

**IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME AND ISRAELI  
PERCEPTIONS: NEWS AND VIEWS FROM  
*THE JERUSALEM POST***

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**BERYL ANAND**



WEST ASIAN STUDIES DIVISION  
CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067  
INDIA  
2006



CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 110 067, INDIA

Phone : 26704372  
Fax : 91-011-26717586  
E-mail : cwaas\_office\_jnu@yahoo.co.in

Date: 27-7-06

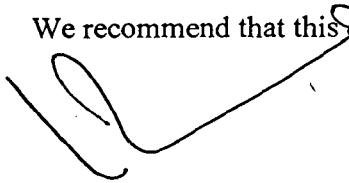
### DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled, "Iranian Nuclear Programme and Israeli Perceptions: News and Views from *The Jerusalem Post*" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

  
Beryl Anand

### CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



Prof. Girijesh Pant

Chairperson

Chairman  
Centre for West Asian and African Studies  
SIS, JNU, New Delhi-110067



Prof. Gulshan Dietl

Supervisor

Centre for West Asian and African Studies  
School of International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi-110067.

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## PREFACE

The perceptions of external threat have a clear impact on the public's foreign and domestic policy preferences. Given the impact of threat perceptions on the public's policy preferences, examining the role of the media in priming those perceptions is a worthy endeavor. This study explores the relationship between media use and perceptions of global threat, finding that rather than having a strong direct impact, the effects of the media are largely conditional. The literature is replete with studies that show the mass media exert a strong influence on public opinion. Studies have shown that people rely on the media as a source of information about politics, that the media shape their views about the political process), and that the media have an impact on policy preferences.

The study undertaken tries to analyse the linkages between the news coverage in the media and the decision-making process, the threat perceptions and the ensuing hostility and enemy images that are being portrayed. The print media forms a good database because of the extensive issues that are being debated in the editorials, opinions and the special features. *Jerusalem Post*, a newspaper published from Israel is taken for the study on Israeli perceptions on Iran's nuclear programme.

The introductory chapter gives a brief overview of the Iran's nuclear programme, its history, the changes and developments that have taken place in Iran and the wider regional and international implications of the same. It looks into the various resolutions adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran's nuclear programme. The chapter concludes with a brief overview about the policy debates in Iran on the nuclear issue. The various factors such as the regional environment and the international implications of the issue have also been touched upon.

The second chapter explores in detail the Israeli security concerns and the perceptions of threat from Iran which is the focus of the study. The various defensive postures adopted by the Israeli government to counter the threat from Iran is been analysed in detail including the US support for Israeli concerns, the Russian and the Chinese support for

technological transfers to Iran and Israel's apprehensions regarding the same. Israeli accusations of Iran's support for terrorist organisations and nuclear weapons falling into dangerous hands in the region are the main reasons behind Israeli responses. The chapter analyses in detail the threat perceptions of Israel in a changed scenario where there is an increasing danger of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) falling into terrorist's hands. Iran enters the scene in the 1990s. From being a friendly state to an inimical foe, the various reasons for the enmity between the two countries and the role of other actors such as the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and most importantly, the United States has been discussed.. A considerable part of the chapter also analyses Israeli accusations of Iran's support for terrorist organisations and the Iranian ballistic missile programme. The rhetorical statements by the Iranian leadership and the Israeli responses to it also play an important role.

The third chapter analyses in detail the role of the press in presenting news to its readers. The press provides a rich, if not altogether authoritative basis for exploring images of an adversary nation-state. Newspapers remain an important source for inferring perceptions. A newspaper from Israel, *Jerusalem Post* (JP) has been taken for the study. The newspaper analyses concentrates on the editorials, news coverage in general and guest columns contributed by eminent academicians and military planners. The role of ideology in examining the content of the news and the policy views and prescriptions offered by the editorials form the basis of the chapter. Interpretations about Israel's policy regarding Iran rest on assumptions of perceptions and rhetoric from Iran, Perceptions stems from the estimation of the other's capabilities and intentions. Hence, the study of perceptions constitutes an important part of the study.

The fourth chapter focuses only on the *Jerusalem Post*. The chapter analyses each of the writings and views of the regular contributors to the newspaper and also the guest contributors views regarding Iran's nuclear programme. A major analysis and a critical thought of the study would give a brief summary of the public opinion in Israel or at least a one-sided view about Iran in Israel. The Israeli views about Iran acquiring a nuclear capability or the very thought of a nuclear weapon state in their neighbourhood is a

nightmarish scenario. The change of the leadership in Iran in 1997 and 2005 leads to a plethora of opinion in Israel. *The Jerusalem Post* forms an important part in this process of analysing images and perceptions about Iran.

The conclusion brings into concern, the views in Israel in general and those of the *Jerusalem Post* in particular. It tries to prove the hypotheses that the news coverage on Iranian nuclear programme is been increasingly influenced by the security concerns in Israel. The study is of the opinion that the views expressed in the *Jerusalem Post* demonstrate the political commitment of the newspaper and there is little effort at objective analysis. The political commitment is clearly evident because there is not a single editorial which would analyse the threat perception concerning Israel's "ambiguous" nuclear programme. The concluding chapter tries to prove that Israeli security concerns overshadow other news item and editorials in the *Jerusalem Post*.



## CHAPTER-I

### IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME AND POLICY

#### 1.1 History of Iran's Nuclear Programme

Iran's nuclear efforts began in 1957 when Reza Shah Pahlavi signed civilian 'Atoms for Peace' agreement with Eisenhower's administration<sup>1</sup>. In 1959 the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre (TNRC) was established, run by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). The TNRC was equipped with a US supplied 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor; operational from 1967 fuelled with highly enriched uranium<sup>2</sup>. Iran received a US research reactor in 1967. Then in 1974 after the first oil shock, Shah created the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, explicitly tasked to develop civilian nuclear power to displace oil, freeing more oil for export, and for developing a nuclear weapon. The Bushehr reactor complex of civilian power reactors was begun by West Germany in 1970's under Shah's regime<sup>3</sup>. Iran also became a signatory of nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) in 1968 as a non-nuclear state. Shah Reza Pahlavi then initiated a civilian nuclear energy programme in the early 1970's.<sup>4</sup> The nuclear programme continued until the regime's demise in 1979 after the Revolution.

Following the Iranian Revolution the revolutionary Islamic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini came to power. Ayatollah Khomeini ordered all work on the nuclear programme to a halt, citing Islamic beliefs that weapons of mass destruction were immoral. Khomeini froze construction of these reactors immediately after coming to power.<sup>5</sup> However the new regime inherited two partially completed, German-supplied nuclear power reactors at Bushehr.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Sahimi., *Iran's Nuclear Program*, (Washington: Blackwell Publishers, 2004) p.14

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>3</sup> This was the same time Iran began buying major shares of key German companies such as Daimler and Krupp.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman , *Iran's search for weapons of mass destruction: War fighting capabilities, Delivery options and Weapons Effects* (Washington D.C:CSIS, 2003), p.4

<sup>5</sup> Shai Feldman, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (BCSIA: MIT, 1996), p. 67

Iran's experience during the 1980s might have driven the country's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). During the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian forces with devastating effect. Iraq's bombardment of Tehran with conventionally armed, extended range Scud missiles during the 1988 War of the cities was an important factor in leading Iran to accept a ceasefire in October of that year. With the West's conspicuous silence over Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against Iran, the leaders in Tehran decided that acquiring those weapons was the only means of ensuring self-defence.

## **1.2 Russian – Iran Nuclear Cooperation:**

In 1991 the then President Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed Iran's determination to complete construction of the nuclear reactors, which were damaged during the Iran-Iraq war. When Germany refused to repair or finish the plants, Iran sought assistance from China and Brazil. In August 1992, as part of a long-term trade and cooperation programme, two Russian-Iranian agreements, on the construction of a nuclear power plant and on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were signed. Nuclear cooperation would consist of constructing nuclear power plants for Iran, cycling nuclear fuel, supplying research reactors, reprocessing spent fuel, producing isotopes for use in scientific and medical research, and training Iranian nuclear scientists at the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPhI).<sup>6</sup>

Russia gained immensely from the project from \$800 million to \$1 billion. The sum was impressive from Moscow's perspective with the Iranians agreeing to pay 80 percent of the Bushehr contract in cash. This hard currency was to feed an entire chain of Russian nuclear institutions, providing significant assistance to a nuclear industry devastated by the break up of the Soviet Union and the ensuing economic chaos of the early 1990s in Russia. The Bushehr contract, as well as the training programme for Iranian specialists,

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Cirincione with Jon B. Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenal: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002) p. 256

complied with the non-proliferation requirements of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Finally, in 1995, Tehran signed an US \$800 million deal with Moscow to finish the nuclear power plant at Bushehr by 2001. Under the contract, Russia is also to provide low-enriched uranium fuel for a period of ten years, starting in 2001, at an annual cost of \$30 million, as well as technical training. In the course of consultation with the US, Russia has dropped its previously contemplated plan to assist Iran in uranium enrichment.<sup>7</sup> The Bushehr light-water project, which was itself hampered by technical and political delays, remained practically the sole instance of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation.

By the end of the 1990s, Iran's nuclear intentions and programmes raised suspicions in Moscow. Particularly nuclear cooperation among Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan deepened the suspicion. The US and Israel consistently opposed all Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation, citing Tehran's alleged military ambitions.

When Vladimir Putin became president in 2000, he centralized Russian foreign policy, reducing the chaos that had pervaded Yeltsin's tenure and making it less prone to lobbying by different actors. The Kremlin became increasingly convinced that Iran was emerging as the key player in the region and that Tehran should not be subject to a double standard of the U.S. When Russia's construction of the same type of reactor was met with anger in Washington, the US supplied light-water reactors to North Korea within the framework of the Korean Energy Development Organisation had been considered proliferation-safe. In effect, Putin made nuclear cooperation and, more broadly, cooperation in the high-tech area a key component of a broader strategic relationship with Tehran.

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*,

### 1.3 US opposition to Russia and China's cooperation with Iran:

In the early 1990s, Russia's repeated calls for consultations with the United States on the question of Iran fell on deaf ears in Washington. From 1995 onward, successive U.S. administrations initiated a systematic campaign against Russia's nuclear cooperation with Iran, which Washington alleged was helping Tehran develop a nuclear weapon. The Iranian issue featured prominently on the U.S.-Russian bilateral agenda throughout the remainder of the Clinton era. Russia's foreign minister and later Prime Minister, Primakov, held that the true root of U.S. policy toward Iran lay in the Israeli lobby's influence in Washington.

In 1995 and 1996 the United States tightened sanctions on Iran, aiming in part to constrain Tehran's WMD programmes. Legislation adopted in February 1996 provided for U.S economic assistance to Russia to be made upon presidential determination if Russia terminated its nuclear related assistance to Iran. In August of 1996, Washington further intensified economic pressure on Iran by imposing secondary sanctions on Iran and Libya. By the fall of 1997 this legislation faced a serious challenge from French, Malaysian, and Russian oil companies that had signed a deal with Iran to help recover and market oil and natural gas.

China was a significant source of assistance to Iran's civil nuclear programme. It reportedly trained Iranian nuclear technicians and engineers in China under a ten-year agreement for cooperation signed in 1990. China also supplied Iran with two nuclear reactors installed at Isfahan. Both the countries claim that the aid has been exclusively for peaceful purposes. In 1992, Washington persuaded China to postpone the sale to Iran of plutonium producing research reactor indefinitely and convinced Argentina not to export supporting fuel-cycle and heavy water production-facilities.<sup>8</sup> China's sale of nuclear reactor was suspended owing to pressure from Washington.

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<sup>8</sup> Mark Hibbs, "Iran sought sensitive nuclear supplies from Argentina, China", *Nucleonics Week* (New York), 22 September 1992, p.2

In April 1996 the U.S Department of Defence regarded China to be Iran's main source of nuclear assistance. In the U.S-China summit of October 1997, however, China made a commitment to cancel almost all of its existing nuclear assistance to Iran and to provide Iran no new nuclear assistance.<sup>9</sup> Tensions rose with Russia when the Clinton Administration learned in March-April 1995 that, as part of a secret protocol for the reactor sale contract, Russia had agreed to provide Iran with a gas-centrifuge uranium-enrichment facility. Washington pressurised Russia to halt its work on the Bushehr nuclear reactor but with little success. Under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, Russia had pledged to complete the construction of the Bushehr plant. In January 2001, Russia announced that the Bushehr project was 90 percent complete and that operations would begin by 2003.

As the only state to cooperate with Iran in nuclear energy field, Russia expected that it would have Tehran's exclusive confidence and be kept informed about all of Iran's nuclear activities well in advance, regardless of whether those activities were part of their bilateral cooperation. But beginning in 2002, a series of revelations shed light on the extent of the Iranian nuclear programme. These discoveries began with information provided by a coalition of Iranian opposition groups based outside Iran, the National Council of Resistance for Iran (NCRI) that disclosed a uranium enrichment plant near Natanz, the Arak "heavy water" production plant, and laser-based uranium-enrichment facilities. Subsequent inspections by the IAEA revealed that Iran had failed to report about its past activities to the IAEA.

#### **1.4 Iran and the IAEA:**

Inspections in 2003 of Iran's nuclear programme revealed significant undeclared activities with potential application for nuclear weapons. The report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) immediately after the inspections in 2003 detailed two uranium enrichment programmes (centrifuges and lasers) and the separation of

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Cirincione with Jon B. Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ,2002) p. 258

plutonium, another fissile material, in small quantities. During his visit, the Director General was informed by Iran of its uranium enrichment programme, which was described as including two new facilities located at Natanz, namely a pilot fuel enrichment plant (PFEP) nearing completion of construction, and a large commercial-scale fuel enrichment plant (FEP) also under construction. These two facilities were declared to the Agency for the first time during that visit, at which time the Director General was able to visit both of them. Iran also confirmed that the heavy water production plant was under construction in Arak. During the visit, the Director General was informed that Iran would accept modifications to its Subsidiary Arrangements, as requested by the Board of Governors in 1992, which would henceforth require the early provision of design information on new facilities and on modifications to existing facilities, as well as the early provision of information on new locations outside of facilities where nuclear material is customarily used (LOFs). This was confirmed to the Agency in a letter dated 26 February 2003.<sup>10</sup> Although the IAEA has stated previously that Iran has not met all of its NPT obligations it did not declare Iran in violation of the NPT.<sup>11</sup>

The IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution on 12 September 2003 which called on Iran, among other things, to suspend all further uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities and set 31 October 2003 as deadline for Iran's compliance. The IAEA requested that Iran provide details about its contaminated centrifuge equipment, including the origin and date of receipt of the equipment, and where it has been used or stored in Iran, as well as further information about its uranium conversion experiments.<sup>12</sup> But ten days before the 31 October deadline Iran invited the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany to visit Tehran. Iran issued a statement declaring that it would sign the IAEA Additional Protocol and suspend all uranium enrichment and "processing activities." The

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran', Report by the Director General, GOV/2003/40, 6 June 2003. Retrieved from [www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-75.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-75.pdf). Accessed on 22 February 2006.

<sup>12</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran', Resolution adopted by the Board on 12 September 2003, GOV/2003/69, 12 September 2003. Retrieved from [www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-69.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-69.pdf). Accessed on 22 February 2006.

EU ministers agreed that once international concerns are fully resolved Iran “could expect easier access to modern technology and supplies in a range of areas.”

### **1.5 Paris Agreement:**

The European trio of France, Germany and Britain reached an agreement on 21 October 2003 in Paris on the Iranian nuclear issue after long and complicated talks. The E3/EU recognised Iran’s rights under the NPT exercised in conformity with its obligations under the Treaty, without discrimination. Iran reaffirmed that, in accordance with Article II of the NPT, it does not and will not seek to acquire nuclear weapons and committed itself to full cooperation and transparency with the IAEA. To build further confidence, Iran decided, on a voluntary basis, to continue and extend its suspension to include all enrichment related and reprocessing activities, and specifically: the manufacture and import of gas centrifuges and their components; the assembly, installation, testing or operation of gas centrifuges; work to undertake any plutonium separation, or to construct or operate any plutonium separation installation; and all tests or production at any uranium conversion installation. The IAEA will be notified of this suspension and invited to verify and monitor it. The suspension will be implemented in time for the IAEA to confirm before the November 2003 Board of Governors meet that it has been put into effect. The suspension would be sustained while negotiations proceeded on a mutually acceptable agreement on long-term arrangements and Iran would also continue to implement the Additional Protocol voluntarily. The signing of the Additional Protocol by the NPT members provides for enhanced and tougher inspections by the IAEA.

In the context of this suspension, the E3/EU and Iran agreed to begin negotiations, to reach a mutually acceptable agreement on long term arrangements. The agreement would provide objective guarantees that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes. It would equally provide firm guarantees on nuclear, technological and economic cooperation and firm commitments on security issues.

Iran declared in November 2003 that it would halt all enrichment and reprocessing-related activities and would sign an Additional Protocol, which contains provisions for enhanced inspection.<sup>13</sup> Although the IAEA has stated previously that Iran has not met all of its NPT obligations, it has not yet declared Iran in violation of the NPT. Iran declared in November 2003 that it would halt all enrichment and reprocessing-related activities and would sign an Additional Protocol, which contains provisions for enhanced inspection. A declaration on the agreement was issued after meetings between Iranian officials and the British, French and German foreign ministers, who urged Iran to comply with a 31 October 2003 UN deadline to dispel doubts about its nuclear ambitions. But Iran said the decision to freeze the uranium enrichment programme was a temporary measure aimed at fostering trust in its peaceful intentions.<sup>14</sup> This was called the Tehran Declaration.

On 29 December 2003 Iran informed the IAEA that it would take the following actions: suspend operation and/or testing of centrifuges at the pilot plant; suspend the further introduction of any nuclear material into any centrifuges; suspend installation of new centrifuges at the pilot plant and at Natanz; withdraw nuclear material from any centrifuge facility if and to the extent practicable.<sup>15</sup> During the period of suspension, Iran said it did not “intend to make new contracts for the manufacture of centrifuge machines and their components,” that the Agency could supervise the storage of machines assembled during that period; that it had dismantled its laser enrichment projects and that it was not constructing or operating any plutonium separation facility. However, reports surfaced that Iran was continuing to assemble centrifuges, and many observers felt Iran had not lived up to its part of the bargain. On 24 February 2004, Iran further stated it will “suspend the assembly and testing of centrifuges and suspend the domestic manufacture

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<sup>13</sup> Sharon Squassoni, “Iran’s Nuclear Programme: Recent Developments”, Congressional Research Service Report (Washington D.C), 4 March 2004, p. 2

<sup>14</sup> ‘Iran to sign and ratify protocol on nuclear checks’, Retrieved from [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-10/21/content\\_274146.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-10/21/content_274146.htm), 22 October 2003

<sup>15</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, ‘Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran’, Report by the Director General, Retrieved from [www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-83\\_derestrict.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-83_derestrict.pdf)



of centrifuge components, including those related to existing contracts”<sup>16</sup> in what later became known as the Brussels Understandings.

The 24 February 2004 report by the IAEA noted that Iran has been actively cooperating with the Agency, including providing access to workshops at military sites. However, Iran omitted any mention of advanced centrifuge designs (P-2) in its October 2003 declaration, and that the Agency still has to resolve the major outstanding issue of LEU and HEU contamination at Kalaye and Natanz. Until this was resolved, the Agency said it would be unable to confirm the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities. All measures necessary for the verification of Iran's suspension of enrichment related activities were adopted and the agency surveillance cameras were placed on 20 centrifuges and sealed.<sup>17</sup>

The Tehran Declaration and the Brussels Understandings were apparently achieved via secret negotiations between Iran and the Europeans. According to Iranian reports, the three leading European countries undertook to close Iran's nuclear dossier at the IAEA at the June 2004 Board of Governors session. Iranian sources also said that the three would provide Iran with "advanced nuclear technology for peaceful purposes" in exchange for Iran's commitment to suspend nuclear activity and to subject itself to closer oversight of its nuclear facilities by the international community.<sup>18</sup> Although Iran believed it had reached an understanding with the European three, at the June 2004 IAEA Board of Governors session the latter initiated a harsh condemnation of Iran for its failure to fully cooperate with the IAEA.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei provided an update on the agency's investigation of Iran's nuclear programmes in 1 June 2004 report to the IAEA Board of Governors. According to the report, the most important

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>17</sup> 'Statement to the Board of Governors', Statements of the Director General (Vienna: IAEA, 2004), Retrieved from <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2004/ebsp2004n017.html>

<sup>18</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran', Resolution adopted by the Board on 18 June 2004. Retrieved from [www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-79.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-79.pdf) -

outstanding issues concerning these programmes were yet to be resolved, partly because Iran delayed until April 2004 the IAEA inspections that were scheduled for March 2004. The delay meant that environmental samples could not be taken and analyzed in time for the board's most recent meeting, which began 14 June 2004. The IAEA reported that several major issues concerning Tehran's gas centrifuge uranium-enrichment programme still need to be resolved. The programme began in 1985 and consisted of a small pilot facility at Natanz, as well as a larger commercial facility at the same site. Uranium-enrichment facilities can produce fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as fuel for civilian nuclear reactors. Iran was operating the pilot facility and planning to install up to 50,000 centrifuges at the commercial facility, but suspended work at the site in December 2003 after agreeing to do so in October 2003.

The agency also reported that it was still investigating the source of enriched uranium particles found at several locations in Iran. This "contamination" has caused concern because it suggests that Iran may have conducted nuclear activities that it has not yet admitted to and may be concealing nuclear material it either produced or imported. Iran also admitted to testing centrifuges with nuclear material at a facility called the Kalaye Electric Company without first informing the IAEA, a violation of its safeguards agreement with the agency. However, Tehran said that it produced only uranium enriched to a very low degree and attributed the IAEA's discovery of other types of enriched uranium particles to contamination from centrifuge components obtained from a procurement network run by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan. Iranian officials maintained that they do not know the components' origin.

At the meeting of Iranian and European delegates, in July 2004 in Paris, Iran rejected the European demand to give up its independent nuclear fuel cycle production capacity in exchange for nuclear fuel to be provided to Iran by Western countries themselves. Iran also refused to commit to a complete halt to its uranium enrichment activity. Further, Iran claimed that it had agreed only to a temporary suspension of activity, and clung tenaciously to its right to enrich uranium and to attain independent nuclear fuel cycle production capability. In September 2004, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw also

complained that Iran had not met all its commitments. In response to this condemnation, Iran complained that even though it had indeed met its commitments, suspended its nuclear activity, and agreed to visits by IAEA inspectors, the three European countries had not fulfilled their obligations to Iran.

Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei in the November 2004 report from IAEA noted that Iran had recently provided the agency with substantial amounts of additional documentation regarding its P-1 procurement activities. This information appeared to have resolved some of the discrepancies in Iran's previous accounts, but the IAEA requested additional documentation. Iran has not yet ratified the Additional Protocol to its NPT safeguards agreements. The voluntary suspension and Iran's undertaking to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol were part of an eleventh hour deal with the three European powers just prior to the November 2003 Board meeting that allowed Iran to avoid tougher action by the Board at that stage. However, the U.S. arguments failed to convince the Board that the November 2004 report contained enough evidence to bring Iran before the Security Council.

On 28 November 2004, Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei received a letter in which Iran refers to the 20 sets of centrifuge components, and states that it "permits the IAEA to place these sets of components under Agency surveillance." In the letter, Iran also states that it "will not conduct any testing of these sets of components." In that letter, Iran also informed the Director-General that it would provide the Agency with the identification numbers of these components. The Director-General, Mohammed ElBaradei reported thus:

*IAEA's inspectors put surveillance cameras in place to monitor the 20 sets of centrifuge components provided by Iran. The identification numbers were also been received. As a consequence, all measures necessary for the verification of Iran's suspension of enrichment related activities were in place. Naturally, in accordance with the draft resolution before you, I will inform Board members should the suspension not be fully sustained, or*

*should the Agency be prevented from verifying all elements of the suspension.*<sup>19</sup>

In November 2004, the Secretariat provided to the Board a comprehensive report on the Agency's verification of Iran's compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations and its voluntary suspension of enrichment and reprocessing related activities. Since that report, Iran has facilitated Agency access under its safeguards agreement and additional protocol to nuclear material and facilities, and has also provided access to other locations in the country, including a transparency visit to a military site. The IAEA continued to implement the measures of the additional protocol by reviewing declarations made by Iran and conducting complementary access and other verification activities. The Agency has also continued its verification of Iran's voluntary suspension of enrichment and reprocessing related activities. The Agency also felt that it has been making progress in two important issues, regarding the origin of the contamination on equipment at various locations in Iran in cooperation with the country concerned, and regarding follow-up on information provided by Iran on its centrifuge programmes.<sup>20</sup>

According to a November 2004 report from IAEA Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei, Iran has recently provided the agency with substantial amounts of additional documentation regarding its P-1 procurement activities. This information appears to have resolved some of the discrepancies in Iran's previous accounts, but the IAEA has requested additional documentation.<sup>21</sup>

Mohammed ElBaradei, the Director-General of IAEA reported in February 2005 that Iran's domestically manufactured components have been contaminated with a different type of enriched uranium than their imported equivalents. Furthermore, environmental

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<sup>19</sup> 'Statement to the Board of Governors', Statements of the Director General (Vienna: IAEA, 2004), Retrieved from <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2004/ebsp2004n017.html>. Accessed on 23 February 2006.

<sup>20</sup> 'Statement to the Board of Governors', Statements of the Director General (Vienna: IAEA, 2005), Retrieved from <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2005/ebsp2004n017.html>

<sup>21</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran', Resolution adopted by the Board on 18 June 2004. Retrieved from [www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-79.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2004/gov2004-79.pdf).

samples taken at the Kalaye facility and another site called Farayand Technique indicated the presence of 36 percent enriched uranium material that Iran has not declared to the IAEA and which probably did not come from imported components.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Tehran has stated that a key component for the P-2 centrifuges was manufactured in a facility associated with Iran's Ministry of Defence, contradicting its previous assertion that the components were manufactured at a private workshop. This revelation perhaps suggested that Iran's nuclear programme is for military purposes. The report also casts doubt on Iran's account of the pace of its P-2 centrifuge work. Iran contends that it obtained the designs in 1995 from a foreign source but did not begin work until 2001. IAEA experts, however, believe that Iran's programme is too advanced for this time frame to be accurate. The report also adds that Iran received the designs from the same source Libya used to obtain designs for its recently ended centrifuge programme, but does not explicitly name the Khan network.<sup>23</sup>

The "outstanding issues" include the sources of, and reasons for, enriched uranium contamination, and Iran's import, manufacture, and use of centrifuges. The Board also expressed its deep regret that Iran reversed its decision to voluntarily suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities, and again urged Iran to ratify the Additional Protocol to its NPT safeguards agreement.

Since the A.Q. Khan's network came to light "the Agency has continued its efforts to verify Iran's compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations. Iran has facilitated Agency access under its safeguards agreement and additional protocol to nuclear material and facilities. In keeping with the Board's requests, the Agency has also continued to monitor all aspects of Iran's voluntary suspension of enrichment related and reprocessing activities. The Agency is making progress on one of the two key remaining issues: namely, the origin of the low and high enriched uranium contamination on equipment at various locations in Iran. With regard to the second issue of verification of information provided by Iran regarding its centrifuge enrichment programmes IAEA continued to

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Armsten, 'Iran and IAEA' *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2004, Retrieved from [www.armscontrol.org/act/2004\\_07-08/acprint.asp](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_07-08/acprint.asp). Accessed on 15 February 2006.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*,

press for additional documentation regarding offers of equipment made to Iran, as well as for information on associated technical discussions between Iran and intermediaries in the procurement network. Iran has provided some additional documentation and information, which were not sufficient to answer several remaining questions. The Agency continued to pursue these and other verification issues. The Director-General asked Iran to provide detailed information that could shed light on the outstanding issues and also asked to support the Agency's efforts to pursue further its investigation of the Lavisian-Shian and Parchin sites, by working to reach agreement on modalities, currently under discussion, that would provide the Agency with access to dual-use equipment and other information related to the Lavisian-Shian site, and would allow additional Agency visits to areas of interest at the Parchin site<sup>24</sup> and hoped to reach a conclusion by September 2005.

#### **1.6 Iran's nuclear Policy under Khatami (1997-2005):**

Former Iranian president Khatami felt that Iran's nuclear policy has always been peaceful. Iran worked inside the IAEA and the NPT. Western efforts to negotiate an end to Iran's drive for nuclear capability have produced unsatisfactory results. Tehran has made tactical concessions under international pressure to freeze its uranium enrichment operations and submit to increased inspections of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but it remains determined to develop a full nuclear fuel cycle that would eventually give it a nuclear weapons capability. The former President Mohammad Khatami had warned European countries that Tehran could reverse commitments made on its nuclear programme, saying Iran was faced with "psychological warfare". His comments came when European Union pressed on with talks in November 2005 to persuade Iran to give guarantees it is not developing nuclear weapons. Iran had suspended its controversial uranium enrichment work while the talks continued. Although Iran is a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty, many Iranians back a robust

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<sup>24</sup> Statement to the Board of Governors', Statements of the Director General (Vienna: IAEA, 2005), Retrieved from <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2004/ebsp2004n017.html>. Accessed on 20 February 2006.

nuclear policy, even a nuclear weapons programme. They say they do not see why Iran should not be a nuclear power when Pakistan, India and other world powers have nuclear weapons. More than 150 members of the Iranian parliament have signed a statement backing the government's nuclear policies and have urged it not to give into international pressure.<sup>25</sup> He said the close relations between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency finally led the "European Union to continue negotiations with the Islamic Republic" on its programme. "We had neared a final agreement, but continuous U.S. pressure and intervention created an obstacle toward sealing a final deal."<sup>26</sup> He always believed that Iran had always adopted one of the most reasonable policies on its nuclear file.

Iran's conduct in its nuclear matters over the past two years has reflected a policy of ambiguity. While it has denied carrying out any unauthorised nuclear activity and has made no reports of such activity to the IAEA, when its nuclear activity was revealed – either by Iranian opposition groups abroad or following IAEA inspections – it has officially confirmed such information and argued that this activity was in no way a violation of the treaties to which it is a signatory or to international commitments it had taken upon itself.<sup>27</sup>

### **1.7 Nuclear Policy debates in Iran:**

Within the country's corridors of power, a subtle debate regarding the strategic utility of nuclear weapons is underway. Reformers have argued that the best means of preserving Iran's fundamental strategic interests lies in conforming to its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations. For this faction, the benefit of Iran's regional détente policy and its commercial relations with European states mandates compliance with the NPT's broad guidelines. Moreover they also feel that the actual assembly and test of a nuclear

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<sup>25</sup> 'Nuclear watchdog criticizes Iran', CNN, 19 June 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/06/19/iaea.iran/?eref=yahoo>

<sup>26</sup> Hanan Nasser and Mayssam Zaaroura , "Khatami: Iran-U.S. contacts should come as no surprise", *The Daily Star* (Beirut), 02 December, 2005

<sup>27</sup> Ayelet Savyon, "Iran's Nuclear Policy Crisis", *Inquiry and Analysis Series*, Middle East Media Research Institute, No. 189, September 2004. Retrieved from <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&&ID=IA18904>

device by Iran would lead to their further isolation and the Gulf States' consolidation of ties with the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Another faction feels that Iran can maintain an elaborate nuclear infrastructure that still bears significant military application in a state of readiness without violating its enhanced obligations under the Additional Protocol. Their main concern is not security per se but rather self-sufficiency in the event that other states cannot or will not provide nuclear fuel for reactors. The capability alone is an important strategic deterrent in their view, and it can make a positive contribution to Iran's defence and national security. There are quite a few influential institutions and people who support this perspective. A fair number of people in academia, the press, think tanks, and the military support this view.<sup>29</sup>

A small number of people within the establishment feel that, due to environmental and economic reasons, nuclear energy is not a necessity for Iran. They argue that the cost of investment for generating a kilowatt of electricity is more expensive using nuclear energy than it is by the other means, such as oil. Behzad Nabavi, an influential leader of the Reformist movement supports this view.<sup>30</sup>

Few people in the academia and the military establishment feel that Iran should withdraw from the NPT and develop nuclear weapons as quickly as possible. This stance is justified by citing international hostility toward Iran, Iran's precarious security environment and how weapons could provide an ideal deterrent. With nuclear weapons, Iran could preserve its territorial integrity, ensure its security, and enhance Iran's status in the region and the world at large.

Firstly, ideological sources play an important role in analyzing the nuclear policy of Iran. It has been reported that the nuclear programme which began under the Shah was stopped

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<sup>28</sup> Ray Takeyh & Gvosdev, "Pragmatism in the midst of Iranian Turmoil", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No.5, Autumn 2004, p.34

<sup>29</sup> Farideh Farhi, "To Have or Not to Have: Iran Domestic Debate on Nuclear Options," in Geoffrey Kemp ed., *Iran's Nuclear Weapons Options: Issues and Analysis*, (Washington, D.C.: Nixon Center, January 2001), p.39.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*



because of the ideological orientation of the Islamic regime when it had taken over power. The power reactors at Bushehr were severely damaged during the Iraqi bombing during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and Khomeini froze construction of these reactors immediately after coming to power. The dominant thought when the Revolution was at its prime stage was that a nuclear weapon was against Islamic principles.

Secondly, Iran views statements about regime change as a serious threat and might therefore want to consolidate its position domestically by acquiring a nuclear weapon. Historical experiences like the Iran-Iraq war and Saddam's use of chemical weapons against Iran was viewed as a primary threat. Iranians concluded that the international community cannot be trusted for security. Moreover, Iran is surrounded by the United States in its neighbourhood. The US has bases in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman. American troops operating in Iraq and Afghanistan complicate the situation further.

Thirdly, Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA), a number of universities and research institutions, and defence establishments are involved in the production and exchange of nuclear knowledge and technology. Iran has invested a lot of economic resources into nuclear related facilities. For Iran acquiring an independent nuclear capability would be modernity and indicate technological prowess. Will the organisational imperatives allow the political establishment to forgo this opportunity is questionable. On the recent decision to go ahead with the nuclear programme, Iranian President Ahmadinejad remarked, "During this period our experts incurred heavy losses and many of our researchers have lost their jobs".

Finally, as stated before, the war with Iraq and the use of chemical weapons by Iraq against Iranians deeply affected the psyche of the Iranian population at large. Iran discovered that it could not rely on the international community to provide for its national security and defence when it failed to react strongly to Iraq's chemical weapon use. Iranians concluded that the international community could not be trusted because there was always a possibility that factors beyond Iran's control would convince nations to ignore Iran's plight.

Another related issue is Iran's missile programme. Asking Iran to stop or dismantle its missile programme would simply not work. Considering the missile attacks by Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and the importance of missiles in defence policy, Iranian military planners are convinced that it is imperative for Iran to invest in missile research and development. Iran has successfully tested mid-range missiles, such as the Shahab-3. However, it is possible that Iran might be persuaded to cease developing longer-range missiles, or limit the deployment of the Shahab-3 so it cannot reach sensitive areas in Israel and Europe, as a bargaining chip in a comprehensive deal to resolve disputes with the United States. Iran and the United States could agree on a verification regime to check and monitor missile deployments. Agreements along these lines could represent important confidence-building measures.

### **1.8 Conclusion:**

Iran's nuclear programme though started during the period of Shah was brought to a halt after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The nuclear programme was again revived in the 1990s after the eight years of war with Iraq was over. The nuclear programme began with assistance from Russia and China. Though China's assistance to Iran was stopped after intense US pressure, the Russian assistance continued unabated. While it can be argued that Iran's nuclear programme was started owing to the threat from Iraq, when Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons against Iran's cities during the eight years war with Iraq, the leadership in Tehran maintains that nuclear power would divert the energy usage domestically and the revenue from the export of oil could be used for development purposes.

The nuclear programme constituted a significant threat perception for Israel which was threatened by Scuds during the Gulf War of 1991. Since then Israel has been lobbying the United States to help Israel by stopping Russian and Chinese assistance to Iran. The missile programme of Iran also places Israel within its range and that constituted a principal threat. The effect of arms proliferation in the region and the fear of Weapons of

Mass Destruction (WMD) falling into terrorists' hands is an unacceptable reality for Israel and the United States, which has its bases in and around the Gulf.

The nuclear programme in Iran assumed an international dimension when an opposition group in Iran, National Council of Resistance for Iran (NCRI) revealed to the world that Iran was concealing its nuclear facilities from IAEA inspections. Since then various resolutions have been adopted by the IAEA asking Iran to come clean on its nuclear programme. The negotiations came to a halt in August 2005 after Iran declared that it was going to resume enrichment at the Isfahan Nuclear Research Centre. Moreover, the election of Mohammed Ahmadinejad had aggravated the crisis. His call for the destruction of Israel has contributed to Israeli concerns on the repercussions that might follow if Iran goes nuclear and acquires the capability to launch a warhead against it.

## CHAPTER-II

### ISRAELI PERCEPTIONS ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

#### 2.1 Iran-Israel Relations

Israel and Iran do not share borders and hence it is necessary to probe the conflict in terms of ideological understanding that led to the exaggeration of the hostilities after the Shah of Iran was thrown out of power in 1979. That the conflict is strategic is underscored by the fact of past Iranian-Israeli cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the overthrow of the Shah, the conventional view in both countries was that non-Arab Iran and Israel -- both surrounded by a sea of innately hostile Arabs -- enjoyed a natural alliance. Indeed, as long as Iran and Israel faced common Arab threats, they forged close clandestine security ties that survived the Islamic Revolution of 1979. It was not just the Shah who traded and cooperated with the Israelis; Khomeini had his fair share of Israeli dealings as well.

Upon its establishment in 1948 and until the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Israel enjoyed cordial relations with Iran (then ruled by the Pahlavi dynasty). Iran was one of the first nations to internationally recognise Israel, and was considered Israel's closest Muslim friend. In spite of this, Iran voted in support of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 in 1975 which equated Zionism with racism, as did 72 other countries. However, Iran and Israel did develop close military ties during this period. On 18 July 1977 Iranian Vice Minister of war, General H.Toufaniah travelled to Israel and met with Israeli minister, Moshe Dayan and Minister of Defence Ezer Weizmann and discussed joint projects and defence cooperation with Israel. This can be seen from the development of joint venture military projects, such as Project Flower<sup>2</sup>. But when the Pahlavi regime collapsed, the Israeli scientists who were

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<sup>1</sup> Trita Parsi, "Under the Veil of Ideology: The Israeli-Iranian Strategic Rivalry" *Middle East Report Online*, 9 June 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero060906.html>. Accessed on 20 June 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The project was focused on the development of a longer-range missile (150-200km) and more heavily armed version of Israeli Gabriel anti-ship missile. Iran agreed on a down payment of \$280million worth of oil to Israel from the project.

working on the Project in Iran were flown back and the blue prints for the construction of the missile were dispatched to Israel.

Israel regarded Iran as a potential ally capable of helping it overcome its isolation in a hostile world while Iran to prevent the domination of Egypt and hence sought friendship with Israel. From Israel's point of view, its tacit relationship with Iran enabled it to purchase oil that it badly needed during the early years of the state's existence. Moreover, Iran facilitated Israel's approach to Third World countries and Israel provided access to the United States and the countries of Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

But since the fall of the Shah, and especially beginning in the 1990s, the mutually condemnatory rhetoric issuing from Iran and Israel has blinded most observers to a critical common interest shared by these two non-Arab powerhouses in West Asia: the need to portray their fundamentally strategic conflict as an ideological clash.

## 2.2 Iran's Nuclear Programme and Israeli Perceptions

Israelis view the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by an Arab or a non-Arab Muslim state in West Asia with considerable apprehension, though they differ on the extent to which they view it as threatening. Many Israelis believe that the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons in their neighbourhood presents their state with an existential threat.<sup>4</sup> Israel's concerns about nuclear proliferation in the region comprise seven main considerations. First, Israelis are terrified about the dimensions of the damage that they might have to endure if attacked by nuclear weapons. In a letter written by then Prime Minister of Israel after the bombing of Iraq's Osiraq reactor he drew a parallel between the effects of nuclear weapons and the Holocaust inflicted upon Jews by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. He termed Israel being attacked by nuclear weapons a "new holocaust". The ideological prism through which the existence of Israel is seen adds to the threat perception of Israel. They fear the

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004) p. 35

<sup>4</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, 'Starting over: the prospects for regional security and arms control in the West Asia in the next decade', (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research). Retrieved from [www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art79.pdf](http://www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art79.pdf), Accessed on 20 February 2006.



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unwillingness of some of their neighbours to accept the permanent existence of a Jewish state in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Israeli national security doctrine places more emphasis on deterrence and pre-emption. This doctrine was formulated in the early 1950s in response to the continued threat of conflict following the 1948-49 War of Independence between Israel and the Arab states. Israeli leaders feared that the combination of the Arab rejection of the legitimacy of the Jewish state, indefensible borders and the absence of strategic depth would lead to repeated military challenges.<sup>6</sup> The importance of deterrence and pre-emption was reinforced in 1967 by Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian mobilisations, and the very costly surprise attack launched by Egypt and Syria in 1973.<sup>7</sup>

- By the early 1990s, Iran seems to have become the focus of such concerns. Iran's mix of Muslim religious identity and its possession of unconventional weapons are viewed by Israelis as creating the danger of a nuclear attack on Israel regardless of the costs to the attacker. In mid-1993 Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said: "We must clarify to the world the real nature of Rafsanjani Iran. [They] regard Israel as a 'collective Salman Rushdie' and would like to do to us what they would like to do to him."
- Second, Israelis tend to regard some of the region's leaders as prone to irresponsible and irrational behaviour and choices, and as insensitive to costs and extremely prone to misassessments and risk-taking. Some are also seen as allowing their emotions to overrule their reason.
- Third, Israelis fear that the vulnerability of their small state may lead an Arab leader to attempt a decapitating strike, destroying Israel's retaliatory means in a first strike and ridding the Muslim region of the Jewish state. The costs of the damage would be greater for Israel in terms of demography.

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<sup>5</sup> Shai Feldman, *Nuclear weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (London: MIT Press, 1997) p.105

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) p. 26

<sup>7</sup> Avner Yaniv, *Deterrence Without the Bomb: The Politics of Israeli Strategy* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987) p.54

- Fourth, Israelis fear that in the absence of advanced technologies in the region deployed nuclear weapons will be inadequately controlled. As a consequence, nuclear weapons might be launched accidentally, resulting in regional catastrophe.
- Fifth, most Israelis reject the notion that a stable nuclear “balance of terror” could be established in West Asia. There is much concern that it would be difficult to manage a multi-nuclear West Asia. The requirements of managing nuclear relations with a number of states simultaneously, are regarded as too taxing for the region’s leaders. There is much concern that it is difficult to manage with many states in West Asia acquiring the nuclear capability. Israel was always wary of the threat posed by Libya and Iraq. In that case they draw parallels between the bipolar balance of power that existed during the Cold War and a very different situation at present.
- Sixth, Israel is also concerned that the proliferation of nuclear weapons in West Asia could lead to their acquisition by terrorist groups. This could happen if a sovereign state transfers weapons to terrorists, a danger that is referred to as ‘state sponsored nuclear terrorism’. The possibility of a rogue state or a terrorist group bent on inflicting mass casualties in support of an extreme political agenda, religious convictions or just some eccentric vendetta against Israel is seen as most threatening.
- Seventh, a particularly salient theme in Israeli discussion is the possible nuclearisation of West Asia, a region that has experienced recurrent warfare and continues to be characterized by active conflict. Hence it is argued that everything should be done to postpone the region’s nuclearisation until Arab-Israeli peace is achieved. Others do not believe that the Arab-Israeli peace process would in any way mitigate the threat posed by nuclear weapons as the states that are of concern remain out of the peace process.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ibid

These fears have led the Israeli government to determine that it would take extreme measures to ensure that its neighbours do not acquire nuclear weapons. Thus, Prime Minister, Menachem Begin issued a directive in November 1977 to the effect that his government would not permit any neighbouring country that remains in “a state of war” with Israel to construct a nuclear reactor that can be used to build weapons of mass destruction that might be used against Israel. From 1978 to 1981, Israel took a series of measures to delay the process of Iraq’s nuclearisation, ultimately resulting in the bombing of the Osiraq reactor in al-Tuwaitha. Israel’s commitment to prevention was termed as the “Begin Doctrine” by the media.<sup>9</sup>

Israeli leaders have repeated this doctrine on many occasions. In a major policy address, then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon stated in December 1981: “The third element in our defence policy for the 1980’s is our determination to prevent confrontation states from gaining access to nuclear weapons. Israel cannot afford the introduction of the nuclear weapon. For us it is not a question of a balance of terror but a question of survival. We shall therefore have to prevent such a threat at its inception”<sup>10</sup>

However, there are differences of opinion reflected in the debate regarding Israel’s approach to Iran’s nuclear programme. The perception that the implications of nuclear proliferation in West Asia might be less than catastrophic is reflected in official calls for Israel to adjust to the prospect of the possible nuclearisation of the region by the then Defence Minister Moshe Arens to the Knesset Committee on Foreign and Defence Affairs. Some have argued that Israel stop making Iran’s nuclear programme “an Israeli issue.” For example, the commander of its Intelligence Corps, Brig. Gen. Doron Tamir, said: “We argue that it is possible to delay and even stop the process of Iran’s nuclearisation. But this is a function of the intensity with which we will deal with the issue. At any rate, it will be difficult for Israel to arrest this process on its own.”

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<sup>9</sup> William Claiborne, “Begin Threatens to Destroy Any Nuclear Reactor Menacing Israel” *Washington Post*, 10 June 1981.

<sup>10</sup> Shai Feldman “The Bombing of Osiraq- Revisited,” *International Security* (Massachusetts), Vol7, No.2,(Fall 1981), p.122



An analysis of Israeli history demonstrates that proposals in which Israel would give up its deterrent options in exchange for international guarantees on Iran are non-starters. Israeli strategic culture is based on self-reliance and the lack of credibility inherent in external pledges of security.<sup>11</sup> Israeli policy makers reject arrangements that would leave verification in the hands of global institutions.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3 Israeli security Perceptions

The cracks in the operational setting of the Israeli national security conception are, primarily, the product of political changes at the international and regional levels. In addition, it is influenced by certain developments in military technology and the proliferation of non-conventional weapon systems to the region.

The rapid proliferation of non-conventional weapons in the region revolves, primarily, around the Syrian acquisition of ballistic missiles armed with conventional and chemical warheads and Iranian nuclear efforts. Such efforts show that these regional powers seem to believe that the next war in the region will not be a classic conventional confrontation between large-scale ground forces supported by air power. Instead they consider non-conventional weapons as the most effective answer to the dire strategic situation in which they have found themselves in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, the second Gulf War and the Arab-Israeli peace process. From Israel's perspective the global and regional changes of the last decade, the Arab political motivation and military capability to launch a conventional war against Israel has diminished significantly. Consequently, the traditional threat to Israel's existence which dominated Israeli strategic thinking from the early 1950's has almost disappeared. The source of the main threat to Israel's existence in the foreseeable future will be the non-conventional arsenals held by regional powers that do not participate in the peace process. Iran still opposes the Arab-Israeli peace process and its rhetoric is very much against Israel. If one of these states succeeds in obtaining an

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<sup>11</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 October 2004

<sup>12</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, "Middle east Arms Control and Regional Security' *Survival*, vol.39, no.1, Spring 1994, p.21

operational nuclear capability, Israel will face for the first time since 1948, the threat of annihilation.<sup>13</sup>

The reach of modern weapons systems, especially missiles, makes security a regional phenomenon and necessity. Iran's growing missile stocks, which are increasing in range, thus concern an Israel that was targeted by Iraqi missiles in the 1991 War. As with the Gulf States, the most important factor in Iran's arms build-up for Israel is its acquisition of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). There is no sign that Iran seeks a confrontation with Israel or it seeks one. However its policies and rhetoric have hardened. Iran singles out Israel to justify other state's right to have nuclear weapons. Israel in turn points to Iran's capabilities, actual and potential, as the reason for its own vigilance and preparedness. But Israel's principal fear vis-à-vis Iran is political in nature. Since the Islamic Revolution in the 1979 Iran has taken over as the leader of the Islamic world and important ideological orientations are influential in shaping defence policy in Iran. Ideological orientation and commitment, though with less vigour than before, are still very important.

Iran's arms build-up, though not intended for more immediate purposes, has had the effect of making the risk of a clash with Israel very real; it has expanded the breadth of tensions by linking conflicts and increasing insecurity generally. Lacking an urgent rationale for nuclear weapons, Iran's nuclear programme has aroused Israeli fears and suspicions. Above all Iran's rhetoric on Palestine and its missile programme raises the possibility of inviting confrontation that Iran has not considered seriously. From an Israeli perspective, nuclear weapons would amplify Iran's international voice, which is essential if the Revolution is to be taken seriously. Nuclear weapons could provide Iran with a leading role in regional politics, from which it has been increasingly marginalized and risks becoming even more so. It could also reduce the cost of defence and the importance of conventional weapons which are expensive and hard to master, maintain and replace.

Hostility towards Israel has been one of the professed policies of Iran since the Islamic Revolution. Every year on the last Friday in the fasting month of Ramadan,

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<sup>13</sup>Uri Bar-Joseph, "Towards a Paradigm Shift in Israel's National Security Conception" in Efraim Karsh, ed., *Israel: From War to Peace?* (London: Frank Cass, 1997) p.103

hundreds of thousands of Iranian citizens demonstrate in the streets to mark Qods Day, a commemoration of the occupation of holy Islamic territory by the Jews. It is not surprising that after the collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy the severing of Iran's ties with Israel was the first foreign policy action of the revolutionary government and the decision was announced on the same day that Yasser Arafat arrived in Tehran. On that occasion Ayatollah Khomeini reiterated his longstanding position that accommodation with Israel is sinful and that the eradication of the Zionist state ought to be the goal of all Muslims.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1980's Tehran also helped build a movement in Lebanon: the Hezbollah<sup>15</sup>. Its support includes training, financial support and weapons.<sup>16</sup> The association between the Iranians and Lebanon's 1.5 million Shia population was forged soon after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in May 1982, when Khomeini ordered the deployment of several hundred hand-picked Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) soldiers to resist the incursion of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) more effectively and to make effective a wider ambition of 'exporting the Revolution'. At the International Conference in support of the Palestinian Intifada, held in Tehran in April 2001, the Supreme Religious leader of Iran, Ali Khomeini called on Hezbollah members 'to assist the Palestinian resistance', while the then Iranian President Khatami has also praised the organization as a 'liberation movement' that 'defends the freedom, Islamic and Arabic dignity of the occupied land'.<sup>17</sup>

Hezbollah is regarded by many in the Arab and Muslim worlds as a legitimate resistance movement and is a recognised political party in Lebanon, where it has participated in government. However, a number of Western governments, including that of the United States and the European Union, have designated it a terrorist organisation. As the stated aim of Hezbollah is the removal of the state of Israel, it

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<sup>14</sup> Roger Howard, *Iran in Crisis? Nuclear ambitions and the American Response* (London: Zed Books, 2004), p.24

<sup>15</sup> Hezbollah or Hezb-Allah is a Lebanese Islamist group founded in 1982 to fight the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. Along with the Amal movement, Hezbollah is the main political party representing the Shia community, Lebanon's largest religious bloc. Founded with the aid of Iran, it follows the distinctly Shiite Islamist ideology developed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It calls for the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon.

<sup>16</sup> Robert E. Hunter, "The Iran Case: Addressing Why Countries Want Nuclear Weapons", *Arms Control Today* (Washington D.C), December 2004, p. 23

<sup>17</sup> Roger Howard, *Iran in Crisis? Nuclear ambitions and the American Response* (London: Zed Books, 2004), p.28

expresses support and sympathy for the activities of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Islamist groups responsible for suicide attacks and armed resistance in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Emerging after the Israeli invasion in the early 1980s as an Iranian-sponsored second resistance movement for Lebanon's Shia community, Hezbollah focused on expelling Israeli and Western forces from Lebanon. It is the principal suspect in several notable attacks on the American, French and Italian Multinational forces, whose stated purpose was the stabilisation of Lebanon: the suicide bombings of the U.S. Embassy, which killed 63 including 17 Americans, of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut which killed 241 American servicemen, and of the French multinational force headquarters which killed 58 French troops. Hezbollah has always denied having any involvement with these bombings, although regarding them as justified. Elements of the group have been "linked" to the in kidnapping, detention and interrogation of American and other Western hostages in Lebanon by groups such as Islamic Jihad who claimed the hostage-takings were in retaliation to the detentions, hostage-taking and torture by the Israeli proxy army South Lebanon Army (SLA).

The Hezbollah wields its Iranian supplied rockets, which can hit Israeli areas like Haifa, as a sort of strategic deterrence, allowing it the freedom to harass Israeli targets near the border, with impunity. The Hamas would like to see its own rocket force fulfilling the same role along the perimeter of the Gaza Strip, and in the future, along the borders of the promised Palestinian state. The primary organisation involved in manufacturing and firing the Qasam family of rockets is the Hamas. The strategic role that the Hamas plans for its rockets is not unlike that of the Hezbollah rockets along the Israeli-Lebanese border.<sup>18</sup>

There is also considerable evidence that Tehran's support goes beyond this and has included the movement of considerable quantities of military supplies. In January 1996 three Iranian trucks, all loaded with arms, were intercepted en route to Lebanon

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<sup>18</sup> Azriel Lorber, "The Increasing Threat Posed to Israel by the Qasam Rockets". Retrieved from <http://www.acpr.org.il/ins/articles/lorber1.htm>. Accessed on 20 June 2006.

via Syria by the Turkish authorities, and a large number of Iranian cargo planes, bearing supplies for the movement, have also apparently been flown into airports at both Damascus and Beirut. Iran has also been accused of military supplies to Palestinian militia. In January 2002, the Israeli authorities intercepted the *Karine A*, a vessel laden with fifty tons of arms, including Katyusha rockets and anti-tank missiles that had allegedly been loaded at an Iranian port before being sent on their way to the areas of the Gaza Strip controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Israeli officials inspecting the cargo at Eilat argued that it proved the existence of a 'network of international terrorism spearheaded by Iran'.

The Israeli perception regarding the Iranian nuclear capability dwells on this presupposition about the prospect of a nuclear warhead being held firmly in the hands of an Islamist regime linked with terrorist organisations in West Asia. These concerns have reinforced Israeli decision makers to paint a grim picture about the whole scenario. Some of these points were detailed in a report of the US Department of Defence issued in 1997: "Tehran strives to become a leader in the Islamic world and seeks to be the dominant power in the Gulf. The latter brings it into conflict with the United States. Tehran would like to diminish Washington's political and military influence in the region. Iran also remains hostile to the ongoing peace process in West Asia and supports the use of terrorism as an element of policy."<sup>19</sup>

The inflammatory rhetoric employed by Rabin and Peres was unprecedented. Peres, then Israel's foreign minister, accused Iran of "fanning all the flames in the Middle East," implying that the failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was rooted in Iran's meddling rather than in the shortcomings of Israel and the Palestinians.<sup>20</sup>

Israel's nuclear weapon policy is related to its perceptions of the nuclear capabilities of other countries in West Asia. Some West Asian countries are currently operating research reactors and a number have plans to use nuclear-power reactors to generate electricity.<sup>21</sup> Increasingly concerned about Iran's nuclear programme, Israel is weighing its options and has not ruled out a military strike to prevent the Islamic

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Shimon Peres, *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Frank Barnaby "Capping Israel's Nuclear Volcano" in Efraim Karsh's, ed., *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli security* (London: Frank Cass, 1997) p. 93

Republic from gaining the capability to build atomic weapons, according to policymakers, military officials, analysts and diplomats. Analysts feel that Israel would much prefer a diplomatic agreement to shut down Iran's uranium enrichment programme, but if it concluded that Tehran was approaching a "point of no return," it would not be deterred by the difficulty of a military operation, the prospect of retaliation or the international reaction. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his top aides have been asserting for months that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a clear threat to Israel's existence and have repeatedly threatened to use force if diplomacy and the threat of sanctions fail.<sup>22</sup>

Gerald Steinberg of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies said that Iran presents "a combination of factors that rise to the highest level of Israeli threat perception. He also said that "nuclear weapons in a country with a fundamentalist regime, a government with which we have no diplomatic contact, a known sponsor of terrorist groups like Hezbollah which wants to wipe Israel off the map makes stable deterrence extremely difficult, if not impossible". Israel's concerns are magnified by the fact that Iran already possesses the medium-range Shahab-3 missile, which is capable of reaching Israel with either a conventional or non-conventional warhead.

Pre-emptive strikes have always been an essential element of Israel's military doctrine. Perhaps the most pertinent example is the air raid that destroyed Saddam Hussein's Osirak nuclear reactor in June 1981. Experts are divided, however, on whether that precedent should be viewed as a window into Israel's thinking on Iran. The idea of responding militarily to any perceived external threat tends to unite Israelis across the political spectrum. For example, Labour Party leader Shimon Peres has long been an advocate of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians but is also among those who strongly believe that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose an intolerable peril to Israel.

A complicating factor in the debate over Iran is Israel's own status as an undeclared nuclear power. Israeli officials insist that their country's presumed nuclear status enhances regional stability by serving as a deterrent but say Iran's possession of

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<sup>22</sup> The Los Angeles Times, 22 October 2004

atomic weapons would almost certainly trigger an arms race with rival Muslim states. There were traditionally two Israeli schools of thought on Iranian proliferation. One viewed Iran as a major problem because of the nature of the regime that took power in the 1979 revolution, the line that the regime took in Lebanon opposing any negotiations with Israel, and its heavy involvement in terrorism worldwide. All this created the image of an extremely problematic adversary. But at the same time, there was a school of thought that retained a certain romantic view of Iran, believing that the collision course Iran and Israel seemed to be on was not inevitable. They felt that, in the long run, some commonalities between the two countries could be revived that existed before the revolution. The influence of this romantic legacy prevailed as recently as ten years ago, when the facts about Iran's march toward a strategic capability that could reach Israel became apparent. From that moment on, Israel's thoughts became focused.

Interestingly, Iran's nuclear development was not what gave serious impetus to this focus. But Israel began to notice that the Iranians were taking interest in missiles capable of reaching Israel. When Iran started to look into the No-Dong and later began developing the Shahab-3, the matter became very serious indeed. It was clear that the Iranians were pursuing the acquisition of delivery systems capable of reaching and penetrating Israel. This began in the 1990s.

The 1990s were of particular importance in Israel's history as they were characterized by drastic changes in the international system and by significant regional developments, which were beneficial for Israeli national security.<sup>23</sup> Israel has remained a good ally of the United States in an American dominated world. This helped Israel become a respected international actor and allowed much progress in the peace process and Israel's acceptance in the region. While the chances for a large-scale conventional war were lower than in the past, Israel still faced existential threats, stemming particularly from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in West Asia. In addition, it continued to face low-intensity conflict challenges.

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<sup>23</sup>Efraim Inbar, "Israel's Strategic Environment in the 1990s" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.25, No. 1, March 2002, p.1

Since 1990's Israel has taken clear actions indicating the seriousness with which it views the problem. The acquisition of the F-15I fighter-bomber aircraft, which is capable of reaching Iran, is one such action. Israeli silence does not indicate apathy or lack of response. As Israel views Iran's accelerated quest to acquire strategic capability, the prospects seem very ominous indeed. Israel focused not necessarily on the prospect of Iran testing or acquiring a bomb but instead on Tehran's intensive effort to acquire a self-sufficient, independent fuel cycle capability. The focus of Israel's current concern is to arrest this process, not to make it more transparent. This can be seen from Israel's opposition to Iran's nuclear cooperation with Russia and China since 1990.

The Madrid Peace Process recognised the centrality of arms-control and confidence building measures and created a multilateral working group on arms control and regional security. In January 1993, the Israeli government fashioned an arms-control policy that emphasised confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) as well as limits on chemical, biological and conventional weapons and ballistic missiles. But Israel is determined that the caps on Israeli strategic deterrent, including its nuclear capability will be only implemented after stable peace is achieved.<sup>24</sup>

Israeli leaders believe the country's strategic deterrent, based on a nuclear capability is needed to counter the 'existential' threat posed by a combination of Arab forces. Arms-control agreements that would affect this deterrent can only be signed as part of formal peace agreements and major changes in force structures, encompassing not only Syria and Jordan, but also radical states such as Iraq, Iran and Libya.<sup>25</sup>

In the last few years, Israel has looked beyond its immediate Palestinian adversaries and seen the same countries of concern as does the United States: Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Iran. Each of these countries has had the same attributes, including their search for nonconventional weapons, their retention of unpleasant regimes, and so forth. But the country that figures as the greatest threat to Israel among the four has always been Iran—not Syria, which is actually closer and has a few hundred missiles capable of

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<sup>24</sup> Shai Feldman, *Nuclear weapons and arms control in the Middle East* (London: MIT Press, 1997) p.105

<sup>25</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, "Middle East Arms Control and Regional security" *Survival*, vol.39, no.1, Spring 1994, p.128



reaching Israel with nonconventional munitions; not Libya, which till recently was interested in a nuclear programme of its own; and not Iraq, even when it was celebrated as being the most immediate threat to the region or to Israel.

WMD in Israeli threat perception became a fundamental problem and an existential threat from the beginning of the 1980s. The deterrence policy, which constitutes a cornerstone in Israeli security strategy, seems to be shaped by the Israeli defence planners' outlook that they simply cannot forsake any means or the ability to, through self-reliance, reassure the state of Israel's future existence.<sup>26</sup> An Israeli perception on Iran's nuclear programme is wholly based on this fact.

Yet despite Rabin's overall assessment that the probability of war is low for the near future and that the existential threat has been reduced, he believed that Israel continues to face serious military challenges. The nature of the threats and the sources changed, however. According to Rabin, the peace process only influenced the probability of the use of force, and not the Arab ability to harm Israel, which has been augmented. Because of missiles, chemical and biological weapons, and because of the efforts in the region to acquire nuclear weapons, Rabin waned that a future war could entail a large number of civilian casualties. Similarly threatening is the surge in the power of Islamic radicalism. The radical Muslims could take over Arab countries and engage in confrontation, which could become an increasingly political problem for the Labour-led government. Shimon Peres, then Foreign Minister has also identified the main threats to Israel as coming from a combination of nuclear weapons and extremist Islam. Therefore, the major enemy of the Rabin government became Islamic Iran, which sponsored subversion and terror and was engaged in acquiring a nuclear option.<sup>27</sup>

Yet according to other military analysts in Israel, the threats are perceived as having a redeeming value: they are beneficial to the peace process because Arab secular elites

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<sup>26</sup> David Ruppe, "Israel Has Offensive Chemical, Biological Warfare Capabilities", *Global Security Newswire*, 6 January 2006. Accessed on 12 February 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Efraim Inbar, n.25, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.111, No.1, Spring,1996, p. 47

share Israeli apprehensions about the Islamic fundamentalist group's challenge to the stability of Arab regimes and the emergence of an Iranian nuclear arsenal.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, the new threat of proliferation poses a problem for self-reliance. In 1981, Israel eliminated the Iraqi threat for some time. But it is now questionable whether Israel can repeat such a feat single-handedly. Iran is even farther away than Iraq. Israel is fully aware of its limitations in this regard and is looking for international cooperation to meet the new challenge. The government in Israel has always felt that the Iran's nuclear programme is a challenge to the West and also threatens global stability. The limited success of the American air strikes against Iraq nuclear installations and its hesitation to use force against North Korea show that in the 1990s, even the superpower has difficulties in destroying key components of a country's nuclear infrastructure. There are significant operational difficulties in such endeavours, in addition to a critical lack of sufficient intelligence.<sup>29</sup>

Israel is fully aware of its limitations in this regard and is looking for international cooperation to meet the new challenge. Yossi Beilin, then Foreign Minister of Israel announced in the Knesset in 1993 that Israel has lobbied West European and other countries including China, to restrain the Iranian nuclear effort.<sup>30</sup> As soon as Washington indicated displeasure with a discreet Israeli attempt to negotiate independently with North Korea, the bilateral contacts were halted. In 1993, Rabin explicitly expressed his desire for "active American participation in the security of Israel."<sup>31</sup> Specifically, he asked the Americans to station "Patriot" SAM<sup>32</sup> batteries in Israel, and for assistance in deploying a defense system against missiles.

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration Regimes in an Anarchic World", *International Organization*, Vol.36, Spring 1982 p. 306

<sup>29</sup> Efraim Inbar, "Contours of Israel's New Strategic Thinking", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.111, No.1, Spring, 1996, p. 58

<sup>30</sup> Haaretz, 17 February 1993

<sup>31</sup> Yediot Aharonot, 21 January 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Patriot has assumed the role as the U.S. Army's anti-ballistic missile (ABM) platform, which today is Patriot's primary mission. Patriot uses an advanced aerial interceptor missile and one of the world's highest performance radar systems (in terms of track quality). Patriot is the only ABM system to have successfully engaged and destroyed a tactical ballistic missile (TBM) in combat and the only SAM system which has successfully provided a manoeuvre force with tactical ballistic missile protection. Patriot systems have been sold to Greece, Israel, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Japan and Spain.

Israel's former Prime Minister and Chief of Staff, Ehud Barak, said that the Iranians "threaten the flow of oil to the free world, the stability of pragmatic regimes and the internal balance in the Arab world, and the economic growth of Europe and Japan. In this sense they deserve a worldwide preventive effort and an international front".<sup>33</sup> The very statement indicates that Israel wanted to build a broad coalition with the support of the other countries to counter the threat from Iran.

According to Yitzhak Rabin, only the United States can lead an international effort to stop nuclear proliferation in West Asia. Israel relied on the US in the attempt to prevent the sale of North Korean Nodong missiles to Iran,<sup>34</sup> which would place Israeli targets within Iranian range. Regarding the increasingly critical area of nuclear defence, Rabin was traditionally known to emphasise the centrality of conventional forces. In the 1980s and 1990s, he still felt it possible to delay the entrance of Arab nuclear weapons into the region. "As far as Israel was concerned," Inbar writes, "Rabin considered these weapons of very limited strategic value, usable only in scenarios involving survival. When the missile and chemical weapons threats became greater in the eighties, Rabin emphasised more a deterrence rather than a pre-emption approach."<sup>35</sup>

As Israel's threat perception increased, then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided in November 2003 to place the responsibility for an integrated strategy to prevent the nuclearisation of Iran in the hands of the Mossad. Its head, retired Major General Dagan was appointed in September 2002 to hone the skills of this organisation in covert operations. The declarations of Israeli senior officials in the winter of 2005-2006 indicated greater alarm than before, meaning that whatever means were taken failed to achieve the intended results.

One variant of covert operations is to focus on the highly skilled elements of those working for the Iranian programme. The Iranian nuclear programme has a limited number of scientists whose contribution is critical to its successful completion. The interested intelligence services have probably already identified the key scientists who

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<sup>33</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 5 June 1999

<sup>34</sup> Haaretz, 1 November 1994

<sup>35</sup> Efraim Inbar, "Israel's Mr. Security" *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No.4, Fall 2005, p.3 Retrieved from <http://www.jcpa.org/jpsr/jpsr-freedman-1-f05.htm>. Accessed on 2 June 2006.

keep it moving. Removing these scientists would also affect the possibility of renewing the nuclear efforts in case a freeze of the Iranian programme was to take place. Therefore, serious offers of refuge and a professional career in the West should be extended to these scientists. Alternatively, they should be intimidated from further cooperation with the Iranian nuclear programme.

Israel displays serious scepticism regarding the effectiveness of economic sanctions. While economic sanctions would certainly hurt the Iranian economy, which is much dependent upon refined oil products, economic pressures are not the best means to stop Iran from going nuclear. According to Israel, sanctions merely keep an issue alive in the absence of the political will to take military measures to remedy the situation. Moreover, in the past, societies and regimes have demonstrated great resilience in the face of economic sanctions and capacity to withstand pain. Iraq was an example.

On 2 December 2005, Israel launched an Arrow missile that successfully intercepted a mock-up of an Iranian Shehab-3 missile. The goal of the test was to expand the range of Arrow missiles to a higher altitude and to evaluate the interface between the Arrow and the American-improved Patriot missile system, which is meant to go into operation if the Arrow fails to shoot down its target. The interception of a missile armed with a nuclear head at a lower altitude and closer to home by the Patriot system is, of course, problematic. While this test and others have proven that the Arrow does hit its target, no defence system is foolproof. The Arrow-2 provides a certain measure of protection, but it is a first generation weapon system, and even its developers do not claim a one hundred percent interception rate. Moreover, it is not clear how the Arrow would function if enemy missiles were equipped with countermeasures or if the enemy were to use saturation tactics.<sup>36</sup>

In November 2003, Israel warned that it is prepared to take unilateral military action against Iran if the international community fails to stop any development of nuclear weapons at the country's atomic energy facilities. It cited Israeli defence minister Shaul Mofaz as stating, "Under no circumstances would Israel be able to tolerate

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<sup>36</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Peace and War: The Arab Israeli Military Balance Enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London : Praeger Publishers, 2002) p.532

nuclear weapons in Iranian possession". In December 2005, a British newspaper claimed that the Israeli military had been ordered by Israeli prime minister (at that time) Ariel Sharon to plan for possible strikes on uranium enrichment sites in Iran in March 2006, based on Israeli intelligence estimates that Iran would be able to build nuclear weapons in two to four years. It was claimed that the Special Forces command was in the highest stage of readiness for an attack (state G) in December. Ariel Sharon reportedly said, "Israel - and not only Israel - cannot accept a nuclear Iran. We have the ability to deal with this and we're making all the necessary preparations to be ready for such a situation."<sup>37</sup> Israeli military Chief of Staff, Daniel Halutz, was quoted as responding to the question of how far Israel was ready to go to stop Iran's nuclear energy programme with the statement "Two thousand kilometres".

Seymour Hersh has claimed that Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith have been working with Israeli planners and consultants to develop and refine potential nuclear, chemical-weapons, and missile targets inside Iran. Meir Dagan, the head of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, told the Knesset in December 2005 that "Iran is one to two years away, at the latest, from having enriched uranium. From that point, the completion of their nuclear weapon is simply a technical matter." Israeli intelligence officials believe that there are two parallel nuclear programmes inside Iran—the program declared to the I.A.E.A. and a separate operation, run by the military and the Revolutionary Guards. Israeli officials have repeatedly made this argument, but Israel has not produced public evidence to support it.<sup>38</sup>

Project Daniel was a 2003 Israeli project, commissioned to assess the threat to the nation of Israel from other states in West Asia, drawing particular attention to Iran, with Iran's nuclear programme in mind. It was prepared by a high-powered team of Israeli foreign policy and military experts. The report was submitted to the then Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and was discussed between Israel, the United States, and NATO. Project Daniel began with the assumption that Israel's security environment must be appraised continuously, and that the threat of irrational state and

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<sup>37</sup> <http://arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=74051&d=2&m=12&y=2005>

<sup>38</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, "The Iran Plans: Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb?" Retrieved from [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050417fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050417fa_fact). Accessed on 20 June 2006

nonstate enemies armed with WMD assets represents the single most urgent danger to the country's survival. Reflecting this judgment, it was concluded that Israel's main focus must be on preventing a coalition of Arab states and/or Iran from coming into possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This objective might be pursued while Israel continues with its present policy of deliberate ambiguity regarding its own nuclear status. It was also concluded that the classic paradigm of war between national armies could become less predictive in the developing West Asia, and that an Israeli "paradigm shift" is therefore required. This shift in orientation and resources would place new emphases on short-range threats (terrorism) and long-range threats (ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction). The group also recommended a corresponding reduction in the resources Israel should now allocate to classical warfighting scenarios.<sup>39</sup>

Since the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, the US has made it clear that it reserves the right to use all available weapons in response to any attack upon its soil by an adversary using Weapons of Mass Destruction. (The Bush Administration told Congress, on 11 December 2002, that it is now the policy of the United States to use "overwhelming force", including nuclear weapons, if chemical or biological weapons are used against America or its military forces. The threats are contained in a six-page document identified as National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction. According to the military analysts in Israel, a similar policy must be followed.

Existential threats to Israel may be exacerbated further by Arab/Iranian leaders whose actions, by Western standards, might be deemed irrational. Faced with enemy leaders who do not value national and/or personal self-preservation more highly than any other preference or combination of preferences, Israeli deterrence could be immobilised and security could be based largely upon the success or lack of success of prior pre-emption efforts. Under such circumstances, a policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)<sup>40</sup> which was once obtained between the United States and the Soviet Union would not work between Israel and its Arab/Iranian adversaries.

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<sup>39</sup> Israel's Strategic Future: The Final Report of Project Daniel, April 2004, <http://www.acpr.org.il/ins/articles/daniel1.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) is a doctrine of military strategy in which a full scale use of nuclear weapons by one of two opposing sides would result in the destruction of both the attacker and

## 2.4 Iran's Missile Programme and Israeli Threat Perceptions:

When the Iran-Iraq War ended, Iran began a joint project with North Korea that developed the missile referred to in Iran as the Shehab-3 and in North Korea as the Nodong. The Iranians were involved in the project from its outset at the beginning of the 1990s, and Iranian representatives were present at the first test launch of the Nodong in May 1993. Development continued, probably with Iranian financing and the participation of Iranian experts. It also appears that the missile developed in Iran is not identical to the North Korean Nodong; changes were introduced to adapt it to Iran's special requirements.

In 2001, Iran announced that the missile had entered mass production. This announcement, however, was presumably somewhat premature, since the development process continued and further launchings occurred in May and July 2002 and in July 2003. Apparently the Shehab-3 system eventually became operational, and it is now believed that Iran has five or six operation launchers and about twenty missiles.<sup>41</sup> As in the case of the Shehab-1 and Shehab-2 missiles, it is not clear whether Iran is capable of producing all the components of the missile independently or whether it is dependent on an external supply of critical components.

In 2004, Iran carried out two additional tests of the Shehab-3 missile, after which it was announced that an advanced model of the missile had been developed. Photographs of the launch show a missile whose tip is completely different from that of the older model. According to various reports, the improved version (called here the Shehab-3M) has an extended launch range of about 1,500 kilometres.<sup>42</sup> The shape of the tip probably indicates an ability to separate the re-entry vehicle from the body and an improved ability to stabilise it during its entry into the atmosphere, which will improve its accuracy.

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the defender. It is based on the theory of deterrence according to which the deployment of strong weapons is essential to threaten the enemy in order to prevent the use of the very same weapons.

<sup>41</sup>Yiftah S. Shapir, Iran's Strategic Missiles Vol. 9, No. 1, April 2006, Strategic Assessment, Retrieved from <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v7n3p2Kam.html>, Accessed on 2 June 2006.

<sup>42</sup> ibid

Mutual deterrence between Israel and Iran should be viewed in this light. This deterrence dialogue has continued since the beginning of the 1990s. Both sides have publicly threatened each other and demonstrated that they are capable of conducting operations at long range. From this perspective, it is possible to view Iran's efforts to obtain Shehab-3 missiles as a response to Israel's acquisition of F-15 airplanes. In other words, Iran regards Israel's purchase of F-15 planes as the acquisition of attack capability that threatens Iran, particularly its nuclear facilities.<sup>43</sup> Development of the Shehab-3 is regarded as a means of deterring Israel from an attack on installations in Iran. One example of this position can be seen in the remark by General Safavi following the most recent missile test: "We don't intend to attack any country, but if we are attacked, we are capable of responding effectively."

The conservative establishment in Iran armed with nuclear weapons is viewed as an instrument in Allah's hand enabling their regime to impose Islam upon the entire world. They believe they have been chosen to carry out Allah's mission. The stakes, moreover, are very high for Iran's ruling elite since the nuclear program is inextricably connected to this elite's political, and even physical, survival.<sup>44</sup> The regime may well have come to the conclusion that the speedy and successful conclusion of its nuclear efforts will guarantee its future at home. Destabilizing the regime of a nuclear state - which could lead to chronic domestic instability, civil war or even disintegration is more risky than undermining a non-nuclear regime.

The CIA reported in June 1997 that Iran obtained major new transfers of new long range missile technology from Russian and Chinese firms in 1996. The US offered to provide China with added missile technology if it would agree to fully implement an end of technology transfer to Iran and Pakistan during meetings in Beijing on 25, 26 March 1998.<sup>45</sup>

A nuclear Iran might well bring an end to this regime and to American attempts to curb proliferation in the West Asia and in other parts of the world. Indeed, the

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<sup>43</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Peace and War: The Arab Israeli Military Balance Enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London : Praeger Publishers ,2002) p.518

<sup>44</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 5 March 2006

<sup>45</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, 'Iran's Military Forces in Transition: Conventional Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction' (London: Praeger, 1999). P.228



emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran would have a chain-effect, generating further nuclear proliferation in the immediate region. Missiles are the most effective means of delivering nuclear weapons. While the United States is developing a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system and Russia claims to have a missile intercept capability with its S-300 missile system, only Israel possesses a serious capability to parry a nuclear missile attack. Israel has developed a defensive layer around the Arrow-2 anti-ballistic missile, which is designed to intercept the family of Scud missiles.<sup>46</sup> This program, which began in the late 1980s, benefited from generous American funding and amounts to the only deployed operational anti-ballistic missile system so far in the world. Since 2000, Israel has deployed several operational batteries of Arrow missiles. The interception range is about 150 kilometers away from Israel's borders.

Finally, there is the deterrence option. Deterrence is not necessarily just the option of last resort for Israel. Some suggest that Israel should hope for the best in the multilateral field but prepare for the worst with deterrence in case Iran accomplishes its objectives. But there is another variation on that theme: taking certain steps before Iran acquires a nuclear bomb. For example, deterring Iran from either reaching fuel-cycle self-sufficiency or assembling a nuclear weapon.

There is no explicit Israeli declaration about its Iran policy but it certainly does not indicate a lack of concern. Israel keeps a very low profile on this issue and that indicates that it serves an interest. Second, in approaching its options, Israel may be taking a sequential policy, letting things run their course and examining them one after the other. Israel's options are not mutually exclusive; they are often mutually dependent. Some options can be described as default options while others are intertwined; time is required for all these processes to take their course.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Efraim Inbar, "The Need to Block a Nuclear Iran" *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2006)

<sup>47</sup> Uzi Arad, 'The Iranian Nuclear Threat and U.S. Policy', (Washington D.C: The Washington Institute for Near East policy, 2003). Retrieved from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=210>. Accessed on 14 February 2006.

From the perspective of Egypt's leaders, the Israeli nuclear programme makes it more difficult to block the nuclear programmes of other states in the region, including Iran and Algeria.<sup>48</sup>

## 2.5 The Israeli options on Iran:

Ehud Olmert took over power from Ariel Sharon. While addressing the Iran issue on 22 January 2006, he said that Iran was trying to engage Israel in the conflict surrounding Tehran's ongoing nuclear enrichment efforts, and that he concurs with Ariel Sharon's position that Israel would not lead the battle against Iran. He said that 'responsibility falls first and foremost on the United States, Germany, France and the Security Council. We do not have to be the leaders.' By contrast, his Defense Minister, Shaul Mofaz, stated Israel will not tolerate Iran achieving nuclear independence, a statement that analysts feel signals a military action by Jerusalem is possible, with or without official US sanction.

Kadima<sup>49</sup> after coming to power has shown a greater resolve in fighting terrorism on its borders. But the policy on Iran does not seem clear. The Israeli leaders in the future might follow Rabin's advice offered in the 1990s that a joint operation against an external threat should be more favourable. But there can be a definite split within Israel's political establishment between Olmert's government and the conservative Likud leaders like Binyamin Netanyahu, who might want to go for a pre-emptive strike against Iran.

The question is whether ordinary Israelis are war weary, whether with Palestine or with Iran, and seek a compromise solution. However, the very strong showing of Hamas in the 25 January 2006 Palestine elections could change the Israeli mood. The day after their vote success, Hamas leader Mahmoud A-Zahhar claimed that his movement will not change its covenant calling for the destruction of Israel. AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee has been at the heart of ties between the Israeli right-wing Likud and members of the US Congress for years. It is regarded

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<sup>48</sup> Yezid Sayigh, 'Reversing the West Asia Nuclear Race' Middle East Report, no.1777, vol.22, no.4 (July-August 1992), p.16

<sup>49</sup> The new centrist party founded by Ariel Sharon before the elections in Israel in March 2006.

as so powerful that it is able to decide which Congressman is elected or re-elected. The US policy towards Iran might also partially depend on that. But the US has given a higher priority for the diplomatic option along with the European Union. Washington Institute for Near East Policy's<sup>50</sup> Deputy Director, Patrick Clawson identifies five options in dealing with Iran: encouraging regime change in Iran, engaging in international diplomacy and multilateral efforts, striking a grand deal with Iran, going for military prevention or some other form of coercion, and adopting a posture of deterrence.

The relations between Israel and Iran became very tense primarily due to the surprise election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran. After his election, Ahmadinejad called for Israel to be "wiped off the map" and statements denying the Holocaust. After the 1997 election of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, it was believed Iran and Israel would work to improve relations. But a hardline regime has taken over Iran, and Israel will not dismiss as pure rhetoric statements of similar kind from Iran. That would reflect Iran's policy preference. The Israeli perception is that an Iran strengthened by a nuclear arsenal may pursue such a policy.

## **2.6 Conclusion:**

If the United States refrains from action, Israel will face the difficult decision of whether to act unilaterally. While less suited to do the job than the United States, the Israeli military is capable of reaching the appropriate targets in Iran. It remains to be seen whether Jerusalem will be forced to act in accordance with its strategic doctrine. If, despite regional and/or international efforts the Islamic Republic of Iran succeeds in emerging with a nuclear arsenal it will not be the end of the current crisis, but rather the beginning of a new and far more dangerous one.

The fact that Iran is close to developing nuclear weapons, despite IAEA safeguards and NPT pledges, reflects the weakness of international guarantees. This analysis shows that there are no good options for Israel and each scenario has considerable risks and Israel will have to decide on its own.

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<sup>50</sup> The Washington Institute for Near East Policy was established to advance a balanced and realistic understanding of American interests in West Asia.

Israel faces serious dilemmas about the appropriate mix of policies on this issue. In the abstract, Israeli policy options are not unlike those that Israel also clearly has, in the abstract, the military option. Israel may not be able to terminate Iran's strategic threat, but can inflict serious damage and believes the United States also has such capabilities.

The 1991 Gulf war thus played a significant role in transforming the discourse on arms control in West Asia. With Israel being threatened by missiles from Iraq, and the helplessness of the US demonstrated Israel's emphasis on self-defence as well as involving the US in the future for other concessions and agreements.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest threat for the same reasons that the United States considers the prospect of a nuclear Iran to be threatening. The ramifications are that it could unleash proliferation in West Asia. It could destabilize the Gulf region and could undermine future negotiating processes between Israel and her neighbours. Israeli perceptions centre on this basic concept.

## CHAPTER- III

### PERCEPTIONS AND MISPERCEPTIONS: ROLE OF THE MEDIA

#### 3.1 Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Relations

Perception consists of images, beliefs and intentions. Decision-making is a process of inference in which actors interact based on expectations of what others will do in a given set of circumstances. Robert Jervis, one of the experts on analysing perceptions in International Relations posits that states adopt war-causing policies in the false expectation that these policies will elicit compliance from the other state. However, the misperceptions these models posit are different. Jervis argues that differing psychological factors often reinforce misunderstanding and impose limitations on the rationality of actors and their decision-making process.

As in Prisoners'/Security dilemma model, security-seeking states are motivated by fear and mistrust and therefore assume the worst of their neighbours. States seek the ability to defend themselves by acquiring the means for insuring marginal security, thus threatening the security of other states. These other actors, being threatened, will act similarly for the sake of their own security, often resulting in an arms race, policies that weaken potential rivals, war, etc. "These symmetrical beliefs produce incompatible policies with results that are in neither side's interests."<sup>1</sup>

As evidence against the Spiral Model, Jervis cites cases in which concessions and conciliation were interpreted as evidence for other side's weakness and thus led to exploitation and expansion rather than to further concessions. Spiral theory criticises tough and punitive actions as leading to spirals of hostility where a state gives up something in order to move towards a mutual-beneficial relationship. A Totalist strategy is characterised by the aim of a total win regarding basic issues in conflict. This strategy often entails complete elimination or subordination of the other and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* ( New Jersey :Princeton University Press,1976) pp.24-26

often emphasises negative means, i.e., threats and punishments. He discusses in detail the various models and its impact on the decision-making process.

The Deterrent-Punitive strategy has the thrust of Political Realism. A deterrent strategy is aimed at preventing the enemy from taking as much as he can. Both these strategies have their thrust upon demanding and forcing the other to do or not to do something. Both emphasise negative sanctions since the fundamental influence process involves threatening or coercing the enemy. In the Deterrence model, conflict arises from acts of appeasement made in the false expectation that appeasement will elicit better behaviour from other state. In fact, sometimes appeasement results in more demands from other state. Revisionist state may believe that the *status quo* power is weak, and challenge to test the *status quo*. As evidence against Deterrence, Jervis cites cases in which threats fail and lead to increased hostility, where the conflict develops in a manner and scope that are far from the original conflict of interests. The Anglo-German relations prior to the First World War offer an example of the Deterrence model.

When negative perceptions regarding the enemy's intentions remain, there will be an internally-generated need to demonstrate it to others and to one's own population about its power and avoid behaviour which may be perceived as weak or irresolute. There is a disposition to make threats more demonstrative and punishments more massive, and a sharp edge is added to competitive and deterrent strategies.

Historically, expansionists like Adolf Hitler did not picture their targets as aggressive enemies, but rather as decadent degenerates. The degenerate picture not only balances better psychologically with aggressive designs, but also makes more sense for the propagandists if seizing opportunities is on their agenda. The degenerate, unlike the enemy stereotype, describes the domination of others as part of a moral mission and duty to help the less capable. Both themes have advantages for mobilising an army or people to back a leader's adventure. Thus, the media has an important role in creating stereotypes and influencing public opinion.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard, K.Hermann, "Analyzing Soviet Images of the United States: A Psychological Theory and Empirical Study, *The Journal Of Conflict Resolution* (Connecticut), Vol.29, No.4(Dec.,1985), p.672

Self-images and perceptions of enemies become operative regarding the development of conflict orientation and the formulation and implementation of strategies when national leaders, important decision-makers, and prominent opinion elites reflect them. Often important self-images and perceptions of enemies are common to groups of leaders and elites. Self-images and perceptions of enemies tend to be relatively stable.<sup>3</sup>

Misperceptions about the enemy can also lead to war or a conflict situation. John Stoessinger<sup>4</sup> says that misperceptions of the adversary's capabilities or intentions can also contribute to the process leading to war. Enemy images and self-image also are important factors leading to war. A leader might have a sense of over-confidence or military-overconfidence that generally gives rise to a war-like situation. For example, the Iranian President's statement regarding Israel's destruction could have also emerged from a sense of over-confidence regarding Iran's capabilities or they might have been aimed at deterring Israel. John Stoessinger pays more attention to the leaders in assessing perceptions. He feels that a leader's perception on a given situation matters more than anything else.

Among the secondary forms of misperception is the misperception of the perception of others. Erroneous judgements regarding how the adversary defines his interests and perceives the threat to those interests, bias the other's expectations regarding his future behaviour and his response to the other's behaviour. These misperceptions of the adversary's perceptions therefore lead directly to misperceptions of his intentions. They also distort the cost-benefit calculus and can lead to miscalculations of one's own actions.<sup>5</sup> Robert H. White calls the misperception about the perception of others as "the absence of empathy"<sup>6</sup>. Another important secondary form of misperception lies in the misunderstanding of the nature of the decision-making process of others.

The presentation of "hard", high threat images of the adversary appears to be associated with "conservative" policies linked to a greater emphasis on military

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<sup>3</sup> Noel Kaplowitz, "Psycho political Dimension of International Relations: The Reciprocal Effects of Conflict Strategies" *International Studies Quarterly* (Denton) vol.28, no.1 December 1984 p. 375

<sup>4</sup> John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (Palgrave:New York, 1974) p. 21

<sup>5</sup> Jack S. Levy, "Misperceptions and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems", *World Politics* (Princeton), 1983, vol.36 pp.77-78

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. White, *Nobody Wanted War* (New York, 1968) p.74

programmes, while less militant images seem to be associated with more moderate positions on defence and foreign policy.<sup>7</sup> Exaggeration of the hostility of the adversary's intentions is also a form of misperception. It derives from system-induced worst-case analysis and also psychological constraints on information-processing. In the extreme case, it can also trigger a pre-emptive strike in a crisis-situation.<sup>8</sup> This is very much a relevant case in Israel-Iran relations. Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) estimates that Iran would have a bomb by 2007 and hence pressurise the government to go for a pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear installations.

In any society, the role of the mass media becomes very important to shape people's perceptions and misperceptions on any given issue. The media generate information and also express their views in the form of news-coverage, editorials, commentaries and even round-tables. Hence the media become indispensable for any study on perceptions.

### **3.2 Role of Mass Media:**

The mass media provide powerful channels of information between the political elite and the masses. Traditionally, the press and broadcasting act as proactive devices for encouraging the citizen to participate in the democratic process. The mass media, by disseminating the full range of political opinions, enable the public to make political choices and enter the national life. Therefore, they are understood as important mechanisms in ensuring the principles of modern democratic societies.

The media's political role covers several features including being a public watchdog, agenda setting and message production. Consequently, the organisation of the print and electronic media plays a vital role in furnishing individuals with their rights. The concepts of the fourth estate and freedom of information have underpinned the development of democratic media systems. The press is meant to act as impartial, objective and independent brokers of information.<sup>9</sup> However as Judith Lichtenberg

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<sup>7</sup> William D. Jackson, "Soviet Images of the U.S. as Nuclear Adversary: 1969-1979", *World Politics*, 1981, vol.33, p.615

<sup>8</sup> Jack S. Levy, "Misperceptions and the Causes of war: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems", *World Politics*, 1983, Vol.36, p.88

<sup>9</sup> Mark Wheeler, *Politics and the Mass Media* (London: 1997), p.1



says, 'an ambiguity exists as the media not only act as onlookers, but are political actors themselves. While media organisations claim to be critical outsiders, they are simultaneously political participants who shape the public's world view'.<sup>10</sup>

The media has a substantial impact upon how citizens think and what they think about, how they attribute responsibility for policy problems and what policy preferences they hold. Further what the media say often has direct effects upon what policy makers do.<sup>11</sup> Editors also might consciously or unconsciously tend to hire and promote reporters who share their policy preferences, or that they might tend to assign, edit, and place stories in such a way as to advance policy views that they themselves hold. Such influence could be entirely consistent with journalists' sense of autonomy, especially if the journalists were chosen for political compatibility in the first place or if they quickly learned and internalised what was expected of them.<sup>12</sup>

Media acts as an important medium between the people and the government in a democracy. First, individuals must have access to knowledge and information that will allow them to pursue their rights and accomplish their duties. Second, they should be provided with the broadest range of information, interpretation and debate over public political choices. Thus, citizens can employ communications facilities to register criticism and propose alternative courses of action. The mass media thus secures the citizen's civil, political and social rights. The print and the electronic media's ability to disseminate critical information quickly and widely throughout society are therefore crucial. The concept of freedom of information has thus underpinned the development of advanced media systems; further, within traditional liberal thought, the media should act as a public watch dog or fourth estate to reveal state abuses.<sup>13</sup>

Communications and information systems have two key features. At the production level, they should afford the maximum possible diversity of provision and the mechanisms for the reader's feedback and participation. At the level of consumption,

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<sup>10</sup> Judith Lichtenberg, *Democracy and the Mass Media* (Cambridge:1990) p.11

<sup>11</sup> Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kiader, *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992), p.27

<sup>12</sup> Maxwell McCombs and Donald L.Shaw, "The Agenda Setting Function of Mass media" *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Chicago) Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1972) , p.178

<sup>13</sup> Mark Wheeler, See n. 9., p.2

they should ensure universal access to services that can guarantee the exercise of citizenship. To this end, the citizen's access to ideas has been understood to be an obligation of national governments. Such rights have been established through a variety of laws, policies and regulations. The right to be informed has been sustained through education to advance knowledge and to discriminate changes in the world; widespread public libraries which are repositories of historical and current information, thereby giving the public access to information about government policies and dominant societal institutional practices; independent and widespread reporting of fluctuating local, national and international events through the press and broadcast media.<sup>14</sup>

The public's knowledge about all manner of things depends, to a large extent, on what the media convey. But as important as newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet are, it is very difficult to critique them. Journalism as a field lacks a coherent, widely accepted set of rules governing precisely how the news should be covered. There are no defined set of rules on objective reporting and how comprehensive and balanced the news should be. Unlike law or medicine, there are no government-imposed regulations that control proper journalistic practice. What the public reads or views as news is a small portion of potential news stories. Journalists choose to cover some events and activities and not others. Knowing what criteria they use to determine what is and what is not newsworthy is key to understanding what becomes 'news'. A former reporter and editor defines news as "the report of what a news organization has recently learned about matters of some significance or interest to the specific community that news organisation serves". This definition emphasise the importance of the news organisation in the newsgathering process; some news organisations will assign significance or interest to an event and report it as news, while other organisations may ignore it.<sup>15</sup> This explains why the lead stories in two newspapers, even within the same geographical region, may be different. These variations are often labelled as "bias", but whose bias is not specified. Biases can be the representation of the experiences and perspectives of one person or group of people

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<sup>14</sup> William H. Melody, "Communication policy in the Global Information Economy: Whither the Public Interest?", in Marjorie Ferguson, ed., *Public Communication: The New Imperatives: Future Directions for Media Research*, (Sage Publications: London, 1990) p.18-19

<sup>15</sup> Jan E. Leighley, *Mass media and politics: A social science perspective* (Boston: 2004), p.51

more than others. Based on this definition, the bias is reporters' and editors' subjective evaluations of community or audience interest.

Jack Fuller, a media critique notes three critical elements of the news – timeliness, community interest, and significance which necessarily introduce fundamental biases in the news. Timeliness introduces a bias of immediacy, where recent events supersede that which is already known. Being of interest to its audience results in news that accentuates the negative and people's curiosity. Significance is typically reflected in the geographic bias in the news- events in the immediate neighbourhood grapple more attention. He suggests that when reporters appeal to audience interests, one consequence is the tendency to report negative developments as news.<sup>16</sup> Hence when the media's objective becomes catering to an audience, the principle of objectivity can be lost.

### **3.3 Journalism of Propaganda:**

In accordance with the principles of good journalism, the press is supposed to get both sides of an issue. In fact, while reporting both sides are seldom accorded equal prominence. Mainstream media seeks to prefigure the reader's perception of a subject with a positive or negative label. The label defines the subject without having to deal with actual particulars that might lead to a different conclusion. The label can sometimes be deceptive as well. Labels like "hard-line" are never subjected to precise definition. The efficacy of a label is that it does not have a specific content which can be held up to a test of evidence. Most of the labels propagate an undefined but evocative image.<sup>17</sup> It can be self-referential as well. By doing thus, media take the roles of propagandists.

Frequently the media accepts as real the very policy position that needs to be examined. This is true with a country's military spending. The press is often critical about the defensive strategies taken by the policy makers. For example, in Israel, the

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<sup>16</sup> ibid

<sup>17</sup> Michael Parenti's, "Monopoly Media Manipulation" in Elliot D. Cohen's ed. *News Incorporated: Corporate media ownership and its threat to Democracy*, (Prometheus Books: New York, 2005), p.105

media often presumes that the Arrow<sup>18</sup> is a defensive shield and the government should go for it. The media pre-emptively assume the very dubious position that needs to be debated. In keeping with their propaganda function, the media often rush into areas that politicians might at first avoid.<sup>19</sup>

It plays a crucial role in making a war acceptable by repeatedly running reports on the military preparedness that might take place. For example, after September 11, the United States media through a seemingly neutral face value exposure and repetition, the matter of fact coverage of preparedness of war made military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq seem likely, urgent, inevitable, needed and quite acceptable. Thus the media cleared away new ground for political leaders to venture upon. In this instance, they provided the readers with war against Afghanistan and the Patriot Act<sup>20</sup>. The media was making the unthinkable acceptable by saying it again and again.

The most effective propaganda relies on framing rather on falsehood. By bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis and other auxiliary embellishments, the media can create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy and without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity. Framing is achieved in the way the news is packaged, the amount of exposure, the placement (front page or buried within, lead story or last), the tone of presentation (sympathetic or slighting), the headlines and photographs.

Propaganda might mean interpretations and integration within the dominant discourse of thought. Whereas mainstream journalists do not always subscribe overtly to official views on terrorism, the field of meanings in which they choose to operate inevitably leads them to produce only certain interpretations of political violence. Without the elite owned or controlled mass media, integration propaganda in the technological

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<sup>18</sup> The Arrow theatre ballistic missile defence system has been developed by Israel and is in operation with the Israeli Defence Forces. The Arrow missile approaches the target at a maximum speed of 2.5km/s, to a maximum altitude of 50,000 m.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p.101

<sup>20</sup> The Patriot Act was passed after the September 11, 2001 attacks and was formed in response to the terrorist attacks against the U.S., and dramatically expands the authority of U.S. law enforcement for the stated purpose of fighting terrorist acts in the United States and abroad. It is also used to detect and prosecute other alleged potential crimes such as providing false information on terrorism. It was renewed on 2 March 2006 with a vote of 89–11 in the Senate and on March 7 280–138 in the House. The renewal was signed into law by President George W. Bush on 9 March 2006.

state would not be possible, where it appears constantly and consistently. Unlike the overt tendencies of agitation propaganda, integration propaganda does not involve the aggressive presentation of specific views but a more subtle and ubiquitous mode which operates within dominant discourses.

Although mainstream journalists in technological societies do challenge the day to day functioning of incumbent governments but they rarely bring into question the fundamental structures of thought or of power. Operating within a particular ideological system, mass media workers consciously or unconsciously produce integration propaganda that serves the overall interests of elites. Stuart Hall describes how it operationally and structurally tends to produce dominant discourses and the perspective of authorised knowers – which are generally presented as being rational and natural.<sup>21</sup> Through the various mechanisms of censorship, licensing, access and advertising, societal elites also ensure that the mass media primarily disseminate messages that promote the social and economic values helping to maintain the status quo. When on issues regarding national security, the military is given more importance and experts from the military dominate the media's views regarding the same.

### **3.4 Media and Political Bias**

Media bias is a term used to describe a real or perceived bias of journalists and news producers within the mass media, in the selection of which events will be reported and how they are covered. 'Media bias' refers to a pervasive or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries is widely disputed, although its causes are both practical and theoretical.

The media biasness begins with the idea that the practices of journalists and editors result in articles and programmes which favour one view of the world over another, providing sustenance for one set of interests while undermining an alternative. These interests may be those of the particular corporations for which they work or they may

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<sup>21</sup> Stuart Hall, " Culture, media and the ideological effect," in James Curran et al., eds., *Mass Communication and Society*, (Beverly Hills, 1979) pp. 315-317

be those of a particular ideology. The notion of bias is applied equally to competing value systems, to the representation of women and men, to the portrayal of ethnic groups and to the priority accorded to whole countries and their peoples. 'Bias' refers to the systematic favouring of one position but it has further implications. It entails a critical judgement. To call someone or some account 'biased' is to challenge its validity and to see it as failing to be 'truthful', 'impartial', 'objective', or 'balanced', terms which appeal to slightly different ideals.<sup>22</sup>

Dennis McQuail in his book, *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest* identifies four types of bias. He classifies them into partisan, propaganda, unwitting and ideological. Partisan bias occurs when a cause is explicitly and deliberately promoted. Examples of this are editorial comments which recommend support for one political party or take sides in a political controversy. Partisan affiliation can also be related to categories of race, class, religion and gender just as much as and might favour one group. A more transparent accounting of who presents the news might alleviate some of problems of partisan affiliation by reporters and journalists. Propaganda bias is involved where a story is reported with the deliberate intention of making the case for a particular party or policy or point of view, without explicitly stating this. Unwitting bias involves looking at the standard operating procedures of papers and newsrooms, to see how these practices routinely create hierarchies of values. These decisions are about the importance to be given to a story, and they are reflected in the item's place in the running order or its place in the paper or on the page. Inevitably these decisions involve a judgement about the issue involved. Ideological bias is hidden and unintended, and it can be detected only in a close reading of the text, where the hidden assumptions and value judgements can be revealed. These assumptions are grounded in ideologies which seek to explain the way the world works, and these are themselves 'biased'.<sup>23</sup>

Media bias can be of two different types. One bias is referred to as 'ideology' which reflects a newspaper's private desire to react to a reader's opinions in a particular direction. The second bias is referred to as 'spin' which reflects the newspaper's

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<sup>22</sup> John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* (Palgrave: New York: 2001), p.16

<sup>23</sup> Denis McQuail, *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest* (Palgrave: New York, 1992), p.120

attempt to simply create a memorable story. These two biases operate very differently. Whereas competition can eliminate the effect of ideological bias it actually exaggerates the 'incentive to spin stories'.<sup>24</sup> There are many examples of accusations of bias being used as a political tool, sometimes resulting in government censorship.

Furthermore, media organisations do not always practice democratic principles in their reporting. Certain people and groups have much greater access to the media than others. Power structures inherent in the systems of government and economies will always give voice and authority to some more than others. The answer lies in the way in which bias is tied to fundamental assumptions about 'power' and 'democracy'. It is assumed that, in a democracy, no one group or set of interests is systematically preferred over another and that the information available to citizens is accurate and impartial. Under these conditions, the principles of political equality and accountability can operate.

The media's distortion of the representation of the world can skew and thwart the democratic process. The democratic process cannot operate effectively if the media systematically promote some interests and misinform the citizens. In identifying biases, critics of the media are voicing a fear that misrepresentation or partiality has important consequences for the way people regard themselves, how they are regarded by others, the outcome of political processes and the practice of democracy. In this context, they are merely to remind us that the extent to which 'bias' matters is a consequence of a set of underlying political assumptions.<sup>25</sup> The media might sometime favour the views of one political party over the other. Ideological leanings can make the media adopt a position which is favoured by a particular political party.

Moreover, media tend to take distinctive stands, and those stands are consistent over many years. There is an 'ideological continuum'<sup>26</sup> that can be clearly read. These positions do not change over time. The media sometimes further their own policy stands through news stories. The news stories do in fact sometimes correspond closely to the political stands that are taken in overt editorials. A conspiracy theory of the

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p.128

<sup>25</sup> John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* (Palgrave: New York, 2001), p.16

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin.I.Page, "Mass Media as Political Actors", *Political science and Politics*, Vol.29, No.1, (Mar., 1996), p.21

media would suggest that the owners or managers of the media organisations influence the policy position that media outlets take. Though the reporters always have their own share of work assigned to them, the ultimate decision lies with the editors who will finally decide the contents of a story and also where the story is to be placed in the newspaper.

Practical limitations to media neutrality include the inability of journalists to report all available stories and facts, and the requirement that selected facts be linked into a coherent narrative<sup>27</sup>. Government influence, including overt and covert censorship, biases the media in some countries. Market forces that can result in a biased presentation include the ownership of the news source, the selection of staff, and the preferences of an intended audience, or pressure from advertisers. Political affiliations arise from ideological positions of media owners and journalists. The space or air time available for reports, as well as deadlines needed to be met, can lead to incomplete and apparently biased stories. But a journalist is unbiased only if he or she reports all the facts. In some instances journalists fail to report a relevant fact, rather than choose to report a false fact.<sup>28</sup> It is assumed that with any potential news story, there are a finite number of facts that apply to the story. A relevant source of bias is the journalist's choice of stories to cover. It would be very difficult for a researcher to construct a universe of stories from which journalists choose to cover.

Media outlets promotion of their own policy agendas might not matter much, for example, if those agendas were highly diverse and competed vigorously with each other, and if at least some significant media voices provided accurate information and offered interpretation that resonated well with the values and interests of ordinary citizens. Then citizens could presumably sort out the true from the false, the useful from the useless or misleading, and come to sensible conclusion. On the other hand, however, if most or all influential media promoted the same policy views, and if those views were badly out of touch with the values and interests of ordinary citizens, public deliberation will be stifled and the citizens misled.<sup>29</sup> Principally, the media have been able to perpetuate the values of the political, social; and economic elites.

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<sup>27</sup>K. Newton, "Media bias" in R. Goodin and A. Reeve, ed., *Liberal neutrality* (London: 1989), pp. 130-35.

<sup>28</sup> Sendhil Mullainathan, and Andrei Shleifer, *The Market for News*, (Harvard University: 2003), p.74

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*



Effectively, the mass media reinforce the dominant ideology over the mass of citizens.<sup>30</sup>

Howard Kurtz, a media critic feels that political diversity problem in the news business is the reason for the ideological bias of the media.” What the journalists sometimes do is to editorialise carefully by selecting sources that support their views. They select sources that express their own point of view and then use the neutral voice to make it seem objective.

Another biasness of the media is the layout bias. Headlines and photos have a much greater impact on readers than the text, which often goes partially or completely unread. This finding amplifies concerns about layout bias. Some of these flaws are inherent to modern journalism, such as the twenty-four hour news cycle, the press’s negative tone, unprepared reporters, and the greater latitude given to editorialising. Others are specific to the coverage of the West Asia in the US and Europe, such as preconceived notions that journalists bring to their coverage. The underlying frames give rise to some of the other problems highlighted, such as telling only part of the story, bad layout and photo choice, and incorrect definitions. Oppositional, alternative, and populist perspectives may appear from time to time in media content, often on the back pages of a newspaper or near the end of a news broadcast. Occasionally, alternative views are even printed in high-profile parts of a newspaper, such as the editorial, opinion columns, and the front page. But often an alternative narrative in the text of a write-up is subverted by the adjacent placing of the dominant discourse in more prominent parts of the article format, such as the headline or an accompanying photograph.<sup>31</sup>

Certain subjects are given more importance; For example, a newspaper might always have a special focus on the ruling party’s accomplishments when they are in power.

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Sutter, “Advertising and Political Bias in the Media”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (Madison), vol. 6(2002), p.729.

<sup>31</sup> Karim H,Karim, “Making sense of the Islamic Peril” in Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, eds., *Journalism After September 11*(London: 2002), p.104

### 3.5 Media Perceptions of Risk:

Since the nineteenth century national daily newspapers periodically reconstituted themselves in response to social and cultural change interpreted primarily through the prism of commercialism. The newspapers portrayed any threat which existed as a potential danger to the nation. Journalism uncritically propagated patriotism as both a cultural comfort and an analytical framework in which to understand risk. The 'culture of fear'<sup>32</sup> that the media helps propagate consists of a vast array of threats. The perception of risk is different from risk *per se*, where it exists as a structural condition. Ulrich Beck, a media analyst argues that risk underlies contemporary societies.

In the present day, Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism by a non-state actor has been identified as a major threat. Risk perception refers to an individual's intuitive judgement of both aspects of risk: the probability of occurrence and the severity of the associated consequences. Risk is a contested notion. According to Ulrich Beck<sup>33</sup>, a media analyst, 'risk is a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurity'. There are no risks *per se* but ways in which events, people, and issues are defined as risks. The definition of risk is an attempt to impose order, that is, to manage and to regulate, society. Anything which the media perceives as a threat to the people can be identified as risk. There are often reports in the media about the risk of a nuclear catastrophe or global warming.

The media does play an important role in bringing societies in contact with risk. Media reports on risk have a different impact on the social perception of risk and anxiety. This does not invalidate, however, the argument that in large-scale societies, the media is a contact zone between the public and risk, the linchpin between objective and subjective risk. Understanding risk means to understand how societies construct perceptions about the social distribution of risk. Different interests struggle to identify risk, for example, through the use of information media to shape public consciousness and policy about risk. Although there is no consensus on the dynamics

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<sup>32</sup> Weisbord, n.30, p.216

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

of interrelationship between media and risk, the media do play an important role in bringing societies in contact with risk. The media reports on risk have a different impact on the social perception of risk and anxiety. Media representations provide crucial information used to estimate the social distribution of risk and the identity of who is responsible for the risk. Patriotic reaction in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and a Jew's response to anti-Semitic acts are examples.

Media plays an important role in bringing to the notice of the public the risk that is inevitable or to be eliminated. The media does also give policy prescriptions to eliminate the risk and might as well convey to the citizens from where it emanates. Thus, it plays an important role in bringing societies in contact with risk and suggesting to the decision-makers how it ought to be eliminated. The Israel-Iran case is an example of the perception of risk that involves the relation between both the countries. The perception of risk, which underlies their relationship with a deep mistrust of the other, has accentuated the arms race with the growing stocks of missiles produced investing lots of resources. When exposed to the threat of risk by the media the public is made to accept policies which a government would take to eliminate those risks. For example, governments might impose certain legislative measures to bring down the risk of global warming and the public complies with it.

### **3.6 Security Perceptions and the Media:**

The media remains the largest and most often used database in studies of perceptions. For example, nearly all Soviet images of the United States were dominated by a Marxist-Leninist language and an anti-American bias. Stereotypes make decision-making easier and can also be used as justifications in post hoc rationalisations. The stereotypes employed, however, are not selected randomly. According to Fritz Heider's balance theory<sup>34</sup>, the stereotype is expected to reduce any cognitive disharmony and reinforce a positive self-image. If someone hates a country or sees threats emanating from it, there would be a tendency to describe it as a diabolical

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<sup>34</sup> Balance Theory is a motivational theory of attitude change proposed by Fritz Heider, which conceptualizes the consistency motive as a drive toward psychological balance. (source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

enemy.<sup>35</sup> If someone saw the opportunity to exploit a country, the balance process would produce a different stereotype. The media also does the balancing act as the condition requires it to.

Perceptions of security are developed to respond to certain perceptions of threat. However, perceptions of security are not merely perceptions of threat transposed. Rather, they are the concepts formulated to address the conceived threats within the possible means and circumstances. In other words, the difference between threat and security is much more than the latter being the opposite of the former. While people enjoy free hand developing their perceptions of threat, they do not have the same freedom formulating their perceptions of security. It is the security dilemma, looked at from a different angle where absolute security is not attainable. Perceptions of security are functions of the decision-makers and the media takes on the responsibility of conveying that to the people.

Experts from government, the military, and academia emerge as the owners of dominant discourses on security related threats, such as terrorism. They make themselves readily available through the mass media to the public, to define and describe the problem as well as respond to alternative discourses on the issue. This doesn't mean that they are engaged in a conscious, coordinated conspiracy to produce a monolithic view, but that they subscribe to a general purpose and a common field of meanings. And this policy view is given in the media also. A lack of security is often pinpointed as a key reason for the occurrence of terrorist incidents and the solutions are seen in technological and legislative improvements by the state to better detect, prevent and punish the enemy.<sup>36</sup> Since commentators on security related topics are drawn entirely from the establishment, their position becomes a given one.

### 3.7 Enemy Images and the Media

The aspects of perceptions of enemies which influence foreign-policy behaviour include perceptions of their character, intent, power strengths, weakness, trust-

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<sup>35</sup> O.Holsti, "Cognitive dynamics and images of the enemy: Dulles and Russia", in D.J. Finlay and others, ed., *Enemies in Politics* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1995), p.26

<sup>36</sup> Karim H,Karim, n.30, ed., *Journalism After September 11*(London: 2002), p.104

worthiness, and that which the actor admires and dislikes. The sources of these perceptions include experiences with the enemy, interpretation of enemy behaviour by leaders and opinion makers, the media's opinion and internal developments in the enemy's society; his successes and failures in power struggles and war; and also interpretation of one's own national goals which may preclude accordance of any legitimacy whatsoever to the adversary no matter what he does. Thus, perceptions of enemies – particularly historical enemies and those regarding whom the actor has experienced trauma or catastrophe- are also an important dimension of political culture.

Enemy images are modified as attitudes among the political elites. Heikki Luostarinen, a media analyst has identified enemy images both as a reflection of the actual tension and conflict between states and as a way of creating unity in a state and legitimising its rulers.<sup>37</sup> Philip Knightely<sup>38</sup> describes how an important element in war reporting is to 'demonise' the enemy and to portray him as 'an animal in disguise'. Enemy images can thus be linked to the journalistic process itself. The portrayal of Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait offers rich material in this respect. In headlines, cartoons and articles all across the world he was compared to Hitler, psychiatrists interviewed on television presented a 'remote diagnosis' declaring him as paranoid and mentally ill.

In *Faces of the Enemy*, Sam Keen shows how enemy images historically can be categorised within certain archetypes. Western portrayals of Saddam Hussein before, during and after the Gulf War fit nicely into several of these categories: 'the enemy as a criminal', 'the enemy as a torturer', 'the enemy as death', 'the enemy as rapist, desecrator of women and children' and 'the enemy as enemy of God'.<sup>39</sup>

It is also interesting to note that the rhetoric of religion has been used to rally support against an enemy. Saddam Hussein in his attempts to rally the Arab world behind him consciously used Muslim rhetoric. It is also interesting when examining enemy

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<sup>37</sup> Heikki Luostarinen, " Finnish Russophobia : The story of an enemy image", *Journal of Peace Research*(Oslo) , vol.26, no.2 May 1989, p.124

<sup>38</sup> Philip Knightely, *The First Casualty* (Deutsch: London, 1975)p. 86

<sup>39</sup> Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy- Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (Harper & Row : San Francisco, 1986), p. 49-51

images vis-à-vis Communism, since US Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush used Christian rhetoric against Communist and Muslim leaders. Iran in its ambition to protect itself as the leader of the Islamic world, adopts an anti-Israeli posture offering overt support to the Arabs in the fight against Israel. The angling of 'us' and 'we' is part of the picture as well.<sup>40</sup> A different yardstick is applied to our own standards and to our enemy's. The creation of a border line between 'us' and 'the other' is a socio-psychological mechanism that occurs in all human relations; in the neighbourhood, community and society, people will include some but exclude others on the basis of different criteria. Eventually nations start to define other nations as the 'other'. Iran's rhetoric of Islamists destroying the 'Zionist entity' is another example of the same kind. Iran by doing thus tries to garner the support of other Islamic nations. If the ruling class was unable to keep this division alive its authority could then be challenged. Media rhetoric appears as a tool of political communication. The rhetorical perspective focuses on the media's ability to persuade. Persuasion is achieved with the help of political rhetoric. In politics, rhetoric is a tool deliberately wielded in the journalistic process through words and concepts and can be used consciously and unconsciously to get a given message across to the receiver.<sup>41</sup>

To avoid enemy image is a challenge for journalists covering international conflicts. An enemy image is a negative stereotype of a nation, state or/and their respective regimes and heads of states. The enemy image can express itself through metaphors or other effects in the language or visual and graphic effects that create expectations of aggressive, hostile or inhuman behaviour. In times of trauma the mainstream media are not as objective as they claim to be, but they also internalise the official line.

Michael Schudson<sup>42</sup> notes that there are three conditions under which dissent and the ideal of objectivity are suspended: Tragedy, danger and a threat to national security. In moments of tragedy, journalists assume a pastoral role. This is evident, for instance, in news coverage of assassinations of political leaders, in state funerals, and

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<sup>40</sup> Rune Ottosen, "Enemy Images and the Journalistic Process", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.32, no.1 Feb.1995, p.99

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York: Freedman, 2001), p.54

<sup>42</sup> Michael Schudson "What's unusual about covering politics as usual" in Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, ed., *Journalism after September 11* (London: 2002), p.41

since September 11 in coverage of the mourning of victims. Second, in moments of public danger, journalists replace professional objectivity with neighbourly reassurance, whether danger comes from terrorists or other calamities. They seek to offer practical guidance and to communicate fellow feeling. They become part of the public healthy campaign, not just a public information system. Third, journalists also reject neutrality during threats to national security. When they are convinced that national security is at risk, they willingly withhold or temper their reports. American journalists did so at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, for example, and on other occasions where releasing information might put American military forces in harm's way.<sup>43</sup>

Daniel Hallin<sup>44</sup> in his influential study of the US media during the Vietnam War argues that journalism's commitment towards objectivity has always been compartmentalised. That is, within a certain sphere, journalists seek conscientiously to be balanced and objective. But there is also a "sphere of consensus" when journalists feel free to invoke a generalised "we" and to take for granted shared values and assumptions. He also points to a third sphere, a "sphere of deviance", where journalists also depart from standard norms of objective reporting and feel authorised to treat as marginal, laughable, dangerous, or ridiculous individuals or groups who fall far outside a range of variation taken as legitimate.<sup>45</sup>

Enemy images are projected mainly in editorials and commentary columns and less so in straight news articles. However, the angling of articles through headlines, illustrations and cartoons may reveal the attitudes of news desk as to who the 'enemy' is, even when the text itself is written in neutral prose.

### **3.8 Media and Patriotism**

Patriotism emerges as the only possible way to provide reassurance to a community, when faced with the risk of insecurity and anxiety in a globalised world. When risk and insecurity are pervasive, as portrayed by the media, the nation allegedly offers a

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

<sup>44</sup> D.C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1986), p.116-117

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*,

safe haven and warmth in a cold, menacing world. When identities are seemingly multiple, patriotism provides a unified identity coming together to face threats.

Journalists defy the professional requirements of detachment and objectivity and willingly embrace patriotic partisanship. There is a strong affinity between journalism and conservative patriotism. Liberal patriotism is often sacrificed on the altar of the nation, particularly when external aggression is seen as a justification for counteraction. Constitutional patriotism and the truth suffer when governments and the public fan the flames of patriotism of war and intolerance. Even in a globalised world, journalism continues to be governed by national demands, audiences, public opinion, advertisers, economies, laws and governments. As long as this remains true, then, journalism is likely to be patriotism's perennial partner, a reliable associate that cosmopolitan citizenship global consciousness continue to lack despite the ascent and consolidation of global media.

The media's sense of patriotism has important consequences for a democracy. Media's love of country quickly transmogrifies into chauvinism that prepare the ground for violence and do disservice to national and global democracy. Instead, it should courageously show patriotic spirit by keeping criticism alive rather than being compliant with "home essentialism".<sup>46</sup> It could provide reassurance by lowering the fear volume and defending diversity and tolerance rather than foundational ethnocentric patriotism. A choice for the latter not only excludes democratic dissent from patriotism, but it also minimises the possibility that citizens of the nation imagine that they also belong to a world community of equals. What conception of patriotism, is chosen is of crucial importance in risk assessment at a time of disorder and violence in a global world.

The weakness of the coverage is augmented by the structural context as well. News media have become consolidated into the hands of a very small number of enormous media conglomerates. For many of them, journalism accounts for a small percentage of their revenues and profits. These new orders have paid huge sums to acquire their media empires, and are expected to generate maximum return for their assets.

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<sup>46</sup> Weisbord, note.9 (London: 2002), p.216



Accordingly, a badly commercial logic has been applied to journalism in recent years.<sup>47</sup> It is an unmitigated disaster for the development of a meaningful democratic debate over international policy, and highlights a deep contradiction between the legitimate informational needs of a democratic society and the need for profit of the corporate media. In the United States since September 11, the range of expert analysis has been limited mostly to the military and intelligence communities and their supporters, with their clear self interest in the imposition of military solution rarely acknowledged and almost never critically examined. The military approach has been simply offered as the only option.

Media bias towards religion is most obvious in countries where the media is controlled by the State, which in turn is dominated by a particular religion. In these instances, bias against other faiths can be explicit and virulent. But even in countries with freedom of religion and a free press, the dominant religion exerts some amount of influence on the media. In nations where Christianity is the majority faith, reporters tend to focus on the activities of the Christian community, to the exclusion of other faiths. But the opposite may also occur, with media self-consciously avoiding reporting on any religious matters at all in order to avoid the appearance of favouring one faith over another.

### **3.9 Conclusion:**

Perceptions can shape the decision-making process in a country. Perceptions can be negative as well as positive. They can be hostile or friendly depending on the circumstances which shape them. Perceptions can play a very important role in a conflict or a war situation. Misperceptions of an enemy's capability like underestimating or overestimating can also lead to war and conflict. Hence perceptions play a very important role in world politics. The media plays a very important role in shaping perceptions as well as analysing them.

It has to be understood that the media should not be viewed as monolithic vehicles for only one type of discourse. Depending on the latitude allowed by owners, they do

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<sup>47</sup> Robert W. McChesney, "The Structural Limitations of US Journalism", in Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, ed., *Journalism After September 11* (London: 2002), p.99

function as sites of contestation across various views. The media has the ability to influence the perceptions of what others think. In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position.

From the perspective of democratic politics, then, this is a very pessimistic view of the nature of the news. It has consequences that are far broader and deeper than any ideological biases of the mass media. The media's analysis of the threat perceptions and risk, their role as a propagandist and their role as objective vehicles for delivering the news are all different functions performed by the media. The media become very powerful weapons in a democratic setup where information and communication revolution is changing people's lives.

The media thus play a very important role in the formation of threat perceptions and security. Media has the power to influence the decision-making process with the influence it wields in the journalistic process. It shapes public opinion and has an effect on their thinking without the public realising it. The ideological linkages and the organisational imperatives hold that the media adhere to other functions than objective reporting and editing. This function of the media has an impact on how the people value their relationship vis-à-vis an enemy or an adversary.

## CHAPTER-IV

### NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE *JERUSALEM POST* ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

#### 4.1. Coverage on Iran's Political Issues in *Jerusalem Post*

*Jerusalem Post's* general coverage on Iran centres on change of regime and the lack of freedom in Iran, which is criticised by the Israeli scholars in their writings in the newspaper. An analysis on this issue in the newspaper would contain advice as to how support for the dissident groups in Tehran should be provided by the United States or Europe. It would also contain matter as to how a regime change can be brought about in Iran. The coverage of Iran in the *Jerusalem Post* entails a critical analysis. The election of the former Iranian president, Mohammed Khatami in 1997, led to a plethora of opinion in the Israeli newspaper. Though almost all of the writers expressed their opinions on the topic, they have been highly critical about the elections in Iran and vociferously criticised the European Union's policy of 'critical dialogue' with Iran, which was intended after Khatami came to power.

In the coverage on Iran, *Jerusalem Post* has expressed its deep mistrust of Iran. Iran is being viewed as a supporter of terrorism. Iran's opposition to the "Middle East Peace Process" (MEPP) was conceived as the support for militant groups like Hamas, which were opposed to negotiating with Israel. Nations which were hopeful of a change in Iran's policies after the election of President Khatami were also criticised by the newspaper. In some sections, a conclusion was drawn that because of United States' oil interests and Iran's importance in the Central Asian context as a region which holds 200 billion barrels of oil reserves, dialogue with Iran has been called for by the major powers.<sup>1</sup> *Jerusalem Post* questioned the basis of the European Union or the United States holding discussions with Iran. The views expressed by the *Jerusalem Post* on the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Jerusalem Post*, 25 August 1997

elections in Iran in 1997 followed a very consistent position. Libya and Syria have been viewed as a threat but Iran was the sole threat to Israel's existence.

An analysis of the headlines of the political news presented by *Jerusalem Post* showed that they mostly dealt with the negative aspects of politics in Iran. The headlines of a few items published in the newspaper were meant to create threat perceptions on Iran's nuclear programme and were event or personality oriented. *The Jerusalem Post* has a major collaboration with the Associated Press (AP)<sup>2</sup> and *Wall Street Journal*<sup>3</sup>. Both these newspapers also are known for their conservative views on issues in world politics.

Though Iran's nuclear programme forms the object of discussion while talking about Khatami's election and the reformists coming to power, the policy by the United States and the European Union (EU) towards Iran has been viewed critically. According to Daniel Leshem's opinion on critiquing EU's policy with Iran<sup>4</sup>, he praises Denmark for urging the European Union to suspend the policy of "critical dialogue" with Iran.<sup>5</sup> Leshem criticises the European Union's policy of condemning Israel for the deterrent capacity that Israel possesses. He is very vocal when he says that the Nuclear-non-proliferation treaty (NPT) has only served to encourage countries like Iran and Iraq to develop nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> In concluding his article, he also criticises newspapers like *Sunday Times*<sup>7</sup> for being indifferent to the threat posed to Israel by nuclear weapons and

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<sup>2</sup> The Associated Press, or AP, is an American news agency, the world's largest such organization. The AP is a cooperative owned by its contributing newspapers and broadcast stations in the United States, who both contribute stories to it and use material written by its staffers. Many newspapers and broadcasters outside the United States are AP subscribers -- that is, they pay a fee to use AP material but are not members of the cooperative. As of 2005, AP's news is used by 1,700 newspapers, in addition to 5,000 television and radio outlets.

<sup>3</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* is an influential international daily newspaper published in New York City, New York. The positions of the editorial page section typically is thought of as adhering to American conservatism and economic liberalism. The page takes a free-market view of economic issues and an often neoconservative view of American foreign policy. The editorial page staffs also offer a very pro-business view of immigration to the United States and immigration reform; specifically they are in favor of open borders and legalisation for those who entered the country illegally. The editorial page commonly publishes pieces by U.S. and world leaders in government, politics and business. However, the Journal publishes no regular editorial columns by liberals.

<sup>5</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 9 April 1997

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *The Sunday Times* is a Sunday broadsheet newspaper distributed in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, published by Times Newspapers Ltd, a subsidiary of News International which is in turn owned

trying to make Israel give up on its deterrent capability. Mordechai Vanunu<sup>8</sup> is being criticised by the *Jerusalem Post* as a traitor and violating his commitments towards his job.

*Jerusalem Post* would also look into Iranian society and the freedom in that country. Abraham Rabinovich in "Every Iranian wants the Bomb" expresses his views on the freedom enjoyed by the Iranians in their country. He shares his experiences in the special feature of the *Jerusalem Post*. Menashe Amir is the director of the Iranian desk at the Israel Broadcasting Authority and according to his observations, several dozen queries about people in Iran wanting to convert to Judaism to flee Iran has come up to him. The freedom enjoyed by the people has led them to openly criticise the regime in Tehran. The Jewish community in Iran, which numbers 23,000 compared to 80,000 before the Revolution, retains its vitality though the Iranian Jews are doing well economically and educationally. According to Menashe Amir, the regime in Tehran has reached a dead end and the population has grown from 37 million to 67 million. Poverty is spreading and many turned to prostitution. People in Iran want a similar intervention as in Afghanistan and Iraq. . There is no leadership around which the various opposition groups have been able to rally. When university students take to the streets no other segments of the population joins them. According to Amir, the Iranian regime is ripe for falling and in case the regime falls they would have an Israel-Iran -Turkey axis. After the regime falls, Iran would need serious reconstruction in many sectors and Israel would be in a position to help. As for the bomb, dissidents want it as much as the regime, although they would not like to see the ayatollahs get their hands on it.

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by News Corporation. On 5 October 1986, the British newspaper *The Sunday Times* ran the story on its front page under the headline: "Revealed: the secrets of Israel's nuclear arsenal."

<sup>8</sup>Mordechai Vanunu is an Israeli former nuclear technician who revealed details of Israel's nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986. He was subsequently abducted in Rome by an Israeli Mossad agent and smuggled to Israel, where he was tried and convicted of treason. He spent 18 years in prison, including more than 11 years served in solitary confinement. Vanunu was released from prison in 2004, subject to a broad array of restrictions on his speech and movement.

## 4.2 Views from *The Jerusalem Post* on Iranian Nuclear Programme

An analysis of the writers who contribute for the *Jerusalem Post* gives a rough idea as to the views expressed by all the contributors to the newspaper. Not very different views have been expressed by all of them. Some of the writers like Gerald Steinberg, Efraim Inbar contribute occasionally while the Columnist Caroline Glick contributes frequently for the newspaper.

Efraim Inbar in 'Facing the Nuclear Challenge' articulates his view that Israel should be concerned with the progress made by Iraq and Iran on the nuclear path. Nuclear devices in the "hands of Saddam Hussein or the Iranian mullahs" constitute a potential existential threat to the Jewish state, while lack of progress on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks does not endanger the State of Israel".<sup>9</sup> Israel was trying to carry the peace process forward with the Palestinians in 1999. According to Inbar, a potential threat like Iran or Iraq must be quickly dealt with than Syria or Palestine. Nuclearisation of West Asia is strategic nightmare for Israeli Defense Forces and hence must be dealt with effectively.

He also reveals his lack of faith in the international verification mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organisations like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meant for the purpose. "A strategy on the building of an effective and verifiable arms control regime is an exercise in self-delusion. Such a fool-proof arms-control regime cannot be devised in a Hobbesian world".<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, Israel should state clearly that, as long as the political circumstances allow the possibility of a hostile regional power to engage in preparations for attacking it, its strategic goal is the nuclear *status quo*, which means Israeli superiority in that area. The Arab demand for equality and symmetry in military capabilities is unacceptable in the conventional and non-conventional area. He draws a comparison with the relations between Canada and the United States and, Spain and France. Canada borders the United

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<sup>9</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 7 June 1999

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

States and does not demand the right to a nuclear bomb or the disarmament of its nuclear neighbour. A similar situation exists between Spain and France. In addition, Israel has never threatened to use its nuclear potential. But the hostile anti-Israeli statements issued in Baghdad and Tehran justifies the Israeli attempts to block their nuclear progress. He offers an untried approach, which he claims does exist and deserves more attention. Nuclear aspirants rely on a limited number of scientists and engineers for realising their ambitions. These personnel are the key element in any successful programme and must, therefore, be targeted. Therefore, they must be bought or eliminated. They should be offered asylum and attractive jobs in Western countries, or face the consequences of constituting a vital threat to the West and Israel.

Efraim Inbar, "Three ways to Stop Iran"<sup>11</sup> offers three ways to stop Iran from going nuclear. To deal with the Iranian challenge, "a strategy of indirect approach" has to be adopted. First, the focus should be on Lebanon. The radical Shiite challenge to the west should be curtailed and thereby the Iran-Syria-Lebanon nexus. Lebanon should be liberated from Syrian influences. This process will weaken and isolate Iran. The second would be to aim for a regime change in Tehran. If Natan Sharansky<sup>12</sup> is right about people preferring to live in freedom rather than fear then the Iranians should be freed from "the yoke of the mullahs". The US should focus upon this objective. American diplomacy aimed at strengthening the dissenting voices in Iran might be successful in fostering an effect similar to the one that brought about the disintegration of the Soviet empire.<sup>13</sup> He strongly criticises voices in the US administration who would not contemplate a military approach towards Iran. He feels that the difficulties in dealing a severe blow to Iran's nuclear programme are being exaggerated. Partial destruction is enough to cripple the Iranian ability to build a nuclear bomb in the near future and only

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<sup>11</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 31 March 2005

<sup>12</sup> Natan Sharansky, "The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror", cowritten with Ron Dermer mentions the concept of freedom and fear. Sharansky argues that freedom is essential for security and prosperity, and every people and nation deserve to live free in a democratic society. Suggesting his "town square test", Sharansky argues that human rights, safety and stability can only be assured by releasing people from their oppressors and turning them into free societies when each would have the freedom to express his opinion. Therefore, he concludes, the free world must insist of promoting democracy for the oppressed people, instead of appeasing dictatorships and doing business with tyrant regimes.

<sup>13</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 31 March 2005

surgical air strikes in combination with limited operations conducted by Special Forces. And he believes the American military definitely has the capability and sophistication to perform such a pre-emptive strike.

Moreover, the nuclear ambitions of Iran threaten regional stability. Beyond enhancing Iranian hegemony in the oil-rich Gulf area and creating a situation in which its containment would be more difficult to achieve, a nuclear Iran would inevitably have a proliferation chain effect in the region. States like Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia would hardly be able to resist the temptation to counter Iranian influence by adopting similar nuclear postures. He feels that the European approach of offering incentives to Iran to cooperate on the nuclear issue has little chance of ending the Iranian nuclear programme, “which has already made significant strides toward producing a bomb”.

Gerald Steinberg in ‘From India to Iran via Moscow’ written after India’s nuclear tests in 1998 offers his opinion and optimism on how the nuclear tests conducted by India would curtail Iran’s nuclear programme. India’s series of nuclear weapon tests will not have a direct impact on Israel, but the indirect results may be very significant. The critical question he tries to address is whether the fallout from the Indian tests will accelerate the rate at which Iran and other countries in West Asia are able to acquire nuclear weapons.<sup>14</sup>

From the Israeli perspective, the Indian surprise testing of nuclear weapons would shock China and Russia, the primary sources of the Iranian programme to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) into ending the flow of nuclear and missile technology to Iran. He also criticises Russia and China for ignoring world stability for their own strategic interests. If the assistance to Iran and Syria continues without interruption, the nuclear programme would be accelerated and West Asia which already has enough sources of instability will not benefit from the proliferation process to “the revolutionary and rogue states in the region”.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Jerusalem Post , 22 May 1998

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*



Gerald Steinberg tries to examine the consequences of India's nuclear tests in 1998 for the West Asian region. The tests conducted by Russia and China would either make them stop support for Iran or destabilise the region if the assistance continues. Steinberg<sup>16</sup> in "Parleys Won't Stop Iran"<sup>17</sup> comments on the effectiveness of parleys conducted to stop the Iran's nuclear programme and to construct Nuclear Weapons Free Zones in West Asia. He finds that the IAEA Report<sup>18</sup> in spite of finding Iran in violation does not seek to refer Iran to the Security Council. The IAEA leadership fears that economic sanctions or authorising the use of force will lead Iran to renounce the NPT.

The alternatives being offered to prevent Iran's nuclearisation are 'far worse'. ElBaradei announced the intention to hold a conference on Nuclear Weapon Free Zones after his visit to Cairo. This reflected Egypt's tendency to use international venues to pressure Israel into changing its policy. But planning for such conferences must include recognition that dozens of similar meetings, conferences and workshops held in the past, including the arms control and regional security (ACRS)<sup>19</sup> workshops, "turned into dialogues of the deaf". The type of changes that are necessary to move toward a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in West Asia will require new approaches to coexistence and security cooperation. Unless the threat from Iran is addressed and halted, all these conferences will be moot. If the IAEA should help move Egypt, Syria and Iran in this direction without the usual propaganda tirades, this would make a major contribution.

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<sup>16</sup> Gerald Steinberg directs the Programme on Conflict Management and Negotiation at Bar-Ilan University.

<sup>17</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 18 August 2004

<sup>18</sup> The Board's March 2004 resolution deplored Iran's further omissions from its October 2003 declarations, and called on Iran to further intensify its cooperation, promptly ratify the Protocol, and proactively resolve all outstanding issues. As was clearly documented in the Director General's February 2004 report, Iran failed to provide the complete and final picture of its past and present nuclear programmes considered essential by the Board's resolution. Since November 2003, moreover, the IAEA has uncovered a number of omissions, including associated research, manufacturing, and testing activities, two mass spectrometers used in laser enrichment, and designs for hot cells at the Arak heavy water reactor.

<sup>19</sup> The Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group is one of five multilateral groups formed shortly after the opening round of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) in Madrid in October 1991 and the only such group devoted exclusively to security issues. The ACRS working group, along with four other multilateral working groups addressing refugees, the environment, water, and regional economic development, complements the bilateral track of negotiations between Israel and its immediate neighbors. Thirteen Arab states, Israel, a Palestinian delegation, and over a score of extra-regional entities participate in plenary and intercessional meetings focusing on both conceptual and operational confidence building and arms control measures applicable to West Asia.

In his article "Israel's Options"<sup>20</sup>, Steinberg analyses the options available to Israel to halt the Iran's nuclear programme. Given the radical nature of the Islamic regime in Iran and its support for terrorist groups like the Hamas and Hezbollah, the addition of a nuclear capability and a ballistic missile delivery system beyond the current Shihab-3 deployment constitutes red line for Israeli decision-makers. Based on this, Steinberg identifies four options which have their own risks and potential benefits.

Firstly, hoping for an internal change in Iran has a low immediate cost but can be potentially dangerous in the long term. The internal reform process in Iran has gone in the opposite direction and hard-liners have regained control. In addition, Iranian decision-making structures are unclear, but appear to be controlled by extremist clerics whose ability to discern red lines and develop a stable deterrence relationship with Israel is extremely limited. Secondly, a military action from the United States perhaps in cooperation with Europe is not impossible but given the complexities faced in Iraq, the chance of a US-led strike on Iran's enrichment and other facilities seems quite low, but not impossible. It is also possible that European leaders might reluctantly work with Iran. But there is little that the Israeli government can do in this framework. Thirdly, there is the option of unilateral action against Iran's nuclear facilities by Israel. The technical difficulties can be overcome though there is the potential for Iranian retaliation. But on the other hand, following a pre-emptive attack, relations between Israel and Iran would be soured for decades. So this option has considerable risks. He concludes by saying that there are no good options for Israel and each scenario has considerable risks. Though the IAEA would decide about Iran in its meetings, whether to launch a military strike or economic sanctions, Israel will have to decide on its own.

Gerald Steinberg in "Regional Arms Control Revisited"<sup>21</sup> gives an analysis of the mechanisms in the regional arms control in the region. The ACRS working Group which was formed after the 1991 Madrid Peace conference were boycotted by Syria and Iran.

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<sup>20</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 6 October 2004

<sup>21</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 1 January 2004

The Bush administration recognises the limitations of international arms control measures and the stabilising impact of deterrence. Israel's exceptional position in not signing the NPT and justification for maintaining nuclear weapons is understood as reflecting the unique security environment and Israel's vulnerability.

In 2002, in his article titled 'Proliferation of Hypocrisy'<sup>22</sup>, Steinberg expresses his views on the NPT Review Conferences<sup>23</sup> in 2000 held at New York. This was written before the commencement of the conference and Steinberg feels that the participants are unlikely to discuss Saddam's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, evidence of Iran's illicit nuclear weapon's programme, North Korea's production of fissile material or the role of Russia and China in assisting their programmes. The main targets of this gathering are going to be the US and Israel. The second focus is going to be the West Asia but not the nuclear efforts of Iraq and Iran. Israel is a "perennial target" at NPT conferences. The unique threats facing Israel are not addressed by the NPT's universal framework and as a result Israel is not a member of the NPT.

Steinberg wants the NPT review Conference 2000 to take note of Israel's vital security interest and the foundation of stability and not sacrifice to political expediency of simple-minded slogans. The Conference need to be reminded that Israel is not the major source of danger and nuclear proliferation in West Asia. A display of hypocrisy at Israel's expense would only reinforce the negative image of non-proliferation. He prescribes that the Review Conference should seek to strengthen an enforcement regime. The nations most threatened by proliferation like Israel, cannot rely upon it.<sup>24</sup>

But Israel needs to consider the implications and possible responses of the strategic developments in West Asia. The threats of chemical and biological weapons from Saddam's regime have been erased and Iran's nuclear programme has become the object

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<sup>22</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 28 April 2000

<sup>23</sup> Every five years, there is a Review Conference on the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Since 1975, NPT signatory countries have held a review conference every five years to discuss treaty compliance and enforcement.

<sup>24</sup> Steinberg says 'Treaties are potentially not the only, or even the most effective, form of arms control'

of major international pressure. Libya has invited inspections from the IAEA to secret uranium enrichment and chemical weapon facilities. These events form the basis for the argument that Israel can and should find an appropriate means of adding to the arms control mechanisms in West Asia.

Though the Iran and Libyan cases have revealed the lack of credibility inherent in the international arms control process and the danger on relying on the same for survival and security, Israel recognises the massive pressure from the Bush administration that made these countries feel that they would be the next to be targeted after Iraq. There is no solid foundation for a reliable and international arms control framework and a vigorous, professional and transparent inspection and verification process is necessary and the IAEA has to clearly demonstrate its changed approach. The tentative moves towards abandonment of efforts to acquire WMD should be welcomed in the region and Israel should ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)<sup>25</sup> agreeing to discuss regional security and mutual inspection mechanisms in a revived multilateral process including Iran and Syria. Limited responses from Israel would add to the momentum.

Moshe Zak in 'Friendly Discord on Iran'<sup>26</sup> criticises the United States for deviating from its current policy towards Iran to normalising relations with Iran. Relations with Iran after Mohammed Khatami came to power in 1997 had improved. Zak argues that the dialogue with Iran would be a joint set back to the American-Israeli endeavour in persuading the Russians to stop assisting Iran's nuclear and ballistic weapons programme. If the US gets close to Iran, the Russians would be forced to compete with the US activity in Iran and hence the US should rather boycott Iran.<sup>27</sup> The Israeli objective in 1999 was to stop countries from providing assistance to Iran.

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<sup>25</sup> The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is an arms control agreement which outlaws the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Signed in 1993 and entered into force on 29 April 1997 the convention augments the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for chemical weapons and includes extensive verification measures such as on-site inspections.

<sup>26</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 5 May 1999

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

Caroline Glick<sup>28</sup> in her column, ‘How to deal with Iran’ notes that given the seeming inevitability of Iran attaining nuclear weapons capabilities, a new received wisdom seems to be coalescing in Washington. This was after Iran rejected the IAEA’s call for suspension in November 2004. She criticises Henry Sokolski, the head of the Washington-based Non-proliferation policy Education Center and US arms control negotiator in the first Bush Administration for his view that it is not possible to change the Iranian regime and therefore the threat posed by a nuclear Iran be moderated, or the mullahs should be engaged in negotiations that would appease them into giving up their nuclear ambitions. She questions his credentials of senior positions on arms-control issues in Congress and in the US intelligence community. His prescriptions are unacceptable, according to Glick. But she feels that it should be carefully analysed, given the fact that Pentagon has partially funded the Report entitled, *Checking Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions*<sup>29</sup>. He construes a new “middle road” policy.<sup>30</sup> The Report says that it is impossible to target Iran’s military sites militarily. This assertion arises from intelligence reports. She strongly criticises Sokolski’s policy prescriptions for dealing with the challenge of Iran’s weapons. Sokolski ‘ignores the main new threat that would exist if Iran is to become equipped with nuclear bombs-the use of those bombs to destroy Israel or its neighbours and rivals in the Persian Gulf , or the transfer of nuclear weapons to a terrorist group deployed as Iran’s proxy.’<sup>31</sup>

Sokolski wants the US to achieve Russian cooperation in checking Iran’s nuclear aspirations by offering the Russians a long term lucrative nuclear cooperation deal. This provokes Glick to criticise Russia’s uninterrupted assistance for Iran’s ballistic missile programme. Her criticism is very intense while commenting on Sokolski’s prescription that “Israel should announce how much weapons usable material it has produced and that it will unilaterally mothball Dimona and place the reactor under international safeguards”. She criticises him of being too hasty to dismiss Israeli security concerns. First, it ignores the real danger of Iran using nuclear weapons to destroy Israel. Second, it ignores the

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<sup>28</sup> Caroline Glick is a columnist who writes for the *Jerusalem Post*.

<sup>29</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=368>. Accessed on 10 June 2006.

<sup>30</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 24 September 2004

<sup>31</sup> See note 9.

rationale behind Israel's nuclear programme. To discuss the disarmament of Israel without talking about the conventional disarmament of Arab countries is to ignore Israel's strategic vulnerabilities.

Finally, the recommendation makes no distinction between a nuclear-armed stable democracy and a nuclear-armed, terror-supporting theocracy. Comparing a nuclear Iran and a nuclear Israel is like comparing a housewife in the kitchen wielding a butcher's knife to a murderer in the dark alleyway wielding a butcher's knife. According to Caroline Glick, it is both "morally obtuse and strategically blind." She concludes by her own prescription for the Iranian threat and developing options for a regime change in Iran. Engagement with Iran must necessarily be predicated on a comprehensive military option supporting limited air or commando strikes at Iran's nuclear facilities. As to the threat of Iran retaliation, Hezbollah leadership and its rockets and missile depot launchers should be pre-emptively destroyed or disabled in Lebanon and a naval flotilla should be deployed to the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman ready to secure the Strait of Hormuz for oil tankers. In addition a massive information warfare campaign should be launched and reformers in Iran should be offered assistance.<sup>32</sup> She expresses her outrage at the Report's dismissal of Israeli security concerns but moderating the threat from Iran, which is a state-sponsor of terror according to her, will destabilise the West Asian region.

In '*Policy Wars and Real Wars*',<sup>33</sup> she criticises the US of following a policy of appeasement with Iran. She calls Iran the "epicentre of global terrorism". She writes that Iran with its ballistic missile capability, chemical and biological weapons arsenal is an active enemy to the US national security and to the physical assistance of Israel. She wonders why there is no military option against Iran as put by *The Times*<sup>34</sup> quoting a former Bush Administration official. She identifies two problems with the US policy towards Iran. First, the US has no chance in moving the issue towards the Security Council. Second, even if it were successful in moving the issue to the Security Council, it

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<sup>32</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 22 September 2004

<sup>33</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 3 September 2004

<sup>34</sup> *The Times* is published by Times Newspapers Limited, a subsidiary of News International, itself wholly owned by the News Corporation group, headed by Rupert Murdoch. It has played an influential role in politics and shaping public opinion about foreign events.

is quite certain that the Council would take no action that would in any way dissuade Iran or prevent it from continuing its nuclear weapons programme. She expresses her reservations on the French and German policy of trying to offer Iran incentives in exchange for cooperation on the nuclear issue. She maintains that North Korea exploited a similar deal to develop its own nuclear arsenal. Russia built the Bushehr reactor for Iran and China supplied Iran with nuclear technologies through Pakistan.<sup>35</sup> She feels that the American policy towards Iran has been a “colossal failure” and Israel should ignore America for stopping Iran from going nuclear. If the US is not able to take military action against threats to its national security, Israel can simply not afford to be paralysed by American policies on Iran that have already failed is her conclusion.

In *‘H-hour has arrived’* written after the EU-3 signed a deal<sup>36</sup> with Iran in November 2004, she tries to assess the wider implications the deal would have on the Anglo-American relations and how it could affect American foreign policy in the future in dealing with the threat from Iran. She calls the agreement “ridiculous”. France has successfully caused a serious fissure in the Anglo-American alliance by bringing Britain into talks with Iran. “The European Agenda” is to bring England to pressurise the US from taking an independent stand on Iran and thereby Israel’s security would be at stake. She strongly criticises the then French President, Jacques Chirac’s statement that the central challenge is developing a “multipolar world”. She finds the French not serious about fighting terrorism but obsessed about creating a multipolar world. By the agreement EU-3 had signed with Iran, it has succeeded in isolating the US and Israel from the rest of the international community. Iran has developed its delivery systems and the testing of *shahab-3* ballistic missile demonstrates that Iran can launch missiles as far as Europe. The Katyusha rocket<sup>37</sup> attacks on Northern Israel have shown that Iran has developed a panoply of delivery options for using its nuclear as well as chemical and biological arsenals to physically destroy Israel.

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<sup>35</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 3 September 2004

<sup>36</sup>Governments of France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with the support of the High Representative of the European Union, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Paris on 15 November 2004.

<sup>37</sup>Katyusha rockets are from time to time launched into towns in northern Israel by the Hizbullah, an Islamic fundamentalist group in southern Lebanon. Residents in Israel are forced to sleep in bomb shelters, sometimes for days on end, in fear of the attacks.

Caroline Glick also criticises the statement by the then Defence Minister of Israel, Shaul Mofaz<sup>38</sup> for placing the responsibility on the US for curbing the threat from Iran. According to Glick, the US approach would not succeed in preventing Iran from achieving nuclear capabilities. The negotiations on unimpeded inspections could easily drag on for three to six months and Iran would withdraw from the NPT. In dealing with the issue of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), “American rhetoric doesn’t match its deeds. It speaks loudly and carries a small stick”. And Japanese opposition to nuclear proliferation in North Korea is hardly consistent. Japan continues to rebuff US and Israeli pressures to end its 2.2 billion deal for oil exploration in southern Iran. They are more concerned about doing business with Iran.

The US policy in West Asia is a full-blown retreat, according to Glick. “The US has a naïve and premature sense of triumph and believes it can indulge in a strategy of delay, deny and retreat. But Israel cannot engage in such irresponsible self-deception” according to Glick. Israel cannot stand idly and expect the US to ride in like a ‘knight in shining armour’ to save Israel from destruction. Israel’s defensive shield, the Arrow is not an impenetrable shield. Rather than relying on the US to support, an action plan should be mapped out by the Israeli Defence forces (IDF) to destroy the Iranian nuclear installations. Also, the prime danger to US national security lies in Tehran. The key to the global Islamic terror nexus that stretches across the world is found in Tehran and hence rather than pressurising an ally (Israel) to reward Tehran’s terrorists’ friends, the US should use allies to leverage throughout the world to prevent the Ayatollahs from acquiring nuclear weapons. The price the US paid in 1990 for ignoring Saddam Hussein in favour of pressurising Israel was the Gulf war. The price it will pay for repeating the same mistake with Iran will be a nightmare. The point she tries to make is primarily about the threat that Israel faces and the negligence of the rest of the world to the threat. She concludes that Israel cannot face a Holocaust again.

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<sup>38</sup>, Shaul Mofaz was appointed as Minister of Defense in November 2002 by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (2001-2006).



Saul Singer<sup>39</sup> in his commentary on the US elections which were held in 2004 analyses the effect it would have on US policy toward Iran. In 'The nuke in the voting booth'<sup>40</sup> he identifies an Iranian nuke as the 'terror network's great hope to turn the tables in the global war'. The Bush administration remains loathe contemplating a military action against Iran and might end up exploring some kind of a dialogue with Rafsanjani and Khamenei<sup>41</sup> according to a former CIA Iran expert, Reuel Marc Gerecht in the *Weekly Standard*<sup>42</sup> published in August 2004. Bush faces an uphill bureaucratic battle over action against Iran. Given that scenario, John Kerry's election to power could not seem to be a better option, according to Saul Singer for preventing Iran from obtaining weapons. John Kerry in March 2004 had called for a "non-confrontational" approach to Tehran. But the re-election of Bush would also have little chance of success. He concludes that 'the realist temptation in the foreign policy establishment is always powerful, principally because it is the path of least resistance and least action, and it dovetails nicely with the status-quo reflexes of the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the military brass at the Pentagon' and John Kerry seems to have embraced the realist cause according to Gerecht. And hence according to Saul Singer, there is chance that with one vote the clock can be turned back on the 'Islamist Nuke'.

Barry Rubin<sup>43</sup>, in his article "Monty Python in Iran"<sup>44</sup> writes that Tehran's denial of its drive to develop nuclear weapons recalls the 'celebrated dead parrot skit'<sup>45</sup>. He compares this skit to the situation in West Asia. According to him denying Iran's drive to obtain

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<sup>39</sup> Saul Singer is one of the editorial members of the *Jerusalem Post*.

<sup>40</sup> The *Jerusalem Post*, 22 October 2004

<sup>41</sup> Rafsanjani served as President of Iran from 1989 to 1997 and Khamenei is the Supreme religious Leader of Iran since 1989.

<sup>42</sup> *The Weekly Standard* is an American neoconservative political magazine published 48 times per year. It made its debut on 17 September 1995 and is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. It is viewed as a leading outlet of the influential neoconservative movement.

<sup>43</sup> Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*.

<sup>44</sup> The *Jerusalem Post*, 3 May 2005

<sup>45</sup> Monty Python, or The Pythons, is the collective name of the creators of Monty Python's Flying Circus, a British television comedy sketch show that first aired on the BBC on 5 October 1969. A total of 45 episodes were made over four series. In one of Monty Python's best routines, a man goes into a pet store to buy a parrot. The bird is obviously dead, but the store owner insists there is nothing wrong with it. No matter how the customer proves otherwise, the store owner has an answer to deny the easily demonstrable truth.

nuclear weapons is one of the most outstanding dead parrots on the international agenda. He cites the two reasons for Iran going nuclear as “fallback arguments”. One is that Iran is surrounded by enemies and the other one is that Iran has a right to have nuclear weapons as other states. The arguments neglect the Iranian “regime’s actual nature, ideology and aggressive ambitions”. Then he goes on to compare the destruction of Israel by Iran to the Holocaust<sup>46</sup>. He criticises the Western world of being oblivious to Israel’s concerns about nuclear weapons.

But there are other dangerous implications of Iran’s nuclear weapons. They would be far more likely to fall into the hands of terrorists than any other nuclear arms in the world, via carelessness or the intention of even a small group of Iranian government extremists or they could be used in the likely event of the Iranian regime facing domestic instability or imminent overthrow. They would give Iran a tremendous strategic leverage. The Arabs, freed from the menace of Saddam Hussein would face a possibly even more frightening threat. Radical movements and terrorists would be inspired to even more recklessness, believing Tehran would back them up. The final solution he offers to get rid of the threat of Iran is that Europe should join the US in a serious programme of economic and political sanctions combined with tough, credible warnings and real pressure on Russia, China, Pakistan and North Korea to halt any help to Iran. But Europe would not back any such measures, fearing confrontation and the loss of both oil imports and profits from trade with Iran. Thereafter, the only defence for Iran’s “intended targets will be deterrence and hope”. He indirectly refers to Israel.

David Bar-Ilan on expressing his opinion about “Facing the Iranian Danger”<sup>47</sup> criticises the new government<sup>48</sup> in Israel that had taken power in 1999. He criticises the new government in rejoicing over the election triumph. He calls it arrogance on the part of the

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<sup>46</sup>The word ‘Holocaust’ was used to describe Hitler’s treatment of the Jews from as early as 1942, though it did not become a standard reference until the 1950s. By the late 1970s, however, the conventional meaning of the word became the Nazi genocide. The term is also used by many in a narrower sense, to refer specifically to the unprecedented destruction of European Jews in particular.

<sup>47</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 3 November 1999

<sup>48</sup>After being defeated by Ehud Barak in the 1999 Israeli general elections, Netanyahu temporarily retired from politics.

Ehud Barak's<sup>49</sup> government. The previous government of Benjamin Netanyahu has viewed the threat from Iran with considerable urgency. Bar-Ilan also criticises Washington for refusing to admit the threat from Iran's nuclear and missile programmes. Only after the evidence of Russian complicity became incontrovertible did the White House assign Vice President Al Gore the task of persuading the Russians to desist. When Barak visited Washington in July 1999 he was made a request from President Clinton that Israel should stop pressurising the US to impose sanctions on Russia and he acceded to it. This seems a puzzling gesture to the late Yitzhak Rabin's perceptions of the region's problems. Rabin cited the danger from Iran and Iraq to rationalise his decision to withdraw from the Golan Heights and go to negotiations with the PLO. Rabin thought a quick settlement with Palestinians and Syria would neutralise the first circle of hostility and Israel could then cope the looming danger from the second circle of Iran and Iraq. He concludes by saying that short-sightedness in the US and Russia is no excuse for Israeli inaction. Not only should Israel make its deep concern about the Iranian threat to all its friends and supporters but also encourage diplomatic and economic measures aimed at stopping Russia's contribution to the "threat of world peace".

In 'Mideast fantasies'<sup>50</sup> he says that though West Asia poses the biggest threat to world peace and stability, one element that makes matters worse is the inability of politicians, diplomats, academics and journalists to understand the region. The layers of misunderstanding begin with the failure to consider the region with its own characteristics. These might include considering Iran a responsible regime and radical Islamist movements as granted and dismiss what is being said about revolutionising societies and destroying the West. Barry Rubin feels these are the real difficulties facing a more accurate western perception of West Asia. Unless, they are confronted and addressed, the common pattern in which misunderstandings produce disasters and crises will continue. Rubin contemplates that the lack of understanding about the region in the West has been the reason for the failed attempts at stabilising the region.

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<sup>49</sup> Ehud Barak was the 10th Prime Minister of Israel from 1999 to 2001. Ehud Barak was elected Prime Minister of Israel on May 17th, 1999 and completed his term on 7 March 2001 after his defeat to Ariel Sharon in a February special election for prime minister.

<sup>50</sup> The Jerusalem Post, 24 May 2005

### 4.3 A Different View

Uri Dan<sup>51</sup> in his analysis titled “*Listen, Do you want to know a secret*”<sup>52</sup> analyses how the warnings of the Israel’s intelligence community were unheeded in Washington during the 1990s. When the Israeli intelligence official passed on information regarding Iraq’s acquisition of WMD these were not taken seriously. In the 1990s, when it was conveyed to Washington that Iran was trying to develop WMD with the support of Russia, the US President Bill Clinton<sup>53</sup> was “celebrating his honeymoon” with Boris Yeltsin<sup>54</sup> in the belief that a “moderate wind” was blowing from Iran. Uri Dan concludes that Israel is the only democracy in the world being threatened by close and distant neighbours and hence its intelligence community would not wait for foreign intelligence reports but devotes special efforts to uncover the secrets of its enemies trying to acquire WMDs.

Yonah Alexander and Joe Swiecki<sup>55</sup> in “*Make Tehran an Offer*”<sup>56</sup> offer two parallel non-military actions to resolve the nuclear issue with Iran. First, Iran should be allowed to keep its nuclear power plants if Tehran agrees to stop its uranium enrichment programme. In exchange, Iran should be guaranteed outside sources of nuclear fuel. Second, a pledge should be secured from Iran to stop sponsoring terrorism. In exchange, Iran should be offered a massive commitment of foreign investment in the range of a billion dollars – enough to generate economic development in the country. This has been written after Washington’s approval of Iran’s deal with the EU-3, which was called the Paris Agreement and the policy shift in the US that seeks to engage rather than confront Iran. If Iran refuses to cooperate within a reasonable timeframe, the United Nations Security Council should consider smart sanctions as well as military options. The carrot and stick approach of both incentives and punishments should be adopted.

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<sup>51</sup> Uri Dan is Israel correspondent for the *New York Post*.

<sup>52</sup> The Jerusalem Post ,24 July 2003

<sup>53</sup> Clinton was the 42nd President of the United States, serving from 1993 to 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Boris Yeltsin was President of Russia from 1991 to 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Alexander is professor and director of the Potomac’s International Center for terrorism Studies. Swiecki is a captain in the US Army.

<sup>56</sup> The Jerusalem Post , 20 April 2005

Emanuel Ottolenghi's<sup>57</sup>, "Don't Play Ball with Iran" offers a different approach in dealing with Iran. This was written before President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was to take office after being elected to power. Though Europe has signed the deal with Iran, according to him the talks are supposed to fail. Still there are two options Europe should seriously contemplate when talks resume. First, the Europeans, who are committed to human rights, should raise this issue with the aim of embarrassing the Iranian representatives at every possible opportunity. Human rights compliance must top the European agenda for every meeting. Second, trade, tariffs and other commercial issues should be made conditional on this compliance. Europeans should also lobby the international community to ban Iran from international sports competitions. While Iran is qualified for the Soccer tournament in Germany, Iranian participation should be made conditional on compliance on nukes. Its exclusion would bring an angered nation into the streets. And their fury would be directed against its rulers. The EU-3 should therefore give Iran's new leader a blunt message: Unless Iran abandons its nuclear ambitions, Europe will launch a campaign to have it banned from international sports competitions, starting with the world cup in 2006. It's easier than sanctions and safer than risky military adventures.

The European Union's move to negotiate Turkey's membership means Europe will share a border with Iran but does Europe have a policy with Iran? Europe cannot make diplomacy influence Tehran unless Europe can show resolve. There will be no military option Europe will consider or support. It is soft power, rather than the hard power of military force, that the three European countries engaged in a dialogue intend to use to persuade Tehran.

Europeans are convinced that Iran is pursuing a nuclear option only for defensive purposes. There is nothing wrong with a democracy having nukes. Hence Europe is more prone to pressure Israel to give up its nukes than to threaten Iran for its lack of commitment to international agreements. Therefore, they are tilted towards a policy of appeasement with Iran. The EU is incapable of looking at West Asia except through the

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<sup>57</sup> Teaches Israel Studies at the Oxford centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

distorting lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It therefore misses the bigger picture about Tehran and the bomb. It dismisses Iranian involvement in the *Intifada*, seems oblivious to Iranian interference in Iraq and Iran's backing of the insurgency. Europe will never deliver on Iran because, despite all evidence to the contrary, it sees no evil in a terror-exporting Islamist dictatorship going nuclear.

Arieh O'Sullivan in "Target: The Jewish State" analyses the reasons behind the Israel-Iran hostilities after the Iranian Revolution in 1979. He gives a brief overview about Iran's regime and how it has consolidated itself in Iran. International pressure, internal strife and technical challenges are all obstacles the ruling theocracy has faced in its attempts to get nukes. Israeli security sources feel that Iran will do every thing it can do to get the bomb. Officially, Israel does not see Iran as an enemy, but rather as an existential threat. With no common border, Iran's military does not pose a serious conventional threat but Iran's support for organisations like the Hezbollah and Hamas and open calls by Tehran's leaders to annihilation of Israel constitutes an existential threat.

Israeli intelligence has confirmed that Iran is actually running a double nuclear programme, one that is open to inspections and access by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the other secret run by the military to make nukes. There were high hopes for reforms when Khatami was elected but the mullahs are focussed on safeguarding their rule and their one indulgence is Israel. Iran doesn't care about a Palestinian state but it wants the destruction of Israel.

Brenda Shaffer in "Will Iran Dupe the World Again?"<sup>58</sup> She explores what strategy would be effective in dealing with Iran? First, China and Japan have considerable leverage over Europe on this issue and must be enlisted. Both countries are negotiating mega-investments contract in the Iranian energy sector-Japan in oil and China in natural gas. Suspending negotiations on this contract will affect Iran as well as Europe.

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<sup>58</sup>The Jerusalem Post, 10 September 2004

Next, all concerned nations should coordinate policy efforts on a secure control structure over Iran's fissile materials to ensure that they do not reach the hands of terrorists. An inner circle within the regime controls these facilities. In a time of regime chaos in Iran, terrorists may either acquire unsecured nuclear materials or have such bomb ingredients transferred to them for financial gain by fleeing regime hardliners. When crafting the next policy stage, concerned governments should consider not only stopping the budding nuclear weapons programme but preventing the loss of nuclear materials to terrorist organisations.

'In Iran: Children and Nukes', by Nir Boms and Reza Bulorchi<sup>59</sup> the writers give various examples about the human rights violations in Iran. Iran as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>60</sup> and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>61</sup> is bound not to execute child offenders. The rule of law is a major preoccupation for the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is not only determined to implement its "mullah-style justice at home" but is also keen to export it, along with other achievements of its twenty-five years of theocratic rule. Lots of teenage children have been stoned to death after the Islamic regime came to power. As the nuclear debate continues with Iran, and the abject failure of the previous agreements with Tehran, the conclusion can be drawn that Iran's theocracy will do everything and anything to get the nukes. The conclusion the writers would draw is about how a regime that cares so little about its own children will care for the children of the "infidel world".

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<sup>59</sup> Nir Boms is the vice president of the Center for Freedom in the Middle East. Reza Bulorchi is the executive director of the US Alliance for Democratic Iran.

<sup>60</sup> The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a United Nations treaty based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, created in 1966 and entered into force on 23 March 1976. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights currently has 149 States Parties.

<sup>61</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international convention setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. It is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Most member nation states (countries) of the United Nations have ratified it, either partly or completely. The United Nations General Assembly agreed to adopt the Convention into international law on 20 November 1989; it came into force in September 1990, after it was ratified by the required number of nations. The Convention generally defines a child as any person under the age of 18, unless an earlier age of majority is recognized by a country's law.

Mitchell Bard <sup>62</sup> in 'Israel' North Korea Problem'<sup>63</sup> analyses the threat North Korea poses to the West Asian region. North Korea has supplied missiles and built missile production facilities for Iran, Syria, Libya and Egypt. Syria purchased the scuds from North Korea and Pyongyang has been engaged in joint missile development with Egypt for two decades. Due to its weak economy, North Korea has long been one of the world's leading weapons proliferators selling technology to "rogue nations". Iran is North Korea's principal customer and Shihab-3 is reportedly based on Nodong. The US and Israel are doing nothing about North Korea and seem willing to accept a new member of the nuclear club. The panacea he offers to get rid of the threat is to follow the same strategy of disarming the regime in North Korea as in Iraq.

#### **4.4 Views of the Editorials from the *Jerusalem Post*:**

Editorials reflect the policy preferences and the official line of thought of a newspaper. Editorials during 2003 were more sober and wanted the international community, and especially the US to take notice of the threat from Iran and act accordingly. Though statements from world leaders criticise Iran as a state-sponsor of terrorism, the international community does not do anything about the threat emanating from Iran. Iran is being compared to North Korea in most of the editorials of trying to bargain and gain time. The views are vocal about military action that should be taken to curtail Iran's weaponisation programme.

*Jerusalem Post* editorials are critical of the Chinese nuclear aid to the Iranians in the early years immediately after the war and Russia's cooperation in the 1990s. In the views expressed by the various writers regarding the same, there have been various measures suggested to prevent the assistance provided by Russia. Some might suggest Russia to have a major nuclear deal with the US while others might want the US to pressurise Russia regarding the same. Most of the writers and the guest columns are for the use of

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<sup>62</sup> Mitchell Bard is a foreign policy analyst and author of *Myths and Facts: A Guide to Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

<sup>63</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 March 2003



force against Iran and would want Israel to go for a pre-emptive strike against Iran's nuclear installations with or without the support of Israel.

Iran is regarded by the US as a pivotal component of the 'axis of evil' and may face the threat of sanctions. According to the *Jerusalem Post* editorials, following a report by the IAEA that disclosed evidences of highly-enriched uranium in Iran's Natanz facility, Russia is to blame if Iran goes nuclear. The editorials in the early 1990s have strongly criticised Russia's nuclear aid to Iran. Countries which do business with Iran are fully aware of the sinister motives of the regime in Tehran. Iran fears sanctions and Security Council referral.

But the US administration is busy with Iraq and North Korea. Russia defies the US again on this issue of paramount importance. Though the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy denies that it has signed any deal with Syria for the construction of a nuclear reactor, ITAR-TASS news agency has reported such a move. If this is true, Russia's moves would prove a danger to the proliferation of nuclear technology and the stability of West Asia. Russia claims that the reactors in Iran and Syria are for peaceful purposes but the question arises as to why Iran or Syria are in need of additional energy resources. Though Russia tells the world that the sharing of nuclear technology is done according to IAEA regulations, the truth behind Russia's dealing is to earn the much needed foreign currency. Trading with the "Ayatollahs" gives Russia a vehicle for demonstrating its independence in foreign policy. Various economic and political tools should be utilised to convince the Russians to cease and desist.

Editorials would focus on particular issues at times. There would be suggestions and prescriptions on how to counter Iran's threat. An editorial might appear after some special happening in Iran. For example, the testing of the Shihab-3 missile by Iran would appear in pictures on a special edition. A brief historical background on when Iran started testing the missiles and how it had acquired them would appear in the special focus. And the statements of eminent professors and military generals would be quoted on the front

pages in bold letters calling the threat very imminent and that Israel should act immediately.

After Khatami came to power, the US started a policy of giving more carrots to Iran. Israel feels that it should not be done because it would weaken the moderates. The Clinton Administration in September 1998 refused to sanction a consortium led by the French company Total for \$2 billion deal to develop Iran's natural gas fields, despite the fact that the company has been boasting about its defiance of US sanctions. The US has also failed to link up its space cooperation with Russia to a complete severing of ties between Russian institutes and Iran's missile programme. The arrests of the moderates in Iran show that Khatami's influence is a thin reed on which to base policy. The US is interminably trying to string out congressionally mandated sanctions. Wishful thinking about the Iranian regime should not be allowed to derail the sanctions, particularly when imposing sanctions would be the best way the US can encourage positive change in Iran.

Iran's support for terrorism in 2002 captured some of the news editorials in the *Jerusalem Post*. Editorials say Iran has been supporting terrorism. The purpose of the Iranian effort is to counter an Israeli threat to their nuclear programme through the use of terrorism. The emerging evidence of an alliance between the Palestinian Authority and Iran could evolve into a proxy relationship like that about Hezbollah and Iran. In global terms, Iran's decision to open new vistas of terrorism since September 11. Hezbollah was put on a new list of terrorist organisations after September 11. *Jerusalem Post* compares Iranian regime to the era of Mikhail Gorbachev. Rather than constantly searching for signs of Iranian moderation with a microscope, an analogy should be drawn between Iranian regime and communism. The system is crumbling and is likely to fall in the relatively near future.

The editorials would also provide factual information to the Israeli public about Iran's supply of arms and ammunitions to the Palestinian Authority. The Karine A was a 4,000 ton freighter intercepted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on January 3, 2002 carrying a wide variety of weapons. While the ship itself was worth an estimated \$400,000 and the civilian cargo used to conceal the weapons approximately \$3,000,000, the weapons were

reportedly purchased for approximately \$15,000,000. The IDF claimed the ship was owned by the Palestinian Authority, and that the arms were bound for their use. The equipment included Katyusha rockets, mortars, sniper rifles, bullets, anti-tank mines, anti-tank missiles, as well as over two and a half tons of pure explosives. According to Maj. Gen. Yedidya Yaari, the commander of the Israeli Navy, they were packed in 83 crates in waterproof plastic and attached to buoys, to permit their drop-off and retrieval at sea. Lieutenant General Shaul Mofaz, chief of staff of the Israeli Army announced in a Tel Aviv news conference on January 4 that the army had seized the ship while General Anthony Zinni was meeting with Yasser Arafat to promote negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The whole incident of Iran's support for terrorist activity is presented to capture the public regarding Iran's support for terrorism. Added to the information on Iran's support for terrorism is Iran's missile program. The Shahab-3 is a medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) developed indigenously by Iran. It has an original range of 1300km, and now after improvements can reach nearly 2100 km. It can thus easily reach Israel, which has prompted concern in that nation. The missile, based on the Nodong-1, was tested from 1998-2003. It was added to the military arsenal on 7 July 2003, with an official unveiling by Ayatollah Khamenei on July 2003.

A news item might appear with the headlines in bold letters about how to prevent Iran from going nuclear. For example, 'A Partial attack would set back Iran's nukes- Jaffe Center head'. The item would accuse Iran of supporting terrorism and offering refuge for terrorists. It would also claim that US is the supporter of a pre-emptive strike and might sometimes go to the extent of saying that the strike against Iran would be coordinated by the US and Israel.

After 2003, all news items related to the Iran's nuclear programme started to take the front page. There was a news item published on 5 January 2005 which reads thus: 'Fearing attack, Iran boosts air defenses at nuke sites.' This was published as the first news item for the day. The item has facts on how Tehran has begun to step up protection of its nuclear facilities and also about Iran's missiles like the Shihab-3.

News item would always quote officials in the IDF or the Mossad. A news item on 25 January 2005 read thus: 'Mossad chief: Iran will go nuclear this year'. Mossad chief Meir Dagan's warning that Iran will go nuclear by the end of 2005 when it acquires the capability to enrich uranium were given in the first few lines of the news item. Also, on 5 August 2003, the news item reads thus: 'Iran can produce bomb by 2005- IDF'. This also appeared on the front page of the newspaper.

The news item mostly contains Israel's views on Iran's nuclear programme. A news item published in 13 September 2004 reads thus: 'US weighs force against Iran'. The item was about US Undersecretary of State John Bolton, meeting Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom. The item was published before Iran was under the threat of its nuclear programme being referred to the Security Council in 2004.

*Jerusalem Post* would carry special editions on important festivals in Israel to address the Iranian nuclear issue and Israel's security concerns. On 22 April 2005 there was a special feature titled 'Pessah Interview'. The first page of the special feature by David Horovitz and Herb Keinon contained details about the interview they had with the then Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon. Israeli security was given the top priority in the interview. The issue of the threat from Iran was also mentioned by Ariel Sharon. There was another special edition for *Shavuot*. The one page full write-up on Iran appeared on 5 June 2003. A picture showing Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini reviewing an honour guard of some 110,000 Basij forces (volunteers) in Tehran was given at the top of the page with the picture covering almost half the page. It has also been cited at the bottom of the picture that Iranian leaders on this occasion called for Israel's annihilation. The picture is followed by an analysis by Mathew Gutman titled 'The Worst Threat?' He gives a brief analysis of Iran's threat perceptions, stemming from Iraq and Israel. He goes back to the 1980s. The Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88 accelerated Iran's search for WMD. He maintains that the direct threat to Israel is from Iran's direct funding of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Ultimately, Iran might use *Al-Qaeda* to diversify its work against American interests abroad and ultimately use its nuclear program as a bargaining chip.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

The writings of Israeli scholars are interesting and indicate differences, but their importance is a matter of controversy. It is not clear whether the same views are shared by the decision-makers in Israel or if they are simply the views of academicians. The views of *Jerusalem Post* is the same as the right wing parties like Likud which would not compromise on Israel's security and would argue that peace with Palestinians and Syria is not a priority as Israel could easily fight them back but Iran and Iraq (Iraq does not constitute a threat anymore) should constitute a grave security threat, given nuclear weapons into their hands.

There are views from different scholars who compare Iran to North Korea. Israelis expect the same from Iran as well. There are other views which criticise the US for ignoring the threat from Iran as it had during the 1990s with Iraq. They also cite the warning issued by Israel about Saddam Hussein's annexation of Kuwait and that was also not taken seriously by the United States.

The writings of the scholars who contribute for the *Jerusalem Post* have been very consistent. The newspaper has a consistent policy over the years in that it has been more concerned about the security than anything else for Israel. In 1997, on the coverage on Iran there seems to hardly any news but for some thing on the change in government in Iran and the possible policy changes it can have regarding its nuclear policy. There seems to be no optimistic view at all but criticism of the political process in Iran and the dearth of democracy that affects the reformers in Iran.

Regarding the nuclear programme, there seems to be a very critical position on all the actors involved. First, it is the suppliers of technology to Iran, i.e., China and in the later years Russia. The regular contributors and the editorial board follow the same policy in the writings and there is no different view that has been expressed. The other major actor that has been criticised highly is the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA). The lack of faith in the international organisations is very clearly evident in the contributions by the regular contributors to the newspaper.

After the Paris deal which was signed in November 2004 with Iran, the views expressed have been critical of the deal with Iran being compared to North Korea. As Bill Clinton's deal with North Korea failed in the Agreed Framework for 1994, Iran's was also bound to fail. Iran was being compared to North Korea and Iraq. The articles by the guest writers also warned the US about the approval of the deal the EU-3 had with Iran. Columnists like Caroline Glick, who work for the Jerusalem Post, took an extreme view that Israel should protect itself from the US influence of lining up with the EU3. There were also views that the US had abandoned Israel and hence Israel should focus its energies on self-reliance and defence.

When a political party takes over power in Israel, *Jerusalem Post* criticises it of being soft on issues that are critical for its national security. *Jerusalem Post* criticises Ehud Barak's government when it came to power in 1999 for being soft on Iran and more reliant on the US to bring about change in the *status quo*. The US policy on Iran during the Clinton administration has been criticised for lack of clarity. In the 1990s after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US sought better relations with the former superpower. In the process, it failed to criticise the dealings which Russia had with Iran. Israeli leaders were afraid that the cash-strapped Russia would trade the nuclear technology with Iran and pressurised the Clinton administration for sanctions against the Russian firms. Clinton was not bowed down by the pressure from the Israeli government. But the Israeli leaders could gain the support of the US Congress to curtail Russia's alleged dealings with Iran and the Clinton administration eventually had to bow down to the pressure, where Iran's missiles would be shown with big pictures and then an analysis would follow. An interview with the Prime Minister in Israel on Iran's nuclear programme would also appear on the first page of the special edition. There would be no writings or else news items on the developments in Iran or any other economic progress. Most of the news items would also throw Iran in a bad light.

The coverage in the page about Iran's reformists or dissidents would be commented by a few analysts. From 2002, when Iran was threatened with Security Council action by the IAEA board members for the concealment of its nuclear programme, there would be special features usually during a festival like in Israel. On two instances, a special focus on opposition groups and regime change was given. On 27 June 2003, Aharon Levrant, a strategic analyst and a senior intelligence officer gives an overview of the developments in Iran after Khatami came to power. His views criticise the US for pinning its hopes on a regime change in Iran and thereby ignoring the real threat it faces. The moderates and the nationalists support the nuclear programme and the quest for nuclear power has been there since the Shah's regime in Iran.

Other views also accuse the respective governments in Israel of ignoring the threat from Iran and focussing more on the peace process with the Palestinians and Syria rather than eliminating the threat from Iran. Eliminating the threat of Iran would yield more results than the peace talks with the Palestinians. The Palestinians would not constitute a major threat to the existence of Israel but Iran would, provided it acquires the ability to acquire the nuclear weapons.

The editorial views are very consistent and persistent on Israeli security concerns and show lack of faith in international organisations. Their credibility is always questioned. Most of the editorial views are critical of the international community for ignoring the threat which is faced by a small state like Israel. EU-3's policy of negotiating and going for a dialogue with Iran has been dismissed by Israel of yielding no results.

## CONCLUSION

The perceptions and the environment play an important role in assessing a strategic environment. Iran and Israel do not share borders and yet they see each other as a major threat to the other's existence. In the course of this mutual hostility, there is a natural tendency to exaggerate the gravity of the threat, on both the sides in order to make the threat seem worse, and on the other side, for reasons having to do with the internal political debate in both Israel and the US. Any discussion on Iran's nuclear programme therefore must necessarily be speculative to some degree.

Information about Israeli security threat perception is often more in the nature of propaganda than objective reporting. Nevertheless, it behooves anyone interested in security in West Asia to try to fathom where that country's security and arms control policies may be going. For better or worse, Iran is the biggest state in that critical sub-region, if not its richest. As the past twenty years have shown, events in Iran are also able to affect remarkably the wider regional and global policies of the international community.

This study argues that Israel has a clear, long-standing set of threat perceptions and that these security concerns are not entirely unreasonable. So is the case for Iran. Though Iran's views may not all find support in the West, once these views are understood, the country's arms control policy and WMD programs can be understood as responses that make sense given the Iranian perception of its security concerns. This point is not made to justify or excuse Iranian actions in these areas, as Iranian policies do pose some threats to others, especially Israel. However, a better understanding of Iran's motivations, even where one disagrees with them, should help the international community develop effective and appropriate responses. But exaggeration of the hostility of the adversary's intention exacerbates misperception and leads to confrontation. There is a less direct but more common route to war which also stems from exaggerated perceptions of the adversary's hostility. The presentation of high-threat images of the adversary appears to be associated with "conservative" policies linked to a greater emphasis on military programmes, while less militant images seem to be associated with more moderate positions on defence related policy. This logic appears in the case of Iran and Israel.



Iran and Israel imagine a worst-case scenario while dealing with the other. Israel's reported nuclear option was built to deal with a worst-case scenario of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) losing its conventional capability to defend the land of Israel. Initially, Israel did not envision an Arab nuclear opponent in Iraq. When such a possibility emerged in the late 1970s, the Israeli response was to sabotage the Iraq's nuclear programme. It destroyed the nuclear reactor near Baghdad with a pre-emptive conventional air strike in June 1981. But the Persian Gulf War of 1991 contributed to a change in the Israeli strategic thinking. This is seen in its willingness to experiment with collaborative security arrangements like the Arms Control and Security Cooperation (ACSC) and a more regional approach. At the same time, after the Scud attack by Iraq in the 1991, Israel became increasingly wary about the threat from its neighbourhood.

Though Iran and Israel had enjoyed good relations during the Shah's regime, after the change of regime in Iran there was a tendency to exaggerate the ideological differences among them and the Iranians viewed the Israeli regime with hatred. The threat perceptions led to an increase in arms race like the Israeli acquisition of aircrafts and up gradation of the defence forces and the qualitative edge it tries to maintain, and in case of Iran, the acquisition of missiles like Shahab-1, 2, 3 and the Iranian rhetoric of the missiles being designed to destroy the Jewish state. Though the rhetoric of Iran is basically designed to accumulate Arab capital, this policy of Iran calls for tougher measures in Israel.

Israel as a small country which has dedicated enough resources to build defensive capabilities since it was formed in 1948, views Iran as a major threat and the Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is viewed as an existential threat by Israel. Iran supports organisations that fight Israel like the Hezbollah which has the capability of anti-aircraft weapons and long-range missiles intended to hit urban centers in Israel. It also aids Hamas and Islamic Jihad. While Iran's hostility has been clearly demonstrated in deeds and words, Israel's reaction calls the attention of the world to the developing existential threat. Added to this threat are the statements that emanate from the Iranian leadership of wiping out Israel and destruction of the Little Satan.

Moderate statements might prevent the estrangement of those elements in Iran that possibly advocate a more nuanced policy *vis a vis* Iran.

Israel's capability of intercepting a nuclear tipped missile using the Arrow system and its second strike retaliatory capability in response to an Iranian attempt at a nuclear attack may be of significance to the Iranians, and this consideration may well lead in the end to a balance of terror and mutual nuclear deterrence. But Israel is reluctant to believe that a 'balance of terror' can be expected in the scenario with Iran. Israel considers Iran to be a terror-supporting regime and hence Iran itself might become a distributor of nuclear technology and materials to other countries. This means that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran would create an unprecedented situation regarding the capability of harming Israel. It may also aggravate some of Israel's security problems, by increasing their complexity, the capability of dealing with them, and the degree of uncertainty that Israel would be required to face. However, it is not inevitable that the Iranian threat will increase to the point that it poses a viable endangerment to Israel's very existence.

The media, and especially the print media where the readers get to read a lot on opinions and editorials play a very important role in analysing changes and threat perceptions. The newspaper taken for this study, *The Jerusalem Post* is the largest selling English newspaper in Israel. *The Jerusalem Post* published a significant number of news items relating to the Iranian nuclear programme. The number of news reports published on the same increased after the year 2000. This indicates an increase in the threat perceptions of Israel and the newspaper's objective to keep the readers abreast of the increased threat from the other side. It can also be seen in the number of special features which carry something on Iran's threat. The coverage accorded to Iran in general was very little compared to the space offered to present Israeli perceptions on Iran's nuclear programme.

The 'Agenda Setting' function of newspapers can be mentioned in this regard. The study shows that if newspapers publish some items with importance continuously for a long time the readers also begin to believe the issues to be important and this "Agenda Setting" function of the newspapers eventually influences the greater political process. The study has helped prove that the opinions and editorials of the

Jerusalem Post have led to an increased threat perception in Israel regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. The threat from Iran is being taken more seriously than the issue with the Palestinians and Syria as has been reflected in the editorials. The political commitment is reflected by an extreme view on the Iranian threat and the strong political commitment towards an oriented thinking.

In Israel, a section of the political establishment is preoccupied with issues regarding security and often prescribes pre-emptive measures. In any situation, it is important to follow the influence of the media that actually builds the societal consensus for and against any issue. Though media has been under severe criticism for their increasingly biased nature and 'manipulated reports'-thanks to Iraq war, one cannot deny the effective influence the media plays in bringing change in the public opinion and thereafter policy decisions. The claim that the media is biased has been proven in the study. The practices of journalists and editors result in articles and programmes which favour one view of the world over another, providing sustenance for one set of interests while undermining an alternative.

The very thought of nuclear weapons in Iran and the stable deterrence that will lead the situation is unacceptable to Iran. Hence, Israel repeatedly says that a nuclear weapon-state in the immediate neighbourhood does not go well. Given the difficulties and risks involved in implementation of the military option, Israel adopts the position that the major burden of dealing with the Iranian nuclear threat - by both diplomatic and military means - must be borne by the US administration, and not by Israel. There are two reasons for this: the Iranian threat is directed not only at Israel, but also at the vital interests of the US itself and at its allies; and the US is also likely to be better prepared to conduct a military campaign in Iran and to cope with the ramifications and risks. And hence Israel says that the threat from Iran constitutes a global threat.

On attempting to study and examine views and news from the *Jerusalem Post*, one of the largest selling newspapers in Israel, the Israeli perceptions regarding Iran's nuclear programme has been clearly understood.

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