

Former Israeli Official: 'It's Now or Never' for Military Action

Tzachi Hanegbi—a close, trusted, long-time personal friend and confidante of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—made remarks on Tuesday at a security conference in Tel Aviv that did not make news in the U.S. But they should have.

Hanegbi explained that the time for sanctions and diplomacy and covert options to neutralize the Iranian nuclear threat is over, and the time for Israel to use its military option has come.

"It's now or never," **Hanegbi said,** " and the option of never does not exist."

Hanegbi formerly served as the Minister of Intelligence and as Justice Minister in previous governments. He is currently a Member of Knesset (Likud).

"Israel has to act according to its own imperatives," he said.

Given how close Hanegbi and Netanyahu are—and given how sensitive the current moment is—it is difficult to believe Hanegbi spoke without knowing the Prime Minister's mind, and without having his blessing to make such ominous remarks.

I, for one, am praying for peace. I don't want to see another war in the Middle East. I'm asking the Lord to bring down the regime in Tehran, and sabotage their nuclear weapons projects, and keep Tehran from going too far. But even as I pray for peace, I know Israel is preparing for war.

Consider other indicators that an Israeli first strike may be increasingly close at hand:

- At the same conference, Israeli Major Gen. (res.) Amos Yadlin, a former head of IDF Military Intelligence, **said** that “for all intents and purposes, Iran has crossed Israel’s red line ... in the summer, Iran will be a month or two away from deciding about a bomb.”
- Netanyahu and his inner circle are watching how Iran has been accelerating its building of uranium centrifuges, expanding its nuclear facilities, and possibly building secret new facilities.
- President Obama is doing nothing after the Assad regime in Syria crossed the Obama “red line” by using chemical weapons against the rebels, killing and wounding many. Are they concluding the White House is serious about dealing with Iran if and when Tehran crosses the “red line”? Hardly.
- Netanyahu and his inner circle are watching how President Obama is doing nothing to stop North Korea from building—and testing—nuclear warheads and the ballistic missiles to deliver them. Are they concluding the White House is serious about preventing nuclear proliferation? Again, hardly.
- Netanyahu and his inner circle are watching how President Obama has pulled U.S. military assets out of the Persian Gulf region, claiming budget cutbacks.
- All this suggests the Netanyahu team believes it is all alone to deal with the Iran problem.

Now, let me be clear: I don’t know if war will happen or not. I hope not. I pray not. But I want to be honest and keep you up-to-date on the latest developments.

Joel C. Rosenberg is the author of numerous New York Times best-selling novels and nonfiction books, with nearly 3 million copies sold. He is also the founder of The Joshua Fund (). His books include The Last Jihad (2002), The Last Days (2003), The Ezekiel Option (2005) and The Copper Scroll (2006).

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