

Israeli Security Cabinet Meets for First Discussion of Iran Attack

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If you were a security minister serving your country wouldn't you think you'd have devoted a great deal of cabinet discussion to any decision to attack a neighboring country? You might think that, but then again you wouldn't be an Israeli cabinet minister if you did. Yediot Achronot reported in its print edition (and for a few minutes in its online edition) that Israel's 14-member security cabinet would deal with the Iranian crisis for the first time. This news was considered so sensitive that the military censor forced Yediot to censor its coverage. The [revised version here](#) (and [in English](#)) says the deliberation on the subject was "rare." Reuters reported earlier that the nine-member security executive, which Netanyahu uses to sound out his most important security matters, hadn't discussed Iran since last October. The [ten-hour meeting](#) also dealt with Israel's military capabilities in striking Iran. This could mean that the ministers were regaled with the actual plan of attack, weapons systems to be used, etc. Or it could mean that some ministers intended to express skepticism at Israel's ability to degrade Iran's nuclear capabilities in any serious way.

Ynet noted that no operational decisions were made at the meeting. The main reason for this is that there is no consensus among the ministers about the advisability of such a military operation. A participant in the meeting called Israel's current policy "playing poker" with the west so as not to allow the international community to believe it had unlimited time to deal with the subject. He also said the ministers were told there were yet more new sanctions that could be imposed to "strangle Iran."

UPDATE: Netanyahu was so angry at this leak to Yediot that he [canceled a follow-up meeting](#) of this body that was intended to continue the discussions about an Iran attack.

I reported here that the Netanyahu government has offered a "compromise" of sorts to Obama, saying it would defer an attack if Obama would lay out his "red lines" along with specific dates by which the U.S. would proceed with an attack if Iran hadn't abandoned its alleged nuclear weapons program. Though there are reports that Obama is weighing this proposal, it's not clear whether this is wishful thinking on the part of those who advanced the proposal in the first place; or whether it's true.

Yediot also reported that Bibi and U.S. ambassador Dan Shapiro got into a heated argument during a meeting that included House Intelligence Committee chair Mike Rogers. The prime minister had complained that Obama was not giving Israel the support it deserved in its struggle against Iran. My Israeli source says the account of the argument is probably exaggerated by a newspaper which opposes an attack, and which also dislikes Netanyahu. Regardless, this is an interesting barometer of a major media outlet's perspective on the issue.

Netanyahu has also [directed the Home Front ministry](#) to examine the vulnerabilities of Israel's energy sector should there be an Iranian response to an Israeli attack. The prime minister wants to develop defenses to protect this vital infrastructure. Though words are cheap, don't you think it's going to a lot of trouble if you're merely playing poker regarding an Iran strike, to get into such pointed preparations for an Iranian counter-attack?

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