

When Will Israel Attack Iran?

Many thoughtful analysts believe the decision to do so has already been made. With Obama unwilling to confront Iran on its nuclear facilities and growing battery of long-range military rockets, it is just a matter of time before Israel goes ahead and bombs those Iranian facilities.

Almost since Benjamin Netanyahu took over as Israeli prime minister in April, he has been sending emissaries to Washington, many in secret, to urge the Obama administration to join the diplomatic fight against Iran—or face the prospect of an Israeli strike against Iran’s nuclear weapons plants.

If and when that happens, it will have dramatic effects—not only for the United States and Europe, but for the entire Near East, the source of most of the world’s oil.

Some of Netanyahu’s representatives (including military intelligence chief Major General Amos Yadlin and Mossad chief Meir Dagan) have already presented the Obama administration with top-secret files on Iranian nuclear weapons facilities, intercontinental ballistic launching sites, and the scientists and military officials who work there.

Shoshana Bryen, senior director for security policy at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, recently made this comment:

“The estimates of when Iran will actually have the bomb are always changing. The question is not how long can Israel actually wait [before striking Iran]. The question is how long until they decide they are not going to play that game [of waiting] anymore.”

Jane’s Intelligence Weekly is the leading international military intelligence advisory group. When as reputable a journal as *Jane’s* suggests that Israel is close to attacking Iran’s nuclear plants, then the world had better sit up and take notice. Israel feels that it will have to attack when Iran has manufactured enough plutonium weapons (with the help of Pakistan) and ballistic missiles (with the help of North Korea) to hurl nuclear missiles at Israel.

Here is the article from *Jane’s*:

“*Israel’s Plans for Iran Strikes*—Amid growing concern over Iran’s alleged duplicity in declaring all its nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Israel—the country that regards itself as most at risk from a nuclear-capable Iran—may be poised to revive contingency plans to destroy Iran’s nuclear installations.

“It is hardly surprising that Israel’s national security establishment has concluded that Israel would be at risk from a nuclear-capable Iran. However, if a preemptive attack is to be launched, Israel may have to go

it alone. Any joint U.S.-Israeli precision-guided missile strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities—Bushehr, Natanz or Arak—is unlikely to prove an attractive option for the U.S. administration while it remains mired in Iraq—which shares a 1,458 km-long border with Iran.

“If the USA was to participate in such an operation, Washington’s allies would undoubtedly denounce what would be seen as yet another example of dangerous U.S. unilateralism. However, the real concern is that a chain reaction of unintended consequences would further destabilize the world’s most volatile region. An Israeli strike could effectively end hopes of reaching any kind of American peace deal. The U.S. administration also faces the dilemma of insisting that Iran has no right to develop nuclear weapons—while Israel is believed to have several hundred in its arsenal.

“The controversial role of intelligence is likely to prove significant. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would have to produce incontrovertible evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons which, given the recent damning report by the U.S. Senate on the CIA’s collection and analysis of intelligence about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD), is unlikely. This crisis of credibility would make a U.S. decision to launch a preemptive strike difficult, if not impossible, to sell to U.S. legislators or to the wider world.”—*Jane’s Intelligence Digest*, July 17, 2004.

If such an attack does happen, then this time it is going to be much more than Near East crisis—because it will also involve Pakistan and possibly North Korea. The latter is already threatening Japan. India might be involved because of its rocky relationship with Pakistan. China will almost certainly be involved, too, because of its influence on North Korea in its attempts to moderate the latter’s warlike pronouncements from time to time.

A report submitted to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has called for the Jewish state to plan preemptive strikes against Iran’s nuclear plant and nuclear second-strike capability as a deterrent against its hostile neighbors in the Middle East.

That report, *Israel’s Strategic Future*, says Israel must prevent its enemies from developing weapons of mass destruction through strikes against vital facilities.

Joseph Farah’s *G2 Bulletin*, a high-level intelligence newsletter, first reported Israel has already begun drawing up plans for a strike at Iran’s nuclear facilities that could come within a few months.

Farah says Israel has been threatened by a biological or nuclear first-strike that seeks to exploit Israel’s small space and high population density. *Here is part*

“To meet its ultimate deterrence objectives—that is, to deter the most overwhelmingly destructive enemy first-strikes—Israel must seek and achieve a visible second-strike capability to target approximately 15 enemy cities.”

The report continues: “Ranges [of air strikes] would be to cities in Libya [Libya also!] and Iran, and recognizable nuclear bomb yields would be at a level sufficient to fully compromise the aggressor’s viability as a functioning state. All enemy targets should be selected with the view that their destruction would promptly force the enemy to cease all nuclear/biological/chemical exchanges with Israel.”

The report also called on Israel to develop a multi-layered ballistic missile defense system.

When Iran announced plans to begin building a heavy-water reactor that can produce weapons-grade plutonium, Israel began drawing up plans to demolish it in much the same way—via sudden air strikes—as it destroyed an Iraqi nuclear facility more than a decade ago when Saddam Hussein was in charge of the nation.

Those of my readers who are older may recall the event: On June 7, 1981, Israeli F-15s and F-16s took off for the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq, after the pilots were emotionally briefed that “The alternative is our destruction.” In fact, Prime Minister Menachem Begin had no idea if the raid would stop the Iraqi nuclear program or merely slow it. But slowing it was reason enough. Actually, they succeeded in entirely destroying the Osirak facility.

While Tehran insists their nuclear reactors are purely for research, the decision heightens concern about Iran’s ability to produce nuclear objectives.

The 40-megawatt reactor, alone, could produce enough plutonium for a nuclear weapon each year, according to sources.

One reactor site is at Arak, next to an already built heavy-water production plant. It is to replace a reactor using nonweapons grade enriched uranium that the Iranians mothballed because they said it was outmoded and lacked fuel. Other reactor sites have been discovered more recently. Nuclear enrichment can be used both to generate power and make nuclear warheads.

Observers wonder out loud why Iran, a nation with vast oil reserves, is so intent on producing nuclear power.

Many observers believe Israel already has decided to bomb Iran. In early September, Netanyahu made a secret trip to Moscow, where he delivered a list of Russian scientists providing assistance to the Iranian nuclear weapons program, according to a report in the *London Times*.

He also told the Russians that Israel was prepared to expose the involvement of the Russian Government in smuggling high-performance S-300 air defense missile batteries to Iran on board the *Arctic Sea*, a Russian cargo ship reportedly hijacked off the Swedish coast during the summer of 2009.

Iran has stated that it wanted the missiles to defend its nuclear facilities against an Israeli or U.S. air

strike. Israel wanted Moscow to abort the sale of those missile batteries—in order to make an Israeli strike easier.

Shortly after Netanyahu’s Moscow trip, the Russian navy intercepted the *Arctic Sea*, arrested all those on board, and took its mysterious cargo back to Moscow aboard military aircraft.

Netanyahu also delivered a sharp rebuke to the U.N. General Assembly, in which he called on the world body to live up to its historic responsibilities to prevent a second Holocaust.

He concluded his message with these words: “The jury is still out on the United Nations, recent signs are not encouraging.”

Who can possibly tell what will happen? No doubt all the countries concerned above have been trying to think these things through and, in some cases, quietly making contingency agreements between themselves (most importantly, I would think, between America and China, because if these two ever fall out, then the whole world could become embroiled).

But it appears that, with or without the tacit permission and help of America, Israel will make a decision to knock out Iran’s nuclear capabilities before Iran destroys Israel’s—as well as the entire nation. Ahmadinejad has repeatedly said he wants to blot Israel from the earth.

Israel already leads the world in the development of satellite-guided UAVs (Unmanned Air Vehicles). Intelligence analysts believe Israel may wait until it has completed its West Bank wall.

Checking for more information on this, I learned that the *Jerusalem Post* reported, in July 2007, that the barrier may not be totally completed until 2010, seven years after it was originally supposed to be finished. However, if events call for action—the Israelis will not wait until all its western barriers are completed.

The first reaction of the Palestinians to any Israeli attack on Iran might surely involve a mass invasion by its young people, even though they would be slaughtered in their thousands or tens of thousands. So Sharon would prefer to wait until the wall is totally completed.

Will Saudi Arabia become involved? It would be difficult for the Wahhabi elements in that nation to restrain themselves. They might try to overthrow the Saudi royal family. In that case it is almost certain that America will attack Riyadh either with its heavy armor troops in Kuwait or by a nuclear attack in order to protect its oil imports from Saudi Arabia, on which it is completely reliant.

Though an Israeli attack might be privately cheered by some Arab rulers, the public consequences would be broad and unpredictable. If Israeli planes were to fly over Iraq, the reaction against America in that country could get ugly. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas would likely be forced to step away from talks with Israel. Iran could escalate the crisis, with missile launches on Israel and attacks from terrorist allies such as Hezbollah. In a global anti-Israeli backlash, it is possible that the diplomatic and economic isolation of Iran

3 would be lessened instead of increased.

Daniel Ayalon, the nation's deputy foreign minister, has declared that Israel's threat of military action against Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program is not a bluff.

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Ayalon issued that warning in the same week America and the UN called on the Islamic Republic to swiftly accept an offer from Western nations to export its uranium and have it processed abroad.

"The one who's bluffing is Iran, which is trying to play with cards they don't have," he said. "All the bravado that we see, the testing, and the very dangerous and harsh rhetoric by Ahmadinejad is hiding a lot of weaknesses."

Ayalon accused Iran of stalling tactics, saying: "If Iranian behavior and conduct continues as they have exhibited so far, it is obvious that their intentions are only to buy time and procrastinate."

Ayalon also refused to rule out the use of military options by Israel or other nations against Iran if other measures fail.

Israel and America do not accept Tehran's claims that its nuclear program is only for civilian purposes.

Israeli analysts say the country is finalizing its plans to attack Iran if necessary.

Dr Ronen Bergman, author of *The Secret War with Iran*, has stated that, if current trends continue, an Israeli strike will be inevitable.

"If history continues on its current path; yes, at the end of the day, Israel will attack," he said. "The Iranians have expressed no willingness to stop the project. They see it as a necessity—an insurance policy—for their regime to have the bomb."

In October 2009, the Western powers offered to work out a deal with Iran, if it would send its heavy water to Russia for processing. Such efforts to appease the Iranian Government worries the Israelis, causing them to think that they need to speed up plans to launch an attack. Dr. Bergman made this comment in early November:

"Israel is convinced that this is a major achievement for the Iranians, because they are determined to have the bomb, Iran is trying to reach it as soon as possible; and Israel thinks that the present agreement and the engagement are lowering the economic pressure on Iran and therefore make it far more possible for it to continue.

"So, from the Israeli point of view, this is a major error of the West; and paradoxically it makes the chances of an Israeli attack much much higher."

Many question attempts to placate Iran, but there are few alternatives to the general strategy. A virtual blockade of the Iranian economy—aggressively cutting off shipping, banking, and refined petroleum—would not be a half-measure. It would be an act close to war.

The challenges of carrying out such a strike 1,000 miles from Israeli territory against well-defended, deeply buried nuclear facilities are considerable.

But so are the risks: Israel could expect a counter attack from Iranian allies, Hizbollah and Hamas, as well as terrorist attacks against Israeli facilities worldwide.

It would incur the wrath of America and the condemnation of European allies. 3

It would also risk handing Iran the moral high ground and giving the Islamic Republic an excuse for pursuing the bomb in earnest.

But observers in the Middle East believe all those considerations are secondary to the Israeli Government's top priority.

Dr. Bergman recently said this:

"I always try to explain to non-Israelis that they will not be able to understand Israelis or Israeli politicians and the Israeli decision-making process without understanding how profound, how deep, is the memory of the holocaust in the overall character of the Israelis.

At the end of the day, the first priority of the Israeli Prime Minister would not be American rage, European condemnation, or Iranian retaliation. The first priority is that Israel, the Jewish people would never face another Holocaust. And, therefore, if the time comes when the Israeli Prime Minister receives information that Iran is on the verge of having a bomb, I would suspect that he would have only one choice, one decision to make."

Several months ago, Yuval Rotem, Israel's ambassador to Australia, made this comment:

"I'm sad, because I was right. Two month ago I wrote about the Gaza massacre. I said, that war on the Gaza strip was only Israeli military training [in preparation for Iran]. And I predicted that Israel will attack Iran before year 2012. Israel is, in fact, in a secret war against Iran."

Prime Minister Netanyahu made the elimination of the Iranian threat his campaign slogan. "Not on my shift," he said. "Iran will not become a nuclear military state." He knows that if Iran becomes a military nuclear superpower, it will mean the end of Israel.

During 2009, the Israel air force has undertaken several full-scale exercises aimed at demonstrating its capability of striking nuclear facilities in Iran.

On October 20, 2009, 17 U.S. Navy ships joined Israeli missile defense brigades in the *Juniper Cobra 10* military exercise. This was the largest joint exercise ever held by the two nations. It was done to test their ability to thwart a multiple-direction missile and rocket attack on Israel from Iran and its allies.

Significantly, those war preparations also extended to Israel's neighbors.

On October 18, 2009, a vital Hezbollah telecommunications network, in south Lebanon, was mysteriously bombed, taking out a capability that allowed Hezbollah commanders in Beirut to stay in touch with troops in the field in the midst of enemy fire.

The Israelis suffered many casualties during the 2006 Lebanon war because of Hezbollah's secretive fiber-optics command and control network.

"Israel is getting ready in every way they can," says a U.S. consultant who works with the Israeli Government. He added, "They are looking at all three fronts: Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran."

Dore Gold, the former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, believes the Iranian nuclear weapons

4 program has reached “five minutes to midnight” and that the international community has a responsibility to stop it.

“We must stop a nuclear Iran for the sake of preventing a genocidal attack on the state of Israel, for the sake of the security of the Middle East, for the security of all American cities, and for the sake of the people of Iran who want to be free,” Gold told an Iran freedom rally in New York in September 2009.

At that meeting, Gold warned that this attack against Iran must be made—and soon—or terrible would be the results. He said the U.S. was able to easily eliminate the Taliban regime’s control in Afghanistan, shortly after 9/11, because the Taliban did not have nuclear weapons or long-range ballistic missiles.

Gold then made this statement:

“Fast forward to 2011 or 2012. If we make the mistake today [by not eliminating its nuclear facilities soon] and Iran gets nuclear weapons and Hezbollah, which is the al-Qaida of the Shiite, attacks New York, Washington, or London, can America respond against a nuclear Iran the way we responded against the Taliban in 2001? No.”

“And therefore,” he added, “if the Israeli attack does not take place, the balance of forces in the world will work for the benefit of international Islamic terrorism in a way that you have never seen.”

Actually, few military analysts doubt that Israel has the capability of inflicting serious damage to Iran’s nuclear sites.

Although Brookings Institution scholar, Michael O’Hanlon, opposes military action against Iran, he acknowledges that Israeli air strikes would set Iran’s nuclear program back several years, possibly providing enough time for other solutions to fall into place.

“Israel could hit them in underground facilities and the overground reactors quite effectively,” he told an audience on Capitol Hill in October 2009. As a result, “Instead of getting the bomb in 2011 and having 20 bombs by 2015, maybe Iran doesn’t get the bomb until 2013 or 2014, and maybe only five or six by 2020.”

The one thing that nearly all analysts agree upon is the unwillingness of President Barack Obama to take strong action against Iran, let alone military action.

“The notion that the Obama administration would order the U.S. military to launch air strikes on Iran is “not credible,” O’Hanlon said.

How long will Israel wait before attacking Iran? “The train has already left the station,” an American close to Israeli defense planners has said this fall. “We’re hearing December or January, possibly up until April [2010].”

How would the Obama White House respond to an Israeli attack on Iran? Former Carter-era national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, counseled President Obama to order U.S. pilots to shoot down Israeli fighter jets heading for Iran if they refused to reverse course. (His son, Mark Brzezinski, was a national security ad-

viser to the Obama transition team.)

In contrast, other Washington insiders believe that the Administration would be relieved to have Israel do what we need to get done. Some in the administration “see Israel as the option in their hip pocket,” says Danielle Pletka, vice president of the American Enterprise Institute. “If all else fails, the Israelis will do it for us.”

How would the Arabs react? John Bolton, former U.S. envoy to the United Nations, says that, no matter how much they might protest, “nearby Arab states would privately welcome an Israeli attack on Iran. Those governments fear Iran’s nuclear program as much as Israel does, but they are powerless to stop it,” he added.

Yet another question also remains. If Israel bombed the Iranian sites, would they find and destroy all of its ballistic missiles,—or would a number of them be launched against Israel before a second strike could take place?

Dr. Ronen Bergman thinks the Israelis will succeed when they launch the attack:

“The Israeli military, the Israeli Air Force, the Israeli intelligence community is all preparing for a possible strike. Theoretically even if tomorrow the prime minister orders the strike—the plans are completed, the planes are ready, the pilots have been practicing this for a very long time. It can be commenced tomorrow. The overall assessment is that Israel knows enough about the Iranian attempts to hide the facilities from the international community so it is able to destroy facilities that Iranians are convinced are not going to be hit in such an attack.”

The first prime minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, used to say: “My worst nightmare is that I brought the survivors of the holocaust to Israel and their sons and daughters would face another holocaust.”

The fear of being blotted out of existence is greater than any other concern in Israel.

On one hand, Ahmedinejad repeatedly mentions the importance of destroying Israel. On the other, he is trying to build the nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles capable of doing it. The Israelis know that theirs is a tiny country. From their point of view, the only way to combat it is not by a balance of deterrence but by preventing the other side from having it in the first place.

When the hour comes, a recommendation will go from the chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces to Defense Minister Ehud Barak, to the security cabinet and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The order will be given. Multiple air strikes will be made. And the world will never be the same again.

What will follow? My beloved fellow pilgrims, it is clearly time to spread the truths of the Third Angel’s Message everywhere. We know not what the future holds. But our lives are in God’s hands, and He will protect His faithful, commandment-keeping children. —vf

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Waymarks