



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 21, 2012

War With Iran Appears More Imminent

There has been ongoing speculation on the possibility of an Israeli-U.S. strike on Iran for quite some time. Publicly, the Obama administration has indicated that while military action was not off the table, it was also not the first choice of the administration. President Obama had hoped Israel would delay an attack on Iran until after the presidential election in November, but the Israeli government is apparently serious about attacking earlier.



“Israel is telling President Obama that unless there is a change of tack, Israel will go it alone. I do believe that [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is serious about this,” [Reuters quoted Ehud Yaari saying](#). Yaari is an Israeli-based fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

According to the Jerusalem-based intelligence website [DebkaFile](#), “the White House ... scrambled to reconnect with Jerusalem after the Obama administration was persuaded that Israel was serious about conducting a fall military operation against Iran’s nuclear program before the Nov. 6 US presidential election.”

“Obama and Netanyahu were discussing a one-on-one encounter on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session opening in New York on Sept. 18,” [DebkaFile](#) revealed. And discussions “handled by National Security Adviser Tom Donilon for the US president and senior adviser Ron Dermer for the prime minister” have moved forward.

[Reuters reports](#) that Netanyahu wishes to secure three commitments from the Obama administration: “a pledge that the United States will attack if Iran does not back down; a tight deadline for negotiations with Tehran, which have so far proved fruitless; and a further tightening of the sanctions noose.”

Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, along with the newly appointed Home Front Defense Minister, have reportedly made well-coordinated preparations for a war with Iran, and for the possible repercussions that would result.

Naturally, President Obama would prefer for such an endeavor to be postponed until after the elections, concerned that any decision on how to handle Iran, one way or another, could impact his chances for re-election.

But according to [DebkaFile](#), Israel has several major requirements that the Obama administration would need to meet for delaying an attack on Iran. [DebkaFile describes](#) those requirements as follows:

1. President Obama will formally inform the two houses of congress in writing that he plans to use military force to prevent Iran from arming itself with a nuclear weapon. He will request their endorsement....
2. To underscore his commitment, President Obama would pay a visit to Israel in the weeks leading up to election-day and deliver a speech to the Knesset solemnly pledging to use American military force against the Islamic republic if Tehran still refuses to give up its nuclear weapons program....



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3. In the coming months up until Spring 2013, the United States will upgrade Israel's military, intelligence and technological capabilities so that if President Obama (whether he is reelected or replaced by Mitt Romney) decides to back out of his commitment, Israel will by then be in command of the resources necessary for inflicting mortal damage on Iran's nuclear program with a unilateral strike....

4. If points 1-3 can be covered — and Netanyahu and Barak are convinced the US really means to strike Iran next spring — our Washington and Jerusalem sources report that Jerusalem may be coming around to agreeing to hold back a lone Israeli attack this autumn.

Those sources report that President Obama has not rejected the plan.

Israel is looking for more serious and straightforward rhetoric out of the Obama administration, an unnamed senior Israeli official [told Reuters](#). "Tehran doesn't see a U.S. strike on the horizon and is confident Washington will prevent Israel from attacking," the official was quoted saying. "So Israel is looking for stronger public statements from Obama, either at the U.N. General Assembly or some other forum, that would change Iran's assessment," he added.

Of course, if President Obama were in fact to agree to this plan and follow these steps, it would prove once more that the U.S. Congress plays virtually no role in the use of American military power, the U.S. Constitution very much including the congressional power to "declare war" notwithstanding.

According to Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey, there is [no truth](#) to the notion that the United States has committed to support an Israeli attack on Iran. He claims that he and his Israeli counterpart Benny Gantz "compare intelligence, we discuss regional implications. And we've admitted to each other that our clocks are turning at different rates."

"They are living with an existential concern that we are not living with," Dempsey added.

But the Obama administration has always made it clear that a military response to a nuclear Iran was considered a viable option.

When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Israel last month, she implied that the United States has not taken a military response to Iran off the table. "We all prefer a diplomatic resolution, and Iran's leaders still have the opportunity to make the right decision," Clinton told reporters in [Jerusalem](#). "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 echo similar sentiments articulated by President Obama. In March [Obama said](#) this of Iran: "I believe there is a window of time to solve this diplomatically, but that window is closing."

The same month, Obama made similar [statements](#) during a 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, the 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," Shapiro observed, adding, "But that does not mean that option isn't available. Not just available — it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready."

With an upcoming presidential election, Obama is finding himself in a difficult position. His Republican



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rival has indicated his willingness to go to war against Iran while falsely claiming that he would possess the “capacity” as president to make the decision. During an interview with *Face the Nation* in June, [Romney stated](#) this regarding his stance on Iran:

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. 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 which would include a nuclear Iran, and we must be willing to take any and all action. They must all — all those actions must be on the table.

It seems that the top two presidential candidates are more interested in launching another offensive war against a country that has not attacked us than in upholding the U.S. Constitution and its limitations.

Photo of President Obama: AP Images



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