

APPENDIX 3:

THE NATURE OF THE STRIKES: THE NUCLEAR OPTION

The use of tactical nuclear weapons to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities is highly unlikely but such use has been considered. We find it important to present the background surrounding this issue and provide the reader with estimated potential casualties if such a scenario is played out.

On April 9, 2006, *The Washington Post* reported that “the Pentagon and CIA planners have been exploring possible targets such as the uranium enrichment plant at Natanz and the uranium conversion facility at Isfahan.”²³⁹ The report added that “Pentagon planners are studying how to penetrate eight-foot-deep targets and are contemplating tactical nuclear devices.”

In an article published in *The New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh confirmed that the Pentagon's Iran plans included the use of tactical nuclear weapons—a remarkable revelation as it implied the use of nuclear weapons for tactical combat purposes as a substitute for conventional weapons.

As Hersh put it, ensuring the destruction of Iran's nuclear facilities meant reassessing the military effectiveness of conventional weapons. “The elimination of Natanz would be a major setback for Iran's nuclear ambitions, but the conventional weapons in the American arsenal could not ensure the destruction of facilities under 75 feet of earth and rock, especially if they are reinforced with concrete.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Peter Baker, Dafna Linzer and Thomas E. Ricks, “US Is Studying Military Strike Options on Iran,” *The Washington Post*, 9 April 2006.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*