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Transcript

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[00:05:48]

MS. LAIPSON: Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ellen Laipson. I'm delighted to welcome you to this panel on the curious topic of proliferation and regime change. So we hope we'll be creative and imaginative and figure out some interesting insights on how these two concepts intersect. I know we used these two words in conjunction certainly when we talk about the challenges of Iran and North Korea, but we're hoping in this panel to actually take an even wider-angle view of these interactions and dynamics, look a little bit to historic experience and not just limit ourselves to those two cases but perhaps think of other cases that might emerge in the future.

I'm really delighted to have a very diverse and experienced panel to explore these questions with us. Dani (sp) Pletka is the vice president of the American Enterprise Institute. Bijan Khajehpour is a managing partner at Atieh International. Bruno Tertrais to my left is senior research fellow at the Foundation Pour la Recherche Stratégique. And a new addition to our panel, we're really delighted to have Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro, who is Brazil's – currently Brazil's permanent rep to the conference on disarmament and for five years previous to that was the permanent representative to – of Brazil to the IAEA. So he brings the perspective of one of the – a very important global actor on questions of proliferation and nonproliferation.

So to begin, I'm going to let each of the panelists take no more than two minutes to give us very broad brush their own conceptual thinking about whether regime change is an appropriate, useful, productive tool as we engage countries on the choices that they make between proliferation and nonproliferation. But to ask the question perhaps even more neutrally, sometimes regime change comes from within and not as an act of the international community. So how, in those cases, do we think about regime change and choices that countries make to proliferate or not? So we'll start very broad brush and then we'll start – and then we'll dig into some of the very specific stories that we're all aware of.

So Bruno, I wonder if you'd like to go first.

BRUNO TERTRAIS: Why me? It's interesting because most of the international community, the expression "regime change" became associated more or less with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, but then suddenly this morning I became aware that regime change can have very different meaning when I heard in the amphitheater that the transition from Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping was a regime change. So we will need to discuss, I think, what actually we mean by regime change. And I – even the – even from the standpoint of my own country, we were a parliamentary republic in 1957, then we went to a different regime, the Fifth Republic in 1958. And was it literally a regime change or not? I'm not sure.

[00:09:03]

But I have – since I have only one minute left, I think the most important stand – the most important point that I'd like to convey, since you encouraged us to think more broadly about the immediate cases, that there is a sort of scientific consensus in the literature about proliferation, according to which basically the nature of the regime does not really matter because democracies and nondemocracies are not more likely or less likely to go nuclear. And I thought when we were preparing for this panel, I had a look at this literature, and I thought: This is wrong. I don't know why, but this is wrong. Then I thought: Yeah, I know why this is wrong, because I have the impression that most of the time the quantitative literature looks as – looks at the issue in a time-

neutral, history-neutral fashion. And I would argue – and I discovered that I was not the only one, hopefully – I mean, Scott Sagan – and I don't know whether he's here today or not, but he was earlier on. And Scott Sagan, I think, has written along the same lines that it would be very difficult for a democracy to go nuclear today, whereas it would have been much more easy for a democracy to go nuclear in the pre-NPT context. So I think that norms matter, and I don't think that this idea that democracies are no more or no less likely to go nuclear is still valid today. So I do think that the nature of the regimes matter.

MS. LAIPSON: That's very helpful. So I invite others to comment on whether – is our definition of regime change literally any political transition, or do we want to use a narrower, more precise definition of regime change? Ambassador?

[00:10:33]

ANTONIO GUERREIRO: Well, you described the title of this panel – I was curious. When I first read it, I thought that it was really very intriguing, which was, what were we meaning by this – correlation between the regime change and the proliferation?

Well, if there is a correlation, it should not – it should not exist. I don't think that regime change from abroad should be on the table as far as proliferation is concerned. Now, the question of democracy and of nondemocracies being more likely or less likely to go nuclear – I think that the main question is a question of security perception, OK? It's true that before the NPT, there was no legal norm which prevented countries from developing a nuclear weapon. After the NPT came into force, that has changed, and now, with very few exceptions, the whole international community is bound by the NPT.

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But I view this panel as a subset of the question of noncompliance. What would be the consequences of noncompliance? The NPT itself is silent on this, but the statute of the (IAEA ?), which was entrusted with ensuring compliance by nonnuclear weapon states, is not. The statute provides for the – (inaudible) – (Security Council ?). So I view this issue as a subset of the issue of noncompliance.

MS. LAIPSON: Thank you. Dani (sp)?

DANIELLE PLETKA: Well, you're right. Intriguing isn't the word. I mean –

MS. : You're too nice.

MS. PLETKA: It's confusing. I think it's meant to be provocative. So what are the questions we're trying to face up to? Bruno touched on this. Regime change was a euphemism brought into – brought into force by the Clinton administration to talk about what we had historically referred to as a coup d'état. And when we thought of a coup d'état, we thought, of course, of internal forces, because the notion that there should be external forces that were in play went out of – was discredited in the immediate history of the '80s, but then prior to that in the '50s as well.

So you know, honestly, it's an irrelevant question. The more – the more relevant question is, what is – what is a more responsible type of government as a steward of nuclear weapons? And that's really what we're talking about, right? We're not talking about a decision to go nuclear and have nuclear power.

If I'm misinterpreting it, somebody should correct me. If that's the case, I think the record is clear. The problem is, all of us want to obfuscate, because none of us want to admit that the NPT, which we're still all sort of paying obeisance here to is, in fact, no longer really a relevant treaty for today.

[00:13:52]

We talked about it; it doesn't have the teeth necessary. You're correct, Ambassador; it doesn't really speak to the question of noncompliance because, of course, this – you know, our worship of this piece of paper was meant to be sufficient. And then, as each country stepped outside, whether it was Israel or it was India or it was Pakistan or it was – or it was countries within the NPT like North Korea or Iran, we looked at it and we said oh, oh, oh, but we can manage this within the context of the NPT. And the truth is that it hasn't been a living or a vibrant document in terms of management of the international situation. It's kind of stayed static.

And whether you view its provisions as an injustice or you view its provisions as simply incapable of addressing the challenge we face today, that's the real problem. The unstated, at the end of the day, is that we feel a lot more comfortable when there are democratic governments that are in charge of nuclear weapons, whether or not they're in adherence to the NPT, and we feel a lot less comfortable when there are governments that aren't democratic.

[00:15:02]

Now here, for me, is a much more piquant question. In the wake of the Arab Spring, when we talk about democracy, do we still feel exactly the same way about the notion that we can now divide everybody up simply between authoritarian antidemocratic regimes or regimes that (pretend ?) to democracy, but aren't, but like in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and ones like we see in Egypt. I don't know. I don't know the answer to that question. I'd love to hear what the other panelists think.

MS. LAIPSON: Thank you. Bijan.

BIJAN KHAJEHPUR: Well, thank you. I was probably as puzzled as everyone else on this panel with the topic, and I thought of two questions or thought processes. One is, I'm talking about the case of Iran, obviously – I'm from Iran – would the strategic assessment of the Iranian strategists be different under a different regime? And the answer – the short answer is no, it wouldn't. So if we have to talk about change, we have to talk about the change of the strategic assessment, whether it's within the same regime or a new regime.

Essentially, the critical question is, how do the strategists of a country – of a regime view their strategic and security environment? And that's why the external forces – the regional forces are more important. And I do believe that there is interdependency. It's not just an external issue. There's an external and internal issue.

So connected to that, the second question for me was, does a threat of a regime change – which has existed in the case of Iran – sort of an external threat to, say, if you don't behave, we will have to push – we will have to push for a regime change – does that change the strategic assessment? Well, yes, it does. And in the case of Iran, we are witnessing that, but unfortunately, in the wrong direction. So the more you threaten, the more that regime or the strategic assessment will move into a security-driven agenda which is not the one you would like to see. So these two dimensions of the question of regime change, I think, are important, and we can discuss them in the course of the panel.

MS. LAIPSON: So I think I've heard three different views on the relevance of democratization or democratic transitions. For Bruno, there's a judgment that democratic regimes are more likely to choose to not go down the nuclear path – that they can develop the constraints; Dani (sp) wants to believe that democratic governments can manage nuclear weapons better than others, but is now questioning, because there are imperfect democracies emerging – very – deeply-flawed democracies emerging that may have those ambitions.

[00:17:54]

And your argument is that a country that is trying to democratize – if the regime change pressures from the outside are too acute, it actually sets back – is that correct?

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: Absolutely, absolutely.

MS. LAIPSON: – the process of democratization.

So let's look to the Brazil story now. So Brazil has a story from the 1970s of political evolution that did change the national policy towards nuclear weapons. Can you refresh peoples' memories about that experience?

MR. GUERREIRO: Well, yes. I am not sure whether the decision was ever made that Brazil should have a nuclear weapon. There was, yes, a decision made that we should develop the capacity to produce a nuclear weapon. What happened is that after the military period in Brazil, which ended in '85, people started thinking about – if we get close to the Argentines – because they also had a nuclear program – and we both decided to give up – (inaudible) – our nuclear weapon intentions, (at least ?) – what would we want nuclear weapons for, you see?

[00:19:18]

So that was the decision made by our leaders both in Brazil and Argentina. And that's – and this started a level of transparency which culminated in the creation of a bilateral agency which has its headquarters in Rio De Janeiro, where you have Brazilians inspecting facilities in Argentina and Argentines inspecting facilities in Brazil.

Now, the comprehensive safeguards agreement, which Brazil and Argentina have in force, was concluded under the aegis of the – of this bilateral agreement.

MR. LAIPSON: Did people hear? Could you try to speak up a little bit, if you could? Thank you.

[00:20:10]

MR. GUERREIRO: OK.

It was – our comprehensive safeguards agreement was concluded under the aegis of the bilateral agreement and not of the NPT because Brazil and Argentina were not partners in the NPT then. We became partners later on. But I can say that after '98, when we became partners with NPT, the president at that time decided that we should join. This was not an easy decision. And still now many people will not swallow it. They think that it was a mistake. And I think that they're wrong. It was the right decision. We should take pride in giving up the idea of having nuclear weapons, because what could we wish them for?

Now, what is interesting is that these people who still do not like our abandoning the idea of having nuclear weapons – we heard today this morning this parliamentarian in – from South Korea urging South Korea to develop a nuclear weapon. And the people in many countries must say, which, I'll say, have similar opinions, they should never get (the upper hand ?) because this is extremely dangerous for the world order.

I read an article from a Brazilian professor a couple of years ago, and he says that all countries comparable to Brazil, all of them, in terms of territorial size, population, GDP, industrial waste, you name it – all of them had nuclear weapons with the exceptions of those which initiated the war and lost it. And I was very much troubled by that part. So I think that we must take pride in the decision we made, OK, and not, let's say, lamenting not having something for which we have no use.

MR. LAIPSON: Thank you.

Bruno, I know you thought about, in the European context, countries of the former Soviet Union that went through a political transition that resulted in the giving up of nuclear weapons capabilities. I wonder if you want to draw on that history or if you want to develop a little bit further your idea about the implications of democratic transitions, that democratic transitions could change how countries perceive – I mean, I don't know if you want to draw on Bijan's point that it depends on the threat environment, but that – is there something about democratic transitions that lead to decisions that nuclear weapons have – you know, are not necessarily desirable?

[00:23:14]

MR. TERTRAIS: Well, threat environment obviously matters. And earlier in the day we heard Ambassador Gold, who I respect, saying something which I think was totally wrong, which was the fact that South Africa gave up its nuclear weapons only because of domestic internal – no, that was the perception that because of Cuban forces, because of Soviet assistance to neighboring countries, that there was a real threat – whether – it's not for me to pass judgment on the reality of the threat, but the perception was absolutely real.

Now, I'm – what I'm – I disagree with any judgment that security conditions and the threat perceptions and the threat environment is always, by far, the dominant variable. In any nuclear choice, there are costs and benefits and pluses and minuses which get into politicians' calculations about their various nuclear decisions. And it seems to me that one of them is precisely the norms, as well as relation with allies, by the way, you know. Going back, again, to this morning's conversation about South Korea, we know about the history of the U.S.-South Korean relations and how much the temptation to go nuclear could not be seen in isolation from the relation with the United States, et cetera.

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I'm a little puzzled by what Bijan said – I'm not necessarily contradict him; I'm puzzled by something you said because my perception from the outside of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Iran is that even at the time of the George W. Bush administration, Washington was very careful to never use the expression “regime change,” and for the Obama administration, it seems clear to me that he has tried to send all the signals to the effect that of course he would – he would like to see more freedom in Iran, but he's not seeking regime change.

So I understand that the perceptions, it seems, from Tehran might be different, and this says a lot about misperceptions, but my own perception is that this administration, and indeed, as the previous one, although congressional – the Congress, as I mentioned is a little different – has been very straightforward in stating that they're not seeking regime change. And now you're saying, well, you know, the U.S. wants regime change, therefore – so I'm a little puzzled by that.

But just one word on your question, Ellen. It seems to me that when you look at the cases of proliferation reversals, all the cases we've had in the past 20 years were – I mean, there is a positive correlation between liberalization, openness and getting backwards on the proliferation track. So to say, you see the cases of Brazil, Argentina, obviously. I mean, Ambassador, you emphasized the bilateral dynamics, but obviously, these were not only the bilateral dynamics. It's no coincidence that President Fernando Collor de Mello was, you know, the first democratically elected president who announced the reality of the nuclear program, et cetera. You look also at other cases which are less well-known, such as Romania, for instance, which is also a case where you can positively correlate a liberalization with (renunciation ?) to nuclear weapons.

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But this does not necessarily mean that regime change is necessary, historically speaking. Sometimes regime behavior change is enough, and then you can actually argue that in South Africa, when the decision was taken, it was not yet regime change. It was not yet regime change; it was regime behavior change. You can, of course, use the case of Libya. And if you believe that Myanmar, Burma had at some point some military temptations, to use your expression, then you can use the case of Myanmar as a regime behavior change, as an apparent – at least an apparent regime behavior change.

So – and sometimes, actually, you don't even need regime behavior change. Sometimes leadership change is enough. You look at cases which are even less well-known, such as Australia, Indonesia – you know, I could name a couple of others – you know, leadership change was enough

for a different decision in terms of nuclear policy, or at least on nuclear intentions – at least nuclear intention.

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So this is to say that regime change is not necessary, but I still believe that especially in the past 20 years, once again, time is not neutral here, that there is a positive correlation with the – strongly disagree with my friend Danielle, this piece of paper that you call is still deeply ingrained in the minds of most Western policymakers as something which is a norm which has certain political strength. So it may be just a piece of paper. It's very imperfect, but I think it's – it has continued to be – to impose itself as a fundamental (role ?).

MS. LAIPSON: Let's dig in a little bit on the Iran case, because I think we now realize that there's some, you know, difficulty in what the U.S. government says versus what it means versus what the Iranians hear or what the Iranians believe to be true. So let's – why don't you two parse out a little bit whether there's a communications problem here, that in our more open and democratic environment, people bounce this phrase “regime change” around all the time, even if it's not formally the declared policy of the U.S. government. On the Iranian side, it seems to me that – are they using it a little bit as an excuse, or do they truly believe and fear that the American agenda is regime change?

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: First of all, Bruno answered his question himself. He said it's a question of perception. So it's important how the Iranian regime perceives the words but also the actions of Western governments.

Just to name one example which has been used recently in a number of policy speeches by Mr. Khamenei, when you say “crippling sanctions,” what do you think “crippling” means? In Iran, there is – the same word is basically “paralyzing.” That's what they are using: They are out to paralyze us. I don't know. You don't have to say “regime change.” You don't have to say “regime change” when for decades U.S. politicians don't use the word “Islamic Republic of Iran.” In fact, President Obama was the first U.S. president or U.S. official to use the official title of the Iranian regime, Islamic Republic of Iran. You may dislike it, but it's the official title of the Iranian – you don't have a problem saying Islamic Republic of Afghanistan or Islamic republic of other countries, Pakistan, in fact. So there – you don't have – especially in a culture like the Iranian culture, words and perceptions are very important.

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And in the minds of the Iranian strategists, especially now the top leader, Mr. Khamenei himself, there is no doubt that the U.S. is out to change the Islamic Republic of Iran and create a new reality on the ground and – you know, there is the – still the memory of the 1953 coup, and that is – that is still very relevant in the Iranian mindset. So yes, the perception is that they want to sort of topple the Islamic republic, and that's what I meant. When you have that kind of a scenario, that kind of a threat from the external environment, the world's superpower is basically saying directly and indirectly – or is sanctioning you, putting pressure on you, is sabotaging, you know, your nuclear program and other programs, is assassinating or supporting the assassination of your scientists, this is what drives a country like Iran into a mode that I would call security mode. And within that security mode, there is no space for democratization or an – even an open debate, even without

democracy, a potentially more diverse debate about exactly the costs and benefits of a nuclear program or any other strategic agenda.

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This is the situation we are facing. So yes, I do believe, first of all, the perception is very strong, and it's not misplaced. Even as an Iranian who is Western-educated and more open to ideas, I do believe that in phases, the U.S. agenda was to – you know, to, if you want, get rid of the current political realities in Iran. And the – part of the literature has changed, but the perception of the key political constituencies in Iran is they are still – this is still the main target and the main agenda. And that's – creates a very unpleasant internal dynamics in Iran, which has led to where we are now. And if it continues, it will further create space and opportunities for the hard-line elements inside the Iranian system.

MS. LAIPSON: Dani (sp), I wonder if you'd give us your thoughts on whether you think even informal talk of regime change gives the United States or a group of international countries leverage on Iran. Do you think that the discussion of regime change is useful? Do you think it's productive? Or do you wish we would approach it in a different way?

MS. PLETKA: First of all, I mean, Bruno is exactly right. It hasn't been the policy of the United States to seek regime change in the Islamic Republic of Iran or any other configuration of the – of the regime there for some years now. But I – but I –

MR. KHAJEHPUR: So you're – so before it was?

MS. PLETKA: Well, I think when we overthrew –

MR. KHAJEHPUR: I just want to clarify.

MS. PLETKA: Well, I think when we overthrew Mossadeq and the communists, I think that was pretty clear that we supported that. So yeah, I'm going to give you that one.

I think that the – that Bijan makes a – I mean, he makes an important case here, which is at the end of the day, if they want to perceive that that – that this is our policy, they're going to perceive that this is our policy, you know, especially if you live in a – in an environment in which each – you know, each instrument of government seeks to reinforce the other for whatever purpose. You know, I think it's fine to believe that. I don't think it is the policy of the United States. I wish it were the policy of the United States. It isn't. It hasn't been; it wasn't under the Bush administration. But me saying so is utterly irrelevant.

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I think we tend to get confused when we talk about these things because we get caught up in the rhetoric of regime change and proliferation and, you know, the strategic environment. Let's just talk for a second about what these countries seek to achieve. The honest answer is, as any Iranian will tell you, that the Iranian nuclear program began not under the Islamic republic but under the Shah, as we know all too well.

Now, Iran, for its own reasons, in whatever iteration of government it finds itself, perceives some requirement for a nuclear weapons capability. I think that's pretty clear. Why? Is it because Iran perceives itself to be under assault in the region? Well, I think that's probably reasonable unlikely as a proposition going 40 years back, but I mean, let's – you could make an argument for it if you want. At a certain point, it becomes a semantic discussion.

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The point is that now Iran's strategic ambitions in the region dictate to the current leadership that they would like to have nuclear weapons. I tend to agree with them that their reading of the environment around the world is correct. Moammar Gadhafi gave up nuclear weapons and look where he is now, you know? Perhaps it's not a misreading of history.

So there are in fact perverse incentives to have it. Why not hang on the fact of crippling – or whatever word you use to choose, whatever translation you like. Why not hang on in the face of these sorts of sanctions, which at the end of the day are unlikely, whatever our secret policy may be, to topple the regime, to the point where you have nuclear weapons, and then have another discussion with everybody and see what they think? It seems to be a not unreasonable calculus for the Iranian government.

The question – at least that's my perspective here from Washington. Maybe – you know, maybe I see things incorrectly. It seems to empower them vis-à-vis their own population, vis-à-vis their neighbors. It seems to – it seems to help empower the historic view of Iran/Persia as a – as a regional power and influence. It helps to burnish, shine – whatever, I'm going to use a bad metaphor here – the cape of Iran as a – as a – as a – as the guardian of the Shia in the region. And God knows, they need a guardian, apparently.

So if that's the case, then how do we – then how do we figure out how to deal with the challenge of an Iranian nuclear weapons program? That's the – that is the scene that we face now, not what should we do, what do they perceive. And if that's the scene we see, then it seems to me that we're either going to end up with a military strike on Iran by Israel or some, laughably suppose, by the United States, or we're going to end up with an Iran with nuclear weapons.

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If we want to do something about that, it seems to me that this regime is fully within its senses and not irrational to have a nuclear weapons program. And they're going to want to keep it and we're going to have to figure out a way to talk them out of it – period, end of story.

MS. LAIPSON: So I want to let Bijan answer, but I'd like to ask both Bruno and Bijan whether you think a more democratic Iran would take a different position on its nuclear program.

MS. PLETKA: Oh, and by the way, I don't think they would.

MS. LAIPSON: OK. So we've got one vote no. All right, let's see.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: First of all, to set the record right, Mosaddeq was not a communist. And if anyone wants to believe that Mosaddeq was a communist, then you have difficulties

understanding Iran. And that's probably where the problem is. We don't take enough effort, you know, or put enough effort and time into understanding the realities on the ground. And in fact, I do encourage everyone who is interested in Iran to read how the external pressure during the Mosaddeq period actually pushed Mosaddeq toward the Soviet Union, not that he was a communist, but pushed him strategically towards the Soviet Union. Do read that part of this history. It's very well-documented.

[00:38:35]

Does Iran want nuclear weapons? I am puzzled by one very important fact. In fact, I wanted to respond to Ambassador Gold in the previous session but there were too many people asking questions. I am puzzled because we take some of – selectively some of the statements of Iranian leaders, you know, very, very seriously. We say, oh, they want to wipe Israel off the map. They said so and the military commander said so. But we don't take the words of the Iranian leader seriously when he says: We don't want nuclear weapons.

So either we have to take them seriously or we don't have to take them seriously – one of the two. You have to make a decision. If we don't take them seriously, then also don't take their references to Israel very seriously. Iran's strategic assessments, I said it yesterday as well, is more focused on the threats come from a potential Talibanized Pakistan.

This is – when you talk about perceptions, Iran's top threat perception right now is not Israel, it's not the United States, it's a potential shift in Pakistan which would create a huge headache for Iran, because then you have – if, God forbid, there is a Talibanized Pakistan, you have a group that hate the Shiites, hate Iran as the leader of the Shiite community or Shiite belief, and who have in the past attacked Iranian interests when they were ruling in Afghanistan.

So this is – this is the type of threat – an if you fail to understand that threat environment, those threat perceptions, we also jump to wrong conclusions about what Iran wants, what kind of a strategic agenda there is and so on. So I think let's take – I do believe we should take the statements from Iran seriously. And there have been Iranian threats as well. But the one that I – the one statement that I'd take very seriously, if I were a regional strategist, is that Iran has said very clearly it will not strike first. It will never attack anyone. And in fact, for 200 years Iran has not attacked any country in our region – or any country, period.

[00:40:54]

The other thing we should take seriously is Iran's 20-year program. Iran has a 20-year program. This is Vision-2025. And there Iran states very clearly, yes, we want to be the number-one power of our region. They say that. But they also say that they want to do that through technological and economic progress, not through military hegemony or military positioning and military capabilities.

So we need to take – you know, first of all, go a bit deeper in understanding Iran's perceptions, Iran's threat environment, but also understanding what they have set out as policies. And I do think that there is – there is a misperception also on this side in reading Iran.

MS. LIPSON: Thank you. Bruno.

MR. TERTRAIS: Well, I don't think there is any contradiction between allegedly taking seriously some of the Iranian statements on the one hand and not taking seriously other Iranian statements. That's just because we have evidence to the contrary in one case and no evidence to the contrary in the other case. So I absolutely don't think there is any contradiction.

[00:42:01]

I also take exception when anyone uses the argument of continuity, that the – Iran's nuclear program began under the Shah, yes. But the Shah ended up making the very deliberate decision, after having hesitated, and still probably keeping somewhere in the back of his mind the idea of a nuclear capability one day. But at the end of the day, his first and foremost strategic objective was to be recognized as a, quote, unquote "quasi-Western" nation. And he understood that for that to happen, he had to, quote "abide by the norm."

And so – I mean, there are – the elements of continuity between the Shah's intentions and program and what happened after '84, I think, are – sometimes were way overstated. More importantly, the – on the argument of threat perception, there is a mismatch between the history of the Iranian nuclear program and the history of threats – of the threat environment of Iran. It's very striking, in fact, at some moments in time you really have an objective – maybe not perceived. And that's where we get – we get into an interesting discussion about perceptions.

Look, to take but one example, at the end of the Clinton administration, there was the grand, you know, Clinton/Albright attempt to do something. This is actually – but during those years, this was actually a moment where, you know, the U.S. is trying, from its point of view, to show its best intentions. And this is a time, actually, where the nuclear program actually accelerates. We can also discuss what happened in 2003, et cetera. My point is just to say that I'm not sure at all that there is a correlation between the objective threat environment of Iran and the speed of its nuclear program.

What would happen – what would –

MR. KHAJEHPUR: (Off mic.)

[00:43:59]

MR. TERTRAIS: It's up to the chair to say.

MR. KHAJEHPUR: Thirty seconds. 1998 is also the year when the Taliban killed 11 Iranian diplomats in Mazar Sharif. Don't forget.

MR. TERTRAIS: So you need nuclear weapons against the Taliban, then?

MR. KHAJEHPUR: No, no, is that – I'm not saying they wanted nuclear weapons. I'm not saying – I'm not saying they wanted nuclear weapons. I'm saying don't always look at what the Americans are doing to understand the Iranians. The Iranians have a much larger environment.

MS. LAIPSON: OK, fair enough. All right, would a democratic Iran – yeah, would –

MR. TERTRAIS: Fair enough. On your question, I think it would – a lot of it – two points. A lot of it would depend on how it happened. The second, the first reason that comes to mind is that you could have the same kind of a debate, more or less, as those which happened in Ukraine in the years 1991 to 1993. I suspect that's one interesting potential reason, all things equal, because Ukraine had operational nuclear weapons and operational ballistic missiles on its soil. So it depends on where Iran is at this point.

Final word of Gadhafi, I mean, just an anecdote. A friend of mine did a documentary on the last days of Gadhafi, and he interviewed the last person who spoke with Gadhafi when he left Tripoli, and that person is a very close Russian friend of Gadhafi. And the guy said: What Gadhafi told me was basically, had I known – had I known. Of course, if you're – if you're an Iranian supreme leader, what conclusions do you draw from that, you know, it's – you are also going back to the perceptions issue. For those –

[00:45:37]

MS. LAIPSON: But if you comply, then regime change becomes more likely, yeah.

MR. : And by the way, some are using this argument as to say, oh, it was a bad idea to topple Gadhafi because, look, you know, he's going to encourage – you know, by the way, I think it's absolutely not a counterargument to the legitimacy of the operation against Libya, but that's s – (inaudible).

MS. LAIPSON: Good point.

All right. We're going to lose the ambassador to a flight, so – but I – your country was a very important player in attempting to resolve the Iranian nuclear file. Brazil and Turkey, as you know, really did work – negotiate with the Iranians separately from the – well, in support, I think, in principle, of the P-5 plus one process. Any reflections on that and whether, in your conversations, in your fellow diplomats' conversations with the Iranians, did this issue of regime change come up?

MR. GUERREIRO: First of all, the idea of Turkey and Brazil was not to solve the Iranian file. That was not the intention, OK. At that time, both Brazil and Turkey were members of the Security Council, and we thought that as such, we had an obligation to do something to try to improve, OK, the climate, because a new round of sanctions was being hatched up and we thought that this would be – it would not be helpful in promoting discussions.

So what we did was to convince Tehran to agree to a formula whereby the issue of Tehran research reactor could have been solved, the issue of the fuel for the Tehama research reactor could have been solved.

[00:47:37]

Now, the P-5 simply dismissed the efforts by Brazil and Turkey, and this was a great disappointment for us. And we came to the conclusion that as far as peace and security issues are concerned, the P-5 simply want to keep the monopoly, OK, of matters which have – they don't want to share it with anyone else, OK? And it was a disappointment, and we received the official answers by the P-5 in the morning in Vienna, and a few hours later the resolution by the Security Council. Imposing sanctions on Iran was vaulted upon, and Brazil and Turkey felt obliged to vote against that round of sanctions against Iran. It was an attempt with – we acted in good faith.

Perhaps we were naïve. We did not realize – but if I would never, ever cease to have the monopoly -- (inaudible) – having to do with peace and security.

MS. LAIPSON: Please.

Q: Do you think – is there any possibility you might have been naïve – (inaudible) – or you think you were just naïve vis-à-vis the P-5?

[00:49:10]

MR. GUERREIRO: No, the fact is that with Iran, we did not – as I said before, our idea was not to solve the file, but to facilitate discussions on the Tehran research reactor, fuel for the Tehran research reactor.

Q: So you feel that the only party to which you were – toward which you were naïve was the P-5?

MR. GUERREIRO: Because we did not – we were not given the opportunity to test, OK, the behavior by Iran during the discussions.

Q: You didn't meet with the Iranians?

MR. GUERREIRO: Yes. They agreed to the Tehran declaration.

Q: That's what I thought.

MR. : They signed it.

MR. : They signed it.

Q: That's what I thought.

MR. GUERREIRO: They signed it.

Q: So you did – (inaudible).

MR. GUERREIRO: But a follow-up was not made possible. That's what I'm saying.

Q: I see.

MR. : OK?

[00:50:05]

MR. : This case is actually used by Khamenei himself and the Iranian leadership as the proof that you cannot trust the Western. In fact, I mean, the Brazilian government actually published the letter that President Obama has sent to President Lula about this case and it was exactly – or at least from what we know, exactly the spirit of the letter, but it was rejected, and hence that – the very deep distrust, much deeper than it was before this event.

MS. LAIPSON: So I think we've looked at a number of angles on Iran. We've mentioned Libya, and so I do want to just put on the table that, you know, the Iraq and Libya cases are when a nondemocratic regime decides to comply with Western requirements and obligations. It then

creates an environment where, in those two cases, then regime change became the policy. Now that could be the wrong lesson that other countries would learn, but I think we would be remiss to not bring in the North Korea case. I'm sure it was – been discussed in other panels, but here we have a country that is much farther along in its nuclear capabilities, where the regime is much more defiant and aggressive and threatening in terms of the willingness to use missiles and possibly nuclear-capable missiles, or at least its missile capacity in an aggressive way. And when people really do scratch their heads and say, you know, can you have a normal transaction with this particular regime, any thoughts on how the regime change idea plays into North Korea? In North Korea we have – its guardian is China, a country that I think is quite allergic to this notion that – of external agency to regime change. So any thoughts on whether regime change is relevant to the conversation about North Korea?

[00:52:08]

MR. : Well, two thoughts, one which is a question, because we don't know anything about North Korea. Well, I know a little bit, but haven't been there yet.

I think an important question is whether or not it would be a good idea or a bad idea to make North Koreans believe that we can actually seek regime change. I don't know the answer to that question, but I do believe that that question is important.

Second thing – and that's incidental – but I'm inclined to think that there are some regimes with which we continue to expect that we can have what we call a normal relationship that is just, you know, playing a diplomatic game that – in which everybody understands the rules. I'm not entirely certain – (inaudible) – tread very carefully here because maybe I don't know enough about the behavior of that regime, which I think has shown extraordinary rationality over the past 30 years, by the way. I'm not sure it's possible to have a normal relationship with that regime. Again: A question mark, but for me a real question mark.

MS. LAIPSON: Yes, you have to leave. OK. Thank you so much.

MR. : OK. I will leave this – (inaudible).

MS. : Thank you. Oh, thank you.

(Off-mic conversation.)

[00:53:39]

MS. : Well, I think it's time to open it to you all to ask questions. We have a mic in the middle, and I'd ask you to stand before the mic and introduce yourself. Tell me to whom you want to address your question. I should let people know that they've given us a few extra minutes because we started late, so we have more than a half an hour to bring in the issues that are of concern to you.

First is Shahram Chubin. Hello.

Q: Thanks. Is this working all right?

MR. : Yes.

MS. : Yes.

Q: OK. My – it's – if you'll permit me a couple of very short comments to Bijan, what Bijan raised. And I'm very happy that I've preempted the ubiquitous – (inaudible). (Laughter.) It's better you get to him.

Bijan, I really can't let stand the proposition that if the regime changed in Iran, whatever the regime, the strategies would still be faced with the same objective threat environment. The threat environment is a result of political relationship.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: I said there is an interdependency.

Q: But I would say there is indeed

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: Yeah, I said that.

Q: And the best example is that we do not worry about enrichment capabilities in the Netherlands or Japan or even Brazil. Why is that? Why were we less concerned about the shah's nuclear program than we are about the Islamic Republic's? I think it's self-explanatory. There's nothing deterministic about –

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: But these are two different things, Shahram. I'm sorry to come in. I said that strategic analysis of the – of Iran, you're talking about Iran, inside Iran, not what the external forces think.

[00:55:09]

Q: I'm talking about Iranian strategists in Iran and how they perceive their threat environment. I'm saying it varies according to the sort of regime you have, because that regime has relationships with its neighbors. It can differ.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: So the threat environment changes.

Q: Exactly.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: That's – so if – I said if the threat environment changes, the analysis will change and –

Q: Well, therefore, there's nothing unusual about what Iranian strategists think domestically. If there's a regime change, it's quite possible their analysis from within will be very different, OK? Now, that's the point I would make.

[00:55:42]

Second, you say – second, you say – well, the environment is important – words are important, crippling, et cetera. Well, I mean, Bruno, I think, answered it, but when you have missile parades in which it says "Death to Israel" – well –

MR. KHAJENPOUR: I agree. That's as bad.

Q: – words are important. You can't be selective about it.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: Absolutely.

Q: The last point really is this question of the chicken and the egg. And we do tend to get it the wrong way around. That is to say, I think that the threats to the Islamic Republic insofar as the crippling sanctions, regime change, whatever the synonym is or was used before – and I don't remember it, frankly – is that a result of – let me put it this way – does getting the bomb, trying to get the bomb attract these threats or is the fact that these threats are made the justification for getting the bomb?

[00:56:43]

Now, that's what we're talking about, really. And my argument would be that nobody talked about regime change in the Islamic republic of Iran, however unattractive it may appear to some people in Washington, before the WMD and particularly the nuclear issue became more prominent. Someone has to ask – and then that became the justification for why Iran was getting them, right, regime guarantee.

So I think that one should try and disassemble these things and nobody in the 1980s or in the early 1990s was talking about regime change in Tehran. But when the nuclear thing became much more prominent, I think the question of regime change in Iran attracted threats and that then became the justification for Iranians within Iran saying we need a guarantee against regime change.

MS. LAIPSON: Well – but don't you think we need to be careful between whether we're talking about regime change as a strategy of outside actors, because I think there was a lot of debate right after the revolution of whether the revolution would last and what was the chance that it would collapse? There was a long period of chaos and confusion –

Q: No, I'm talking about outside actors, yeah.

MS. LAIPSON: You're talking only about regime change as the choice of outside actors.

Q: So I've given you enough material to come back if you want, but you don't have to.

[00:57:53]

MR. KHAJENPOUR: All I want to say is that the more serious U.S. sanctions on Iran started in the mid '90s before there was any talk.

MS. LAIPSON: And it wasn't about nukes, right.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: There was any – there was no talk whatsoever about the nuclear program. So the – if you say – if you perceive – we said it's a question of perception – if you perceive sanctions, severe sanctions, as an instrument of changing, whether it's regime behavior or regime as a whole, they existed well before the nuclear program.

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MS. : (Off mic) – can you just clarify a second? I’m sorry, your perception is that the sanctions that began in the 1990s had nothing to do with the Iranian nuclear program? I mean – speaking –

[00:58:34]

MR. KHAJENPOUR: Absolutely.

MS. : – speaking as an author of several of those – and I know that there are folks in the room who were closely involved – yes, they did. (Scattered laughter.) (Cross talk.)

MR. KHAJENPOUR: Then who –

MS. : ’93 – (inaudible) – Iran and the Nonproliferation Act in 1992 – they – well, starting then –

MR. KHAJENPOUR: 1992 – (cross talk) –

MS. LAIPSON: There were sanctions that had to do with terrorism, undermining the peace process, there were a lot of other rationales.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: At least, it was never mentioned, so it’s – anyhow, let’s –

MS. LAIPSON: OK, Mark (sp).

Q: I apologize, I’m not going to continue the Iran discussion.

MS. LAIPSON: Thank you, thank you.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: Thank you, thank you – (chuckles) – appreciate it.

Q: I actually leapt to my feet when you mentioned North Korea.

MS. LAIPSON: Ah, thank you.

Q: Because I’m supposed to speak on the exact subject on Thursday at our U.S. office. And I was hoping I could learn something that could help me finish my presentation. (Scattered laughter.) And I did.

[00:59:18]

MS. LAIPSON: I wouldn’t let you down. I wouldn’t let you down.

MR. KHAJENPOUR: We’ll charge you for that.

Q: But what I’m mostly happy about is that you actually had this title of a – of a session here, because I was a little bit worried that by putting the word regime change in the title of my own

presentation, I would be viewed differently politically than I – than I have been. But I think you’ve made it now acceptable, politically correct, to talk about – safe to talk about regime change.

[00:59:44]

MS. LAIPSON: So thank George Perkovich for that. (Scattered laughter.) OK.

Q: I know I’m supposed to ask a question, so I’ll try to figure out a question. But let me just provide an answer, first of all, to Bruno’s question, which is a very good question. Would it help in the North Korean case for them to think that we wanted – actually, they do think it already. And it kind of goes to Bijan’s point. The perception in North Korea is that the Yankees are out to invade and if they don’t arm themselves to the teeth, they’ll be invaded. I mean, it’s nonsense but they say that all the time, so I immediately believe it. And so a policy of positive regime change – I’m not sure it would really change their perception; it would actually make it real. And maybe it would even help to bring it about.

I mean, I think – OK, the punch line of my talk is that it’s the only happy ending in North Korea. But then the question is, does it – in what ways can outside forces engender regime change apart from the disastrous manner that we did it in the case of Iraq?

MS. LAIPSON: Right, no and I think the dilemma in North Korea is that as long as the Chinese will always go for the short-term interest in keeping the regime afloat – I mean, you know, preventing complete starvation, preventing complete collapse of the economy – we’ll never get to that point. We’ll never get to that juncture. So did you want to respond to that?

MR. KHAJENPOUR: I just want to say one thing. I think there is – one mistake we all make is we think that our opponents, the different regimes and strategists we are dealing with, that they think like we do. And they don’t, especially a country like North Korea. So the whole frame of mind, the whole sort of way of analysis we have sort of perceiving things is different. And that’s, I think, one of the first obstacles. You know, how do we sort of put ourselves into their shoes to understand their frame of mind and then to see how they interpret our actions? And that’s where, I think, the cross-cultural impediment comes into these analyses.

MS. LAIPSON: Did you want to come in?

[01:01:52]

MR. TERTRAIS: Yeah, actually – I was – first of all, I was trying to find an equivalent regime change, but now that – George Perkovich now is the man who made regime change acceptable in policy talks about proliferation, anyway –

MR. KHAJENPOUR: Transformation is a good word, transformation.

MR. TERTRAIS: – well, political extreme makeover – (laughter) – I just sense that we’re going to sound like North Koreans. (Scattered laughter.)

No, I was seriously wondering – but again, that’s a question more than a statement. Should we not attempt to reverse the connection and tell whatever regime is – has embarked into a nuclear

weapons program illegally in its regime, which we don't like – Iran, for instance – if you cross the nuclear threshold, then we would undermine – we will deliberately undermine your regime, not by threat of an Iraq-style invasion, of course, but if you cross the threshold, then our policy, our collective policy becomes regime change. Is that a good idea or not?

[01:02:58]

MS. PLETKA: Well, how does that – how does that work? So we're going to wait until you're in a position, a maximal position to deter the possibility of regime change and then it's going to become – I mean –

MR. TERTRAIS: I don't think you can – well, that's precisely my point. This is not – this is not necessarily about military action.

MS. PLETKA: No – by the way, thanks, Mark, for that comment about – where is Mark – about Iraq being a disaster. I'm sure the 25 million of people of Iraq are really grateful to you for that.

I think it's a – I mean, I think – I think the problem is that George has done us a little bit of a disservice. You know, the two don't always go together is the – is the honest-to-goodness truth. So George isn't here, so I can talk about him behind his back. But I mean, that's the challenge. It's not one or the other. There do have to be other factors at play here. And I think that that's what everybody's kind of alluded to.

MS. LAIPSON: (Off mic) – can this be turned into productive leverage in any way, but I think Dani's (sp) argument is wouldn't you have waited too long then, and then you – then the other country has accrued much more deterrent capacity and it just – and would you create international consensus on such a strategy? You know, again, I think we're back to the P-5 that would – and not even all of the five of the P-5 would go along. But it's an intriguing idea.

[01:04:18]

MS. PLETKA: (Off mic.)

MS. LAIPSON: Let's let some other people in, please.

Q: James Acton from the Carnegie Endowment.

I kind of feel slightly obliged to defend the panel – sorry, to defend the title – (laughter) – of the session. For all – for all the complaining, I think this has been a very rich session, so I thank the panelists for that.

You know, one aspect that you were just discussing is how we affect a regime – externally imposed regime change for the purposes of nonproliferation. Another issue that came up that I'd like to push all the panelists a bit further on is the issue of, if the U.S. does regime change for other reasons than nonproliferation, what implication does that have for nonproliferation?

You know, in the last decade, the U.S. has toppled regimes in Iraq and it's toppled – been involved in the toppling of Libya. I mean, Libya and Iraq being states that had nuclear weapons programs at some point.

One argument that one often hears is that has made nonproliferation harder because states that are thinking about developing nuclear weapons will be incentivized to do so to shield themselves against regime change. So, I'd like to push all the members of the panel on whether or not they agree with that. And in particular, how strong is this effect? Because as Bruno pointed out, you know, in a case like Libya, you have contrasting foreign policy aims. You know, on the one hand, one wants to do something about the terrible rights – human rights abuses. On the other hand, one doesn't want to incentivize other states to develop nuclear weapons, so there's a real clash of interests there. And so if the panelists do think that regime changes for other reasons makes nonproliferation harder, how do you weight that against other foreign policy objectives? I mean, this is an issue that was discussed but I'd just like to push everyone a bit further on that.

[01:06:07]

(Off-side conversation.)

MR. KHAJEHPUR: I think, first of all, obviously the situations in different countries are very different, so I will focus on Iran. If you have a structure, political structure, like you have in Iran where you have a fragmented power structure with lots of – lots of factions and lots of networks who are trying to influence the overall agenda, you definitely empower and give arguments to segments of that power structure who would like to, you know, develop nuclear weapons and basically have a different security agenda. But at the same time, you should not underestimate the others and their ability to sort of take part in the – in the bargaining process, in the decision-making process. And I think with every action, you have to look at how the different segments of the power structure are affected.

[01:07:10]

There is an interesting example of – for, you know, the sake of not using regime change – of a transformation, and that is, for example, Pakistan after Musharraf. I mean, remember Pakistan under Musharraf, which was a dictatorship, and then suddenly it became a democracy after 9/11? But there was a – there was a transformation. It moved towards a different structure beyond Musharraf even though it had nuclear weapons and even though it was, you know, it was initially not an ideal power structure. So, there are examples that people see, like, inside the corridors of power. Some people use the examples of Libya and Iraq and some others use the example of North Korea to argue for their case. But also others use the example of Pakistan. They say, look, Pakistan has nuclear weapons but it's still more or less being influenced, and it cannot deter that sort of external agenda. So, I think we have to believe in bargaining processes where they exist and we have to understand that each action, no matter what the original motivation, can produce arguments and agendas within those bargaining processes.

MS. LAIPSON: I would just add that I find, in a way, the question is a little too hypothetical because if a country for which there were some other reason to justify regime change, was also a proliferation threat, then we would perceive that the regime change was a twofer. You know, that it was going to have more than one benefit. If there's regime change only for human rights reasons or

for some other reason in a country where the – where the proliferation threat is very low, I don't – I'm not sure it would have any spillover effect for positive or negative on other cases. So, I really do think that each case, if there's – if the proliferation issue is also present, then it would be part of a complex mix of motivations, and that when regime change has occurred, it's normally not been for a single, causal factor but for, you know, the overall unacceptability of the regime. And that usually manifests itself in more than one way.

Did you want to come in?

[01:09:30]

MS. : Yeah, I mean, the one – the one caveat I would give to what Bijan said about Pakistan is that the instruments of control over the nuclear weapons program, of course, didn't change. That remained in the military and the ISI.

I actually think Jim's (sp) asked a very – a good question, and it goes to our own credibility. You know, the truth is that we've nattered on about human rights issues and in Iran and in – and in Pakistan, and we did in Iraq under Saddam as well. The truth is that our – that there are very few who believe that in fact that is a sufficient cause for us to move forward on any drastic policy. And perhaps – I mean, I certainly believe this to be true – perhaps it's those issues that we ought to be more serious about rather the notion that we ought to be less serious or look for some equalizer with proliferation.

The truth is that those represent not just a risk to the United States and to the populations in the countries and to the neighbors, but also tend in a particular direction when these countries are in fact drawn to these – to this WMD. That's the – that's the truth at the end of the day and that's another challenge we face.

MS. LAIPSON: Please.

Q: Hi. My name is Eileen Hordick (sp). I'm with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Middle East Policy. And I have a question – a personal question to Mr. Bijan, please. You were – your claim that Iran does not want to attack Israel and that, you know, statements as – such as wiping off – Israel off the map of the Earth are just for talk, then kindly explain what Hezbollah's role is in Lebanon. And also, if Iran's main goal to acquire a nuclear bomb was to defend itself against Pakistan, then are we going back to religious wars because you stated that Iran is afraid of Pakistan because it's a Sunni state –

[01:11:33]

MR. KHAJEHPUR: No, no. I said a Talibanized Pakistan.

Q: It's religious –

MR. KHAJEHPUR: If Pakistan is ruled by the Taliban, not under the current situation –

Q: Only if it's ruled by Taliban?

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: Pardon?

Q: Only if it's ruled by Taliban?

[01:11:43]

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: This is the perception.

Q: That's the – OK. And regarding Hezbollah, please.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: Sure. Hezbollah is – again, I am saying take Iran's words seriously when they say that very, very clearly Hezbollah is a deterrent against Israel, is a – is a deterrent – strategic deterrent against Israeli interests the same way Israeli has tried to antagonize Iran, Iran is trying to antagonize Israel. But I take – as I said, I take Iran's statement seriously that Iran will not start a war. Iran will not attack. Iran's statements are all around the world that if we are attacked, we will respond. And that I take seriously. You can disagree with it, but I take that very seriously as a strategic objective in Iran.

Yes, but Hezbollah, they say it very clearly, also after the recent escalation in southern Lebanon. Iran said very, very clearly that, you know, it's supplying the Hezbollah, it's supporting the Hezbollah. It created the Hezbollah in the '80s, so there is no hidden agenda there. It is a deterrent against Israeli interests.

Q: And I just wanted to add that Hezbollah's ideology is to wipe off Israel. That's the main ideology.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: OK. Does it have the capability?

Q: Probably will. I don't know. I don't know. I don't have the – I don't have the statistic, I'm just asking.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: OK. It doesn't have the capability. No, it doesn't have the capability.

[01:13:11]

Q: So it's just the bark, basically, to scare them?

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: I mean, that's the talk – the talk of – the anti-Israeli talk, both in Iran but also in Hezbollah, is an instrument of making these entities – whether it's the Ahmadinejad government or the Hezbollah – more popular in the Arab world, antagonizing –

Q: So it's just a propaganda tool?

MS. LAIPSON: OK, I think we're getting a little beyond our subject here, thank you.

Q: I just – OK, sorry. OK.

MS. LAIPSON: Did you want to come in on the previous?

[01:13:36]

MR. TERTRAIS: Yeah, I actually like it when panelists ask questions and the audience answer them. (Inaudible.) But I want to try to answer more Jim Zigland's (sp) question. Look, this used – I used to call it the – (inaudible) – affect, for the – (inaudible) – there are many of them here. It was the Indian army chief of staff who said, after the First Gulf War, that we know the lesson the Gulf War is that if you want to fight the United States, you better – take on the United States, you better have nuclear weapons.

I think that that lesson and that mindset exists whether or not you topple regimes around the world. So you might as well do the right thing, if you think you're doing the right thing. My point is to say, I don't think it should be an important argument on the debate on whether or not you do another Libya to say, well, Mr. President, actually, you know there's a risk that if we do this, that other country will take – will be further incentivized – what a horrible American word, by the way – to develop its nuclear program.

I don't think that argument will have a lot of force because it will be a hypothetical medium- to long-term consequence. But my main point is to say I think the – (inaudible) – effect exist even if you don't topple regimes. Maybe you have to do it, you know, once every decade, just for the – for the sake of it. (Laughter.)

But I – to that question of whether or not nuclear weapons gives you immunity, my take on this is very simple. Immunity for them is a belief and for us is a choice. It's a choice because if we start believing that nuclear weapons give a country total immunity to do whatever it wants, even if it's totally contrary to our own strategic interests, then this means that we have totally given up on nuclear deterrence, on missile defense and on a bunch of other tools that we are supposed to have in our collective toolbox.

Second, I could – I don't want to start another debate now, but I was intrigued – I was thinking about, during James' (sp) question, and then someone mentioned Pakistan, Musharraf, 9/11, et cetera. Wait a minute, didn't – Dick Armitage said a few days after 9/11, you are either against us – with us or against us. And if you are not, we'll bomb you back to the Stone Age, or something to that effect.

He says he didn't say that. OK, well – I mean, whatever the exact terms of the conversation, I think it's reasonable to assume – at least I'd like to put on the table – that Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons at that time did not fundamentally alter the way the Americans acted vis-à-vis Pakistan the day after 9/11. Or, if it did, that's because it was an additional concern. So I'd like to put that on the table.

[01:16:41]

MS. LAIPSON: Please.

Q: I have one question for Mr. Bruno and one for Mr. Bijan. First question for you – (inaudible) – talked about positive co-relationship between democracy and nonproliferation. I

would just like you to highlight a bit on how you see the Indian case, where domestic politics incentives actually played a crucial role in making India overtly go nuclear and – (inaudible).

And for Mr. Bijan, I understand your concern relating Talibanization in the region, or in case of Pakistan. What I don't understand is, I think, when you talk about Talibanized Pakistan as a source of threat for you in terms of – in context of nuclearization, I think that's a bit of decontextualization, particularly because if you look at – if you look at the current progress of relationship that went on Pakistan, it has been – the relations have remarkably improved with IPI – assigning of IPI and a lot of other cultural exchanges and other stuff. So I don't really see how you look into this situation as a threat perception. And ironically, there was a – there is some kind of history between – of nuclear cooperation between Iran and A.Q. Khan; how would you look at that? Thank you.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: I'll go first. First of all, what I'm saying – what I'm stating here is that threat perception of Iranian strategists – not my personal threat perception; this is from a lot of discussions inside different think tanks and different organizations in Iran – this is – this is their threat perception. We may say it's wrong, but this is their threat perception. They say if Pakistan is, you know, ruled by a Talibanized or Taliban government, and because of their antagonism towards the Shia in general and towards Iran in particular, that can become a major threat for us.

Now, what Iran is doing – the improved relationship with Pakistan – investing – you know, Iran is even investing in building the pipeline – the gas pipeline on the Pakistani side; this is all Iran's way of preventing that scenario. This is important to understand. Iran's way of preventing – Iran helping Pakistan develop economically, and that way preventing a radicalization of Pakistani politics and a – and a potential move towards a more radical, Talibanized structure.

[01:19:15]

So I think there is consistency in what Iran is doing. And as I said, the threat perception is there. As I said, it's not my threat perception, but I do believe personally that by focusing so much in an obsessive way on the Iranian nuclear issue, the West is sort of neglecting some other developments in that region, the same way it happened in the late 1990s in the same phase that Bruno was talking about; when there was too much focus on Iran, we missed to see what the Taliban were emerging to and what al-Qaida was becoming. I think it's the same phenomenon right now – that we are so obsessed with the Iranian program, that we are not seeing what's happening inside Pakistan, what's happening in the region in general, what kind of agenda are some of the more hardline forces driving. So that is my personal belief. But what I've stated previously was the perception – the threat perception inside Iranian strategic think tanks.

MS. LAIPSON: Go onto India and Democracy?

MR. TERTRAIS: Yeah. Look, we all know the numbers – although we may disagree on what exactly the numbers are. But a majority of nuclear-capable countries are liberal regimes or democracies. You may count five or six of five-and-a-half – six and – 6.2 – however you count it. So I never said that there was no – I mean, let me clarify what I said.

[00:1:20:44]

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Democratic countries do go nuclear, but they go nuclear in the pre-NPT or non-NPT context. My point – I emphasize it once again – is that it's a very different context politically and legally, by the way, in a world where the NPT has become – where that little piece of paper has become one of – one of the most universal treaties ever devised. And I continue to think that a democratic decision – decisions on the proliferation path in the world of 2013 are very different from the decisions on the (proliferation ?) path in the world of 1963. That's my basic point. Yeah.

MS. LAIPSON: (Off mic.)

Q: Paul Scholt (sp), King's College and Carnegie. I also am trying to move more systematically and away from obsessive focus. I'd be very interested in the whole panel's views on recent experimentation with military and financial solutions, where it seems that we get not entirely satisfactory results from big-scale, on-the-ground intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, which leads one to suggest we might not be willing to do that again, and rather more complex results in Libya, with the final results not to be known.

[01:20:21]

And in Libya, incidentally it now appears that they have not actually agreed to change on proliferation, that there seems to be evidence – (inaudible) – writes that he was hedging; he was holding chemical programs which were not declared and have not been found, which leads us to remember there's a layer of deception in this – in this question. How do we know when proliferation has ended? How do we really know?

So that's one question: What will recent history – lively recent history on the military instrument lead to? How will that change the way regime change is considered? And then, of course, there's the financial and the economic side. The sanctions in Iraq and still on Iran – how will that appear to people in states of concern or outside as a factor?

And I guess that's an exemplification of the Etel Solingen point in "Nuclear Logics," that decisions on WMD acquisition are, in some way, an indicator of the way that regime regards its economic prospects. Is it going to be an open regime, or is it – is it going to be a closed regime? And ferocious sanctions are a way of making that choice extremely evident.

[01:23:28]

So, looking at the way that Westerners or people in contested regions will be looking at the application of these two instruments, what can we say about regime change? Because history must matter, mustn't it?

MS. LAIPSON: I'd just like to offer a little bit of a variation on your first question. Let's imagine, you know, a future or contemporary Libya and Iraq that were denuclearized in a somewhat nonpermissive – in a not fully permissive way, let's say, and regime change then occurred; could they then revisit the question of whether a nuclear program was desirable for their national security? So, could the cycle begin again?

Q: Well, I imagine yes, but you'll want to talk about that.

MS. LAIPSON: Yes. So I – just to add that to the mix of questions.

[01:14:17]

MS. PLETKA: I think the question goes directly to, again, what David brought up, which is that the lesson – the lessons that we draw about, you know, Iraq and Afghanistan and Libya and Egypt and Syria and Yemen – I could go on for awhile – are that – are that these abrupt changes, whether imposed from the outside or from the inside, tend to be – tend to have results that are very hard for us to foresee, or at least – maybe they're easy for us to foresee, but undesirable. And there, the challenge is that if, in fact, your desire is to cede these totalitarian and authoritarian states, who may or may not coincidentally also have a nuclear weapons program, by the way, move towards a democratic system.

And here, I think, when we say democratic system, we ought to have learned after Iraq, perhaps, that using the word “democratic system” is not necessarily all-embracing. What we really mean is a liberal democratic system. Then, the idea is that we need to be working a lot harder on what the foundations are for liberal democratic systems in these countries, which, despite the protestations of the U.S. government, are a – basically a zero priority and certainly a zero capacity, and frankly, a zero success rate on our – on our part.

So, you know if we're really – we're faced with a horrible challenge, which is, OK, fine, let's presume that a better regime is going to behave better with a nuclear weapon you may or may not already have – damn. Maybe not, you know. And the fact that we are not able to foresee and plan and yet remain the largest – the largest power in the world – it seems a little bit ridiculous.

MS. LAIPSON: Do you want to – yeah, please.

MR. KHAJEHPOUR: You talked about the sanction – the second part of your question, about sanctions – I mean, the live case of Iran shows that sanctions are not – are not changing the calculation in the direction that the Western governments originally thought. They are actually achieving two things. One is that there is a – as I mentioned earlier, there is a greater tendency to sort of understand everything, even economic relations, in security dimensions. But secondly, they actually weaken those elements that you should actually try to empower in a country like Iran, meaning the more moderate political forces, the private sector, you know, the society as a whole, especially the middle class, the forces that could actually contribute to a more open – let's not call it democratic, but a more open debate about issues like the nuclear program and so on. These sanctions are weakening them. So it's actually self-defeating, a sanctions – especially in a country like Iran. I mean, you can – I don't know what the dynamics in Burma or other examples that people use, but in Iran, they have been self-defeating.

[01:27:15]

MS. LAIPSON: OK, we've got about four more minutes. So I want to permit the last two questioners to pose their question. Do you want to jump in now, or do you want to wait for another question? Please.

Q: My question is to Mr. Khajehpour. My name is Samna Malik (ph). I'm from Pakistan. Sir, I must – I was provoked to the highest limit, being a Pakistani and listening to – my coming

from the Talibanized Pakistan. But I must thank you for the gift of IPI because I, till now, thought that the Iran-Pakistan India pipeline is a “you sell and we buy” kind of a thing. But you just mentioned that it’s a gift. I never realized that. (Laughter.)

[01:27:54]

Having said that, I think you are taking too much of an oversimplified notion about a killing of an Iranian diplomat, extremely tragic incident happening in Kandahar in the year 1998 and Pakistan going nuclear the same year. The program is much older than that. And it makes me wonder, sir, that Pakistan has a command and control structure that you just talked about, which is independent of Musharraf or no Musharraf; rather, better befitting example was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia al-Huq. And the command and control structure where the nuclear doctrine, as whatever it is, definitely does not have Iran as its focal point. Should I take it that when Iran makes nuclear doctrine, it will be Pakistan-specific? Thank you, sir.

MR. KHAJEHPUR: (Chuckles.) Shall I answer?

MS. LAIPSON: Sure.

MR. KHAJEHPUR: I’m sorry, I didn’t want to hurt any Pakistani feelings or any Pakistani friends. (Scattered laughter.) I am here as a – as an analyst, and I have to tell you what the Iranians are thinking, you know, whether you like it or not.

Now, killing – first of all, it was not one diplomat; it was 11 diplomats. And it was in Mazar-e Sharif, 1998. Well, if taking 52 American diplomats as hostages is so dramatic as it has been in the past 34 years, then killing 11 Iranian – killing – that – hostage-taking versus killing – I think it is a completely different level. And it was part of a much wider, much broader package of anti-Iranian behavior, you know, going to the extreme, and there – it’s now well-documented that there were – there were strategists at that point who were actually calling for an invasion of Afghanistan by Iran – not by other states, by Iran. But fortunately, they were stopped.

I did not say that there was a coincidence between the killing of Iranian diplomats and the Pakistani nuclear test that I didn’t say – the IPI is not a gift. It’s a – it’s a business – it’s a connectivity between the two countries. But it’s interesting for me that Iran is investing in the Pakistani side of the pipeline. Iran investing on the Iranian side was clear, but on the Pakistani side – it’s not a gift, but it’s a nice gesture to help this project materialize.

[01:30:14]

MS. LAIPSON: Thank you. OK, the last question.

Q: Thank you. Melissa Hitchman from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I wanted to return the panel to the early discussion about nonproliferation through means short of regime change and just make a bit – or give a bit of context or nuance to a comment that you made, Bruno – and thank you for using the Australian context for that – to say that it – like most policy changes, that was a result of incremental change. And when that decision was made to abandon an indigenous capability intention, it was actually made by a conservative government. But as you say, interdependent with a threat perception change is leadership change. So although there

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had been a change in the political cycle, it was actually made by a conservative government, which we had had in the years before, which had been quite attracted to an indigenous capability. But it was made in the context of the – following the NPT negotiation, following a change in threat perception post-Vietnam, looking at the high cost of alliance management that Australia paid. So it was taken in the context of cost. There were a number of different reasons, not just leadership change. But I think it is a useful example. Thank you.

[01:31:24]

MS. LAIPSON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Please.

MR. TERTRAIS: Yeah, I would just say that the different leaders made different evaluation of cost and advantages. I would just leave it at that.

MS. LAIPSON: I want to thank everybody. I am not sure we've created any strong consensus about the causality between regime change and nonproliferation, but I hope you've found it as interesting and provocative as I did. In 10 minutes Carl Bildt will be speaking in the auditorium. Is that what it's called?

MR. : Amphitheater.

MS. LAIPSON: Amphitheater. So let me thank Dani (sp), Bijan, Bruno and Ambassador Guerreiro in absentia. (Applause.) Thank you. OK, thank you.

(END)