



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 17, 2012

## Sec. of State Clinton Meets with Israelis to Address Iran, Syria, Egypt

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has [indicated](#) that the United States is willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that Iran does not possess nuclear weapons. This is not the first time the American people have heard such rhetoric from this administration regarding Iran, but these latest remarks were made during Clinton's recent visit to Israel.



Secretary Clinton spent 12 days traveling to nine countries to address a variety of international issues. Her visit with Israeli leaders focused on subjects including "Iran, upheaval in the Arab world, the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the political transition in Egypt," observed Bloomberg News.

Clinton's visit to Israel was likely to help smooth out the relatively strained relationship between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — primarily resulting from what Israel perceives to be a weak U.S. response to Iran's growing nuclear program. "We're living in a time of unprecedented change, a lot of challenges for us both," Clinton told Netanyahu before the two sat down for a working dinner. "We will continue to consult closely as we have on an almost daily basis between our two governments to chart the best way forward."

During Clinton's visit with Israeli leaders, Israeli President Shimon Peres said that his country would utilize all options to prevent Iran from "endangering the freedom of other people, from endangering the lives of other people."

Clinton stated that the United States has not taken a military response to Iran off the table, telling reporters in [Jerusalem](#):

We all prefer a diplomatic resolution, and Iran's leaders still have the opportunity to make the right decision. The choice is ultimately Iran's to make. Our own choice is clear: We will use all elements of American power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Clinton's assertions echoed what President Obama said in March of Iran: "I believe there is a window of time to solve this diplomatically, but that window is closing." Obama made similar [statements](#) during a March 14 press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron, warning that the opportunity for a diplomatic solution was "shrinking." At that time, Obama warned Tehran to use the opportunity to engage in diplomatic talks with world leaders in order to avoid "even worse consequences."

And in May, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro let it slip that the United States is fully prepared to engage in a military strike on Iran. "It would be preferable to resolve this diplomatically, and through the use of pressure, than to use military force," he observed, adding, "But that does not mean that



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option isn't available. Not just available — it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready."

Whether Secretary Clinton's statements on Iran have appeased the Israeli government is unclear.

In addition to discussing Iran with Israeli leaders, Clinton also addressed the increased tension between Israel and Egypt.

Just before heading to Israel, Clinton stopped in Egypt and met with Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tanwai, head of the military council, as well as newly elected President Mohamed Mursi, and urged Egypt's leaders to honor the 33-year-old peace treaty with Israel.

Back in May, the *Times of Israel* noted the possibility of [war](#) between Israel and Egypt, as the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) had been calling up reserve battalions:

According to 2008's Reserve Duty Law, combat soldiers can be called for active reserve duty once every three years, and for short training sessions during the other two. Rising tensions between Israel and Egypt and the ongoing unrest in Syria caused the army to ask the Knesset for special permission to call up more soldiers, more often.

That request was approved by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which allows the IDF to call up to 22 battalions for active duty, of which six have already been summoned. "This signifies that the IDF regards the Egyptian and Syrian borders as the potential source of a greater threat than in the past," said former deputy chief of staff Dan Harel.

During her visit, Secretary Clinton addressed the "alarming" situation in Syria with Netanyahu. She told reporters, "We discussed what Israel can do, and what we can do together, to support regional security and progress."

In addition to issues on the Syrian border, Israeli Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom said on Monday that "the rise of President Mursi to power [in Egypt] has aroused great concern." While President Mursi has indicated he would uphold Egypt's international commitments, his avowed support for the Palestinians in their quest for a homeland has been a cause for concern for Israel. Secretary Clinton stated that she was able to emphasize to Egypt's leaders that the world is expecting Egypt to "play a constructive, leading role in advancing regional peace and security, in particular by upholding the peace treaty with Israel."

Netanyahu told Secretary Clinton that Israel appreciates the efforts of the United States in handling some of these growing issues.

According to *Bloomberg*, Clinton's visit to Israel may have had some 2012 presidential election implications. Bloomberg reports, "She was here two weeks before a scheduled visit by Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Netanyahu and Romney have known each other for years, having both worked as advisers at Boston Consulting Group in the 1970s." Romney is likely to have won some favor with Israel as a result of his recent interview with *Face the Nation*, in which he [commented](#),

I can assure you if I'm president, the Iranians will have no question but that I will be willing to take military action if necessary to prevent them from becoming a nuclear threat to the world. *I don't believe at this stage, therefore, if I'm president that we need to have a war powers approval or special authorization for military force. The president has that capacity now.* [Emphasis added.]

I understand that some in the Senate for instance have written letters to the president indicating you should know that a containment strategy is unacceptable. We cannot survive a course of action



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which would include a nuclear Iran; we must be willing to take any and all actions.

All those actions must be on the table.

But while Romney's remarks may have made him popular with Israeli officials, they provoked a great deal of criticism from constitutionalists in America, who understand that the Constitution clearly states that only Congress may declare war.

Photo of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: AP Images



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