**Research Proposal**

**Name of the student:** CDR Tim Hullmann, DEU Navy

**Subject of the paper:**

Israel, Germany and the Iran – would Germany go to war for Israel’s security?

**Background:**

On the basis of the exclusive relationship between Germany and Israel stated the German chancellor in front of the Knesset that Israel’s security is of prime priority for the Federal Republic of Germany. 50 years after the establishment of the German – Israel relationship both nations consider themselves as strategic partners which is documented inter alia by military co-operation and high visible arms supply from Germany to Israel.

On the other hand most recent developments, like the visit of the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sigmar Gabriel, could indicate that this exclusive partnership is on a decline. Increased criticism against Israel’s domestic policy, particularly on the Palestinian issue and Jewish settlements within the areas of Judea and Samaria, is expressed publically. Also did Germany not oppose the UN decision providing the Palestinians with the status of a non-member observer state and even more critical, is Germany very much in favor of the so called “Iran nuclear deal” which is heavily objected and criticized by Israel.

Within this context it can be argued that Israel’s security situation has improved within the recent decade significantly; however existential threats are emerging in the horizon of the East, namely the Islamic Republic of Iran. With the agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, which was significantly facilitated by the German government, Israel fears that this “deal” leverages the Iran becoming a nuclear power in the Middle East. Next to hegemonic endeavors with their proxy of Hezbollah in the Lebanese Republic and Iran’s involvement in the Syrian civil war the striving for nuclear capabilities poses an ultimate peril to the State of Israel.

Apparently contradicting the ultimate statement of Israel’s existence and fully justifying its demand for national security, Germany brokered the accomplishment of the JCPOA even though it is neither a nuclear power nor permanent member of the Security Council to the United Nations. Germany’s deep involvement in the negotiations between the E3/EU+3[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Islamic Republic of Iran finally accomplishing the nuclear deal prompts questions about Germany’s interests in its international relations and their priorities amongst them. Arguably economic interests could be superior to Israel’s security demands and following this the German-Israel relationship could require a deep review.

**The goal of the work:**

1. To analyze the political relationship between Germany and Israel.

2. To specify Israel’s security requirements with a certain focus on Iran’s hegemonic interests and nuclear endeavors.

3. To analyze the relationship between Germany and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. To identify Germany’s priorities in foreign affairs with particular focus on the triangle “Germany – Israel – Iran” in the area of security and economic interests.

3. To examine German’s options supporting Israel’s security demands using its influence in the periphery of the JCPOA.

**The research question:**

How can Germany support Israel’s security demands with respect to the Iranian endeavor for a regional power in the Middle East including the depiction of an existential, nuclear threat to the State of Israel?

To what content can Germany’s actions in foreign policy predicted - “*would Germany go to war in support of Israel’s security”*?

How can the statement, that the existence and the security of the State of Israel is Germany’s raison d’état, measured against the threat posed by a nuclear Iran, while simultaneously Germany brokers the threatening realization of the JCPOA?

What are the determining factors of the German – Iran relationship; why is Germany so supportive with regards to the realization of the JCPOA?

What is the level of consistency of the before mentioned statement; “are economic interests superior to Israel’s security demands”?

What are Israel’s options to stimulate Germany’s political decision makers taking active actions against the Iranian endeavor becoming nuclear?

**The research claim:**

1. The political relations between Germany and Israel are resilient to a certain content.

2. Germany’s foreign policy has proven as consistent and reliable over the last decades; particularly with regards to the exclusive relationship with Israel, and is therefore to a certain content predictable.

3. Germany’s foreign policy is limited influenced by the different parties; Israel’s right to exist is commonly agreed upon.

4. Iran poses a vital threat to the State of Israel.

5. Germany has (A) mechanisms and political instruments at its disposal and (B) the preparedness making use out of them to support Israel’s security demands.

**The limits of this paper:**

This work will focus on the political relationships between Germany and Israel; social, cultural and economic ties will be maximally briefly reflected.

Even though Hezbollah constitutes a constant threat to the State of Israel it will not be discussed extensively. Also Iran’s conventional capabilities threatening Israel’s security will be not touched upon. This work will exclusively focus on the nuclear peril posed by the Iran, as the ultimate danger to Israel’s existence.

**Method of presenting the ideas of the study**

1. Introduction
2. The German – Israel Relationship - Analysis
	1. Background and history
	2. Recent development and influencing factors
3. Israel’s Security Demands and Policy
	1. Israel’s security situation
	2. Israel’s security policy
4. The Iranian threat to Israel’s security
	1. Iran’s hegemonic interests in the Middle East
	2. The Iranian nuclear endeavor
	3. Impact of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
5. The German – Iran Relationship – Analysis
	1. Background and history
	2. Recent development and determining factors
6. Instruments of German foreign policy mitigating Iran’s efforts
	1. Germany’s foreign policy – Analysis
	2. Instruments of national foreign policy
	3. Utilization of alliances
		1. United Nations
		2. European Union
		3. Coalition of the Willing
7. Options and Limitations for Israel’s Security
	1. Germany’s foreign policy portfolio
	2. Israel’s potential courses of action

**The importance of the work:**

Israel’s security is at a turning point if Iran achieves its goal becoming a nuclear power. Although the Iran is internationally widely isolated a domino effect of nuclearisation in the entire region cannot precluded. Israel’s decision makers need to consider all options for preventing the Iran developing nuclear capabilities; including the support of international strategic partners like Germany. In order to develop an Israeli political strategy against Iran’s hegemonic interests and in particular with regards to its nuclear efforts a prediction of the strategic partner’s courses of action and of their power influencing these efforts is of outstanding importance.

The realistic assessment, of what can be expected from the strategic partner Germany, enables Israel making best use out of the exclusive relationship or inviting Israel making considerations that facilitate the required support.

With regards to the national security framework this work addresses the pillars of A) diplomacy and B) national security.

1. China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy [↑](#footnote-ref-1)