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## IRAN: AN EXAMINATION OF THE “MOSAIC DEFENCE” IN A CONFLICT WITH THE WEST

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**JCSP 39**

**Master of Defence Studies**

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**PCEMI 39**

**Maîtrise en études de la défense**

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
JCSP 39 – PCEMI 39  
2012 – 2013

MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES – MAÎTRISE EN ÉTUDES DE LA DÉFENSE

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WITH THE WEST**

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## **Iran's Mosaic Defence**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper is an examination of the military doctrine of Iran, specifically regarding a possible conflict with the West. Such a conflict could include a US or Israeli strike against strategic suspected nuclear sites, a conventional invasion of Iran or even the perception of any such imminent military threat to Iran. It remains a point of debate whether Iran desires to become a world power in light of its nuclear program or whether it merely aims to be and remain a regional power. In this capacity, Iran aims to exercise its influence in the region while maintaining its autonomy and keeping other powers, such as the United States, at arms length. It can be assumed that its military forces are primarily defensive in nature while acting as a deterrent to attack at the same time.

Having watched its neighbour Iraq invaded by American and Western forces to affect regime change and based on its adversarial relationship with the United States, Iran fears it is next. It fears for its survival and the survival of the Islamic Revolution. The Mosaic Defence is a tactical military doctrine designed to ensure the survival of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it includes a forward defence as part of a war of survival as Iran struggles for greater influence and independence from outside intervention or influence. Like any other state in a fight for survival, Iran will behave accordingly, doing anything necessary to survive.

Tension over Iran's nuclear program, threats to Israel combined with American military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Navy fleet in the Gulf and the added presence of British and French military bases in the GCC states, have led to much rhetoric

from Iran in recent years. How much of Iran's doctrine is posturing as deterrent and how much is actual capability is debatable. Iran recognises its inability to match western, specifically American conventional forces in a traditional combat. It is largely believed that the perceived threat of US/Israeli strike against Iran's nuclear facilities or even a ground invasion in an attempt to affect regime change has led Iran to develop the current military doctrine of the "Mosaic Defence".

What is the Mosaic Defence and how would Iran react, employing this new doctrine in the event of an attack by a foreign power? This paper will examine Iran's "Mosaic Defence" doctrine, exposing the intended tactics and make some hypotheses on how Iran would employ its forces in the event of a conflict or threat from the west.

The Mosaic Defence is an asymmetrical doctrine developed in response to the perceived threat of an American or Israeli strike against its nuclear facilities or even a US ground invasion in an attempt to affect regime change. The Mosaic Defence is a deterrent designed to convince the United States that military action is too costly an option to consider. It consists of surprise, cyber warfare, the threat of irregular warfare and world terrorism.

The Mosaic Defence includes the re-organisation of Iran's military forces to employ a hybrid warfare, a mixture of conventional and non-conventional or irregular forces and means of waging war and reflecting the actual capabilities of Iran's military forces. This actual defence of Iranian territory is a large part but only a part of Iran's ongoing resistance to perceived American influence and Israeli domination of the Persian Gulf region. It consists of posturing for an asymmetric combat and the ability to inflict mass casualties upon an invader to act as a deterrent. The Mosaic Defence is part of

Iran's greater strategy and also includes the forward defence of engaging Iran's enemies beyond its borders before the fight comes to Iranian soil.

The intent is also to reduce outside influence and manoeuvre for greater power and recognition in the Gulf and the world. In the case of these two latter examples, it is safe to say the application of Iran's Mosaic Defence has already begun in a number of areas: the use of oil resources and economic warfare; cyber warfare; the shaping of public opinion in Iran and abroad through the exploitation of the media; thinly veiled threats of nuclear weapons; the use of worldwide terrorism and the support of violent proxies in Syria and Lebanon.

This examination of Iran's doctrine will begin with exploring Iran's strategic culture and history in an effort to understand why it developed this irregular warfare doctrine. It will also look into Iran's strategic environment and its relations with neighbouring Arab states and Eastern trade partners in order to better understand the context of the Mosaic Defence doctrine and Iran's motivation. Finally it will examine Iran's adversarial relationship with Israel and the United States and will better explain Iran's motivation behind its defence doctrine, why Iran found itself nearly alone in the world and why it developed the Mosaic Defence, irregular warfare doctrine.

The second chapter of this study will define the Mosaic Defence and demonstrate what it really is, how it fits into Iran's strategy and argue that the forward defence facet of Iran's doctrine is already being activated. This chapter will begin with an examination of several Western strategists or "experts" on Iran and explore their writings about Iran's doctrine followed by several examples of declarations made by Iranian leadership. Finally, this chapter explains the nature of Iran's asymmetric and hybrid warfare and a

comparison with the Unrestricted Warfare theory of China's People's Liberation Army and its potential influence on Iranian military thinking and the development of the Mosaic Defence. This examination of these together will provide some insight on understanding the basic tenets of the Mosaic Defence.

The third chapter gives a brief introduction to Iran's military forces or the tools at Iran's disposal in the conduct of the Mosaic Defence to demonstrate their capabilities so the reader may better understand the threats and limitations and how Iran's military power could be employed.

The fourth chapter is devoted to examining Iran's Nuclear ambitions and the tensions over the fears it has caused in Israel and the United States. The question and debate over Iran's nuclear intensions are arguably the cause of increased tension in the Middle East or in the Iranian point of view perhaps the result of suspicion and distrust. This chapter will examine the potential capabilities and how Iran would employ a nuclear arsenal. It will demonstrate that the nuclear issue is an integral part of the Mosaic Defence as either a proliferation to proxies, the use as a first strike capability, part of a greater deterrent or simply to prevent invasion as a weapon of last resort to defend the state or more importantly the Islamic Regime.

Finally, the last chapter is an exploration including some hypothesis on the practical application of the Mosaic Defence in defending Iran from an invader. It will briefly explore how the Mosaic Defence would unfold in the event of a conflict, specifically how Iran would employ its military forces if invaded. This chapter will explore each of Iran's military branches and capabilities in the manner in which they



would be employed. This includes arguably the ongoing use of proxies and sleeper cells in the West, but more specifically how they would be used for defending Iran's territory if Iran itself was in danger and how Iran would step up its activity abroad. The fact that Iran conducts aggressive operations and prepares for even more is proof of the Mosaic Defence exists as a defensive doctrine but also includes a forward defence which has already begun.

“The wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world.”<sup>1</sup>  
 – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 30 June 2005

“We have never sought to dominate others or to violate the rights of any other country”<sup>2</sup>  
 – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 20 September 2010.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **IRAN’S STRATEGIC CULTURE AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

#### **The Strategic Culture of Iran**

The use of the term “Mosaic” in the title of this doctrine is descriptive of its make-up and it hints at Iran’s motivation for the doctrine and perhaps even its national ambitions.<sup>3</sup> It is indeed interesting and worth pointing out that Iran did not select a religious, Islam-inspired name for the doctrine but rather, a national one. Mosaic art is an image created from many smaller individual pieces to form a collective work of art. As a sum of Iran’s regular and irregular forces combined in one all-encompassing effort to defend the regime, it is indeed a “Mosaic” of Iran’s military might in a national effort.

Mosaic also speaks to culture, national identity and can be connected with the regime’s commitment to the defence of the regime in general and the state in particular. It is indicative of nationalism over religious fervor as the motivation behind the

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<sup>1</sup> WorldTribune.com. “Iran's new president declares worldwide 'Islamic revolution'.” 30 June 2005. <http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/05/front2453552.1027777777.html> (accessed on 28 September 2012)

<sup>2</sup>The Telegraph. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: 'We're not making a nuclear bomb'. 20 September 2010. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/8013353/Mahmoud-Ahmadinejad-Were-not-making-a-nuclear-bomb.html> (accessed on 28 September 2012)

<sup>3</sup>Pierre Pahlavi. "La Vraie Nature du Pouvoir Iranien." *Politique Internationale* (Volume 120, été 2008). [http://www.politiqueinternationale.com/revue/article.php?id\\_revue=120&id=738&content=synopsis](http://www.politiqueinternationale.com/revue/article.php?id_revue=120&id=738&content=synopsis) (accessed on 28 October 2012)., 477-478.

development of this military doctrine. Although there is proof of significant religious motivation in Iran including among the very influential Revolutionary Guards, nationalism is very strong. The Guards are indeed the guardians of the Islamic Revolution which undeniably includes Islamic culture, but their development and identity have become more nationalist than religious. The Guard's ideology is deeply rooted in popular revolutionary principles of 1979, political integration into society and the state which has resulted in a very nationalistic identity and character rather than a religious one.<sup>4</sup>

Mosaic tile art adorns churches and mosques throughout the Middle East. Specifically, Mosaics are rooted in Iran's culture and identity and reach back to ancient history of the region such as Ubaid in Mesopotamia and Babylon around 2000 BC and pre-date Islam itself.<sup>5</sup> Although more elaborate examples were developed during the Islamic Era such as the Mosque of Dome of Rock in 7-8<sup>th</sup> Century AD, early mosaics in Iran speak to the importance of national identity, pride in ancient history as part of nationalism.

Iran traces back its origins to the Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great in 550 B.C. which stretched from Egypt to modern day Turkey and parts of China.<sup>6</sup> Iran's sense of identity includes a strong bond with its past, including ancient history, its art and culture and Mosaic is symbolic for its new-found military doctrine. It could have selected a name inspired by Islam and the Jihad or struggle but its having adopted a secular, more national term clearly points to a national identity behind the regime. This is quite possibly

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<sup>4</sup>Pierre Pahlavi. "Guerre Irrégulière Et Analyse Institutionnelle. Le Cas De La Stratégie Asymétrique Des Gardiens De La Révolution En Iran." *Revue Études Internationales* XLII (No 4 Décembre 2011). 477

<sup>5</sup> Iran Chamber Society. "Iranian Visual Arts: History of Iranian Tile". Sunday 28 October 2012. [http://www.iranchamber.com/art/articles/tile\\_history1.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/art/articles/tile_history1.php) (accessed on 28 October 2012)., 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Glenn E. Curtis and Eric Hooglund. *Iran: A Country Study*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, 2008., 7-8.

the beginning of a transition from a theocracy to a more secular military dictatorship and the shift in the balance of power.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran came as a surprise to the West. The US did not understand the regional balance of power nor the internal politics of Iran. Ever since the Mullahs and Pasdaran seized power in 1979 and established the Islamic Regime, the West has failed to comprehend Iran and does still not understand what Iran desires and what drives its ambition. Many strategists today wonder whether Iran strives to become a world player or merely have more influence in its own region. The real answer is both. Iran wants more influence, power and status among the Gulf States and through that position and power as well wants more influence on the world stage. This is not to say that Iran desires to be the next hegemonic super-power of the world but it does want to be a world player, respected and not to be trifled with.

Iran's main motivation is nationalism. Iran is driven by a desire to preserve the Revolutionary state including the Khomeini system and to be recognized as the great energy power it is and regain its position in the world as a "Great Power". Modern Iran is a product of its history including the introduction of the Parthian concept of irregular warfare coupled with the Persian identity and religious influence of Shiite concepts of defence and warfare. Iran wants to relive the historic "Golden Age" of ancient history and as an international power or the great power of antiquity.<sup>7</sup> To do this Iran has to project its influence and dominate regionally in order to deal with great powers and super powers on equal terms. Across the cultural divide and revolutionary passion, Iran's desire and message is lost on Western ears.

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<sup>7</sup>Pierre Pahlavi. "La Vraie Nature du Pouvoir Iranien." *Ibid.*

## **Iran's Strategic Environment**

### **Relations with the Gulf Co-operation Council – The Gulf Arab Kingdoms**

In addition to the strategic culture that underlies the mosaic defense doctrine, it is also largely motivated by the strategic context within which the Islamic republic is evolving. It is therefore necessary to dwell on the main features of the strategic environment Iran is constantly trying to counter-balance and even reduce US influence in the Gulf region and improve its own influence. This is part and parcel of the “forward defence” aspect of Iranian doctrine and a part of the Mosaic Defence.

Persian-Arab history affect relations and ethnic divide in the Gulf states. The Arab conquest of Persia in 642 A.D. and Iran's subsequent discovery of its roots are part of its present day identity. Language and the Sunni-Shiite tension are also at the root of the differences including the presence of many ethnic Iranians present in the population of the Gulf Kingdoms.<sup>8</sup>

The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf also referred to as the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) is a collective of Arab kingdoms in the Persian Gulf consisting of the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar and Kuwait formed in the interest of answering “the challenges of security and economic development in the area. It is also a fulfillment of the aspirations of its citizens towards some sort of Arab regional unity.”<sup>9</sup> In short, the GCC was formed in response to Iran's instability and ambitions in the region and the fear of its

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<sup>8</sup> Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger Publishers. 2010., 186.

<sup>9</sup> Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Website. <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng/index895b.html?action=Sec-Show&ID=3> (accessed on 24 November 2012)

exporting its revolution to neighbouring states when the Ayatollah Khomeini called for Shiite supporters to “revolt against their pro-American leaders”.<sup>10</sup> Disrupting its Sunni adversaries is consistent with the Mosaic Defence, promoting Iran’s position but also destabilising US interests before a conflict comes home to Iran.

Iran’s relations with Saudi Arabia have improved or at the very least warmed somewhat since 2005 when the new Saudi King Abdullah demonstrated his ability to act independently from US policies and include Iran as a regional solution to regional problems.<sup>11</sup> By extension these relations with the other Gulf Kingdoms of the GCC have gradually improved in the years that followed.

In 2007, President Ahmadinejad visited Qatar intending to quell GCC fears of Iran’s nuclear program and dissuade the GCC from assisting US in the event of an attack.<sup>12</sup> These events had the appearance of a warming to Iran and the GCC states attempts to distance themselves from American favour.

However the Gulf Kingdoms of the GCC privately have significant concern regarding Iran’s nuclear ambitions.<sup>13</sup> An Iran armed with nuclear weapons may result in the Gulf Kingdoms having increased military dependence upon the United States. This western military presence causes domestic difficulties in the GCC kingdoms internal politics due to ethnic divisions between Sunnis and Shiites. Iran’s relations with the Gulf

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<sup>10</sup> Alidad Mafinezam and Aria Mehrabi. *Iran And Its Place Among Nations*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. 2008. 69.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Ea: Resisting the New International Order*. *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>13</sup> Suzanne Maloney. *Iran’s Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press. 2008. 58.

Kingdoms have diminished considerably in the face of the Arab Spring and the civil war raging in Syria. A major concern is that the situation may lead to unrest and discord among the GCC kingdoms and result in a regional arms race.

Sanctions prove difficult and Saudi Arabia including Iran in regional issues does however permit stability in oil production and oil prices but also project an ability to exercise independence from the US and contribute to legitimacy among the GCC population. However the result is it does serve to establish Iran as a regional player.

Although Iran does possess certain economic influence and political influence among the Shiite population in the region, the sanctions against it, its relations with the US compared to those of the GCC states mean that Iran's military spending pales in comparison to the Gulf Kingdoms. This too leads to the natural development of the Mosaic Defence out of necessity.

### **Relations with Shiite States (Syria, Lebanon and Iraq)**

Following Iran's 1979 Revolution, Syria sought closer ties with Iran to counterbalance the military threat from Israel when Egypt, under US pressure agreed to peace with Israel.<sup>14</sup> Eventually Iran entered into a defence co-operation pact with Syria against Israel and agreed to assist in weapons purchases from Russia.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the Sunni dominated GCC States, Syria has a large Shiite population and an Alawite minority ruling class which is not readily accepted by the Sunni as legitimate. In addition to military interests, Iran has embraced the Alawite dominated government in Syria, extending its

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<sup>14</sup>Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Ea: Resisting the New International Order. Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>15</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 94.

reach to influence Syria's large Shiite population. Both countries share a common enemy in Israel and object to US influence in the region.

Iran and the Sunni-led, pro-American Arab states differ on Israel and support to the Palestinians. GCC states generally object to Iran's over-involvement in Palestine-Israel and Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> Syria serves as an allied Muslim state to counter the Sunni states, who are heavily influenced by their allegiance to the US. At times the GCC states remain silent over Israeli-Palestinian conflicts while Iran exercises its foreign policy against the US and Israel through its proxies namely Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah and its support to and actions through Syria. Iran has special interest in providing support to Hezbollah, the Shiite terrorist group in Lebanon.

Iran's support to Hezbollah is relative to two aspects of the Mosaic Defence. First its support to these organisations provides Iran an outlet for its foreign policy and permits it to act against western influence in the region and even US hegemony on the world stage without being directly held accountable. Its acts are largely deniable or at the very least difficult to prove. This regular support is undoubtedly a forward defence and is arguably part of the Mosaic Defence. Secondly, the use of proxies such as Hezbollah is not only indicative of Iran's irregular or hybrid warfare doctrine in action and how its irregular troops would engage conventional ground forces, it demonstrates how it could use these proxies to distract attention from itself and possibly spread a conflict in the event of an invasion of Iran.

Iran's foreign relations with its bordering states and regional neighbours have changed since Saddam Hussein was overthrown in 2003. Iran's rush to be the first to

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<sup>16</sup>Alidad Mafinezam and Aria Mehrabi. *Iran and its Place Among Nations*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. 2008. 69.



recognize the new Iraqi government after the fall of Saddam Hussein may be the initial steps to exporting the Islamic revolution beyond the borders of Iran. The move may be to gain influence in the region and at the very least win favour and support in Iraq given that Iran and Iraq are “the only two Shiite governments in the Islamic world.”<sup>17</sup> Iran may not have outright ambitions to annex Iraq but it undoubtedly seeks friendly relations with another largely Shiite state on its border and an ally in regional dominance.

### **Relations with China and Russia**

Iran has long established links with China which continued after the Islamic Revolution and still exists to present day. Iran and China see one another as great ancient powerful eastern civilizations and have overlooked ideological differences in favour of common identities and national interests.<sup>18</sup> They do not view one another as Communist or Islamic states but as ancient Eastern states. Their lack of a colonial history leads to a common objection to perceived outside influence in their regions and leads to the insistence on independence, whatever the cost and whatever means necessary, which explains the Mosaic Defence and the absolute need for independence.

China has been a supplier of weapons to Iran since the early 1980s. These weapons include advanced anti-ship missiles and had initially included Chinese assistance to Iran’s ballistic missile and nuclear programs.<sup>19</sup> Iran has attempted military alliances

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<sup>17</sup> The Moscow Times. “What Does Iran Really Want?” 6 March 2008.  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1565107/Irans-Revolutionary-Guards-Quds-force.html>  
(accessed on 22 October 2012)

<sup>18</sup> Alidad Mafinezam and Aria Mehrabi. *Iran And Its Place Among Nations*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. 2008. 81

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

and closer military links between the two countries hoping China will protect it and act in Iran's favour against American interests and action. Iran sees China as a counterweight to US hegemony and dominance in world affairs but especially in Asia.<sup>20</sup>

Although China has agreed to co-operate in oil and gas, technology, trade and leading to both countries declaration in 1992 of a shared strategic vision, good relations and friendship, "opposing hegemonism", China has stopped short of a military alliance.<sup>21</sup> China's assistance in Iran's nuclear program was halted and military assistance to the ballistic missile program was suspended in 1998 after US objections, China favouring US economic influence over any common national interests with Iran.<sup>22</sup> Admittedly, China does not prefer the US to dominate as the sole super power, as it rises in influence on the world stage. It has no desire to see a more powerful, influential Iran as competition in the region or in the world.<sup>23</sup> China acts in China's interest and will not compromise its national interests to help Iran.

However, this close relationship could have led to Chinese influence on Iranian military doctrine and the unrestricted warfare's influence upon the development of the Mosaic Defence. If there was not an official direct link in the development of military doctrine then at least a contribution to the shaping of modern Iranian military thinking is a logical conclusion.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>22</sup> Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Ea: Resisting the New International Order. Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

Iran's relations with Russia are similar to those with China and its motives are calculated and based on nationalism not religious ideology. Both Russia and Iran want to counter western influence in the region and Russia constantly supports Iran, but stops short of an actual alliance. Iran has overlooked the Russian treatment of Chechnyan Muslims in the interest of securing and maintaining an ally and trade partner. The fall of the Soviet Union left Iran facing hostility with former Soviet Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.<sup>24</sup> This combined with the cool relations with the west left Iran warming up to Russia in the interest of stability as well as trade. Russian ambitions to restore its position in the world and its distrust of Iran's Islamic ideology and motivation prevent the two from getting so close as to form an alliance.<sup>25</sup>

Russia has become Iran's largest trade partner and major supplier of military hardware, providing Iran's military with tanks, fighter aircraft, submarines and significant steps towards completing the development of the nuclear reactor at Bushehr.<sup>26</sup> Russia however, like China, has also stopped short of siding with Iran, instead opting to maintain its new hard-won relations with the US and provision of natural gas to the west.<sup>27</sup> Iran's failure to secure a lasting ally against western influence has further advanced their motives to develop and enact the Mosaic Defence. Isolated by sanctions and a lack of international relations means Iran will likely continue to act beyond its borders and

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>26</sup>Alidad Mafinezam and Aria Mehrabi. *Iran And Its Place Among Nations*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. 2008. 75-76.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 73 & 76.

employ economic influence of its energy reserves to influence other states and defend itself.

### **Relations with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan**

Relations between Pakistan and Iran have varied from Iran's suspicion of Pakistani support for the Sunni Taliban in Afghanistan to their eventual co-operation in supporting the current Karzai regime. The US claims that the Pakistan military had assisted in the early stages of the Iranian nuclear program until Pakistan suspended support in 1993.<sup>28</sup> Steadily improved relations between the two countries led to co-operation on the border against drug smuggling and the planned construction of a natural gas pipeline, known as the "Peace Pipeline" through Pakistan into India and eventually to China.<sup>29</sup>

India has maintained good relations with Iran and has counted on it as a reliable source of energy to India's ever-increasing demands. Iran and Pakistan have invested nearly \$5 Billion (US) since 2000 on this project but construction stopped short of India.<sup>30</sup> However, US pressure has stalled the pipeline proceeding through India, again frustrating Iranian efforts. This undoubtedly increased Iran's motivation to conduct a forward defence, interfering with US interests in the region in Israel, undermining US efforts in Afghanistan and supporting any actor or state who will trade and side with Iran

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<sup>28</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 87.

<sup>29</sup> Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*. *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>30</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 87.

over the US.<sup>31</sup> Diversifying markets and exploring trade in the region is part of Iranian strategy to increase its position. Consistent with Iran's attempts to reduce US influence and improve its own position, the use of economic and exploitation of resources is demonstrative of Iran's precursor to the Mosaic Defence and the use of oil and energy as an aggressive weapon and secure its standing as a great power.

Iran's relations with Afghanistan have varied in recent years. Once hostile towards the Taliban government, Iran actively took steps against the regime in its efforts to protect the Shiite minority. Relations worsened following the Taliban's seizure of the Iranian consulate in Mazar-e Sharif and the subsequent killing of ten Iranian diplomats in August 1998.<sup>32</sup> This provocation and deterioration in relations led to Iran massing some 250,000 troops along the border and very nearly led to an Iranian invasion of Afghanistan in 1999.<sup>33</sup>

Following the fall of the Taliban Sunni regime and its ill treatment of the Shiite Afghans, Iran restored relations with Afghanistan and openly supported the Karzai government. Iran has invested heavily in electricity, infrastructure and trained commercial pilots.<sup>34</sup> However the continued US presence in Afghanistan has led to Iranian support to the Taliban against Western interference in the region.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Shireen T. Hunter. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order. Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>32</sup> Glenn E. Curtis and Eric Hooglund. *Iran: A Country Study. Ibid.*, 247-248.

<sup>33</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 82.

<sup>34</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. Letter-Report (LR212-042). *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options*. Ottawa. 8 March 2012. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Politact Strategic Intel. "Reports Taliban-Iran Increasing Co-operation". 3 August 2012. <http://politact.com/issue-brief/reports-taliban-and-iran-increasing-cooperation.html> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

*"We did interdict a shipment, without question the Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, through a known Taliban facilitator. Iranians certainly view as making life more difficult for us if Afghanistan is unstable. That's why I am particularly troubled by the interception of weapons coming from Iran. But we know that it's more than weapons; it's money; it's also according to some reports, training at Iranian camps as well."<sup>36</sup>*  
 —[General David Petraeus](#)

### **Relations with US, Israel and the West**

It has been argued that Iran's desire to become a regional power has been accelerated by the US presence in the Gulf, and eliminating Iran's adversaries, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Sunnis regime in Iraq.<sup>37</sup> However, the US occupation of Iraq, the deployment in Afghanistan and the US bases in the Gulf Kingdoms undoubtedly makes Iran feel surrounded and vulnerable, which could in part explain its hostility, increased rhetoric and outrageous public declarations. This pressure against Iran, the close proximity of its enemies coupled with its strained resources explains the development of the Mosaic Defence.

Many in the West believe Iran is playing both sides of the Afghan conflict and exercising both its anti-Sunni and anti-American policy by supplying the Taliban with weapons against its American enemy and aiding the Karzai regime in an effort to gain influence and support in the

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<sup>36</sup> Lalit K. Jha. "Concern in US over increasing Iranian activity in Afghanistan". Pajhwok Afghan News. 16 March 2011. <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/03/16/concern-us-over-increasing-iranian-activity-afghanistan>. (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>37</sup> Mohsen M. Milani. "Reflections on Iran's Policy Towards Iraq". Ed. Tarrzi, Amin *The Iranian Puzzle Piece: Understanding Iran in the Global Context*. Quantico, Virginia: Marine Corps University Press. 2009. 63.

region.<sup>38</sup> Iran has no interest in the new Afghan government, but by eroding public opinion it can succeed in undermining American influence in the region.<sup>39</sup> Iran has been accused of supplying weapons to the Taliban efforts against Western forces in Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> This is demonstrative of the Mosaic Defence's forward defence working beyond its borders to reduce foreign influence as Iran manoeuvres for position in the region.

It is a logical deduction for Israel to feel threatened by Iran's ambitions coupled with threats from President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 to "wipe Israel from the map" and his later admission that the solution to the Crisis in the Hamas-Israeli conflict in 2006 was the "elimination of the Zionist regime" calling it an "illegitimate regime with no legal basis for existence."<sup>41</sup>

It is also logical for Israel to fear the spread of a potential regional conflict to include other Islamic states given President Ahmadinejad's comments regarding Iran's desire to spread the Islamic Revolution.<sup>42</sup> Despite his previous threats, Ahmadinejad has

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<sup>38</sup> Mark Sappenfield. "[Is Iran meddling in Afghanistan?](http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0808/p06s01-wosc.htm)". The Christian Science Monitor, 8 August 2007. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0808/p06s01-wosc.htm>. (accessed on 3 December 2012).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> CTV. "Iranian weapons found in Afghanistan". Associated Press. 4 June 2007. [http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20070604/iran\\_weapons\\_070604/](http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20070604/iran_weapons_070604/). (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>41</sup> Sean Young. "Ahmadinejad: Destroy Israel, End Crisis". The Washington Post. 3 August 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/03/AR2006080300629.html> (accessed on 27 November 2012)

<sup>42</sup> WorldTribune.com. "Iran's new president declares worldwide 'Islamic revolution'." 30 June 2005. <http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/05/front2453552.1027777777.html> . (accessed on 28 September 2012). On 30 June 2005, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made the following comment. "The wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world."

denied the possibility of a conflict between Israel and Iran saying “military purchases are unnecessary because there is no war on the horizon between those two nations.”<sup>43</sup>

Although he repeated referring to Israel as a “tumor”, Ahmadinejad has backed away from some of his more hard-lined threats, saying the dispute with the United States will not be resolved quickly but only through dialogue based on respect.<sup>44</sup>

Iran’s rhetoric is often understood in literal terms in the West. Its regular slights against Israel may just be their way of illustrating good versus evil and personifying evil by Israel as that evil in the Middle East and the United States as its personification on the global scale. Iran may very well be melodramatic and as it exaggerates its own identity, recalling ancient history as it was yesterday, it is very likely over-emphasizing its intent towards Israel and the West. The exaggeration, threats and rhetoric are all part of the Mosaic Defence, in that Iran fosters uncertainty and doubt, adding to the cryptic nature of understanding Iran’s complexity.

“Far from being the mad mullahs they are portrayed as, the Iranian elite are cold, brilliant calculators who have always thought in terms of a "grand strategy" and the national interest.”<sup>45</sup> Everything Iran says and does has a purpose but its intent is misunderstood and its message often lost Western ears.

For the United States and Israel, Iran’s rhetoric must be taken at face value, as real threats of violence to security, stability and the economy. The American experience in

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<sup>43</sup> CNN.US. “Iranian President: Israel 'nothing more than a mosquito' to Iran”. 21 May 2012. [http://articles.cnn.com/2012-05-12/middleeast/world\\_meast\\_iran-ahmadinejad-israel\\_1\\_catherine-ashton-nuclear-program-eu-foreign-policy?\\_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST](http://articles.cnn.com/2012-05-12/middleeast/world_meast_iran-ahmadinejad-israel_1_catherine-ashton-nuclear-program-eu-foreign-policy?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST) (accessed on 27 November 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Reuters.U.S. “UPDATE 6-In New York, defiant Ahmadinejad says Israel will be 'eliminated’”. 24 September 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/24/un-assembly-ahmadinejad-idUSL1E8KO5BL20120924> (accessed on 27 November 2012)

<sup>45</sup>Pierre Pahlavi. "La Vraie Nature du Pouvoir Iranien." *Politique Internationale. Ibid.*



Tehran, its embassy over-run and the hostage crisis that followed cannot be overlooked or forgotten. In the case of Israel, it cannot afford to shrug off Iranian threats as bravado nor can its interference with Hezbollah be dismissed as akin to the Cat and Mouse game of the Cold War. It is a plain and simple concern for its very survival.

### **Strategic Environment Defined**

Given the above discussed strategic environment, the Mosaic Defence doctrine is consistent with Iran's identity, goals and ambitions and a logical conclusion for Iran to deter aggression and defend its regime. Its interference beyond its borders is not only a forward defence, in its opinion at least, but an effort to maintain or obtain regional power and influence. The dramatic public declarations are part of Iran's national culture, its identification as an ancient regime and great power but also part of its efforts to counter balance Western influence in the region. Iran intends to defend itself but also to deter invasion or attack and gain international status simultaneously.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE "MOSAIC DEFENCE" DOCTRINE DEFINED**

#### **Western Experts on the Mosaic Defence**

Despite Iran's posturing towards Israel, many strategists conclude that as a result of the great losses suffered in the 1980s Iran-Iraq War, "Iran's military doctrine regarding the use of conventional forces against the West remains predominantly defensive in nature."<sup>46</sup> Although Iran continues to be indirectly involved in conflicts and affairs beyond its borders, Iran may simply aspire to be a regional power but its actions indicate far greater ambition.

One key aspect of Iran's Mosaic Defence that has been far too often overlooked is that the Mosaic Defence, specifically a doctrine for the defence of territorial Iran, it is already in action and in an ongoing "Cold War" of sorts the Mosaic Defence includes a Forward Defence beyond the borders of Iran. Although the Mosaic Defence includes the physical defence of Iranian territory, when examined altogether, it includes many moving parts including proxies, sleeper cells as well as the preparation for asymmetric warfare to defend Iran in the event of a tradition strike or invasion; it includes all means and responds to all natures of perceived threats.

Limited information has been published on the Mosaic Defence but it has been briefly summarised or hypothesised by a small number of expert strategists. The purpose of this section is to summarize the observations made by these authors about the mosaic defense in order to identify the fundamental tenets of this doctrine. Steven Ward, US

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, Director of Iranian Studies. [http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/assets/pdfs/CAFP\\_booklet- PECA\\_livret-eng.pdf](http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/assets/pdfs/CAFP_booklet- PECA_livret-eng.pdf). (accessed on 14 September 2012)., 3.

strategist and retired US Army officer, describes Iran's greater strategy as having evolved over the years to be consistent with its actual military capabilities; an ability to confront superior American military power. He identified Iran's doctrine as consisting of "ballistic missile deterrent, asymmetrical warfare, and mass mobilisation for partisan warfare". Ward describes the evolution of Iranian doctrine over time from deterrent-based ballistic missiles and irregular warfare to having expanded to include improved relations with its neighbouring states to diminish US influence in the region.

Ward also cites a Revolutionary Guards 2001 book on doctrine which outlined "devotion, popular mobilisation and pro-revolutionary proxies outside Iran"<sup>47</sup> Finally, he points out Iran's use of psychological warfare including convincing the US that military action would be so costly that it should be avoided and he concludes that if confronted, Iran would make use of "surprise, unconventional tactics and worldwide retaliatory responses" to effect US operations.<sup>48</sup> This psychological aspect of the Mosaic Defence is both a deterrent but also a legitimate effort to structure and prepare Iran's limited forces to make an invader pay dearly for an incursion into its territory and an effort to increase enemy casualties while suffering great casualties itself. Although the collective memory of Iran's costly war with Iraq is still in recent memory, the idea of devotion and sacrifice for the regime and the state's survival come first in Iranian military thinking.

Another Iranian publication, the military journal entitled "Saff" contained an article entitled "What Future Wars Will Be Like". The article called for improved accuracy and firepower, joint training and operations and the use of the "paralyzing

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<sup>47</sup> Steven R. Ward. "The Continuing Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine". *The Middle East Journal*. Autumn 2005. 564.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 560.

power of nuclear and chemical weapons” and argued that “new tools cannot be used with old tactics”, advocating a new Iranian doctrine which included “defence, superior firepower, nuclear weapons and communications.”<sup>49</sup> This push towards a new doctrine including a call for better communications can be interpreted as a Cold War type deterrent using communications between adversaries or the frightening possibility of advocating using these weapons.

David Thaler, a strategist with the US based Rand Corporation does not directly address a military doctrine but he does discuss Iran’s foreign policy and motivation which links into the grand strategy and by default, the Mosaic Defence. Thaler discusses Iran’s foreign policy is motivated in increasing its positions in the region at the expense of the US. He also points out the motivation behind Iran’s rhetoric is actually aimed at its domestic audience.<sup>50</sup> Thaler recognizes Iran’s rhetoric against Israel and the US and the subsequent US reaction and calls for Regime change to bolster nationalism and maintain a tighter grip on power domestically. This aggressive foreign policy is part of the forward defence of the Islamic state especially in its efforts to ensure the survival of the Regime.

Strategist and author Ray Takeyh outlines Iran’s grand strategy as calculating and its ambitions in influencing Islam as having no borders. He indicates that Iran’s anti-Israeli rhetoric is motivated to forward Iran’s position in the region and that its common animosity towards Israel which led to an alliance with Syria use of proxy groups like Hezbollah permitted Iran a “pathway beyond its military reach”.<sup>51</sup> This use of proxies is

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<sup>49</sup> “What Future Wars Will Be Like”. *Saff*, #239, 21 March – 20 April 2001. 17-20.

<sup>50</sup> David E. Thaler, Alireza Nader, Sharam Chubin. *Mullahs, Guards and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics*. Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, National Defence Research Institute, 2010., 91.

consistent with Iran's desire to spread its influence abroad but also indicative of the tactical application of Iran's Mosaic Defence and how it would fight on its own territory.

The principal strategist among the experts who addressed the Mosaic Defence, Michael Connell of the Center for Naval Analysis has described the organising, training and equipping of the Iranian military forces as a preparation for decentralised partisan or guerrilla warfare. He describes the doctrine as a "layered" defence and points out the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), also known as the Revolutionary Guards, is developing small unit tactics to co-ordinate between the services to maintain pressure on advancing invading troops to fight a dispersed war of attrition.

Connell concludes that Iranian doctrine, specifically the Mosaic Defence is defensive in nature to act as a deterrent to US invasion and he feels a confrontation is unlikely. This is consistent insofar as the Mosaic Defence pertains to defending Iran during an invasion. However, this is flawed and overlooks the potential for a forward defence aspect of the Mosaic Defence. The US tension with Iran and its involvement outside its borders constitutes a "Cold War" and its greater defence strategy is already in action but arguably not the close-in defensive nature of the Mosaic Defence in the sense of defending an invader on Iranian soil.

Finally, Connell correctly points out that Iran's decentralized command and control structure could lead to escalation and loss of control particularly in the Persian Gulf with US and western warships operating in close proximity to Iran's naval forces.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ray Takeyh. *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009., 61.

<sup>52</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, Director of Iranian Studies. *Ibid.*, 6.

Unlike the Cold War, the ongoing tension between the US and Iran, there is no diplomatic communication between East and West.

Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies addressed Iran's defence doctrine, also citing Connell's work, pointing out that the Mosaic Defence doctrine calls for co-ordinated defence between the Army, Air Force, and IRGC and then employ the Basij militia in built-up urban areas.<sup>53</sup> More importantly Cordesman points out Iran's success employing irregular forces in such small unit tactics against Iraqi forces in urban environment during the eight-year Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988. He also points out the Revolutionary Guards influence abroad employing asymmetric tactics and providing training to sympathetic forces beyond its borders such as Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Israel.<sup>54</sup>

Many strategists conclude that Iran's retaliation in the event of an attack, especially an Israeli attack, would include efforts to escalate and spread the conflict to other Muslim states in the region but also that an unintended consequence may include an escalation due to decentralised command structure of the IRGC.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of Iran's intent, strategists conclude that Iranian defensive doctrine consists of a mix of conventional and irregular forces and means. They conclude that this asymmetric

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<sup>53</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 16 August 2007. [http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070816\\_cordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012)., 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>55</sup> Canada. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Ibid.*, 5.

doctrine centres on irregular forces and ballistic missiles forces play a large part in deterrent and retaliation, intended to compensate for Iran's lack of air power.<sup>56</sup>

### **Iranian Leaders Statements and Declarations**

The portrait offered by Western experts on the mosaic defense deserves to be supplemented by what transpires on this doctrine from official statements made by Iranian leaders. Major-General Mohammad-Ali Aziz Jafari, Commander of the IRGC, is thought to be the main architect behind Iran's new asymmetric doctrine. He advocated irregular warfare as Director of the IRGC Center for Strategy, before his appointment to command the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>57</sup> General Jafari stated that Iran's defensive measures relied upon "asymmetrical warfare, the use of Iranian terrain in mobile-defence operations, experience from the Iran-Iraq war and "given the enemy's numerical or technical superiority, the IRGC would use asymmetrical warfare capabilities such as those used by Hezbollah in its 2006 conflict with Israel in Lebanon." <sup>58</sup>

Whether these acts beyond its borders are indicative of Iran's nature, acts of defiance or defence remain to be determined. Furthermore, the answer to the question of Iran's motive behind the support to its allies remains as cryptic as the Revolutionary state itself. The West must determine if this is proof of expansionism in Iran's efforts to

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<sup>56</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan. *Analyzing the Impact of Preventative Strikes Against Iran's Nuclear Facilities*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 10 September 2012. [http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubscordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubscordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 15 December 2012), 46.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, Director of Iranian Studies. *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Tilford. "Iranian war games emphasize "Asymmetrical warfare tactics"". 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

become a Regional Power, world power or attempts to export the Revolution and spread conflict and employ the Mosaic Defence abroad.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has fuelled the concern and confusion surrounding Iran's intentions and its desire to spread the Islamic Revolution by his declaration "the wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world" giving credibility to concerns of the possibility of a regional conflict to include other Islamic states.<sup>59</sup> In 2005 Ahmadinejad threatened to "wipe Israel from the map" and later called Israel an "illegitimate regime with no legal basis for existence" and advocated for the "elimination of the Zionist regime".<sup>60</sup>

On 29 June 2008, General Mohammad Ali Jafari made another threatening declaration, claiming Iran would "impose controls on shipping in the vital Gulf oil route attacked".<sup>61</sup> Following this remark, Ali Shirazi, representative of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, announced that in the event of an attack by Israel or the United States, "Tel Aviv and the U.S. fleet in the Persian Gulf would be the targets that would be set on fire in Iran's crushing response".<sup>62</sup> This statement clearly indicates that there is a naval and a deterrent aspect to the Mosaic Defence.

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<sup>59</sup> WorldTribune.com. "Iran's new president declares worldwide 'Islamic revolution'." 30 June 2005. <http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/05/front2453552.1027777777.html> (accessed on 28 September 2012). On 30 June 2005, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made the following comment. "The wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world."

<sup>60</sup> Sean Young. "Ahmadinejad: Destroy Israel, End Crisis". The Washington Post. 3 August 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/03/AR2006080300629.html> (accessed on 27 November 2012)

<sup>61</sup> Reuters Factbook "Strait of Hormuz". <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/24/us-iran-hormuz-profile-idUSTRE80N1M520120124> (Accessed on 22 December 2012)

<sup>62</sup> Al-Arabiya News. "Iran vows to set Tel Aviv "on fire" if attacked". 08 July 2008. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/07/08/52730.html> (accessed on 22 December 2012)



Despite his previous threats, Ahmadinejad denied the possibility of a conflict between Israel and Iran saying “military purchases are unnecessary because there is no war on the horizon between those two nations.”<sup>63</sup> Although he referred to Israel as a “tumor”, Ahmadinejad has once again backed away from some of his more hard-lined threats, saying the dispute with the United States will not be resolved quickly but only through dialogue based on respect will they resolve differences.<sup>64</sup>

In 2007, the former IRGC Commander Mohsen Razai said “Iran has no meaning without Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. There was a time when Iran within its own borders meant something, but today, Iran is the region and our identity has now become intertwined with that of the region. It is our principle and undisputable right to become a regional power. We are a nation that can play such a leadership role, but they (the West/U.S.) would like to deprive us from playing such a role.”<sup>65</sup>

Reading between the lines of thinly veiled threats and half truths, it is possible to see Iran’s goals and ambitions. Iran’s resentment of US presence in the region is evident and it clearly perceives this threat to Iran’s security but also to its dominance in the region. The Iranian military doctrine of the Mosaic Defence is projected to be employed in its defence in the event of an invasion or direct threat to its territory or sovereignty but it is a legitimate threat as a forward defence beyond its borders. It remains unclear if Iran

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<sup>63</sup> CNN.US. “Iranian President: Israel 'nothing more than a mosquito' to Iran”. 21 May 2012. [http://articles.cnn.com/2012-05-12/middleeast/world\\_meast\\_iran-ahmadinejad-israel\\_1\\_catherine-ashton-nuclear-program-eu-foreign-policy?\\_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST](http://articles.cnn.com/2012-05-12/middleeast/world_meast_iran-ahmadinejad-israel_1_catherine-ashton-nuclear-program-eu-foreign-policy?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST) (accessed on 27 November 2012)

<sup>64</sup> Reuters.U.S. “UPDATE 6-In New York, defiant Ahmadinejad says Israel will be 'eliminated’”. 24 September 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/24/un-assembly-ahmadinejad-idUSL1E8KO5BL20120924> (accessed on 27 November 2012)

<sup>65</sup> Mohsen M. Milani. “Reflections on Iran’s Policy Towards Iraq”. Ed. Tarrzi, Amin *The Iranian Puzzle Piece: Understanding Iran in the Global Context*. *Ibid.*, 63-64.

possesses legitimate nuclear ambitions or even a first-strike threat to Israel and eventually the United States (US) but it clearly perceives a threat, arguably as a result of its own rhetoric. The question of Iran's intent and motives remains a question which deserves further examination. Many Western strategists generally agree that Iran's doctrine is intended to act as a strategic deterrent.

### **Iran's Asymmetric Warfare**

Having recognised Iran's pride and nationalism and that its connection to its past is deeply rooted in Iran's psyche, another look into Persian antiquity illustrates the origins of not only modern Iran but also arguably the first example of irregular or asymmetric warfare. After Alexander the Great's conquest of what is modern day Iran and his death in 323 BC, a series of rulers and successors struggled for power and eventually the ancient Persian tribe of Parni led to the Parthian or Arsacid Empire. In 53 BC the Parthians employed horse-mounted archers, overwhelming 40,000 Roman heavy infantry in one of Rome's worst defeats. The Parthian irregular, hit and run tactics using light cavalry and mounted archers made them skilled at seige warfare and difficult for the Romans to defeat.<sup>66</sup>

Iranian military thinking has been 2500 years in the making and the return to irregular warfare after the Islamic Revolution is a logical transition. Not due to the revolution itself but the military culture combined with a shortage of military hardware and the severing of ties with the Shah's allies that followed the revolution.

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<sup>66</sup> Jona Lendering. "History of Iran: Parthian Empire". *Iran Chamber Society* Sunday 23 December 2012. <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/parthians/parthians.php> (accessed on 23 December 2012)

Almost as an acknowledgement of its limitations against superior US forces, Iran developed the doctrine of “Mosaic Defence” as an asymmetric doctrine and reorganised its Revolutionary Guard in 2004 to concentrate on asymmetric warfare.<sup>67</sup> “One of the central purposes of the strategy of irregular warfare, when used by those with the weaker forces, is... to duck the effects of high technology... One of its great complexities is that it is so simple...”<sup>68</sup> In the simplest of terms it is unconventional, irregular or the better known guerrilla warfare fought in the absence of normal linear terms and conditions, in an effort to exploit the enemy’s weakness and compensate for an advantage.

Perhaps more important in modern irregular warfare is the exploitation of the media and internet in an effort to capitalize on propaganda and achieve strategic victory even in the face of tactical defeat. It is this use of any and all available means to counter superior weapons, adversity to accept casualties and the exploitation of the media in which irregular warfare attempts to undermine the will of the enemy to fight and therefore negate the advantage of superior forces.

Insurgencies such as the campaign in Afghanistan or Iraq are modern examples of asymmetrical warfare but a better example of the new face of modern irregular warfare is Hybrid Warfare such as the Israeli-Hezbollah 2006 conflict. Hybrid Warfare involves all forms of warfare that is; conventional, irregular and terror tactics perhaps simultaneously.<sup>69</sup> This is the type of warfare that defines the Mosaic Defence. in order to deter aggression, Iran intends to combine different types of warfare to maximize casualties

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<sup>67</sup> Andysheh Dadsetan. *Iran's Defense Posture: Not So Dire Straits*. The Center for Strategic & International Studies. 24 January 2012. <http://csis.org/blog/irans-defense-posture-not-so-dire-straits>. (accessed on 15 September 2012)., 2.

<sup>68</sup> John Ralston Saul, 2004 as quoted by Pierre Pahlavi at CFC on 12 December 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Frank Hoffman. "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges." *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 52. 1st Quarter 2009. 35.

and exploit the psychological impact of the cost of invasion. Iran is willing to, or at least it wants to project the image that it is willing to suffer great casualties in order to inflict great casualties upon an invader and break his will, even his desire to begin hostilities.

The development of asymmetric warfare as a doctrine is a result of its culture and identity, as previously discussed but also of Iran's recognition of its limitations against superior conventional forces. Iran possesses significant conventional forces to maintain its status as a "regional power" in the Gulf. Its strategic missile forces may act as a threat to neighbours and invaders alike. However, its military forces are not sufficient to stand up against a co-ordinated and concentrated American assault.<sup>70</sup>

Instead of waging an insurgency as a result of and after the inevitable defeat of its conventional forces, Iran has begun to plan, equip and train its forces for just such a campaign.<sup>71</sup> Iran plans to wage total war both at home and abroad simultaneously disrupting an invading force within its own borders during an invasion and at the same time disrupting economic standing outside of Iran. This use of asymmetrical warfare and irregular troops to disrupt invading forces includes shutting or even just threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz to choke the world's oil supply.

The adoption of an asymmetrical warfare doctrine such as the Mosaic Defence is consistent with Iranian culture, nationalism, its successes in history and its grand strategy. Confronted with an overwhelmingly powerful adversary, albeit one it continues to antagonise, Iran has developed the Mosaic Defence to counter its perceived threat. As it continues to struggle against itself and its Jewish and Sunni neighbours, it finds itself

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<sup>70</sup> Robert Tilford. "Iranian war games emphasize "Asymmetrical warfare tactics"". 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>71</sup> Galen Wright. *Ibid.*, 2.

surrounded by US forces in the region in the Gulf Kingdoms, in Iraq and Afghanistan. That same US power that supported the Shah's regime, a secular Western regime and the identity that Iran still struggles to protect itself against. Iran feels threatened and has developed its doctrine and to some extent its rhetoric and threats accordingly.

### **A Comparison of China's Unrestricted Warfare and the Mosaic Defence**

The intent of this section is to introduce the Chinese concept of Unrestricted Warfare and draw some comparisons to the conclusions reached on Iran's Mosaic Defence. This comparison will complete the definition of the Mosaic Defence having examined it from another angle. This exploration will deepen the reader's understanding of the Mosaic Defence in relation to recent events but also to set the stage for better comprehension of the practical application of the Mosaic Defence in the defence of Iran.

The Mosaic Defence is Iran's attempt to threaten to wage "total war" or an "unrestricted warfare", consisting of both conventional and irregular or asymmetric warfare and new and complementary methods.<sup>72</sup> Wright's article "*An Unrestricted Army*" draws attention to the similarities of Iran's Doctrine and the work of two Colonels of the People's Liberation Army of China. Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui wrote *Unrestricted Warfare* in 1999 outlining methods to counter-balance the superiority of high-tech western forces, specifically those of the United States. Wright does not indicate whether the Iranian doctrine was inspired, unofficially or otherwise by the Chinese but he is correct in pointing out the similarities.

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<sup>72</sup> Galen Wright. *Iran's Mosaic Doctrine – An Unrestricted Army*. 2 March 2010. <http://thearkenstone.blogspot.ca/2010/03/irans-mosaic-doctrine-unrestricted-army.html> (accessed on 21 October 2012)

Colonel Qiao Liang, one of the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare* once said “the first rule of Unrestricted Warfare is that there are no rules, with nothing forbidden” and the author points to George Soros attacks on monetary systems as economic warfare designed to cripple countries and he holds up modern asymmetrical warfare as “multi-dimensional attacks on social, economic and political life.”<sup>73</sup> Iran’s use of proxies and influence of terror groups abroad serve as proof of this influence and the Mosaic Defence’s incorporation of these principles.

According to Qiao and Xiangsui, the goal of unrestricted warfare is not simply to “use force of arms to force the enemy to accept one’s own will, rather to use all means whatsoever to force the enemy to serve one’s own interests.”<sup>74</sup> The battlefield of unrestricted warfare is more complex than the traditional or conventional battlefield. In short, the battlefield is everywhere. Unrestricted warfare advocates war beyond the conventional or accepted limits and blurs the lines of conventional thinking. To overcome a superior adversary, Qiao and Xiangsui point out unlimited measures means “beyond boundaries or limits to attain an objective.”<sup>75</sup> It advocates attacking vulnerability and not taking on a superior foe head-on.

Colonels Qiao and Xiangsui’s “Essential Principles” for unrestricted warfare are omni-directionality, synchrony, limited objectives, unlimited measures, asymmetry,

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<sup>73</sup> Q. Liang and Xiangsui, W. *Unrestricted Warfare*. PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House. Beijing: 1999., x.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

minimal consumption, multidimensional coordination and adjustment and control of the entire process.<sup>76</sup>

The principle of Omni-directionality simply means that this philosophy of combat does not limit conflict to military means nor military targets on a traditional battlefield. In fact, it advocates blurring the concept of battlefield and being open to the possibility of expanding a conflict beyond traditional limits. This is characteristic of Iran's Mosaic Defence in that Iran extends its reach beyond its borders in a forward defence through the use of proxies and terror groups.

The principle of Synchrony pertains to "conducting actions in different spaces within the same period of time".<sup>77</sup> This does not necessarily mean they have to be simultaneous but within a key period of time as to have the desired effect or impact on the enemy. It could in fact be simultaneous or sequential merely so close together in time as to prevent an appropriate reaction in a timely manner.

A synchronised unrestricted engagement could be a "sneak attack on financial markets, followed by a hacker inserting a computer virus into communications and domestic systems".<sup>78</sup> The panic and unrest may challenge a government trying to maintain order and provide services on the home front combined with a military force attempting to conduct operations abroad may be overwhelming. This principle is consistent with Iran's threats to bring the war to Israel, the US and those who aid them.

The principle of Limited Objectives is defined as setting achievable objectives and not getting over extended. The authors urge caution against setting objectives that

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

“exceed allowable limits can lead to disastrous consequences.” Although no direct link can be established, one can draw the correlation between this principle and Iran’s use of proxies which permit it to exercise foreign policy and plausible deniability. This principle is also consistent with Iran’s relations with the GCC states. Although Iran has much greater combined military might and population than the GCC states combined, Iran falls short of directly threatening its neighbour for fear of direct confrontation with the United States in support of the GCC.

Unlimited measures means not being governed by limits or boundaries which could impede success in warfare. The authors refers to “surprise and deception to break the will of a democratic society” and specifically use the destruction of an economy as an example.<sup>79</sup> But this could also be extended to Iran’s use of proxies and terror groups and also its influence in Shiite communities regardless of borders.

Asymmetry as a principle of Unrestricted Warfare means to employ asymmetric and hybrid warfare. The authors encourage attacking an enemy’s weakness in order to overcome superior military forces and they use examples of modern guerilla urban warfare, terrorism and the psychological shock of striking soft targets, but also the resulting impact upon public opinion of making the superior force appear powerless to act.<sup>80</sup> This has certainly been the goal of many modern terror groups and has been the experience of Hezbollah in the 2006 conflict with Israel. This example of hybrid warfare serves as an example of attacking the weakness of a superior force and exploiting its reaction and resulting collateral damage in world media.

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<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.



The principle of Minimal Consumption is similar to the western principle of war Economy of Effort. The authors define it as using “the least amount of combat resources sufficient to accomplish the objective.”<sup>81</sup> This principle is best reflected in the Mosaic Defence by Iran’s tailoring its doctrine to correspond with its realistic abilities. Iran’s military forces, although large by regional standards are not as modern or as strong in numbers as the high-tech forces of the US and NATO. This principle stands in direct contrast to terror groups sponsored by Iran and their willingness to accept casualties in order to capitalize on the American aversion to casualties. However, one may argue that Iran’s memory of vast casualties in the Iran-Iraq War leaves little desire for an open war but it is also proof of the Islamic Republic’s willingness to sacrifice numbers to ensure the survival of the regime and its revolutionary ideals. This principle of using the right numbers necessary to accomplish their objective is consistent with the Mosaic Defence both as a tactical doctrine and as part of the greater strategy at work in Iran.

The principle of Multidimensional Coordination is not to be confused with synchrony or omni-directionality but it is complementary to both. It is coordinated action, and mobilization of all available forces, both military and non-military.<sup>82</sup> Iran has effectively embraced this principle whether consciously or not, by deploying its Al-Quds Force abroad and supporting terror groups and threatening to employ such means against its enemies if attacked.

The final principle, Adjustment and Control of the Entire Process, refers to flexibility and the willingness to adapt and not to blindly adhere to the principles but to

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

change as necessary during a conflict, adapt and embrace new capabilities and technologies.<sup>83</sup> This is certainly the case with modern insurgencies, hybrid warfare and terrorism. The ability to incorporate conventional tactics and weapons with irregular ones such as Hezbollah's use of anti-tank teams and weapon systems against Israel in 2006 is proof of the ability of such tactics to constantly adapt. This ability to constantly revise and counter tactics is a signature of modern irregular warfare and its inclusion in the Mosaic Defence is logical and will be explored in the next chapter.

In short, the authors advocate compensating for an adversary's superior forces by combining all methods available and expanding targets and battlefields beyond the traditional concept. They count other forms of attack among the emerging types of warfare such as terrorism, trade war (impacting resources or financial markets), ecological war (impacting a state's environment) or media war "(manipulating what people hear and see to lead public opinion astray)".<sup>84</sup> They quite correctly point out that these methods would most likely be put to use by a non-state actor, free from the consequences or responsibility to a population and having repeatedly demonstrated they are not governed by the conventions of the laws of war.

These two doctrines are strikingly similar. Both are designed to counter US influence and interest in their region and avoid direct military conflict if and when possible but instead these concepts capitalize on exploiting weakness and compensating for inferior forces compared to those of western/US militaries using any and all means available to accomplish their endstate.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **IRAN'S MILITARY FORCES: THE TOOLS OF THE MOSAIC DEFENCE**

This chapter briefly describes the military forces of Iran, both regular and irregular and outlines their capabilities in order to better understand how Iran can and will wage war and outline the forces at its disposal in the execution of the Mosaic Defence. Their roles and responsibilities have evolved from a parallel structure which has developed following the Islamic Revolution. There are in some cases very distinct responsibilities, duplicate responsibilities and also some overlap such as air defence. Rather than examine regular forces and then irregular forces it is necessary to explain them in accordance with their assigned roles and responsibilities. Despite the origins and political roots of the Revolutionary Guards, they possess both regular and irregular roles but are also responsible for conventional and strategic defence systems. It is necessary to examine them together to gain a better understanding of Iran's Mosaic Defence doctrine.

#### **The Islamic Republic of Iran Army (Artesh)**

There are two distinct military forces in Iran. The first is the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, also known as "The Artesh" and is the remnants of the regular Army of the Shah's regime. It is a conventional regular army responsible for the defense of the borders and integrity of the state. The second is the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) sometimes referred to as the Sepah-e-Pasdaran or Pasdaran for short.

The Artesh (Army) consists of 375,000 troops mostly conscripts, divided into six Infantry Divisions, four Armoured Divisions, six Artillery Regiments, two Commando

Divisions, one Special Forces Brigade and one Airborne Brigade.<sup>85</sup> The Artesh loyalty to the Islamic regime was considered questionable and has not enjoyed the favour of the government. The imperial roots of the Artesh meant it was largely equipped with American equipment and trained in western doctrine by western forces, specifically American and French. The Iran-Iraq War led to purchase of Soviet equipment and increased relations with Russia since early 2001 led to training with the Russian army indicating an adaptation of Russian influenced norms and conventional doctrine.<sup>86</sup>

The Artesh is the largest army by Persian Gulf standards and its major equipment holdings are 1565 tanks, 3284 artillery systems and some updated anti-tank guided missile systems.<sup>87</sup> This fleet of armoured vehicles and weapons consists of a variety of equipment including some western pre-revolution era equipment, some Soviet and Chinese variants and some indigenous Iran-built such as the Zulfiqar tank, indigenous to Iran but containing Soviet engines. Iran's arms procurement has been impacted by sanctions but there has been some equipment produced in Iran, such as fire control systems.<sup>88</sup> The bulk of Iran's armoured fleet consists of a modified version of the T55, T72 and Zulfiqar. Only the T72 and Zulfiqar possess advanced fire control systems. It is estimated that out of its fleet of tanks, only 1000 are operational, including the approximately 250 Zulfiqar which leaves Iran with only enough tanks to outfit the 92<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Jane's. *Iran*. <https://janes.ihs.com/Grid.aspx> (accessed on 14 January 2013)

<sup>86</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 103.

<sup>87</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004. 254.

Armoured Division and conduct sustained armoured operations, leaving the remainder with the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>89</sup> It is unknown if the irregular warfare and hit and run tactics of the Mosaic Defence were originally developed out of necessity or coincidence but it is a logical conclusion that Iran's has developed its doctrine to fit into its actual capabilities.

Iran's artillery inventory is also a mix of western and Soviet made largely towed systems and its conventional doctrine is largely based on massed, static firepower.<sup>90</sup> Despite the Artesh efforts to modernize its armour and equipment, it is unlikely that the introduction of the Mosaic Defence has altered the ability to rapidly change targets, or the doctrine governing the conventional use of fire support.

Iran's inventory anti-armour weapons fits well into its doctrine of the Mosaic Defence. Iran also holds and builds a number of portable anti-tanks systems and has been constantly trying to make advances in anti-tank technology. Iran produces an improved version of the RPG-7 and although it is unable to penetrate most frontal armour of western and even Russian made main battle tanks.<sup>91</sup> However, continued efforts to acquire better technology and improve penetrating power mean that these weapons used in hit and run tactics could prove very effective in insurgency operations.

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<sup>89</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004. 256.

<sup>90</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004. 258.

<sup>91</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Military Forces in Transition: Conventional Threats and Weapons of mass Destruction*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999. 258.

### **Air Defence Forces**

The Air Defence Forces of Iran are both a separate command within the Artesh with some controlled by the Air Force and consist of a varying array of weapons and capabilities. Iran has been steadily improving its Air Defence and ballistic missiles systems since the US invasion of Iraq in 1990.<sup>92</sup>

The Artesh has some mobile anti-aircraft systems including ZSU 23-4s, shoulder launched anti-aircraft missiles such as the Stinger bought from Afghanistan rebels and a variety of Chinese made SA-7s but it lacks an integrated command and control system and is unable to co-ordinate air defences.<sup>93</sup> It is unlikely Iran would be able to defend against modern western aircraft. Much like its manoeuvre warfare doctrine, Iran has compensated for its lack of conventional forces and ability by matching its doctrine to its capability. The Mosaic Defence doctrine of irregular warfare and dispersing its hand held systems could pose a threat to aviation and low level aircraft especially in the event of occupation of Iran by western forces, in conducting an insurgency.

### **Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF)**

The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) also consists of the remnants of the Shah's forces. The IRIAF consists of approximately 15,000 personnel and 300 combat

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<sup>92</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 95.

<sup>93</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004.,261.

aircraft divided into 18 squadrons.<sup>94</sup> Iran acquired 79 American F14 Tomcat before the 1979 revolution and relies heavily reliant upon its advanced radar for air defences but the IRIAF is only about to maintain approximately 30 operational due to maintenance and spare parts shortages.<sup>95</sup>

Its fleet of aircraft consists of a mixture of airframes and it does include some more recent additions such as the Russian MiG-29 and Chinese J-7. Iran has so far been unsuccessful in obtaining permission to build Russian MiG-29 in Iran but it has claimed to have three combat aircraft in domestic production.<sup>96</sup>

The 36 Su-24 Fencer fighter-bombers make Iran capable of brief incursions into the GCC states to conduct deep strikes and intimidate them.<sup>97</sup> But its supply starved air force is no match for the modern equipped GCC states or the US and Israel. Between the Artesh air defences and those of the IRIAF, Iran is only capable of limited point defence for key bases and some infrastructure.<sup>98</sup>

### **The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)**

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) or Revolutionary Guards are the guardians of the Islamic Revolution or the Islamic system of government in Iran.<sup>99</sup> They

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<sup>94</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East. Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>95</sup> Jane's. *Iran*. <https://janes.ihs.com/Grid.aspx> (accessed on 14 January 2013)

<sup>96</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004., 275

<sup>97</sup> Steven R. Ward. . "The Continuing Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine". *The Middle East Journal*. Autumn 2005. 571

<sup>98</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East. Ibid.*, 276

<sup>99</sup> Pierre Pahlavi. "Guerre Irrégulière Et Analyse Institutionnelle. Le Cas De La Stratégie Asymétrique Des Gardiens De La Révolution En Iran." *Revue Études Internationales* XLII (No 4 Décembre 2011). 477.

were originally formed by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 to prevent forces loyal to the Shah from carrying out a coup d'état and restoring the old regime.<sup>100</sup> Ill disciplined, poorly trained, the Revolutionary Guards were a militia, loyal to the Ayatollah Khomeini and helped him cling to power in the early days of the post-revolutionary period.<sup>101</sup> Since then, the Revolutionary Guards have transformed from a band of revolutionaries into an armed force mirroring the Regular Army (The Artesh) and were capable of conducting operations against the Iraqis in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988. The Guards hold a privileged position within Iranian society and control the strategic and irregular forces of Iran's military.

The Guard's legitimacy and hold on control is due largely to popular support and has become entrenched in Iranian society since they maintained control during the 2009 Presidential election unrest.<sup>102</sup> In its role of protecting the revolutionary regime, the Guards continued to transform into a force not only meant to counter the Artesh and maintain its hold of power but one able to counter a threat of American invasion and participate in the defence of the state and regime as a fighting force.

The Guards are estimated to be 125,000 strong consisting of its own army, navy and air forces, and also controls the strategic missile forces, internal and external security forces and the "Bonyads" charities and a significant part of Iran's economy.<sup>103</sup> In 2005,

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<sup>100</sup> Glenn E. Curtis and Eric Hooglund. *Iran: A Country Study*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, 2008. 269.

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth Katzman. *The Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press. 1993.

<sup>102</sup> Pierre Pahlavi. "Guerre Irrégulière Et Analyse Institutionnelle. Le Cas De La Stratégie Asymétrique Des Gardiens De La Révolution En Iran." *Revue Études Internationales* XLII. No 4 Décembre 2011. 489.



the IRGC underwent a complete restructuring to counter the perceived threat. This transformation has been to that of a light and mobile force capable of conducting asymmetric warfare against an invader.<sup>104</sup> The reorganisation focused on decentralised command and locating troops in all 30 territories and the capital, Tehran.<sup>105</sup>

The decentralised deployment and command structure was intended to allow more freedom of action in times of invasion and increase co-ordination with the Basij (militia).<sup>106</sup> Its intent is to engage invading conventional forces and use the Guards to strike the rear and interior of invading/occupying forces. Its very dispersion is designed to permit independent action to continue in spite of surgical strike to command and control nodes.<sup>107</sup> This reorganisation is undoubtedly recognition of its inability to stand up against superior conventional forces in the event of an invasion and intended to engage an invader in asymmetric warfare to disrupt and destroy enemy forces from the rear.

### **Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) and the Guards Navy (IRGCN)**

There are two distinct naval forces in Iran. The first is the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) which consists of the remnants of the Shah's Imperial Navy of the old regime and the second is the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy (IRGCN). The IRIN is a conventional navy consisting of 18,000 personnel and a few corvettes, frigates,

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<sup>103</sup> BBC News. *Profile: Iran's Revolutionary Guards*. 18 October 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7064353.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7064353.stm) (accessed on 20 September 2012)

<sup>104</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>106</sup> PressTV. "IRGC Changes Aimed at Confronting New Threats." 18 February 2009. <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/86059.html> (accessed on 18 October 2012)

<sup>107</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, *Ibid.*, 2.

submarines and cruise missile defences. The IRGCN is an asymmetrically focussed navy consisting of 20,000 sailors and 5,000 marines manning a fleet of fast attack boats estimated in the thousands and coastal defence anti-ship missiles.<sup>108</sup>

When the IRGCN was established in 1985, the IRGCN and the IRIN had overlapping missions and the two competed for funding and resources. The IRIN was primarily a conventional navy whereas the IRGCN concentrated on irregular, asymmetrical tactics. In 2007 Iran re-organised its naval roles, officially dividing responsibilities making the “IRGCN responsible for defence of the Persian Gulf and the IRIN responsible for projecting Iranian power far beyond its shores and operates in the Gulf of Oman and the Caspian Sea.”<sup>109</sup>

#### **IRIN & IRGCN Fleet – Vessels & Equipment**

Submarines	3
Mini-Submarines	12
Frigates	4
Corvettes	2
Fast Attack Craft-Missile	23
Large Patrol Craft	5
Coastal Patrol Craft	300 +
Landing Ships (Logistic)	10
Landing Ships (Tank)	5
Landing Craft (Tank)	3
Hovercraft	7
Replenishment Ship	1
Supply Ships	2
Support Ships	7
Water Tankers	4
Tenders	12
EM52 Rising Mines	3000
C 802 / 80 CSSC-3 Anti-Ship Missiles	100

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<sup>108</sup> Joshua C. Himes. “Iran’s Maritime Evolution”. *Gulf Analysis Paper, Middle East Program July 2011*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. <http://csis.org/mideast> (accessed on 14 September 2012), 2-3.

<sup>109</sup> Joshua C. Himes. “Iran’s Maritime Evolution”. *Ibid.*, 1.

Ra'ad Cruise Missiles

Unknown

C-701 Kosak Anti-Ship Missiles

Unknown

<https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1353400>

### **Iran's Ballistic Missile Forces**

The Ballistic Missile Forces of Iran are controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) or Revolutionary Guards.<sup>110</sup> The IRGC strategic missile forces are thought to be responsible for Iran's nuclear program and potentially other chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons if deployed.<sup>111</sup> As of the year 2000, Iran was believed to possess up to 2000 tons of chemical weapons and potentially biological weapon material which could be fitted for use on warheads mounted on the SCUD missiles.<sup>112</sup>

Development of this strategic deterrent has been continuous, building on the Soviet-made SCUD-Bs surface-to-surface missile and investing into increasing range, payload and accuracy. The Shahab 3 and Shahab 3M Ballistic Missile are Iranian built versions of the Russian SCUD-B, built and improved upon with Russian and North Korean assistance to improve range and accuracy.<sup>113</sup> The test firing in July of 1998 proved the missile capable of reaching ranges of 1300 kilometres and is now allegedly capable of reaching 2100 kilometres and striking targets in Israel, the Strait of Hormuz, US bases in the Middle East and even Southern Europe.<sup>114</sup> Iran is believed to be

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<sup>110</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>111</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies. 16 August 2007. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816\\_cordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012), 3.

<sup>112</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 100.

<sup>113</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. 95.

currently developing the Sejil and Safir Ballistic Missiles, the next generation to the Shahab 3M with improved guidance and accuracy and estimated extended ranges of 3,000 km.<sup>115</sup>

Iran's experience in the 1980-88 war with Iraq included an exchange of ballistic missiles, in an engagement known as the "war of the cities".<sup>116</sup> Iranian doctrine covering the employment of ballistic missiles is speculated to be intended to deter invasion and inflict significant casualties coupled with asymmetrical warfare, launched at civilian targets, cities and defences in depth.

### **Iran's Nuclear Program and Ambitions**

Iran claims to be pursuing nuclear scientific development in an effort to develop nuclear power for the peaceful purposes of generating electricity and consistently denies attempts to develop nuclear weapons.<sup>117</sup> Iran's nuclear ambitions date back to 1959 when the Shah's regime had plans to build 23 nuclear power plants over 30 years to diversify its

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<sup>114</sup> Alan Cowell and Nazila Fathi. "Iran Test-Fires Missiles That Put Israel in Range". *The New York Times* 28 September 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/29/world/middleeast/29tehran.html? r=0> (accessed on 14 October 2012)

<sup>115</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan. *Analyzing the Impact of Preventative Strikes Against Iran's Nuclear Facilities*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 10 September 2012. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubscordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubscordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 15 December 2012)

<sup>116</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004., 486.

<sup>117</sup> Reuters.US. "UPDATE 6-In New York, defiant Ahmadinejad says Israel will be 'eliminated'". 24 September 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/24/un-assembly-ahmadinejad-idUSL1E8KO5BL20120924> (accessed on 27 November 2012)

sources of energy.<sup>118</sup> Construction at the Bushehr site started in the early 1970s but was left unfinished and was abandoned during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the Ayatollah Khomeini eventually approved efforts to develop nuclear weapons to defend against Iraqi chemical weapons and to deter American invasion.<sup>119</sup> With assistance provided from China and Russia, Iran restarted its nuclear program in 1991 but international outcry over violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Iran's failure to comply with UN inspectors has led to United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions four times between 2003 and June 2010.<sup>120</sup>

The development of nuclear weapons or at the very least, the veiled threat of possessing nuclear weapons is consistent with Iran's psyche and nationalism of its perceived rightful place among nations but it is also consistent with its doctrine of the Mosaic Defence.

The Mosaic Defence doctrine recognises this fact and relies heavily upon Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and its strategic missiles program, coupled with terrorism through non-state actors or proxies abroad and the threat of asymmetrical warfare to defend its territory during an invasion.<sup>121</sup> The idea being to attrit an invader

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<sup>118</sup> Major Shams-uz-Zaman, Pakistan Army. "Possibility and Implications of an Israeli Strike on Iranian Nuclear Installations". National Defence University Journal 2011. [http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/NDU\\_Journal\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/NDU_Journal_2011.pdf) . (accessed on 21 January 2013)., 121.

<sup>119</sup> Nicholas Schmidle, "The Art of Brinkmanship: Unraveling Iran's Nuclear Policy". *The Stimson Center*. 23 December 2004. <http://www.stimson.org/summaries/the-art-of-brinkmanship-unraveling-irans-nuclear-policy/> . (accessed on 21 January 2013) ., 1.

<sup>120</sup> Major Shams-uz-Zaman, Pakistan Army. "Possibility and Implications of an Israeli Strike on Iranian Nuclear Installations". National Defence University Journal 2011. [http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/NDU\\_Journal\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/NDU_Journal_2011.pdf) . (accessed on 21 January 2013)., 121.

<sup>121</sup> Steven R. Ward. "The Continuing Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine". *Ibid.*, 573.

using all means available consisting of surprise tactics inflicting casualties upon the invader, making him pay dearly for every inch of ground captured.

In September 2012, General Jafari, Commander of the IRGC warned Iran may withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and attack US Bases, stating should Iran be attacked by the US or Israel, “our response to Israel is clear; nothing will remain of Israel”.<sup>122</sup> A significant part of the Mosaic Defence deterrent is the unpredictable nature of Iran and the spectre of the cost of invasion, coupled with extremism, capitalizing on western fear of the infliction of losses but also its lack of understanding.

In March 2005, giving a speech in the presence of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, General Safavi then Commander of the IRGC, said “with a spirit of Jihad and martyrdom-seeking” the IRGC warfare prepared for “endless defence and long-term warfare on land, air and sea.”<sup>123</sup> This use of religious fervor and zeal combined with asymmetric methods and the veiled threat of WMD is also consistent with Iran’s identity and its Mosaic Defence doctrine.

Despite the previously discussed nationalistic nature of the Revolutionary Guards, the use and exploitation of religious fervor by the Iranian regime is undeniable. Following the Revolution, the Islamic Regime took advantage of religious devotion to defend against Iraqi invasion during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88. The Iran-Iraq War was often referred to as the “Sacred Defence” and there was a significant religious obligation to defend the state against the Iraqi (Sunni) invaders. The use of devout

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<sup>122</sup>Alireza Nader. “Profile: Revolutionary Guards Chief Gen. Jafari”. *The Rand Corporation*. 22 January 2013. <http://www.rand.org/blog/2013/01/profile-revolutionary-guards-chief-gen-jafari.html>. (accessed on 24 January 2013)

<sup>123</sup> Steven R. Ward. “The Continuing Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine”. *The Middle East Journal*. Autumn 2005. 573

Iranian youth as human wave assaults against Iraqi positions is a clear example of Iran's irregular warfare and religious fervour in action.

The memory of the large casualties suffered during the conflict with Iraq leave little appetite in Iran for a costly war. However, in the event of an invasion or attack on Iran's sovereignty there can be little doubt of the soft nationalists, those who have little memory of the Shah and religious zealots alike supporting the regime against an invader. This religious fervor will encourage sacrifice to prolong an invasion and to ensure the survival of the regime if not the actual victory of a given conflict.

Although Shiite principles only permit defensive war, the religious obligation extends to defend the country or to defend other Muslim countries, especially Muslims lands occupied by non-Muslims.<sup>124</sup> This interpretation of Shiite justification for war could very possibly be Iran's justification of the use of proxies beyond its borders, especially in Israel. This could also extend to proliferation or a pre-emptive strike using nuclear weapons as part of the Mosaic Defence.

The Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran's Supreme Leader, religious leader and cleric recently condemned its possession of nuclear weapons declaring such weapons a "sin, useless, harmful and dangerous".<sup>125</sup> Although such an announcement forbidding the use of nuclear weapons should be indicative of a change in Iran's intension or even clarification, the cleric stopped short of declaring Iran would permit the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect Iran's facilities and confirm its intentions.

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<sup>124</sup> Lt Col Teresa M. Pitts, USAF. *Cultural, Religious and Ideological perspectives on the Just War Doctrine and Customary Laws of Armed Conflict: Western (Catholic) and Islam (Shiite)*. Air War College, Air University. 16 February 2007., 9.

<sup>125</sup> CTV. "Iran says Supreme Leader's Ban on Nuclear Weapons is Binding". The Associated Press. 15 January 2013. <http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/iran-says-supreme-leader-s-ban-on-nuclear-weapons-is-binding-1.1114752/comments-7.360786> (accessed on 18 January 2013)., 13-14.

Canadian defence strategist Anton Minkov casts doubt on the sincerity of the Supreme Leader's 2005 declaration against nuclear weapons, which was repeated more recently. He cites a letter from the previous Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini in which he stated "the government has the right to unilaterally terminate its religious contracts with the people, if those contracts are against the interests of the country and Islam."<sup>126</sup> Minkov succinctly points to the Khomeini's views linked the religious identity to the revolutionary ideology of "restoring justice and triumphing over evil". This means that Iranian doctrine is flexible enough to set aside principle, at least in the short term, in the interest of preserving the state and the greater good, that is, in obtaining nuclear weapons to act as a deterrent arsenal against invasion.

In keeping with Shiite values of defending Islam and Islamic states, Iran's Mosaic Defence operates beyond the defined borders of the state, interpreting the meaning of the justification of war to suit its ends. Additionally, in contrast to the condemnation of nuclear weapons are numerous declarations by the Supreme Leader citing Islamic principle supporting a defensive war against the "occupiers of the Islamic holy lands of Israel and Iraq" and the ongoing Jihad as the struggle of Zionists against all Muslims.<sup>127</sup> Several Iranian clerics interpret the spread of democracy as an effort to transform Islamic countries into western countries.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Anton Minkov. Letter-Report (LR212-042). *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options*. Department of National Defence. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. Ottawa. 8 March 2012. 10.

<sup>127</sup> Lt Col Teresa M. Pitts, USAF. *Cultural, Religious and Ideological perspectives on the Just War Doctrine and Customary Laws of Armed Conflict: Western (Catholic) and Islam (Shiite)*. Air War College, Air University. 16 February 2007., 9.

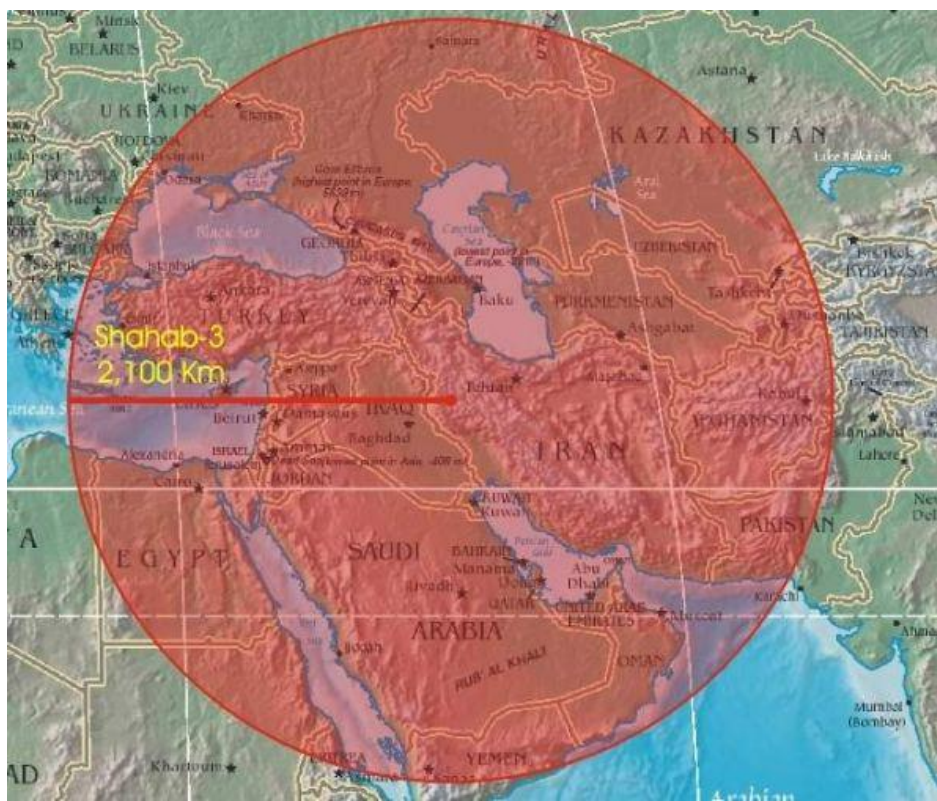
<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.



The declaration condemning nuclear weapons may be sincere but it may be misunderstood or designed to deceive the world, specifically the west. As such, it would certainly be consistent with Iran's complexity and the Mosaic Defence. It may be a measure to buy time or mislead or it may indeed be a legitimate declaration and Iran's refusal to permit the UN inspectors may simply be a stubborn attempt to exercise sovereignty at the expense of the economy.

It is however, unlikely Iran will overtly employ nuclear weapons against a second-strike capable enemy such as the US or Israel. But the size of Israel as a "one-bomb" state cannot be ignored. Although the Islamic regime is not suicidal, even one bomb in Israel, employed by a proxy, can have devastating effect. The use of non-state actors and terror groups permits Iran to act but provides Iran deniability, shielding it from direct responsibility and it is consistent with the Mosaic Defence. There exists the possibility of proliferation of nuclear weapons to these groups for use against the United States and Israel. The nuclear deterrent plays into Iran's overall strategy and the Mosaic Defence.

## Ballistic Missile Range Map



This map illustrates the estimated range of Iran's Shahab 3 (Meteor) Ballistic Missile.  
<http://mapsof.net/map/shahab-3-range>

## The Basij

A product of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the Basij (Mobilisation of the Oppressed in Persian) is a reserve force of about 90,000 active members with mobilisation strength of 1,000,000 men. It consists of approximately 740 battalions of 300 men and is mainly made up of young and old men having completed military service.<sup>129</sup> Raised by the Ayatollah Khomeini as a fanatical mobilisation base and used in suicide attacks and advancing as a “human wave” during the Iran-Iraq War, they are now

<sup>129</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 16 August 2007.  
[http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816\\_cordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012). 10.

focused on maintaining civil obedience and augmenting the IRGC in asymmetrical warfare defending “public alleyways and urban areas”.<sup>130</sup>

Following the 1999 political unrest and pressure for modernization, the regime has made efforts to reinvigorate religious zeal as key to military success.<sup>131</sup> This effort to instill the revolutionary and especially religious motivation in the population explains the demonization of the west. This radicalization and continued devotion among the Basij form another critical layer of the Mosaic Defence; the religious fervor and willingness to not only accept losses but the encouragement of martyrdom to act as a deterrent against invasion.

The members of the Basij, known as Basiji, sometimes wear black and white scarves to identify themselves.<sup>132</sup> They are often used to enforce Islamic law, preserve the regime and enforce civil order during domestic unrest.<sup>133</sup> Subordinate to the IRGC, the Basij exercise significant influence on University curriculum and indoctrinate the population in an effort to control and/or shape public opinion.<sup>134</sup> Following anti-government riots in 1993, the Basij formed the Ashura Brigades consisting of 17,000 men

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<sup>130</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>131</sup> Steven R. Ward. *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and its Armed Forces*. Georgetown University Press. Washington: 2009. 313.

<sup>132</sup> Lee Kaplan. “Hezbollah cells: Who are the Basijis and IRGC?” *Northeast Intelligence Network*. <http://www.homelandsecurityus.com/archives/4608> (accessed 7 December 2012).

<sup>133</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>134</sup> Pierre Pahlavi. "Guerre Irrégulière Et Analyse Institutionnelle. Le Cas De La Stratégie Asymétrique Des Gardiens De La Révolution En Iran." *Revue Études Internationales* XLII. No 4 Décembre 2011., 479.

and even women in several all-female battalions to enforce Islamic morality such as women not covering their hair or wearing make-up.<sup>135</sup>

An integral part of the Islamic regime's grip on power in Iran, the Basij and IRGC wield significant influence on Iran's economy and the Basij is estimated to exercise direct control over at least one third of the economy.<sup>136</sup> Following the Iran-Iraq War, demobilised Basijis and serving IRGC members were encouraged to invest in business and were given priority to invest in privatised national companies which led to significant influence on Iran's economy and government contracts.<sup>137</sup>

In 2003 President Khatami secured the loyalty of the Basij and the IRGC during the American invasion of Iraq by solidifying their influence and control over the economy.<sup>138</sup> Members benefit from low-interest loans, access to specialised housing, priority university admission, government contracts and political contributions and they exercise significant control over agriculture, education and energy ministry.<sup>139</sup> This influence solidified the regime's control of member loyalty and by extension, over the population.

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<sup>135</sup> John Pike. "Qods (Jerusalem) Force". Federation of American Scientists. (FAS) Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC - Pasdaran-e Inqilab) <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/qods/> (accessed on 18 October 2012).

<sup>136</sup> BBC News. *Profile: Iran's Revolutionary Guards*. 18 October 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7064353.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7064353.stm) (accessed on 20 September 2012).

<sup>137</sup> Saeid Golkar. "Paramilitarization of the Economy: The Case of Iran's Basij Militia". *Armed Forces & Society*. Sage Publications. <http://afs.sagepub.com/content/38/4/625> (accessed on 17 October 2012). 629.

<sup>138</sup> Saeid Golkar. "Paramilitarization of the Economy: The Case of Iran's Basij Militia". *Ibid.* 629.

<sup>139</sup> Saeid Golkar. "Paramilitarization of the Economy: The Case of Iran's Basij Militia". *Ibid.* 629.

### **Al-Quds Force & Iranian Sleeper Cells in Western Nations**

The Quds Force or Al-Quds Force (Jerusalem Force in Persian) is an irregular force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps who carry the Islamic Revolution beyond Iran's borders. They are suspected to have operated in Lebanon and Syria conducting operations including terrorism, training terrorists and providing explosives and training to Taliban forces in Afghanistan.<sup>140</sup> It is suspected that the Quds advise, supply, train and even operate with Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Al Quds operates training facilities in Iran, Lebanon and Sudan and conducts targeting and attack planning, maintaining contacts in underground Islamic movements in the Gulf States of Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. It also supports Hezbollah in Lebanon Iraq and Jordan as well as Islamic jihad in Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey and Chechnya among others.<sup>141</sup>

The IRGC Deputy Commander was quoted as promising “any aggression against Iran will expand the war into the borders of the enemies.”<sup>142</sup> Iran promises terror attacks in nations supporting the United States and Israel in the event of an attack on Iran. Al Quds have been suspected of operating sleeper cells in western nations including Canada,

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<sup>140</sup> The Telegraph. “Iran's Revolutionary Guards: Quds Force”. 4 October 2007. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1565107/Irans-Revolutionary-Guards-Quds-force.html> (accessed on 14 October 2012)

<sup>141</sup> John Pike. “Qods (Jerusalem) Force”. Federation of American Scientists. (FAS) Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC - Pasdaran-e Inqilab) <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iran/qods/> (accessed on 18 October 2012)

<sup>142</sup> Brian Stewart. “Did intelligence fears prompt Canada to cut Iran ties?” CBC News. 11 September 2012. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/09/10/f-vp-stewart-iran-canada.html>. (accessed on 7 December 2012),. 3.

the US and recruiting among Iranian and Arab communities in the west. Sleeper Cells of Quds in western nations is consistent with the Mosaic Defence and Iranian threats.

Evidence of these sleeper cells working in the Western Hemisphere have driven the US and Canada to co-operate on border detection and terror threats and specifically terrorists from entering the US. The Quds are believed to be the driving force behind the plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the US in October 2011 and have been linked to drug trafficking and money laundering in South America to finance Hezbollah operations in the Middle East.<sup>143</sup>

In January 2012, US intelligence official James Clapper stated Iran was establishing Sleeper Cells designed to attack US and allied interests around the world in the event of war.”<sup>144</sup> American officials believe there are 40,000 Iranian agents in the west largely in South America. In the US and Canada these groups concentrate in the mostly Shiite Muslim communities in New York, Detroit, San Francisco and Toronto running intelligence, financing and recruiting through the mosques and community centres.<sup>145</sup> Other estimates indicate up to a dozen separate sleeper cells operating in the US including San Jose California and Boston originally thought to be raising money

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<sup>143</sup> Shawn McCarthy. “Ottawa working with Washington to counter an Iranian threat in the Americas”. *The Globe and Mail*. 2 January 2013.

<sup>144</sup> Brian Stewart. “Did intelligence fears prompt Canada to cut Iran ties?” CBC News. 11 September 2012. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/09/10/f-vp-stewart-iran-canada.html>. (accessed on 7 December 2012), 3.

<sup>145</sup> Michael Carl. “Iranians prepare terror campaign inside U.S: 'There are numerous Revolutionary Guard cells' inside borders.” *WND*. 5 December 2012. <http://www.wnd.com/2012/12/iranians-prepare-terror-campaign-inside-u-s/> (accessed 7 December 2012)

through cigarette and credit card fraud, actually plan to carry out terror strikes in the US in the event of a conflict with Iran.<sup>146</sup>

The presence of Quds Sleeper Cells active in Canada, coercing, threatening and blackmailing Canada's 100,000 strong Iranian community into co-operating with embassy has been speculated as the cause for Canada's expulsion of Iranian diplomats and breaking off diplomatic ties with the Islamic republic.<sup>147</sup>

These home-grown terrorists are disenfranchised Canadians both by birth and naturalisation recruited to participate in terror attacks abroad and are feared to be capable of carrying out attacks here at home. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is aware of 45 to 60 such individuals who have travelled abroad to join Al Qaeda and have intercepted others trying to join efforts to conduct terror attacks abroad. Some terrorists involved in the recent attacks in Bulgaria and Algeria included naturalized Canadians, who have left Canada but still travel on Canadian passports and can easily return to conduct attacks at home.<sup>148</sup> Recent arrests in Nigeria uncovered an Iranian trained and equipped terror cell having been trained in the use of weapons and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and responsible for planning attacks in Nigeria.<sup>149</sup> The cells exposure further confirmed Iran's efforts to step-up attacks on Israeli and Jewish centres

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<sup>146</sup> Lee Kaplan. "Hezbollah cells: Who are the Basijis and IRGC?" *Northeast Intelligence Network*. <http://www.homelandsecurityus.com/archives/4608> (accessed 7 December 2012)

<sup>147</sup> Brian Stewart. "Did intelligence fears prompt Canada to cut Iran ties?" CBC News. 11 September 2012. *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>148</sup> Stewart Bell. "Extremism: What's In It For The Radical?" *The National Post* 9 February 2013.

<sup>149</sup> David Barnett. "Iran-backed terror cell exposed in Nigeria". [http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&q=http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/02/iran-backed\\_cell\\_exposed\\_in\\_ni.php&ct=ga&cad=CAEQAhgAIAAoATAIOAhA\\_qYiQVIAVA AWABiBWVuLVVT&cd=pvtg5FIMI AU&usg=AFQjCNGckb8lCgpmXyH2-WiMu7EyslQGTA](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&q=http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/02/iran-backed_cell_exposed_in_ni.php&ct=ga&cad=CAEQAhgAIAAoATAIOAhA_qYiQVIAVA AWABiBWVuLVVT&cd=pvtg5FIMI AU&usg=AFQjCNGckb8lCgpmXyH2-WiMu7EyslQGTA)> Long War Journal 20 February 2013. (accessed on 24 February 2013)

in Cyprus, Turkey, Kenya, India, Thailand, Azerbaijan and elsewhere using dual citizens of western countries to plan and execute these attacks.

Memories of the Toronto 18 remind Canadians that the possibility of home-grown terror attacks are a very real threat and the possibility of such a groups being supported by Iran raises the magnitude of the potential effects and success of such an attack and the danger of the Mosaic Defence if fully implemented.

### **The IRGC Cyber Corps**

The IRGC contains a Cyber Corps that is more than capable of carrying out cyber attacks and according to the United States, it already has. US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta claimed that warned that “the United States was at risk of a Cyber Pearl Harbour”.<sup>150</sup> Without outright identifying Iran as the perpetrator, Panetta recognised the current and persistent threat from adversaries citing “foreign cyber actors are probing America’s critical infrastructure networks” and “targeting computer controls systems that operate chemical, electricity and water plants and those that guide transportation”.<sup>151</sup> The US believes that the Iranian Cyber Corps was responsible for a cyber attack against Saudi oil companies and American financial institutions.<sup>152</sup> The US believes the IRGC Cyber Corps was established in 2011 in response to Operation Olympic Games, a US/Israeli

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<sup>150</sup> Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger. The New York Times. “U.S. Suspects Iran Was Behind a Wave of Cyber Attacks”. 13 October 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?_r=0) (accessed on 18 October 2012).

<sup>151</sup> Zachary Fryer-Biggs. “DoD’s New Cyber Doctrine: Panetta Defines Deterrence, Preemption Strategy”. *Defense News*. 15 October 2012. 6

<sup>152</sup> Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger. The New York Times. “U.S. Suspects Iran Was Behind a Wave of Cyber Attacks”. 13 October 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?_r=0) (accessed on 18 October 2012).



cyber attacks using the computer virus Stuxnet against Iran's nuclear enrichment plant at Natanz setting back development by several years.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Marc Ambinder. "Did America's Cyber Attack on Iran Make Us More Vulnerable". *The Atlantic* 5 June 2012. <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/06/did-americas-cyber-attack-on-iran-make-us-more-vulnerable/258120/>. (accessed on 11 December 2012)

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE MOSAIC DEFENCE IN ACTION**

*“If we have to fight, we shall fight. You will kill ten of our men and we will kill one of yours and in the end it will be you who will tire of it.”*

*- Ho Chi Minh, 1946*<sup>154</sup>

This section contains a number of hypothesis about the practical implementation of the Mosaic Defence doctrine in the defence of Iran; the waging of total war through irregular forces, terror groups and proxies and its possible implications for the West. To predict how Iran would react in the event of an attack, it is necessary to examine its doctrine, analyse its capabilities and events in the region in recent years. To overcome or even survive a western attack and invasion, Iran must counter American technology and superiority. This chapter will lay out possible scenarios but will primarily focus on a US attack on Iran. Specifically, this chapter will examine how each arm of Iran’s military forces would be employed in a chronological manner.

Possible Scenarios for a conflict between Iran and the West are: invasion and conflict with the GCC Kingdoms over growing Iranian influence in the Gulf, an Israeli and/or US airstrike or a US airstrike followed by a ground force invasion in a Iraq 1991 scenario or most likley a 2003 regime changing scenario.

#### **Gulf Co-operation Council Kingdoms**

As previously discussed, there are concerns in the GCC states of Iran’s influence and conflict with US influence in the region, especially circumstances surrounding Iran’s

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<sup>154</sup> Bruce Solheim. A. *The Vietnam Era: A Personal Journey*. Greenwood Publishing Group Inc. Westport, Connecticut: 2008. 16.

development of nuclear weapons, escalation and spreading of a conflict with Israel and the possibility of a nuclear arms race in the Gulf. This could spark a conflict between Iran and the Gulf Kingdoms of the GCC. However, it is unlikely that such a conflict would begin without US support and would undoubtedly lead to US participation in support of the GCC states. One concern is that the decentralisation of the IRGC, their deployment and the autonomous nature of the command and control of these radical forces may add to “confusion and lead to possible conflict given close proximity to US Forces” in the region.<sup>155</sup>

### **Israel/US Combined Airstrike**

It is unlikely Israel will strike Iran without US assistance or at least approval and the guarantee of support following such a strike. A unilateral Israeli strike may buy some time but it is likely to stir up emotion in the region and the very real possibility of gaining sympathy for Iran among Muslim states and risk the conflict spreading to other states against the perceived common enemy of Islam. The inclusion of American and even GCC states would give airstrike legitimacy in the region.

Potential Iranian responses to such an Israeli airstrike include: Shahab ballistic missile strikes on Tel Aviv, nuclear or military sites, Proxy attacks on Israel using missiles and terror weapons such as chemical or dirty bombs or strikes against Israeli and Jewish centres and groups abroad.<sup>156</sup> Such strikes could extend to allied countries or

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<sup>155</sup> Michael Connell. *Iran's Military Doctrine*. Center for Naval Analyses, Director of Iranian Studies. [http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/assets/pdfs/CAFP\\_booklet-PECA\\_livret-eng.pdf](http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/assets/pdfs/CAFP_booklet-PECA_livret-eng.pdf). (accessed on 14 September 2012)., 3.

<sup>156</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Israeli and US Strikes on Iran: A Speculative Analysis*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 5 March 2007. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070305\\_iran\\_israelius.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070305_iran_israelius.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012). 10.

neighbouring states which enabled the strike or permitted use of their airspace for its conduct.

In the event of an Israeli airstrike against Iran's nuclear facilities, Iran could respond with ballistic missiles launched against Israeli cities, nuclear plants or other critical infrastructure including the unlikely possibility of a missile armed with a CBRN warhead causing devastating effect.<sup>157</sup> Although the potential of an Israeli nuclear response to an Iranian CBRN strike is undeniable, it may be perceived as equivalent retaliation should an Israeli strike against Iranian nuclear plants lead to radiation leak or any significant environmental or nuclear incident in Iran.

### **US Airstrike / Ground Invasion Combination**

In the unlikely event an airstrike requires follow up military action to contain Iranian forces or possibly to affect regime change, a ground force invasion may be required. This may come in the form of either a 1991 style Iraq invasion pushing back Iranian forces to seize and occupy nuclear facilities or a complete 2003 style invasion of the country.

Once invaded, it is assumed Iran's conventional forces will put up as much of a delay and conventional fight as possible. The invading forces would be met initially by Iran's conventional military forces but would quickly transition its efforts to an asymmetric fight. When the conventional forces fail to stop an invader, Iran intends to "take off the gloves" and wage unrestricted war against invading forces. It is very likely

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<sup>157</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. Letter-Report (LR212-042). *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options*. Ottawa. 8 March 2012. 6.

that Iran will not wait for an actual invasion to defend itself but it will act when it feels such an attack is imminent.

As discussed in previous sections, a forward defence is already an ongoing part of the Mosaic Defence in an effort to undermine western, specifically American influence in the region as well as world hegemony. It is important and pertinent to point these out because they are ongoing but certainly expected to intensify at the outset of a conflict when and if Iran is faced with imminent invasion or US strike.

It is anticipated that if attacked by US forces, Iran would react initially with cyber attacks against US economic and government facilities, close the Strait of Hormuz, strike the US and Israel through proxies and terrorist organisations while defending its territory with conventional forces. The intent is to disrupt the US economy, impact the home front and exploit public opinion at the same time. Iran is likely to follow up an invasion with strikes using its missile forces against US military troops in the Gulf region such as targets in Afghanistan followed by strikes in Israel using conventional or even chemical biological or radioactive warheads.

### **The IRGC Cyber Corps**

The Cyber Corps of the Pasdaran has already carried out cyber attacks against the United States to diminish American power and influence and to chip away at US hegemony in the world. As an integral part of the Mosaic Defence, the supposition is that any attack or threat of imminent attack on Iran would be immediately met with a simultaneous attack on western networks, infrastructure and economy.<sup>158</sup> This threat

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extends to allies of the US and by default, Canada given the interconnected industries, markets and infrastructure such as communications, air traffic control, electricity and energy.

Approximately two dozen nations including Iran, Russia and China conduct cyber attacks generally designed to collect information and penetrate communication, transport and other vital infrastructure systems.

The US has recognised constant probing of its power, water, transportation, specifically air traffic control and other critical infrastructure computer systems. Continued cyber attacks against US infrastructure and economy coupled with the US conduct of offensive cyber operations lead to the obvious conclusion that the US and all western economies are vulnerable to cyber attack, misleading data or even actual shut down. This recognition illustrates the wide ranging aspects of the Mosaic Defence.

Iran's recent attempts to engage in cyber attacks on American infrastructure are very likely efforts to unseat the United States as the sole super power or a test as part of a series of future, more devastating attacks on the American domestic front. Further, successful severe attacks would be consistent with the Unrestricted Warfare concept and undoubtedly an integral part of Iran's Mosaic Defence.

If Iranian doctrine is truly similar to China's Unrestricted Warfare, it is more probable that these attacks would be synchronised with other events, attacks or strikes. Synchronised attacks would compound the effects on Western/American society. Attacks carried out in close succession to one another to maximise impact and add to confusion before authorities can react and mitigate their effects.

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<sup>158</sup> Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger. The New York Times. "U.S. Suspects Iran Was Behind a Wave of Cyber Attacks". 13 October 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/world/middleeast/us-suspects-iranians-were-behind-a-wave-of-cyberattacks.html?_r=0) (accessed on 18 October 2012).

A cyber attack against the New York Stock exchange coupled with the sinking of an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz or even an allied warship would undoubtedly have repercussions across the globe, causing confusion and economic devastation, driving up the price of oil around the globe and possibly swinging popular opinion in Iran's favour. The effects of such a strike could very likely be magnified if synchronised with a terrorist attack in the United States or its allies. This threat of terrorism and economic warfare is part of the outer layer of the Mosaic Defence, its forward defence which is already in action.

According to Richard Fadden, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Cyber-attacks could overwhelm current Canadian protection capabilities within two years if not reinforced. Fadden also stated that Al-Qaeda terrorism is the greatest threat to Canada and that extremist groups are actively recruiting young Canadian to participate in terror acts, so far overseas. He urged for international standards or new international law be created to govern cyber-attacks.<sup>159</sup>

### **Ouds Force Use of Proxies, Sleeper Cells and Terrorism**

Iran is notorious for its support to outside terrorist organisations, acting against Iran's adversaries, without Iran getting directly or overtly involved. As previously discussed, Iran supports non-state actors and terrorists such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran's support to these groups and its use

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<sup>159</sup> Mike De Souza. "Cyber threats could overwhelm Canada within two years: CSIS." *The Gazette 11 February 2013*. <http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/somnia/7950146/story.html> (accessed on 12 February 2013)

of them as proxies permits action against Israel and against US regional influence without being directly attributable to Iran.

Additionally, Iran has aided Syrian government forces use force against its population to maintain control. The Official Journal of the European Union listed three Iranian Revolutionary Guard members responsible for "providing equipment and support to help the Syrian regime suppress protests in Syria".<sup>160</sup> These three members were Major-General Jafari, Commander of the IRGC, Major-General Qasim Soleimani, Commander of the Quds Force and Taeb Hossein, Deputy Commander of Intelligence for the IRGC.

The Al Quds provided thousands of missiles and even Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs) to Hezbollah during and since the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah Conflict in Lebanon and also provided training and sophisticated components for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) including explosively formed projectiles (EFPs), radio and infrared triggering devices to Sunni forces in Iraq for use against US forces as early as 2003 and presenting a significant threat by 2005.<sup>161</sup> Undoubtedly Iran would step up support to Hezbollah and any other sympathetic extremist groups if Iran itself was threatened. Its intent would be to divert aggression on Iran and especially impact public opinion by bringing the fight home to Israel and the US.

Israeli soldiers described the Hezbollah troops as disciplined "trained and highly qualified, equipped with flak jackets, night-vision goggles, good communications and

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<sup>160</sup> Robert Tilford. "Iranian war games emphasize "Asymmetrical warfare tactics"". 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>161</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 16 August 2007. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816\\_cordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012)., 7- 8.



sometimes Israeli uniforms and ammunition”<sup>162</sup> This is proof of their transition to a more professional military force with significant backing, no doubt the result of the Quds work in preparing the proxy for striking out at Israel. The Hezbollah fighters were well-equipped with “advanced weapons from Russia, Syria and China and worked from well prepared defensive positions, using tunnels to move from one position to another and using Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) in a swarming technique against Israeli tanks.”<sup>163</sup> The firing of ATGMs against the advancing armour, inflicting casualties is not dissimilar to sited Kill Zones or sited fields of fire, proof of military training and planning and the combination of asymmetric techniques and advanced weapons is consistent with Iranian support.

Support for Hezbollah in 2006 came not only from Iran but also from Somalia, drawing Somali fighters to join Hezbollah against Israel.<sup>164</sup> This is proof of Iran’s ability to not only influence and control non-state actors but also to spread its reach beyond its borders and escalate the conflict to other nations.

Iran’s use of the Quds Force abroad to cause panic and economic impact on infrastructure has proven effective in the past and could certainly be exploited again. A recent example of the Quds actions beyond Iranian borders is the July 2012 suicide attack in Bulgaria, killing five Israeli tourists. US officials attributed the attacks to Hezbollah acting under Iranian direction in retaliation for Israel’s alleged assassination of

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<sup>162</sup> Steven Erlanger and Richard A Opiel. "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel With Its Training, Tactics and Weapons". *The New York Times* 7 August 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07hezbollah.html>. (accessed on 7 January 2013)

<sup>163</sup> Avraham Tal. "Justified, essential and timely". *Haaretz*, 28 July 2006. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/743763.html>. (accessed on 7 January 2013)

<sup>164</sup> Robert F. Worth. "Somalian Military Support to Hezbollah". *The New York Times*. 14 November 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/15/world/middleeast/15nations.html>. (accessed on 7 January 2013)

Iranian scientists working in Iran's nuclear program.<sup>165</sup> Arguably this is a demonstration of Iran acting through proxies and potentially home grown terror groups and reaching into western nations as intimidation or retaliation. Undoubtedly, Iran's intent to use these proxies and similar tactics are indicative of the Mosaic Defence and would intensify during an occupation of Iran.

Timely use of the media can both exploit the effects of an attack as a victory drawing sympathizers to the cause and disrupting domestic services, travel and economy. The media can be a tool of propaganda to make known the collateral damage and impact public opinion. Such public opinion can draw neutral sympathy against the aggressor and erode popular support at home.

By its own admission the Israeli Defence Forces failed to protect the population during the 2006 conflict with Hezbollah and the collateral damage inflicted upon the Lebanese population resulted in outcries from Beirut, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other international groups and caused the IDF to re-examine its use of cluster munitions.<sup>166</sup> It could be argued this was also part of Hezbollah and Iran's strategy to impact public opinion, especially world opinion and to prevent Israel from winning the moral war even if it won some battles.

It is a logical conclusion that when faced with a strike and/or invasion, Iran would incite its allies or proxy groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad and other groups throughout the Middle East to strike out at Israel and American allies, thereby forcing its

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<sup>165</sup>Nicholas Kulich and Eric Schmitt. "Hezbollah Is Blamed for Attack on Israeli Tourists in Bulgaria." *The New York Times* 19 July 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/world/europe/explosion-on-bulgaria-tour-bus-kills-at-least-five-israelis.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/world/europe/explosion-on-bulgaria-tour-bus-kills-at-least-five-israelis.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). (accessed on 7 January 2013)

<sup>166</sup> Yuval Yoaz. "Winograd: Current use of cluster bombs not in line with int'l law Committee calls bomblets 'inaccurate;' Beirut: Cluster bombs are flagrant violation of international norms." *Haaretz. The Associated Press* 31 January 2008. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/winograd-current-use-of-cluster-bombs-not-in-line-with-int-l-law-1.238382> (accessed on 7 January 2013)

enemies to fight several insurgencies at the same time, before the battle reaches Iranian territory. This would also cause significant disorder in western countries and their economies, impact their minority Muslim communities, affect public opinion and disrupt military efforts in the engagement against Iran.

Iran also hopes to incite unrest among the Gulf Kingdoms and other neighbouring states including Iraq, specifically targeting Shiite populations, eventually swinging favour among Muslim states to support Iran. Iran will undoubtedly influence the Badr Corps of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Army of the Mahdi under Moqtada al-Sadr.<sup>167</sup> Although there is no direct evidence these groups support Iran, it is likely these groups have provided support to the Syrian government forces suppressing the insurgency. Al-Sadr has however, admitted “external splinter groups” may be involved in crossing the border to oppose rebel forces there and support Iran’s ally.<sup>168</sup> It is likely that in the event of a conflict these groups may be influenced by Iran to destabilise one or more Gulf States or work in conjunction with Iran’s forces to conduct an insurgency against an invader. Although the GCC States generally condemned Hezbollah’s actions against Israel’s civilian population in the 2006 conflict, there is always the danger of a conflict involving Israel escalating and spreading throughout the Muslim world.

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<sup>167</sup> Robert Tilford. “Iranian war games emphasize “Asymmetrical warfare tactics””. 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>168</sup> Al Arabiya News. “Moqtada al-Sadr says his followers not fighting in Syria, but members of ‘splinter’ groups could be involved” 8 June 2012. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/06/08/219426.html> (accessed on 21 March 2013)

## **Iranian Naval Forces and the Strait of Hormuz**

Iran has announced its intent to block the Strait of Hormuz or at least threaten to do so in response to an attack. The Strait of Hormuz is a vital water way which links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, leading to open water and international trade. The Strait of Hormuz is 90 nautical miles long and only 22 nautical miles wide, consisting of two shipping lanes, each one mile wide and separated by a two mile gap.<sup>169</sup> The extremely narrow channel limits vessels ability to avoid a conflict and also severely restricts large combat vessels options and ability to manoeuvre in combat.

The resulting uncertainty could restrict the voluntary movement of commercial shipping in the region for some time, dramatically affecting the world economy. Even the threat of closing the Strait of Hormuz in the event of a conflict would undoubtedly result in an immediate and dramatic increase in the world's oil price and have an effect on the global economy.

In January 2011, more than 30 percent of the world's oil supply and nearly 17 percent of the world's natural gas was shipped through the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>170</sup> In today's age of global markets, the closing of this chokepoint or any kind of conflict in the area will undoubtedly impact global markets.

The Iranian doctrine of irregular naval warfare calls for employing Special Forces, fast-attack boats to swarm conventional ships, submarines, and mines laid by submarines,

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<sup>169</sup> United States. Department of Defence. Office of Naval Intelligence. *Iran's Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy*. Suitland, MD: Fall 2009. <https://www.fas.org/irp/agency/oni/iran-navy.pdf> . (accessed on 20 September 2012)., 2-3.

<sup>170</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner. *IRAN AND THE GULF MILITARY BALANCE – I: The Conventional and Asymmetric Dimensions*. The Center for Strategic & International Studies. 113.

surface naval vessels and covertly by civilian converted minelayers combined with a barrage of surface to surface guided missiles or Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles (ASCMs).<sup>171</sup> Iran possesses nearly 200 Dhows (local commercial ships) which are intended to be disguised and used covertly to insert Special Forces and lay mines.<sup>172</sup> Using these asymmetric naval forces, Iran could strike the at GCC critical infrastructure, commercial shipping vessels or conventional naval forces with little or no advance warning which means it could block the Strait of Hormuz for a short time.<sup>173</sup>

Undoubtedly, Iran cannot control or block the Gulf or the Strait of Hormuz indefinitely. US and allied naval forces would react and defeat an Iranian blockade but the small dimensions of the Strait of Hormuz forbid manoeuvre of large naval vessels, leaving them vulnerable to suicide attack and torpedoes. It is uncertain how long it would take to work through the confusion and restore normal commercial shipping to the Gulf.

Perhaps as a demonstration of modern capability, a gesture of resolve or even a threat, Iran recently conducted naval exercises in the Strait of Hormuz, commanded by the IRGCN but including IRIN ships using “modern weapons and new tactics”.<sup>174</sup> Although the term modern or new was not clearly defined, it was announced that Iran’s exercises included movement of marines and Special Forces by helicopter, live fire missiles and included some of IRIN’s largest vessels.

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>172</sup> Global Bearings Magazine. *The Consequences of a Strike on Iran: The IRGC Navy*. <http://www.globalbearings.net/2011/12/view-irgc-naval-bases-in-larger-map.html#!/2011/12/view-irgc-naval-bases-in-larger-map.html> (accessed on 20 September 2012)., 5.

<sup>173</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner. *IRAN AND THE GULF MILITARY BALANCE – I: Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>174</sup> Reuters. “Iran's Revolutionary Guards hold exercises in Strait of Hormuz”. Reuters.com 13 January 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/13/us-iran-military-idUSBRE90C09R20130113> . (accessed on 15 January 2013).

The Iranian navy also possesses armed UAVs and could use these as remote control bombs and massing these armed UAVs could swarm naval vessel from several directions simultaneously in an attempt to overwhelm its defences.<sup>175</sup>

This potential to damage the world economy and critical infrastructure in the Gulf is of concern to GCC, US and the world and must be taken seriously. The US is taking the Iranian threat so seriously in fact, that it is currently developing tactics and weapons as counter measures against Iran's asymmetric capabilities in the Gulf. It is developing the Spike fire-and-forget guided missile to engage fast-attack boats trying to swarm conventional US naval vessels and it is improving its missile defence system in the Gulf region. Having retired the Osprey Class minesweeper in 2006, the US lacks sufficient minesweeping ability and is working to address the significant threat of mines in the Gulf or the Strait of Hormuz by developing a Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) which can carry helicopters to detect and destroy mines. However, the efficiency and speed of these systems of clearing mines remains uncertain given the speed at which the Iranian Navy can deploy mines in the region.<sup>176</sup>

The IRGC Navy has significant experience using asymmetric naval warfare tactics during the Iran-Iraq War and has updated them since.<sup>177</sup> During this conflict, Iran inserted Basij Frogmen to seize Iraqi oil platforms, and conducted swarming attacks with

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<sup>175</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner. *IRAN AND THE GULF MILITARY BALANCE – I: Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>176</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner. *IRAN AND THE GULF MILITARY BALANCE – I: Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>177</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. Letter-Report (LR212-042). *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options*. Ottawa. 8 March 2012. 8.

limited success against commercial shipping.<sup>178</sup> Iran has recently practiced both massed and dispersed swarming tactics using fast attack boats in swarming attacks combined with test firing Ghader and Noor variations of the Chinese C-802/C-704 ASCMs from shore based positions.<sup>179</sup> The IRGCN has also continued to improve guidance and range of the Chinese Silkworm HY-2 employing them from mobile shore batteries.<sup>180</sup>

“Massed swarming employs formations of hundreds of lightly armed and agile boats set off from different bases, then converge from different directions to attack a target or group of targets” whereas “Dispersal swarming attacks use a number of highly agile missile or torpedo attack craft that set off on their own, from geographically dispersed and concealed locations, and converge to attack a single target”. “The dispersed swarming attack is assessed as much more difficult to detect and repel because the attacker never operates in mass formations.”<sup>181</sup>

In the event of a conflict in the Persian Gulf and in particular the Strait of Hormuz, Iran is very likely to use its staging bases along the eastern shores to launch fast attack boats, some of which can be quickly launched from flat bed trucks, blending in with the nearly 3,000 local transiting vessels making identification very difficult for

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<sup>178</sup>Fariborz Haghshenass. “Iran’s Asymmetric Naval Warfare Policy”. Focus #87. Washington Institute for Near East Policy. September 2008. <http://www.mettransparent.net/IMG/pdf/PolicyFocus87.pdf> (accessed on 18 October 2012). 5.

<sup>179</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. Defence Research and Development Canada. Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. Letter-Report (LR212-042). *What Happens After An Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options*. Ottawa. 8 March 2012. 8.

<sup>180</sup>Fariborz Haghshenass. “Iran’s Asymmetric Naval Warfare Policy”. *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>181</sup>Fariborz Haghshenass. “Iran’s Doctrine of Asymmetric Naval Warfare”. *Policy Watch No. 1179*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy. 21 December 2006.

defending conventional warships therefore reducing advance warning and capitalising on surprise.<sup>182</sup>

### **Iran's Ballistic Missile Forces**

Iran's ballistic missiles forces play a central role in deterrent and retaliation and are intended to compensate for Iran's lack of air power.<sup>183</sup> In the immediate face of a threat, it is likely Iran would use these long range missiles against US military forces stationed in the region prior to an actual invasion of Iran's territory.

If Iran acted upon its promise to engage Israel and US interests in the region as well as close commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, if threatened, it would immediately seize world attention. Successful missile strikes on US forces in neighbouring Gulf Kingdoms may divide support and slow the momentum of an invasion and divide world opinion. Iran would attempt to capitalise on just such an opportunity to exploit media coverage and maximise propaganda to gain support and diffuse the threat of invasion.

The Shabab ballistic missiles would likely be used against civilian and military targets in Israel. As previously mentioned, such an attack could, if the regime felt seriously threatened, include the use of Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) warheads against Israel. Although Israel's nuclear deterrent and potential response may prevent such a strike, it may occur in a desperate attempt to escalate the conflict and gain Islamic support around the world. The secondary affects would certainly

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<sup>182</sup>Fariborz Haghshenass. "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare Policy". *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>183</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan. *Analyzing the Impact of Preventative Strikes Against Iran's Nuclear Facilities*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 10 September 2012. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubscordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubscordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 15 December 2012). 46.



be seen in other Islamic nations in the region as an attempt to gain support to the Iranian cause and if not export the Islamic revolution, certainly to gain sympathy and even escalate spread the conflict drawing in other states in the Gulf region or eroding support for the US by including Israel.

During a ground invasion the intent is to cause maximum damage, confusion and disorder. Targets would especially include forming up points or concentrations of troops massing on the border or in kill zones within Iran during an invasion. Although inflicting large casualties would arguably rally the US population and world popular support against Iran, it is also likely that if successfully launched, these missiles would inflict mass casualties having an equally demoralising impact on the US support for an invasion.

As previously mentioned Iranian nuclear or WMD doctrine is largely unknown. Despite Iran's long and vivid memory of the resulting attacks of these weapons from its conflict with Iraq, Iran possesses chemical and biological weapons and there has been speculation about the possibility of radioactive or "dirty" bombs.<sup>184</sup> Likely a deterrent however, the covert development of a nuclear weapon would be employed as a weapon of last resort. Aside from emboldening its proxies, the acquisition of nuclear weapons would certainly change the dynamics of conflict with Iran.

Iran could potentially respond to a strike using ballistic missiles as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), armed with CBRN warheads in the event that a strike against Iran's nuclear facilities results in a radiation leak or as a last resort in the final throws of a regime changing invasion.

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<sup>184</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Military Forces in Transition: Conventional Threats and Weapons of mass Destruction*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999., 388.

## **Iranian Nuclear Doctrine and Intentions**

There is a great deal of national pride in the technological developments and public support for nuclear and technological developments whether for the production of electricity or weapons. Nuclear capability or even near capability is the Islamic Regime's insurance policy against a regime changing invasion, to ensure it will not suffer the same fate as Iraq.<sup>185</sup> This insurance policy is an integral part of the Mosaic Defence, initially to deter aggression but finally to ensure its survival.

Proliferation of nuclear weapons from a nuclear-armed Iran is probable, both from Iran to terrorist groups and the development of such weapons by other regional states in reaction to Iran possessing nuclear weapons. Although proliferation through a proxy is a very real and dangerous possibility, Iran has possessed chemical weapons for many years without providing these devastating weapons for their use by these proxies against the US or even Israel. Perhaps this in itself is proof of a functional deterrent but it may also simply be that Iran has not yet had a serious enough or imminent threat to its territory or regime.

Iran's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) weapons and its ballistic missile capabilities are intended to be used as a "devastating use on a battlefield, deterrence, and held as political leverage over other states in the region."<sup>186</sup> Strategists tend to agree that Iran's intention towards possession of nuclear weapons, if they are legitimate and serious, are defensive and pose no first strike agenda. However, proliferation to non-state actors

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<sup>185</sup> Suzanne Maloney. *Iran's Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press. 2008. 53.

<sup>186</sup> Jane's Sentinel. *Security Assessments: The Gulf States*. October-May 2001. Sentinel House: Surrey, United Kingdom. 2001. 94.

and terror groups aside, it is plainly evident that Iran would not hesitate to employ a nuclear weapon if it thought it was in a fight for survival, foreign troops on its soil and if the regime was in jeopardy. The use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and nuclear weapons in particular play a crucial part in the strategic deterrent but also in the Mosaic Defence of Iran's territory and to ensure the survival of the regime.

Although Iran does not appear open to negotiations or re-establishing diplomacy with the United States, Iran is looking for a guarantee that US will not attempt a regime change.<sup>187</sup> Any US policy to advocate regime change in Iran may strengthen the resolve of the regime to resist and increase in Iranian operations abroad, further enacting the Forward aspect of the Mosaic Defence.

It is evident that Iran has not learned from Iraq's experience, in that all Saddam Hussein's rhetoric and posturing failed to deter US invasion but instead rallied support for regime change. Whether the regime has actually seen resurgence in popularity is debatable. But popular, nationalistic support for the nuclear program is clear, evident through demonstrations against giving in to foreign pressure to give up development.<sup>188</sup> There is a difference in opinion or motivation for development of nuclear weapons. One is nationalistic pride and the other is deterrence and survival of the revolutionary regime.

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<sup>187</sup>Nikki R. Keddie. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. Yale University Press: New Haven, Connecticut. 2006. 339.

<sup>188</sup>Nicholas Schmidle. "The Art of Brinkmanship: Unraveling Iran's Nuclear Policy". *The Stimson Center*. 23 December 2004. <http://www.stimson.org/summaries/the-art-of-brinkmanship-unraveling-irans-nuclear-policy/>. (accessed on 21 January 2013) ., 2.

## **The IRIAF and Air Defences**

The IRIAF and combined air defences of Iran have been discussed and their capabilities identified. Iran's lack of substantial air power has led to reliance upon missiles and asymmetric threats and its air forces and air defences exist primarily as a defensive force but they have a deterrent ability.

Although Iran's air defences are numerous, they are not well integrated and would not likely last long against American concentrated attack. Instead, Iran's air defence doctrine largely relies upon passive defences such as hardened shelters, underground missile silos, dispersion and hidden bases and storage sites.<sup>189</sup> Many of Iran's missiles, both air defence and ballistic missiles are mounted on mobile platforms which can be dispersed and camouflaged in an effort to survive superior targeting and firepower.

Iran's fleet of Soviet-made Su-24 Fencer fighter bombers are capable of short range rapid strikes deep into neighbouring Gulf States and stands as a veiled threat to those friendly to the US.<sup>190</sup> The use of surprise, using either conventional or chemical weapons to threaten GCC states, could be used to punish Sunni neighbours for supporting US use of airspace. A successful attack against Israel or US forces would undoubtedly be exploited and held up as a victory in the media campaign. It could even be argued that in the event of a real threat of an air campaign and invasion, the IRIAF may even defect as did the 91 aircraft from Iraq's air force in 1991. It is likely that the IRIAF will respond to any incursion into Iranian airspace such as a strike against specific targets and vital points

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<sup>189</sup> Steven R. Ward. "The Continuing Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine". *The Middle East Journal*. Autumn 2005. 571.

<sup>190</sup> Steven R. Ward. *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and its Armed Forces*. *Ibid.*, 317-18.

such as a strike against nuclear sites. But, in the event of a build up and large scale air war, it is likely that the IRIAF will remain in its hardened shelters and try and ride out the storm in the interest of survival. It cannot hope to stand up to US forces in anything beyond a mere skirmish over bordering airspace.

### **The Artesh**

Iran's military has a history of poor trained, under equipped troops with a culture of hardship and poor treatment.<sup>191</sup> Coupled with a culture of extreme devotion, this leads to the Iranian forces being ideally suited for irregular warfare. This factor is magnified by the fact that although the Artesh is vast by Gulf standards, its equipment is largely outdated, aging and unsupported due to sanctions and arms embargoes.

The Artesh developed its doctrine training and methods on a western model during the time of the Shah. Its officer corps a product of western Staff Colleges, the doctrine employed during the Iran-Iraq War was American influenced. It is a logical conclusion that their conventional war-fighting doctrine will still be largely based in that philosophy, although also now influenced by Russian thinking.

The Artesh does conduct large scale training exercises but it does not carry out joint or combined arms training, and although its size permits it the ability to project limited offensive operations into Iraq and the Gulf states, it could not do so for long especially lacking the support of sufficient air forces.<sup>192</sup> Preparing for a US invasion, like

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 310-11.

<sup>192</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner. *IRAN AND THE GULF MILITARY BALANCE – I: The Conventional and Asymmetric Dimensions*. The Center for Strategic & International Studies. 52.

that of Iraq, Iran has trained and organized the Army to fight against an enemy with air superiority, using defensive tactics fighting in depth.<sup>193</sup>

Reports of recent training exercises of Iran's conventional forces indicate they too are conducting training on asymmetric warfare and concentrating on "mobile-defensive operations" and "use of Iranian terrain".<sup>194</sup> During a land invasion and eventual occupation of Iran, the Artesh will conduct defensive operations combined with some of the IRGC forces. It is anticipated the Artesh will focus on defensive or specifically "delay operations", trading space or terrain for time.

The Artesh will employ many staged defensive blocking positions as obstacles to an advancing enemy and will attempt to inflict casualties and force the advancing enemy to deploy his forces without becoming decisively engaged. Iran's fire support is largely towed and not very mobile, relying upon the soviet style massing fire and concentrating on targets, means it has little flexibility to switch from one target to the next and conduct fire and movement in support of mobile operations, except for its few self-propelled units in support of armoured forces.

The Artesh intend to use the varying Iranian terrain and try to use close country to employ hit and run tactics and avoid allowing the US forces to engage with direct fire weapons at maximum range. It is their assumed hope that the hit and run tactics at close range will allow them to cause as much damage as possible and compensate for the inferior armour, speed and range of Iranian tanks and weapons. Causing damage and

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>194</sup> Robert Tilford. "Iranian war games emphasize "Asymmetrical warfare tactics"". 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012).

casualties to the invader, the Artesh hopes to allow the irregular forces to engage and disrupt the enemy and force him into a counter-insurgency occupation operation developing into a war of attrition.

The Artesh is definitely not able to withstand a concentrated invasion by US forces and will undoubtedly trade space for time until it is overwhelmed by the advance. At that point its forces will endeavour to fade into the population and combined with the IRGC and the Basij, it will fight in the urban, built-up areas to maximize damage to advancing forces and try to disrupt the advance and inevitable occupation that will follow.

### **The 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah Conflict**

Major-General Mohammad-Ali Aziz Jafari, Commander of the IRGC claimed Iran would employ irregular warfare and mobile defence to counter American military might in the event of a US attack. “Iranian strategy would reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.” Jafari is reportedly an expert on irregular warfare and has ties with the commanders of the Badr Corps of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).<sup>195</sup> He said Iran would use asymmetrical warfare capabilities, such as those used by Hezbollah in its 2006 conflict with Israel in Lebanon.<sup>196</sup> The 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah Conflict is an example of Iran acting through a non-state actor proxy to engage Israel and serves as an example of how

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<sup>195</sup> Robert Tilford. “Iranian war games emphasize “Asymmetrical warfare tactics””. 8 January 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/iranian-wargames-emphasizes-asymmetrical-warfare-tactics> (accessed on 3 December 2012)

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 2.

the Mosaic Defence would function against an invader in the event of a ground force invasion against Iran.

UN observers in Lebanon noted the Hezbollah forces in 2006 employed fire and movement from several prepared anti-tank positions drawing the advancing Israelis further into Lebanese territory.<sup>197</sup> It is therefore concluded that the Artesh would do likewise, drawing the advancing Americans further into Iranian territory lengthening their supply lines and using IRGC to hit them in their rear and along supply lines. Using Improvised Explosive Devices, the IRGC would aim to slow, confuse, attrit and wear down American armour and follow-on forces during an advance and during an occupation.

The asymmetrical nature of the conflict demonstrates how Hezbollah was able to counter Israeli technology and use the media to its advantage. In fact, the combination of conventional and irregular tactics employed by Hezbollah is an example of Hybrid Warfare and is indicative of Iran's influence and illustrates how Iran intends to defeat superior high tech forces in executing the Mosaic Defence doctrine against an invasion of Iran.

Much like the asymmetrical Naval doctrine of using swarming and massing attacks against vessels, it is safely assumed that the ground forces use of hand held anti-aircraft weapons will be employed in much the same manner, even after the bulk of the Artesh and IRIAF air defences fail. Undoubtedly the dispersed irregular forces will use

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<sup>197</sup> Steven Erlanger and Richard A Oppel. "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel With Its Training, Tactics and Weapons". *The New York Times* 7 August 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07hezbollah.html>. (accessed on 7 January 2013)



these weapons to attrit aviation during a ground force invasion and the subsequent occupation.

The same can be said for anti-armour weapons. They will very likely employ massing volleys of anti-tank missiles and move from one firing position to another, much as the Hezbollah forces did against the Israelis in 2006. Hezbollah employed small unit tactics, deployed in anti-tank teams moving from prepared defensive firing positions using tunnels to strike Israeli tanks inflicting significant losses upon the modern armoured force. Having been trained and equipped by the Quds force and IRGC experts on irregular warfare, these tactics are characteristic of what allied forces can expect to face if engaged by Iranian ground forces.

### **Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) & The Basij**

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Army units are deployed in all territories and the capital in a decentralized command structure. This decentralized structure is intended to ensure continuity of action in the event that Iranian command and control infrastructure is destroyed or paralyzed. The IRGC have designed up to 3,000 four-man units to be employed as “stay behind” or layback forces and used to disrupt an invading enemy during advance into Iran or during an occupation specifically to “supply and communications, rear areas, ambush combat troops” and project forward into neighbouring states to inflict casualties and attack US forces in Gulf states sending teams to “raid or infiltrate forces of states friendly to the US.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman. *Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. 16 August 2007. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816\\_cordesman\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf) (accessed on 11 September 2012), 5.

The Basij are concentrated in urban areas and are intended to reinforce the IRGC and conduct surprise attacks against invading/occupying forces in urban areas.”<sup>199</sup> The Basij will be used as a mobilisation base for the IRGC, augment their numbers and also use force if necessary to maintain civil order and discourage any Iranians tempted to openly support the invading American forces.

The effectiveness of the Basij to maintain civil order in 1999 and in 2009 was met with mixed reviews. Some members failed to act against protesters in their own local areas and Basij forces had to be reassigned to operate outside of their own residential areas.<sup>200</sup> This may be a learning point for the regime on how to better employ the Basji in the event of an invasion, or it may indicate they will not be effective in time of total conflict. It may simply be that the protesters were not well organised and had they been organised, the demonstrations of 2009 may have had very different outcome. It is truthfully difficult to predict how the citizens will react to an outside invader.

As of 2010, the Basij had begun concentrating on training “thousands of its members in blogging and filtering dissidents’ websites.”<sup>201</sup> This may also be indicative of the Basij involvement in the Cyber Corps not only conducting surveillance on its domestic population but possibly safeguarding against cyber attacks and even conducting some of its own in conjunction with or supporting the IRGC.

The Basij as an irregular force with varying levels of training should be expected to be skilled at night attacks, ambushes and integrated into units as Lay Back forces to

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<sup>199</sup> Andysheh Dadsetan. *Iran's Defense Posture: Not So Dire Straits*. The Center for Strategic & International Studies. 24 January 2012. <http://csis.org/blog/irans-defense-posture-not-so-dire-straits>. (accessed on 15 September 2012)., 2.

<sup>200</sup> Ali Alfoneh. “Iran: The Basij Resistance Force”. *The Tehran Bureau*, 21 October 2010. (accessed on 14 October 2012)., 2.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

harass and erode enemy communications and rear areas.<sup>202</sup> They will employ IEDs and attempt to capitalise on confusion and uncertainty and attempt to disappear among civilians to prolong conflict.

This is the most dangerous part of the tactical fighting aspect of the Mosaic Defence. Iran will accept “high losses in return for maximizing enemy casualties”.<sup>203</sup> The whole philosophy of the Mosaic Defence is to exploit weakness and capitalize on its strengths; surprise, ruthless determination and manpower. Iran is confident this doctrine will provide a sufficient deterrent to invasion while ensuring the regime maintains its grip on power.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper demonstrates the strategic culture of Iran and its ambitions for greater influence, its desire to counter and reduce US interest and influence in the region and the resulting development of the Mosaic Defence doctrine. The Mosaic Defence is both a tactical defensive doctrine and a greater strategy designed to deter aggression through the use of proxies, veiled threats of WMD and irregular warfare, world terrorism and economic warfare employing covert action beyond the borders of Iran. The Mosaic Defence is intended to defend Iran if invaded but also deter attack by reminding the west of the terrible cost of invading Iran.

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<sup>202</sup> Pierre Pahlavi. "Guerre Irrégulière Et Analyse Institutionnelle. Le Cas De La Stratégie Asymétrique Des Gardiens De La Révolution En Iran." *Revue Études Internationales XLII, No 4, Décembre 2011*. 2011. 479.

<sup>203</sup> Steven R. Ward. *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and its Armed Forces. Ibid.*, 324.

The Mosaic Defence is indeed a deterrent strategy. It is more than just the domestic defence of territory. It may not be a forward defence beyond its interference with Hezbollah and cyber attacks, and its actions may be those intent on impeding US hegemony and influence in the Middle East. However, the Mosaic Defence is a very real and dangerous threat to act and take any measure necessary to defend Iran to ensure the survival of the regime and the state. The Mosaic Defence is a forward defence employing proxies, terrorism, cyber attacks, threats, affects to global oil prices and an effort to increase its standing in the Gulf and the world, all as a precursor to defending its territory in face of its perceived threat and to bolster its fading revolution among a restless domestic population.

The visit of Iran's Foreign Minister to Iraq to meet the newly elected Prime Minister of a Shiite dominated Iraq was announced to maintain relations as neighbours and point out that the US would eventually leave but Iran as a neighbour was in the region to stay.<sup>204</sup> It is also demonstrative of Iran's clear determination to assert its position as a "regional power" in the Gulf. The fall of Sunni regimes surrounding Iran in Iraq and Afghanistan set conditions for the rise of Shiite and Iranian influence in the region, adding fuel to Iran's nuclear ambition.<sup>205</sup> Undoubtedly, Iran will continue to assert its influence to return it to Great Power status in the region and in the world.

Iran's inability to directly confront the superior US forces was demonstrated during the Tanker Wars and Operation Praying Mantis in 1989. Although they suffered significant losses, it served as an example and Iran learned the lessons in its exploitation

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<sup>204</sup> Vali Nasr. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts with Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: Norton & Company. 2006. 212.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

of limited successes in irregular warfare. Iran's failure against US Naval forces and the folly of taking on the West in a direct confrontation led to the creation of the Mosaic Defence and its forward defence component.

Iran's nuclear program and its ambitions in the Gulf region and the world are clearly a danger to regional security. Given the close proximity to Israel and Iran's rhetoric and the Islamic extremism in the Gulf region, it is safe to say that the danger of a nuclear armed Iran is a risk to global security.

### **Recommendations**

The Mosaic Defence demonstrates the cost in lives both at home and on the battlefield. The promise to bring war beyond its borders and the difficulties of fighting such a war at home and abroad simultaneously are readily evident. Dialogue and severe sanctions are the best method to prevent the development of a nuclear weapon in Iran, but Iran must be convinced to act rather than threatened to do so. Iran must be recognised and respected but also convinced that not developing nuclear weapons is in fact in its best interest and its security guaranteed.

Finally, the Mosaic Defence and the threat of its complete engagement abroad have very real consequences for the United States and Canada on the domestic front. The threat of worldwide terrorism and the engagement of sleeper cells in home grown terror attacks require increased surveillance of Iranian sleeper cells and sympathizers, greater awareness and security at Canadian and North American vital points and infrastructure such as power grids, power plants, economic centre and stock exchanges and large transit and transportation systems. Canada and the US must heighten border security and place greater emphasis on CBRN terror response, detection and prevention. The Cyber threat

and consequences of domestic casualties and crippling damage also call for increased cyber surveillance and firewall protection against cyber attacks on these vital infrastructure systems and services.

The hybrid and irregular nature of Iranian military doctrine require western military forces, including Canadian military forces to be prepared to engage a capable conventional and hybrid equipped enemy in the event of a conflict with Iran. After a decade of conducting counter-insurgency operations, western military forces must retain these lessons learned but continue to adapt to the ever changing asymmetrical/hybrid threat both at home and abroad.

A new Cold War has begun between Iran and the US and Israel. This Cold War is more *Cold* and calculating than the last.

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