Ahmadinejad: US and Israel plot wars within three months
DEBKAfile Special Report July 27, 2010, 2:23 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Ahmadinejad](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Ahmadinejad/)   [Obama](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Obama/)   [Two wars](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Two%20wars/) 



Muscle-flexing by accusing America

debkafile's Iranian sources quote President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying: "We have precise information that the Americans have devised a plot, according to which they seek to launch a psychological war on Iran. They plan to attack at least two countries in the region within the next three months," he said, without specifying which countries were the subjects of the alleged conspiracy, only hinting that America's senior military ally in the region, Israel, was directly involved.
Ahmadinejad spoke Monday night, July 26, in an interview restricted to the controlled Iranian media which make a point of stressing the late hour.

He said the plot had two objectives: "First of all, they (the Americans) want to hamper Iran's progress and development since they are opposed to our growth," he said and secondly, "They want to save the Zionist regime, because it has reached a dead end and the Zionists believe they can be saved through a military confrontation."
debkafile's Iranian sources note that Ahmadinejad deliberately avoided referring to his country's areas of "growth" which he charges the US of opposing, because it is non-existent. The economy is in rapid decline as every ordinary Iranian knows to his detriment, while UN, US and European sanctions have slowed drastically the only fields showing progress, oil and gas field and industrial development, leaving only the nuclear program and preparation of the military for war.

Our Iranian and intelligence sources attribute the Iranian president's reference to "precise information" to the intelligence which has also reached Saudi and Gulf governments of a decision reached in the White House to follow up sanctions - if Russia, China and Turkey help Tehran bypass them - by intensifying the squeeze on Iran with military steps. The first would be orders to the US Navy to search Iranian ships suspected of carrying cargoes prohibited by UN, US or European sanctions on routes through the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Sea.
Ahmadinejad's reference to two wars was his rejoinder to this intelligence and a signal to Washington that US searches of Iranian vessels would not go by without response. Two potential arenas are American forces in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea or even Iraq, or a Hizballah attack on Israel.

The Iranian president ended the interview with a warning to US President Barack Obama not to follow in the footsteps of George W. Bush by sending US troops to fight new Middle East wars.
He also had a piece of advice for Moscow: Not to play into Washington's hands and thereby hurt Russian interests. This was part of the sharp exchange passing back and forth between Ahmadinejad and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in the last 48 hours.
Monday, July 27, the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that Iranian criticism of the Russian President was unacceptable and fruitless, irresponsible rhetoric."

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**Ex-CIA chief Hayden: Military action against Iran "seems inexorable"**
DEBKA*file* Special Report *July 25, 2010, 10:41 PM (GMT+02:00)*



Former CIA Director Michael Hayden

Ex-CIA Director Michael Hayden said Sunday, July 25, that during his tenure (under President George W. Bush), a strike was "way down the list" of options. But now it "seems inexorable" because no matter what the US does diplomatically, Tehran keeps pushing ahead with its suspected nuclear program.
Talking to CNN's State of the Union, Gen. Hayden predicted Iran would build its program to the point where it's just below having an actual weapon. In his view, "That would be as destabilizing to the region as the real thing."
**debka*file***'s sources take this as affirmation that neither Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf states nor Israel will be willing to live on constant edge with an Iran which can build nuclear bombs or warheads whenever it likes. They note that Hayden has added his voice to a growing number of leading American figures and publications which have indicated in the past fortnight that the military option against Iran has climbed the top of President Barack Obama's list of priorities.
According to our Washington sources, the US president switched course after hearing Saudi King Abdullah assert explicitly: "We cannot live with a nuclear Iran."
Abdullah added he no longer believes diplomacy or sanctions will have any effect and made it clear that if the Americans continued to back away from direct action to terminate Iran's advance on a nuclear bomb, the Saudi and its allies would go their own way on the nuclear issue.
Today, therefore, the White House is no longer willing to countenance Iran's nuclear development advancing up to the threshold of a weapons capacity and stopping there.  And since Tehran will never cede its prerogative to determine every stage of its nuclear program without outside interference, the only option remaining to the United States is military.
(This radical change in the Obama administration's outlook was examined in depth in the latest **DEBKA-Net-Weekly** issue 454 published July 23.)
**debka*file***'s Washington sources add that the White House was finally brought to the point of seriously considering military action against Iran, as Gen. Hayden noted - not as a result of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's efforts at persuasion - which failed, but because of the Saudi ruler's ultimatum.
The Middle East can therefore expect far-reaching military shifts and redeployments in the coming weeks -but Israel is not likely to gain any kudos for this new development because it has lost considerable traction under the incumbent government.

An Attack on Iran: Back on the Table

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EmailPrint..By JOE KLEIN Joe Klein – Thu Jul 15, 3:30 am ET

In late 2006, George W. Bush met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon and asked if military action against Iran's nuclear program was feasible. The unanimous answer was no. Air strikes could take out some of Iran's nuclear facilities, but there was no way to eliminate all of them. Some of the nuclear labs were located in heavily populated areas; others were deep underground. And Iran's ability to strike back by unconventional means, especially through its Hizballah terrorist network, was formidable. The military option was never officially taken off the table. At least, that's what U.S. officials always said. But the emphasis was on the implausibility of a military strike. "Another war in the Middle East is the last thing we need," Secretary of Defense Robert Gates wrote in 2008. It would be "disastrous on a number of levels." (See pictures of President Bush in the Middle East.)

Gates is sounding more belligerent these days. "I don't think we're prepared to even talk about containing a nuclear Iran," he told Fox News on June 20. "We do not accept the idea of Iran having nuclear weapons." In fact, Gates was reflecting a new reality in the military and intelligence communities. Diplomacy and economic pressure remain the preferred means to force Iran to negotiate a nuclear deal, but there isn't much hope that's going to happen. "Will [sanctions] deter them from their ambitions with regards to nuclear capability?" CIA Director Leon Panetta told ABC News on June 27. "Probably not." So the military option is very much back on the table.

What has changed? "I started to rethink this last November," a recently retired U.S. official with extensive knowledge of the issue told me. "We offered the Iranians a really generous deal, which their negotiators accepted," he went on, referring to the offer to exchange Iran's 1.2 tons of low-enriched uranium (3.5% pure) for higher-enriched (20%) uranium for medical research and use. "When the leadership shot that down, I began to think, Well, we made the good-faith effort to engage. What do we do now?" (See pictures of terror in Tehran.)

Other intelligence sources say that the U.S. Army's Central Command, which is in charge of organizing military operations in the Middle East, has made some real progress in planning targeted air strikes - aided, in large part, by the vastly improved human-intelligence operations in the region. "There really wasn't a military option a year ago," an Israeli military source told me. "But they've gotten serious about the planning, and the option is real now." Israel has been brought into the planning process, I'm told, because U.S. officials are frightened by the possibility that the right-wing Netanyahu government might go rogue and try to whack the Iranians on its own. (Comment on this story.)

One other factor has brought the military option to a low boil: Iran's Sunni neighbors really want the U.S. to do it. When United Arab Emirates Ambassador Yousef al-Otaiba said on July 6 that he favored a military strike against Iran despite the economic and military consequences to his country, he was reflecting an increasingly adamant attitude in the region. Senior American officials who travel to the Gulf frequently say the Saudis, in particular, raise the issue with surprising ardor. Everyone from the Turks to the Egyptians to the Jordanians are threatening to go nuclear if Iran does. That is seen as a real problem in the most volatile region in the world: What happens, for example, if Saudi Arabia gets a bomb, and the deathless monarchy there is overthrown by Islamist radicals?

For the moment, the White House remains as skeptical as ever about a military strike. Most senior military leaders also believe Gates got it right the first time - even a targeted attack on Iran would be "disastrous on a number of levels." It would unify the Iranian people against the latest in a long series of foreign interventions. It would also unify much of the world - including countries like Russia and China that we've worked hard to cultivate - against a recowboyfied U.S. There would certainly be an Iranian reaction - in Iraq, in Afghanistan, by Lebanese Hizballah against Israel and by the Hizballah network against the U.S. and Saudi homelands. A catastrophic regional war is not impossible. (See who's who in Barack Obama's White House.)

Of course, it is also possible that this low-key saber-rattling is simply a message the U.S. is trying to send the Iranians: it's time to deal. There have been rumblings from Tehran about resuming negotiations, although the regime has very little credibility right now. The assumption - shared even by some of Iran's former friends, like the Russians - is that any Iranian offer to talk is really an offer to stall. A specific, plausible Iranian concession may be needed to get the process back on track. But it is also possible that the saber-rattling is not a bluff, that the U.S. really won't tolerate a nuclear Iran and is prepared to do something awful to stop it.



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Despite all diplomatic efforts the US has undertaken to dissuade Israel from striking Iranian nuclear facilities, the attack now seems virtually inevitable.

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In light of Israel’s recent military preparations, it can only be a matter of when.

The recent visit of Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Jerusalem only proved Israel is determined to act, taking “no option” off the table regarding Iran’s nuclear program.

*“This is our position. We mean it,”* Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said, pointing out at the same time that the current priority should be diplomacy.

When it comes to the US mediating role, diplomats appear to have used up their tools.



An Iranian long-range Shahab-3 missile is fired in desert terrain at an unspecified location in Iran (AFP Photo / Shaiegan / Fars News)

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**Israel can withstand Iranian missile strike - experts**

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A leading Israeli missile expert said this week that the damage Iranian missiles are capable of causing Israel is limited, whereas Israel is capable of setting back Iran’s nuclear program by several years.

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Prof. Yitzhak Ben Yisrael, a retired general who headed the army’s weapons development branch, said that Iran at present had several hundred operational Shahab-3 missiles which can hit Israel, 1,300 kilometers distant.

Addressing a conference at Israel’s Institute for National Security Studies, he said that no more than about 80 Shahabs were likely to penetrate Israel’s anti-missile defenses, which are also being buttressed by American missile defense systems.

In the 1991 Gulf War, he noted, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel, most of them at Tel Aviv. Some 3,300 apartments were damaged or destroyed, but only one person was killed. In part, the low casualty figure was because residents were in shelters and in part because many had left to small towns or places like Jerusalem, which Saddam was considered unlikely to hit because of Islamic holy places, and which he did not in fact hit.

The Iranian Shahabs, said Ben Yisrael, have the same size warheads as the Iraqi Scuds. If the damage caused by Iranian missiles with conventional warheads would thus be twice the damage caused by the Iraqi Scuds it would be unpleasant but sustainable, he said.

In order to guard against the warheads becoming nuclear, he suggested, Israel might feel the need to attack Iran’s nuclear installations. *“We have the capacity to hit them and to delay their program by several years,”* he said. For this, Ben Yisrael believes that Israel needs only to damage several key facilities, not the entire nuclear network. The question, he said, was whether the international community would utilize the time thus gained to good purpose. If not, he said, Israel could strike again in the future, but he expressed the hope that other solutions could be found.

The military scientist, who is currently chairman of the Israel Space Agency, said that the Iranians are likely to respond to an Israeli attack by striking at Israeli and Jewish targets around the world. *"It would not be much different,”* he said, than the attacks in Buenos Aires in the 1990s against the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center that Iran is accused of carrying out. More immediately, he said, the Iranians would unleash Hezbollah, which would resume firing rockets into Israel as it did in 2006, when it fired more than 4,000 in a month-long war. *“We can do much to shorten the war next time,”* he said.

That point was elaborated on at the conference by Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland, a former head of the Israeli National Security Council. Given Hezbollah’s overt participation in the Lebanese government, he said, the next time its military wing attacks, Israel will consider itself at war not with Hezbollah but with Lebanon. *“It will be a war between the state of Israel and the state of Lebanon. It won’t happen again that they’re sitting in cafes in Beirut while we’re in shelters in Haifa.”* Israel for the most part spared Lebanon’s national infrastructure in the 2006 conflict, and in Beirut attacked only the Hezbollah quarter.

Although Israel has dropped broad hints in recent years that it would attack Iran if its nuclear program is not halted, these threats have subsided since President Barack Obama came to office and announced his intention to seek a dialogue with Tehran. Given the lack of substantive progress in negotiations, Washington has been threatening an imminent tightening of sanctions against Iran. The Tel Aviv daily Ha’aretz reported Thursday that Obama told Chinese President Hu Jintao during their talk in Beijing last month that the US would not be able much longer to keep Israel from attacking Iran’s nuclear installations. His statement was reportedly part of his efforts to persuade China to support strict sanctions against Tehran. The newspaper cited Israeli officials who were briefed by American counterparts as the source.

*By Abraham Rabinovich*

How to save the Obama presidency - bomb Iran

BY DANIEL PIPES
02/02/2010 23:50

President needs dramatic gesture to change perception of him as lightweight ideologue.

Talkbacks (52)

I do not customarily offer advice to a president whose election I opposed, whose goals I fear and whose policies I work against. But here is a way for Barack Obama to salvage his tottering administration by taking a step that protects the US and its allies.

If Obama’s personality, identity and celebrity captivated a majority of the American electorate in 2008, those qualities proved ruefully deficient in 2009. He failed to deliver on employment and health care, he failed in foreign policy forays small (e.g., landing the 2016 Olympics) and large (relations with China and Japan). His counterterrorism record barely passes the laugh test.

This poor performance has caused an unprecedented collapse in the polls and the loss of three major by-elections, culminating two weeks ago in an astonishing senatorial defeat in Massachusetts. Obama’s attempts to “reset” his presidency will likely fail if he focuses on economics, where he is just one of many players.

He needs a dramatic gesture to change the public perception of him as a lightweight, bumbling ideologue, preferably in an arena where the stakes are high, where he can take charge and where he can trump expectations.

Such an opportunity does exist: Obama can order the US military to destroy Iran’s nuclear weapons capacity.

Circumstances are propitious. First, US intelligence agencies have reversed the preposterous 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that claimed with “high confidence” that Teheran had “halted its nuclear weapons program.” No one (other than the Iranian rulers and their agents) denies that the regime is rushing headlong to build a nuclear arsenal.

Second, if the apocalyptic-minded leaders in Teheran get the Bomb, they render the Middle East yet more volatile and dangerous. They might deploy these weapons in the region, leading to massive death and destruction. Or they could launch an electromagnetic pulse attack on the US, devastating the country. By eliminating the Iranian nuclear threat, Obama protects the homeland and sends a message to America’s friends and enemies.

THIRD, POLLING shows long-standing American backing for an attack on the Iranian nuclear infrastructure.

• A *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll in January 2006 found that 57% of Americans favored military intervention if Teheran pursues a program that could enable it to build nuclear arms.

• A Zogby International poll in October 2007 found that 52% of likely voters supported a US military strike to prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon; 29% opposed such a step.

• McLaughlin & Associates in May 2009 asked whether people would support “using the [US] military to attack and destroy the facilities in Iran which are necessary to produce a nuclear weapon”; 58% of 600 likely voters supported the use of force and 30% opposed it.

• *Fox News* in September 2009 asked: “Do you support or oppose the United States taking military action to keep Iran from getting nuclear weapons?” Sixty-one percent of 900 registered voters supported military action and 28% opposed it.

• Pew Research Center in October 2009 asked which is more important, “to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action” or “to avoid a military conflict with Iran, even if it means they may develop nuclear weapons”;  of 1,500 respondents, 61% favored the first reply and 24% the second.

Not only does a strong majority – 57%, 52%, 58%, 61% and 61% – already favor using force, but after a strike Americans will presumably rally around the flag, pushing that number much higher.

Fourth, were the US strike limited to taking out Iran’s nuclear facilities, and not aspiring to regime change, it would require few “boots on the ground” and entail relatively few casualties, making an attack politically more palatable.

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Just as 9/11 caused voters to forget George W. Bush’s meandering early months, a strike on the Iranian facilities would dispatch Obama’s feckless first year down the memory hole and transform the domestic political scene. It would sideline health care, prompt Republicans to work with Democrats, make netroots squeal, independents reconsider and conservatives swoon.

But the chance to do good and do well is fleeting. As the Iranians improve their defenses and approach weaponization, the window of opportunity is closing. The time to act is now or, on Obama’s watch, the world will soon become a much more dangerous place.

*The writer (*[*www.DanielPipes.org*](http://www.danielpipes.org/)*) is director of the Middle East Forum and Taube distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University.*

China urges patience in Iran talks, Russia warns Teheran

ByASSOCIATED PRESS
05/02/2010 19:36

Chinese FM calls on all parties concerned to "adopt more flexible policy;" Lavrov: UN Security Council will discuss Iranian nuclear program if Iran fails to diplomatically resolve issue.

Talkbacks (1)

China's foreign minister on Friday urged the world to be patient and keep up diplomatic efforts with Iran to try and find a solution to Teheran's nuclear ambitions.

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told a gathering of the world's top defense officials that negotiations with Iran's government have "entered a crucial stage" and called for another round of talks involving the UN Security Council and Germany with the hope that a "mutually acceptable proposal" can be reached with Teheran.

"The parties concerned should, with the overall and long-term interests in mind, step up diplomatic efforts, stay patient and adopt a more flexible, pragmatic and proactive policy," the Chinese diplomat said. "The purpose is to seek a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution through dialogue and negotiations."

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The comments at the Munich Security Conference came after Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki decided to join the meeting at the last minute. It was not clear whether Mottaki would attend the entire three-day conference, but he was scheduled to hold late-night discussions with Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad earlier this week suggested he would at last agree to export a significant amount of uranium for processing. The UN is considering a fourth round of sanctions against the country for failing to rein in its nuclear ambitions.

Iran's moves appeared timed in part to defuse pressure by the US, Britain and France for more sanctions against Iran. UN Security Council members China and Russia are not convinced.

In Berlin on Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle — both of whom are attending the Munich conference — said Iran must answer remaining questions about the nature of its nuclear program.

They stressed that they remained ready to continue negotiations toward a diplomatic solution. Westerwelle warned, however, that the international community's patience was "not infinite."
“For the past two years, Iran has repeatedly bluffed and played tricks … it has played for time,” Westerwelle said in a radio interview reported by Reuters, stressing that “we in the international community cannot accept a nuclear-armed Iran.”

Lavrov said he planned to meet Mottaki in Munich and urge him to submit information on Iran's nuclear program to the IAEA.

"Under certain circumstances, if there is no other possible solution, then we will have to discuss it in the Security Council," Lavrov told reporters.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton made it clear that the Obama administration's position has not changed.

She said the Iranian government has been unclear in its intentions regarding the possibility of accepting international urgings to negotiate on the nuclear matter.

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"The fact is we haven't really seen much in the way of response" from Iran, she told reporters in Washington. "Sometimes we see response from a part of the government that is then retracted from another part of the government."

She reiterated that the focus is now on sanctions.

"We have, in good faith, engaged in diplomacy with the Iranians," she said. "We've always had a two-track process, and we think it is important that we move now toward looking at what pressure, what sanctions, can be brought to bear on the Iranians. We're going to continue to reach out to all of our colleagues in this effort, including, of course, China."

*JPost.com staff contributed to this report.*

Analysis: Iranian quickstep: 1 step forward, 2 steps back

By JONATHAN SPYER
04/02/2010 03:10

Latest Ahmadinejad statement suggests that Teheran still believes it can find a few partners for the dance it has been performing since 2003.

Talkbacks (1)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad this week told Iranian state television that “we have no problem sending our enriched uranium abroad.”

In so doing, Ahmadinejad appeared to agree to the long-standing plan for the export of the greater part of Iran’s enriched uranium stocks.

Recent experience with the diplomatic methods of the Islamic Republic of Iran suggests that this statement is the latest instance of Teheran’s favored approach to diplomacy.  The Iranian tendency is to seek to offset confrontation at the 11th hour by appearing to show flexibility. Once crisis is averted, the regime relies on differences over the details to make sure that nothing actually happens. It is the diplomacy of one step forward, two steps back. Thus is further time bought for the Iranian nuclear program.

The hitherto seemingly inexhaustible international patience at Iranian maneuvering, meanwhile, has recently been showing signs of at last wearing thin. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is the latest convert to the cause of renewed sanctions. Brown said on Tuesday that “What we now, I think, have to do is accept that if Iran will not make some indication that it will take action – we have got to proceed with sanctions.”

It remains to be seen if the latest Iranian move will revive the spirits of the advocates of “engagement.” Ahmadinejad’s statement relates to the IAEA proposal that Iran should ship its low-enriched uranium abroad, where it would be converted into fuel rods for an Iranian research reactor producing medical isotopes.

The purpose of the IAEA proposal was to call Iran’s bluff. Iran has long claimed that its nuclear program is for purely peaceful purposes. Very well, then, said the IAEA – let other countries take charge of converting Iranian low-grade uranium into material fit only for domestic use. Of course, this proposal depends on the assumption that the Iranians have been entirely honest in revealing all their supplies of enriched uranium. If they have not, and if a substantial amount remains outside of the purview of international observers, then the exercise becomes meaningless. Still, let us assume in this regard that the Islamic Republic of Iran’s well-known tendency toward honesty and transparency has prevailed, and that as such the proposal to export a large percentage of Iran’s known supplies of low enriched uranium is not entirely devoid of content.

In considering the seriousness or otherwise of Ahmadinejad’s statement, it is worth looking back to October last year, when the export proposal was first tabled. The apparent Iranian flexibility at that time came two weeks after the revelation of a secret uranium enrichment plant in the town of Qom on September 21. At the time, there was international excitement as Iranian representatives in Geneva agreed “in principle” with the proposal for the export of uranium. It was agreed that the details would be worked out at a subsequent meeting in Vienna.

That was on October 2. At the meeting in Vienna on October 19, the proposal was further clarified. A draft proposal was formulated. At the end of that month, Iran began to retreat from its apparent acceptance of the proposal.  On November 18, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki unambiguously rejected it in the following terms: “Definitely, Iran will not send its 3.5 percent-enriched fuel out.”

The tentative December “deadline” came and went. On January 20, Iran confirmed that it rejected the export proposal as formulated in Vienna.

In other words, a skeptic might conclude, the international anger resulting from the Qom revelation made a bit of momentary cooperation from Iran advisable. Once the moment had passed, normal service could be resumed. The Iranian parliament and Guardian Council a week ago approved an Ahmadinejad endorsed bill to cut food and energy subsidies. The move, while significantly reducing government spending, stands to sharply increase prices and possibly lead to rising inflation. Political unrest is ongoing in Iran, and the regime is reported to be unnerved by the failure of its initial attempts at repression to douse the flame.

At such a moment, the last thing the regime needs is renewed sanctions. It is therefore an opportune moment for the reappearance of the reasonable Teheran of last October – to kick the ball down the road again for another few months.

Will the “international community” play ball?   There are currently indications of a hardening US stance. A bill to target Iranian fuel imports is working its way through Congress. New sanctions may be discussed at the Security Council later this month. In the absence of renewed UNSC sanctions, the administration may set about trying to build a “coalition of the willing” for further moves against Iran.

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But it is deeply questionable if any of this will prove sufficient to stop the Iranian nuclear drive.

In the meantime, the latest statement by the Iranian president suggests that Teheran still believes it can find a few partners for the dance it has been performing since 2003: one step forward, two steps back – all the way to a nuclear Iran.

*The writer is senior researcher at the Global Research in International Affairs Center, IDC, Herzliya.*

 이란, 신형 미사일 생산공장 가동

이란이 6일 신형 미사일 생산공장 2곳에 대한 개장식을 열고 본격적인 생산에 들어갔다고 이란 국영TV가 보도했다.

아마드 바히디 이란 국방장관이 참석한 가운데 열린 이들 공장의 개장식은 이달 말로 다가온 이란의 이슬람혁명 31주년 기념행사 중 하나로 마련됐다.

이들 공장에서는 '카엠(떠오름)'으로 명명된 헬리콥터 요격용 지대공 미사일과 '투판(폭풍) 5호' 지대지 미사일이 생산된다.

특히 투판 5호는 2개의 탄두가 장착돼 있어 탱크와 장갑차 등을 제압하는데 위력을 발휘할 것이라고 국영TV는 전했다.

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| Amid push on Iran, U.S. seems keen for Israel to show restraint  |
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| The head of the U.S. armed forces said he was concerned about the unintended consequences of a military strike on Iran's nuclear program. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen said after arriving in Israel on Sunday that American policy on the matter is clear: "Iran must not acquire nuclear capability." However, Mullen also said that if a regional confrontation were to break out following a strike on Iran, it "will be a big, big, big problem for all of us, and I worry a great deal about the unintended consequences of a strike."

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In a fairly unusual step, Mullen held a short press conference at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. He then met with the Israel's military leadership, including Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi. Mullen appeared keen to relay a public message to Israel: The U.S. is leading the international effort to levy harsh sanctions on Tehran, so Israel must exercise complete restraint. In June 2008, when Mullen was last here, circumstances were similar: Then-president George Bush and his administration also interpreted Israeli statements as meaning that the country intended to attack Iran. Mullen was dispatched by the Bush administration in order to clarify that Israel cannot do this. Mullen was asked Sunday about the red lines the Obama administration set for Iran's nuclear program. He refused to offer a detailed response, but said, "President Barack Obama was very clear that from a policy standpoint, Iran cannot have nuclear weapons." He added that he still hoped a solution could be found through diplomacy and sanctions, and that there would not be a regional war. "We haven't taken off any option from the table," he said. While the military option had not been discounted, "it's pretty hard to be specific." He reiterated the assessment that unless Iran's nuclear program was halted, Tehran could have its first nuclear bomb within one to three years. Mullen expressed concern at the behavior of the Iranian leadership and said it had a destabilizing influence on the region. He cited as cause for concern Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent statement that Iran could step up uranium enrichment, and added that the country was linked to Hezbollah, Hamas and the instability in Yemen, and played a role in Afghanistan. Stressing America was committed to Israel's security, he commended the countries' close defense and security ties, and their stabilizing effect on the region. The admiral also noted that the U.S. has taken steps to protect several countries in the region from Iranian threats, and mentioned that Patriot air defense missiles had been deployed in the United Arab Emirates. Mullen added that all measures are defensive. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in Qatar that Iran is leaving the international community little choice but to exact a heavy price from Tehran over its provocative actions.  |  |
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| Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. (AP)  |
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| Sanctions alone won't stop Iran's nuclear work  |
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| By Emily Landau  |
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| Without genuine U.S. determination, there is no chance of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.  |
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| Iran raised the extent of its defiance of the world when it began enriching uranium to a level approaching 20 percent. In the West, there is wide agreement that this step is bringing Iran closer to having a nuclear bomb. And as with every instance in which Iran takes such a step, or when information is revealed regarding the military nature of its nuclear program, the world is easily shocked and the call goes out for more decisive action. In practice, however, these are just hollow words. U.S. President Barack Obama took office against the backdrop of intensified disclosure of military nuclear activities in Iran. At the end of September, when the enrichment facility that was built near the Iranian city of Qom was disclosed, Obama enlisted support from French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. He expressed his insistence that the situation was serious, and that if Iran did not alter its path there would be consequences. But there weren't. A

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nd in October, when the deal to enrich uranium outside Iran was presented, Tehran was initially given a two-week extension and was then given until the end of the year. American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that the United States would not wait forever. In the meantime, however, the U.S. is waiting. The end of the year, the deadline that Obama set for evaluating diplomatic progress on Iran, also came and went. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that nothing has been accomplished, and it has been clear that the essential next step will involve imposing sanctions. In January, however, with China in the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council, it was said that it was necessary to wait until February, when France would assume the post. February has arrived, but the Chinese are still opposed to sanctions and the Iranians are enriching their uranium to a higher level. Obama's response is that he has had it and the time has come for sanctions and immediately - which means within a few weeks, perhaps by the end of March. In March, however, Gabon will assume the presidency of the Security Council, and it is not certain that Iran is at the top of its agenda. And there are still the problems with the Chinese. And if we assume that ultimately there will be sanctions, so what? The involvement with sanctions, who's for and who's against, when, why and to what extent, deflects from the primary problem - the absence of an American strategy for tough negotiations with Iran. Even more serious, however, is that there are worrying signs that the Obama administration is beginning to resign itself not only to the fact that Iran will continue to enrich uranium, but also to recognition that the Islamic republic could ultimately build a nuclear bomb. When you begin to reconcile with a specific reality, you stop trying to change it. And then we hear more about the need to deter and contain Iran than about stopping it, about a nuclear umbrella for America's allies in the Persian Gulf instead of a firm negotiating strategy against Iran. And sanctions alone won't stop Iran. The role of sanctions and other pressure, such as credible military threats, is to convince Iran that time is not on its side and it would be better to seriously negotiate with the West. Only then will the diplomatic work of American-Iranian negotiations begin, with a goal of an arrangement that would eliminate the Iranian nuclear threat. There is no sign that the Obama administration intends to mobilize the necessary political muscle to lead such a process. An additional decision on ineffective sanctions will apparently satisfy the U.S. So, we tried. The weakness that Obama is showing toward Iran has implications for America's global leadership role. Israel must speak to the Americans about this, and instead of focusing on sanctions, should try to determine if and how the U.S. intends to lead a comprehensive process leading to a solution. Without genuine American determination, there is no prospect of preventing the Iranians from developing nuclear weapons. The writer is a senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies, where she is also director of the Arms Control and Regional Security Project.  |  |

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| White House refuses to rule out military option on Iran  |
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| By Barak Ravid, Haaretz Correspondent and Haaretz Service  |
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| U.S., Russia and France warn UN that Iran is 'escalating' nuclear standoff.  |
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| The White House on Tuesday would not rule out any options, including the military option, for dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said: "I wouldn't rule out anything." He said Iran's rejection of every attempt by the Obama administration for diplomatic engagement is proof that its nuclear program is "not of the means and type that they have tried to convince others that's it's for."

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Israel also continues to avoid ruling out a strike on Iran. Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Ganbriella Shalev, said in Washington on Tuesday: "It's one of the bad options - we don't think it's as bad as Iran having nuclear weapon. It's one of the options and all the options are on the table." She added: "For us it's an existential threat. Iran is training and equipping Hizballah and Hamas. They are not even smuggling weapons - they are transferring them." Gibbs' statement comes after the U.S., Russia and France sent a joint warning to the United Nations that Iran was escalating its standoff with the international community over uranium enrichment. The three powers' letter to the UN nuclear watchdog was a response to Iran's launch last week of higher-grade enrichment - raising suspicions of a quest for atomic bomb capability - on grounds that world powers were imposing unpalatable terms for the deal. "(This) is wholly unjustified ... If Iran goes forward with this escalation, it would raise new concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions," the letter said. It said the plan for Iran to swap enriched uranium for nuclear medicine fuel had legal assurances it would be fulfilled, contrary to Iran's assertions. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday that any country which tried to impose new sanctions on Iran would regret its actions, adding talks were still going on over a proposed nuclear fuel swap. He was speaking a day after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on a Gulf tour sought backing from oil giant Saudi Arabia to help win Chinese support for additional sanctions. "Of course, if somebody acts against Iran our response will definitely be firm enough ... [to] make them regretful," Ahmadinejad told a televised news conference, without elaborating. "Sanctions will not harm Iran," he said. Russia urged Iran earlier Tuesday to allay growing international fears over its contentious nuclear program and declared that while the West should be cautious over imposing harsh sanctions, such measures could not be excluded. The Kremlin's remarks came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Moscow to shore up Russian support for new steps against Iran. For his part, Netanyahu on Tuesday called for "paralyzing sanctions" against Iran's energy sector, Interfax news agency reported. Russia has generally resisted calls for increased sanctions, but officials are showing rising frustration with Iran's resistance to cooperation with the international community over its nuclear program. "The position of Russia regarding sanctions remains unchanged, said a spokewoman for Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. "[But] if Iran remains uncooperative, no one can exclude the use of sanctions." Netanyahu told his Greek counterpart George Papandreou in an impromptu meeting in Moscow on Monday evening that if Iran managed to develop nuclear weapons, the rest of the Muslim world would follow suit. According to an official traveling with the prime minister, Netanyahu told Papandreou that he was concerned Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia would soon begin their own attempts to develop a nuclear weapon should Iran accomplish its own goal. **Iran willing to consider 'new nuclear offers' from West** Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday that talks were still under way over the West's proposal for a nuclear fuel swap and the issue was "not yet closed." "There are some talks under way over the nuclear fuel swap," he told a televised news conference, without giving details. "The case is not yet closed ... we have already announced that we are ready for a fuel exchange within a fair framework." He added: "We are still ready for an exchange, even with America." Ahmadinejad's order last week to start production of higher-grade uranium, rather than agree to the UN-brokered fuel swap proposal, exposes Tehran to new calls for UN sanctions from Western powers. "We didn't have any plan to produce it internally because it was a low amount of fuel and it was not economical," Ahmadinejad said. "But ... we found that there is no goodwill in this regard and we told them that if they don't provide us [with the fuel] in due time we would start work inside [Iran]." "And even now, if they provide us with the necessary fuel the conditions will be changed," Ahmadinejad said. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said earlier Tuesday, after meeting his Turkish counterpart that Tehran was prepared to consider any new ideas on a proposed nuclear fuel swap with major powers. Washington and its allies fear Iran wants to acquire nuclear weapons, and are lobbying for new United Nations sanctions, but Tehran says its aims are purely peaceful. Mottaki described the talks with Davutoglu as consultations, rather than any mediation between Tehran and the world powers involved in efforts to resolve the nuclear row diplomatically. "We have informed our Turkish friends about the latest developments on Iran's peaceful nuclear case," Mottaki told a joint news conference with Davutoglu. Ahmadinejad's order last week to start production of higher-grade uranium, rather than agree to the UN-brokered fuel swap proposal, exposes Tehran to new calls for UN sanctions from Western powers. Mottaki, echoing comments by Iran's nuclear agency chief on Monday, said the United States, France and Russia had submitted a new letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]. The letter contained a new proposal, Mottaki said. "While we are continuing our [nuclear] activities we will consider any new idea or proposal, either given directly or indirectly via the agency [IAEA]," he said, giving no details. The United States denied on Monday that it had made new proposals along with France and Russia on the nuclear fuel swap, and said "the door remains open" for Tehran to accept the proposal offered in October.  |  |

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“이란 사정권” 이스라엘, 보잉737 크기 새 무인항공기 공개

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이스라엘 공군이 적대적 관계인 이란까지 날아가 작전을 수행한 후 귀환 할 수 있는 신형 무인항공기(UAV)를 21일 외국언론에 공개했다.

히브리어로 강하다는 뜻인 ‘에이탄(Eitan)’이라는 이름을 가진 신기종은 20시간 이상 연속비행이 가능해 이란 영해 페르시아만에서도 작전을 벌일 수 있다. 또 해발 약 1만 2000m 높이까지 올라갈 수 있다.

지상에서 조종하는 이 무인정찰기는 동체 길이 24m, 날개 길이 26m, 무게 4.5t으로 크기가 보잉737여객기와 비슷하며 이스라엘이 보유한 무인정찰기 중 가장 크다.

익명을 요구한 한 이스라엘 공군 관계자는 “주요 임무는 정보수집이지만 아직 밝힐 수 없는 다른 몇 가지 임무도 담당하게 될 것”이라고 밝혔다.

이와 관련해 AP등 외신은 레이더와 고성능 카메라, 지도 제작장치 등 최첨단 전자장치가 장착돼 앞으로 중동지역에서 적군에 대한 감시와 도청, 지상군과의 통신, 화물 운반 등의 임무를 담당하는 것은 물론 필요시 다양한 미사일을 적재할 수 있다고 전했다.

이스라엘군은‘에이탄’이 이란을 겨냥해 만든 것이라고 명시하지는 않았다. 하지만 이스라엘이 이란의 핵무기 개발 저지를 위해 필요할 경우 군사적 공격도 불사하겠다는 입장을 밝힌 후 양국간 전쟁 가능성도 제기되고 있다.

이스라엘은 1982년 레바논 침공 때 세계 최초로 무인 비행기를 본격적으로 실전 투입했다.

최근 무인 항공기를 가장 애용하는 국가는 미국. 특히 아프가니스탄과 파키스탄에서 군사작전을 펼치며 무인항공기를 폭넓게 활용하고 있다.

로이터·동아닷컴 특약=박해식 동아닷컴 기자 pistols@donga.com

Iran Approaches Nuclear "Breakout"

DEBKA-Net-Weekly #431 January 29, 2010

Tags: US-Iran nuclear bomb Israel

 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Obama's engagement strategy against Tehran's nuclear armament has failed. From February, Tehran will be able to build a nuclear device if it so chooses. Israeli must decide by May whether or not to take up its military option for knocking out Iran's nuclear installations.

[**Arab Islamist and terror chiefs called to Tehran for anti-Israel war planning**](http://www.debka.com/article/8611)
DEBKAfile Exclusive Report February 25, 2010, 11:21 AM (GMT+02:00)
Tags:  [Iran](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Iran/)   [terrorist chiefs](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/terrorist%20chiefs/)   [war conference](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/war%20conference/) 



Iran will chop off the hands of attackers

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has summoned allied Islamist and terrorist chiefs to Tehran Saturday, Feb. 27, to finalize their roles in military operations against Israel in the event of a Middle East conflagration. It will be the sequel to the preliminary discussions Ahmadinejad held in Damascus with Syrian president Bashar Assad and Hizballah and Hamas chiefs Thursday, Feb. 25.

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Who will blink first in Iran's nuclear poker game?

By Aluf Benn

Tags: Benjamin Netanyahu

"Do not strike" is what the Americans are telling Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Let's first try sanctions on Iran."

"Do not strike" is what Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is saying to Netanyahu. "If you go crazy and go to war, it will be the end of the Zionist regime."

Netanyahu managed to convince the world that Israel is on the verge of a preemptive war to try to foil Iran's nuclear program. His speeches on a second Holocaust and Amalek, the acceleration of military preparations, the exercises on the Home Front, the distribution of gas masks and even the stockpiling of dollars by the Bank of Israel all suggest that Israel is preparing to strike Iran, as it did when it attacked the nuclear plants in Iraq and Syria.

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The preparations for war give Israel unprecedented international significance. U.S. President Barack Obama, who kept his distance at the beginning of his tenure, is now airlifting senior officials to ask Netanyahu to hold back. When he wanted to deal with the Palestinian problem, Obama made do with a retiree without authority in the form of George Mitchell.

It turns out that the Israeli threat to spark a regional war is bothering the administration a lot more than the occupation and the West Bank settlements. Not only are the politicians troubled, representatives of global investment firms are curious to know "when they will attack," as a way of gambling on oil prices. It turns out that Israel's economic significance is buried in its ability to cause trouble - not in high tech, start-ups or the Bamba snacks the Israelis pride themselves in.

Netanyahu will certainly argue that his assertive stance is what convinced Obama to take a tougher line on Iran. But the prime minister's approach is risky: What will happen if diplomacy and sanctions fail, as they are expected to, and Ahmadinejad continues on his nuclear path? Will Netanyahu then be able to pull back from his heated statements and announce that the Iranian threat is not so bad? Or has he already burned the bridge for a withdrawal and will have to go to war?

Netanyahu is playing poker and hiding his most important card: the Israel Defense Forces' true capabilities to destroy Iran's nuclear installations. If he attacks, he is risking a war of attrition in which Tel Aviv will be hit by missiles and Ben-Gurion International Airport will be closed. And the longer the violence continues, the more international firms will leave the country; the talented and wealthy will abandon it, too.

Netanyahu sees the same danger, but from the other side. He believes that if Iran goes nuclear, the elites and high tech will leave and the economy will be destroyed, so an Iranian bomb must be prevented.

Ahmadinejad is also playing poker, and in recent weeks he upped the ante when he posed the destruction of the Zionist regime not merely as a religious-ideological ambition, but as a practical goal. Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who is functioning as a super-adviser to Netanyahu for national security affairs, said in response that "the clock for the Iranian regime's downfall is ticking."

Israel and Iran are gambling that only one of them will survive the confrontation. Is this threat serious? History suggests it is. In the Six-Day War and the War of Attrition, Israel defeated Nasserism, which, like Ahmadinejad today, preached the wiping of Israel off the map of the Middle East. The price was high and cost Israel the Yom Kippur War, but the Arabs became convinced that the Jewish state is not a passing phenomenon.

The third player, Obama, holds the weakest hand. This is so because of domestic political weakness and because he can't seriously threaten Ahmadinejad or Netanyahu. Obama doesn't want to attack Iran himself and will find it hard to restrain Israel at the moment of truth.

What will he do? Will he turn off the American early warning radar in the Negev and announce that there will be no airlift and no diplomatic support, and as far as he's concerned Tel Aviv can burn because Israel acted against his advice? It's hard to imagine that Obama will abandon Israel to its fate. He can only complain and signal to Netanyahu that American support is not guaranteed for any Israeli action.

Before war breaks out - if indeed it does - the real hands the leaders are holding will not be seen. But in the meantime the stakes are constantly rising with the expectations that one of the players will recognize his weakness, blink and leave the table.

US ponders denying Israel arms needed for conflict with Iran

DEBKAfile Exclusive Report March 13, 2010, 9:53 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags: Israel Obama US arms for Israel

 Ehud Barak meets Robert Gates in D.C.

Prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu convened his inner cabinet Saturday night, March 12, to discuss the spiraling crisis with Washington and his first response.

debkafile's military and Washington sources report: The Obama administration is considering withholding from Israel military items urgently needed in case of a flare-up of hostilities with Iran and its allies. This would further ratchet up the row over the added 1,600 homes in ...

[Clinton warns Netanyahu US-Israeli relations at risk](http://www.debka.com/article/8647)
DEBKAfile Special Report
March 12, 2010, 11:39 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Hillary Clinton](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Hillary%20Clinton/)   [Jewish housing in E. Jerusalem](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Jewish%20housing%20in%20E.%20Jerusalem/)   [Joe Biden](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Joe%20Biden/)   [Netanyahu](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Netanyahu/) 



Hillary Clinton

The crisis in US-Israeli relations took a sharp turn for the worse Friday night, March 12, with a phone call from US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warning Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu that the relationship was at risk. debkafile reports: He was given to understand that Israel must make sweeping concessions to prove its interest in renewed talks with the Palestinians, including in Jerusalem, and accept the Obama administration's line on Iran.

...

 US researchers postulate Israeli tactical nuclear strike on Iran
DEBKAfile Special Report March 28, 2010, 11:30 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Israel](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Israel/)   [US](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/US/)   [Iran nuclear](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Iran%20nuclear/) 



Tactical Nuclear Weapon

Scenarios of a potential Israeli attack on Iran - usually without Washington's assent - abound in leading US media in the last 24 hours. They contrast sharply with the impression Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu has been trying to convey to the public that he and President Barack Obama were of one mind on the Iranian question when they talked at the White House last Tuesday, March 23, but  the president wanted more Israeli concessions to get talks restarted with the Palestinians.
debkafile's military sources point in particular to the work of two eminent experts on Iran's nuclear program, Anthony Cordesman and American-Jordanian Abdullah Toqan for the Washington Institute for Strategic Affairs, who report the belief in some American military circles that "…nuclear weapons are the only weapons that can destroy targets deep underground or in tunnels…"
The quote was embodied in a 208-page report published Friday, March 26 under the heading: Options in Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program.

They explain that because of the limited scale of its air and missile forces, Israel would resort to "using these [nuclear] warheads as a substitute for conventional weapons, given the difficulty its jets would face in reaching Iran for anything more than a one-off sortie."
Our sources note that in July 2009, the two researchers (in a 114-page report) maintained that the Israeli Air Force possessed the aircraft and resources for striking Iran's nuclear facilities. This view disputed the estimates generally current Washington at the time. Then, too, Cordesman and Toqan were of the opinion that it was not necessary to hit scores of targets to cripple Iran's nuclear bomb program: Seven to nine sites would suffice.
Our Iranian sources report that Tehran ran off thousands of copies of that report for distribution among its intelligence and Revolutionary Guards commanders, who were told to study every word, photo and map. Iran's rulers took the work as seriously as though they had scooped a top-secret Israeli plan of operation.

In their latest work, the two researchers find that ""Ballistic missiles or submarine-launched cruise missiles [such as those with which Israeli Dolphin submarines are armed] could serve for Israeli tactical nuclear strikes without interference from Iranian air defenses."
Saturday, March 27, the day after the Cordesman-Toqan paper was published, The New York Times revealed:
"… international inspectors and Western intelligence agencies say they suspect that Tehran is preparing to build [two] more sites," six months after its secret enrichment plant was discovered in Qom.

The report goes on to say:  "The most compelling circumstantial evidence… is that while Iran appears to be making new equipment to enrich uranium, that equipment is not showing up in the main plant that inspectors visit regularly [at Natanz or at Qom.]"
Small manufacturing factories spread around Iran to avoid detection and sabotage "are a particular target of American, Israeli and European intelligence agencies," some of which have been penetrated," the report says.  Iran "has encountered difficulties in manufacturing centrifuges, the machines that spin at very high speeds to enrich uranium."

Then, Sunday, March 28, The New York Times followed up with proposed scenario, captioned: "Imagining an Israeli Strike on Iran," based on a simulation exercise conducted last December by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Its main point is that if Israel goes ahead with this attack, using a refueling base set up in the Saudi desert without Saudi knowledge, Washington will essentially tell its leaders they have "made a mess," and instruct them "to sit in a corner while the United States tries to clean things up."
The exercise does not indicate how the US will clean things up, whether diplomatically or militarily - or both - or just concentrate on keeping the Gulf oil nations safe from Iranian retaliation.
Iran next defies warnings and fires missiles at Israel, including its nuclear center at Dimona, with minimal damage and casualties - the strategy being "to mount low-level attacks on Israel while portraying the United States as a paper tiger…"

debkafile's sources infer from this simulated war game that the Americans believe that, aside from the confrontation over Iran's nuclear facilities, Israel and Iran will try and use their conflict to manipulate US policy.

The next stage would be for Hizballah to fire up to 100 rockets a day into northern Israel, following which Israel would launch a 48-hour campaign by air and special forces against Lebanon to destroy Hizbalah's military strength.
The games simulators then predict an Iranian attack on the Saudi oil industry center at Dahran with conventional missiles, mining the Strait of Hormuz and damaging US oil shipping.
At that point, Washington will embark on a massive reinforcement of the Gulf region. It is clear that the US will then aim at destroying all Iranian, air, ground and sea targets in and around the Strait of Hormuz to inflict a "significant defeat" on Iran's forces.
The game is projected to end eight days after the initial Israeli strike.

**ME game-changer: US nuclear shield for Saudis, Gulf emirates**
DEBKA*file* Exclusive Analysis *April 1, 2010, 11:13 AM (GMT+02:00)*

Tags:  [Trident](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Trident/)   [US-Saudi Arabia](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/US-Saudi%20Arabia/) 



US nuclear-capable Trident ballistic missile

The US test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic Trident missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads from Saudi territory during a joint military exercise last week, a Western military official reported late Wednesday, March 31.

A US defense spokesman denied the Trident's launch, Wednesday, April 1, but Saudi security sources stand by the report.
**debka*file***'s military sources report this was the first time in Middle East military history that a nuclear-capable missile was fired from the oil kingdom toward the Persian Gulf and Iranian shores. It came in response to Saudi and Gulf Arab concerns over America's failure to halt Iran's evolving nuclear weapon program.
DEBKA-Net-Weekly out Friday will discuss the strategic aspects of this game-changer for Iran and Israel. To subscribe to **DEBKA-Net-Weekly**, ***c***[***lick here***](http://www.debka.com/weekly/subscribe/)

The official did not reveal the location of the test, the type of submarine used, whether it was successful - or even the scale of US and Saudi strength taking part in the joint exercise. Our sources report they must have been American since Saudi Arabia does not have the units or radar systems for operating multiple-headed ballistic missiles.
Regardless of the location - Saudi waters off the Red Sea or its Persian Gulf bases - the drill would have brought the Trident close to the Iranian coastline, either on the Persian Gulf or Arabian Sea.

This demonstration by the Obama administration aimed at showing Saudi and Gulf Arab rulers they are now protected by an American nuclear umbrella against an Iranian nuclear attack.
Monday, March 29, Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khaled bin Sultan said Saudi and U.S. warplanes will carry out joint air exercises soon.

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| Fighting Iranian fire with fire  |
| http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/images/0.gif |
| By Yossi Melman  |
| http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/images/0.gif |
| **Tags:** [Mossad](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/tags/index.jhtml?tag=Mossad), [Iran nuclear](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/tags/index.jhtml?tag=Iran+nuclear) http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/images/tags/tag_arrow1.gif  |
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| Prof. Anthony H. Cordesman is considered a leading strategic expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. A few days ago he and another scholar, Abdullah Toukan, published a new study entitled "Options in Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program." This is a study over 200 pages in length, which discusses Iran's nuclear program, the way the Iranian nuclear threat is perceived by the United States, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel, and possible reactions of each of these states. The study concludes that, "if all peaceful options have been exhausted and Iran has left no other means to convince it to stop or change its course in pursuing nuclear weapons, the U.S. is the only country that can launch a successful military strike." But the report also examines the military options of the other players, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and surveys their military power. The chapter dealing with Israel discusses two possible scenarios: One is an Israeli attack with conventional weapons by planes, and by the launching of Jericho ground-to-ground missiles, ballistic missiles and missiles launched from Dolphin submarines. Another scenario is using nuclear warheads to attack deeply buried nuclear facilities in Iran. According to the report, "Some believe that nuclear weapons are the only weapons that can destroy targets deep underground or in tunnels," the way some of the Iranian nuclear sites were constructed (for example, the uranium enrichment facilities at Natanz and Qom). One could have expected a prestigious scholar like Cordesman to be more thorough and serious in this case, and not to use the journalistic jargon "some believe," or that he would at least present another opinion that states exactly the opposite. In a Reuters story, Princeton University physicist Robert Nelson assailed the idea that tactical nuclear weapons, detonated below ground, would pose tolerable risks for civilians and the environment. "This is a dangerous myth. In fact, shallow buried nuclear explosions produce far more local fallout than air or surface explosions of the same yield," he argued.

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But most important, Cordesman does not even discuss the question of whether there is even the slightest chance that Israel's leaders would consider ordering the use of nuclear weapons, which the entire world believes and assumes Israel has, for the purpose of an attack. On this issue he pays lip service by saying that "it is very unlikely that any U.S. president would authorize the use of such nuclear weapons, or even allow any other country, even a strong ally such as Israel, to use them [nuclear weapons]." That's all. And even if a president were to allow Israel to use nuclear weapons, would such use would be made of them? Apparently, even for a highly regarded scholar, the urge to be sensational and to examine all the options, even those that are most clearly groundless, is unconquerable. It should have been firmly stated that Israel is developing a large inventory of nuclear weapons only for the purposes of deterrence and defense, and perhaps as "doomsday" weapons as in Samson's famous last words, "Let me die with the Philistines" when there is a clear and present danger of its being destroyed. An Israel that uses nuclear weapons for an attack will cease to exist as a nation among the nations of the world. **Another stain** British MPs from all the parliamentary factions are demanding tighter supervision over the sales of arms to Israel. A report by the committee on strategic export controls states that Israel used British equipment during Operation Cast Lead, in contravention of agreements and of its promises. The report, parts of which were published this week in The Guardian Weekly, joins previous incidents that are causing tension in the relations between the two countries. The most important of them is Britain's decision to expel the Mossad representative in London in response to the use allegedly made by the Mossad of passports belonging to British citizens in the Mahmoud Mahbouh assassination. Another contribution to besmirching Israel's name, although certainly not as powerful or extensive, was that of arms dealer Gideon Sarig. About two weeks ago a London court sentenced Sarig to nine years in prison for illegal arms dealing with Israel. The news was published in the British media and later in the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, but did not receive proper attention in Israel. According to the indictment, Sarig, 58, and his British partner were arms brokers who mediated in arms deals without receiving an export license, as required by British law. The indictment claimed that Sarig purchased about 400 shotguns in Turkey and sold them to Israel. Few details are known about Sarig, who lived in Maida Vale in northwest London. He studied at Tichon Hadash high school in Tel Aviv, and upon completing his military service in the Israel Defense Forces studied economics and insurance and tried his hand at a few businesses. Over 20 years ago he emigrated to England. He had relatively few business dealings with Israel, according to a friend. He brokered several weapons export deals for Israel Military Industries (Taas), and sold civilian equipment to Ispra of Herzliya. In addition to the illegal commerce with Israel, Sarig and his partner were convicted of smuggling arms to Venezuela, Peru, Senegal, Nigeria, Gabon and mainly Sri Lanka. From 2005-2006, at the height of the bloody civil war with the Tamil Tiger rebels, Sarig and his partner sold Uzi submachine guns to the Sri Lankan government, as well as bombs from Ukraine and about 4,000 armor-piercing 30 mm. shells. Sarig's partner in arms smuggling was Howard Freckleton of north London. The two denied the allegations against them, but the jury did not believe them and convicted them unanimously. A Defense Ministry spokesperson said in response that they had received no request from the British authorities to assist in the investigation. The ministry also claims that they know nothing about any transaction in which Sarig and Israeli companies were involved. In any case, they emphasize that Sarig's name is familiar to them only because his father was a deputy director general at the Defense Ministry in the 1950s and 1960s.  |  |
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**Iran's bomb-making plutonium facilities close to completion**
DEBKA*file* Special Report *April 10, 2010, 10:51 PM (GMT+02:00)*

Tags:  [Iran nuclear](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Iran%20nuclear/)   [plutonium](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/plutonium/)   [Bushehr](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Bushehr/)   [Arak](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Arak/) 



Arak heavy water reactor nearly finished

Iran had plenty to celebrate on its National Nuclear Day Friday, April 9. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad unveiled the new "third generation" centrifuge which he claimed was capable of six times the speed of the machines in current use in Natanz and there and then proclaimed Iran a nuclear power.
He had three more reasons to crow:
1. Iran's first atomic reactor at the southern town of Bushehr began its main and final test at high temperatures after eight months of test runs. If all the components of the Russian-built 1000-megawatt plant work smoothly, the reactor will finally go into full operation in June or in August at the latest after years of delays.
Mahmoud Jafari, who heads the project, said all parts are working well and there is no reason why the plant should not start producing electricity before the end of this year. On March 18, Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin also said Bushehr would go on stream this summer.
**debka*file***'s military sources report that the spent fuel rods from this reactor will soon be providing Iran with an easy and plentiful source of weapons-grade plutonium.

2. So too will the Arak heavy water plant which Iran has been building secretly southeast of Tehran in violation of its Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations. Work there was discovered this week to have advanced by leaps and bounds and brought the project close to completion, against all estimates that the reactor would not be ready before 2015.
Our military and intelligence sources note that Arak and Boushehr will combine to provide Iran with the large quantities of plutonium for nuclear warheads. This fissile material has advantages over enriched uranium in its accessibility from heavy water and light water reactors, its smaller size for a nuclear explosion, and its use in smaller and lighter nuclear warheads for delivery by smaller missiles.
A former IAEA official, John Carlson, once warned that large light water reactors "of the sort Iran is building at Bushehr can produce 330 kilograms of near-weapons grade plutonium - enough to make more than 50 crude nuclear bombs." The process of separating plutonium from spent fuel "employs technology little more advanced," he said, "than that required for producing dairy products or pouring concrete."
3.  Jafari also announced on the occasion of National Nuclear Day that Iran had uncovered in the central province of Yazd large new deposits of uranium ore plentiful enough to make Iran independent of foreign imports for both its military and civilian needs.
**debka*file***'s political sources add: These three breakthroughs on Iran's road to a nuclear weapon are radical enough to put Tehran in the driving seat in negotiations with the 5+1 Group (five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) over its illicit production of enriched uranium and their offer to process it outside Iran as a compromise gesture.
Iran has shown the world it no longer needs outside help for reprocessing uranium up to the critical 20 percent level, which is a short jump to weapons grade and the fissile core of a nuclear bomb. Tehran has made good use of every second allowed by the US-led world powers' lame efforts to dissuade it from its nuclear goals by means of partly-effective sanctions, attractive incentives and diplomatic engagement, a policy which gained momentum after Barack Obama became US president.
Even this week, he was still telling Tehran that the door to diplomacy still stood open.

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| Medvedev: An Israeli strike on Iran could cause a global catastrophe  |
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| An Israeli strike of Iran's nuclear facilities could spark a nuclear conflict, which could spiral to a global catastrophe, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told ABC on Monday, adding that he supported what he called "smart" sanctions on Tehran as part of attempt to make it abandon its nuclear program. The Russian president is in the United States for a 47-nation nuclear summit convened by U.S. President Barack Obama aimed at thwarting nuclear terrorism, and which may also center on a U.S.-back attempt to hit Iran with new nuclear sanctions. Russia and China remain two important missing links in Obama's drive to sanction Iran over its nuclear program.

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Referring to the possibility that Israel may attack Iran if negotiations over its contentious nuclear programs fail, Medvedev told Good Morning America that "it would be the worst possible scenario," adding that "war means lives lost." The Russian president also tried to estimate the meaning of what he sees as a war in the Middle East erupting as a result of such a move on Israel's side, saying "everyone is so close over there that nobody would be unaffected. And if conflict of that kind happens, and a strike is performed, then you can expect anything, including use of nuclear weapons." "And nuclear strikes in the Middle East, this means a global catastrophe. Many deaths," Medvedev said. On the subject of imitating new sanctions against Iran geared at forcing it to abandon its nuclear program, the Russian president said that "it's not whether it's a good thought or bad thought, I'm talking about something else." "The sanctions is a tricky thing which works seldomly. You yourself were busy with politics, and you know that sanctions is not without conditions," Medvedev said, adding but sometimes you have to do that." "What kind of sanctions? We have spoken about that with President Obama yesterday. Sanctions should be effective and they should be smart," the Russian President said. "They should not lead to humanitarian catastrophe, and the whole Iranian community would start to hate the whole world. And we're worried that there are a significant number of people which have radical opinions. Do we want that radical thought to be sent to the whole world?," Medvedev said. However, the Russian president did not rule sanctions altogether, saying that they "should be smart." "They should force or obligate the Iranian leadership to think about what's next. What could sanctions be? It could be trade, arms trade. It could be other sanctions," Medvedev said, adding that "sanctions should let the country understand that all who impose sanctions have the same opinion." Medvedev said that any new sanctions "should not be paralyzing. They should not cause suffering. Aren't we in the 21st century? That's why if we're going to develop our cooperation in this direction we have a chance to succeed. Better would be to go without sanctions and achieve things politically. Earlier Monday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned Obama's nuclear summit, calling it humiliating to humanity. U.S. President Barack Obama is hosting the summit, which is focused on preventing nuclear terrorism but where world leaders are also set to discuss his push for new sanctions against Iran's atomic program. "World summits being organized these days are intended to humiliate human beings," Ahmadinejad told delegates at a domestic tourism industry event, according to IRNA news agency. Iran was not invited to the summit, which is being attended by leaders of China and Russia whose consent will be required to impose new sanctions which Obama wants agreed in the coming weeks. Ahmadinejad had harsh words for politicians who claimed to represent the international community: "These foolish people who are in charge are like stupid, retarded people who brandish their swords whenever they face shortcomings, without realizing that the time for this type of thing is over." Iran has said it will complain to the United Nations about what it sees as Obama's implied threat to attack it with nuclear weapons. Addressing the United States, Ahmadinejad said: "Your gift to the world is a nuclear bomb while Iran presents ... humanity." Iran says sanctions will not force it to stop its pursuit of nuclear technology which it says is entirely peaceful. The West fears it is seeking to gain nuclear weapons.  |  |
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**Tehran: If Iran is attacked, nuclear devices will go off in American cities**
DEBKA*file* Special Report *April 13, 2010, 6:53 PM (GMT+02:00)*

Tags:  [Barack Obama](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Barack%20Obama/)   [Iran nuclear](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Iran%20nuclear/) 



Iran threatens US with nuclear terror

This warning, along with an announcement that Iran would join the world's nuclear club within a month, raised the pitch of Iranian anti-US rhetoric to a new high Tuesday, April 13, as 47 world leaders gathered in Washington for President Barack Obama's Nuclear Security Summit. The statement published by Kayhan said: "If the US strikes Iran with nuclear weapons, there are elements which will respond with nuclear blasts in the centers of America's main cities." For the first time, **debka*file***'s military sources report, Tehran indicated the possibility of passing nuclear devices to terrorists capable of striking inside the United States.
Without specifying whether those elements would be Iranian or others, Tehran aimed at the heart of the Nuclear Security Summit by threatening US cities with nuclear terror.
**debka*file***'s Iranians sources report that Tehran is playing brinkmanship to demonstrate that the Washington summit, from which Iran and North Korea were excluded, failed before it began, because terrorist elements capable of striking inside the US had already acquired nuclear devices for that purpose.
Although Iran has yet to attain operational nuclear arms, our military sources believe it does possess the makings of primitive nuclear devices or "dirty bombs."

In an interview ahead of the summit, President Obama warned: "If there was ever a detonation in New York City, or London, or Johannesburg, the ramifications... would be devastating."
In another shot at the summit, Behzad Soltani, deputy director of Iran's Atomic Commission, announced Tuesday: "Iran will join the world nuclear club within a month in a bid to deter possible attacks on the country." He added: "No country would even think about attacking Iran once it is in the club."

The Iranian official's boast was run by the Fars news agency, published by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps.

Behzadi further pointed to the construction of 360 MW nuclear power plant and a 40 MW research reactor in Iran's central city of Arak, claiming the projects were 70 percent complete.
This plant is generally believed to have been built to enable Iran to produce weapons-grade plutonium as an alternative weapons fuel to highly-enriched uranium and material for radioactive weapons.
Sunday, April 11, **debka*file*** reported that Iran is making much better progress than Western and Israeli intelligence estimates have held toward completing the Arak heavy water reactor.
[Click here](http://www.debka.com/article/8710/)
Along with the strides made in its nuclear manufacturing capacity, Tehran's anti-US rhetoric has grown more strident in the past week. Thursday, April 8, Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Maj.Gen. Hassan Firouzabadi said if the United States made any military moves on the Islamic Republic "none of the American troops in the region would go back home alive."
**debka*file***'s military sources report the presence of app. 220,000 US soldiers in the countries around Iran, including Gulf bases and waters, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iranian general was reacting to US defense secretary Robert Gates' warning that Washington's policy decision to limit the use of nuclear arms if attacked did not apply to Iran and North Korea.

Ahmadinejad: Iran is Obama's way to stay in power
DEBKAfile Special Report April 16, 2010, 7:41 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Ahmadinejad](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Ahmadinejad/)   [Obama](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Obama/) 



Another provocative offer

With typical provocative arrogance, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said in a letter addressed to the US president that Barack Obama's power and success depends on Iran. Disclosing this Friday, April 16, the Iranian leader promised to publish the letter soon. "Obama should start cooperating with us in practice," he said. "We don't need you to do anything for us to come out of isolation, rather we want to help you come out of isolation."

On the US push for sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, he wrote: "The time when they can imagine they can do Iran any harm is over."  The US cannot dominate the Middle East without Iran, he added. "The nuclear issue veils America's real intentions."

debkafile's Iranian sources reveal that the Iranian president's comment on the veil over America's real intentions refers to the Obama administration's behind-the-scenes contacts with Iran in which they are engaged in drawing the dividing lines of influence between the US and Iran in the Middle East and Persian Gulf. This is going on behind Obama's strong public condemnations of Tehran.
The discreet dialogue surfaced in the Iranian leader's avowed willingness to cooperate with Obama, hinting at an arrangement acknowledging Iran's supremacy as the regional power at Israel's expense.
Israeli leaders have failed so far to initiate assertive steps to counter-balance this unspoken process.
Ahmadinejad is clearly encouraged by the anti-Israeli rhetoric he hears from President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the way administration officials link the Netanyahu government's policies towards the Palestinians with the loss of American lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.
debkafile's Middle East sources stress that US-Iranian cooperation is already well in progress in Beirut, where Tehran's surrogate, Hizballah, has been co-opted to government and parliament with veto powers over their decisions; in Yemen, where Iran withdrew its backing from the Houthi rebels in a deal brokered by Syria; and in Baghdad, where Iyad Allawi, whose Al Iraqiya part won the general elections, was left no choice but to travel to Tehran to obtain Iran's blessing for his government coalition.
While still militarily present in Iraq, Washington has come to terms with the fact that even a pro-western Iraqi ruler who won office in a US-sponsored election cannot form a stable government without presenting himself cap in hand in Tehran.
Ahmadinejad is clearly willing to expand this profitable "cooperation" with the Obama administration to other Middle East spheres and so avoid a showdown over Iran's nuclear aspirations.
Where does this leave Israel?

Who will pre-empt whom?
DEBKAfile DEBKA-Net-Weekly April 29, 2010, 10:48 AM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Barack Obama](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Barack%20Obama/)   [US-Iran](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/US-Iran/) 



What next after failed sanctions?

The US and Iran are racing ahead towards their next moves in case sanctions fail to deter Iran from building a nuclear bomb. DEBKA-Net-Weekly's coming issue out this Friday opens a window on President Barack Obama's new Iranian policy and Iran's plans to loose its allies against Israel in August - or sooner.
Don't miss our detailed analysis of the buildup for a Middle East war this summer and its prospects.

[**Abbas asks China to support Iran sanctions as Palestinians would die in ME war**](http://www.debka.com/article/8754)
DEBKAfile Exclusive Report May 1, 2010, 11:16 AM (GMT+02:00)
Tags:  [Hu Jantao](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Hu%20Jantao/)   [Mahmoud Abbas](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Mahmoud%20Abbas/)   [US-Iran](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/US-Iran/) 



Abbas welcomed by Hu Jintao

Chinese president Hu Jintao was taken by surprise by the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas's plea to support tough sanctions against Iran's nuclear program when they met in Shanghai Saturday, May 1, debkafile's Middle East sources reveal. A Middle East war, a real peril in the absence of sanctions, would cost the lives of many Palestinians who would be caught in the middle.
Abbas said he spoke for most Arab rulers.

Iranian teams train on S-300 interceptors at Russian bases
DEBKAfile Exclusive Report May 19, 2010, 5:39 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Iran nuclear](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Iran%20nuclear/)   [Russian S-300](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Russian%20S-300/) 



S-300 effective against air or missile attack

While joining the US in backing a softened UN Security Council sanctions package against Iran, Tuesday, May 18, Moscow is reported by debkafile's military sources as surreptitiously training Iranian Revolutionary Guards crews at Russian bases to operate the advanced S-300 interceptor-missile systems, which are capable of fending off a potential US or Israel attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

UN sources disclose that the new sanctions motion - in its present diluted form - does not expressly forbid the consignment of this weapon to Iran.
Moscow is withholding them from Tehran for now, keeping the promise prime minister Vladimir Putin gave President Barack Obama. But if and when the weapons are delivered, Iran will have trained crews ready to operate them.
In their push to develop military ties with Iran and its allies, the Russians earlier this month also agreed to sell Syria MiG-29 fighter jets, Pantsyr short-range air defense systems and armored vehicles in a major arms transaction.
Washington and Jerusalem have known about the presence of IRGC S-300 missile crews at Russian training bases since early May. But when Israeli president Shimon Peres raised the issue during his talks with President Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow on May 9, he was told sharply that neither Israel nor any other government is entitled to tell Russia to whom it may give military assistance.
And when US diplomats in New York and Moscow were instructed to ask their opposite numbers whether the training program augured the shipment of the interceptors to Iran, notwithstanding Putin's promise, they were greeted with deafening silence.
On May 11, the White House was worried enough to send the president's nuclear adviser to tell reporters: "The United States has made clear to Russia that delivering a promised advance air defense system to Iran would have serious implications on US-Russian relations."
This was the sternest admonition for Moscow to be heard ever from an Obama spokesman. This time, the Russians responded with equal abrasiveness. Foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, who was with President Medvedev in Ankara at the time, shot back: Moscow needs "no advice from across the ocean" about the sale of the S-300.
These less-than-diplomatic exchanges aside, the fact remains that Moscow's consent to start training Iranian missile crews has strengthened Tehran's hopes of the interceptors' early delivery. The Iranians are even more encouraged by the success of the Russian-Chinese bid to delete from the UN sanctions draft any substantial expansion of the standing international arms embargo that might apply to the sophisticated S-300 anti-missile, anti-air system.

Syria has 1,000 ballistic missiles zeroed on Israeli targets
DEBKAfile Exclusive Report May 26, 2010, 12:16 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags:  [Hizballah](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Hizballah/)   [Israel](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Israel/)   [Syrian missiles](http://www.debka.com/search/tag/Syrian%20missiles/) 



Scud-D smuggled to Hizballah by Syria

A colossal Iran-funded and directed armament program has enabled Syria to field 1,000 ballistic missiles and Hizballah 1,000 rockets - all pointed at specific Israeli military and civilian locations, including the densely populated conurbation around Tel Aviv, debkafile's military sources reveal. Syria has smuggled most of its stock of liquid-fuel powered ballistic missiles over to Hizballah in Lebanon, while its own production lines have been working day and night for five months to upgrade its stock solid fuel-propelled missiles, so improving their accuracy. North Korean military engineers and technicians are employed on those production lines.

According to Western military sources, a command center for coordinating a missile offensive against military and civilian targets in Israel has been operating at Syrian general staff headquarters in Damascus since early March with the help of Iranian, Syrian, Hizballah and Hamas liaison officers.

The command center, operating under direct Iranian command, was formally established at a gala banquet attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Syrian President Bashar Assad, and Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Damascus on February 25.  Its primary mission was defined as "target unification" - military lingo for interaction at the command level to make sure that Tehran, Damascus, Beirut and Gaza do not send short-range missiles flying toward the same Israeli target at the same time.
Each of the four has been assigned one of four Israeli sectors and given specialist training in its features.

The new joint command gave Hizballah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah the confidence to sneer at Israel's five-day, countrywide home front missile defense exercise, which ends Thursday, May 27.

In a speech on Tuesday, May 25, he said: 'Israel wants to reassure its people and make them feel strong and properly prepared to stand up to all possible war situations. But this assurance is false. So carry on with your drills," he said, "but when the rockets start falling on the occupied territories, we'll soon see how much good they are."
The command center's central strategy, say our military sources, is to eliminate the Israel Air Force's edge by releasing a simultaneous deluge of missiles and rockets from hundreds of stationary and mobile launching sites in remote parts of Syria, Lebanon, Iran and the Gaza Strip.
Most of the projectiles in the Syrian, Hizballah and Hamas arsenals are propelled by liquid fuel and therefore take 50 minutes to 1 hour to load and loose at assigned targets. During this time gap, they are vulnerable to air attack. As a bridging device, western intelligence sources believe the joint command in Damascus plans to attack Israel with synchronized missile fire from Iran and Syria during the time Israeli warplanes are hammering, say, Hizballah batteries in Lebanon.
The thinking in Tehran and Damascus is that the Israeli Air Force will find it hard to tackle three or four fronts simultaneously.

Tehran and Damascus are therefore building air shields around their missile bases and launching sites, for which purpose Assad asked Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to speed up the delivery of the advanced Russian Pantsir anti-aircraft missiles when the latter visited Damascus on May.
Medvedev promised to accede to this request.

debkafile's military sources recall that the same Russian Pantsir missiles were ineffective in preventing the September 2007 air strike, by which Israel destroyed the North Korean plutonium reactor financed by Tehran at Al-Azur in northern Syria.

Iran on war alert over "US and Israeli concentrations" in Azerbaijan

DEBKAfile Exclusive Report June 23, 2010, 1:23 PM (GMT+02:00)Tags: Azerbaijan Iranian war preparations US-Israel

 Iran's land forces on the readyIn a rare move, Iran has declared a state of war on its northwestern border, debkafile's military and Iranian sources report. Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps men and equipment units are being massed in the Caspian Sea region against what Tehran claims are US and Israeli forces concentrated on army and air bases in Azerbaijan ready to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

The announcement came on Tuesday, June 22 from Brig.-Gen Mehdi Moini of the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), commander of the forces tasked with "repelling" this American-Israeli offensive. He said: "The mobilization is due to the presence of American and Israeli forces on the western border," adding, "Reinforcements are being dispatched to West Azerbaijan Province because some western countries are fueling ethnic conflicts to destabilize the situation in the region."

In the past, Iranian officials have spoken of US and Israel attacks in general terms. debkafile's Iranian sources note that this is the first time that a specific location was mentioned and large reinforcements dispatched to give the threat substance.

Other Iranian sources report that in the last few days, Israel has secretly transferred a large number of bomber jets to bases in Azerbaijan, via Georgia, and that American special forces are also concentrated in Azerbaijan in preparation for a strike.

No comment has come from Azerbaijan about any of these reports. Iranian Azerbaijan, the destination of the Revolutionary Guards forces reinforcements, borders on Turkey, Iraq and Armenia. Witnesses say long IRGC convoys of tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft units and infantry are seen heading up the main highways to Azerbaijan and then further north to the Caspian Sea.

On Tuesday, June 22, Dr. Uzi Arad, head of Israel's National Security Council and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's closest adviser, said "The latest round of UN Security Council sanctions on Iran is inadequate for thwarting its nuclear progress. A preemptive military strike might eventually be necessary."

debkafile's intelligence and Iranian sources point to three other developments as setting off Iran's war alert:

1. A certain (limited) reinforcement of American and Israeli forces has taken place in Azerbaijan. Neither Washington nor Jerusalem has ever acknowledged a military presence in this country that borders on Iran, but Western intelligence sources say that both keep a wary eye on the goings-on inside Iran from electronic surveillance bases in that country.

2. Iran feels moved to respond to certain US steps: The arrival of the USS Harry S. Truman Strike Group in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea and its war games with France and Israel, which included live-fire bombing practices against targets in Iran.

3. The execution of Abdolmalek Rigi, head of the Sunni Baluchi rebel organization (including the Iranian Baluchis), on June 20 was intended as a deterrent for Iran's other minorities. Instead, they are more restive than ever. Several Azeri breakaway movements operate in Iranian Azerbaijan in combination with their brethren across the border. Tehran decided a substantial buildup in the province would serve as a timely measure against possible upheavals.