

Mossad chief holds secret U.S. meetings on Iran nuclear threat, Senate panel reveals

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Global Research, February 01, 2012
Haaretz 1 February 2012

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During a broadcasted meeting of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, CIA Director, panel Chairperson indicate they met Tamir Pardo in Washington this week; U.S. official: Iran willing to attack U.S. targets if threatened.

Mossad chief Tamir Pardo held secret talks with top U.S. officials in recent days, cursory comments made during a public Senate hearing indicated on Tuesday.

The clandestine Washington visit was exposed during a hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which was participated by CIA Director David Petraeus, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, and Dianne Feinstein, who chairs the Senate panel.

During the meeting, Feinstein asked Clapper whether or not Israel intended to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, with the top U.S. intelligence official answering that he would rather discuss the issue behind closed doors.

Feinstein then indicated that she had met Mossad chief Pardo earlier in the week in Washington, with Petraeus adding that he too met Pardo and cited what he called Israel's growing concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The CIA chief also said that it was important to note that Israel considered a nuclear Iran as an existential threat.

The entire exchange was broadcasted live on American television.

Referring to the Iran's nuclear progress, Clapper told the Senate panel that "Iran's technical advancement, particularly in uranium enrichment, strengthens our assessment that Iran has the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to eventually produce nuclear weapons, making the central issue its political will to do so."

"These advancements contribute to our judgment that Iran is technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium for a weapon, if it so chooses," Clapper added, saying that the U.S. judged "Iran would likely choose missile delivery as its preferred method of delivering a nuclear weapon."

Clapper also indicated that the 2011 Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi envoy to the U.S. indicated that the Iranian leadership "changed their calculus and are now more willing to conduct an attack in the United States in response to real or perceived U.S. actions that threaten the regime."

"We are also concerned about Iranian plotting against U.S. or allied interests overseas. Iran's willingness to sponsor future attacks in the United States or against our interests abroad probably will be shaped by Tehran's evaluation of the costs it bears for the plot against the ambassador as well as Iranian leaders' perceptions of U.S. threats against the regime," Clapper added.

News of the Mossad chief's reported Washington visit came as, also on Tuesday, President Shimon Peres said that [Iran's "evil" leadership mustn't be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons](#) capability.

Referring to Iran's contentious nuclear program, the president called the issue "ours and the world's central problem at this time, accusing Iran of attempting to achieve regional and "even global hegemony."

"Nuclear weapons mustn't be allowed to fall into the hands of Iran's Ayatollah regime," Peres said, calling Iran's religious leadership the "most morally corrupt regime in the world."

Hinting at the possibility of a strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, the president reiterated the Israeli stance, according to which "no option should be ruled out in our dealing with the Iranian danger. This is an existential threat."

"It is the duty of the international community to prevent evil and nuclear [weapons] from coming together. That is the obligations of most of the leaders of the free world, one which they must meet," Peres said.

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