

Former Def. Minister: Israel Will Attack Iran by Nov.

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By: Ken Timmerman

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The sanctions currently being discussed with Russia, China, and other major powers at the United Nations are likely to be a slightly-enhanced version of the U.N. sanctions already in place, which have had no impact on the Iranian regime.

And despite unanimous passage of the Iran Petroleum Sanctions Act in January, the Obama administration continues to resist efforts by Congress to impose mandatory sanctions on companies selling refined petroleum products to Iran.

In an Op-Ed in the Israeli left-wing daily, Haaretz, Sneh argues that Iran will probably have "a nuclear bomb or two" by 2011.

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Sneh believes that the "acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran during Obama's term would do him a great deal of political damage," but that the damage to Obama resulting from an Israeli strike on Iran "would be devastating."

Nevertheless, he writes, "for practical reasons, in the absence of genuine sanctions, Israel will not be able to wait until the end of next winter, which means it would have to act around the congressional elections in November, thereby sealing Obama's fate as president."

Sneh does not foresee any U.S. military strikes on Iran, an analysis that is shared by most observers in Washington, who see the Obama administration moving toward containment as opposed to confrontation with Iran.

In a recent report for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), military analyst Anthony Cordesman concluded that Israel will have to use low-yield earth-penetrating nuclear weapons if it wants to take out deeply-buried nuclear sites in Iran.

"Israel is reported to possess a 200 kilogram nuclear warhead containing 6 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium that could be mounted on the sea launched cruise missiles and producing a Yield of 20 kilo tons," Cordesman writes in the CSIS study he co-authored by Abdullah Toukan.

Israel would be most likely to launch these missiles from its Dolphin-class submarines, he added.

While Sneh is no longer in the Israeli government, his revelation of a drop-dead date for an Israeli military strike on Iran must be taken seriously, Israel-watchers in the U.S. tell Newsmax.

"Ephraim Sneh is a serious guy," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "He was deputy minister of defense and has long been focused on the issue of Iran."

Shoshana Bryen, Senior Director for Security Policy at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), said that what struck her most about Sneh's comments was the shift of emphasis from resolving the Palestinian problem to Iran.

"For 30 years, he's been saying that solving the Palestinian problem is Israel's biggest priority. Now he's saying, forget about the Palestinians. Iran is the problem."

Sneh "is extremely well regarded on the left and the right," she added. "People respect him enormously."

In his Op-Ed, Sneh argues that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu needs to mend its bridges with the United States, and the only way to do so is by enacting an immediate and total ban on any settlement activity, including in Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem.

"Without international legitimacy, and with its friend mad at it, Israel would find it very difficult to act on its own" against Iran, he argued.

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