

POSSIBILITY OF ATTACK ON IRANIAN NUCLEAR SITES

Brigadier Mumtaz Zia Saleem

Abstract

Iran's nuclear programme has numerous regional and global implications. It has become an irritating point for the world in general and west in particular. That's why the dangers of physical attack on Iranian nuclear facilities are looming in the region. A report by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) puts Iran's nuclear programme in sharp focus. The report indicates that now Iran's nuclear programme is in the advanced stage and it has built a large containment vessel. On this premise, this paper is an endeavour to comprehend the implications of Iran's nuclear programme and to investigate the possibilities as well as implications of physical attacks on these nuclear facilities.

Introduction

The dangers of physical attack on Iranian nuclear facilities are looming in the region. The report by Director General International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released on 8 November 2011 has put Iran's nuclear programme in sharp focus¹. The report indicates that Iran has its nuclear programme now in the advanced stage and has built a large containment vessel at its Parchin base that is used to test trigger mechanism for the nuclear device. Parchin, an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) military base (60 square kilometres) is located 30 kilometres south of Tehran. Recently, there was a massive explosion at the site on 13 November 2011 killing an officer of IRGC and 20 others. General David H Petraeus, former Commander Central Command (CENTCOM), while giving interview on CNN TV channel on 10 January 2010 admitted that though Iranian nuclear facilities were heavily

fortified, “Well, they certainly can be bombed”². He repeated the same on 16 March 2010, “In all of these initiatives, our military activities will continue to support our diplomatic efforts, and we will remain vigilant across a wide range of contingencies.”³

Global and Regional Implications of Iran’s Nuclear Programme

The idea of nuclear Iran has sent ripples across the region and the globe. While the United States and its allies consider nuclear-armed Tehran as unthinkable, it is believed that acquisition of nuclear capability for Iran is now a matter of time. Iranian leadership has claimed that Iran has already attained the status of a nuclear state. Iran’s insistence that it acquired its nuclear capabilities legally under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would encourage other aspirants (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Algeria etc) to develop nuclear options of their own. But this claim suffered a heavy dent after surfacing of secret nuclear enrichment at Natanz and Arak. Such efforts would undermine nuclear non-proliferation restraints internationally. The nuclear cooperation with United Arab Emirates (UAE) and nuclear agreement with India by United States has made the case against Iran weak. Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Hosseini told the United Nations Panel on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that Indo-United States nuclear deal has severely damaged the NPT⁴. A nuclear-ready Iran could be emboldened to manipulate oil prices upward. This might happen due to perceived Iranian threat to the freedom of the seas (threats to oil transit points or Straits of Hormuz) or threats of terrorist proxies against Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States oil facilities and pipelines. According to the United States, emboldened by its nuclear capability, Iran might lend greater support to terrorists for targeting Israel and United States’ interests in the region or across the globe. This would enhance Iranian role in all matters relating to the Persian Gulf and related regions; something which will be resisted strongly by Arab states. Whether a nuclear-ready Iran will act rationally and respond positively to global concerns is anybody’s guess. But the will and determination shown by Iran on its issues with United States and Israel are known and have made

the question of nuclear deterrence extremely viable. Iran believes that United States acted in bias to provide civil nuclear technology to India. Iran is apprehensive of this collusion that may be aimed at containing Iran in long run.

The nuclear programme is believed to focus on production of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and Plutonium. In November 2004, Tehran signed a temporary agreement with Germany, France and Britain to cease uranium enrichment voluntarily and for a limited period. Later, in August 2005, Iran removed United Nations seals and re-initiated the enrichment process in Natanz. IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution regarding reporting of Iran's nuclear case to United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This proposal of swap-over of fissile material for enriched uranium, possibly to France or Russia, is still under consideration. UNSC vide UN Resolution 1696 on 31 July 2006 gave Iran 30 days to abandon enrichment activity and comply with IAEA demands. Later, the sanctions were imposed through UN Resolution 1737 on 23 December 2006, which were intensified through another UN Resolution 1747 on 24 March 2007. However, United States is still pushing for tougher sanctions against Iran and on 28 January 2010; imposed stiff sanctions on its own, after frustration from international community to do so through the mechanism of United Nations. This time it has targeted two Iranian military groups and a number of Iranian banks and people it accuses of backing nuclear proliferation and terror-related activities. United States National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) reported on 27 November 2007 that contrary to Bush administration, assertions, Iran halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003.⁵ This was interesting, as earlier in NIE 2005, it was reported that Iran is determined to develop nuclear weapons despite international pressures and obligations. The credibility of United States intelligence has become questionable as well, because in the past also they reported presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq, on the basis of which United States attacked Iraq. (Some critics view the process of United States intelligence as highly politicized and express dismay over how to build up a case for United States' policy options on various issues and for seeking legitimacy for attack). NIE

2007 indicates a timeframe of weapon enrichment by Iran sometime in between 2010-2015. United States intelligence estimates suggest that Iran has about 1,000 kilograms of low-yield uranium. National Intelligence Estimates 2007 has also reported some technical difficulties faced by Iran regarding calibration of centrifuges and acquiring a precision rotational speed as the enrichment process proceeds. Iran has adopted an off and on nuclear build-up strategy. It had postponed its uranium enrichment process after signing the Additional Protocol with the IAEA in October 2003. Under United States and European pressure, Iran suspended its uranium enrichment process on 22 November 2004. Iran stands firm on its stance of enriching uranium on its own soil and has warned United States of serious consequences in case punitive measures are taken. Iran has announced successful enrichment of uranium at the Natanz plant, calling it an “historic achievement.” On 11 April, President Ahmadinejad announced uranium enrichment up to 3.5% (90% enrichment is required for nuclear bomb). Iran has begun enrichment of uranium in a second network of centrifuges, thus doubling its enrichment capacity.

For more than a decade, American officials in Congress and successive administrations have tried to focus on what they perceive as the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. The United States has asked China, Russia and others to cut off supply of vital technology, material and know-how to Iran. This supply-side non-proliferation strategy has achieved some successes. It still could slow Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapon capabilities. Thus the West believes that the supply-side constriction should continue. However, West is divided over the way Iran should be confronted on its nuclear issue and lack consensus in order to enthusiastically put up a joint front. This is evident from the fact that countries like China, Russia and Germany continue to maintain commercial and defence cooperation alongside their demand not to pursue nuclear weapons programme/United Nations sanctions. Reportedly, German firms continue to remain active in Iran and business is still going pretty well, irrespective of the calls by the government for tougher sanctions. Daimler-Benz, BASF and oil companies are active in

Iran even today⁶. Russian cooperation in Bushehr Plant and sale of S-300 air defence missile to Iran is still intact. China continues to import 12% of its total oil requirement from Iran (2009-2010)⁷. The West, led by United States, continues to make lofty claims and demonstrates greater unity amongst them. German Foreign Minister Westerwelle has expressed on 14 November 2011 that “the international community wanted to continue dialogue with Tehran, but would not put up with stalling tactics any longer. Further sanctions could not be ruled out if Iran maintained its refusal to cooperate”⁸. On 4 March 2010, United States and its allies proposed imposition of new sanctions on Iran in United Nations Security Council session. The session remained inconclusive and on 14 March 2010 French and Finnish Foreign Ministers announced that European Union is ready to take unilateral measures against Iran, seemingly in a bid to revive the solidarity amongst the West. Notwithstanding its failure in achieving convincing support in UNSC, such statements especially from the United States are meant to pacify Israel, which remains anxious about Iran’s nuclear ambition. Therefore, consensus is likely to evolve on any stringent measure against Iran, owing to the Chinese reluctance for imposition of sanctions at this point of time. United States continues to prefer a tougher resolution and declined a European-backed draft resolution terming it too weak. Western concerns are that Iran could use the Bushehr exemption as cover for importing other prohibited goods. The United States is believed to have been working on many options, to deal with Iran’s nuclear programme. It is essential to prevent any military adventure by Israel against Iran. The second option is by doing cost-benefit analysis and choosing the best alternative instead of the worst; this means no enrichment or reprocessing of any kind. Yet there is another proposal to offer freeze for freeze⁹ (*Iran imposes a moratorium on expansion of enrichment infrastructure and United States does not push for further Sanctions*) on Iran, that is, Iran freezes nuclear activities essentially enrichment and United States/West freeze their sanctions regime and isolation. Whatever is the incentive package, Iran is a serious contender with Israel for regional influence in the Middle East and any fair share in the security arrangement, will have little prospects of long-term success. No matter which option is adopted, the United States has realized that

without a broad-based direct engagement on the nuclear issue, seeking a common ground on the *other problems* in the region will not be possible. The role of the IAEA has not been appreciated by the United States, as its former chief Al Baradei gave some positive remarks about Iran's nuclear programme, downplaying the euphoria being created by United States/West. Even a senior Vienna diplomat familiar with the issue is quoted to have said, "There has been no increase in the number of centrifuges enriching uranium since end of May."¹⁰

United States is also capitalizing on the anti-Iran feelings in Middle East (ME) to boost its defence exports and has announced US \$43 billion arms aid package to Saudi Arabia/United Arab Emirates and others in East to bolster Middle Eastern allies mainly against Iran.¹¹ Iran's influence in the region, particularly in Iraq would increase after withdrawal of United States forces and Iraq might potentially become a de facto Iranian satellite. Perception developed by the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) - a United States think-tank, proved to be an abortive attempt to visualize that the balance of power in the region will be tilted towards Iran in case of *Shia* dominated Iraqi National Alliance (INA) wins the 2010 elections.¹² United States, if it relocates its forces in Afghanistan for long duration, would be in a weaker position as its depth would be vulnerable to Iranian security forces. In the recently held election of 128-seat assembly in Lebanon in June 2009, Hezbollah¹³ has not been able to secure more seats but has vowed to open a new page for the coming stage. The group has indicated to join in the national unity cabinet. The political marginalization of Hezbollah would affect Iran as it has been using it as leverage against United State/Israel. Lebanon has remained prone to regional conflicts but internal compromise seems possible. There are reports of United States direct negotiations with Hezbollah despite being a declared terrorist organization in the official record of Washington. How Iran would react? It will affect the tone of relationship with Hezbollah, being a political ploy in the Middle East. This could be part of a multi-pronged political-cum-diplomatic manoeuvre against Iran to reduce Iran's options against Israel/United States. Saudi Arabia is already mending fences with Syria where both states were sponsoring different camps in Lebanon. The United State

keenness to strengthen democracies and support for democratizing the Middle East did alarm many Arab regimes, but United State is not pursuing this objective for the time being. The United States offer of dialogue with Iran and extending full cooperation to Arabs has raised suspicion in both these camps. More than that the last presidential election of June 2009 sparked riots in Iran. The supporters of President Ahmadinejad and presidential candidate reformist opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi clashed resulting in deaths of many in Tehran. The most significant aspect raised during post-election protests was the questioning of the credibility/bias of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, something which was unusual and surprising. The aim was to attack the real power centre of Iran making the appointment of supreme leader controversial. United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also admitted that United State was behind these protests, indicating the covert operations being conducted in Iran to discredit the present government and support moderate/reformist elements from within Iran. Hillary Clinton on 9 August 2009 in an interview on CNN television said that United State was behind the scenes, “to show support for demonstrators contesting Iran’s disputed presidential election results.”¹⁴ The presidential election of 2009 once again reflected the tussle between the reformists and the conservatives, as later charged the former of masterminding post-election unrest and plotting a soft coup in the Islamic republic. Twenty people were put to trial in the revolutionary court including political, figures, journalists and academics. The prosecution called for the dissolution of reformist movements such as the Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF) and the Islamic Revolution Mujahedeen Organization for lying and spreading rumours of fraud in the election.

United States is deliberately keeping the Israeli threat alive to woo Iran to come to the negotiating terms. US is benefitting enormously in the Middle East in terms of keeping the wealthy Arab monarchs under a constant Iranian threat and selling them military hardware and civil nuclear technology worth billions of dollars. By keeping the Iranian threat intact, it provides US with enormous political and economic leverage in the region; its influence waned rapidly after unhinging of

Saddam Hussein due to un-abated expansion of Iranian clout. There are reports of establishing Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Quick Reaction Force¹⁵ in the backdrop of Iran's military advancements and exercises/war games. Iran, while appreciating this factor, has diffused its belligerent posture towards GCC states and is moving to improve relations. These diplomatic efforts are bearing fruit as Iran was invited to attend the GCC's 28 Summit meeting in Doha in December 2007, in the 26-year history of the GCC. The meeting was attended by six heads of states including President Ahmadinejad.¹⁶ Pakistan, after seeing the Iranian response to this regional forum, has also shown interest in joining the GCC. The timings of employing the military option are important as currently it does not suit United States for being already enticed in two theatres.

Iranian Resolve and Pakistan's Position

It is not just the nuclear programme itself but Iranian political leadership regards it as matter of national prestige to bolster their culture and power. Any dialogue which does not acknowledge its role as a regional player and assign it a fair share in any future regional security arrangement will have little prospects of long-term success. Pakistan should advise the Iranians to cash this offer of dialogue for economic and strategic gains. In a surprising development, President Obama did acknowledge Iran's right to nuclear technology in June 2009¹⁷. It is estimated that Iran has approximately 1200 kilograms of 3.5 per cent Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) for refining up to 20 per cent¹⁸. However, on 2 December 2009, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a state television address said that Iran will itself enrich uranium up to 20 per cent purity.¹⁹ Iran's atomic chief, Ali Akbar Salehi, revealed a new Iranian offer vis-à-vis draft nuclear plan presented by IAEA that Iran is ready to deliver 1,200 kilograms of LEU in one go in return for fuel for Tehran medical research reactor. He, however, emphasized that the exchange must take place simultaneously inside Iran²⁰. Iran has been emphasizing on simultaneous nuclear swap inside Iran in batches which fairly addresses Western concerns over retention of LEU in Iran and is an area that can be further negotiated to prevent escalation.

Military Developments and its Implications

Reportedly, numbers of powerful United States bunker-buster bombs were shipped from California to the island of Diego Garcia besides redeployment of Naval forces from the Pacific. In January 2010, the United States Administration signed a contract with Superior Maritime Services to transport 10 ammunition containers from Concord, California, to the islands, containing 195 Blu-110 and 192 Blu-117 bombs used for blasting hardened or underground structures²¹. These military preparations and logistics deployment for the military strike indicate urgency and seriousness. This also indicates that it had entered the execution stage and operational commanders are weighing their options and working on contingency planning. Iranian Defence Forces including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps have conducted numerous military exercises to deter such an attack. These exercises include Air Defence drill, actual testing of air defence missiles and Radar/Early Warning (EW) systems. Dan Plesch, Director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at the University of London, the co-author of a study on the United States preparations for attack on Iran, stressed, "United States bombs are ready today to destroy 10,000 targets in Iran in a few hours."²² More than the United States, Israel feels directly threatened from Iran becoming nuclear and therefore, has its own plans ready to conduct pre-emptive strikes to take out nuclear sites. Israel has demonstrated hits political will clearly and has military experience of conducting such a strike in the past. Israel attacked Osirak Plant of Iraq and justified it under Article 51 of United Nations charter. It also bombed Syrian nuclear site, Al Kibar in September 2007. Israel conducted a military exercise in June 2008, involving 100 F-16/F-15 fighters along the eastern Mediterranean and over Greece. Here, the aircrafts were tasked to cover more than 900 miles (1600 kms) of distance, which is approximately the same from Israel to Natanz (Iranian Nuclear facilities) if flown over Saudi Arabia and Iraq. In this exercise the helicopter borne parties also participated to rescue the downed pilots. The reports of creation of Iran Command within Israel army have also surfaced indicating their discomfort at the manner in which the Iran nuclear issue is being handled.

If United States attacks Iran or supports such an attack and is able to occupy/position forces for it, the security of Pakistan will also be greatly threatened. The theory of “Pakistan- the Ultimate target of United States” would be seen materializing. India in the East, United States troops and unfriendly Afghans forces in the North-West and South-West and Iran, under American control in the West, would provide the ideal encirclement required to reduce the “Muslim Nuclear Power”²³. Any aggression by United States against Iran will trigger massive possible *Shia* backlash within Pakistan. In case of an attack on Iran for a long time to come, we will have hostile neighbours all around, a situation which will be exploited by India. The worst case scenario will emerge, if United States attacks Iran using Pakistani soil and air space²⁴. Pakistan has taken a clear position in this regard by not becoming part of any such adventure. Turkey, the other possible route to reach Iranian nuclear sites also has denied use of its air space for such an attack; it even did not allow territory to be used against Iraq and turned down the offer of huge aid from United States.

But the Bush administration had tried for a long time to convince the world that ultimately the Iranian nuclear standoff can be settled by attacking Iran but it is well known that it was held back due to resistance of European Union, Russia and China. There is also an in-house debate to achieve a complete consensus, especially in Israel, about the practicability of such an attack. Can the intended Iranian sites be completely reduced through a quick operation with surprise, is a question which cannot still be answered with confidence on the part of the possible or known attackers. For United States, it could be part of a psychological Warfare specially when seen in overall cost-benefit analysis as there still exists split opinion within the United States Administration. Michael Hayden, former Director Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), said on 25 July 2010 in an interview to CNN that during his tenure, “a strike was way down the list of options”²⁵. These mixed signals could be part of an overall strategy aiming at the Iranian political and military leadership guessing about the possibility and timings of such an attack. On the Iranian side, the preparation for a military response is also in place. To deter such a

possibility, the modernization of its arsenals is underway. Russia may have supplied S-300 STA missiles to Iran that would increase the cost and complexity of any strike against Iran. It would substantially dilute a potential Israeli attack. Israel is already in contact with Russia for blocking the sale of these state-of-the-art air defence missiles to Iran²⁶. Besides these military preparations, other cold and soft options through covert means are also underway alongside to undermine development in the Iranian nuclear programme. Reportedly, a software smart bomb, (highly sophisticated computer worm) *Stuxnet* was launched against industrial plants worldwide in general and targeting Iranian nuclear power plant at Bushehr in particular²⁷. The extent of damage that has been caused to the nuclear plant is not fully known but it is assumed that it was aimed to determine the stage of the progress made and ascertaining the criticality by interpreting the classified details/formulae hacked through the said virus. Any adventure on the part of United States would fuel anti –United States feelings in Iran and further complicate Pakistan-Iran relations as some critics in Iran perceive Pakistan to be serving the objective of American foreign policy agenda in South West Asia²⁸. Pakistan's steadfastness against US pressures has convinced the Iranian leadership of any such undesirable eventuality. But under the present offer of dialogue by the US, the chances of such an attack are though remote, yet are not far-fetched. It is visualized that the Hot and Cold, a combination of diplomatic overtures and military posturing, is likely to continue. United States has amassed around 45,000 troops in South and East of Afghanistan in Helmond Province bordering Iran. The troop surge in Afghanistan is also to see some more addition in areas bordering Iran as well. While talking to Thai television Secretary of State Hillary Clinton offered to extend defence umbrella to allies, "We want Iran to calculate what I think is a fair assessment: that if the United States extends a defence umbrella over the region, if we do even more to develop the military capacity of those in the Gulf, it is unlikely that Iran will be any stronger or safer because they won't be able to intimidate and dominate....."²⁹ It drew a quick rebuke from Israel where a senior minister said it sounded that the United States, "had come to terms with a nuclear Iran". Israel also admitted holding of direct nuclear talks with Iran which has been denied by Iran³⁰. This is an interesting development. It

is visualised that Iran will retaliate massively to any physical attack on its nuclear sites. Nobody is claiming that there would be an all out invasion of Iran, at best it could be a mix of air strikes and quick small special raids on nuclear sites and key military installations. Such raids, however, are not that simple and quick as they are thought of to be.

However, owing to geo-political development the possibility of attack is rather low. United States at the same time continues to allay the fears of Gulf states by providing them arms and missiles. Eight Patriot missile batteries — two each in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates — were not there two years before³¹. Other gulf countries have also expanded their patriot systems while United States-operated Aegis ballistic missile cruisers, are in the Gulf at all times now. United States reiterates that “Defence Capability” has been built, but it is not something sparked by events in Iran in recent months. However, with Iran agreeing for a swap over deal recently in May 2010 should help diffuse the looming dangers of any military adventurism for some time now. Implications of air strikes over Iran could be enormous as Americans would never be sure of decisively neutralizing Iranian capabilities. This may leave the United States with no option but to contend with the status quo on Iran and keep it diplomatically and economically isolated through tough sanction regime.

Author

Brigadier Mumtaz Zia Saleem was commissioned in 1982. He did his staff course in 1992. He is a graduate of National Defence University, Islamabad. He has done Masters in Business Administration, Masters in War Studies, Masters in Art and Science of Warfare and Masters in International Relations. He completed his Ph D in International Relations from Karachi University in 2011. Presently he is performing staff duties in the field formation in Lahore.

Endnotes

1. Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran, http://iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iaecairan/iaea_reports.shtml
2. "Iran's N-facilities can be bombed: US Commander", *Dawn*, January 11, 2010
3. General Petraeus's written testimony before Senate Armed Service Committee on the Posture of US Central Command, on 16 March 2010
4. Iran says Indo-US Nuclear Deal Severely Damaged NPT, cited in *The News*, 7 May 2009.
5. Cited in *Newsweek*, 17 December 2007.
6. The bilateral trade between Germany-Iran is euros 3.2 billion (September 2011).
7. Iran oil exports to China rose to 409,000 bpd (December 2010) making it the third largest oil exporter.
8. <http://www.payvand.com/news/11/nov/1148.html>
9. William Burns during a meeting with officials from China, Russia, Britain, Germany and France in London on 8 April 2009, www.stratfor.com, accessed on April 16, 2009
10. "No nuclear enrichment boost in Iran since May", *The News*, August 26, 2009 clear enrichment boost in Iran since May", *The News*, August 26, 2009.
11. "US Announces Major Middle East Arms Package", 30 July 2007 by Sue Fleming and Andy Sullivan, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN30407691>
12. "Iraqi Elections: Political Tremors?", Bret H. McGurk, 25 January 2010, http://www.cfr.org/publication/21294/iraqi_elections.html
13. Hizbollah emerged on the scene in the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion when Lebanon was seven years into its bloody war. By 1990 Hizbollah got fully entrenched into Southern Lebanon after the civil war and secured a parliamentary presence. It compelled the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to withdraw from Southern Lebanon in May 2000. <http://www.jir.janes.com>, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 2009
14. "US was behind the scenes for Iran protesters: Clinton", *The News*, 10 August 2009.
15. <http://gulffnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/gcc-joint-rapid-deployment-force-to-be-set-up-this-year-1.571506>. GCC joint rapid deployment force to be set up this year.
16. Beyond the Arab-Iranian Divide in the Gulf, m. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, 23 January 2008, <http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/BeyondtheArabiraniandivideinthegulfMMARizvi=230108>
17. President Obama address to Muslims in Egypt on 4 June 2009, cited at www.iranaffairs.com/iran_affairs
18. "Iran Wants Major Changes in N-deal", *Dawn*, October 28, 2009. IAEA Director General Verification Activities in Iran & Syria confirms on 17 November 2009 that 839 kilograms LEU, UF6 by Iran, www.iaea.org/Publication/docomments/Board/2009.
19. "Iranian held in US over arms-trafficking", *The News*, December 3, 2009
20. Turkey, Brazil Seal Deal in Iran Nuclear Fuel Swap, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE64F29P20100516>, Turkey, Brazil Seal Deal in Iran Nuclear Fuel Swap, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE64F29P20100516>.
21. US preparing to strike Iran's N-Facilities, *Deccan Chronicle*, 17 March, 2010.
22. Considering a war with Iran: Discussion Paper on WMD in the Middle East, www.csid.soas.ac.uk
23. Yousafzai, Ahmed, The Great Game and Pakistan, cited in *The Frontier Post*, Editorial, 15 May 2005.
24. Ibid.
25. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jul/25/ex-cia-chief-strike-iran-seems-more-likely-now/>
26. "Netanyahu Secretly Visited Russia: Reports", Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/articles/dUSTRE5882T42009>
27. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/world/middleeast/16stuxnet.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all
28. Ibid.

Possibility of Attack on Iranian Nuclear Sites

29. "An N-Umbrella for allies", by Julian Borger, *Dawn*, 24 July 2009.
30. The spokeswoman for Israel's Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) Yael Doron told AFP that the commission's representatives had held several meetings with an Iranian official in a regional context and under Australia's auspices. "Israel claim N-talks with Iran, Tehran denies", *The News*, 23 October 2009.
31. Satellite Launch Shows Iran's New Capabilities, Lauren Gelfand. JDW Middleeast Editor, 10 February 2010, jdwjane.com.