



## War with Iran Seems More and More Likely

Some critics have alleged that the Obama administration has been covertly preparing for war against Iran for some time now. There is perhaps no better proof of this than a statement made by President Obama on Sunday that suggested that the time to handle a nuclear Iran diplomatically is closing. "I believe there is a window of time to solve this diplomatically, but that window is closing," Obama told reporters.



Obama made similar saber-rattling [statements](#) one week ago during a press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron, warning that the opportunity for a diplomatic solution was "shrinking." At that time, Obama warned Tehran to use the opportunity to engage in diplomatic talks with world leaders in order to avoid "even worse consequences."

While Obama did declare during that press conference that there was still "time and space" for a diplomatic solution rather than a military strike, he stated that the window of opportunity for that was disappearing.

On the same day as the press conference with Cameron, the *Kommersant Daily* [quoted](#) Russian diplomats who said that the United States has asked Russia to deliver an ultimatum to Iran that it must engage in diplomatic talks to avoid a military strike.

Haaretz.com reports:

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asked her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in New York on Monday to tell Tehran that it has one last chance to solve the conflict peacefully by making progress in the talks with the P5+1 group — United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany. Otherwise, an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities will occur within months, the diplomats said.

Russian diplomats reportedly told the United Nations that they believe it is a "matter of when, not if" Israel would strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

President Obama has asked that Israel refrain from taking military action on Iran's military sites to allow the sanctions an opportunity to work, but he has asserted all along that military action remained a viable option. Israel has committed to refraining from a military strike on Iran until 2012, that is, until after the American elections.

The Israeli daily publication *Maariv* reported that Israel's agreement to refrain from military strikes coincided with the purchase of U.S. "advanced bunker-busting bombs and long-range refueling plans."



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 26, 2012

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Still, the *Atlantic's* Jeffrey Goldberg [reports](#) that despite Israel's assurances of restraint, the Israeli political establishment has been adamant in talks of a military strike against Iran.

"One conclusion key officials have reached," Goldberg writes, "is that a strike on six or eight Iranian facilities will not lead, as is generally assumed, to all-out war."

Those same officials seem to also believe that the United States would come to Israel's aid in the case of a military strike against Iran, regardless of U.S. protest against such actions.

Goldberg concludes that this means that Israel will most certainly strike Iran. He writes, "I'm highly confident that Netanyahu isn't bluffing — that he is in fact counting down to the day when he will authorize a strike against a half-dozen or more Iranian nuclear sites."

Similarly, Ronen Bergman of the *New York Times* [concluded](#) after speaking with Israeli leaders early this year that "Israel will indeed strike Iran in 2012."

That report followed a secret U.S. war game that simulated an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. The *Times* reported on the exercise that it "forecasts that the strike would lead to a wider regional war, which could draw in the United States and leave hundreds of Americans dead."

At the time, the *Times* noted that a similar exercise took place in December 2002, simulating a potential invasion of Iraq.

The *Los Angeles Times* has also [reported](#) that the Pentagon has increased its naval build-up in the Persian Gulf:

The Navy will add four more mine-sweeping ships and four more CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters with mine-detection capability. The Navy is also sending more underwater unmanned mine-neutralization units to the region.

The United States already has three aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf.

Some analysts pointed to President Obama's signing of the executive order entitled "National Defense Resources Preparedness," as evidence that the United States is preparing for war with Iran. The *Huffington Post* analyzed the timing of the order and the seeming lack of explanation for its sudden signing and [concludes](#) that the motivating factor is oil and the potential for its disruption:

If Iran was struck by Israel or the West, or if Iran thought it might be struck, the Tehran regime has promised it would block the Strait of Hormuz, which would [obstruct](#) some 40 percent of the world's seaborne oil, some twenty percent of the global supply, and about 20 percent of America's daily needs. Moreover, Tehran has promised military retaliation against any nation it feels has harmed it. The United States is at the top of the list.

Blocking the Strait of Hormuz would create an international and economic calamity of unprecedented severity.

The order itself indicates, "The United States must have an industrial and technological base capable of meeting national defense requirements and capable of contributing to the technological superiority of its national defense equipment in peacetime and in times of national emergency."

When asked about a possible link between the executive order and war with Iran, White House spokesman Jay Carney [dismissed](#) the speculation and said of the order, "I think it was a fairly standard and routine piece of business. The President's approach to our dealings with Iran, I think has been made clear."



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When asked to sum up the President's policy towards Iran, Carney responded that it includes, "... aggressively pursuing a policy focused on tightening sanctions against Iran, increasing the pressure on Iran, and increasing the isolation of the Iranian regime, because this President believes we have the time and space to do that, to see if that diplomatic approach and sanctions approach can produce the desired result — because, as he said from this podium, it's easy to talk about war, but you need to talk about the potential implications and consequences of war."

Most remain unconvinced, however. Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice [notes](#) that Obama is taking flak from both the Left and the Right on his signing of the executive order. While the conservatives are concerned by the unchecked power assigned by the order, those on the Left are concerned that the executive order is a prerequisite for war with Iran.

Meanwhile, some have questioned the wisdom of pursuing war against a nation where nuclear proliferation has yet to be fully confirmed.

The *Associated Press* [reported](#) last week, "Despite saber-rattling from Jerusalem, Israeli officials now agree with the U.S. assessment that Tehran has not yet decided on the actual construction of a nuclear bomb."

Reuters [reported](#) similarly, "Current and former U.S. officials say they are confident that Iran has no secret uranium-enrichment site outside the purview of U.N. nuclear inspections."

The Iranian government continues to assert that they are not constructing nuclear weapons. In April, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, "We believe that using nuclear weapons is haraam and prohibited and that it is everybody's duty to make efforts to protect humanity against this great disaster."

Similarly, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that nuclear weapons "belong to the past," during an interview with German television earlier this month.

Some contend that Iran may, however, be provoked into constructing nuclear weapons if it were to be attacked. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said, "I am most certain that such a decision will surely be taken after any strikes on Iran."

As pundits and experts analyze the potential for a war with Iran, support for such a war remains low amongst the American people. A January Rasmussen Report poll [shows](#) that a mere 35 percent of Americans support U.S. military action if sanctions prove ineffective in Iran.

*Photo: President Barack Obama pauses as he speaks during in a joint news conference with Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron, left, in the Rose Garden of the White House, March 14, 2012: AP Images*



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