



Dr Jean-Loup Samaan  
Researcher  
NATO Defense College  
Middle East Department

The views expressed are the author's only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the NATO Defense College or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

# 1. NATO & Nuclear Proliferation



*“The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity. During the next decade, proliferation will be most acute in some of the world’s most volatile regions.”*

*Active Engagement, Modern Defence*  
Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of  
the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,  
[2010, p.10 ]

## 2. Why does the Iranian issue matter for NATO ?

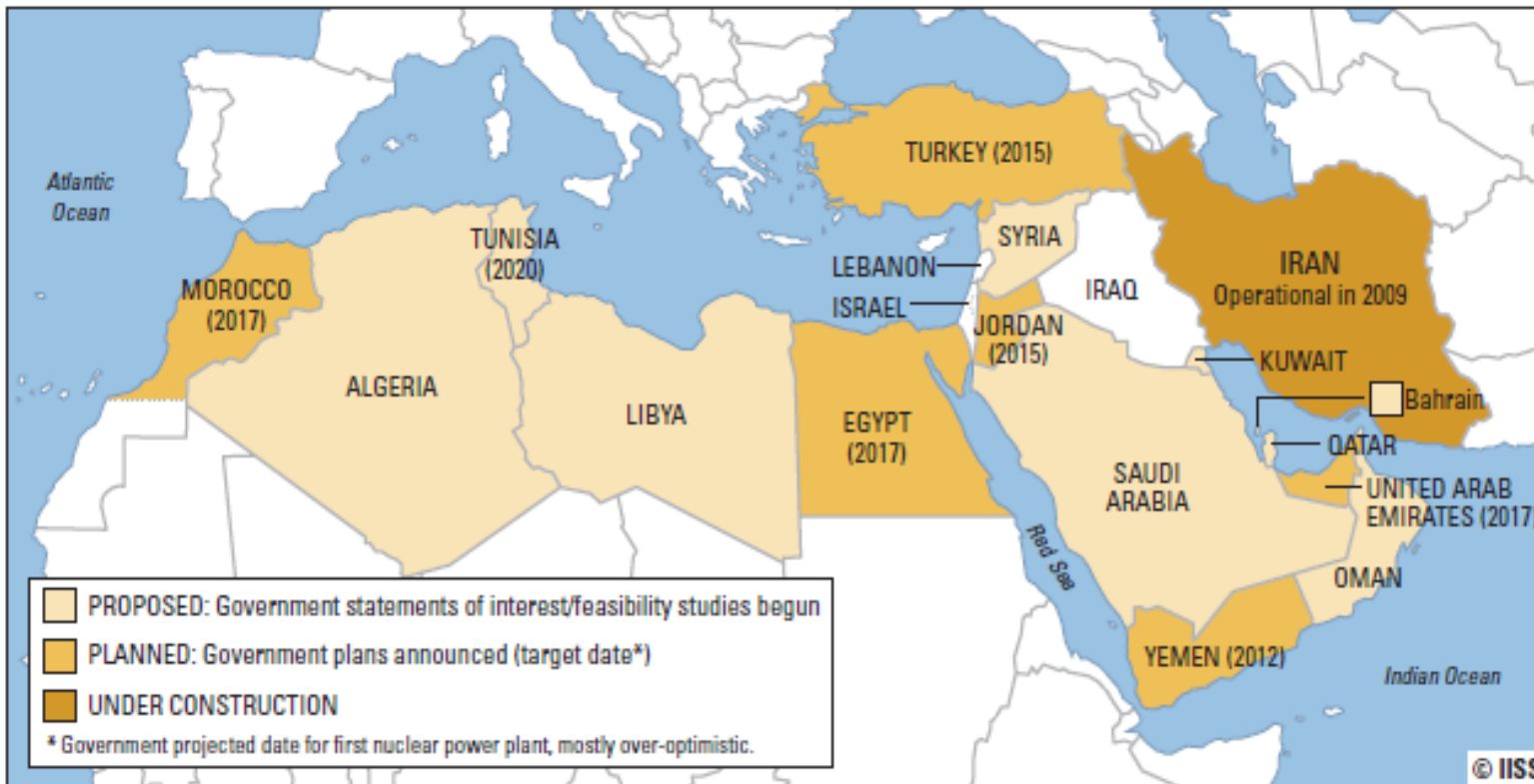


- 5 reasons why a nuclear-armed Iran challenges the *raison d'être* of NATO
  1. Iran borders the territory of the Atlantic Alliance
  2. Some NATO members maintain a military presence in the region that could be at stake
  3. NATO partners in the Middle East and the Gulf have been expressing growing concerns to NATO
  4. The regional chain reaction that such a scenario presents could endanger the Middle East's strategic stability
  5. A nuclear Iran would have the capability to strike targets in continental Europe

### 3. The regional chain reaction

*“Proliferation begets proliferation”*

Former US Secretary of State George Shultz

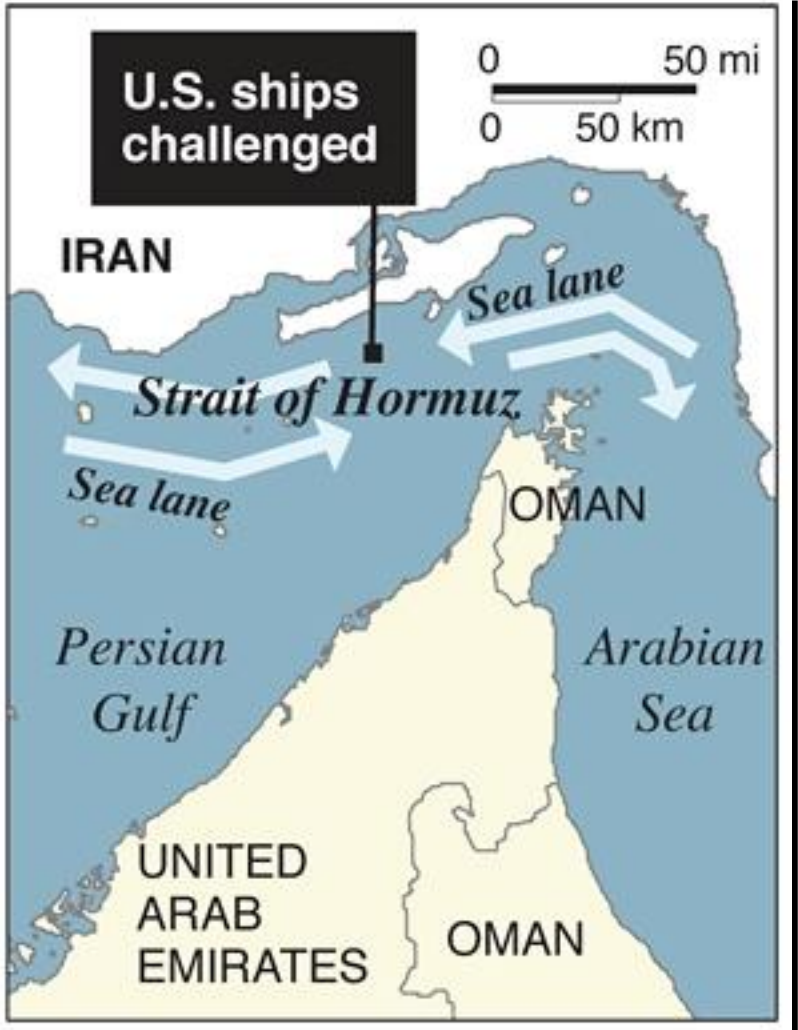


Nuclear-power aspirations in the greater Middle East

# 4. Conflict escalation: new patterns?



Flashpoint # 1 Naval confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz under the nuclear threshold



# 4. Conflict escalation: new patterns?



Flashpoint # 2: A new Israeli-Hizbullah conflict under the nuclear threshold



## 5. Implications for NATO



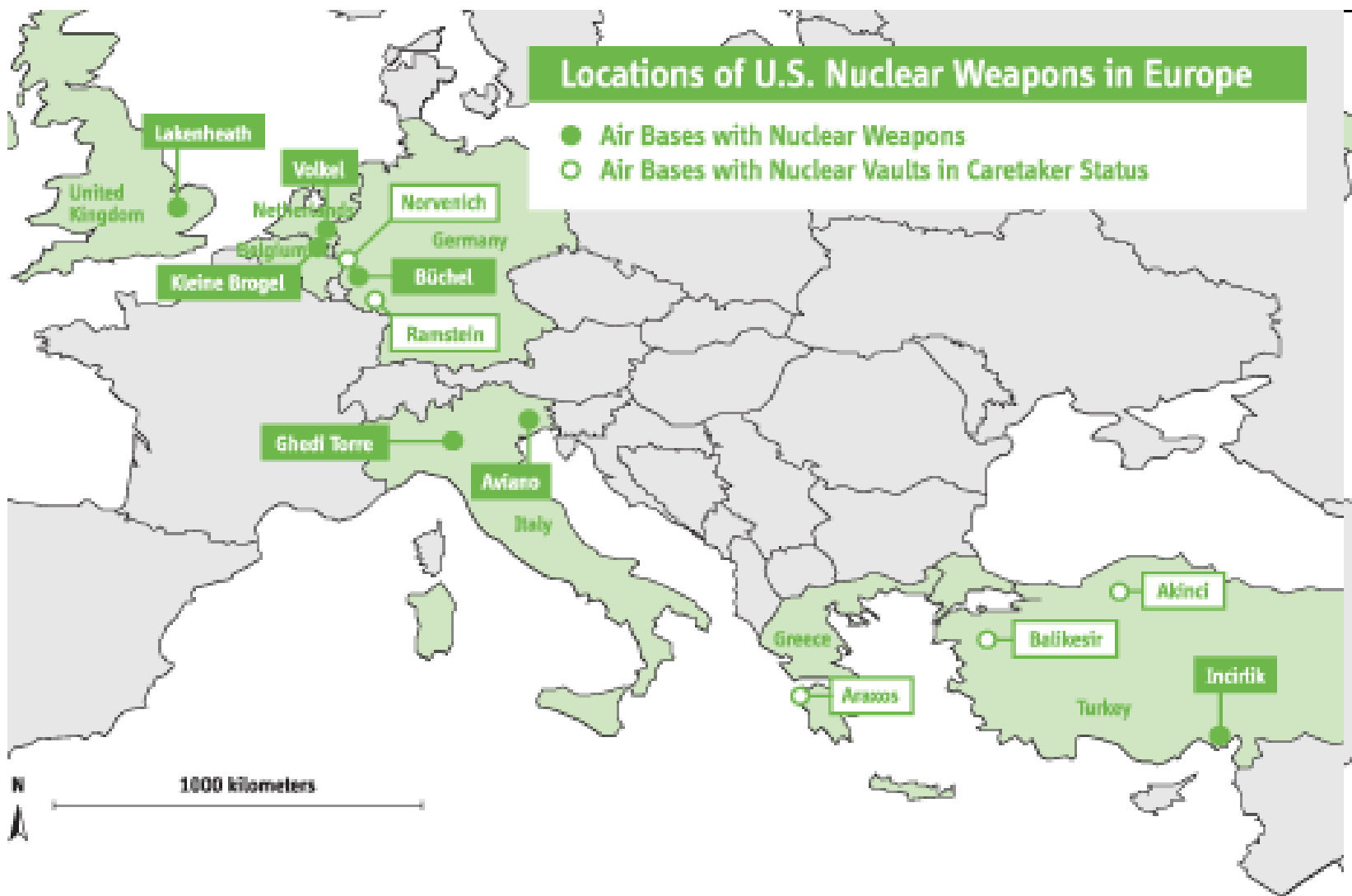
- The modest scope of MD & ICI partnerships
- “Multi-bilatellarism”: NATO partnerships vs bilateral agreements
- Revamping the content of NATO MD & ICI partnerships
- Extended deterrence?

***Back Up Slides***



- The paradox of a Nuclear Iran: thinking not about nuclear warfare but about subconventional confrontations
- The coming NATO's dilemma: whether NATO reinforces its relations with regional partners through security guarantees or these countries will look for alternative solutions
- Preparing NATO for a Nuclear Iran in order to raise the costs of Tehran's crossing the Rubicon

## What if US nuclear Weapons in Europe go south?





Russia

Area of protection offered by Bush's proposed system

Proposed Russian missile base

RUSSIA (Kaliningrad)

Baltysk

Redzikowo

Poland

Bush's proposed US missile base

Brdy: radar

Czech Republic

Iranian missile ranges

Zelzal: 250 miles

Fateh: 105 miles

Iran

Black Sea

Ukraine

Iraq

Turkey

Shahab-3: 1,240 miles

Area to be protected by US Aegis defence system

Initial stage of Obama's alternate plan would deploy Aegis ships armed with interceptors. There will be a second phase on land in 2015, probably in Turkey

Aegis defence system



Arleigh Burke Class destroyer

Ticonderoga Class cruiser

18 US Aegis ships are equipped with interceptors  
 Each carry up to 24 SM3 Interceptor missiles  
 Cost of each missile: about \$10 million  
 Cost of programme: \$42.7 billion  
 Can blow up ballistic missiles above the atmosphere  
 Also carries Tomahawk cruise missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes and rapid-response gun systems

Mediterranean Sea

- **The statu-quo bias:** A tendency to assume Iran's nuclear weapons would be a deterrent against aggression.
- But it could also be an effective security umbrella for offensive non-nuclear military activities.
- Iran's investment in asymmetric warfare capabilities.
- The mechanisms of a "stability-instability paradox".

- **The vicious circle of internal politics: Israel/USA/Iran**
- **Toward a « zone of immunity » for Iran's program?**
- **A false dilemma: economic sanctions vs military action?**



\* Shahab-3 with extended range, but diminished payload  
 † In development; estimated range, unknown timeline for deployment  
 ‡ Believed to be based on SS-N-6 and purchased from North Korea; estimated range (some estimates extend to 3,500km); unknown quantities

Iranian ballistic-missile ranges

# The suspicions over Iran's Nuclear program

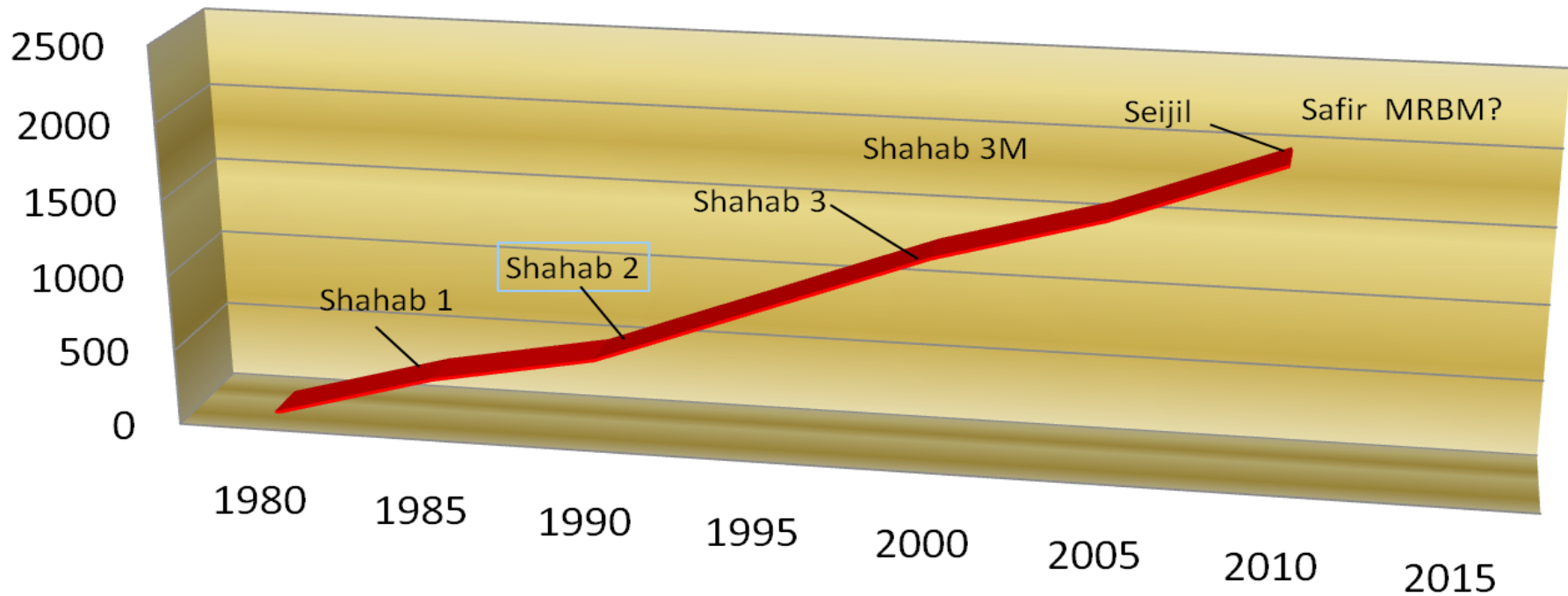


IAEA's indicators of a potential militarization of the Iranian program:

1. experiments involving the explosive compression of uranium deuteride to produce a short burst of neutrons;
2. uranium conversion and metallurgy to produce uranium metal from fluoride compounds and its manufacture into components relevant to a nuclear device;
3. development, manufacturing and testing of explosive components suitable for the initiation of high explosives in a converging spherical geometry;
4. multipoint explosive initiation and hemispherical detonation studies involving highly instrumented experiments

International Atomic Energy Agency, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, GOV/2011/29, 24 May 2011

## The missile range










### 3. The nuclear hedging effect



 *“Nuclear hedging” designates a “national strategy of maintaining, or at least appearing to maintain, a viable option for the relatively rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons, based on an indigenous technical capacity to produce them within a relatively short time frame ranging from several weeks to a few years”.*

Ariel Levite, “Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited”, *International Security*, 27: 3, Winter 2002-03