



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 18, 2012

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Says U.S. Ready for Attack on Iran

According to U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro, the United States is now [fully prepared](#) for a military strike on Iran. Unbeknownst to Shapiro, his remarks were recorded and aired on Israeli television on Wednesday night, though the comments were not meant to be heard by the general public.

"It would be preferable to resolve this diplomatically, and through the use of pressure, than to use military force," Shapiro observed, adding:



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

We believe that there is some time — not an unlimited amount of time. In practice, this is a brief window in which we can still use diplomacy to achieve our goals. At a certain stage we are going to have to decide whether diplomacy isn't going to work. We want to give it every chance of succeeding.

The *Times of Israel* [notes](#) that the preparations for the military strike are in conjunction with joint military exercises between the United States and Israel:

The exercises, to be held in the coming months, will strengthen the relationship between the IAF [Israeli Air Force] and the US Air Force as they practice carrying out joint operations. Israeli and US air defense forces are also to take part in a major joint drill later this summer in Israel to simulate a massive attack. Thousands of US soldiers are expected to arrive in Israel for the drills.

Those exercises allegedly have nothing to do with the increasing tensions between Israel and Iran, but rather are "part of a routine training cycle designed to improve the interoperability of our air defense systems, and [are] not in response to any real-world event," explained U.S. European Command spokesman, Air Force Captain John Ross. "It's a classified exercise, and we can't release even small details about it," he added.

The drills, originally scheduled in April, were postponed by President Obama. [CounterPunch.org explains](#):

U.S. participation in such an exercise, obviously geared to a scenario involving an Iranian retaliation against an Israeli attack on its nuclear facilities, would have made the United States out to be a partner of Israel in any war that would follow an Israeli attack on Iran.

Obama and U.S. military leaders apparently decided that the United States could not participate in such an exercise so long as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refused to give the administration any assurance that he will not attack Iran without prior approval from Washington.

The United States and Israel reportedly had been discussing the best approach to Iran and had some



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disagreements on the subject. Washington contends that Iran will become a threat only once it has begun enriching high-grade uranium. But Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak believes that an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities may be necessitated prior to enrichment because of Iran's move into an "immunity zone" — a point where its facilities may be protected.

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

But by March, Netanyahu and the United States had come to an agreement. *Israel Insider* reported, "The US will supply Israel with bunker-busting bombs and refueling planes in return for delaying a strike against Iran until at least the end of the year."

There were reportedly a number of other reasons that Israel agreed to holding off on such an attack, however.

Seattle-based political blogger [Richard Silverstein](#) noted:

A senior Likud politician told my confidential Israeli source that Bibi Netanyahu has decided to delay an Israeli attack on Iran until some weeks or possibly months before the next scheduled Israeli election. That will happen by October 2013 unless Bibi determines he wants to go to the nation earlier.

Likewise, according to senior correspondent Amir Oren of Israel's daily newspaper *Haaretz*, Israel delayed its plans to launch an attack on Iran due to unexpected results of a war simulation. During that simulation, experts discovered that Iran would be able to retaliate with a single missile strike that had the ability to kill 200 Americans. [Oren](#) observed,

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

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

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

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador Shapiro's remarks come just days before nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+ countries — the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China and Germany. But while some analysts believe that Iran is likely to make some concessions during the meetings, there has been no indication that Iran will allow the discussions to affect its nuclear program. And according to Israel, unless Iran shuts down its nuclear program altogether and stops enriching, the sanctions and diplomacy have failed.

But not everyone believes a military strike against Iran would be effective. Wednesday's *Wall Street Journal* carried an op-ed co-authored by former Mossad chief Meir Dagan with international intelligence officials and former diplomats, which defends using sanctions against Iran over a military strike. They wrote:



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It's common sense that before undertaking military action against a country, we should first try to dissuade it from its current course by applying decisive economic pressure. Doing so will show the regime that the world is serious and committed, willing to do whatever it takes to stop Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Photo: Israel's President Shimon Peres, right, raises a toast with newly appointed U.S. ambassador to Israel, Daniel Shapiro, on Aug. 3, 2011: AP Images



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