

***Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences, Part 3
Regional and Global Consequences of US Military Action in Iran***

***Potential Targets, Likelihood of Success
and Consequences***

Sam Gardiner, Colonel, USAF (Retired)
Statement to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
November 14, 2007

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I call this a “Net Assessment” because the information you are seeing comes from the internet. Nothing is classified. There is nothing here new to the Iranians.

In December of last year I was invited to a small dinner with the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Ambassador Zarif at the time. I sat directly across the table from him. Using the same kind of information I am giving you, I told him Iran needs to take the US threat of a strike seriously. I told him how the US might attack, and I told him my assessment of consequences. He left with a copy of a paper I had written.*

I was at that dinner for the same reason I am testifying here this afternoon. I believe we are all better served if policymakers of both sides look the beast directly in the eyes.

Sam Gardiner, *The End of the ‘Summer of Diplomacy:’ Assessing the U.S. Military Options on Iran*, The Century Foundation, NY, 2006.

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Let me start with the most serious consequence of a US strike first. Certainly, this loss of life would be terrible. From my war games, however, I would warn you that when this headline appears, the President of the United States will be faced with very few options.

He would have to respond strongly. We could find ourselves deeply involved in a major war in the region.

That is the bottom line of my story, let me start at the beginning.

Objectives of US Military Options

- **Punish Iran for its support of terrorism and attacks on US troops in Iraq.**
- **Set back the Iranian nuclear program 3 to 5 years.**

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Two objectives are most mentioned for the use of military force against Iran.

The first is relative new and now seems dominate the thinking of those who favor military action. It's not about the nuclear program. It's about the other aspect of Iranian behavior.

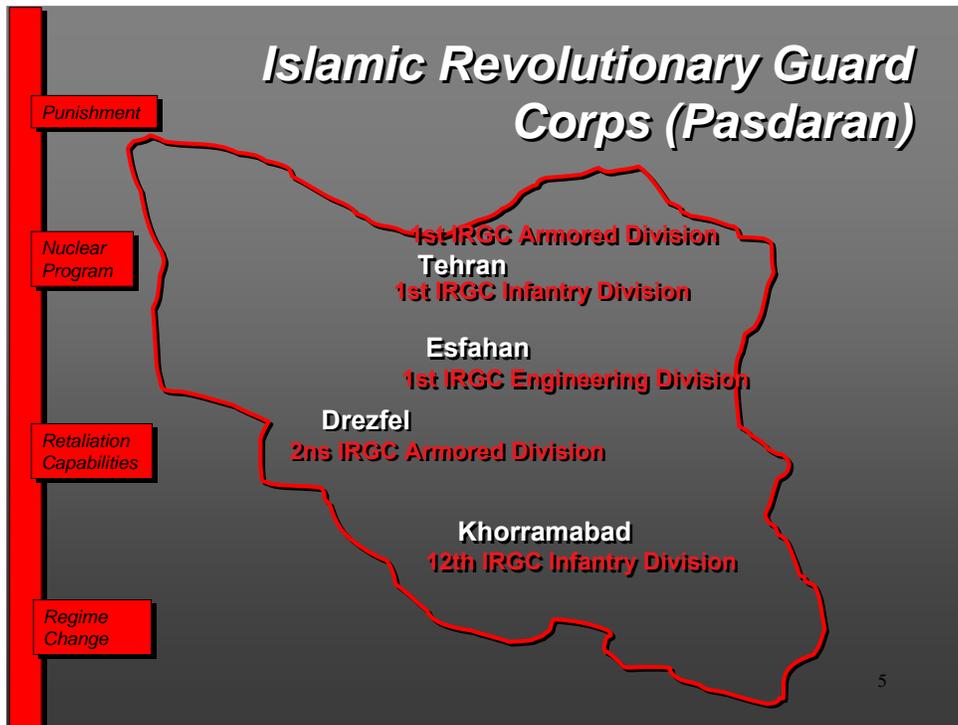
The second focuses on the nuclear program.

Can we achieve either of these objectives, and what would be the consequences?

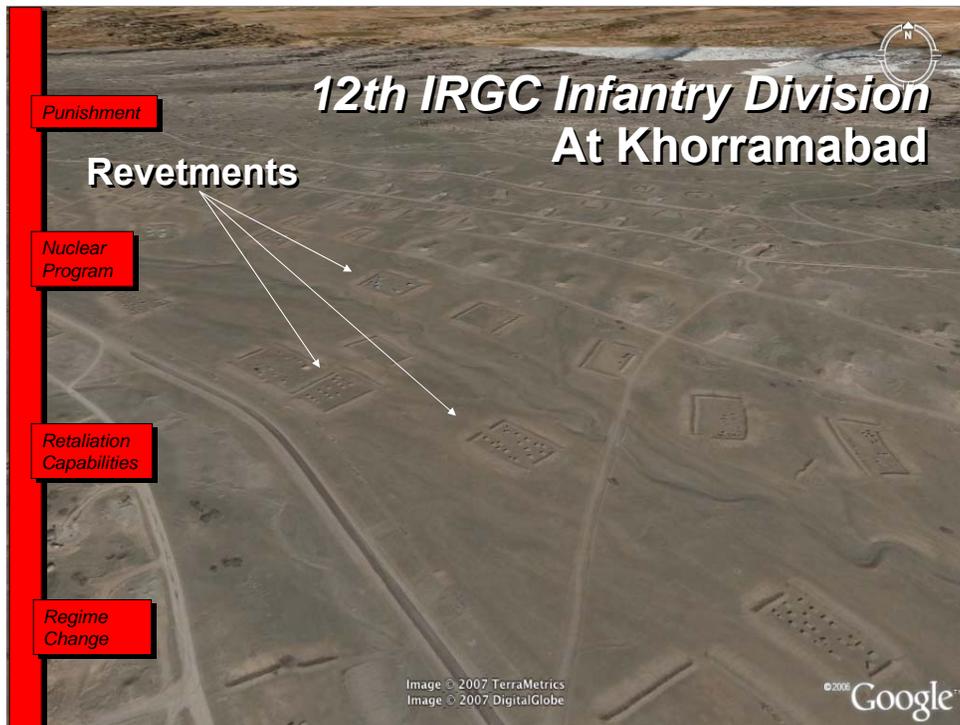
Targets and Likelihood of Success

4

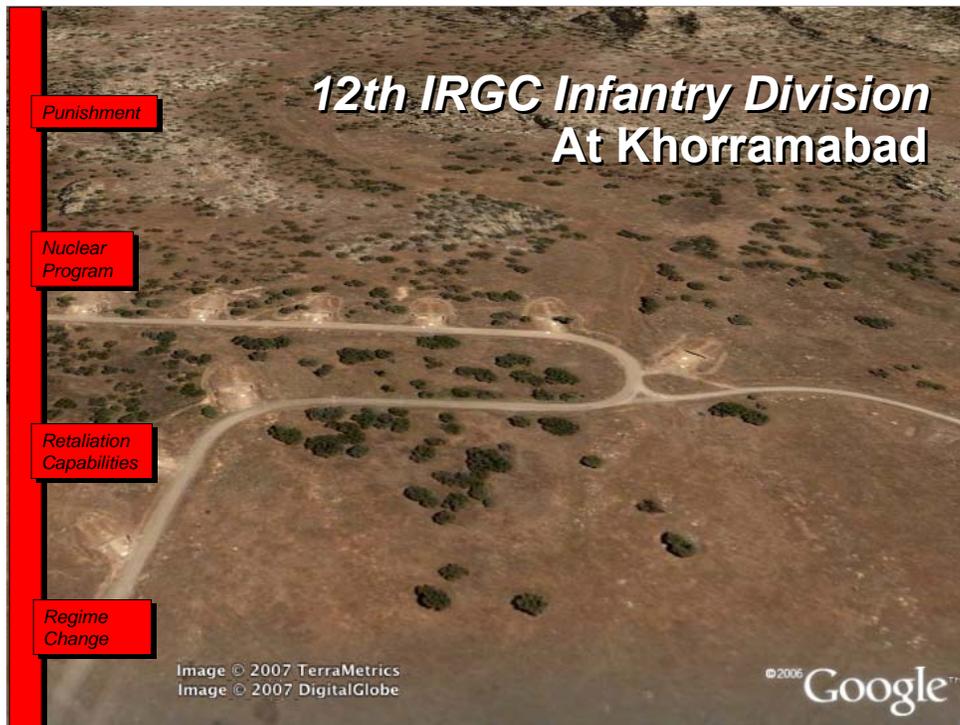
Looking first at targets and likelihood of success...



The five Islamic Revolutionary Guard Divisions are the protectors of the regime. If one wants to punish Iran, these units are very likely targets.

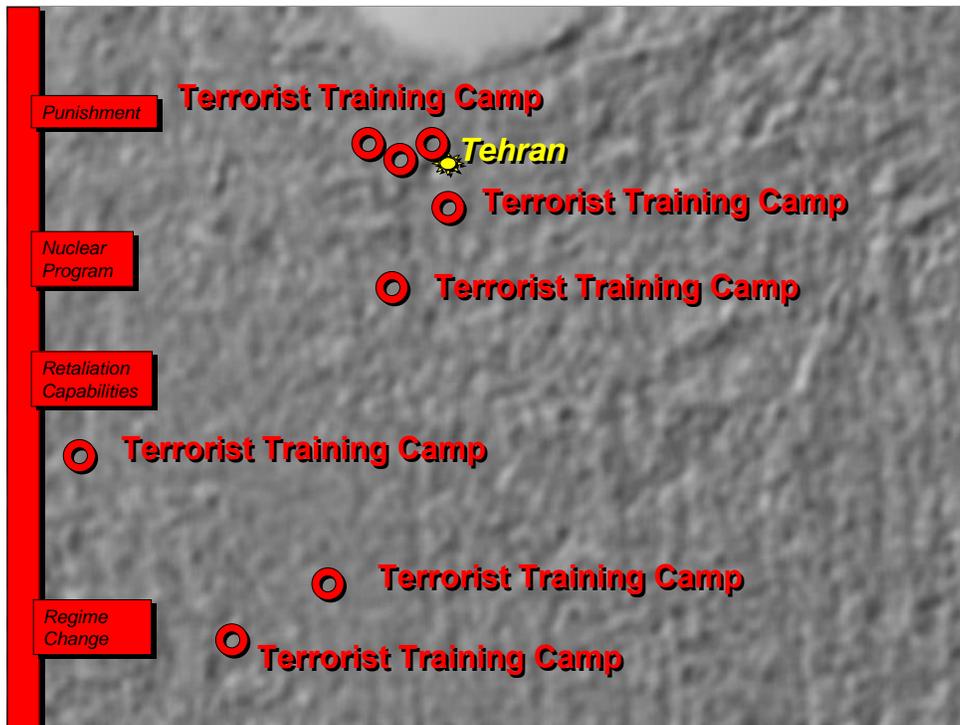


Looking at the IRGC bases, it becomes obvious targeting them is not a simple process. They have prepared for air strikes. Equipment, munitions and facilities are bunkered and in revetments



...and they are widely separated.

The IRGC is probably only behind North Korea in protecting its ground forces against attack.



If Iran is going to be punished for supporting terrorism, terrorist training camps would seem to be logical targets.

The problem with these camps, as with others the United States has attacked, they are low infrastructure and low density. They are not very good targets.

Punishment

Assessment of Punishment

Nuclear Program

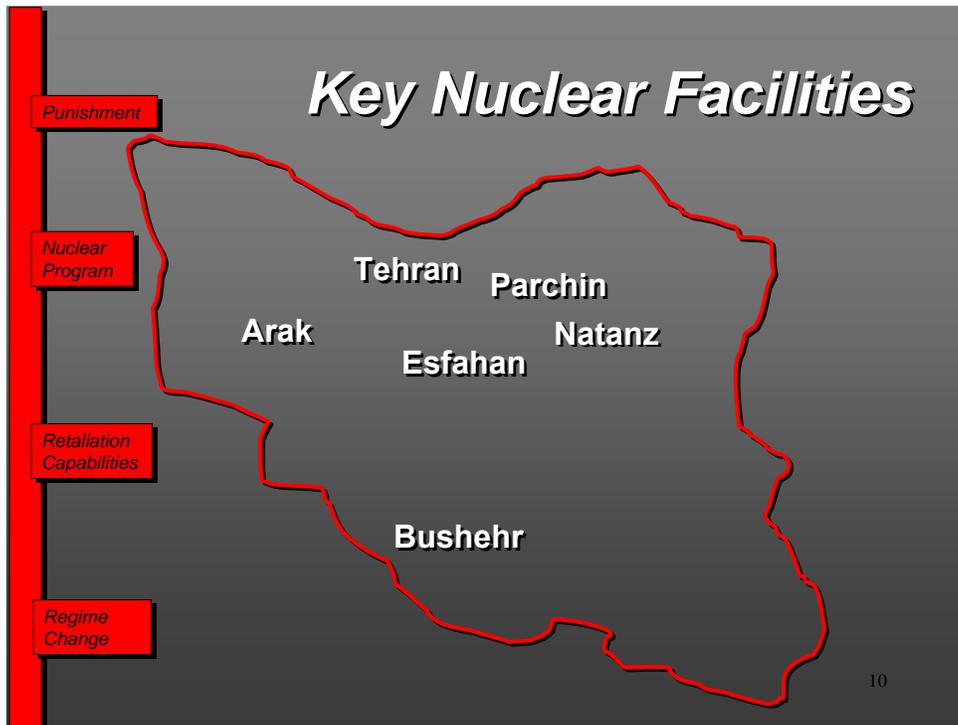
- No serious damage was done to the Revolutionary Guard units.
- Strikes on terrorist training camps did little damage.
- And...Iran did not stop enrichment nor conclude there was a need to change its vision of its role in the region.

Retaliation Capabilities

Regime Change

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If the United States launches punishment attacks against, how well do we do?

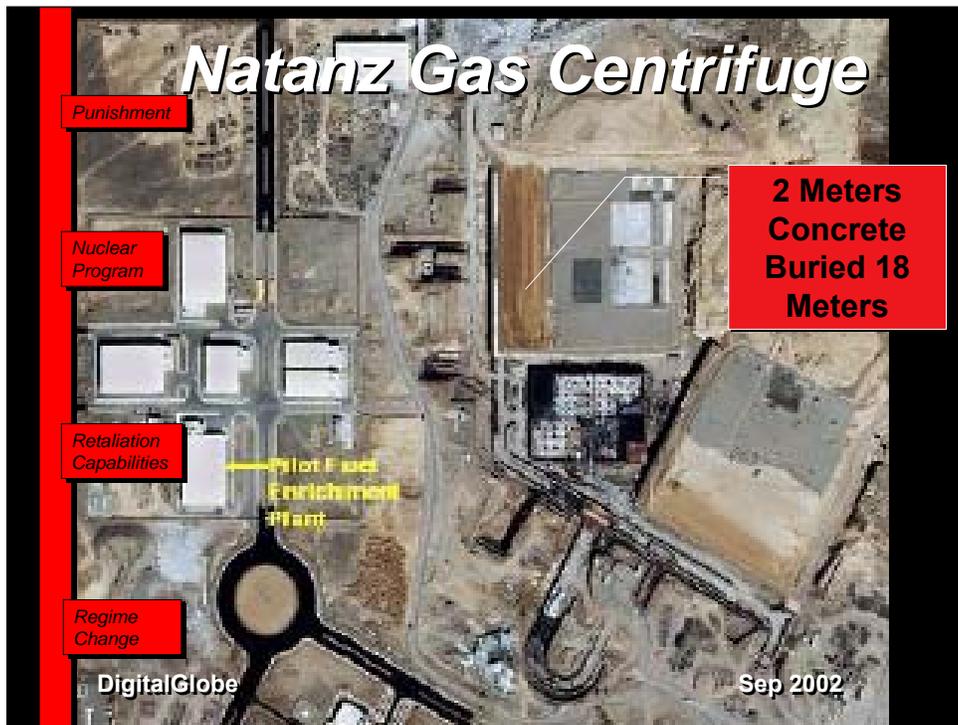


Can we set back the nuclear program?

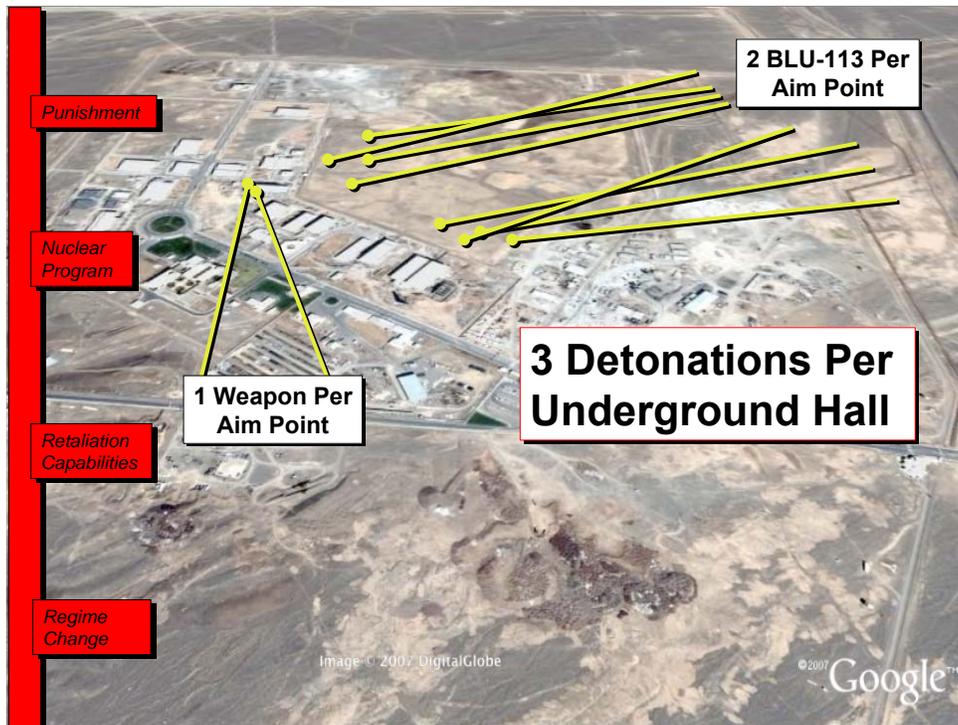
There are six key nuclear facilities that would be considered targets in a strike on the program.



Key to understanding our capability to set back the nuclear program is understanding the capabilities of the primary weapon against deep targets. This is the conventional BLU113.

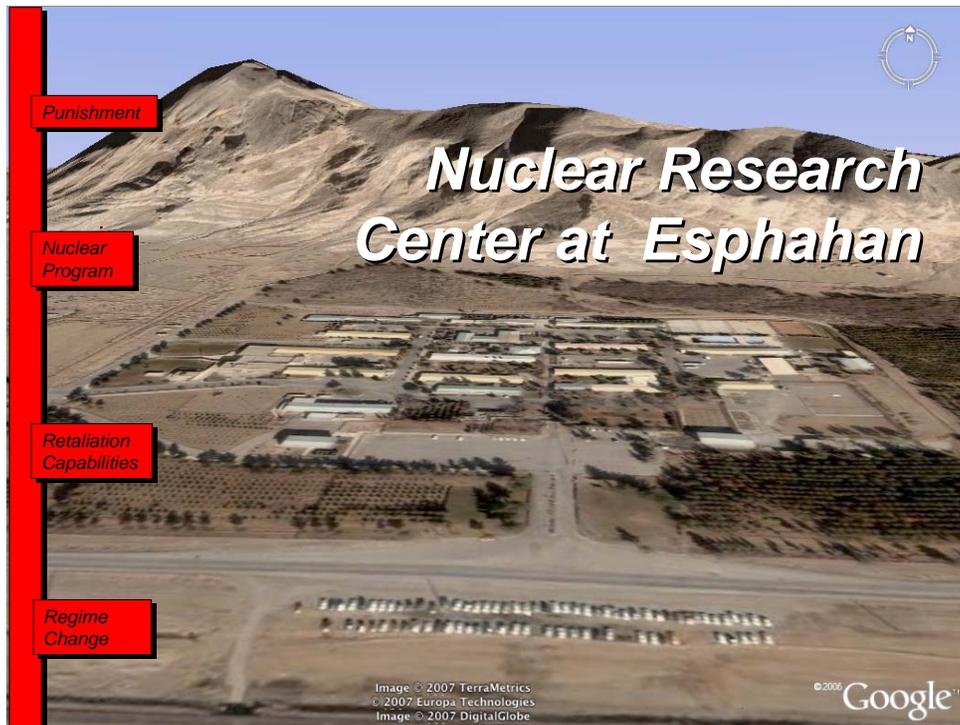


On top of everyone's list of targets is the Natanz Gas Centrifuge Plant. This overhead is from five years ago and shows the two centrifuge halls before they were buried under 2 meters of concrete and 18 meters of soil. That's over 60 feet of protection.

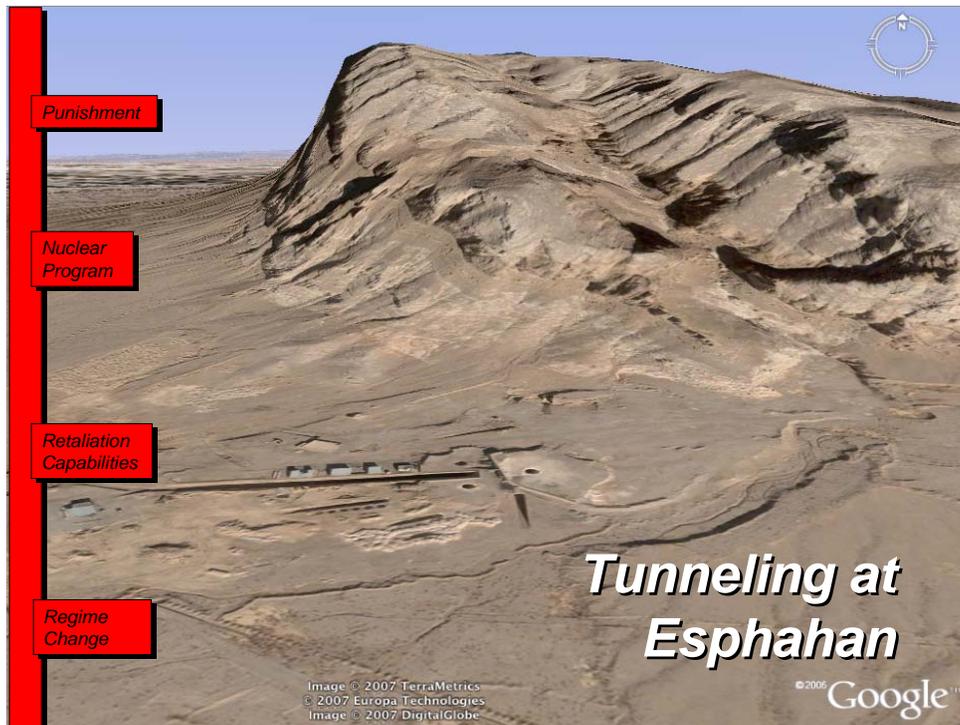


This is the way the facility looks now.

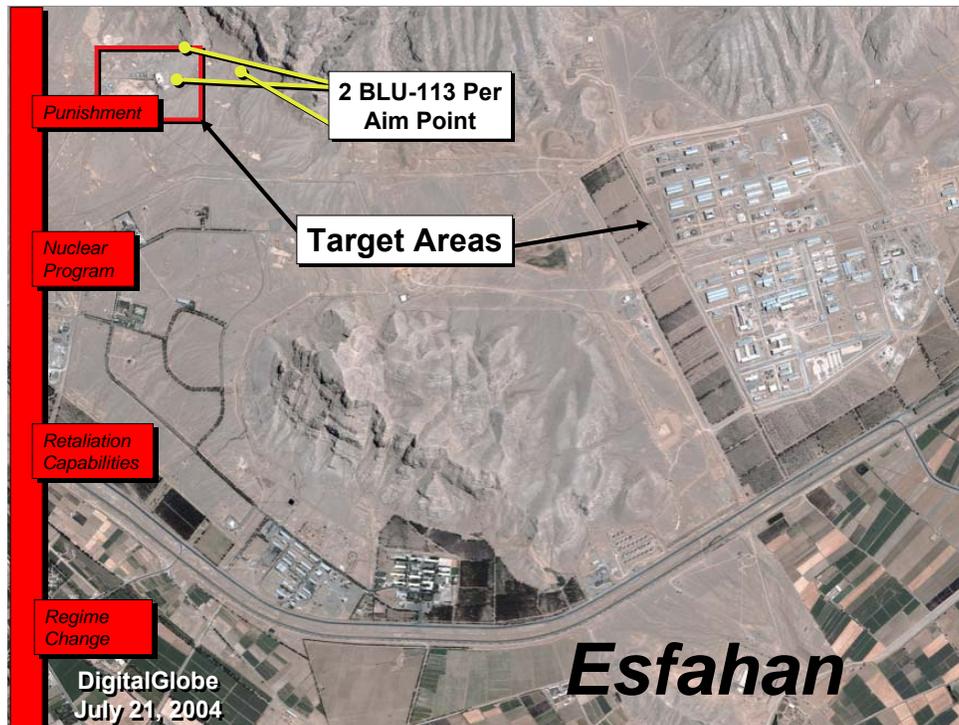
It's a tough target. You can see my estimate of the number of attacks it would take to be 80% confident of destroying the two halls. Each aim point would require two weapons, the second following into the crater of the first.



The second most important target is the Nuclear Research Center at Esphahan.

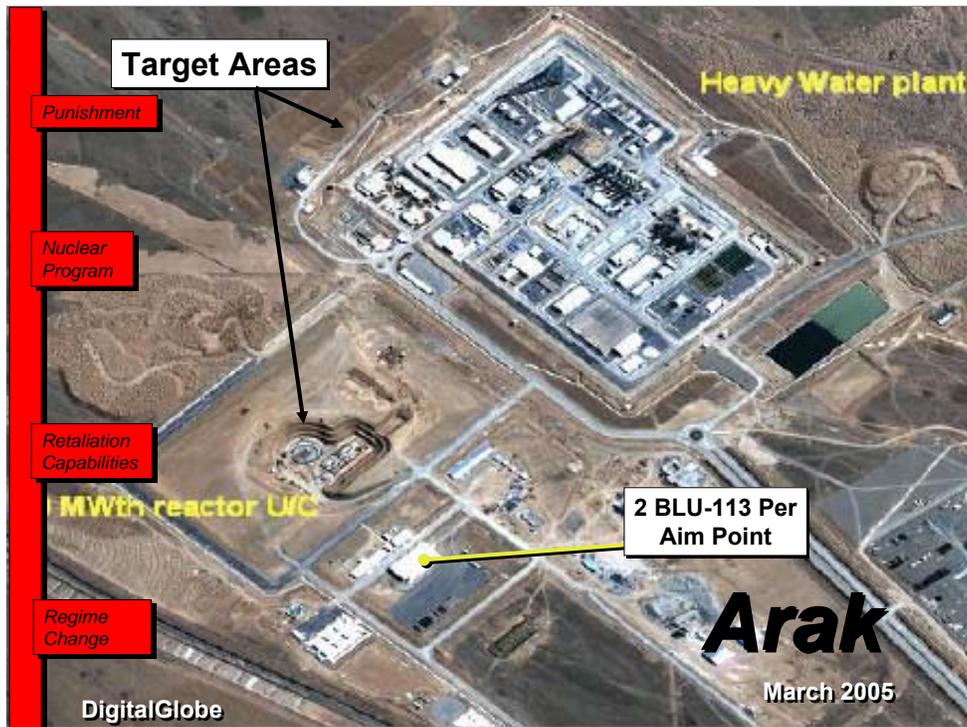


We have seen tunneling at Esphahan, an alternative to the dig-and-fill method first used at Natanz. Probably supported with North Korean equipment, we see more and more tunneling. The targets become more and more difficult.

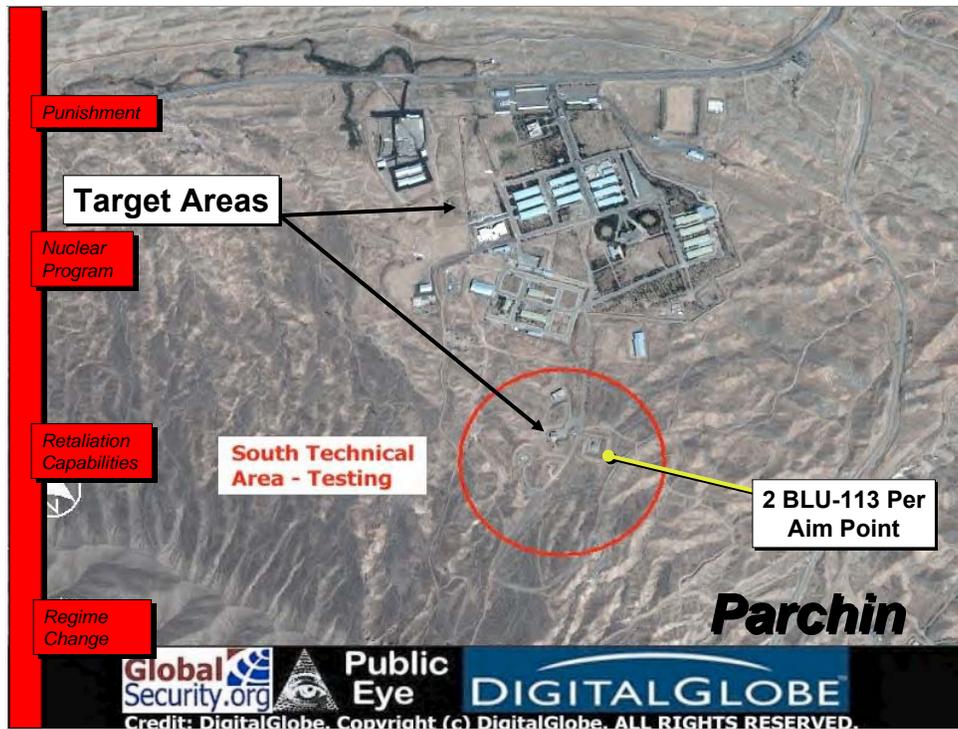


Here is the kind of attack that would be required at Esphahan.

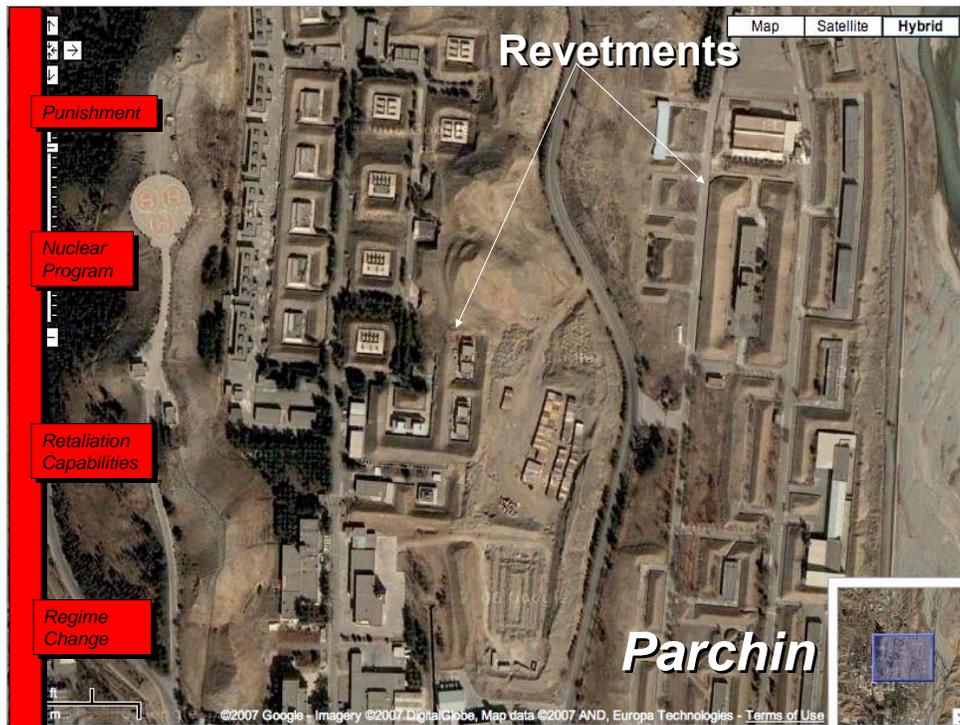
We can close the tunnel entrance, but if we do not know which direction it goes into the mountain, it becomes extremely difficult to destroy what's inside. This is where nuclear weapons might come into targeting, but that is another story.



The heavy water plant at Arak would be on the target list. There is evidence of tunneling here also.

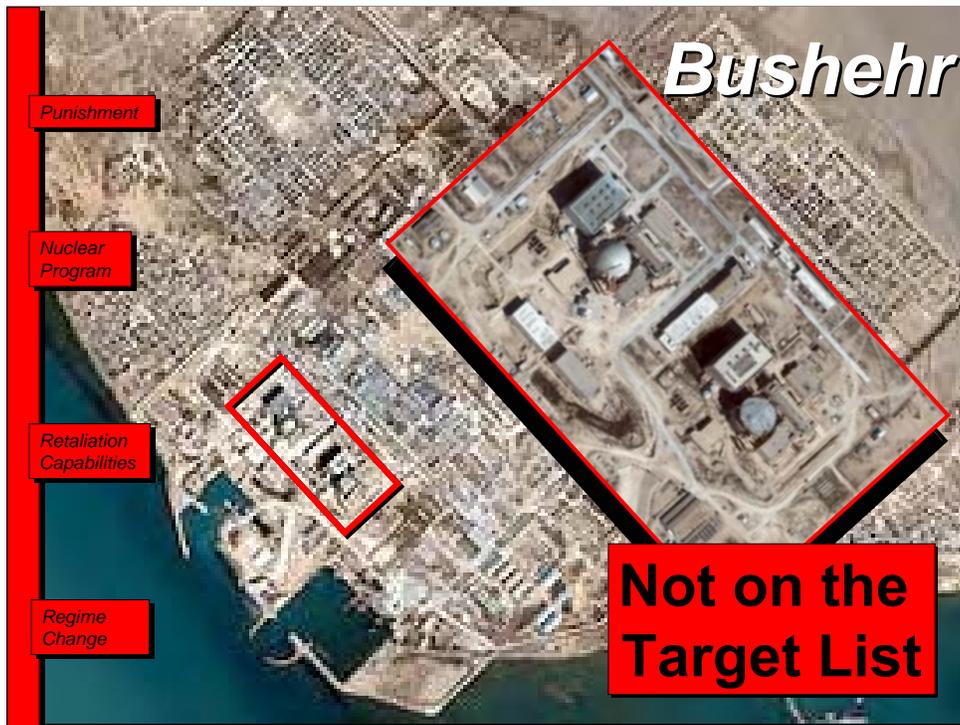


Finally, the weapons and missile test facility at Parchin would be on the list. Again, we have seen more tunneling.



Actually, an interesting footnote is that the facilities in Parchin are better protected than any of the facilities around the other nuclear sites. Here you see buildings and facilities inside heavy revetments.

I suspect some of this hardening is due to the chemical weapons program; I will come to that later.



The long-delayed, Russian-built power plant at Bushehr would most likely not be on the target list. It's not key to the nuclear program. No reason to kill Russians.

Assessment of the Strike on Nuclear Facilities

Punishment

Nuclear
Program

- Three to five years of construction was destroyed
- The effect on the nuclear program is unknown:
 - Could set it back
 - Could cause acceleration

Retaliation
Capabilities

Regime
Change

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Because we know how long the facilities took to construct, we can be fairly specific about how much facility damage we could do.

We are far from certain, however, about the impact on the nuclear program.

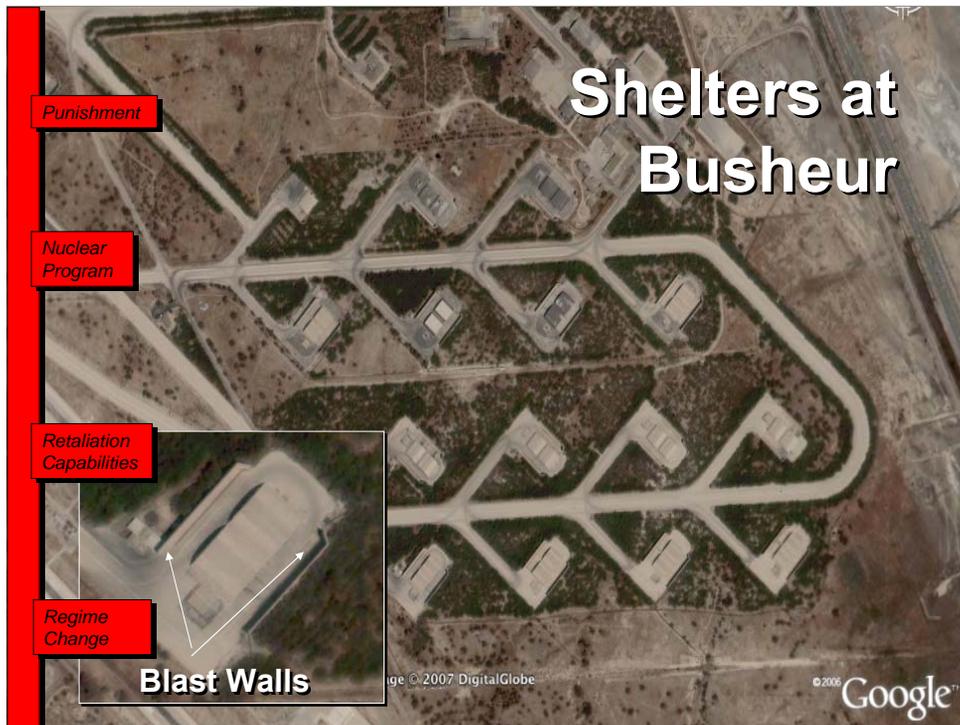
As a teacher of strategy, I would always urge caution when a military option has such uncertainty.



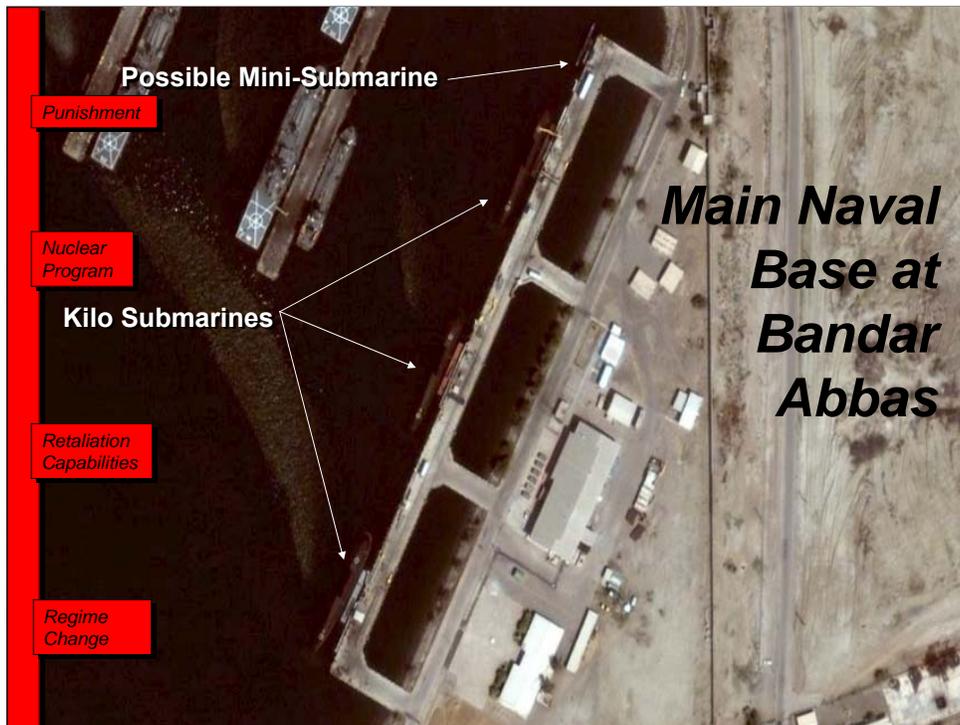
Israel argues that if you meet a bear in the woods, you should not just aim to wound it.

A strong military argument can be made (and will be made) that if we are going to strike Iran we must also strike its capability to retaliate. It would be foolish to do otherwise the argument will go.

Iran has a limited air force capability, it should be attacked.

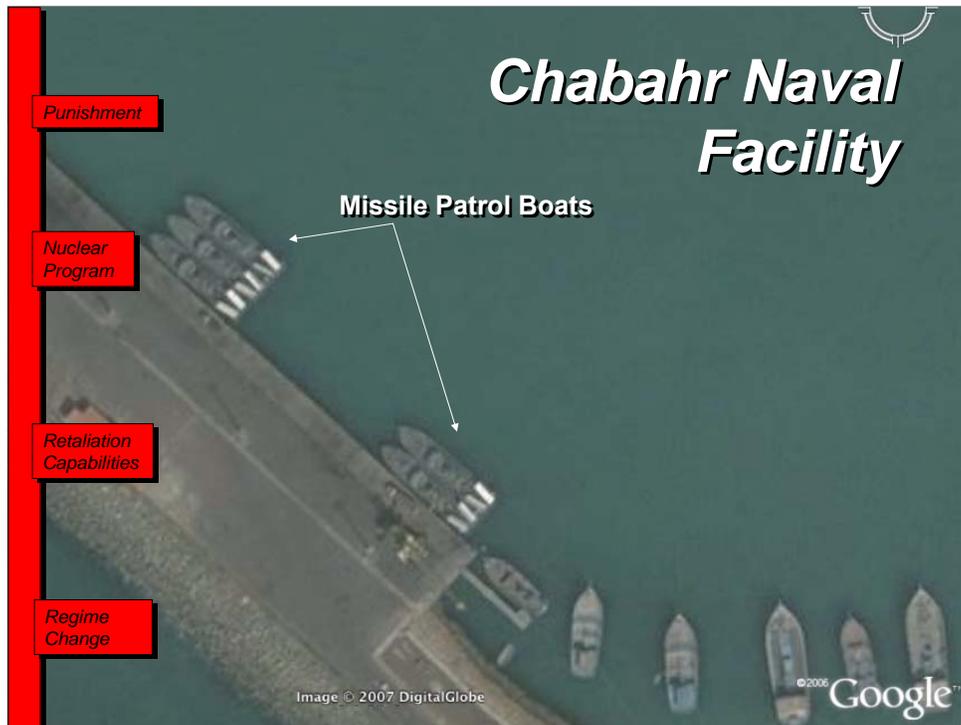


Like the Revolutionary Guard, the aircraft are sheltered against air attack.

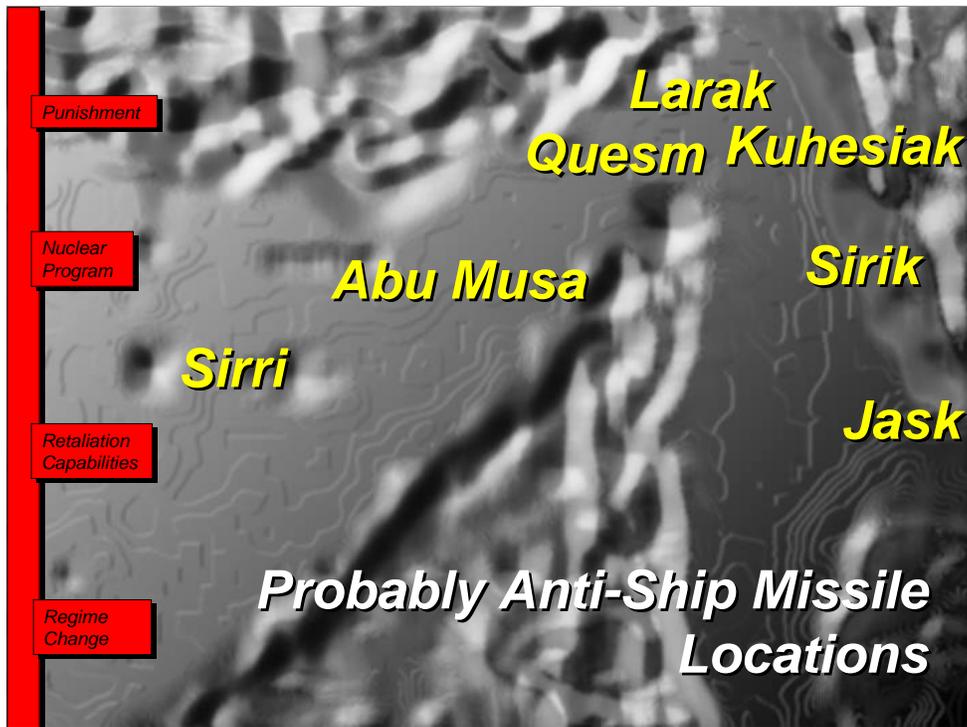


On the list of retaliatory capabilities to be destroyed would be the limited naval assets.

You see here the three Russian supplied Kilo submarines and possible a mini-sub of Iranian construction. They would be hit.



The missile patrol boats would be struck.



It would be important to destroy as many as possible of the anti-ship missiles the Iranians have along the Gulf.



Iran has the older Silkworm missiles as well as the more modern C-805, the type used by Hezbollah against an Israeli ship.



The missiles are bunkered for storage. When they are moved from storage, they go into firing positions in revetments.



Certainly we would want to strike the medium range Shaab-3 missiles. Some press reports indicate a portion of the missiles are deployed into the same general firing location the Iranians used during the war with Iraq.

Mobile missile are a difficult target.

At the end of the presentation, I'll come back to the missile threat.

Assessment of the Strike on Retaliation Capabilities

Punishment

Nuclear
Program

Retaliation
Capabilities

Regime
Change

- Iranian combat aircraft were mostly destroyed
- Large naval vessels destroyed
- Capabilities remaining:
 - Small boats
 - Terrorists
 - Chemical capabilities
 - Some missiles

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How well did we do?*

*For additional arguments on preemption: Sam Gardiner, "Et Maintenant en Avant: Preemption and the Planning for Iran," Syracuse Law Review, Volume 57, Number 3, 2007, pp. 443-456.

Consequences

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We often forget the two-sided nature of war? How will the Iranians react?

Possible Iranian Reactions to the Military Options

- **Little or no response**
- **Low DNA violent responses.**
- **Broad and violent response against US and Israeli interests**

No Iranian
Retaliation

"Time on
Our Side"

Moderate
Reaction

Strong
Reaction

Iran has a range of possible reactions.

Although I don't believe Iran will remain passive after a strike, it is instructive to examine what can happen if Iran does nothing.*

I've called the second category of response "low DNA." Iran responds but keeps its connections to the attacks as muted as possible.

Finally, Iran could choose a violent response to US and Israeli interests.

*See Sam Gardiner, *General You Have the Advantage of Time: Iran's Response to the US Military Option*, British American Security Information Council, London, February 2007.

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Like response to the Danish Cartoons...

Beruit

OPINION »
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Make your money work "Time on Our Side"

MARKETS 10:10AM ET BigCharts
 DOW 12,467.07 -35.49 -0.28%
 NAS 2,424.02 -10.22 -0.42%
 S&P 1,420.31 -3.59 -0.25%

Tools:
 Alerts
 Stocks
 News
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Moderate Reaction

Strong Reaction

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It is important to understand the “no-retaliation” options for Iran in order to understand the consequences of a US strike. On the day after a strike, Iran will have more influence in the region than on the day before a strike.

We are likely to see this headline. I see a parallel to the reactions to the Danish cartoons of a few years ago.

Anger will run high. It is possible extremists will take advantage of the situation.



US Embassy
Nairobi, Kenya

Declassified Key Judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate “Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States” dated April 2006

Key Judgments

Iran

- The ~~Iraq~~ conflict has become the “cause celebre” for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of US involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement.

No Iranian Retaliation

“Time on Our Side”

Moderate Reaction

Strong Reaction

Again, with little or no retaliation from Iran, the National Intelligence Estimate would suggest more global resentment of the United States and cultivating supporters.

National Intelligence Estimate

The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland

“We assess [Iran-backed] Lebanese Hezbollah...may be more likely to consider attacking the Homeland over the next three years if it perceives the United States as posing a direct threat to the group or Iran.”

No Iranian Retaliation

“Time on Our Side”

Moderate Reaction

Strong Reaction

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Another National Intelligence Estimate more directly makes the connection to attacks on the Homeland by Hezbollah.

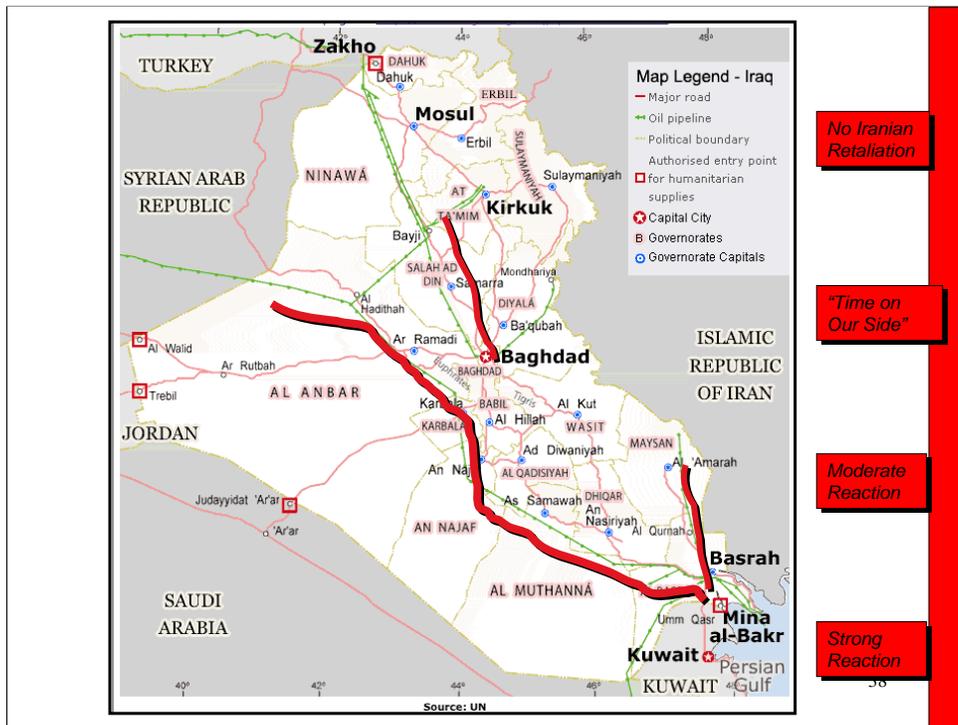


Again, with little or no retaliation by Iran, military forces in the region will be expanded. The Gulf Cooperation Council has previously told the United States that it would want assistance to keep the flow of oil moving out of the Gulf.

Iran has done nothing but the oil market already spikes because of the growing image of of crisis in the region.



The image gets stronger. Some GCC states and Israel ask for US missile defense deployments.

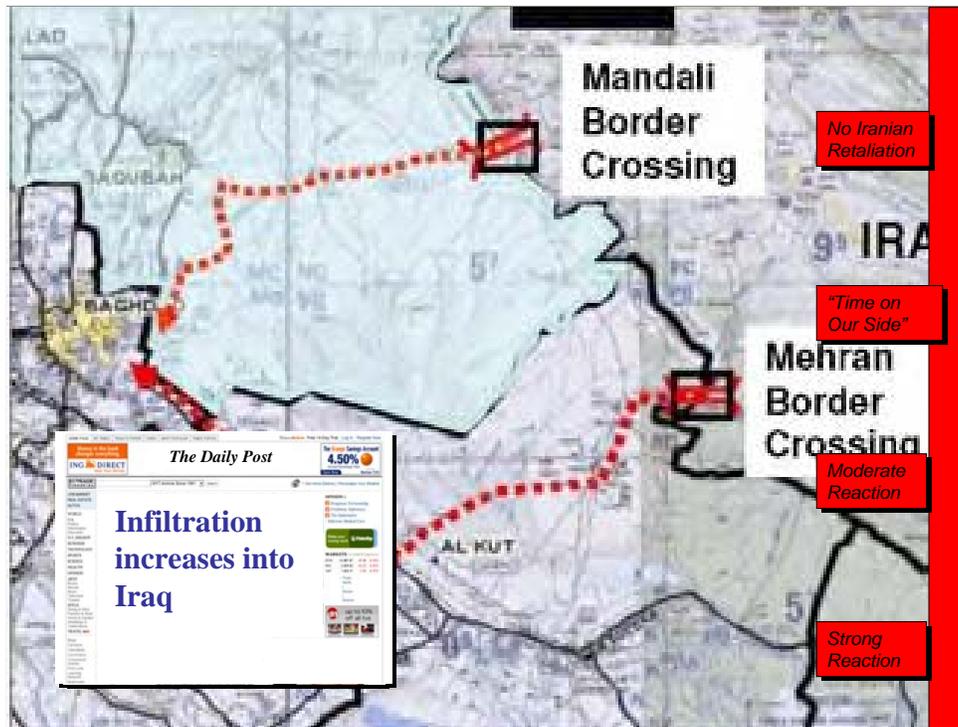


Moving up Iran's escalation ladder, the vulnerable oil pipelines in Iraq offer great possibilities.

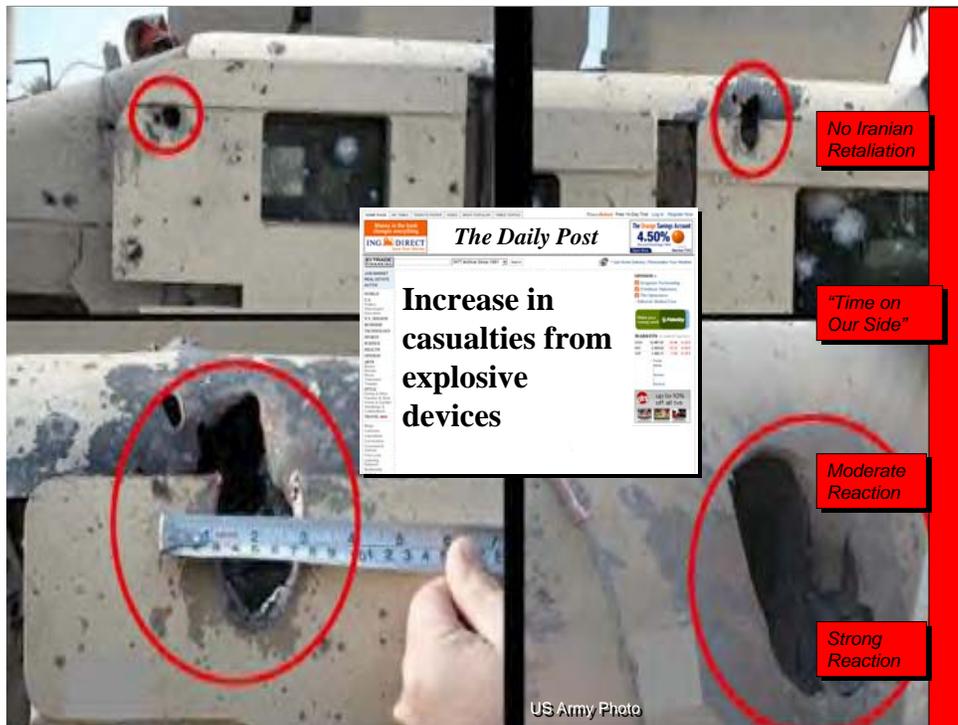


Two million barrels a day come off the market, and it seems as if it is just part of the pattern of violence in Iraq.

The attack is actually good economics for Iran. The oil it is selling the world is now more valuable, and the United States suffers a consequence.



Slowly, Iran could send more members of its Revolutionary Guard into Iraq along with more weapons.

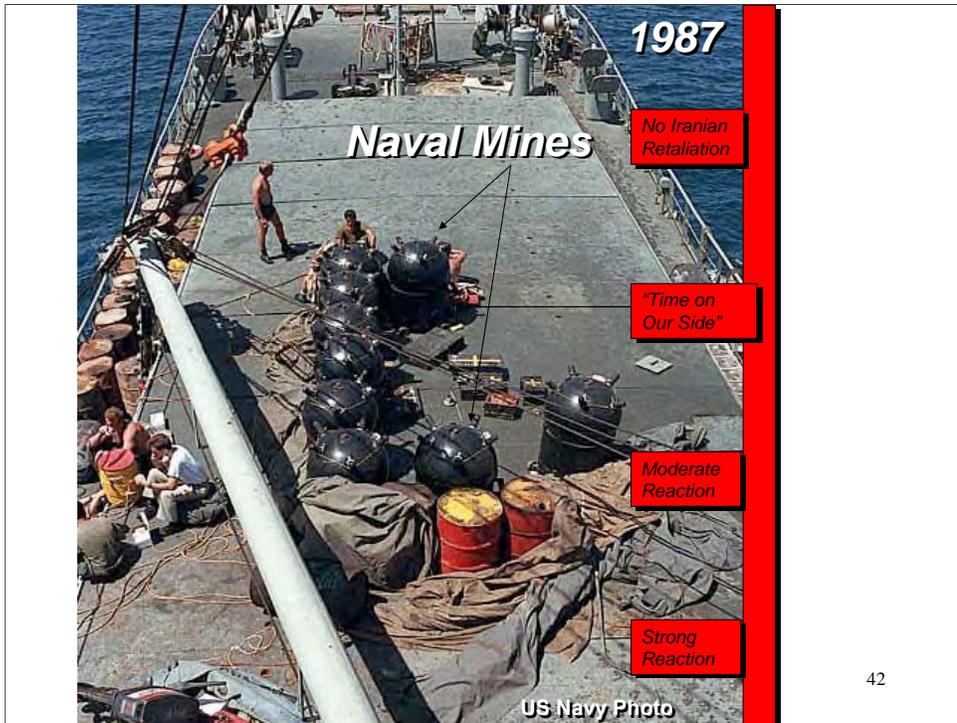


Maybe there is some evidence that Iran is behind the increased violence, but it is not clear the government is behind it.

It is possible for Iran to benefit from a US strike with little or no reaction.

Here is the profound point. Rather than weakening Iran, a strike can strengthen both the regime and its position in the world.

I have seen war games in which the team playing the Iranian leadership discusses how they could get the United States to attack them.



We tend to think of the military aspects of a strike and the Iranian reaction in terms of a short period of time. As I have suggested, that is not in Iran's interest.

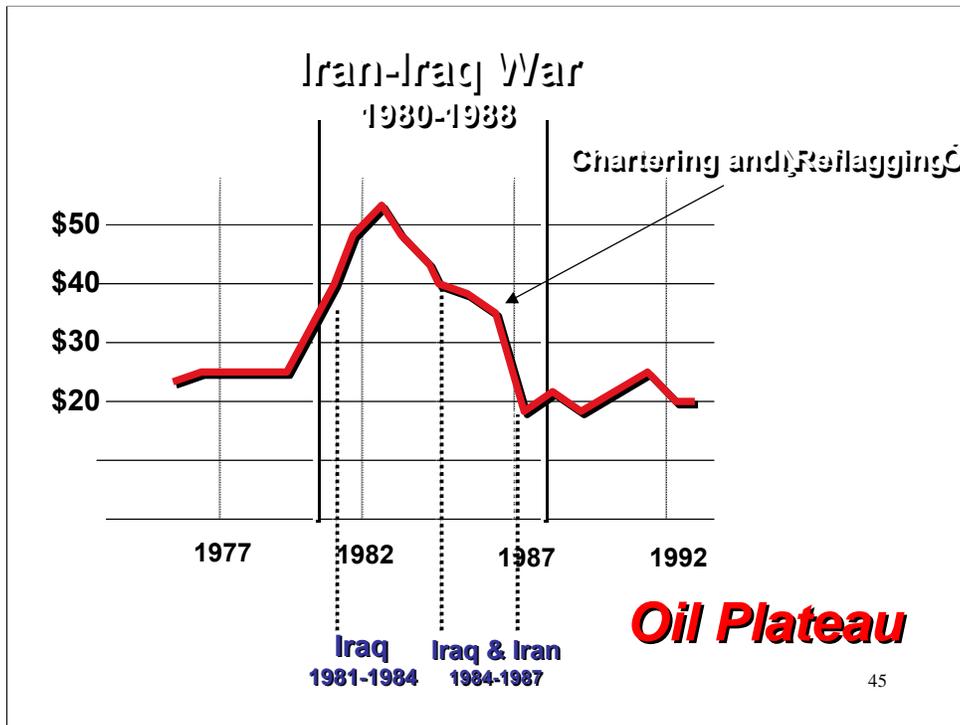
We could begin to see a few mines floating in the Gulf.



We could see Iran using very small craft to attack tankers.



We might even see a tanker or two seriously damaged.



Rather than seeing a spike in oil, we could see an oil plateau.

Some oil company executives are saying \$200/barrel if the United States were to attack Iran. A recent war game concluded \$5 per gallon gasoline and major economic consequences.

We might see a price line in the form we did during the Iran-Iraq war.

Responses to a Strike

| | Moderate | Strong |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| • Hezbollah attacks on Israel..... | High Probability | High Probability |
| • Attacks on US forces in Iraq..... | High Probability | High Probability |
| • Sabotage pipelines in Iraq..... | High Probability | High Probability |
| • Encouraging demonstrations on a wide scale..... | Possible | High Probability |
| • Hezbollah attacks outside the region... | Possible | High Probability |
| • Iran stopping its own oil exports..... | Possible | High Probability |
| • Iran blocking Gulf oil flow..... | High Probability | High Probability |
| • Iran attacking other's oil facilities..... | Possible | Possible |
| • Iran suicide attacks..... | Not Likely | Possible |
| • Syria involved..... | Not Likely | Possible |
| • Threats to regional governments..... | Not Likely | Possible |

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Iran will be under pressure at home to respond. Even after an expanded strike by the United States on Iranian retaliatory capabilities, there are a wide range of options.

Israel is important. Even if Israel had no part in the strike, Iran will call it a US/Israeli attack. Israel will become a target.

The United States will become a target.

What you see unfolding here is the escalation ladder to a greater Middle East War.



We need to remember. Iran already has WMD. Iran has a major chemical weapons capability and often conducts chemical weapons exercises.

Iran's Chemical Weapons Program

- Types of Chemical Agents:
 - Blister
 - Blood
 - Choking
- Delivery Capability
 - Artillery
 - Bombs

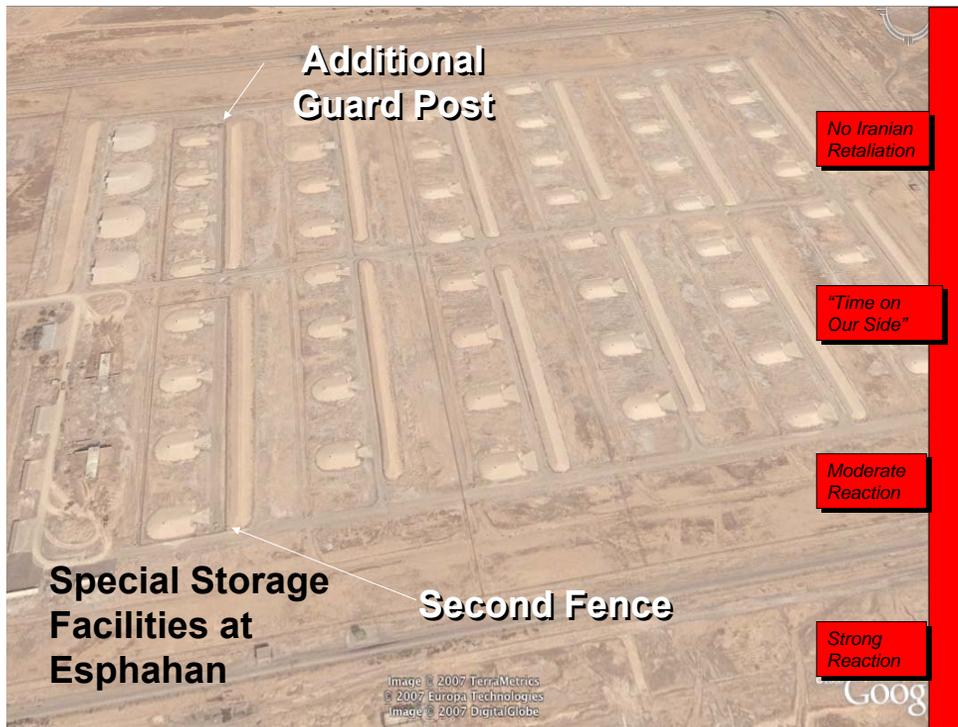
No Iranian Retaliation

"Time on Our Side"

Moderate Reaction

Strong Reaction

These are the estimates of the agents and delivery methods.



A major chemical plant is located in the vicinity of Esphahan. I believe chemical weapons are stored in this facility near the air base there. Eight of the bunkers have special security, a kind of security I see no other place in Iran.



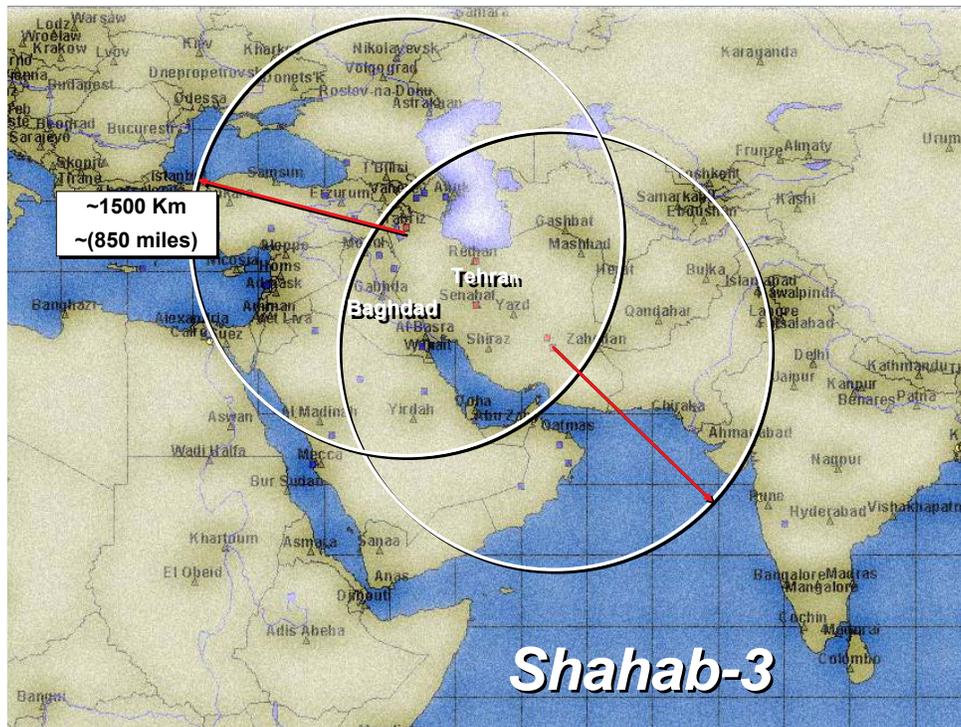
All of this brings me back to where I started. After one looks at the challenge and response cycle, it is very easy to see how the smallest of US military options could eventually bring us to an objective of regime change and a major war in the Middle East.

As a senior player said to me in a recent war game, I can see how the President will have no choice after this thing gets started.

Additional Issue

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I would like to conclude with a separate but but related issue.



We are often shown this kind of range chart for Iranian missile, specifically the Shahab 3.

The argument unfolds. Iran can now already strike a NATO country. In a few years it will be able to strike the center of Europe, and in a few years after that its missiles will be able to reach the United States.

The consequence is the proposal for two missile defense sites in Europe. The consequence is a growing and serious tension with the Russians.

I urge caution when you see these kinds of projections of Iranian missile capabilities.

Nose Cone and Guard



Source: Bruce H. Schumaker
Berlin, March 27, 2006

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The Iranians exaggerate technology and capabilities. The Shahab 3 is an important case in point.

Six different missile versions have been seen in the September parades. Here are pictures of four different erector front-end designs. This kind of variation is not found in a major operational system.

Iran has conducted 10 launches since 1998 with what appears to be a 30% failure rate.

The erector launcher is modified oil equipment.

The announced range and payload are exaggerated.

Despite the announcement that the missile was deployed with the armed forces in 2003, the evidence is that this is not an operational missile.

The Iranians have announced this is indigenous production, that is probably not true. They have gotten assistance from North Korea and maybe Russia.