

**FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES**

**WASHINGTON FORUM 2010: COUNTERING THE IRANIAN THREAT  
A CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR URI LUBRANI**

**MODERATOR:  
CLIFF MAY,  
PRESIDENT,  
FEDERATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES**

**SPEAKERS:  
URI LUBRANI,  
IRAN ADVISOR,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MOSHE YA'ALON OF ISRAEL**

**UZI RUBIN,  
FORMER DIRECTOR,  
ISRAEL MISSILE DEFENSE ORGANIZATION,  
ISRAEL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

*Transcript by  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.*

(Applause.)

URI LUBRANI: Good morning to you all and I thank the – the first thing I would like to say that I'm delighted to be a guest of this conference and of FDD. I consider myself an honorary member of this organization and I have to start – I know that time is clipped and we have little time. And I have to say a few things before I get into the substance of what I want to say.

I'm speaking on my own behalf. I have always had the privilege of being able to say – to speak my mind and I never cared whether my mentors like it or not. And therefore, for some – for some, I have been stigmatized as being a rogue elephant or a loose cannon, as the British would say. That's number one – I am responsible for what I say, nobody else.

Number two, I'm going to – if I had to do my job quickly, I would say what Senator Kirk suggested and I would have no – nothing to say. (Laughter, applause.) So I was deeply impressed by the knowledge and by the wits and by the depth of what the senator said. He covered all the problems. That's number two.

Number three, I'm going to suggest to you that there is one area which I have been carrying with me in mind to try and introduce to the United States as a problem. Look, we, in Israel, have a problem with Iran in Gaza, in Lebanon, in Syria and the mining in Jordan. I'm not going to touch the WikiLeaks revelations. You've seen them. Everybody's afraid of the Iranian – I would even call it colonialistic (sic) aspirations. Iran is on the warpath, has been for some time.

My problem is always to teach my mentors and my colleagues and my audiences that one has to take the Iranians seriously. Some of them think that Ahmadinejad is a clown. He's not. He is a clever, a sophisticated son of a bitch. (Laughter, applause.) And he knows what he's aiming at and he's very industrious. He's everywhere. This weasel is all over. He travels to Venezuela. He goes to South Asia. He's all over with his message.

Now, we, in Israel, have therefore a problem with Iran, even on the nuclear problem – nuclear problem is a very serious problem and I would say that one has to do whatever one can in order to prevent Iran from having it. Now, we are living in a cruel world and we live in realities which we sometimes hate to admit to ourselves.

They can achieve nuclear capability without us knowing, even. And I go even further – they are at it. They are at it surreptitiously. And they have done it before. They have been cheating the Western world for 16 years about the nuclear program. They are doing it again and they are doing it with relish.

And you should know that they have – they are covered a permission of the Quran. And I have with me a quote of my mentor, teacher and very, very good friend, Bernard Lewis, who said that, a lie is evil except in three situations. One, if you have something to say in wartime. In wartime, you're allowed to lie. And of course there is.

Number two, to – if you have two friends quarreling and you want to be an intermediary, you could lie to make these two friends make up. And the other one – the last one is when a man speak to his wife and to soothe her. So you can lie. (Laughter.) And this is – this comes from the Hadith of the Quran, of the –

MR. : (Inaudible, laughter.)

MR. LUBRANI: Now, having said that, I would like you to – I have lived almost seven years in Tehran and nothing can really epitomize what one carries with one when one leaves after such a period. I have found a quotation by a British ambassador who was representing Great Britain in Tehran at the beginning of the '60s.

And he said in his final report when he left, the Iranians are a people who say the opposite of what they think and do the opposite of what they say. That does not necessarily mean that what they do does not conform to what they think. (Laughter.) Now, I challenge you to make heads or tails of this. (Laughter.)

This is what Iranis (sic) are. They're highly sophisticated, very clever, very smart, nationalistic, most of them, religious, all of them to some degree. So this is what you have to do. And if you want to begin to negotiate, it's not enough to have an Ivy League degree and go there, negotiate. You've got to be able to understand when he says yes, well, does he mean yes? And I'm telling you outright when he says, yes, he means no. And I'll give you an example.

When I arrived in Tehran in '73, I was received by the Head of Protocol. We were not, then – and we never were recognized by – fully recognized or officially recognized as members of the diplomatic corps. But nevertheless, there was an agreement between the two countries that there will be an embassy. There is an embassy in Tehran. There is an Iranian Embassy in Tel Aviv.

And my – my mentors thought that this might be a good opportunity since I'm going there to try and raise the level of representation a little. So I wrote a quick letter of credence and I went to Iran. Head of Protocol and according to Protocol, who went where to see the minister of foreign affairs, who was an extremely gracious person, very, very nice and very, very knowledgeable. And he received me in a most cordial way.

We had a very nice conversation and then I popped the question and I said, would you, Your Excellency, arrange for me to have an audience with His Imperial Majesty? And without batting an eye, he said, of course. And then I went to back to my embassy. I thought we've made it. And we began to phone to say about the date. And a week passed, two weeks passed, three weeks passed, nothing happened.

Then, after that, I decided that enough is enough and I'm going to do my work without having seen His Imperial Majesty. After a few months, I went to see a friend in Tehran and I told him the story that I was received by the minister, he was kind, he was cordial. He's still kind. I see him from time to time, but this is what he told me. So he looked at me and says, look, my friend, in Farsi language, you have a word called "baleh."

"Baleh" is yes. "Baleh" is no. (Laughter.) "Baleh" is maybe. "Baleh" is what you heard is if you have enough patience, enough perseverance, enough luck, you will be seeing His Imperial Majesty at his own convenience. It took two-and-a-half years. So I mean that is – these are the kind of realities one has to see.

Now, the West has been trying to talk to Iran for the last five or six years about nuclear – about the nuclear program. There were ministers in Europe – I think it was Jack Straw, the foreign secretary in Britain who shuttled from London to Tehran six or seven or eight times; I don't know. I may be wrong about the number, maybe more.

And every time that he has made some progress, no progress at all. You had a meeting in Geneva only two, three days ago. And lo and behold, you have another meeting in January. And I'm telling you now, without any shadow of a doubt, that there's going to be another meeting because the Iranis (sic) are clever enough to leave a little loophole of hope for people to think that yes, maybe they will talk.

I have to say here that the sanctions are indeed making – making inroads. They are making the – making the way and they begin to bite. And that is very good news. And if one is

to extend the sanctions, one is doing excellent work. But unfortunately, my feeling is it's not enough and I would like, at this point, to point out to you what Iran is really at. It's not at Israel. It's not – Israel is almost – it's insignificant.

Iran is to challenge – this regime in Iran is out to challenge Western culture, Western values. They say it and you should know it. And they are doing it very cleverly, quietly. They are going to South America to surround. They're working in Europe. They're working in Africa. And what do they have to – working in Africa. And their people are down and out.

They're unable to close the month with their salaries and they are spending millions and billions and millions outside. It means to say that they consider themselves already a small superpower. And that is what I came – I've come to ring a bell to – an awakening call to say work it. Work it and make sure that you understand and that you follow what they're doing.

Now, in order to explain – to give you one example of what I have to say, I would – I would ask Uzi Rubin to say a few words about Iran's missile program, which is very indicative and very informative. Please, and I'll come to you after he finishes. (Applause.)

UZI RUBIN: Thank you, Uri. You almost discouraged me by saying that whatever – you shouldn't believe that what they say is what they mean. But then you encourage me again in saying it doesn't mean that they don't mean what they say. (Laughter.) I'll speak more in a few words because – what I'd like to talk about in not a few words is how – from the outside, you can see Iran's – let's say basic intention, inherent intention.

So it's not just its missile programs – all its major strategic programs. And I – my presentation, that is usually quite graphic. Well, I need to show a lot of papers but unfortunately, there was no available arrangement here for screening these things. So my presentation – my slideshow was printed and distributed.

So not very good for the environment. I (know a few good ?) people will do well to recycle this thing later one. Anybody wants more details, I'll be giving my card – my business card and you can ask me questions. Before I start, I say, is Iran – whose problem is Iran? And I go into this argument many times with people (abroad ?).

And it always reminds me, a story that happened to me here in the United States. I was doing my sabbatical here in Stanford in '89, '90. Exactly when, in August '90, when Saddam Hussein invaded Iraq and it was big news, of course. He invaded Kuwait – invaded Kuwait and I was in Stanford the next morning, came to work.

They took – (inaudible) – at five past 8:00, there was a knock on my door. Director of studies of – CISAC, Center of International Security and Arms Control, said can I talk to you, Uzi? I say of course. Now, did you hear the news? I said which news? And then Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I said, oh, yes, yes.

So what – he asked me – what is Israel going to do about it? (Laughter.) Well, I kind of sat back and I said, you know, what Israel going to do? Last time, we saved the world in Iraq, we were slapped by an embargo on F-16s. Next – this time, we are behind – Israel is 100 percent behind the United States. It went on like that. (Laughter.) The whole day, about 20 visitors.

So whose problem was it for – all of a sudden, anything happens in the Middle East, people tend to send it to the Israeli court. Now, I'm telling you, you don't send it to the Israel court. This is everybody's problem. Table 2, it says here – and I want to show it to you. So Iran's means and Iran's intentions.

I'm an engineer, so usually, I deal with means. But I'm also a retired engineer, so I also deal with intentions. (Laughter.) And I would – (chuckles) – I would like to – first, the question, is Iran seeing itself in the future as a regional power or a global power? I'll talk about the indicators from the technical point of view, the nuclear, missile and space program.

People, there are three programs, not two. Missile and space are two different programs. They support each other. And then the declaratory indicators and try to summarize. And then I walk you through the slideshow. That was the first slide. So Iran's set vision – is it regional? People here in the United States – many people say, yes, Iran is Israel's problem.

It's intentional and Israel's in the – (inaudible). Its intentions are regional. It wants to be a regional hegemon. Now, with the WikiLeaks revelation, we know that this is Russian view. The discussion between United States and Russia in February 2010, this year, so which is an extremely interesting paper to read. I read it too, on the way here, on the plane and I'm going to make an – (inaudible) – amazing.

The Russians say very clearly, the Iranians have no regional, no global intention. What they want to do, they don't threaten anyone; they want to threaten the Middle East. They want to be hegemon in the Middle East. In other words, Israel and you, American problem, not anyone – it's not our problem.

And last year was a report here, a very important report, the EastWest Institute joint team assessment and American and Russian scientists that came out and I quote here, you can see it in the second slide, "The main emphasis of the missile program is regional because poor Iran has challengers on its borders." I mean people – Iran is threatened.

By the way, I heard an article – a paper by Iranian academics in Tehran in a conference by their impressive academics explaining that Israel is surrounding Iran. (Laughter.) And I'll say it again. Israel is surrounding Iran. And (they believe ?) because at that time, Israel was friends with Turkey so Israelis threatening the west, Israel is friend of India, so it's threatening from the east and it's threatening with the Islamic republics after the fall of the union. So it's threatening from the north. And of course, Israel in the south so Israel is all around Iran.

So some – some people say – think that, but you take Ahmadinejad's words and he's very valuable. It's interesting to read – I always read him. One of his quotations that I'd like to put here – but I can use other quotations. This is a famous one from beginning of this year, when they celebrate the 30 years of the revolution and Iran – and Ahmadinejad – not only Ahmadinejad was waxing about Iran's future role in the world.

And he was saying Middle East is a crossroad with relation to the world. Whoever has the word in the Middle East would have the say – final say in the world. And that's it. And then the other thing is that who is the last word in the Middle East? Everybody knows. Of course, it's Iran. So he sees himself, already, as a superpower.

And this is the heart of the question, really. If Iran is just a local power, it's very important because Middle East is really a crucial part of the world. It has more than 50 percent of the oil resource of the world, the energy of the world. But it's just the Middle East. I will look at this question from the technical point of view and I'll look at the declaratory point of view. But I will not deal with one thing.

I will not deal with timelines. Don't ask me when Iran is going to have nuclear bombs. I think it's meaningless, and I'll explain that later – and when it's going to have ballistic-missile – (inaudible) –] United States – it's a meaningless question. They'll have it when they're good and ready to have it, not before, because they have the patience of carpet-makers. They work slowly,

they have the time, they have the patience, not like us. We like our short-cuts, we want results now. No, they look at generations forward. But I don't think they are going to wait generations.

Another thing which I'll be very short is the nuclear program. I'm not a nuclear expert. I was assisted here by my good friends in Israel and 64 nation – (inaudible) – Dr. Emily Landau, Dr. – (inaudible) – world-renowned experts on the Iranian nuclear program. Let me say just a few words about the four facilities (?) that are known now, that's slide five.

And with all the protestations of the Iranians that they have a peaceful program, the nature of the program, no matter whether they are making nuclear bombs or not, but the nature of the program, the character of the program smells very heavily of a nuclear program, because the – (inaudible) – construction of the facilities were not announced. All of a sudden, they were revealed by someone. The guys going for a peaceful nuclear program don't behave this way.

And then, they are constructed underground, heavily fortified, heavily shielded. So what do you need to shield peaceful facilities against? Lavizan was one of the sites where IAEA discovered some radioactivity, so they razed the site and cleaned the soil, like the Syrians did in their nuclear reactor. And then – (inaudible) – reviewed stories about a computer that was a hemisphere and so on and so forth, and then they discover after all this – when all this was over, there was a discovery of another nuclear site in Qom, which makes you wonder whether they are missiles or nuclear sites.

Now, the amazing thing is that nuclear site in Natanz – the cover story is that they need enrichment in order to supply their own nuclear power in Bushehr, and I heard one of the – (inaudible) – I had the privilege of listening to him in 2006 in Berlin. He was so convincing – he is an engineer – that for a moment I was fooled.

Now, he made a presentation that claimed that they need so many tons per year and that they have – going to have about 30,000 centrifuge thing, which will produce exactly that amount with wastage so there will be not independent – they'll be independent of foreign supply of nuclear material for the peaceful. And Bushehr is really not part of a military-nuclear program because they don't want to be dependent on Western goodwill. Okay, you can perhaps buy that, but then comes Qom with 3,000 centrifuge. That has one meaning only: military, no civilian, because it's too little for nuclear power, but it's clearly sufficient for nuclear bombs.

So the goals, of course, can be split into self-sufficiency. I think that self-sufficiency is really goal, but it's not the only goal. The other goal is, of course, a military program, and the first objectives of one, which is – they declare here, so many are speaking. The second one was considered, even in the United States, before the NSA. They had a nuclear-military program before 2003, and then the question is whether they continued it or not.

But I think whether they are continuing it or not is really not important. What they are building is the mainstay of the nuclear capability, which can switch in no time to a military program. Just to give an example, the United States started the Manhattan project, which was really major national effort. And the major – 90 percent of that effort was to make the nuclear material, was – nuclear material first part, first quantity wasn't – (inaudible) – in New Mexico.

It took six months – six months – six months only to the first explosion. So just to give you a feeling of what is the relationship between making a nuclear bomb and materials and turning that into a bomb, 80 percent of the effort is nuclear material.

My – and again, I would like – like all here, I am speaking for myself. I am not representing anyone. I have the privilege of being a retired official, so I am not an official, I'm retired, I'm a private person.

And speaking for myself, my opinion is that you can look at the Iranian capability on four levels: They can stay where they are now, low-enrichment uranium in the basement, not doing anything with it. They can move one level up, enrich it to a high level and leave it in the basement. They can go next level and make a bomb in the basement, make a bomb but not announce it, undeclared nuclear power.

Unless you know international diplomacy is working, unless you declare you are not nuclear, and because nobody can prove – you can say, okay, the people here, the liberals here in the new – (inaudible) say, well, there's no proof that they have nuclear weapons if they don't announce it or don't test it. And of course, level 4 is an announced nuclear power and test – the Indians and the Pakistanis went through the stages. If you remember, both of them stayed for about 30 years as undeclared and waited to decide to declare – (inaudible). I think the Iranians are already on level one.

I don't think they would move in Level Two and stay there. It's too unstable, I don't want to analyze that. They moved directly to level three, bomb in the basement. In other words, the question is, when is Iran (cool ?) to have nuclear bombs by itself is not entirely the good question. The question is whether is nuclear weapons – which will they exploit? And as long as it's abatement, the exploitation of that is very limited to their intents – to their means.

And with that, I think I'd like to leave the nuclear program with – (inaudible) – and go to the space and missile program. And I don't want to bother you here with a lot of pictures saying, okay, they've got this Shahab and that Shahab – I want to look at – (inaudible). Now, the great – I think the major weakness of all the studies that were made on the Iranian missile program and space program is that they are freezing the situation now.

They are looking at what they are capable of doing now and saying, hey, that's what they can do. They can then come to an ICBM, which is a tool but not the entire tools, because – I'm an engineer – we don't look at points. We look at graphs. We look at what happened, where they are now and what is going forward. You can see the trend. Twenty years ago, the Iranians had no capability, nothing. They bought missiles from Libya, you know, to have – to fire to Iraq. Today, they fly their own satellites. That's the curve, people. So don't be fooled or don't be misled by reports that – (inaudible) – is saying they are incapable of doing things. Think about what they couldn't do before, what they can do now, and extrapolate to the future.

And the things are those – the expanding missile-industrial basis. It's not just that they have this and that missile. The basis is going very rapidly. The efficiency, the self-confidence – I see the designs are coming in, I see the self-confidence of the engineers. I have been there, I have made missiles. I know what it means. I can see how they are solving problems faster and faster.

The increasing range in payload capabilities is undeniable. You see persistently going, gone, and then as soon as you're between the missile and space programs. As I say, there are three programs. The two of them are mutually supporting. Look at picture in slide 10. This is just – I don't want to go over the pictures – they couldn't make a missile 25 years ago.

Now they have a whole industrial basis for making liquid-propellant missile. You can see the picture. They are very proud of it, by the way. They are very – (inaudible) – on that. They are showing the videos again and again, look at what we can do. We can weld, we can machine, we can construct, we can integrate.

And then in the solid propellant, slide 11 is the new Sejil. Solid propellant, it looks like the Shahab. Don't be fooled, it's a completely different missile. It's quantum leap of the Shahab

– (inaudible) – as the Russians say, rightly, in the discussion in February with the United States, it's an outpost of the SCUD – basic SCUD technology from the '70s – from the '50s. The Sejil is comparable to Western technologies in mid, end-'60s. It's a quantum leap.

Two stages, solid propellant, big water and the numbers taken from one of the most liberal scientists here in the United States, which I respect as a scientist, Dr. Ted Postol, it's his numbers. A 15-ton solid-propellant model – people, that's a big model. Just to give you the comparison, the Polaris A1 and the Minuteman 1, which were the first U.S. solid-propellant missiles, weighted 14 and 33 tons respectively, while the Sejil is about 22 tons. It's a respectable missile in the regime of all missiles, because it's a big one.

And if they can make such big models, that means all infrastructure that you see in slide 12 is in place. It's not something that they have to buy in order to be capable of doing things.

The very existence of this missile, the fact that you see it taking off with its plume of smoke – actually, not the smoke, it's the dust of aluminum particles – going behind it, its whiting, which tell tale of solid propellant – that means that all this infrastructure, with the right size, big, huge machines use – (inaudible) – huge mixers, huge X-ray machines – every single item denied but controlled by the MTCR, Missile Technology Control Regime.

But in the Missile Technology Control Regime, there is something which few people remember. Our missiles are divided into category 1, category 2. There is an assumption to deny – try not to sell category 1, but on production means, there is complete ban. We are not – decide not to sell it. So –

MR. MAY: I'm going to ask you to just – I want to make sure we get plenty of time, that people to ask you questions and you get to respond.

MR. RUBIN: So and then we see in the pictures another – (inaudible) – coming up – a little thing, a little cylinder made of carbon fiber. This is the future, because this is another – (inaudible) – and I made this slide before the WikiLeaks came out. In the WikiLeaks, I found – (inaudible) – in slide 14 – here they are, they are buying carbon fibers, carbon filament in China. This makes for an increase of – doubling the range of missiles.

There are space launchers, the gun facilities are going from rudimentary to huge launching facilities, like Cape Kennedy. The capability of taking – the United States took the MLRS and made it a nuclear missile. (Inaudible) – now it's an accurate missile. The Iranians did the same to the Fateh-110. They took the Zelzal, which is a very statistical weapon – (inaudible) – nothing to write home about from Lebanon – (inaudible) – Tel Aviv, that now he has a CP of about 500 meters. They do the same, technology spreads. And they are not stupid.

They took the – as I said – moving to move from single-stage liquid to two-stage solid. They took their single-stage liquid and built it up into a first-stage of a satellite launcher, a very elegant satellite launcher, and later, in August, demonstrated another feat of stability and control. They took the Shahab-2, which is a SCUD C, and shoved off the wings, which made it stable. It's a very stable missile. Now they are flying it in a stable configuration.

Now, all modern fighter aircraft, unstable configuration. Takes a lot of expertise in control – I need some more time.

MR. MAY: But let's – (inaudible) – we can go through in the questions. I want to make sure that you get to respond to what people are concerned with.

MR. RUBIN: Okay. In the next two slides, I won't go into details, I won't even do the timelines. Impressive timelines, how fast they can solve problems. The ranges are going, the Sejil itself, according to my calculation, although the Russians say that they are just in 2,000 kilometers, even the IISS – (inaudible) – own report says 2200 kilometers. My own calculation is about 2500 kilometers.

Now, if you look in the Middle East, why do they need 2500-kilometer missile? It doesn't make any sense. That's mapping 24. But when you put it in the map of world or Europe in 28, it makes a lot of sense. It goes from Tabriz to Russia.

The next question is about the BM-25, and that starred in the WikiLeaks. Do they have this ability? What is their – (inaudible)? Does it exist? Russians say, no, it doesn't exist. If it exists, is it in Iran? The Russians say, of course, it doesn't exist, so it's not in Iran. To the first question, does it exist, the North Koreans give us an answer in October. They just paraded them in Pyongyang, the missile exists.

Is it in Iran? We saw the hints last year in February, this year in February. We saw pieces of a very similar engine to one of the engine of the BM-25, but then the Iranians improved with one sent back there. They demonstrated last February exactly – not space-rated BM-25 engine – (inaudible) – the exact model. It's there. The models are there; now we have to be very naïve to think that if the model are there, the missile is not there.

So I say the missile there, range must be at 3500 kilometers, otherwise the North Koreans didn't have any sense of making them. Now, put it on the map, I fear it goes all the way from Tabriz to Luxembourg. So Europe is under threat almost now.

Larger space launchers used in order to justify ballistic missiles – I don't have the time to go into that, but it's amazing how they are using the space programs an excuse for getting ballistic-missile technologies. It's peaceful, so why don't you give us the technologies? Then I can show you the – (inaudible) – we can see the sign of that already. We see those supposedly space-based technologies under ballistic missile. That's page 37.

The declared goals of the – (inaudible) – to make bigger satellite launchers. I predict they'll be solid, and in 39, you can see how. You can take the Sejil, make into huge space launcher and change that space launcher in ICBM. I don't know the timeline, I won't give you, but if anybody from Mars, scientists from Mars who would come down and say, hey, there is a country on Earth that has these three programs: a nuclear-enrichment program, solid-propellant ballistic-missile program and a space-launcher programs, what does he want? Where does all this lead?

Well, it leads to nuclear ICBM, obviously. To nothing else. It's nuclear ICBM capability. So why should the Iranians – do they need nuclear capability, nuclear ICBM capability? I say, look at what Iran, again – Ahmadinejad is saying. He is – one of the most interesting, amazing speeches in Isfahan earlier this year made the fantastic claims. He analyzed the world in very bold terms, and he came to the conclusion, we need to seek a new way of exercising power – we, the Iranians – exercising power in order to manage the world, no less than that.

That's superpower thinking, and to make it very clear here in the United Nations in his visit in October, there are only two major superpower in the world, he said: that's the United States and Iran. And I think he was polite in mentioning the United States – (laughter).

To the conclusion is, he who wants to be a superpower needs the clout of a superpower, and the clout of the superpower here in the United States is the Minuteman, and in Russia, it is

the Topol-M 27. And – (inaudible) – I say, you have missile-defense system. Hone it, increase it, reinforce it, because you will be under threat. When, I don't know, but not in the far future. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. MAY: Thank you, Uzi. Some questions, and then we'll be – (inaudible, applause). All right. Let me start with some questions. I think Craig Snider is going to have the first one. If we can get a microphone over to Craig over there, if you can. And I've got some questions myself, but I'm going to let – I'm going to hold back on those. Thank you, Craig.

CRAIG SNIDER: Thank you. I'm Craig Snider from Philadelphia, representing the David Howard Freedom Center and also the Snider Foundation in Philadelphia. My question is to Ambassador Lubrani, and that is, with regard to Iran, Wafa Sultan, the Muslim apostate from Syria, has said that she has great hope that the Iranian people could overthrow the Islamic republic, that they have an affinity and a connection to their deep roots in the Persian culture that predates Islam, that it's a very young population with technology savvy and capability.

And in addition, she believed that if the Iranian people in the Green Movement could succeed, that it would be a very significant defeat against radical Islam, because radical Islam looks to Iran as really a hero in standing up to the West. So the question is, do you believe that despite the inclinations of the Iranian people, that they would be able to rise up and assert themselves?

MR. LUBRANI: Okay, I answer this one, yeah?

MR. MAY: Mm-hmm, sure.

MR. LUBRANI: This question is giving me the opportunity to terminate my presentation to you. I was going to tell you – all of us, you and we, all the West has one big ally in Iran, and that's the Iranian people. The Iranian people are the only agent which can change regime in Iran. I don't believe in military – I am against military action. I am having it on the table because we as Israeli have to have it on the table always.

But I think that it will be counter-productive – I think that a lot can be done much before you can even contemplate using it. And the Iranian people are ripe, mature, able to do the job. You have got to give them heart, to give them the feeling that they have got allies outside. This has not been done by the United States, certainly not by Europe. I know because we have been inundated with questions from people who are inside saying, where is the United States?

And let me tell you, what Israel is in Iran is another matter. I mean, I can tell you that a great number of Iranis don't even know where Israel is. I mean, I'm talking about the generation just now – the grandchildren of the founders of the revolution. But it doesn't matter. They know where the United States is. They know what the – what the standard of living in the United States – they know what the United States is.

They think you represent the – best represent the world. They think that their kickers are the best kicker in the world. Everything, you know, American is good. And that is – that is our base in Iran. You ought to help them. And once you've done that, I don't think you'll need to contemplate any military – any military action. That's my view. And I hope – I hope I'm right.

I'll tell you – before I end, I'll just tell you something. I've been wrong on many – on many issues during my career. On the matter of Iran, with all possible humility, I'll grant I haven't been wrong. And I – and I went to see my foreign minister in '78 to tell them that – to tell him that there is going to be a mind-boggling revolution. And he didn't believe me. Neither did the ambassador – your ambassador in Tehran. Neither did they believe some of your

agencies. He asked the question – Mr. (Leiyon ?), who was my boss, passed the question to some American authority. And he received – and he said this was – this came from usually, I remember – but a usually reliable source. Usually reliable source. So the answer was that this usually reliable source doesn't know what he's talking about. And that was three months before the demonstrations began. So you realize that I've got a very deep respect for agencies and their intelligence. (Laughter.)

And I've been sticking to my guns on this ever since. And I'm telling you, my feeling is there is a Green Movement, it's a cure, it's ripe, it ought to be helped. And it's going to do the job. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. MAY: We're going – we're going to take a couple questions over here, if you can, with the – well, we got a mic – I've just got to ask Uzi – I'm going to make this question simple, but I think it's an important one. The United States has anti-missile defense technology we have not deployed – and more than Israel does. Israel is now, as I understand it, working very hard – a five-year program to increase its missile defense. What is the potential for a missile-defense deployment program to safeguard Israel against a missile attack from Iran?

MR. RUBIN: The United States is developing – has developed very capable missile defense against a missile with a range of an Iranian missile to Israel. And it's actually now deploying them in the – in the Gulf. They are capable, very capable. But the United States is just doing even better than that; it's supporting us financially to develop our own capable missiles. So I think it's a – it's a good job. And we are very grateful to the United States for their support but you – (inaudible) – since the change of administrations here. That was always missile-defense cooperation with Israel – always withstood all the ups and downs of Israeli relations with the United States. And we are grateful for that. Yes.

MR. MAY: Go ahead – (inaudible).

Q: I'm not sure which one would answer this. But there's been recent reports that Iran is going to install missiles in Venezuela – or has agreed to – with medium-range missiles. Could you comment on whether they're capable of that, and whether those missiles could reach the United States?

MR. RUBIN: First, they are capable of doing that. That's not the first time. And quite possibly that came out about two years ago, that Iran offered Venezuela to deploy or to buy Shahab missiles. I'm not very familiar with the local (area?); I didn't look at the map. It ranges about, let's say, 2,000 kilometers; probably could reach the United States.

Is it feasible to move missiles like that over there? Totally feasible. Those missiles are deployable. They have no problem of putting them in ships with their launchers and moving them here to Venezuela and deploying it there. Not much more difficult – actually, even perhaps less difficult than Russians have found in deploying their older missiles in Cuba. Just takes time – you can do it.

MR. MAY: Go ahead.

Q: Charles Mergen (ph), author. I want to ask Ambassador Lubrani to comment on the messianic, apocalyptic thinking within the Iranian regime, particularly Khamenei and Ahmadinejad saying they are convinced the 12<sup>th</sup> imam is inbound. There's been – Khamenei said this summer that he had actually spoken to him. We're not quite sure actually what that means.

But how do you assess that in the context of capability? I loved your line of the day – I think it's the best – that Ahmadinejad is not a clown, he's a clever, sophisticated son of a bitch. How do you build in the prophetic – from their perspective, angle on that?

MR. LUBRANI: Let me just say that the tragedy is that I believe that Ahmadinejad really believes in what he says. In fact, when he was – he was mayor of – mayor of Tehran, he paved the road for this missing imam to ride into Tehran toward the major mosques there when he – when he would reach earth. So you have a totally irrational, obsessed kind of philosophy which is now driving the hardcore of ayatollah regime in Tehran – very simple, so.

MR. MAY: Let's go to Stanley Tate right here.

Q: I'm Stanley Tate (ph) from Miami, Florida. I'm just curious – I was in Tehran a couple of years ago, and I'm just curious how you imagine the United States can reinforce the Green Movement when it's in an entire police state, when the citizenry of Tehran have no freedoms whatsoever. They have no armaments, they have no guns. They have no means to effect the revolution that is meaningful. The Royal Guard (sic) has complete control of that entire city.

And I'm just curious as to how you imagine this revolution can be effective, how it can start and how it would not be put down with real weaponry and real enforcement by the royal guard?

MR. LUBRANI: To this, I have another answers. The first – the first answer is very simple. When there is a will, there is a way. And I believe in it. And let me tell you, in the Soviet Union, the dissidents were in the same position, possibly even worse. And the ways can be done. You just give me a free hand and I'll teach you. (Laughter.)

Q: Question to Ambassador Lubrani about Israel's policy towards Lebanon, and specifically towards Hezbollah. You know, obviously, Iran has a proxy in Lebanon – Hezbollah – which threatens directly Israel. And the rise of Hezbollah happens under Israel's watch and partially under your watch when you were in Lebanon. So what were Israel's mistakes? And what lessons could Israel learn for the future?

MR. LUBRANI: You're talking about Israel mistakes? Well, I can talk to the evening about them. (Laughter.) In very short term, we should have stayed in Lebanon much less. It would have been much better. We should have – I was – I was at the time coordinator of our activities. We overstayed time in Lebanon for a very long time. Number two, we should not have in the – initially believed that we can change regimes in Lebanon. Nobody can change regimes in Lebanon. Even Hezbollah will, in the end, not be able to change it.

MR. MAY: Let me go to Eli, over here.

Q: Eli Lake from The Washington Times. This is a question for Dr. Rubin. Can you talk about your assessment of whether Western sabotage and covert action attempts can delay the Iranian development of long-range missiles? And can you also talk about why the Iranians chose to doctor footage of earlier missile tests in 2008, and what you think that says about their program?

MR. LUBRANI: To be very, very frank, I don't know the answers neither to the first question or the second one. (Laughter.) I simply don't know.

MR. RUBIN: He mentioned me.

MR. LUBRANI: Oh, he mentioned you? Okay.

MR. RUBIN: And can the missile program be slowed down? Yes, it can be slowed down but cannot be stopped. Eventually, if they are detrimined (ph), they'll continue. One weak – their only vulnerability is in still reliance on materials and components from abroad, like those carbon fibers. If you can put your hand on that and stop that you can stop it dead, not just slow it, stop it dead. When you're talking about just sabotage I don't believe it can do anything more than slow it down. And what was the second question?

Q: The doctored video tapes that were – (cross talk).

MR. RUBIN: Oh, yes, yes. Don't try to find too much reason there. They are trying to be – we are tracking the Iranian release of video of materials and statements and sometimes it doesn't make much sense.

You see a lot of hype and a lot of contradiction there and it's a layer cake. And on top of it is a force of PR. PR of – (inaudible) – by the way. It's part of their – and we don't have time to talk to that but there's another study I did and presented to the Iranian view of the whole missile program. How they regard it.

And one of the thing they want to get from the missile program is a coined – they want to get impression. They are transparent and pompous. They are saying we will transplant in order to show you, the west, what we can do. Come and take pictures of us; send your satellites and take a picture. We want you to know that we are strong. Maybe not that strong, but under that hype that there is a layer of real capability, don't be mistaken.

There will be the usual people who think that that's hype, it means that they can do nothing. No. It's hype and they can do things so there's not much – the doctoring – they doctor things in order to show themselves on a better foot also in order to save embarrassment and save face. Not against us but against their own bosses. I mean, if one missile didn't take off because of a malfunction they will never admit – by the way, they never admit malfunctions.

Always, everything is successful so they wouldn't admit the malfunction. They were called out, sometimes inattentive to – (inaudible) – and they seem to correct it. When I show you the parts of the BM25, not the field-space launcher BM25. In my opinion, it was a – (inaudible) – by the Iranian security; they shouldn't – (inaudible). So sometimes they slip and when they slip they try to correct by doctoring but it's not important more than that; it's just.

MR. MAY: Go ahead.

Q: Dr. – (inaudible) – American University. It's to Ambassador Lubrani. I can attest, knowing him for so many years, that these people to listen to this advice. (Chuckles.) It also would have been different and for the gentlemen there, Hezbollah started in 1981, by the way, the – (inaudible) – under there. Allah ma Islam (ph), it was called at that time. So you know, it was before the invasion, just to correct it.

The question to you is about the Russian angle of the situation and I heard what Mr. Rubin about these WikiLeaks revelations notwithstanding – there is a sense, that I got also from previous Israeli government, that somehow the Israelis are very, very mute and reserved when they criticize the Russian rolling all that. Is there something that we don't know? (Laughter.)

MR. LUBRANI: We have Mr. Lieberman as our foreign minister, what do you want? (Laughter.)

Q: (Inaudible) – to a – (inaudible) – of the Israeli government, the head of which you know I know very well for many years. (Inaudible, off mic.)

MR. LUBRANI: Look, you know, we've always had a very particular soft point for Russia and you know that for a long time and Russia is aspiring to become important in the world again and they're trying to. They don't succeed so very much because they have their hang ups. (Laughter.) I can only tell you – I can only tell you one thing, when I stayed in Tehran, the best intelligence the Russians, the best intelligence about – more than the United States and more than we had – the best intelligence and they're still at it. They are still at it.

MR. MAY: You want to answer the same question?

MR. LUBRANI: I want to add to that. I want to – as the Jew I have the privilege of answering your question with a question. (Laughter.) Why is the United States – why is the United States so reluctant to expose China's support of the Iranians program?

MR. MAY: In interest of time we've got Michael and Ora (ph). Both ask your questions and then we'll give them in a combined answer, okay?

Q: Michael Goldstein from Cleveland. I'm with the Association for Intelligence Officers. I want ask Uzi a question about ballistic-missile defense. As you know, biannually there's an operation between Israel and the United States in ballistic-missile defense. I think it was October 2009, Juniper Cobra, where we sent – the Navy sent our AEGIS ships to work with the Israelis in this combined effort.

What happens if there really is an attack by Hezbollah or someone else with ballistic missiles and the Navy doesn't come? How much will that – would that degrade the three-tier ballistic-missile system, assuming it's all in place by that time?

MR. MAY: (Inaudible) – ask her question, too, and then combine or separate the answers if you like.

Q: I have a two-part question. (Laughter.) Okay, here we go. For Mr. Lubrani, given that your mentor is Bernard Lewis, or still is such, can you comment on the Turkish-Persian rivalry, historically, and perhaps now as a hegemon? And then for Mr. Rubin, about the Iran development, if so about EMP.

(Cross talk.)

(Laughter.)

MR. LUBRANI: Should I answer this question? And the second you can answer?

MR. RUBIN: The second question is mine –

MR. LUBRANI: No, the second –

(Cross talk.)

(Laughter.)

MR. : The first question is Uri.

MR. LUBRANI: I would like to – let me answer the Turkish. Look, I am an optimist by nature. Our relationship with Turkey is tenuous at this time and will remain for some time. We have made mistakes, they have made mistakes and they are, in fact, trying to find a way how to get off their high horses. I know that there are talks going on in Geneva between a representative of – (inaudible) – and the director general of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey. They are a looking for a way of how to solve this problem.

This is not going to solve the problem, entirely, because you have a fundamentalistic regime in Turkey and what is more important, if I am – if my senses are correct and I have been borne out by some, I sense in the rhetoric of this regime, already, a quest to become a Middle Eastern – a Middle Eastern power by Turkey. It boils down to the fact that they're not quite sure they're going to be accepted by the European community and they feel that the Ottoman Empire ought to be somehow resurrected.

MR. RUBIN: Okay, I've been asked a question and I start with the second one I hear, the EMP. EMP is a byproduct of nuclear explosion, nuclear exploding a nuclear bomb to a certain altitude above the country creates an EMP. So I think that an EMP is part of the nuclear threat.

And now if you ask me if I were an Iranian, why go to new EMP? If you have a nuclear bomb with a missile just let it go all the way. I know the United States and people think about EMP as a threat to the United States but in our case I think this is just – it's a threat by itself, it has no meaning; it's part of the nuclear threat.

About this question of the AEGIS, what happens if AEGIS doesn't come to help Israel? I am very uneasy – I say with great discomfort, I would say nothing much. There are only 21 ships, now, in the United States Navy equipped to carry AEGIS and the – (inaudible) – claims there are 27 ships. Now, those ships are not dedicated antimissile ships. They are the work horses of the U.S. Navy, of the diminishing U.S. Navy, the number of ships is going down.

They have assignments all over the world so if you can get the time of a ship – by the way, the stumbling block for phase one of the PAA (ph) is the availability of ships. The United States Navy requires more ships in order to withstand, to patrol constantly in the Eastern Mediterranean. Now, the number of AEGIS ballistic SM-3s on those ships and each ship is very low. (Inaudible) – missiles – only four.

Now, if you look at how many SM-3s exist in the world today, how many in the stockpile? Now, I don't know if the number is unclassified so I won't mention it but it's a very small number. So I say, right now, in the next two years the AEGIS ship would be a great moral boost if they join in but basically we need our own missiles and perhaps the appointment of U.S. battles PAC-3s, if emergency comes.

MR. MAY: I just want to thank both Uzi Rubin and Ambassador Lubrani for that fascinating discussion. Thank you, again, for that. (Applause.) And let me say, we got 15 minutes, now, and then the next event so if you check your schedules noon will be the next event right here, four.

MS. : It's here?

MR. MAY: Get lunches and come back here for the next open event – and yeah, and leadership meeting in next door. Got that? If not, see one of our staff, they know more than I do.

(END)