



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 4, 2012

Netanyahu Puts Off Iran Attack Until Closer to Israel Elections

Additionally, some officials have also indicated that they are waiting to see the outcome of discussions between the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 group, consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia and China, before officially embarking on a military strike.

"It could happen this year, but also 2013 is a possibility," said an Israeli senior official.

"We will need to wait to see the effect sanctions and diplomacy have on Iran and what the regime decides to do."

But according to senior *Haaretz* correspondent Amir Oren, Israel delayed its plans to launch an attack on Iran due to a war simulation that produced unwelcome results. During that simulation, experts discovered that Iran would be able to retaliate with a single missile strike that had the ability to kill 200 Americans.



"At 8:58 P.M. on Tuesday, Israel's 2012 war against Iran came to a quiet end. The capricious plans for a huge aerial attack were returned to the deep recesses of safes and hearts. The war may not have been canceled but it has certainly been postponed. For a while, at least, we can sound the all clear: It won't happen this year. Until further notice, Israel Air Force Flight 007 will not be taking off," [writes Oren](#).

Following the disappointing simulation, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak observed that Israel could not act alone in striking Iran before the U.S. presidential elections in November.

According to Oren, "For all intents and purposes, it was an announcement that this war was being postponed until at least the spring of 2013."

Most contend that the one factor that could change the tentative timeline set by Netanyahu would be Iran's decision to begin enriching uranium to military grade levels for the purposes of building a bomb.

Intelligence agencies have been able to track Iran's enrichment program and the weapons group that would assemble the bomb if instructed to do so by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Experts from both the United States and Israel are in agreement that Iran has yet to begin the enrichment of the uranium needed to build a weapon.

The *Jerusalem Post* [reports](#):

Intelligence officials in Israel and the US have voiced confidence that they would know if Iran decides to move to the stage of manufacturing a nuclear weapon. Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan recently said that if Iran was, for example, to begin enriching uranium to 90-percent levels



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and was not stopped, then Israel would need to use military force to stop it.

Netanyahu acknowledged on Tuesday that the sanctions are indeed hurting Iran but that it was not yet clear if they would inhibit Iran's decision to pursue a nuclear weapon.

The United States and Israel have reportedly been discussing the best approach to Iran and have had some disagreements on the subject. Washington contends that Iran becomes a threat only once it has begun enriching high-grade uranium. But Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak believes that an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities may be necessitated prior to enrichment because of Iran's move into an "immunity zone" — a point where its facilities may be protected.

Initially, Israeli officials seemed interested in launching an attack on Iran before the end of this year. An unidentified senior Russian Foreign Ministry official had said that Russia expected a strike on Iran before the end of the year, reported Bloomberg News.

Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Nikolai Makarov [announced](#) that it would not be until the summer that the United States and Israel would make a decision on whether to attack Iran.

"Iran, of cause, is a sore spot. Some kind of decision should be taken, probably nearer to summer," [Makarov told RIA Novosti](#).

In February, Mossad boss Tamir Pardo made a [secret](#) visit to engage in talks with the United States in order to assess "the pulse of the Obama administration and determine what the consequences would be if Israel bombed Iranian nuclear sites over American objections," reported *Newsweek*.

Pardo had a number of questions, including: "What is our posture on Iran? Are we ready to bomb? Would we [do so later]? What does it mean if [Israel] does it anyway?"

But President Obama reportedly made it clear that an Israeli attack uncoordinated with the U.S. military would likely bring about regional instability and could hurt America's relations with Israel.

President Obama has [asked](#) that Israel refrain from taking military action on Iran's military sites to allow the sanctions an opportunity to work, but he has maintained all along that military action remained a viable option. Israel has committed to refraining from a military strike on Iran until after the American elections.

The Israeli daily publication *Maariv* reported that Israel's commitment coincided with the purchase of U.S. "advanced bunker-busting bombs and long-range refueling plans."

Meanwhile, analysts fear the impact that the growing tension and war speculation in the region is having on the cost of oil.

In February, Standard & Poor's [issued](#) three separate reports that predicted Iran will engage in "low-level provocation" in response to the sanctions by disrupting shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

"Iranian authorities could disrupt supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf by imposing tanker inspections or boarding merchant ships in its territorial waters, supporting oil prices because markets would increasingly view armed conflict as "a real, if remote, possibility," the report stated. That report noted that such actions would be welcomed by oil-producing areas in the region such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait because the tension would increase the price of oil.

Business Week notes the increased price of oil since December:

Oil has risen 8 percent since Dec. 19, when Bank of America Corp. said in a report that crude may



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surge by \$40 a barrel if international sanctions halted supplies from Iran. Oil for March delivery on the New York Mercantile Exchange rose as much as 74 cents to \$101.65 a barrel, the highest since Jan. 19, and was at \$101.17 at 12:55 p.m. London time. Prices are 19 percent higher than a year ago.

But the cooling tensions in the region could potentially bring about a reduction in the price of oil.

If it is indeed true that an attack on Iran will be postponed to nearer Israel's election, experts are expecting the United States to withdraw at least some of its naval ships from the Persian Gulf, where the USS *Carl Vinson* and the USS *Abraham* aircraft carriers are currently patrolling the Strait of Hormuz, along with the USS *Makin Island*, an assault ship. It was announced at the start of March that four additional mine countermeasure ships were headed for the region as well, but with a postponed attack, most expect the U.S. to withdraw some of its might. As one example, the USS *Enterprise*, which was believed to be headed for the Strait of Hormuz in preparation of an attack on Iran, has now been scheduled to visit Piraeus, Greece instead.



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