



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 2, 2012

Mossad Spy Chief: Iran Nuke Not “Existential Threat”

“What is the significance of the term ‘existential’?” Pardo was [quoted as saying](#) in an article by the *Washington Times*. Citing Israeli diplomats who met with the spy chief last week in a closed-door session, the paper reported that, according to Pardo, the danger posed by a hypothetical nuclear weapon in Iranian hands was being overblown.



“If you said a nuclear bomb in Iranian hands was an ‘existential’ threat, that would mean that we would have to close up shop,” the Mossad boss told the gathering of about 100 Israeli ambassadors. “That’s not the situation. The term is used too freely.”

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Speaking to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, several diplomats [said](#) Pardo had stated that a nuclear-armed Iran would “absolutely” pose a threat to the nation. But even if the Iranian regime were to acquire a bomb, the intelligence chief was quoted as saying, it would not mean the destruction of Israel.

Still, Israeli officials are already working to disrupt Iran’s supposed nuclear-arms program using various measures, Pardo reportedly told the ambassadors. And they will continue to do so indefinitely.

The head of Israel’s powerful spy agency did not comment on the much-discussed possibility of a military attack on Iran, according to ambassadors cited in press reports. But other U.S. and Israeli officials have become increasingly vocal in promoting a preemptive strike, with some lawmakers and leaders openly proposing an armed confrontation to prevent Iran from acquiring the hypothetical bomb.

Tough international sanctions have already been imposed on Iran, and many experts view such measures as akin to an act of war. In mid-December, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak also said his government and U.S. officials were determined to stop the Iranian regime from developing the nuclear weapon it is allegedly seeking.

President Obama, meanwhile, has refused to rule out military intervention against Iran even as the U.S. government [turns up the heat on the Syrian government](#) and fights multiple unconstitutional wars at home and abroad. And prominent advocates for a new war on Iran — “war mongers,” neo-cons, and “war hawks,” as critics refer to them — can be found on both sides of the aisle in Congress.

But despite the heated rhetoric, more than a few respected voices in Israel and the United States have publicly opposed an attack on Iran. Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan, who was succeeded by Pardo last year, has very publicly opposed a military strike. He also criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for banging the war drums, saying an attack on Iran would have devastating consequences.

Ex-Israeli military chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi is also against attacking Iran, according to news reports. And U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned about the consequences of such a strike, too, though he later insisted that the Iranian regime would not be “allowed” to develop a bomb.



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The Iranian dictatorship, of course, insists its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes — medicine and energy. And so far, no concrete evidence has been publicized to the contrary.

However, many analysts believe the Islamic government — which maintains friendly relations with the communist dictatorship ruling mainland China and the government of Russia — is indeed pursuing a nuclear weapon. Still, most experts do not believe a hypothetical bomb would be used offensively against Israel or any other nation.

Israel's former military-intelligence chief Zeevi Farkash has been quoted as saying that the Iranian regime is pursuing a nuclear weapon to deter American intervention, not to attack the Jewish state. Countless other analysts agree — especially in the aftermath of several recent U.S.-led “regime change” operations against governments in the region that did not possess weapons of mass destruction.

Most GOP presidential contenders have been engaged in something of a rhetorical competition to see who could be the most belligerent toward Iran, with some candidates even proposing a preemptive, unilateral American attack on the Islamic Republic. Former Senator Rick Santorum, for example, recently vowed to unconstitutionally attack Iran if elected — unless the Iranian government bowed to his demands.

Meanwhile, Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), who promotes a non-interventionist foreign policy, has urged a more cautious approach. Pointing out that no solid evidence has yet emerged proving that the Iranian government is even developing a bomb, Paul frequently stresses his opposition to ongoing and potential future wars based on several constitutional and pragmatic arguments.

“To me, the greatest danger is that we would overreact,” the Texas Congressman and top-tier Republican presidential contender [said](#) about the Iranian nuclear issue in a recent debate, comparing the pro-war propaganda on Iran with the inaccurate arguments used to launch the war on Iraq almost a decade ago. Paul also regularly emphasizes the constitutional requirement of a congressional declaration of war.

Some proponents of preemptively attacking Iran have said the fanatical regime in Tehran should not be trusted to make rational decisions. Others have claimed the Iranian government might offer nuclear-weapons technology to terrorist groups which might be more inclined to use it.

However, it is well known that the Israeli government possesses hundreds of nuclear weapons — not to mention the thousands of warheads maintained by the U.S. government. Given such a reality, even if Iran were to acquire nuclear missiles, it would almost certainly be suicide to launch them.

Photo of Mossad chief Tamir Pardo: AP Images

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