

If Attacked, How Would Iran Respond?

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Introduction

A report by the Iran Project published in late 2012 warned that “a U.S. and/or Israeli preventive military action against Iran could...perhaps contribut[e] to increased sectarian conflict and regional war.”¹ In March 2012, pundit Fareed Zakaria warned that an Israeli or American strike against Iran could be “a path to another Middle East war.”² While other experts have actually posited a more measured Iranian response, they have not offered a systematic analysis of Iran’s strategic capabilities.³

Iran could respond to an attack in two main arenas: against Israel, or in the Persian Gulf against the United States and/or the Sunni Gulf states, mainly Saudi Arabia. The common Western assessment, which envisions a horror scenario of Iranian responses and consequent developments, serves as an excellent deterrence tool for the Iranians by undermining the threat of the military option and reducing the likelihood that the regime in Tehran will agree to a diplomatic solution.

This paper challenges the commonly held Western view through a systematic analysis of Iran’s capabilities and the possible range of Iranian strategies to be used against Israel. The analysis complements studies that have been conducted on the Iranian response in the Gulf,⁴ and takes into account the response capability of Iran’s ally Syria and that of Iran’s Lebanese and Palestinian proxies. In addition, this paper makes four policy recommendations to reduce the possibility of regional escalation, which in any case is unlikely, considering the interests of the relevant actors. The main conclusion is that the possibility of a strike against Iran is a pivotal instrument of diplomacy. A measured but credible use of this tool can help achieve the goals of the international campaign: to pressure

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Iran so that it agrees to concessions regarding its nuclear program, which will ensure that it does not possess military nuclear capabilities, and to reduce the likelihood of regional escalation.

The Iranian Military Response: Capabilities

An examination of Iran's ability to inflict harm on Israel touches on several levels, including the use of missiles, airpower, naval capabilities, and terrorist activity.

An Iranian missile attack constitutes the main threat. Iran has two types of missiles whose range allows them to strike targets in Israel: Shehab 3 missiles, with a potential range of 1,300 kilometers, and Ghadir missiles, with a range of over 1,600 kilometers.⁵ Both missiles have a low level of accuracy, which makes it impossible for them to strike a pinpoint target: the CEP (circular error probability) of the Shehab is over 2 kilometers, and even with the Ghadir, the CEP radius is hundreds of meters. Both missiles can carry a heavy warhead: 1 ton and 750 kilograms, respectively. Iran has dozens of launchers and about 300 missiles of each type threatening Israel.⁶ Nevertheless, the experience of 1991 shows that missiles with such problematic accuracy are not effective in hitting specific Israeli targets, and that they are used as weapons of terror against large cities, where the damage is also limited by the advanced warning to the populace, the effectiveness of the Arrow system, and the improvement in passive civilian defense. Addressing this resource, in recent years the Iranians have released films documenting simultaneous launches of multiple missiles from different launchers, with the goal of saturating the Israeli missile defense system.

There are suspicions that the Iranians have the ability to arm their missiles with biological and chemical warheads, even though Iran is a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the possession and use of such weapons. However, because the missiles have a low level of accuracy and this nonconventional weapon is not effective in a missile attack, Iran's limited capability in this area and its leadership's understanding that the use of chemical weapons would damage Iran's legitimacy and lead to a military response on an entirely different level would likely actually prevent a nonconventional attack in response to a conventional attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Another possible form of Iranian response to an attack is a terrorist attack on Israeli and Jewish targets abroad. Over many years the Quds

Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards has developed the ability to carry out terrorist attacks around the world. The attacks in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994 against the Israeli embassy and the AMIA Jewish Center have been attributed to the Revolutionary Guards. Both the wave of attacks against Israeli diplomats in 2012 and the attempted assassination of the Saudi ambassador to the United States were perpetrated by the Iranians.⁷

Various scholars have warned that the response to an attack on Iran would also include attacks against Israeli and Western targets.⁸ Iran has already tried to carry out terrorist attacks in retaliation for attempts to strike at its nuclear program through the Stuxnet virus cyber attack and the January 2010 and July 2011 assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists. The failure of these attempts suggests that Iran has a limited ability to carry out wide scale terrorist attacks, and that the Western world has developed good abilities to thwart attacks since the terror attacks of September 2001. Iran's limited capabilities make it possible to contain its capacity for retaliation through the use of terrorism.

Other threats include attacks through planes and drones, although Iran's ability on this level is highly limited. Iran suffers from clear inferiority against the Israeli air force. Israel has two layers of aerial defense against aircraft penetrating its airspace: interceptor aircraft and anti-aircraft systems for aerial defense. The flight ranges of Iran's most advanced aircraft, the Sukhoi 24, make it impossible for them to attack and return to Iran without refueling in the air, which makes them vulnerable and open to air defense radar. The drones in Iran's possession do not appear very advanced compared to their Western counterparts, and they do not have serious operational flexibility once they are launched.⁹ While the Iranians recently announced that they have succeeded in developing a Shahed 129 drone that is capable of carrying up to eight missiles with a range of 1,700 kilometers (which covers all of Israel), various assessments in Israel indicate that the capabilities of the drone have been exaggerated.¹⁰ Yet even if the announcement is partially correct, it appears that Israel has an appropriate response to this threat and that the most relevant threat scenario is suicide drones being sent from Lebanon or Syria.

Theoretically Iran has maritime capabilities that would enable it to strike Israeli targets, but they are circumscribed. Iran has some Soviet-made submarines that are not permanently stationed in the

Mediterranean and are mainly used in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.¹¹ Their ability to embark on long missions without an escort appears limited. While Iran has a number of vessels that are able to reach Israel's shores, they would have difficulty passing through the Gulf of Suez during fighting, and ships sailing in the direction of Eilat would encounter Israeli vessels with advanced sea-to-sea missiles. Given these limitations, it would appear that the more relevant scenario is a naval terrorist attack, either using anti-ship missiles fired from a ship disguised as a civilian vessel or through the use of Iranian midget submarines carried by a civilian vessel for suicide attacks. The Iranians have a number of such submarines (the Ghadir), whose sailing range is very limited.¹² These submarines can carry a small number of soldiers and two torpedo missiles. Therefore, even though there is a certain capacity to hit targets in Israel, it is still a threat that Israel can meet. As for an attack using ground forces, the Iranian ground threat is not a relevant consideration, given the more than 1,200 kilometers between Iran and Israel.

Thus an interim summary of Iranian capabilities indicates that Israel can successfully deal with Iranian responses to an attack. These scenarios are far from large scale war, and their impact would be primarily psychological. The main Iranian military threat in the event of an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities is the missile threat, along with the threat of terrorist attacks against military and civilian targets. The following section examines Iran's willingness to respond using all its capabilities in the event that its nuclear program is subject to a Western military strike.

The main interest of the ayatollahs is to preserve their power. Thus, in a scenario involving a pinpoint strike on the Iranian nuclear program, the regime would seek to respond without causing escalation and significant American intervention in the crisis.

Assessment of the Iranian Response Strategy

There are two significant parameters for assessing an Iranian response. The first concerns the identity of the attacker: is it an American attack, an Israeli attack without US backing, or a combined attack (American backing for an Israeli strike would almost certainly be perceived as such a scenario by the regime in Tehran). The main Iranian interest is in regime survival, and therefore the regime would consider whether its response would enhance the threat against it. If the scope of the first attack had already threatened the regime, there would be fewer

inhibitions about a response. Thus with an Israeli strike, for example, the danger is that an Iranian response would drag the United States into involvement that would threaten the regime, while in an American attack limited to nuclear targets, the concern is that a response would lead to a counter-response that would threaten the regime. If in Tehran's assessment the United States had decided to use its full power in order to topple the regime, this would reduce Iran's inhibitions, and the scope of the Iranian response could be expected to increase. If Tehran's assessment is that the United States is limiting its attack to Iran's nuclear infrastructure and that it is likely to broaden its attack against the regime only in response to an Iranian response, the chances would increase of Iran's exercising restraint in order to avoid escalation that would threaten the survival of the regime.

The second parameter concerns the nature of the attack. The greater the force and scope of the Western strike – if it included economic assets such as the oil and gas industry or government and military assets such as government and religious buildings, headquarters, and strategic military forces – the more pressure Tehran would face to respond with significant force in order to deter its enemies from future strikes and restore its honor. The two parameters are connected, since an American response in the event of escalation would include a broader and more powerful attack on regime assets as well. For this reason, it would be a more credible and effective threat that would encourage Iranian restraint in response to a Western attack.

Against this background a scale of five possible Iranian strategies can be posited (from the limited and measured to the very massive):

- a. Total military restraint: This is an extreme scenario in which the Iranian regime chooses not to respond immediately after an attack on its facilities. Two examples of this strategy are the lack of immediate Iraqi response following the Israel Air Force attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981, and the absence of a Syrian response to the attack on the Deir ez-Zor nuclear reactor in 2007.¹³ However, there is little likelihood of Iran adopting such a strategy. In contrast to Iraq and Syria, Iran is aware that the West knows about its nuclear program, and an attack would not be a strategic surprise. Even if the timing and nature of the attack are a surprise, Tehran has likely prepared a response in the event of a strike. Tehran would presumably decide to use this plan, even if it were partial and restrained, to show the

strength of the regime, deter Iran's enemies from additional actions in the future, and restore the country's honor after the attack on its nuclear project. In other words, there is a high level of certainty that there would be an Iranian response, and the question is about its scope.

- b. Tit for tat:¹⁴ This is the classic reactive strategy because it mimics the strategy of the attacker. Iran's response to a strike against the country's nuclear facilities would be an attack on Israel's nuclear facilities. In this scenario, a significant number of missiles would be launched from Iran and Lebanon in the direction of Dimona or any other target in Israel perceived as "nuclear associated," in order to convey a message of parity between Iran and Israel, and perhaps even to damage Israel's facilities. There is a high likelihood that this method of operation would be chosen, independently or as part of a broader Iranian response.
- c. A response that is limited in scope but more significant: A broader Iranian response would include the use of terrorist cells and a restrained launch of missiles – one or two missiles volleys at Israel's cities, and perhaps also Saudi and Western targets in the Gulf. Suicide missions from the air and the sea are also possible in this limited response scenario. If the Western strike damages Iran's nuclear infrastructure but does not harm other regime assets, there is a high likelihood of such an Iranian response, because the regime in Tehran will seek to balance the need to respond to an attack with the fear of escalation that would threaten regime assets not directly connected to Iran's military nuclear program. Again, the main interest of the regime of the ayatollahs is to preserve their power. Therefore, it seems that they would not carry out an action that is perceived as likely to threaten the stability of the regime. Thus, in a scenario involving a pinpoint strike on the Iranian nuclear program, the regime would seek to respond without causing escalation and significant American intervention in the crisis.
- d. The maximalist response against Israeli targets: Despite what has been noted thus far, it is possible that Iran would seek an aggressive, maximalist response to a strike against its military nuclear project and its national honor, while attempting to isolate Israel from the United States. It could launch dozens of missiles a day against Israeli cities in a number of volleys spread throughout the day. The strategic purpose

would be to punish Israel for the attack, paralyze life in Israel, exact as heavy a price as possible from Israel, and increase the psychological effect of the attack on the Israeli populace. Iran would attempt to achieve the maximum deterrent effect and deter Israel regarding a future conflict. The regime in Tehran likely assumes that such a response would lead to a significant Israeli response and could lead to escalation of the conflict between the two countries – which in turn could allow another strike against the nuclear infrastructure and a broad and comprehensive attack on Iranian economic and government assets. Such escalation could spiral out of control and encourage American military intervention, which could threaten the continued survival of the regime. Given this, the Iranian regime will likely refrain from such a response against Israel as long as a Western strike focuses on the nuclear program. If the Iranian regime feels that the attack reflects an effort to threaten its survival or that Israel and the United States are less willing to respond with force, it is liable to believe that it has less to lose from possible escalation. This scenario, in an extreme configuration, could also include Iranian use of nonconventional weapons. However, the operational limitations of Iranian weapons, together with Tehran’s ambition to prevent a massive Israeli response and American intervention, would serve as deterrents regarding use of this type of weapon. Accordingly, there seems to be limited probability that Tehran would use nonconventional weapons at the start of a future crisis resulting from an attack on Iran, or in a scenario of conflict with Israel that does not develop into an all-out clash that clearly threatens the survival of the regime.

- e. Regional escalation: Iran responds to a Western attack with full force and against all its enemies – the United States, the Gulf states, and Israel. In such a scenario, Iran could attack Israeli and American targets in the Gulf with all of its (limited) capabilities, including threatening to close or actually closing the Strait of Hormuz. However, an assessment that an attack on Iran’s military nuclear facilities would necessarily

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lead to a large scale, prolonged regional war is highly questionable.¹⁵ A scenario of regional escalation would require the United States to intervene and would significantly change the regional balance of power. Therefore, Tehran would choose such a response only if it did not fear that such a move would lead to further significant harm to regime assets, because it would already feel a real threat to the survival of the regime, or as a last resort in an attempt to set the entire region ablaze in order to press for international intervention (apparently led by Russia) to achieve a ceasefire as quickly as possible, and before the regime loses a large portion of its assets. Since this would be a dangerous gamble, the assessment is that Iran would seek to avoid such a response, and hence at the start of the crisis this is a scenario with very low probability.

An interim summary on Iranian strategy: Unlike Iranian capabilities, which can be measured and evaluated with a high level of reliability, assessing intentions is more difficult and demands more caution and less decisiveness. However, the perception that the serious threat is the likely scenario is not grounded in a rational evaluation. The tit-for-tat and limited response scenarios appear more relevant, though they depend on many factors, mainly the type of Western strike against Iran and Tehran's assessment of the strength of the Israeli and American response to their response – the “third move.” The spectrum of Iranian responses does not necessarily describe strategic options that stand on their own,

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but a hierarchy of possible responses that are not mutually exclusive and that could escalate in the event that the crisis deteriorates beyond the ability to arrest it. Thus, for example, it could be that the first Iranian response would be limited but would result in a powerful Israeli response and in its wake, an escalation to a more massive Iranian

response. This hierarchy illustrates the greater effectiveness of a surgical first strike that is focused on the Iranian nuclear program and on the later use of steps to limit the scope of the conflict so that it will remain under control.

Relevant Iranian Allies and Proxies

Three Iranian allies in the region are relevant to these response scenarios and pose a threat to Israel: Hizbollah (an Iranian proxy organization),

the Syrian military, and Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza that operate from Sinai.

Hizbollah's arsenal of rockets and missiles has grown significantly and improved since the Second Lebanon War, and there is no doubt that its firepower is longer and more accurate. Nevertheless, Israel's defensive, offensive, and intelligence capabilities have developed since 2006. Anti-missile systems such as Iron Dome, already operational, and the not yet operational David's Sling could be game changers in a future Israeli campaign against Hizbollah. A repeat of the Israeli strike against Hizbollah's strategic missiles early in the 2006 war would also be a significant factor in shaping the future battlefield. If the IDF succeeds in repeating its offensive success from the first day of the Second Lebanon War and its defensive success in Operation Pillar of Defense, it is highly likely that the horror scenarios described in the media will not be realized.¹⁶ Every war is different from previous wars, and therefore the next conflict with Hizbollah will not be identical to the conflict in 2006. Damage to the home front would likely focus on the Gush Dan region and be more serious than in 2006, but a significant blow to the Iranian nuclear program justifies this price.

Furthermore, in recent months Hizbollah has been busy fighting in Syria alongside Assad. It is still not clear how this affects the organization's capabilities and its preparedness for a conflict with Israel. What is clear is that the events in the Middle East and the decision by Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to aid Assad in the war against the rebels have lengthened the list of Hizbollah's opponents, both within and outside of Lebanon. On the one hand, a war against Israel could be seen as an opportunity for Hizbollah to restore its prestige as the defender of Lebanon from the Israeli enemy. On the other hand, it could strengthen those who argue that Hizbollah is an Iranian proxy that is prepared to bring destruction to Lebanon in the service of the regime in Tehran. Given the organization's deteriorating situation internally in Lebanon, Hizbollah at the time of a Western attack on Iran would likely face conflicting pressure regarding possible action against Israel. If in the past it was clear that Hizbollah would attack Israel in response to a strike against Iran, now its willingness to do so prompts

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more doubts. Since the organization is budgeted by Iranian arms and training in exchange for an understanding that Hizbollah will act if it receives an order from Tehran, it might be unable to refrain from taking action, and internal Lebanese pressure would affect mainly the scope of the action, which would be more limited than what was possible before 2012 and the diversion of Hizbollah's efforts to Syria. In other words, Hizbollah would likely take part in an Iranian response, but the scope of its response may well be smaller than in the past.

Syria: the scope and quality of Syria's rocket and missile arsenal are a major strategic threat to the State of Israel. However, the Syrians, unlike Hizbollah, are not Iranian proxies, and their considerations are based on Syrian and not Iranian interests. A major consideration for Damascus is regime survival, and a conflict with Israel would certainly work against this interest. The fear of a massive Israeli response deters Syria. Indeed, it has not responded to the direct attacks against it in recent years attributed to Israel. In addition, over the past two years the Syrian army has invested major efforts in the Syrian civil war. Although it is difficult to assess how much erosion there has been in the army's capabilities vis-à-vis Israel, these capabilities have almost certainly been significantly damaged. It is likely, then, that the events in Syria have further reduced Assad's willingness to take part in a response against Israel in the event of a strike against Iran. It could be argued that Assad's increasing dependence on his Iranian patron and his desire to take revenge for the attacks attributed to Israel against military targets in Syria would encourage a Syrian response. However, Syria's restraint in responding to the direct attacks, in spite of Assad's threats, are a good indicator that the Syrian ruler does not wish to risk Israeli involvement in his country. Such involvement could change the balance of power in the Syrian civil war and, in the eyes of the regime, the positive dynamic that was created following its success in taking on the rebels in a number of key areas in the country. Therefore, even if Assad responds, it would be a minimal, token response, such as allowing terrorists to operate from Syrian territory, which would not drag Israel into an all-out war.

The third relevant element is Palestinian terrorist activity in Gaza, the most important actors being Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The tension between Sunnis and Shiites over the civil war in Syria has pushed Hamas to distance itself from Syria, Hizbollah, and Iran, and has damaged Hamas's ties to Iran and Tehran's assistance to Hamas. Therefore,

Hamas will likely be reluctant to enter into a conflict with Israel and look like a collaborator with the regime in Tehran – in contrast to Islamic Jihad, which would take part in an Iranian response. That said, recent months have seen a certain warming of relations between Hamas and Tehran,¹⁷ which could encourage the Hamas leadership to decide to lend its support, even if only token, to Iranian retaliation efforts, in an attempt to prove its loyalty once again. Nonetheless, the tension still existing between Hamas and Tehran would likely be manifested in a reduced response by the Palestinian terrorist organizations. The worse Hamas's economic and political situation, the more pressure its leadership will feel to return to Iranian patronage and participate in a response against Israel in the event of a Western strike against Iran.

For its part, Israel knows how to deal with the threat from the south, even if it includes hundreds of rockets fired at Israeli cities over a number of days, as occurred during Operations Cast Lead and Pillar of Defense. Israel has successfully dealt with a threat to the Gush Dan area using an integrated, comprehensive offensive and defensive response. Israel appears to have an appropriate response to the threat from the south, even if the terrorist organizations decide on large scale action, and certainly if they decide to restrict their operations.

Policy Recommendations

The analysis in this paper confirms the argument that for Israel, the main threat of an Iranian response to a Western or Israeli attack would be a volley of conventional missiles and rockets launched at Israel's cities and nuclear installations by Iran and Hizbollah. This is still far from the horror scenario of an all-out war between Iran and Israel or a regional war, which is highly improbable. Nevertheless, the risks of escalation to a broader conflict must be minimized through action on four fronts.

- a. A surgical strike: If a decision has been reached to attack Iranian nuclear facilities, a surgical strike is preferred, or in other words, a pinpoint strike on the infrastructures that support Iran's military nuclear program over the course of a few days. In a pinpoint strike, it will be possible to maximize the damage to the Iranian military nuclear program but to leave Tehran with all the other assets that are important to the Iranian economy and the survival of the regime. In such a situation, the regime would have a great deal to lose from

- escalation, and this would reduce the chances that it would opt for the strategy of a massive response.
- b. A credible threat in an extensive, powerful “third move”: Along with the surgical strike against Iran, a clear message must be conveyed to Tehran that a massive Iranian response would lead to escalation of the conflict and result in a comprehensive and powerful American and Israeli response, which would also include political, economic, and military regime assets. The combination of a limited attack scenario and a credible Western threat to expand the targets of the attack in the event of escalation serves a strategy of restraining the Iranian response and preserving the achievements of the attack at the lowest possible price. An Iranian response can be expected in any case; the challenge will be to limit and contain it.
 - c. A strengthened Israeli defensive pillar: Since there will likely be an Iranian response, even if it is limited in scope, Israel’s ability to thwart the components of the response is critically important. Israel has advanced anti-missile and anti-rocket defense systems, such as the Arrow and the Iron Dome. If they are used together with passive means of protection, early warning, and public awareness and discipline, it will be possible to limit the damage from an Iranian response. This would not only save lives and reduce the damage, but would also lessen the pressure for an Israeli response that could lead to an exchange of blows and escalation. In the meantime, preparations must also be made to thwart suicide attacks from the air and the sea and attacks against targets abroad. If the Iranians nevertheless launch a massive response, Israel will need a wide ranging response against critical Iranian infrastructures so that the Iranians understand the need to end the conflict as soon as possible.
 - d. A plan for the day after: Planning for an attack on Iran must include a plan for the day after. The plan must ensure that international sanctions on Iran continue as part of ongoing pressure on Tehran to give up its military nuclear program. It must also guarantee that there continues to be a credible military threat. This is necessary to improve the conditions for reaching a diplomatic agreement between Tehran and the West in which Iran would be a number of years away from a nuclear bomb and agree to have the International Atomic Energy Agency monitor implementation of the agreement. Only this would prevent Iran from arming itself with nuclear weapons over time.

Many experts argue correctly that an attack, no matter how successful, cannot stop Iran's military nuclear program forever. Nonetheless, this does not justify inaction and passivity. If Iran does not agree to an acceptable settlement that will ensure that its breakout time to a bomb allows for detection and response in time, use of the military option could buy time until there is regime change. It could also send a very clear message to the Iranians that their attempts to arm themselves with nuclear military capabilities will be thwarted in the future as well.

A credible military strike is an integral part of the general strategy toward Iran's nuclearization – a strategy that prefers a diplomatic solution. Damage to Iran's nuclear program would prove to Tehran that the West is determined to prevent it from going nuclear. It would also signal readiness to make do with arresting progress on the nuclear front and not threaten the survival of the regime. When a nuclear bomb is not within Iran's reach and when the West proves its seriousness, the current regime in Tehran may become more flexible, agree to stop its military nuclear program, and accept close monitoring of compliance with the agreement. If it does not agree to do this today, the attack will actually allow more time to step up pressure on the regime through use of the existing sanctions in order to persuade it to accept such an agreement or face increasing domestic pressure that could threaten its survival. Either way, a strike should be seen as a tool to promote the goal of stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons through diplomatic means, to the extent possible, and not as a solution in and of itself.

The four recommendations above, which combine a limited strike scenario with a broad defensive arrangement as part of a long term diplomatic strategy that does not end on the day of the strike, are intended to minimize the risk of a Western strike against Iran if it does not display willingness to reach a diplomatic solution that guarantees it cannot develop military nuclear capabilities. They show that correct preparation and Western cooperation can significantly reduce the chances of a regional war in the wake of an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Such preparation supports a long term diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis. Those who overestimate the threat of regional escalation damage the credibility of the military option and encourage a situation in which this becomes the only available option for preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Notes

- 1 The Iran Project, *Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action against Iran*, 2012, p. 39, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf.
- 2 Fareed Zakaria, "Zakaria: Another War in the Middle East?" *CNN*, March 8, 2012.
- 3 Thom Shanker, Helene Cooper, and Ethan Bronner, "U.S. Sees Iran Attacks as Likely if Israel Strikes," *New York Times*, February 29, 2012; Ephraim Kam, "An Attack on Iran: The Morning After," *Strategic Assessment* 15, no. 1 (2012): 15-27.
- 4 For example, Amos Yadlin and Yoel Guzansky, "The Strait of Hormuz: Assessing and Neutralizing the Threat," *Strategic Assessment* 14, no. 4 (2012): 7-22; Jonathan Marcus, "Analysis: How Would Iran Respond to an Israeli Attack?" *BBC*, March 7, 2012; Michael Eisenstadt and Michael Knights, "Beyond Worst-Case Analysis: Iran's Likely Responses to an Israeli Preventive Strike," *Policy Notes 11*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 2012; Bruce Riedel, "In Saudi Arabia and Israel, Signals that Iran has Retaliation in Works," *Daily Beast*, October 26, 2012; Anthony H. Cordesman, Alexander Wilner, Michael Gibbs, and Scott Modell, *Iran and the Gulf Military Balance – I: The Conventional and Asymmetric Dimensions* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 1, 2012); Anthony H. Cordesman, Alexander Wilner, Michael Gibbs, and Scott Modell, *Iran and the Gulf Military Balance – II: The Missile and Nuclear Dimensions* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 1, 2012).
- 5 "Iran's Ballistic Missile Capabilities: A Net Assessment," *IISS Strategic Dossier* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 2010).
- 6 The Middle East Military Balance Project at INSS. The files on the Middle East military balance, updated in January 2013, rely on open sources and unclassified studies. Even though this data should be viewed cautiously, it provides a general picture of Iranian military capabilities. See <http://inss.web2.moonsite.co.il/uploadimages/SystemFiles/iran.pdf>.
- 7 For example, Indian police claim to have found proof that Iran was involved in the attack on the Israeli diplomat in New Delhi in February 2012. See "Cops Name Iran Military Arm for Attack on Israeli Diplomat," *Times of India*, July 30, 2012, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-30/delhi/32941054_1_israeli-diplomat-houshang-afshar-irani-mohammad-reza-abolghasemi.
- 8 Iran Project, *Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action against Iran*; Shanker, Cooper, and Bronner, "U.S. Sees Iran Attacks as Likely if Israel Strikes"; Ron Tira, "D-Day + 1: Strategies for the Day After an Attack on Iran," *Strategic Assessment* 15, no. 4 (2013): 93-107.
- 9 See note 6.
- 10 For example, Tal Inbar, head of the Space Research Center at the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies, believes that the range of the

Iranian drone is significantly shorter than what has been reported, but stresses that because of the drone's design, which is similar to the Israeli design, the aircraft could be a problematic threat if it is operated from Lebanon. In contrast, Danny Eshchar, deputy chief executive at Aeronautics, claims that photographs of the drone show an aircraft that could not carry weapons. See Barbara Opal, "Iran Boasts UAV Self-Sufficiency," *Defense News*, September 30, 2013, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130930/DEFREG04/309300019/Iran-Boasts-UAV-Self-Sufficiency>.

- 11 Ibid.
- 12 According to the INSS military balance files, the range of the submarines when they are on the surface is 550 miles, while their range of movement when submerged is 50 miles.
- 13 In response to a report on the attack, the Syrian President claimed on October 1, 2007 that "retaliate doesn't mean missile for missile and bomb for bomb. We have our means to retaliate, maybe politically, maybe in other ways. But we have the right to retaliate." See "Assad Sets Conference Conditions," *BBC*, October 1, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7021986.stm. For the purposes of this analysis, this response is within the scope of total restraint because it is the minimal response to which the regime is committed.
- 14 The term, developed by Robert Axelrod in connection with game theory, describes a policy of response involving imitation of the enemy's action in order to create coordination and a certain cooperation. See Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
- 15 For example, Meir Dagan, in an interview on Channel 2 television: "How Will Israel Look on the Day after an Attack on Iran?" *Uvda*, December 1, 2011; Anthony Cordesman, "Israeli and US Strikes on Iran: A Speculative Analysis" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 5, 2007); Fareed Zakaria, "Zakaria: Another War in the Middle East?"; Iran Project, *Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action against Iran*.
- 16 For example, Meir Dagan: "An attack on Iran would ignite an all-out war, destruction, and paralysis"; see "How Will Israel Look on the Day after an Attack on Iran?"; "Iran: If We're Attacked, We'll Launch 150,000 Missiles at Israel," *Ynet*, November 27, 2011; Amir Buhbut and Moshe-Hay Hagigat, "War Scenario: 1,000 Missiles a Day, 500 Killed on Home Front," *Walla News*, March 8, 2012, <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/9/2515071>; "Senior Iranian Official: 10,000 Israelis Will be Killed in the Conflict," *Ynet*, October 8, 2012.
- 17 Assaf Gabor, "Morsi's Fall: Hamas Trying to Get Closer to Tehran," *Ynet*, July 29, 2013; Adnan Abu Amer, "Will Hamas Re-enter Iran's Orbit?" *al-Monitor*, July 22, 2013.