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NEGATIVE BRIEF: Israeli/Palestinian Mediation - good

By Vance Trefethen

**This brief argues against anything that would reduce U.S. mediation in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.**

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY / OPENING QUOTES

U.S. engagement is essential

EDWARD DJEREJIAN 2013. (founding director of Rice University’s Baker Institute and the former United States ambassador to Israel and Syria) 20 Mar 2013 Why US engagement in Israeli-Palestinian peace is needed <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Why-US-engagement-in-Israeli-Palestinian-peace-is-needed-307169>

Strong and sustained US engagement with the president’s full backing would be essential to advance a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace.

U.S. advocacy for a solution is critical now: We have to act before the vision fades away forever

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

Without a resolution to the conflict in the near term, the material and political costs of implementing a future comprehensive agreement will be significantly higher, perhaps impossibly so. American policy advocating for a two-state solution requires the engagement of American leaders to move decisively toward a vision of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security before that vision fades away forever.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

U.S. mediation has worked successfully in the past: Yom Kippur War (1973) and Camp David (1978)

Dr. Yoav J. Tenembbau 2011. (PhD in modern history from the University of Oxford, a master's degree in international relations from Cambridge University;  lectures at the Diplomacy Programme, University of Tel Aviv. ) June 2011, The Perils in U.S. Mediation of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: What History Has Taught Us <http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2011/0104/oped/op_tenembaumperils.html>

The U. S. has successfully played the role of mediator in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's Shuttle Diplomacy brought about three interim agreements, two between Israel and Egypt and one between Israel and Syria. Kissinger, indeed the U. S. president, did not attempt to delineate the terms of an accord to the sides concerned, but rather to mediate between them to attain it. The same applies to President Jimmy Carter, who in September of 1978, at the Camp David Summit, played the role of mediator between Egypt and Israel. The Camp David framework agreement for peace, which laid the basis for the Egypt-Israel peace agreement, was a corollary of that diplomatic effort. Again, Carter did not present a blueprint for peace or specific terms for an agreement, but helped bring it about by actively mediating between the Egyptians and Israelis.

Even if “mediation” fails, the U.S. still has important roles to play: Manage the conflict and prevent another regional crisis

Uzi Rabi 2014. (Director of Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies.) 14 Apr 2014 Conflict Management, Not Resolution: America's Role in Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/uzi-rabi/conflict-management-israel-palestine_b_5147173.html>

The writing on the wall points to another breakdown between the Israelis and Palestinians before final status issues are discussed. On the one hand, the Obama administration still believes the U.S. can exert a strong influence on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Secretary of State Kerry has personally invested a great deal of time, effort, and prestige in the current process and does not want to see it end in failure. On the other hand, his energetic mediation has run aground on the hard realities of domestic politics in Israel and the Palestinian territories and a century of conflict between the parties, to say nothing of deep mistrust and mutual recrimination. Therefore, the American position may be shifting from resolving the conflict to simply managing it, where the priority is finding an interim method for avoiding another regional crisis. Despite this pessimistic prognosis, in the highly unlikely scenario that the U.S. can successfully induce both sides negotiate seriously, it would be demonstrating to an increasingly skeptical world that it still has a very important role to play in the region, both as a world power and as a constructive force for security and stability in the Middle East.

Even if a comprehensive peace settlement is unattainable, US involvement can still bring practical benefits

Elliott Abrams 2014. (senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at Council on Foreign Relations; former deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the administration of Pres. G. W. Bush; former Assistant Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration ) Jan 2014 The Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: Aiming "Low" or "High" <http://www.cfr.org/israel/israeli-palestinian-negotiations-aiming-low-high/p32136>

While today's political-level peace negotiations can provide an essential umbrella for pragmatic steps, focusing solely on achieving a full final status agreement is too risky. Practical on-the-ground improvements are beneficial in themselves and can improve chances for an eventual negotiated settlement. They will also strengthen the PA and its ability to engage in the compromises any full peace agreement will require. Supporting the construction of a Palestinian state from the ground up, strengthening Palestinian institutions, and seeking pragmatic Israeli-Palestinian cooperation should be the center of U.S. policy now, not the handmaiden to a policy aimed at a comprehensive but currently unattainable final peace agreement.

Having a peace process in place is better than no process because it calms the violence

**Analysis: The peace process doesn’t have to “solve” for comprehensive peace, it just has to be up and running to be better than no process at all.**

Ambassador Uri Savir 2014. (former member of the Israeli Negotiations Delegation with Jordan and as head of the Negotiation Delegation with Syria. ) 23 Nov 2014 “EU, US discuss options for renewing Mideast talks” <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/peace-process-rescue-plan-european-union-state-department.html#>

Netanyahu continues to stick to his three no's: no border, no settlement freeze, no negotiations. He made this clear to the new EU High Commissioner on Foreign and Security Affairs [Federica Mogherini](http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Events/Pages/eventEU071114.aspx" \t "_blank) at their Nov. 7 meeting in Jerusalem. Diplomatic sources in Brussels tell Al-Monitor that British and French foreign ministries discussed recently with the State Department a more solid rescue operation for the current situation. Europe is worried about an Islamic emotional outburst on the issue of Jerusalem, and in the view of the European leaders, only a renewal of the peace process can stop the ongoing process of spiraling violence.

U.S. leadership can turn around the struggling peace process

*Daniel Kurtzer 2014. ( former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and to Israel; professor of Middle East policy studies at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs)30 June 2014* The U.S. must inject life into a moribund peace process <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israel-peace-conference/1.601474>

It is not too late to turn this pause in peacemaking into a push forward. If the United States acts forthrightly, with determination and creativity, it will not only put an end to the proliferation of bad ideas, but more importantly it will inject life into a moribund peace process. Strong and determined American leadership can help prevent the situation on the ground from worsening over time, and can create a substantive beacon to which the parties can head when they decide to sit down and negotiate. The time for the United States to act is now.

Sustained engagement is the policy that could lead to the best outcome for all parties, including the U.S.

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

This report supports the third option: a proactive, cogent, and comprehensive U.S. strategy based on close and sustained engagement with both parties to restart negotiations with a defined framework of conflict resolution. This is the riskiest option for the United States in the short term, due to the high level of diplomatic energy and resources required, but it is also the strategic option that could lead to the best outcome for all parties, including the United States. American re-engagement in the Israeli Palestinian conflict would need to be designed to positively reshape the conditions on the ground, implement and build on successes in negotiation, and engage a large number of players invested in and committed to a just, comprehensive, and durable Palestinian Israeli peace on the basis of the two-state solution.

U.S. engagement is the only policy that can bring stability to the Israeli-Palestinian situation

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority also have an interest in involving key regional states—including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, other Arab Gulf states, and Turkey—in U.S.-coordinated peace negotiations, stability operations, and oversight based on the commitment of these regional powers to support the PA in its state-building efforts. The result of the most recent conflict in Gaza and ensuing cease-fire negotiations demonstrated that there is an increased Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian interest in maintaining stability. U.S. engagement promoting Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations can further contribute to this stability. This study argues that proactive U.S. engagement is the only policy option that has the potential of creating a realistic policy trajectory of peace and stability building in the Middle East and re-establishing U.S. leadership in the region.

U.S. engagement is key to reversing the lack of trust and stalemated peace negotiations

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

Prevailing wisdom offers bleak prospects for renewed negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Political uncertainty, unilateral actions, and a general lack of trust have immobilized policymakers in both governments. However, the most important factor for reversing the current stalemated state of peace negotiations is serious American engagement in the issue.

INHERENCY

Obama has withdrawn from mediating the peace process. We won’t get back involved unless it would be productive

Pete Kasperowicz 2014. (journalist) 3 Nov 2014 Obama Administration Gives Up on Israel, Palestine Peace Process for Now <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/11/03/obama-administration-gives-up-on-israel-palestine-peace-process-for-now/> (brackets added)

“There are no current plans to introduce a peace plan,” [State Department spokesman Jen] Psaki said on behalf of the Obama administration. Psaki said the U.S. is still talking to both parties, but said it won’t make an effort to lead them until they show more willingness. “It’s up to the parties to take steps,” she added. “We know what the issues are, we know what the conditions would be, but it’s up to them, so we’re only going to take steps that we think would be productive.” Psaki also indicated the U.S. would not try to force the two sides together if they can’t make some progress on their own.

Obama has quit focusing on Israeli-Palestinian issues, it’s unlikely he will start any new initiatives

Ambassador Uri Savir 2014. (former member of the Israeli Negotiations Delegation with Jordan and as head of the Negotiation Delegation with Syria. ) 23 Nov 2014 “EU, US discuss options for renewing Mideast talks” <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/peace-process-rescue-plan-european-union-state-department.html#>

The chances of a second Kerry mission are very slim. The foreign policy orientation emanating from the White House these days focuses primarily on economic deals with China and Asia, and on the struggle against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. President Barack Obama's opinion of [Netanyahu](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/israel-war-syria-lebanon-hezbollah-netanyahu-obama.html" \t "_blank) is well known and it is unlikely that he will embark on a policy initiative that depends on the Israeli prime minister for it to succeed.

Status Quo is transitioning away from U.S. mediation: Europe and the UN are replacing us

Grant Rumley 2014. (*research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies*) 18 Dec 2014 BUSINESS INSIDER, The Palestinians Are Mounting An Audacious Bid To Transform The Terms Of The Peace Process <http://www.businessinsider.com/an-audacious-bid-to-transform-the-peace-process-2014-12?IR=T>

Now, after the failure of John Kerry’s 9-month round of negotiations and a devastating war in Gaza that helped shift world opinion against Israel, the Palestinians have fully committed to their campaign to fundamentally change the dynamics of the peace process. As one senior Fatah official professed [candidly](http://www.pal24.net/ViewNews.aspx?ID=40939" \t "_blank): “We are looking to replace the US as mediator with the UN.” This transition may already be taking place. The US is buckling under the weight of its many failed Middle East policies and the Europeans appear content to fill the void. On Wednesday, the EU parliament voted 498 to 88 in favor of a resolution recognizing Palestinian statehood and the two-state solution, [affirming](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/12/17/Palestinians-agree-merged-U-N-text-with-France.html" \t "_blank), “these should go hand in hand with the development of peace talks, which should be advanced.”

MINOR REPAIRS

Increase aid to Palestinians.

While US mediation does pose risks, we shouldn’t cancel it. Instead, we should reduce the risks by increasing efforts to aid the Palestinian people

Elliott Abrams 2014. (senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at Council on Foreign Relations; former deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the administration of Pres. G. W. Bush; former Assistant Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration ) Jan 2014 The Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: Aiming "Low" or "High" <http://www.cfr.org/israel/israeli-palestinian-negotiations-aiming-low-high/p32136>

The Obama administration is fostering Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at a full and final peace agreement. While the talks last they help calm the regional political situation, but they do nothing to improve Palestinian daily life or help build the institutions of a future Palestinian state. If they fail, as all past efforts have, they may leave behind frustration and bitterness. Even so, negotiations should not be abandoned, but should be buttressed by a simultaneous effort to undertake pragmatic steps that support Palestinian institutions, improve life in the West Bank, and strengthen the Palestinian Authority (PA) against Hamas. While today's political-level peace negotiations can provide an essential umbrella for such steps, focusing solely on achieving a full "final status agreement" is too risky. Practical "on-the-ground" improvements are beneficial in themselves and can improve chances for an eventual negotiated settlement.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Multiple foreign policy problems.

Disengagement (“the James Baker option” – we stop mediating, go home, and tell them to call us when they’re serious about peace) would result in multiple problems in our foreign policy

Dr. Robert Satloff 2014. (PhD; executive director of The Washington Institute, leading a team of Middle East scholars, experts and policy practitioners; holds the Institute's Howard P. Berkowitz Chair in U.S. Middle East Policy) 12 May 2014 Decision Time on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process:U.S. Strategy Hits a Critical Juncture <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/decision-time-on-the-israeli-palestinian-peace-process-u.s.-strategy-hits-a>

In the current situation, there is intense speculation as to Secretary Kerry's next step. On the one hand, he could choose from variations on the "James Baker option": endorse the focus on settlement activity as the principal, though not sole, reason for the breakdown in diplomacy, announce some version of the U.S. ideas sufficient for Israeli-Palestinian agreement, and invite the parties to call him whenever they have the "urgency" (to use Indyk's term) to make the compromises needed for breakthrough. This would have the effect, if not the intent, of heaping the lion's share of blame on Israel and effectively freeing Palestinians from responsibility for their actions (and inaction) in the process. While this type of policy may be alluring to some, it has the seeds of many future policy headaches, such as feeding international condemnation of Israel that the United States would have to work to counteract; feeding Israel's sense of abandonment at a critical moment in the Iran nuclear negotiations; and feeding a potent mix of defiance and irresponsibility among Palestinians that might end with a much worse political configuration in Ramallah.

“Do Nothing” option is bad for US interests in the region

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

The first option is to disengage from the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The “do nothing” approach epitomizes a low-risk, low-reward strategy, and while popular in some foreign policy circles, is not compatible with the many U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security interests in the region.

2. Peace process fails

Link: Israeli/Palestinian peace can’t happen out without 3rd party intervention

EDWARD DJEREJIAN 2013. (founding director of Rice University’s Baker Institute and the former United States ambassador to Israel and Syria) 20 Mar 2013 Why US engagement in Israeli-Palestinian peace is needed <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Why-US-engagement-in-Israeli-Palestinian-peace-is-needed-307169>

Political uncertainty, unilateral actions and a general lack of trust have immobilized policy-makers in both Israel and Palestine. A key factor is whether or not there is the requisite political will, beyond mere rhetoric, to move forward on peace negotiations in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Washington. Although both Israelis and Palestinians recognize that the status quo is untenable, the power imbalance between the parties remains too large for negotiation and agreement without substantial third-party intervention.

Link & Brink: U.S.-led engagement is the only thing that has potential to bring peace & stability

EDWARD DJEREJIAN 2013. (founding director of Rice University’s Baker Institute and the former United States ambassador to Israel and Syria) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

This is a special report by the Conflict Resolution Program of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. It is intended to demonstrate to policymakers, particularly in the United States, Israel, and Palestine that, despite current adverse circumstances, viable and sustainable negotiations can be initiated leading to a two-state solution. A core concept for potential U.S. engagement in peacemaking is clearly defined. This study contends that proactive United States engagement is the only policy option that has the potential of creating a realistic policy trajectory of peace and stability building in the Middle East and re-establishing U.S. leadership in the region.

Link & Brink: U.S. diplomacy is key. U.S. engagement with backing of the President is essential to comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace

EDWARD DJEREJIAN 2013. (founding director of Rice University’s Baker Institute and the former United States ambassador to Israel and Syria) 20 Mar 2013 Why US engagement in Israeli-Palestinian peace is needed <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Why-US-engagement-in-Israeli-Palestinian-peace-is-needed-307169>

In this respect, strong and sustained US engagement with the president’s full backing would be essential to advance a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace, but only through diplomacy that also reshapes the environment on the ground. The goal would be the two-state solution – considered by most observers as the preferred resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – with a democratic Jewish state and an independent and sovereign Palestinian state living in peace and security next to one another. The alternatives are continuing stalemate, occupation and conflict, or a one-state solution where the Jewish population becomes the minority as a result of current demographic trends.

Impact: Thousands die. Israeli/Palestinian conflict has killed over 8000 people in the last 14 years

Max Fisher 2014. (journalist) 14 July 2014 This chart shows every person killed in the Israel-Palestine conflict since 2000 <http://www.vox.com/2014/7/14/5898581/chart-israel-palestine-conflict-deaths>

You'll notice right away that the overwhelming majority of the deaths are Palestinian, and have been for the almost 14 years since B'Tselem began tracking. Overall, the group has recorded 8,166 conflict-related deaths, of which 7,065 are Palestinian and 1,101 Israeli. That means 87 percent of deaths have been Palestinian and only 13 percent Israeli. Put another way, for every 15 people killed in the conflict, 13 are Palestinian and two are Israeli.

3. Hurts Iran nuclear negotiations

Link & Brink: US engagement on Israel/Palestine negotiations is key to success for addressing Iranian nuclear issues

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University 2013. (written by a study group led by Baker Institute fellows Dr. Yair Hirschfeld and Dr. Samih Al-Abid) RE-ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS: WHY AN AMERICAN ROLE IN INITIATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>

Concerning Iran, the U.S. will continue to keep all policy options on the table to pressure Tehran to end its nuclear weapons program. A wide, supportive coalition, U.S. leadership, and robust diplomacy should enable the U.S. to negotiate a more comprehensive long term strategy for improved relations, while preventing Iran from obtaining a military nuclear capacity. The Iranian leadership will attempt to exploit the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to divide the more moderate, anti-nuclear weapon camp within Iran. A long term U.S. strategy, including engagement in comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace and stability building, will facilitate the necessary international and regional engagement addressing the Iranian issue.

Link: Successful US/Iran negotiations are essential to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons

Anthony Cordesman, Bryan Gold and Chloe Coughlin-Schulte 2014. (Cordesman - Chair in Strategy at the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_Strategic_and_International_Studies);  served as national security assistant to Senator [John McCain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McCain) of the [Senate Armed Services Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_Armed_Services_Committee) and as civilian assistant to the [Deputy Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deputy_Secretary_of_Defense).; former director of intelligence assessment in the [Office of the Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_the_Secretary_of_Defense). Gold - Research Intern, Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Coughlin-Schulte -  Intern at [Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)](http://www.linkedin.com/company/csis?trk=ppro_cprof).) “Iran – Sanctions, Energy, Arms Control, and Regime Change“ Jan 2014 <http://csis.org/files/publication/140122_Cordesman_IranSanctions_Web.pdf>

However, Iran cannot develop a credible nuclear force under the terms of the interim agreement or any full agreement with the same constraints. As long as Iran faces the agreed inspection and controls on enrichment, it cannot act in ways that will prevent Israel from at least having mutual assured destruction capability and the US from deploying an effective form of extended deterrence. Iran cannot be sure that Saudi Arabia cannot match or exceed its rate of nuclear deployment. In broad terms, Iran can only “win” the kind of nuclear arms race it needs if other states do not react, and it cannot hope to violate any meaningful nuclear agreement with the P5+1 in trying to create such a force in ways that will not provide ample warning.   
Implications for US Policy  
The end result is that years of careful effort will be needed to determine whether a combination of outside sanctions and negotiations will make fundamental and lasting changes in Iran’s behavior and progress towards developing nuclear weapons. The key questions for both sides will be whether Iran is serious, and whether the US and other states seeking to make lasting changes in Iran’s nuclear programs will provide the right mix of carrots and sticks to change Iran’s behavior on a lasting basis. In summary, the US and other members of the P5+1 must do everything they can to limit Iran’s capability to improve its break out capability and prevent it from getting even one nuclear device.

Link: Iran has every intention of building a nuclear bomb

Dr. James Carafano 2011. (PhD ; Heritage Foundation’s Vice President, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, E. W. Richardson Fellow, and Director of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies; adjunct professor at Georgetown University and the Institute of World Politics and has served as a visiting professor at National Defense University; previously served as an assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point ) “Nightmare Scenario in the Middle East as Iran Inches Closer to the Bomb” 9 Nov 2011 <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2011/11/nightmare-scenario-in-the-middle-east-as-iran-inches-closer-to-the-bomb>

That new report from the International Atomic Energy Agency? No big whoop. All it says is that Iran is trying to build a nuclear weapon. “The information indicates that Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device,” the report concludes. As a result, IAEA, the U.N. “watchdog” responsible for monitoring compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, now “has serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear programme. Welcome to the club, IAEA. The rest of the sentient world has known about Tehran’s “secret” program to build the bomb since 2002.

Link & Impact: Iran nuclear bomb would be a significant threat in the region

Anthony Cordesman, Bryan Gold and Chloe Coughlin-Schulte 2014. (Cordesman - Chair in Strategy at the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_Strategic_and_International_Studies);  served as national security assistant to Senator [John McCain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McCain) of the [Senate Armed Services Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_Armed_Services_Committee) and as civilian assistant to the [Deputy Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deputy_Secretary_of_Defense). He is also a former director of intelligence assessment in the [Office of the Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_the_Secretary_of_Defense). Gold - Research Intern, Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Coughlin-Schulte -  Intern at [Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)](http://www.linkedin.com/company/csis?trk=ppro_cprof).) “Iran – Sanctions, Energy, Arms Control, and Regime Change“ Jan 2014 <http://csis.org/files/publication/140122_Cordesman_IranSanctions_Web.pdf>

In contrast, the real world military balance would change drastically the moment Iran can deploy significant nuclear forces and they are mobile or sheltered enough to limit the risk of a successful preventive first strike. A serious Iranian force that can launch significant numbers of nuclear warheads on warning or the moment Iran is under attack, that the US and Israel cannot credibly deter or destroy, and that will have enough surviving elements to make any form of preemption extremely dangerous is a far more credible threat. The creation of such a force would also correct Iran’s greatest military weaknesses. Iran’s air force is now largely obsolete, as its surface-based air defense system. Its long-range missiles and rockets lack the accuracy and lethality to destroy key point targets and are largely area weapons that may intimate but have little strategic effect. As long as Iran remains so vulnerable to US, Gulf, and Israeli air attack; its growing asymmetric forces have limited real-world value. The US, GCC states, and Israel can escalate with precision strikes in ways that make any Iranian use of asymmetric warfare a high risk effort than may well cost Iran far more than it is worth. This is a key reason why Iran’s nuclear efforts should not be seen as irrational, a matter of prestige, or some form of military eccentricity. They make perfect sense from the viewpoint of a nation that both sees itself as under siege from the US and many of its neighbors and wants to greatly increase its influence in the region. Iran’s nuclear efforts make good sense when seen in terms of its overall military posture. It is also a key reason that the US, P5+1, and other states must be prepared to fully enforce the agreement with Iran and insist on its compliance.

Impact: Shi’ite Apocalypse. Risk of nuclear war with Israel

Dr. Louis Rene Beres 2014. (PhD; professor of Political Science at Purdue University) Iran’s strategic threat to Israel, 8 June 2014 JERUSALEM POST <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Irans-strategic-threat-to-Israel-355702>

When Iranian leaders openly proclaim their belief in the Shi’ite apocalypse, a series of final battles presumed indispensable for transforming the profane “world of war” into the sacred “world of Islam,” essential self-defense becomes a uniquely urgent Israeli concern. Even if such proclamations should turn out to be contrived or inauthentic, a fully rational Iranian nuclear adversary could still pose a very grave threat to Israel. This is because “two scorpions in a bottle” – the original J. Robert Oppenheimer metaphor of nuclear deterrence then obtaining between the US and USSR – are always apt to react precipitously in a world of organized fear and structured uncertainty. There is more to worry about here than “mere” eschatology. A rational Iranian “scorpion” and/or a rational Israeli “scorpion” could calculate that the risks of waiting passively to be struck first would actually exceed the risks of “stinging” first. However unwittingly, such altogether rational calculations could still result in a nuclear war.

“Iran is Rational” - Response: So what? That doesn’t tell us what they will do

Dr. James J. Carafano 2012. (PhD; served as a visiting professor at National Defense University and Georgetown University; served as an assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West PointDeputy Director, The Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies and Director, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies ) “Rational or not, Iran is a real danger” CNN 1 Mar 2012 <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/03/01/rational-or-not-iran-is-a-real-danger/>

During recent congressional hearings, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has been trying to explain why he told CNN's Fareed Zakaria that Iran is a "rational actor." He may be right. So what? It doesn't really help answer the question of what to do about Tehran. If you don't understand what factors an opponent weighs as important benefits and what it considers to be worrisome costs, you can't predict what a rational decision might look like to him. Moreover, if you bank on the enemy being rational - without leaving allowances that the enemy might make mistakes, stupid choices, or be at least partially influenced by emotional fervor - your forecast regarding his next steps may be way off base.