

## Ask The Experts: The Case Against A Military Strike On Iran



Ephraim Halevy, Fmr. Mosssad Director (1998-2002)

"The State of Israel cannot be destroyed" [...] "An attack on Iran could affect not only Israel, but the entire region for 100 years." [While Iran should be prevented from becoming a nuclear power, its capabilities are still] "far from posing an existential threat to Israel."\*

I believe that the state of Israel could, after such a move [of a military strike in Iran] be attacked by rockets not only near Gaza and the North but also in Tel Aviv." "I fully trust the discretion of the IDF Chief of Staff and the head of the Mossad, both the current and former ones. They are the ones who have the data."\*\_



Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Former MK, former IDF Chief of Staff (1995-1998), Former Military Intelligence Chief (1986-1991)



Meir Dagan, Fmr. Mossad Director (2002-2011)

"A military attack will give the Iranians the best excuse to pursue the nuclear race. Khamenei will say 'I was attacked by a country with nuclear capabilities; my nuclear program was peaceful, but I must protect my country.\*

Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan referred to the possibility of a future Israeli Air Force attack on Iranian nuclear facilities as 'the stupidest thing I have ever heard' during a conference held at Hebrew University in Jerusalem on Friday (May 6th, 2011)\*

[Attacking Iran] "would mean regional war, and in that case you would have given Iran the best possible reason to continue the nuclear program ... the regional challenge that Israel would face would be impossible."\*\_

"Striking Iranian nuclear sites is like mowing the grass. Unless a strike succeeded in permanently crippling the Iranian capacity to produce and weaponize fissile material, the grass would only grow back again. And no strike — or even series of strikes — can accomplish this. Iran's hardened sites, redundancy of facilities, and secret locations present significant obstacles to a successful attack. Even in the best-case scenario — an incomplete strike that, say, set back the Iranian nuclear program by two to three years — the Iranians would reseed it with the kind of legitimacy and urgency that can only come from having been attacked by an outside power. "\*



Aaron David Miller, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars



"I wish to express grave concern from the Prime Minister's speeches here at the Knesset about a nuclear Iran. His words sound like a calculated preparation for a reckless adventure. I will not get into details, even though the discussion about this issue is out there, but we warn PM Netanyahu and the Minister of Defense Ehud Barak in advance: Watch out. We will not support you in this adventure. And if you feel overconfident and wish to change the face of the Middle East – shift your energy for the diplomatic sphere."\*

Shelly Yachimovich, Leader of Israeli Labor Party

"I want everyone to pay attention to the fact that the three tribal elders, (Former IDF Chief of Staff Gabi) Ashkenazi, (Former Head of the Shin Bet Yuval) Diskin and (Former Mossad Director Meir) Dagan, within a very short time, are all telling the people of Israel: take note, something is going on that we couldn't talk about until now, and now we are talking about it. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark, and that is the decision-making process. The leadership makes fiery statements, we stepped on the brakes, we are no longer there and we don't know what will happen. And that's why we are saying this aloud."\*



**Gad Shimron, Former Elite Mossad Unit Member** 



Haim Ramon, Former MK (Labor, Kadima), Kadima Council Chairman

"Israel cannot by itself stop Iran's nuclear programme, as was done in Iraq and, according to foreign media, in Syria." [An air strike] "could even put the Iranian nuclear programme back by five years ... Such a strike would give Iran an additional pretext to build a nuclear bomb [as a deterrent against Israel]."\*

"Israel's urge to try and deter Iran is understandable, particularly when looking at the terrible rhetoric of the leaders of the Islamic Republic, and at the powerlessness with which the international community has been handling this crisis. However, an Israeli military action will not only not solve the problem, but it will also result in a counter attack. Israel must take into consideration that deterring threats that do not actualize could hurt those who send them. No matter which way we look at it, it is playing with fire."



Dr. Emily Landau, Senior Research Fellow and Director,
Arms Control and Regional Security Program, The Institute
for National Security Studies



Bruce Riedel, Senior Research Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institute

"An Israeli attack on Iran could ignite a regional conflict from Afghanistan to the Gaza strip," "For the Americans and the Obama administration it will be a disaster ... Hezbollah will see an attack on Iran as a threat to their patron and there is a very good chance that they will initiate (another) Lebanon war only this time (with) even more rockets and missiles than in 2006 ... We have every reason to believe that the Iranian will see an Israeli attack on their nuclear facilities as a joint American-Israeli attack and they will retaliate not only on Israeli targets but on American targets."\*

"Iran's capability to retaliate for an Israeli strike against the U.S. is enormous." ... "Meir Dagan has said an Israeli attack would be a 'stupid idea.' He is right."\*

"The indication is that at best it [military action] might postpone it [Iran's nuclear program] maybe by one or possibly two years. It depends on the ability to truly get at the targets that they're after. Frankly, some of those targets are very difficult to get at... [T]he consequence could be that we would have an escalation that would take place that would not only involve many lives, but I think could consume the Middle East in confrontation and conflict that we would regret." \*



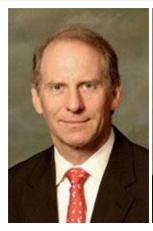
Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense



Colin H. Kahl, Former Deputy Assistant
Secretary of Defense for the Middle East at the
Pentagon (2009-2011)

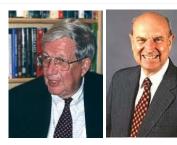
"[A] a clean, calibrated conflict is a mirage. Any war with Iran would be a messy and extraordinarily violent affair, with significant casualties and consequences.... A U.S. strike would damage key Iranian facilities, but it would do nothing to reverse the nuclear knowledge Iran has accumulated or its ability to eventually build new centrifuges. A U.S. attack would also likely rally domestic Iranian support around nuclear hard-liners, increasing the odds that Iran would emerge from a strike even more committed to building a bomb."\*\_

"It is in the American interest to pursue a negotiated outcome to the current impasse. The reason is straightforward. Sanctions and clandestine efforts will not succeed in stopping Iran's nuclear advance at an acceptable plateau or in undermining the regime.... [A preventive strike] would likely delay the Iranian program, but perhaps not for more than a few years. Moreover, whatever is destroyed will likely be rebuilt in a manner that makes future attacks more difficult. An attack also could trigger retaliation and set in motion a chain of events that leads to widespread loss of life and a massive increase in oil prices." \*\_





Richard Haass (President) & Michael Levi (Senior Fellow), Council on Foreign Relations



Former Ambassadors William Luers & Charles
Pickering

"History teaches that engagement and diplomacy pay dividends that military threats do not. Deployment of military force can bring the immediate illusion of "success" but always results in unforeseen consequences and collateral damage that complicate further the achievement of America's main objectives. Deploying diplomats with a strategy while maintaining some pressure on Iran will lower Tehran's urgency to build a bomb and reduce the danger of conflict." \*\_

"As calls for a military solution to deal with Iran's nuclear program increase, William H. Luers and Thomas R. Pickering make a compelling case that a better option remains on the table: diplomacy." \*\_



Senator Dianne Feinstein (D), Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence



Rep. Mike Rogers (R), Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

"My argument is this is too important for us not to get this right. If Israel does a unilateral strike this could be a real problem for the national security interests of the United States." \*\_

"I think it would be premature to exclusively decide that the time for a military option was upon us. I think that the economic sanctions and the international cooperation that we've been able to gather around sanctions is beginning to have an effect. I think our diplomacy is having an effect and our preparedness.... a [Israeli] strike at this time would be destabilizing and wouldn't achieve their long-term objectives." \*



General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff