

# Middle East War Could Erupt Right After U.S. Presidential Election

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**by Vladimir Sazhin**

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Some political experts claim there will be a risk that a new "big wave" in the Middle East could reach its peak after the American presidential elections, and that the region might plummet into the abyss. They say that Israel is ready to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

At the same time the Islamic Republic, whose economy is on the verge of collapse due to sanctions, is also prepared to stand up to Israel.

So far, uncertainty in the US presidential race has served as a containment factor. But what will happen after the elections?

Irina Fedorova, a specialist in Iranian-US relations, delivers a "partly cloudy" forecast for the near future; "Before the Inauguration on January 20 it is hardly possible to anticipate any sudden political moves from the US president, who will be elected on November 6. The main task of the new, or old, president with the US political elite will be the formation of a new government. That is why foreign policy issues will not take precedence in that period.

"The issue that will influence the US president's opinion on the possibility of a military strike against Iran will be the crisis in Syria, including the problem of Bashar al-Assad. Until those problems are resolved, the US president's attention will be focused on Syria."

The Israeli factor cannot be ignored either: the current situation in Israel provides much food for thought. The Knesset is dissolved and elections are set for January 22, the day after the new president of the USA is inaugurated. There are two politicians who are ready for a war against Iran; Benjamin Netanyahu from Likud and Avigdor Lieberman of Israel is Our Home [Yisrael Beiteinu], and there is a very real possibility that one of them will win.

The likelihood of finding a solution to the Iranian problem between the US and Israeli

elections cannot be ruled out completely, but during that period, anti-war pressure on the Cabinet will dwindle to almost zero. That is because, although Knesset deputies continue with their duties, they are essentially already “lame ducks” in the absence of a sitting parliament. The current Knesset cannot be expected to address the issue of a no-confidence vote before the elections and, in the event of a successful strike against Iran, as anticipated by its proponents, it would be seen as a vote winner in the election run-up.

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It is not however the growing military activity in Iran that worries Israel, but the Iranian nuclear programme. Recently, there was an announcement that Iran had finished the installation of a centrifuge at the Fordo underground military facility. Western experts believe that Iranian nuclear specialists can now produce uranium enriched not only to 60%, but the 90% purity required for weapons grade material. If true that can only serve to encourage Israel to strike first.

Irina Fedorova observed: “There can be unpredictable decisions in politics and it is possible that the situation could arise when the Israeli military, without Washington’s approval, would start an operation against Iran. In that case the USA would, without doubt, support Israel.”

And many experts believe that that is just what is likely to happen, right after the US presidential elections.

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