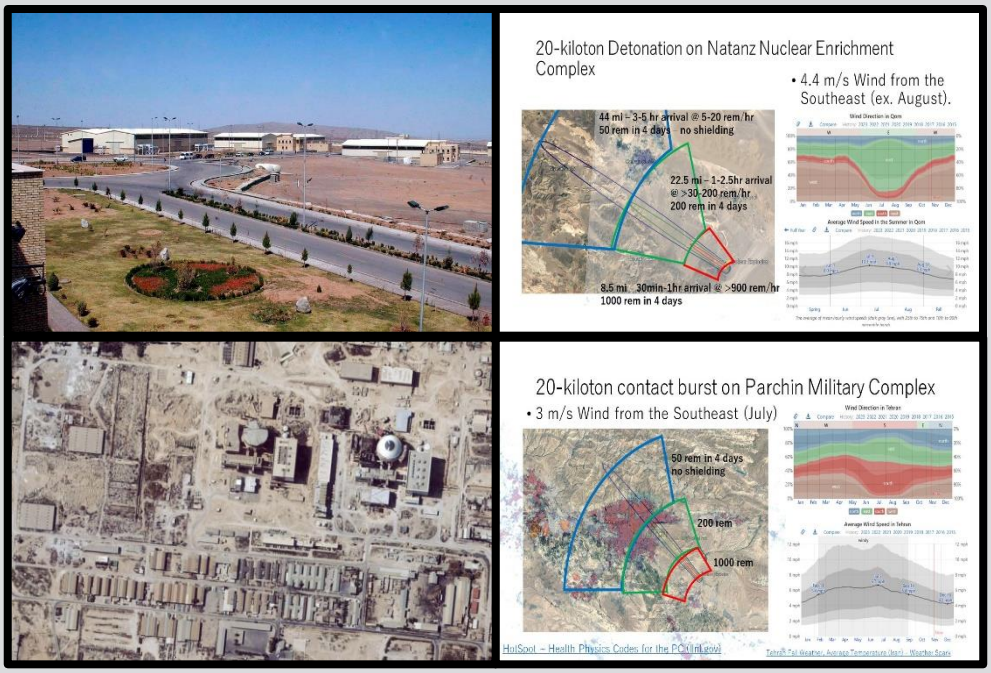
OCCASIONAL PAPER 2401

Gaming Israeli Nuclear Use: Pandora Unleashed

Edited by Henry Sokolski



February 2024

NPEC

Nonproliferation Policy Education Center

Copyright © 2024 by Henry D. Sokolski
Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
Arlington, VA 22209
www.npolicy.org

Printed in the United States of America.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center.

Cover images, from top left clockwise: 1) The Natanz uranium enrichment facility buildings, south of Tehran, Iran (credit: Vahid Salemi); 2) Graph depicting fallout from 20-kiloton Detonation on Natanz Nuclear Enrichment Complex (credit: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory); 3) Graph depicting fallout from 20-kiloton contact burst on Parchin Military Complex (credit: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory); 4) Satellite image of Parchin Military Complex (credit: The Jerusalem Post).

Gaming Israeli Nuclear Use: Pandora Unleashed

Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
Occasional Paper 2401

February 2024
Series Editor: Henry D. Sokolski

Nonproliferation Policy Education Center

The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is a nonpartisan, educational organization founded in 1994 to promote a better understanding of strategic weapons proliferation issues. NPEC educates policymakers, journalists, and university professors about proliferation threats and possible new policies and measures to meet them.

For current publications of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center,
please visit www.npolicy.org.

Contents

Acknowledgments and NPEC……...……2

Gaming Israeli Nuclear Use: Pandora Unleashed……...……...……...…3

Scenario……...……..……...……...……...…8

Move One…...……...…..……...……..……..…10

The Prime Minister's Decision……..14

Move Two..…….....…..……...…….....15

Appendix A: The Potential Humanitarian Consequences of Israeli Nuclear Use….....…..18

Appendix B: Team Notes by Move….....……...……..35

Acknowledgments:

This research was supported by generous grants from the Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Smith Richardson Foundation.

About NPEC:

The **Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC)**, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1994 to promote a better understanding of strategic weapons proliferation issues. NPEC educates policymakers, journalists, and university professors about proliferation threats and possible new policies and measures to meet them. For more information, visit http://www.npolicy.org/.

The views contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of each participant or the official policy of their respective agencies, private sector organizations, or the United States Government.

Gaming Israeli Nuclear Use: Pandora Unleashed

Henry Sokolski

With the Gaza crisis, a nuclear rubicon of sorts has been crossed: Elected Israeli officials — a deputy minister and a ruling party member of Parliament—not only publicly referenced Israeli possession of nuclear weapons, but suggested how such weapons might be used to target Gaza. This is unprecedented.[1]

More recently, Iran directly attacked an Israeli-manned intelligence outpost in Iraq and publicized a staged mock missile strike against a simulated Israeli air base. Iran also has inched within weeks of making several nuclear weapons and has made its military ever more immune to first strikes against its key missile and nuclear facilities. Iran and its proxies also now have long-range, high-precision missiles that could easily reach key Israeli targets.[2]

None of these developments is positive. For decades, most security analysts assumed Israel's undeclared nuclear weapons were only deployed to deter attacks and that Iran would not dare to

---

1. See Kawn Wei Kevin Tan, "An Israeli lawmaker is urging her government to use 'everything in its arsenal,' including 'doomsday' weapons, against Hamas," *Business Insider*, October 11, 2023, available at https://www.businessinsider.com/israeli-lawmaker-urged-government-to-use-nuclear-weapons-against-hamas-2023-10; "Israel minster renews call for striking Gaza with 'nuclear bomb,'" *MEMO Middle East Monitor*, January 24, 2024, available at https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240124-israel-minister-renews-call-for-striking-gaza-with-nuclear-bomb/; and Scott Ritter, "Israel's Nuclear Weapons In the Spotlight," *Energy Intelligence*, November 13, 2023, available at https://www.energyintel.com/0000018b-c8be-dac7-a7ab-ddfe44520000.

2. See David Albright, "How quickly could Iran make nuclear weapons today?" ISIS January 8, 2024, available at https://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/How_quickly_could_Iran_make_nuclear_weapons_today_January_8.pdf; Parisa Hafezi and Timour Azhari, "Iran says Revolutionary Guards attack Israel's 'spy HQ' in Iraq, vow more revenge," *Reuters*, January 16, 2024, available at https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-revolutionary-guards-say-they-have-attacked-espionage-centers-iraqs-erbil-2024-01-15/; Tasmin News Agency, "IRGC Practices Detonating Israeli Air Base," February 14, 2024, available at https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/02/14/3039190/irgc-practices-detonating-israeli-airbase Joseph Dempsey, "Silo mentality – Iran's Haji Abad missile base," *IISS*, May 4, 2021, available at https://www.iiss.org/en/online-analysis/military-balance/2021/04/iran-haji-abad-missile-base/; and Jon Gambrell, "An Iranian nuclear facility is so deep underground that US airstrikes likely couldn't reach it," *Associated Press*, May 22, 2023, available at https://apnews.com/article/iran-nuclear-natanz-uranium-enrichment-underground-project-04dae673fc937af04e62b65dd78db2e0.

attack Israel directly. This after-action report describes a war game originally designed nearly two years ago. It directly challenges these assumptions and suggests that military attacks between Israel and Iran—including nuclear ones—are possible.

The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center held the game and its preparatory meetings —five separate sessions — in November and December of 2023. The participants included Republican and Democratic Hill staff; U.S. Executive Branch officials and analysts; leading academic scholars; national security and Middle Eastern think tank experts; and American military personnel.

The game consisted of three moves. After receiving a war brief and instructions from the Israeli prime minister, teams representing the Israeli Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the intelligence community formulated their preferred options for launching nuclear strikes against Iran. The prime minister selected one. Move two begins after the Israeli military carries out this strike. In move two, the teams were reconstituted to represent Israel, friendly Arab nations, and the United States and its European allies. Control played Iran, Russia, and China. Each team responded diplomatically and militarily to Israel's initial nuclear strike against Iran. The game's third and final move was a "hot wash" where participants discussed their insights.

The game starts in 2027 with Israeli intelligence reports that Iran is mating nuclear warheads to its long-range missiles. This prompts Israel to ask Washington to collaborate in a conventional military strike targeting key Iranian nuclear facilities and missile bases. Not wanting to be drawn into a major war with Iran, the United States demurs and instead offers Israel U.S. standoff hypersonic missiles.

Israel uses these to target Iran's key nuclear and missile sites. Almost immediately, Tehran's proxies —Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthi rebels—respond with devastating conventional missile strikes against Israel. These attacks kill at least as many Israelis as the October 7, 2023 Hamas raid. In response, Israel attempts to preempt further proxy military strikes by launching aerial strikes against proxy military strongholds in Gaza, Southern Lebanon, and Yemen. These attacks kill more than 2,000 Arabs.

Iran responds directly. With Israeli missile defenses now degraded (after defending against earlier Iranian proxy strikes), Iran strikes key Israeli nuclear and government defense ministry buildings in Tel Aviv, killing more Israeli civilians. Iran also announces that it has withdrawn from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

Israeli intelligence then learns that Israel's previous conventional strikes against Iranian nuclear and missile sites failed to retard Iran's integration of nuclear warheads with its missiles. When Israel shares this information with Washington officials and again asks them to approve a joint U.S.-Israeli follow-on raid, Washington only offers "continued assistance" and tells Israel it should stop attacking Iran lest the fighting escalate to a nuclear exchange.

Israel swallows hard. Sensing that it now is isolated and that further Israeli conventional strikes are unlikely to scotch an Iranian nuclear strike, Israel's prime minister decides attacking Iran with nuclear arms is Israel's only option. After consulting his cabinet, he approves a non-lethal nuclear demonstration shot over a remote location in Iran combined with conventional strikes against leading Iranian nuclear facilities and military sites. Israel also launches cyber-attacks against Iran's military communications networks and uses its back channels to make a private diplomatic appeal to Tehran to stand down further offensive action against Israel.

Israel's actions, however, fail to bend Iran's will to continue to wage war. Worse, the United States urges Israel to stand down. Isolated and desperate, Israel concludes it has no choice: It launches a "precision" follow-on nuclear strike of 50 weapons against 25 Iranian military targets (including Russian-manned air defense sites). The aim is to cripple Iranian offensive forces and perhaps induce enough chaos to prompt the Iranian revolutionary regime to collapse. Almost immediately after this strike, Iran launches a nuclear attack of its own against an Israeli air base where American military are present.

This move is the game's last. Many critical questions remain unanswered. Would Israel or Iran conduct further military nuclear operations? Might Israel target Tehran with nuclear weapons? Might Iran target Tel Aviv with nuclear arms? Might Russia or the United States be drawn into the war? That there were so many basic unknowns informed the game's four key findings:

1. ***The strategic uncertainties generated <u>after</u> an Israeli-Iranian nuclear exchange are likely to be at least as fraught as any that might arise before such a clash.*** An unspoken hope among security experts is that nuclear deterrence can work between Israel and Iran. Such optimism, however, discourages clear thinking about what might happen if deterrence fails. During the game's play and hot wash session, participants emphasized how difficult it was to develop appropriate policy responses to Israeli or Iranian nuclear use as neither contingency was adequately considered *before* use. Precisely how much damage might Israeli nuclear strikes inflict against Iran's nuclear and missile sites, infrastructure, and population? Might Iran's key nuclear and missile capabilities be knocked out or are they buried too deep to be harmed? What precisely might the political, diplomatic, military, and economic impacts be of such nuclear strikes? Would the world's economies be "knocked out" or just "jolted?" What about the region's economies? How would the United States, Russia, China, and other nations respond to Israeli and Iranian nuclear use? Would they be drawn into the conflict? Would demands for proportionality guide U.S. and allied responses? How likely would Israel be to share details of what targets it hit with precisely what weapons with outside parties including with its closest allies? After the game, none of the participants felt confident that they could answer any of these questions. To narrow these "unknowns," gaming possible Middle Eastern nuclear wars publicly and in classified settings is needed. Ideally, such simulations would include Israeli officials and outside experts as well as officials and outside experts from neighboring Middle Eastern states. An explicit goal for

these games would be to devise ways to deter first and subsequent nuclear weapons strikes. Such official gaming, however, has yet to take place publicly. Nor is it clear it has been conducted in classified settings.

2. ***Although Israel and Iran might initially avoid the nuclear targeting of innocents, such self-restraint is tenuous.*** Military analysts have rightly argued precision-guided munitions enable combatants to avoid hitting innocent civilians. Meanwhile, most nations have ratified the 1977 Protocol 1 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which discourages targeting civilians and civil objects. Perhaps for these reasons, both Israel and Iran, neither of which is a party to Protocol 1, initially avoided targeting civilians with their nuclear weapons. In the game, however, even Israel's initial decision to fire a harmless nuclear demonstration shot was controversial. The game's Israeli defense minister and others wanted instead to strike Tehran to maximize chaos in hopes of inducing regime change. This option in the game's second move was again promoted as being as reasonable as trying to limit civilian casualties. Ultimately, the Israel team chose instead to strike 25 military targets with 50 nuclear weapons. Israeli and U.S. intelligence, though, could not clearly determine what collateral and military damage these "limited" military strikes inflicted. After Iran replied with a nuclear military strike of its own against a strategic Israeli airbase, the game ended. Yet, a third follow-on Israeli nuclear strike was a strong possibility. What might Israel target? Much would depend on the power of arguments in Washington, Jerusalem, and Tehran for and against conducting further nuclear exchanges and attacking population centers. In this regard, both U.S. and Israeli officials appear to share a similar *Jus ad Bellum* view of military proportionality. This shared view considers extensive collateral harm to innocents to be allowable so long as it is necessary to prevent further hostile military attacks. This view, however, is not universally supported. Many of America's closest allies, for example, believe that when there is a choice between inflicting less or more military damage to civilians and civil objects to achieve a military objective and an option to inflict more harm is chosen over less harmful options, the damage inflicted should be viewed as being excessive to achieving legitimate military goals. To complicate matters Washington officials often emphasize the importance of reducing indiscriminate harm as much as possible. This patchwork of views on military proportionality is confounding. Certainly, part of any effort to deter the future use of nuclear weapons against cities in the Middle East would benefit from public clarification of just what military proportionality might demand in such cases. Initially, this might be accomplished with track-two talks between former senior officials from the United States and Israel and, if possible, Iran. Yet another reason to hold such talks is to understand Iranian and Israeli messaging. In the game's hot wash, Israel was asked to reconsider its decision to make its second 50-weapon nuclear strike. The Israeli team was given a different Iranian diplomatic response to Israel's move one demand that Tehran cease offensive actions against Israel. The Israeli team was asked what they might do if Iran offered to cease offensive operations in exchange for an Israeli commitment to engage

in *mutual* talks to eliminate Iranian and Israeli nuclear weapons. This softer reply made a significant difference: The Israel team said if it had received this response, it would have accepted Iran's offer and would have held off launching its second strike.

3. ***Multilateral support for Israeli security may be essential to deter Israeli nuclear use but will likely hinge on Israeli willingness to discuss regional denuclearization.*** An Israel isolated and desperate is an Israel far more likely to use nuclear weapons than an Israel surrounded by friendly, supportive neighbors. This should inform further expansion of the Abraham Accords and other efforts at integrating Israel into the region's economic and security affairs. Washington will continue to provide Israel much of the military assistance and cooperation it needs. Yet, Israel's increasing diplomatic dependence on the United States should be a source of concern. In the game, Israel is disappointed when it asks for Washington to join it in major military operations against Iran. America's unwillingness to be dragged into a major war with Iran and rejection of Israel's request markedly increased the Israeli team's desperation. If Israel's security and economic future were much more integrated with its neighbors, such anxiety would likely be ameliorated. A desirable feature of such integration would be joint military training and exercises to deter Iranian and Iranian proxy military provocations. Yet another might be to announce that if Iran's leadership continues to inch towards nuclear weapons, the West will no longer remain neutral regarding its overthrow and might well engage in information campaigns against the regime. All of this could help deter Iran and dissuade Israel from resorting to nuclear weapons use. Yet, such regional security and economic collaboration is unlikely unless the most important security goal — to avoid nuclear wars and nuclear proliferation— is made explicit. This will require not only being more candid about the nuclear weapons risks associated with "peaceful" nuclear energy and the financial and security risks of building nuclear power systems in the region but also opening up the diplomatic aperture to reducing nuclear weapons threats. The latter would necessarily require Israel and its closest ally, the United States, to be much more open to participating in regional denuclearization discussions.

4. ***Little progress is likely in reducing Middle Eastern nuclear threats if the United States continues its public policy of denying knowledge of Israeli nuclear weapons***. Current U.S. policy is not to admit Israel has nuclear weapons. This policy dates back to the Cold War when any admission of Israeli nuclear weapons would have likely prompted the Soviet Union to help Egypt or other Arab states get nuclear capabilities of their own. Those days are behind us. Yet, recently, the Pentagon refused entirely to declassify early, official considerations of what multilateral Middle Eastern denuclearization talks (that would include Israel) might entail.[3] Moreover, there still is an executive order making any public mention of Israeli

3. See National Security Archive, "Memorandum of Conversation, "Task Force. Meeting No. 1-Arms Control of the Near East," 27 March 1063, Top Secret, Excised copy," December 6, 2023, available at

possessing nuclear weapons a security violation that could result in the revocation of an official's security clearances.[4] Given the strategic dangers and uncertainties that possible nuclear exchanges between Israel and Iran raised in this game, formulating proportionate military, political, and economic policies to deter such use is essential. This will require gaming and planning that America's current outdated Israel nuclear-related classification policies all but preclude.

Scenario

It is 2027. Iran has one of the world's largest theater missile and drone forces and supplies its proxies with substantial numbers of these missiles and drones. The main beneficiary of Iran's largesse is Hezbollah, which throughout most of 2027 uses these strike systems in a cat-and-mouse contest of pinpricks firing from Syria, occasionally against northern Israeli positions. Iran, meanwhile, has not given up developing a nuclear weapon. Two years before, in 2025, Iran formally declared its intent to withdraw from the NPT. At that time, it nearly exhausted the 90-day deadline for formal withdrawal, as North Korea did in 1993. That clock is still paused but with only 24 hours more required for Iran to be legally free of the NPT restrictions.

In mid-2027, Israeli intelligence receives human intelligence (HUMINT) that Iran is increasing activity at a number of suspected Iranian nuclear weapons design-fabrication sites. Israel then receives high-confidence HUMINT and signals intelligence that the Iranians are about to assemble complete nuclear warheads with missile delivery systems at several ultra-high-performance concrete-hardened, buried locations. Israeli intelligence knows where some of these sites are but lacks high confidence that they have located all of them. The most likely assembly sites are all underground: the Parchin military complex 20 miles from Tehran (population 8.5 million), the Fordow Fuel Enrichment plant 25 miles away from Qom (population 1.2 million), and the Natanz Enrichment Complex about 60 miles from Esfahan (population 2 million).

Israel's prime minister decides this is a casus belli. Meanwhile, Israeli intelligence determines that the only non-nuclear weapon option that might penetrate the hardened weapons assembly sites is a hypersonic strike weapon that only the United States possesses. Israel has asked Washington to transfer these weapons for the last two years. The U.S. President, who has repeatedly pledged never to let Iran get nuclear weapons but does not want Israel to start a war,

---

https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/30842-document-6-memorandum-conversation-task-force-meeting-no-1-arms-control-near-east-27 and "Recent Nuclear Declassifications and Denials: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," December 6, 2023 available at https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nuclear-vault/2023-12-06/recent-nuclear-declassifications-and-denials-good-bad-and

4. For a rare, official public reference to "DOE Classification Bulletin WPN-136 on Foreign Nuclear Capabilities," see United States Department of Energy Office of Hearings and Appeals, In the Matter of Grant F. Smith, August 25, 2015, Case No. FIC-15-0003, available at https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/FIC-15-0003.pdf.

refused these requests. Israel's prime minister speaks directly with the president of the United States. The Israeli prime minister asks that America join Israel in launching a coordinated airstrike. He makes this plea noting Israel's lack of adequate penetrating munitions. The U.S. president asks for and receives a full Israeli intelligence brief. He decides not to do a joint strike, but agrees to give Israel the latest U.S. hypersonic conventional munitions. The U.S. Air Force arranges for the commercial delivery of these munitions into Germany on non-American cargo planes, which subsequently deliver them to Israel.

On July 30, 2027, Israel, without explicit American permission, launches a preventive conventional missile strike using nearly all of the hypersonic weapons it received against the known Iranian nuclear weapons integration facilities. International news outlets attribute Israel as having attacked "suspect" Iranian nuclear weapons integration facilities. Iran releases photos of its damaged "peaceful research" sites, decries the attack, and calls for "retribution" against Israel's "illicit" attack.

A day later, on July 31st, Hezbollah launches missiles that saturate and suppress Israeli missile defenses. Hamas and the Houthi rebels (who have acquired missiles capable of reaching Israel) take advantage of Hezbollah's saturation of Israeli missile defenses to launch rockets from Gaza and Yemen against Israeli military bases, civilian infrastructure, and population centers. These attacks cause serious additional damage and numerous casualties – at least as many deaths as the 2023 Hamas attacks from Gaza. With the Israeli defenses degraded, Iran launches an unprecedented missile strike of its own against nuclear-associated targets, including Israel's reactor at Dimona (which, given its size, fails to release any significant radioactivity beyond the local area). Iran also strikes several nuclear-associated air and missile bases (including Sdot Micha airbase) and Israel's bases for its Dolphin nuclear missile-armed submarines. Iran also attacks the Ministry of Defense headquarters in central Tel Aviv. The strike against Tel Aviv kills and injures a large number of civilians.

Immediately after these attacks, Iran announces it is withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 24 hours, claiming the Israeli strike jeopardizes its "supreme interests." Meanwhile, Israeli HUMINT reports that Israel has yet to fully destroy its target set: While Israeli strikes crippled above-ground targets, even the hypersonic strikes failed to penetrate the most important underground facilities at Parchin, Fordow, and Natanz, all of which are feared to be still operational.

Israeli leadership is shaken by the combination of the massive damage to Israel and the ongoing nuclear threat and decides that this is the existential moment that demands a nuclear response. The Israeli prime minister declares these attacks are putting the state's existence at risk, having killed more than 4,500 innocent Israeli citizens, which is more than three times the number killed in the 2023 Hamas attacks from Gaza. Israel is also disturbed by Iran's unprecedented willingness to directly attack Israel and the survival of Iran's nuclear facilities.

The Israeli prime minister speaks with the American president again, explains that the Israeli attack using U.S. hypersonic missiles failed to eliminate the target set, and asks that the United States join Israel in attacking Iran without nuclear weapons. The American president demurs, offering additional American "assistance" but making it clear that Israeli military strikes against Iran must end now lest they lead to a nuclear exchange between Iran and Israel. The Israeli prime minister explains that if that is the case, Israel will have to take whatever action it deems necessary.

On August 3rd the Israeli prime minister calls for the views of the foreign and defense ministers as well as the head of the Mossad. He tasks them to determine how and where a nuclear weapon(s) be used and of what yield(s). Target ideas include but are not limited to: a demonstration shot over Syria and/or Iran, targeting Iran's energy infrastructure, destruction of nuclear integration locations as best is known, or other targets including civilian and infrastructure targets. Yield options include 1.5 kt, 15 kt, or 50 kt.

Move 1

Move 1 had two parts. First, Israeli Intelligence, the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs separately assessed the specific impacts of each of the prime minister's suggested target sets and yields. Second, Israeli Intelligence, the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs each made a recommendation to the prime minister as to their preferred option.

Part 1

Israeli Intelligence

Israeli Intelligence's first recommendation is to target Iranian military bases and nuclear weapons production facilities that are isolated from populated areas with low-yield weapons (1.5 kilotons). Alternatively, Israeli intelligence suggests a low-yield demonstration shot in an isolated region, such as the Kerman province in eastern Iran, combined with conventional strikes against Iran's nuclear production facilities and missile systems.

With both options, Israeli Intelligence's goal is to damage or disable Iran's nuclear weapons capability and avoid full-scale nuclear war. Although Israeli Intelligence believes these low-yield nuclear strikes will only delay Iran's nuclear progress, it also believes such strikes would send a strong signal that Israel is both capable and willing to escalate if Iran continues to attack Israel –

unilaterally or through its proxies. Israeli intelligence chose low-yield weapons to minimize civilian casualties that might otherwise risk international condemnation.

Israeli Ministry of Defense

Israel's Ministry of Defense assesses that an electromagnetic pulse strike would result in some immediate deaths including patients in hospitals and passengers on planes. However, the electromagnetic pulse effect would disrupt the government's ability to command and control troops in a coordinated manner and disrupt Iran's supplies of food, water, and other goods and services. A line of nuclear detonations along the central line of Persia resulting in an electromagnetic pulse could catalyze the Iranian public's discontent with the regime, leading to mass discontent. Limiting the electromagnetic pulse impact to Iran's political center is more likely to destabilize the nation. In addition, the defense minister suggests going after Iran's oil industry, as an interruption of Iran's oil exports would significantly damage its economy, create chaos, and help induce desirable regime change.

The Ministry of Defense also determines that, depending on the height of the burst and weapon size, the impact of the electromagnetic pulse might be felt beyond Iranian borders. Should the electromagnetic pulse interfere with the region's commerce (including oil exports), Israel risks angering nations such as Saudi Arabia and the United States, particularly as Israel is not asking for U.S. permission to launch the attack.

In terms of reprisals, the Ministry of Defense believes that an optimized blast for electromagnetic pulse could risk condemnation from other nations, but it is unclear if impacted third-party nations would strike Israel as a result. The defense ministry stresses that nuclear use of any sort would result in condemnation and reprisals and therefore those risks should not factor into the targeting decision.

The defense ministry concludes that it will be difficult to destroy Iran's military targets using strikes that risk limited collateral damage with the yields available to Israel, as those targets are located deep underground. Even multiple successive strikes are unlikely to burrow underground and would only result in more fallout in the atmosphere, which risks even greater international condemnation. However, in the case that this intelligence is wrong, Israel may still find it worth attempting such a strike.

The Defense Ministry assesses that low-yield nuclear weapons would be effective against soft targets such as political centers or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps headquarters, especially as a symbolic attack. However, reprisals are likely and would result in more immediate collateral damage.

The Defense Ministry also assesses that nuclear strikes against targets that risk a large amount of collateral damage (e.g., infrastructure, political centers, and non-hardened military sites, such as key bases near population centers) would be effective, but conventional weapons should be used where possible. Iran has many remaining missiles and will hit targets reciprocally, including population centers, critical sectors of the economy (e.g., U.S.-Israeli chip manufacturing), and strikes against the Israeli government and military leadership.

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes all of the prime minister's suggested targets will produce dire diplomatic consequences if hit. However, the ministry deems a 1.5 kiloton demonstration shot to be the least disruptive. A demonstration shot allows Israel to make clear it knows Iran is about to strike, that Israel is willing to take strong action to deter Iran unilaterally, and that Israel aims to keep even its nuclear strikes "proportionate."

The foreign ministry, however, also voices reservations about a demonstration shot. It could delegitimize Israel's insistence that Iran not acquire nuclear weapons. It clearly would undermine calls for a nuclear weapons-free Middle East and might suggest Israel is both desperate and weak.

As for military strikes against targets distant from urban centers, the foreign ministry cautions they could nonetheless kill significant numbers of civilians and damage infrastructure. This could lead to a humanitarian crisis and global outcry. Key allies, especially those who advocate for non-proliferation and adherence to international law, might distance themselves from Israel. Such a strike could invite retaliation, not only from Iran, but from regional allies, escalating the conflict further. In addition, a single strike would be insufficient to achieve the military objectives and multiple ground bursts will produce significant airborne radioactivity.

The foreign ministry deems that Israeli strikes against targets with large collateral damage would be viewed as disproportionate and risk massive international condemnation. Israel could be subject to accusations of war crimes, especially if civilian areas or non-military infrastructure are significantly impacted. Such actions could result in long-term political and economic fallout and lead to a sustained period of international isolation. An Israeli nuclear strike with large collateral damage could also significantly destabilize the region, lead to further conflicts and humanitarian crises, and trigger a wider nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

The foreign ministry suggested a fourth possible strategy: Israel could ask the United States to extend its nuclear deterrent against future Iranian nuclear strikes similar to U.S. agreements with NATO and Japan. In exchange, Israel would agree not to hit Tehran. Should Iran launch nuclear strikes against Haifa and similar cities, or retaliate in Israel or Europe, the U.S. president would commit to destroying Iran.

Ultimately, the foreign affairs team questioned how much difference selecting any of the suggested targets would make: any use of nuclear weapons, they thought, would outrage the international community. Israel must clarify its objective: Is it to destroy the Iranian nuclear program or seek regime change?

Part 2

Based on the analyses and recommendations of each of the teams in part one, the teams were next tasked with recommending the target(s) and yield(s) for a nuclear strike to the Israeli Prime Minister.

Israeli Intelligence

Israeli intelligence's goal is to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to deter further Iranian attacks. Towards this end, it recommends a nuclear demonstration shot over Kerman province, an isolated area of the desert, and launching a nuclear strike against Fordow Fuel Enrichment plant near Qom, a small city. Iran should be warned that there will be further attacks if Iran continues to attack Israel or persists in advancing its nuclear weapons activities.

Israeli intelligence notes that Israel may suffer international sanctions and that Iran would likely use Israel's limited nuclear strikes to justify acquiring and using its own nuclear arms. Diplomatic fallout would be worse, however, if Israel struck a major Iranian city. As for the Israeli defense ministry's suggestions to eliminate Iran's leadership in Tehran, Israeli Intelligence doubted this would bring an acceptable regime change, if at all, and were wary of killing large numbers of innocents.

Israeli Ministry of Defense

The Israeli Ministry of Defense favors a much more massive attack on Iran than Israeli intelligence or foreign affairs. It believes the ultimate aim of any nuclear attack should be to disrupt command and control to foment regime change. To achieve this, the Israeli Defense Ministry recommends attacking the Iranian leadership before it can move to hardened, buried locations that low-yield weapons cannot destroy. In specific, Israel must target Iran's political and military centers. In addition, the Defense Ministry recommends targeting Iran's fissile material stockpiles and missile forces and to the extent possible Iran's nuclear warhead missile mating facilities. Finally, the defense ministry suggests launching two high-altitude electromagnetic pulse strikes along a central line from Tehran to Esfahan. An electromagnetic

pulse detonation further south might affect U.S. allies and is not recommended. Israel should retain enough nuclear weapons and missiles for additional follow-on attacks if necessary.

The Israeli Defense Ministry hopes that the combination of loss of command and control, loss of leadership, and collapsing access points to missile and nuclear facilities make it likely that Iran will be unable to launch any of its few nuclear weapons during the immediate crisis. Should intelligence reveal that earth movers are being used to clear entrances to nuclear weapons mating facilities, Israel should target those facilities again and follow on as needed to keep the entrances closed. If new intelligence shows the locations of additional Iranian leaders, Israel should strike those targets with whatever weapons are needed. Israel should be prepared to continue hitting its initial targets until its objectives are achieved, integrating nuclear and conventional weapons to "escalate to de-escalate."

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes Israel must cap further escalation and deter Iran from launching further counterstrikes. Towards this end, the foreign ministry recommends that before Israel launches any nuclear strike against Iran, Israel should request that the United States extend the nuclear guarantee given to NATO and Japan to include Israel. If Washington is unwilling to provide such an assurance, Israel should launch a demonstration shot in the desert. Although the demonstration shot may be the least provocative action, the Foreign Ministry warns that even such a low-yield strike will justify further Iranian nuclear weapons activities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs cautions that Israel should be prepared for the chance of a large-scale, possibly nuclear, counterattack on the Israeli state. It is an enormous mistake to assume Iran will back down. Should Iran not back down and begin to target cities with nuclear weapons, Israel must decide whether to execute a counter-value strike to destroy Iran.

The Prime Minister's Decision

Israel intends to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons capability and attack key nodes of its military structures. Israel's attack will consist of three phases. First, Israel will launch a demonstration burst just north of Yazd, outside of all populated areas, with a 1.5 kt-yield and a 1,000-foot burst height. This strike should kill none.

Second, Israel will launch combined conventional air and missile attacks against leading nuclear weapons-related facilities in Iran (Fordow Fuel Enrichment Facility, Natanz Enrichment Facility, and associated sites, Parchin military complex, and the conversion plants at Esfahan). These

strikes should kill no more than 500 civilian casualties each. If there is reason to believe the casualties to be higher, these estimates should be forwarded to the Prime Minister's office before any action is taken.

Third, Israel will communicate through backchannels with Iran that Israel seeks immediate cessation of nuclear and non-nuclear attacks by either side. Israel will also ask the United States to extend a NATO-style Article 5 guarantee to include Israel in exchange for Israel not conducting any further nuclear attacks. Israel should ask the United States to join a UN Security Council resolution condemning Iran's activities and taking actions needed to protect world peace.

Move 2

Early in August, Israel launched its demonstration burst just north of Yazd outside of all populated areas, and the combined conventional air and missile attacks against leading nuclear weapons-related facilities in Iran (Fordow Fuel Enrichment Facility, Natanz Enrichment Facility and associated sites, Parchin military complex, and the conversion plants at Esfahan). The air and missile strikes blocked the entrances and exits of the nuclear weapons facilities and the conversion plant at Esfahan was hit. Israel targeted select military facilities during these strikes including bunkers that contained the long-range missiles most capable of reaching Israel with an immediate strike, temporarily blocking the entrances to these missile facilities and cratering the above-ground runways. Israel expended about fifty percent of its bomb and missile magazine in this strike. Concurrently, the Ministries of Defense and Interior executed offensive cyber operations to destroy and degrade military communications capabilities, with a priority on those capabilities related to nuclear assets. There is no immediate intelligence on the extent of the impact.

Following Israel's attack, the Israeli government asks the United States for immediate support. Among Israel's requests are security assurances in the event Iran launches a nuclear counterattack, more bunker-buster munitions, and backing at the UN. Israeli officials note that without American nuclear security assurances, Israel may have to escalate, possibly with a second nuclear strike. The Americans decline offering Israel security assurances for fear of being dragged into the war. However, the United States sends Israel conventional and logistical support, deploys a U.S. carrier group and a guided missile submarine to the region, and moves to DEFCON 2.

Although friendly Arab nations oppose the deployment of American military forces, Israel reaches out to them suggesting they join a military alliance against Iran. Towards this end, Israel asks its Arab neighbors for overflight rights for military operations and a naval quarantine of Iran. The Arab nations push back and instead collectively agree to stay neutral. They only offer diplomatic and economic initiatives in pursuit of a ceasefire.

Meanwhile, Russian president Vladimir Putin condemns Israel's nuclear use and its attack on Iran's "peaceful" nuclear facilities. Putin announces that he has promised Iran an immediate shipment of Russia's new S-500 air defense systems along with Russian technicians to operate them. Putin calls on Israel to cease further military provocations against Iran.

Israel delivers an ultimatum to the Iranian government: Stop all rocket attacks by Iran and its proxies against Israel or face a second, much more destructive Israeli strike. In response, Iran blames Israel for its nuclear escalation of the conflict and reaffirms its right to defend itself against a nuclear-armed Israel. Iran's price for peace is an Israeli commitment to renunciate its possession of nuclear weapons and commit to their immediate elimination.

Fearing further escalation, the United States sponsors a UN Security Council resolution, supported by the friendly Arab nations, calling for a ceasefire and condemning the use of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Israel feels increasingly isolated and desperate with the lack of timely American security guarantees.

Iranian proxies resume their attacks against Israel, with thousands of Hezbollah rockets targeting Israel's critical infrastructure. Rockets destroy Israel's major power generating stations, transformers, and oil and gas infrastructure, causing rolling blackouts and massive explosions. Hezbollah also damages the Knesset building and kills hundreds of Israelis as rockets land in major population centers. A spokesman for the Iranian defense ministry announces that army engineers have succeeded in unblocking targeted entrances to its underground, long-range missile and nuclear forces, which can now be used at any time against Israeli targets. The spokesman also confirms that Russian missile defense units and the Russian technicians operating them have arrived and are operational. Ayatollah Khamenei declares a Holy War against Israel and states that nuclear weapons are no longer forbidden.

Israel, now believing that Iran was not deterred by its initial nuclear detonation and that the existential Iranian nuclear and rocket threat is once again imminent, disregards the potential diplomatic consequences and launches a full-scale nuclear and conventional strike. Israel detonates six fifty-kiloton nuclear ground bursts at the Iranian weapons assembly sites at Natanz, Parchin, and Fordow (two warheads each). Israel launches forty additional 1.5 kiloton warheads at Iran's twenty largest missile and air bases, command and control sites, and headquarters that are not located in urban areas. These detonate in airbursts at 100m above the ground. Israel also fires conventional smart bombs at critical military and political sites within major cities, including the residence of Ayatollah Khamenei, the headquarters of the IRGC and Defense Ministry, and the Iranian parliament. Israel publishes a press release confirming its nuclear strike but not sharing the details regarding the number of nuclear weapons used or their targets.

The Arab states and the United States and its NATO allies scramble to understand the scale and effects of the strike. As Israel did not publicize the specifics of its nuclear strike, the rest of the world lacked clarity as to the number of bombs dropped, the targets they struck, and whether

Israel successfully disabled its targets. The Arab states in particular expressed that they lacked a clear understanding of the location of fallout and the impacts on civilians. Each team launched a hasty bomb damage assessment as they had not modeled or prepared for this eventuality ahead of time. These preliminary bomb damage assessments by the Israeli, Arab, and American governments suggest that fallout is affecting civilians within Iran and that some deeply buried targets may have survived.

As it struggles to understand the effect of the nuclear strike and the state of Iran's nuclear facilities, Israel again calls for the United States to extend support to Israel to deter Iran. The United States, meanwhile, calls for restraint and urges the other nations not to test American resolve during this moment of crisis. Russia responds that its military advisors have been killed and it holds Israel responsible. Before any negotiations can begin, Russia and China demand that America withdraw its forces from the region and immediately stop arms transfers to Israel. The Arab nations, fearing a spiraling regional conflict, call on Pakistan, India, and China to use their diplomatic and economic leverage to prevent further escalation.

The friendly Arab nations collectively close their borders to any civilian or military access and deploy naval forces to enforce a quarantine of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, denying access to any belligerent. China condemns Israel's provocations and calls for Israel to forswear its nuclear weapons immediately and commit to binding negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

A nuclear warhead detonates above Mashabim Air Base, an Israeli air base with a permanent American military presence, and is quickly identified as an Iranian counterstrike. At least 25 American service members and hundreds of Israelis are presumed dead. The United States invokes Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in response to the attack against an American military installation. Turkish President Erdogan announces that he will not support Article 5 action against Iran until and unless Israel publicly agrees to forswear its possession of nuclear weapons along with Iran.

Israel requests military coordination with the United States and NATO forces. The United States makes clear that if Israel uses any more nuclear weapons, Washington will cease its conventional military support and pull the plug on all intelligence sharing. Israel dismisses this threat. Israel believes it must take any and all military actions with whatever munitions – nuclear or non-nuclear – are needed to eliminate the Iranian threat to Israel and is willing to "go it alone" if necessary. There are at least another 50 nuclear weapons in Israel's arsenal. It is unknown how many nuclear weapons Iran has.

Game play ends.

Appendix A: The Potential Humanitarian Consequences of Israeli Nuclear Use

The Potential Humanitarian Consequences of

Israeli Nuclear Use

15 November 2023

Eva Lisowski

Overview

- Nuclear Weapon Effects
- Israel's Nuclear Arsenal
- Wargame Scenario
- Potential Targets in Iran
- Humanitarian Consequences of Hypothetical Nuclear Attacks

Nuclear Weapon Effects

- Blast Overpressure → Physical Destruction from the explosion
- Prompt Radiation → Biological Effects of nuclear radiation
- Thermal Radiation → Burns and ignition of city debris

- Delayed Radioactive Fallout

Direct Impacts: Overpressure

- **Overpressure—physical destruction from nuclear blast**
  - **Units: Pounds per square inch (psi) at distances (km) from ground zero (point of detonation)**
- **Overpressure occurs seconds to minutes after detonation, depending on distance from ground zero, and lasts for fractions of a second to seconds depending on yield, followed by negative phase pressure**

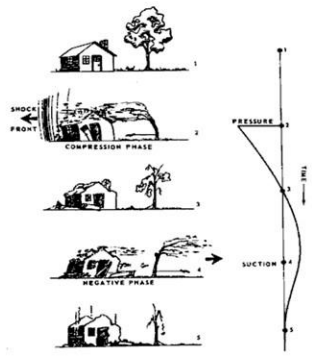


Figure 3-III. Variations of Blast Effects Associated with Positive and Negative Phase Pressures with Time

Direct Impacts: Overpressure

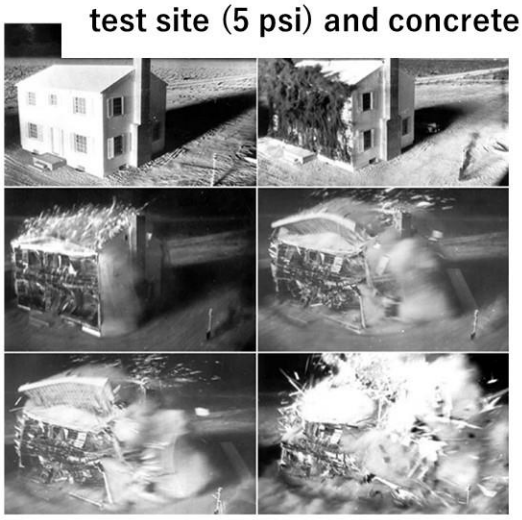
- **Deaths and casualties associated with different levels of overpressure**

Overpressure	Physical Effects
20 psi	Heavily built concrete buildings are severely damaged or demolished.
10 psi	Reinforced concrete buildings are severely damaged or demolished. Most people are killed.
5 psi	Most buildings collapse. Injuries are universal, fatalities are widespread.
3 psi	Residential structures collapse. Serious injuries are common, fatalities may occur.
1 psi	Window glass shatters Light injuries from fragments occur.

5

Direct Impacts: Overpressure

- **Impacts of nuclear blast on wood-framed house at Nevada test site (5 psi) and concrete building at Hiroshima**



Direct Impacts: Thermal

- **Thermal Fluence—radiative heat from nuclear fireball**
  Units: calories per square centimeter—cal/cm^2) at distances (km) from ground zero (point of detonation)
  - **Significance:** thermal fluence of 20 cal/cm^2 causes third degree burns on exposed skin, with 5 to 10 cal/cm^2 causing second degree burns
  - Wood will ignite at 10-20 cal/cm^2, many fabrics will ignite at 10 cal/cm^2, paper ignites at around 5 cal/cm^2 , depending on conditions
- **Thermal Fluence—burn damage to exposed skin and burns through clothing**

7

Direct Impacts: Prompt Radiation

- **Prompt Radiation—nuclear radiation exposure occurring within seconds after the detonation (as opposed to fallout)**
  - **Units: prompt radiation doses in rem ("Roentgen equivalent man")**
  - **One rem is equal to 0.01 Sievert (Sv) or 10 millisievert (mSv)**
  - **Significance:** doses of 200 rem or more are considered fatal or near-fatal, with doses between 50 and 200 rem considered high but survivable, and doses of 10-50 rem potentially causing medium- and long-term health impacts

8

Direct Impacts: Prompt Radiation

- **Health Effects of Prompt Radiation and Fallout**

Health Effects of Ionizing Radiation Doses								
Dose (rem)	**0.1**	**5**	**10**	**50**	**100**	**200**	**600**	**1000**
Significance	USNRC Annual Dose Limit to the Public	USNRC Annual Dose Limit for Radiation Worker	Statistical Increase in Cancer Incidence	Considered High Dose by USNRC	High Dose with High Survivability	Survival Chance Highly Dependent on Medical Care	Almost no survival even with Intense Medical Care	Lethal within Days
Symptoms			Possible Onset of Cancer	Acute Radiation Symptoms possible	Moderate decrease in white blood cell (wbc) count	Severe decrease in wbc count, Skin hemorrhage/blood spot, hemorrhage, infection, hair loss		Diarrhea, Fever, Electrolyte imbalance
Death Occurs within						2-12 weeks	1-6 weeks	<2-14 days
Cause of Death						Hemorrhage, Infection	Hemorrhage, Infection	Circulatory / Respiratory collapse

Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- **Firestorms—mass fires ignited by nuclear detonations as in Hiroshima**
  - **Firestorms** develop as the simultaneous fires ignited by blast and thermal fluence join to cause gale-force winds toward the fires on all sides, as the plume of hot air from the fire rises, resulting in conflagrations that consume all combustible material
  - **Firestorm zone** estimated to occur at distances from ground zero experiencing >**15 cal/cm^2** thermal fluence for detonations with **yield over 50 kT,** and >**10 cal/cm^2** thermal fluence contour for detonations of **smaller yield**
    - Thermal fluence, and thus firestorm range, can be influenced by weather—for example snow on the ground or cloud cover can multiply thermal fluence, increasing the range at which mass fires are set

10

Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- **Firestorms—mass fires ignited by nuclear detonations as in Hiroshima**

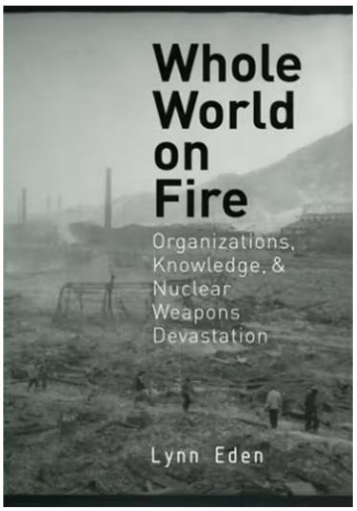
Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- **Firestorms ignited by nuclear detonations are <u>qualitatively different</u> in their initiation from those ignited by conventional weapons**
  - Although firestorms were also ignited in **non-nuclear bombing of cities during World War II,** in those firestorms were caused by targeted application of **thousands** of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices from hundreds of planes, and thus present **a very different situation** relative to the damage caused by a single nuclear weapon

12

Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- Consideration of firestorm damage has in the past been largely **omitted** from weapons damage/targeting analysis by official United States military planners
  - This omission has been brought to the attention of the public through the work of **Lynn Eden**, **Theodore Postol** and others



Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- As the radius of firestorm lethality will exceed the radius of lethal/near-lethal damage from other effects (overpressure, radiation, thermal fluence) in many possible nuclear attacks, the implication is that some planned attacks will result in **casualties that are militarily unnecessary**, disproportionate, and transgress the civilian-military principle of targeting in wartime, thereby rendering existing targeting based solely on blast damage and immediate radiation effects **illegal under international law** along with threats of nuclear use based on such targeting
- Arguably the onus of proof of legality under international law should be on proponents of possible nuclear use and threats thereof in such narrowly defined instances

14

Direct Impacts: Firestorm

- **Firestorms—mass fires ignited by nuclear detonations**
  - **Significance:** Areas engulfed in firestorms may be nearly impossible to escape, meaning that most people within an area estimated to be affected by a firestorm will likely perish
    - As such, in many cases (depending in part upon factors such as weapons yield and topography), the casualties from a nuclear detonation-caused firestorm will effectively overwhelm and subsume the impacts on people of overpressure, thermal fluence, and initial radiation, as well as fallout, although all of these impacts combine to reduce survivability
  - Fires outside the firestorm radius may still be set due to overpressure and/or thermal damage to gas and electric infrastructure or ignition of building materials or vehicle or fuels, causing additional damage

15

Direct Impacts: Fallout

- **Exposure to radioactive fallout from airborne nuclear materials/contaminated debris (cloudshine) and deposited material (groundshine)**
  - Airborne nuclear materials are transported by **ambient winds** and **deposited** as dry or with precipitation
  - Calculations require HOB, weapon yield, plus **date and time** used to select historical weather data. Assumptions about cloud top and bottom height.
  - Exposures above background levels, such as exposures below 5 rem/50 mSv may have limited health impacts but significant political impacts, particularly when international cross-border contamination is considered

16

Indirect Impacts

- **Economic Costs of Health Impacts** of Nuclear Detonation and Radiation Exposure
- **Cost of Infrastructure Rebuilding** following Nuclear Detonation
- **Costs of Environmental Contamination** with Radioactivity or soot / debris particles
- **Social and Political** Consequences of Nuclear Use

17

Israel's Nuclear Program

Israel's Nuclear Facilities

- Negev Nuclear Research Center (1958)
- Dimona Reactor (Pu production since 1966)
- Chemical Reprocessing Plant (1965)

BBC News | MIDDLE EAST | Israel 'may have 200 nuclear weapons'

Nuclear Notebook: Israeli nuclear weapons, 2022 - Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (thebulletin.org)

Israel's Nuclear Weapon Arsenal

- "hypothetically possible that Israel developed two-stage thermonuclear weapons"
- "based on Israel's plutonium production, testing history, design skills, force structure, and employment strategy … its arsenal probably consists of **single-stage, boosted fission warheads**"

The International Panel on Fissile Materials estimates that as of the beginning of 2020, Israel may have a stockpile of about 980 ± 130 kilograms of plutonium.

That amount could potentially be used to build anywhere between 170 and 278 nuclear weapons, assuming a second-generation, single-stage, fission-implosion warhead design with a boosted pit containing 4 to 5 kilograms of plutonium.

Nuclear Notebook: Israeli nuclear weapons, 2022 - Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (thebulletin.org)

Wargame Scenario (simplified)

- **Israel** receives high-confidence intelligence that Iran is about to join nuclear warheads with delivery systems at concrete hardened, buried locations, and Israeli PM and intelligence decide **to attack with conventional hypersonic weapons** received from the United States.
- Iran releases imagery of damaged "peaceful facilities," **Hezbollah** launches missiles that **suppress Israeli missile defenses,** and **Hamas and the Houthi** rebels take advantage of the saturation of missile defenses to **launch their own rockets against Israeli military bases, civilian infrastructure, and population centers**, causing serious damage and numerous casualties.
- **Iran** launches **missile strikes against nuclear facilities**, including the small Dimona reactor, several nuclear-associated air, missile, and nuclear missile-armed submarine bases. Iran also attacks the **Ministry of Defense headquarters in Tel Aviv**, located in the city's center, and **withdraws from the NPT**.
- **Combination of the massive damage to Israel and the ongoing nuclear threat causes Israel consider options for a nuclear response**

Wargame Scenario (simplified)

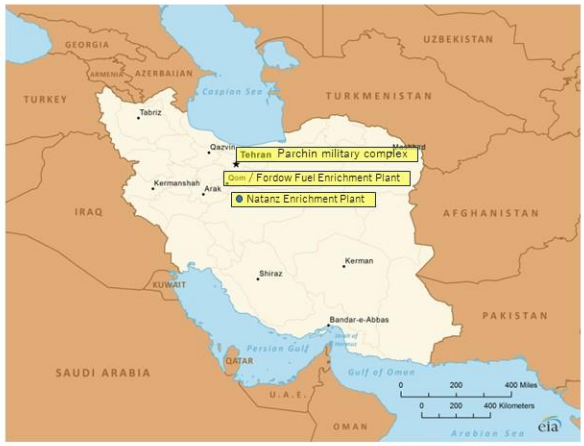
Potential Targets by Israeli Nuclear Weapons

- demonstration EMP shot over Syria and/or Iran
- targeting Iran's energy infrastructure
- destruction of nuclear integration locations
- civilian and infrastructure targets
- Etc.

Hypothetical Targets

Potential Targets by Israeli Nuclear Weapons

- Parchin military complex (18 mi from Tehran, Iran)
- Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (20 mi NE of Qom, near Fordow Village)
- Natanz Nuclear Enrichment Complex



Natanz Enrichment Complex (nti.org)

Identifying Plausible Nuclear Yields

The following are elements of target destruction:

- Finding, identifying, and characterizing the target
- Weapon-system survival and arrival at the target
- Weapon penetration and detonation
- Energy coupling of weapons effects to the ground
- Shock propagation through the ground to the target facility
- Response and vulnerability of the target facility

Out of Sight Should Not Mean Out of Reach: Deterrence and the Proliferation of Hard and Deeply Buried Targets | RealClearDefense

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2005. Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator and Other Weapons. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/11282.

Year_2_NU-NEA_Report_E_2303 (nagasaki-u.ac.jp)

Identifying Plausible Nuclear Yields

- Figures are plots of the probability of (severe) damage of deeply buried targets in granite, as a function of the target depth.
- Figure 4.5 compares a 250 kiloton and a 1 megaton weapon, both of which are contact burst on the surface, for 100 meter and 10-meter CEP.
- Figures 4.6 compares 10 kiloton and 300 kiloton earth-penetrator weapons (EPW) at 3 meters' depth of burst.

Out of Sight Should Not Mean Out of Reach: Deterrence and the Proliferation of Hard and Deeply Buried Targets | RealClearDefense

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2005. Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator and Other Weapons. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/11282.

Year_2_NU-NEA_Report_E_2303 (nagasaki-u.ac.jp)

Deeply-Buried Targets: Destruction Potential is Based on Nuclear Yield and Depth-of-Burst

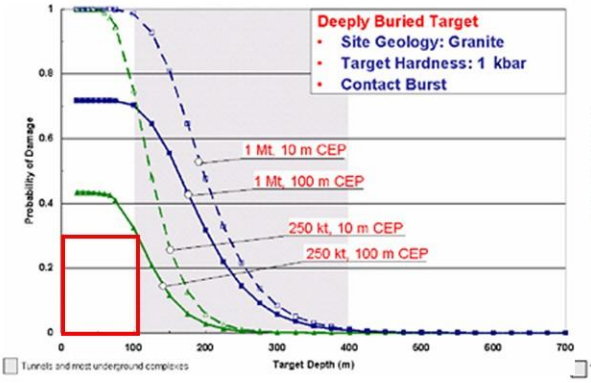


FIGURE 4.5 Effectiveness of contact bursts against some deeply buried targets. Note: CEP = circular error probable (i.e., accuracy).

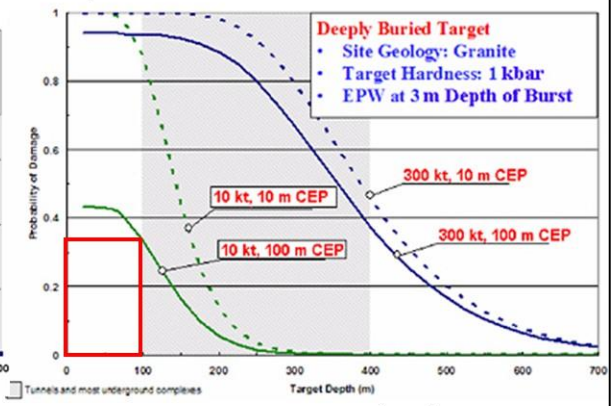


FIGURE 4.6 Earth-penetrator weapon (EPW) needs to be of sufficient yield to be effective against targets of interest. Note: CEP = circular error probable (i.e., accuracy).

Out of Sight Should Not Mean Out of Reach: Deterrence and the Proliferation of Hard and Deeply Buried Targets | RealClearDefense

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2005. Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator and Other Weapons. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/11282.

Year_2_NU-NEA_Report_E_2303 (nagasaki-u.ac.jp)

Identifying Plausible Nuclear Yields

- The effectiveness of a 250 kiloton contact burst is about the same as that of a 10 kiloton EPW (equivalent ground shock)
- Accuracy (i.e., CEP) is a critical parameter, for contact weapons, and at low yields for penetrating weapons.

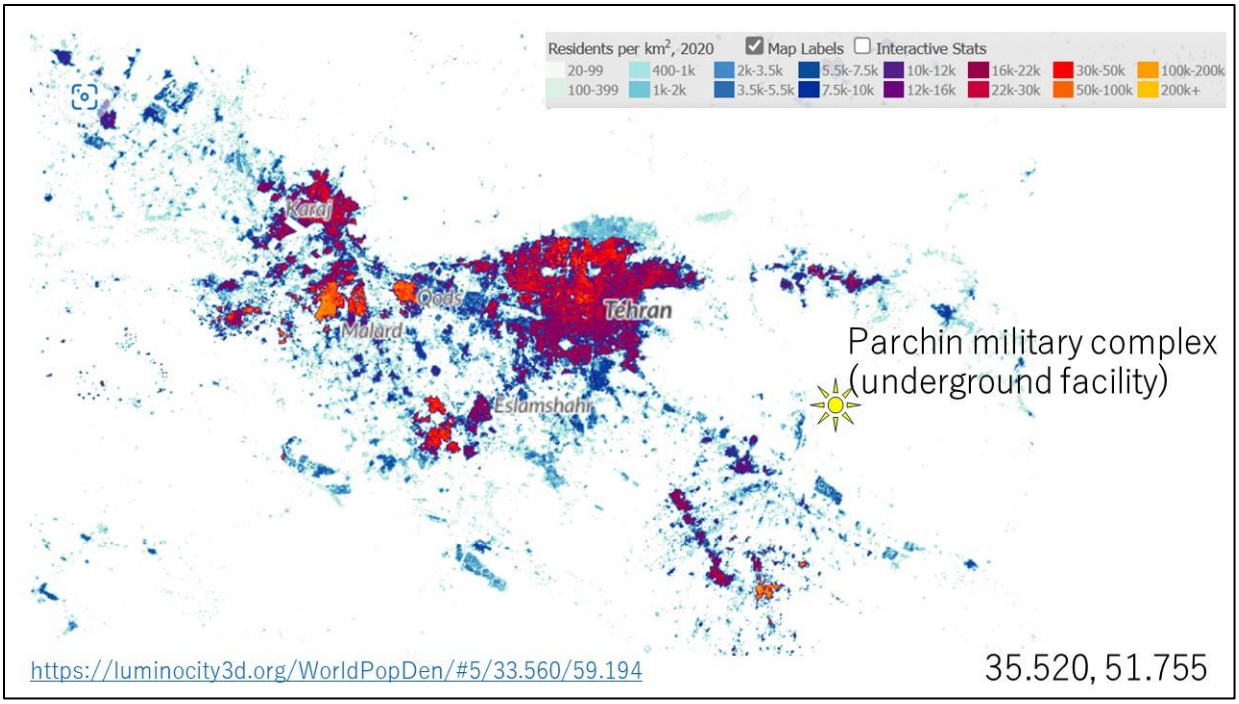
- Parchin military complex (18 mi from Tehran)
- Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (20 mi from Qom)
- Natanz Nuclear Enrichment Complex

→Attack **estimated as a 20 kt surface-burst**

→ Detonated as an EPW to minimize collateral damage and fallout, and to take out any possible deeply-buried targets at the facility. (modeled as contact burst)

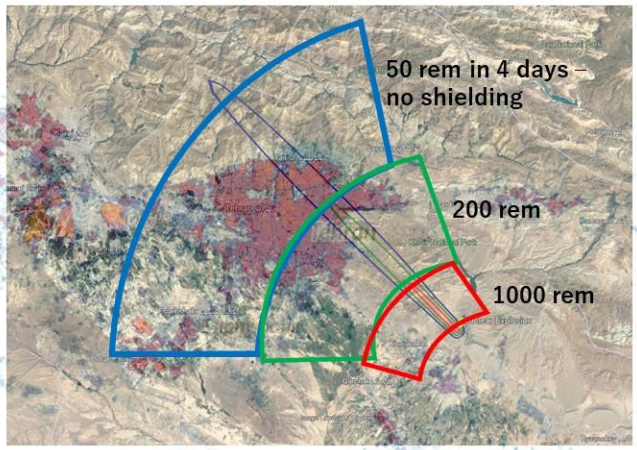
→ Increased from 10 kt to increase probability of damage even with a higher CEP.

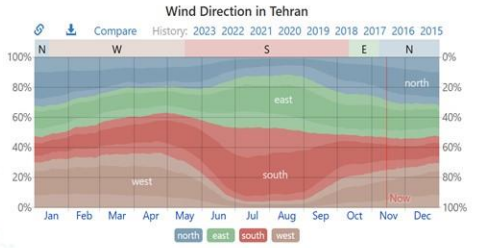
→ Similar to attack on Nagasaki ("Fat Man"), so may be considered "acceptable according to historical precedent"

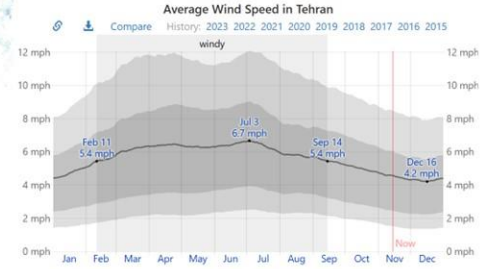


20-kiloton contact burst on Parchin Military Complex

- 3 m/s Wind from the Southeast (July)

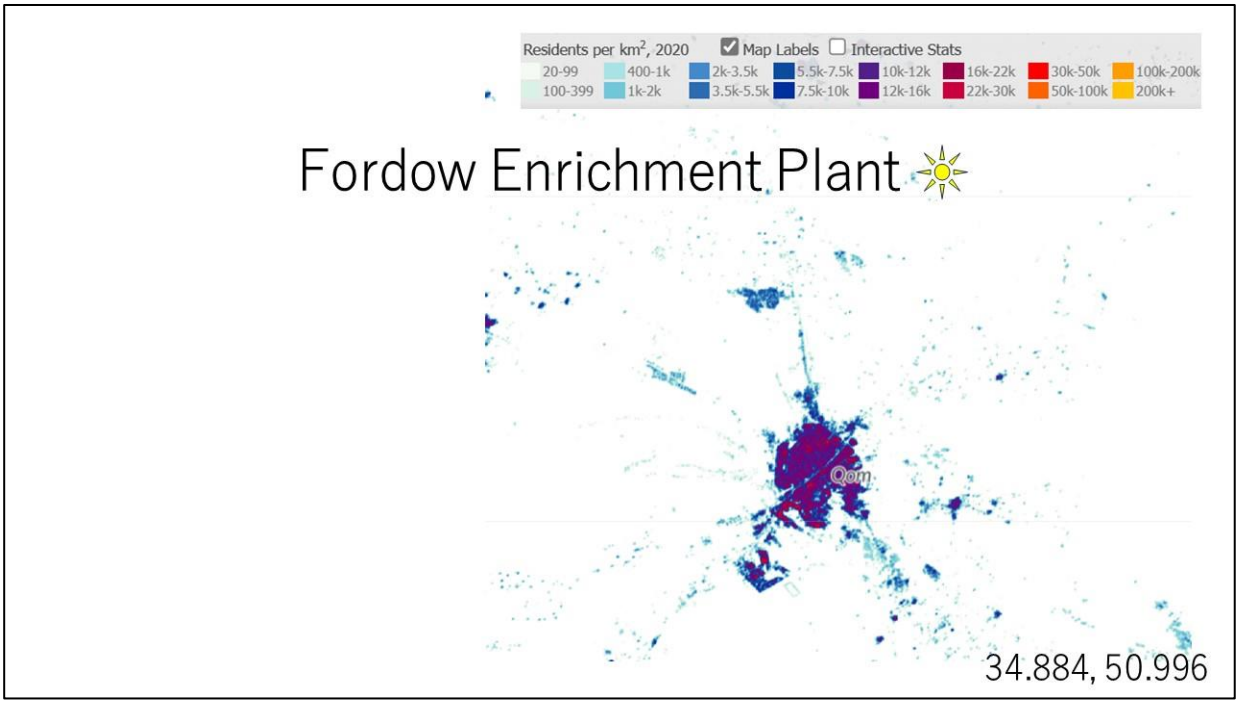




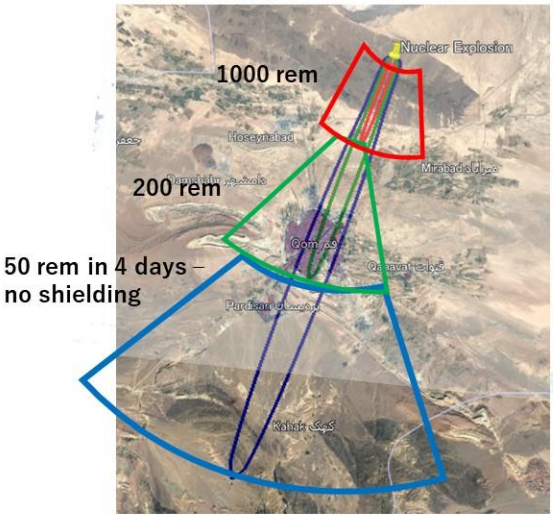


HotSpot ~ Health Physics Codes for the PC (llnl.gov)

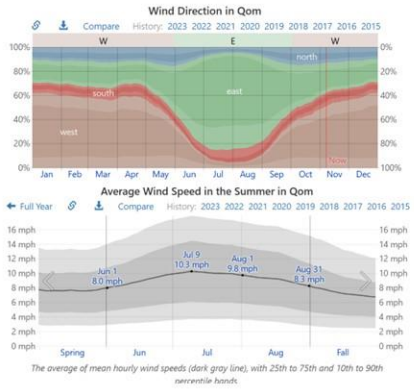
Tehran Fall Weather, Average Temperature (Iran) - Weather Spark

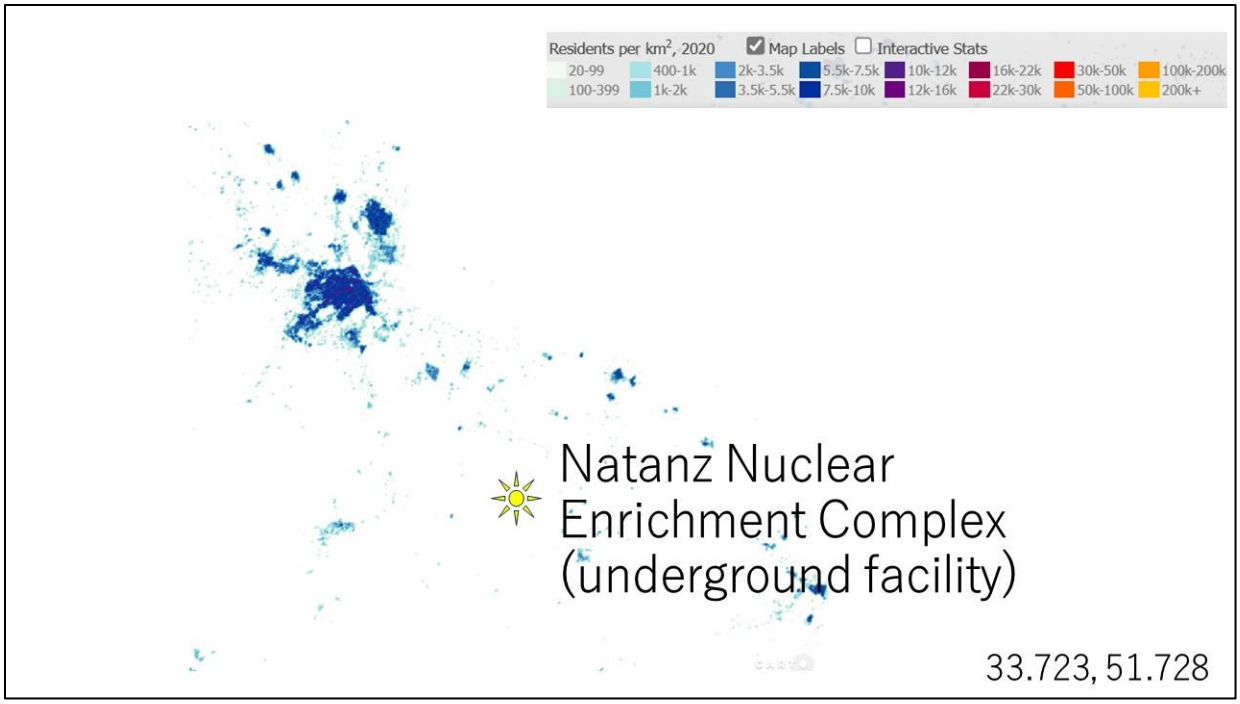


20-kiloton contact burst on Fordow Enrichment Plant



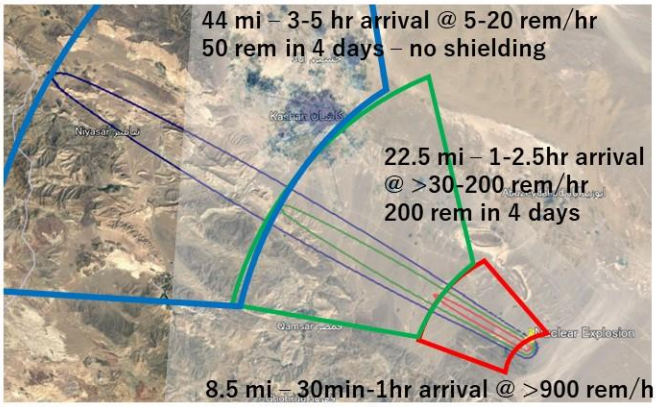
- 3.58 m/s Wind from the Northeast (ex. Early June). Wind towards Qom is unlikely on average.

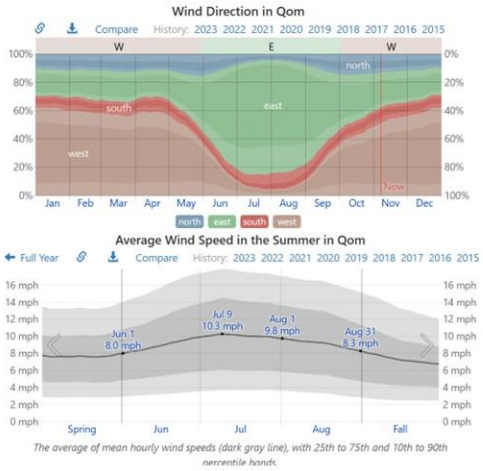




20-kiloton Detonation on Natanz Nuclear Enrichment Complex

- 4.4 m/s Wind from the Southeast (ex. August).





Appendix B: Team Notes by Move

These notes are organized chronologically by the individual, although streamlined and reworded for comprehension purposes.

Move 1

Part 1

Israeli Intelligence

Facilitator: Mr. Martin, if you want to go ahead and agree on a team briefer, then we can start answering the question.

Participant 1: Can I get a volunteer that would like to be the briefer. Don't all jump at once.

Participant 2: I can brief.

Participant 1: Mr. Jones is our briefer. That's outstanding. All right folks. Uh, can we get into it? Is there a possibility you can share the slide question deck with us? Alright, what is our assessment of the physical damage and the likely military and diplomatic responses to Iran to different kinds of employment? I'll start off. I think if we use a strike to demonstrate maybe like a warning or signaling that we'll use EMP damage that could be a strong deterrent, but we might be moving past that about where we're going to plan to use the weapon itself.

Participant 4: I have a couple of questions that I would want clarified, which would go into determining the feasibility of an EMP strike. First, would there be cloud damage to space assets in lower orbit, depending on the altitude we detonate it? And then the hardening of military targets against EMP with Iran. They have ballistic missiles and so forth. Do we know for those storage facilities, are they pretty caged will it have effects on that? If they're not hardened targets then my leaning towards an EMP goes pretty high. But I also don't want to take out Chinese satellites, for example, by accident.

Facilitator: So this would be a question for Control.

Participant 2: Well, I think we might be able to answer that. M most of the EMP altitudes are low enough that you aren't going to take out satellites. Again, I'm personally against the EMP. I'm leaning towards the warning shot, but you can do a warning shot at an altitude that won't cause the EMP. Because otherwise if you do EMP – remember, there are premature babies in their incubators who are going to get killed. Where is that going to leave you? I don't know that you can do any significant damage to these missiles and these underground things.

Participant 5: An EMP strike would give Iranian leadership pause to consider the potential implications, would likely result in limited damage to Iranian military or strategic capabilities, and if an EMP strike is given without a clear statement that it is a credible demonstration of Israeli capability and will, then Iranian leadership would likely view it as an empty escalatory threat. However, if Israel declared an EMP strike that's a credible demonstration of capability and intent to escalate to nuclear employment unless Iran immediately dismissed its nuclear WMD activity. Iranian leadership might concede that Israel presents a credible nuclear threat. It is probably the international community will increase diplomatic pressure on both belligerents to de-escalate and agree to talks. Quiet support for Israel from its allies and partners would continue. The EMP strike would not result in any protective effects.

Participant 1: Participant 6, you, you're raising your hand?

Participant 6: Yes, I have a question. Given Iran's underground facilities and hardened underground facilities, are we considering a very limited, like, less than 3 kiloton underground strike against a hardened facility to minimize all collateral damage?

Participant 2: The way these things are described, the attack's going to be ineffective.

Participant 1: So, I can fill in a few gaps here. Any nuclear weapon can produce EMP, depending on what altitude it's at, technically, and depending on how it's employed. Depending on altitude, distance, location, and yes the hardening of the facility. It really goes to the extent of the damage. So, our question control is, are these facilities hardened? Then I think if we're making the choice to use nuclear weapon, I think all bets are off at that point anyway. Right? We're not going to care if those other assets get fried. Depending on the altitude, it's going to not fry a satellite and usually satellites are hardened against EMPs.

Participant 6: I am going to suggest nuclear weapon use 100 to 200 feet underground. A penetrating warhead with a nuclear blast.

Participant 1: All right, so we'll keep that in the notes.

Participant 2: Another quick question for control then, does Israel have penetrating warheads?

Participant 6: Yeah, good question.

Participant 1: So, the question is, do we have the capability to hit under 200 feet, right? That's more of the question.

Participant 6: Does Israel have an effective underground penetrator warhead that's nuclear capable?

Participant 1: Correct. Can you go back to the questions?

Participant 4: So, you're not at all concerned with fallout with a penetrating warhead down to 100 to 200 feet?

Participant 2: Well, limited fallout, obviously.

Participant 1: The fallout, if it's down that low, it's going be a sub-surface blast. It will spread dust, but the fallout is going to be less likely than an air burst. We're worrying about prevailing winds. We covered the EMP part. Let's try to work these in series. So we can get back to we have our answers for when the time's up. I want to leave time to have everyone debate if that makes sense. So, striking against military targets that risk limited collateral damage. Okay, so let's say we hit every military target, right? You know, let's say we knock out, try to go for a simultaneous or a multiple strike capability. Half of our targets are located near city populations. How do we feel about the implications of hitting cities? Like we're talking about the fallout and damage to civilian infrastructure and the like. Go ahead, sir, you have to raise your hand. Just go ahead.

Participant 6: So, two things. Number one, are we -- and this is where Control's comment about the hardened concrete facilities comes in – we've got to take that into account. So we're talking about precision-guided munitions. Even if it's a nuclear warhead, I would think it just can't set off a blast. The second thing is if we're talking about nuclear – what are the priorities for nuclear strikes? Because I'm assuming Israel does not have an unlimited supply of nuclear weapons. So, what are the priorities? The Iranian missile facilities? The Iranian weapons production facilities? What are our priorities for a strike?

Participant 1: So, I would think our priority is to eliminate the threat, right? So, our main threat is not Iran's military capability. It's to strike Iran's nuclear capability. Correct? So, we're aiming for Iran's weapons first and their production facilities.

Participant 6: And nuclear stockpile then?

Participant 1: Yeah. I do agree with you though, that we're going to be definitely hitting hardened facilities. We're not hitting a bar in the middle of the desert. This is going to be a bunker in a mountain somewhere.

Participant 6: So that's for our underground option.

Participant 1: Right.

Participant 5: Do we know that whatever our target list is we're going to achieve that desired effect?

Participant 1: So, we have 1.5, 15 kiloton, and a 50 kiloton weapon. So under the tactical nuclear range, right? We have multiple delivery options, including missiles. Right, so what we really need answered from Control is do we have the capability to do deep-ground penetration. Because if not, that limits our options.

Participant 5: We also need to know do we know the totality. Do we know where all their stuff is?

Participant 1: And the answer is maybe not. So, we know key sites that we've identified right? But nothing's 100 percent in intelligence, right?

Participant 5: So here's the thing: They also know that we know. What's the likelihood that they haven't already moved their stockpile and their weaponized stuff and the stuff that they're getting ready to weaponize to some other location that we're not aware of yet?

Participant 6: Or forward deployed to some alternate location that is within range of Israel? Excellent question.

Participant 1: Okay, let’s look at the facts. Everything in Iran is already in the strike the strike capability of Israel. That’s already been established. They've already hit us in the briefing.

Participant 6: Wouldn't they be better off keeping their weapons in hardened underground facilities?

Participant 1: I agree.

Facilitator: We just have 20 minutes left. This question should probably go off to Control. Are there any other questions that I should add?

Participant 4: Real quick: you guys all saw the presentation as far as the effectiveness of deeply buried targets and the kiloton yields to get there.

Participant 1: You mean, from the previous briefing we had?

Participant 4: Yes, from Eva's presentation, talking about deeply buried targets.

Participant 1: Yes. I remember part of that. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it's a lower amount of need for yield. Right? So, lower yields still work as effectively as higher yields underground.

Participant 4: So, the only reason I'm bringing this up is because looking at the graph, even with the weapons that you guys were just talking about, which was 1.5, 15 and 50 kilotons - your probability of destroying a hardened target is pretty low.

Participant 6: That's an excellent observation. But the problem is if the target's underground, that's where we've got to go to strike it. And, the Iranians are pretty adept at underground facilities.

Participant 2: The slide on the right says that a 10kt will take out something at like 100 meter depth.

Participant 4: At slightly better than 40% probability.

Participant 1: Okay, so here are a couple of thoughts for all of you. What if we're going for denial versus destruction? And, we also probably need to get that question answered so if you can go ahead and send that off to Control, we can continue with our discussion.

Participant 5: All right, there's another part of this question that we're not considering. What's the diplomatic effect on Israel? I don't think there is much productivity in this option because if they've got the stuff in 1,600-foot-deep buried things, we may have forty percent chance or less of damaging or destroying them, but not everything.

Facilitator: We also have a question from Israel Defense.

Participant 5: The other issue is that Israel would probably lose. It would get Iran into a strategic defensive for a long out war, and it would probably decide that it's going to war. It would gain allies and broad-based support from around the world because Israel went nuclear, without being decisive. All right if they went decisive, Israel loses all global support but eliminates the threat.

Participant 1: I would disagree with that. I think that if they're making the decision to do this, there are going to be people who are indifferent and there will be people who care about the fallout right? There's going to be backers. Because Iran is not exactly popular either. And, if they're starting this, they're wrong. In my own personal view, I would not advocate for this. But that's not the game we're playing. We're going to do this right? We're going to hit something.

Participant 5: One-third of the world's population is Muslim.

Participant 1: Yeah, just because you're Muslim doesn't mean you side with the Muslims. I guarantee you. I traveled all around the world and I'll tell you people in Indonesia think completely differently than people in in Saudi Arabia versus people that are in Thailand and Bhutan that are also Muslim.

Participant 5: I agree until it becomes an attack like this where you're wiping out…

Participant 6: May I ask are you advocating no nuclear weapons use at all?

Participant 5: What I'm saying is there are risks here that we need to consider.

Participant 4: I think the best option is the EMP, personally. Not touching their soil and minimizing deaths.

Participant 1: So, before we get back to that, we've got to answer this from Israel Defense.

Facilitator: Yes, is this question okay to send off to control?

Participant 1: So, the Defense team is looking along the same lines we are. How deep are the suspected sites with weapons showing locations for fissile material and production? Are there access points to the surface? What if we strike the entrance and access points with small yield weapons, that will collapse the tunnels. They won't be able to dig them out fast enough. They could have another access point. We could also hit those with conventional weapons. It would signal to them that we know where you are and what you're doing. It denies their capability to be able to get after it. And even if they have a weapon sitting somewhere else – a mobile launch or a transport launcher in a different area, we have put them on notice to say, "hey, we know you're doing this." Now, these are an option that we could maybe find a way to maybe concuss the tunnel into itself, right? Yeah, it won't destroy the thing. It may only have a 40% chance, but what if we're just hitting the mouth of the caves and you're dropping the whole thing in?

Facilitator: No matter what there is nuclear weapon use. The question is how nuclear weapons are being used. So that is not up for debate.

Participant 1: Can we see the target list by chance? Do we have that map available to us?

Facilitator: We also need to respond to the defense team.

Participant 1: So I think the answer was -- someone had stated earlier that they had open source intelligence that Iran bragged about having subterranean compounds that go very deep. Like 1,600+meters. Someone correct me if I'm wrong. I'm trying to remember off the top of my head.

Facilitator: So these are the most likely assembly sites that are all underground, but we do not have to necessarily stay within these sites.

Participant 6: I would like to bring up a couple of points. The underground nuclear facilities vary by function. So, if you've got a storage facility, it's going be deeply underground and probably not accessible by even a penetrator warhead. Conversely, Iran has the ability to launch their missiles from underground facilities, which are relatively close to the surface. So, if you want to keep your strike closer to the surface more effective, you need to strike the underground launch facilities, not necessarily the underground storage facilities, and you'll have more luck. Secondly, whoever's advocating the EMP, I think that's a terrible idea because no, there are no deaths, but you're talking about electronic disruption not only in Iran, but in surrounding countries potentially. So, you're going to drag everybody else into it just by virtue of an EMP that goes beyond the borders of Iran.

Facilitator: I am going to encourage us to respond to the Israeli Defense team, because it has been a few minutes. Do you want me to pull that back up?

Participant 1: I mean, the only problem is we don't have that information in the real world.

Participant 2: We are intelligence, we have to answer. I mean some of it's easy. Yes, it has tunnels to the surface. These people aren't underground forever.

Participant 1: So, we don't have the depth, but I assume that we have multiple access points at each facility. And I know that's shooting ourselves in the foot with my theory about collapsing tunnels but you'd be a fool to only have one entrance in and one entrance out for any facility that you buried underground.

Participant 5: But that is, that's still just going to slow them down. It's not going to eliminate the threat.

Participant 1: Yeah, yeah.

Participant 2: They just asked us a question and we're going to answer it.

Facilitator: Okay, Israeli Defense asked, "How deep are the suspected sites where weapons joining is taking place, and locations for fissile material storage and production? Are there access points like surface blast doors that are less deep? Is there another way we could deny access to those facilities without collapsing the physical space?"

Participant 1: We do have the location. We know three possible locations, and we don't know any other possible locations.

Participant 2: Well, I think in the scenario, we know some other locations, the question is, do we know all the locations that you pointed out? I mean you're never sure that you know everything. Certainly, not in Intel.

Participant 4: I would say that you have moderate confidence that you have most of the access points mapped. This doesn't preclude one access point not being used and having no activity to draw attention to it. I think that's realistic based on targeting. I would say we have moderate confidence for most of the access sites, but that doesn't preclude one's going unnoticed because there are just emergency access only and are unused.

Participant 1: I would say that we know each site has an entrance and an exit right, and might have secondary entrances and exits. Would that make sense?

Facilitator: So we're saying we know that each site has entrances and exits, but we don't know if they have secondary ones.

Participant 1: Yeah, that sounds about right. Sorry, it's a lot of technician-speak, but basically, it's saying, "yeah, it has a front door, but we don't know if it has a backdoor or not." We're going to assume it has one. Also, we know of three sites and we estimate that there's going to be at least three more, And, the possibility of a TL-launcher. We do not have the depth but we do have the information of their access points. We have moderate confidence for most of the access sites but we do not have the location for those which are unused. We know that each site has entrances and exits but not sure if it has secondary entrances or exits. We know of 3 sites and estimate there are 3 more and the possibility of ability to use a TL launcher. Yes there is a way to deny access to those facilities but it would be very hard to dictate damage.

Facilitator: We also have about five minutes left, so we probably do need focus on the questions.

Participant 1: Alright, let's look at the map here. I got something that I want to discuss really fast and then you guys can yell at me for it. We've established we're going to use nuclear weapons, whether it's a good idea or a bad idea. Okay, let's talk about fallout and damage assessment. We have a complex twenty miles from Tehran with a population of 8.5 million. If we strike there even with a low yield, there's a possible fall out into that area within 20 miles. We have the Fordow fuel enrichment site 25 miles away from QOM, an estimated 1.2 million population. Again, fallout, but less fallout than Tehran. And then we have the Natanz enrichment complex, 60 miles from Isfahan with a population of two million. If we are striking these targets, there's a possibility of fallout. Though the one that's 60 miles away is less likely to have fallout, depending on the yield we use. Now, assuming we have to pick a target of these three situations, which one would you guys pick? I would go for our third choice, Natanz, even though I feel like striking production capabilities is not best. I would rather strike missile launch facilities than production facilities.

Participant 3: I have to disagree with striking anything near Isfahan which is a religious center and would turn the whole country to get behind any responses that are used against us.

Participant 1: Alright that's a possibility.

Participant 6: I think Parchin military complex is a better option.

Participant 1: If we do, we have to use the lowest yield. You don't want to use a 50 kt within 20 miles of Tehran. You're going to drop radioactive material over 8.5 million people. Also you're near a water supply. What is that? The Caspian is going to get dripped over.

Participant 5: Could I propose a less risky option? Drop a nuke in the most desolate part of the Iran. It demonstrates will and capability. It limits collateral damage. It give Iranian leadership pause.

Participant 1: I like it, but I have a thought. Yeah, we didn't get an answer on that penetrator, did we?

Facilitator: No, that's right. I do believe our time may be extended by a couple minutes, though.

Participant 3: What, if we were to couple Participant 5's ideas with conventional strikes against Iran's energy export terminals for natural gas and oil to show that we can very quickly cripple the core sources of revenue. As well as considering, and you guys are the experts so critique this, but as well as to strike against Bushehr, which would be symmetric to the attack against our nuclear facility.

Participant 6: The problem with that is any strike against any target, other than their nuclear weapons stockpiles, risks retaliation – immediate response from Iran. And that's a direct threat to Israel. So, you either take out their nukes first or you don't do it at all.

Participant 1: I think that ship's sailed, though. I mean they've shot everything at them except nuclear weapons, even through their proxies, as that is what their briefing said, right? So, they're actively engaged now. For all intents and purposes, they are at war.

Participant 6: I am talking about an Iranian nuclear response to Israel.

Participant 1: I agree on a certain level. What if we kind of combined all three? The problem is we don't know the target sites. If we can find those launchers, we can hit them. But if it was me and I was general for a day, I would try to go for conventional strikes against military targets – Bandar Aboss, their main airbase outside of Tehran. Command and control, C2, options. And, as a nuclear strike option, I like the idea of signaling - that we drop it in a desolated area. It's still going to have an effect. Nuclear weapons are always going to have an effect. So, everyone get out of the mindset that it's harmless, because there's going be a fallout no matter what. It just depends on what that fallout means

Participant 2: You can airburst it pretty high, you aren't going to get much. It will be negligible fallout.

Participant 1: It just is going to be spread over a larger area.

Participant 6: What are the prevailing winds going to do with the nuclear effect?

Participant 2: I mean, the jet stream, the wind always blows East eventually.

Participant 6: Okay, so what do we do? How many countries do we want to pollute?

Participant 1: What, if we do a ground version in a desert area?

Participant 4: If you guys want to do a remote area, I would recommend the middle of the Kerman province, which is mountainous and not very populated. If at all. It also happens to be somewhat in the area where they like to move some of their tells, because they'd like to keep them real mobile. So if anything it might affect some of the tells, but it mostly will avoid civilian populations with the prevailing winds. It will also blow over western Afghanistan, which is also not very populated because it's desert. So, if that's the option we want to use, not only is it the furthest range from Israel, demonstrating the full range of being able to hit any target in Iran, but it also puts in a desolate area and an area where prevailing winds make it more favorable.

Participant 6: For any nuclear demonstration shot, what is Iran's response going to be?

Participant 1: We don't have that answer and we don't know.

Participant 5: I would argue in this case if it was the only thing that was going on, and it was clearly communicated by Israeli leadership, that this is a demonstration of our capability, and our will and intention. Unless Iran immediately knows we're going to come back.

Participant 6: So, how does Iran respond to that demonstration?

Participant 1: We don't have that answer and we got to stop.

Participant 6: Do they launch a nuke in response?

Participant 4: I don't know if they have nukes yet. They are just trying to put them together, right?

Participant 5: Yeah, they are trying to assemble them and Israel just has to say you need to cease and desist immediately and come to the table, whatever the international negotiating table is. That's an option that I think has a probability of survival. All the other options are not feasible. EMP doesn't have any protective effects and gets blown off. The second one forces Iran into strategic defensive, gathers allies, and it becomes a protracted conflict. In the third one, Israel loses all friends because of the indiscriminate targeting and probably gets the Muslim world inflamed against Israel.

Participant 1: Participant 6, I think you have valid points. I'm not blowing off, right? I think it's something we can ask, but I don't think we're going to get an answer because they want us to play the game as is right? We're going to strike. The most likely target to not give us collateral damage is to try to level their facilities. But again, we've already tried to hit the facilities with hypersonics and they didn't work. So, I totally forgot to mention that because I think that was in our briefing. So, this is 3 years in the future, and we hit it with hypersonics and it didn't work, right? So this is probably why we're considering a nuclear option, right? And we're going to use a nuclear option. The prime minister has made up his mind. He just wants our information about what we're going do.

Facilitator: We have about 5 minutes remaining.

Participant 1: So, we got to wrap this up here, so we got conventional strike options, right? And we need to figure out which ones we want to hit with, what targets. So even though I think dropping a small tactical nuke (1.5 t) in the valley in the northern region is a good demonstration and we should present it as an option, I think we should also consider the worst-case scenario. So, how do you guys feel about presenting the option where we go and strike multiple targets with conventional assets -- submarines cruise missiles, you know, service and service missiles aircraft. And then we strike a nuclear option. Sir, remind me where that location was up in the northern region.

Participant 4: It’s the Kerman province of Iran.

Participant 1: I’d just say strike multiple military targets and command and control with conventional assets.

Participant 2: Well, the prime minister didn't ask us about conventional assets. I mean, he wants nuclear options.

Participant 1: Well, it does say strike other targets that risk a large amount of collateral damage. Yes, I guess that's true. I mean, if we read it that way, I don't know, hitting every one with the tactical nukes at 1.5 is going to at least deny the enemy assets. No matter what there's going to be fallout. But I would suggest a ground burst or if we can try a deep penetration burst and knock it closed.

Participant 2: It seems to me we're clustering around two basic options. One - some sort of demonstration either EMP or this isolated spot on the ground, or as good a counter-force strike as we can pull off, however we do it … by blocking tunnels or if we have some magic, deep penetrator or something. I mean, I think those are the two options that we are really looking at.

Participant 1: Right, and we have to answer this other question, which is that we're going to possibly -- if we strike multiple targets with nuclear weapons -- we're going to alienate the rest of the world against Israel.

Facilitator: We have just three minutes left.

Participant 1: Participant 5, is that a good assessment or not?

Participant 5: I think that is a fair, logical, and most probable assessment if they were indiscriminately targeting.

Participant 1: Okay, so I think we can maybe be dumb this down to one certain thing, which is that we can suggest striking military bases with tactical nukes that are 1.5 kilotons and are semi-isolated from populations. If we have to strike field production facilities, they must be struck with the lowest yield nuclear weapon possible to cause the desired effect, This is basically saying, we hit it with the lowest yield we think we can get away with to destroy or disable them. I know this is political speak. I'm sorry but, I mean, it kind of puts us into a situation. We're sitting here debating. Yes, we're going to use these. Do we have conventional options? Did we answer the questions?

Facilitator: Okay, we have about a minute left. What else needs to go on here?

Participant 2: Don’t we want a demonstration option of some sort?

Participant 1: Yeah, I think we should throw that in. What do you guys think? So, the second course of action would be to have a demonstration strike in Kerman – in an isolated region to demonstrate Israel's nuclear capability. Would you guys want to pair that with conventional strikes?

Facilitator: We are out of time, so we do need to wrap it up.

Participant 1: I would pair that with conventional strikes. Anyone's thoughts on that?

Participant 2: That’s fine.

Facilitator: And just say conventional strikes?

Participant 1: I say pair with...

Participant 5: What are the diplomatic responses that Iran and others would have to the two different types of strikes?

Participant 4: I mean, the only thing we have to instruct us on that is their response to the killing of Khomenei.

Participant 1: Yes. Participant 2, remember to remind him that we think that if we use full-on nuclear weapons - the highest yield possible – we'd pretty much lose all face on the world stage and any ability to have any allies. Short of the United States, it's hard to say.

Participant 2: That's always hard to say.

Facilitator: Are we all ready with the slides to go back into the session, you're out of time.

Participant 4: Do we have to include that we want the demonstration strike in a non-populated area? Does that matter?

Participant 1: I think isolated region makes sense no matter what.

Participant 4: 100%. I missed the isolated region part.

Participant 1: I think we're good for now. Okay.

Facilitator: Okay, then let's all head back into the original meeting.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Facilitator: Participant 1, would you like to brief the slides or do you want to see if we have any other volunteers to brief at the end of this session?

Participant 1: Let's see, um, I'm happy to see, we have a lot of double dippers who've done this before. It’s great to see we have such a great foreign ministry team. I'm okay if someone wants to volunteer to be the briefer at the end, but if not, I'll happily take that role.

Facilitator: I think it might be you, Participant 1. So I'm going to also open up our email here just so I can keep an eye on what's going on. But if you want to start talking about how you might address the questions on this slide. That would be great.

Participant 2: I think with the way that Control framed the game, in terms of "there will be nuclear use." That is something, I guess, as the foreign ministry team when we make our recommendations for the prime minister, we need to think about those benefits as well as the diplomatic consequences.

Participant 3: think we're looking at shades of gray as we progress through the severity of strike. The use of nuclear weapons period is going to bring about a baseline set of responses from the international community. Following from that baseline, you know, we're looking at what shade of gray are we selecting with respect to the negative impacts from the international community coupled with the positive will we can garner or establish from them. So, looking at this one, an EMP strike with zero casualties, I think global condemnation is going to happen everywhere. But can we spin that that it's we're demonstrating restraint by conducting an EMP vice a military strike, or a more counter value strike hitting a civilian population, or a civilian infrastructure type target.

Participant 4: I don't know if you had the opportunity to participate in the last war game, the space wargame or review the materials. But the one big takeaway from that was because of the way the magnetic fields work above the earth with the Van Allen belts and everybody's satellites being in low Earth orbit, if you launch a weapon into low Earth orbit and detonate it, you're pretty much going to screw everyone's satellites. That's my understanding of it

Participant 3: I'm not a EMP expert, but I think that would be like a high altitude or a HEMP, I think is the term I've seen tossed around. But is there no ability to conduct atmospheric EMP where it wouldn't be impacting satellites?

Participant 2: It seemed that the way Control just briefed it in the plenary, these would be directed at a lower altitude over a specific region of territory.

Participant 4: So that's what I wanted to get at and make sure we're specifying. Because, if you just launched this thing off in a high altitude, you've pretty much screwed everybody. So don't bring the ire of the whole world on you.

Participant 2: That's kind of what I'm getting at. The way that I read that EMP document, was that it focused on the power distribution networks of specific areas of the United States. So, I think we could assume, for our use here, that it would be directed at territory and not into something that would affect LEO or whatever. It would have some impact.

Participant 4: Well, yeah. Correct me, if I'm wrong, but isn't there a line-of-sight effect, too, on everything that's basically above you? Now we've reached the limits of what I would consider myself educated on. But I know that there are line-of-sight issues, too.

Facilitator: You can certainly specify what type you're considering, or you can elaborate by saying, we would do this versus this in terms of an EMP strike because we want to exercise restraint if that's what your goal is. You can determine what kind of strike.

Participant 5: Just to follow up on your line of thoughts. I mean, you were talking about how we would justify the move. I think maybe we need to take a step higher because you talk about benefits, but it's going to be benefits corresponding to a certain objective. And that, to me, isn't clear. Is the objective to come out of this, having destroyed completely Iranian nuclear program? And with that achieved, it's okay to have a certain degree of economic difficulty linked to sanctions and et cetera, et cetera. Is the mid-term goal also like regime change? That for me wasn't clear, but maybe I read the slide too fast from the last slide from the first session. To me, it's not clear in terms of the midterm goal, because that will inform what we're ready to accept in terms of the cost of destroying the nuclear program completely and seeking regime change as well. Maybe the objectives that we need to scale the harm that each of the moves can do and scale the benefits towards these goals. But maybe you have ideas of what goals Israel could pursue in very political terms.

Participant 4: I kind of took this as, if you're going do something like an EMP, it's like an "escalate to de-escalate," kind of move. I'm not saying that that's actually what it would accomplish, but it seems the only real intent behind it that I could draw from it.

Participant 5: Yeah, so it would not reach the objectives. The two objectives that I named, for example, could not be achieved within the EMP.

Participant 6: Sorry, I was going to say, yeah I agree with the characterization that it's escalate to de-escalate. It's basically to shock everyone into stopping for a moment, right? And it gives time for a diplomatic solution. Whether it's worth the cost is another thing, But I think we need to consider that there are three different levels of damage. Is there a military objective -- is it warfighting? Is it regime destruction? Is it something less than that? Do we merely try to degrade Iran's ability to retaliate? Or is it simply, shock and awe – we're going do this to stop the action right now so that we can find a non-kinetic way to stop this.

Participant 7: Do we want to have different objectives for each option or do we want universal objectives, and then how each option would pursue those objectives?

Facilitator: If we look at the session two questions for today, those are the questions we will answer then. So, the first two questions are, what should the targets be for a nuclear strike and why, and then what should Israel expect to achieve by such a nuclear attack?

Participant 5: So, it differentiated goals, right?

Participant 2: Yeah, that's what I'm seeing for session two today.

Facilitator: For this move, they want each team to talk about what the potential benefits and consequences are of these various attacks. We'll hear from each team, then go back and make a specific recommendation of one way to go with one objective. Does that make sense?

Participant 3: A potential benefit of EMP -- and if we just remove the "EMP" because that implies we are achieving some military effect potentially – and just say that this is a demonstration launch without the intent of causing damage. We then have the ability to use the

lowest yield. Whereas if we're striking a military target or striking infrastructure target there will be some required yield to generate the kinetic effect needed. So, in this case, the 1.5 kt, our lowest yield option, is another method by which we can show constraint and the "escalate to de-escalate" intent of the detonation.

Participant 6: I would just add that, from a diplomatic perspective, we would justify that by saying this was not a military use of nuclear weapons. It was a demonstration and there was every attempt not to actually "whatever you want to call it" in concert with the laws of war proportionality and all of that stuff. So, I think that if you talk about it that way, there will be diplomatic consequences, but the condemnation probably won't be as great because of the lack of immediate deaths.

Participant 4: The only thing I guess, when thinking through this and the second, third, fourth-order consequences. Yeah, there may not be any immediate deaths and I understand Iran may not be as dependent of a society on electronics as we are. But there is the potential to create somewhat of a humanitarian crisis, right? If we knock out their grid and cause a bunch of second, third, and fourth-order consequences of the EMP effects and the way it affects their daily lives. Just look at the situation in Gaza and the amount of outrage that that has caused. You could create a similar situation doing something like this. And I think that's worth noting or thinking about.

Participant 7: I think it's going be difficult to argue that this is a non-military use. You're detonating a weapon of mass destruction over someone else. I mean, at that point it's like

Participant 6: Right, right. My only point is that our job is to differentiate between these different kinds of uses. Right?

Participant 7: Fair enough.

Participant 1: Yeah, I think we're accepting that as the foreign ministry that it's all going to be negative diplomatically. But it's just what gives the best options the day after. And, as we've previously discussed, the potential for achieving whatever objective we're aiming for.

Participant 7: I'm personally a little more skeptical that the differences between the best and the worst scenario are actually going to be that big once you've detonated a nuke. I understand the idea being that few people die and we could have killed more. But once you've used a weapon of mass destruction, does the actual target we hit matter that much? Maybe, we argue that it does, but I think that's worth exploring. I think it's hard to say we used a nuclear weapon within the laws of war.

Participant 6: I think it's interesting though, because if I were the prime minister that could push you into the position where it's like, "well, it's going to be roundly condemned and we won't even have achieved any military objective, so we should do the whole thing." So, anyway, I think you do raise an interesting question that we will have to finesse our way through.

Participant 7: Actually, that's one of my concerns.

Participant 5: I mean, I'm thinking from the French perspective, that for us, the doctrine is nuclear weapons are non-employment weapons. So, it means that would have been a failure of its mission. I would find it very hard for Europeans and France not to condemn Israel very strongly. And, I'm preempting the discussion of tomorrow, but I think of Turkey and NATO will want to condemn Israel very strongly. Some countries are already anti-nuclear. But also, even nuclear powers could find it hard to supports Israel. So, I think it's quite an important question.

Participant 4: But we're assuming that– and this is beyond my expertise – that effects would not hinder the Iranians ability to then target Israel back. I don't know what those targeting systems would look like. I don't know what the launching systems would look like, but we're assuming because that EMP effect could theoretically knock out their ability to target and launch. I would want more information about that. Maybe there is a military benefit there. Maybe it does achieve something. Maybe that is the best option.

Participant 3: Well, is this just a comparison of the target set that we're given though? This is the lowest one on the totem pole. So, if we turn around and say, what happens, if we go one level up and we hit one of their military targets, how would that change their response? So, if we do a demonstration strike, does that encourage them to accelerate? Does that encourage them to counterfire? But if we hit a single one of their military bases, capable of nuclear operation, then, does that give them the impetus to use one of the other bases before it's gone and immediately conduct a kinetic strike? Whereas an EMP may allow them an off-ramp before they get there.

Participant 5: What is the effect an EMP would have on everything that's on the ground that was presented? Not much, right? I don't have much expertise on this.

Participant 3: I think the answer is, it depends. Every facility is going to be a little different. If we're just talking about going through rock, probably not much. But if we're talking about going through connected communication lines or physical connections, potentially a lot. But I don't think you could say it's a standard answer for all facilities what the response would be. That's why, you know, earlier I said, I look at this more as a demonstration strike than an EMP event, because maybe Israel has really good characterization on one of these and knows exactly what would happen, but we don't.

Facilitator: I would just like to take time out to remind you we have twelve minutes left and need to work on the slides. I've been capturing some notes on the first slide. Should we go through each of your options and see how you would like to edit them?

Participant 8: Let me just put a couple of thoughts in here. I think the demonstration shot would show weakness to some decision-makers in Tehran. Number two, if we consider an EMP shot, I think would have to be presented with the statement that it's a very high variance outcome because we don't fully understand the physics, let alone the behavioral response of Iran. My recommendation would be two things. One, counterforce avoidance to clobber the nuclear sites. If it were to drive huge numbers of casualties up, then I would avoid that. But my primary

target will be the destruction of the nuclear weapons being assembled. And the second thing I would urge is that the government of Israel needs to consider a second strike after that. Where will they go after this? This leaves us with some very unpleasant options, particularly around the counter value strikes. And, I'm not recommending – I don't know what they would be. Those are just some thoughts. I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Participant 1: So, what would be the leverage gained by doing either an EMT strike or military strike? And then flagging a willingness for a second strike?

Participant 8: Well, the second question… is this to me?

Participant 1: To the group.

Participant 8: Well, I would say the second part of your question is a very good one, but nuclear incredulity has now vanished. And Iran could launch nuclear strikes at Haifa and Tel Aviv. We don't have any idea what the likelihood of that is, but it's much more probable than it was a week ago in the scenario. The purpose of the counterforce with avoidance would be to destroy the nascent nuclear capability of Iran.

Facilitator: How do you want to move forward to capture the three options? In this first session, we're just delivering pros and cons on the options from a foreign affairs point of view, and in the second half of the move, we're going to recommend what we think Israel should do.

Participant 2: I would recommend, based on Participant 8's comments here, because our initial discussion revolved around whether the EMP was a demonstration or not. With Participant 8's comments, I think we should just agree on whether or not the EMP does provide any benefits or not over the other two options. Maybe while we talked that it had benefits in the beginning, that it was the only one that might have had those benefits. Maybe it's, it's the one that has the least amount of consequences.

Participant 7: I'm not sure if this counts as one of the consequences, but I think it would legitimize any argument that Iran shouldn't have nukes. If Israel's argument is that Iran is not responsible enough of an actor to have nukes. But we're the ones nuking them, that undermines international perceptions that there can be nuclear -free Middle East .

Participant 3: I mean the flip of that coin, though, arguably, from fine lines and twisty words, we could say we didn't nuke you, we only EMPd you.

Participant 7: I don't think the Ayatollah would see it that way. But that's fair, that is one of the benefits of an EMP over another option.

Participant 4: I don't know that we really care how the Ayatollah sees it so much as we care about how the rest of the world sees it. Right? I mean, as long as we're sending a threatening message to Tehran, that's the message we want to get through there. I think that the larger thing to look at is how the rest of the world is going to see it.

Participant 7: You're completely correct and I think the argument that is worth considering is that once we do this, no matter which option we proceed with, any claims that Iran is an actor untrustworthy of a nuclear device becomes harder for the rest of the world to swallow.

Participant 8: That's a good point. We should make that point.

Participant 6: A potential benefit though, is that, the reason why Iran has nuclear weapons according to the scenario is because they've been working for the last two years, standing on that thin edge of the NPT. So, Israel has always been outside the NPT. They knew that Iran was going to work that diplomatic system. Yeah, I'm twisting things as a former diplomat, but you could say that one of the potential benefits of a demonstration strike is this is Israel saying we know Iran is about to strike us, anyway. This is an existential threat to us. The diplomatic community was not prepared to do anything to prevent this. And we are actually the good guys because this is a demonstration strike that is not used in warfighting with very few deaths. Now, I think Participant 8 is absolutely correct that one of the potential costs is that Tehran looks at it like weakness.

Participant 8: No, I agree that your argument should be presented because we're looking and we're sort of desperate here. There were positive aspects to a demonstration shot like an EMP. We were asked to look at the pros and cons of the different options, so yes.

Participant 6: Right. I don't think we have to be naive that the rest of the world is going to look at how terrific Israel was … how restrained it was. Right? So, I mean, I think it's there, right? We all understand the diplomatic consequences are dire in all three circumstances. That'll go to the next move, right? Like what we actually want to achieve with these things.

Participant 8: We could pick that up and elaborate it, unpack it, to calls for a new global nonproliferation regime. Not in the immediate crisis here, but would be something to do in the following months and years.

Facilitator: Do we have anything else we want to say about that? We haven't really talked about these last slides.

Participant 5: So, this first bullet here about the collateral damage. As Eva laid out in her preparatory briefing, even with sites that are 15 to 20 miles away from population centers, you're going to have some effects that require immediate medical attention to mitigate the collateral damage that would be inflicted from that distance away.

Participant 7: Do we think that a single round of strikes would degrade Iranian counter strike capabilities significantly?

Participant 4: I think there's a potential ambiguity there.

Participant 8: Yeah, I think the U.S. targeteers would be looking for two weapons per target, at least. Here, because of the super hardness, it would be significantly higher and to contribute to

that we're talking about a recommendation for ground burst to screw up the electronics and the communications.

Participant 3: The drawback here would be a single strike would be insufficient to achieve the military objectives, which would then increase the political cost of using a significant number of weapons and targets and spreading that collateral damage. Thus, removing the limited aspect of it.

Participant 8: Well, it's still limited, but it's less limited than it was four minutes ago. I mean, we're not, we're not air bursting over Tehran.

Participant 6: I didn't think that this medium option was a single strike. I think at least as it's described, it's …

Participant 1: It's plural strikes against military targets.

Participant 8: Let me be clear I'm talking about how many warheads per target. Not like where the war goes in first and second strikes.

Participant 3: Looking at the political costs though, you know, America is the only country that's used a nuclear weapon. And we've done one weapon twice. Israel gets to become the first country on Earth who uses multiple sequence strikes in a single attack. From a political standpoint and a worldwide stage, I think that's a very negative outcome that we would have to drive out and address.

Participant 4: We're also looking at potential benefits here and I guess if I'm Israel, the point that I'm going to make to the world, is that well, everything led me to believe that the Iranians were going to use these weapons against us. We had to use nuclear weapons to effectively take them out. Then, folks who complain about the collateral damage, well, I'm just going to point to Dresden and the Tokyo fire bombings and say, well, look at what the United States and our other allies were willing to incur upon other nations to defeat the Nazis and the Japanese. I guess that by sticking to the military target and saying the past shows that sometimes, and even the laws of war, show that to some degree some collateral damage is allowed and this is what was necessary to prevent us from being wiped off the face of the earth. I think that's the argument you make there. That's the potential benefit of doing this.

Participant 8: I think that's right, but will acknowledge that there's transcendental negative aspects to this option.

Participant 4: Well, yeah, absolutely.

Participant 8: The ground bursts are going to have lot of airborne radioactivity.

Participant 4: Yeah, well you're being asked to polish a turd here, sir.

Participant 1: Yes, we could lean more into the rule of law, rule of existence argument with, you know, Iran saying their goal was to destroy Israel as a state and as in international law, you have a right to defend your existence.

Participant 4: And there was a ramping up, right? It wasn't an automatic nuclear use. It started with the hypersonic missiles. That didn't destroy the target. That only caused escalation. So, you know, you can say, well, we didn't go straight to the nuclear option. We've ramped up to this, and we deemed that the nuclear option was necessary to destroy military targets that were going to be used to destroy us if we did not. And, like I said, when the conversation turns to civilian casualties and collateral damage again, you point to the historical precedence of Dresden and Tokyo and the fire bombings and say, well, this is what was necessary in the 1940s to eradicate evil from the face of the earth. We had to do the same.

Participant 8: I mean, I'm not going to repeat myself. I'll just say that if I describe how it looks from Israel's point of view. If I were looking at this from Washington's point of view, I'd make a very different argument.

Participant 7: I think we should consider that one of the costs. Say we do this. I think we can no longer rely on our allies to defend us in future moves. At the very least, it's not a guarantee. Maybe a nuclear strike would be enough to convince Washington it is no longer in their interest to support us going forward. At the very least, I think it's clear that someone like Japan, France, or Germany would no longer be willing to do provide us with military or diplomatic support.

Participant 8: Let me just suggest the expansion of that a little bit differently. With this discussion presented to the plenary group, we could include an option of asking the United States for a guaranteed extended nuclear deterrent against follow-on Iranian strikes on Israel. In other words, if Iran were to launch strikes on Haifa and Tel Aviv and other urban areas, we would want the United States to declare that it will destroy Iran. If they do that, that's a crisis management bargaining tactic.

Facilitator: When would we do this, Participant 8? Would we do this before we launched a strike as a last bargaining chip?

Participant 8: Good question. I think we might do it like, simultaneous with the strike or six hours before to put it to the White House that we would like an extended nuclear guarantee like NATO and Japan have had against a large-scale Iranian nuclear strike.

Participant 3: Do we tell them that we're doing a large-scale nuclear strike when asking that?

Participant 8: Well, now, I think Israel… I'm looking at option two here I think, you know.

Facilitator: Yep, and we have only two minutes, so I'm not sure what we want to do about option three

Participant 8: Well, this sort of covers option three in the sense that we're not going to hit Iran. We're not going to hit large Iranian cities. We really don't want to do that. But we would like

the United States, in the interest of crisis stability in a nuclear war – not before a nuclear war but in a nuclear war – to extend its nuclear deterrent by the president announcing that if Iran were to retaliate in a large scale way against Israel or Europe, the United States would essentially destroy Iran. Their urban industrial structure.

Participant 6: I think it makes sense to ask for that, but I could not ever believe the United States would agree to that.

Participant 8: How'd you like to make that briefing in the White House? Right?

Participant 9: Because a U.S. first strike would then lead to a Russian or North Korean, or other retaliatory strike from an Iranian ally.

Participant 8: Yeah, I could defend it more, but in a sense it's peripheral to our discussions. But my point is if this gets to this point – and God, if it gets to option two, Israel hits military targets in Tehran, the chance of nuclear weapon use in South Asia and Northeast Asia and elsewhere has just skyrocketed.

Ministry of Defense

Participant 1: Alright, so this is the ministry defense team. We were given three different notional options. It's not to say that we should feel tethered to any one of these three, but we've got option one, and EMP strike with zero immediate deaths. Option two is to strike military targets that risk limited collateral damage. And, option three is striking other targets -- infrastructure, population centers, military bases near population centers that could have significant amounts of collateral damage. And then to assess what size yield and so forth, and what are the Iranian responses, and our ability to mitigate those. That's the task at hand. It's kind of a lot to chew on and we have 35 minutes to do it. Does anyone have any opening thoughts they want to share?

Participant 2: I've just got some initial thoughts for everybody to shoot down. So, the EMP option I kind of just ruled out from the outset, because we're kind of already pregnant here. And basically, this is the moment that we've been preparing for 30 years now. And so, it seems to me, that there are several goals and I will just enunciate what my recommendations to the prime minister would be. I'd like to draw on other people's expertise to know how you would do that or if you think those are wrong. The first task or the first order of business is to destroy, if possible, the weapons that have already been built and that are being mated to the delivery systems. That's the first thing. Whether by hard kill – and this is a question I have – whether the EMP produced by an unsuccessful strike would be sufficient or is there a way to maximize EMP production to fry the electronics in the warhead so that even if you don't get a hard kill, you can get a soft kill. So that's the first thing. The second thing: We have to recognize that we may not succeed in getting all those weapons because of where they are. So, that raises the second set of targets, which is these stockpiles of highly enriched uranium, which are kept at

various locations, as well as the weapon production facilities as well as fissile material production facilities. So, if we don't get the weapons, we at least prevent them from building a larger arsenal beyond the number of weapons that they've already created. So, it goes from possible destruction of the threat to mitigation of the threat if, as kind of the worst case if we don't succeed in destroying the weapons. I would also recommend – and I don't know whether a conventional or nuclear strike would be the best way to do this – a decapitation strike against senior political and military leadership. If we can kill a fair chunk of the leadership that might delay or complicate efforts to recover, or efforts to consider a response to our strike. This is also our chance to grievous damage the economy long term. So, at least now, oil is not as important as it used to be for Iran, in terms of their foreign exchange earnings. But most of the oil infrastructures is in the Southwest part of the country, so either a conventional or nuclear strike – and I'm not sure we should squander nuclear weapons for this target because they could probably be handled by strike aircraft with conventional munitions. We should do everything we can to destroy as much of the oil industry as possible because that again has a bearing on Iran's ability, long-term, to sustain the regime. So I am just throwing out those different sets of options. I would argue go big. These targets might, I think, provide the basis for a conversation on what that means and I'd be interested to hear if others think that that's not the right way to go about this.

Participant 1: Okay, thanks. Why don't we try to identify what our preferred course of action is and then let's try to game out what the likely Iranian responses to that preferred course of action are and then our ability to mitigate those responses and then if we need to re-attack. Is there any reaction to what Michael laid out?

Participant 3: I think I agree with the targets you laid out, specifically the attack on currently built weapons and their ability to reconstitute those weapons as potential strikes for nuclear weapons. I don't entirely think that EMP alone could be relied upon to take those out. So, I tend to agree with your two.

Participant 2: There was a question I had from a technical point of view, unless you have anything else that you wanted to add. I'm sorry I didn't mean to cut you off.

Participant 3: Well, the technical considerations are hard and deeply buried targets. Those are very particular types of warheads and I don't know if Israel has them in the stockpile. So, just a consideration, I think we need to use the full yield, 50 kilotons option if we're going to go after those hardened and deeply buried targets. Even that may not be enough. You know, we, we can't assume there's any coupling effect.

Participant 1: I agree. Look at what we have in the U. S. arsenal. We've got the 83, which is a crowd-pleaser. That is far, far, far north of 50 kilograms yield. And so, if you really have a hardened and deeply buried target, especially if it's the high-pressure concrete that's reinforced, 50 kt is not going to do much against that whatsoever. And if you couple that -- what was the 1,600 feet underground coupled with high concrete, 50 kt is just not going to get the job done.

Participant 3: The targets may be unachievable with what we're given.

Participant 1: Yes.

Participant 2: Is there a way to maximize and again, within the context of an attempted kinetic kill, are there other ways to maximize the EMP production with the nuclear blast so that you get a one-two punch? I have rudimentary knowledge about these things. I just want to make clear I don't claim any special expertise on this, but that you could maximize the EMP part of the yield so that if the physical – the shockwave of the blast and heat – is not sufficient to get through the concrete, then – and I know there are ways to shield the equipment from EMP – but the EMP might fry the electronics in their warheads. So that if the warheads survive the blast, they may not be operational.

Participant 1: I'm not a nuclear physicist or nuclear engineer, but my understanding is that the higher up you go into the ionosphere, the more effect you're going have from an EMP perspective. The downside of that is if you're going to be scooping out reinforced concrete on the ground, you're going want to do ground bursts. So, they're almost mutually exclusive. Someone disagree with me if you have a different understanding of physics, please. Part of my frustration is I don't see us as having a lot of good options to have the effect that you laid out, Participant 2, of being able to impact in a material way their existing stockpile of weapons and usable material. That's my concern.

Participant 2: I would just say, I know our briefing talked about some of the missile bases being under 1,600 feet, although I never saw those. I never saw those things. I know that the mop that was developed for Fordow which was, if I remember correctly, close to 100 meters deep and that's the easiest I've ever heard. They may have deeper facilities, but most of the missile facilities are located close enough to the Earth that they have these launch halls where the ceiling is at surface level, and they have blast doors that pull away. So, again I'm not fighting. I don't want to fight the scenario. But I'm just saying we might send this to the intel people to ask do they have any intel about how deep these weaponization facilities are? And if their information is that they are more shallow…again, 600 feet just sounds kind of deep. Maybe that was faulty intel collection. I don't know.

Participant 1: Yeah, let's ask how deep their suspected sites are for fissile material storage or fissile material production and existing weapons locations. Anything else you want to add to that?

Participant 2: What were the facilities where you're joining up the weapons with the delivery systems? How deep those are but that's the first order target.

Participant 3: If I could make an add-on suggestion, too? Perhaps we want to know if the only way to eliminate that target is a structural defeat of the mission space, or is there another way I can deny the use of that facility? I don't know if Intel has characterized that.

Participant 1: Yeah, that's a great question to ask, because, I mean, if they're like North Korea, that site can be cleared within 12 hours with earth movers.

Participant 2: And let me just say, just to get a little bit ahead of ourselves here, but if striking the assembly facilities is not possible, we still have the ability to hit fissile material storage areas as well as fissile material production sites as well as weaponization workshops, which may not be so deep. So, that doesn't preclude action, but it just makes it much less… you know… the outcome is likely to be much less satisfactory from our point of view. And then, of course, the decapitation strikes and strike at the oil industries – those are soft targets.

Participant 1: Yeah, I mean, look, I don't want to be one of these guys that says that we can achieve the same effects using conventional munitions as we can with nuclear munitions. I just don't believe that's true. The problem is that we don't have a lot of good aim points that lend themselves to nuclear weapons that we wouldn't otherwise target using conventional munitions. I mean, that's my frustration.

Participant 3: I hadn't thought coming into this session that I would advocate for a leadership decapitation, but it seems a viable target that we could achieve. I agree there certainly aren't many good options. Then we have to talk about the ramifications of that. But that seems an achievable target, where I think the things that I came in here thinking were achievable targets are, in fact, not.

Facilitator: So, before I move on too quickly, should I send this email as written to the Intel team? "How deep are the suspected sites for fissile material storage and production and where weapons joining is taking place? Are there access points like service blast doors that are less deep? And is there another way we could deny access to those facilities without collapsing the physical space?

Participant 1: Alright. Sounds fine to me.

Participant 2: I would just put up front "where the weapons joining is taking place," as the first point because that's the primary target – our priority target.

Participant 1: So, let me propose something very different. Maybe it's not that different. What if we did conventional strikes against soft targets – petroleum, oil refinery, natural gas, leadership positions, and go for a full-on decapitation, IRGC leadership sites using conventional weapons and maybe we do an EMP to have some effect over Tehran itself? My concern is – and I know as the defense team we're not supposed to worry about the political ramifications, so maybe shouldn't even bring this up – but if we use nukes and they haven't used any nuclear weapons against us, even an EMP, will you be looked at even more of a pariah? Maybe as a defense team that's not our bag and so we don't need to worry about it. But, you know, the game does want us to think about the utility of nuclear weapons in this situation. So, if it comes back that there are no good aim points for nuclear effect maybe we do go after soft targets with conventional and then integrate some kind of EMP over Tehran. I don't know.

Participant 2: That's the alternative option is that you do an EMP in multiple locations to have as much effect on the critical infrastructure as possible in conjunction with a decapitation strike in the hope that you foment unrest in the country. The main challenge for the regime becomes regime survival, rather than what they had in mind in terms of a nuclear breakout. Along with

calls for the Iranian people to rise up, because now the regime is really endangering the potential survival of the nation and it's time for them to take their fate into their own hands. Now, if we get a desirable response that allows us to strike some of the weapons mating facilities, we could still kluge this with the first option. If the first option that we discussed is not available then I would say this is something to consider. From our point of view, it's a matter of, this is existential and it's better to be a living pariah than to be considered virtuous and dead.

Participant 1: So maybe we do that with the conventional strikes on the soft targets – leadership, IRGC, refineries, secret police, or whatever. Then we do three new detonations in the atmosphere. One over the southern part of the country Bushehr, one over the central part of the country to impact Natanz and Isfahan, and then one over the north to impact Tehran.

Participant 2: Actually, leaving the periphery untouched, where in the past you've had a lot of the unrest, and take out the political center of the country. That gives an opportunity. You target the political center of the country. Then the peripheral areas that have kind of chafed under the Islamic Republic more than other parts of the country have their opportunity to perhaps break loose. I would think one thing we might consider is whether we want to do a low-yield decapitation strike. Because unless you have very good intelligence, a conventional decapitation strike, even with large munitions, is kind of a dice roll. But if you use nukes, there'll be a lot of collateral damage, unfortunately. But there's a better chance if you hit North Tehran with a nuke first of all, that a lot of people won't be unhappy because everybody understands that's where the people who benefited most from the regime are. You'll just end up killing, as a matter of statistics, a lot of the regime people and supporters. So the key points should be the IRGC headquarters and the parliament building… but you have a few area strikes in North Tehran with small-yield nuclear munitions or warheads that maximize the chance of effect.

Participant 1: They gave us 1.5 kt warheads, and so 1.5 kt warheads, and with 1.5 kt what you're going to be affecting is a few blocks. You know, 1.5 kt is a really small weapon. So, if we do want to hit our headquarters with a 1.5 kt and do it at a 200-meter-high burst, and do something similar with the parliament building or whatever other kind of leadership you have, that could work. Then, if you want to do the EMP line, you run an EMP line of three from the Bushehr due north to Tehran, with one in the center, and you'll leave the periphery to get your strategy.

Facilitator: From a facilitating perspective, we are a little more than 15 minutes in, and we've kind of been getting into what our recommendation is, which is a little bit more in the second session. So, I think it might be good to start kind of working through each of the options and coming up with exactly what we think the effects would be on Iran and what the likely responses would be. Then we can come back after we get the briefings from all the teams and develop the recommendations. If that makes sense.

Participant 2: Well, let me suggest that no matter what we hear back from the Intel people. People have talked about with conventional, penetrating munitions. You have multiple strikes on the same main point to kind of burrow in. I understand there are problems with nukes

because you'll have turbulence caused by the nuclear explosion. And there's all that the whole fracture side issue, but if you have a series of phased strikes and again, I don't know if there's technical issues related to how long you need to have the interval so that follow on strikes are not interfered with by previous strikes, but against the same main points – maybe try to three, four, five times at the same aim point – do we start burrowing down even with super hard concrete? Do you eventually start poking a hole through? Because maybe it's very hard, but it's brittle too. Maybe the heat, you know just like the World Trade Center towers, the heat causes the metal structures to weaken. Maybe the combination of blast and heat weakens the concrete and again, this takes a technical person to provide some input, but we have to think about this option, too. Mybe this is a viable option. I don't know.

Participant 3: I think, from the very limited knowledge I have on this, that's a very difficult approach. It produces a maximum amount of fallout and debris that's irradiated. It would be a very difficult and very costly if we're looking at reprisals from Iranians and neighboring countries. It would be a very costly option and maybe not even possible.

Participant 2: I was just going to say from the Israeli point of view, like I said at the beginning, they're already pregnant now and I think from their point of view it's all about what enables mission accomplishment. Collateral damage, Iranian response… you know, they're getting struck with nukes, and it doesn't matter whether it's low-yield or high-yield, it should be what accomplishes the mission no matter what the cost.

Participant 1: I am with Josh. It is going to create a hell of a lot of downwind range hazard. Right? And I take your point that well we don't give a s***. Like, I get that. But my concern is that 50 kt is the highest yield we have. I think we would go Winchester using 50 kts to scoop down that deep, depending on how deep it is. But again, at a certain point, what happens is all the blast is going to get reflected back into the atmosphere and you're going to be scooping out very little. It's kind of like throwing a stick of dynamite on the ground. Yeah. You're going to get some ground that gets scooped up, but to actually dig a hole that a 6-foot man can jump inside, you're just going have to throw stick after stick after stick of dynamite and you're just going to get diminishing returns.

Participant 2: Okay, yeah, just throwing it out.

Participant 1: Yes, I know. I just think we would be more effective by trying to foment the " we'll decapitate the regime with nukes and conventional and EMP and let everyone to rise up against the Ayatollahs.

Participant 2: What I recommend is we state in a conditional way. For instance, our intelligence might be wrong in terms of the hardness of the concrete or the depth of the target. Although I imagine there are probably issues related to how you want to hit the target, depending on how deep it is in terms of the angle of attack and all that. But I still think it's worth attempting a direct strike, but understanding that we may not be effective, which is why we have to do all these other things. Just because our intelligence might be wrong and you just never know until you know sometimes.

Participant 3: For characterizing reprisals, I don't know if we've talked much about that yet. Is that something that we need to respond to within the next 12 minutes?

Facilitator: Yes, that would be good. Again, for all three of our categories of options.

Participant 2: I would just say that Iran has a lot of missiles. They used them in the previous rounds of reprisals against the Israeli strike, and it'll just be more of the same against more targets. If they didn't get them the first time, they'll try to get them again. But, you know, reciprocity is important to them and they'll try to hit the population centers, including an attempted decapitation strike against the Israeli government and military leadership. Expect reciprocity as well as strikes against civilian population centers. Reciprocity means striking out against the Israeli government, the Israeli MOD, the Israeli nuclear infrastructure, and critical sectors of the economy since there we struck the Iranian oil sector. I'm not sure what that translates to in particular targets in the case of Israel. Intel has a big factory for chips that are worth several billion dollars. It's an American company and a major Israeli facility, so it's kind of a twofer there. Maybe there's one or more of the Intel chip factors or maybe there are other big factories that are important to both American companies and the Israeli economy.

Participant 1: Do we want to try to preempt any of this as much as we can? I mean, adding this to the list of targets that are going to be part of the soft targets and the decapitation, as we try to hit as many of these missile bases as possible.

Participant 2: The problem is the bases are so dispersed and there's so many of them. I think we want to keep in mind our missile defense will be able to deal with at least some of the incoming missiles, if not a significant number. So, we have the ability to mitigate. The question is, do you use any of your nuclear weapons to hit their missile bases or conventional weapons? And if conventional is good, is it good enough to do the job? I think you're right. Damage mitigation would be useful.

Participant 1: Yes. So, I think if what Participant 2 has laid out is true, then I would say let's go into damage limitation strategy. And, if we can use conventional to do it, then let's do that. If we start to go Winchester on our conventional missiles and our conventional munitions, I'm very open to using nuclear weapons to hit some of Iran's key sites.

Participant 2: So, as part of your initial strike, or maybe the second wave of the initial strike after the conventional aircraft hit, you try to do the decapitation and hit the industry. Maybe you then hit missile bases to at least to damage the blast doors, so they can't open or something like that. Or if you could get through the blast doors with penetrating munitions in order to get into the blast hall, the launch halls to damage the missiles.

Participant 1: Yeah, so the thing is the number of aim points we have are going through the roof. Right? I mean, political leadership, nuclear related infrastructure, the oil petroleum industry and missile bases. That's a lot of aim points

Participant 2: But again, this is doomsday.

Participant 3: So maybe just to add a note to answer the mail here to characterize the damage. We could add that we concede that nuclear weapons are effective against infrastructure, political centers, and military bases, but recommend second to conventional in this strategy. Then we'll do sort of an opposite approach on the EMP slide and say the primary use of nuclear weapons is very effective.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Facilitator: Okay, a lot about reprisals saying nuclear weapons are effective, but conventional should be preferred where possible on the sort of soft targets with high collateral damage. We're saying that for these military targets it's likely to be less successful, given the depth and hardening, but maybe worth attempting. Otherwise, do we think that the reprisals would be affected or change by targeting primarily these deeper weapon sites? Or do we think they're largely similar?

Participant 3: I would argue likely the same.

Facilitator: So how do we see the effect of this on Iran and the likelihood of reprisal?

Participant 4: I've been wanting to add that in terms of the effect that an EMP would have – I'm hesitant to say that it would be zero imminent deaths. Maybe it's just seen as collateral damage in this kind of a doomsday scenario, but there would be planes crashing down and it would affect electronics that civilians are using, like, cars and hospital facilities. A lot of people would probably immediately die. I'm not a political expert on this kind of stuff, but I think it might be viewed as very much a humanitarian crisis. Israel could easily be seen as targeting civilian populations, as opposed to a military benefit. The civilian consequences of that may be much greater than the military consequences from the rest of the world's perspectives. So, I don't know if they would care about that or Iran would be able to justify a harsher response based on a humanitarian argument. But it might be something to consider. It's not really zero imminent deaths.

Participant 1: Well, in my view, yes, you're right. You know, people on respirators in hospitals. You're right about that. But at this point, we're going for regime change. So, if we're going in for regime change and doing a line of EMPS along the central plateau of Persia hastens regime change, then to hell with it. I mean a couple thousand people may die. Yes, but that's a heck of a lot fewer than if we decide to go big in downtown areas.

Participant 2: And to be bloody-minded about it, you know, it's the breaking the egg to make an omelet thing. Maybe this helps catalyze discontent with a regime that is getting us into another war. And so, in a certain way, it might work, even though this is kind of a long-shot option. Maybe this, in a way, makes it more likely that you'll have massive unrest as a result.

Participant 3: Just a reprisals note for EMPs. I'm no expert on this, but I think if you had optimized blast for EMP it would likely go beyond Iran’s borders and affect its neighbors. I think you'd have an electronic effect well outside of the intended zone. So, perhaps you would

have additional regional condemnation. I certainly don't think anyone is going to strike Israel in response, but it is perhaps a consideration. You can shoot that down if you disagree.

Participant 1: I think that's true, but if you're in a situation where the city council of Oakland, today, said that Hamas did not murder or behead, any babies and this was, you know.
To Participant 2's point earlier, the more I think about this, the more I think he's absolutely right about that. This is that the view may very well be, "well to hell with you all, we're going to do what we need to do to secure our population."

Participant 3: So, I agree with on that. And now that I think about it, the reprisals are coming anyway. Maybe it's more pointed if you took out your neighbor's power grid as well. Well, sorry not sorry.

Participant 1: Yeah, and it's going to affect Iraq, maybe some of Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. I think Israel's fine with that.

Participant 2: So, let me ask you this. The point I made before that you're affecting mainly the political center of the country and not the periphery is not true? This will affect the entirety of the country, including the peripheral regions that have generally been more restless.

Participant 3: My understanding of EMP is yes. It would not be contained to Iranian borders.

Participant 1: It depends on the height of the burst and the size of the weapon that's used and so forth. That said, a lot of it is theoretical modeling.

Participant 2: So let me ask, maybe we see if it would be possible to restrict EMP effects to the political center of the country that would be the preference while recognizing that this actually might have spillover regional effects.

Participant 1: Yes, and if you do have some spillover effects then okay.

Participant 2: That's life.

Participant 1: Yeah, that's life. Okay.

Participant 2: So we heard from Participant 5 that it will definitely go over the border.

Participant 5: Yes, actually the EMP, at right the height of burst, and the yield you get out of it. The EMP is definitely reach cross borders and take out power lines. More likely it will cause reprisal and result in a unification of the other Arab nations that surround the targeted area to now have a coalition against Israel. Now, on the other hand, using a weapon that produces a lot of gamma is going to be optimal for an EMP burst. Basically, the height of the burst will just go out. So, the easiest way to think about it is if you look at your target and shine a light on it, wherever it lights up that's where the EMP is going to go. It will be somewhat mitigated at the far ends of it, but it's still going to go across pretty far. So, to narrow a specific target is going to be really tough with EMP. Air bursts will give you the better nuclear effects. Ground bursts

give you lots of radioactive fallout. The fallout circulates in the atmosphere you'll get condemnation from possibly NATO, other European nations, and probably from the Russians.

Participant 1: I mean, you'll probably get some effect on Qatar, which is maybe a feature not a bug.

Participant 5: Yeah, and in Quatar you also have U.S. troops so you run the risk of alienating the United States because you're dropping fallout and radioactivity on them. You're not going to be very welcomed by the U. S. military.

Participant 1: Not, if we're doing EMP. There'll be very little thought if there's an EMP.

Participant 5: Yeah, if you do a high-altitude burst. The problem is the higher you go the effects will be higher. So, depending on how far it reaches, if you take out the Saudi desalinization plants, they're not going to be very happy with you.

Participant 2: I was just going to say, one of the negative impacts potentially is the impact on the oil exports from the region. This could trigger an oil crisis, which then raises the question … some people have speculated that in such a situation the Israeli goal is to drag the United States in, to get the U.S. to drop its MOP on some of these deep hardened facilities. But the problem is, once you ask "mother, may I?" It's really easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission. I'm trying to figure out how this can be gamed to gain leverage since it could affect oil exports from the region. On the other hand, you could just say, look, this could be used to generate international pressure on Iran to not move forward with mating of the weapons to the delivery systems. So now, of course, that still leaves them with the weapons, and it's kind of a recess deterrent situation like you had in South Asia for many years with India and Pakistan. My understanding is the Indians have some of their arsenal mated to delivery systems, but much of it is not. In Pakistan I don't think they do that. Is that an acceptable outcome? Threaten an EMP strike that could interfere with oil export in the region, and you get international pressure on Iran not to mate the weapons. You get an outcome, which is less than optimal, but at least, you know, weapons are not mated to the delivery systems. How do you verify that? I don't know. That is one these branch plans that you could have as one possible option that we can propose.

Facilitator: So we talk about the EMP catalyzing unrest. Does anyone want to give a little more color on the mechanism for that?

Participant 2: Well, it disrupts the government's ability to effectively command and control troops. Here's an opportunity for people to rise up without the ability for the government to respond in a coordinated manner. There's going to be effects in terms of distribution of food and water and stuff like that. And people are going to start raiding warehouses. There's going to be a lot of chaos, and the chaos might then lead to an anti-government manifestation.

Participant 1: Right, right so the EMP is supposed to create chaos and give an opportunity for the people to rise up against the regime. We'll use targeted 1.5 kt strikes against regime

leadership sites. So basically, our strategy is regime change, coupled with damage limitation strikes.

Participant 2: That's right, and you might even have a small number of low-yield strikes against the bases for the RIGC units in the provinces would use. Although the problem is, there's just so much it's not just the RIGC in the province, there's law enforcement forces and the police. But the message would be symbolic. Now, you could hit with conventional munitions quarters around the country, so that people get the message that the regime is being targeted and this is an opportunity for them.

Part 2

Israeli Intelligence

Participant 1: Participant 2 and Participant 4, thank you for interjecting the briefing, I appreciate it. Really do. Let's talk turkey. What should be the targets for a nuclear strike and why? Let's pick our pony here. Who wants to go first?

Participant 2: I would be in favor of a demonstration shot in the isolated site.

Participant 3: I second that.

Participant 1: Can, can you write that down? Let's give the prime minister options to strike, right?

Participant 2: No, I think we're supposed to come up with specific a strike package.

Participant 4: I third that.

Participant 1: Let's talk about variations. Let's give a couple of options. We don't have to settle on one, right?

Participant 5: No, we have to make a recommendation on a specific option.

Participant 1: Well, it says targets plural. I would think Bander-e-Abbas might be a good military target military on the Persian Gulf for a low yield, not near a good-sized population center.

Participant 2: Why Bander-e-Abbas?

Participant 1: It's primary naval base. It's the home of the Iranian Navy.

Participant 2: Why would we want to do that?

Participant 1: Well, it's a demonstration without mass casualties. You can always escalate. If you start at the top, you can't go up higher. Right? But if you start low, you can always go higher.

Participant 3: I think what we're talking about is like a desert, you know, way out in the East, central wasteland. Not the largest naval base.

Participant 1: Oh, I mean as a secondary option. I should have specified that

Participant 5: Here was my thinking when I recommended this. This is done in isolation of any other activity, and there's a clear, definitive message from the Israeli government broadcast to the world that they are willing and capable of escalating this to a full nuclear war in order to stop Iran from fielding nuclear weapons. I believe that will have the desired military, as well as diplomatic, effects.

Participant 6: It sounds like you're assuming that Iran does not have nukes yet

Participant 5: It is my understanding that they do not have nukes yet. They are within days possibly of getting weaponized nuclear capabilities. But the government of Israel says, "you must cease and desist, and disarm, or we're going to escalate this. Iran must immediately agree to some type of negotiations and disarmament. I think that that would have the desired effects, militarily and politically.

Participant 6: If seems using the nukes to dissuade somebody else from getting a nuke seems almost counterproductive.

Participant 1: Oh, sure. It sounds like it, but remember the prime minister wants states he is going to use nuclear weapons, so he wants target options.

Facilitator: Right. Yes, we are going to use nuclear weapons. We have 20 minutes left and we do have more questions.

Participant 1: We should probably cancel Bandar-e-Abbas. There's a large population at Bandar-e-Abbas. Though Bander-e-Abass is considered a legitimate target. The city just surrounds the naval base, just for everyone's FYI.

Participant 5: We should also provide the Iranian's a nuclear off-ramp.

Participant 6: What's the secondary option?

Participant 2: No, there's only option.

Participant 1: No. The briefing says targets right? So, let's give them options.

Participant 2: Well, that's part of the package. It isn't that we want to say use this one, or maybe this one, or maybe this, right? I think we're supposed to come up with this is what you're

supposed to do or this is what we're recommending you do. After all, we're just sending it to the prime minister and we know there are other groups. So, what do we want them to do? What are we comfortable with? This, to me, it's sort of like the lowest rung of nuclear you can get. As you say, if you start out higher it only gets even higher and messier.

Participant 1: You're not wrong. Nuclear weapons are a sledgehammer to a nail. What was the processing facility that was near Qom? Does anyone remember off the top of their head?

Participant 4: Fordow

Participant 3: Yes, Fordow.

Participant 2: It's the underground centrifuge facility. Do you want to do that instead of the isolated strike? Do you want to hit Fordow underground?

Participant 1: I mean, if you want two options to actually stop their nuclear program, you have to hit their processing sites. That's just how it is.

Participant 2: I think the first strike is the demonstration is to say, "Hey. stop now, or you're going to get struck." To me, that's why you do the demonstration.

Participant 1: I would give the demonstration strike is the off-ramp, and say, "this is our off-ramp." And then if they don't, we recommend disabling their program. The one strike that will stop their nuclear program and also not cause mass casualties or possibly an intifada against us, would be to strike the Fordow fuel enrichment plant. Why? 1) Qom has a lower stated population. 2) The other one is holy site. 3) The other one is right near Tehran. So, if we're worried about fallout… 20 miles? Ground burst target at 15 kilotons? We'd probably be able to at least stop it.

Participant 2: Oh, isn't Qom also a holy site? I thought that's where the Ayatollah hangs out.

Participant 1: It also could be signaling. I was thinking about this. Qom is probably a holy site. But you either hit Qom or you hit …

Participant 2: We're still on the first question. We used up almost half our time. We have to start writing stuff down. But there has to be one option. Not, do this or do that or do this next. I mean this is nuclear use, What do we want the prime minister to do tomorrow?

Facilitator: So it seems that we have a target. Are there any more targets that we need to add?

Participant 1: I don't remember the name of the isolated area mountains.

Participant 4: I'm right here. It is Kerman. That's eastern Iran. I mean, if it escalates then the target deck would probably be for Bushehr, Arak, Fordow and Natanz. Leave Isfahan and Tehran alone, but you've hit seven facilities.

Participant 3: But for most of the facilities, I don't think nuclear weapons are the right device.

Participant 1: Participant 2 was right earlier that we need to move on to the other questions too?

Facilitator: Is there anything to be changed or added to the slide?

Participant 1: I would say, Kerman as an isolated desert area as an off-ramp. It is a demonstration off-ramp.

Facilitator: Okay.

Participant 4: Are you comfortable with saying if it continues to escalate, then suggest striking all the nuclear facilities and nuclear weapons?

Participant 1: I would start with Kerman, then Fordow, and then all the others later on if we have to.

Facilitator: So the question is what should Israel expect to achieve by any nuclear attack?

Participant 1: I would say, and anyone can debate me on this, but our goal in using nuclear weapons is to prevent or to disable the ability of Iran to have nuclear weapons.

Participant 5: I would argue that the first objective is to explain to the Iranian leadership that they cannot get nuclear weapons without incurring significant cost.

Participant 4: The whole goal is to dissuade Iran and its leadership from continuing its current trajectory.

Participant 3: Basically, you're saying you need to have the quickest off-ramp possible, period.

Participant 5: Right. What we're trying to say is this is going to cost you too much to get this. The benefit is not worth it -- the juice is not worth the squeeze. It is more advantageous to not get nuclear weapons.

Participant 1: So, I would write that as, "convince the Iranian leadership that their current course of action is too costly. It will be a price you don't want to pay.

Participant 3: Ryan, we are Mossad, right? Can we throw in a counter-Ministry of Defense intelligence assessment about the likelihood that hitting buildings in downtown Tehran will turn the people against the government? I think that's a wild thing that they said. We are Mossad, so maybe we should try an assessment that we've got no human intelligence to suggest that the people are going to respond to such a strike in their capital by overthrowing their government.

Participant 1: I like that. I don't know where we're going to write it, but I like it because you can make an argument that Iran has eliminated enough dissonance over time that an uprising would be unlikely.

Participant 5: I think that could be an answer on the follow-on slide.

Facilitator: Okay. To the next slide? What should Israel be prepared for in the way of a counterattack and other diplomatic and economic consequences as a result of acting on your specific recommendation?

Participant 1: Isolation from the international community. Economic sanctions.

Participant 4: Iran using it as justification for having a militarized nuclear program. Basically, long-term, Iran can use it as a reason why you would have nuclear weapons – for self-defense.

Participant 5: Loss of any Islamic allies.
Participant 1: Or, Iran could use it to gain more allies in a coalition against Israel.

Facilitator: Under what circumstances would there be a need for follow-on military action? Nuclear or non-nuclear and what they might be? Under what circumstances would a follow-on attack be unhelpful?

Participant 5: I would say damage and intelligence assessments indicate only limited damage to Iranian strategic capabilities.

Participant 1: Number two would be Iran shows no sign of deviating from their current course – if they increase attacks on their own or through proxies, or they use another weapon of escalation.

Participant 5: Under the question of when a follow-on attack would be unhelpful… if the international response results in foreign humanitarian intervention. In other words, if a coalition of countries intervenes to provide a humanitarian response because in a follow-on attack, we couldn't tell what the fallout would be.

Participant 1: I would also say that if there was an unlikely chance – and we think this is unlikely due to our assessment - that the government in Tehran changes and becomes neutral to Israel. So let's say this happens and it causes a power overthrow, which however unlikely we think it is, we'll be dealing with a different government at that point, right?

Facilitator: Okay, is there anything else we would need to add? We have about 5 minutes left.

Participant 1: Participant 3, did we want to create another slide that we have a HUMINT assessment that says that we don't believe that even if we do decapitate the power in Iran that there's going to be a revolution.

Participant 5: Go back to the first slide, where it says Kerman, an isolated area in the desert as a demonstration, we must add that it must include a clear declaration of intent to escalate unless Iran immediately desists from the pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Participant 2: On the next slide, I think that's where you can put our skepticism about regime change. We do not expect attacks on civilian leadership to likely lead to regime change.

Participant 3: Or at least the regime change that we want to see.

Participant 2: Okay – a favorable regime change.

Participant 3: Let's say we get past the first question of whether or not we're successful in such efforts -- taking out who we plan to take out. But then our expectations are the nice guys are about to win. I think that's highly unlikely. They would just operate a military dictatorship,

Participant 1: I think we're heading in the right direction. I think we're providing good counter-options. I think that's why they do these wargames. They want to see what people crowdsource. It's a complicated question with no right answers. Right? So that's why this is we're doing this.

Game play ended.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Facilitator: I think this will go more quickly because we have very specific questions to answer.

Participant 2: Were the other team's questions for that session the same as ours, or did we have a different set than they did?

Facilitator: They were given the same options for targets, but the questions were phrased differently to have each group look at it from the perspective of their department. So, we were looking at it from a foreign affairs perspective, and the other teams were answering from intelligence and military perspectives. I think that the defense team had the most detailed question. Okay, so what should our targets be?

Participant 1: Well, we got a question from the principal about going the EMP route, but also talking to the Americans about, "hey, we're leaning towards doing a limited, military strike, would you be willing to do that kind of diplomatic deal?" I don't know if that's just my staffer instincts that chases behind every word your boss says, but that looks like a potential route to run down

Facilitator: We could certainly could go that way. You could also push back. I think it's up to the team to decide.

Participant 3: I think given that we're still the foreign ministry and pitching this to the rest of the world, that anything besides a very limited, either non-kinetic EMP type strike or single, low-level target or a low number of targets military strike, is going to be a no go. I think pitching to the worldwide stage that we're protecting our existence and therefore it's our responsibility to conduct nuclear warfare at a massive scale against Iran is going to be a no-go. I don't think there's any way we can sell that on the world stage. Similarly, asking for the extended deterrence of destroying Iran if they strike back, asking the rest of the world to destroy a country is, I think, a non-starter. I get there's some expounding on what we mean, but those are powerful words to say we're going to make a country cease to exist because we felt threatened as opposed to they actually threatened us existentially.

Participant 8: I think Participant 3's idea, as far as selling this idea of an Israeli strike nuclear strike on Iran, promising to destroy Iran, or requesting that the United States do so is correct. There's no way to sell this to the world. There would be war crime tribunals afterward, is my reasonable guess. But the United States has destroyed countries in the past. And, if Israel's survival is at stake, I think as the foreign affairs ministry, the existence of the Israeli state should proceed and dominate the question of how the Israeli state is perceived, for obvious reasons. If I understand the task and we have to come back with one option, I would argue for counterforce with avoidance of collateral damage in which we would use our nuclear arsenal to the extent possible to destroy the nuclear-related targets. We could get into parsing that.
But also, as the foreign ministry, we need to come up with how we sell this in the short term to the United States. I will stipulate that the answer is there's no way to get U.S. approval, but the U.S. has other fish to fry and will be looking out for a war-stopping strategy. This is different from disarming Iran of its nuclear capability. So, I think we could put it to the United States that the best thing they could do to stop this nuclear war is to guarantee Israel's existence and Europe's existence should Iran fire nuclear missiles that London, Paris or Berlin. You hear these words and they're shocking, I agree, because we haven't heard them for so long. But this is the world we've been thrown into. As a foreign ministry, we've got to make the best of a very bad situation. And I'll summarize: We're not doing this so that we can disarm Iran. We're doing this as a war stopping strategy.

Participant 3: I might be missing the linkages, but with a limited number of nuclear weapons, why is it that we think Iran is going to reach out and touch Europe as opposed to fighting the country right next door that is potentially providing them an existential threat. I think dragging Europe into this and guaranteeing Europe or pretending that Iran's going to strike Europe with the only nuclear weapons they're going to get off is stretching what we hope the scenario is going to go to and trying to validate a broader support strategy in the international community.

Participant 8: Well, if I'm not mistaken, the United States spent seven billion dollars on a missile defense system in Romania and other places over the last ten years on precisely this scenario. So, I think it involves capabilities and intentions, and now Iran has the capability, which we've seen coming for a long time. The view that Iran could do something crazy if they thought they were about to be attacked, I think, does bring Europe into this. And we're not dealing with somebody like in the Cuban missile crisis, where Moscow went out of its way to assure everyone that they were not threatening Europe. But I can see Iran holding Europe hostage to U. S. actions. So those are my views. I may be right. I may be wrong. But I think we

need to present some sort of a nuclear diplomatic proposal to Washington. In addition to a target selection.

Participant 4: Well, keeping it within the scope of the game. We know some definites here, right? We know that a nuclear weapon is going to be used. We can't get around that. And so, it's our job to come up with a way that can align with the best foreign policy interests of Israel. My view is Iran – if we have any South Park fans in the room – Iran's a little bit like Eric Cartman. He's really loud and obnoxious, and he gets slapped in the face once and he backs down. That might be gamble, but I think there's a big shock factor that goes along with just doing a demonstration shot. So, I've been playing around with nuke map, and that was a recommendation of some folks in our company, who actually support OSD policy on these matters. Iran has a lot of desolate places where at a very high altitude, a demonstration shot could be made without causing any immediate casualties. High enough that we're not causing any casualties necessarily on the ground. Yes, you're going to have the contamination issue in the atmosphere, but you're not going to get around that regardless. I think that's the best option to induce some shock here and let the rest of the world know that we're serious, and bring everyone to the table to say we're not messing around. Let's all talk and either de-escalate this thing or it's going to escalate from there. You're still talking about an Iranian capability that even if they are in their most advanced stages, they're going to have to do a few things before they can make a credible threat towards Israel. So, I think that just a demonstration shot in a desolate place on the map can get the point across.

Participant 7; I agree with Bob, it also gives us the option of moving up and down on the escalation ladder. If we start with nuking targets and killing civilians. You can't undo that.

Participant 4: It's almost like it's an all-or-nothing thing, right? It's almost like, if you go middle of the road, you're limiting your options either way. So, it's either, we're going to just give them a little jab or we're going give them the full haymaker. And from a diplomatic perspective, I think the little jab is better than the big haymaker. I can even point out a place on the map. If you pull up nuke map, pick a spot in the middle of Iran. Right now, I'm looking just north of the town of Yazd, outside of all the populated areas. Run the numbers. You're not going cause any casualties on the ground there. You could go with a 1.5 kt detonation at about 1,000 foot burst height.

Participant 3: Just a comment on Europe. I think it's going to be very difficult for Europe to support this if its vital interests are not at stake or there's not a targeting specific to Europe. If Iran had launched a warning strike or had detonated something and said we're targeting Europe, it would be very different. But here it seems like it's very much Israel. So, from a diplomatic perspective, in one of the comments that was made earlier, the United States tries to get the support of the international community through this narrative of saying it's a war stopping strategy to prevent Iran from firing nuclear weapons at London in Berlin, it would have to be backed up. So far there has been no direct threat to Europe.

Participant 8: I used to work for a guy who forced us to argue in favor of a position we disagree with. In that spirit, a demonstration shot has the added feature that it could be a war-stopping strategy and it kicks the crisis down the road. I would agree here with the sense that it's less

escalatory, and in that sense is war-stopping. These are all good things. But as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I think we do have to tell the decision makers that what they're doing is agreeing that Iran is now going to be a nuclear weapon state. Given these conditions, it is likely to be a much larger nuclear weapon state than anybody dreamed over the previous few years. This is okay if it avoids nuclear war in the short term because we might think of something two years from now down the road to box in Iran's growing nuclear capability.

Participant 4: I don't know that I necessarily agree, just because I think that the shock factor alone of doing something like this is going to show everyone on the international stage that you're serious, and now folks are going take this issue seriously and say, oh, s***, we've got to do something here. It might drive forward that whole initiative of a WMD-free Middle East or a nuclear-free Middle East. I think, at least, that's what we're hoping for here. I think that's what we present as our strategy, that we shock people to their senses here. Shock everyone at the table.

Participant 8: It seems to me that you are agreeing with me in the following sense. That it's up to us, more than the intelligence or defense department of Israel, when we say people will be shocked, which I agree, and they'll do something about it, we need to come up with some ideas for exactly what they would do. I guess where I would push back is if we said, Iran will be so shocked that they will sign the NPT.

Participant 4: I get what you're saying. I think right now we're just trying to keep Israel from being wiped off face to the earth. Okay. I get it. I get where you're coming from, if I'm Israel right now, and the scenario has played out the way that we've seen, and there are people dying across Israel, I just want the dying to stop in Israel. I don't care about that piece of paper. I mean, that's the position that I'm looking at it from.

Participant 6: So, may I jump in for a second?

Participant 8: In that case we should recommend that we divide our conclusions into short-term and longer-term.

Participant 6: Actually, Participant 8, you've convinced me to take a different approach. In the scenario, just yesterday, Iran dropped out of the NPT. And, we know what happens when countries drop out of the NPT because we've seen what happened with North Korea, right? It doesn't end. Right? And Iran has a demonstrated capability of providing capabilities to terrorists. And there's no reason why they might not do the same in this case. So here, the other thing is once Israel uses nuclear weapons, its entire strategy is gone right? There is no more nuclear ambiguity. That opens up a whole other can of worms and Israel's, yes, they are concerned about this existential crisis, but also into the future. So, I would make the argument that I don't know, maybe the EMP isn't enough. Maybe we actually try to destroy as much of their fissile material capabilities and production capabilities as possible.

Participant 4: I guess what I'm getting at here is it's either the soft jab or you give them the full roundhouse. Either end of the spectrum. I think you got to choose one. If you're somewhere in the middle I think that that's where you're kind of screwing yourself.

Participant 3: Doesn't striking their fissile material production just buy us into an eternal round of every two years we have to go nuke them again because they just reconstitute their fissile material production?

Participant 6: Well, it depends. I guess this was one of the questions, right? How does the story end? Do we envision a different some other approach than the NPT or some other thing specifically for the Middle East? Up until now, you're right, it has been whack-a-mole.

Participant 4: To carry on your anecdote here about North Korea I would ask myself, what do you think it would look like if South Korea did this to North Korea? Let's imagine North Korea is playing the role of Iran and South Korea is playing the role of Israel. And South Korea took some kind of action like this against North Korea. How do you think that would play out? What do you think the United States would do? What do you think everyone in the region would do? How do you think people would react if South Korea took nuclear action against North Korea under a similar context?

Participant 6: I don't think you can go there because it's reversed. Right? North Korea is the nuclear weapons state. So, North Korea would be Israel.

Participant 4: But play along here. How do you think folks in the region would react? I think that if South Korea did have some kind of nuclear capability and used it against North Korea in a demonstration capacity, I think that it would get everyone's attention. And everyone from Japan to the United States, and all the all the regional players, even China would say, oh, s*** whoa, we got to do something here. We have got to intervene.

Participant 6: Yeah, but could they intervene before North Korea made a counterattack? So, the third question we need to answer is what do we think is going to happen in the way of a counter-attack?

Participant 8: I vote that we solved the Israeli-Iran war, and we'll postpone solving the South Korean one.

Participant 6: It's an interesting problem.

Facilitator: We have four minutes left. Should we vote on the option? We need to move forward. Do we have consensus on which of these options we're going to pick?

Participant 8: Yeah, it sounds to me that we do, and it's for the demonstration burst of some kind of. Am I correct?

Participant 5: Yes.

Participant 1: Yep.

Participant 3r: Or, present it as a dichotomy. Say here are the two options as we see them. It's either all or nothing.

Participant 8: Yeah, I don't think we should present it that way. I don't agree with this. I would personally, not go this way. However, I would say we're concluding as a consensus that a viable war-stopping strategy, which might work, is a demonstration burst in the desert of some kind. EMP or otherwise.

Facilitator: Do we all agree?

Participant 6: We spin that out, right? It's for the purpose of war stopping. And then what would we expect to achieve with this? This would be a diplomatic. We would rally our allies and whoever else to help stop the war to deter or prevent Iran from counterattacking. To cap escalation.

Participant 8: It seems to me we really do need as the foreign ministry to say something about a diplomatic approach to Washington and others here. My suggestion would be to request from the White House that the president, before any nuclear shots are fired, we request the president extend the U.S. nuclear guarantee given to NATO and Japan to Israel, and this is aimed at Iran.

Facilitator: Moving on, what should we be prepared for, in the way of a counterattack.

Participant 8: Well, I think the chance of a large-scale counterattack on the Israeli state is significantly higher than it was two weeks ago in this crisis. Israel has to prepare to face the question, are they going to execute a counter-value strike against Iran to destroy it in that contingency? I would emphasize that I think it would be an enormous mistake to assume that everyone will back down given that our track record of assumptions has been not so good.

Participant 6: Do we think that a large-scale counterattack by Iran will be nuclear?

Participant 8: Yes. At the risk of getting controversial here - I don't want to be Dr Strangelove here, so don't put this on the slide. But the foreign ministry would likely come up with an information warfare program, which would get the message to Iran that they should Iran launch a large-scale strike on Israel after this, Iran would be wiped out. Whether that's public or private diplomacy, I don't know. Probably private, by leaking it.

Facilitator: Do you want me to put this on the slide in the end?

Participant 8: What do others think about this? Or is it will make up make us look crazy.

Participant 4: I don't know that I'm convinced that if the proper pressure was applied, or, depending on how the rest of the world responded, particularly the Arab world, that an Iranian response would necessarily be nuclear or with the aim of wiping Israel off the map. I think Iran would think about its own future beyond that being what? So, you wipe Israel off the map. Now what?

Participant 8: But would you agree that the chance of these options being considered in Iran has gone up significantly?

Participant 4: Oh, yes, Yeah, absolutely. I think you're right.

Facilitator: Under what circumstances do we need follow-on military actions and what might they be"

Participant 8: They would be the counter-value strike that Israel has been preparing to deliver for 50 plus years.

Participant 4: Yeah, the scenario he is describing is Iran doesn't back down. Iran escalates in a nuclear manner and starts hitting cities. Israel has to be prepared to respond in kind, I suppose.

Participant 8: I mean, that's why they bought the Dolphin submarines.

Participant 6: But wait, are we going to do this preemptively?

Participant 8: No.

Participant 6: So, if they hit our cities, we are then going to go counter-value?

Participant 8: No, I think what we're saying is the prime minister had better start considering now how he's going to face that question. Because he may have 11 minutes in the event to make the decision. To execute that strike you have to face questions about pre-delegation of launch authority.

Participant 4: But I also think that non-nuclear options, conventional options, should be explored as well. What that looks like, I'm not sure. Maybe if other nations are willing to come to Israel's side, kind of like we explored in the Ukraine game. Rather than responding in a nuclear manner, if you're able to build a coalition, then taking a conventional approach to addressing Iran militarily. I don't think you should take that off the table either.

Participant 8: I would add that we should explore diplomatic initiatives with other countries cause we are, sort of, the foreign ministry.

Game play ended.

Ministry of Defense

Facilitator: I guess the good news is we already talked a lot about a recommendation in the first session, so we may be able to move quickly.

Participant 2: I just wanted to recommend that the priority still should be a strike focused on the nuclear infrastructure, followed by disrupting command and control and regime change. It should be in that order. Then maybe we strike economic targets last because I think the immediate priority is disrupting the nuclear program by direct action. Also, I still think – this is just my recommendation for whatever it's worth – we should attempt a strike on the facilities where they are mating the weapons to the delivery systems, because you just never know when intelligence might be wrong, or the super hard concrete was perhaps improperly laid and you might have greater effects than you expect. So, I still think that should be the priority, but I'll leave it to you guys to decide, in the end, what you do. Again, the weapons mating facilities where they're being mated, and then the stockpiled fissile material as well as fissile material production capabilities, which I think are between Natanz and Fordow. Those are targets that are at least within the capabilities of some Israeli penetrating weapons. At least with Natanz. Fordow, they would probably have to use nuclear weapons against that. But those are doable, possibly with nuclear weapons. Again, I'm not fighting the scenario, but I think 1,600 feet below ground, that's a mine. That's not a deeply buried facility. I think even our NORAD site under the granite mountain – I forgot what it's called – is a few feet under granite. It's not 1,600 feet. So, I'm just not sure. The intelligence might be wrong. It's worth a try with a few weapons on those sites.

Participant 1: I was having technical troubles logging in. I think what we do is we just kind of refine what we laid out earlier, which is that we use a limited number of low-yield weapons to decapitate the Iranian regime, coupled with damage limitation strikes, coupled with a limited number of EMPs. The effect we're trying to achieve is to bring down the Iranian regime. Failing that, we want to create enough chaos so that they cannot respond or retaliate in the immediate term. The purpose behind a damage limitation strike is to wrong-foot the enemy and create time before they can punch back at you. Ideally, they make a decision not to throw that punch back, whether it is because outside powers put pressure on them to do that or there is some kind of change in their internal decision calculus on what they should be trying to achieve and whether or not that's feasible. I think that by putting the regime at risk, it creates that breeding space for either one or two of those things to happen. Moreover, if we think they're actually going to go against us – I think is a safe assumption based upon this game that the next big hit from them is coming – the damage limitations strike mitigates the impact of that. So, what we're saying is you're asking the wrong question when you ask what we think the Iranian response is going to be. We know what the Iranian response is going to be. We think they're trying to destroy Israel and what we're trying to do is make that not happen. And even if we're not totally successful, we think that these actions will make whatever's coming next much less than had we done nothing.

Participant 2: I think the priority still should be the Iranian nuclear arsenal, whether it's the weapons being mated, fissile material stockpiles, or fissile material production facilities because again, regime change is a proposition. Whereas, I think there's no doubt we could do some damage, if not significant damage, to the nuclear infrastructure. So, and that's the tip of the spear anyhow. That's what we need to cause harm to. So I would just recommend that we frontload that aspect.

Participant 1: I think that's right. We do want to degrade their nuclear infrastructure and weapons-related infrastructure as much as possible. That's all part and parcel of the damage limitation strategy. So, I framed it as option one is for a regime change option and two is for damage limitation. And your point is to flip so that we're going damage limitation first, and if we can affect a change in the regime, so much the better. We're willing to give it a real honest shot to make that happen.

Participant 2: I would say the second point would be to disrupt regime command and control/foment regime change because one hopefully leads to the other. If you create a situation where it looks like the regime's grip on power has been loosened in a strike, that then, perhaps, catalyzes action by the population, which then could lead to regime change. That, at the very least, buys you time because they're focused for a few days or a week on dealing with the aftermath of the decapitation strike and efforts to disrupt their control over the population in the provinces. That creates time for diplomacy to exploit whatever opening is created by the strike on their nuclear infrastructure to dissuade them from going further down this path of mating weapons delivery systems. It may not work, but it's a concept of operation, at least.

Participant 3: Participant 5 said to go for the leadership first, followed by their military capability and I would agree for one very specific reason. It sounds like we're going to need to talk about the phased timing. I think maybe other teams are considering a nuclear strike. Now we're considering a suite of options, but if we strike, say, their nuclear capacity – if we strike that first – and we leave the leadership for a second option, the leadership could go underground in some of these hardened, deeply buried tunnels where we would never get them. I think the first use must be the leadership in order to get them. Just something for thought, maybe does that mean.

Participant 1: Honestly, that makes a lot of sense, and especially if we're going to use the 1.5 kt to smoke the Ayatollahs and the regime leadership, then yes. I think we can do the sequencing awfully darn quick. I mean, what we're talking about is all this stuff unfolding ideally, within one night, if possible.

Participant 3: I totally agree and I think that's achievable. In a matter of hours, hopefully. This would be highly coordinated.

Facilitator: Okay, we have your first priority is damage limitation, uh, targeting material stockpiles and retaliatory missile forces. Ideally, around the same time, targeting regional or regime political and military centers with your small yield weapons to disrupt command and control before they become unreachable, especially to low-yield weapons, in hardened underground bunkers. And third, we have an EMP strike following along the central line of Iran, with three strikes from Bushehr to Tehran.

Participant 2: I would keep it in the North center, in the greater Tehran region and may as far south as Isfahan. Because once it gets to Bushehr, it's going to affect a lot of U.S. allies in the Gulf region. I mean, it's going to go over the border anyhow, but I would just urge you to keep it further north towards the political center of the country.

Participant 1: So, we're talking to two new detonations then. For one, over Tehran and one of Isfahan.

Participant 3: I know we have a lot more to cover, but mentioned that Control appreciates specificity. Do we want to throw out a number of these low-yield bombs that we're going to target leadership with? Or, are we fine just saying, "Hey, we're going to go after the leadership we're not quite sure how many that is right now."

Participant 5: We are looking to avoid a nuclear strike. I mean, you might find they have something in their arsenal similar to the massive ordinance penetrator. Our version is 30,000 pounds and it gets the pretty deep and it's very accurate. It will take out hardened, deeply buried targets, such as command control facilities. Or, if you're looking at the reactor facilities, and not cause the spread collateral damage with a nuclear weapon, it might be a little more acceptable if we do that way.

Participant 1: Have we got a response yet from Intel as far as how deep their weapons storage facilities or their physical material storage facilities are?

Facilitator: Yes. We do not have the depth, but we do have information on their access points. We have moderate confidence for most of the access sites, but we do not have the locations for those, which are unused. We know that each site has entrances and exits, but are not sure if they have secondary entrances or exits. We know the three sites and estimate there are three more and the possibility of the ability to use a TL launcher. They say yes, there are ways to deny access to the facilities, but it would be hard to dictate damage. So, they seem to be saying, we know of some entrances, but can't guarantee we'll be able to totally block off any entrances in case there are secondaries or ones that are unused.

Participant 1: I'm fine using some type of massive conditional penetrator on those sites. That's fine. I mean, it was hit the ones we know.

Facilitator: Talking about the nuclear joining facilities… do you want to hit those with conventional are those still on our table for hitting with a nuclear strike just in case?

Participant 1: I'm open to either. I'm not radically opposed to either one.

Participant 3: I think both could be considered. I question the ability of either to damage the mission space. But I think to the points made earlier, it's worth a try.

Facilitator: So, if those are our target sets, we can go on to the next slide, which we talked about a bit. What should Israel expect to achieve by a nuclear attack? And, you know, any discussion we can get into of sort of how this ends that would be useful.

Participant 2: I will just say, first and foremost, to destroy, if possible, nuclear devices that have already been produced and prevent them from producing anymore for the short to mid-term. Even if they end up with an arsenal of four to six or eight devices, Israel has robust missile defenses. Of course, if Iran was to ever use them, Israel could launch a large conventional

missile strike with a few nukes in it. Maybe a few get through. But of course, one or two getting through is better than eight or ten getting through. So, the smaller the arsenal they're stuck with at the end of this, the better off Israel is, at least for the short- to mid-term.

Facilitator: Is our second goal still to create chaos in the hopes of leading to regime change, or at least mitigating their ability to respond.

Participant 5: Definitely. Yeah, I think so.

Participant 3: Maybe from a military perspective, phrase it as, "it would be to disrupt the immediate command and control ability of Iran to respond, which then is going to open up the populace to the opportunity to get after that regime change." I think that the EMP is going to be very effective in that. I don't think we understand what the command-and-control structure of Iran's nuclear force would be. So, perhaps the EMP has knocked that out. Maybe they don't have the ability to authorize a nuclear response if the EMPs are effective.

Participant 5: Yeah, you also get a nice show of force and resolve and it gets you the shock and awe effect. It's more than likely they have a very centralized command control. So, it will cause a lot of confusion in her network.

Facilitator: It's shocking to sort of agitate the populace or to deter government action or both?

Participant 5: It should probably do both, but probably more so to the general population. Actually, to the world, it shows a resolved Israel. The fact that you use a nuclear weapon doesn't mean you're going to end the conflict. When we dropped the bomb on Nagasaki, the Japanese continued to fight for weeks after. The war did not end with the second bomb and continued to follow-on strikes with incendiary, which killed as many as the atomic bombs did then. So you have to have some ways that shock and awe to get the leadership to say, "look how many how many we have." Israel shows resolve. They have a stock power. They could do it again. And again. That's what brings them to a table.

Facilitator: Does anyone have anything to add on objectives beyond those three goals?

Participant 3: A good sub-bullet to the second goal is that another way to achieve that disruption of command and control is through those low-yield decapitation strikes. If they have no leadership and they can't communicate, it would be very difficult to coordinate that response and hopefully impossible to authorize a nuclear response. That is the last way we plan to use nukes that isn't already on here.

Participant 1: I mean one is linked to the other, right? If you're not sure who's in control and who has the launch authority to fire that handful of nuclear weapons? If Iran only has four to eight nuclear weapons, which I think is what's in the scenario, I think there's a decent chance that we're able to make sure none of these go off during this immediate crisis. If we collapse enough exits where they're being stored, enough missile bases, and kill enough leaders and have some EMP effect, there's a decent chance that they may not get any off.

Facilitator: To the next slide, which is what Israel be prepared for, by way of counterattack and other consequences. So, we're asking if there are decent odds that this amount of chaos and loss of access to facilities may prevent nuclear retaliation.

Participant 5: The first effect will be the UN Security Council's commendation of Israel real using a nuclear weapon.

Participant 1: Who care? They hate us anyways at the UN.

Participant 3: Along that line is just remembering our lens as the military. We're concerned with the target and effects – of course, the diplomatic response will happen and the foreign affairs group is likely tackling that. What we need to do is respond is to the incoming missiles that we're going to face. I think from a military targeting perspective, we don't consider the consequences from forums like the UN.

Participant 1: That's the Ministry of Foreign Affairs job, right?

Facilitator: One thing that we haven't touched on that I know we mentioned a bit last time was possible reactions from other/third-party countries. Do we expect any responses from them that are worth considering outside of the UN perspective from any of our actions?

Participant 1: Again, I think the previous commenter's point is correct. We are the defense team. And so, unless we think someone's going attack us, that's outside our tasking. That's the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' problem.

Participant 3: Could it be worth noting -- I don't know how recapitalized these proxy groups are, but maybe a note about focusing on conventional missile strikes from Iran and proxies. But I don't think any other country is going to militarily engage Israel over anything we've suggested so far in my opinion. Maybe they will form of coalition and an attack? I don't think so.

Facilitator: I just think we should get at least one or two quick bullet points on, "Under what circumstances might there be a need for follow on military actions and would that be helpful or unhelpful?"

Participant 1: You know, if we have intelligence that says that they're using the earth movers to clear the adits points where we think the weapons are stored, then we hit those points again using nuclear weapons or conventional munitions. Whatever weapon system we think is necessary to achieve the desired effect of collapsing those adits.

Participant 3: I think I might expand that.

Participant 1: I was just going to say, similarly, if we have intelligence that says, we know where this commander is, we smoke them using whatever weapon is necessary to achieve the effect we want.

Participant 3: I agree. That's exactly what that's what we have to say. If we have intelligence that any of our military objectives were not met, we should consider engaging.

Participant 5: Be prepared to escalate the de-escalation. You might have to escalate your force to hit them to make them back down or stand down. So, you're going to do that by integrating your nuclear and conventional forces where targets are needed.

Game play ended.

Move 2

U.S. / EU / NATO Team

Facilitator: Hello? Hello? How are you. So everyone seems to be taking a few minutes for everybody to move over. I think we have enough to get started. I don't know how you want to start this off.

Participant 1: Let's see. I guess you can throw up the questions that we have to answer.

Facilitator: Yeah. Does anybody want to see any of the scenario or anything like that before we do? And is there any action we need to take? Any response to the other teams, any response to the Israeli team requesting Article 5 guarantee? We should probably respond to that at some point.

Participant 2: I mean, I don't want to speak for people, but I assume that's a reject. It seems definitely the Article 5, there's no world where. Poland sticks its neck out, right?

Participant 3: I'm sorry, you were arguing which point?

Participant 4: I think it was the phrase NATO- style article.

Participant 2: Oh, you're right. You're right.

Participant 3: Can I just make a note on the questions, before we get to the larger policy issues, such as the request for an extended guarantee from the United States, a NATO type protection? Actions the United States would take we would have to contact NATO allies. I would think for immediately to tell them our view of the situation, and that they should, take precautions with their military forces such as raising their alert. Obviously it's a national decision. But, I mean, Britain and France have to get this if they have submarines in port, they might want to get them out of port number 1. 2, we might recommend, tell Paris and London and everybody else that no NATO, tactical nuclear weapons in storage in Europe are going to be moved or alerted. And the 3rd thing I would raise is immediately communicate to Moscow and Beijing to tell them

that the U.S. role in this is to dampen an escalation. We are not going to use this as a platform to work against their interests in the Middle East, or any place else. That we want them to call it. I'm not saying we, our team, should go with these 3 items, but they are an example of what we would want to consider before we get to the larger policy issues.

Participant 4: Participant 3, we're also representing EU and NATO. Would you recommend any specific upgrading of alerts?

Participant 3: Particularly, the French British nuclear forces, which are overwhelmingly submarine based, almost completely submarine based, but I think I would evacuate them from port. This is not a provocative action. That's one thing I would do. If I were NATO, I would welcome the U.S. assurance that the NATO tactical nuclear weapons are not going to be moved out of storage. This is also assigned to Moscow that we're not thinking of doing anything. What do you call this? I don't know if the word competence building measure is relevant here, but maybe. And try not to use this crisis against them. And would welcome their intervention on the diplomatic front to dampen conflict in the Middle East.

Participant 5: Can I ask a question? Are you going to tell the Russians and the Chinese that the movement of British and French submarines shouldn't be viewed with alarm?

Participant 3: I'd have to send it. I think I would. I think in the case of the tactical nuclear weapons, they're going to know it. If they're moved in the British and French case.

Participant 5: Right.

Participant 3: From port watchers, I would communicate to them.

Facilitator: I was just going to suggest that we may want to send emails about some of these moves if the team agrees some of these items.

Participant 3: I'd send the communications. Well, I'd like a discussion. It's given that we can ask who was in charge of China and Russia, which I guess is control. Yeah, we can send this. We should send this message somewhat immediately.

Facilitator: Yep

Participant 4: Because you add the part about British and French submarines evacuating nuclear arms yeah.

Participant 2: Do we add the Israeli right to exist part here? It seems like standard communications.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Participant 5: Sorry, I think your first bullet, if you have Germany and France, that's the same thing as the second bullet. 1'd just delete the first.

Facilitator: Oh, sorry British and French. Sorry I misheard. British and French nuclear submarines will be evacuated out of their ports and then we're communicating to Russia and China that this should not be a cause for alarm right?

Participant 3: Yes, right.

Participant 6: I would agree that there would be a raised level of alertness and at the French level maybe evacuating submarines similarly to what happened recently. Probably a P3 more than a NATO consultation with the Brits and the French would happen. That would definitely be of interest for intel from the French and the British side given the gravity of Israel potentially having broken it. I'm always thinking of the precedent with Iraq for France. This is still going to be an issue.

Facilitator: Good. So we got an email while you were talking. Control just wanted to clarify the list of actions that the Israeli Prime Minister suggested have been taken, including the nuclear explosion. So the nuclear explosion has occurred. Okay and I'm very sorry if I missed your point if there's anything I should summarize that you just said, I can go ahead and add that to the slide.

Participant 6: No, I was just concurring, but maybe just add the dimension of the way these 3 powers communicate.

Facilitator: Sorry, you're going to have to be specific. Tell me in which point.

Participant 6: Just add consultation: French, British, and the U.S.

Facilitator: Okay.

Participant 3: Okay, yeah, I think there's another issue here, which I would recommend we don't consider in the interest of time and bigger fish. Policy issues down the road and that is: Did not call a meeting of the nuclear planning group of NATO as a reassuring action. But I don't think it's something we should get caught up on here.

Participant 5: So, I don't disagree, but I think we should step back for a minute there and put our actions in different categories. Right? A lot of the things that we've mentioned so far are kind of crisis stability measures, which is all good, but I think as the U.S and NATO, we have to articulate some of our own objectives. Right? And, I think we have to condemn the use of the nuclear weapon by Israel, but then also talk about the fact that Iran has pulled out of the NPT and et cetera. I think the number 1 objective is to limit escalation correct?

Participant 3: I agree with your point that these are in some sense ancillary actions. And the larger issue is, what is our objective, how are we going to work with the Europeans, and are we going to extend a NATO type guarantee to Israel. I don't know how the European governments would respond to this. It depends who's in office.

Participant 4: I was just going to say, if we can try to immediately focus our conversation on the NATO Article 5 style guarantees with respect to Israel, give them the respective time to allow them to use that for planning.

Participant 6: I'm sorry, I will have to leave in 10 minutes, but I left a note to our facilitator with some ideas of what European state member positions could be. And how the U.S. as a political actor can position itself. So when you come to this discussion later, I won't be there, but I hope it helps.

Facilitator: I'm going to put them in the chat so you all can see them.

Participant 3: These are good objections. I think they can be handled because they've sort of come up and historically NATO would use language such as a coalition of the willing.

Facilitator: I think you need to get back to the previous point.

Participant 3: What are we trying to do here? And would we endorse the request from Jerusalem?

Participant 4: I guess immediately what I find interesting about that question is there's already been significant conventional attacks against Israel. Which would have theoretically already triggered the negative article.

Participant 1: How?

Participant 4: Response in a native context. So this is purely a question about if there is a nuclear exchange from around Israel, that would then be the trigger for the Article 5.

Participant 3: I think that's an extremely good point.

Participant 4: Would this include additional conventional attacks? Or are we specifically talking about an initial communication we need to make with Israel, is this space just on a nuclear exchange or is this more conventional attacks and doesn't include proxies?

Facilitator: I'm going to switch to sharing emails, so we can ask them.

Participant 3: Yeah, I would think it would be focused on an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel or Europe.

Participant 4: So, rather than a native NATO Article 5 style, this would be more extended to their returns as well.

Participant 3: This would be more constrained and limited.

Participant 3: Because you're right if literally interpreted it means we're at war with Iran already.

Participant 3: Seems to me that's not a good idea.

Participant 4: Is it limited just to Iran or does it also include around in proxies if it is conventional?

Participant 3: I think now I'm believing it should be focused on the way President Kennedy said in the Cuban missile crisis which is any of this whole leave in Cuba landing on any country in the Western hemisphere will be considered an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, presumption being nuclear missile which may itself be required clarification. Because I don't want us to invoke this or anybody who would welcome the guarantee if Iran fires a conventional weapon into this region. Please don't raise chem bio at this point. But reacting to this, I would be in favor of it. I'm not predicting that the U.S. would do it and there may be dimensions of this I just haven't caught up.

Facilitator: But could we do an article in the subject?

Participant 4: A NATO Article 5 style requests so that we're trying to articulate that it's not necessarily native.

Participant 3: Yeah, I would eliminate reference to NATO and NATO Article 5 altogether.

Facilitator: Okay.

Participant 3: A presidential speech on television saying that any nuclear missile coming from Iran landing on Israel, the Gulf Abraham countries, or Europe would be a violation… help me here. I want to imply that the U.S. might respond with nuclear strikes on Iran.

Participant 4: For the title, we could use collected defense instead of native Article. 5.

Participant 3: Yes, that's good, that's defined. We should try to shoot holes in this because there may be some.

Participant 4: Maybe we can send a clarifying question to get the communication going and then leave the presidential speech part till the next action just so we can determine more of what Israel's intent is by that request.

Participant 3: One thing comes to mind which is would the U.S. privately say that in exchange to Jerusalem, in exchange for the president, we insist that Israel not use any more nuclear weapons if Iran does not use any more nuclear weapons.

Facilitator: Would you want to put this in this clarifying email or no?.

Participant 4: That would be in a next action that we would issue this proclamation, if this is a great deal in the next one.

Participant 3: But this is private agreement between the U.S. industry.

Facilitator: Okay, so I just want to clarify is this clarifying email okay to be sent? Yes? Okay.

Participant 5: Hold on a second. My understanding is when they're talking about a NATO or 5 it is not limited to nuclear, right? That's too broad for us. So, really, the clarifying point will be we are prepared to issue something in the event of intelligence or whatever regarding a nuclear strike. I mean, the Israelis are basically trying to blackmail us by saying we'll hold off, we won't do further nuclear strikes if you give us a guarantee. So we're just walking it back, right?

Facilitator: Right, so what we sent, and I'm sorry I hit send so quickly, was a clarifying question. We didn't say anything about NATO Article 5. We called it released collected defense request and we just asked would this be limited to an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel or Europe? Is it conventional as well? Would it be limited to Iran only or Iran and its proxies? We wouldn't want anyone to invoke this if Iran launches a conventional weapon into Israel. That's what we said in our clarifying email. And we can certainly follow up with more questions if you would like, I did not send anything about the televised speech. Is this okay or do we need to do follow up?

Participant 3: Okay, I think it's okay. And it's really good to get rid of the NATO.

Facilitator: Yeah, that's different. Israel has sent us more requests. Can everyone see the emails I'm sharing? Israel requests from the U.S. that we provide insurances that it will aid Israel in the event of any further attack from Iran and its allies similar to obligations existing under Article 5 of NATO, to provide public statements supporting Israel, to support a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for seizing all attacks against the sovereign state of Israel, provide military equipment and ammunition to Israel on an expedited basis especially bunker busting munitions, and call for detailed coordination between the Israeli and American military on actions necessary for the security of Israel. Sub point 5 should include intelligence sharing.

Participant 6: Yes.

Facilitator: Do we want to respond to that or there's a message from control as well. The Kremlin has released a press release and decried Israel's use of nuclear weapons in its attack on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities and Iran's legitimate means of self-defense. He said he had spoken with Enron's president and promised immediate assistance to shore up its air defenses with the delivery of Russian S500 air defense systems along with Russian technicians to set them up and operate them. He called on Israel to cease its further military provocations against the sovereign state of Iran. So, we don't need to respond to that just take that in, but we should respond to Israel. And I guess we wait on our presidential statement until we hear back from Israel on the clarifying questions. Does that sound right?

Participant 3: Well, I think we need to discuss this and I do not believe the United States should go with what amounts to a blank check to Israel at this point. we need a more diplomatic phrasing. The best way to deescalate is for Israel to refrain from using any more nuclear strikes.

Facilitator: And for Iran.

Participant 3: Right, in this, right? Yes.

Participant 4: Could those 2 points be brought together answering number 3 for that calls on both.

Participant 3: Good point. Yes, we could go public with that early on communicated to go to the government of Israel by the United Nations discussion.

Participant 4: And I think that number 2 would be what our presidential address would be included in, and then wait on number 7 for their response about the clarification about the collective defense request.

Facilitator: I would suggest not calling for the Security Council resolution as a reply to this but creating a new message and sending it to all the teams. And if you guys can tell me what you would like that to say. We're saying the U.S. is asking for a resolution, is that what we're saying? Cause we can't have half of the U.S. to condemn violence in between in the Middle East.

Participant 3: And to demand all sides, have an immediate ceasefire.

Participant 7: Am I the only one who sees the Russian action as potentially escalatory and concerning. That's kind of what I'm getting at here. How do you on the surface come out and say we don't like this, but at the same time, it's Iran's and not our friend. Russia's not our friend. We can say all we want to say about condemning this, but if I haven't participated in a couple of days, I know how this is probably going to go. It's going to increase until we do something. And that's just the name of the game.

Participant 2: Are we actually going to give Israel equipment? I assume we are just because their domestic.

Participant 7: And that's kind of what I'm asking here. I mean it seems to me we're all caught up in the fact that Israel has used a nuclear weapon here, which don't get me wrong, I understand why we're not making light of that, but at the same time, I don't think we should lose sight of the fact that Iran is not our friend. And now we have a nuclear threshold and can this be used in some way to our advantage to knock Iran permanently off balance?

Participant 3: Oh, it's a fair enough point. That would be applicated in the Air Force by some.

Participant 2: But as far as the statements concerned, we'd probably just do this. Sorry, I don't want us to get derailed. Let's just shoot the email.

Facilitator: Okay, is this email sufficient?

Participant 4: Do we want to call out anything specific in particular or just condemned by?

Participant 5: I think we have to condemn the use of a nuclear weapon. I'm sorry I don't think we can give Russia high ground. I think we have. We have to say something a little more about that, right? What, do we want to congratulate Israel for not killing anybody with nuclear weapons?

Participant 6: Can ask for more transparency and some measures to gain time, at least.

Participant 7: Well, I think you made a very good point earlier where Israel has basically done this in an effort to blackmail us. I like that word going along with what they're doing. That being said, the threshold has been crossed and now we need to be thinking about how we use this to our advantage.

Facilitator: But that wouldn't go in the-

Participant 7: Statement? Absolutely.

Facilitator: Yeah, so let's can we focus on getting the U.N. resolution email out and then move on to that? Is that okay?

Participant 5: All right, but they're going to have a fit if they see just that. So, the United States is sponsoring a resolution calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the Middle East to avoid further escalation. Help me out here guys.

Participant 2: For the sake of the game, maybe we don't try to be so precise. We try to get the broad point across. I see what you're going for, and I agree if we had infinite time, it would be worth the effort, but maybe just say we condemn use of nuclear weapons. We also call for a cease fire and then move on.

Participant 3: I can't read it. Does it condemn nuclear?

Participant 5: We need to add something. It should also condemn nuclear use in the Middle East. We already talked about hostility by any party.

Facilitator: Anything else or?

Participant 1: I think this suffices for the immediate need.

Participant 5: Yeah, I think we just need to put one thing in there about deterring further use. Because that should be directed toward Iran, right? Or Israel?

Participant 3: Yeah.

Facilitator: So, where would put the use of nuclear weapons?

Participant 5: And will actively work to deter further, sorry I'm such an old retired diplomat.

Facilitator: Additional use, because I don't mean that it's Israeli. Additional use of nuclear weapons.

Participant 5: Or just weapons of mass destruction.

Facilitator: So it's distraction in the Middle East by any party. Are we good with this?

Participant 3: Yes.

Participant 5: Then, yeah, that's fine. All right.

Facilitator: Let me see if anything else came in. Israel responded the primary threat we are trying to protect against is a nuclear attack against Israel. Therefore, our limited requests from the United States is to make a commitment to deter a nuclear attack against Israel by guaranteeing to respond to an Iranian nuclear strike with an American nuclear strike. This guarantee should be given directly to the Ayatollah, and to others as the U.S. decides it's prudent without American support. Israel will have no choice but to escalate further, which is an outcome neither of us wants. Additionally Israel hopes to receive conventional and logistical support and material from the United States.

Participant 2: So, they're blackmailing us if we don't give this guarantee.

Participant 7: How about we take the action that was similar action that we're taking now where we start moving carrier strike groups and try to walk them back from this. Say, look that's almost a bridge too far at this point but how about we send you some more resources and again take the same action we're taking now.

Participant 5: Can I ask a question of everyone? Do we think that an Iranian nuclear strike on Israel would not threaten its existence?

Participant 1: Hmm, that's a good.

Participant 5: Yeah, I think it wouldn't just be a single weapon. I would say in response to this message, we will, of course, provide conventional and logistical support. We will, of course, extend deterrents. What I'm trying to get at is focusing more on the conventional side. Is Israel here saying that they will preemptively strike Iran again, or would that be in response to an Iranian nuclear?

Participant 3: I think as the global weakness, that's what we do not want to happen.

Participant 2: Can we make the guarantee conditional as long as you don't nuke Iran? We will provide that if that's a policy option we have.

Participant 3 : But that seems okay to me, except I'd like to get more feedback on us giving this guarantee to Israel, which would be the strongest guarantee the U.S. government has ever given to another state. The U.S. would be seriously obligated to take major action.

Participant 5: To use nuclear weapons against Iran?

Participant 3: I think it is looking that way. Yeah.

Participant 2: Can we guarantee a coming to defense? Even if it's not necessarily a nuclear retaliatory strike, I think we're trying to thread the needle here.

Participant 3: My bad no, I don't think I think these are important issues with differential impact. We want both to exercise nuclear restraint at this point. It's what I would argue is the number one U.S. objective and I think Israel is in a way blackmailing us and there's things that they could do to increase the price.

Participant 5: You know, I'm regretting the use of the term blackmail, but we haven't sent that to anyone. The bottom line I think is that it sounds like Israel doesn't think it can deter Iran, that only the U.S. can deter Iran.

Participant 3: I guess I agree with that and I think Israel thinks they're planning the counterforce disarming strike on Iran because it's too risky.

Participant 5: Mm. Hmm. Do we think that we have the U.S. and/or NATO has conventional capabilities that could really sink Iran's nuclear capabilities for a good long time.

Participant 2: If I remember the prompt for the game, Israel had used American munitions and failed.

Participant 1: Yes.

Participant 2: And we haven't.

Facilitator: We haven't received any updates to find out how successful any of the attacks they did in the opening scenario were.

Participant 3: But it did.

Facilitator: It did detonate, yeah. I think in there and they conventionally attacked some of the missile sites or the nuclear weapons assembly sites instead, but they only close the entrances to tunnels. I don't think they put them out of commission.

Participant 3: From the U. S. point of view, I think we need to stretch this out.

Participant 1: If we don't get a ceasefire.

Facilitator: So, I'm just checking to see if any other mail came in. Nothing new.

Participant 2: Can we shoot a quick email to the to the world that we put a carrier group behind it?

Participant 3: Israel? Yeah.

Participant 2: Yes, I'm just trying to think of the actions we can take without having to, you know.

Participant 5: Wordsmith and all that.

Participant 2: Mm, hmm.

Participant 7: In addition to sending naval resources into the region, I think we should also be thinking about if Iran starts making a move to strike back in some kind of nuclear manner, what are we going to do? I think it was a good question to ask what capabilities do we have to potentially intervene to prevent Iran from doing that.

Facilitator: With the United States sending a carrier group, where do we send them?

Participant 7: Into the eastern Mediterranean and I would do exactly what the president is currently doing, send a message to the world that any actor in the region that would want to further escalate this, don't do it.

Participant 3: I think we have to go to DEFCON 2. Maybe not worldwide, but within STRATCOM.

Facilitator: The United States is going to DEFCON 2. And what are we saying about CENTCOM and STRATCOM.

Participant 3: DEFCON 2 in STRATCOM, CENTCOM, and CYBER CON. The European commander is going to be screaming to go to DEFCON 2.

Facilitator: This is all the United States?

Participant 3: Yes. During this, there's some NATO implications. Okay.

Facilitator: Is there anything else we want to say in this announcement?

Participant 3: Let me just point out this only has happened once in U.S. history, so it is large.

Facilitator: Should we point that out in this email?

Participant 3: Oh, no, let them figure it out.

Facilitator: Do we want to add anything else this email? Do we need to say what NATO or the EU are doing? Are they taking any actions like this? Since we are the U.S.A. team.

Participant 7: I say you fire that off and then in our next move we can reach out directly to the Russians and try to engage them as NATO and say, hey, what the heck are you doing?

Facilitator: Good. That's good with me.

Participant 3: If it's good with the team.

Participant 4: Are we trying to position conventional naval assets to target Iran here or proxies or both?

Participant 7: I'd say both, but you're leading for a reason.

Participant 4: So then let's also talk about a guided missile submarine into the Gulf of Oman on, because we're not going to range anything from the Eastern Med.

Participant 7: On a carrier striker

Participant 4: Yeah, I like that and we have shown a guided missiles submarine, Ohio class, going through the strait of the Suez canal.

Participant 3: I think every naval asset we have would be thrown into the region that we could.

Facilitator: Okay, are we good to go? These two? All right, I'm going to hit send and then we're starting a new message to Russia.

Participant 3: That’s where we are, yeah. What do people think about this 500 system? But it's not going to have any impact for 2 years.

Facilitator: 2 years from today or 2 years from 2027?

Participant 3: Which is the scenario? Yeah, from 2027. If there's anything that is in plug and play, it's Soviet Russia and air defense.

Participant 7: Well, that's fine, but I think the Russian action is still digging their nose into it. And especially if we're concerned about Europe, then we should probably engage them.

Participant 3: Yeah, I agree.

Participant 7: Mm, hmm.

Participant 1: good

Facilitator: Oh, we've got another message from Israel. Israel request an immediate response from the United States regarding any further update as Israel makes its decisions related to the options available for Israel's defense. Israel has received information from Iran that is inconsistent with Israel's demand that it cease attacks. And when it sent to the control team and not us, but it forwarded oh, it forwarded this. So they told control Israel speaks of peace and the escalation. Oh, this is from Iran. So, Israel sent Iran a message that said Israel exhibited an enormous amount of restraint given what you and your proxies have done to Israel and the Israeli people. We do this in the spirit of peace. We restrain our response because we believe there is a chance for peace. If you decide to escalate this crisis beyond the current point, then Israel will do whatever it seems necessary with whatever capabilities we deem necessary to secure the Israeli state. The choice is yours. Then control wrote, Israel speaks of peace and the escalation yet it has escalated this war by crossing the nuclear barrier and attacking peaceful Iranian nuclear facilities as well as Iran’s legitimate self-defense forces. Iran reserves the right to limit further damage from such attacks as a legitimate act of self-defense. While Iran is no longer bound by the NPT, it would only be willing to stop defending itself upon Israel's commitment to its possession of nuclear weapons and commit to their immediate elimination. Then they forwarded that to us and ask for an immediate response.

Participant 1: Okay.

Facilitator: So, do we need to respond to their 5 point request?

Participant 7: Do we need to let them know that we were deploying naval assets?

Facilitator: Where it just got sent?

Participant 3: I don't know that we need to do anything more at the moment. Okay.

Facilitator: We haven't sent this one message to Russia, and we haven't talked about the presidential speech yet. Okay. So, what do we want to do next?

Participant 4: I think Israel's collective defense needs to be sent.

Facilitator: Yeah, we need to finish writing it too..

Participant 3: So this is the statement that the U.S.A. would extend the nuclear guarantee and against any nuclear missile fired from Iran at this coalition to include Israel. It's a huge step.

Participant 1: Hmm.

Facilitator: Is that what we want to stay?

Participant 3: That's the hypothesis for the pieces on the table.

Facilitator: Yep. We really should read this.

Participant 3: Let's see what we're getting into.

Participant 7: Well, you're making a heck of a promise.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant 4: Could we just kind of avoid it by saying we don't want to see any further nuclear use and then we talk about providing the conventional logistical support. The naval assets, and conventional capabilities that we've sent to the region to deter Iran and its proxies and just don't explicitly respond to the extended regular deterrence guarantee.

Participant 1: A fair option.

Participant 3: Which I could be persuaded on.

Participant 4: And then also add something in about desiring to lead diplomatic discussions amongst the friendly Arab nations and Israel, Iran, and the rest of U.S. and NATO or just U.S. and UN.

Participant 3: It's just Security Council, I think the first sentence needs to include something. The first is Israel not to use any more nuclear weapons as well as Iran.

Facilitator: So, are we getting rid of this?

Participant 1 : No, I'm not getting rid of it.

Participant 4: Oh, I don't think we need to.

Facilitator: I just don't know if it's a good idea. We need to make some decisions. Yeah, it’s 6:23. We have about 20 minutes left in game play.

Participant 4: What about the United States extended regular deterrence, seeks to dissuade the use of nuclear weapons. Just restate what the general policy of extended returns is without guaranteeing Israel action.

Participant 3: I think that I'm leaning in that direction.

Participant 5: Do we need to say nuclear deterrence or can we just say extended?

Participant 3: That might help.

Participant 5: Do we think we can deter Iranian nuclear use with something other than the threat of U.S. nuclear weapons? I don't know the answer to that.

Participant 2: I like the idea of giving us flexibility in our response.

Participant 3: We have to, right? Yeah. Well, I mean, that's what we're troubled by.

Facilitator: Yeah, so there's an update from the Iranian Defense Ministry and how the army engineers have succeeded in unblocking targeted entrances to its underground long range missiles forces, which can now be used at any time against Israeli targets. Russian missile defense units have arrived in our operational Ayatollah Khomeini. The holy war against Israel declares that nuclear weapons are no longer forbidden.

Participant 5: Wow.

Participant 1: Okay.

Facilitator: So, let's get back to this.

Participant 5: I think we are trying to escalate.

Participant 1: Nuclear restraint is looking pretty dead.

Participant 3: Well, there's one path that is only talk. They have not fired any nuclear weapons.

Participant 7: But now, because we didn't engage Russia, there's Russian assets on the ground and if we strike here on, we're probably going to take out something that's Russian and it's going to create a problem.

Facilitator: Is there any way we can reach out to Russia at this point? Or do we just need to respond to Israel?

Participant 7: We have a lot of irons in the fire here. I think we need to make some decisions and look; clock is ticking.

Participant 3: The U.S. is not going to go to nuclear war to defend Israel.

Participant 7: Number one: I don't know if that's true and number two: I don't know it's even what we need to be discussing right now. I think we just need to let the Israelis know that we have their back. We're going to try to engage the Russians. We're going to try to deter the Iranians as best we can.

Participant 3: I think it does mean that if you're to fire more nuclear weapons and to destroy Israel's cities. I don't know that the U.S. would use nuclear weapons. I don't think we would. I'm not going to tell anybody that outside of the situation, but one of those paths, should Iran go nuclear, I want my military to know that we will do ruinous actions against Iran, but I don't think we would use nuclear weapons. So, I think it has significant actions, unfortunately, which is I'm willing to accept the destruction of the state of Israel by Iran. And why we put more weight on the first option that we're hoping it's cheap talk.

Participant 1: I would not put that in a communication.

Facilitator: No, I'm not putting that. I didn't take any of that down.

Participant 7: Okay, team leader, I'm nudging you here to start making some decisions.

Participant 1: Yeah, if we're just going to keep going up the escalations/de-escalate ladder, this is the thing. It's the clear next step to go. And continue the communications with all sides.

Participant 3: It's an escalation, but it's incremental compared to other options we discussed.

Participant 1: Yeah, we already have everything in the region so lines being drawn, it's time to see how close to the edge we can go.

Participant 3: So, the good metaphor it is, we're now going to bring it.

Participant 4: What's your situation?

Facilitator: Maybe we take up that last line of guarantee? I was saving that in case you wanted it back. Is the email as written sufficient? Also the friendly Arab nations sent us a message saying they do not support. They support the escalation, but do not support for their military assets being deployed within the region. Please consult before taking any further military action. I don't think that changes this, but all right. Is this good to go as written?

Participant 4: Okay.

Facilitator: Yeah, great. So I will send this.

Participant 4: Let's see if we have any other method in the interest of time that could probably take the place of a presidential address.

Facilitator: We only have 15 minutes left just to communicate unitary intent. We also have an update from Iranian proxy it says they today launched hundreds of rockets at critical Israeli infrastructure and other civilian targets, including power generating stations and transformers, causing rolling blackouts across Israel. Oil and gas depots and pipelines were hit causing massive explosions.

Participant 2: Any way we can call on the team to condemn the attacks? They'll probably say no, but…

Participant 4: We can put them in an interesting position.

Participant 2: Well, we would be hopefully a lot further militarily.

Participant 4: Movements or actions? If they are not willing to condemn we'd have to question whether or not, with our naval assets in the region, we'd be willing to. The U. S., so this would be in response to their request for talking to or conferring about further military action with this

update of intel. Yeah, would you all be willing to condemn? And it looks like that press statement from Saudi might actually be important before you write this.

Facilitator: The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the keeper of Mohammed's tomb made the piece of blessings of the lobby upon him and the defender of Islam rejects Ayatollah Khomeini's assertions that this is a holy war. There's no holiness in the use of nuclear weapons. We, Saudi Arabia, decry any assertion that this war is anything but a war between two nations. We call on parties to de-escalate and observe a ceasefire. Okay. Should we give them political space? Okay, so do we want to send this message to the friendly nations?

Participant 4: Would we ask that they would condemn the proxy rocket attacks? And if they don't show enough force as well in their payment, that would be a point of discussion where we would respond with the conventional return.

Participant 2: That's a good place in the region. I would phrase it in the positive. Like, we appreciate your condemnation of the war. Cause they already yeah made that statement, right? And then any further U.S. actions would at least be consulted with Arab allies. I don't know if that's a point we're willing to make.

Participant 4: I think we're now asking the direct question, though, with the rocket attacks from the proxies, whether or not they would be willing to extend their condemnation to these specific actions.

Participant 5: We have to give them something in return.

Participant 4: I think what it would be in return is that we wouldn't act to target these proxies. Okay. Yep, because if we've got the deterrent assets there, we're not going to use them in response to this attack. It just reduces the credibility of our actual statements of returns.

Facilitator: Does that make sense? Can everyone read it? Sorry?

Participant 2: I have a feeling that Israel is going to have thoughts on this.

Participant 1: Or you can assume Israel is going to attack the proxy.

Facilitator: This is just between us and friendlies.

Participant 1: No, right. Okay.

Facilitator: Yeah, I'm going to go ahead and hit send.

Participant 2: Where do we go next? We wanted to send to Russia. Did we ever get around to that?

Facilitator: No.

Participant 4: There's nothing with only 10 minutes left. I hate to ask, but why does so many folks see the deployment of S500, which has very, very limited range offence capability, primarily a defensive weapon system, and it's just purely an upgrade what Iran already has, why do we see it so exculpatory?

Participant 7: It's the fact that now, if Israel strikes, or because they're using it now to protect Iranian sites, now, they're going to say, well, okay, now you're attacking Russia and it has the potential to escalate from there.

Participant 7: So reaching out to Russia was to try to prevent any kind of escalation on that front.

Participant 4: I guess the way I looked at it is that we already know that the Russian teams are embedded in Iran with the S3 and 400 systems. I just assume this has increased capability, but not necessarily, any chest piece that moves to protect necessarily via that.

Participant 7: Well, we got a message from control saying that those systems were set up now protecting Iranian sites.

Participant 4: Yeah, I guess if it was current day, we know that Russian teams, Russian trainers are there for the S30400. So I just saw this as increasing capability, not necessarily a change in Russian trainer presence.

Participant 7: But you don't see Russia doing that and sending the messaging they have is potentially regulatory.

Participant 4: I personally don't. I'm just I'm trying to appreciate what the general consensus was.

Facilitator: We have a press release from Israel approximately 30 minutes ago. The government of Israel made the difficult decision to defend its sovereignty and right to exist. Israel has decided that to ensure its continued existence, Israel had to use all measures available to defend itself. This involves using targeted nuclear munitions that sought to minimize civilian deaths, destroy Iran, and nuclear weapons facilities. Israel seeks peace with Iran, but will continue to defend its interests.

Participant 5: Okay.

Facilitator: Anything else we need to do that's very smart?

Participant 5: This changes our next steps we have.

Participant 3: 8 minutes left game play.

Participant 4: With an Israeli action, the first thing we'd be looking to see is what the Iran response is.

Facilitator: That has not come yet. Maybe they got wiped out before sending.

Participant 4: Maybe we continue with the Russia message with 8 minutes to go. I don't think we could come to a consensus without any more information from control.

Participant 4: But do we want to communicate to Russia bilaterally?

Participant 3: I think we directly communicate to Russia and probably UN that the world is on the brink of a tremendous catastrophe. Urge all parties to exercise restraint and to not continue actions.

Participant 2: Is there some deal we could strike where we pull out U.S. naval assets in return for Russia pulling back.

Participant 7: I don't know that we go that far but I like what you're thinking kind of using the bargaining chip, but what was just said is pretty spot on. Is there a way you could kind of, I don't know, maybe throw out the option of a tit for tat exchange. Maybe that's appropriate, but I wouldn't jump straight to it.

Participant 2: I think the first part that was brought up is correct. I'm just wondering since we have finite time, we might want to make multiple points.

Participant 4: I don't think the assets that we've sent, one strike group and one missile submarine, are threatening at all to Russia.

Participant 2: That's fair. Their capabilities are very, very small.

Participant 4: I don't think necessarily, it's threatening to Russia at all.

Participant 7:. It may not be threatening to Russia, but it's definitely threatening to Iran. And if Russia is looking out for Irani interests then there's " something that could be leveraged there.

Participant 4: We can say we're moving. I mean, again, the striker is not going to range Iran from the eastern Mediterranean. So we could say we were moving the guided missiles submarine, but that's not over whether it's there or not even though we made the message to be over. But whether it's moved and in the end is not is something we could easily offer and not follow through.

Participant 1: What do you want to do?

Participant 3: I think you could say this. What do we say to Israel now as the U.S.?

Facilitator: Okay, so, send this to Russia? Are we good?

Participant 5: Do we want to ask Russia to help restrain Iran?

Participant 3: Okay.

Participant 5: I would give a little bit. The Russians are going to look at this, and they're going to say on the brink of a tremendous catastrophe, Israel has already done that by nuking Iran, but how about in the midst of a tremendous catastrophe? That would be good. We need to work together.

Participant 3: That's terrible, but I think it actually has some serious content, which is we're in a catastrophe. It's happened. All we can do now is keep the disease contained. Exactly. And we don't wish to use this. No one should use this as an opportunity.

Participant 4: And then with 3 minutes left to go, do we have any other last communications?

Participant 3: Is this good? I can send this? Yeah.

Participant 1: Yeah, do we have to show that we were serious about that somehow?

Participant 2: Maybe saying, hey, this is on you guys now, we're not going to risk.

Facilitator: Israel still seeks peace in the region and requests assistance from the United States to effectuate a peaceful resolution of the situation. Israel requests further coordination with the UN and the United States on support.

Participant 2: Do we just say no?

Participant 1: I mean, if they're not going to.

Participant 3: The United States will not be dragged into a nuclear war in the Middle East by any country.

Participant 4: I agree. We did in fact respond about our policy and extended deterrence, what the purpose was, that we would support with conventional logistics.

Participant 3: Logistical capability is correct.

Participant 4: We watered it down so we didn't respond to it. We did provide assistance in that statement.

Facilitator: Yes, United States extended deterrence seeks to dissuade the use of nuclear weapons. Yeah.

Participant 7: Latest would be that.

Facilitator: Control team said yeah a nuclear explosion has been detonated over Mashabim Air Base. Is that Israel?

Participant 2: That is.

Participant 1: It's in Israel yes.

Facilitator: Thank you.

Participant 2: So now it's with U.S. soldiers stationed on it.

Participant 7: Do we want to change this response? Yeah, that's why I wasn't necessarily buying the statement to begin with.

Facilitator: I thought the Iranians would be smart enough to only kill Israelis and not Americans.

Participant 4: Yeah, this has got an army here.

Participant 7: Missile Defense Command establishment. Well, as they said, even in the lectures, Israel's our number one recipient for military assistance. It's kind of hard for us not to be intertwined with them.

Facilitator: Yeah, we just got 10 extra minutes to keep playing.

Participant 3: So what do we tell…Israel? No.

Participant 7: Provide nuclear deterrent if you think they'll use new conventional response here especially if U.S. troops have been killed now with a nuclear weapon by Iran and our goal all along has been to keep Iran from doing something like this. I think this is a no holds barred. This is a war and we're in more now. This is a military response.

Participant 7: I would try to keep it conventional. I think you can successfully respond to a nuclear attack, a single nuclear attack like this, conventionally with a country like Iran but the gloves are coming off, in my opinion.

Facilitator: All right is this a U.S. only announcement or U.S./NATO/EU announcement?

Participant 2: Yes, it's good. America invokes Article 5 here.

Participant 1: That's kind of what I was wondering. Yeah, we could.

Participant 3: Okay.

Participant 7: Are there specifics, in response to the nuclear strike on an Israeli air base that presumably killed American troops?

Participant 7: I believe it's an American air base. Is it? Yeah.

Facilitator: I don't, I honestly don't know so, an American air base in Israel.

Participant 2: You know, it looks like it's an IDF base.

Facilitator: Okay, okay. An army.

Facilitator: Here it is, it's a base within a base.

Participant 4: Oh, that's a US section of it.

Participant 2: So it's an American facility. It's not an Israeli.

Participant 4: Hosting Americans yeah, it's a U.S. military installation on board. It's really.

Participant 2: Okay then I think that's Article 5.

Facilitator: That's it, that's all we need to say. Sound easy. Okay. Anything else we want to say.

Participant 2: Do we try back channel communications with the Iranians? They like an embassy or something?

Facilitator: So I'll share that. The control team responded to our message to Russia: With all due respect Israel's strike killed all of our Russian defense advisors. We have consulted with our Chinese friends. America must immediately withdraw these forces and stop military supplies before any talks can proceed.

Participant 1: Those are the technicians that set up?

Participant 4: I take that means naval. Withdraw all of our forces doesn't seem commensurate with anything that's happened between Israel.

Facilitator: We don't have to respond to everything if there's something more important to focus on.

Participant 4: If you want to respond to this, you can, I think it’s going to be what, 5 more minutes? Yeah, I think with respect to control we should probably have some response to Israel. I think so just for the sake of data.

Participant 3: What about this? What about telling Israel each side has fired one nuclear weapon now. Proven that they take these issues seriously, the matter is closed.

Participant 2: Do we need to attach costs if Israel decides to reopen the matter?

Participant 3: I can't imagine we could come up with anything that would be agreed to. Other than the implicit, right? We're making to withdraw support from Israel further, additional

support like conventional support, and pulling the plug on the intelligence sensors that we give them.

Facilitator: So we will cease conventional support and pull the plug on intelligence should Israel continue to use nuclear weapons?

Participant 2: Would it be outside the scope of the game to argue that we hold like-

Participant 3: A congressional vote?

Participant 2: So, it would it be outside the scope of the game to have a congressional vote on whether the U. S. should? We are adding territory.

Participant 1: You can always Article 5 it. Um, but there would already be a new AMF? Yeah.

Facilitator: Yes, we have to message it. Before we send this, there's a message from Israel. Israel requests coordination with the U.S. and NATO to work together for the defense of Israel and NATO military forces. And China condemns Israel's provocative attacks and use of nuclear weapons. Israel needs to forswear its nuclear weapons immediately, and commit to binding negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East. And then back to our message, is this what we want to send?

Participant 3: I think we should just send it.

Participant 4: I agree.

Facilitator: Is there anything else we want to do in our last 2 minutes of game?

Participant 3: Um, the only thing I see that's left open is the U.S. public would be going nuts at this point. With European publics yeah. Thinking that they're under threat, I mean. There's spooky agencies that would be dusting off the martial law plans in the United States, but I don't know. We have not been asked that.

Participant 2: So, on that, I think we just assume domestic politics are not of concern, which is a mistake.

Participant 4: A limiting assumption of the game, these are things I think we could also capture in the next piece here.

Facilitator: Things we considered yes, we can switch to slides if you're ready to do that.

Participant 3: I mean, that's the where do we stand. And on time, do we have to go back to the plenary session right now?

Facilitator: Well, we have to write up our answers on our briefing slides and then I suggest we move to that. Now, I'll keep an eye on email while we're doing that in case anything comes in, but they're going to shut down email in less than a minute.

Participant 4: So could I just ask does anybody find it interesting that we wouldn't have directly communicated with China as well?

Facilitator: That was more of a function of the time limit, I think.

Participant 1: I was just talking for the barely chat with Russia.

Participant 3: No, I think we would try to talk to China.

Facilitator: I'm going to move to the PowerPoint. Yeah, there we go. So, our first page is what diplomatic actions might each team take as response to this. So we can restate what we did and we can also share what we would have done had we had time. Oh, I think we've answered this really well. What would we like to do? We should recap what we did on these slides to present.

Participant 3: The U.S. goal was to try to stop the war, to try to stop nuclear use. I think what goes here is that we debated extended nuclear deterrence protection for Israel and the other in the Gulf States and we decided not to do that.

Participant 3: I think the DEFCON 2 was more of a diplomatic than a military action but it's a restrained limited DEFCON 2, right? We reached out to Russia, right? On China.

Facilitator: Control will yell that we did not reach out to China cause we didn't do it in the game.

Participant 3: Time.

Facilitator: Something up to de-escalate the craziness.

Participant 5: Did that to de-escalate the crisis, okay prevent.

Participant 3: Attempt to establish a crisis stability.

Participant 5: And limit the geographic boundary of the crisis, right?

Facilitator: Anything else diplomatically? What did we do with the friendly Arab nations?

Participant 3: We tried to kind of unify a response to Iran’s claim.

Facilitator: Was the nuclear explosion over the Mashabim Air Base an attack or accidental detonation. If it was an attack, do you know where it came from? We request that you cease any military action until we can determine where the nuclear blast came from. Friendly Arab nations asked us.

Participant 7: It just feels like they didn't want to make a decision that they're trying to.

Facilitator: Yeah and President Erdogan announced today that it would not support an Article 5 action against Iran until and unless Israel publicly agrees to forswear it's possession of their weapons along with Iran.

Participant 4: I think that's probably because we didn't articulate the U.S. forces are involved at that base.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant 1: We did say it was a U.S. air base. Yeah.

Facilitator: I do think that the Arab teams agreed with us. They agreed to the nation. Yeah, we can demo proxy attacks against Israel and all attacks to escalate this conflict further. We support all actions which lead to the termination of proxy attacks. So they did support us in the end.

Participant 3: Probably friendly observations agreed with the United States to condemn Iran actions.

Participant 5: For this side, I think we did condemn nuclear use, right? But yes, it placed us in a difficult position. It demonstrates that a demonstration crossing the nuclear threshold is crossing the threshold and that it's hard to defend a demonstration.

Participant 4: I think the second question on the top of the slide might be more involved in that first, as we corrected the established crisis stability de-escalation with reaching out to Russia and China. I don't think we came to a position which we thought anything we did would necessarily de-escalate the situation.

Participant 3: I mean, we did recommend actions which would geographically limit this. And we don't know if they work, but no war has broken out in NATO, in Europe, or against Taiwan, as far as we know.

Facilitator: Anything else for this page or should we move on to the next slide? We do have till 7:25 to work on these.

Participant 3: I have not.

Participant 4: Okay, I think that control would probably be very interested in this question even if we didn't take actions or think of them, can we think of anything else?

Facilitator: That we could have done that would have?

Participant 4: And including that, we really don't think it was just pure geographic isolation.

Participant 5: So, the real question: If we had offered the nuclear guarantee to Israel and they were restrained, would Iran have been restrained?

Participant 3: We don't know, but if we had given the guarantee, and then Iran attacked the base in Israel, we would be called upon to fulfill the promise.

Participant 5: But so here's the thing that I don't understand. The purpose of providing the promise is to Iranian nuclear tech, right? Not to retaliate after they do, right? So I would be quite comfortable saying if the Iranians actually did retaliate saying, you know, nuclear weapons are not punitive weapons. We're just going to bomb the heck out of you with everything else. Now, would this destroy our credibility going into the future?

Participant 3: Sure, maybe. But I don’t think so necessarily.

Participant 7: Yeah, I don't think it would either. And I think absolutely you can respond to a nuclear action, a single nuclear action with a conventional response. I think that would be perfectly reasonable.

Participant 3: If this war and a total of 2 nuclear weapons have been fired. I will break out the champagne. Right? I wouldn't put that in there. Calling this a victory then.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant 7: If we move to the next slide, should we say we could have or would have responded to that? If it had been confirmed that a single nuclear action was over our air base, would we have responded militarily?

Facilitator: I was under the impression that that's what we were going to do.

Participant 3: Oh.

Participant 7: With conventional yeah. I thought we were going down that path when we invoked Article 5 and said this is an act of war and we're going to start coordinating a conventional response.

Facilitator: I was under the impression that's where we were going. The next slide is about military actions.

Participant 7: That perhaps is better.

Facilitator: All right. We moved the carriers and the submarines, right? Did we do anything else militarily?

Participant 4: Com.

Participant 5: Oh, yeah.

Participant 4: We want to explore what diplomatic communication we would have attempted to have with Iran via whatever media after they attacked the Israeli base, which contained our installation, to articulate to them the act that they just committed to. And what the greater extent that was, that it wasn't just an attack on Israel that it was an attack on U.S. forces.

Facilitator: Would that be on the diplomatic action page? Is that escalation?

Participant 4: No, I guess that would have been back to the diplomatic. I'm just asking.

Facilitator: We didn't really explore that.

Participant 7: And to your point, I think control is also going to push us on we said we would make a conventional military action. He's going to want to know what that exactly that means. I mean, did we agree on a declaration of war? What are we going to do there? How does that fit into the back channel that we're discussing now.

Participant 4: The point about popping the champagne if only 2 weapons had gone off. We would also probably chalk up the loss of U.S. military personnel in a small amount if we were able to communicate with Iran and say, hey, do you realize sincerely what you just did? It wasn't just to get your students against the U.S. and what that invokes. If there was some communication able to de-escalate Iran's aggression because of that real estate, that would be a win as well.

Participant 3: One big question here on this: Is U.S. conventional response at this point limited to strikes on Hezbollah and their missiles? Or does it up the escalation ladder to include strikes on Iran.

Participant 7: I think it's up the escalation ladder. I don't disagree with what is being said like, hey, if all we walked away with was the loss of our base there. But at the same time, I'm also looking into the future and considering the rest of geopolitics. Does that have a bit of an Afghanistan effect where it's like Iran was able to bully its way into us, not doing anything about them, detonating a nuclear weapon over our base? That's dangerous.

Participant 5: If I were playing control, I would tell Iran to say, "Wasn't a nuclear weapon. Prove it." And, you know how long it'll take for nuclear forensics to figure that?

Participant 7: Well.

Facilitator: Yeah, no kidding. What do we want to say here? Because right now we have a question and we're not really saying what we would have done.

Participant 7: I think it's grounds for war with Iran. But I don't know that everyone else agrees with that.

Participant 3: I'm seeing big shaking no nos.

Participant 5: No, I think I was just going to say, I don't think we had time to really discuss what we were going to do there besides the back channel, right? Yeah, that was not a military action, but a diplomatic one.

Facilitator: So we were seeking, we attempt it, or we planned to get back channel negotiation with Iran. Is that correct? Where are we asking them to use no more nuclear weapons?

Participant 4: De-escalate. Okay.

Facilitator: Okay all right let me see escalation military actions. Let's look at the last slide and then we can go back through them. How might the responses of other countries' Israel strike have changed based on different targets and different yields for a nuclear strike?

Participant 3: If the Israelis had used a large counter at the outset rather than a demonstration burst. I think we would have lost the European allies. Bigger support in Saudi Arabia, don't put that.

Facilitator: Okay.

Participant 4: That's also interesting for control for construction of the game.

Facilitator: In the U.S., NATO, and the EU together.

Participant 4: In one team? Yes, because you don't see that interaction between exactly. As you said, it would have completely changed the European response.

Participant 3: Yeah, I know that they don't ask it, but if we put the Iran strike on the air base in Israel and the number of casualties it will be important, I mean, the U. S. can accept a couple 100 casualties. But if it's a couple 1000, it really forces a larger likelihood that the U.S. would respond with a big intervention of that set of strikes.

Participant 7: I have to push back on that. I don't think that politically, knowing the political climate in the United States, that we could accept a couple 100 American casualties from an Iranian nuclear weapon.

Participant 3: Well, I mean, you may be wrong.

Participant 4: Given the consequence of what would come out for our response to that, I think we would have to somehow sell it to the public.

Participant 7: Well, absolutely. But again, I think that's where you say, okay, we're going to make a conventional response, but to sit there and say we could just eat it-

Participant 3: I mean, it’s not just eating it. It’s eating it for 10 days and then the war somehow ends.

Participant 7: And then, it's the next Afghanistan you know, the next country gets invaded and then there's the move on Taiwan. And so on and so forth.

Participant 3: That we've seen after Afghanistan, right? And we were able to accept that most Americans don't give a rat's a** about Afghanistan?

Participant 7: No, they don't, but now we're in the quagmire that we're in with Ukraine.

Participant 3: And now we're scrambling to figure out how we're going to defend Taiwan long term. This has catastrophic implications for U.S. foreign policy. Maybe that needs to be said, but to me, it's so obvious. All kinds of things we could list, but we don't have time to do. The American public today is willing to let Ukraine go or partner of Ukraine.

Participant 7: I think you're right. I'm just I'm just making sure we realize what we're saying here because these conclusions are going to be published by control and if I know him, he likes to go to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. And that's where he's going to publish this so I'm just making sure we're all on the same page.

Participant 3: This is what we are.

Participant 5: Say, okay, I deny everything I've said.

Facilitator: Nobody’s name is going to be attached, but you should come to some agreement about the highlighted comment on both the bullet 2 and bullet 3. If we don't have examples he's going to push back on that.

Participant 3: Not that that isn't important, but he's going to want to know what you mean.

Participant 5: Are we supposed to answer this also for the U.S.? Do we think that we would have had the same response if Israel's first nuclear strike had been either a large counterforce or against cities?

Participant 3: That's a good question. Yeah, I think we would have been much less eager to help Israel had they done that.

Participant 7: Yeah, I agree with that.

Participant 2: I assume that we'd want to mention that this permanently creates a rift between Israeli government and the U.S. They perceive that we didn't do enough. We perceived that they asked for too much.

Participant 3: Both good points.

Participant 7: Well, I know Participant 5 is regretting our use of the blackmail word.

Facilitator: Nobody likes to be blackmailed.

Participant 5: Nobody likes to be blackmailed and that's what happened. That's the currency though, right? With clear weapons, there's a lot of blackmail going on.

Participant 7: Yeah, and that's what happened. And that doesn't feel good.

Facilitator: Yeah. Should we put that right on the slide?

Participant 7: I wouldn't. I think there's a better way to say it, but yeah, I think it's an important data point to add.

Participant 1: Sure. How would you like to say that? Nuclear strike bargaining?

Participant 5: Yeah, that's a good way to put it.

Participant 1: Mmhmm.

Participant 3: You could even say raised tension.

Facilitator: Good change.

Participant 5: We put that, long term, this has catastrophic consequences for U.S. policy but can we give a few examples?

Participant 1: We can throw that U.S. Turkey rift in there. We'll give a lot of anti-Turkish Congress people a lot of ammunition there.

Participant 7: I mean, is Turkey really NATO?

Participant 1: NATO in name only.

Facilitator: Anything else? The other examples, there has to be something besides that.

Participant 5: With the U.S. and Turkey: Potential rift with friendly Arab states, right? They're not convinced that Iran was the sender of the nuclear explosion.

Facilitator: The Airbus oh, you don't have to put all of that in there.

Participant 7: And there's the potential degradation of American power throughout the world if we don't respond to this appropriately.

Participant 5: Yeah, I get the feeling that the Russians and the Chinese came off much better than we did. Yeah. I was wondering if there were any long term consequence.

Participant 7: With Russia and China, I would put it down on the end of that. China in parentheses, maybe, and all those little smaller countries, the 3rd world that we all fight over.

Participant 5: I'm just going to say in smaller nations.

Participant 7: Influence in the battle for influence. I think it also has the potential to click on the question of America's military might right? I mean with the conversation we were having of how many casualties are we willing to accept to see this end?

Facilitator: If the world perceives us as weak in response to that that's huge.

Participant 5: I would say it's not just military might, but I feel like we fumbled the ball on the diplomacy.

Participant 2: Yes.

Facilitator: I agree.

Participant 5: Military might and diplomatic influence.

Participant 7: Do you think some of that is just the nature of how we're conducting these games over email like this?

Participant 5: I think that might get in the way, right?

Participant 4: Yeah, I think that's part of it, but it is definitely. I think there is evidence of real loss of influence as well.

Participant 5: Is there anybody here who thinks that we actually could dissuade Israel from using a nuclear weapon if they wanted to?

Participant 2: I'm probably not optimistic. If we had to move for Israeli use of a nuclear weapon. I think we could. If we couldn't, right? Like, we stopped Netanyahu from doing something stupid in what? 2011, right?

Facilitator: Mmhmm, if I remember correctly.

Participant 5: Should we add that?

Facilitator: I mean, no.

Participant 2: Yeah, okay.

Facilitator: It challenges the game as well, right? Yeah. It's 7:23. Do you want to look over anything a minute? These were our initial notes. I'm not going to include them in our

presentation. We'll capture them in a transcript. Want me to move to one of the slides? I'll send us a copy of this.

Participant 5: Yes, I would say those are still interesting because we did have very specific actions.

Facilitator: But we don't have to brief them. If you don't want to. Up to you guys if you want to brief them.

Participant 4: Sure, if he's still held.

Facilitator: I think these are important to address. Okay. Should I move it? I'm going to move it up to the front.

Participant 4: Okay, that makes sense. And I know we had maybe batted around 3 objectives but do we want to rest on just one objective, which is just limit escalations?

Facilitator: What were the limited escalations?

Participant 3: Yeah, well, I think there's 2: 1A and 1B. 1A is the weapons, that is nuclear weapons limited by the number that are detonated. And the second is geographic.

Participant 4: Isolation well, the crisis didn't spread that we know of.

Participant 5: Containment or self-contained?

Participant 3: Contain the crisis, I think. Yeah.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant 1: Is anyone willing to take over the speaking presentation? I have to run off at 8:00. Or could we ask to go first maybe?

Facilitator: You go first, so you can get out of here after presenting. All right. Thanks everyone. Bye.

Game play ended.

Israel Team

Participant 1: Well, maybe we want to get started. In the meantime, I can give just a brief summary. The idea in the first move was that we don't want to do a massive attack. So, you'd start with a single demonstration, then use conventional means, and then use diplomacy to try

to leverage the Iranians into a peaceful scenario. That's unlikely to occur in this wargame, I think, but that was the idea.

Facilitator: I guess now that we've done that strike what are our next steps?

Participant 1: Okay, so as I understand it, those strikes have already occurred. Is that right? Okay, and now we're waiting for the Iranians to act, and then I think that we ought to also be coordinating with our allies, finding out what their answers are to our questions and coordinating with the UN Security Council. I would say the priority relates to getting the United States government to agree to some kind of an equivalent of a NATO Article 5 arrangement and then coordinating with friendly Middle Eastern countries, most likely the UAE and Saudi Arabia and maybe Egypt if they're friendly, to provide air clearances and ask for them to seal the Gulf and provide military assistance.

Facilitator: Okay, in that case, we can draft up a note to those teams.

Participant 1: Sure. Okay, so we want to draft the first email that goes to the United States: the government of Israel requests the agreement of the United States to: 1) provide assurances that it will aid Israel in the event of an attack from Iran similar to obligations existing under Article 5 of NATO; 2) provide public statements supporting Israel; 3) support a UN Security Council resolution that calls for ceasing all attacks against the sovereign state of Israel; and 4) provide military equipment and munitions to Israel on an expedited basis. I'm just making it up right now. So, others may have better wording or better ideas.

Participant 3: Mr. Prime Minister just a clarifying question with the first point. Will that already obligate the United States to join this conflict militarily, given the previous missile attacks Iran has conducted on Israel, and is that the intended outcome?

Participant 1: There is no agreement by the United States to defend Israel in any material way, and now we're requesting them to do so.

Facilitator: We could say in the event of any further attack from Iran – that clarifies it.

Participant 1: Sure, yep.

Participant 4: If I may… maybe we should include, other than Iran, attacks by Hezbollah, Houthis or Hamas.

Participant 1: Absolutely, I've been calling it Iran and its allies for lack of a better term.

Participant 4: Okay.

Participant 1: On the military side, there's just a long laundry list of things you can ask for. Right? So, you can ask for the U.S. Navy to halt all Iranian ships. There’s a bunch of stuff. So, what I would say is maybe for the next one is, a call for detailed coordination between the

Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense related to actions necessary and prudent for the security of Israel.

Facilitator: Do we want to give any specifics or leave it as is?

Participant 1: I think I wanted to leave it blank. Frankly, we could spend a whole day thinking about good ideas.

Facilitator: Okay, does anyone else have anything to add?

Participant 4: Maybe we could ask specifically for munitions like bunker busters or MOABS and things like that.

Participant 1: We definitely need bunker busters and key conventional munitions.

Facilitator: All set?

Participant 1: I think so.

Participant 5: I've got one quick question. While we're doing all these diplomatic things, what are we doing about intel? Israel has intel that they missed the big attack from Hamas. Is the United States willing to share intel?

Participant 1: Yes, excellent point. We could probably put that under the DOD-MOD coordination but it's interrelated. Okay. How about another email that goes to the allied Arabic countries?

Facilitator: I'll just send out a quick follow-up to the United States on subpoint 5 about how detailed coordination should include intelligence sharing.

Participant 1: Yes.

Facilitator: Okay.

Participant 3: And then just a clarifying question. Having sent that request to the United States -- just so we understand where we're at militarily – the implication was that if another attack or any anything else comes from Iran or proxies, America might consider joining in that. Is Israel currently on a pause militarily, or are we trying to see where things shake out diplomatically first, and we're not considering additional strikes at this time?

Participant 1: Yeah, just so you know, this was meant to be a two-phased operation. So, the first phase is essentially this demonstration with conventional and using that to try to leverage the Iranians from not acting. The second phase is, if the Iranians do attack, if they do not cease their activities in a material way, hopefully we've at least degraded their ability to attack us using nuclear weapons. But the second phase is if they do not relent, then we will use nuclear and conventional weapons. And under the nuclear attack, the attack sequence is prioritized to

destroy the Iranian nuclear weapons capabilities. Prioritize the hardest targets, Fordow, Natanz and so forth. And then secondarily, a full-scale conventional attack against all assets of the Iranian military and government systems command and control: Army, Navy, Air Force, major logistics systems, major logistics hubs. And also, even energy facilities, but with the idea of degrading them so that we can restart them within about 3 months. So that's the second phase of the attack, if the first phase fails.

Participant 3: Okay, thank you sir. So, right now we're theoretically posturing to make those attacks if necessary.

Participant 1: Exactly.

Participant 3: All right. Thank you.

Participant 1: So right now in terms of military activity, I'm not sure if there's anything in this game we can do other than to say that we're doing it. There's no one we can email or whatever about that per se. Although, we can coordinate with the United States, and we can coordinate with other allied countries. So, I think the next email that we send is to the Arab, GCC States, but this would be, in our game, to all of the Arabic countries, but really it would probably be geared towards closer allies, and those would include Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and maybe Egypt. And what we would be asking for is an agreement.

Participant 4: Bahrain?

Participant 1: Yes, Bahrain. Maybe Kuwait. Basically, all those states probably that are on there are probably fine. And what we're asking for is an alliance with those countries for military and logistics purposes. And we're requesting all military and military-related assets that they can provide, including access rights to waters in the Red Sea and the Gulf; overflight rights over the countries that are required for Israel to conduct operations; for intelligence of those countries related to Iranian activities; and to request military assistance in the defense of Israel. And see what they're willing to provide. That could include primarily and maybe initially, air defense systems and any additional logistics, military or otherwise, that they have in their stockpiles. And then, thirdly the actual active assistance and defense by those countries for themselves and Israel.

Facilitator: Sorry, can you repeat the final point?

Participant 1: The last one is that we request the military assistance of those countries for themselves, and for the defense of Israel. That would include a quarantine of Israel and the Gulf, and an offer to provide aerial protection over the entirety of the GCC-Israel region. So, in other words, if they see Israeli planes, they are protecting their own airspace, which in turn is protecting Israel.

Facilitator: Okay, does this note look acceptable or does anyone want to add or change?

Participant 3: Perhaps for the 4th bullet, if we rephrase, request the active military participation of these countries. Is anyone opposed to that? The above 1 says military support, this I think was more if you see an Iranian aircraft headed to Israeli airspace, shoot it down. Something of that nature.

Participant 1: Right.

Participant 4: Could we also expect that they might use their navies to blockade Iranian ports?

Participant 1: Yep. And maybe we can add another item on there, which is basically diplomatic support for initiatives in the UN Security Council or in other international fora.

Facilitator: Any objections or modifications?

Participant 1: That's good.

Facilitator: We just received a note from Russia. It is a press release from the Kremlin: "Mr. Putin today decried Israel's use of nuclear weapons and its attack on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities and Iran's legitimate means of self-defense. Mr. Putin said he had spoken with Iran's president and promised Iran immediate assistance to shore up its air defenses with the delivery of Russian S500 air defense systems, along with Russian technicians to set them up and operate them. He called on Israel to cease its further military provocations against the sovereign state of Iran."

Participant 1: We can request the United States to provide additional Patriot missile batteries to Israel, and also other GCC states that are at risk, including Egypt, which probably is still using the Russian systems. I'm in favor of it, but I'm open to other thoughts.

Facilitator: Would we want to make that request in response here?

Participant 6: So, I'm not sure what we're trying to accomplish here. Are we trying to give breathing space for the Iranians to walk back? Or are we gearing up for war? It seems like we're trying to have it a bit of both ways by trying to request that our friends in the GCC blockade Iranian ports. Well, that's an act of war. Trying to get more missile defenses, that's fine. You know, part of the problem is that we've got no real material effects, just political and psychological effects, from the nuclear weapon, but no real material effect from the nuke detonation. And when you hit an adit, it takes about 12 hours to clear out using earth movers. So, hitting those adits using conventional munitions that are not MOABs, not earth penetrators, not nukes, that's basically a crew of dudes working with machinery to pull stuff out. So, my fear is that we've done enough to piss Iranians off but haven't really affected their ability to extend power. So, I'm not sure what we're trying to accomplish here. Are we trying to actually escalate this with the Iranians or are we trying to go into a war with them? And I take your point, Mr. Prime Minister, that we still have the option to escalate if we want to, but I'm not sure that we've taken away the ability for the Iranians to reach out and touch us before we can do anything to respond.

Participant 1: Yep, that's a very good point. I think the estimates on what it will take for them to recover from some of the attacks may be longer than that, but I understand that sometimes you can get dozers out to replace things pretty quickly. Maybe what that leads us to, I appreciate the point on blockades, is the idea that it is an act of war, but it's in the gray zone of a triggering event for war. It's designed not to enable the Iranians to attack Israel. But may lead us to another option, which is to coordinate with Control, which is operating our back-channel communications with Iran, to find out what the back-channel response from the Iranians is.

Participant 6: I don't have any objection to that, Mr. Prime Minister. The only thing that I would advise you on is kind of what I said last night: you're very clear with your counterpart in Tehran that we pulled our punch on this one, and if they choose to continue to prosecute this war, we will end the regime using whatever means we deem necessary to protect the citizens of our nation. I think we need to make it very clear that we took a very measured and humane response, but if they decide to escalate this thing, we're going to come from the top rung. I would humbly submit that you have to offer a very clear threat that goes with this, particularly if it's true that we did enough to piss them off, but not enough to really hinder their ability to punch us, we have to say this was a concerted effort. We showed enormous amounts of restraint given what you [Iran] have done to us through yourself and your proxies over the past several weeks. The next punch will be the last punch that we throw if you decide to escalate it.

Participant 1: I love that. Yeah, we should send that message in a back channel to the Iranian government.

Facilitator: So, if someone wants to help me with the language of this, that'd be great.

Participant 6: Yeah, so what I would say is we exhibited an enormous amount of restraint given what Iran and its proxies have done to the Israeli people over the past several weeks. We do this in the spirit of peace. We restrained our response because we believe there's still an opportunity for peace. If Iran makes the decision to escalate this crisis beyond where we are at this point, we will do whatever we deem necessary, using whatever capabilities we deem necessary, to secure the safety and security of the Israeli state. The choice is yours. That's how I would put it.

Facilitator: Is everyone comfortable with this language?

Participant 1: I like it.

Facilitator: We did receive a clarification request from the U.S. team about our collective defense request. They ask, would this be limited to an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel or Europe, or is it conventional as well? Would it be limited to only Iran or its proxies? We wouldn't want anyone to invoke this if Iran launches a conventional attack on Israel.

Participant 1: My general thought is that this is geared toward a nuclear attack against Israel. The primary threat we're trying to protect against is a nuclear attack against Israel. Our limited request to the United States is for an assurance of protection in a nuclear attack. In addition, we

would also request and hope and expect materiel and other logistics and intelligence assistance and any other conventional assistance that the United States is willing to provide.

Participant 6: So, Mr. Prime Minister, you're saying that if Israel gets nuked by Iran, we're asking, the United States to nuke Iran in response?

Participant 1: That's right.

Participant 6: Okay, so we're asking that they make that declaration public? Because if they don't make that declaration public, it does not have a deterrent value.

Participant 1: At a minimum, they have to convey that to the Israeli government. They can decide whether they make that public. They can do it either in a limited fashion or in a completely public fashion.

Participant 6: When I say public, I mean, they have to convey it to the Iranians.

Participant 1: Absolutely.

Participant 6: Because I don't much care if we're all dead in Israel, and the Americans happened to nuke Tehran afterward. I'd rather reduce the chance of the Iranians nuking us by the American president calling up Tehran and saying: “If you do this we're going to smoke you guys so don't do it.”

Participant 1: That's exactly right and I don't have a strong opinion as to whether the United States makes that message, only to Israel, or whether it makes it to Israel and other U.S. allies in the region, or to the Russians, or in a public setting outside of those key countries.

Participant 6: Yeah, I'm fine. I think it may be more efficacious if it's just directly one-on-one with the Ayatollah.

Participant 1: Right.

Participant 6: You know, I'd be surprised if the Americans took us up on this offer, but it doesn't hurt to ask.

Participant 1: Well, my aim is to do that and the threat is twofold. The threat is basically a threat to the Iranians and it's a threat to the United States government. The threat is that if the Americans are not able to get this situation under control, they're going to have a massive situation in the Middle East, which the United States won't be able to control. So, it's a double threat and that's why we did it. That's why it's a two-phased operation. The first phase is we can do something, but we acted conventionally. The second option is something much more significant.

Participant 6: Yeah, and maybe that's part of the communique to American president that says, hey, look, we're going to be forced to escalate significantly beyond what we've already done if

this thing doesn't get under control quickly. We're asking for your help to try to de-escalate things.

Participant 1: Yes.

Facilitator: Everyone comfortable with this response as written?

Participant 1: I want to just change a couple of words on the top where it says make a public declaration. What we're really saying is to make a…

Participant 6: Commitment.

Participant 1: Commitment, yeah. We could say the guarantee should be given directly to the Ayatollah, or to others that the United States government decides is prudent.

Participant 6: Yeah, it's not really protecting Israel. It would be retaliation, right? Because you commit to deter a nuclear attack against Israel by guaranteed response to an Iranian nuclear strike with an American strike.

Facilitator: Okay. We got a response from our Arab friends: "Israel, we will only support diplomatic and economic initiatives for a cease-fire." That's from the friendly Arab States team.

Participant 3: That seems to be something we chalk up an "okay, thanks."

Participant 1: Trying to find a way to broaden their definition of diplomatic support.

Participant 3: This is probably a long shot, but could a blockade-type action that we were discussing earlier be an economic initiative for a cease-fire or is that just entirely an act of war?

Participant 1: Well, in traditional Arab thinking you can do something like that. From a Western policy expert, we would say that is a cause of war, but it actually could be something that's a little bit more diplomatic. So, the court of Dubai conducts security operations that limits movement, something along those lines. That's kind of a grey zone type of thing, so we can ask that actually, it's not out of the realm of possibility. Why don't we ask the Arab nations whether they would support security inspections within the Red Sea and within the Gulf, and notify us of any discoveries or intelligence that is garnered from those economic and security inspections.

Participant 4: Maybe. Would the economic initiatives include sanctions as well?

Participant 1: I'm sorry what's that on the sanctions?

Participant 4: Whether economic initiatives would include sanctions.

Participant 1: Good question we could say would economic initiatives include termination and suspension of all trade and all assets associated with trade with Iran at this time. Now, would this include oil and all of their other assets?

Facilitator: And when we say security inspections, that's inspections of Iranian ships.

Participant 1: I would say all ships. Everything is so unclear. We don't know anything about who is who in the zoo. So, we have to inspect everything and everything has to be cleared and reviewed and papers checked and all those kinds of things. By the way, we can do that. What if we do something similar to that on land routes in and out of various countries? I don't think that's very effective. Quite frankly most of this stuff is by sea. How about communications? Many of the Iranian communications systems are interconnected with, or travel through, GCC countries, so could we also include telecommunications and cyber assets? And I would just put this in the form of a yes or no thing. So, would you agree to do X, Y, and Z.

Participant 3: And maybe specify," would they agree to the following economic or diplomatic measures?" That way we have framed them for them as, "we believe these are economic. You should support them."

Participant 6: Right.

Participant 1: And then on the diplomatic side, you can add a bullet about support for the protection and defense of Israel in any United Nations resolutions.

Facilitator: Yep. We got a few new notes, so let's go through those quickly. So, speaking of resolutions," the United States is sponsoring a UN Security Council resolution, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the Middle East to avoid further escalation. The United States condemns the use of nuclear weapons and will actively work to deter additional use of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East by any party." The friendly Arab nations are supporting that resolution. And we got a second note – a response from Iran to our negotiations, our back channel. They say "Israel speaks of peace and de-escalation yet it has escalated this war by crossing the nuclear barrier and attacking peaceful Iranian nuclear facilities as well as Iran's legitimate self-defense forces. Iran reserves the right to limit further damage from such attacks as a legitimate act of self-defense. While Iran is no longer bound by the NPT, it would only be willing to stop defending itself upon Israel's commitment to renunciate its possession of nuclear weapons and commit to their immediate elimination."

Participant 6: Yeah. Okay. Mr. Prime Minister, I have to say it's time to go to phase two now. It's time to nuke the sons of b*** before they hit us. So, we're alone. Let's be unafraid. We've given peace a chance. I think we've got our answer there.

Participant 1: So, I agree. Why don't we get that confirmed by the United States and Russia. In other words, why don't we get the United States to have their own back-channel coordinate with the Iranians to let them know that Israel is serious about what they're saying. I mean, you're right. It's not a helpful response.

Facilitator: So, do you want to send out a note asking the United States to back channel with Iran to show our resolve?

Participant 1: Yeah, I'd send it to the United States to ask if they can provide an update in the next 30 minutes with respect to any status update that they have before Israel reserves the right to take all prudent action to defend the country.

Participant 3: Just a thought for consideration: I wonder, given the response of Israel just now, and our stated number one goal of denying their use of nuclear weapons, I think it might be a matter of time here, minutes maybe, before we receive a control team note that we've been nuked. And I think yesterday, being from the Ministry of Defense team, that our primary focus was hitting, again, all of those sites and decapitating leadership.

Participant 1: I think what we're asking for is confirmation from the United States just generally relating to Israel. We are requesting the United States provide any further updates as Israel makes its decisions related to all the options available in its defense. We'll say that Israel requests an immediate response.

Facilitator: And so, we're sending this in the thread, letting them know about Iran's response. Do we want to say anything about Iran's response?

Participant 1: We can say Israel has received information from Iran that it has declined to make any statement to not continue its defense. That's not quite the right words. We have to think about what the exact phrase is, but Israel has received information from Iran that is inconsistent with Israel's demand that it cease attacks. I think it's a fair statement?

Facilitator: Maybe any update on Israel's defense-related requests or something like that, just to be clear about what we're requesting from them?

Participant 3: Say again?

Facilitator: I just want to make sure we're clear on exactly what we're requesting from the United States so they don't try to come back for clarification and slow down our information sharing.

Participant 1: I think this is pretty clear. Israel requests an immediate response from the United States regarding any further update as Israel makes its decisions related to the options available for Israel's defense. Yeah, that's it. Send it. If the U.S. doesn't know what that means, I don't know what they're doing.

Facilitator: The United States sent a carrier group to the eastern Mediterranean as well as a guided missile submarine in the Gulf of Oman. The president warns actors in the region that would act if they further escalate this. The United States is moving to DEFCON 2 in STRATCOM, CENTCOM, and CYBERCOM.

Participant 6: What a bunch of drama queens, good god. The war's over here. We're the ones tossing lead at one another and they think they're the center. They think they're the main player in this drama. I'm just listing out some aim points because I take the point that time is of the essence at this point, given the Iranians' said no. You either unilaterally disarm and give up your nukes, otherwise we're escalating. That's fine. And so, I just listed out some aim points. I think we go relatively low, not super low yield. 1.5 is ridiculously low yield. But we do 15 kiloton yield strikes and make them relatively low. Looking at about a 100-meters high burst. Take out the political leadership, theological leadership, IRGC headquarters, secret place, internal security, whatever that is, and the Iranian army headquarters. Then targeted strikes at Natanz, Esfahan, and Qom. And then the suspected nuclear weapons storage sites, where they actually keep the warheads before they do the mating with the missiles. And then hit the weapons-usable fissile material sites. So, what you're talking about is a salvo. I would do two taps – hit them twice, in case you get a misfire or a dud since we've never tested our weapons. I would hit each one twice. So, what you're talking about is a salvo roughly of 20 warheads give or take. And then what you do is continue the conventional campaign against airbases, missile bases, anything else you want to hit. So, this goes back to – we're doing both a damage limitation strike and also the regime change.

Participant 1: I agree with all that with the exception of the regime change part. I assume that the regime is located in Tehran. I would prefer not to hit Tehran. I would use conventional munitions against those hardened targets other than the fact that they're in a city. And probably forces them out of the city anyway.

Participant 6: And at this point, they may be at bunkers anyway, and I take your point. So, fair point. If they're in the city, then we can use large conventional munitions, whatever we got. The problem is how are we going to deliver the warheads. I just don't know enough, if we've got missiles with the legs that can carry that large the warhead.

Participant 1: And 50 kilotons is still very, very small anyway. So, the likelihood of civilian damage or whatever is very limited. Frankly, I'm not sure they are actually going to be that effective. I mean, a large 5,000, pound bomb is pretty effective.

Participant 6: Yeah, but my fear is that we're going to get to the update at 7:20 and they're going to say you got nuked.

Participant 1: Got it. Any other messages?

Facilitator: Nothing yet no.

Participant 1: I'm counting on the idea that we've hit them once and it's going to take them a day to untangle themselves to a certain extent.

Participant 3: I'm not an expert by any means on Israeli conventional weapons, but I agree with the strikes on all those targets. We could consider fewer nukes if we're going that route but then we've already opened the can of worms.

Participant 1:Right. Once you've done it, you've opened Pandora's box.

Participant 6: Yeah, I'm with Participant 3 in that we're in it for a penny for a pound and I take your point. Like, I'm not trying to slaughter innocent Persians, but we're trying to ensure the survival of the Jewish people in our nation. We're not being supported by anyone. So, I kind of think we've got to go hard and end this thing before we get ended. Because they have strategic depth that we, of course, do not.

Participant 4: If we're still interested in threatening the regime, and we're not going to hit Tehran, maybe we can get the Mossad on that or special forces. Something like that.

Facilitator: All right, so we have a fairly important email update coming in from control. "Iranian defense spokesman announced army engineers have succeeded in unblocking targeted entrances to its underground long-range missile forces, which can now be used at any time against Israeli targets. Russian missile defense units have arrived and are operational. Separately, Ayatollah Khamenei declares a holy war against Israel and declares that nuclear weapons are no longer forbidden."

Participant 6: With respect, it's smoke them if you got them at this point.

Participant 1: Yep, I agree. All right.

Facilitator: Let's start typing up our targets list. So, we're saying…

Participant 1: By the way, I wouldn't just use 15 kiloton. I would start with 50 kilotons at all of the primary nuclear facilities, including Fordow, Natanz, and Parchin.

Participant 6: I think that's right. Esfahan. Qom. Go big. 50 kilotons, twice per target. Then we could go the 1.5 kilotons on the political sites that may be in downtown Tehran.

Participant 1: I'm still hesitant on the Tehran ones, but anything that's outside of Tehran, I think is fine.

Facilitator: So did we want to use 50 against the other sites that are in cities like Qom and Esfahan, or just against the targets that are buried and outside of the cities.

Participant 1: The 50 kilotons should be used in any of the facilities outside of the cities, you know, minus Bushehr, which is an actual operational nuclear power plant. Then, I would use 1.5 kilotons on key military sites. So that would include Air Force sites, Navy sites – any military facility of substance should be attacked with a 1.5 kiloton nuke. And I'm thinking in terms of quantity, maybe about 20 sites.

Participant 6: Okay, I think that makes sense. With the 1.5 kilotons, you'd be going after headquarters sites on those bases, hangars.

Participant 1: Yeah, so priority on any large missile sites. I understand a lot of these are hidden so major missile sites, airfield sites, and other command and control sites should all receive 1.5 kilotons. And I would strike, with large conventional, smart weapons, any military site in Tehran or other major cities. So, we're trying to destroy them, but we're not using nukes.

Facilitator: Sorry, including political centers in Tehran, what other targets are we hitting?

Participant 1: And other large cities in Iran

Participant 3: Maybe just one note? It looks like we contradict ourselves in ONE spot there. Are we hitting all their missile sites with 50 and with 1.5?

Participant 1: I mean, it depends on what they are. Frankly, what's the difference?

Participant 6: You know, so I think what you're going for there is the suspected sites where they're doing the warhead mating into the missiles. So those are different from the conventional Iranian missile sites, right? I think I think that was your intention, sir.

Participant 1: Yep, I agree.

Facilitator: Okay, we'll move that. I guess we should just clarify what we said 1,000 feet airburst?

Participant 6: No, I would do a 100-meter airburst.

Facilitator: And against the buried sites would we also be doing airbursts?

Participant 6: No, no, no. So, if they're buried, if they're adits, if they're bunkers, then we're doing ground bursts.

Facilitator: I'll just clarify that for all of them.

Participant 6: So, I would add in on your two times 50 K, at those sites and other suspected nuclear warheads storage sites. So that we're not boxing ourselves in.

Facilitator: Okay, is everyone ready to go?

Participant 1: I think so. Is there any message from the United States?

Facilitator: We got one email when we were typing. Let's see what it says. Not getting anything from the U.S. but Iranian proxies have launched another round of rockets at Israel. Including targeting power generating stations and transformers, causing rolling blackouts across Israel, oil and gas depots and pipelines causing large explosions, population centers and the parliament building. That's the only update.

Participant 1: Okay, well, I think we're approved to go, subject to anybody else who has thoughts.

Participant 6: Nope.

Participant 1: All right, you can send it.

Facilitator: Alright. The United States just got back to us, right as we sent it. The United States extended deterrence seeks to dissuade the use of nuclear weapons. The United States does not want to see any further nuclear use. The U.S. will, of course, provide conventional and logistical support. We have sent naval resources to the region to deter Iran and its proxies. The United States desires to have diplomatic discussions amongst the friendly Arab nations, Israel, Iran, and UN Security Council members." And, we received a press release from Saudi Arabia. "The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the keeper of Mohammad's tomb, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the defender of Islam, rejects Ayatollah Khamenei's assertions that this is a holy war. There was no holiness in the use of nuclear weapons. We, Saudi Arabia, decry any assertion that this war is anything but a war between 2 nations. We call on all parties to de-escalate and observe a cease-fire."

Participant 6: So, Mr. Prime Minister, you may want to put out a note yourself that says we didn't want to do this, we were forced into doing this. We hate that we find ourselves here, but once again, the Jewish people are, you know what I mean?

Participant 1: Yeah. So, I'll send a note, it's a press release. "Approximately 30 minutes ago, the government of Israel made a very difficult decision to defend its sovereignty and right to exist. Israel has made the determination that in order to ensure its existence, that it had to use all available means necessary to protect and defend the nation. This involved the difficult decision to use targeted and limited munitions to effectuate the destruction of Iran's illegal and immoral nuclear weapons facilities. Israel seeks peace with Iran, but will continue to defend its interests and nation." And you guys can fiddle with other better words, or other ideas.

Participant 1: Well, with respect to the wording, it says this involved using limited conventional, I will say this involved using …

Participant 3: Both conventional and targeted nuclear.

Participant 1: Yes. That's a better way.

Participant 6: That sought to minimize civilian death.

Participant 3: Can we call Iran's nuclear weapons facilities immoral if we just nuked them?

Participant 1: I was thinking about that. The issue is that the moral part of it is that they threatened to destroy the country of Israel without justification. So, anyway, we may not want to get into that.

Facilitator: Any other comments?

Participant 3: I think it looks good and we better push it before the flurry of traffic in messages gets out there. If we want it to be first and relevant.

Facilitator: Alright, that's out.

Participant 3: Do we have any intelligence or were we provided any intelligence on an assessment of how many weapons we think Israel possesses? What I'm getting at is that I think we certainly maintain the ability to strike again. We have plenty more. Or do we have a sense of that?

Facilitator: I don't believe anything was given in the game narrative. So, if we want to make an assumption and if it's a reasonable assumption, we can do that.

Participant 3: I don't know if I think that's necessary. I was just thinking out loud. And I suppose we used about 50, maybe 60.

Participant 6: Yeah, I think it's about right we're in the ballpark of 50 to 60. I think we should assume we'll have international condemnation, but we still have like, another 140, 150 in the stockpile.

Participant 1: I guess we're going to find out how many Iran has left. We could send a note to the United States asking for further assistance and further defensive systems in the event of a counterattack from Iran.

Facilitator: If the team agrees, we can send a note.

Participant 1: I think the U.S. team is stymied by government bureaucracy. They cannot respond quickly. Why don't we send a note? Let's draft up a note to the United States to ask for their assistance on the other items that we previously asked that relate to the diplomatic and military defense of Israel.

Facilitator: I just pulled up what we've received so far from them. This was the earlier note they sent. Just as a reminder. "They do not want to see any further nuclear use. The U.S. will, of course, provide conventional and logistical support. They've sent naval resources. They desire to lead diplomatic discussions." So, some of the points in our original note have been responded to, but not at all. Specifically, we haven't heard anything on security assurances.

Participant 1: So, maybe now we send a note to the United States stating that Israel still seeks peace in the region and requests assistance from the United States to effectuate a peaceful resolution of the situation. Israel requests further coordination with the United States on support for its defense. Because what's going to happen next theoretically, is the Iranians are going to counterattack, or its proxies, and we're going to need additional assistance to do that.

Facilitator: And so, as a reminder that the proxies already launched a follow-on attack that hit Israeli critical infrastructure. Ok is this ready to send?

Participant 1: Okay.

Facilitator: Okay, I'll keep an eye on the email for further information when we hear back from the other teams. We did just receive a note from control. It just says a nuclear explosion has been detonated over Mashabim Air Base, which is an Israeli air base that has a U.S. presence as well. So, we got our nuke back.

Participant 1: Well, most importantly, we got the U.S. into the mix, because now U.S. assets have been hit by an Iranian nuke.

Facilitator: Do you want to send the U.S. a final note about this?

Participant 1: I don't think so. I think we've sent them what we need now they know.

Facilitator: All right. Well, in that case, we can go ahead and start looking at our slides. So, our questions. First, we go through diplomatic actions. Then military actions.

Participant 1: Just out of curiosity are we supposed to be taking this from the beginning of the evening?

Facilitator: Yeah, so this is from the beginning of the evening. So, this is kind of a summary of what we what we did this evening. What we chose to do and why.

Participant 1: Okay, so what I would say is, Israel took a series of diplomatic actions to allow Iran several opportunities ***not*** to engage in a nuclear war in the region: 1) Israel requested that Iran de-escalate after Israel's limited demonstration; 2) Israel coordinated with the United States in an effort to request diplomatic and military assistance, and a commitment to defend Israel in the event of a nuclear attack; 3) Israel coordinated with friendly Arab states for diplomatic and military assistance; 4) Israel coordinated again with the United States with a request for assistance even after it was attacked by Iranian proxies; 5) Israel only commenced a nuclear attack after Iran communicated its intent not to cease its operations and recommitted to its right to use all available means. And then, after number one, I'd put another item, which is Israel used back-channel communications to coordinate its threat to the Iranian government directly. Did I capture everything?

Participant 3: It looks correct, yeah. That's everything we discussed. You listing them all out made me realize what an effort we put in, because I was like, we pretty much just nuked them, but no.

Participant 6: No, this is very measured and considered really.

Facilitator: We got one more email. The United States has invoked Article 5 of NATO in response to the nuclear strike on a U. S. military installation onboard an Israeli base.

Participant 6: Well, they can request Article 5, they can't invoke Article 5, right? I mean, the other 31 nations have to vote and agree that, "yes, we're going to do Article 5."

Facilitator: I guess they do also represent all those nations that team so maybe they can get away with the word invoke.

Participant 1: Oh, yeah, you're right. It says it does say U.S. EU and NATO so you're right.

Participant 6: All right. I stand corrected.

Facilitator: Do we want to say anything to them now that they're in the war, or just stick to the slides?

Participant 1: Well, that doesn't have anything to do with us directly right now. In other words, right now, the United States has been attacked and that brings all of NATO into it. And then, what are they going to do? I guess we can offer to coordinate with NATO on all of these initiatives. That's one thing we can do. We can send an email to the United States, NATO and the EU to request coordination for the defense of Israel. And the U.S. base, that's a better way to put it.

Facilitator: Say, "Israel requests coordination with the U. S and NATO to work together for the defense of Israel and NATO military forces."

Participant 1: Yep.

Participant 3: Sounds good.

Facilitator: All right. And China condemns us. Okay, should we move on to the next slide?

Participant 3: Yeah.

Facilitator: So, this is our military actions. We have the big one.

Participant 1: Yeah, I would just copy and paste what we did in there, that's the easiest way to answer that.

Participant 3: And I don't know if it's necessary, but once we launch these nuclear attacks, I assume an ongoing rolling conventional campaign across all Iranian forces. Which I guess we have in that last bullet there, never mind.

Participant 6: Yeah, and this gets to what we talked about last night too – as we see targets come available that we've already identified as priority that have not been engaged, we'll engage them with whatever munition can service that target. So, this is an ongoing campaign at this point.

Participant 3: Right.

Facilitator: Do we want to give any color as to, you know, I think our motivation is fairly obvious, but if we want to discuss it.

Participant 1: The Israeli targeting sequence is designed to distinguish between civilian and military targets and limit damage to the civilian populace, while effectively destroying the ability of Iran to attack Israel.

Facilitator: Okay. And the game play is over. Just some last-minute notes from the other teams. The friendly Arab nations asked for clarification on who exactly nuked the Israeli-U.S. base, which seems fairly obvious. The U.S. has said "Both sides have fired nuclear weapons. The matter is closed. We will cease conventional support and pull the plug on the intelligence that we provide to Israel should Israel continue to use nuclear weapons." Apparently, control is stepping in on the NATO team and saying that Turkey would not support an Article 5 action against Iran until and unless Israel publicly agrees to forswear its possession of nuclear weapons along with Iran.

Participant 6: So, there's no Article 5.

Facilitator: There's no consensus on Article 5.

Participant 3: Just so I heard that right, the United States continues to condemn Israel's use of nuclear weapons and would cease intelligence assistance and other should additional nuclear weapons be employed?

Facilitator: Yes, that's the gist.

Participant 3: Okay, thinking about our last comment about coordinating with NATO, maybe that's a no.

Participant 6: I know you can respond with; we've got better intel than you guys have.

Facilitator: We can tell them that the plenary, but we're past the end of communication.

Participant 6: Yeah, you're not ceasing Intel sharing with us. We're ceasing intel sharing with you.

Facilitator: So, we can move on to the last side. I think we're going to have plenty of extra time if we want to add anything else in the slides or any final thoughts. This is our last slide and we'll have until about 7:25 to finish them up.

Participant 6: I don't think so. I don't think it mattered. You know, everyone condemned us. Israel stands alone as we've always been forced to stand alone. We did what we had to do to defend our people and our nation. I mean, honestly, the American responses to us were kind of

paternalistic, you know, “hey, little brother, calm down.” The tone that they were taking was very imperious.

Participant 3: Yeah, I agree. If it’s specific to Israel, I think not. But Iran’s choice of target could have had a very different effect. But I agree. It didn't matter, we didn't draw any other country into the conflict on our own. Any other target wouldn't change that. And we face the condemnation we would face hitting anywhere.

Participant 6: Yeah, we did a 1.5-kiloton strike out in the middle of nowhere. We offered peace. They said, go pound sand and then they launch attacks through their proxies on civilian population centers, power grids, all kinds of stuff. I mean, my God. We were not the problems here, right?

Facilitator: I’m going to put that point up here.

Participant 1: You can also say Israel specifically declined to use nuclear munitions in large population centers.

Facilitator: Are there any other thoughts on any of these questions from the game that we want to add, anything else worth bringing to the attention of the plenary or the folks writing the report, or does this feel pretty comprehensive?

Participant 1: I think it looks pretty good to me. Maybe go to the last slide, just to look at it again. Well, I guess this was pretty easy for us. I'm curious what the conversations were on the U. S or the Arab teams.

Facilitator: Yeah, they were a little slow in responding. Our team was moving good and quick.

Participant 3: Well, this one was especially easy for us, because we already know why we picked our targets. They're probably debating. I guess one thing for discussion, if we had the intelligence and we did a single-use nuclear weapon to decapitate the regime, would that have had a different impact? And I don't think so. It would have been in a population center and maybe would have driven different outcomes, but I don't know if it would have.

Participant 6: Yeah, the problem with that is, if we're trying to use one nuclear weapon to decapitate the regime, you've got the sites that are spread out across Tehran. So, you've got to either use a really big weapon or multiple smaller weapons, like we discussed. And if you go really big, Tehran is in a bowl. There are mountains all around, which is really ideal nuclear warfighting terrain, because the shock waves can bounce off and come back over to the city itself. So, it actually amplifies the damage in Tehran if you go big.

Participant 3: Just another example of our team’s measured resolve.

Participant 6: We're saving lives out here, people.

Game play ended.

Friendly Arab Nations

Participant 2: Let me just say, I think we have one of the easiest things to do this session. I can't see this group of nations doing anything militarily. And so, all we have to do is answer this box. And maybe the third about how we might change. That's why I asked about Russia and China. I thought they might have a lot more to say or do than this group of nations.

Facilitator: We can always ask Control and see what they're doing because they are acting as Russia and China, or any country that is not listed.

Participant 3: Don't you think there would be some diplomatic backlash even from the Saudis?

Participant 2: Certainly, under the table, they're clapping. We're representing a whole bunch of Suni nations. They aren't going to want Iran to do well. In some sense, I think they'd be happy. To answer the third question, if the Israelis really do mess up the Iranians then maybe we might have to take a harder stance. But the Israelis are being really restrained. I would think Saudi Arabia would be happy. After all they've been attacked by Iran and are in competition.

Participant 3: I agree with you. I just remember the backlash.

Participant 2: The Iranians are not Arab; they are Persian people.

Participant 2: The Gazans are Arabs and we have to be upset about that. I don't see us having to be upset about the Iranians.

Participant 1: Currently, you can compare it to, you know, we only have the information we have right. Iran is fighting a proxy war with Saudi Arabia via Yemen. The Houthis were directly targeting Saudi Arabia's oil refineries and the Qataris act as a go-between, right? They helped broker the Taliban, they currently helped to broker the current cease-fire. Who else is in the Abraham Accords here? Is Egypt in the Abraham Accords?

Participant 4: No. They already have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Participant 1: And Egypt doesn't want a wider escalation. They have a humanitarian crisis with Gaza on their border now. I am not sure how they play into Iran or how they feel about Iran. I would say this is a miscalculation on a whole different level, but I think the Saudi Arabians would cheer. I don't think it would matter if they're both Muslim or not. I think it was more like they might even take military action because Saudi Arabia does have a pretty well-developed defense force. You know, American equipment, American tanks, and American aircraft per se and training by us for the last 30 or 40 years.

Participant 3: Yeah, I'm not so concerned about state-level actors, national leadership, and whatnot. It's more that I am considering the broader socio-religious piece of this. There is already a strong belief that the West is at war with Islam and we're sponsoring Israel.

Participant 1: Aren't Saudi Arabians based on what Sunni Islam is, and Persian Islam is based on another school of thought? They are contradictory to each other, right?

Participant 2: Yes, Shias and Sunnis.

Participant 3: The largest concentration of Shia are in Iran. There's a sprinkling of them all throughout the Middle East, including Hezbollah. Hamas is primarily Sunni.

Participant 1: Let's think about the context of this separated from Hamas. Right? This whole scenario is about Iran and Israel. I know we can't separate the two in the real world, but the scenario we're looking at… it directly puts nation-states against each other.

Participant 3: But nation-states have to somehow manage their people and exceed the sentiments of their people. I am just wondering if the first-time nuclear weapons have been used since 1945 and they are being used against the Israelis by the Muslim people.

Participant 6: Forgive me, but the rest of the world is not going to see any of that. They're going to see a mushroom cloud over Iran and they're going to panic. It doesn't matter who they are, or what their previous motivations were. A mushroom cloud changes the entire game. They must, out of necessity, go after Israel. Across the diplomatic, intellectual, military, and economic spheres. The question is improperly formulated to say it's only diplomatic. Israel is going to experience economic sanctions; they're going to experience diplomatic sanctions. They're going to experience, at a minimum, a lot of cyber-attacks, trying to stop this.

Participant 2: I do not see our group of nations doing that.

Participant 4: I don't either.

Participant 6: They have to do this. It looks like the start of a nuclear war. That they've got to shut it down.

Facilitator: Control clarified that all the actions that were listed in the introductory slides have been taken.

Participant 1: So, there's been a strike and destruction. We're calculating what the diplomatic response from our countries is. Let's pretend we're there, right? So, we all have a vested interest in keeping the status quo in the region, and not having a shooting war. Which is already happening between the two sides, right? Because we're right in the middle. What will we do?

Participant 2: As I said, yesterday, I'm a sort of blow them up with nuclear weapons sort of guy. I haven't thought that much about diplomacy or from that point of view. I would think you're trying to say what steps can be taken to de-escalate or off-ramp this.

Participant 1: I think we have two choices. Either we join in or we de-escalate.

Participant 2: I'm leaning toward trying to de-escalate this somehow. I can't think of what to do to do that, but I think that the intent of our group of countries is to try to get this pot not boiling over.

Participant 6: That's the only thing to do is to de-escalate. We have to redirect the inevitable diplomatic force that's going to be brought against Israel. We have to redirect it to Iran and say, if you get them to stand down, we will stand down.

Participant 1: I kind of agree that might be our only way of going forward because as a coalition, even though Saudi Arabia would have the ability to militarily strike, which is not a diplomatic action, right? To help support or separate a line against Iran. They would probably be willing to do it. I also think they wouldn't do it in the sense of it would also alienate them from the rest of the Arab world and they have trading for everybody.

Participant 4: Respectfully, I think as a group, we were underestimating the amount of anger there would be even among Sunni Arabs in the Gulf over a mushroom cloud over another Muslim Cloud. Yes, Iran is Shia and Saudi Arabia is dealing with 10-15% of their population. Russia and Saudi inhabit all of the oil producing parts of the country. Bahrain is a predominantly Shia country. Kuwait is a third Shia. Oman has a significant Shia population. What we saw at our Institute, we ran polling across the Arab world after the beginning of the Hamas conflict last month. What we saw is that even in Arab countries, the masses had more trust in Iran, at least they reported such, in late October than they did for the United States. So, it's a little bit counterintuitive because we know their governments are fighting but the power among the population of the Muslim connection is strong. And I think these governments would be very hesitant to do anything post Arab Spring to delegitimize their role, particularly Saudi Arabia. Their role as a religious leader in the region. I absolutely think there'll be no role for the Arab states in participating against another Muslim country. Particularly because the lessons the Saudis learned from Yemen were that they're really not competent and capable of successfully carrying out military operations. They had to have systems on the ground. Basically, doing everything but pulling the trigger. No one other than the UAE is capable of anything militarily. I don’t see any military actions

Participant 2: I think we are in agreement there are no military actions.

Participant 1: I was trying to get to a thought on which I agree with all of you. What would you do if you could take action without taking action? Besides a diplomatic thing. Would you be brokering peace by offering humanitarian or peacekeeping forces or acting as almost a referee in-between to try to de-escalate?

Participant 3: The comment Participant 4 was making is right on the money. Diplomatically, I think all these countries would be trying to play the middle of the road and may even be going into Iran and saying, “let us use our good offices to get Israel to back off.” In reality, what they're telling the Israelis is we're trying to give you an off-ramp or give an off ramp. We need your assistance and cooperation.

Participant 1: That's where I am thinking this would happen. I think that diplomatically what they would do would be that Saudi Arabia, UAE, or Qatar would step up and try to insert themselves to calm the situation down or get engulfed by it. Then the thought process would be we're going to condemn and try to separate the two and then see what we can do to keep a bridging force in between. I'm not saying it's all possible. But diplomatically I think they would take that action. Militarily, I don't think they're going to go after and strike targets in Iran or in Israel. They could provide a peacekeeping force in between, or on long international borderlines. Within our borders to keep things from flying over us. The United States will eventually come over, right?

Participant 2: Do we want to put pressure on the United States to try to de-escalate the thing rather than getting us directly in between these two countries?

Participant 1: Who is going to have more credibility with Iran? Is it Saudi Arabia or the United States?

Participant 3: I don't think it would be either. I think it would be Qatar.

Participant 1: Yeah, Qatar.

Facilitator: We have a press release from the Kremlin. I am going to share my screen so everyone can see. "Mr. Putin today has decreed Israel's use of nuclear weapons, its attack on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities, and Iran's legitimate means of self-defense. Mr. Putin said he had spoken with Iran's president and promised Iran immediate assistance to shore up its air defenses with the delivery of Russian S-500 air defense systems along with Russian technicians to set them up and operate them. He called on Israel to cease its further military provocations against the sovereign state of Iran."

Participant 6: Military response right there. I think we're underestimating the panic that the rest of the world's going to show or display as a result of this.

Facilitator: We also just received a message from Israeli Defense. They are seeking an alliance from military and logistic purposes to counter Iran. They hope for: 1) any military and logistics assets they can provide, including water access and in the Red Sea and the Gulf, overflight rights over the countries needed for Israel to conduct operations; 2) any intelligence they can provide on Iranian targets and capabilities; 3) any military they can provide, especially air defense and other logistic capabilities; 4) they request the active military participation of these countries, both for themselves and Israel, including a naval quarantine around Iran in the Gulf and a blockade of Iranian ports, and shooting down Iranian planes in your airspace; 5) diplomatic support for initiatives in the UN Security Council and other international forums.

Participant 2: My inclination is to reject all of it. As our group of countries, we want to be neutral. I think that is maybe one of our diplomatic steps is to declare neutrality. Qatar is one of our countries that is a go between and can try to mediate something. I am inclined to tell the Israelis we are neutral.

Participant 3: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I do not believe the Israelis have the capability to strike unless they have overflight rights through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and any other space that they need. In doing so, you'd shut down any further attack, but then we couldn't stop Iran from potentially weaponizing a nuclear weapon and using it.

Participant 2: We might not be able to control our airspace necessarily. And Jordan isn't actually one of our countries.

Participant 1: Israel has struck reactors in Iraq and parts of Iran by air strikes in the 80s, if I remember correctly, and Syria.

Participant 5: So, Israel struck stuff on the border to Iraq. What they'll do is fly through the southern part of Syria up the border and then they'll cross Iraq. Probably the northern reaches, where it is friendlier, and then that's how they get over to Iran. That's the one thing that they don't have capability-wise is a robust air bridge and they frequently would ask the United States for use of tankers. That's one reason why they're trying to purchase so many of them right now. So, I don't know if Israel at this time has acquired its own organic refueling capability that would be required to do a strike.

Participant 1: Going back to this, I think I kind of agree with rejecting a good portion of it. But what if we countered and said it is because our goal is to de-escalate and we will only support diplomatic initiatives in the UN for a cease-fire. We will also consider a quarantine blockade of Iran and would only provide humanitarian aid and no other logistics support to both sides.

Participant 6: First of all, I think we're beyond the UN right now. Secondly, who's going to do the blockade around Iran?

Participant 1: Doesn't Saudi Arabia actually have a Navy?

Participant 6: Nothing substantial

Participant 3: All we need is to get the United States to shut down the Strait of Hormuz.

Participant 2: I don't think Saudi Arabia or anyone wants that.

Participant 1: That's going to mess up oil.

Participant 3: We'll allow Saudi Arabia and GCC countries through. Just not Iranian. I had a general who said outright he could shut down the primary source of their Iranian economy with one submarine at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.

Participant 1: In that case, if we don't think those would be effective points, I would say we would probably just reject everything and say that we're only going to support a cease-fire across the board.

Participant 4: What would we do if Israel drove five nuclear warheads across the border and gave them to us because we're Saudi.

Participant 2: Well, I don't think they'll do that.

Participant 4: I am saying we can ask. We're still not going to get it.

Participant 2: Where's the upside in getting involved in all this? I mean, laying low seems a better thing.

Participant 3: What are you thinking about these Russian technicians?

Participant 6: The technicians are going to be S-500 operators. That's what they're going to be.

Participant 2: I'd like to think by the time they show up, we can get this thing over. If this thing is long enough for Russian technicians to get flown into Iran. Why don't we send this off?

Participant 1: I have a secondary thought here. How do we feel about Russia intervening with the situation? Because it just makes it worse, right? Yes, it's an escalation. Do we feel it's going to stop the Israelis from performing airstrikes because there's a more credible air defense system in place or do we think it will escalate the situation further?

Participant 3: What happens to Russian technicians?

Participant 1: I don't think the Israelis will care. I think if they've decided to make nuclear weapons, all bets are off.

Participant 3: Does this become casus belli for Putin?

Participant 1: Yeah, I don't know. I don't have the same level of knowledge on Russia. You know, I'm only taking my informed opinion from what I see and that's a very low-level opinion. So, I don't know. I'm just saying, if we call out the Russian intervention in this. Do we reject the need for Russia to interfere in this situation as well and call for all parties to broker a ceasefire.

Participant 6: Why would we reject a defensive air system moving into Iran? It's not an offensive weapon. Why would we reject that?

Participant 1: Installation of other parties.

Participant 3: Yeah, the question is what happens if Russian personnel get killed and it gives a reason for Putin to make trouble for us in any number of ways.

Participant 1: I was really thinking of just seeing it as a basic escalation only.

Participant 3: Is this what his reference was to, you know, August 1914? Nobody expected anything to go beyond the mobilization of troops and whatnot. Then they expected it to be a quick little war. And then they expected their technological advantages to be overwhelming or whatever. Given what's been going on with Russia, I would think that Putin might even be thinking of arming or providing a greater measure of support to Iran, just to keep this thing going.

Participant 1: Yeah, I think we might just go with the ceasefire though right now and then we can make a decision on Russia later.

Facilitator: So is this good to send out?

Participant 2: Yeah, I'm good with it.

Facilitator: I've sent this off.

Participant 4: I was just going to say Russia's basically friendly with the Gulf oil producers. I mean, they depend on one another to set prices. In four or five years, the Saudis are going to be even more concerned about that than they are today. As prices get more volatile and as global demand begins to drop off towards 2040.

Participant 3: Let's look at this this way, if this entire region becomes engulfed in a war, what happens to Russian petroleum reserves?

Participant 1: It goes up. Putin loves asymmetrical warfare. He is buying drones from Iran, so I would say that the military relationship is pretty awesome. So, I don't know, it's hard to say with three years. There's a lot of real-world stuff that's going on right now that informs our decisions outside of the game. So, let's try to answer these questions here. Let's see, okay. What actions we might take in response to an Israel strike, ongoing proxy attacks. Would we also call for sanctions to Iran or other blockades to try to discourage them from proxy attacks, including interdiction for weapon shipments to proxies?

Participant 2: I wouldn't just threaten the sanctions if people don't de-escalate, rather than actually do it as a first step.

Participant 3: And embargoes.

Participant 1: What other diplomatic actions could we take as a group? We hold the world's petroleum reserves in our hands. We're a key member of OPEC, right? Could we stop shipments as a way of slowing it down?

Participant 6: That's part of the sanctions and embargoes.

Participant 1: Just trying to be more elaborate, I guess.

Participant 2: We'll stop the petroleum going to home.

Participant 1: Cut it off, I mean, as Iran will have theirs. I kind of agree with Participant 6. We might be grossly underestimating the amount that a mushroom cloud is going to freak people out. If we really did try to stop it quickly, you need to get people's attention. Nothing is going to get more attention from the UN than having the world's energy market pause for a moment. Not necessarily a crash, but a hiccup.

Participant 2: See, I'm in a different view that I don't want to get the world's attention to our group. I mean, as you say, nuclear weapons are flying around. Attracting attention is the last thing I want our group of countries to do.

Participant 3: They're all relying upon the sale of oil for their economies. I wouldn't stop global distribution. I would say we're going to threaten to sanction embargoes against Iran and Israel or the belligerents in an attempt to de-escalate the situation and force them to exceed to some type of negotiation or talks.

Participant 1: I want that too but if it doesn't work someone's going have to be the adult in the room. You're not going to be able to get these two people to back off fighting unless you get everyone else involved, right? I know it's an extreme measure, but at the extreme, we could pause it.

Facilitator: We just received something from the U.S. and NATO team. So, I'm going to share this. "The United States is sponsoring a UNSC resolution calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the Middle East to avoid further escalation. The United States condemns the use of nuclear weapons and will actively work to deter additional use of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East by any party."

Participant 2: My inclination is to support this. Say yes.

Participant 4: Same.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Participant 5: Yeah.

Facilitator: I will get back to the slides. Did you want to go to the next question?

Participant 1: Let's look at this to make sure we get all as a group consensus how do we feel about this?

Participant 2: I might put a stop to petroleum shipments.

Participant 6: Shipments to the antagonist.

Participant 2: Well, pretty much shipments from Saudi.

Participant 4: Israel doesn't really import any Arab oil. Pretty much, for all of the obvious reasons, Israelis import from Nigeria and the United States.

Participant 5: What about disclosing our airspace to all parties to include rockets? So, people can't fire ballistic missiles into the airspace.

Participant 2: Do we have a way of enforcing that?

Participant 1: Especially if they're suborbital missiles, frankly, I think that comes on. There's no treaty that governs that. None apply. It's kind of like open skies.

Facilitator: Would it make sense to pressure the United States to step in?

Participant 1: Yes. Offer to be a mediator between Iran and Israel, not a ref, but a mediator in between. Because Qatar has a really good background with us and they have a vested interest in having those two not kill each other.

Facilitator: We do have about ten minutes before we're going to get that red call. Is there any action that we need to take, or want to take?

Participant 3: Demarche of both Israel and Iran Israel for using nuclear weapons. Iran for recklessly pursuing nuclear weapons.

Participant 6: Is a demarche enough for a response?

Participant 3: More symbolic, all of all the countries sign it.

Participant 6: Doesn't mean anything.

Participant 3: But it's just another measure that you can take that signals your dissatisfaction and that it's a step on the road to other more drastic actions.

Participant 6: Or two of the more drastic actions here, that's the problem. We need to consider a NATO withdrawal of personnel from these countries.

Participant 1: I think those are kind of tame and in my thoughts, let's check the other questions out before we decide. What military actions might each team take in response to this? We put none. And I know the argument was that these countries don't have enough military power. But, closing our borders to any civilian or military access or enforcing a quarantine, if possible, at the Persian Gulf level.

Participant 3: Quarantine or a blockade?

Participant 2: A blockade is an act of war as the Cuban missile crisis did. The quarantine is apparently fuzzy.

Participant 1: Keep it ambiguous. Quarantine.

Participant 3: Of what?

Participant 5: I don't understand the quarantine.

Participant 1: I mean, I don't really have a way that I can think of trying to affect Iran without firing a shot beyond economics. Right? So, I can help Saudi Arabia and Qatar. I can help control the access point to the Persian Oil.

Facilitator: We did just receive a message from Israel Defense about economic sanctions. Is everyone able to read this? "Would the Arab states agree to the following economic actions?

- Support security inspections of all ships within the Red Sea and the Gulf and notification of any discoveries or intelligence that is garnered from those economic and security inspections?
- Suspension of all trade and associated assets with Iran?
- Action against Iranian telecommunication and cyber assets in GCC countries qualify as economic initiatives?
- Support for the protection and defense of Israel in any UN resolutions?"

Participant 2: That's fine.

Participant 1: GCC countries are Gulf Cooperation?

Participant 4: Yes, besides Yemen.

Participant 1: I think we do about half of that, and we would definitely not do the last one.

Participant 3: I think that Participant 2 has made a good point. We need to emphasize our neutrality so that we can maintain a negotiating and mediator-type position.

Participant 1: Yeah, I'm kind of with that, but we still have to have something to enforce that neutrality. Not enforce it, but give credence to be like, "hey, we're serious."

Participant 3: Well, I think you're on the right track with the military piece in that. Individually, they can't do much, but if they work together, they can do a lot to defend their airspace, their territory, and maritime economic exclusive zones, those types of things.

Participant 4: They have that. It's called the Peninsula Shield Force, and they used it against Bahrain during the uprising in 2011. I remember how many tanks they rolled across the causeway, but the Saudis took several destroyers and brought them to protect a Sunni island, which is the traditionally Sunni area of Bahrain. And they helped in all kinds of electronic ways that you guys understand. So, they have been able to do that when they've been really scared before.

Participant 1: So, as a group together, say we represent each country in this coalition. We need to maintain neutrality. But if I have a mechanism of enforcement, which would be deterring proxies from attacks within our border, economic sanctions, and possibly cooperative military action outside of Israel, but not in support of Israel or Iran.

Facilitator: Do you want to respond to this? Before we move back to the slides?

Participant 2: Well, I'm not sure we've quite decided that. It's going to take a lot of time to go through these. Why don't we go back to the slides we were working on?

Participant 1: We're not going to support Israel in the UN. We're going to defend our own borders and it behooves us to stop proxy attacks, if possible, within our borders. And then also to deny access to both parties from entering our borders or our territorial areas. I could see dropping a bomb in Yemen to try to dissuade them from launching again in Israel, if this was the situation. It's hard to say, if they're going to launch an attack in Lebanon, you know, try to stop Hezbollah. So, I think those are good options. Do we need to define the quarantine?

Participant 2: The message we received tried to define it in a lot of detail. I'm not sure whether we want to define it in that much detail

Participant 1: You want to keep it in, like, just very broad and ambiguous so they don't define specifics and they can pick it apart.

Participant 3: Well, I would recommend enforcing a quarantine of the Gulf against movement of military capabilities that are assets by either belligerent.

Participant 1: Very good.

Participant 4: I like that. The only one who would really be able to participate would be the Emirates. But good enough.

Participant 5: Oh, something that we quietly ask the United States for is if they have any knowledge of weapons shipments or something moving through our territory.

Participant 4: Guys, if the policy is an all-encompassing escalation, would we tell the United States to threaten the oil embargo? If the United States takes any kind of escalation or actions within the territory of Iran.

Facilitator: We did just receive an announcement from the United States. I'm going to share my screen just so everyone can see it. “The United States has sent a carrier group into the eastern Mediterranean as well as a guided missile submarine in the Gulf of Oman. The president warns actors in the region that would act to further escalate this not to do so. The United States is moving to DEFCON 2 in STRATCOM, CENTCOM, AND CYBERCOM.”

Participant 2: Wow. All of our reasons to keep our heads down, I would think.

Participant 4: My take is that they would be using every tool at their disposal to prevent escalation. Because they will be caught in the middle.

Participant 3: I think that they would agree that we should remain neutral. We should be attempting to use our good offices to try to mediate, or bring some type of this discussion and let the United States be the military power of this equation.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Participant 2: I agree.

Facilitator: Would we like to respond to this or do we need to respond to this?

Participant 3: I would say that the Friendly Arab nations favor a U.S. presence to help stabilize and provide security.

Participant 4: Yeah, the only thing I'm saying, throw it out there for you guys, we would be more assertive in trying to convince the United States to de-escalate in nature.

Participant 2: Supports U.S. efforts to de-escalate the crisis.

Participant 1: Yeah, because we're not going to support military intervention by the United States.

Participant 3: Looking at this, from the Israeli point of view – at least the way I would think that they would think about this – do the movement and the presence of the United States strengthen their hand, and give them an off-ramp from further military action while causing concern for Iran? Iranian leadership would look at the movement of the United States to a more offensive posture as cause for concern to find some way to de-escalate the situation. At the same time, you've got almost all of the gulf countries putting pressure on both countries to find a way to negotiate.

Participant 4: Yeah, I agree with that. I think, for example, in Qatar, there could be a lot going on behind the scenes in regard to the Gulf States' willingness to allow the United States to use its bases on their territory for offensive action. For example, the Qatari are dependent on coordination over natural gas with Iran. Are they going to be willing to allow us to use our really major air base in the region to launch an attack? No. So, I think they do have some other tools as well.

Participant 1: So, I think we would reject the issue to go to DEFCON 2, by the way. DEFCON 2 is almost key turning if I remember correctly, and the United States doesn't need to move a carrier battle group. That's signaling. Also in the area are all major air force with strike capabilities. That's not part of the scenario. I would say that having a U. S carrier strike group in the Gulf would do nothing, but stir more attention. We're trying to de-escalate, right?

Participant 3: The carrier group is in the eastern Mediterranean.

Participant 1: Oh, I'm sorry. I missed that. Oh, the Gulf Oman, that is really close. All right, I don't want to sway the group here, but what was the consensus of the rest of you folks while I was away? Do we support this or we don't support this?

Participant 2: Well, we support the de-escalation. There's the issue of whether we leave it, sort of subtle, and send this off in one sentence. Or do we want to say something that says, we don't see the need for the United States to go to these higher levels of alert.

Participant 1: Yeah, I think that's a good point.

Participant 3: Should the United States consult before taking a further military action in order to allow diplomacy to work.

Participant 1: Yeah, I think those are both valid ones. I don't think we want to leave it ambiguous like this because at this point ambiguity works with certainty, but sometimes we need to be really specific. We support de-escalation. We do not support any further military assets being deployed in the region. We can work with all that right?

Participant 3: Request consultation before taking any further military action in order for diplomacy to work

Participant 1: I like that.

Participant 3 Yeah, I'm good with it.

Participant 1: How are we doing on the questions? I'm sorry to be like this. I just want to make sure we're not rushing to finish.

Facilitator: This came in from the control team. “Iranian defense spokesman announced army engineers have succeeded in unblocking targeted entrances to its underground, long-range missile forces, which can now be used at any time against Israeli targets. Russian missile defense units have arrived and are operational. Separately, Ayatollah Khomeini declares a holy war against Israel and declared that nuclear weapons are no longer forbidden.”

Participant 2: Again, the question is, do we want to get involved in this at all? I mean, clearly, we're not in favor of a holy war and nuclear weapons.

Participant 3: Nuclear exchange would be devastating to the entire region.

Participant 1: So, if I remember correctly, the king of Saudi Arabia is the keeper of Mohammed's tomb. He is “the defender of Islam.” Someone correct me if I'm wrong in my history.

Participant 3: Yes.

Participant 1: We can release a statement saying, you know, counter to Khomeini, because Khomeini does not speak for all of Islam. And "the defender of Islam and Keeper of Mohamed's tomb rejects all assertions into making this a holy war. That has consequences for the entire world and does not need to escalate further."

Facilitator: Yes, we did just get this report from AP news, "Iranian proxies, including Hezbollah, today launched hundreds of rockets at critical Israeli infrastructure and other civilian targets, including: power generating stations and transformers, causing rolling blackouts across Israel; oil and gas depots and pipelines, causing massive explosions; population centers; and parliament.

Participant 1: Are the Jordanians members of the Abraham Accords?

Participant 4: No, because they already had relations with Israel.

Participant 1: If Jordan was a member of our coalition, Jordanians could produce air strikes against Hezbollah in Lebanon without any backlash. They've been a strong Western ally in the past, and they do have a very competent military. We have no way of adding that in, do we?

Participant 3: Can we request information? Do we have any more accurate battle damage assessment of the strikes that were done on Iranian nuclear facilities and what their second and third-order effects were?

Participant 1: I have an idea. So we have a couple of options, right? We've been trying to play this even rope thing where we're trying to be neutral and telling everyone to de-escalate. That's not happening. So, Russia's already in the mix. China's not in the mix yet, but they will be. But who else can we call upon, that is not the United States, to help intervene on an economic and military level? My thoughts are we send an information request out to Pakistan, India, and China. They all have almost shared borders with Iran. They also have leverage. Especially China and the economic centers in India as well. Pakistan literally borders Iran and they're also a nuclear nation. So, Pakistan probably is acutely aware that any further nuclear exchange between Israel and Iran is going to possibly cause fallout in Pakistan. So, what are your thoughts about crafting a message to Control to see if China's, India's, and Pakistan's interest in proposing a non-unilateral, multilateral peacekeeping force, but sanctions of some sort? What are your thoughts? Who would get Iran to back down? Russia is going to make them double down, but if China says, hey, we're not party to this and we're calling on you to stop. Pakistan says we agree, we are your neighbor, and we have nukes and we can be involved really quickly and help blockade The Persian Gulf.

Facilitator: We just received this from the U.S., E.U, and NATO, "We appreciate your condemnation of the war. Are you willing to extend your condemnation to the specific proxy rocket attacks? We will not act to target these proxies if you issue this condemnation."

Participant 1: So that is basically saying, they're not going to attack the proxies if we issue a condemnation of these attacks.

Participant 2: I don't think we'd want them to attack the proxies.

Participant 1: Yeah, we don't give a crap with those proxies. It's better security for us if those proxies are attacked.

Participant 2: Proxies have apparently escalated this.

Participant 1: We condemn all proxy attacks against Israel and any attacks that escalate this conflict further.

Participant 2: Let's think just a second. See, I don't know why we're supposed to be happy that they're not going to attack the proxies.

Participant 1: Yeah, I don't really care if the proxies were attacked or especially wouldn't care if they were thorns in our sides as well. Non-state actors cause more problems for us.

Participant 2: How about something like we support all actions – with the emphasis on all – actions that lead to the termination of proxy attacks?

Facilitator: Okay, so send it off?

Participant 1: Yes.

Facilitator: So, I received another press release from Israel. "Approximately 30 minutes ago, the government of Israel made the difficult decision to defend its sovereignty and right to exist. Israel has decided that, to ensure its continued existence, Israel had to use all measures available to defend itself. This involved using both conventional and targeted nuclear munitions that sought to minimize civilian deaths to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons facilities. Israel seeks peace with Iran but will continue to defend its interests and nation."

Participant 1: Alright, so they struck again. Alright, so this obviously isn't slowing down. We have to get other people involved. I say we reach out to China to ask for an intervention as well as India and Pakistan. What are your thoughts?

Participant 2 I don't know. I think we'd have to condemn the further use of nuclear weapons.

Participant 1: We could do it separately. We have to do one and then the other. Or, we have to do both. I mean, we can condemn nuclear weapons and a press release.

Participant 3: I think it would be fine to ask for diplomatic assistance from Pakistan, India, and China. I don't think we want China to intervene though.

Participant 1: I mean, remember, we're not the United States. We're Friendly Arab Nations that have an economic powerhouse. We're not asking China to militarily intervene in anything outside their borders right now. At least from my view, I would think that we could leave it ambiguous and say, "we are asking for your intentions in this conflict and if you are willing to

diplomatically and economically intervene to help de-escalate the situation and prevent further nuclear war."

Participant 3: Okay, intervene, to me, means military intervention, and diplomatic and economic efforts to force the belligerents to end the conflict.

Participant 1: I think we know how to word it. We're asking for China's intentions in this conflict. What we should say? We ask if you have any willingness to economically and diplomatically pursue a de-escalation along with us. I get what you're saying, Participant 1. I'm just trying to figure out how to word it.

Facilitator: I'm going to go ahead and send that off and then we have a few new messages. So, we have one from the Control team that said, "counter command and control strikes by Israel produce harmful fallout affecting Iranian population. Some deep targets survived." Then the other message is an AP notice stating that, "A nuclear explosion has been detonated over Mashabim Air Base."

Participant 2: Anyone have any idea where that is?

Participant 1: I'll check. It is a U.S. and Israeli air base in Israel. So, they struck an Israeli air base with a nuclear weapon.

Participant 2: While it was in the air, I don't think that's an accident.

Participant 3: Well, it could be if it was an airplane.

Participant 1: So, nuclear weapons in the fifties were pretty bad as far as the design and triggers and arming compared to current weapons. If anything was built within the last 20 years, the likelihood of accidental detonations is very low.

Participant 2: Well, those are ours, maybe this was an Israeli one. You'd hope they'd be good. You'd hope we help them be good.

Participant 1: Well, the French help them build theirs. So, I mean, they're not working with pots and pans. I don't know. That would seem more like an actual strike than accidental.

Participant 3: They've only had one test.

Participant 1: Well, we need to ask Control if there's any information or ask Israel's foreign defense team if this was an accident, or if this was an incoming strike.

Participant 6: Participant 1, didn't you say this is an Israeli airbase? A joint U. S. Israeli air base. This attack came from Iran.

Participant 1: I would agree, but we would have to check and make sure. If you guys think it's an accident, let's ask the Israeli team. If they say this is an attack, then we know where we stand.

Participant 2: It could be a clash of weapons for that matter.

Participant 1: I don't think they would do that.

Participant 2: But there's information. We don't have to decide on that basis, there would be trajectory information.

Facilitator: I'm sending this off to control.

Participant 1: I think we should ask the Israeli intelligence team if this strike was an accidental or purposeful attack.

Participant 3: The reason why I am asking is that if it was known that this was an attack, we would have tracked Iranian missiles or Iranian aircraft pointed to that destination.

Participant 1: We might.

Participant 2: Who's talking about? Who's we?

Participant 3: What I'm saying is whoever sent the message would have included that because the United States and Israel would have wanted that known first thing. We want to put that in the press as well.

Participant 1: There's a system that we could ping the United States and ask them if they detected any missile launches from Iran directed at that base.

Participant 2: I'd want to add if it were an attack, do you know where it came from?

Facilitator: Okay, I'll send it. We have an announcement from the United States. The United States invokes Article 5 in response to the nuclear strike on the U.S. military installation onboard an Israel base. From the control team we have, "China condemns Israel's provocative attacks and use of nuclear weapons. Israel needs to forswear its nuclear weapons immediately and commit to binding negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East."

Participant 1: So, the answer from China is we condemn this and want negotiations, but we have no way that we're not acting.

Participant 2: Yeah, seems irrelevant to what we're interested in.

Participant 1: So, we're going to have to pick a side.

Participant 3: I think we should go to the United States and ask them to halt any immediate military response until we can attempt to de-escalate to negotiations. And then we go to Iran and say you have to back down or you're going to have NATO bearing down on you?

Participant 1: Before we even do that. Do you guys want more information? Ask if the United States detected any missile launches.

Participant 3: We already have.

Participant 4: That went to Control.

Participant 2: Well, that's too bad. Send the same message to Control and the U.S.

Participant 1: And then we need to caveat that and say we request that you cease any military action until we can determine where the blasts came from. I guess it's not going to happen though. I don't think we would, to be honest. Our command control system would have detected something coming in.

Participant 1: China's made its play. India hasn't made its play. So, we either need to figure out what we're doing. We've already said that no one's backing down. So, do we join NATO and act against Iran?

Participant 2: It sounds like there could be fallout on Saudi territory at this point. I mean, we didn't get that confirmed.

Facilitator: This just came in. President Erdogan announced today that Turkey would not support an Article 5 action against Iran until and unless Israel publicly agrees to forswear its possession of nuclear weapons along with Iran.

Participant 6: It's just a detractor.

Participant 1: Yeah, we could support that, but we could also say we call on a coalition to sign a peace treaty or prevent nuclear weapons in the Middle East and a non-aggression pact.

Participant 1: I don't know. In the real world, I think the ship has sailed on as far as peace goes.

Participant 6: Yeah, exactly. We're past that. You got a new debt over each country now.

Participant 2: The question is, what do we do? I'm running out of options here. I'm still for laying low. I mean, the more nuclear that fly, the less reason I want anyone to direct them towards our countries.

Participant 1: The only thing to do is move forward and as quickly as possible at this point.

Participant 6: Speaking as Saudi Arabia, it's time to start inviting Pakistani and Chinese troops into the country to bolster our military force.

Facilitator: We are out of time gameplay wise.

Participant 2: All right, then we should go look at the third question. Because there have already been strikes based on different targets in different yields. I don't know what to do with this one.

Participant 1: Other countries' response is simple. They are calling for de-escalation, and none of them have worked. Right?

Participant 3: Do any of you feel that the yield has any influence on decision making?

Participant 1: I mean, yeah, at 1.5 kiloton yield. The detonation is about 2-3 miles. I looked at the damage pattern stuff.

Participant 5: My response to your question is I don't think that was tracked by anybody. Nobody really cared about the yield. Just the fact that a weapon was used.

Participant 3: Yeah, so non-attribution. I had the opportunity to ask two different presidents. presidents, do they think we could afford a single nuclear strike on the U.S. territory? And would we necessarily respond if it wasn't an all-out attack? And, both of them said absolutely.

Participant 1: It really depends on the actor. You're talking about terrorist attacks or foreign sovereign entities.

Participant 3: They said that if another country deliberately employed a nuclear weapon against the U.S. territory or mainland United States, they would not immediately respond with an all-out counterattack. I agree that the yield doesn't matter. It's the fact that it's used. But politics drives decision-making. I said, well, what about the American people and both of them said they would have to go before the American people and say, yes, it's terrible. We lost 8 Million people (or however many we lost) and the people who made the decision to do this would pay. But we're not going to go kill 80 million people in return. So, the tit for tat just wouldn't work. It's not the same thing as a country sponsoring a terrorist attack against the United States and we respond by bombing the intelligence headquarters in that country or something. It's just not the same. I find the question irrelevant. Nuclear weapons were used, something decisive is going to be done, but it's not going to be an all-out attack. Unless it's, you know, the same thing.

Participant 1: I kind of disagree in the sense that the reason it works for the United States is because we're based on MAD. Right? Mutually assured destruction. We let the warheads fly in the other countries and it all goes downhill. Here, we have two countries that had possible nuclear weapons and now they don't know how many they have. We're playing on the outside of not knowing if that escalation would have been a MAD event. Right? And one has been picking at the other for years. We do need to respond to this question. So how do other responses from other countries change based on different targets? I think that if Israel hits a population center, then they're not going to have any friends left.

Participant 2: Well, population center first. Israel the first country to strike a population center.

Participant 1: Well, Israel strikes different targets. I think if they're hitting targets, low yield and they're hitting targets, then there is nothing wrong. I understand that they're using nuclear weapons. This is a precedent. They're going to do it. But, in the course of the game, I think that other countries could accept small tactical hits like that. I know there's no such thing as a tactical nuclear weapon in certain contexts. I'm saying that if Israel hit Tehran, they're dead to rights and Israel's pretty much a pariah. There's probably going to be an invasion of Iran in order to quell this nuclear problem. But if this really is a military target?

Participant 6: Have to disagree. You're talking about a limited nuclear inventory for each country, they can't afford to go after population centers. They have to expend their nuclear ordnance on military targets first. The idea of going after a population center is secondary to eliminating the military capabilities of the opponent.

Participant 1: I agree, but I'm trying to answer the question of what would happen if. So, if they did hit a population center, I think Israel would have no legs to stand on. They would lose every ally and I don't think they would do it. I think that the world and different countries would accept Israel using limited low yield nuclear weapons on military targets with limited civilian casualties. We don't know the inventory.

Participant 3: Right. Okay so here's how many of these military bases are not around some type of civilian populace and is it not going to impact some type of civilian populace? I don't think you can argue that. I think the yield doesn't matter. The use of the weapons means you're committed. I agree with Participant 6 that you've got to go after the military targets first, but I also think that, at some point, how many weapons could wipe out Israeli devices. How many weapons would you need to wipe out Iran?

Participant 2: Well, the question is, how do we answer this question? Before we say we're going to be neutral, neutral, neutral. But, are we still going to be neutral if Israel does strike cities? And you're saying they do, or suppose they attack military bases that are near cities, or there's a lot of fallout or something bad. Are we still going to be neutral, or are we going to join and say well, hey, we have to join against Israel for this? And the same conversely if Iran does something really bad. Do we decide to be neutral?

Participant 1: So, I'm saying, whether they're going to or not, let's just say what we would do, right? If Israel hits the large population center with a nuclear weapon, we would cut all diplomatic ties and it would be a pariah on the world stage.

Participant 2: Diplomatic and economic ties.

Participant 3: I would also say that yields don't matter. They don't play into the equation at all.

Participant 1: I mean, I disagree because a tactical nuke that's 1.5 kilotons is small and 50 kilotons is quite large. Would you be willing to accept that?

Participant 6: The Moab isn't even close to 1.5. Kilotons.

Participant 1: I'm just trying to think of a large field weapon.

Participant 3: I understand what you're trying to get to.

Participant 2: The explosion in Beirut was about 1.5 kilotons, something like that.

Participant 1: I mean I agree with you. I think that what's hard is to put us in the mindset of not being American when we think about this. Because we think about how we never do this and we never do X, Y, and Z. Any nuclear use is nuclear use. That's the end story. As we all know from traveling around the world, everyone has a different view on that, especially backgrounds and how they see things. I think people wouldn't be willing to accept a small.

Participant 3: In response to that, what happened when Russia fired a few missiles at the nuclear plant in Ukraine? And the reaction of countries around the world? Those weren't even nuclear weapons. They were just missiles. But the potential impact of those missiles on that nuclear plant caused a really violent reaction. The yield doesn't matter. It's the perception of what the weapon is.

Participant 1: I mean, I think we can disagree, but I think we should go with your statement because I think we should say that. I'm trying to think of how we would word it, though. Because I don't think we're going to come to a consensus in the group on this. But I think that it's true that there's going to be a certain amount of population in the world that's going to accept this. And assuming a certain population in the world is going state that using nuclear weapons is horrible. I think that the shock and outrage will be there. I can't really speak to anybody else. I think that maybe we're right. Maybe we should manage that slide is to say that there's going to be an overwhelming response to try to de-escalate right? Regardless of the yield of the weapons or targets.

Participant 3: Yeah, I like that.

Facilitator: Is there anything else that needs to be added to this slide? We do have 15 more minutes, so we can go back and look at the other slides and see what needs to be added.

Participant 3: I would change the first to Israel or Iran.

Participant 2: Hey, why don't we go back and look at the slides again? Run through all of these.

Participant 1: We can add in our point about seeking a coalition of other large nations to apply diplomatic, economic and possibly military pressure against Iran and Israel.

Participant 5: I've been listening in. I don't really have anything else to add right now, but I'll take another look at it. So, by internal proxy attacks, are you referring to our territory being used as a springboard for proxy attacks to Israel whether it be material support or cross-border

raids, or are you just talking about something happening within our borders and attacking our facilities.

Participant 2: I thought we meant within our borders.

Participant 1: I mean, that is a good thing, because we already said to prevent proxy attacks within our borders but we want to also help prevent proxy attacks in general. That's saying the same thing, right? Same, but different?

Participant 6: And what do you mean by proxy attacks?

Participant 1: Houthi rebels out of Yemen. You know, trying to think of any other informal groups or internal groups that would seek to help escalate the situation.

Participant 2: How about saying, prevent Houthi proxy attacks. I can't see getting involved with Hezbollah.

Participant 5: We were talking about ballistic missiles. I think the only thing we could really stop or have a chance of stopping would be their drone attacks if that's how they're attacking. And then if that's the case, we would probably have to request from our allies, like the United States, some of their air defense systems. Because I don't think we have good ones.

Participant 2: So, you're saying that's what we should do, or we should not get involved with them.

Participant 5: I think based on all the conversations I've been listening to is that we've been trying to de-escalate the whole situation. Israel is acting out right now because of massive proxy attacks that they blame Iran for, and Iran is leveraging them heavily even though they're engaged in direct hostilities now. So, making Israel not feel backed into a corner as quickly as possible is in our best interests, from what I gather based on the dialogue we've been having. So, in that case, we want to prevent other people from continuously throwing spears past our heads as we fight each other.

Participant 2: I'm sorry, so do you mean we want to stop the proxy attacks, or we don't want to get involved?

Participant 5: I think that we prevent attacks coming directly through our territory. We would stop them, but we would not necessarily go out of our way. I think that in our immediate vicinity, we can justify to the belligerents as we're not going to be used as a springboard for your attacks to attack each other. But once we start getting adventurous and expeditionary, I don't know. That that gets kind of iffy, especially if we don't know who we fully back.

Participant 1: Do we need to elaborate on the civilian and military access to deny all logistic materials and intelligence support to either party?

Participant 5: It's a tough nut to crack. There's not a whole lot you can do when people are shooting missiles at each other.

Participant 1: Yeah, unless you got some to shoot down, there isn’t no way. You know, it's really hard to say what other countries would do. Call for de-escalation? They're going to call for a ceasefire and if it continues, we're going to basically cut both ties. But our coalition doesn't have enough military power to militarily intervene. And then at one point, if it keeps going like it's going, we're probably going to have to choose a side because we're going to be caught in the crossfire.

Participant 3: Article 5, that one that you just can’t get around.

Game play ended.

NPEC

PO Box 17678 | Arlington, VA 22216
Email: info@npolicy.org
Web: www.npolicy.org