

Beyond the Paper

Sam Gardiner
October 11, 2006

Seven Truths

- **Iran is developing weapons of mass destruction - most likely true**
- **Iran is ignoring the international community—true.**
- **Iran supports Hezbollah and terrorism—true.**
- **Iran is increasingly inserting itself in Iraq and beginning to be involved in Afghanistan—true.**
- **The people of Iran want a regime change—most likely an exaggeration.**
- **Sanctions are not going to work—most likely true.**
- **You cannot negotiate with these people—not proven.**

Bottom Line *(and Level of Confidence)*

- ✓ **Lebanon operation was closely coordinated between the US and Israel. (95%)**
- ✓ **White House and Israelis believe the Lebanon operation was a success. (75%)**
- ✓ **This Administration feels it has lost the American public; so, it might as well "do the right thing" with Iran before it leaves office.(100%)**
- ✓ **Someone inside the USG seems to have the smoking gun on the Iranian nuclear program that can be revealed at an appropriate time. (60%)**

Bottom Line *(and Level of Confidence)*

- ✓ **US special operations forces are currently operating inside Iran, and the US is supporting MEK operations inside Iran without the Congressional notification required by law. (95%)**
- ✓ **Military leadership are increasingly uneasy about the Iran plan and are talking to the press. (100%)**
 - **Nuclear option against Natanz may be planned. (95%)**
 - **Do not believe the intelligence would support an operation. (75%)**

Failed Diplomacy

- ✓ **In May 2003 Iran proposed road map leading to the restoration of relations with the US. (100%)**
- ✓ **Iran could:**
 - **Cut off support to militant groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad**
 - **Convert Hezbollah into socio-political organization.**
 - **Recognize Israel and a separate Palestinian state.**

Called "Last Resort"

Rice Proposes Path to Talks With Iran on Nuclear Issue

By STEVEN R. WEISMAN
Published: May 31, 2006

WASHINGTON, May 31 — Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#), abandoning the Bush administration's opposition to diplomatic contacts with [Iran](#), said today that the United States would join European negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program if Iran suspended uranium activities that are suspected to be a cover for nuclear arms development.



Doug Mills/The New York Times
Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the U.S. would be willing to change course if Iran suspends all nuclear activities.

Enlarge this Image Ms. Rice's announcement came after a searching internal administration debate over how to revive the stalled European-led process of engaging Iran in talks to end its suspected nuclear activity voluntarily. In recent weeks, European leaders have been increasingly vocal in asserting that direct American participation was essential to a solution with Iran.

"The United States is willing to exert strong leadership to give diplomacy its very best chance to succeed," Ms. Rice said at the State Department, in announcing the shift in American policy. She added that "the United States will come to the table" with its European partners "and meet with Iran's representative."

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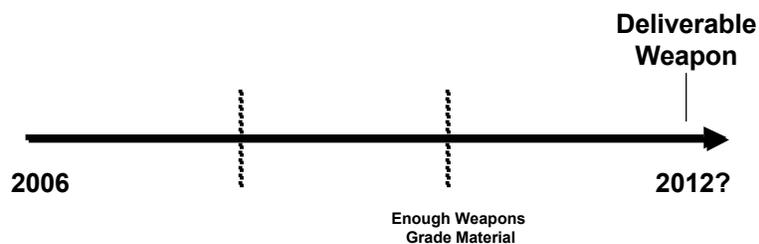
“Cheney was dead set against it...” NYT

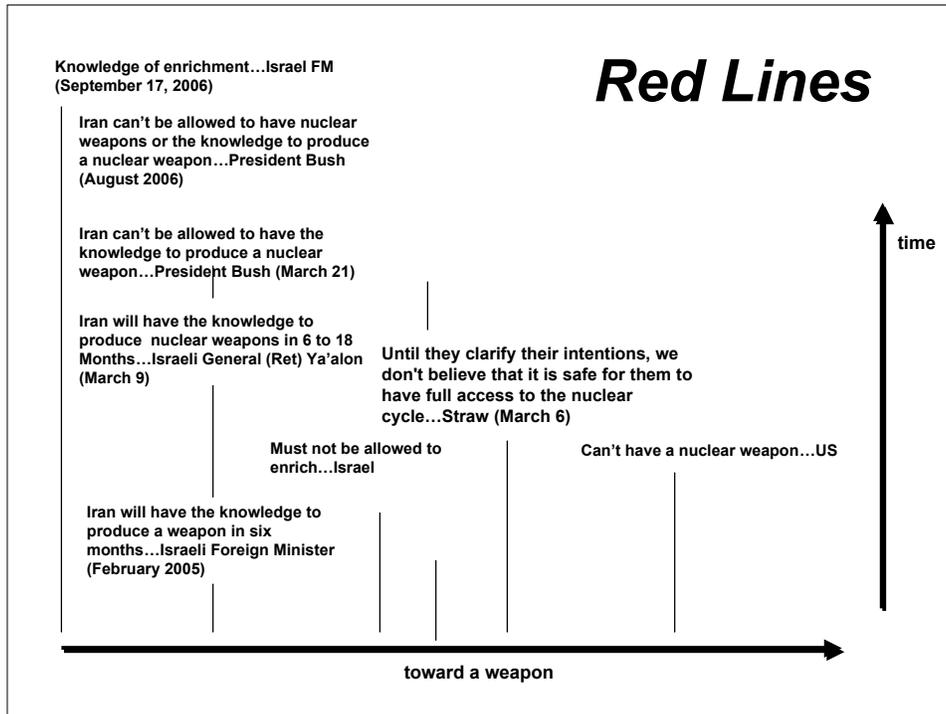
Focused Sanctions

- **Very little belief that sanctions would work.**
- **Support fading for sanctions package.**
- **US is working on its own sanctions package:**
 - Treasury
 - Congress

The US Intelligence Dilemma

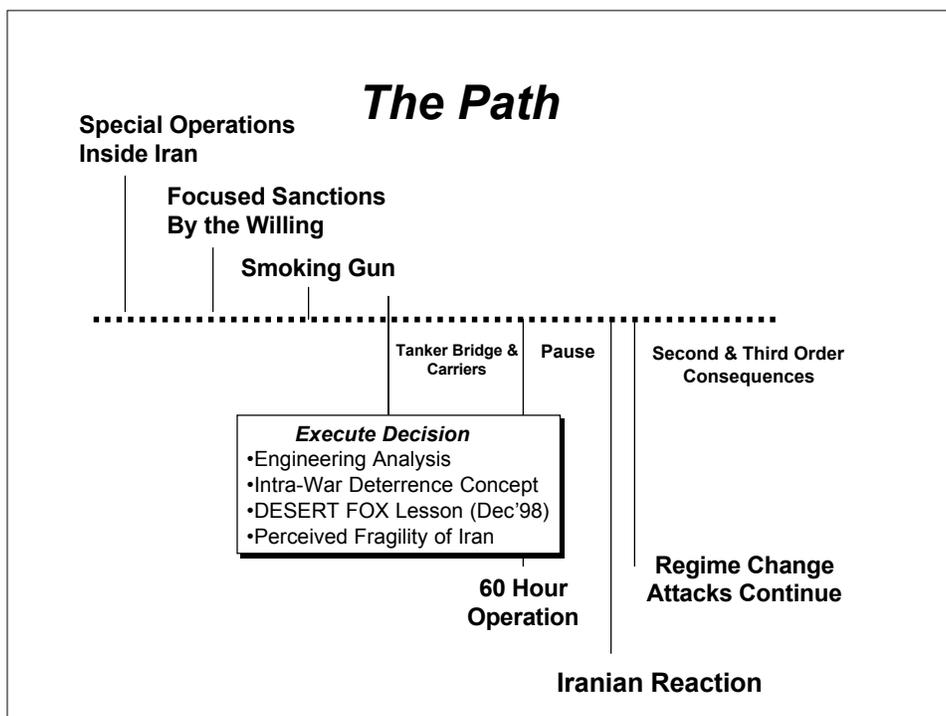
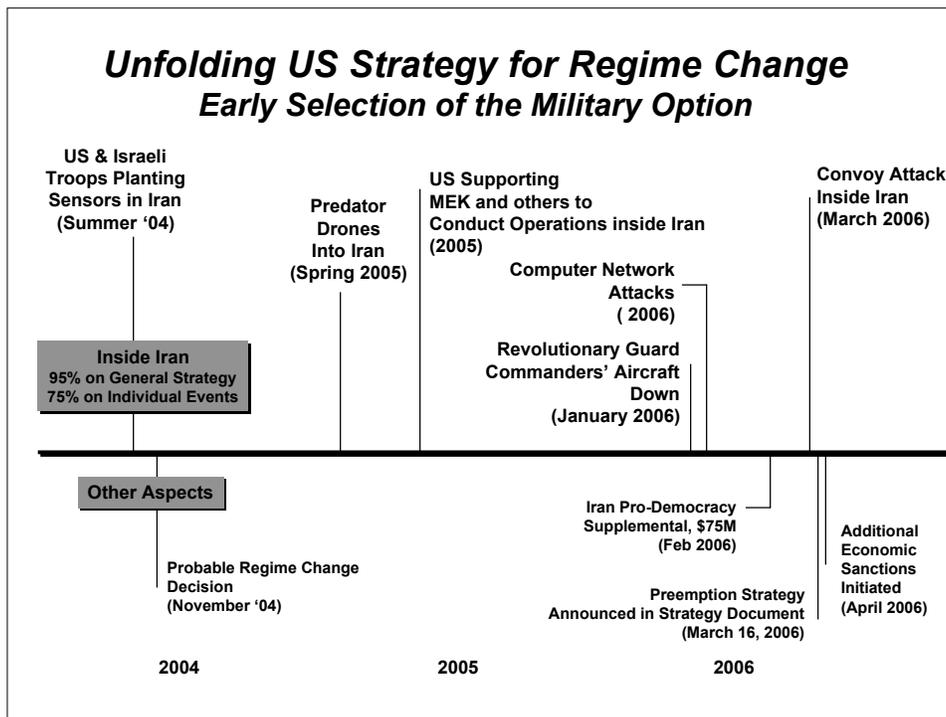
- There is the nuclear program that can be seen, and there are the nuclear programs that cannot be seen.
 - Possibly more than one weapons program.
 - Work is deep underground and may be inside cities.
- The intelligence dilemma is that the US will most likely not know when Iran has crossed the red lines.





Preempting Early The History

- **Operation SOUTHERN FOCUS**
 - Guidance: "Stay below the CNN line."
 - Initiated July 2002
 - Strikes on 400 targets
- **ANABASIS**
 - Take over an air base, declare a revolt and force Iraq to violate the no-fly zone
 - Started at the end of 2001 approved by the President in February 2002
 - 80 former Iraqi soldiers trained in the United States
- **CIA sabotage and assassination operations prior the war.**



Framework for US Planning

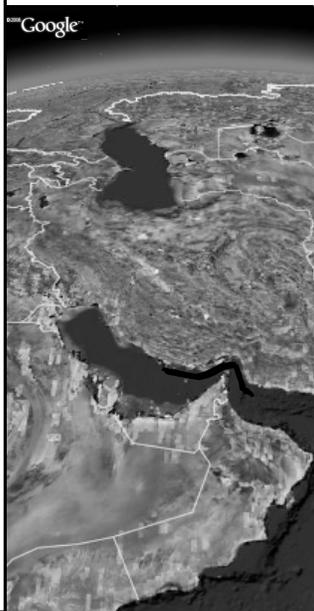
90% Confidence

- **Gradually begin the operation with low visibility components, “below the CNN threshold.”**
- **Not a ground operation.**
- **Coalition would be best but should plan for striking alone.**
- **Air strike has two options**
 - Initial attack (750 aim points)
 - Pause (Intra-war deterrence)
 - Expanded attack to include leadership targets
- **Objective is to both destroy the nuclear facilities and attack the fragile regime.**

Targets in Iran

Initial Strikes

- **Nuclear Facilities**
- **Military Air Bases**
- **Air Defense Command and Control**
- **Terrorist Training Camps**
- **Chemical Facilities**
- **Medium Range Ballistic Missiles**
- **23rd Commando Division**
- **Gulf Threatening Assets:**
 - Submarines
 - Anti-Ship Missiles
 - Naval Ships
 - Small Boats



Follow-On Strikes

- **Revolutionary Guard Bases**
- **Command and Governance Assets**
 - Intelligence
 - Military Command
 - Radio and Television
 - Communications
- **Security Forces in Tehran**
- **Leadership: Targeted Killing**

Strategic Communications Themes

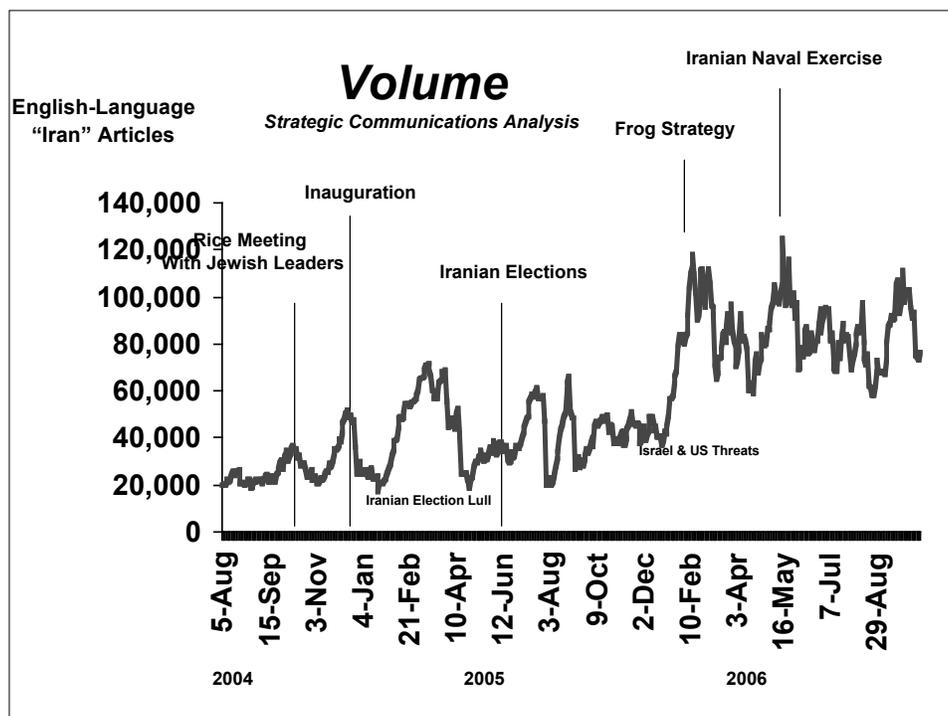
- **“Like al Qaeda and the Sunni extremists, the Iranian regime has clear aims...” President Bush**
- **“The United States is at war with Islamic fascism.” President Bush**
- **US is confronting a new type of fascism...” Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld**
- **“...central banker of terror” Stuart Levey, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism**
- **“...some observers believe Iran is actively supporting al-Qaeda operatives” House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.**
- **It’s about Israel.**

Consequence of an Attack

	Short Strike	Regime Change
• 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
• Cartoon-like 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

Oil Prices: Second Order Consequences

- ✓ 20% reduction in Global oil would shift the economy into a “synchronized recession.”
- ✓ Precipitous fall in stock markets.
- ✓ Interest rates would fall:
- ✓ Countries strongly opposed to the strike might be stirred to move their assets out of the US.
- ✓ Non-ME oil exporters would have a bonanza: Russia, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria.





My Assessment

- ✓ Don't underestimate the Iranian resolve.
- ✓ Iran and the US (West) are on a collusion course.
- ✓ A terrorist incident could spark a greater Middle East conflict
- ✓ Striking Iran would be more damaging than beneficial to US interests.
- ✓ Delay is the best strategy for now:
 - ✓ US be less vulnerable in the future.
 - ✓ Chance of improving support in the region will get better.
 - ✓ Deterrence requires understanding; both sides need to get better.