

Iran's Unconventional Counter U.S. Strategy

by
Jonathan Herman

A thesis submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Global Security Studies

Baltimore, Maryland
May 2014

© 2014 Jonathan Herman
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

The United States and Iran are involved in a protracted political conflict over Iran's nuclear program. This conflict has the potential to escalate into a state of military conflict. Iran has attempted to play its perceived military strengths against the United States' perceived weaknesses. This thesis examines three aspects of Iran's Strategic approach. The first aspect of this strategy examined are Iran's actions in Latin America, in particular regarding Iran's military and terror ties with the ALBA nations compared to Iran's relationship with Brazil its largest trading partner.¹ The second chapter studies Iran's actions in the Strait of Hormuz through the lens of traditional naval military strategy, specifically the naval strategies of fleet-in-being doctrine and *guerre de cours*. This chapter examines the historic and modern performance of the Iranian Navy, as well as other instances of small boat tactics. The final chapter examines the division of the Iranian security forces between the regular army, the IRGC², and Hezbollah and determines that this division is successful. When examining the goals of removing foreign influence from the region, becoming the regional power, and keeping conflict below the threshold for war, this division is effective.

Advisors and Readers:

Dr. Sarah O'Byrne, Dr. Jacob Straus, Dr. Mark Stout, Dr. Rameez Abbas, and Dr. Mike Vlahos

¹ Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas

² Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps

Preface

I would like to thank my thesis advisors Dr. Sarah O’Byrne, Dr. Jacob Straus, Dr. Mark Stout, and Dr. Rameez Abbas as well as the rest of the faculty of JHU for their help and guidance throughout the thesis process; without them this would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Bruce Engle and Mary Sondergard for all their grammar help. Lastly, thanks to my parents for the support that allowed me to pursue this degree.

Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface	iii
Tables and Figures	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Iran’s Counter U.S. Strategy: Latin America	5
Introduction	5
Literature Review.....	6
Key Definitions and Assumptions	11
Case Study Selection	12
Case Studies	13
ALBA.....	13
Brazil.....	23
Analysis	25
Conclusion.....	27
Chapter Two: Iranian Counter US Strategy: The Strait of Hormuz.....	30
Introduction	30
Literature Review.....	31
The Strait of Hormuz.....	31
Naval Warfare	35
Case Study Selection	38
Key Definitions and Assumptions	39
Case Studies	39
Iran-Iraq War and the Tanker War.....	39
Iranian Naval Power Today	48
Small Boat Tactics	52
Analysis	54
Conclusion.....	59
Chapter 3: Iran’s Division of Military Forces.....	61
Introduction.....	61
Iranian Security Goals.....	62
Foreign Intervention.....	62

Regional Power.....	65
Limit All-Out War	70
Iran's Military Forces	73
The Artesh.....	73
The Iranian Revolutionary Guard	76
Hezbollah	79
Use of Forces to Accomplish Goals.....	81
The Artesh.....	81
The IRGC.....	84
Hezbollah	87
Conclusion.....	89
Conclusion	91
Bibliography	93
Curriculum Vita	99

Tables and Figures

Figure 1 www.news.com.au	18
Figure 2 www.speroforum.com	22
Figure 3 Ships Attacked By Iran 1987 and 1988	44
Table 1 Breakdown of Ships Attacked by Iraq 1984	41
Table 2 Breakdown of Ships Attacked by Iran, 1984.....	42

Introduction

The confrontation over Iran's nuclear programs has brought Iran into political conflict with the United States. This has been a recurring theme throughout presidential elections, policy debates, and academic literature. These two countries are at many times perceived to have a longstanding and deep mutual animosity creating the potential for future conflict, particularly with regard to Iran's nuclear program. Iran maintains the program's civilian purpose, while the United States and allies have called this into question. This political conflict has not taken a military turn so far. This may change, however, as both sides have prepared for armed conflict.

It is widely accepted that the United States could military defeat Iran in the event of war, but, at what cost is unclear. It is logical to assume that Iran has not viewed the US invasions of two of Iran's neighbors in a vacuum. Iran has learned lessons from the American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. If Iran takes the feel threatened by American precedents of intervention in other states in its neighborhood, it follows that Iran would have developed a strategy aimed at countering this very large and real threat.

This thesis seeks to examine the strategy Iran has developed to counter the United States. Understanding Iran's strategy can help the United States in the event of war. It may also help the two countries avoid war by aiding in mutual understanding of actions, helping prevent a miscommunication. Simply assuming the United States will win due to its overwhelming military force is not enough. If one understands a potential opponent's strategy, it is far easier to defeat them. When applied to the United States and Iran, an understanding of Iran's strategy may help prevent war, lower casualties, or help increase

the disparity between the US and Iranian militaries. The two sources of Iranian strategic English literature I could find, fail to give any primary sources about Iran's strategy.³ This paper draws on both primary and secondary sources, however due to the lack of English sources of Iranian Military strategy; this paper relies on others' translations and analyses for the actions of the Iranian Military and attempts to infer the strategy behind these actions.

An understanding of Iran's strategy can also serve as a framework through which less powerful countries aim to balance and defeat world powers. Given the current international situation, a war with a more or less equal power is unlikely and great power conflicts with less powerful states are more likely. While not all countries will follow a strategy based on the Iranian one, a more complete understanding of Iran's actions can serve as a starting point for future examinations.

The first chapter in this portfolio asks, what is the purpose of Iran's actions in Latin America. I seek to find out if Iran's activities in the region move beyond simple geostrategic positioning and to examine the root causes of Iranian actions. Based on the literature review, there is no consensus on the reasons for Iran's actions. In order to answer this question, I examine two case studies: Iran's relationships with the countries of the ALBA Alliance, in particular Venezuela;⁴ and Iran's relationship with its largest trading partner in the region, Brazil. Based upon these case studies, I argue that Iran's actions in the region aim to bring Iran's unconventional forces, namely Hezbollah within

³ The two sources are the Iranian center for Strategic Research and The Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs Naser Hadian and Shani Hormozi, "Iran's New Security Environment Imperatives: Counter Containment or Engagement with the Us," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 4 (2011); "Iran's Security Interests and Concerns," (2007), www.csr.ir/departments.

⁴ Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America, Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua, and Antigua and Barbuda

striking distance of the United States, as well as seeking allies and partners in the event of conflict with the United States. Through these two actions, Iran aims to deter the United States from engaging in conflict by physically threatening the United States with retaliatory responses from Hezbollah agents in Latin America and by finding nations who are willing to help Iran circumvent sanctions, thereby weakening the US strategy.

The second chapter in this portfolio asks why Iran has selected its specific naval policies with regard to the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's naval strategy is typically understood to be one based solely on an economic rationale: smaller ships and hit and run tactics are cheaper than building a traditional navy such as the United States Navy. Iran's strategy involves using its fleet of smaller ships armed with anti-ship missiles to attempt to swarm U.S. forces and close the Strait. Iran also has a large number of mines which could be used to close the Strait. To understand the rationale behind Iran's choices, I examine Iran's naval strategy through the lens of traditional naval strategy, specifically the fleet-in-being doctrine and *guerre de course*. I argue that given Iran's history of conflict in the region and with the United States, Iran has adapted aspects of traditional naval strategy to form a naval strategy which can be incrementally more violent against the United States. Iran, for example can stage symbolic mock attacks against U.S. and allied forces in the Gulf in a political gesture, ratcheting up these mock attacks to real ones if the need arises. The large number, and hidden nature of Iran's small boat force means that it is unlikely that the United States could destroy all of them, leaving some to prey on merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf.

The final chapter asks if the division of Iran's military forces between the Artesh (traditional/conventional forces), the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, and non-state

actors such as Hezbollah is effective at enabling Iran to meet its security goals. This division is different from how other nations organized their armed forces. Most countries organize their forces based upon the environment in which they fight, the army on land, the navy on water, and the air force in the air. Iran does this but in addition each service of the Iranian military has at least a rudimentary branch for each environment. I argue that this division is based upon the different services' approach to warfare, and has been effective at helping Iran meet its security goals of removing and preventing foreign intervention in the Middle East and becoming the regional power, gain prestige and a leadership role in the Muslim world, and ensure that conflict with foreign powers do not lead to all-out war. Iran's military forces are generally regarded as weak, particularly when compared against the United States. This division came about as a way to address this weakness and attempt to turn it into a strength. Recently, however the conventional army has begun to embrace more unconventional warfare strategies, weakening this division, and creating overlap. This overlap may spell the end of the Iranian division of forces, or at least lower its efficiency.

The Iranian strategies examined in these chapters show a trend of attempting to turn a perceived weakness into strength. Although the Iranian military is weak, this is not an examination of whether Iran can emerge victorious from a conflict with the United States rather; this thesis seeks to examine how Iran is attempting to deal with a large perceived threat to the state.

Chapter One: Iran's Counter U.S. Strategy: Latin America

Introduction

In recent years, attention has been given to Iran's international activities, particularly its activities in Latin America. Iran has found many avenues for cooperation with countries in the region. The activities Iran undertakes in the region at times appear disjointed and aimless. Iran has recently increased its activities in the region, leading to the question of why now and why in Latin America? The physical distance and seeming lack of cultural ties between Iran and this part of the world should suggest a lack of interest on behalf of Iranian leadership in partnering with countries of the Western Hemisphere, as countries tend to focus closer to home. This anomaly, especially since it is in the United States' traditional sphere of influence, deserves further study to determine what Iran's grand strategy is in Latin America. I will put the puzzle of Iran's strategy in Latin America together and try to prove that this strategy is designed to counter the United States' actions toward Iran. Determining the overarching strategy and the reasons behind it will allow the United States to counter Iran's strategy both prior to and in the event of conflict.

Iran's nuclear program and international behavior are among the major challenges to the security of the United States and its foreign policy. The possibility of this conflict coming to a head is a distinct possibility. Both countries are taking measures to prepare for conflict. These measures include the well-known posturing and threats against the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, and preparations to counter this threat by the United States, such as deployments of carrier battle groups to the Persian Gulf and mine clearing exercises by the United States 5th fleet. Lesser-known preparations are occurring; however, Iran in

particular, is focusing on expanding its presence in the Western Hemisphere. This influence has been examined in light of the current state of affairs between the United States and Iran, and the region's geographic proximity to the United States.

Literature Review

Concern for Iran's growing influence in Latin America has reached the highest levels of the government of the United States. The United States passed a law in 2012 to develop a "comprehensive strategy to counter Iran's growing hostile presence... in the Western Hemisphere."⁵ Before and after the passage of this law, scholars examined Iran's strategy in the region.

A plurality of the scholarship on the subject examines Iran's expanding influence through the lens of decreasing U.S. imposed isolation. The scholars viewing Iran's influence through this lens views Iran as wanting to gain international legitimacy and increase trade. According to Steven Johnson, a scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Iran's targets for aiding in its isolation avoidance are nonaligned countries.⁶

These authors, Johnson, Berman, and Goforth examine the economic ties between Iran and the countries in Latin America, in particular those ties which aid Iran in decreasing the effects of sanctions. These economic ties include such activities as gasoline deals, joint factories, and creating joint funds. This claim is present in the rationale for countering Iran in Public Law 112-220. These economic relationships, such as gasoline deals examined later, often come with the express intent, stated by leaders of *Alianza*

⁵ *Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012* 112, PUBLIC LAW 112-220.

⁶ Stephen Johnson, *Iran's Influence in the Americas* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012). p. 10

*Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*⁷ (ALBA)⁸ nations, to help Iran avoid sanctions.⁹ These authors explore the economic ties between Iran and ALBA of which Iran is an observer.¹⁰ While most of the scholars in this school, such as Goforth and Caro, focus on the Venezuela-Iran relationship, they also note Iran's economic relationship with Brazil, Iran's largest trade partner in the region.¹¹ These authors explore other facets of the Iranian presence in the region, yet the overarching theme is one of attempts to avoid the isolation desired by the United States. These activities reduce the effect of the foreign policy of the United States and United Nations toward Iran. Farah, for example, explores military relations in some detail, however, he concludes that "the most immediate utility of Iran's alliance with the Bolivarian axis ... is for Iran's own near-term ends: the ability to minimize the impact of international sanctions, especially on its financial sector"¹² While Iran's strategy in Latin America certainly involves sanction busting, it is more complex. Were the relationships with countries in the region simply for these economic purposes, they would most likely not include the military or revolutionary aspects examined later. While economic arrangements can lead to more agreements between countries over time, I will show that Iran's Latin American activities with its largest trading partner, Brazil, are solely economic and do not involve other aspects of Iran's activities with the ALBA nations.

⁷ Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America

⁸ Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua, and Antigua and Barbuda

⁹ Sean Goforth, *Axis of Unity : Venezuela, Iran & the Threat to America*, (Potomac Books, 2012). P.42

¹⁰ Joel D. Hirst, *The Alba : Inside Venezuela's Bolivarian Alliance* (Miami, FL: InterAmerican Institute for Democracy, 2012).p 95.

¹¹ Johnson, p.69

¹² Doug Farah, "Iran and Latin America: Strategic Security Issues," (Ft. Belvoir, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2011).

Other scholars focus on the stated revolutionary goals of Iran and countries in Latin America and suggest that Iran has targeted likeminded revolutionary countries in Latin America, such as Venezuela and Bolivia, especially since the ascension of former President Ahmadinejad to spur anti-American sentiments.¹³ The Chavismo movement and the subsequent growth of leftist governments in Latin America have given Iran many potential targets using this approach. Hunter examines the correlation between the domestic politics of countries in Latin America, the election of left leaning self-proclaimed revolutionaries specifically, and an increase in Iranian relations with these countries. Paraguay and Uruguay are used as examples of attempts by Iran to improve its relationships under such situations. The support Iran gave to Nicaragua during the 1980s under the Ortega regime and the sudden re-establishment of diplomatic relations after his re-election serve as examples of this approach.¹⁴

Perdue examines the strategy of the “war of all the people”.¹⁵ This strategy, according to Perdue, is a “doctrine of asymmetrical and political warfare” aimed at the United States.¹⁶ The foremost leaders in this strategy were Presidents Chavez and Ahmadinejad.¹⁷ Perdue explains this strategy as both military and political actions, such as the mass mobilization of a population to counter an invasion, as was the case in the Iran-Iraq War, or the militia in Venezuela currently being used to suppress the unrest in Venezuela. He also analyzes the reason for the cooperation between Iran and the

¹³ Shireen. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era : Resisting the New International Order* (Santa Barbara, Calif. :: Praeger, 2010).p.233.

¹⁴ I. Caro and I. Rodriguez, "La Presencia De Irán En América Latina a Través De Su Influencia En Los Países Del Alba " *Atenea*, no. 500 (2009). P.23

¹⁵ Jon B. Perdue, *The War of All the People : The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism*, 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012). P.1

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

revolutionary countries in Latin America. He concludes that different countries and ideologies can be joined together against a common enemy while they are “revolutionaries” and militants.¹⁸ Purdue links together the concerns regarding terrorism in Latin America and the revolutionary ideals of the countries involved. While they do establish an overarching strategy for Iranian involvement, especially Purdue, I believe Iranian involvement goes beyond revolutionary fervor, to military prudence. I posit that it is necessary for these military strategies to be integrated with the economic strategies examined by the previous group of authors. The revolutionary governments in Latin America have a history of anti-Americanism that can be used by Iran to threaten the United States.

As previously stated, Iran has engaged in military and terroristic activities in Latin America. While most authors make some note of the terrorist or military relationship between Iran and Latin America, in particular the bombings of the AMIA (Argentine Israelite Mutual Association) and the Israeli embassy in Argentina in the early 1990s, some see this as the main reason for Iranian involvement in the region. Martínez analyzes the relationship between the Iranian nuclear program and terrorist activities. He examines the evangelical nature of Iran’s proxy Hezbollah in the region. He also explores Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) activities in the region. These include closed-door meetings with high Venezuelan military officials.¹⁹ Martínez mostly focuses on the assistance ALBA gives Iran on its nuclear program. A large benefit is access to Bolivian

¹⁸ Ibid, p.59

¹⁹ Emilio Martínez, *Relaciones Peligrosas : El Eje Teherán-Caracas-La Paz*, 1. ed. (Santa Cruz: [s.n.], 2010). p. 30

uranium deposits.²⁰ This activity could be sanction-busting or military in nature; as the Iranian nuclear program is assumed to be of a military nature, I have included it here. Many previously mentioned authors explore the possibility of Iran using terrorist and military influence in Latin America to strike the United States. The Meir Amit Terrorist Information Center focuses on the terrorism aspects of Iranian influence in Latin America. This report examines the activities of the Quds Force²¹ in the region. This report also claims that the economic agreements with the various countries in the region are used to launder money to support the military and terrorist activities in the region.²²

The literature on Iranian activities in Latin America establishes different reasons for the recent increase in activity in the region. The literature is mainly written with the goal of determining the threat these activities pose to the United States, and written piecemeal. In my opinion, the best way to undermine Iranian influence in the region is to examine the whole Iranian approach and determine what has caused the increase in activity in the region. I posit that the entire Iranian strategy in Latin America is due to the foreign policy of the United States and is an attempt by Iran to counter this policy and prepare for a possible conflict with the United States. I aim to show how the subjects studied by these authors fit together to show us Iran's Latin American strategy and how that strategy is designed to counter the United States. The pieces studied by the aforementioned authors shed light on Iran's activities in the region, yet at times lose the forest for the trees as they do not examine why Iran is embarking on these activities in the big picture. While the first group of authors does that acknowledge Iran is attempting to circumvent United

²⁰ Ibid. p. 41

²¹ Part of the IRGC

²² "Latin America as an Arena for Iran and Hezbollah's Terrorist, Subversive and Criminal Activities," (Tel Aviv, Israel: The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2012). p. 13

Nations and United States sanctions, they do not explore how else Iran is attempting to weaken the position of the United States. Other groups of authors explore aspects of Iran's policy in Latin America, but they do not directly relate them back to a causal factor, which in my opinion is to counter the United States.

Key Definitions and Assumptions

Iranian strategy in Latin America has many facets. This study of Iranian influences and strategy in Latin America includes all countries of South America, Central America, and Mexico. I am not looking at the countries in the Caribbean, aside from islands belonging to Venezuela. While I am looking at activity of the Iranian government, the close relationship between terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force means that the activities of violent extremist organizations in the region must be considered as part of Iran's activities. This is also due to the changing nature of war toward unconventional conflicts. Especially in light of Director of National Intelligence Clapper's testimony, where he states, "Hizballah's Secretary General in mid-November publicly warned that an Israeli attack on Iran would spark a regional war, signaling that Hizballah may retaliate for a strike on Iran."²³ When referring to the conflict over Iran's nuclear programs, I am dating the start of this conflict to after the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began imposing sanctions on Iran in 2007.

Throughout this study I assume that the Iranian nuclear program is not solely for peaceful purposes, but is instead for designing a nuclear weapon. I also assume that following the

²³ Senate Select Committee on Intelligence *Unclassified Statement for the Record on the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the Us Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence* January 31 2012.

death of President Hugo Chavez, the new government, under newly elected president Maduro, will continue his policies toward Iran. Related to the Venezuelan policy, I assume that the ALBA nations, as self-proclaimed revolutionary governments, have a similar world view and that they can be studied as a group. While they are separate countries, the similarity of leaders and philosophies, lends to a study of these countries as a group. I also assume that Iran has an overarching strategy in Latin America, as many countries have grand strategic objectives for regions in which they are involved.

Case Study Selection

In order to determine the cause of Iranian influence and activities in Latin America, I will first establish the Iranian strategy for Latin America. To accomplish this, I will look at Iranian interactions with the ALBA nations, in particular Venezuela, and non-ALBA Brazil. The countries involved in the two cases are on friendly terms with Iran. After determining Iranian strategy, I will compare Iranian strategy before 2007 to Iranian strategy after 2007, when international pressure of Iran's nuclear program greatly increased with the passing of multiple UN resolutions.

I chose my first case study, the ALBA countries, due to the large amount of interaction between these countries and Iran. Based on a preliminary study, these countries play a key role in Iranian strategy in the region, thereby calling for their inclusion in a study of Iranian policy. Also, based on a preliminary study, these countries are engaged with Iran in multiple areas, including military, economy, and diplomacy.

I have chosen to look at Brazil because Brazil is Iran's largest trade partner in the region.²⁴ This trade has continued even in the face of UN sanctions against Iran, with a projected \$1.5 billion in bilateral trade in 2010.²⁵ Brazil and Iran have engaged in many bilateral meetings and visits under former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. They have also engaged in bilateral oil exploration. There is much data involving Iranian-Brazilian relations due to these economic ties. In addition to the availability of information, Brazil is an emerging power in Latin America and is attempting to emerge into international power politics, in particular with regard to Iran. I would expect there to be more of a relationship between Iran and Brazil than Iran and the ALBA countries due to the amount of trade between the two countries.

Case Studies

ALBA

The ALBA nations have a relationship with Iran that begins with Iran's observer status in the organization. This observer status allows Iran to remain aware of the actions of this organization. Of the many attempts to bring some level of integration to Latin America, such as UNASUR, MERCOSUR, and *La Alianza del Pacifico*, to name a few, ALBA is the most controversial. The ALBA is a far left-leaning trade organization with desires to integrate South and Central America created by Hugo Chavez. This officially ties Iran with this controversial organization in Latin America. Due to the physical distance between the ALBA nations and Iran, it seems unlikely that Iran would have the same

²⁴ Hunter p. 237

²⁵ *Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012* P.2

interest in the activities of ALBA as some of the other observer states and invitees to the alliance, such as Haiti, Surinam, and Santa Lucia.²⁶

The People's Trade Treaty, a free-trade agreement designed to counter the United States' proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, is a cornerstone of ALBA, thus while Iran may not have a vested interest in Latin American integration, Iran does have economic ties to the ALBA nations, as will be discussed below. The trade between two ALBA nations, Venezuela and Cuba, and Iran is slim; the total between Iran and these two countries was less than €200 million²⁷ in 2008.²⁸ Later I will examine what this trade consists of, shedding light of what Iran's economic strategy may be. These numbers hardly justify becoming an observer state, leading me to question why Iran would want to become an observer.

Iran's entry into agreements with ALBA stems from its engagement with Venezuela. The two nations have a historical relationship through their membership in OPEC since its founding. In 2005, the two countries signed a free-trade agreement.²⁹ Much of the interaction between these two countries focuses on oil. Over the years there have been joint ventures between Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In 2005 and 2006 the two companies signed over \$6 billion in joint developments. After 2007, Venezuela has made multiple statements about selling gasoline to Iran. In 2009, the two nations agreed that Iran would import 20,000 barrels of

²⁶ While not relevant to this part of the discussion, it is important to note the Syria is also an observer.

²⁷ Approximately \$2.81 million

²⁸ Hunter p.237

²⁹ Johnson p. 90

Venezuelan gasoline daily during Western economic sanctions.³⁰ In 2011, a similar agreement was made between Iran and Venezuela but was canceled, with a statement saying Iran no longer needed to import gasoline.³¹ The benefit of these agreements to Iran is obvious; this cooperation lessens the impact of any sanctions on Iran by the West, especially with regard to such a strategic resource as gasoline. Beyond Venezuela, the other ALBA nations in 2010 “publically stated [the] intent ... to not comply with the United Nations trade sanctions on Iran.”³² This explicit intent of the ALBA nations gives Iran aid in circumventing international sanctions; the value to Iran and its strategy in Latin America is obvious.

In addition to oil, the ALBA nations economically and financially aid Iran in avoiding sanctions. Iran has set up a bank, the Banco Internacional de Desarrollo, in Venezuela, with only one branch in Caracas.³³ The Economic Development Bank of Iran has financed the purchase of Iranian goods with ALBA members Ecuador and Bolivia.³⁴ In addition to these banking institutions, a binational fund, the Fondo Binacional Venezuela-Iran, “was established in May 2008 with an initial capital of \$1.2 billion. Each country provided half of the initial capital.”³⁵ The direct connection of these financial institutions to Iran allows Iran to continue receiving foreign capital under sanctions. While the amount of money flowing through these institutions may currently be small, they have set up a pipeline that can be expanded if the need arises.

³⁰ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee of the Western Hemisphere; Subcommittee of Middle East and South Asia; and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, *Iran's Relations with Venezuela: Axis of Unity or Strategic Alliance?*, 2009.

³¹ Johnson p.91

³² Foreign Relations Committee: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs, *Iran's Influence and Activity in Latin America*, February 16, 2012 2012.

³³ Joby Warrick, "Iran Seeks Closer Ties in Latin America," *The Washington Post*, January 12 2012.

³⁴ Farah 2011

³⁵ Ibid.

Through these economic and financial interactions with the ALBA nations, Iran has secured vital resources and foreign capital even in the face of international sanctions. With secure sources of resources and capital, Iran can keep its domestic economy running and have money with which to buy foreign goods. While Iran is a large oil exporter, due to U.S. sanctions it may not be able to rely on oil exports for its foreign capital. It appears Iran has intentionally created a backup network that can kick in when the need arises. This will allow it to continue to sell its oil for foreign capital, as well as transfer this currency to countries to purchase goods on the world markets, in the face of international embargos. This will allow the Iranian economy to function more normally than if it were in complete isolation. This may also allow Iran to purchase military supplies and arms for use against the United States.

Aside from the aid in avoiding sanctions Iran receives from the ALBA nations, Iran is involved in military and terrorist activities through these nations. Iran used this link to create a network of cells in South America headed by the Iranian Republic Guard Corps - Quds Force,³⁶ aided by Iranian backed Hezbollah.³⁷ Iran very likely used this network to carry out terrorist attacks in Argentina in 1992 and 1994.³⁸ Iran and Hezbollah tried to use this network to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States in 2011. This plot involved an alleged plan to place an explosive device in a restaurant in Washington, D.C. The man admits he was “directed by Iranian military officials.”³⁹ The Venezuelan government supported an Iranian cyber-attack against the United States in

³⁶ The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Larry Neumeister, "Feds in Ny Seek 25 Years in Saudi Ambassador Plot," *ABC News*(2013), http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/feds-ny-seek-25-years-saudi-ambassador-plot-19105358#.UYIL_LWkpio.

2011.⁴⁰ Despite these uses of Iran's terrorist network, the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center believes that Iran has "focused on constructing covert terrorist networks... [to] be activated when the Iranian regime considers it appropriate,"⁴¹ and not on using them. The Iranian government could call for the activation of this network in the event of war with the United States, for example. Two known networks, "one home-grown Venezuelan clan and another cultivated by Mohsen Rabbani, a notorious agent of the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, proselytize, fund-raise, recruit, and train operatives on behalf of Iran and Hezbollah in many countries in the Americas."⁴²

Another example of military cooperation is that the Venezuelan military adopted the principles of asymmetrical warfare as defined by Peripheral Warfare and Revolutionary Islam: Origins, Rules, and Ethics of Asymmetrical Warfare.⁴³ This book advocates the use of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist tactics, similar to, and based, on those used by the IRGC. The ALBA nations created a military academy – *La Escuela de Defensa de la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*⁴⁴ – supported by Iran to remove U.S. influence from the training of their militaries.⁴⁵ Iran's support for this military education program was established by the presence of the Iranian Defense minister at the inauguration ceremony in Bolivia.⁴⁶ His presence caused protest in Argentina due to a warrant for his arrest from Interpol related to the bombings in

⁴⁰ S. Smithson, "U.S. Authorities Probing Alleged Cyberattack Plot by Venezuela, Iran," *The Washington Times*, December 13 2011.

⁴¹ The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center p.10

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Farah, 2011

⁴⁴ The Defense School for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America

⁴⁵ Farah. 2012.

⁴⁶ Jorge Marirrodiga, "El Régimen Iraní Se Lanza a La Conquista De Latinoamérica," (El Pais, 2012).

Argentina in 1992.⁴⁷ Considering the ties between the Venezuelan Army and this school, it is likely the strategies and tactics outlined in Verstryngé's book are being taught at this school. The school has as its goal the creation of a "Latin American and independent doctrine."⁴⁸ This type of warfare fits into Iran's strategy of creating terrorist and asymmetric warfare networks in the region, such as the cells that carried out the attacks in Venezuela and planned attacks against the United States. In 2006, former Venezuelan President Chavez said, "Iran is under threat; there are plans to invade Iran; hopefully it won't happen, but we are with you."⁴⁹ At the same meeting he stated, "Under any scenario we are with you just like we are with Cuba, if the United States invades Cuba, blood will run ... We will not have our arms crossed while bombs are falling in Havana or they carry Raul off in a plane."⁵⁰ This shows that Venezuela will stand with Iran in the face of armed aggression; it is likely that there are plans to integrate the graduates of this program into Iranian and Iranian-proxy operations in the event of conflict. It is logical to assume that the two allies, after choosing similar doctrines, would have plans to jointly implement them. That said, it is possible that the Venezuelan government will not stand by its rhetoric, especially against the United States.



Figure 1 www.news.com.au

The United States is one of Venezuela's largest trade partners with over \$55 billion in bilateral trade between the two countries in 2012. The United States has a trade deficit of

⁴⁷ Farah 2012 p.13

⁴⁸ Juan Paullier, "¿Qué Busca La Academia Militar Del Alba?," BBC Mundo, http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2011/06/110614_alba_escuela_defensa_militar_jp.shtml.

⁴⁹ "Chavez Pledges Help for Iran against Any Attackers," (The Associated Press, 2006).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

\$21 billion dollars in this exchange.⁵¹ It could be argued that Venezuela would not openly support Iran if it means losing this source of income, considering this is compared to less than \$200 million in trade with Iran. In addition, the change in Venezuelan leadership may render these assurances null and void. I believe that while Venezuela may not openly join Iran in a war against the United States, Iran is counting on a base of operations for its proxy Hezbollah, not actual Venezuelan military assistance, in order to strike the United States. Maduro, having won the recent election, will likely continue Chavez's alliance with Iran. Ahmadinejad was, after all, given a place of honor at Chavez's funeral.⁵²

Iran has also been supporting the development of equipment for its South American partners. Iran has supplied Venezuela with UAVs.⁵³ In addition to simply supplying these drones, Iran has built Iranian-Venezuelan military factories to build these UAVs.⁵⁴ These drones have become integrated into the Venezuelan military and used in border patrol and drug interdiction missions.⁵⁵ The United States attempted to prevent this by appealing to the United Nations to establish a ban on the purchase of Iranian made and designed weapons.⁵⁶ This ban, however, has not stopped the activities of the Iranian military.

While the Iranian military does not have the capability to directly threaten the U.S. mainland at this time, I infer that by building relations and their subversive network it is

⁵¹ "Trade in Goods with Venezuela," United States Department of Commerce, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c3070.html>.

⁵² See Figure 1.

⁵³ Joseph M. Humire, "Iranian Weapons on America's Doorstep: Ahmadinejad Pursues Joint Military Ventures in Latin America," *The Washington Times*, July 4 2012.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Security Council resolution 1737 (2006)

trying to gain this capability. The Iranian Navy lacks the ability to project power far away from its home waters, with the exception of some limited excursions to Syria, and recently Sri Lanka.⁵⁷ The Iranian Air Force is not known to have conducted any long-range operations. Iran's much talked about ballistic missile program also currently lacks the ability to strike the United States. The maximum range of its missiles is currently 2,000-2,500 km.⁵⁸ These limitations severely restrict Iran's ability to take the fight to the U.S. main-land. A web of terrorist and fourth-generation warfare-trained operatives could give Iran this striking power, as we have seen from the aforementioned attempts. The Iranian government's use of intelligence services, both Iranian and Venezuelan, to attempt to strike the United States shows that the government has the intent to carry out attacks in the United States. Based on these prior incidents, I conclude that Iran will make more active use of these strategic tools.

The economic and military activities of Iran have been helped by Iranian efforts on the public diplomacy front. Looking at the Iranian presence in Latin America compared to other countries, Iran has 145 accredited diplomats in its embassy in La Paz, more in Caracas, compared to only eight in Madrid,⁵⁹ and fourteen in Canada before the closing of its embassy.⁶⁰ This presence follows the trend that Iran has almost doubled its embassies in the region from six to ten.⁶¹ Based on the evidence presented above while discussing Iran's military and intelligence activities in the region, it is likely that some of

⁵⁷ Julian Kerr, "Australia Confirms Iran Navy Encounter Off Sri Lanka," *Jane's Navy International*, March 19 2013.

⁵⁸ Doug Richardson, "Iran Releases Data on Its Ballistic Missiles," *Jane's Missiles and Rockets* (2011).

⁵⁹ Marirrodiga

⁶⁰ Stewart Bell, "Iranian Diplomatic Staff Leave Canada after Ties Severed, Embassy Shuttered," *National Post*(2012), <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/09/12/iranian-diplomatic-staff-leave-canada-after-ties-severed-embassy-shuttered/>.

⁶¹ Roger F. Noriega, "Iran's Gambit in Latin America," *Commentary* 133, no. 2 (2012).p.30

this embassy staff is involved in training at the *ALBA Escuela de Defensa* and intelligence operations. Military advisors are not usually accredited as diplomats, however, there is nothing stopping such an action.

Iran faces a perception challenge in the region. A 2011 Latinobarometro survey showed Ahmadinejad and Iran were ranked least favorable by citizens of Latin America out of nine countries, receiving only 25 percent favorable compared to the United States' 72 percent.⁶² These numbers are an average across the region; when looking at the ALBA nations, the average is only slightly more favorable at 35.25 percent.⁶³ I should note that the top three favorable countries were ALBA countries. While the governments in Latin America may be friendly to Iran, the population does not feel the same way.

Iran has taken steps to change this negative perception. In December of 2011, it began broadcasting an Iranian satellite TV channel in the region, Hispan TV. This channel is a 24-hour broadcast channel in Spanish.⁶⁴ According to the *Sistema Bolivaria de Communication e Informacion*, the goal of this channel is to “show the points that unite and historical connections between Iran and Latin America to bring [them] closer and guarantee a future.”⁶⁵ The channel follows an Islamic dress code while on air.⁶⁶ This will also serve as a way to link the Bolivarian Revolution to the Iranian Revolution.

⁶² Ilan Berman, "Iran Courts Latin America," *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (2012).. P. 102

⁶³ Ibid. p.104

⁶⁴ Marirrodriga

⁶⁵ "Irán Se Escuchará En Español Con El Canal Hispan Tv," Sistema Bolivariana de Communication e Información, <http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/multipolaridad/iran-se-escuchara-espanol-canal-hispan-tv/>.

⁶⁶ See Figure 2.



Figure 2 www.speroforum.com

In addition, Iran and Venezuela publicize joint construction projects, many of which help the poorer segments of the population. An example of this is the

Cuidad Fabricio Ojeda public housing project in Venezuela, a joint project of the two governments.⁶⁷ This could imply that Iran is attempting to garner popular support in the region in line with its diplomatic activities. These activities will likely help influence the population to support Iran in the event of a conflict. While this might not be enough to push these countries into overtly helping Iran militarily, especially since even in Venezuela the United States is more popular than Iran,⁶⁸ an increase in popular support for Iran may give the ALBA governments more leeway in supporting Iran.

There has been a push by Iran to reach out to Islamic communities in the region, in particular Venezuela's Margarita Island.⁶⁹ There have also been more Islamic websites sponsored by figures linked to the Iranian government targeted at Latin America.⁷⁰ I believe Iran desires to tap this growing population in the hope some can become radicalized and join Iran's mission in the region.

Iranian interactions with the ALBA cover many aspects of national power. Iran is involved in military, economic, political, and informational activities with these countries. It is clear that Iran is trying to spread its influence among these countries.

⁶⁷ Farah 2011

⁶⁸ The United States has a 56% favorable rating compared to Iran's 37%.

⁶⁹ Noriega p. 32

⁷⁰ Meir Amit p. 37

Compared to the following case of Brazil, the majority of Iran's activities in Latin America are focused on these countries. It is important to note that, at least with Nicaragua, this is not a new development; the two countries maintained an alliance from 1979 to 1990 coinciding with the Sandinista regime.⁷¹

The moves Iran is making in the region are aimed at the United States, whether those moves are to secure its supplies of strategic resources or prepare terrorist cells to strike targets in the hemisphere. The terrorist cells can be used to extend the range at which Iran is able to strike targets, which considering the current political climate are most likely American.

Brazil

Relations between Brazil and Iran revolve around trade. Trade between the two nations heavily favors Brazil. In 2012, Brazilian exports to Iran were projected to be \$1.3 billion, while Brazilian imports from Iran were only \$140 million.⁷² The relative importance of bilateral trade between the countries is apparent when looking at the percentage of trade of each country going to the other. Imports from Brazil accounted for 2.9% of all Iranian imports, making Brazil Iran's eighth-largest supplier. On the other hand, Brazil does not make the top 25 list for purchasers of Iranian exports.⁷³ This is an attempt to secure resources that it cannot get as easily from the world market. The top imported goods from

⁷¹ Caro and Rodriguez, "La Presencia De Irán En América Latina a Través De Su Influencia En Los Países Del Alba ".p. 23

⁷² Ministério das Relações Exteriores p.3

⁷³ Ibid. p.4

Brazil are industrial and mechanical goods, accounting for 21.5 percent of Iranian-Brazilian imports.⁷⁴

An important aspect of Iranian-Brazilian relations is the deal that was proposed by Brazil and Turkey for a nuclear fuel exchange with Iran in 2010. These negotiations helped boost Brazil onto the world stage as negotiator. This deal would have had “Iran exchange 1,200 kg of its low-enriched uranium for higher enriched nuclear fuel for use in a medical research reactor.”⁷⁵ The goal of this deal was to help de-escalate tensions between the West and Iran over its nuclear enrichment program. In the end, this deal did not go through, but it did serve to highlight the relationship between Iran and Brazil. It also shows Brazil’s support for what it sees as Iran’s peaceful nuclear program. This is risky if it turns out that Iran’s program is not solely peaceful.

Former President Lula reached out to former President Ahmadinejad on various occasions. Once in Ecuador in 2007 when Ahmadinejad was invited to Brazil, and the second time was in 2008 when the foreign ministers expressed a desire for both heads of state to meet.⁷⁶ When the two leaders were supposed to meet in 2009, the idea was met by protest domestically and did not occur.⁷⁷ Thus the relationship between Brazil and Iran has not reached an official head of state meeting, in contrast to the ALBA nations, known for many meetings between heads of state. The relationship between Brazil and Iran is more institutionalized and transparent than Iran’s relationship with the ALBA countries.⁷⁸ Lula’s successor, President Dilma Rousseff, has stepped back from the closeness between

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 5

⁷⁵ "Taking Centre Stage," *Latin America Monitor: Brazil Monitor* 27, no. 7 (2010).

⁷⁶ Johnson p.68

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Farah 2012 p.3

Iran and Brazil.⁷⁹ She has also called out Iran on human rights issues on many occasions.⁸⁰

Analysis

Simply in the amount of data available, a difference is visible between the two case studies. Iran has more interactions with the ALBA countries across multiple areas than it does with Brazil. Considering the difference in trade numbers between the two case studies it is strange that the relationship between Brazil and Iran isn't stronger, and that the trade ties between the ALBA nations and Iran are so low. While there are many economic ties between the ALBA countries and Iran, they represent small amounts of money. I would expect there to be more relationships between Iran and Brazil due to the relative amount of trade when compared to the ALBA countries. Looking at the United States as an example, of the five countries from which it imports the most, three are treaty allies: Canada, Japan, and Germany; one is a very important partner in fighting crime, Mexico; and the last is the next largest economy in the world, China.⁸¹ This contrasts with Iran's situation in Latin America, with its closest allies not being its largest trading partners. It is also interesting to note that while Iran is an observer in ALBA, it is not an observer in MERCOSUR. Both Brazil and Venezuela are members of MERCOSUR, giving Iran more reason for becoming an observer in MERCOSUR as opposed to ALBA, in my opinion.

⁷⁹ Marirrodiga p.2

⁸⁰ Eduardo J. Gómez, "Why Iran-Brazil Friendship Has Gone Cold," *CNN*(2012), <http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/05/opinion/gomez-iran-brazil-chill>.

⁸¹ NTI.org, "Design Characteristics of Iran's Ballistic and Cruise Missiles," NTI.org, http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/design_characteristics_iran_missiles_3.pdf?_=1360355163.

Iranian strategy in Latin America appears to be aimed at securing its supply lines of strategic materials from the ALBA countries and Brazil, and foreign capital, in addition to establishing bases for terrorist networks. These supply lines may continue even in the event of conflict with the United States. The ALBA supply lines most likely will continue due to shared anti-American sentiments between the governments. Iran has tried to increase the likelihood that these routes will remain open through public diplomacy and TV influences in the region. It is important to note that while there have been multiple attempts to spread Islam in Brazil,⁸² there has not been the systematic approach in Brazil that there has been in the ALBA nations to convince the population of Iran's good intentions. This is most likely due to Brazil being perceived as friendly to the United States. In the event of conflict, I believe Iran thinks Brazil will side with the United States, cutting off supplies, and is thus not worth the expense of trying to solidify. On the other hand ALBA's statement of support for Iran may merit more investment on Iran's part to keep these supply routes open. Iran is using its military expertise and technology to increase the capability of allied armed forces in the region in both conventional and unconventional warfare. This increases the readiness of Iran's allies in the type of warfare expected to be successful against the United States.

The military part of Iran's strategy in the region focuses on unconventional warfare. As previously mentioned, this is the only way Iran can currently strike the U.S. mainland. As their missionaries try to recruit more members into their proxy organizations, the threat from these organizations increases. Iran has increasingly used this network to attack the United States. Interestingly, the only successful attacks did not attack American interests.

⁸² Noriega p.31

These attacks were against Argentine and Israeli interests. Despite previous successes, Iran has not attacked Israeli interests in the region since the early 1990s. This plus the attempted attacks against the United States leads me to believe Iran is saving this network for a conflict with the United States. While the attacks in Argentina occurred long before the recent increase in tension between Iran and the United States, I believe this is simply an outlier and does not show any major change in the target of Iran's strategy in the region.

Iran was also active in the 1980s supporting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Iran and Nicaragua have referred to these past ties recently. Despite the closeness of the two countries, Iran closed its embassy once the Sandinistas were voted out of power, only to reopen it in 2007 once President Ortega was returned to power. This is another example of a pause and reset of Iranian interactions with Latin America. While it could be argued this is a simple resurgence of old ties, without the current state of relations between the United States and Iran, I do not believe the ties would have progressed as quickly as they have since their resumption.

Conclusion

Iran's strategy in the region displays patterns of preparation for conflict with the United States. Currently, the main point of conflict between the two nations is Iran's nuclear program. Therefore, I conclude that Iran's strategy in the region results partly from U.S. policy toward Iran's nuclear program. Iran's actions in Latin America demonstrate Iran's ability to threaten the United States in its own region, along a similar vein to how The U.S. threatens Iran in the Persian Gulf. The aforementioned activities by Iran correlate

with the increasing tensions between the United States and Iran. The gasoline agreements occurred once the United States and the United Nations implemented sanctions. Iran's actions are a direct response to counteract U.S. policies. While obviously this is not sufficient to explain why or the success with which Iran has engaged in Latin America, but without this motivation, Iran would not have looked so far away or close to the United States for allies. In light of the death of Hugo Chavez and the election of President Rouhani, I predict that the ties will continue, albeit at a slower pace and may even slightly decrease. Any decrease will likely be due to the reliance on the personal relationship between the two former leaders.

When looking at the large difference in Iranian activities between the ALBA nations and Brazil, the difference in governance must be addressed. The ALBA countries feel they are revolutionary countries while Brazil does not. I agree with Purdue and Hunter that revolutionary ideals play a part in Iranian strategy. However, I do not believe this is the sole reason for its involvement. This relationship is a factor for success and helps explain the discrepancy between the two case studies. Related to the idea of revolutionaries joining together is the much older "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" idea. The governments of the ALBA nations have publicly declared they feel threatened by the United States thus are more willing to interact with Iran than Brazil, a friend of the United States.

The use of Iranian assets for the bombings in Argentina shows that Iran has been active in this region for decades. While this is evidence that Iran's involvement in Latin America is not solely based on a possible conflict with the United States, it does not change the reasons for the recent events and ties between Iran and countries in the region.

I believe the lull between these attacks and the current conflict represented a pause and reset in Iran's strategy.

Chapter Two: Iranian Counter US Strategy: The Strait of Hormuz

Introduction

Following the fall of the Iranian Shah in 1979 and the subsequent hostage crisis involving American diplomatic personnel, the relationship between the United States and Iran drastically changed for the worse. As this relationship soured, the likelihood of conflict between the two countries increased. Today, one of the main points of contention is Iran's nuclear program. This has led to United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and American sanctions.

Iran is located on the strategic Strait of Hormuz, through which 35 percent or more of seaborne oil travels.⁸³ This position allows Iran to threaten to close the Strait in the event of conflict.⁸⁴ This threat is a large part of Iranian naval strategy. This paper examines why Iran has followed certain policies in the development of its naval forces and how those policies are important to understanding Iranian naval strategy in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's military forces, as are any nation's, are designed to counter perceived military threats. In Iran's case, the perceived threat is the most powerful navy in the world, the U.S. Navy. In any conventional conflict, Iran would likely be rapidly defeated. For this reason, Iran has had to find other ways to counter the United States' control of the sea without inviting a massive military response leading to Iran's defeat.

⁸³ Ofira. Seliktar, *Navigating Iran : From Carter to Obama* (New York :: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁸⁴ Yeganeh Torbati, "Iran Renews Hormuz Closure Threats," *Reuters*(2012), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/15/us-iran-hormuz-idUSBRE86E0CN20120715>.

Literature Review

The Strait of Hormuz

Given the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's ability to close the Strait is the center of debate in both the academic and policy worlds. With the disparity in military power between the United States and Iran, many studies agree that the United States would win a conventional conflict.⁸⁵ Different viewpoints have arisen, however, with regard to the ability of Iran to close the Strait, and if that is possible, how long it would take the United States to respond and at what cost in lives, material, and money.⁸⁶

In general, the writing on the Strait of Hormuz focuses on mines, missiles, ships, and aircraft. All agree that Iran could mine the Strait to some extent. In addition, all agree the United States would likely use military force to keep the Strait open. While it is almost certain that the United States would respond to a massive Iranian blockade, it is unknown if there is a threshold for U.S. involvement. I posit that a threshold for U.S. involvement exists. There are actions which Iran could undertake in the Strait to make transit more difficult without the United States responding militarily, along a similar line to the actions taken by President Assad in Syria and the debate over U.S. involvement, specifically the "red line" President Obama issued over the use of chemical weapons, and the debate over military intervention once their use was reported.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ J. Peter Pham, "Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz: A Realist Assessment," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 32, no. 2 (2010); Caitlin Talmadge, "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (2008); Eugene Gholz, "The Strait Dope: Why Iran Can't Cut Off Your Oil," *Foreign Policy*, no. Sept./ Oct/ (2009).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Barack Obama, "President Obama Speaks at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium" (paper presented at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium, National Defense University, Ft. Lesley J McNair, December 3 2012).

The accepted Iranian strategy does not involve a traditional blockade posture with surface or large numbers of subsurface ships.⁸⁸ Instead, it involves an initial Iranian mine-laying operation in or near the shipping lanes. Iran is estimated to have over 2,000 mines, including Soviet, Chinese, North Korean, and homemade mines. These mines would likely be backed up by Chinese-made, anti-ship missiles, both mounted on ships and deployed from shore.⁸⁹ In addition to these missiles, Iran has access to indigenously designed air-launched anti-ship missiles. Assumed U.S. air superiority largely counteracts any benefit from these missiles.⁹⁰

While Iran may be able to mine the Strait and launch anti-ship missiles, it would likely be difficult for it to cut off the oil supply transiting the Strait. For example, Eugene Gholz, and J. Peter Pham believe Iran has the intent to close the Strait, yet lacks the capability.⁹¹ Conversely, arguments against Iran's ability to close the Strait completely rely on tankers being able to move around the threats, such as mines or the range of missiles.⁹² Specifically, ships can move around known minefields to areas that have been cleared or are more difficult to mine; they can also move outside of the most effective ranges for missiles. Related to the ability of ships to avoid hazards is the possibility of the international community to move the shipping lanes away from the threat.⁹³ Beyond the prospect of tankers simply moving out of the way, it is difficult to sink or disable an oil

⁸⁸ Such as the blockades during the World Wars.

⁸⁹ HY-1, HY-2, and C-802 missiles Nato Reporting name Silkworm, Seersucker, and Saccade.

⁹⁰ Pham, "Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz: A Realist Assessment." P.68, Talmadge, "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." p.90, Seliktar, *Navigating Iran : From Carter to Obama*. p. 4

⁹¹ Gholz, "The Strait Dope: Why Iran Can't Cut Off Your Oil."

⁹² Ibid. Pham, "Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz: A Realist Assessment."

⁹³ Pham, p.68

tanker. During the tanker war, a naval conflict during the Iran-Iraq War, 150 larger oil tankers were hit with anti-ship cruise missiles, but only about a quarter were disabled.⁹⁴

Before being able to hit a tanker, however, the weapons must be deployed. A large part of the successful deployment of weapons is training. According to past research, the Iranian military lacks the ability to effectively deploy these forces, especially against an American response because the conventional Iranian navy is “a hollow force.”⁹⁵ As previously mentioned, mines are a large concern, however, the ability of Iran to deploy the mines before the United States and regional allies notice would be difficult if not impossible.⁹⁶ Anti-ship cruise missiles also pose operational difficulties for the Iranian military through the challenge of “over the horizon targeting”; unless Iran has mastered this technique, the effective range of its missiles will be severely limited.⁹⁷ During the 2006 war in Lebanon, the training of Hezbollah troops surprised the Israeli forces, both on land and sea.⁹⁸ It is logical that an organization receiving training from a state would not be better trained than the state providing the assistance. Therefore, I disagree with the assessment that Iran would be incapable of deploying these weapons successfully.

Scenarios for closing the strait do exist. For example, Catlin Talmadge examines many Iranian Strait-closing weapon systems, strategies and possible U.S. countermeasures.

While the impact of any closure of the Strait would be felt primarily through oil,

Talmadge explains the “potential for further military escalation would be high.”⁹⁹ As she

⁹⁴ Gholz.

⁹⁵ Pham, p.66, Gholz

⁹⁶ Pham p.68, Seliktar, *Navigating Iran : From Carter to Obama*.

⁹⁷ Pham p. 67

⁹⁸ Steven Erlanger and Richard A. Opiel Jr., "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics and Weapons," (2006).

⁹⁹ Talmadge, "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." P.85

explains, this escalation may put the traffic in the Strait at further risk. This risk would be from Iranian actions as well as the risk of sailing in a war zone. Talmadge focuses on mine warfare as Iran's primary means of attack. She concludes that traffic in the Strait "could be impeded for weeks or longer, with major air and naval operations required to restore the full flow of traffic."¹⁰⁰

William O'Neil contradicts Talmadge and insists she exaggerates the damage that could be done by an Iranian attempt to close the Strait. As with the previous authors, O'Neil examines the ability of the tankers to move away from the established shipping lanes.¹⁰¹ He also examines the difficulties of mining the Strait, both the secrecy needed to prevent American action and technical difficulties such as laying mines from a submarine in shallow waters.¹⁰² O'Neil also refutes Talmadge's claims regarding anti-ship missiles. O'Neil explores the difficulties of operating anti-ship missiles in the Strait, including background radar returns,¹⁰³ the difficulty of radar placement, and the countermeasures implemented by the United States.¹⁰⁴

As previously stated, most authors examine the threat from mines as one of the most severe threats from the Iranian military. While they acknowledge the threat, many reports and articles temper this threat with the realization that Iran relies on the Strait of Hormuz to export its own oil.¹⁰⁵ Mines are indiscriminate weapons; Iranian tankers would be at the same risks as other countries' unless the locations of the minefields were shared,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 116 Her estimates for the closer of the Strait range between 37 and 112 days.

¹⁰¹ William D. O'Neil, "Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz," *Discussion of Caitlin Talmadge, Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz, with reply* 33, no. 3 (2008). P.192

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Such returns include other ships, oil platforms, and land.

¹⁰⁴ O'Neil p.194

¹⁰⁵ Seliktar, *Navigating Iran : From Carter to Obama*.

increasing the probability of foreign intelligence services learning the location of the minefields or, at least, safe passages. Due to this risk, the importance of Iranian oil exports to the Iranian economy and the risk of harming diplomatic relations with countries such as China, I forecast that Iran will attempt to close the Strait using unconventional means, which are more discriminatory. The prior literature leaves a gap in the knowledge of Iran's overall naval strategy; I address this issue by looking at additional aspects of naval power.

Naval Warfare

Today's weapons and strategies may be more technologically advanced than those used historically, but they trace their roots to past weapons and strategies. Since at least the 1800s, mines and coastal fortifications were in use as an anti-access area denial tactic.¹⁰⁶

Naval strategy has evolved over time, one of the first strategists, Mahan, focused on the enemy fleet as the target of offensive action.¹⁰⁷ While he did believe in the utility of disrupting maritime commerce, this was only brought about after the destruction of the enemy fleet.¹⁰⁸

Naval strategist Julian Corbett examined the role of the "fleet in being." This concept of a defensive naval posture involves keeping one's fleet active and able to sortie, even if it does not.¹⁰⁹ This requires the opposing commander to prepare for a fleet action, and resources devoted to defend against one, while the opposing fleet is safely in port. This

¹⁰⁶ A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1815*, 12th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1918), p.67

¹⁰⁷ Peter Craig Gordon Alexander Paret and Felix Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy : From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton Paperbacks; (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). p. 459

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Julian Stafford Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Classics of Sea Power; Variation: Classics of Sea Power. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988). P.214

strategy allows for a smaller force to tie up a larger one, as well as stage minor counterattacks from relative safety. While these minor attacks rarely succeed, Corbett notes that “the weaker of two belligerents [in] minor-attack has always exercised a certain fascination. When a Power was so inferior in naval force that it could scarcely count even on disputing command by fleet operations, this strategy remained a hope of reducing the relative inferiority by putting part of the enemy's force out of action.”¹¹⁰

Modern naval strategy revolves around four missions. First, strategic deterrence, which in the case of the United States and other nuclear powers is providing a second strike; for other countries it is the ability to increase the cost of an opponent’s actions.¹¹¹ Second, naval presence “is the orchestrated use of naval forces below the level of hostility in support of foreign policy.”¹¹² Third, sea control is the ability to transit when and where you need to or stop your opponent from doing so.¹¹³ Fourth, projection of power ashore; this includes missiles, aircraft, and amphibious actions.¹¹⁴

Control of the sea within the fleet-in-being is “essentially guerrilla warfare at sea.”¹¹⁵ The side attempting to deny the use of the sea does not always have to confront the other side in battle; the commander has the initiative and can choose how and where to attack the opposing force. These forces can be smaller than the asserting power’s forces.¹¹⁶ In light

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 228

¹¹¹ Stansfield Turner, "The Naval Balance: Not Just a Numbers Game," *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 2 (1977). P. 343

¹¹² Ibid. p. 344

¹¹³ Turner 1977 p. 344; Stansfield Turner and George Thibault, "Preparing for the Unexpected: The Need for a New Military Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 61, no. 1 (1983). P. 124

¹¹⁴ Turner 1977 p. 344

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 347

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 347

of the anti-ship missile threat, modern theorists favor a larger number of smaller ships, so the loss of one ship is not as severe.¹¹⁷

The traditional sea denial strategy used by smaller states is the *guerre de course*, another name for the guerrilla war at sea. The goal of this strategy is to deny the larger force risk-free operations.¹¹⁸ The use of this strategy enables the building of flotillas of small ships that can operate in “littoral waters too dangerous for capital ships.”¹¹⁹ These forces allow a commander to strike when and where he wishes by using coastal terrain and swift attacks. Following this strategy also entails submarines and larger ships designed for destroying commerce, not necessarily enemy capital ships. The increased range of land-based systems, whether aircraft or missiles, has made the littoral waters more deadly to capital ships and commerce.¹²⁰ Modern naval strategists, such as Till and Turner, point to the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Tranato, and Mers- el-Kebir as the death of Corbett’s “fleet-in-being.” I disagree that the fleet-in-being strategy is dead; the advent of anti-aircraft missiles, stronger air defense radars, increased reconnaissance ability, and simple awareness of such successful attacks means navies implanting such a strategy can more successfully defend their ports.

The narrow confined waters of the Persian Gulf, in particular the Strait of Hormuz are littoral waters. These waters are different from the open ocean in that they are highly developed both on land and at sea. Till examines the naval strategy in littoral waters.

Based on the belief that since the “ the introduction of numerous torpedo boats, coastal

¹¹⁷ Turner 1982 p. 127

¹¹⁸ Capt. Wayne P. Hughes USN (Ret), "Naval Operations: A Close Look at the Operational Level of War at Sea," *Naval War College Review* Vol. 65, no. 3 (2012). p.27

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 33

submarines, and minefields early in the ... twentieth century, contested coastal waters have been taboo for capital ships and the nearly exclusive province of flotillas of small, swift, lethal fast-attack craft.”¹²¹ In this environment, the combat ability of a country’s fleets is dispersed among multiple units; the loss of one is less severe than the loss of a capital ship. When these forces are integrated properly, Till posits that they have the same combat capability of a larger fleet.¹²²

Case Study Selection

The case studies I have selected are the Iran-Iraq War, the state of Iranian naval forces today, and similar naval strategies and incidents. The Iran-Iraq War was a formative experience for the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran and its military. During this time, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was founded, and Iran began threatening to close the Strait in retaliation for Iraqi attacks. As with any major military conflict, the Iran-Iraq War forced Iran to rapidly develop military strategies in response to the progress of the war. Following the war, Iran learned lessons; attempting to understand those lessons will help us understand Iran’s naval strategy.

Due to the lack of English language literature from the Iranian military about the Iran-Iraq War, the study of the state of Iranian naval forces today helps determine the lessons learned from the Iran-Iraq War, as well as sheds light on the forces Iran has to implement a naval strategy. Since the availability and composition of forces has a large effect on strategy and visa-versa, an understanding of modern Iranian naval forces is essential to understanding Iranian naval strategy.

¹²¹ Geoffery Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2004). p. 259

¹²² Ibid.

I have included the selection of small boat naval strategies and terrorist incidents because the world does not exist in a vacuum. Iran can observe the effectiveness of other strategies and tactics, and adapt those to its own strategy so that it learns from others' mistakes and successes. The success or failure of these strategies helps predict the success or failure of the Iranian effort.

Key Definitions and Assumptions

During my case study of the Iran-Iraq War, while there are many aspects that affect Iranian thinking and strategy, I am only focusing on the naval strategy in and around the Strait of Hormuz. During the Iran-Iraq War, both sides engaged in attacks on merchant shipping. As this is a paper on Iranian strategy, however, I will limit my case study to actions that would have an effect on Iranian strategy, and not a general case study of the Tanker War. I also assume that Iran has some control over its proxies such as Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations. In addition, I assume the Iranian state is not suicidal, and is rational and capable of learning from mistakes.

Case Studies

Iran-Iraq War and the Tanker War

One of the defining events of the Middle East in the late 20th Century was the Iran-Iraq War, which occurred from 1980 to 1988. As the century's longest conventional war, there are many aspects of the conflict which could be studied. I, however, am focusing on the conflict in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

On September 22, 1980, one year after the Iranian revolution, Iraq invaded Iran in a surprise air and land attack. After some initial success, the Iraqi offensive ground to a halt

following the Battle of Khorramshahr in October 1980.¹²³ Following Iranian counterattacks into Iraqi territory, the war began to resemble World War I trench warfare.¹²⁴ As in all wars, both sides began to seek ways to gain the initiative over their opponent.

In 1984, Iraq, believing itself immune from Iranian retaliation due to the lack of Iraqi traffic using the Gulf, began attacking “any vessel found in what [was] termed the ‘zone of military operations.’”¹²⁵ In addition to targeting Iranian vessels, Iran also targeted ships flying the flags of neutral countries such as Cyprus, Turkey, and Greece.¹²⁶ The primary weapon used was the Exocet missile, and in 1984 alone, 32 out of 58 ships (55 percent) were either sunk or declared a constructive total loss.¹²⁷

Subsequently, Iran began to retaliate against Iraqi attacks targeting ships of nations friendly to Iraq, such as Saudi Arabia. This led to an expansion of the conflict by both sides. In addition to direct air assaults, Iran began boarding foreign ships to inspect them for weapons and other materials heading for Iraq.¹²⁸ Both belligerents encountered difficulties during this stage of the conflict; many of these problems were previously mentioned such as heat haze, volume of traffic, and radar coverage.¹²⁹ It is important to note that during this stage of the war Iran did not have dedicated anti-shipping missiles as

¹²³ Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War: The Iran-Iraq War* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990).p.93

¹²⁴ Lee Allen. Zatarain, "America's First Clash with Iran : The Tanker War, 1987-88," (Havertown, Pa. :: Casemate, 2010). p. 4

¹²⁵ Martin S. Hooton E. R. Navias, *Tanker Wars: The Assault on Merchant Shipping During the Iran-Iraq Conflict, 1980-1988*, (New York, 1996). P. 72

¹²⁶ Ibid. p.73-4

¹²⁷ (CTL) Not economically repairable, Hooton p. 74

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 81

¹²⁹ Ibid. 85

it does today.¹³⁰ Iran mainly used Maverick missiles or unguided rockets.¹³¹ The use of anti-tank missiles as opposed to anti-ship missiles put Iran at a large disadvantage.

Islamic Jihad, a terrorist organization with ties to Iran, claimed to have mined the Gulf of Suez, damaging several vessels. However, it is more likely that Libya was responsible.¹³²

Following this incident, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps began improving the Iranian mine capability.¹³³ Before the war with Iraq, the Iranian Navy had only performed one mine laying exercise.¹³⁴

In the first year of the “Tanker War”, the difference between the effectiveness of the Iranian and Iraqi campaigns is clear. Table 1 shows Iraqi attacks and Table 2 shows Iranian attacks. The first number is the ships attacked followed by total sunk or CTL.

Table 1 Breakdown of Ships Attacked by Iraq 1984¹³⁵

Quarter	Tankers	Bulk Carriers	General Dry Goods	Support
I	1	5/3	6/3	1/1
II	9/6	3/2	2/1	-
III	3/2	8/3	4/2	2/2
IV	7/6	1/1	2/1	-

¹³⁰ Ibid. 87

¹³¹ Hooton p.87 Mavericks are Anti-tank missiles not anti-ship.

¹³² Ibid. 90

¹³³ David Crist, *The Twilight War : The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012). p.236

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Hooton. p.100

Table 2 Breakdown of Ships Attacked by Iran, 1984¹³⁶

Quarter	Tankers	Bulk Carriers	General Dry Goods	Support
I	-	-	-	-
II	5	-	-	-
III	7	-	-	-
IV	3/1	-	1	2/1

As Tables 1 and 2 show, not only was the Iraqi campaign more extensive, targeting in the third quarter alone as many ships as Iran did during the entire year, it was more successful. This success was most likely due to the specialized anti-ship missiles Iraq possessed as opposed to Iran.

As the war progressed, Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz.¹³⁷ Iran began stopping more Kuwaiti ships along with Italian and Chinese vessels thought to be aiding the Iraqi war effort.¹³⁸ The most volatile action during this time was the attempted boarding of a French merchant vessel, “only for the Iranian warships to be warned off by a French warship.”¹³⁹ After similar boardings of British and American ships, the United States and United Kingdom gave tacit approval for these searches, however both countries expressed reservations, and the United States began escorting merchant shipping in the Gulf.¹⁴⁰ Iran claims to have boarded 1,200 ships and seized 30 cargos.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 109

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 111

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 125

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 160

During 1986, Iran expanded its attacks on merchant shipping using all weapons at its disposal. This year marked the emergence of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and small boat attacks. On October 22 and November 15, the IRGC attacked two ships using RPG-2s and small arms, failing to do significant damage to the ships.¹⁴² The price and availability of these weapons make them a cheaper alternative to traditional naval weapons. While they do not do as much damage, it is still possible to kill crew members or damage vital systems.¹⁴³ Iranian attacks increased from 1984 to 1986, from 23 to 41.¹⁴⁴ In 1986, Iran also received the Chinese-made SS-N-2 “Silkworm”¹⁴⁵

In 1987, the Tanker War greatly expanded. At this time, the Iranian Air Force and Navy were feeling the effects of the war. Equipment was suffering from poor maintenance and war damage.¹⁴⁶ The Silkworm missile is land-based, allowing Iran to launch it without using naval assets. This missile has a warhead that is three times the size of the warhead on the successful Exocet.¹⁴⁷ The missile is able to receive targeting information from air and seaborne assets, helping to extend its effective range to 80 kilometers.¹⁴⁸ While only responsible for two of 88 Iranian attacks, the Silkworm was responsible for damaging one-sixth of the ships that were sunk or damaged beyond repair, as well as the highest number of casualties in an attack of 19 injuries.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 119

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 123

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 131

¹⁴⁵ Cordesman 1990 p.233

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 272

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 274

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Hooton p. 137

Following the introduction of the Silkworm missile and the threat it posed to shipping in the region, in particular Kuwaiti ships, the United States began Operation Earnest Will.¹⁵⁰ The operation began with the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers under the flag of the United States. This allowed the U.S. Navy to escort the tankers through the Strait and Gulf. The operation began on July 24, 1987, with the convoy of the *Gas Prince* and the *Bridgeton*.¹⁵¹ During the course of the convoy, the *Bridgeton* hit a mine, flooding four of 31 compartments.¹⁵² It was determined the convoy had focused too much on the Silkworm and airborne threat and was unequipped to detect mines.¹⁵³ While the ship did not sink, or take long to repair, it served as a wakeup call to the U.S. Navy, and gave Iran a propaganda victory in the international media showing the vulnerability of the United States.

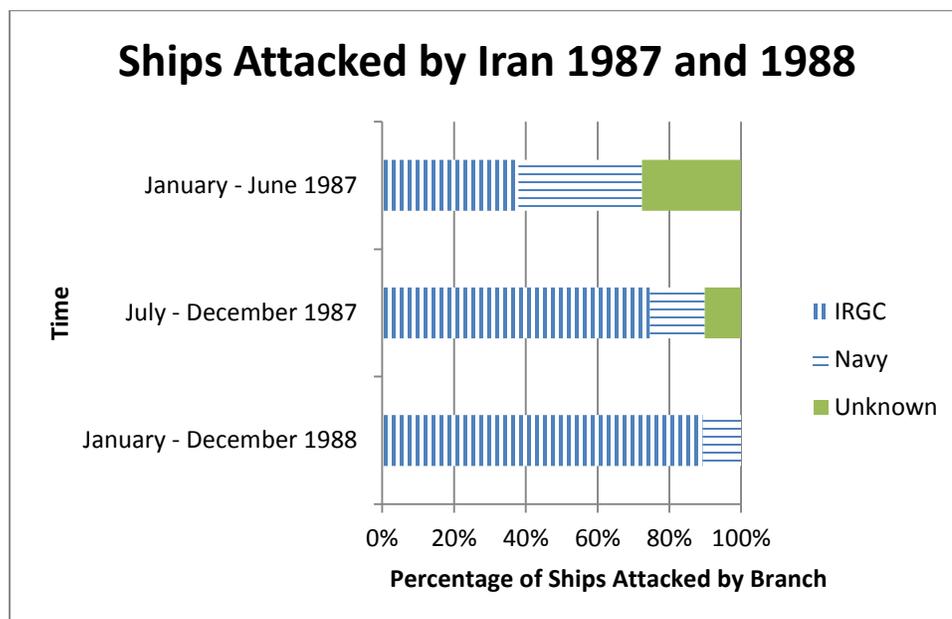


Figure 3 Ships Attacked By Iran 1987 and 1988

¹⁵⁰ Zatarain, "America's First Clash with Iran : The Tanker War, 1987-88." p.61, Cordesman 1990 p. 278

¹⁵¹ Both ships were oil tankers

¹⁵² Zatarain p. 71, Cordesman 1990 p. 298, Hooton p. 136

¹⁵³ Cordesman 1990 p. 298

Following the start of Operation Earnest Will, the IRGC began conducting more attacks. During the first two quarters of 1987, the IRGC conducted 11 of 29 (37 percent) attacks with 10 (34 percent) being conducted by the regular Iranian Navy and eight unknown. The last two quarters of 1987, in contrast, the IRGC was responsible for 44 of 59 (74 percent) attacks while the Navy was responsible for nine.¹⁵⁴ It is also important to note that during the first half of the year only one ship was sunk or written off, while during the second half of the year the number went up to six.¹⁵⁵ Another way to look at this is that for the first half of the year 3 percent of attacks were successful; in the second half of the year 10% of the attacks were successful. In December the IRGC was able to sink the *Norman Atlantic* using RPGs.¹⁵⁶ In response to these attacks, ships from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, and the USSR were in the Gulf.¹⁵⁷

In 1987, the confrontations between Iran and the United States came to a head with the Iran Ajr incident and Operation Nimble Archer. The Iran Ajr was a roll-on roll-off ship owned by Iran.¹⁵⁸ This ship was attacked and boarded by the United States after intelligence showed the ship was being used to lay mines in the Gulf.¹⁵⁹ This was the first proof that Iran had been mining the Gulf, something it had denied.¹⁶⁰

The discussion of Operation Nimble Archer returns to the Silkworm threat. On October 15 and 16, Iran launched two Silkworm attacks against ships in Kuwait. The second attack hit a U.S. flagged Kuwaiti vessel, leading the United States to respond, saying

¹⁵⁴ Hooton p. 159

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ John Kifner, "Iranian Speedboats Attack 2 Tankers," *New York Times*, December 7 1987.

¹⁵⁷ Cordesman 1990 p. 314

¹⁵⁸ "Questions on Iran Ajr: Warship of Freighter," *New York Times*, September 23 1987.

¹⁵⁹ Zatarain p. 106

¹⁶⁰ For more on the incident see Zatarain's book.

“[the US] would protect such vessels anywhere in the world.”¹⁶¹ In retaliation, the United States attacked two oil platforms that were being used as bases to attack Gulf shipping.¹⁶² The oil platforms were attacked with naval gunfire and demolished by Navy SEALs.¹⁶³ Following these incidents, hostile acts between the United States and Iran continued to occur, however both sides went out of their way not to overly provoke the other.¹⁶⁴

In 1988, the last year of the war, the IRGC took over responsibility for the Gulf from the Iranian Navy. The IRGC conducted 42 (89 percent) attacks versus five for the conventional navy. This year the IRGC managed to sink or severely damage three ships using RPGs.¹⁶⁵ On April 13, the IRGC increased the mining campaign in the Gulf. The next day, the USS Samuel B. Roberts hit one of these mines wounding 10 sailors and severely damaging the ship, requiring it to be towed to the United States.¹⁶⁶ In response to this direct attack on a U.S. warship, the United States began Operation Praying Mantis. This operation targeted three oil platforms used by the IRGC.¹⁶⁷ Iran attempted to defend itself using both IRGC and Iranian Navy assets. This turned the operation into the largest surface action for the U.S. Navy since World War II.¹⁶⁸ The Iranian response was uncoordinated and piecemeal.¹⁶⁹ The Iranian ship *Joshan*, a small attack boat, fired a Harpoon missile at the USS Wainwright after declaring it had no hostile intentions.¹⁷⁰ The *Joshan* was sunk, its missile having missed.¹⁷¹ Following the sinking of the *Joshan*,

¹⁶¹ Cordesman 1990 p. 329

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 330

¹⁶³ Zatarain p. 165

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 185 Cordesman 1990 p. 333

¹⁶⁵ Hooton p. 179

¹⁶⁶ Cordesman 1990 p. 376, Hooton p.171, Zatarain p. 190

¹⁶⁷ Cordesman 1990 p. 376

¹⁶⁸ Harold Lee Wise, "One Day of War," *Naval History* 27, no. 2 (2013).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Iran sortied the *Sahand*. This frigate opened fire on U.S. aircraft, resulting in its sinking by the United States.¹⁷² This sinking led to the *Sahand*'s sister ship the Sabalan firing on the USS *Jack Williams*, missing the US frigate, but inviting an attack by laser-guided bombs.¹⁷³ Iran came out of this engagement having "lost nearly half of its operational major ships."¹⁷⁴ In addition, Iran suffered over 160 casualties.¹⁷⁵ The United States lost one helicopter and its two-man crew to an accident.¹⁷⁶

Over the course of the war, the IRGC became the primary organization used for attacking shipping in the Gulf. The percentage of attacks attributed to the IRGC almost reached 90 percent. Its attacks were also the most successful. The IRGC proved it was more capable of producing sorties and accomplishing its mission as opposed to the conventional navy.

Beyond the military operations underway in the Gulf through the Iran-Iraq War, Iran used other methods to put pressure on the Gulf. The use of terrorist organizations and Iranian civilians allowed Iran to distance itself from these actions while still reaping the benefits. Examples of this strategy include the 1988 hijacking of a Kuwaiti Boeing 747, Flight 442, by terrorists supporting Iran;¹⁷⁷ various Hezbollah attacks in Kuwait in retaliation for its support of Iraq in 1985, and an attack on Haj pilgrimages to Mecca in 1987.¹⁷⁸

"Iranian pilgrims massed after Friday midday prayers for a political demonstration, which

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Cordesman 1990 p. 378

¹⁷⁴ Ibid p.379

¹⁷⁵ Crist. p.355

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Cordesman 1990 p.375. This plane was hijacked en-route from Bangkok, Thailand and was diverted to Mashad, Iran. For more information, see Chronology of Events in Hijacking of Kuwait Airways Flight 422 with Am-Hijack Bjt," *Associated Press*, April 12 1988. The terrorists responsible for the hijacking were well trained and seemingly supplied by Iran. Robert Fisk, "Iran to Send 4,000 Troops to Aid President Assad Forces in Syria," *The Independent*(2013), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-to-send-4000-troops-to-aid-president-assad-forces-in-syria-8660358.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Cordesman 1990 p.375

is forbidden by the Saudi authorities.”¹⁷⁹ Iran accused the Saudi security forces of opening fire on the demonstrators. Ayatollah Khomeini’s representative in Mecca called for glorious demonstrations in support of Iranian militant Islam.¹⁸⁰ There is also evidence of Iranian-supplied arms and explosives during the protest.¹⁸¹ Therefore it is highly likely this protest was staged to produce support for Iran. A similar event also happened the previous year, with less bloodshed.¹⁸²

Iranian Naval Power Today

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran began to rebuild its naval forces. Today, Iranian naval forces number over 38,000 men including the IRGC and regular navy.¹⁸³ Iran began modernizing its anti-ship missiles by ordering Russian, Chinese, and North Korean missiles.¹⁸⁴ These missiles are both land-launched and sea-launched missiles.¹⁸⁵ The primary missile in the Iranian arsenal today is the Chinese-made C801/802.¹⁸⁶ This missile family has multiple variants for air, land, sea, and subsurface launch abilities.¹⁸⁷ There are also solid fueled and turbojet propelled varieties.¹⁸⁸ In addition to the flexibility these variants give the family, there is also the choice between TV-guided and radar-

¹⁷⁹ During the Haj, “Iranian pilgrims massed after Friday midday prayers for a political demonstration, which is forbidden by the Saudi authorities” (John Kifner, "400 Die as Iranian Marchers Battle Saudi Police in Mecca; Embassies Smashed in Teheran," *New York Times*, August 2 1987. Iran accused the Saudi security forces of opening fire on the demonstrators. Ayatollah Khomeini’s representative in Mecca called for glorious demonstrations in support of Iranian militant Islam. There is also evidence of Iranian supplied arms and explosives during the protest Therefore it is highly likely this protest was staged to produce support for Iran. A similar event also happened the previous year, with less bloodshed (Cordesman 1990, pp. 230; 301).

Ibid.

Cordesman 1990 p.301

Ibid. p.230

¹⁸³ IISS, "2013 Military Balance," (London: IISS, 2013).

¹⁸⁴ "Iran's Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy," (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, 2009).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Anthony H. Kleiber Martin Cordesman, "Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities the Threat in the Northern Gulf," Westport, Conn. : Praeger Security International. P.116

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

guided missiles, allowing Iran to overcome targeting problems and countermeasures.¹⁸⁹ Hezbollah used the C801/802 family of missiles in 2006 to attack the INS *Hanit* off the coast of Lebanon.¹⁹⁰ The ship was damaged but managed to make it back to port for repairs.¹⁹¹ The same day, a Cambodian-flagged freighter was sunk by another missile.¹⁹² Both the IRGC and the Iranian Navy have expanded their fleets following the war. The Navy has expanded its surface fleet with Iranian-built frigates.¹⁹³ The Iranian navy bought three Kilo-class submarines.¹⁹⁴ These submarines have been complemented by imported and domestic midget submarines.¹⁹⁵ These submarines are similar to the submarine that sank the South Korean *Cheonan*.¹⁹⁶ These submarines, along with the more traditional Kilos, could be used to deploy divers on raids, attack ships, and lay mines. During the Iran-Iraq War, the Iranian Navy had no subsurface assets. The acquisition and production of these submarines has given the Iranian Navy a completely new capability.

In addition to submarines, both navies, but in particular the IRGC, have acquired small missile boats. The majority of these boats are Chinese-made, such as the Houdong and C-14 missile boats.¹⁹⁷ Iran has also converted older French missile boats to fire newer Chinese made missiles.¹⁹⁸ In an effort to become more self-sufficient, Iran has begun to

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p.118

¹⁹⁰ Amos Harel, "Soldier Killed, 3 Missing after Navy Vessel Hit Off Beirut Coast," *HAARTETZ*, July 15 2006.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ 2013 Military Balance

¹⁹⁴ Office of Naval Intelligence

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Mail Foreign Service, "'North Korean Mini-Sub Torpedoed South's Navy Vessel in Revenge for November Attack,' Spy Claims " *The Daily Mail*, April 20 2010. ,Cordesman 2007 p.116

¹⁹⁷ Office of Naval Intelligence

¹⁹⁸ Cordesman 2007 p.119

produce its own missile boats based on North Korean designs.¹⁹⁹ All these missile boats are armed with anti-ship cruise missiles giving them a large amount of firepower relative to their size. These missile boats are also difficult to detect, especially in the Strait and the Gulf due to the already crowded radar picture.²⁰⁰ These ships are newer and thus more reliable than the navy's older surface combatants.²⁰¹

The IRGC also operates a fleet of smaller motorboats.²⁰² These ships are armed with 40mm and 20mm guns, along with smaller automatic weapons and RPGs.²⁰³ In addition to attacks against ships, these ships can be used to land raiding parties around the Gulf.²⁰⁴ They are also capable of being used in suicide attacks and are similar to ships used in attacks discussed below. These ships do not have the supplies or endurance to “remain at sea for more than a few days.”²⁰⁵ In order to ensure the maximum effectiveness of these ships, the IRGC operates them from oil platforms and islands in the Gulf and near the Strait. The IRGC has also been expanding its network of bases on the Iranian coast to hide ships, and stage hit and run attacks.²⁰⁶ An example of this expansion of naval bases is the base opened in the town of Jask, near the entrance to the Strait.²⁰⁷

IRGC tactics for employing the small boats are based off of attacks during the Iran-Iraq War but with more sophisticated weapons. Against escorted ships or combat ships, the

¹⁹⁹ Office of Naval Intelligence

²⁰⁰ Cordesman 2007 p. 116

²⁰¹ Office of Naval Intelligence

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Cordesman 2007 p. 119

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Office of Naval Intelligence

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ "Iran 'Opens Naval Base' near Gulf," *BBC*, October 28 2008.

IRGC hopes to overwhelm the defenses with a high number of small, maneuverable attack ships.²⁰⁸ The ships can then retreat into the range of land-based anti-ship missiles.

The IRGC has been embracing high-tech measures in its strategy in the Gulf. The Iranian military has deployed or is developing various unmanned systems.²⁰⁹ These systems are both airborne and seaborne.²¹⁰ These could be used in “suicide” attacks or in more conventional attacks. In 2012, Iran unveiled a locally produced drone capable of launching missiles and dropping bombs.²¹¹ This and other UAVs could be used both in attacks and for reconnaissance for missiles and other forces.

Iran has flexed its muscles in the Strait against both U.S. and British forces. In 2004 the IRGC captured eight British personnel by while training the Iraq Navy.²¹² In 2007, 15 British sailors and marines were taken captive by the IRGC after straying over the border.²¹³ In both instances, the crews were released without major incident. Against the United States, Iran demonstrated its small boat “swarm tactics.” During an incident in 2008, five Iranian small boats closed to within 200 yards of an American surface task force in the narrow Strait.²¹⁴ While no damage was done, it demonstrated how Iran could use the small boats in real life. The United States conducted a war game involving small boats in 2002 in which the United States navy “lost” 16 ships.²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ Office of Naval Intelligence

²⁰⁹ Cordesman 2007 p.123

²¹⁰ Office of Naval Intelligence

²¹¹ *Unclassified Statement for the Record on the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the Us Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*

²¹² "Iran Releases British Servicemen," *BBC*, June 24 2004.

²¹³ According to the IRGC. The British say they were in Iraqi waters; "Seized Sailors 'Held in Tehran'," *BBC*, March 26 2007.

²¹⁴ THOM SHANKER, "Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game," *New York Times*, January 12 2008.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Small Boat Tactics

Looking beyond the Strait of Hormuz and Iran will help shed light on the rationale behind Iran's naval strategy. Other conflicts around the world have involved tactics similar to those developed by Iran. Within the Strait of Hormuz, Iran is not the only actor. Terrorist groups are also active in the region around the Strait. The oil tanker *M. Star* was attacked while transiting the Strait by what the Emirati investigators determined to be a "homemade explosive aboard a dinghy."²¹⁶ The Abdullah Azzam Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack failed to penetrate the hull of the ship; it did however injure one crewmember.²¹⁷ The attack was likely an attempt to replicate a 2002 attack against the French tanker *Limburg*. While the attack on the *Limburg* failed to sink the tanker, it killed one crewmember and "sent more than 90,000 barrels of oil pouring into the Gulf of Aden."²¹⁸ In conducting this attack, terrorists first rammed the side of the tanker with a small boat that exploded.²¹⁹ These two attacks failed to sink their target ship or even do a large amount of damage.

Other groups have had more success with small boats. The Tamil Tigers staged a successful suicide attack against a Sri Lankan supply vessel. The Tigers rammed a powerboat into the ship and exploded the boat, killing 16.²²⁰ The ship was also attacked with mortars from the speedboat beforehand. As a result of the damage and subsequent fire, the ship sank.²²¹ The Sea Tigers, as the naval arm of the Tamil Tigers was known,

²¹⁶ Robert Worth, "Tanker Damage Caused by Attack, Inquiry Finds," *New York Times*, August 6 2010.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ "Yemen Says Tanker Blast Was Terrorism," *BBC*, October 16 2002.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ "Rebel Suicide Attack on Sri Lankan Supply Ship," *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/world/rebel-suicide-attack-on-sri-lankan-supply-ship.html>.

²²¹ Ibid.

was renowned for its use of small boats for hit and run attacks, as well as larger scale naval battles against the Sri Lankan Navy.²²² The Tigers had small boats designed for specific purposes, some were designed to engage in naval combat, other for inserting frogmen, and a ship designed to go 45 knots as a suicide boat. Following attacks, the Sea Tigers would move their ships 2-3 km inland to avoid detection.²²³

Against military targets, the threat of a small suicide boat is well established. The 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* by Al-Qaeda severely damaged the ship and killed 17 crewmen.²²⁴ The ship was attacked while in port, a more simple measure than attacking a ship on alert while moving. In addition, due to the double hull of most tankers, it is easier to damage a warship than a tanker; however, this does prove suicide attacks can be effective against warships.

The effectiveness of anti-ship missiles against larger surface ships was proven in the 1967 war with the sinking of the Israeli Destroyer *Eilat* by Egyptian missile boats.²²⁵ Perhaps one of the best examples of a conventional small boat strategy was the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. While this war was mainly a land-based conflict, the Israeli Navy “quickly established their tactical superiority at sea, and in the second stage of the conflict, the Israelis found it necessary to attack ... with a variety of exotic craft (explosive boats, frogmen, dinghies, and submersibles ...”²²⁶ The small boats used were

²²² Tom Fish, "Sri Lanka Learns to Counter Sea Tigers' Swarm Tactics," *Jane's Navy International* (2009).

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ CNN Library, "Uss Cole Bombing Fast Facts," <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/world/meast/uss-cole-bombing-fast-facts/index.html>.

²²⁵ Abraham R. Wagner Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Lessons of Modern War Volume I: The Arab-Israeli Conflicts, 1973-1989* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990). P.108

²²⁶ Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. P.179

the predecessors to the boats in use by Iran today. The 1973 wars showed the only counter to these small boats was air cover or other fast attack boats.²²⁷

Another serious threat facing ships in the world is piracy, in particular off the coast of Somalia. These pirates have been fairly successful in capturing ships in the region. In 2008, over half of the pirate attacks were successful that number has significantly dropped in 2013 to less than 10 percent.²²⁸ These pirates typically hold the crews and ships hostage for millions of dollars.²²⁹ The pirates have been responsible for over 149 successful hijackings since 2005. During their attacks, 3,742 crewmembers have been taken hostage, with 82 to 97 casualties.²³⁰ When compared to the number of ships, 22,000, that transit these waters, the number is quite small, however once attacked the pirates can be very successful.²³¹ The tactics used by the pirates are simple and reminiscent of the tactics of the IRGC. The pirates use mother ships as a movable base then attack the targeted ship using small boats and small arms.²³² During 2010, the pirates were able to attack ships even with the area being patrolled by multiple countries.

Analysis

Following the first attack by Iraq against shipping in the Persian Gulf, Iran attempted to retaliate. During the first years of the Tanker War, Iraq was attacking more ships, more successfully than Iran. Iran was only able to sink two ships compared to 33 by Iraq. As the war progressed, Iran became more effective in naval warfare and expanded the IRGC

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ "Maritime Piracy," UN Office on Drugs and Crime, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/9.Maritime_piracy.pdf.

²²⁹ "The Pirates of Somalia: Ending the Threat, Rebuilding a Nation," (The World Bank, 2013).

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Gregory D. Stone, "Proxy War: A Critical Examination of Superpower Indirect Conflict in Africa" (University of Manitoba, 2010).

²³² Ibid.

to naval operations. Iran also moved away from conventional attacks on shipping, air power and traditional sea power. Iran's shift to the IRGC and away from the navy likely involves the degradation of Iranian military power due to the war, as well as the perceived ideological purity of the IRGC. While some may say the main reason for the shift was the ideological purity of the IRGC, I conclude that the degradation of traditional military power was the primary reason, due to the Iranian purchase of Silkworms. These missiles allowed Iran to attack without risking its depleted naval power.

Combat against the United States showed the Iranian navy to be depleted and ineffective, especially against a modern navy. Against the Gulf States, the Iranian navy may have been effective; however, any conflict in the region will likely bring in the United States, forcing Iran to consider this possible enemy in strategic thought. Small boats used in action have proven themselves against various targets, both civilian and military. These are cheaper than a conventional naval force; the armaments of these ships can be similar to those on larger ships, the same missiles for example, just a smaller number. This relates back to Till's argument that when properly used these craft have the same combat capability of a larger fleet at a lower price, and less vulnerability to the loss of a single ship.

The shift to the IRGC accomplished Iran's mission of threatening the Gulf and the Strait more severely, with more successful attacks. This, combined with the Iranian Navy's defeat in Operation Praying Mantis, led to the IRGC taking more of a role in Iran's naval forces. Today, the IRGC has responsibility for defense of the Strait and the Gulf. Strategies of a similar nature to the IRGC's seem to have been effective in the past; however, the effectiveness against the U.S. Navy has yet to be proven and is a risky

strategy. On the other hand, a conventional strategy failed. In my opinion it is logical to attempt a strategy that has not been proven, despite its risks, over one known to fail.

The IRGC also possesses the Quds Force and its links to terrorist networks around the world.²³³ This access may allow the IRGC to coordinate naval actions with attacks on foreign installations in the region, as well as terrorist attacks against civilians, similar to those against Kuwait during the Iran-Iraq War. Less violent than direct terrorist attacks, Iran could orchestrate protests such as those in Saudi Arabia. These protests may even lead to positive press for Iran if many of its supporters are killed or arrested. Such actions could allow Iran to have plausible deniability for actions undertaken by these organizations. While some actions may implicate Iran, such as an attack by Hezbollah or other known Iranian proxies, it is unlikely that retaliation would be directed toward Iran but toward these organizations themselves.

The weapons used by terrorist organizations are unlikely to be able to sink an oil tanker. The three cases of terrorism against civilian vessels show how difficult it is to breach the hull, much less sink the vessel. Weapons used by the IRGC or Iranian supported terrorist groups are likely to be larger and more destructive due to state sponsorship. Small boats can be used to capture ships, as in the case of the Somali pirates. This tactic could be used in the Gulf to board vessels and destroy them, as opposed to suicide attacks against the hull. The narrow confines of the Strait are a likely impediment to this strategy as patrolling naval forces have less area to patrol, and terrorists would have fewer places to hide. That being said, if the perpetrators were Iranian forces during a conflict, they could use the Iranian coastal base network to hide.

²³³ Office of Naval Intelligence

Iran depends on support from other countries, both for weapons and money, and protection from the United States in the United Nations. For this reason, I conclude that Iran is unlikely to use mines to a large extent in any conflict due to their indiscriminate nature. While they are effective and Iran has been increasing its mine laying capability, I foresee Iran using mines to boost the firepower of their small boats, for example laying mines in the path of a targeted ship. This may help reduce the risk of attacking friendly shipping. It is possible that Iran would decide that the damage done to the oil market would be worth the risk of sinking a friendly ship; this is unlikely unless the situation is at the brink of war.

The capabilities Iran has in the Gulf allow for an incremental range of responses. The increasing conventional capability of the Iranian Navy, and the small boats of the IRGC, could be used to board and inspect ships transiting the Strait. This could increase transit costs and difficulties of transiting the Strait, as well as serve to send a diplomatic message to the world. While it is unlikely other countries would be as understanding as they were during the war, I postulate that the world would not respond with military force. While in the case of the Somali pirates the world responded with military force, it does not follow that the world would respond with such force against a nation state, especially if Iran justifies it with some legal maneuver.

The Iranian military could also execute operations against foreign navies operating near its borders. This might bring retaliation against Iran if tensions are very high; on the other hand, when Iran conducted operations against British personnel there was no military retaliation. Related to this would be maneuvers similar to those against the U.S. surface group in 2008.

More seriously, terrorist attacks such as those discussed above could be used against targets hostile to Iran. While more serious than “inspections,” the plausible deniability adds a tool to the Iranian arsenal short of all-out war. Admittedly the support of terrorist organizations has led to invasions of countries in the past, such as Afghanistan and Lebanon, but a small attack in retaliation for a diplomatic issue, such as more sanctions, is unlikely to lead to a response unless Iran is directly responsible, as it was for the mining of the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*.

The next step in Iran’s incremental campaign would be attacks directly attributable to Iran. Such attacks would most likely lead to retaliation against Iran, therefore I see these attacks as highly unlikely unless all other methods have been used and have failed. While some people see Iran as irrational, I disagree; due to the severity of Iran’s defeat in Praying Mantis, Iran has learned not to fight the United States directly. Although it is true Iran would directly defend itself against conventional attacks, I do not see this as being Iran’s primary means of attack.

It seems Iran has learned from its conflict with Iraq what strategies and tactics give it the most “bang for the buck.” Small boats and small arms were among the most successful against commerce shipping during the war, as well as being useful against warships in theory. The building of this strategy does not seem to me to be due to poor resources, but experience.

Iran’s naval strategy in the Gulf is one of the Fleet in Being. Its small boats can stage sorties to conduct raids, and although they may face high casualties, they will likely do some damage to civilian or military vessels. The threat of Iranian missiles, small boats,

submarines, and surface combatants is enough for the United States to maintain a large naval force in the Persian Gulf in peacetime. In a conflict their mere existence will force the United States to commit forces to protect convoys and its bases even without direct raid, part of the principal of the Fleet in Being. While modern strategists have declared the Fleet in Being doctrine dead due to the risk of airborne attack, the dispersion of the IRGC fleet mitigates this threat.

Examining Iranian naval strategy with regard to the four missions of naval strategy shows it is effective. Iran has strategic deterrence by being able to increase the cost of an attack. While the use of the IRGC to capture and harass foreign vessels in the Strait is not the traditional method of establishing naval presence, it nonetheless established Iran's presence. Iran's ability to deny the seas to an enemy has not been established, but other actors have been able to deny risk-free transit of the seas using a similar strategy. Lastly, Iran has chosen an unconventional method of projection of power ashore. It has elected to use proxies, terrorist tactics, and commando raids. These choices are vastly different from those made by large conventional navies; however they fulfill all missions of a naval strategy.

Conclusion

I acknowledge the Iranian threat to close the Strait, but I disagree with the accepted interpretations of "close" examined in the literature review of this paper. While it is possible Iran intends to completely close the Strait, I feel this must be questioned. Iran knows it cannot stand up to U.S military power for long and also knows the United States will use this power to keep the Strait open. The Iranian strategy is not limited to

physically closing the Strait. If the costs of operating in the Strait, due to any of Iran's possible actions discussed, outweigh the benefits the Strait has been effectively closed.

The Strait and the Gulf are two connected strategic waterways. Iran's strategy with regard to these waterways is one of deterrence. Iran is positioning itself to be able to counter a move by a more powerful hostile force. It does this not by attempting to completely stop an action — however this is most likely an end goal of the Iranian military buildup — but by increasing the cost of a hostile action. This deterrence moves beyond the military sphere. Iran has developed force that can retaliate for diplomatic as well as military actions it perceives as hostile. The whole range of Iranian military options must be taken into account when looking at its naval strategy, from raids and terrorist attacks to conventional naval forces.

The military forces and strategy Iran is pursuing give it the ability to incrementally increase retaliation and deterrence in response to the level of perceived hostile action. Iran is attempting to stay below the threshold of massive U.S. or western military action, as it knows it cannot win. By increasing the perceived cost of military actions, Iran is also raising the threshold for military action. In other words, the higher casualties Iran is believed to be able to inflict on attacking forces, the less likely it is to be attacked. Given the United States' strategy with regard to Iran, any violence and escalation by the United States would be a large strategic failure.

Chapter 3: Iran's Division of Military Forces.

Introduction

Responsibility for Iranian security falls on the shoulders of three different military organizations. The Artesh is the traditional military force encompassing air, land, and naval forces. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is the military arm of the Islamic revolution; the IRGC also controls air, land, and sea forces. The final piece of the puzzle is insurgent and terrorist groups supported by Iran, such as Hezbollah. These forces, while not part of the Iranian military, do serve the security interests of the Iranian state. In order to determine if this three pillar security approach is effective, one must understand the Iranian security goals and the climate in which these goals were developed. The force structure Iran has chosen mirrors the Iranian government, which has power distributed among various organizations, at least on paper. By having two militaries, the Artesh and the IRGC, the revolutionary government ensures the two forces act as checks and balances against each other. Each force offers a unique niche to accomplishing Iran's security goals. The specialized nature of each force — the Artesh focusing on conventional military power, the IRGC on irregular warfare and weapons of mass destruction, and Hezbollah's focus on Israel and international terror — creates a robust system of defense of Iran, given the problems of Iran's military forces.

In order to determine the effectiveness of Iran's security system, I first selected three Iranian security goals: to remove foreign intervention; become the regional power and gain influence in the Muslim world; and keep disagreements from erupting into all-out war. Then I examine the three forces Iran uses to accomplish these goals. Lastly I analyzed how each force helps to accomplish each goal.

Iranian Security Goals

The contemporary goals of Iran stem from Iran's history and current strategic situation. Iran is located in one of the most turbulent areas of the world. Throughout modern history, Iran has been involved in many conflicts with its neighbors and countries farther away. It is important to note that unlike the majority of its neighbors, Iran was never colonized. Following the revolution in 1979, the government changed, but prior events had a large impact on the revolution and current security goals. Although this list of Iranian security goals is not all encompassing, the major three goals gleaned from research and classes on Iran are:

1. Remove and prevent foreign intervention in the Middle East and become the regional power
2. Gain prestige in the Muslim world
3. Ensure that conflicts with foreign powers do not lead to all-out war.

Foreign Intervention

The first goal of Iranian security policy examined is removing foreign intervention and becoming the regional power. Foreign interference has left a very large scar on the Iranian psyche, and even today it is perceived to be a large threat to Iran.

The root of this goal goes back to the early 1900s, when the Middle East was first being explored for oil. The British established the Anglo-Persian Oil Company — later the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) — in 1909.²³⁴ This company was highly important to the Royal Navy in that it provided large amounts of oil at a discount, and it was

²³⁴ James A. Bill, "The Eagle and the Lion : The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations," (New Haven :: Yale University Press, 1988). p. 57

controlled by the British government.²³⁵ For many years, the Iranian government was dissatisfied with the terms of agreements between the two countries over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Initially the Iranian government only received 16 percent of the sale of oil, and nothing for refining or distribution that took place outside of Iran.²³⁶ Following the First World War, the British secretly negotiated a deal in which, in exchange for a loan and a bribe, British advisors “would direct Iran’s civil and military affairs.”²³⁷ This secret arrangement and the terms of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company severely hurt relations between the two countries and created distrust among upper-class Iranians.²³⁸

Adding to the mistrust of foreign powers, in particular the British, Iran was invaded during the Second World War by British and Soviet forces. During the war Iran was neutral. There was a large German population living in Iran when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.²³⁹ This large population was a concern to the British and Soviet governments, who were afraid of fifth-column activities. The British and Soviet governments applied diplomatic pressure in an attempt to persuade the Iranian government to expel the German nationals.²⁴⁰ The Iranian government, unsure of the course of the war, attempted to remain neutral. When Iranian response to Allied diplomatic pressure was “deemed unsatisfactory” Allied troops crossed the Iranian border.²⁴¹ Despite some preparations by the Iranian military, it could not stand up to a

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid. p. 58

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid. p. 60

²³⁹ F. Eshraghi, "Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941," *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (1984).

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

multi-front invasion by two global powers. A result of the invasion was the replacement of Reza Shah Pahlavi with his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.²⁴²

Following the war, attention returned to the Anglo-American Oil Company and the issue of national sovereignty. Beyond simply controlling large portions of land, the AIOC refused to allow Iranian officials to audit the books to ensure Iran was getting the money due for its shares of the company.²⁴³ The view of the British at the time was one “as a nation of satanically clever and shrewd maneuverers who acted to bring power and prosperity to the British Isles while smilingly and secretly planting the seeds of decay and impotence elsewhere.”²⁴⁴ Being called an ally of the British became one of the most-used political insults. This mistrust and increasing power of nationalists led to the nationalization of the AIOC and the appointment of nationalist Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddiq.²⁴⁵ In response, the British deployed troops and naval vessels to the region.²⁴⁶

This nationalization and eventual withdrawal of the staff of the British embassy led to attempts by MI-6 to overthrow Musaddiq.²⁴⁷ MI-6 was later joined by the CIA, which was afraid of a communist takeover.²⁴⁸ The coup succeeded in forcing Musaddiq out of office and cementing the power of the pro-western Shah. The British influence during the first half of the 20th century, and the US participation in the 1953 coup and subsequent

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Bill, "The Eagle and the Lion : The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations." p. 64

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 67

²⁴⁶ Mark J Gasiorowsky, "The 1953 Coup D'etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 3 (1987). P. 263

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 270

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 275

support for the Shah has led to a severe mistrust of foreign forces in the region. This mistrust came to the forefront following the Gulf Wars and the invasion of Afghanistan.

After the 1991 Gulf War, the United States became the hegemon in the Middle East, a goal coveted by Iran. Following the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran was surrounded on both sides by British and American troops. Although the United States defeated two of Iran's historical enemies, Iraq and the Taliban, these enemies were replaced by U.S. forces. Given previous history and the conflict between the United States and Iran, Tehran felt very threatened by the presence of U.S. troops in neighboring countries. This threat grew when Washington began speaking about regime change in Iran, echoing in Iranian minds the 1953 coup.²⁴⁹

Due to the history of foreign interference, specifically by the United States and United Kingdom, Iran today is afraid of foreign intervention both overt and covert. A primary goal of Iranian military forces is to safeguard the independence of Iran. This is a goal for all military forces, however, due to Iran's history and current strategic situation this takes on an extra level of importance.

Regional Power

The second goal of Iranian military forces I have chosen to use in this paper is becoming the dominant regional power.²⁵⁰ This goal is best examined through the lens of Iran's rivalries with Israel and the Gulf States.

²⁴⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman, Bryan Gold, and Chole Coughlin-Schulte, "Iran- Sanctions, Energy Arms Control, and Regime Change," (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2014).

²⁵⁰ Reza Sanati, "Rowhani and Iran's Unchanging Goals," <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/rowhani-irans-unchanging-goals-8637>. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, (Yale University Press, 2007). p. 88

The Iranian rivalry with Israel is a relatively modern situation. For a large part of the history of Israel, Iran was seen as a clandestine ally. Israel courted Iran in an effort to counter its Arab enemies. Iran in turn needed Israel's clout in Washington and advanced technology for economic improvement.²⁵¹ This cooperation was never directly acknowledged by the two countries. The two countries opened secret embassies in each other's capitals and maintained some form of diplomatic relations.²⁵² Despite this goodwill, when Israel annexed the West Bank Iran declared the occupation illegal and called for a withdrawal.²⁵³ Following the Iranian revolution, Israel tried to maintain some kind of relationship with the new regime in Iran. Israel, for example, "offered to send back a number of American-built Iranian tanks that the Shah had shipped to Israel to be refurbished."²⁵⁴ The new government, while using anti-Israel rhetoric, was engaged in some trade and negotiations with the Israeli government.²⁵⁵

The situation changed drastically following the defeat of Iran's primary rival, Iraq, during the 1991 Gulf War. The primary enemy of the Iranian regime was severely weakened and under international sanctions. During the Gulf War Iraq fired multiple missiles at Israel. This showed that countries Israel had considered on the periphery now had Israel in range.²⁵⁶ With the defeat of Iraq, commonly accepted as one of, if not the, strongest militaries in the Middle East, Iran and Israel found themselves unchecked.²⁵⁷ The two powers began to compete to be the regional power, second to the United States. Israel felt

²⁵¹ *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 30

²⁵² *Ibid.* p. 32 For more information regarding the Israeli-Iranian cooperation see reference

²⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 71

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 94

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 95

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 181

²⁵⁷ "Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective," *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2005). p. 259

it had to be the preeminent power in the region in order to ensure its continued existence.

²⁵⁸ Iran “as a new Middle East Order was emerging, believed that the time for its role gratification had arrived; it would be a key player in shaping the new Middle East ... and would take on what it considered to be its rightful role in the affairs of the regions.”²⁵⁹

With these two countries competing for preeminence in the region, a rivalry was bound to unfold. Israel began to see Iran as a threat due to the lack of any other state balancing out Iranian power.²⁶⁰ In the post-Soviet Middle East, Iran was excluded and isolated by U.S. policies. Israel saw the peace negotiations with multiple Arab states and the PLO as an opportunity to become the economic center of the region.²⁶¹ In retaliation Iran began to increase its support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah.²⁶²

Iran had previously vocally attacked Israel, however after the Oslo Accords, the frequency and sincerity increased. The Iranian Parliament passed a statement calling for the destruction of Israel.²⁶³ With the restarting of the Iranian nuclear program, Israeli fears of Iran increased, especially when paired with the development of the Shahab-3 Missile, which brought Israel into range.²⁶⁴

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad added to the Iranian-Israeli tensions, particularly with Ahmadinejad’s rhetoric. This rhetoric included denial of the Holocaust and calling for Israel’s destruction on multiple occasions.²⁶⁵ The conflict over Iran’s nuclear program

²⁵⁸ *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 162

²⁵⁹ "Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective." p. 260

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid. p. 264

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 175

²⁶⁴ "Consider Iran's Missiles and Aircraft, Too," *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 164, no. 17 (2006).

²⁶⁵ Hussein D. Hassan, "Iran: Profile and Statements of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad," (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2007).

has driven both countries to enter into an arms race.²⁶⁶ The two countries are now mutually suspicious and have fundamental goals that are incompatible with each other.

The other regional rival in which Iran is involved is the Iranian-Saudi rivalry. Saudi Arabia has legitimacy in the Muslim world due to its guardianship of Mecca and Medina. Traditionally, it has not been a major power in the region. With the discovery and development of oil, Saudi Arabia has become a very wealthy and influential nation. Although the two nations had some tensions before the fall of the Shah, over who was the true leader of the Middle East and OPEC due to Saudi Arabia's "unwillingness to be a junior partner... and its inability to be an equal partner."²⁶⁷ These were mitigated by both countries being the pillars of U.S. security policy in the Gulf, and thus to some extent under the influence of the United States.²⁶⁸

Following the Iranian revolution, tensions skyrocketed. First, the revolution overthrew a monarchy, similar to Saudi Arabia's. Thus from the beginning, the two governments would likely be ideologically opposed. Iran's desire to export the revolution and its brand of Islamic government by calling the Gulf monarchies illegitimate and appealing to the "Arab street" has also created tension between these countries.²⁶⁹ In addition to these actions, the anti-Western, particularly anti-United States, nature of the Iranian Revolution has hampered relations with close U.S. ally Saudi Arabia. Both countries see themselves

²⁶⁶ Ephraim Kam, "The Iranian Threat: Cause for Concern, Not Panic," *Strategic Assessment* 1, no. 3 (1998).

²⁶⁷ Frederic Wehrey et al., "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009). p. 13

²⁶⁸ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 36

²⁶⁹ Wehrey et al., "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy."

as the legitimate leader of the Muslim world. Finally, the Sunni-Shi'a has a large effect on this rivalry, however, it is not seen as the primary cause.²⁷⁰

In the years immediately following the Iranian Revolution, Iran "directed a great deal of incendiary propaganda against the Saudis and what Iranians called Riyadh's American brand of Islam."²⁷¹ The interstate rivalry was shown through disruptions and protests by Iranian Hajj pilgrims, which led to the deaths of over 400 people and Iran calling on Saudi Arabia to pass control of Mecca and Medina to Iran.²⁷² During the Iran-Iraq War, Saudi Arabia supported Iraq, a fellow Sunni Arab government.²⁷³ Both countries supported insurgent forces aimed at expanding their influence in the region; anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan were supported by Saudi Arabia, and the Organization for the Islamic Revolution on the Arabian Peninsula by Iran.²⁷⁴ This further inflamed Iranian-Saudi relations. By the late 1990s, Iran and Saudi Arabia attempted to improve relations with visits by Iranian President Khatami to Saudi Arabia.²⁷⁵

Following the fall of Saddam in Iraq, the shared threat to Saudi Arabia and Iran had been removed. Iraq became a battleground between Iranian-supported Shias and Saudi-backed Sunnis. While both governments have taken steps to minimize the sectarian rhetoric on

²⁷⁰ Ibid; W. Andrew Terrill, "The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security," (Carlisle, PA: U.S Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2011); F. Gregory Gause, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question," *Strategic Insights* VI, no. 2 (2007).

²⁷¹ Terrill, "The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security." P.6

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*.p.97

²⁷⁴ Wehrey et al., "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy." p. 15

²⁷⁵ Terrill, "The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security."

the international level, the populations of both countries have used sectarian rhetoric in support of various factions in Iraq.²⁷⁶

Iran currently is downplaying the Sunni-Shia divide. In an effort to increase its influence in the Middle East, Iran is taking the lead in pan-Arab issues, such as Palestine and countering the United States.²⁷⁷

Iran has called for a regional security framework that excludes external actors following the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Both countries compare this to the withdrawal of the British from the Middle East in the 1960s.²⁷⁸ Iran sees this as an opportunity to become the regional power, while Saudi Arabia is opposed to taking what it sees as a junior seat to Iran.²⁷⁹

Limit All-Out War

Despite Iran's multiple conflicts and rivalries, Iran aims to keep these conflicts from erupting into all-out war.²⁸⁰ This does not mean Iran does not prepare for this eventuality, however, given Iran's history and current military situation vis-a-vis its potential enemies, Iran has the desire to resort to shows of force over actual force.²⁸¹

One of the most defining events of the revolutionary government was the eight-year Iran-Iraq War which began in 1980. In the 1960s and 1970s Iran was "quickly outgrow[ing]

²⁷⁶ Gause, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question; Wehrey et al., "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy."

²⁷⁷ "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy." p. 22

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 66

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Daniel Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*, 1 ed. (RAND Corporation, 2001). p. 102

²⁸¹ Ibid.

its neighbors in terms of economic and military strength.”²⁸² This rapid growth stopped with the beginning of the Islamic revolution in 1979. This strength was rivaled by the increasing threat of Iraq, with the size of the Iraqi Armed Forces increasing “tenfold in less than a decade” from 1980 to 1990.²⁸³

In 1980, the military situation between Iraq and Iran, favored Iran on paper. Iran’s military expenditure was \$4.2 billion compared to Iraq’s \$2.67 billion.²⁸⁴ While the active-duty Iraqi Military outnumbered the Iranian military 242,000 to 240,000, the Iranian reserves outnumbered the Iraqi reserves 400,000 to 250,000.²⁸⁵ The Iranian Air Force and Navy largely outnumbered their Iraqi counterparts.²⁸⁶ Simply looking at the numbers, Iraq should have been deterred by the larger Iranian military. As we know, this was not the case and Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980. While it can be argued that without U.S. support, the Iranian military was not at its height of readiness, the withdrawal of U.S. support occurred only one year prior, and it is unlikely that the deficiencies in spare parts Iran encountered during the war and today would have negated the other advantages.

One key disadvantage that most influenced the beginning of the war was the purge of the military by the revolution with 40 percent of officers leaving the service due to arrests or exile.²⁸⁷ Despite the Iraqi failure to conquer any portion of Iran and a return to the *Status Quo ante bellum*, the war caused over 1 million deaths and severely damaged the

²⁸² Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 40

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 99

²⁸⁴ "The Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance* 80, no. 1 (1980).p. 42

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ariel I. Ahran, "Proxy Warriors : The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias," (Stanford, Calif. :: Stanford Security Studies, 2011). p. 111

economies of both countries.²⁸⁸ The damage suffered by Iran in this war was a wakeup call that the traditional armed forces were not a sufficient deterrent against a regional power, much less against the United States or the Soviet Union. This was compounded by the rapid Iraqi success early in the war that caught the regular army unprepared.²⁸⁹ While the IRGC was also caught unprepared at the start of the war, “Iran was in the early stages of transforming the Pasdaran ... into a serious alternative to the army.”²⁹⁰ The fact that the IRGC was not yet fully operational as well as its successes later in the war made it appear to be more effective than the regular army.

This war left a scar on Iran’s psyche. Even in Iraq’s weakened state following the 1991 Gulf War, Iran saw Iraq as one of its greatest security threats.²⁹¹ The high costs of this war highly influence Iranian policy to this day. Skirmishes with the U.S. Navy that occurred during the Iran-Iraq War saw the Iranian Navy severely defeated.²⁹² The 1991 Gulf War served as a wakeup call to the Iranian military. The ability of the United States to transport 500,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, defeat the Iraqi army, and maintain a very low casualty level startled the Iranian military establishment.²⁹³ In light of the eight-year and costly war they had fought against the same army this must have come as quite the shock. This served to show the United States could easily defeat an army stronger than Iran’s.

²⁸⁸ Ian Black, "Iran and Iraq Remember War That Cost More Than a Million Lives," *The Guardian*(2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/23/iran-iraq-war-anniversary>.

²⁸⁹ Anthony H. Wagner Abraham R. Cordesman, *The Lessons of Modern War* (London: Mansell, 1990).p. 89

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. p. 55

²⁹² For more on these skirmishes see the Chapter on the Strait of Hormuz

²⁹³ Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. p. 90

Given the memories of the deadly Iran-Iraq War and Iran's certain defeat in a conventional war with the United States, or any country under its protection, Iran aims to keep the conflict below the threshold of war.

Iran's Military Forces

The Artesh

The Artesh traces its history to the Iranian Army under the Shah. Under the Shah the Artesh had access to many Western weapons and was the largest and most well equipped armed force in the Gulf. The Iranian Air Force, for example, received F-14 aircraft. Following the revolution, the Artesh was viewed with distrust due to its ties with the Shah.²⁹⁴ It suffered multiple purges of its officer corps, especially among the higher ranks.²⁹⁵ The Iran-Iraq War showed that the army's experience and heavy equipment were needed even in an age of revolutionary fervor.²⁹⁶ Only in 1998, however, was the Artesh politically put on the same level as the IRGC.²⁹⁷

Today, Iran's armed forces number about 398,000 men, making them the largest military forces in the Persian Gulf.²⁹⁸ The Army consists of 350,000 men, the Navy 18,000, and the air force 30,000.²⁹⁹ The Artesh is responsible for defending the country against conventional attack, receiving support from the IRGC.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 34

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 36 Contrary to the IRGC.

²⁹⁷ Michael Eisenstadt, "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran: An Assessment," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2001). p. 18

²⁹⁸ Does not include IRGC. IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Michael Eisenstadt, "Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: Policy Papers* 42(1996). p. 40

The Iranian Army is a traditional military force centered on armored conventional units.³⁰¹ Due to external pressure and financial hardship, much of this equipment is obsolete and lacking in spare parts.³⁰² The army's equipment is a hodgepodge of Western, Soviet, and indigenous designs.³⁰³ The Army is organized into four armored divisions, six infantry divisions, six artillery groups, two commando divisions, an airborne division, and other independent units.³⁰⁴ Despite its strength on paper, the Iranian Army only has one armored division that is "well enough equipped to be ... a true armored division."³⁰⁵ Currently the Army has over 1,663 tanks; only 630 of these are considered modern tanks.³⁰⁶ The Artesh must share some of these tanks with the IRGC and there is no formal method for determining the division of forces.³⁰⁷ In an attempt to extend their life and modernize, Iran has developed multiple tank upgrade packages, such as reactive armor and larger guns.³⁰⁸ Despite these attempts, it must be remembered that the majority of these forces are over 30 years old. One source of strength for the Iranian Army lies in the number of anti-armor weapons it possesses. Iran produces many local variants of Russian anti-tank weapons.³⁰⁹ Due the lack of armored vehicles and a large dependence on non-mechanized infantry, the Army is most likely incapable of mounting a large-scale offensive beyond Iran's immediate borders. It is, however, very well suited

³⁰¹ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

³⁰² Anthony Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2007). p. 29

³⁰³ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

³⁰⁴ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*, p 40

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ IISS, "2013 Military Balance." Modern tanks being T-72's or better

³⁰⁷ Eisenstadt, "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran: An Assessment." p. 18

³⁰⁸ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p.53

to a defensive battle.³¹⁰ In recent military exercises, the Iranian Army has been training its forces in asymmetric and irregular warfare.³¹¹ These exercises were based off of American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and focused on defeating a U.S. invasion.³¹²

The Iranian Air Force is supplied similarly to the Army, a mixture of old U.S. and Soviet equipment. It is also plagued by a lack of spare parts leading to a mission ready rate of 60 percent for western aircraft and 80 percent Soviet aircraft.³¹³ It is unknown how long even these numbers could be maintained during times of increased operational tempo. Despite these problems, the Iranian Air Force is one of the most professional forces in the Iranian military as it has no conscripts.³¹⁴

Despite the advantage the Iranian Air Force had at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq gained air superiority due to poor supply and maintenance of Iranian aircraft.³¹⁵ After the first years of the war, Iran was unable to “generate more than 30-60 sorties per day under surge conditions.”³¹⁶ Iran was unable to mount strategic air operations against Iraq targets after 1982; Iraq on the other hand had almost free range over Iranian territory.³¹⁷ This vulnerability was further highlighted by U.S. airpower during the 1991 Gulf War.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid. p.19

³¹³ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

³¹⁴ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. p. 104

³¹⁵ Cordesman, *The Lessons of Modern War*. p. 477

³¹⁶ Ibid.p.478

³¹⁷ Ibid. p.486

Today the Iranian Air Force and Air Defense Forces are spread very thinly. The majority of Iran's ground-based air defense systems are obsolete Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs).³¹⁸ The low number of these units and the large area they must defend mean there is little defensive depth. To counteract this lack of active defensive systems Iran has many covered airbases that are more difficult to attack.³¹⁹

Despite attempts to increase both the quantity and quality of aircraft, the Iranian Air Force still relies on obsolete aircraft. The U.S. made F-14 remains one of the most modern aircraft in the Iranian inventory, even with problems updating the aircraft. Even if the Air Force were supplied with advanced aircraft, the lack of advanced training, and dedicated training squadrons means that Iran would be at a disadvantage in any air conflict. It has also failed to train its force in large unit maneuvers and even today cannot produce many sorties, even over a short period of time.³²⁰

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard

The IRGC is a large institution in Iranian society; for this paper I am solely looking at the military aspects of this organization. The IRGC exists to protect and spread the revolution domestically and abroad. The IRGC comprises of air, land, and sea forces. It also has control over the Basij Militia. The Basij is a lightly armed and manned force in peacetime.³²¹ The goal of this force is to augment the IRGC manpower and to engage in irregular combat in the event of an invasion.³²²

³¹⁸ Eisenstadt, "Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions." P.46

³¹⁹ Ibid. p.45

³²⁰ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. P.97

³²¹ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

³²² Frederic Wehrey et al., "The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009). P.48

During the Iran-Iraq War, there were tensions between the conventional military forces and those of the revolution. These tensions ran along the fault lines between the regular army, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Basij militia.³²³ These tensions and the belief that Iran's "lack of reliable suppliers, sufficient hardware, and an experienced officer corps was not a disadvantage, but rather an opportunity to prove how revolutionary idealism could overcome a stark reality,"³²⁴ led to the well-known Iranian strategy of using poorly trained Basij militia in human wave assaults to achieve an opening for exploitation by regular forces. These operations successfully achieved some victories while conserving supplies.³²⁵

The success of the religious and revolutionary forces and the aforementioned failure of the conventional forces to deter the Iraqi invasion must have been noticed by Iranian leadership. This is reflected in the growing importance of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the size of the Basij militias. Although the regular forces are numerically superior to the IRGC and militias in peacetime, 350,000 to 127,000, the budget of the IRGC is three-and-a-half times larger than that of the regular forces.³²⁶ Upon mobilization of the militia, the IRGC easily eclipses the regular forces, with over 1 million reserve militia members.³²⁷ When compared to the IRGC of 75,000 before the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, the growth is tremendous.³²⁸

³²³ Ray Takeyh, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (2010), p. 368

³²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 369

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ "Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance* 113, no. 1 (2013).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ "The Middle East and North Africa."

The IRGC controls all of Iran's strategic weapons, from surface-to-surface missiles to weapons of mass destruction.³²⁹ This gives the IRGC an important part in any deterrence strategy. In addition to these strategic forces, the IRGC maintains traditional military forces that share equipment with the Artesh. The large numbers of Basij forces would add vast amounts of manpower to IRGC formations. Both the IRGC and the Basij have paid attention the U.S. experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan; they have subsequently increased training in independent resistance action in an attempt to bleed U.S. forces in the event of an invasion.³³⁰ It is unknown how many of the Basij forces would actually engage the enemy, however due to their size, even a small number would likely cause problems for any invading force.

Although the IRGC is primarily tasked with internal security, the naval arm of the IRGC has over 5,000 men, double the manpower of the Artesh's marine force.³³¹ This naval infantry force, plus control of Iran's strategic forces, shows that the IRGC is more than just an internal security force and can easily be turned on to the offensive. The IRGC has been the force used for demonstrations of Iran's willingness for self-defense. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the IRGC has engaged in multiple provocations against both the U.S. and Royal navies.

Relating to Iran's proxy forces also falls under the umbrella of the IRGC. The main link between Iran and its proxies is the IRGC Qods Force, the IRGCs section for the

³²⁹ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. p. 73

³³⁰ Ibid. p.76

³³¹ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

“operation of asymmetric warfare.”³³² A more in-depth examination of Hezbollah and this relationship follows.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah was founded in 1982 to help expel the Israelis from Lebanon. At the beginning, Iran sent 1,500 members of the IRGC to aid in the establishment of the military wing of the organization. Hezbollah and the Qods Force are highly interdependent. Iran provides between \$100 million to \$200 million a year to Hezbollah.³³³ In addition to this funding, the Qods Force trains Hezbollah soldiers in “the use of improvised explosive devices, indirect fire..., sniper operations, and insurgent tactics.”³³⁴ In the years before the 2006 conflict, it was believed that there were 2,500 Iranian troops in Lebanon.³³⁵ This training and equipment paid dividends when Israel invaded Lebanon. The support of Iran helped turn “Hezbollah [into] a militia trained like an army and equipped like a state.”³³⁶

Even before this conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, Hezbollah was a force to be reckoned with. Before the attacks on September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was the terrorist group responsible for the most American deaths. Hezbollah was responsible for the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, as well as many attacks in Western Europe

³³² Nathan Gonzalez Elliot Hen-Tov, "The Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran: Praetorianism 2.0," *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2011). p. 50

³³³ Matthew Levitt, "Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran's Shadow War with the West," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (2013). p. 123

³³⁴ Shannon W. Caudill, "Hizballah Rising Iran's Proxy Warriors," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 49 (2008).p. 130

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Erlanger and Jr., "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics and Weapons."

during the 1980s.³³⁷ Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, Hezbollah reduced its operations internationally to avoid being “caught in the Crosshairs of Washington’s ‘war on terror.’”³³⁸ While Hezbollah appears to have lost effectiveness during this time due to its lack of international attacks, it emerged more effective, as previously mentioned, in its war with Israel.

Today’s Hezbollah is “the most technically capable terrorist group in the world.”³³⁹

Hezbollah has a core force of fewer than 1,000 men; however, it has between 5,000 and 10,000 trained reserves.³⁴⁰ In shows of strength, Hezbollah has held military parades in Beirut involving tanks and armored personnel carriers. These armored vehicles were most likely captured from the Lebanese army.³⁴¹ Hezbollah is able to conduct attacks against Israel from the relative safety of southern Lebanon using Iranian-supplied rockets.³⁴²

Iran has supplied both short and long range rockets for use against Israel. The short range rockets are Katushas, relatively small, and only have a range of about 19-28 km.³⁴³ Long range rockets have a range of 30 to 50 km depending on the model.³⁴⁴ Both categories of rockets are unguided, making them more terrifying than lethal.

In addition to its strength in Lebanon, Hezbollah has a global network. Recently however, this global network has had mixed success. In 2008 and 2009, Hezbollah and Qods force

³³⁷ "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism," University of Maryland, <http://www.start.umd.edu/start/>.

³³⁸ Levitt, "Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran’s Shadow War with the West." p. 2

³³⁹ Casey Addis and Christopher Blanchard, "Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress," (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service 2010).

³⁴⁰ "Hizballah," www.Globalsecurity.org.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon," (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2006).

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

operations were foiled in Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Egypt.³⁴⁵ In 2011, operations began to turn around, with the successful assassination of the Saudi ambassador in Pakistan.³⁴⁶ One of the most recent successful attacks was against Israeli tourists in Bulgaria in 2012.³⁴⁷ In 2011 and 2012, Hezbollah operations were foiled in Cyprus, Thailand, Georgia, India, the United States, and Kenya.³⁴⁸

Use of Forces to Accomplish Goals

The Artesh

Remove Foreign Influence

The Artesh is not responsible for removing foreign influence from within Iran, which is part of the IRGC's goal of protecting the revolution. With regard to removing foreign influence from the region, the regular forces lack the combat power to fight the United States or the United Kingdom in a conventional war, especially if Iran were to take the offensive. The army lacks the ability to engage in the kind of maneuver warfare that would be needed to defeat these external powers. This is especially true following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. No longer are there massive U.S. forces on Iran's border. In order to engage U.S. forces, the Artesh would have to advance over land through Iran and into Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States and engage the United States there.³⁴⁹ Due to the lack of spare parts, experience in large armored warfare,

³⁴⁵ Levitt, "Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran's Shadow War with the West." p. 3

³⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 4

³⁴⁷ United States Department of State Publication Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2012," (2013).

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ The Navy lacks the transport and amphibious ability to force a large-scale landing against opposing US forces.

obsolete equipment, and overall lack of mechanization, by the time Iran's forces arrived, if they arrived at all, they would be severally weakened and easily defeated.

Against an invasion of Iran, the Artesh would likely be defeated by an external power.

The Artesh is well equipped for a static defense and would likely be able to put up some resistance if given time to prepare. If caught off guard, the same lack of maneuver forces, training, and equipment would most likely lead to the rapid destruction of the Artesh.

This is likely to change in the future due to an increased effort to train for asymmetric and irregular warfare. As the Artesh land component continues to modernize and shift to irregular warfare, it will not be able to remove foreign influence from the region; it will however be more able to protect Iran from any perceived foreign threat.

The Iranian Air Force would very likely be swept from the sky in any conflict with a Western power. Given its inability to defeat the Iraqi Air Force, against a Western power it would likely not be able to successfully launch any attacks. On the defensive side, the air force and the air defense network are spread very thinly. The Air Force does not add much to Iran's ability to rid the region of foreign influence or to defend its airspace against attack from a Western power.

Become regional leader and gain prestige in the Muslim World

Despite the insufficiencies of the Artesh, especially with regard to the United States, it is the largest military of the Gulf States by more than a factor of two.³⁵⁰ Just in manpower alone, Iran is a threat to the Gulf States. In terms of armored vehicles, Iran falls behind

³⁵⁰ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. p. 41

Saudi Arabia but ahead of the Gulf States.³⁵¹ Iran has 2,978 armored vehicles compared to Saudi Arabia's 5,370.³⁵² Despite this disadvantage in number, Iran significantly outnumbers Saudi Arabia in tanks. The majority of Saudi Arabia's armored vehicles are lightly armed armored personnel carriers such as the M113.³⁵³ In terms of quality however, the Gulf States are armed with U.S. produced weapons such as the M1A2 Abrams.³⁵⁴ The Iranian military would face similar problems against this equipment as it would against the United States itself. Despite these disadvantages, without the United States in the picture it is likely that the size of the Iranian Army will enable it to become the regional power.

One advantage the Iranian military has over its Gulf rivals is that it has its own defense industry. Although it does rely on other countries for advanced weaponry, the Iranian defense industry is growing and produces its own tanks such as the Zulfiqar and T-72.³⁵⁵ The ability to design and produce its own weapons grants prestige to Iran over other countries in the region.

In the air, Iran is once again numerically superior to any other single country in the Gulf. Quality issues are more severe for the Iranian Air Force than for the Army. The Gulf States are well equipped with modern Western aircraft. The majority of the Iranian Air Force's Western aircraft are lacking in spare parts and obsolete. Given the performance of the U.S. Air Force against the Russian-equipped Iraqi Air Force in the Gulf War, it is

³⁵¹ Ibid. p. 42

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ IISS, "2013 Military Balance."

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid; Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. p. 44

likely the Gulf States will have a similar performance against the Iranian Air Force in the event of conflict.

Keep Conflict from Erupting into All-Out War.

The Artesh is very effective at accomplishing this goal. Even with the severe problems from which it suffers, the Artesh is a large force undergoing rapid modernization. Size alone will prevent the Gulf States or Israel from engaging in open warfare due to the risk of a defeat. Against the United States the Artesh is likely hoping that it can increase the cost of a war so as to deter U.S. intervention. The switch to an irregular warfare strategy is based on Iraq and Afghanistan and is likely to deter the United States from an all-out invasion of Iran due to the fear of such a campaign.

The Artesh is capable of demonstrating Iranian power. The Artesh engages many military exercises aimed at defending against foreign aggression. It also engages in more threatening offensive exercises.³⁵⁶ These military maneuvers have been held in direct response to external provocations such as tensions with Turkey and Iraq in the 1990s.³⁵⁷ The Artesh is aware of its weakness vis à vis the United States, and therefore has been known to act as a voice of restraint.³⁵⁸

The IRGC

Remove Foreign Influence

As the guardians of Iran's strategic weapons, the IRGC has the ability to project Iranian power around the region. The rockets of the IRGC have the range to reach many U.S. bases, including the 5th Fleet in Bahrain. As such, the IRGC may theoretically be able to

³⁵⁶ *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. p. 15

³⁵⁷ Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. p.102

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

remove foreign influence from the region. However, it is more likely that in the event of conflict, the United States would quickly defeat the Iranian missile systems and establish anti-missile protection around the Gulf. The size of the IRGC's marine forces means that it is able to carry out small raids against other countries in the Gulf, potentially damaging U.S. interests.³⁵⁹

The land forces of the IRGC face similar problems as the Artesh with regard to forcibly removing foreign influences from the Gulf. If defending against foreign invasion, the IRGC offers a flexible response. It can call on its conventional military power, alongside the Artesh. Or it can offer a large force trained in irregular warfare, the Basij. It is likely Iran would suffer many casualties and damage; these forces may be able to successfully protect Iran from invasion.

Internally, the IRGC is responsible for protecting the revolution. This includes foreign and domestic threats.³⁶⁰ The IRGC is also responsible for border security. As the guardians of the revolution, the IRGC and the Basij have strict controls in place for the press and other media outlets.³⁶¹ The IRGC and Basij also have organizations to give paramilitary and political training to citizens helping to reinforce the revolution's hold on the country. In this the IRGC has been very effective.³⁶²

Become regional leader and gain prestige in the Muslim world

The IRGC is a very ideological force. By supporting revolutionary Islam, the IRGC has attempted to gain the trust of the Arab Street. If revolutionary Islam were to spread and

³⁵⁹ For more information see the chapter on Naval Strategy in the Strait of Hormuz.

³⁶⁰ Byman et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*.p.41

³⁶¹ Wehrey et al., "The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps." p. 53

³⁶² Ibid.

unseat the governments of surrounding states, Iran would assume a leadership position in the region. Although Iran has not engaged in such actions since the 1980s, the IRGC could arrange for an incident to occur during the Haj and once again call for Saudi Arabia to relinquish control of the Islamic Holy sites. Iran's support of Palestinian causes helps Iran pursue this goal. The Iranian government's support of these forces through the Qods Force has made some Arab states seem soft on Israel.³⁶³ This is very likely to decrease in value due to the conflict in Syria and Iran's support of Bashar Al-Assad.

The IRGC's role in Iran becoming a regional power is also related to the previous section about countering foreign influence. The same missiles that allow Iran to threaten American interests in the region allow it to threaten the Gulf States as well. This threat will only increase if Iran develops nuclear weapons, as many of these states are small and one or two nuclear strikes would completely destroy the country. The ability of the IRGC to threaten the Strait of Hormuz, as outlined in the previous chapter, severely threatens the surrounding Gulf States, due to their dependence on oil exports.

Keep Conflict from Erupting into All-Out War.

The IRGC and the Basij militia serve as a large part of the deterrent force against any conflict reaching all-out war. Their focus on asymmetrical warfare as previously mentioned creates an effective deterrent against invasion even if all of the Basij does not resist the invasion.

Short of war, the IRGC is capable of creating incidents and threats that go beyond the ability of the Artesh. One example of this is the capture of British sailors examined in the naval chapter of this thesis. Another example is the incident with the U.S. Navy, also

³⁶³ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*.

previously examined. These two incidents allowed the IRGC to show its resolve, and both had an intrinsic threat of violence and could have led to a confrontation. It is unlikely, however, to have escalated into open warfare.

Once again the threat of missile strikes and possible nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction give the IRGC a large deterrent capability. Any use of these forces would encourage a response in kind by the United States or another state. The IRGC could conduct tests or other activities which threaten force and show resolve without actually engaging in conflict. This would bring international condemnation and escalate the conflict but would probably not lead to kinetic responses.

Hezbollah

Remove Foreign Influence

Iran's links with Hezbollah allow it to attack foreign interests around the Middle East. A prime example of this is the bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon. Hezbollah can help Iran to threaten foreign interests in the region. The main benefit of Iran's association with Hezbollah involves the deniability it gives Iran.

Hezbollah has turned into an effective tool for Iranian foreign policy. One of Iran's few allies in the Middle East, Bashar al-Assad's Syria is not religious or revolutionary; it is, however, anti-West.³⁶⁴ Since Assad belongs to a minority Shia-esque sect in Syria, if his government were to fall, it is almost a certainty this alliance would end. Recent changes favoring the government coincided with an influx of Hezbollah fighters. This correlation

³⁶⁴ Avi Issacharoff, "Syria's Assad: Regime Strong Because of My Anti-Israel Stance," *Haaretz*(2011), <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/syria-s-assad-regime-strong-because-of-my-anti-israel-stance-1.340454>.

likely shows how advanced Hezbollah has become. Hezbollah is reportedly accompanied by 4,000 troops of the IRGC.³⁶⁵ A victory in Syria will prevent Iran from losing a very close partner and may help consolidate Iran's power in the region while defeating Western-backed forces.

Become regional leader and gain prestige in the Muslim World

This cooperation between Iran and Hezbollah is a continuation of Iran's shift to the IRGC for defense and of putting its faith in the revolutionary ideals and religiously affiliated groups. Hezbollah "emphasized that the 1978-1979 revolution served as an inspiration to action."³⁶⁶ In the past when Iran desired to export its revolution to the Arab Street to overthrow "their unpopular and corrupt governments by appealing to the Arabs' religious pride and their frustration with the Arab government's impotence vis-à-vis Israel,"³⁶⁷ Hezbollah was the perfect ally, especially with regard to the last issue. It allowed the revolutionary ideals of the revolution to engage against Israel and play the public relations card. While Iran and Hezbollah have failed to topple the Arab governments, Hezbollah's success in attacking Israeli and American targets most likely raised Hezbollah's stock in Iranian eyes. It also enjoys support on the street, particularly in its home base of Lebanon.³⁶⁸

Hezbollah can strike targets besides Israel. As mentioned in the previous section, Hezbollah troops have been reported to be fighting alongside Assad's forces in Syria. In

³⁶⁵ Fisk, "Iran to Send 4,000 Troops to Aid President Assad Forces in Syria".

³⁶⁶ Augustus R. Norton, "Hezbollah: A Short History," (Princeton :: Princeton University Press, 2007).p.36

³⁶⁷ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. p. 101

³⁶⁸ Simon Haddad, "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006).

the event of a conflict, Hezbollah can offer Iranian troops trained in fighting Western forces and in irregular warfare.

Keep Conflict from Erupting into All-Out War.

The anonymity offered by Iran's proxy Hezbollah plays an important part in keeping Iran's conflicts from reaching all-out war. Hezbollah allows Iran to attack its opponents with less fear of retaliation. When fighting Israel, Hezbollah was able to aid in Iran's conflict with Israel without Iran fearing an Israeli strike.

On the international stage, Hezbollah allows Iran to have a deterrent force for which it is not directly held responsible. While Iran continues to develop its conventional long-range deterrence capability, its unconventional deterrence is well developed though its links with Hezbollah. Through Hezbollah, Iran has found a way of marrying its domestic defense and deterrence strategy to its long-range deterrence strategy. Hezbollah allows Iran to rely on religious and revolutionary fervor for its long-range deterrence, something conventional forces do not allow. Hezbollah's network allows Iran to reach beyond the range of its missiles and conventional forces. Given the limited range of Iran's conventional forces and the distance of Iran's primary enemy, the United States, such ability is very important.

Conclusion

The system Iran has developed to meet its security goals is effective. The division is a division of labor, with each force being given different missions for differing military and political realities. The Artesh acts as a conventional military force which, despite its weakness, is still a powerful force and is attempting to modernize. The IRGC is focused

on irregular warfare and massive mobilization. Hezbollah gives Iran limited international power projection.

The IRGC and Artesh overlap in many places. As the IRGC develops its armored force and the Artesh trains for irregular warfare, the line between the two forces is becoming blurred. While in theory the two forces offer two distinct approaches to warfare, as they become more similar, I believe the two forces could be merged. The IRGC ensured the forces which had attempted coups following the fall of the Shah did not have free rein; the revolution is now solidified in Iran and the Artesh. If the Artesh and the IRGC were to be merged, the Iranian government could still ensure the loyalty of the personnel controlling weapons of mass destruction and the senior leaders of the Artesh. The separation of powers is no longer as necessary, efficient, or stark as it was in the past. This union is unlikely to happen due to the nature of the Iranian government, specifically its tendency to have multiple organizations undertaking a similar task.

While the use of terrorist forces may harm Iran on the international stage, the advantage these forces give Iran far outweighs the consequences of being declared a state sponsor of terror by the United States, the very country Iran may use these forces against.

Conclusion

Understanding a potential opponent's strategy can help shape one's own strategy to more efficiently defeat an enemy. This paper has shown how Iran has attempted to counter its weakness by learning lessons from its own and other conflicts. Iran's primary strategy vis-à-vis the United States is to create a military capable of deterring the United States. As stated in the third chapter, I believe Iran wishes to keep any conflict beyond the threshold of armed conflict. The strategies outlined in the first two chapters of this paper give Iran the ability to deter the United States. Although Iran does not wish to engage in armed conflict a key aspect of any deterrence strategy is the ability to, or at least the perception that Iran can, use its military. Iran, I conclude, wishes to use the strategies outlined in this paper to deter the United States from challenging its rise to power in the Middle East. Although not examined in this work, Iran's nuclear program, if it culminates in a nuclear weapon may further deter the United States from challenging Iran's rise. It may also push the United States over the edge and end with U.S. military action. In the event of such conflict, I conclude that Iran's strategy will be to attempt to inflict as many casualties both of American service personnel and civilians all over the world as possible, hoping to break the American political will to fight. Such attacks, if the US population sees a war with Iran as necessary may in fact, increase the will to fight.

Iran has attempted to offset its comparative military weakness vis-à-vis the United States by altering its strategy to target perceived weaknesses of the United States and Iranian strength. Although this is hopefully an obvious conclusion, this thesis attempts to combine multiple aspects of Iranian strategy into one work. I conclude that Iran's primary goal in its counter US strategy is that of deterrence. Iran hopes to increase the

costs of any US action to a point where the costs outweigh the possible benefits. Iran's reach into Latin America acts as a long range strike force, possibly capable of launching attacks against the U.S. homeland. The global reach of Hezbollah's forces outside Latin American and the Middle East would allow Iran to strike targets in the territory of U.S. allies as well. The large number of troops trained in unconventional warfare could turn any invasion of Iran into a much larger counter insurgency operation than Iraq or Afghanistan. Not counting the initial invasion which the United States would most likely win with few casualties as was the case of Iraq. The three aspects of Iran's strategy examine form an overlapping web of long, mid, and local deterrence against the United States.

This paper is far from a comprehensive examination of Iranian strategy. For one, this paper does not examine the rationale behind Iran's nuclear program. As with any state the development of nuclear weapons is a large part of its national security strategy. The development of a nuclear weapon would fit into the deterrence strategy already outlined. Another aspect of Iran's counter US strategy which merits further study is Iranian cyber warfare capability. The novelty of this field and the immense vulnerability of the United States to a cyber-attack, mean cyber warfare is a possibility for Iran to deter and attack the United States without having to engage with the United States' overwhelming force.

Bibliography

- (Ret), Capt. Wayne P. Hughes USN. "Naval Operations: A Close Look at the Operational Level of War at Sea." *Naval War College Review* Vol. 65, no. 3 (2012): 23-46.
- Addis, Casey, and Christopher Blanchard. "Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress." Washington DC: Congressional Research Service 2010.
- Administration, U.S. Energy Information. "World Oil Transit Chokepoints." <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=wotc&trk=p3>.
- Ahram, Ariel I. "Proxy Warriors : The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias." Stanford, Calif. :: Stanford Security Studies, 2011.
- Anthony H. Cordesman, Abraham R. Wagner. *The Lessons of Modern War Volume I: The Arab-Israeli Conflicts, 1973-1989*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.
- Bell, Stewart. "Iranian Diplomatic Staff Leave Canada after Ties Severed, Embassy Shuttered." *National Post* (2012). <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/09/12/iranian-diplomatic-staff-leave-canada-after-ties-severed-embassy-shuttered/>.
- Berman, Ilan. "Iran Courts Latin America." *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (Summer2012 2012): 63-69.
- Bill, James A. "The Eagle and the Lion : The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations." New Haven :: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Black, Ian. "Iran and Iraq Remember War That Cost More Than a Million Lives." *The Guardian* (2010). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/23/iran-iraq-war-anniversary>.
- Blanche, Ed. "Flashpoint Hormuz. (Cover Story)." *Middle East*, no. 403 (08//Aug/Sep2009 2009): 12.
- . "Sidestepping the Strait." *Middle East*, no. 431 (04// 2012): 32.
- Brito, Dagobert, and Amy Myers Jaffe. "Chapter 9: Reducing Vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz." *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran* (11//11/1/2005 2005): 207-23.
- Byman, Daniel, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green. *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. 1 ed.: RAND Corporation, 2001. doi:10.7249/mr1320osd.
- Caro, I., and I. Rodriguez. "La Presencia De Irán En América Latina a Través De Su Influencia En Los Países Del Alba " [In Spanish]. *Atenea*, no. 500 (2009): 21-39.
- Caudill, Shannon W. "Hizballah Rising Iran's Proxy Warriors." *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 49 (Spring 2008): 128-34.
- "Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa." *The Military Balance* 113, no. 1 (2013/02/01 2013): 353-414.
- "Chavez Pledges Help for Iran against Any Attackers." INTERNATIONAL NEWS: The Associated Press, 2006.
- "Chronology of Events in Hijacking of Kuwait Airways Flight 422 with Am-Hijack Bjt." *Associated Press*, April 12 1988.
- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence *Unclassified Statement for the Record on the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the Us Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence* January 31 2012.
- "Consider Iran's Missiles and Aircraft, Too." *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 164, no. 17 (2006): 94-94.
- Corbett, Julian Stafford. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* [in English]. Classics of Sea Power; Variation: Classics of Sea Power. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. "Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon." Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2006.

- Cordesman, Anthony H., Bryan Gold, and Chole Coughlin-Schulte. "Iran- Sanctions, Energy Arms Control, and Regime Change." Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2014.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. Kleiber Martin. "Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities the Threat in the Northern Gulf." Westport, Conn. : Praeger Security International.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. Wagner Abraham R. *The Lessons of Modern War* [in English]. London: Mansell, 1990.
- Cordesman, Anthony H., and Abraham R. Wagner. *The Lessons of Modern War: The Iran-Iraq War*. San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990.
- Cordesman, Anthony, and Martin Kleiber. *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*. Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2007.
- United States Congress. *Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012* 112, PUBLIC LAW 112–220.
- Counterterrorism, United States Department of State Publication Bureau of. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2012." 2013.
- Crist, David. *The Twilight War : The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* [in English]. New York: Penguin Press, 2012.
- Dodds, Klaus. "Stormy Waters: Britain, the Falkland Islands and Uk–Argentine Relations." *International Affairs* 88, no. 4 (2012): 683-700.
- Dolan, Daniel. "Rethinking the Strait of Hormuz." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 138, no. 5 (05// 2012): 40-46.
- Eisenstadt, Michael. "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran: An Assessment." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 5, no. 1 (March 2001).
- . "Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: Policy Papers* 42 (1996).
- Elliot Hen-Tov, Nathan Gonzalez. "The Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran: Praetorianism 2.0." *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2011): 45-59.
- Erlanger, Steven, and Richard A. Opiel Jr. "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics and Weapons." Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: THE MILITIA; Pg. 8, 2006.
- Eshraghi, F. "Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941." *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (1984): 27-52.
- Farah, Doug. "Iran and Latin America: Strategic Security Issues." Ft. Belvoir, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2011.
- Foreign Relations Committee: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs. *Iran's Influence and Activity in Latin America*, February 16, 2012 2012.
- Fish, Tom. "Sri Lanka Learns to Counter Sea Tigers' Swarm Tactics." *Jane's Navy International* (March 2009).
- Fisk, Robert. "Iran to Send 4,000 Troops to Aid President Assad Forces in Syria." *The Independent* (2013). Published electronically June 16.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-to-send-4000-troops-to-aid-president-assad-forces-in-syria-8660358.html>.
- Gasiorowsky, Mark J. "The 1953 Coup D'etat in Iran." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 3 (1987): 261-86.
- Gause, F. Gregory. "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question." *Strategic Insights* VI, no. 2 (March 2007).
- Gholz, Eugene. "The Strait Dope: Why Iran Can't Cut Off Your Oil." *Foreign Policy*, no. Sept./ Oct/ (2009).

- "Global Terrorism Database." University of Maryland,
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&search=kuwait&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=1&count=100#results-table>.
- Goforth, Sean. *Axis of Unity : Venezuela, Iran & the Threat to America*. Potomac Books, 2012.
- Gómez, Eduardo J. "Why Iran-Brazil Friendship Has Gone Cold." *CNN* (2012). Published electronically April 5, 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/05/opinion/gomez-iran-brazil-chill>.
- Haddad, Simon. "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 21-34.
- Hadian, Naser, and Shani Hormozi. "Iran's New Security Environment Imperatives: Counter Containment or Engagement with the Us." *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 4 (2011): 13-55.
- Harel, Amos. "Soldier Killed, 3 Missing after Navy Vessel Hit Off Beirut Coast." *HAARTETZ*, July 15 2006.
- Hassan, Hussein D. "Iran: Profile and Statements of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad." Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2007.
- Hirst, Joel D. *The Alba : Inside Venezuela's Bolivarian Alliance* [in English]. Miami, FL: InterAmerican Institute for Democracy, 2012.
- "Hizballah." www.Globalsecurity.org.
- Humire, Joseph M. "Iranian Weapons on America's Doorstep: Ahmadinejad Pursues Joint Military Ventures in Latin America." *The Washington Times*, July 4 2012.
- Hunter, Shireen. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era : Resisting the New International Order*. Santa Barbara, Calif. : Praeger, 2010.
- IISS. "2013 Military Balance." London: IISS, 2013.
- "Iran's Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy." Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, 2009.
- "Iran's Security Interests and Concerns." (2007). www.csr.ir/departments.
- "Iran 'Opens Naval Base' near Gulf." *BBC*, October 28 2008.
- "Iran Releases British Servicemen." *BBC*, June 24 2004.
- "Irán Se Escuchará En Español Con El Canal Hispan Tv." Sistema Bolivariana de Communication e Información, <http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/multipolaridad/iran-se-escuchara-espagnol-canal-hispan-tv/>.
- "Iranian Naval Exercises in the Strait of Hormuz: Threat or Rhetoric?". *Stratfor Analysis* (2011): 19-19.
- Issacharoff, Avi. "Syria's Assad: Regime Strong Because of My Anti-Israel Stance." *Haaretz* (2011). Published electronically February 1. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/syria-s-assad-regime-strong-because-of-my-anti-israel-stance-1.340454>.
- Johnson, Stephen. *Iran's Influence in the Americas* [in English]. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012.
- Kam, Ephraim. "The Iranian Threat: Cause for Concern, Not Panic." *Strategic Assessment* 1, no. 3 (November 1998).
- Katzman, Kenneth, Neelesh Nerurkar, Ronald O'Rourke, R. Chuck Mason, and Michael Ratner. "Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012.
- Kennedy, Greg. "Strategy and Power: The Royal Navy, the Foreign Office and the Blockade, 1914-1917." *Defence Studies* 8, no. 2 (2008): 190-206.
- Kerr, Julian. "Australia Confirms Iran Navy Encounter Off Sri Lanka." *Jane's Navy International*, March 19 2013.

- Kifner, John. "400 Die as Iranian Marchers Battle Saudi Police in Mecca; Embassies Smashed in Teheran." *New York Times*, August 2 1987.
- . "Iranian Speedboats Attack 2 Tankers." *New York Times*, December 7 1987.
- "Latin America as an Arena for Iran and Hezbollah's Terrorist, Subversive and Criminal Activities." Tel Aviv, Israel: The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2012.
- Levitt, Matthew. "Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran's Shadow War with the West." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (January 2013).
- Libary, CNN. "Uss Cole Bombing Fast Facts."
<http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/world/meast/uss-cole-bombing-fast-facts/index.html>.
- Mahan, A. T. *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1815* [in English]. 12th ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1918.
- Marirrodriaga, Jorge. "El Régimen Iraní Se Lanza a La Conquista De Latinoamérica." INTERNACIONAL; Base; Pág. 6: El Pais, 2012.
- "Maritime Piracy." UN Office on Drugs and Crime, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/9.Maritime_piracy.pdf.
- Martínez, Emilio. *Relaciones Peligrosas : El Eje Teherán-Caracas-La Paz* [in Spanish]. 1. ed. Santa Cruz: [s.n.], 2010.
- "The Middle East and North Africa." *The Military Balance* 80, no. 1 (1980/01/01 1980): 39-50. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee of the Western Hemisphere; Subcommittee of Middle East and South Asia; and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. *Iran's Relations with Venezuela: Axis of Unity or Strategic Alliance?*, 2009.
- Morgan, Susie. "Iran's Growing Influence in Latin America." *Middle East*, no. 415 (2010): 15-17.
- Murphy, Martin N. "The Troubled Waters of Africa: Piracy in the African Littoral." *Journal of the Middle East & Africa* 2, no. 1 (2011): 65-83.
- "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism." University of Maryland, <http://www.start.umd.edu/start/>.
- Navias, Martin S. Hooton E. R. *Tanker Wars: The Assault on Merchant Shipping During the Iran-Iraq Conflict, 1980-1988*. New York, 1996.
- Neumeister, Larry. "Feds in Ny Seek 25 Years in Saudi Ambassador Plot." *ABC News* (2013). Published electronically May 4. http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/feds-ny-seek-25-years-saudi-ambassador-plot-19105358#.UYIL_LWkpio.
- Noriega, Roger F. "Iran's Gambit in Latin America." *Commentary* 133, no. 2 (2012): 29-32.
- Norton, Augustus R. "Hezbollah: A Short History." Princeton :: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- NTI.org. "Design Characteristics of Iran's Ballistic and Cruise Missiles." NTI.org, http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/design_characteristics_iran_missiles_3.pdf?_id=1360355163.
- O'Neil, William D. "Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz." *Discussion of Caitlin Talmadge, Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz, with reply* 33, no. 3 (12/15/ 2008): 190-98.
- Obama, Barack. "President Obama Speaks at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium." Paper presented at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium, National Defense University, Ft. Lesley J McNair, December 3 2012.
- Paret, Peter Craig Gordon Alexander, and Felix Gilbert. *Makers of Modern Strategy : From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* [in English]. Princeton Paperbacks;. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986.

- Parsi, Trita. "Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective." *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2005): 247-69.
- . *Treachorous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. Yale University Press, 2007.
- Paullier, Juan. "¿Qué Busca La Academia Millitar Del Alba?" BBC Mundo, http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2011/06/110614_alba_escuela_defensa_militar_jp.shtml.
- Perdue, Jon B. *The War of All the People : The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism* [in English]. 1st ed. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012.
- Pham, J. Peter. "Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz: A Realist Assessment." *American Foreign Policy Interests* 32, no. 2 (2010): 64-74.
- "The Pirates of Somalia: Ending the Threat, Rebuilding a Nation." The World Bank, 2013.
- "Questions on Iran Ajr: Warship of Freighter." *New York Times*, September 23 1987.
- Rahimi, Babak. "Rivalry between Iran's Conservative Factions May Be the Biggest Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." *Terrorism Monitor* 10, no. 1 (01/12/ 2012): 7-9.
- "Rebel Suicide Attack on Sri Lankan Supply Ship." *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/world/rebel-suicide-attack-on-sri-lankan-supply-ship.html>.
- Richardson, Doug. "Iran Releases Data on Its Ballistic Missiles." *Jane's Missiles and Rockets* (November 22 2011).
- Rubin, Michael. "Dire Straits: Iran's Navy Plays a Dangerous Game." *The Weekly Standard*.
- Sanati, Reza. "Rowhani and Iran's Unchanging Goals." <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/rowhani-irans-unchanging-goals-8637>.
- "The Security of the Persian Gulf." edited by Hossein Amirsadeghi. London :: Croom Helm, 1981.
- "Seized Sailors 'Held in Tehran'." *BBC*, March 26 2007.
- Seliktar, Ofira. *Navigating Iran : From Carter to Obama*. New York :: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Service, Mail Foreign. "'North Korean Mini-Sub Torpedoed South's Navy Vessel in Revenge for November Attack,' Spy Claims " *The Daily Mail*, April 20 2010.
- SHANKER, THOM. "Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game." *New York Times*, January 12 2008.
- Smithson, S. "U.S. Authorities Probing Alleged Cyberattack Plot by Venezuela, Iran." *The Washington Times*, December 13 2011.
- Stone, Gregory D. "Proxy War: A Critical Examination of Superpower Indirect Conflict in Africa." University of Manitoba, 2010.
- Takeyh, Ray. "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 365-83.
- "Taking Centre Stage." *Latin America Monitor: Brazil Monitor* 27, no. 7 (2010): 3-3.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." *International Security* 33, no. 1 (07/15/ 2008): 82-117.
- Terrill, W. Andrew. "The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security." Carlisle, PA: U.S Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2011.
- Till, Geoffery. *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Frank Cass, 2004.
- Torbati, Yeganeh. "Iran Renews Hormuz Closure Threats." *Reuters* (2012). Published electronically July 15. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/15/us-iran-hormuz-idUSBRE86E0CN20120715>.
- "Trade in Goods with Venezuela." United States Department of Commerce, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c3070.html>.

- Turner, Stansfield. "The Naval Balance: Not Just a Numbers Game." *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 2 (1977): 339-54.
- Turner, Stansfield, and George Thibault. "Preparing for the Unexpected: The Need for a New Military Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* 61, no. 1 (1983): 122-35.
- Walker, George K. *The Tanker War, 1980-88 : Law and Policy*. Naval War College, 2000.
<http://archive.org/details/tankerwar198088174walk>
- <http://archive.org/details/tankerwar198088174walk> Note: Click here for Internet Archive access.
- Ward, Steven. *Immortal : A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009.
- Warrick, Joby. "Iran Seeks Closer Ties in Latin America." *The Washington Post*, January 12 2012, A-SECTION; Pg. A01.
- Wehrey, Frederic, Jerrold D. Green, Brian Nichiporuk, Alireza Nader, Lydia Hansell, Rasool Nafisi, and S. R. Bohandy. "The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps." Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009.
- Wehrey, Frederic, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hansell, and Robert A. Guffey. "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy." Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009.
- Weitz, Richard. "Ahmadinejad's Latin American Tour Highlights Iran's Isolation." *World Politics Review* (2012): 1-1.
- Winkler, David F. "Operation Praying Mantis Blows a Hole in Iranian Navy." *Sea Power* 46, no. 9 (09// 2003): 45.
- Wise, Harold Lee. "One Day of War." *Naval History* 27, no. 2 (04// 2013): 26.
- Worth, Robert. "Tanker Damage Caused by Attack, Inquiry Finds." *New York Times*, August 6 2010.
- "Yemen Says Tanker Blast Was Terrorism." *BBC*, October 16 2002.
- Zatarain, Lee Allen. "America's First Clash with Iran : The Tanker War, 1987-88." Havertown, Pa. : Casemate, 2010.

Curriculum Vita

Jonathan Herman

Jonathan.L.Herman@gmail.com

859-266-1293

Multilingual graduate student with international experience interested in international relations, intelligence, and national security

Education:

The Johns Hopkins University

M.A Global Security Studies: Strategic Studies Concentration

Thesis: Iran's Unconventional Counter-U.S. Strategy

This 100+ page thesis draws primary and secondary English, Spanish, Portuguese and French sources to examine these three aspects of Iran's military strategy: Iran's military and terrorist ties in Latin America, Iran's actions and naval strategy in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, and the division of the Iran's security forces between the regular army, the IRGC, and terrorist forces.

Relevant Courses:

American National Security; Military Strategy and National Policy; Intelligence, War and Political Conflict; Counter-Terrorism and Intelligence; Understanding Contemporary Iran; Energy and Environmental Security; Cyberforce Superiority: Foundational Elements; Global Political Economy

St. Louis University Madrid Campus

B.A. Political Science: International Relations Concentration; Minor in History; Certificate in Spanish

Accredited in the US and EU

Final Paper: The Philosophy of Freedom in Iran

This paper examines Iranian governmental structure and the Green Movement through the lens of early political thinkers, such as Plato, Hobbs, and Locke

Experience:

National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, Western Hemisphere Intern

- Created briefing materials pertaining to The Pacific Alliance and to constabulary forces in Latin America that informed the Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, in the form of Power Point presentations, one page briefs, and oral briefings
- Authored in depth research papers pertaining to constabulary forces and the Pacific Alliance, incorporating sources written in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, and English

- Analyzed the military capabilities of various countries in the region, assessing their ability to cooperate with the US military, engage in law enforcement operations, and general background information as requested by the DASD and other policy makers
- Contributed to policy on current security issues in Latin America, such as border protection, military cooperation between various countries and the US Military, and law enforcement capacity building in unstable regions
- Gathered and analyzed open source intelligence to perform daily briefings on current events
- Performed in-depth research into government military relations in various countries throughout Latin America

Fayette County Public Schools, Spanish Immersion Program *Substitute*

- Taught all levels of Spanish from kindergarten through AP Spanish
- Designed lesson plans for a diverse student population

U.S House of Representatives, Congressman Chandler's Office *Intern*

- Directly contributed to research regarding the State Department Budget mark up by investigating and reporting on State Department programs
- Maintained the congressman's situational awareness regarding the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya via in-depth intelligence and data analyses presented in top priority, weekly emails
- Acted as key member of a team of research professionals directly charged by the congressman with the collection of essential quantitative and qualitative data related to upcoming House votes
- Handled constituent issues, phones, and letters; ensuring the representative's views were expressed correctly

2010 World Equestrian Games, Protocol/ Language Services

Depts *Intern*

- Handled logistics to limit any breach of protocol for VIP's and government representatives from various nations
- Coordinated a team to create a 7 language, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Dutch, and Italian lexicon of relevant terms for accurate interpretation during the event
- Produced in-depth research and analyses of social, political, and cultural issues for over 50 countries, presented in order to train 2,000+ staff and volunteers

Languages:

- Fluent Spanish
- Conversational French
- 2 Semesters University Arabic and Hebrew

Research and Publications:

- Iran's Unconventional Counter-U.S. Strategy
- The Philosophy of Freedom in Iran
- Iran's Shift from Conventional Military to Unconventional Power
- Constabulary Forces: An Examination
- Resource Issues Escalating the Falklands/Malvinas Conflict
- Al-Qaeda's Use of the Internet for Hostile Information Operations
- Intelligence During the Korean War: 1950