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Scenario for 2009 Israeli Strike on Iran

Posted By [Gordon Prather](#)

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This week, Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu both warned that if Hillary's "diplomacy" failed to halt "Iran's nuclear activities," Israel would be left with "[no option](#)" but to attack and destroy them.

Never mind that on [15 November, 2007](#), IAEA Director-General reported for the umpteenth time he had "been able to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran" to a military purpose.

A few days after that 2007 IAEA report, Anthony Cordesman, widely acknowledged to be an expert on military affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, updated his war-game scenario entitled "[Iran, Israel and Nuclear War; An Illustrative Scenario Analysis](#)." [.pdf]

Apparently, however, Cordesman, concluded that, because of the Likudnik paranoia, "the latest IAEA report on Iran again illustrates the risks of nuclear war in the Middle East."

Nor did Cordesman take into account the just made-public National Intelligence Estimate entitled "[Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities](#)" [.pdf] that judged "with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program" and *assessed* "with moderate confidence Tehran had not restarted its nuclear weapons program."

Now, fast forward to [4 March, 2009](#), when Director-General ElBaradei once again reported he had "been able to continue to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran."

A few days after that, Cordesman and someone named Abdullah Toukan, issued what appears to be a 2009 update, this time entitled "[Study on a Possible Israeli Strike on Iran's Nuclear Development Facilities](#)," this time acknowledging and quoting from the November 2007 NIE on Iran's nuclear programs. However, they focus on this judgment:

"We judge with moderate confidence that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough HEU for a weapon is late 2009, but that this is very unlikely."

Why? Perhaps because then-President Bush had gone to Israel and [reportedly](#) told the Likudniks that he didn't accept the judgments of his own National Intelligence Council, particularly those relating to the un-likelihood of Iran's attempting to produce weapons-grade enriched-uranium

To his credit, in his 2009 update, Cordesman does note that;

"It is not known whether Iran has some secret facilities where it is conducting uranium enrichment and a nuclear weapons program. So far no concrete intelligence information points to this being likely."

So, Cordesman's scenarios assume the Israelis will attack what he considers to be the three main target facilities, which if destroyed, would seriously delay Iran's attempt to realize its inalienable rights to the enjoyment of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

- ***Natanz** facility apparently covers some 670,000 sq ft in total, the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) complex was built some 8 meters-deep into the ground and protected by a concrete wall 2.5 meters thick, itself protected by another concrete wall. By mid-2004 the Natanz centrifuge facility was hardened with a roof of several meters of reinforced concrete and buried under a layer of earth some 75 feet deep.*

- *The **Esfahan** Nuclear Technology Center (ENTC) is an Industrial-Scale Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF). The U3O8 [yellowcake] is transported to ENTC to convert it to UF6 (Uranium Hexafluoride).*

- *The **Arak** Facility covers an area of approximately 55,000 sq ft and contains the [uncompleted] Heavy Water Reactor [and a completed 'heavy water' production facility] and a set of cooling towers.*

However, according to the [DEBKAFfile](#) – an Israeli internet website that specializes in disseminating information [and apparently quite a bit of intentional dis-information] related to U.S., Israeli and Mid-East Security and Intelligence – the 2009 CSIS study lists an additional six targets that would need to be destroyed in order to "cripple" the Iranian nuclear program.

- **Lashkar A'bad**, site of secret uranium enrichment plants in the north near the Turkish border.
- **Tehranb**, for the central laboratory for developing atomic armaments as well as more uranium enrichment facilities.

- **Ardekan**, at the southern tip of Iran, where more uranium enrichment facilities are located.
- **Saghand**, Iran's main uranium mining region.
- **Bushehr**, on the Persian Gulf shore, Iran's biggest nuclear reactor built by Russia.
- **Gachin**, near the Strait of Hormuz, the site of more uranium mines and enrichment facilities.

But, except for its description of the nuclear reactor at Bushehr as being Russian-built, all the above is either DEBKAF file mis-information or dis-information.

Cordesman presents in mindboggling detail – specifying the number and types of Israeli aircraft (virtually all U.S.-supplied) required, the refueling-in-flight requirements (going and returning), the number and types of bombs required, the optimum altitudes to be flown at each phase of the route, etc. – three possible aircraft-accomplished scenarios, as well as one Israeli ballistic missile-accomplished scenario.

But the targets to be attacked do *not* include those additional targets alleged by DEBKAF file to be parts of Iran's nuclear program.

Targets to be attacked *do* include Iran's military installations; all ten of Iran's military aircraft bases, Iran's known ballistic missile sites and known air-defense surface-to-air missile sites.

Cordesman predicts that the Israelis will suffer a “very low attrition rate” in taking out all these Iranian military targets because Iran now lacks “modern weapons systems, integration and C4I Battle Management.”

However, if Russia delivers to the Iranians the S-300V (SA-12, Giant) Mobile SAM system – which the Iranians have already bought and paid for and for which Cordesman provides detailed specifications and resulting capabilities – then “the whole analytic model, beginning from C4I Early Warning to Response and Scramble times in the engagement of Israeli aircraft with [the Iranians in possession of] this integrated mobile air defense system, will have to be calculated.”

Cordesman estimates that once that Russian Mobile SAM system is operational the attrition for an Israeli Air Strike of 90 aircraft could then be “between 20 to 30 aircraft,” a loss he supposes Israel could hardly afford.

Cordesman also provides an informed analysis of the dire probable environmental consequences of an Israeli attack on the Bushehr nuclear-power plant, once it becomes operational later this year.

So, what principal message did Cordesman send?

“Iran should be engaged directly by the U.S. with an agenda open to all areas of military and non-military issues that both are in agreement or disagreement.”

And what message did DEBKAF file and the Likudniks receive?

That if Hillary’s “diplomacy” fails – as it will – to “halt” Iran’s IAEA Safeguarded “nuclear activities” Israel will be left “with no option” but to attack and destroy them *before the year is out!*