

Israel 'has faith in team Obama'

By [Global Research](#)

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An Israeli official says Tel Aviv is familiar with and has full confidence in the people nominated to run the Obama administration.

“Obama is surrounding himself with people who we know - from Hillary Clinton, to Rahm Emanuel, to James Jones. There is no reason to panic,” the Israeli official told the Jerusalem Post.

The official’s remarks come shortly after the release of a recent report compiled by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and the Council on Foreign Relations — which contains recommendations for the Obama administration’s policies in regards to the Middle East and Iran.

The think-tank report, authored by veterans of past US administrations, suggests that “to deal effectively with a rising Iran, the United States must embark on a far deeper reevaluation of its strategy and launch a comprehensive diplomatic initiative to attempt to engage” Iranian officials.

The report also called for a timely normalization of “low-level diplomatic relations” with Tehran.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry reportedly did not agree with the recommendations. The Israeli official, however, dismissed the proposals and told the paper that, “We have nothing to be afraid of.”

Rahm Emanuel, Obama’s chief of staff, boasts strong ties with Israel, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Emanuel, a veteran of seven years in the White House during the Clinton administration, reportedly held dual citizenship with Israel and assisted the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the 1991 Iraq war.

Hillary Clinton, appointed as the secretary of state, is also expected to steer the next administration in a pro-Israel direction. During her 2008 presidential campaign, she threatened to “obliterate” Iran should Israel come under attack.

“It could be that the new administration’s policy will be different from the Bush administration’s; in fact, it will be a little different. But that doesn’t mean it will be against Israel,” the Israeli official told the Post.

Israel insists that Iran, a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has “plans”

to develop a military nuclear program.

Under the allegation, top Israeli echelons and army brass have long argued that militarily taking out Iran's nuclear infrastructure is a legitimate option.

Since Obama's election victory, his campaign promise of engaging "in aggressive personal diplomacy" with Iranian leaders to resolve the controversy surrounding the nuclear program has been severely criticized by Tel Aviv.

The UN agency responsible for investigating Iran's nuclear activities confirmed in its latest report that it has "been able to continue to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran."

The UN body, however, insists that unless Tehran increases its nuclear cooperation, it "will not be able to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran."

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