

# Likud-Republican Alliance - WWII Scenario? Launching a First Strike on Iran

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*Rumors now coursing through the upper echelons of the US and pro-Israel Jewish communities anticipate a unilateral Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear sites in the run-up to the presidential election in November, 2012. Backers of the sneak attack strategy believe that the pre-election timing will guarantee Congressional backing and prevent President Obama and other members of his government from opposing what will be a mirror image of the Israeli pre-emptive strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1982.*

The critical shipment of highly advanced US materiel (100 GBU-28 bunker busters) was contracted for sale to Israel by the USA in 2007, but the shipment was not ready until after the Bush administration retired, and the Obama administration arrived.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, someone in the Obama administration reduced the arms shipment from one hundred bunker busters to a mere fifty-five; then the sophisticated laser-guided bombs were trans-shipped to Diego Garcia. There was some speculation at the time about these weapons stored at Diego Garcia, a remote British-owned island in the Indian Ocean that serves as a strategic US military base. In 2009, observers were perplexed as to whether the laser-guided bombs were ultimately meant for shipment to Israel for attack on Iranian nuclear sites in a rerun of Osirak-1982.<sup>2</sup>

It is well known that the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu is “strained” and for good reasons. Netanyahu resented Obama’s overtures to Iran (the Nowruz statements), his Cairo speech, his push for peace via Special Envoy George Mitchell, his insistence on the ten-month suspension of settlement construction, and worst of all, the president’s insistence of moral equivalency, an abandonment of the double standard with one set of rules for Israel and another for everybody else.

The two men have crossed swords time and again. Their private White House meetings have been peppered with very caustic exchanges – including their secret summit in November 2009, when Netanyahu arrived at the entrance to the White House in the back of a white van and departed the same way – with no press release, no press conference nor joint statement. In that meeting, Netanyahu threatened Obama to force the president to back off the peace negotiations and the settlement freezes, or he would oppose his policies in Congress, a threat he has made good, most recently with the July resolutions in the House and Senate calling for the suspension of US aid to the PA. Here is a quote from *Haaretz*:

Senior officials in the Obama administration also accused Netanyahu of suggesting that he had the power to pressure Obama with various lobbies within the U.S. political arena.<sup>3</sup>

Immediately after the resolutions for suspending US aid to Palestine passed by both houses of Congress with overwhelming majorities this Summer, the Obama administration issued a statement through the State Department arguing against the suspension of aid to the Palestinian Authority. The Obama administration statement argued that the program of aid to the Palestinian Authority was the backbone of US policy in the region.<sup>4</sup> In the aftermath of the turbulence, now even Netanyahu has decided suspension of US aid to the Palestinian Authority is a very bad idea, since it would convert the West Bank into a mirror image of Gaza through the instantaneous ascendancy of Hamas.

Now, with the bunker busters in Israel, and Obama engaged in his re-election fight – right-wing Israelis and their supporters in the diaspora believe that the door is open for a unilateral attack on Iran, and there will be absolutely nothing that the US administration can do about it – even though they would like to stop it. An Israeli attack would be immensely popular with the many supporters of Israel in Congress, but starkly less popular with the American people who are largely sick of war – although the right-wing of America is acutely Islamophobic, and so is the Republican Party which has become little more than a coalition of bigotry in all its forms.

The US Jewish community is riven. The young and the progressive Jews support Obama's policy of pursuing peace. Others are vehemently Islamophobic. Few if any supporters of Likud accept morale equivalency. Many senior Jewish leaders in the USA and Israel support the double standard – one set of moral criteria for Israel, another set of moral criteria for everybody else – especially where Arabs or Muslims are concerned.

The bottom line – the right-wingers realize that during the presidential re-election offers them a unique opportunity for punishing Iran. The US presidential campaign has already begun with both sides running TV spots and raising funds as aggressively as they know how to do at this stage. Right-wingers perceive that Obama, whom they regard as a closet Muslim peacenik from Africa, is literally hand-cuffed to Congress. So, the right-wing government of Israel is free to attack Iran with relative impunity from the political and diplomatic perspectives.

At the very least, Congressional leaders from Harry Reid, Charles Schumer, Steny Hoyer, Mitch McConnell, Lindsey Graham, Eric Cantor, John Ryan and John Boehner will advocate support for Israel's unilateral attack. The thinking of supporters of the attack on Iran is predicated on strong support from the media. The arch-conservative, Rupert Murdoch, controls a significant proportion of the mainstream information channels.

Under the influence of Congress, the mainstream media and the very popular perception of Israel among the general public, the majority of Americans would grant impunity to a sneak attack by Israeli forces. A senior right-winger who is intimately familiar with key political figures in Washington and Jerusalem, describes the Iranian attack strategy as, "literally a form of political blackmail rather like the Sword of Damocles dangling over the head of an embattled President."

Last week at the UN, Governor Rick Perry made a bold play for a major shift in the political allegiance of the pro Israel bloc when he appeared on the dais with Danny Danon, Chair of World Likud and an aggressive politician who challenged Netanyahu from the right for the Party Leadership. In July, Danon invited controversial radio personality, Glenn Beck, to address the Knesset.<sup>5</sup> Danon is no stranger to controversy. Recently, he has been labeled,

“the new McCarthy.”<sup>6</sup>

In New York, with Danny Danon at his side, Rick Perry haltingly read a statement written for him in language the Governor of Texas found difficult to enunciate in a performance starkly reminiscent of his predecessor, George W. Bush. It was painfully clear that American Likudniks crafted Perry’s incongruous statement for him.

Predictably, Perry criticized Obama for his lack of support for Israel calling the President’s policies, “naïve, arrogant, misguided and dangerous.” Unsurprisingly, Perry called for stronger US support of Israel and for Jerusalem to be the nation’s “undivided” capital. Reading the statement prepared by Likud, Perry shamed Obama for adopting a policy of “moral equivalency” – Perry’s reaffirmation of the double standard – one set of rules for Israelis and another set of rules for Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims.

Perry asserted that the USA should cut aid to the Palestinians. Although he was not present at the Likud rally, Perry’s main rival, former Governor Mitt Romney, issued a statement of his own to condemn Obama. In his excoriating statement, Romney accused Obama of “repeated efforts over three years to throw Israel under the bus.”<sup>7</sup>

Reports in the aftermath of the UN rally noted that the Republican Party is becoming the favorite of Likud and the other parties on the Israeli right. Polls taken over the weekend indicate that Obama is losing Jewish support.<sup>8</sup> In Israel, Obama is extremely unpopular with only twelve per cent characterizing him as “pro-Israel.”<sup>9</sup>

In US presidential politics, the Jewish vote is important for two reasons: campaign contributions and votes in the key battleground state of Florida. At this point, Perry’s attack appears to be working by undermining Obama’s Jewish support.

The forthcoming ‘surprise’ attack on Iran will, of course, be synchronized with a rise in public concern vis a vis the Iranian nuclear program – a trend that will be manufactured via sophisticated perception management.

Now thirteen months out from the US presidential elections, the political weather forecast is coming into sharper focus: stormy weather, highly charged thunderstorms, punctuated by scattered lightning bolts, rising to hurricane force, winds accelerating to cyclonic velocities, throughout the United States, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

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## Notes

1 Obama Sold Israel Bunker-Buster Bombs

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/09/23/president-obama-secretly-approved-transfer-of-bunker-buster-bombs-to-israel.html>

2 Bunker Busters Shipped to Diego Garcia: Imminent Attack or Strategic Move?

<http://my.firedoglake.com/jimwhite/2010/03/17/bunker-busters-shipped-to-diego-garcia-imminent-attack-or-strategic-move/>

3 Haaretz, 11th November 2009, "Washington disappointed: Netanyahu didn't present concrete steps,"

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/washington-disappointed-netanyahu-didn-t-present-concrete-steps-1.267165>

4 Haaretz, 12th July 2011, "Obama administration: U.S. aid to Palestinian Authority critical to Mideast stability"

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/obama-administration-u-s-aid-to-palestina-n-authority-critical-to-mideast-stability-1.372877>

5 Jerusalem Post, 11th July 2011, "If we didn't have Beck, we'd invent someone similar: Danny Dannon welcomes conservative pundit in address to Knesset c'tee, says threats don't prevent Israeli public from living normally.

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=228827>

6 Gideon Levy, "MK Danny Danon is the new McCarthy: Like Likud MK Danny Danon, McCarthy built his whole career on investigative committees, exactly like the one Danon tried to establish and appoint himself head of yesterday. Now find the differences. There aren't any." Haaretz, 21st July 2011.

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/mk-danny-danon-is-the-new-mccarthy-1.374361>

7 Romney and Perry blame Obama for PA bid

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=238743>

8 AJC Survey Confirms: Obama Losing Jewish Vote

<http://www.frumforum.com/poll-confirms-obama-losing-jewish-support>

9 After the storm: Bibi's poll numbers improve (38 to 51%) but so do Barack's (from 9% to 12%) in Israel

<http://israelmatzav.blogspot.com/2011/05/after-storm-bibis-poll-numbers-improve.html>

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