

THE CTAP INTERVIEW

Reza Marashi, National Iranian American Council

*Interviewed by Dr. Doug Borer,
US Naval Postgraduate School*

THIS INTERVIEW IS TAKEN FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE COMBATING Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).¹ On 12 September 2016, Reza Marashi, research director at the National Iranian American Council, visited the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, California. Dr. Doug Borer of the Defense Analysis Department at NPS spoke with Marashi about the then-recently concluded multilateral agreement to constrain Iran's nuclear program, Iran's tactics in the Persian Gulf, and the role of Hezbollah and Iran in Syria.² Although this interview took place over a year ago, the discussion remains fresh and relevant to the present geostrategic situation, particularly as the current US administration considers abrogating the Iran nuclear deal.

Doug BORER: I want to start by talking about a bit of news that came out recently concerning the release of some of the American prisoners who were in Iranian jails and the supposed payments that were made for them.³ What is your view on the importance of that news?

Reza MARASHI: The Iranian government's imprisonment of dual nationals—people who hold citizenship in both Iran and the United States or Europe—has long been a problem. But let's focus on American citizens. This is a problem that's been going on for over three decades now. What separates this specific instance from incidents in the past is that the United States now has channels of communication with Iran that we haven't had in more than 30 years. So, we were able to directly discuss with the Iranians potential ways to resolve the current problem. After much deliberation and much discussion, we were able to reach an arrangement by which Iranian citizens in American prisons were swapped for American citizens in Iranian prisons.

Naturally, there is going to be a big to-do about this. There is a to-do about anything Iran-related that is not confrontational, because Iran is politically toxic in the United States. As we were negotiating the prisoner swap with Iran, we also had a claims tribunal going forward in The Hague. Before the 1979 revolution, the Iranian government had given the United States money to make purchases from the Department of Defense. Once the revolution happened, the United States obviously was not going to give the revolutionary government the weapons or the money, so the money had been sitting in the United States since 1979. The tribunal in The Hague was set up as part of the process of resolving the earlier Iranian hostage crisis—getting our people who were trapped in the US embassy from 1979 to 1981 out.⁴ So setting up this tribunal was part of that process, and the money was one of those claims.

This money that the Iranian government had in the United States was in the process of being adjudicated, and the United States was going to lose big, to the tune of about \$10 billion. Now, if you are the

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Americans protest Iran's hostage-taking in 1979.

US government, regardless of your political affiliation—Republican or Democrat or anything in between—if you find out that you are about to lose \$10 billion, wouldn't you try to settle for less? Wouldn't you try to settle bilaterally with the Iranians so that you avoid having The Hague tribunal render a resolution that is not favorable to the American national interest? That's exactly what we did. We contacted the Iranians in a track that was separate from the prisoner swap, and said, "Hey, why don't we settle this claim? We will give you back your money with interest." The Iranians said okay, and at that point we were just haggling over the price. But we were very concerned that the Iranians would pull the plug at the last minute, so we offered to settle on a number: about \$1.7 billion. We said, "We will give the money to you, but we want the prisoners out first." That's how it happened. There were some less-than-honest arguments calling this ransom.⁵ Well, no. If anything, it was the other way around. We were holding the leverage over the Iranians. The Iranians didn't say, "Give us this money, or we won't give you back your prisoners." We were telling the Iranians, "Let our people out and then we will give you the money." It was negotiated on a separate track from the hostage talks. If people want to argue that the optics didn't look good, I will say, fair enough. But then I will follow that up by saying that nothing looks good in terms of the political optics pertaining to Iran.

BORER: I think that gets back to the broader, more strategically important nuclear deal that was agreed to several months ago.⁶ What do you think has been the outcome of that, for the broader relationship between Iran and the United States? As critics might ask, has this nuclear deal and the transfer of money

actually had any impact on Iran's outreach to Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels, and other regional concerns?

MARASHI: It's a great question. If you were to talk to US and Iranian officials, or officials from any of the other countries that were party to the negotiations over the nuclear deal, they would all tell you that this was strictly about Iran's nuclear program. This was not about Iran's regional policies, US-Iranian relations, or anything else. They would say it was strictly transactional. It was not meant to be transformational in terms of the broader relationship between the United States and Iran. I would answer that by saying, fair enough, but I don't buy it. It wasn't supposed to change everything in one fell swoop, but it certainly laid the groundwork so that, if implementation of this deal was faithfully carried out by both sides, it could serve as a foundation from which additional and subsequent discussions over other issues of contention could potentially grow.

Based on assessments by the US government, the other governments that were party to this negotiation—the British, French, Germans, Chinese, and Russians—and also the International Atomic Energy Agency, we know that Iran has verifiably fulfilled its end of the bargain. This means that every aspect of Iran's nuclear program—the entire supply chain from beginning to end—is being fully monitored and verified. So if Iran sneezes in its nuclear facilities, we know. That's good. We didn't have that kind of vision on the inside until this point. To attempt to build a nuclear weapon now, Iran would have to create an entire parallel supply chain, which has never been done in the history of the world. So, on nonproliferation, we are good.

Where we are struggling, believe it or not, is in providing Iran with the sanctions relief that was promised under the terms of this deal. Let me unpack that for you. The United States made very specific commitments that are outlined in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. Anybody can read it online.⁷ Have we fulfilled all of the specific obligations? Yes, we have. But there is a kicker. Very specific language in the JCPOA says that if Iran does not derive the economic benefit that was promised as a result of the sanctions relief outlined in this deal, the United States and Iran will work together to find mutually agreed upon additional steps that the United States will take to provide sanctions relief. Iran has not derived the economic benefit that was promised. So, the disagreement between the countries lies in what additional steps

the United States has to take to provide the sanctions relief that was promised.

BORER: Do you think that is simply a matter of the price of oil?

MARASHI: I actually think it has nothing to do with oil. I think it has to do with the fact that the United States has unilateral sanctions that prevent Iran from conducting financial transactions in banks across the world. We have gone around the world and said that if banks process Iranian financial transactions, we will sanction and fine them. When you add it all up, we have fined banks around the world to the tune of millions, if not billions, of dollars. So banks are unwilling to process fully legitimate Iranian financial transactions, even on humanitarian goods, for example, because they don't want to be penalized. So the banks are saying to the US government, "Provide a clear framework for what is permissible and what is not. We want a grandfather clause to say that if we do transactions that are legitimate today, in 2016, and—God forbid—the nuclear deal falls apart, you won't retroactively punish us for doing business that was legitimate at the time." The US government has not yet provided that kind of guidance and, frankly, the reason is because we are in an election year, and it is politically very difficult to provide additional benefits to Iran on anything, even though we are obligated to do so under the JCPOA.

The Iranians could be making a much bigger stink about this, but they also have domestic politics, and if they say the deal isn't working, that raises the political temperature on them.

BORER: Do you think that the momentum for this deal will maintain itself no matter which of the two major party candidates wins the US election, or do you think it would be different under a President Hillary Clinton or a President Donald Trump?

MARASHI: I don't think either one is going to scrap the deal. It is not in the American national interest to scrap a deal that every other major powerful country in the world has agreed to. It would adversely affect the American national interest to go back on a deal that we agreed to, not just with the Iranians, but with the French, the British, the Germans, the Russians, and the Chinese. That would raise questions about US credibility. So we have to be cognizant of not allowing our own domestic politics to impede our ability to carry out hefty and difficult multilateral arrangements and agreements.

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Now, that being said, what might be different if Trump were president? On the one hand, he says we should be doing business with Iran, selling airplanes and doing oil business with them, and he asks why the Europeans and the Asians are getting all of the money and the contracts. But on the other hand, he says the deal is terrible and that he won't be beholden to it should he become president. So it's hard to nail him down, but oftentimes a president is only as smart as the advisors that he or she surrounds themselves with. Most of Trump's foreign policy advisors are the same cast of characters that President George W. Bush had surrounding him. Their policies in the Middle East are pretty clear. So I think his policies in the Middle East will more closely resemble those of George W. Bush than those of Barack Obama, George H.W. Bush, or Bill Clinton.

I don't think that there has been any particular damage to American power or credibility as a result of the Iran nuclear deal. In fact, I think they have been enhanced because the deal averted a military confrontation with Iran that nobody wanted. I don't think we have sacrificed any leverage. I don't think we have sacrificed any option with regard to checking Iranian ambition or Iranian power that is adversely affecting the interests of the United States. If anything, diplomacy without the military is like an orchestra without the instruments. But I think most levelheaded people would agree that military force should be the last resort. I think it's less than honest to say that we have truly run the course with regard to diplomacy in Iran. I think there is a lot more we can do to have discussions, to test the seriousness and the intentions of this Iranian government to resolve problems peacefully.

BORER: There has been news recently about swarms of small Iranian boats seeming to challenge or harass US boats in the Persian Gulf.⁸ Does that behavior come from divisions inside the Iranian military establishment, or are some commanders a little more free with the rules of engagement? Or do you think that these tactics are part of a strategic direction that comes from the top of the Iranian defense establishment?

MARASHI: That's an important question. I think it's a little bit of both. I don't think it's a secret to anyone that the Iranian government does a lot of things in the Persian Gulf that we don't like. We do a lot of things in the Persian Gulf that the Iranians don't like. The question then is, what do we do about the things we don't like? We don't have an Incidents at Sea Agreement with the Iranian government, which is crazy to me, because we have very legitimate concerns about their behavior in the Persian Gulf, such as those tactics you outlined.⁹ But we don't have the political courage in Washington, D.C., to propose it to them. I think the United States and the American national interest benefit from demonstrating that the problem is in Tehran, not in Washington. Demonstrate a willingness to sit down and discuss it with

Iranian Revolutionary Guard stages a re-creation of the arrest of American soldiers, 22 February 2016.



the Iranian government—have a very difficult and oftentimes tense discussion over what the rules of engagement should be and try to find ways to resolve problems peacefully. I think it's frankly in Iran's interest, as well, to have such an agreement because they don't want a military confrontation with the United States.

But the question is, if they don't want a confrontation, why are they doing these provocative things? I like to say that all politics is local. So I do think that while Iranian military speedboats coming up against our big boys in the Persian Gulf is destabilizing, it also doesn't have approval from the very top of the food

chain in Iran's political pecking order. I think that the Revolutionary Guard, who are the ones doing this maneuver in the Gulf, are freelancing a little bit. The reason why you have seen them do more of it over the past few weeks is twofold. First, I think they are trying to demonstrate internally, inside of Iran's political system, that they are still here: "You [Iranian politicians] have to deal with us internally, but also you, the United States, have to deal with us externally. You can't work around us." Also, they think we are in their part of the world, in their waters. So they want to demonstrate to us that there is a certain level of deterrence, and we shouldn't think that, just because we have struck this nuclear deal, the Iranians are projecting weakness. This is what I think the strategic thinking is, in part, for why they are doing this swarming. Now, obviously, I disagree with that thinking, and I think what they are doing is reckless. But because we don't have those channels of communication to try and iron out some rules of the road, it is very easy for them to do.

But also, I think Iran's internal politics is at a crossroads. You have different actors within the Iranian political system and within the Iranian military pecking order who want to go in either one direction or another. There are some people in the Iranian system who believe that greater engagement with the outside world can help achieve Iran's strategic interests and resolve a lot of problems peacefully. There are others who think that the United States and other Western countries will never accept the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been the governing system since 1979. Because it will never be accepted, Iranians must do everything in their power to resist American power projection in the Middle East. I think that's a dangerous line of thinking, and I also think it's incorrect, because the idea of finding mutually agreed-upon solutions in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, broadly conceived, between the United States, Iran, and other stakeholders in the region, hasn't truly been tested. I don't blame US military officials for going to the podium and saying, "Look the Iranians better be careful. Otherwise they might bite off more than they can chew." I think the Iranians need to hear that. I think we have shown the proper level of restraint. Going forward, if the Iranians continue to challenge our ships, then I think it's worthwhile for the US government to send messages to the very top of the Iranian food chain to say, "This has to stop, and if it doesn't, here is a clearly



Iranian Revolutionary Guard

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outlined set of actions that the US government will take.” I think the Iranians will get the message.

BORER: Do you think that the idea of containing Iran has already, to a certain degree, dissolved, given Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and its increasing influence in Yemen—essentially in the region writ large? On the flip side, do you think that Iran has already overextended itself?

MARASHI: On the latter point, yes. I am a big believer in looking at things from a geopolitical lens as opposed to an ideological lens. Through a geopolitical lens, I see Iran overextended, particularly in Syria and to a lesser extent in Iraq, and I see the United States thinking that maybe it wouldn’t be such a bad thing to try and bleed out the Iranians and make them pay for what they are doing. This is exactly what Iran did to us in Iraq from 2003 until about 2011, depending on whom you talk to. So it’s a little bit of payback. Now, that being said, Iranian policy in the region has always vacillated, whether it has been more interventionist or demonstrating more restraint. It depends on what is going on in the region.

In my view, containing Iran has always been a fool’s errand because trying to contain a regional power is always a losing battle. When I look at things through a geopolitical lens, I understand the need for a balance of power. Iran already is a regional power; it’s not seeking to become one. I would argue that it’s always been one. I would say the same thing about Saudi Arabia. I think they both are the pillars of regional power and regional security in the Middle East. Frankly, that view has been shared by most US officials as far back as [former US president Richard] Nixon and possibly even before him. People make the argument for containment, but I think it’s a short- to medium-term argument, and they are looking at the solution according to a short- to medium-term trajectory, because you cannot contain a regional power indefinitely. The cost of doing so in blood and treasure increases exponentially as time passes. One would think we had learned our lesson with Saddam Hussein and Iraq. The policy toward Hussein was containment, so why did we have to invade if containment was working? What is the end goal of containment? Is it to overthrow the regime and install somebody who is more pliable with regard to American interests? Or is it to find some kind of modus operandi with the government to stop it from doing things that are destructive to American interests? I think this needs to be more clearly defined.

So, if it’s not going to be containment, I personally favor focusing on balance of power, and I think that’s more in the US national interest. Maintaining a balance of power is what we were doing up until 1992, frankly—and we didn’t have a good relationship with Iran prior to 1992 either. I think both Ronald Reagan, through the Iran-Contra arms deal, and George H.W. Bush at various points during his administration, sought to find covert channels of communication with the Iranian government because they understood that Iran is a powerful country, and it needs to be engaged on some level. Maybe they thought we shouldn’t be overly reliant on our traditional partners in the region because those partners could use and abuse the relationship with the United States to achieve their interests at the expense of our own. When our interests overlap tactically or strategically with the Saudis or the Egyptians or other traditional American partners, that’s great. But sometimes, as has been the case in Afghanistan and



Bashar al-Assad

Iraq at various points in time, for example, it might be tactically or strategically in our interests to either communicate with or collaborate with the Iranians. Why not test the proposition? If doing so is in the US national interest, then I don't think that ideology, traditional partners, or domestic politics should get in the way. Iran can be engaged on some issues to test the proposition of working together to achieve what is in the US national interest. I think the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [the nuclear deal] demonstrates that if Iran sees it to be in their interest, they are willing to have those conversations, and talks can prove to be successful.

BORER: The attempted military coup in Turkey added a new variable, if you will, into the region.¹⁰ And then the Turkish government showed a seemingly resurgent interest in more forcefully interacting in Syria. Do you think that Turkey's increased involvement further complicates things for the United States, or does it actually help to have a long-standing regional ally be more assertive in its own neighborhood?

MARASHI: It depends on how responsible those assertive actions of our traditional partners actually are in practice. I think that in Syria and Yemen, and even in Iraq, the Turks and the Saudis, both of which are traditional American partners, have become susceptible to imperial overreach. Frankly, they didn't learn from the mistakes that the United States made in 2003. When we intervened in Iraq, we didn't have a clearly defined endgame. I am very skeptical of military intervention that doesn't have a clearly defined endgame because mission creep kicks in, and how do you define the strategic objectives? I think our strategic objectives in Iraq have changed over time—multiple times, frankly.

Now I think the same thing is happening to the Saudis and the Turks. Victory as defined by the Saudi government in Yemen when it first intervened is very different from how it defines victory today. It's not clear to me what the Turks' strategic objective for intervening in Syria is. They say that they want to push back the Kurds. They say they are flexible about the degree to which [Syrian president Bashar al] Assad is part of a political transition—if a political solution can be reached that will stop the killing.

But Turkey hasn't clearly defined what will cause it to pull Turkish troops out of Syria. I would frankly say the same thing about Iran. What is the clearly defined endgame? If it's Assad surviving and never leaving power, then there will be an intractable conflict because durable solutions to conflict require the buy-in of every country with the capacity to wreck the solution. This means that Syria can't be solved without Iran, but it also can't be solved without the United States, Turkey, and Russia because they have all made themselves players. They are all supporting different actors in the proxy war. Nobody has clean hands.

I would say the same thing to a lesser degree about Yemen, because I don't think Iran has intervened there in the same way that the Saudis have. I would say the same thing about Iraq, as well. Nobody can force any kind of military or political solution on anyone else. If you can't win outright by exerting force, then the conflict becomes this cycle of escalation, where one side escalates, and then the other side says, "We have to escalate as well, because we don't want to be subdued and pushed into some solution that doesn't achieve our interests, however we define them." Well, as the different actors continue to escalate, one after the other, eventually they are going to run out of escalatory options short of direct military conflict, which is why it's so important to have those channels of communication.



Turkish troops

You need an off-ramp so that you don't reach the worst possible outcome. I don't think that's something that the Turks, the Saudis, and the Emiratis have fully internalized. I think the United States is much more cognizant of this danger now because we have been doing this kind of operation for 15 years, since 9/11. I think the [Barack Obama administration] is asking our allies to do more and that's right, because we don't want free riders. That's important, and I give the Obama administration credit for pointing out that our traditional partners do need to do more. Our traditional partners are going through some growing pains because, for decades, they have outsourced their security to the United States. When you outsource your security, you are inherently insecure. Those governments are not used to doing any sort of moderate or light lifting, never mind heavy lifting. So there is going to be a learning curve. I think that they need to make some mistakes in order to

have more restraint in their power projection. Just like the United States does now.

There is a difference between Iranian and Saudi power projection in the region. Both have clients, non-state actors, that they throw out into the region to do destabilizing things. The difference is that the Iranians have these non-state actors in Iraq and Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. If Iran says jump, they ask how high. If Iran says do more, they do more. If Iran says stop and pull back, that is exactly what they do: they stop and pull back. Iran has control. The Saudis don't have that kind of control over the non-state actors that they fund. If anything, they tell these non-state actors, "Do what you want to do, just don't do it in the kingdom. Better that you do it elsewhere, whether it's in the United States or other places in the region." The Saudis don't care, and I think that's extremely reckless. It's much more damaging to US interests than what the Iranians are doing. But there is nothing we can do to get the Saudis to rein these actors in because the Saudis have injected a poisonous, intolerant, minority strain of Islam into the region and they don't have the wherewithal to pull it back. The Iranians do, and I think that's a very important difference.

BORER: What are your thoughts on the danger of people making mistakes in this escalatory cycle? Hezbollah has been more active in Lebanon lately and may be considering a confrontation with Israel on the Golan Heights. Do you have any observations to share on that?

I don't think the Iranians or Hezbollah thought that the war in Syria would drag on as long as it has.

MARASHI: I think Hezbollah is stretched thin in an unprecedented manner. On the one hand, Lebanon is its priority. But to project its power domestically inside of Lebanon, it needs that strategic passageway through Syria to connect to Iran, because Hezbollah is an Iranian client. I don't think the Iranians or Hezbollah thought that the war in Syria would drag on as long as it has, or that it would become the proxy war that it has become. I think both are looking for a way out because as they continue to dedicate manpower, resources, blood, and treasure for the fight in Syria, they become more vulnerable to an Israeli military attack in Lebanon, much like we saw in 2006.

I don't think Hezbollah wants to take a whack at Israel, because it would be biting off more than it can chew. I think the Israelis are having very serious conversations about whether now is the right time to take another whack at Lebanon because Hezbollah is overstretched. I have had these discussions with Israelis when I've traveled there. I think that idea is dangerous and reckless on the part of

Israel. I understand why, from a geopolitical perspective, they might want to discuss it, but I also think it's short-sighted because Hezbollah and its Iranian sponsors have done a very good job of integrating Hezbollah into the political, economic, and social fabric of Lebanon. While I am not a fan of Hezbollah, I think it is there to stay.

So then the question becomes, how do we get it to stop doing destructive and reckless things, so that Lebanon can become politically, economically, and socially stable in a way that, frankly, we haven't seen in quite some time? I don't think we can test that proposition until the war in Syria is solved—until we have some kind of solution that is amenable to all sides. In Syria right now, there are too many actors that are supporting various sides in the proxy war, and they're all viewing the fight through a zero-sum lens. Iran and Hezbollah are two of them. This mentality of "If I am not winning, then I must be losing" must be abandoned, just as it was jettisoned to solve the Lebanese civil war, for example. Until all sides realize that a political solution that stops the killing is actually in their long-term geopolitical interest, I think we will continue to see the bloodshed that we see now. Hezbollah will continue to be stretched thin. Who has escalation dominance in Syria? I would argue that the Iranians and Hezbollah have it. For

Hezbollah, it's existential: Syria is their supply line. For Iran, it's about deterrence vis à vis Israel, because that's why Iran supports Hezbollah. There is an ideological component as well, and it's an avenue for Iran's power projection into the Arab world. It's much more

difficult to explain what the US geopolitical interest is in Syria, beyond the idea that Syria is on Iran's side of the geopolitical chessboard: "Wouldn't it be cool if we could take Syria from their side and bring it to ours?" I don't disagree that it would be cool and that it would be a net strategic benefit over the long run, but then we have to have a discussion about the cost.

BORER: I like to conclude these interviews with what I call the "king for a day" question. If you could do just one important thing that would help ensure the future of US interests, what would it be?

MARASHI: I would put strict financial limitations on money in politics and campaign finance. I would undo the Citizens United decision.¹¹ I think the influence of private/corporate money in elections is adversely affecting the national security of the United States of America and poisoning our political system. It's also preventing us from being able to get very important things done that we need

to get done, not just on foreign policy, but particularly on domestic policy. All politics is local. I travel the world, and every single day people are asking me about what is going on in America. It frightens me when people look at the United States of America and question our ability to lead. I don't like that at all. I am a big believer in US power, and I believe that the world is a better place when we are projecting our power in a smart, calibrated way. People buy what we are selling and have integrated themselves into the international order that we have set up, so I have a big problem when they start to question whether it's in their best interest to do so. I think that there is a direct connection from this uncertainty to money in politics. We need to check that, and I think doing so would free up our politicians to take the kind of actions they need to take to sustain US power far into the future. ❖

I believe that the world is a better place when we are projecting our power in a smart, calibrated way.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

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ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER

Dr. Douglas Borer is an associate professor of Defense Analysis at the US Naval Postgraduate School.

NOTES

- 1 The Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP) aims to collect and archive knowledge on strategy, operations, and tactics used by military and other security personnel from around the world in the twenty-first-century fight against global terrorism. Collectively, the individual interviews that CTAP conducts constitute an oral history archive of knowledge and experience in counterterrorism for the benefit of the CT community now and in the future.
- 2 This interview was edited for length and clarity. Every effort was made to ensure that the meaning and intention of the participants were not altered in any way. The ideas and opinions of all participants are theirs alone and do not represent the official positions of the US Naval Postgraduate School, the US Department of Defense, the US government, or any other official entity.
- 3 Jay Solomon and Carol E. Lee, "\$400 Million Sent to Iran as US Prisoners Released, Raising Questions," *Wall Street Journal*, 2 August 2016: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/400-million-sent-to-iran-as-us-prisoners-released-raising-questions-2016-08-02>
- 4 "444 Days: Selected Records Concerning the Iran Hostage Crisis 1979–1981," National Archives, n.d.: <https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/iran-hostage-crisis>
- 5 Shawn Tully, "5 Things You Need to Know about the \$400 Million America Sent to Iran," *Fortune*, 5 August 2016: <http://fortune.com/2016/08/05/money-america-iran/>
- 6 The six-nation deal was finalized in July 2015. "Iran Nuclear Deal: Key Details," BBC, 13 October 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>
- 7 "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," US Department of State, n.d.: <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/>
- 8 Henry Johnson, "Watch: Iranian Attack-Boats Swarm US Destroyer," *Foreign Policy*, 25 August 2016: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/25/watch-iranian-attack-boats-swarm-u-s-destroyer/>; Noah Shachtman, "How Iran Attacks at Sea (Updated)," *Wired*, 8 January 2008: <https://www.wired.com/2008/01/inside-irans-se/>
- 9 *Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas*, US Department of State, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, 25 May 1972: <https://www.state.gov/t/isn/4791.htm>
- 10 "Turkey's Failed Coup Attempt: All You Need to Know," *Aljazeera*, 15 July 2017: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/turkey-failed-coup-attempt-161217032345594.html>
- 11 This refers to a case that was argued before the US Supreme Court in September 2009, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. The court found that corporations and unions have the same right as individuals to spend money to influence voters during an election campaign. See "Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission," SCOTUSblog, n.d.: <http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/citizens-united-v-federal-election-commission/>