

Israeli Attack on Iranian Nuclear Facilities:

Predicted Responses from the United States, Russia, and China

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Introduction

On December 16, 2009, Iran test fired a medium range Sajjil-2 missile capable of reaching Israel with a nuclear warhead. While reasonably upsetting to the international community, this is not new behavior from Tehran. In September of 2009, Tehran test fired several missiles, including the surface-to-surface Shahab-3 missile capable of reaching Israeli and American interests in the Gulf. Also test fired during that time were other short range missiles such as the Fateh-110, Tondar-69, and Zelzal. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Air Force has stated that these missile tests aim "to maintain and boost the country's armed forces deterrent capabilities (Fox News 2009)." The message of these tests is certainly clear: back off and beware.

Iran's flexion of its military muscles increases suspicion that its nuclear program will follow in similar footsteps; particularly, that Iran will develop nuclear weapons. The possibility of Iran's nuclear capabilities being used offensively is an alarming and ever increasing realization. A history of threats and support of terrorist operations against Israel coupled with a radical Islamic military doctrine suggest nuclear deterrence may not be Tehran's only strategic objective.

Of particular concern is Iran's progression in uranium enrichment, a necessary step for creating nuclear weapons. In September 2009, Western intelligence personnel announced the discovery that Iran had secretly built a uranium enrichment site in the mountains near Qom (Fox News 2009). Iran has repeatedly broken vows to export its enriched uranium to be refined for peaceful civilian use (McLatchy Company 2009). The discovery of Iran's clandestine facility strongly suggests its intention to evade international inspections and hide enrichment activities. Since the find, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has ordered Iran's atomic energy agency to build ten additional uranium enrichment sites (Stratfor Analysis 2009).

On May 15, 1974, Iran entered into an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it would submit to international safeguards under the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). These safeguards would apply to "...all source or special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of Iran, under its jurisdiction or carried out under its control anywhere, for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (International Atomic Energy Agency 1974)." Since 1974, Iran has repeatedly violated agreements for ending its conversion and enrichment activities as well as allowing international oversight. Tensions rose considerably when in 2005 when Iran rejected the EU's Long Term Agreement and informed the IAEA that it would resume enrichment (NTI 2009). A year later, in 2006, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement demanding Iran cooperate with the IAEA (Ibid.). Iran ignored this statement and instead launched its heavy water production plant at Arak (Ibid.). Despite five UN Security Council resolutions, Iran continues to enrich uranium (Ibid.). As

of November 2009, it is estimated that Iran has 1763 kilograms of low enriched uranium, with only a few months of potential separation from weapons grade enrichment (Ibid.).

Israel has repeatedly stated that they would not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons and will act unilaterally if necessary to prevent such a development. At present, Israeli officials are keeping fairly quiet, allowing negotiations to continue and Iran time to comply with international demands for ending its enrichment program and complying with outside oversight. However, it has become apparent that Israel is tiring of delay strategies designed to drag out and evade negotiations. Israeli Defense Forces Chief Gabi Ashkenazi has given the “Group of Six” (United States, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and Germany) until the end of 2009 to decide a plan of action (Stratfor 2009).

United States President Barack Obama has publicly realized that an Israeli air strike against Iranian nuclear facilities cannot be held off much longer. Any military confrontation between Israel and Iran would create a cascade of problems for the United States, China, and Russia. While all three countries are official diplomatic allies, there exist dramatic differences and sympathies which lie between them. Such rifts threaten commitment to negotiations and increase the chance of Israeli military action. Concerns about a possible Israeli strike have sparked an increase of literature on the issue. What follows is a review of the available scholarly articles and debates in order to better understand the probable responses of the United States, Russia, and China in the event of an attack.

Literature Review

Any understanding of a possible Israeli attack must begin with an exploration of Israeli fears and assumptions. Dr. Elihu Richter's article "Tehran's Genocidal Incitement Against Israel" is a decent starting point. Dr. Richter is the head of the Genocide Prevention Program at Hebrew University as well as Associate Director for the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide. While Dr. Richter's opinion may not represent the state of Israel, it is a valid representation of popular Israeli thought on the Iranian nuclear issue.

There is a very present notion among Israelis that Iran is committed to the destruction of the state of Israel. On several occasions, Iranian leadership has stated that they will "wipe Israel off the map (Richter and Barnea 2009)." In addition, Khomeini, in his 1970 book *Hukumat-i Islami*, charges Jews with the corruption of Muslims and begs Allah to curse them. Khomeini likens Jews to a hungry predator waiting to devour the world. This rhetoric creates valid concerns about Israeli security. Dr. Elihu contends that "rhetoric matters and words kill." He further states that incitement to genocide violates the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and Incitement to Genocide. Yet, Islamic genocidal rhetoric is continuously overlooked by the international community as a crime against humanity, creating an even greater sense of Jewish vulnerability.

An even greater blow to Israel's sense of security was felt when Iranian President Ahmadinejad was invited as a guest lecturer to American universities between 2005 and 2008. Visits to the United States granted legitimacy to a president who has continued

vows to destroy the Israeli state. The overall message interpreted by Israel was that the international community has grown complacent and even tolerant of Iranian hate rhetoric and intentions. Such interpretations jeopardize trust in alliances and the effectiveness of international organizations, especially those involving nuclear oversight. In his conclusion, Dr. Elihu restates his concern that rhetoric leads to action and that any approach to Iran must involve the insistence that they divorce the genocidal language. The real concern, however, is not the language but the quiet approval and complacency on the part of professed democracies and Western allies.

Dr. Leonard Weiss, an expert in nonproliferation issues and an affiliate of the Center for International Security and Cooperation, assessed the Israeli-Iranian nuclear tension in his scholarly article "Israel's Future and Iran's Nuclear Program (Weiss 2009)." Weiss suggests that Israeli fears of an apocalyptic confrontation with Iran are predicated on their notion that Iran is an irrational state actor. This assumption, according to Weiss, inclines Israel to believe that Iran's relentless hatred will cause it to launch a nuclear warhead against the state of Israel, killing millions of Jews and Muslims. He further suggests there is no evidence to back up this assumption. Iran's development of militarized nuclear power is, therefore, a defensive response to Israeli paranoia. Dr. Weiss neglects to consider, however, the validity of Israeli fears. After all, Iran and its Muslim neighbors completely surround the Jewish state.

Dr. Weiss' assumptions are debatable. First, if Israel truly believed Iran to be an irrational actor, it would have already launched an attack to prevent a future nuclear from Iran. Instead, it has recognized Iran's rationality by offering an excessive amount of time for diplomatic negotiations. Israel continues to hope Iran will see the light and

comply with international demands. Second, there is sufficient evidence for the argument that Iran is a considerable security threat to the Israeli state. Not only has Iranian leadership vowed to destroy Israel on numerous occasions, but it has also contributed considerably to terrorist activity against the Israeli state through its support of Hamas and Hezbollah.

Dr. Weiss also notes the hypocrisy of the United States' policy toward a nuclear Iran. In 1957, Iran's first research reactor was supplied by the United States along with enriched uranium, plutonium, and fissile isotopes (Weiss 2009). Weiss fails, however, to place this in historical context. Prior to the Iranian Revolution of 1978, the United States was supportive of the ruling Shah and maintained friendly relations with Iran. On 1 April 1979, Iran officially became known as the Islamic Republic under a new radical Islamic constitution naming Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as the Supreme Leader. As a result, relations between the United States and Islamic Republic became hostile. There was, therefore, no real cause for prior to the late 1970s that Iran would use nuclear technology against the United States or its allies.

Finally, Dr. Weiss makes three arguments against an Israeli attack on Iran. First, reliable delivery of a nuclear bomb won't be possible for several years. Even if a successful delivery system is created, such an occurrence will subject Iran to economic sanctions and possible military response under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. He believes there remains adequate time for negotiating. Second, the existence of numerous dispersed and underground Iranian nuclear fuel facilities makes a successful Israeli military operation unlikely. Any attack would only delay an Iranian nuclear program and double its efforts in the long run. Furthermore, an Israeli offensive would

bolster support for the clerical government and increase terrorist attacks. Third, Iran is unlikely to launch a first strike nuclear attack, because the ruling clerics want to bring Shia Islam to world leadership. This cannot be accomplished if Iran is destroyed during nuclear warfare. Dr. Weiss concludes that while Iran remains committed to the fall of the Jewish state, its future methods will likely mirror its current methods. Specifically, Iran will continue to support terrorist organizations and bank off public anger regarding Israeli occupation in the West Bank. The first argument is obsolete. As previously noted, Iran successfully test fired the Sajjil-2 medium range missile in December 2009. This missile is capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to Israel. Also, even after the successful test fire, the Group of Six remains slothful and resistant to imposing economic sanctions. Dr. Weiss' third argument, while certainly valid, fails to consider the Islamic doctrine of martyrdom. A nuclear war might well be considered a necessary sacrifice for the long term institution of Shia world leadership and the defeat of a historical enemy.

To date, the Group of Six has addressed the Iranian nuclear problem through repeated attempts at negotiations and economic sanctions. In his scholarly article from the International Journal on World Peace, Dr. Ben-Meir, assesses the effectiveness of such approaches. Ben Meir is a senior fellow at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University. The downside to his assessment is that it was written in early 2009, and therefore does not account for negotiations past that date.

Overall, Ben-Meir considers the current approach to be a complete failure. The reasons for this failure are threefold. First, the West has failed to understand Iranian psychology. During the Bush Administration, Iran began to notice its reflection. This was

in part due to the White House's refusal to deal directly with Tehran. Rather, its denouncements alienated the moderates and fueled the clerical government's commitment to its nuclear program. Nuclear capability is vital to Iran's vision of itself as a regional power and protector against Western imperialism. Iran's meddling in a war-stricken Iraq and successful evasion of sanctions has only increased this arrogance. In addition, the Iranian sense of grandiosity has been aided by the popular opinion that its oil cannot be sacrificed. (This is especially true for the Chinese and Russians, Iran's major petrol trading partners.) These narcissistic revelations have contributed to deception and stalling throughout negotiations.

Second, there has been complacency instituting severe sanctions in response to Iranian defiance of international demands. Agreement among the Group of Six regarding the most painful of sanctions has been next to impossible. China and Russia have presented the most challenge as they continue to maintain strong trading ties with Iran. Failure to agree ahead of time on the strictest course has also contributed to stalling. Also, negotiations have failed to stick to a designated time schedule. For successful negotiations to occur, they must be strictly limited to a certain number of months, therefore creating real consequences for failure to comply.

Third, negotiations have failed to address Iran's national security concerns. Namely, Iran fears an attack from the United States and/or Israel. It is unlikely to halt its enrichment activities unless some assurance can be reached that it will not be attacked. However, Iran's quest for regional hegemony might also prevent it from relinquishing its enrichment activities.

Actors and Perceptions

An Israeli offensive will greatly exaggerate the divided interests between softly allied global superpowers over Iran. Foremost among these paper allies are the United States, China, and Russia - two of which are currently chief trading partners with Iran. Separate economic, political, and national security interests will likely determine the direction of their response following an attack. It is important to understand the motivations and interests of each actor in order to better construct a vision of the world following an Israeli preventive strike.

Russia

It was popularly believed heading into negotiations that the road to Tehran ran through Moscow. Russia is, after all, an important Iranian economic and diplomatic partner. Nevertheless, Moscow's influence over Iran is questionable. It has failed to live up to the expectations of several Group of Six members throughout the negotiations. It is clear Russia's interests do not fully align with an international interest for an immediate solution.

Economics

Russia continues to be a key supplier of ballistic missile goods, conventional arms, chemicals, and technology to Iran. The greatest tie between Iran and Moscow is their defense trade. In 1995, Russia signed an \$800 million contract with Iran to complete its Bushehr nuclear power plant (NTI 2009). Yet, Russia has also been dragging its feet on the Bushehr construction project. Iran, as a result, is quickly losing faith in Russia as a reliable trading partner and threatening to take its business

elsewhere. Russia's lack of commitment to the Iranians may be in part due to political allying with efforts to dissuade a nuclear Iran.

Russia depends on its exports to Iran for financial security. Exports to Iran totaled \$2 billion in 2005 (Beehner 2006) and approximately \$3 billion in 2008 (Mankoff 2009). Gazprom, Russia's main oil company, is also engaged in projects to develop Iran's South Par fields. Moderate conflicts between Iran and the Western world allow Moscow to feed off its dominant trading relationship with Tehran. Resolution on the nuclear issue would likely rush foreign oil companies into competition with Russia. It is therefore unlikely Moscow will simply give up its economic benefits of Iranian trade in order to prevent a nuclear Iran.

Politics

Russia has failed to be a committed player in negotiations with Iran. In fact, Moscow may benefit more from the crisis with Iran than a quick resolution to its nuclear enrichment program. Besides the economic benefits of being Iran's foremost nuclear technology supplier, Russia enjoys the political importance of being considered the key to the Iranian solution. Since the Cold War, Russia has enjoyed only a fraction of its previous influence in the Middle East. Its economic and political partnership with Iran offers it, therefore, an influence it hasn't realized since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition, by delaying the pace of negotiations, Moscow is able to maintain the leverage awarded by Washington. It has been widely assumed that Moscow is the key to successful negotiations, and that assumption has allowed Moscow more influence on issues such as the renewal of a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

However, Moscow's political alliance with Iran might not be as strong as originally assumed. In late July 2009, the Iranian Mehr News Agency announced that Russia and Iran would conduct joint military exercises in the Caspian Sea with "more than 30 Russian and Iranian ships (Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst 2009)." However, further investigation revealed that only one Russian ship participated in the exercise. This single ship did not belong to the Ministry of Defense, but to the Ministry of Emergency Situations. This discovery, along with other evidence, has questioned Russia's political and military commitment to its Iranian client. For example, Russia has delayed its fulfillment of a contract to deliver S-300 long range air defense missiles to Iran, threatening a \$1 billion dollar agreement (Tobey 2009).

National Security Concerns

The relationship between Russia and Iran is certainly not one built on trust. Great differences in ideology and interests make this alliance less than comfortable. Moscow has on more than one occasion accused Tehran of aiding Chechen guerillas and spreading radical Islam throughout Central Asia (Mankoff 2009). Iran's history of supporting international terrorist attacks may contribute to Russia's hesitancy to put pressure on Iran's nuclear program. It cannot afford any further problems in the North Caucasus. These concerns suggest Russia is in no hurry to help Iran gain possession of nuclear weapons.

In addition, Tehran's search for alternate trading sources suggests it is attempting to limit its dependence on Moscow. By increasing its autonomy, Iran is positioning itself to be a future Russian competitor in Eurasia. This metamorphosis

coupled with a radical state ideology should make Russia very concerned about a nuclear Iran. If Iran accomplishes nuclear warheads, it is likely Russia will face increased security concerns from Islamic extremists. If the nuclear program is halted, Russia will concede vast economic reward and Middle Eastern influence to foreign competitors. Therefore, it is within Russian national security interests to drag out negotiations while sabotaging a speedy nuclear installment. In fact, Russia seems to have hijacked the Iranian nuclear scene in order to preserve its own economic and political benefits, rather than out of any serious attempt to bring about resolution.

China

While Moscow's support of Tehran is flexible, the Chinese have a much greater dependence on its trade with Iran and cannot afford to impose sanctions. Economic and geopolitical interests strongly tie China to the case for Iranian nuclear energy, even at the risk of a nuclearized weapons program. Beijing's coming 2010 UN Security Council Presidency will grant it even moiré power to protect its interests in Iran.

Economics

In 2008, Sino-Iranian trade totaled over \$29 billion, compared to only \$400 million in 1994 (LeMeire 2009). It is estimated that trade with China will comprise 25 percent of Iran's total trading pie by 2013 (Ibid.). However, it is Iranian oil that China craves most of all due to its expanding economy. In 2008, Iran was the third largest oil exporter to China (Ibid.). In January 2009, China took over a Japanese contract to develop the South Azadegan oil fields (Ibid.). Plans are also in the works for Iran to supply China with 250 million tons of natural gas over the next 25 years (Ibid.). In return, China

supplies approximately one-third of Iran's refined petroleum products due to Tehran's limited refining capacity relative to demand (Ibid.).

Politics

Overall, Chinese foreign policy has stressed the avoidance of direct confrontation, especially with other superpowers. Thus, while China continues to supply Iran with vital nuclear and military technology, it also fails to use its veto on UN Security Council sanctions against Iran. Beijing is likely to continue the appearance of buckling under United States pressure, while raising strong resistance to any serious sanctions that could jeopardize its energy and security interests. Even if severe sanctions were adopted by the UN Security Council, China's current relationship with Iran suggests it will continue to engage in lucrative and questionable business with the Iranians.

Geopolitically, China's short-term and long-term interests involve balancing the expansion of United States power. Its alliances with Iran and Russia are designed to do exactly that. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an economic institution created by China and Russia for the purpose of improving trade relations. Throughout its growth, the SCO has challenged United States economic interests in Asian and Central Asian states. Efforts to establish a NATO-like collective security agreement also suggest the alliance is evolving to counter the spread of American troops. Importance differences between Russian and China, however, will pose great challenges to this development.

National Security Concerns

Broad contentions exist between the United States and China over issues such as Taiwan and North Korea. The possibility of a confrontation with the United States is something China must consider and plan for, yet strive to avoid. At present, China remains isolated by United States dominance of Middle Eastern oil fields and therefore has even greater dependence on Iranian oil. In the event of conflict, China cannot afford to be cut off from Iranian energy supplies. It is strategically vital that China maintain a strong energy relationship with Iran. To protect this relationship and deter any outside threats, China may actually favor an Iranian nuclear weapons program. Nuclear weapons, if kept solely for deterrence, may in theory promote stability.

Like Russia, the benefits of a nuclear (or at least “*nuclearizing*”) Iran may outweigh the risks of potential destabilization. China has benefited from United States distraction over the Iranian nuclear issue. While the United States focuses much of its energy and resources on Middle Eastern affairs, China is able to increase its Asian hegemony virtually uninhibited. China has also been using the situation to rack in several big defense paychecks. In addition to its contribution to a nuclear Iran, China has been instrumental in transfusing Iran with new military technology and weapons systems. In December 2005, the United States sanctioned six Chinese companies for selling Iran sensitive missile technology (LeMeire 2009).

United States

Despite their differences in approaching Iran, both the Bush and Obama Administrations have considered a nuclear Iran to be a serious security threat. The

United States maintains virtually zero economic, political, or ideological ties to Iran, and it certainly fails to appreciate Iran's meddling in its Middle Eastern affairs. The message from the United States has been clear: a nuclear Iran is unacceptable. While both the United States and Israel would like to see a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear problem, United States President Barack Obama has warned the Chinese that an Israeli strike against Iran cannot be held off indefinitely (Ravid and Mozgavaya 2009).

Economics

Iran is incredibly rich in energy resources, and it therefore represents a potential energy trading partner for the United States. However, this potential will remain untapped unless Iran divorces its commitment to nuclear advancement and opens its economy. Iran's involvement in terrorist activities may also present a significant obstacle to any American-Iranian economic engagement. Nevertheless, the United States has been willing to concede economic reward packages throughout negotiations in return for Iranian compliance to end its enrichment activities. Like its arrangement with Saudi Arabia, it is possible the United States will see past the moral challenges of Iran in order to reap energy benefits.

Politics

United State's strategy toward Iran has changed fundamentally with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Rather than condemning Iran as an "axis of evil," the new administration has advocated increased engagement, multilateralism, and negotiations. Hopes that this new approach would warm relations and increase Iranian

cooperation have failed to be realized. Rather, Iran continues to thwart negotiation efforts to cease its nuclear program.

The Obama Administration has also departed from Bush's tight alliance and support of Israel, although both Washington and Israel share a serious concern about Iran's nuclear development. Nevertheless, Obama has made it known repeatedly that Israel is free to defend itself according to the measures it deems necessary for national security. While the United States continues to hope for successful negotiations, it is fully aware that Israel's patience is running out and the time to act is drawing near. In response, it has put further pressure on China and Russia to reason with Iran or risk the consequences of an Israeli assault. Frustration with Russian and Chinese stalling strategies is beginning to have its effect. Any hopes the United States received from Beijing during Obama's visit in late 2009 were lost when Beijing failed to uphold its promise to join the condemnation of Iran by the International Atomic Energy Agency (Ravid and Mozgavaya 2009). Instead, China has strengthened its refusal to join the imposition of Western sanctions. This stance will be especially problematic for the United States when China takes over the Presidency of the UN Security Council in January 2010.

National Security Concerns

The most obvious United States national security concern rests with Iran's potential use of nuclear power for military purposes. Suspicions toward this end were increased in the fall of 2009 when US intelligence officials uncovered Iran's covert construction of nuclear facilities. Satellite analysis suggests that the nuclear facility near

Qom can be utilized to weaponize uranium (Gelfand 2009). Iran continues to insist that the Qom facility does not deviate from its IAEA promise of peaceful intentions. Iran has also reneged on prior agreements to export its enriched fuel to France and Russia (NTI 2009). Washington has responded to Iranian deceptions by adopting a harder approach and recognizing all options should be considered to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapons program. In response to Iran's refusal of export proposals, President Obama has stated that "as a consequence [the United States has] begun discussions...about the importance of having consequences...Over the next several weeks, [the United States] will be developing a package of potential steps that [the United States] could take, that would indicate [their] seriousness to Iran (Gelfand 2009)." This statement aligns with Israel's insistence that the Group of Six agree on a course of action before the end of 2009. A military option, however, would be an incredible challenge for United States due to its military and financial resource attachment to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to concerns over a weaponized nuclear program, the United States cannot risk further destabilization of the Middle East. The US remains engaged in both the Iraq War and Afghanistan combat operations, areas Iran has historically considered to be within their sphere of regional hegemony. Iranian efforts to undermine United States objectives in the Middle East are quite clear. Iran has been active in supporting armed resistance groups in both Iraq and Afghanistan as well as funding and arming regional terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah. A nuclear emboldened Iran would pose an even greater threat to US regional interests as well as significantly decrease the security of the only true US regional ally, Israel.

Research Design

This predictive analysis will utilize the LAMP method (Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction) developed by Dr. Jonathan Lockwood in 1992. The LAMP method does not assume one perspective, but considers the perceptions of all individual actors regarding the issue at hand. Every LAMP analysis, therefore, begins with a complete examination of each actor's perceptions. Based on the various perceptions, the analyst considers each possible choice available to the actors. Each actor has their own set of free will choices. The LAMP method rejects predetermination of future events and assumes that they are, rather, a combined total of free will interactions. Furthermore, alternate futures are constantly changing and rely heavily on the fluctuations of current interactions. At any point in the future, a free will choice can alter the perceptions of other actors. To account for the changing nature of interactions and possible futures, the LAMP analysis emphasizes probability calculations over quantitative analysis. This is the main difference between the LAMP analysis and other analysis models.

The following are the twelve steps involved in the LAMP analysis process (Lockwood 2009):

1. Define the issue or event from which alternate futures will be developed.
2. Identify each actor.
3. Examine each actor's perceptions of the issue.
4. Identify all possible actions for each actor.

5. Determine major scenarios for alternate futures.
6. Calculate $X^Y=Z$, or the number of permutations of alternate futures per each major scenario.
7. Calculate $X=n(n-1)/2$, or the relative probability of pairwise comparisons for the scenario where X equals the total number of pairwise comparisons and n equals the total number of alternate futures. (A pairwise comparison is the analysis of two alternate futures simultaneously.)
8. Rank alternate futures for each scenario in order of decreasing probability.
9. Analyze the consequences of each alternate future.
10. Determine the events presently required to produce each alternate future.
11. Create possible indicators for the events in Step 10.
12. Determine the potential for an alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.

The LAMP method is particularly useful for analyzing the possible responses of the United States, China, and Russia in the event of an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. Furthermore, all three actors have separate and often conflicting perceptions and motivations in regards to Iran. A probability analysis is ideal because it can weigh all the various competing perceptions to best predict a likely future response.

The LAMP method, like other analysis models, is imperfect due to the opportunity for bias and misunderstandings on the part of the author. Every alternate future

scenario is constructed out of the author's perception of each actors' perceptions. Perceptions rely on countless observations and inferences, are not factual, and vary widely from micro-actor to micro-actor. One country's defense department might hold a completely different agenda and motivation than its economic or finance department. Therefore, the analyst must take into account the author's background when researching, or they will be biased by limited representation of one industry/actor over another. Also, the identification of an actor's perception requires linear thinking. Unlike other senses which collect information in volume, thinking can only address a limited number of events at one time. Considering there are countless events and interactions occurring simultaneously, the analyst is all but forced to work out of a vacuum.

Step 4: Courses of Action

To begin the fourth step of the LAMP procedure, the study will identify all possible courses of action (COA) for each actor. Again, the focus at this point in the study is all *possible* courses of action, not all *likely*. The following, therefore, are four possible courses of action which happen to be identical for the United States, Russia, and China:

COA #1: Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations. This is the least confrontational course of action and does NOT include covert assistance to either Iran or Israel. Defense and energy trade between Iran, Russia, and China will continue as usual, unless there are new restrictions.

COA #2: Create or strengthen an open military alliance with either Israel or Iran. This course of action would likely occur unilaterally and at the expense of confrontation with other permanent UN Security Council members.

COA #3: Ignore sanctions or covertly funnel assistance (arms, missiles, etc.) to the Iranian government. Assistance will likely violate new restrictions on trade.

Assumptions

1. While the United States has adopted a softer approach toward Iran under the Obama Administration, it is losing patience with Iran's failure to comply with international demands. President Obama has recognized the nearing possibility of military solution.
2. Following the event of an Israeli strike, the United States will advocate a return to negotiations given a reasonable commitment from Iran to cooperate. A military response will continue to be the method of last resort.
3. The United States military is too preoccupied in Iraq and Afghanistan to fully commit to a war with Iran. Nevertheless, it cannot afford Iran to develop nuclear weapons and risk its national security and foreign energy interests. The United States will, therefore, likely give whatever aid it can to Israel if needed.
4. There is room for maneuvering in the United States defense budget, making a military commitment to eliminating Iranian nuclear facilities a real possibility. Defense spending in 2010 will account for less than five percent of the United States economy (Spring 2009). To put this in further perspective, the total cost of

the Iraq war between 2001 and 2009 has been \$210 billion (Ibid.). The estimated cost of Obama's health bill proposal will equal no less than \$1.2 trillion during its first ten years (Ibid.).

5. Russia does not wish to see Iran in possession of nuclear weapons. Russia has engaged in defense trade with Iran for the financial and political incentives. Iran's commitment to a radical religious doctrine and support of foreign Muslims poses serious security concerns to the Russian government. It will only aid Iran as long as the financial benefits outweigh the national security risks.
6. Chinese dependency on Middle Eastern energy resources makes support for a nuclear Iran risky. Destabilization in these regions will have catastrophic implications for the Chinese economy. However, this seems to be a risk its willing to take. China continues to supply nuclear technology to Iran and refuses to join international condemnation of Iran's nuclear activities.
7. The need for countering United States hegemony outweighs any Chinese hesitations about the development of Iranian nukes. In 2002, Chinese President Jiang Zemin announced that China's foreign policy was to "oppose American deployments in Central Asia and the Middle East." He also stated that China and Iran will work to "prevent domination of a superpower on the entire world (Tkacik 2006)."
8. Chinese investment in its alliance with Iran suggests that despite sanctions, it will continue its defense trade with Iran. Between 2005 and the first part of 2009, Chinese investment in Iran has totaled approximately \$10.2 billion, second

behind its investment in the United States at around \$16.5 billion (Scissors 2009). An increase in Iranian investment over the past several years indicates China is attempting to divorce itself from dependency on the United States. A failing United States economy only increases this need for Chinese economic independence. It is therefore within the strategic interest of China to support and protect its investments in Iran.

9. Russia's relations with Iran are not as strong as previously believed. Moscow has repeatedly delayed the Bushehr project and has deferred its S-300 long range missile contract indefinitely. It can be assumed from this behavior that while Russia wishes to benefit financially from trade with Iran, it does not wish to risk military action from Israel or the United States. An Israeli strike would therefore further dissuade Moscow from fulfilling its commitments to Iran.
10. Russian-Iranian energy cooperation is also shaky. Disagreements over how best to exploit Caspian resources further decrease the likelihood Moscow will come to Tehran's aid in the event of an attack.
11. If war between Israel and Iran fails to immediately follow an Israeli strike, China will use its geopolitical influence to deter any further force by Israel or the United States. One should expect to see an increase in joint Sino-Iranian military cooperation and a hardening of a defense alliance.
12. In the event of a war between Iran and Israel, China would prefer to act covertly in assisting Iran. Overt military assistance will further strain its relations with the

United States and jeopardize its interests in areas of contentions with the West, such as Taiwan.

Step 5: Major Scenarios

The fifth step in the LAMP procedure is to construct major scenarios occurring after the event in question. Because each choice of action will depend and interact with Iran's direction of recovery, the study will construct major scenarios likely to occur in Iran post-strike.

Scenario #1:

Iranian nuclear facilities will be rendered dysfunctional and Iran will return to international negotiations. This scenario would imply that Iran's overt and covert nuclear infrastructure would be so badly damaged from an Israeli strike that the costs of reconstruction would greatly overwhelm the capabilities of Iran. This scenario does not assume abandonment of Iranian nuclear objectives for the long run.

Scenario #2:

Iran will strengthen its resolve to develop nuclear weapons and reach out to its allies or business partners for support. An initial strike will fail to cripple Iran's nuclear program. The clerical government as a result will rally support from moderates and oppositionists against Israel and the West. Iran will continue its enrichment activities and importation of defense technology. Tehran will also attempt to bring foreign sympathizers and/or business partners into a protective alliance.

Scenario #3:

Iran will engage its military resources in a war against Israel. Iran will attempt to organize committed Shia Muslims and loose allies in a military engagement against Israel. Iran will focus its military efforts on Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Terrorism will increase against United States targets in the Middle East.

Assumptions

1. The United States pattern of prolonged military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan decrease the likelihood Tehran will be willing to give up its nuclear pursuits. United States presence in the Middle East directly threatens Iran's geopolitical position as a regional hegemon. Nuclear weapons would ensure Iran's security from a United States threat and would protect its regional interests.
2. An Israeli strike is unlikely to sufficiently cripple Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Many of its facilities remain underground, undiscovered, and difficult for satellite analysts to identify.
3. There is little incentive for international cooperation after an Israeli strike. Generous economic incentive packages have failed to influence Iran to freeze its uranium enrichment. To swap aid for uranium after an attack would not only represent an extreme diversion from current behavior, but would be a disgrace to the image of Tehran as a Muslim leader. If Iran were to be seen as "bought out" by the Western foe, it would lose respect and authority among its neighbors.

4. Iran's radical Islamic ideology prevents it from fully cooperating with the Western world, foremost Israel.
5. The incentives for nuclear armament greatly outweigh those for cooperation. Nuclear weapons would: vault Iran's regional and international power, crystallize its leadership of the Muslim world, ensure its security against future attack from Western powers, and challenge United States presence in the Middle East.
6. Iran is a rational actor and does not want to risk its destruction through a war with Israel.

Step 6: Permutations of Alternate Futures

The sixth step in the LAMP procedure is to calculate the number of possible alternate futures by using the formula $X^Y=Z$, where X equals the number of choices available to each actor, Y equals the number of actors, and Z equals the alternate futures. Again, there are three possible courses of action for each actor as discussed in Step 4 of the LAMP procedure and three major scenarios as discussed in Step 5. Therefore, $X = 3$, $Y = 3$, and $Z = 27$. There are 27 possible alternate futures for this study. Table 1 on page 29 represents all 64 possible futures.

Step 7: Pairwise Comparisons

The seventh step in the LAMP procedure is to perform pairwise comparisons. Again, this means that each of the alternate futures will be compared against all other alternate futures. The winner of each comparison will receive one vote. Votes will indicate the probability of each alternate future for a given scenario and will provide the basis for ranking in Step 8. The comparisons, in turn, will be conducted for each of the three scenarios. To determine the number of pairwise comparisons to be made, the equation $X=n(n-1)/2$ will be used, where X equals the total number of pairwise comparisons and n equals the total number of alternate futures. Thus, $X = 27(27-1)/2 = 27(26)/2 = 351$ pairwise comparisons. The comparisons will be divided into three tables (Table 2 on page 30, Table 3 on page 31, Table 4 on page 32), one for each of the three scenarios.

Step 8: Ranking Alternate Futures

The eighth step in the LAMP process involves order ranking the probabilities of each alternate future for a given scenario. Table 5 on page 33, Table 6 on page 34, and Table 7 on page 35 represent the order rankings for Scenario 1, Scenario 2, and Scenario 3, respectively.

Table 1. Alternate Future Permutations

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States
1	IDN	IDN	IDN
2	IDN	IDN	CA
3	IDN	IDN	MA
4	IDN	MA	IDN
5	IDN	MA	CA
6	IDN	MA	MA
7	IDN	CA	IDN
8	IDN	CA	CA
9	IDN	CA	MA
10	MA	IDN	IDN
11	MA	IDN	CA
12	MA	IDN	MA
13	MA	MA	IDN
14	MA	MA	CA
15	MA	MA	MA
16	MA	CA	IDN
17	MA	CA	CA
18	MA	CA	MA
19	CA	IDN	IDN
20	CA	IDN	CA
21	CA	IDN	MA
22	CA	MA	IDN
23	CA	MA	CA
24	CA	MA	MA
25	CA	CA	IDN
26	CA	CA	CA
27	CA	CA	MA

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 2. Scenario #1

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	26
2	IDN	IDN	CA	5
3	IDN	IDN	MA	19
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
5	IDN	MA	CA	0
6	IDN	MA	MA	11
7	IDN	CA	IDN	22
8	IDN	CA	CA	5
9	IDN	CA	MA	17
10	MA	IDN	IDN	18
11	MA	IDN	CA	3
12	MA	IDN	MA	12
13	MA	MA	IDN	10
14	MA	MA	CA	1
15	MA	MA	MA	15
16	MA	CA	IDN	20
17	MA	CA	CA	4
18	MA	CA	MA	14
19	CA	IDN	IDN	24
20	CA	IDN	CA	7
21	CA	IDN	MA	21
22	CA	MA	IDN	16
23	CA	MA	CA	4
24	CA	MA	MA	14
25	CA	CA	IDN	25
26	CA	CA	CA	7
27	CA	CA	MA	22

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 3. Scenario #2

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	11
2	IDN	IDN	CA	1
3	IDN	IDN	MA	17
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
5	IDN	MA	CA	0
6	IDN	MA	MA	12
7	IDN	CA	IDN	17
8	IDN	CA	CA	5
9	IDN	CA	MA	19
10	MA	IDN	IDN	17
11	MA	IDN	CA	4
12	MA	IDN	MA	22
13	MA	MA	IDN	12
14	MA	MA	CA	2
15	MA	MA	MA	19
16	MA	CA	IDN	20
17	MA	CA	CA	7
18	MA	CA	MA	24
19	CA	IDN	IDN	18
20	CA	IDN	CA	6
21	CA	IDN	MA	24
22	CA	MA	IDN	13
23	CA	MA	CA	3
24	CA	MA	MA	16
25	CA	CA	IDN	20
26	CA	CA	CA	8
27	CA	CA	MA	25

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 4. Scenario # 3

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	10
2	IDN	IDN	CA	1
3	IDN	IDN	MA	19
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
5	IDN	MA	CA	0
6	IDN	MA	MA	18
7	IDN	CA	IDN	11
8	IDN	CA	CA	2
9	IDN	CA	MA	20
10	MA	IDN	IDN	15
11	MA	IDN	CA	6
12	MA	IDN	MA	13
13	MA	MA	IDN	15
14	MA	MA	CA	5
15	MA	MA	MA	22
16	MA	CA	IDN	17
17	MA	CA	CA	7
18	MA	CA	MA	18
19	CA	IDN	IDN	16
20	CA	IDN	CA	8
21	CA	IDN	MA	25
22	CA	MA	IDN	14
23	CA	MA	CA	5
24	CA	MA	MA	21
25	CA	CA	IDN	18
26	CA	CA	CA	11
27	CA	CA	MA	25

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 5. Probability Ranking for Scenario #1

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	26
25	CA	CA	IDN	25
19	CA	IDN	IDN	24
7	IDN	CA	IDN	22
27	CA	CA	MA	22
21	CA	IDN	MA	21
16	MA	CA	IDN	20
3	IDN	IDN	MA	19
10	MA	IDN	IDN	18
9	IDN	CA	MA	17
22	CA	MA	IDN	16
15	MA	MA	MA	15
18	MA	CA	MA	14
24	CA	MA	MA	14
12	MA	IDN	MA	12
6	IDN	MA	MA	11
13	MA	MA	IDN	10
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
20	CA	IDN	CA	7
26	CA	CA	CA	7
2	IDN	IDN	CA	5
8	IDN	CA	CA	5
17	MA	CA	CA	4
23	CA	MA	CA	4
11	MA	IDN	CA	3
14	MA	MA	CA	1
5	IDN	MA	CA	0

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 6. Probability Ranking for Scenario # 2

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
27	CA	CA	MA	25
18	MA	CA	MA	24
21	CA	IDN	MA	24
12	MA	IDN	MA	22
16	MA	CA	IDN	20
25	CA	CA	IDN	20
9	IDN	CA	MA	19
15	MA	MA	MA	19
19	CA	IDN	IDN	18
3	IDN	IDN	MA	17
7	IDN	CA	IDN	17
10	MA	IDN	IDN	17
24	CA	MA	MA	16
22	CA	MA	IDN	13
6	IDN	MA	MA	12
13	MA	MA	IDN	12
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	11
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
26	CA	CA	CA	8
17	MA	CA	CA	7
20	CA	IDN	CA	6
8	IDN	CA	CA	5
11	MA	IDN	CA	4
23	CA	MA	CA	3
14	MA	MA	CA	2
2	IDN	IDN	CA	1
5	IDN	MA	CA	0

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Table 7. Probability Ranking for Scenario # 3

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
21	CA	IDN	MA	25
27	CA	CA	MA	25
15	MA	MA	MA	22
24	CA	MA	MA	21
9	IDN	CA	MA	20
3	IDN	IDN	MA	19
6	IDN	MA	MA	18
18	MA	CA	MA	18
25	CA	CA	IDN	18
16	MA	CA	IDN	17
19	CA	IDN	IDN	16
10	MA	IDN	IDN	15
13	MA	MA	IDN	15
22	CA	MA	IDN	14
12	MA	IDN	MA	13
7	IDN	CA	IDN	11
26	CA	CA	CA	11
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	10
4	IDN	MA	IDN	9
20	CA	IDN	CA	8
17	MA	CA	CA	7
11	MA	IDN	CA	6
14	MA	MA	CA	5
23	CA	MA	CA	5
8	IDN	CA	CA	2
2	IDN	IDN	CA	1
5	IDN	MA	CA	0

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly or illegally funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Step 9: Analyze Consequences of Alternate Futures

The ninth step in the LAMP analysis procedure involves analyzing the consequences of the most probable alternate futures, given that their particular scenario occurs. The probabilities of alternate futures per scenario were calculated in Step 8. The three top ranking alternate futures per scenario will be analyzed.

Scenario #1: Iranian nuclear facilities will be rendered dysfunctional and Iran will return to international negotiations.

Rank No. 1: Alternate Future #1. China, Russia, and the United States will support the continuance of negotiations. (Alternate Future #1 received 26 votes.)

Rank No. 2: Alternate Future #25. China and Russia will covertly assist the Iranian government, despite passive participation in international efforts to prevent nuclear armament. The United States will continue to pressure Iran through negotiations. Alternate Future #25 received 25 votes.

Rank No. 3: Alternate Future #19. China will covertly assist the Iranian government, while Russia and the United States commit to international negotiations. Alternate Future #19 received 24 votes.

The most likely alternate future within this scenario directly emphasizes military de-escalation. If Iran demonstrates willingness to submit to international demands under IAEA oversight, all actors would prefer a return to the status quo. This, however, is not an optimal future for the United States as the status quo currently entails delay tactics in

negotiations. Events would inevitably lead back to military action as Iran is unlikely to give up its long term nuclear aspirations.

The second most probable future is one in which Russia and China continue to offer technological and military aid to Iran, covertly if necessary. Both the Chinese and Russian economies depend heavily on trade with Iran. If sanctions were placed on Iran following an Israeli strike, it is likely trade will continue as long as it does not directly threaten confrontation with the United States. Russia is a high cost oil provider and therefore gains from Middle Eastern instability. Therefore, there may be little incentive to halt arms trade. Also, China has taken advantage of American preoccupation in Iraq and Afghanistan as an opportunity for power expansion. Increased tensions between the United States and China would refocus attention to heated issues such as Taiwan and North Korea.

The third most probable future, receiving 24 votes, is one in which the United States and Russia commit to international negotiations, while China covertly assists the Iranian government. Unlike the second ranking future, this implies that the incentives for Russian cooperation outweigh those for profiting off Tehran. Russian relations with Tehran, as discussed, are not as strong as once believed. Moscow appears to be influenced by United States pressure to quell its defense trade with Tehran as it has failed to deliver on several military contracts. It is possible Russia will use its defense trade with Iran as a bargaining chip with the United States to gain further concessions on trade and defense, particularly arms reduction.

Scenario #2: Iran will strengthen its resolve to develop nuclear weapons and reach out to its allies for support.

Rank No. 1: Alternate Future #27. China and Russia will covertly assist the Iranian government, regardless of any sanctions, while the United States fortifies its military alliances in preparation for a forceful preventive solution. Alternate Future #27 received 25 votes.

Rank No. 2: Alternate Future #18. China and the United States will fortify their military commitments to Iran and Israel, respectively, while Russia continues to profit off defense trade with Iran despite any sanctions. Alternate Future #18 received 24 votes.

Rank No. 3: Alternate Future #21. The United States will fortify its military alliances in preparation for a future military solution, while Russia opts for international negotiations. China will continue offering covert assistance to the Iranian government regardless of sanctions. Alternate Future #21 received 24 votes.

An acceleration of Iranian commitment to develop its nuclear program following an Israeli strike would expedite the timetable of a joint-Israeli-American response. Both actors have made it clear that a nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable. It is therefore most likely given this scenario, that the United States will prepare for a military attack. Concurrently, China will come to the aid of its ally as it cannot afford to abandon its investments. The Sino-Iranian alliance will strengthen in its resolve to act as a bulwark against the United States and as protection from its perceived aggressive expansion.

The second ranked most probable future implies a confrontational positioning of superpower against superpower. United States maneuvering toward a military solution may trigger China to amplify its military support for Iran in effort to deter war. An Iranian loss would have dire consequences for China's energy needs and national security concerns about United States encroachment. Russia will seek to benefit financially, no doubt, from both sides of the defense trade.

The third ranked most probable future suggests that the United States will move forward in planning a military operation, while Russia will appeal for a return to negotiations. While Russia's energy sector would benefit from instability, it is more likely to wish a return to the status quo than join an alliance against Western powers. Moscow was only recently granted a promise by the United States to stand down on its plans for a missile defense shield. Military alliances would directly threaten its national security by regressing in armament negotiations with the United States. Furthermore, it would lose any bargaining power it currently has by abandoning its successful fence line strategy.

Scenario #3: Iran will engage its military resources in a war against Israel.

Rank No. 1: Alternate Future # 21. The United States will assist Israel in a war against Iran. Russia will remain passive and demand a return to international negotiations. China will offer covert assistance to the Iranian government and avoid, if possible, direct military confrontation with the West. Alternate Future #21 received 25 votes.

Rank No. 2: Alternate Future #27. Both China and Russia will covertly assist the Iranian government, while the United States joins ranks with Israel in a war against Iran. Alternate Future #27 received 25 votes.

Rank No. 3: Alternate Future #15. China, Russia, and the United States will strengthen their military commitments to Iran and Israel, respectively. Alternate Future #15 received 22 votes.

What is most noticeable about Scenario # 3 is the probability finding that the United States, for all but one alternate future, would engage in joint military operations or direct assistance rather than lobby for a ceasefire and return to negotiations. These probabilities are based on the assumptions that the shared security interests and strategic ties between the United States and Israel are so strong that the United States would unlikely abandon its key Middle Eastern ally. Since the early 1960s, the United States has supplied Israel with defensive weapons systems and crucial assistance in war. In 2007, Washington promised to increase military aid to Israel by \$60 million per fiscal year (Sharp 2008). Approximately \$2.775 billion will be delivered in full within the first thirty days of fiscal year 2010 (PressTV 2009).

Also worth mentioning are Russia's flexible engagement preferences in the event Iran and Israel declare war. Scoring equally for Scenario #3 were the choices of joining international ceasefire pleas and covert assistance, followed by military assistance within three votes. Because the United States would certainly be engaged alongside Israel, Moscow is unlikely to form an open military alliance and risk jeopardizing its other geopolitical interests. It also has no real motivation to make costly sacrifices for Iran's

claim to nuclear rights, especially true given its concerns about Iranian support for terrorist activities in the Northern Caucasus. However, strong Sino-Russian ties might drag Moscow into being a halfhearted donor for military assistance. Assistance would, in such a case, likely be limited to the transfer of a small number of arms. The Russian economy is a formidable restrictor of Russian military aid. Financial analysts at IHS Global Insight have estimated that the Russian economy contracted possibly over eight percent during fiscal year 2009 (Galeotti 2009). Furthermore, nearly 45 percent of Russia's weaponry are outdated and will need to be replaced by 2015 (ibid.). Moscow is in no real position to offer significant military assistance.

Step 10: Transpositioning

Transpositioning is the metamorphosis of one alternate future into another due to change in perception. For example, if Tehran's perception of Moscow as an ally changes in a negative direction and relations chill, Russia will be less likely to provide military assistance to Iran in the future. This change of perception will alter the alternate futures for a given scenario. As a result, probability rankings will also change.

Step ten of the LAMP procedure requires the analyst to examine the potential for transpositioning among alternate futures. The study will, therefore, now consider transpositioning of the top ranking alternate futures for each of the three scenarios. Each future and scenario will be restated below. Also, the five top ranked probabilities will be considered for transpositioning.

Scenario # 1 : Iranian nuclear facilities will be rendered dysfunctional and Iran will return to international negotiations.

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
1	IDN	IDN	IDN	26
25	CA	CA	IDN	25
19	CA	IDN	IDN	24
7	IDN	CA	IDN	22
27	CA	CA	MA	22

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

Alternate futures 1, 25, 19, and 7 are unlikely to transposition to 27. Alternate future 27 is the only future within the top five that includes military assistance. Because the predicted Israeli strike has been successful in its objectives to eliminate Iranian nuclear facilities, at least in the short run, there is no urgent need for further military activity. The most likely alternate future to transposition is future 1. If there is reasonable expectation that Iran will not respond to an Israeli attack, operations will likely return to prior conditions. Because each actor's objectives are unlikely to change in the short run, this means that China and Russia will continue their defense trade with Iran, even in spite of sanctions. Therefore, alternate future 1 could easily transpose to alternate future 25.

In addition, a change of relations between China, Russia, and Iran could transposition future 25 into 7 or future 25 into 19. Of the two possible transpositions, the

second is more likely. Russia's relationship with Iran is flexible at best and perhaps should be considered one of relative convenience. When situations present opportunity, such as when Moscow needs to use its Iranian token to purchase US concessions in arms reduction talks, relational commitments are subject to change. China's relationship with Iran is much stronger and based on fundamental needs such as energy and countering US presence in regions of interest. Its threshold for transposition is therefore much higher, yet possible. While Chinese policy statements are generally full of anti-American rhetoric, its overall foreign policy is based on avoiding direct confrontation. As long as China's economy remains dependent on the United States, it must be careful on how it engages Iran. For alternate future 25 to transposition to 7, China must be sufficiently convinced that aiding Iran will have severe financial or political consequences.

Scenario # 2: Iran will strengthen its resolve to develop nuclear weapons and appeal to its allies for support.

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
27	CA	CA	MA	25
18	MA	CA	MA	24
21	CA	IDN	MA	24
12	MA	IDN	MA	22
16	MA	CA	IDN	20

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

None of the alternate futures are likely to transposition in alternate future 16. National security and regional interests would have to make next to impossible changes for the United States to allow Iran the opportunity to develop nuclear weapons. However, if the United States were to suffer total economic collapse, rendering its capacity for military assistance nonexistent, this transposition could occur.

The most likely of transpositions would involve Russia divorcing its financial exploitation of the Iranian nuclear situation and assuming a united front against Iranian enrichment endeavors. Iran's failure to opt for Scenario 1 would be a significant indicator that Western democracies will respond with an equal resolve to disrupt Iranian efforts. If forced to take sides or faced with economic consequences for aiding Iran, Moscow is likely to take a passive stance alongside her Western counterparts with whom she shares more widespread interests. This change would transpose future 27 and 18 to either 21 or 12.

Finally, transposition of alternate future 27 to 18 depends on China's perceptions regarding its role as a superpower, the importance of its alliance with Iran, and the necessary strategies for preventing war. Preference for avoiding confrontation may be superseded by bolder choices *if* China perceives its power equal to that of the United States and *if* it is able to decrease economic dependency on the United States. China also might opt for further military assistance if it perceives its vast energy interests and investments to be significantly threatened by the prospects of war and the influx of

Western competitors. If China perceives itself to be on equal footing with the United States, it might select a confrontational posture in order to deter military force and avoid a proxy war between superpowers.

Scenario # 3 : Iran will engage its military resources in a war against Israel.

Alternative Future	China	Russia	United States	Votes
21	CA	IDN	MA	25
27	CA	CA	MA	25
15	MA	MA	MA	22
24	CA	MA	MA	21
9	IDN	CA	MA	20

IDN (COA #1) = Join an international demand for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations.

MA (COA #2) = Create or strengthen a military alliance.

CA (COA #3) = Covertly funnel assistance to the Iranian government.

As noticed, all alternate futures listed involve United States military assistance to Israel. The United States has historically aided Israel in military affairs and will be unlikely to part from this pattern in the future. Israel represents the only democracy and true United States ally in a sea of Muslim resentment. Any transpositions, therefore, will be due to changes in perceptions or actions on the part of Russia and China. Considering Moscow affinity for profiteering, it is most likely that alternate future 21 could transpose to alternate future 27. For this to occur, Russia must be reasonably

assured that it can do so without facing harsh consequences from the United States, including the reconsideration for a missile defense shield.

China, as noted in Scenario 2, will stress non-confrontation with the United States unless it considers its vital regional interests to be in extreme jeopardy. If there is significant threat to its interests China might offer military assistance and protection to Iran. Therefore, alternate future 21 could be transposed to alternate 15. For this to occur, however, Moscow must be simultaneously convinced that offering military aid is in its best interests. This could occur through new Sino-Russian agreements and incentives. Russian military assistance, as noted previously, would likely account for a very small portion of the overall aid to Iran.

Step 11, 12: Focal Events and Indicators

The remaining steps of the LAMP analysis procedure involve identifying focal events (Step 11) and indicators (Step 12) suggestive of alternate future transpositions. Focal events are hypothesized future conditions that could alter the relative probabilities of alternate futures for each scenario. For instance, an example of a focal event would be if Iran's clerical government were to be suddenly replaced by a moderate government. Such an occurrence would warm relations between Iran, the United States, and Israel and increase the likelihood of effective negotiations. Indicators, on the other hand, suggest the occurrence or nearing of a focal event. For the following section, focal events and their indicators will be assessed under each post-strike scenario. The status quo, or the starting point from which change will be considered, will be represented by the most likely alternate future for each scenario.

Scenario # 1: Iranian nuclear facilities will be rendered dysfunctional and Iran will return to international negotiations. **Status quo**: All actors resume international negotiations.

Alternate Future (25): All actors resume negotiations, but China and Russia continue to provide covert or illegal assistance.

- Russian defense companies fail to divorce their Iranian counterparts.
 - Russia signs defense contracts with Iran.
 - Russia delivers on current defense contracts.
- Economic sanctions threaten Chinese interests.
 - China refuses to sign off on UN Security Council sanctions.
 - China evades current sanctions
- Russia and Iran reach agreements on Caspian Sea disputes.
 - Russia and Iran sign a Caspian Sea agreement.
 - Russia and Iran announce progress in negotiations.
- Relations between the United States and Russia sour.
 - The United States and Russia fail to produce a renewal of the 1991 START agreement.
 - United States moves forward with its plans for a missile defense shield.
 - United States increases its military presence in Central Asia.

- The United States increases its military presence in Central Asia, exaggerating Chinese worry about United States expansion.
 - China increases its rhetoric about countering United States expansionism.
 - China presses for new military alliances and cooperation.
 - China uses its UN Presidency to condemn United States military endeavors.

- Relations between China, Russia, and Iran strengthen.
 - Iran is admitted as a full member to the SCO.
 - China, Russia, and Iran create a collective security agreement.
 - All actors voice their commitment to one another.

Alternate Future (19): The United States and Russia reattempt negotiations, while China continues to offer covert or illegal aid to Iran.

- Economic sanctions threaten Chinese interests.
 - China refuses to sign off on UN Security Council sanctions.
 - China evades current sanctions.

- The United States increases its military presence in Central Asia, exaggerating Chinese worry about United States expansion.

- China increases its rhetoric about countering United States expansionism.
- China presses for new military alliances and cooperation.
- China uses its UN Presidency to condemn United States military endeavors.
- Tehran increases its suspicion of Moscow's intentions. Tensions over Caspian Sea resources increase.
 - Tehran voices anti-Russian rhetoric.
 - Russia increases its naval presence in the Caspian Sea.
 - Joint military exercises cease.
- The United States offers Russia attractive incentives for abandoning its relations with Iran.
 - Russia signs economic incentive packages.
 - Russia wins on trade issues in World Trade Organization negotiations.

Alternate Future (7): The United States and China reattempt negotiations with Iran, while Russia continues profiting from Iranian defense contracts.

- The United States agrees to reduce its Central Asian military presence in return for Chinese cooperation in ending Iranian nuclear enrichment activities.

- United States decreases military presence in Central Asia.
- China halts delivery of defense technology to Iran.
- Joint Sino-Iranian military exercises cease or decrease.
- Russian defense companies fail to divorce their Iranian counterparts.
 - Russia signs defense contracts with Iran.
 - Russia delivers on current defense contracts.
- Russia and Iran reach agreements on Caspian Sea disputes.
 - Russia and Iran sign a Caspian Sea agreement.
 - Russia and Iran announce progress in negotiations.
- China's economy slows and reliance on Iranian energy decreases.
 - China imports less oil.
 - Economic indicators suggest contraction of the Chinese economy.

Scenario # 2: Iran will strengthen its resolve to develop nuclear weapons and appeal to its allies for support. **Status quo:** China and Russia covertly or illegally assist Iran, while the United States offers military assistance to Israel.

Alternate Future (18): The United States and China offer military aid to Israel and Iran, respectively, while Russia continues profiting from Iranian defense contracts.

- Russia and Iran reach agreements on Caspian Sea disputes.

- Russia and Iran sign a Caspian Sea agreement.
- Russia and Iran announce progress in negotiations.
- Russian defense companies fail to divorce their Iranian counterparts.
 - Russia signs more defense contracts with Iran.
 - Russia delivers on prior defense contracts.
- The United States increases its military presence in Central Asia, causing China to counter this development by strengthening its military alliance with Iran.
 - China signs new defense contracts with Iran.
 - China and Iran engage in joint military exercises.
 - China and Iran announce a military alliance.
- A failing United States economy increases China's relative superpower status and willingness to engage in more confrontational foreign policy maneuvers.
 - China increases military activities with Iran.

Alternate Future (21): The United States offers military aid to Israel, while Russia advocates negotiations and China offers covert or illegal assistance to Iran.

- Russia suspects Iran of supporting terrorist activity in the Northern Caucasus.
 - Russia accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism.

- Terrorist attacks increase throughout the Northern Caucasuses or across Russia.
- Tehran increases its suspicion of Moscow's intentions. Tensions over Caspian Sea resources increase.
 - Tehran voices anti-Russian rhetoric.
 - Russia increases its naval presence in the Caspian Sea.
 - Joint military exercises cease.
- Russian-American relations warm and the United States offers Russia incentives for abandoning its defense trade with Iran.
 - Russia signs economic incentive packages.
 - Russia wins on trade issues in World Trade Organization negotiations.
 - Russian and the United States reach an agreement on the renewal of the 1991 START Agreement.

Alternate Future (12): The United States and China offer military aid to Israel and Iran, respectively, while Russia advocates negotiations.

- Iran supports terrorist activity in the Northern Caucasuses.
 - Russia accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism.
 - Terrorist attacks increase throughout the Northern Caucasuses or across Russia.

- Tehran increases its suspicion of Moscow's intentions. Tensions over Caspian Sea resources increase.
 - Tehran voices anti-Russian rhetoric.
 - Russia increases its naval presence in the Caspian Sea.
 - Joint military exercises cease.

- Russian-American relations warm and the United States offers Russia incentives for abandoning its defense trade with Iran.
 - Russia signs economic incentive packages.
 - Russia wins on trade issues in World Trade Organization negotiations.
 - Russian and the United States reach an agreement on the renewal of the 1991 START Agreement.

- The United States increases its military presence in Central Asia, causing China to counter this development by strengthening its military alliance with Iran.
 - China signs new defense contracts with Iran.
 - China and Iran engage in joint military exercises.
 - China and Iran announce a military alliance.

- A failing United States economy increases China's relative superpower status and willingness to engage in more confrontational foreign policy maneuvers.

- China increases military activities with Iran.

Scenario # 3: Iran will engage its military resources in a war against Israel. **Status quo:** China continues aiding Iran, Russia assumes a passive position, and the United States offers military assistance to Israel.

Alternate Future (27): The United States offers military assistance to Israel, while China and Russia covertly or illegally aid Iran.

- Relations between the United States and Russia sour.
 - The United States and Russia fail to produce a renewal of the 1991 START agreement.
 - United States moves forward with its plans for a missile defense shield.
 - United States increases its military presence in Central Asia.
- The Russian economy continues to contract and it increases its dependence on defense trade.
 - Russia signs defense contracts with Iran and other countries.

Alternate Future (15): The United States offers military aid to Israel, while China and Russia offer military aid to Iran.

- Relations between the United States and Russia sour.
 - The United States and Russia fail to produce a renewal of the 1991 START agreement.

- United States moves forward with its plans for a missile defense shield.
- United States increases its military presence in Central Asia.
- China offers Russia attractive economic packages for forming a military alliance with Iran.
 - Russian, China, and Iran sign a collective security agreement.
 - Russia signs defense contracts with Iran.
- Iran is admitted as an SCO member after the SCO successfully negotiates a collective security agreement.
 - Iran becomes an SCO member.
- China perceives its Iranian investments to be in extreme jeopardy.
 - China issues warnings to the United States about the use of military force.
 - China mobilizes its military.

Alternate Future (24): The United States offers military aid to Israel, Russia offers military aid to Iran, and China covertly or illegally aids Iran.

- Russia's economy continues to decline and it increases its dependence on defense trade.
 - Russia signs defense contracts with Iran and other countries.
- Russian-American relations sour.

- The United States and Russia fail to produce a renewal of the 1991 START agreement.
- United States moves forward with its plans for a missile defense shield.
- United States increases its military presence in Central Asia.
- Russia perceives its Caspian Sea interests to be gravely threatened by the prospect of an Iranian loss.
 - Russia increases its military presence in the Caspian Sea.
 - Russia voices commitment to Iran.

Conclusion

This predictive analysis began as an exploration into a future world where the United States, Russia, and China were confronted with an Israeli attack against Iranian nuclear facilities. Given the current stalemate in negotiations with Iran, a military solution is becoming an ever present reality. Differences between United States, Russia, and China are increasing the likelihood of this outcome. All three actors are important geopolitical leaders with diverse economic, political, and national security interests. Any of the three, therefore, have the power and means to escalate an already dangerous situation.

Three scenarios exist following an Israeli strike. First, Iran consents to international demands. Probability ranking suggests that given Iran's cooperation, all three actors would prefer to resume negotiations and avoid confrontation. Second, Iran doubles its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. In this case, probability ranking shows

that the United States is likely to take military measures to stop Iran's nuclear program, while both Russia and China pursue their own interests either covertly or illegally. Third, Iran and Israel declare war. In this final scenario, the United States is most likely to grant military assistance to Israel, while Russia pulls back its businessmen and China quietly assists Iran to avoid direct confrontation with the United States.

Understanding the likely actions of each geopolitical power aids in post-strike planning. In a world where the United States has its attention on two ongoing wars, there is a limited amount of resources to be dispersed in the event of an additional conflict. Therefore, it is necessary to know ahead of time both the nature of the threat and where it is coming from. For instance, the Iranian nuclear threat does not come solely from Iran, but from those providing Iran with the necessary material and know-how. Intentions matter. China has significantly more interests and investment in Iran's success than Russia. (Russia's flexibility of interest depends on the dollar sign.) Knowledge of intentions, concerns, and likely responses aids policy makers in developing strategies for risk reduction and countering future threats.

According to this analysis, after Iran, China is the second most important threat to the United States in the event of an Israeli strike. Despite its generally non-confrontational practices, it engages in passive-aggressive activities to protect and pursue its interests. In the event of an Israeli strike, it will cling even more to the necessity of guarding its energy and geopolitical investments. The United States should be warned that any Chinese show of commitment to international negotiations, vows to halt the transfer of defense technology or arms, or promises to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear pursuits will likely be deceptive. Beijing's short-term and long-term strategic

interests are so tightly bound to Iran that it cannot afford to abandon its ally. It will strive to avoid confrontation with the United States as long as those interests are not severely threatened.

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