



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on September 10, 2012

Romney Won't Rule Out Invading Iran

Asked if he would send U.S. ground troops into Iran to force Tehran to abandon its nuclear program, Mitt Romney didn't say yes and he didn't say no.

"What's your red line?" asked host David Gregory on Sunday's [Meet the Press](#). "You put troops on the ground to stop Iran from going nuclear or can you live with a nuclear Iran and contain it?"

"I don't think we live with a nuclear Iran," Romney said. "I think we make it very clear that a nuclear Iran is unacceptable to the United States of America, to civilized nations throughout the world. And that we will maintain every option that's available to us to keep that from happening."

The Republican nominee for president said the United States should continue efforts through diplomatic channels to persuade the Iranian government to shut down its nuclear facilities, while imposing more severe, "crippling" economic sanctions on the oil-rich nation.

"We need to use every resource we have to dissuade them from their nuclear path," Romney said. "But that doesn't mean that we would take off the table our military option. That's something which certainly every American would hope we would never have to use. But we have to maintain it on the table or Iran will, undoubtedly, continue their treacherous course."

While Iran insists that it is developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes, President Obama, nearly all the Republican candidates for president in this year's primaries, and various members of Congress have often spoken of keeping a military option "on the table," to be used if needed to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. But most of the speculation thus far has been about a possible air strike, most likely by Israel, on Iran's nuclear facilities. A commitment of ground forces by the United States and possibly other nations would likely set off a larger and more costly war than the nine-year war in Iraq. Iran is larger country than Iraq with a stronger military. Ali Fadavi, naval commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, [warned](#) last week that an attack by Israel would be regarded as an attack by the United States as well, and would trigger retaliation on Americans in the region.

"The Zionist regime separated from America has no meaning, and we must not recognize Israel as separate from America," said Fadavi, as quoted by the Fars News Agency in Iran. "On this basis, today only the Americans have taken a threatening stance towards the Islamic Republic," Fadavi said. "If the Americans commit the smallest folly they will not leave the region safely."

Iran has the ability to reach both Israel and U.S. bases with missiles bearing non-nuclear warheads. The Persian Gulf nation has upgraded weapons and conducted military exercises in recent months to demonstrate its readiness to defend against a strike on its nuclear sites, Reuters News Service [reported](#). A spokesman for the militant group Hezbollah, an ally of the Tehran regime, has also warned





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of Iranian retaliation should either the United States or Israel attack.

“Iran will not forgive a strike against its nuclear facilities,” Hassan Nasrallah said in an interview with the Beirut-based channel Al-Mayadeen. “The Zionist entity will not be the only target. American bases in the region will be targets, too.”

Romney and other Republicans have frequently charged that President Obama’s stand against Iran’s nuclear program is not tough enough. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said a nuclear-armed Iran would pose an “existential threat” to Israel and has warned that the window of opportunity for preventing that threat is closing. Economic sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western nations are not working, said Netanyahu, who has repeatedly prodded the United States toward more punitive action. The Obama administration has reportedly been privately urging restraint on Israel, but the White House recently denied a report in the Hebrew language newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* that the United States was offering Iran a promise to refrain from assisting Israel in a possible attack in exchange for an Iranian pledge not to attack U.S. targets if the Israelis do strike. No source was cited in the account of the alleged deal.

“The report is false and completely incorrect,” said White House spokesman Jay Carney, “and we don’t talk about hypotheticals.” Speaking recently to journalists in [London](#), Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed his reluctance to be part of any Israeli attack on Iran.

“I don’t want to be complicit if they choose to do it,” Dempsey said.

Photo: An Iranian Air Force MiG-29 fighter aircraft



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