

IRAN NUCLEAR STANDOFF



REPORT

Tel Aviv, Israel, 7-8 September 2012



This workshop explored concerns, options and opportunities relating to the Iranian nuclear program in the context of the Israeli domestic scene and in light of regional and international developments (including Syria). A critique of negotiations to date and prospects for a Middle East WMD Free Zone also were addressed.

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SUMMARY

- There is an unprecedented and potentially transformative national debate in Israel about whether or not Israel should launch a pre-emptive strike against Iranian nuclear facilities. The long-term impact of this very public debate is as yet unclear.
- There appeared to be, at the time of the meeting, a split in the Netanyahu government, between the prime minister (who views the Iranian threat as an immediate existential threat) and the defense minister, Ehud Barak (who believes that Israel can guard its strategic interests without risking the uncertainties of a military attack).
- Some questioned the strength of the Netanyahu government, which is faced with an economic crisis in addition to the Iran nuclear crisis. A recent poll showed only a 37% approval rating for Netanyahu. However, some cautioned that despite the fact the Kadima party has left the governing coalition, Netanyahu remains a strong leader. Some expressed a deep concern that Netanyahu may be using the Iran nuclear issue to help leverage his position in the next election.
- Some questioned the international positioning of Israel on the Iranian nuclear issue. Having now put Israel out front on this issue, there is a concern that the world is viewing this problem as an Israeli problem and not in terms of its global significance for non-proliferation and the dangers they think it represents for Iran's regional hegemonic intent.
- Some criticized Israel's perceived involvement in US domestic politics, as many believe this is complicating Israel-US relations at this very tense time. This is in part driven by the disconnect between the time urgency Israelis feel given Iran's technological developments and the US domestic electoral calendar which works heavily against any decisive move being made by the US at least until after the November elections. However, some believe Netanyahu has overstepped these bounds, and has shown his preference for the Republican US candidate. Some believe this foray into partisanship is very harmful, and is engendering extremely negative reactions from the Obama administration, which they say has been a very good friend to Israel in recent years.
- An interesting array of participants in our meeting believed that the Israeli position on Palestine has further complicated its ability to address the Iranian nuclear issue. Ignoring some steps, such as a proposed three month suspension of settlement activities in return for additional US military assistance that could have widened and expanded Israel's window of action, was termed a "basic mistake" by some. Others strongly disagreed, and did not believe the Palestine issue could in any way prove decisive vis-à-vis the Iranian nuclear issue.
- The Iranian leadership seems to be in a relatively stable position at the moment, although some believe this may change unexpectedly. The intense international pressure on the

nuclear issue in Iran, rather than creating divisions, appears to be a politically unifying. One person said the people in Iran who are most critical of the government are least happy with this sort of international focus on the nuclear issue.

- The Iranian economy is facing major challenges. Some believe this is due to the economic sanctions, others consider it a result of internal economic mismanagement, or at best a mix.
- The strength of Iranian-Russian relations may be over-estimated, some say. While some believe Russia is the most important country in the world today vis-à-vis Iran, some others describe this relationship as “cool.”
- The grave situation in Syria was discussed at length in our meeting, though it was not originally on the agenda. Some believe the outcome is critical to the security and defense of Israel, and it ultimately might influence the nuclear dossier. The role of Iran in Syria was noted with grave concern by Israelis, and there was an indication that Israel would never accept a continued Iranian military presence in Syria given its proximity to Israel and the shared border. It was pointed out that the Russian interests in Syria are not the same as Iran’s and some felt this distinction needs to be further clarified and explored. Some Israeli participants felt it could be a “turning point” if Russia were able to distance itself from Iran in Syria. Russia believes principles of the international system are at risk and that the conflict cannot be solved militarily. It also was noted that, as far as the future Syrian leadership is concerned, Russia has not said it sees only one possible outcome and if the people of Syria chose a different leadership, Russia will be supportive. But the decision can’t be imposed from the outside or by military force.
- Some believe there are more nuanced things that Israel can do in Syria, and that its current policy which one person called “making diatribes every two weeks” is not adequate given the shared border and the issues at stake. Some believe the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the strongest of the opposition forces should not be a non-starter for Israel. Others are concerned if Israel makes too many threats regarding Syria the result may be getting drawn into a military conflict.
- There are few, if any, in Israel who believe Iran’s nuclear program is for non-military purposes. This is not an opinion unanimously shared by the international community. There is a general agreement, however, that a possible Iranian nuclear weapons program in the near term (if any) would be small-scale and based on old technology.
- There is concern in Israel and in several other countries that the pace of Iran’s technological advances, including their efforts to build facilities underground, is limiting the time available for a successful Israeli military strike against its facilities. Some predicted the 50 or so days following our meeting on 7-8 September (i.e. into late October) would be a “critical time” for such decisions. This timeframe does not match well with the pace of negotiations and the US electoral calendar.
- Many believe that a military strike would have tragic consequences, and it only would provide minor delays to the program while solidifying Iranian resolve to move forward toward a nuclear weapons capability.

- The current Israeli debate regarding red lines is seen by some as essential in getting the US and others to adapt a firm stance. Others see this as boxing in (particularly the US) flexibility in negotiations.
- There appears to be a clear distinction between Israel, which objects to Iranian nuclear capability, and the US, which draws a line at Iran taking a decision to acquire a nuclear weapon.
- Some believe that the goal of any policy must be Iranian regime change. Others vociferously disagree. Some believe the lessons need to be drawn from the Libya example, where Gaddafi agreed to forgo his nuclear weapons program only because there was a tacit agreement against regime change. They said the fact that the US and others rescinded on this deal was a huge mistake and has contributed to unwillingness among some, including Russia, to risk such a situation again in places like Syria.
- It was suggested that to address the Iranians' concerns regarding regime change, countries should agree that their purpose is not to change the Iranian regime, and should pressure the Iranian regime to state its intention is not to destroy Israel or seek regime change there.. Some felt it would be particularly helpful if countries like Russia and China were to promote such a policy.
- There was a lively debate about sanctions, and their effect. Many Israelis believe that further and more extreme sanctions are the only way to induce Iran to approach negotiations seriously. These people believe it is imperative that negotiators do not give up their "best card" in negotiations, but that other sorts of inducements short of sanctions relief could be considered.
- Others believe sanctions have gone well beyond the goal of promoting non-proliferation, and that some form of sanctions relief must be addressed as part of any negotiations if they are to succeed. It was also said that if sanctions are to play a role in negotiations, the prospect of their withdrawal should be on the table – otherwise they can't induce changes of policies.
- Sanctions policy was discussed. It was pointed out that UN sanctions and specific sanctions decided upon by individual states belong to different categories. Sanctions promoted by an individual state should correspond to specific grievances between sanctioning and sanctioned countries (in this case Iran). Some strongly questioned whether the nature of the specific grievances between, for example, New Zealand and Iran justify extra sanctions beyond those agreed by the UN.
- Participants in the meeting gave an insightful critique of the negotiations to date. These can be found on pages 27-32. They include a need for greater creativity and flexibility, a need for a 'game changer' and a 'ladder to climb down;' and frustration that valuable time is being lost.
- Of particular interest, it was noted that there are indications that, despite official policy, Israelis might be able to live with some sort of agreement that limits Iran's enrichment to 3.5% with adequate supervision and verification. Defense Minister Barak has sent signals to this effect, and many believe that if the Israeli government would say this is okay, then the public would go along.

- Others believe that any such approach is fundamentally flawed and that unless and until the discussions are framed in another way that demonstrates some change of policy in Iran, both toward their apparent trend toward weaponization and also their policy toward the elimination of the state of Israel, there will always be residual concerns in Israel about alternative means toward a nuclear weapon.
- Prospects for the WMD Free Zone conference slated to be held in Helsinki in mid-December were discussed. There has not yet been an Israeli decision to not participate, and some academics believe that with creativity an agenda could be suggested that could make it possible for Israel to participate (for example, if there were a focus on things like the FMCT, CTBT, CWC, BWC, No-First-Use, etc). Some thought the Helsinki 1975 experience could prove instructive.
- Many believe that there needs to be development of further confidence building measures, in Track II forums and elsewhere. Someone pointed out that Israel's experience with Egypt and Jordan showed there had to be a "massive effort of 'dignification,' creating the atmospherics of equality. There are many things we can do."

REPORT

This meeting was the ninth in a series of Pugwash workshops devoted to the Iranian nuclear issue held in Israel and organized in cooperation with Israeli Pugwash. It was the third of these meetings in Israel on this topic to take place in 2012, demonstrating the gravity of the issues at hand.

This workshop involved 34 participants from 7 countries (please see Appendix A for the participant list). It was co-sponsored by the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, and the Academic Center for Law and Business.

The meeting was held according to traditional Pugwash/Chatham House rules: participants took part in their individual capacities; statements are not attributed to any individual; and distribution of the substance of discussions is encouraged. The report¹ reflects the fact that the majority of participants were Israeli. There also is an additional focus on Russia in this report. Both Israeli and Russian perspectives were well represented in this meeting given the involvement of extremely knowledgeable people on both sides. However, it should not be assumed that any particular comments can be associated with any one individual as there were a range of views expressed by a variety of participants, and not all participants were present for all parts of the meeting. There was no attempt to achieve consensus, but rather, as in all Pugwash meetings, the goal was to encourage the sharing of diverse perspectives. The goal of this report is to attempt to represent the range of debate. Please also note that the quotes included may not be exact, but are intended to give a sense of the dialogue.

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¹ This report was prepared by Pugwash Senior Program Coordinator Sandra Ionno Butcher, who has sole responsibility for the content (sibutcher@earthlink.net). The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the rapporteur, the Pugwash Conferences or any of the sponsoring organizations. Pugwash appreciates the support for its Middle East project provided by the Norwegian MFA, the Carnegie Corporation, other funders and our national groups.

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The domestic situation in Israel

An unprecedented national debate

The meeting opened with a discussion of the unique and unprecedented debate occurring in Israel about the Iran nuclear issue. While there was a consensus among Israeli participants (discussed further below) regarding the seriousness of the perceived threat posed to Israel by the Iranian nuclear program, there were varying perspectives on the short- and long-term impact of the intense current public discourse.

According to one participant, “Every Israeli agrees that Iran is a threat, and people are concerned.” However, it was noted that for the first time in Israeli history, the public has been engaged through the media in debates regarding Israel’s response to this perceived threat, including a possible preemptive military strike. They are asking themselves whether Israel should attack or wait, and for how long, and what will be the outcome if Iran attains a nuclear capability or builds a nuclear weapons program. There is public discussion in the media as to how many Israelis might die in a counter-attack. The defense minister was quoted the day we met as saying at least 500 might die in the Tel Aviv area, leading one senior participant ironically to ask, “Who will the 500 be? Should they leave now?” People are discussing where they will hide, how to get gas masks, and similar topics. The question of whether or not this war is a choice or a non-choice was raised. If it might be a choice now, someone suggested, it would be a “non-choice” later if things are left “without action” too long.

Such discussions have been fuelled in the media by a host of former ministers, intelligence chiefs, parliamentarians, and military experts who are speaking publicly about these topics. Many of these figures have cautioned against Israel taking independent military action against Iranian nuclear facilities at this time.

Some see this debate as progress in a democratic system. Others say these people are casting such a shadow of doubt in the public that they are affecting the decision-making ability of the leaders, resulting in a situation in which what many consider the “legitimate fear of a nuclear Iran” has been “taken hostage by political bickering.” One participant said that now Israel has “6-7 million chiefs of staff.” As a result, the public is “confused,” said one participant who also noted that the topic has such prominence that people will share their thoughts with you on the street. Someone else referred repeatedly to the “national hysteria.” As discussed below, there also is growing concern that such issues are being used increasingly in domestic politics in the fight between the Netanyahu government and the opposition.



MK N. SHAI, E. ASCULAI

Strengths/weaknesses of the Netanyahu government

The strengths and weaknesses of the Netanyahu government were discussed briefly. Some questioned how to interpret a recent poll that indicated Netanyahu had a 37% approval rating. One person warned that despite such numbers, Netanyahu is a strong prime minister who is likely to be in power for a long time yet, and he should not be judged by ratings that vacillate up and down. Despite the withdrawal of Kadima from

the coalition, participants were reminded that the government's coalition with its 65 members is "very strong" and that Netanyahu has not lost a no-confidence motion in more than four years, which one participant called "a record." Some well-informed participants believe that on the Iran nuclear issue, Netanyahu has the political power to pass a resolution in government and in the cabinet, but that he needs a national consensus that is "deeper and more significant." While some think he might have been able to bring the country along when Kadima was part of the government, now Kadima's leader Shaul Mofaz has expressed opposition publicly, further complicating the political landscape. One participant questioned whether the current Israeli government is defining its position looking toward next year's elections, and said "this makes me shake" that he might even be considering this, "it is unprecedented." One person said the two dangers to Netanyahu's government are the Iran issue and the economy/budget.

Yet, there appears to be a lack of confidence among key stakeholders in the leadership. One person said that the public discussion in Israel has only come about due to the "profound mistrust" of the higher political and military echelon and the top leadership of the current Israeli government. He pointed to a "sense of total mistrust" of the high-ranking civil servants who are in daily contact with political leaders and who question their "ability to take clever decisions." With reference to a reported Mossad slogan, "conduct your wars cunningly," one participant asked, "Where is the cunningness of the government on this issue?" (He compared this with the "chess game" he sees Iranians playing. Someone else said Iranians are not "strategic masters" but are instead survivors who "muddle through.")

One participant said he believes the current dichotomy, to the extent it exists, can be traced to the original two schools of thought in Israel in the 1960s as to whether or not Israel should acquire nuclear weapons. Some, such as Shimon Peres, believed that Israel nuclear capability could guarantee the future of Israel in strategic terms. This line of thinking, he said, explains why Peres is against a military strike, since they believe that Israel's nuclear weapons guarantee the country's security. Others at the time argued against Israel's nuclear weapons, and said if nuclear proliferation in the region started with Israel, there would not be strategic stability. Paradoxically, he said, this is the school of thought (those who were opposed to Israeli nuclear weapons) that is behind the harshest actions against potential proliferators.

Participants were divided as to the impact and advisability of Israel's international positioning on this issue. One person said, "History will judge this government regarding its Iran policy." It has managed to "confiscate the Iran problem and make it solely an Israeli problem." Some thought it was "much wiser" to "leave the stage to the big powers" rather than now being in a position of "pushing the world" and drawing red lines and complaining about the world's inability to block Iran. Others fundamentally disagree with this assessment, and say that Israel only took on this current leading role because the international community failed to adequately address the situation. One person said, "The international community has been failing for ten years, and we need to say this loudly...Israel is driven today by fear and frustration." Others disagreed with what they consider to be an isolated Israeli perspective and point out that there is no international consensus that the Iranian nuclear program poses such danger nor in the steps that may be needed to address this issue (this is discussed further below).

One person noted that the fact that the nuclear issue is now an important instrument in Israel's political debate is not in itself negative. However, the problem is that either intentionally or perhaps unintentionally given a lack of societal experience in discussing such things, a number of parameters are being blurred. For example, what really is the Iran threat? Is the risk of Iran getting nuclear weapons similar to or the same as obtaining capability? The lack of clarity on this point may be intentional. In such "pre-war debates," this person said, the parties of war tend to twist facts and concepts.

Israel-US tensions

Participants also discussed the impact of what some see as Israeli leaders engaging in US partisan politics. (One person asked, “What do you expect will be the result given the speech that Netanyahu delivered at AIPAC, the day after meeting Obama”?) Someone pointed out it is unknown what will happen after the election. Someone else remarked that until a few years ago it would have been inconceivable to think of a chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff publicly doubting the military ability of Israel. This person believes this has come about because Israel put its “most vital issue at the center of a domestic battle in the US.” It was pointed out that there is “not much love” between Netanyahu and Obama. Some say when Obama came into office, some Israelis (Livni, etc.) “emphasized heavily” that they did not support diplomacy. Others vigorously disagreed with this assessment.

One participant said that Obama “gets far too little credit” for what he has done for Israel, not only regarding the Iron Dome air defense system, but on other points. One person pointed out that it is a “complex” picture, but to say that Obama has thrown Israel “under a bus” is a “disgusting phrase.” According to this participant, Obama has done more for the protection of Israel and against Iran “than all his predecessors...We know exactly what [Obama] did for us.” This participant said the prime minister’s “basic mistake “was to make it a partisan issue in the USA, to recruit the Republicans and alienate the current US administration.” Someone said “most concerning” for Israelis is that “for the first time we have heard in Israel that it is possible the government of Israel will take a position on this kind of delicate issue based on partisan self-interest.”

Palestine

An interesting array of participants also pointed out that the Israeli position on the Palestinian issue has further complicated its ability to address the Iranian nuclear issue. One senior Israeli participant said this is “totally ignored.” “Israel could handle this problem far more easily with better understanding of the US if there was here some flexibility regarding the Palestinian issue.” According to this participant, for three more months of a settlement freeze, the US administration was ready to give Israel military assistance that would widen and expand Israel’s window of action and it was rejected. This person considered this a “basic mistake” of this government. Another participant noted that the government has instead used the Iran issue to send the Palestinian issue into “deep freeze.”

Others disagreed. One person said that while Palestine is important in terms of the health of democracy in Israel, it is doubtful that action on Palestine would stop Iran from getting the bomb, or change the situation in Syria, etc.

The domestic situation in Iran

Participants discussed the internal situation in Iran. This topic has been explored extensively in recent Pugwash meetings in Israel, and so the discussion here focused on updates and other salient points.

Stability of the leadership

Most participants agreed that the Iranian leadership currently seems stable and perhaps is solidifying. One person said this is due to repression and executions, the populist policies of Ahmadinejad, nationalistic foreign policy, and disillusionment over the prospects for change. He said, “The Arab spring is no reason [for Iran] to be optimistic...Syria is burning, Libya is disintegrating, Egypt is in crisis, etc.” This combination of factors leads to “political apathy.” Others say the actions of the regime are “contrary to what the new generation in Iran wants” in terms of societal issues, such as the role of women. This person said Iran feels both strong and weak. It is very much in control domestically, but it feels regional insecurity.

Someone noted that the leadership today are “less pragmatic” than even seven years ago. In the past, the Iranian leaders were in dialogue with the West. Although they were not liberal moderates, “they knew the West.” Today, this person said, they are relying increasingly on a very close circle around the leader, and even the president no longer has legitimacy. One person said “there is paralysis at the top in Iran” and that this is a problem in Iran’s decision-making that we have seen “all along.”

One person said the dilemma of Iran is that the people who want to change policy don’t have power, and the people who have power don’t have will to do it. He said it is difficult for Khamenei to make decisions because he doesn’t have the credentials to be Supreme Leader. He said it is like “making an assistant professor provost.”

Someone else said that to the extent that some might think Iran is weaker today in terms of its social or political authority, this might mean they would be tempted to “go for toys” such as nuclear weapons for purely internal purposes. And yet, he pointed out, Khamenei said in the speech to the NAM that nuclear weapons don’t save regimes if they are to collapse for their own internal reasons.

Economic problems

Some note, however, that whatever stability there may be in Iran now can change quickly, especially given the fact that the economy is in “bad shape,” a situation which some attribute primarily to the sanctions. Some note there also has been economic mismanagement. Official inflation figures of 25 percent cloud the true situation, which by some estimates shows real inflation as high as 40 percent. Official unemployment figures are at 15 percent, but some say this is closer to 20 percent. Iranian families are having trouble making ends meet. This situation can cut both ways, it could either “lead to something” or it can detract interest from a revolution if people are focused on what they will eat tomorrow. Some believe these conditions can lead to a narrowing of social support for the regime, and noted that the regime has “moved to the right” on some major issues, including pushing women from education, reversing birth control rights, repressing intellectual debate, etc. This person noted that the leadership relies more on the “conservative camp” and predicted that this split with the mainstream conservatives will work against the regime in the long-term. Some say the “higher echelon of power” (including the return of Rafsanjani) is more likely to provide a challenge to the system than the civil society people who took to the streets in 2009. One person said the rise of Rafsanjani is interesting but hard to interpret.

Someone pointed out that the real “Persian spring” took place 30 years ago and those people are now in their 60s. There are still those who criticize the regime from inside. The Pasdaran support the regime, but



PROF. M. LITVAK, AMB. S. SEVJE

want change. They are businessmen who understand that Iran is not so competitive economically and militarily. Someone said the state of Iran is weak, but the regime feels strong. The regime is being tougher. One person noted with concern, for example, that the minister of education banned all Iranian scholars from attending a meeting in Istanbul of the international society of Iranian studies, and said they would be fired if they attended.

One participant said it is not an exaggeration to say the Iranian regime is a “colossal failure.” It has been retreating from most of its aims and some of its achievements for 30 years. If you compare Iran with Turkey or South Korea with where they were 30 years ago and where they are today, this person asked, “Where is Iran? It is a failure from an economic point of view.”

Iran’s regional context

Some believe Iran understands the need to compromise and change, given their strategic location, surrounded by Sunni forces and in the face of the Saudi challenge in the Gulf. One person said Iran doesn’t want to be the leader of the Middle East, and understands that a Shia country cannot be a leader of the Muslim world. Others disagreed, and said that Iran considers it an “Islamic” power, without making the distinction of Sunni/Shia: “Islam is the flag they raise.” What they hope for is a “negotiated, balanced position” in the Middle East and they don’t want to be pushed out of the Persian Gulf or the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). He said if there are Sunni or Salafi powers back in Baghdad, this will be a “big problem” for Iran. The balance of power with Saudi Arabia, Syria (discussed further below) is important to Iran, which is looking for opportunities to come back “in a sustainable way.” The nuclear issue, therefore, is not the biggest issue for Iran, and this person believed that the international community has failed to address the nuclear issue because it really is supporting regime change.

Others countered and said they believe Iran has hegemonic intentions, and say that it is not a question of “giving” Iran a role, “they take it.” They say that Iran is shrewd and takes advantage of collapsing systems. Someone else said, “Iran thrives on managed chaos and instability.” The US attack on Saddam “made Iran a superstar, as did the attack on Afghanistan.”

The nuclear issue in Iran’s domestic context

One person said that the best thing that can be done to suppress the independents or dissidents in Iran is to keep international pressure on the nuclear issue, which unifies the country behind issues of dignity and nationalism, rather than helping the opposition. Even someone who had been sentenced to 5 years in jail in Iran told one participant that he would do the same if he were Ahmadinejad. A former senior Iranian official before leaving the country said Iran has always thought the capability would be enough of a deterrent, and this was the Khatami approach as well. Ahmadinejad began to use the nuclear issue as a political tool—internationally and domestically. One person said the intense focus on the Iran nuclear issue is “playing into Ahmadinejad’s game.”

One person said, “Think how they think.” He encouraged participants to put themselves in the position of a leader in Iran, faced with a country like Israel having a national debate about whether or not to attack your country. “The people who are concerned about the government there are the least happy with this nuclear debate” because it makes the consensus around the government stronger.

Another participant said that Iran is debating the nuclear issue for the first time because they have no choice.

There is a “new balance of power” in the regime for the first time. One third of the new parliamentarians are independents, and they were allowed. Someone said this proves that after 33 years Iran is “in a new mood” for various international reasons.

One person said the Revolutionary Guards (the Sepah) and others do fear an Israeli attack, but someone else said an attack from Israel on Iran’s nuclear facilities is not a major problem for Iran. They are using the issue to unify the people behind the government and it helps them with their major concern, which is for the regime to survive. This person

said the other major issue for Iran is to be a major regional power. What happens in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria are concerns for Iran. This person said, “They don’t care about you [Israel].” Someone else said, “We [Israel] are a convenient enemy for Iran, we are a low worm. You can step on us.” He said that Iran uses Israel as a “tool” to divert attention.

The elections in Iran next May will be important. Some believe that nothing will be able to be done on the Iran nuclear file before those elections.

There remains great skepticism in Israel about the fatwa on nuclear weapons. One person said he simply does not believe it. He said, “God sometimes makes decisions contrary to previous positions.” He referred to this ironically as “deistic immunity.” “When God is on your side, imagine how flexible you can be,” he said. He gave the example of Khomeini changing his mind and making a deal with Saddam “the infidel.”



E. HALEVY, R. MARASHI

Threat perceptions and relations with Iran

Israel's threat perceptions

Many, if not most, Israelis believe that Iran poses an existential threat to the state of Israel. One person said the threat to Israel from Iran is “not new” and did not start with the nuclear project. One senior person said “Israel has been at war with Iran for thirty years” and he provided a narrative that traced Iranian influence in Lebanon, in Gaza, etc., and the concerns of Israeli prime ministers dating back to Rabin in 1993. “Every rocket from Gaza,” he said, “was produced or financed by Iran.” This includes, he said, more than 40,000 rockets, including very precise and heavy rockets with the ability to reach Tel Aviv.

The Iranian anti-Israeli rhetoric has had a profound impact on Israel’s threat perceptions, particularly when coupled with the belief mentioned above that Iran has been arming and supporting groups that oppose Israel. One person said that Iran spreads a “vicious anti-Semitic propaganda,” and that European leftists do not react to the statements in the same way they would if the statements were against homosexuals, or people of color. Israelis believe they must take the strong anti-Israeli rhetoric from Iranian leaders at face value. Someone said Iran can either threaten to destroy Israel or have nuclear weapons, but it can’t do both. Even if, as some say, the Iranian leaders “don’t believe a word” of what they say, this rhetoric has consequences.

Some say that Iran understands that Israel is a natural strategic partner of Iran (for example they refer to Israeli support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war), and they understand that the US is not going to be able to make an agreement with them while they keep using such rhetoric. Their anti-Israeli rhetoric is a tactical move, part of a “long game” in which such rhetoric gives them gains on the Arab street. Some call this “very dangerous tactics.”

One person said Iran is a dangerous nuclear proliferator because it has a hegemonic agenda for the Middle East, nuclear weapons will give it immunity to counter attack for any actions they take. “When Iran has immunity from a counter attack, it will be a real menace.” They can do a lot under the threshold; they can slowly encroach on Bahrain until one day it is under its control. Another Israeli said, “A nuclear Iran is worse than the Salafis who want us to disappear. Nuclear Iran is the worst [threat] at present.”



AMB. R. EKEUS (LEFT), AMB. J. ISSACHAROFF (CENTER),
Y. ALPHER (RIGHT)

Some believe differing threat perceptions may explain the apparent current divide in the Netanyahu government over how to address the Iranian nuclear issue. One participant laid out two different reasons why leading Israelis oppose Iranian nuclear capability. The prime minister is said to believe that if Iran gets a nuclear weapon, there is a real danger of an immediate and calculated attack of Iran on Israel in order to destroy Israel, as this is what he believes is their objective. The defense minister is more strategic, and is said to believe that Israel should never concede its strategic superiority in the Middle East on the nuclear or conventional levels. If a competing opponent in the Middle East has a nuclear capability, this would affect adversely Israel’s military and strategic actions, therefore from this perspective the threat is not that Iran is fanatical and will attack Israel right away, but because Iran having nuclear weapons capability will adversely affect Israel’s military and strategic actions and in this way it will undermine Israel’s strategic behavior.

Other international actors and the perceived Iranian threat

Some thought that the idea that the whole world is concerned about the “Iran nuclear threat” is an exaggeration, and that in fact there is no consensus. Someone pointed out that there is no concern about the Iran nuclear program in places like India. Others say that it is a major concern in the Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, and in Egypt. Some say the Non-Aligned Movement should not be overlooked and the fact that 120 countries went to the meeting in Tehran at this time is a show of support. But another person disagreed and said the NAM conference was the “biggest failure for the Iranian leadership in a long time.”

Others thought the Iran nuclear issue is primarily a non-proliferation and NPT issue that should concern the world and the UN Security Council. If the international community is not dealing with it, “it is their failure” said one person, “the responsibility for dealing with Iran is not on Israel’s shoulders.” If anything should concern the international community, it is a state “cheating.” Other disagreed with the idea that Iran is currently “cheating.” One person said “they are sticking to the book” though they made some very serious errors in failing to report some activities in 2002-2003. Intentions are much more difficult to gauge. There is disagreement among the negotiating partners as to whether or not Iran is in compliance with its commitments. In Russia, for instance, the degree of Iran’s compliance with its own safeguards is mainly considered “sufficient” and there is belief that there is no evidence or signs pointing to the existence of a military

dimension in Iran's nuclear program (these issues are discussed further below). Others pointed to other aspects of the Iranian threat, and said for example its ballistic missile range "covers half of Europe."

From the non-proliferation perspective, some raise concerns that an Iranian nuclear weapon could lead to further proliferation in the region. Some believe the fears that Egypt, for example, might pursue nuclear weapons are exaggerated. While they have thought in past about an independent nuclear capability, they have not shown intent along these lines (due in part some say to the Israeli arsenal). Turkey is a member of NATO and unlikely to pursue independent nuclear capabilities. Saudis may be more likely, according to this assessment, and if they did so they would take many years and most likely require Pakistani help. However, others have pointed out if that if Iran is attacked and withdraws from the NPT, then there may be a whole different calculus in the region.

Iran-Russian relations

One Israeli participant said that Russia is the most important country in the world today regarding Iran (perhaps China as well). There is a belief among many Israelis that Russia might be able to influence Iran to move away from what many Israelis see as Iranian moves toward nuclear weapons. However this was contradicted by some others who point out that in fact Russian-Iranian relations have been to an extent limited in recent years. One participant said there is an "overall lack of friendliness between Moscow and Tehran" and relations are in "no way cordial, but cool." One person suggested the idea of the so-called Russian influence on Iran might be "widely exaggerated." One person pointed out that while Putin met Ahmadinejad, he did not meet Khamenei face to face for many years, perhaps because the Iranians did not welcome a summit-level meeting (though they did eventually meet). It is not to say Iran regards Russia as minor, but they did not want to give an impression they have full faith in Russia as a mediator (or that they are heavily relying on Russia). Someone said this is not necessarily something that the Russian side wants to change either, as they need to demonstrate faithfulness and transparency also in their dealings within the E3+3. One person noted that while Russia and Iran do cooperate and trade on a regional level, for example regarding the Caspian, the Russian-Iranian relations suffered negatively following the most recent period of introduction of more and more sanctions. In addition, the repercussions are still there, one person said, from the Russian decision to not deliver S-300 missiles to Iran as a result of the UNSC Resolution 1929 sanctions.

The regional dynamic

As in prior Pugwash meetings on Iran in Israel, discussion took note of the profound changes occurring in the region. This time, discussion touched on the impact for Iran of the recent changes.

Someone said that Iran "won't be winners" as a result of the "Arab spring, since no country wants the model of the Islamic Republic of Iran exported to their country. Another said Iran is "on the losing end" of regional developments.

Another participant pointed out that the political leverage Iran has had in the region may be exaggerated.

For example, there is a difference, he said, between providing money to Hamas and directing activities. Hamas don't agree with the Iranian philosophy and do not launch rockets on instruction from Tehran. (Another pointed out, however, that while it is true Hamas has distanced itself from Iran, without capabilities provided by Iran, Hamas would have been very different.) According to one participant, Iran has at best a marginal influence in Afghanistan (where even the Shia do not like Iran) and even the close relationship between Iran and Hezbollah is not a one-way street, but the influence of each on the other is equal, according to this participant.

The Iran-Turkish rivalry, one person said, undermines Iran. Someone else said this relationship is basically "all right." Another noted it has been deteriorating.

One person said that if Iran is given a regional role this will "betray" the Arabs, and the Saudis, Jordanians, Qataris, etc., who would be "terrified." It was noted that the importance of Saudi oil cannot be ignored. Someone else cautioned against what he termed "strange enthusiasm" in Israel for Saudi leadership in the region, "Are you really welcoming a Middle East with Saudi Arabia as a leader, is this regime so preferred?" One person said, "Saudi Arabia is a status quo power, Iran is a revisionist power." Someone else said, "The Saudis are willing to fight in Syria until the last US soldier." One participant cautioned against further inflaming any hostility between the Sunni and Shia, as in places like Lebanon and Syria, it can "go very bad."

Syria

Participants addressed the grave situation in Syria. One person noted, "There is bloodshed beyond toleration and the world is quiet." This section looks at issues related to Syria primarily in terms of the possible impact on Israel. As one person said, "What happens in Syria will directly affect Israel" and is "critical to the security and defense of Israel."

Some believe that what happens in Syria also ultimately might influence the nuclear dossier. One person said Syria also is considered a "very key" issue for Israel because it is "a conduit for support for forces in Lebanon and Gaza" and also due to the concentration of chemical weapons there. In addition, Syria shares a common border with Israel. For many years this was, as one participant said, the quietest border without a peace agreement, thanks in part to the 1974 disengagement agreement with Syria. One participant said Israel to date has been "very circumspect" in the way it has stated its public posture regarding Syria. One person said that while Israel has expressed an estimate that Assad will no longer be there, Israel has not "promoted activity and action this field."

A participant noted that the Syria struggle today is on two levels. The regional struggle involves Turkey and Saudis on one hand, and the Sunnis and Hezbollah on the other hand. It is also a global struggle between US and Russian interests. This person said it is already not just an internal issue for Syria, and remarked that one doesn't remember seeing such an accumulation of Russian ships and intelligence in the region as in this event.

Iran's role in Syria was a topic of discussion, and its presence in Syria was described by one participant as



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“critical.” He said Iran has in the past few months increased its involvement in Syria, and has openly said it is has been involved in fighting, which it previously “tried to hide.” He pointed to a statement in which the deputy head of Quds forces said if it were not for Iranian military involvement the regime would have fallen, and others saying that Iran is not going to allow the regime to fall. One participant said Iran has bases in Syria and has had intelligence and military cooperation with Assad. This person said there have been tests done in Syria with Iran and Hezbollah participation and with a huge transfer of Syrian equipment and weapons to Hezbollah, sometimes before the military got it. Someone else noted that relations between Iran and Syria have never been based on ideology, but it has been a “convenient alliance” for 33 years. Iran’s policies toward Syria, he said, should be seen in the context of the regional changes in the Arab spring and as a question of Iranian state interests.

The end result of the Syrian crisis, one person said, should be “no Iranian presence.” An Iranian presence in Syria would be a direct threat to Israel. This is not like arming Hezbollah, it is not like Iran support for the PIJ in Gaza and its lesser support to Hamas, he said. If Iran stays in Syria militarily, Israel will face a direct military presence of Iran across our border. This would be against the interest of Israel.

Others referred to what they termed a “proxy war” in Syria between Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran. One person said Iran is losing soft power in the Arab world as a result of its role in Syria and said that even some “very high ranking people” in Iran are not happy with Iran’s approach in Syria. If Assad falls, this person predicted that it would mean “Iran will lose in Lebanon.” This would be a “big setback” for Iran, someone else said. Someone noted there are no Saudi forces in Syria, though another replied they are financing things.

One participant said that Egyptian President Morsi’s criticism of Iranian support for Assad shows that Iran is becoming isolated by large parts of the world. Another person said that “Morsi spat in Iran’s face publicly” and in so doing Morsi performed a great service on behalf of the international community and Israel and should be applauded for it. “We can live with a few bad words from Morsi on Israel,” one senior Israeli participant said. He also referred to growing cooperation between Egypt and Israel in defense and security measures in the south, which will increase if Israel “plays our cards properly.” Another participant said the situation in Syria is not a “zero sum” between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but the potential Muslim Brotherhood role causes concern for the Saudis. About the relations between President Morsi and Iran others pointed out that Morsi’s visit to Tehran was after all the first visit of its kind and the climate between Iranian leaders and Morsi was not at all an antagonistic one. So the dissent between Morsi and the Iranian leaders should not be overemphasized.

Some believe that Israel is not dealing creatively enough with the Syrian situation. One person said it is “inconceivable” that Israel has a common border but sits and looks on, only making “diatribes” every two weeks. It is not true, said one participant, that Israel has no influence in the Arab world, but it is “too limited in what we try to do.” There are ways to show Israel is serious, as they “made some movements” for example in 1970 when Syria went to Jordan to overthrow King Hussein. There are “more nuanced things” that Israel can do discreetly in Syria and more Israel can do regarding Lebanon. Someone said, for example, “many things are happening” in the Golan Heights with the Druse.

If Syria lapses to anarchy and there is no exit strategy that allows all players to live with it, one participant warned, all the neighbors around Syria will look to their own interests. This, he said, is not a threat as he is not even sure Israel knows what this would mean practically, but he warned that “all could lose.” If Iran is there after all, there will be those who say Israel can’t live with it given the way Iran behaves and their politics and “terror culture.” “Israel will not pay the price by allowing Iran to stay there.” He said they have no business there, no border, and they are doing things which are against all the norms of international

conduct. “This can’t be allowed to continue.” “It touches on the worries of Iranian dreams of hegemony in the region,” he said. “We won’t interfere, but we won’t allow continued Iranian presence in Syria.” One participant noted that though it is not “trumpeted,” in 2006 in the first 48 hours of the war, Israel took out all strategic missiles Iran placed in Lebanon, and that for Israel to be able to do this, “someone had to tell them where to find it.”

Another participant questioned what would happen if Israel sends these sorts of passive threats that they will not tolerate this presence. He asked “Would you recommend Israel to intervene militarily to exercise this threat?” “Compellent threats are not deterrent threats,” he said. “When facing a situation in Syria or elsewhere where the forces or balance of power are not clear and shift quickly, to try with nuances to use military threat is extremely difficult and possibly verge on dangerous.” It was noted by another participant that Israel has made a clear threat regarding the Syrian chemical weapons, and after that Obama said the US would take care of it. That is the only statement Israel has made so far.

Someone else said it is not clear in Syria who to support. Someone pointed to the presence of Alawites in Syria (someone else said that Iran never recognized the Alawites, but someone else noted that in 1979/1980 Grand Ayatollah Shirazi said he ‘Shiified two million Alawites’ in Syria). It may be a “fuzzy connection,” said one person, but it is there. From this perspective, “As long as the Baath party, the Assad family and Alawites are in power in Syria, we will not separate Iran from Syria.” If the top priority is to separate Iran, then one must think creatively, this person said, about the opposition. He noted that of 200 opposition groups, the CIA has only identified two groups that are “reliable and well-organized” – both “tragically” controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood. Another participant countered this characterization, and said things can change quickly in the region, and reminded participants that Israel has a peace treaty with Egypt, which the Muslim Brotherhood has said it will respect, and Morsi made a statement in Tehran that Israel is proud of. “History can bypass you, you have to be careful,” he said. One participant said one possible scenario could be a situation in which Syria breaks down into semi-autonomous regions, including Alawites. If this happens, he said, then the question of who Israel should back in one way or another might become more relevant.

One person suggested that after November, there will be modified approach to Syria from the Obama administration, not on the Libya model, but “stepped up.”

Many Israelis expressed concern over Russia’s role in Syria, though they clearly recognized Russia’s involvement as different from that of Iran. One person said the interests of Russia and Iran in Syria are “not identical, and should not be identical.” He continued, Russia is behaving very differently in Syria than Tehran and if that is not clear to the international community, it should be. The Russian interests in Syria are strategic (regarding ports and other aspects of the military and defense establishment) and political (regarding power relations between US and Russia). One person noted that Russia has been “cool and cautious to all Iranian overtures to discuss or coordinate on Syria.”

Some believe that Russia’s role in Syria is overemphasized. One participant noted that Putin said the degree of Russian influence today is in no way comparable to that of the Soviet Union. Someone said that “even Bashir personally doesn’t believe in Russian protection.” Russia has said publicly it is not attached to this particular regime and if Syrians decide otherwise, the Russians would go along. Russian concerns include doubts that there is a military solution to the problem, coupled with a deep hesitance to change the rules of the international system on a piecemeal basis. It was noted that the degree of fragmentation in Syria is higher than many believe and therefore “action should be taken...to impress upon those people that it is impossible to only believe in the power of arms to enforce their case.” It was noted by one participant that

any possible Russian naval intelligence presence in the waters near Syria should be regarded “as a message,” an attempt to show Russia cares. However, it also can be seen as a part of “something all navies and militaries perform” and in fact the prior absence of Russian vessels in the Mediterranean for a while was “an abnormality.”

One person noted that Israel has not felt threatened by Russian presence in Syria, and believes that Russia has not exercised its influence there. When and where Israel has had concerns about certain cooperation and equipment supplied to Syria, they have made their views known to Moscow. He said he is “not sure all requests and hopes were addressed, but some were.” However, in Syria, one participant said, Russia has the chance to do three things: 1) to stabilize the region; 2) be a player with whom others will concert; and c) “clip the wings” of Iran (particularly vis-à-vis the idea of any possible continuing Iranian military presence in Syria). One Israeli pointed out, “We don’t forget the distance between Tehran and Moscow is the same as Tehran and Tel Aviv.” Someone else said that Russia is “losing a great deal of influence in the Arab world as a result of its perceived support of Assad.” Others disagreed, and believed the more general principles of international law that Russia seeks to protect in this and other situations are to the benefit of the entire international system.

Some Israelis believe that it could be a “turning point” if Russia were able to distance itself from Iran in Syria, and if Russia approached the crisis in a “constructive and creative” manner. This could give practical context to Russia’s desire to avoid being seen as providing “political cover” to Iran and could be the “beginning of renewed cooperation” between Russia and other countries. To the extent that Russia is influenced by the Libya experience, some noted that what happened in Libya was “a mistake.” Particularly serious was the agreement reached in 2003 between US and UK with Gaddafi regarding the dismantlement of Libya’s nuclear capabilities in exchange for a pledge that there would be no regime change. (“Regardless of whether this was written on paper in ink, we have reason to believe this was an understanding to say the least.”) One person said, “The precedent of 2003 was enormous. For the first time a Muslim, Arab state decided to forgo its nuclear military operations and plans.” In 2011, events repudiated this understanding, and this change of policy was wrong. This was “not the way to conduct international relations.” To sacrifice the assets gained in 2003 for the end result in Libya was a poor result,” he said, noting that the situation in Libya today is far from stable, and affects 4.5 million people. It was a “net loss from every point of view,” including that Russia lost its influence in Libya. This is the second time after Iraq, and some believe Russia has decided not to have a third time around.

Iran’s nuclear program

Status

Very few if any voices in Israel believe the Iran nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes. Most believe the Iranians are at a minimum seeking a nuclear weapons capability. There is debate as to how sensitive the Iranians are, however, to the costs and benefits of the program. Some say that while Iranians are in “constant progress, and deliberately want to come as close to possible to break out,” there has been no decision to do so. One person questioned that if a country is deliberately pushing the line, does that mean it really is “legitimate civilian activity”?

The question of Iranian compliance with its NPT obligations was debated. Some believe firmly that they are not in compliance, and that the concerns raised by IAEA reports about Parchin, etc., are “serious” especially

given the fact Iran denied Amano access to the site. Others say that in 2003 Iran stopped enrichment and weaponization. “Many countries studied from a theoretical point of view, weaponization at one time or another,” said one participant, and this is possibly allowed under the NPT, even though there is a “grey area.” Someone else said that while they are not prepared to believe “nothing is happening,” if you deprive a country from what it in principle has the right to do under the NPT, then there should be equal readiness to deprive all countries who do the same. “Not all questions of international law have been sufficiently clarified,” said this participant.

One person said the debate as currently framed is designed to leave room for political maneuverability on all sides, as it is easy to claim there are certain capabilities than it is to prove whether or not they exist. However, this person said, it is clear to all that Iran has no capability to be a large nuclear weapons state. If they feel “pushed into a corner,” one participant said, many believe they can at most develop a small nuclear weapons program, based on old technology. Some believe that if Iran really wanted to develop nuclear weapons, they would have done so by now, as this has been an issue for 12 years. Someone else noted that the Iranian path to a bomb might not have been the fastest, but it is the “most secure” in that doing this under the auspices of the NPT gives them the “excuse” to go to 90 percent enrichment and buys them time while they amass fissile materials.

One person said the purpose of the Iranian nuclear program has nothing to do with Israel, but is a protection against the US. He said, “They must have sufficient guarantee the US will never come and get them” and only a nuclear weapon can serve that role. Someone else said that while the idea is very prevalent in “Third World” strategy to seek a nuclear capability against the US, and while strategists in Iran might think it is a possibility to deter the US in this way especially if they think the US goal in Iran is regime change, in reality “for Iran to get in a direct military confrontation with the US would be suicide.”



PROF. P. COTTA-RAMUSINO, AMB. S. BATSANOV

Impact of developments

According to the recent IAEA report, Iran has installed nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the centrifuges in Fordow, an underground facility. Someone said “we simply don’t know” if there is one cascade or two cascades there. Fordow might be to produce some fuel for the TRR. The possibility was also raised that Fordow might be defensive – that it might perhaps be a reserve of centrifuges ready in case Israel does attack. One person said, “Who knows what they are thinking?” There is no clear proof in Fordow or elsewhere, one participant said, that shows a military program. Further, there is no evidence that they could break out in a matter of months. Others said the configuration of Fordow has no possible civilian explanation. The nature of the Fordow plant, some say, is in “no sense” for a civilian nuclear program. There is only room there for 3000 centrifuges, and the most logical use would be to enrich LEU to HEU. Someone else said this suspicion is compounded by the fact that the Iranians themselves hid the site, and have changed four times their explanation for the purpose of the site.

Someone said we have to “learn to operate on the basis of a certain degree of uncertainty.” There cannot be 100 percent certainty. If one takes a maximalist approach in this regard, it is likely that one will arrive at a wrong conclusion and therefore take wrong decisions.

Someone else pointed out that HEU is not the whole story, and that Israel is also concerned about LEU. A

recent IAEA report indicated Iran may have nearly 7,000 Kg of LEU, which this person said could be “the difference between one bomb and several bombs.”

Some believe developments at Fordow place added pressure on the timeliness of the issue, since the buried sites are more invulnerable, for example, to a possible Israeli strike. One person said this new phase requires further, not less, Israel-US cooperation, “If Israel doesn’t think the US [with its more advanced weapons capable of destroying the underground sites] has its back, Israel has less recourse.” Someone else said the US can take out Fordow, and the Iranians know it and this “speaks volumes” and a psychological aspect that should not be underestimated. The Iranians know the US has penetrated Fordow via intelligence and other means, and a seed of doubt has been planted that might “help to peel people off.” (This person said there is disagreement over whether or not this “straddles the line” of regime change.)

One Israeli participant reported about a technical overview, seeking to define when the Iranians might achieve a breakout capability in terms of fissile material. He said that when enriching to 3.5 percent of uranium 235, about 70 percent of the work is done (others say it is at 5 percent that 70% of the work is done), and that when one reaches 20 percent, around 90 percent of the work is done to reach weapon grade

The Israeli participant also said the equipment for enrichment to this higher level is there as it is the same centrifuges used to get to 3.5 percent, though they must be somewhat rearranged—the cascades will be smaller, with some repiping and revalving. While such revalving or repiping is not a long job, a decision must be taken to do this (or some other facility might already be piped in that way). Then uranium must be reconverted from hexafluoride to metal, and then one has to melt the metal and machine it to an approximate shape. In terms of how much is needed, this participant said it is accepted that for the first core, two hemispheres of 25kg would be needed, and for a second core, it would need less. Metallurgists say the core itself after machining needs 15 kg (others disagreed and said 20kg) for a 10-15 kiloton weapon (roughly the size of Hiroshima). Packaging to a warhead, this person said, “is not very important.” “They can carry out a nuclear test without all the trimmings of a bomb or warhead.”

This participant pointed out that some necessary additional steps can be done in tandem with seeking the needed amount of fissile material. A nuclear explosive device could be developed in parallel. Some referred to both “old indicators” and the November 2011 IAEA reports that said the studies regarding weaponization were ongoing, specifically regarding putting the core and the explosives together. The Director General’s report, this person said, indicates that Iran may have received from the A.Q. Khan network an old Chinese/Pakistan design for nuclear weapons in the same way that Libya received such plans. This person said it is known that Iran has been working on the design until 2003, and the report indicates they “probably” continued this later.

Another participant mentioned the plutonium channel also deserves attention, and said that Iran is continuing to build the IR40 in Arak, a research reactor that every year could produce enough plutonium for one device.

Timelines

Some estimates have been floated that Iran can breakout very quickly (participants mentioned, for example, that the unanticipated developments regarding the TRR serve as a warning that Iran can be much better technically than many think). However, one participant said he does not think it is true that Iran can breakout quickly. While it is possible to test the machining, melting, molding, etc. with natural or depleted uranium (so one does not need to wait for the enriched uranium to be available), he said experts in various nuclear

weapons countries agree it will take approximately a year for a country starting from 3.5 percent to make one nuclear weapon. The question then becomes, how many nuclear weapons do the Iranians need. Some say four cores are needed: one for testing, a second in case the first fails, and then two for a minimum arsenal. To arrive at four cores would, in his estimation, take another year. This estimation means that breakout for the first weapon/device would be 1 year, and for three more it would be another year. Some question that an “arsenal” of two weapons is not something any state would be satisfied with.

One participant said the amount needed for a gun assembly design would be about 50 kg, but the Iranians have a design for an implosion type design. Pakistan, it was pointed out, exploded uranium bombs.

Someone raised a question about detection, and while this type of work can be detected and discussed with the IAEA, such a process can take a very long time. One participant said there is a “very extreme degree” of attention of all sorts of intelligence agencies, inspectors, etc., so some believe Iran cannot move to weaponization covertly. If they decide, as in the case of North Korea, to “go their own way,” that would be a very different situation, “a smoking gun with all its consequences.”

However, some worry that there are already some “not large” quantities of fissile materials already missing, which have yet to be explained and which might be used in some as yet undetected site. Another fear is that Iran may come up with a “trumped up” charge against IAEA inspectors that would result in them being expelled (example, falsely accusing them of taking pictures, etc.).

One participant said that this emphasis on a linear examination of the theoretical capabilities of the technical aspects of the program is “too simplistic” in that it “assumes that no matter what others have seen, or proven, the only way to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons is basically to prevent from having nuclear activities.”

Another participant noted that, based on the Soviet experience, quite often assessments made of Soviet capabilities were always in the highest possible range. These led people to assume the Soviet intent was always aggressive. However, often in reality the reserves were made based on Soviet calculations of the technology gap between the two sides, and as a hedge against things not working properly and not necessarily aggressive intent.

The international debate – dispute over goals

Red lines – the capability versus weaponization dichotomy

A distinct change from our prior meetings, the term “red line” was used during this meeting with increased frequency and consistency, mirroring the current public debate in Israel. Some believe that Netanyahu’s push for clearly defined red lines is “totally justified.” Others question the advisability of this approach. Discussion of such red lines, one person commented, is very different from the “unfortunate hysteria” regarding a possible attack and they should not be considered in the same way.

One participant warned, however, that the notion of redlines is “very dangerous” and commented that when Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer drew lines in the sand, this was a “recipe for battle.” Someone else countered they can help to clarify positions, and gave an example. When President Obama within a matter of hours

clearly defined a red line on the Strait of Hormuz, Iran “backed down” within a similar amount of time. Similarly, a red line was given about moving chemical weapons in Syria, which one person said was “very helpful to Israel.” “When Obama is serious, he sets red lines,” said one participant who said this proves that redlines can be a “recipe for effective deterrence.”

The main division over red lines seems to be that Israel regards the attainment of an Iranian nuclear weapons capability (or “latency”) to be a red line, while the US considers weaponization to be the red line (although there appears to be two camps in the US on this point). Someone said, “The ship on latency has sailed.” Someone else cautioned that Iranians are “habitual line steppers” in terms of what Israel says its red lines are. This person said that the US and Israel agree on 98-99% of the issues, except for that 1% of when it would be “right” to strike. Iran knows this, and exploits it. They are not, said this participant, approaching the US red line of weaponization.

Specifically what such red lines might be beyond these broad stroke statements was a matter of discussion. The public discourse rarely details these sorts of specifics. For example, some suggested the red lines might be if intelligence is intercepted that indicates Iran is going to build a bomb, if Iran is caught in open breakout at Fordow, or if Iran reaches perhaps some technical hurdles, such as enriching beyond 20 percent, etc. (One person said that crossing 20 percent is a red line by virtue of the IAEA charter and the difference between LEU and HEU.) Another person wondered if Iran were to evict for whatever reason the IAEA inspectors if this might be a red line. (Someone said North Korea has done this in past and it was not a red line. Someone else said the situation is not parallel because the DPRK is “protected by China.” Another participant pointed out this was not a red line for Saddam Hussein either.) One participant said they do not believe Iran would throw out the inspectors as long as they believe there is a potential that sanctions might be lifted. While some believe the US might bomb if Iran is caught in open breakout at Fordow, there are very few who believe the US will ever commit to red lines publicly. “No president will box in like that.”



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There are also some indications that even in Israel there may be some who recognize that some sort of Iranian enrichment program will be in the end an inevitable outcome of the current negotiations, but they believe it imperative to not even hint at this possibility at this stage (this is discussed further below).

Prevention versus containment

While the Obama administration positions itself as being in favor of “prevention,” there are many in Israel who fear that containment is “the acceptable fallback position for the US administration.” “For Israel, this is not an acceptable fallback position,” said this participant. Someone said that it is important to find a sustainable policy for Iran in the region, and “containment is not sustainable.”

An Israeli participant said it is mistaken to think that if Iran gets a nuclear weapon then nuclear war is inevitable. He pointed out that it is at least possible to consider that Iran and Israel might be able to deter each other, on a first level of analysis. However, there are additional complex issues that can affect any such

stability, and “a lot should be invested in measures to stabilize such a relationship, including the involvement of the US.” He said, “It also is mistaken to think if the two have nuclear capabilities it is therefore stable.”

Another said one should not assume that a nondemocratic country will use nuclear weapons in the worst way. This sort of argument was put forward by even some very liberal voices (including ironically one of the Pugwash founders, Bertrand Russell) in 1948, urging an attack against the Soviet Union since there were fears they would not manage nuclear weapons in an appropriate way. Someone else noted that you “don’t need to have democracy to have control of a nuclear capability.” The Soviet Union, he said, was “extremely responsible” in its nuclear affairs. There are some concerns, however, if a situation arises where an extreme group might take over the capabilities (the example of the Revolutionary Guard in Iran was raised).

Regime change

There are those who believe regime change should be the ultimate goal of policy toward Iran. One participant said that every step that is taken should be measured by whether or not it supports the “implosion of the regime.” However, this was not a consensus and was hotly debated in our meeting.

Some warned strenuously that such action will only strengthen the regime. One participant said that anyone who thinks a military attack will facilitate regime change is “dreaming.” Someone said it would be a “major catastrophic decision” if regime change were the object of Western policy since not only will it fail, but it will immediately undercut any possibility, to the extent one exists, to get agreement on the nuclear side. Someone said it is not useful to speak of regime change, and it is better to speak of a change of policy. “It is not our right to tell them to change the regime,” said one senior Israeli participant. However, if the policies change to the level that would satisfy most, it would in effect be a new regime. One participant said that he does not believe the US is after a regime change in Iran. “This went away with George Bush,” he said.

Someone said that the Iraqi example demonstrates some of the dangers of a reliance on a regime change strategy. Iraq knew that there would never be a lifting of sanctions, even if there was a ceasefire, as long as Saddam was in power. This understanding that the goal was regime change, led them to throw out the inspectors and to not allow them to return. Some believe that the CIA injected people into the inspection teams with the goal of finding points of vulnerability to kill Saddam, and this was a “big mistake.” “The idea should only have been disarmament.”

Someone said it may be considered “old-fashioned” to refer to the UN charter, when concepts such as the “responsibility to protect” are moving forward. However, “if we are serious about a consensual approach to international relations” then we have to develop new laws through the international system and not keep relying on increasingly “frivolous” resorts to power, which create a “huge problem” for some in the international community.

Someone suggested that all countries that have contact with Iran, including especially the Russians, could make it clear to the Iranians that their rhetoric regarding the destruction of Israel should end. In other words, if regime change is not an appropriate goal vis-à-vis Iran, it is equally inappropriate for Iran vis-à-vis Israel. This could be an important psychological aspect of the “market place diplomacy” of Iran, to know that just as a country such as Russia does not support a military attack on Iran from Israel, it also “will not allow Iran to engage in any effort to destroy the state of Israel.” If the Chinese equally were to issue such a statement, some believe this might be “have some effect.”

Options and ways forward

Pressure/sanctions

There remains in Israel widespread belief that the pressure and sanctions (coupled with at least the threat of military action) are the only way to engage on this issue with Iran. One participant said, “Right now it is all about pressure, not inducements.” Another person said Iran is weak, and “it is only when Iran is on its knees, and only when its national interests are threatened will they make a change.” He said there are “hundreds” of examples that Iran only pursues a change of policy when its interests are at stake and when it is in a position of weakness. Some believe that without the Israeli threats of military action the “crippling” sanctions might not have been put into effect. Others say that negotiating sanctions with Europe was part of the Obama strategy from “day one.” One participant said there are Wikileaks documents that support this statement. However, another participant said, “Talking tough on Iran is like kissing babies.” And yet, he said, the lessons of three decades are that “when you pressure this regime, they pressure back, when you kick them, they kick back.”

There is a widespread mantra that sanctions are working to pressure Iran. However, one participant asked, “What is the metric?” Someone pointed out that sanctions have impacted 50% of Iranian oil exports, some \$3.5 billion per month revenue. Businesses have been hit hard; Russian ships have closed business with Iran. One person said he has “great confidence” that sanctions have slowed the Iranian nuclear program, as the limits on carbon fiber and steel have impeded the ballistic missile program and the ability to make advanced centrifuges. He said it is the advanced generation machines and not Fordow that would be a “big deal.” Because of such sanctions, he said, there is “plenty of time for a full airing of diplomacy” after the elections. “Iran does not have a fast breakout route thanks to sanctions.”



DR. R. MARASHI, DR. E. LANDAU

One participant said, “There is a limit to what sanctions can do,” and reminded participants that if a country really wants nuclear weapons they will make sacrifices, such as when the Pakistanis said they would eat grass to get nuclear weapons.

Some believe that while unilateral sanctions are a legitimate coercive tool in cases where there is a threat to international peace and security, it is only those countries who feel the policy of a given state—its actual acts, actual measures, decisions and subsequent factual moves—constitutes something that creates an enemy in this state, only in this situation can a given country apply unilateral measures. One participant pointed out that some countries, like Russia, have “great doubt” that Iran is an enemy for New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Japan and all those who are going along with the US, EU and others regarding applying unilateral measures. Others said that when faced with a country where its president organizes a conference to deny the existence of the holocaust and which professes a possible intent to wipe out another country, this is in fact a security problem for the whole world. Others point out that the only reason why current sanctions are “unilateral” in nature and not “international” (meaning UNSC sanctions) is because Russia and China refuse to go along with them.

One person said for a variety of reasons the US believed they have only binary option, between sanctions or war, and from this perspective sanctions are a lot better than the alternative. “Sanctions are a blunt instrument, but it is what we have.” Someone else said the Israeli position is very dangerous. Sanctions are important, but sanctions without diplomacy will have zero effect. One participant said that while it is necessary to ratchet up the sanctions, it also is necessary to ratchet up the exit. You can’t say “stop a, b, c, and d and we will talk later” and predicate options on the way you behave.

There is a debate about the goal of sanctions. Some believe they seek to induce behavior change and to bring Iran to a serious negotiating posture. Others believe the magnitude of the current sanctions is far beyond the goal of ensuring a “waterproof” non-proliferation regime. Some say that if the goal is to have behavior change and then regime change if there is no behavior change, then this should be said clearly. The misperceptions and confusion “doesn’t help,” said one participant.

Someone said it is wrong to build into sanctions the idea of regime change. There needs to be some “light at the end of the tunnel.” There needs to be some outline of what the end of sanctions might be, to give some space for diplomacy. Someone said, “There is no intelligent thinking from DC or others as to what the sanctions are aiming at.” One participant said, “We need to convince them that the current situation is worse than a negotiated settlement” and this should include “the harshest sanctions” the international community or countries unilaterally can put on the agenda to isolate Iran diplomatically.

Threats and/or implementation of military attack

One participant said a “credible threat of consequences” is the key to potentially more successful negotiations. “It is the only thing with the chance of working. Iran needs to think this president will bomb.” This participant said, “This is the role of red lines.” Libya, this person said, was a success in this respect because they were influenced by the Iraq war and thought they were next in line for attack. Another participant strenuously disagreed, and said the only reason why Libya gave up their nuclear capability was because the US and Europeans assured them there would be no regime change.

Despite the intense current debate in Israel over the advisability or not of a military attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities, even some of the most critical Israeli participants warned that this should not be misunderstood. “There is very deep concern in Israel, united around this issue,” said one participant. “The military is no less concerned than the political echelon,” said one person, “the question is if they share the same urgency.” One person said “to do it without the US in the fall or with the US in the spring, this is the debate.” The first priority, he said, is to do it with the US, but if no one else will do it, Israel will “do it alone.” If the international community takes no action, most believe there will eventually be a national consensus in Israel in favor of an attack, and achieving this consensus won’t take very long.

One participant said there is no doubt that there are intimate relations between Israel and the US, mainly in the intelligence realm. Recently the question, as one person pointed out, has become whether or not the US will help Israel now in a military strike and the answer was no. The US deputy chief of staff was recently in Israel and these sorts of dialogues were reported publicly. The message was that “we are not with you yet.” Some Israelis interpreted this to say it doesn’t mean the US won’t go with Israel later, depending on the scenario. However, some believe that US and Western experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have made the US more “confrontation averse.” (One person said that Afghanistan was the “biggest gift” the US could have given Iran.)

One participant said that the assumption that unless Israel or the US attack, Iran will become a state with nuclear weapons is “somewhat doubtful.” Another participant said, “Iran’s lack of a credible, quick breakout is a weak link in Israel’s position.” This opens the door to a possible package of diplomacy, sanctions, military threats and economic and other inducements. However, this sort of a package needs time to evolve. (This person noted that at the time of our meeting the heavier July sanctions had only recently begun to bite.)

One person cautioned that the debate between Israeli versus US or joint action may be meaningless, “Iran will not differentiate between a US or Israeli strike.” This has been openly discussed in Iran for a long time.

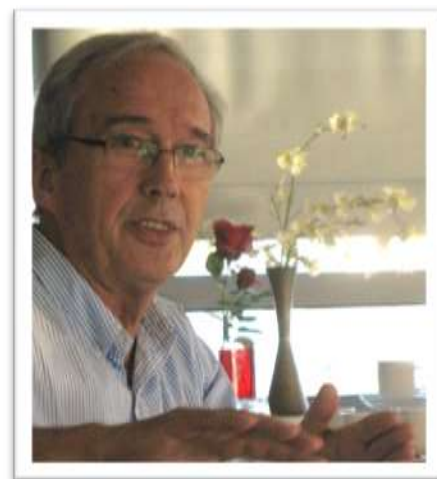
Someone said that most estimates say a military attack might delay the Iranian program by 2-5 years, depending on how effective the attack is. Some are concerned that whatever the intentions might be regarding a limited attack, it nevertheless might open the door to some of the most “anti-Iranian” people in the US and Israel to doing a larger strike, against the Iranian defense infrastructure (air defenses, etc.), which would lead to a “dramatic deterioration of the whole situation that won’t address the main issue and could lead to an all out war.” Someone else said a military strike is “risky, maybe dangerous, but not a ‘game changer.’”

Someone else questioned some basic underlying assumptions, “Do you think any military action of Israel against Iran will do anything to change the situation in Iran regarding regime change? Do you think the nuclear issue has fortified or weakened the regime?” Someone said if you are serious about wanting a regime change the best thing you could do would be to remove the issue of the “nuclear toys.”

One senior participant said, “The risks and dangers are by far higher than to try and work diplomatically....Palliative half measures are better than nothing, a strike is too much.”

Some believe a military attack on Iran will “backfire immediately.” While some like the Saudis may be “happy for a moment” due to self-interest, the longer-term impact of anti-Israeli bias may be more problematic not only in the Middle East, but also in Pakistan, India, Europe and maybe even the US. One person said, “As an instrument of change inside the region, a military attack will backfire.” Someone predicted “with high confidence” that if Israel bombs Iran, Iran will not pursue a civilian nuclear program in any enrichment facility.” Someone else said he does not believe that current events show Iran has moved any closer to a decision to weaponize, but rather recent events are more related to a policy of defiance vis-à-vis the international community and to show quantitative progress to allow them to say sanctions and UNSC resolutions are invalid and do not affect Iran (one person called this a “national obsession”). A strike would only reinforce this defiance. A strike “doesn’t resolve the fundamental character of this problem.”

One participant said, “We are approaching the moment when Israel will have a huge choice to make.” If Israel does not attack while it has a window to do so, and if the US commits to doing something as Iran weaponizes and then doesn’t, if one “thinks beyond the next hill,” and if Israel then will be unable to do it conventionally, what is the next option?



B. HOURCADE

One participant noted several interviews by a person very close to the Israeli prime minister that appeared in Israeli media the day we met, which said that the next 50 days are “critical.” This matched similar assessments given by others, including a public statement by one of the participants in our workshop who was criticized in government circles at the time for speaking in these terms.

Critique of negotiations so far

There was a near consensus that the negotiations to date have not yielded any significant progress. Some believe strongly this proves that the Iranians in particular are purposely stalling for time, to enable what these critics believe is a very clear Iranian technical march toward weaponization and to gather as much fissile material as possible to therefore ensure the shortest possible breakout time. As mentioned earlier, these analysts believe the only solution is to apply even more stringent sanctions and threats.

However, others believe that the results reflect some structural and ideological deficiencies in the approach states are taking to the talks. This section focuses on this latter set of items, in no particular order.

- **Need for more creativity and flexibility:** Many participants pointed to the need for more creative negotiations. In Moscow, Istanbul, and Baghdad, one person said, the principals were all reading from their notes, in what one person termed a “mutual diatribe.” This was especially evident in Moscow, he said. While the technical meetings may have been better, there still were no formed positions. Others disagreed firmly with this interpretation of recent meetings and said it exaggerates the problems to suggest they were just exchanging talking points. He said that in the Moscow negotiations, for the first time, Iran was talking beyond issues such as the deaths of their nuclear scientists; they were discussing Fordow and produced for the first time their position papers.



PROF. P. COTTA-RAMUSINO, DEP. FOR. MIN. RYABKOV

- **Need to be gracious:** Someone mentioned the difficulty of “being gracious” to a country as defiant as Iran, but that switching from punitive measures to something different will rotate on this. Another participant mentioned the positive impact of a symbolic measure such as putting a round table in the room had, so that the Iranians felt like “all were equal” at the table.
- **Shopping lists don’t work:** Someone said the negotiations will not work if all they consist of is a sharing of shopping lists. This person said the Iranians are “very professional and creative in trying all kinds of ways to avoid a hard give and take.” Telling them things without addressing issues will lead to nothing happening. They are “very elaborate in not showing their priority list.”
- **Need “game changers”:** One person familiar with the negotiations said that the negotiations have lacked a willingness to address any proposals that might have been “game changers.” Someone said it is a “fundamental deficiency” of the P5+1/E3+3 that they have a “joint inability” to present a proposal to Iran that would be reasonably attractive for them to consider.
- **Low receptivity to ideas:** Some believe that the receptivity is too low to many ideas floated by

associations and NGOs, including the proposal circulated by Pugwash after extensive consultation on all sides. One person said “there is no sign whatsoever that our partners want to factor any of this into their stern and firm positions on this issue.”

- **Imbalance of the dual track:** One participant said the “dual track” approach, as a code name for international policy toward Iran in recent years, has been “imbalanced in terms of overwhelming weight and attention on one side of the dual approach—sanctions.”
- **Need to “find the middle:”** Some believe it is important to seek out middle ground and areas of overlapping interests.
- **Political calendar and need to “start talking right away”:** Some believe that the negotiating dynamic will change after the US elections. However, there is concern that this will again become problematic as the Iranians move toward their own elections. Some believe that Iran currently has the capacity and is ready to negotiate. “Right or wrong,” said one participant, because the regime seems to be strong, they can negotiate from the position of strength. Others see things differently and say the Iranian political leaders are not able to make compromises today because of their ideology. Some believe the Iranians may prefer a Romney victory, as they see the Republicans as “cowboys” who “muck up” international relations. The Iranians, he said, don’t like Obama, and think he “talks out of both sides of his mouth.” One person warned of the importance of restarting negotiations immediately after the US election. Recent negotiations have begun to get to substance, but one person said the negotiators have been boxed in. This is true for Sherman and for Jallili, and so they have “punted” until after November. Others think this is not an acceptable alternative. “The nuclear clock is moving too fast,” said one participant, “the diplomatic clock and momentum is not moving fast enough.”
- **Need for discretion:** One person said there is a need to be more discreet this time around. It made a difficult situation even more difficult to have substantive discussions when reporters were posting each day on their websites what has happened. Discretion lessens the likelihood that spoilers can play that role.
- **The long game:** Successful negotiations will take time. Some are concerned that there has been too much focus on quick results, and less on the procedures for establishing the conditions for a successful negotiation. Someone said, “Negotiations are a marathon, not a sprint.”
- **Lack of understanding of different negotiating styles:** One person said he firmly believes that the Iranian psychology is a “marketplace psychology,” with a need to overbid for something, trying to be bold, impressive. This means there is a need to make a move in negotiations that even in the heads of the Iranians would be seen as “something different.” It also can explain a misunderstanding of Iran’s approach in recent negotiations to asking for “all sanctions” to be lifted, which could from this perspective have been interpreted as a first parlay in the negotiation, rather than a final position. Someone else said, “Iranians don’t have it in their DNA to say yes or no, their answers range from ‘yes, but’ to ‘no, however.’” Someone else said the Iranians “like to pretend they are as clear as the sky when they are not.”
- **Lack of agreement on the goal of sanctions:** Among the P5+1/E3+3 partners the goals of sanctions have not been fully agreed. Some believe that the goal of sanctions should be to ensure a stronger non-proliferation regime. However, some of the current sanctions exceed these goals and call on other changes within Iran to occur before sanctions are lifted. Until there is agreement on the goal of the sanctions, some believe it will be nearly impossible to agree to how to include sanctions relief in some sort of agreement.

• **Difficulties of the P5+1 (or E3+3) format:** One participant referred to the “endless arguing” among the partners, which hampers their ability to engage productively with the Iranians. Some believe Obama should have left the P5+1 format years ago and that it was a mistake that the US did not insist on bilateral negotiations. However, some believe it is imperative that Iran understand this sort of internal difference of opinion among the partners does not mean that any one of them is seeking to create a situation where Iran gets “political protection” from any of them. All, including Russia, do not support a nuclear armed Iran. One person said that the P5+1/E3+3 is the “best format available.” It helps to coordinate positions among those countries that have a say. The final message to Iran, he said, is coherent, and Iran is unable to play one against each other to the extent it might be able to in the absence of this forum. One person said it is not right to say the position of the group has not been discussed and worked through very thoroughly before presented to Iran. Within the group no one trying to introduce anything other than commonly agreed positions, and if not then others at least are warned ahead before the discussion takes place. When the group talks to Iran, this person said, everyone is keen to perform within the limits of the agreed position and not go beyond it. This was called “cumbersome” and “difficult.” It has been in particular pointed out that in coordinating among different negotiating partners, the risk becomes of accepting the lowest common denominator and creating a situation where movement becomes extremely slow. More than a risk, this appears to be the reality of this kind of multilateral negotiation.

• **Emphasize rights and responsibilities:** There is disagreement, even among the P5+1/E3+3, as to whether or not Iran is in compliance with its existing commitments. Some believe that despite the earlier transgressions in 2003, Iran is now following the letter of its commitments to the IAEA. Others say that the UNSC resolutions “trump” all, and note that Iran is not in compliance with UNSC resolutions. One participant noted that one should not selectively use various resolutions, such as those of UNSC, to define, who has which international obligations and mentioned as an example another UNSC resolution (487), which explicitly requested Israel to refrain from attacking nuclear facilities in the future, and also from the threats of such attacks. Some believe firmly that negotiations will go nowhere until all parties recognize Iran’s right to enrich as an NPT member. One person said, “If you skip the rights part, you will never get Iran on board.” That said, all agree that Iran could consider at all levels cooperating more with the IAEA, for example through full implementation of the additional protocol, code 3.1, etc.



PROF. D. MENASHRI, PROF. P. COTTA-RAMUSINO, DEP. FOR.
MIN. RYABKOV, E. HALEVY

• **Missed signals?** Some said that there were signs Iran came to recent negotiations with indications they could limit enrichment to 20 percent, but when they asked about related sanctions relief, they were told no. One participant said that the Iranians did not hear any hint that certain sanctions could be lifted or frozen, and this led to their perception that sanctions are not on the table at the moment. Some saw a hardening of the US positions in recent negotiations, while others don’t think the US positions have changed. Regardless of whether or not a change in US positions had occurred, one person said, the signal was significant.

• **Different perspectives on even recent history:** The lesson of 2009 TRR deal is interpreted very differently by many people. Some say it “almost worked” and it missed “by a hair” and is proof that some sort of

agreement can be possible. Others say it shows the higher Iranian leadership will never support an agreement, since Ahmadinejad and Jallili were ready to accept it, but they received “domestic flak” and Tehran rejected it within 24 hours. Others think this could have been handled differently. There was some debate as to whether or not the US started engagement without preconditions in 2009, and if this was ultimately a failure. Someone said in 2010 the US could not take a yes. However, someone said that “2009 and 2010 were not perfect, but CBMs are not supposed to be perfect.”

- **Appreciate domestic pressures – on all sides:** Someone noted it is important to recognize that it is difficult for the Iranians to “stick their necks out.”

- **Need for a ladder to climb down:** One person encouraged creative thinking for initiatives that could “bring Iran back into the international community, and to accept its duties and its rights.” Even the harshest critics of Iran recognize the need for a “ladder for Iran to climb down.” However, many believe that if putting away sanctions are part of that ladder it would undermine the “only card” the West has in the negotiating dynamic. Others believe there are ways to do this that encourage Iran to take certain steps and then a related incentive can be provided (this is the essence of the Russian plan). One participant said, “The Russians never proposed something like an early lifting of sanctions in a step-by-step plan.” There were very measured degrees of reciprocal measures for Iran if they did something. For example he said, if Iran said in an early stage they would not enrich to 20 percent and not introduce new centrifuges to cascades, others may say no additional sanctions, while others are still in place.

- **Lack of trust:** Some believe Iranian leaders are specifically not willing to compromise on the nuclear issue since if they do so they are worried this will open the door for other demands on human rights and regime change. “This regime does not want to compromise,” was a view reinforced by a senior Israeli participant, who believes the only way to get them to compromise is to threaten the survivability of the regime. Another said the Iranians are not interested in a deal and don’t want negotiations. “This is not a normal negotiation where two sides want to reach a common goal and bargain over the price,” because in this situation only one side wants a negotiated settlement. “This is very zero sum,” this participant said, “the opportunity for a wider dialogue to bring in non-zero options regarding regional issues...that ship sailed maybe three years ago.” Others believe the only way forward from this “impasse of zero level of trust” is to do something different, “action-for-action,” “more-for-more,” “step-for-step” – a whole series of clichés describe the same idea. Some say this can be structured, as in the Russian proposal, to provide a gap between what Iran does and what reciprocal action comes from the international community. But a “degree of reciprocity is fundamental.”

- **Contradictions with UNSC resolutions:** Some believe firmly that recognizing Iran’s right to enrich is central to any possible deal. However, this contradicts some UNSC resolutions. Someone said, this “should be arranged or we will get nowhere.” One person said there are political reasons why the US will not welcome this discussion now, but “at the end of the day, international control and normalizations with Iran will be the best guarantee to avoid their attempt to get a military program.”

- **Pressures on US government:** Some believe firmly that Israeli pressure on the US is hurting the ability of the US to solve this peacefully, as it is limiting the US ability to compromise. This is egregious, they say, because at the end of the day, this is primarily a conflict between the US and Iran who both have to “sign on the dotted line” for any agreement to work. With Israel and the US Congress boxing in the State Department, it has “hurt flexibility and reduced the political space and when you reduce the political space, you reduce the political will.” When comparing Israel’s list of friends and enemies, he said, one list is longer than the others and one country is at the top of the friend list. It doesn’t help when this kind of pressure

adversely affects US strategic interests. It was noted that it was not only Israel, but the Saudis, French, British AIPAC, Congress and others who have had an impact on the US ability to negotiate. Others disagree that Israel is in any way responsible for the failure of negotiations. “The international community should not delude itself and blame Israel,” said one person.

- **Success = defeat?** Some believe that the sides are not seriously considering the many options available to them primarily due to an unspoken but inhibiting belief that any deal with Iran would be seen as defeat at this stage.

- **Iranian anti-American line hardened:** Some noted that the Iranian anti-American line has frozen and can’t change. The result is that they cannot meet directly. Such private meetings would be considered negatively, one person said, and “someone else would stick a knife in his back.” The fact that Iranians could not attend a meeting on Afghanistan was mentioned in this respect. However, someone else noted that was because it was officials. Iranians can meet with Americans non-officially. Equally if it is officials to officials to get toward negotiations, this they can also do and it would not cause problems in the internal system, for example, for Jallili to meet Sherman.

- **Losing momentum:** Some are concerned that despite some promising steps in the Moscow talks things are starting to lose momentum, which is of concern with the challenges of domestic schedules. When negotiators next get together, they will “inevitably” revisit things, and there may be a “back to level one” feeling, an “aftertaste.” While many may be attacked for “talks for talks” and the concern that all are “buying time,” some believe the partners “can’t let this chance fade.”

- **Proposing alternatives viewed as undermining not fostering negotiation:** Some believe that when Russia and other players, capable of producing new ideas propose options that differ from the official P5+1/E3+3 position, this creates a wedge for Iran, and encourages them to exploit this rather than dealing with the core proposal. Others say that Iran is not interested in the official proposal, and the very nature of negotiations necessitates such give and take.



R. MARASHI

- **Russian and other proposals dismissed because obviously not P5+1/E3+3 consensus:** The conundrum is that the way these negotiations are structured, because Iran knows that for example the Russian proposal to recognize the right to enrich based on comprehensive international control is “purely Russian,” they will not take it seriously. However, some believe these alternative sorts of ideas “ferment for future talks” and demonstrate things are not deadlocked. If they are viewed skeptically on all sides they might perhaps be close to something that could ultimately be viewed as acceptable.

- **“Iranians not biting:”** Some see the lack of Iranian interest in negotiations to be the “essential problem” and why there has been “little fruit” to diplomacy. The solution, from this perspective, is to add much more pressure. One person said, “No one can say Iran didn’t have an opportunity to engage.” There is “no constraining Iran from engaging...or bringing their proposals.” This person said they have had an opportunity to engage on various levels – political, experts, consultations, and there is no progress on any

level. This is the experience, he said, of the enhanced level of diplomacy, and this is the basis upon which we can discuss the issues. Others disagree and think that this is not an accurate assessment. The Iranians aren't biting, said one person, because they don't think anything interesting has been presented to them.

- **Iran is imitating P5+1/E3+3 behavior:** One person said that over the course of the negotiations the Iranians are "imitating the rules of the game," mimicking and retorting with rhetoric, which is "all very disturbing and shows they are learning fast." Iran has been able to develop this culture of negotiations and it is making it harder for the group to penetrate with its message.
- **Americans are too rigid:** Some believe negotiations have been inhibited because the US diplomats are very limited in their maneuverability, and they are attached to a number of position points that are "very rigid." Someone said it is not only the Iranians who are reluctant to stick out their necks. This is a problem, according to one participant, because "not even a trial balloon can be sent because there is no way the US can agree on behalf of the whole group." Negotiations are "stuck," one person said. Others disagree with this characterization of the US team's approach, and many believe that the dynamics will change after the US election.
- **Russians are aiming to the lowest common denominator:** Some believe that a dramatic Russian change in its policy toward the P5+1 ideas is the "one factor that could dramatically increase diplomatic changes and increase the possibility that Iran will seriously engage to remove the shadow of the nuclear threat from Israel and the area." This is the cardinal factor, according to this participant. Others disagreed and believe that it is useful to have a variety of proposals floating."
- **Lack of political will and vigor:** Some believe that one of the major problems is the lack of political will and vigorous attention to this issue on the part of those who say they want a negotiated settlement has created an impasse.
- **Iran does not believe it needs to move faster:** One person said the trick is figuring out "how to make Iran believe it needs to move."
- **Israel is not responsible if diplomacy fails:** Many participants strenuously emphasized that the "responsibility for diplomatic success is not on Israel's shoulders." Israel, they say, has always been supportive of "serious and credible engagement of Iran" because it knows what the alternatives are. Israel cannot affect the success or failure of diplomacy, and cannot critically determine it." Others disagree, however, and say that Israel's threats of military action have not been helpful, to say the least.
- **Negotiations for the sake of negotiations are bad:** Some felt that going through the motions is not worthwhile if the end point is not obvious or agreed ahead of time. However, one participant noted that the lessons of the Cold War prove that sometimes such dialogue has intrinsic positive value.

Prospects for the Middle East WMD Free Zone conference

Participants discussed the proposed WMD Free Zone conference, which is slated to be co-convened by the UNSG, Russia, the UK, and the US with the help of Finnish facilitator Jaakko Laajava in mid-December 2012 (a subject that was addressed in detail in prior Pugwash Conferences in Israel this year).

Central questions arose around some key points:

Is Israel prepared to participate in the conference, given their concerns regarding the origin, format, scope and agenda of the meeting? One person said the conveners are all “cautious” on this point, despite the fact that Israel has not said it will not attend. One participant described Israel’s dilemma as, if you start trying to affect the process it means you are ‘in’ – even despite the major objections you have had to how the process came about. If you decide not to do anything, then it is possible it might happen without you. (Israel’s decision not to participate in the Goldstone report did not set a positive example in this respect.)

If Israel will not attend, is it meaningful to hold the conference? Some believe invitations should be extended to all parties, and chairs made ready should they attend, but that the meeting should go forward even if some states do not participate. Some believe there is no point in convening the conference without key states such as Israel. One person reinforced that Israel has the “full right” to not attend, but that this is not the right decision given the severe stress the NPT regime is already under.

Is postponement an option? Some believe it is impossible to imagine a successful meeting being called in December of this year given the fluid situation in the Middle East (including Syria), etc. Others believe that postponement can mean “postponement for eternity.” One person said that co-conveners cannot simply agree to postpone. Such a decision would give those in the Arab League and elsewhere a “scapegoat.”

One person said there is “no chance” Israel will forgo nuclear weapons, as it sees nuclear weapons as the final guarantee of their survival. Israel will only be willing to discuss a WMD Free Zone after a peace agreement is signed with its neighbors, including Iran and Iraq and if preceded by discussions regarding conventional weapons and missiles.



C. KUPCHAN, AMB. R. EKEUS, DR. E. LANDAU, PROF. Y. EVRON

However, this person said, that if the facilitator realizes this is the situation, then there are a few steps that can be done to frame the meeting in such a way that could serve as an important CBM short of dismantling Israel’s nuclear weapons. For example, Israel and regional states could discuss joining an FMCT if there is one. It could commit to ratify the BWC and CWC, and declare No-First Use. One person said if the emphasis in the meeting were to be on these sorts of texts, then “something achievable for feasible could be done.”

One person said that in the end, the co-conveners and the ambassador need to send a list, saying you are invited to attend an event of say 2 days or 5 days, with a tentative list of issues, a tentative list of invitees, and request confirmation. This is one way to establish a sense of regional ownership of the issue. This would in no way be a deadline for some rigid schedule.

One participant said there may be lessons to be drawn from the experience of Helsinki 1975, where the sides, which faced undeniable existential threat from each other, somehow came up with creative formulations for discussions. Positive lessons include the idea that Helsinki 75 was not a treaty, but an agreement. There were no member states, it was called an ‘organization,’ no ratification was needed. It served as a confidence building forum. In the Helsinki process, it took two years to agree principles. Someone very specifically

suggested the 1973 foreign ministers meeting might set an example for the December meeting. The outline was for some principles to be discussed but not decided upon, and then there were two years of negotiations in Geneva and then back to Helsinki. If a country doesn't like the substantive results of such negotiations, they can say no. Someone else suggested some additional lessons could be drawn from the framing of ACRS in the 90s.

One participant noted it may not be helpful to draw too many parallels, not only because some in Moscow and elsewhere may still feel that this was "the beginning of the end," but also because each situation must have its own formula.

Many discussed the possibility of starting some sort of process, rather than emphasizing a major result at the December meeting. The importance of a "free exchange of ideas" was emphasized. One person said, "If you expect too much of the final recommendations, then it will get nowhere."

Another person emphasized the meeting should not be used as an occasion to "bash" anyone, including Iran and Israel. Rather it needs to be constructively focused. It should not derail into a regional security issue, but those topics can be addressed under a framework of a WMD Free Zone. As one person said, "Security comes in parallel when discussing WMDs." Establishing some future next step would be in and of itself some sort of security assurance.

One participant pointed out that while the idea is part of an agreement made to achieve indefinite extension of the NPT, and Israel is not a party to the NPT, nevertheless, protecting the NPT as we know it, "with all its defects and problems" still serves the ultimate security interests of the nuclear powers, and Iran and Israel, as it constrains the worst abuses.

The involvement of experts and civil society can be helpful, one person said. It was noted that Pugwash plans to hold a meeting the day before it starts in Helsinki.

One participant noted that the opportunities for dialogue are "few and far between" and that this might be too useful of an opportunity to engage, especially as the results of the US election will be known at that time.

Next steps

Participants raised various issues that could be considered in moving forward. However, they did not focus per se on all the elements of a possible deal. The Russian proposal, the Pugwash proposal and other options have been circulating for several months. Many feel that the elements of a deal are available. As shown above, the purpose of the discussions centered more on exploring the lessons learned from the experiences so far.

There were, however, some general thoughts shared as to how things could or should proceed.

Some in Russia and elsewhere see the need for a triangular configuration, in which the international community recognizes Iran's right to enrich, in exchange for comprehensive international control of its program. When this is achieved, sanctions can be lifted. Someone else described this as a "step-by-step approach with the vision of the final result."

Someone highlighted a need to limit future rhetoric on all sides. There was unanimous condemnation for the sorts of anti-Israeli rhetoric from Iran. In addition, it was pointed out that the anti-Iranian animosity in the Israeli media and constant threat of military attack should be limited. Many Israeli participants highlighted the vast difference in the type of rhetoric, but others pointed out that the distinction may not seem so obvious in Tehran.

Many are concerned that the pace of the negotiations is not adequate and needs to be sped up. Some believe the technological developments are outpacing the diplomacy. Others point to other problems. The negotiations are “moving at the speed of the slowest ship,” said one person. “The speed of the slowest ship is too slow.” One participant noted that as time passes by, the “price for which Iran is prepared to concede on central issues is growing.” “We are missing opportunities all the time.”

Some believe that Track II forums need to be fostered in which options can be explored, hopefully involving US participants who will speak creatively. In particular, it is important to explore further whether or not there is any room in the US and Israel to accept the right of Iranian enrichment.

The elephant in the middle of the room: can Israel accept Iranian enrichment?

The Iranians will not accept any deal that does not accept their right to enrich. The official Israeli position is no enrichment. Participants discussed throughout the workshop whether these two poles can be bridged.

One person said for the Iranians “3.5 percent is a bottom line.” They may discuss Parchin at the end of a diplomatic process, but not at the beginning, as they “refuse to pay for the sins previously committed.” Many are highly skeptical they will close Fordow, but they may well allow inspectors there. However, one person said, “they will never surrender their right to enrich or limit activities without sanctions relief.”

So, the central question is whether Israel, despite its official policy, can live with a deal that allowed Iranian enrichment. The answer from our discussions appears to be a qualified yes.

One person said it is most likely impossible to get an answer from the Israeli leaders that they would accept Iranian enrichment. They would worry that if they said they would accept a certain percentage, then they would be concerned this would be the starting point for negotiations. “No enrichment” is a generic slogan. There were indications, however, that Defense Minister Barak has indicated 3.5 percent might be something with which Israel could live, though he was not speaking for the prime minister and would not be the one to make that decision. One participant said such a deal seems to be possible provided that extra quantities would be under international control and transferred out of Iran. If the leaders agree to 3.5 percent, one person said, the public will accept this.

Another person said the “military top brass don’t want to have a war with Iran, full stop.” He said they don’t want to go to war with Iran, therefore they will be ready for reasonable concessions with one proviso, it has to include watertight supervision and verification. “If the US comes out saying to the Israeli government and military a limited quantity of 3.5 percent enriched uranium, with watertight supervision, and any breach means a quick military option, then the military top brass will live with it. Some in the government will say yes, some will say no, and if this is before an election in Israel it can be an issue (someone else said they did not believe such things would influence the Israeli election). Someone else disagreed with this description of the military’s calculation, but that they would include in their calculations the time gap it would take for Iran to weaponize, which depends on more than just the level of enrichment.

There is a question whether or not Iran should be able to go ahead indefinitely to produce 3.5 percent enriched uranium. Someone else noted that if the purpose is for working power plants, they will need “lots” – more than if they only want a bomb.

Another person noted that if it is reality that many in the US and some in Israel recognize that some formulation regarding the right to enrich is a future possibility, then this is “a beginning.”

Someone noted that the international community has not been able to say yet what it wants from Iran, 3.5 percent or less than 20 percent. If for example, one says 5 percent, this is a serious constraint, well below 50 percent of the work needed to reach weapons capability. Twenty percent is another story.

Need for “out of the box” thinking and confidence building measures

One person pointed out that Israel’s positioning in the Middle East is more like that of an external actor rather than being perceived as a part of the region. This is an unhealthy environment, and that ways need to be found to change the local environment in a way that is compatible with different types of regimes, taking advantage of some of the opportunities provided by the “Arab spring” and other developments.

Some believe strongly there are ways to create an environment more conducive to negotiations. “Many things can be done, small things that have significance,” said one Israeli participant who mentioned for example, the very positive impact of providing a round table at the P5+1 meeting so that “everyone was equal.” This person said “it is not so expensive to give them a bit of dignity, given the way they have been treated over the past 200 years by world powers, the West, and czarist Russia.” This person does not believe negotiations will be “shotgun negotiations” where one side puts a gun to the temple of one and the other side gives up. He said Israel has some experience in the way it conducted itself with Egypt and Jordan, for example, where had to be a “massive effort of ‘dignification,’ creating the atmospherics of equality. There are many things we could do.”

Someone said the 50 days are also very important for diplomacy, and that perhaps some “Ronald Reagan arms control concessions without an agreement” might be important – for example, regarding airplane parts. “Just do it,” said one participant. Someone said, the “last real hope for diplomacy is later this year.” Someone else said, “Remember, Nixon went to China, not vice versa.”

Someone said that there have been some very private and ongoing discussions between the Iranians and Americans, though he said he doesn’t know if this is any reason for “tremendous hope.”

One participant warned very clearly against trying to tie the concept of a successful solution too much to details about levels of enrichment, rather than securing a policy change (for example, he said, changing Iran’s policy to erase Israel from the face of the Earth). Are they or are they not willing to forgo a military nuclear option? He said, there will always be some possibility of other developments such as a protogenic solution to manufacture a bomb, via lasers, plutonium, etc. that can create further difficulties, so that even if negotiations succeed, it will be a Pyrrhic victory (“Saddam tried three ways,” this participant said). “The concept,” he said, “is to reach a different platform.” He said examples of such breakthroughs exist, and that Israel has been involved in some of them. Another participant agreed that maybe we should “change the whole equation” and saying something much more simple and understandable and firm to Israel is worth considering, but this would only be possible if the US were on board, or willing to deal unilaterally with Iran in this way. Others

question whether there is a leader in Iran today capable of making such bold moves today.

Others point out that such thinking moves from the limitations of the technical aspect of discussions to intentions, which is something quite different than negotiations. If you do not believe, for example, the fatwa is a clear declaration of intent, it is difficult or impossible to reach agreement on intentions.

One person suggested the agenda should be enlarged to include not only the nuclear issue but all interests. He warned, "Time is short. Short time sharpens the brain." The Iran experience has shown, he said that "when the knife is at the neck, then thinking capacity increases leaps and bounds. One thinks clearer the sharper the knife." From this line of thinking, the idea is to leave the issue of enrichment and "go to the jugular." Make it clear that if negotiations fail, there is nothing after the negotiations, "each to their own fate." He likened it to the Iranian bazaar mentality, that if are trying to buy a carpet in the bazaar, you haggle and leave the shop, go three paces away, and the vender comes back with a better deal. The process doesn't end until you are at the end of the street and no longer in sight. Then he realizes he is left with the carpet. He will go after you and around the corner. It is a battle of nerves. In the current battle of nerves, he said, the major concession on their side in return for nuclear capability would be tacit acceptance of Israel as part of the international community. "Less than that, minor tactics will get nowhere." Iran will accept anything, except self-destruction. Another participant said he liked this metaphor of going around the corner, but he doubted anyone would give up a carpet when a gun is in the hand of the customer in his shop. The issue is, how are we prepared to pay for the carpet? Do we collectively act as if we don't care, or say in the shop you don't have any idea of what price you are willing to pay for it?

Conclusion

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, participants were reminded of the unpredictability of some events. "We have no red telephone with Iran," one Israeli participant noted.

Another participant noted that he is not sure that Iran wants war or that Israel wants to strike, but wars sometimes begin without anyone wanting them. "Misinterpretation, mistrust may lead to mistakes." The lack of communication with Iran has been made worse in recent years because, perhaps with the exception of Pugwash, the Iranians don't go. Some countries like Russia could play a role in bringing such people together (a planned PIR conference in October was mentioned as at least one positive development in this regard).

One participant warned, "We could say it is too late." Some say this all the time. "Maybe after 50 days it will be too late. Maybe after Armageddon." But it is dangerous to say it is too late. "Until a shot is fired, it is never too late. Don't forget it. One doesn't have to be Chamberlain or a peacenik to do it. Many things can be done."

It was noted that the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs has throughout its history been opposed to the possession of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction by any state, and seeks the peaceful resolution of conflict, especially in areas such as the Middle East where nuclear risks are present. Participants in this meeting discussed the risks involved with nuclear weapons, including the possibility of accidents and miscalculations no matter how strong the measures in place to guard against such problems. In fact, the US has one of the worst records in this regard, though more education needs to be done on such risks as not even all the participants in our meeting were aware of some of the most egregious recent examples. The current debate in the Middle East, according to one participant, in a sense shows the uselessness of

nuclear weapons, as they are neither helpful in stopping nuclear proliferation or the threat of nuclear proliferation, nor are they relevant tools in addressing the most pressing issues facing the region. The unwillingness to enter into an all-out deterrent relationship with a neighbor shows the limitations of nuclear weapons as a tool for stability. There is a hope that out of this current morass, discussions can begin in whatever forum to lay the groundwork for a regional security system that does not rely on the presence of any nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, though this was unfortunately not yet a consensus position.

Finally, one participant mentioned a historical note, about the role Pugwash has played in the past during a time of great tension in the region. In 1967 the Soviet Union dropped diplomatic relations with Israel. A few years later it became apparent to both sides, especially the Soviet Union that it was important not to sever relations totally. The opportunity was taken at a Pugwash meeting for an approach to be made to Shalheveth Freier, the former chair of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission to see if it might be possible to set up a discreet channel between Israel and the Soviet Union. A channel was created in 1972 and survived the Yom Kippur War and one of the Pugwashites in this meeting, Efraim Halevy, was directly involved in this effort. This channel continued until diplomatic relations were re-established. This bit of history was provided as an example of the types of creative, innovative and responsible sorts of actions that can be done in times of tension, including by those with a deep sense of responsibility to Israel and its welfare.

All participants agreed that they hope we might have an opportunity to discuss these issues in the future with more optimism than was possible at the time of our meeting.

APPENDIX A: FINAL PARTICIPANT LIST

Mr. Yossi Alpher, Independent Writer/Consultant and Director, The Political Security Domain [formerly: Director, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University; Co-editor, bitterlemons.org, an Israeli-Palestinian internet-based dialogue project]

Dr. Ephraim Asculai, Senior Research Associate, The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), Tel Aviv, Israel

Dr. Eitan Barak, Lecturer, The Department of International Relations, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel; Adjunct Lecturer, The Faculty of Law, Tel-Aviv University

Prof. Amazia Baram, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Middle East History, and Director of the Center for Iraq Studies at the University of Haifa; former Fellow at: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, U.S. Institute of Peace, the Washington Institute, and the Brookings Institution

Amb. Sergey Batsanov, Director, Geneva Office, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs; Member, Pugwash Council; Member, International Advisory Board, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) [formerly: Director, Special Projects, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), The Hague, The Netherlands; Director for External Relations, OPCW Preparatory Commission (1993-97); Representative of the USSR/Russian Federation to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva (1989-93)]

Prof. Avishay Braverman, Labor Party MK, formerly: Minister of Minorities (2009-2011), Senior Economist, The World Bank, and President of Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

Mrs. Sandra Ionno Butcher, Senior Program Coordinator, International Secretariat, Pugwash Conferences, USA; Director, Pugwash History Project; Honorary Research Associate, Science and Technology Studies Department, University College London [formerly: Joint Executive Secretary, British Pugwash Group; Executive Director, Student Pugwash USA; Interim Research Director and Senior Analyst, British American Security Information Council]

Prof. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino, Secretary-General, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs; Member, Pugwash Executive Committee; Professor of Mathematical Physics, University of Milan, Italy [formerly: Secretary General, Union of Italian Scientists for Disarmament (USPID); Director, Program on Disarmament and International Security, Landau Network – Centro Volta, Como, Italy]

Amb. David Danieli, Deputy Director General (Policy), Israel Atomic Energy Commission [formerly: Ambassador of Israel to India]

Mr. Gottlieb J. Duwan, Iran Watcher, U.S. Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel

Amb. Rolf Ekéus, Chairman Emeritus of the Board, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI); High Commissioner on National Minorities, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (2001-2007); former Ambassador of Sweden to the United States (1997-2000); former Head of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) (1991-1997)

Professor Yair Evron, Professor Emeritus, and Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), Tel-Aviv, **Israel** (formerly :Professor, Head, Department of Political Science; Head, Graduate Program, Security Studies, Tel-Aviv University; Visiting Professor or Research Fellow, Harvard, Cornell, UCLA, Concordia, MIT, Georgetown and Oxford Universities)

Mr. Brandon Friedman, Center for Iranian Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, **Israel**

Mr. Efraim Halevy, former Director of Mossad, Tel Aviv, **Israel**

Mr. Bernard Hourcade, Senior Research Fellow (Emeritus) CNRS, Paris; recently Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC

Ambassador Jeremy Issacharoff, Deputy Director General for Strategic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem; formerly: Deputy Chief of Mission - **Israel** Embassy in Washington DC and Member of UN Secretary General Advisory Board for Disarmament Affairs

Dr. Evgeny A. Kudrov, Head of the Political Section, a.i., Embassy of the **Russian Federation** in the State of Israel

Mr. Cliff Kupchan, Director, The Middle East, Eurasia Group, with work focusing on M.E., Iran and US foreign policy, but especially on Iranian nuclear, foreign, and domestic policies [formerly: Vice President and Senior Fellow, The Nixon Center (during the Clinton Administration); Senior official at the U.S. Department of State; House International Relations Committee (Representative Lee Hamilton)]

Dr. Emily Landau, Director of Arms Control and Regional Security Project, Institute for National Security Studies (formerly The Jaffee Center for Security Studies), Tel Aviv, **Israel**

Prof. Meir Litvak, Head, the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, **Israel**

Dr. Reza Marashi, Research Director, National Iranian American Council, Washington, DC; formerly with Office of Iranian Affairs, **US** Department of State; former Analyst at the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)

Prof. David Menashri, President of the Academic Center for Law and Business, Ramat Gan, **Israel**; Professor Emeritus, Tel Aviv University [formerly: Dean of Special Program and Director, Center for Iranian Studies, Parviz and Poursan Nazarian Chair for Modern Iranian Studies, Tel Aviv University]

Mr. Ras Mok, Non-Proliferation Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, **Israel**

Mr. Uri Neeman, former Head of Research at the Mossad

Hon. Sergei Ryabkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

Amb. Svein Sevre, Norwegian Ambassador to Israel [formerly: Ambassador to Sudan (2008-2010); Special Envoy for the Middle East (2006-2008), Ambassador to Syria and Lebanon (2002-2006), Head of the Middle East Section, MFA, Oslo (1998-2002); Minister-Counsellor in the Embassy in Tel Aviv/Head of the Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority (1994-98). Served in Brasilia, Madrid, New Delhi, Berlin (GDR)]

MK Dr. Nachman Shai (Kadima), Journalist and former IDF spokesman

Mr. Ari Shavit, Journalist, **Israel**

Dr. Efraim Sneh, physician, retired Brigadier General in the Israel Defense Forces, and currently head of the Yisrael Hazaka party (established by him in 2008); former member of the Knesset for the Labor Party (1992-2008) and former Deputy Defense Minister

Mr. Anatoly L. Yurkov, PhD, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of **Russia**

Dr. Aharon Zohar, Consultant on Regional and Environmental Planning; Chair of the Israeli Pugwash Group, Carmei-Yosef, **Israel**

Dr. Motti Zweiling, Academic Center of Law and Business, Ramat Gan, **Israel**

Staff:

Ms. Claudia Vaughn, Program Coordinator, Pugwash Conferences, Rome, Italy