

Peter Robinson: ... <http://twitter.com/uncknowledge>; <http://twitter.com/uncknowledge>. A classicist and military historian, Victor Davis Hanson is a Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. He is the author of many books including recently *A War Like No Other – How the Athenians and Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War*. Robert Baer spent 20 years in the Central Intelligence Agency as a field officer covering the Middle East. Mr. Baer is now a journalist and author. His latest book *The Devil We Know – Dealing With the New Iranian Super Power*. Victor – Bob, thank you for joining us. Segment one – will Iran or won't it? An October report by the International Atomic Energy Agency "Iran has sufficient information to design and produce a workable implosion nuclear device". Do you buy that? Iran is now capable of producing nuclear weapons?

Robert Baer: I think absolutely.

Peter Robinson: Without any doubt?

Robert Baer: Oh without any doubt, I think they are very close, they could move very quickly on this. We have not even seen the beginning of their programs, their covert capacity. Picks stuff up in Eastern Europe, in Russia, they could move very quickly if they wanted to.

Peter Robinson: Victor do you buy that as well?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah, I think the key word was a nuclear weapon because I do not know how much in enriched uranium and what quality it is would allow them to produce a series of weapons. Remember the United States after the Nagasaki bomb really did not have an arsenal atomic weapons for six months. So I do not know they might get one or they might get perhaps two, but I think that is why it is so important that we watch these deals where they are offering to have other outside people, France or Russia, enriched uranium. I think they are having a little bit of problems to get a series of

Peter Robinson: Can I question. Who knows what? You are a former CIA operative, you are a military historian, how do you form your opinions about what is actually going on. You are doing more than reading the *New York Times*.

Robert Baer: I think everybody

Peter Robinson: In other words can you form really good opinions on what is publicly available information?

Robert Baer: I think you can and I think you can project I mean I had the advantage of seeing classified reporting in Iran and frankly it was not good. We have been out of the country since 1979.

Peter Robinson: How recently did you see?

Robert Baer: Until December, 1997 when I left the CIA. I followed it fairly closely from the sidelines. It is not very good and the Iranians are very good at procuring banned materials very easily and they are very smart people. They are capable of making bomb and they have been going

back to really the 1970's. What the important thing is they have chosen not to and that is really one of the key questions.

Peter Robinson: Right. Let me quote you Bob. You right in *The Devil We Know* "right now the Iranians do not need a nuclear bomb. The Iranians are too smart to risk the gains they have made in Iraq and Lebanon by forcing the issue." So they have the ability to produce a nuclear weapon, they can do so quickly, but they will not?

Robert Baer: I think they are buying time. They are trying to remain a radical revolutionary power and yet get themselves at the international negotiating table and the way to do this to keep on letting information out about their bomb, saying they are going to do it, backing off and they are trying to work their way. I do not think they are going to make it into the G20 by this, by simply forcing our hands. That is my opinion.

Peter Robinson: Victor what do you think they are up to?

Victor Davis Hanson: Well I think it depends on what Iran we look at. The present day Iran I think that they feel that the Iraqi Democracy did not implode like they thought it would and because of

Peter Robinson: You mean after this recent election?

Victor Davis Hanson: Exactly and

Peter Robinson: They thought they were about to lose their regime, they thought it was about to get returned?

Victor Davis Hanson: Well I think that the idea that Iraq is next door and it actually is working in somewhat stable fashion and then you have a large dissident movement within Iran, then Lebanon did not become just entirely a Hezbollah enclave and that Lebanon still survived as a quasi constitutional state. Their way of looking, Manichean way of looking at the world, we say well they are very powerful and they won and Iraq empowered, but in their way of thinking, I think they look at Lebanon, they look at the Sunni States that are actually more favorable to Israel stealthfully than they are Iran, they look at what is going on in Iraq and they think, my gosh, we are in an unstable position and maybe this Russian route and a bomb or two will allow us to do what Pakistan has done. Give us some autonomy. I do not think that they feel they are in a very stable position. I do not think they are either. I think their regime is shaky.

Peter Robinson: Give me, who actually runs Iran? You have a population of about 70 million people and a very, I was going to say a strange form of government because it is so, at least as far as I am aware, is dissimilar to certainly has no parallel in the West and as far as I am aware, it does not really have any parallel elsewhere in the Muslim world. A strange Theocracy – you have an elected President, an elected legislature elected from slates approved by they always seem to have an enormous, how has that?

Victor Davis Hanson: That changed on the 12th of June. I think this is a bit of an exaggeration but there was a military coup and the country is being run by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp

Peter Robinson: Which is about 100,000 strong, is that right?

Victor Davis Hanson: It is a little bit more than that. But you have the besiege which is their reserves that came out in the street. The problem with that

Peter Robinson: The reserves are several million?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah, they could be several million; they could put 2 million people in a uniform very quickly. But the besiege are volunteers and they are being integrated into the Revolutionary Guard – fully integrated. But the point is, the Commanders, and especially in the Defense Minister came through what is called the Kutz Force which has a long history of shedding blood, particularly American blood. The Kutz Force was responsible for the two bombings in Argentina; it was responsible for blowing up the Marines in Beirut in 1983 and on and on. Now that these people are fully in control, and if made Rav Sanjani back down as well as Karube Ranfer. Elections this time and Musave is what are these people going to do? Are they reformed revolutionaries or are the still radicals? That we do not know yet so far.

Peter Robinson: Okay. Segment two what does Tehran think it is doing? We have actually touched on this. Iran slightly bigger than the State of Alaska, population about 70 million, religion Shi'a Muslim, resources vast deposits of oil and natural gas. Robert Baer in *The Devil We Know* "what is critical to understand is that Iran today has an unshakable belief in its right to Empire. It means to achieve this through proxy warfare and control over oil supplies". That is two sentences and two assertions, let us take them one at a time. An unshakable belief and a right to Empire.

Robert Baer: Do you want me to say it politically incorrect?

Peter Robinson: Yeah, please.

Robert Baer: They think they are superior; the Iranians do, to the Arabs.

Peter Robinson: So there is an ethnic overlay?

Robert Baer: It is huge. Look at the ethnic Beaudoin as backward and they look at their civilization as more advanced than even the West. They will go through their old empires, they will go through any number of things and they think they are a superior culture. We are talking about a people and there is a certain amount of exaggeration, and they also look at the chaos around them on Sunday. There was a bombing that killed 41 insist on Province that was done by suicide bomber and they look at the mess in Pakistan, in Afghanistan and they look at Iraq at the suicide bombings there and they see the barbarians at the gate. And they do not intend to let those barbarians cross the border. And if they have to become aggressive to stop the barbarians, which they look, again this is an exaggeration, as Sunni Muslims they will. And they will do it through proxies; they will do it through irregular warfare, asymmetric warfare if you like.

Peter Robinson: The Persian proportion of the population of Iran itself

Robert Baer: Fifty-one percent.

Peter Robinson: Is 51%, and it is remarkable how fragmented the remaining 49% is. You have about 24% Azureus as I recall and everybody is in single digits. There are a dozen other ethnic groups that are in single digits.

Robert Baer: They are sitting on a volcano.

Peter Robinson: So the 51% Persians say to themselves, we can control these people in our own borders, why shouldn't we control them in a wider Empire too. Is that what you are saying?

Robert Baer: Oh absolutely,

Peter Robinson: We know how to control this.

Robert Baer: When it comes to the Arabs, they can, when is the last time the Arabs in the Gulf fought a war? Never in modern history because they are not organized to do it?

Peter Robinson: Victor you accept all this?

Victor Davis Hanson: More or less. I think that the problem with Iran is that it is an imploding society, it has its minority problems, it has its rivalries, it has now a Constitutional System emerging in Iraq, it has this problem in Lebanon, it is not liked by the Arab countries, it has the Europeans in this Orwellian situation where they are on the right side of us now. Sarcose pushing us. I never thought in my lifetime I would see an Iranian President lecture and American President.

Peter Robinson: French President.

Victor Davis Hanson: Excuse me, French President, but I think what the problem is for us that we got this regime in there that wants to tell the Muslim world that the Shi'a and the Persians who had been the minority and less distinguished are the real inheritors of Muslim supremacy and that they are the people who will deal with the Zionist entity and that their willingness Rav Sanjani said years ago to lose a sizable number of their population, but to us we think this is crazy, this is surreal. I think it is, I do not think they are serious but 65 years after the Holocaust, you cannot expect a small Jewish state, I have never found the documentation of that statement that widely quoted one bomb state is what Iranians are supposedly said about Israel that it was a one bomb State.

Peter Robinson: Meaning it would take one bomb to

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah, I do not think that is quite true myself, a 20 kiloton bomb would not destroy all of Israel, but nevertheless, 65 years after the Holocaust you cannot expect the State here to sit there and then just say to themselves Ahmadinejad, Rav Sanjani, all these people are just trying to just thump because the Shi'a and they are Persian and they want to tell the Arab world they are the real tough Muslim. That is what the problem is because in nuclear poker, lunacy is an advantage. That is what they are trying to convey and we think it is lunacy but we do not know.

Peter Robinson: Daniel Pipes "Iran today is reminiscent of the Soviet Union in the 1970's. The regime is brutal, and aggressive, but hollow." Bob?

Robert Baer: I do not think it is hollow. I mean it is not hollow in the sense that it is going to collapse like the Soviet Union. We should not liken

Peter Robinson: We have Putin, as far as we can tell because now Russia is free and if people get in there and conduct public opinion polls, we view Putin as a very difficult disagreeable character. But there is no doubt he commands the support of well over half the population of Russia. Does the regime in Iran command the support of a significant portion of the population?

Victor Davis Hanson: We are not in a pre-revolutionary state in Iran. There are no signs. I think we are seeing tuck theory Sunni Fundamentalism on the edges I think we are seeing a threat coming in from Pakistan. There are going to be a lot more bombs going off. But there is no sign there is going to be revolution or insurgency by the Azureus would be key for instance. The state is too powerful, too brutal and too capable of controlling Iran right now.

Peter Robinson: I have a question here that was submitted by Twitter from somebody who calls himself UK manchild. Strange name but a good question. Should the United States have supported the protestors, the dissidents in the after effects of the current Iranian revolution? You are suggesting not.

Victor Davis Hanson: Can I answer that?

Peter Robinson: Yes, please. It sounds as though you are suggesting Obama got it about right. This was a long time

Victor Davis Hanson: Karube and Musave

Peter Robinson: Give us a sentence on each of them.

Robert Baer: Were directly involved in blowing up the Marines in the US Embassy in 1983. They have blood on their hands; these are not people that we can in any way trust. They have made it appear they have transformed themselves into some sort of green revolution, but they have not. There is no alternative in Iran that we can identify that should come to power to replace coming in Rav Sanjani that I can identify.

Victor Davis Hanson: Well I think the question is where all the million people behind Musave. I think it was more like people who went out in the streets in 1979 and said they were for Komanyi, but they were for Bane Sauder or they were for socialist type European state. So what I am suggesting is maybe it would have been counterproductive for George Bush to do it, but this is part to support the people in the street in Tehran, it would have been tarred them with the Bush brush. Fifty-three percent of the Americans voted for Barack Obama because he was the promised transcending candidate that appealed over the heads of governments and political leaders. So it seemed to me that he was in a very unique position of not supporting Musave, but saying to the Iranian people, we support your legitimate concerns over Constitutional Government and do a lot more rather than wait, wait, wait. He ended up resembling was an old style Jim Baker realist that was saying, let us see who wins. Whoever wins, it is Tiananmen Square again, we do not want to be on the side of the losers. It did not look good. It sort of bothered our Sunni allies as well and it bothered a lot of people in the world and people like Barack Obama who talk about human rights

and idealism and make fun of the old ideological blinkers that we had, they should not be on the wrong side of history. I agree with Robert, Musave is a thug but the people who are in the streets, who said that they were supporting him, were not thugs.

Peter Robinson: So what do we make of the polls, frankly I Googled around, I could not find any polls, but I remember this is the kind of accepted fact, correct it if it is wrong that among the population, the United States is much more warmly regarded in Iran than in any of the Arab neighbors. Is that right?

Robert Baer: It is, and they are very pro American. You go to Tehran, I was there three years ago, it is a very westernized people and they carry on these conversations, they are on the internet.

Peter Robinson: So the structure of the problem runs as follows: We have no problem with the people, they have just not like the Germans, kept running up to the Second World War who actually supported Hitler in significant numbers. We do not have that kind of problem. We have the problem with the regime which is some tens of thousands, with a military which is a hard core of a hundred thousand and more and expandable to a couple million. The particular operative problem is even if you leaned against it, even if you could find leverage to use to bring it down, there is nothing to replace it. Is that a correct formulation?

Robert Baer: I cannot identify and replace it, but again we are not dealing with Iranian Nationalism because you can have the average Iranian be pro-American and still want to bomb. But if you are Israel do you want any Iranians to have a bomb? And their answer would be no.

Peter Robinson: Let me set up segment three what is to be done? What is to be done by the United States? Give me

Victor Davis Hanson: We have a big problem we have not discussed and that is Russia. Because in Russia's way of thinking it is a win/win/win situation to encourage Iran to get the bomb. And we do not want to confront that. We have this embarrassing situation with a quid pro quo of selling out the Poles and the Czechs for this non-existent help by Russia. Russia

Peter Robinson: Better back up and explain that. The Bush Administration said we are going to put missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic, the Obama Administration said no we are not.

Victor Davis Hanson: It is not a question of whether it was wise or not. At this late point in the game you have Eastern Europe go out on a limb, you should have supported them. Russia was never going to help you because any tension in the Gulf raises oil prices for both Russia and Iran. If Iran gets the bomb it is going to be pointed westward or towards Israel, it is not going to be pointed towards Russia. The Russians way of thinking we are going to be the regional king maker and if you have this rogue nation that is nuclear and you want it to be contained we are going to refashion the 1970's/1960's Cold War role that we played in the Middle East that you have to come to us to deal with our client. Anything that causes us problems as we know, whatever they are, Putin is for. So this idea that we are going to ever cut a deal, we have to deal with the fact that Russia wants Iran to be nuclear and will go at great lengths to make sure it is and it will do the same thing to Israel and do the same thing to us that North Korea does to Japan. It is an irritant and it is good if you are Putin. This idea that

Peter Robinson: The Russians are the new French. They will define themselves against us.

Victor Davis Hanson: Much worse. The French have been very positive in Iran.

Robert Baer: Victor is right. If you were the Russians, wouldn't you want it, one drive up the price for oil?

Peter Robinson: Right.

Robert Baer: If you want to pull the Russian economy out of this recession it is going through, drive up the price of oil to \$150 per barrel, they benefit from it and they do not care what happens in the Gulf. They are not addicted to oil like we are.

Peter Robinson: Two quotations. Former Vice President Dick Cheney, October, 2007 "we will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon". Retired General John Abase last year "there are ways to live with a nuclear Iran". Is the attainment of a nuclear weapon by Iran or should it be flatly unacceptable to the United States? Is that where you begin with American policy? Whatever else we do, we will not let them get that.

Robert Baer: The question is what can we do about it if they make a bomb? What the Iranians have stated, they will do, and I believe that they will, is if we attack their nuclear facilities, they will take out Saudi Arabia's major oil facilities with surface to surface missiles. That is pretty

Peter Robinson: They could do that?

Robert Baer: We are talking about 10 million barrels instantly would be taken off markets, world markets. Seventeen million barrels of traded oil in the Gulf would be taken off and we would be paying \$400 to \$500 for a gallon of gasoline and are we as Americans, I am talking about American people prepared to go that far and I would say no.

Peter Robinson: Victor?

Victor Davis Hanson: Most people who say that we can live with a nuclear Iran point to Pakistan, but I think there are two problems with that. Most of our problems in Afghanistan come from Pakistan.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Victor Davis Hanson: And they otherwise would not be there in some degree is Pakistan was not nuclear. And two, there are a billion person nuclear India that contains Pakistan. We do not have a billion person nuclear rival over Iran that can contain it within the region so it is a bad and a worst choice, but there are ways I think of preventing them from getting a series of bombs through blockades, really strengthen sanctions and we are not willing to do that because apparently the United States does not want to get in a situation which oil prices increase, we offend Russia.

Peter Robinson: There are ways to prevent them from getting a series of nuclear weapons.

Victor Davis Hanson: I think there are.

Peter Robinson: You think we need to prepare ourselves to live with at least the kind of North Korea

Victor Davis Hanson: No I do not.

Peter Robinson: Where they have four or five or six weapons.

Victor Davis Hanson: No, no. I think

Peter Robinson: There is no way to prevent them getting any?

Victor Davis Hanson: I think there is a way. I think if you

Peter Robinson: To prevent them from getting any at all?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah I think you could get the Europeans, the Indians, to immediately stop exporting gas that we find gasoline inside. You could probably have some kind of blockade of the Persian Gulf. We are talking about very serious things that are Acts of War, but they are not a physical Act of War, but they would put enough pressure on Iran and ostracize it.

Peter Robinson: If we blockaded the Gulf, they would not take out the Saudi oil?

Victor Davis Hanson: I do not know, that would be their call. We did it with Cuba and Russia had to make that call. The Cubans, they backed down. I would be very, if you had a ray of American ships that blocked it, gasoline going into Iran or you blocked the importation of certain military things or export of oil, it would be their call whether they wanted to attack American ships.

Peter Robinson: Let me pursue the Abizaid (00:20:48). There are ways to live with a nuclear Iran. This is a pretty good question from, Albert Fuchs by way of Face book. Mutually assured destruction kept nuclear weapons from being used during the Cold War, would Iran be as sensitive to nuclear deterrents as was the Soviet Union?

Victor Davis Hanson: You know that is a question I would ask the Israelis because they are really the key in this. You can be Netanyahu live with a Defense Minister who really built Hezbollah and was behind the rocketing of Israel in 2006 in many ways. Can somebody like my argument is they are more rationale than they were in 1983 and 1984. Can they live with that argument and count on the Iranians not being suicidal. So I do not think it is really the answer is in Washington, it is in Tel Aviv, what they are going to do.

Peter Robinson: So, you just set up segment four which is Israel. Israeli Defense Minister Ephraim Snay in an October interview, this month as we sit here taping this "if no crippling sanctions are in place by Christmas, Israel will strike. Israel will strike. If we are left alone we will act alone". Is that somebody getting out ahead of his Prime Minister? Is that the Israeli's testing the Western

response. This was in an interview with the *Sunday Times* in London. Or is that a statement of Israeli policy? Have they already answered the question?

Robert Baer: Snay is a friend of mine.

Peter Robinson: Is he a crazy person or is this?

Robert Baer: He is not all crazy.

Peter Robinson: This is a man who knows what he is doing.

Robert Baer: He knows what he is doing, he knows Iran, he knows politics, he is labor, he was labor and if he says that Israel will attack, and he doubted that they would a couple of years ago, they probably will.

Victor Davis Hanson: I think that when you have a 2% approval rating of Obama inside Israel according to some polls, this was sort of what Israel did during the Bush Administration, especially after that flawed 2006 estimate that Iran was not really getting the bomb. But now, I think when an Israeli high official says that they are going to do something, we have to take it serious. So I agree with Bob. There is another thing to remember,

Peter Robinson: When you say your point about Obama's 2% approval rating in Israel, his Administration has almost no diplomatic leverage with Israel?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yes.

Peter Robinson: That is the point you are making?

Victor Davis Hanson: And the second point, they do not believe that the United States is going to do anything and they were not sure about Bush. Second is that I think

Peter Robinson: Do you buy both of those? You do.

Victor Davis Hanson: I think it is right. I think also, it is a little worrisome that there are people in this Administration, I will give you three examples, Samantha Power appointment, the failed Charles Freeman nomination, the pressure on the settlements, Dr. Zazynski is very Orwellian statement that who was an advisor to the Obama campaign, remember on that National Security matters, that we should shoot down.

Peter Robinson: Brzezinski?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yes, it was Brzezinski that we should shoot down Israeli planes if they fly over America occupied.

Peter Robinson: Zbig Brzezinski "in order to strike Iran they the Israeli's would have to fly over our air space in Iraq. Are we just going to sit there and watch? We have to be serious about denying

them that right. That means you go up and confront them. No one wishes for this but it could be a liberty in reverse.” The liberty he is saying we should be willing to shoot down

Victor Davis Hanson: I do not know if he is, he did not speak for the US military, he does not speak necessarily for the Obama Administration, but what I am worried about is there is a large number of people in the Obama Administration who do not see a constitutional democracy that is western and is very successful tolerant diverse society like Israel as exceptional in the region. It is just another nation no different, no better no worse than Palestinians, no different no worse than Syrians and their way of thinking it is a win/win situation if Israel takes out the Iranians, then we say to the Israeli’s oh my gosh, we deplore this preemptive unilateralism, we are no longer a strong ally and we win out of it. I am really worried because I see a Greek tragedy here where the Israeli’s are going to have no good points and they might feel that a second Holocaust, he denied the first one and he is bragging about the second one.

Peter Robinson: Ahmadinejad (00:25:01)

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah. They might think this is the only thing we can do is try to do some response and it will be messy, it will be long, it will not necessarily be comprehensively successful and then people in the United States it will open Israel up to say you see this an ally that is an albatross around our neck. This Administration would like to

Peter Robinson: And the Administration wants distance.

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah, I think they want to make it; we want to be neutral in a way that Europe is toward Israel. This is what this Administration wants.

Peter Robinson: Question – technically, militarily, what does Israel have the capacity to do to the Iranian nuclear program?

Robert Baer: Limited. They have some bunker busters, they could take out some sites underground, they could set it back for years, they might have to go back 10 years from now or five years from now. I could understand, what they believe is if they can degrade their program it is going to buy them time; it will convince the Iranians to back down. They think that psychologically the Iranians will back down. I do not have that reading. I think that the Iranians, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Core is a cult. I think that under attack they will attack in places we cannot even imagine. In Iraq, in Lebanon.

Peter Robinson: The ordinary western, the middle class population in Tehran will take

Robert Baer: Will get sacrificed. Too bad. They have stated, their deterrent doctrine is to strike back every where they can. So if Israel and I think it is almost inevitable, 50% chance will attack, we should expect the worst.

Peter Robinson: And the worst is? Give me three or four sentences on what happens the day after Israel attacks. Begins it attacks.

Robert Baer: Dubai gets hit, our supply lines in Iraq will be hit and they can hit them, they can get across that border and there are Iraqi's that will do their bidding, we will see a war in Lebanon, we are close to one now anyhow and you will see this Chaosistan as McChrystal called it recently come into being.

Victor Davis Hanson: I think there is also something that is going on that is very; I have not seen it in my lifetime is the status of the Europeans. They were always the good pal, we were the bad cop. We were always

Peter Robinson: Toward the Arabs?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah, we were going to take care of business in the world and they were going to sort of say we should have done soft power with the understanding that we were always there. Now we are not there. This is why you have in the elite, or not with the people in Europe, they are worried about Obama and this is why Sarcose keeps lecturing, he keeps saying the centrifuges are spinning because if they get a two or three stage rocket, Sydney is like Frankfurt, and now you are going to have a very bizarre situation like you do with North Korea and Japan. So a country like Germany for example, they could build nuclear weapons like it does Mercedes and they would work 4,000 probably in a year. They are going to sit there within missile range of a lunatic regime that says things like we want a trade, we want this. Then the Europeans are going to be saying to us you were supposed to under, unspoken accords, make sure the Western system that emerged out of the Cold War was stable. And you did that during the Cold War and now what are you going to do about this problem? I think that is going to be a narrative you are going to hear more and more from the British, the French, the Italians and the Germans that they cannot really stand on the sidelines and say Bush did it or you guys are a bunch of cowboys because they got somebody for the first in their memory who is markedly to the left of them.

Peter Robinson: A winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Victor Davis Hanson: Exactly. And he is a committed United Nations Internationalist and has brought appeal to their own publics in a pacifistic utopian way. These people who are so, we make fun of the Europeans, but they are very sober, judicious, real politic players. They understand.

Peter Robinson: They know their own interest.

Victor Davis Hanson: They know their own interest and they know they do not want to be held up by a third rate revolutionary theocracy on this matter of nuclear weapons. Same thing with Japan and North Korea. So either somebody takes care of North Korea or we are going to have otherwise stable players and we have to look to our own security and that will be a nightmare because we are going to have people going nuclear, we are going to have people, redefine our relationship with the United States. Obama does not quite understand that whether he knew it or not, whether he gets the Nobel Prize, whether he wants to praise the United Nations Human Rights, he had a historic role to protect countries to act like utopians with the expectations that they did not have to get their hands dirty and contain somebody, not that far away from them.

Peter Robinson: Segment five, let us just, well let us call this segment the nightmare. Intel question – it is my understanding as a layman that all of this business of enriching uranium with spinning

centrifuges, this is very skilled work. Wherever it is going on under the bunkers, around Iran, can we assume that Israel has already done everything it can to make being a physicist or a nuclear technician in Iran one of the most dangerous jobs in the world?

Robert Baer: They cannot solve this by covert action.

Peter Robinson: They cannot?

Robert Baer: They cannot go kidnap scientists or assassinate them. The program is too big. They are getting too much help from Russia, individual Russians of the very least. There is this technology is easily for the Iranians who are very skilled people, they have made advances in nanotechnology and other fields that have surprised us.

Peter Robinson: The scientific establishment there is serious.

Robert Baer: Yes it is very good, these are smart people. That is isolated attacks like this is not going to do it. There is no easy solution to Iran's nuclear bomb. And we also have not talked about the arms race in the Gulf. If you Saudi Arabia that is the huge divide in the Middle East the Shi'a Sunni divide. I would want a bomb if they get one. And what does that lead to?

Peter Robinson: And Mubarak has said he wants a bomb or at least made noises about it.

Robert Baer: I spent too much time in the Middle East to trust all these people with nuclear bombs. I do not say from a prejudice, but the region is volatile and nuclearized is fair

Victor Davis Hanson: I think another thing we do not talk about we talk about the bomb, but we do not, the bomb is not the problem, the bomb is an expression of a particular world view. We sleep tonight with Britain with a bomb, with France with a bomb and to be frank with Israel, it is a constitutional state with the bomb. We do not sleep very well with China. We sleep much better with India with a bomb than Pakistan. So it is the type of government and when you have a non-constitutional, non-consensual, non-democratic government, now they can change, but I would not worry about Japan that much with a bomb. I worry about China, I worry about North Korea and the problem in the Middle East is there is not many people there that you, as Bob said, you would want to have a bomb.

Peter Robinson: Israel is it.

Robert Baer: Come on the borders are still drilled in since the Ottoman (00:31:40) times, still disputed, they are still in this sectarian violence which we do not begin to understand and that is what scares me.

Peter Robinson: And that goes on all the time.

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah

Robert Baer: Yeah and we are going to be collateral damage.

Victor Davis Hanson: Even enriched uranium so they are enriching U235 and maybe it is not the greatest weapons grade, maybe they are sneaking out to Russia under some phony program where Russia is going to use it and enrich it in a different way, but it really is helping them get a purity that they need for two or three bombs.

Peter Robinson: You think it may be going back and forth?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yeah I do, I really do. I think we fell for that trap by saying that we will let the Russians monitor it to make sure it is for peaceful purposes when it may be a way of getting not quite a good enough enriched uranium but even better. But all that being, you can make a dirty bomb, you can get the enriched uranium, you can pack it into a suicide bomber, he can walk into Tel Aviv government office or even go into Lebanon, you can go to the United States, and go into the stock market, and it is not going to do a lot of damage but psychologically, it is going to say this is contaminated, this is radioactive.

Peter Robinson: Let us close out the program with the few minutes remaining by placing ourselves in two situation rooms. First we are in Israel and we are advising the Prime Minister and your friend the Defense Minister. They have listened to everything that has been said so far and I will sum up as follows: On the one hand if Iran gets a nuclear weapon, it is an existential threat to the State of Israel. We have said since Ben Gurion that we will not permit that to happen. On the other hand all we can do is buy ourselves time and buy ourselves time for what? The Administration of the United States would use an attack by us on Iran to put distance between us, the United States and Israel. Iranian public opinion to the extent that it matters at all would swing hard against us. Every one of our neighboring regimes whatever they said in private would feel required to denounce us in public. The Europeans would scarcely come to our aid and would not be able to extend us any meaningful aid even if they did, buy us time for what? What do you advice Benjamin Netanyahu to do?

Victor Davis Hanson: If I am an Israeli and I look at Iran's record, used to be the Palestinians and Lebanon and the leadership that has come to power on 12, June, if I am an Israeli, not as an American, I would say we somehow have to knock Iran down a notch. The Americans are not going to do it, we are going to have to do it and I think that is the

Peter Robinson: Not necessarily attacking the nuclear program?

Robert Baer: Just in general. I mean

Peter Robinson: For morale?

Victor Davis Hanson: We are forgetting that the Palestinian authority now is under attack by Hamas which is the

Peter Robinson: A client of Iraq.

Victor Davis Hanson: Which is a client of Iran and Hezbollah is a client of Iran and they are getting stronger by the day and I think you can make that argument very well. We have to do something now or we are going to be surrounded, what if Egypt falls next in the succession with some pro-

Iranian military faction comes in. The numbers are against Israel so they are looking at it differently.

Peter Robinson: Bob Baer advises the Prime Minister of Israel you must act.

Robert Baer: Well he is going to have to

Peter Robinson: Do you agree?

Robert Baer: I agree with the question that \$64,000 question is at what point will the point of no return come. But I think what they are going to have to

Peter Robinson: You mean in the development of the nuclear

Robert Baer: Yeah.

Peter Robinson: We are not there yet?

Robert Baer: Not quite. We are going to have to

Peter Robinson: Six months?

Robert Baer: Six months, a year. But what they have to do is and that is why you are seeing Netanyahu go to weird places like Russia and Europe. They are going to have to assume that the United States is not the situation where it was in the past as a strong protective of paternal ally and they are going to have to cut a deal, they are going to have to say to the Russians, we are going to have to do this, what are you going to do about it, they are going to have to go outreach to the Saudi's to the Egyptians, they are going to have to talk to the Europeans, the French and Germans and they are not going to get a coalition, but they are going to have to have a framework of all of these parties and say to them this is going to happen and what are you going to do about it. Not that they are going and I think they are going to find a very ambiguous response. It is not going to say do not do that, they are going to hear something liked well we are not going to move on you, we are not going to oppose you, but we are going to criticize you in the media.

Peter Robinson: Last question. Now we are in the situation room in the West Wing of the White House. Everybody including President Obama has heard everything we have said in this program. Sum it up, the Israeli's will with a better than 50% probability strike. What do you advice President Obama to do about that?

Victor Davis Hanson: About the Israeli strike?

Peter Robinson: Well, what should he do about Iran and what should he do about the Israeli strike? Time, we need to keep

Victor Davis Hanson: I would have a graduated response. First of all I would say

Peter Robinson: To Iran?

Victor Davis Hanson: Yes. He said in July that by the time of the G20 Summit you are going to face consequences, than the G20 Summit and said you are going to face consequences on October 1st when the direct talks. Then the direct talks went then he said this is the third time he said it, it does not do any good. He is going to have to say to his team, we are going to tell them we are going to stop the gasoline import into Iran. Then we are going to say we are going to have a blockade or tough sanctions then blockade, but they have to have deadlines and they are not going to be deadlines like healthcare is going to be passed by the August recess or get out of Iraq by March.

Peter Robinson: The time for talking has passed. The United States must act.

Victor Davis Hanson: So they have to establish and I am not an expert, but they have to find out what this graduated response is. Sanctions, blockades, stopping export and the final redline is up here at about a year and that is to do something, then they are going to have to discuss it and the problem is that we have a President who likes to be liked, he is charismatic, he has never been in a situation where when he is confronted with a very bad choice, and a worse choice and whatever choice he makes people like us are going to criticize him perhaps. He is not going to be like and whenever that situation

Peter Robinson: Approval rating will drop.

Victor Davis Hanson: Exactly. And every time he has been in that situation we are seeing it now in Afghanistan, he votes present. That is what worries me.

Peter Robinson: And with regard to Israel? Briefly what should President Obama do?

Victor Davis Hanson: Well Obama should do is he should in diplomatic channels help Israel appeal to the self interest of people in the region, the Russians, the Europeans and say you know what we do not like what they are doing if they are going to do it. If we did what I just outline earlier, Israel would not have to do it. After all this one last statement.

Peter Robinson: Sure

Victor Davis Hanson: This is 65 years after the Holocaust. My God, we are talking about 6 million people were executed while the world watched and now we have a person who is promising to do that again, and we are not doing, nobody is talking about it. This is just insane. Anybody who reads something like Martin Gilbert *The Second World War* all he writes about is how the world did not do anything while the bear mark went in and they just killed 6 million people. We have a guy who is saying this did not happen, he would like it to happen again if it did happen and we, this is insane, it is absolutely insane.

Peter Robinson: Bob? What should President Obama do about Iran? Same two questions to you.

Robert Baer: I think he should open a back channel right now to the real power, who is Komanyi and his son and about five generals and sit down at the table and we talk about Jim Baker, pragmatist, sit down and see if there is any chance of a grand bargain.

Peter Robinson: You send Holbrook over? You send a serious deal maker?

Robert Baer: Jim Baker.

Peter Robinson: You send Jim Baker.

Robert Baer: Jim Baker

Victor Davis Hanson: What do you give up though for them to quit?

Robert Baer: That would be the question. What would they want I mean would it be Resolution 242, would it be something on Lebanon, would it be something on Iraq. We have

Peter Robinson: You said that their interest, at one level their interest is stability in their own region. They see themselves surrounded by lunatics and they want stability.

Robert Baer: And we could

Peter Robinson: We could cut that deal right?

Robert Baer: WE could cut that deal; we could just turn over Afghanistan to the Taliban. Who is going to suffer first is not us it is going to be the Iranians. We do have and it is not the embargo they need, they need oil equipment, they need all sorts of things. They have a population of 71 million, 30% unemployment; they need a lot of things. We can carry in this Cold War, we can strike their nuclear facilities, hope nothing goes on, but we really need to go in there and open up an American President has to take the risk of doing that and failing because I think at the end of the day an embargo and sanctions could bring Iran down, but it could also create chaos or something that will look like World War III.

Peter Robinson: And how do you advice President Obama to behave toward Israel?

Robert Baer: We have to reassure the Israeli's. We are attached at the hip with the Israeli's, we simply cannot tell them hey look, let us let things go on as they are and let us hope for the best. That is not going to work with the Israeli's. We cannot stop their bombing of Iran. What is a commander going to do in Iraq, say I have seen 20 F16's coming this way, what should I do? We have four minutes before they are crossing the border. You cannot stop them. So, we need to get in the position that the Israeli's are not thinking they are going to be destroyed.

Peter Robinson: Last question. You get about six words a piece on this. Probability that the Israeli's do strike within the end of the first quarter, by March of next year.

Robert Baer: Forty-nine percent.

Peter Robinson: Victor?

Victor Davis Hanson: I would say 50/50.

Peter Robinson: A fearless note on which to end, but one worth pondering. Victor Davis Hanson, Bob Baer, the author of *The Devil We Know*, thank you very much.

Robert Baer: Thank you.

Victor Hanson Davis: Thank you

Peter Robinson: I am Peter Robinson for Uncommon Knowledge and the Hoover Institution, thanks for joining us.