

Memo exposes Israeli war plan against Iran

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A leaked memo that surfaced Wednesday provides a detailed blueprint for an unprovoked Israeli war against Iran. The publication of the memo coincides with multiple Israeli media reports indicating that such an attack may be imminent.

The memo was first published by US blogger and journalist Richard Silverstein and was subsequently picked up by the BBC and other media. Silverstein said that the document had been passed by a member of the Israel Defense Forces to a politician, and then on to him. He said it had been prepared for the eight-member Israeli Security Council as part of a bid by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak to convince other members of the government to support an early and unilateral Israeli strike.

The memo posted on Silverstein's blog, Tikun Olam, states: "The Israeli attack will open with a coordinated strike, including an unprecedented cyber-attack which will totally paralyze the Iranian regime." The aim is to shut down all communications between the Iranian government and military, leaving the country's leadership in the dark about what is happening at key installations and bases. Carbon fiber munitions would be employed to shut down the country's electrical grid.

Meanwhile, "A barrage of tens of ballistic missiles would be launched from Israel toward Iran," the memo states. These would be fired by Israeli submarines from the Persian Gulf region against Iranian nuclear facilities at Arak, Isfahan, Fordo and elsewhere. They would be supplemented by "a barrage of hundreds of cruise missiles" aimed at destroying the regime's command and control capacity and decapitating Iran's nuclear and missile development program, targeting the "residences of senior personnel."

These attacks would be followed up by Israeli Air Force warplanes carrying out air strikes against "targets which require further assault."

Clearly, such an assault would inflict massive civilian casualties while plunging the entire region into chaos.

The memo is only the latest in a number of reports over the past week indicating that Netanyahu and Barak are making a concerted push for war, having publicly declared that the

stalelated international negotiations on Iran's nuclear program are a failure and that economic sanctions have not swayed Tehran to abandon the program. The Iranian government insists that its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes.

Matan Vilnai, who is leaving his post as Israel's "home front" defense minister to become the Zionist state's ambassador to China, gave an interview published in the Israeli daily *Maariv* Wednesday in which he spelled out the government's projections for the domestic impact of a war on Iran.

Vilnai told *Maariv* that "the home front is ready as never before" for a war with Iran. "There is no room for hysteria" he said, estimating that approximately 500 people within Israel would probably be killed in retaliatory strikes. "There might be fewer dead, or more, perhaps... but this is the scenario for which we are preparing, in accordance with the best expert advice."

Israelis had no choice but to accept such a death toll, Vilnai suggested. "Just as the citizens of Japan have to realize they can have earthquakes, so the citizens of Israel have to realize that if they live here, they have to be prepared to expect missiles on the home front. It's not pleasant for the home front, but decisions have to be made and we have to be ready." Recent polls have indicated continued strong public opposition to a war with Iran.

The war, Vilnai said, "will last 30 days on several fronts," according to the government's assessments. The implication is that Israel would be involved in hostilities not only with Iran, but also with the Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah as well as Palestinian fighters in the Gaza Strip.

Vilnai is being replaced in his "home front" post by Avi Dichter, the former director of Israel's internal security agency, Shin Bet, Netanyahu announced on Tuesday. The appointment of Dichter, who resigned from the opposition Kadima party to take the post, was widely seen as part of the war preparations as well as a move to bolster support for an attack within the government.

As director of Israel's General Security Service (GSS) from 2000 to 2005, Dichter was responsible for choosing the targets of Israel's so-called "targeted assassinations," the

Zionist regime's response to the second Palestinian intifada. These extra-judicial executions claimed some 724 lives, including those of at least 228 civilian bystanders, of whom 77 were children.

New civil defense measures are being taken in preparation for war, including the rolling out of a text message system for warning the population against incoming missiles, the distribution of more gas masks, and the organization of air raid drills at schools in the north of Israel when they open next month

An indication of the seriousness with which the war threats are being taken internationally is their impact on Israel's economy. Fears of an Israeli attack have sent the shekel to its lowest level in nearly 15 months, while the Tel Aviv stock market hit a three-week low on August 13. Meanwhile, the cost of insuring Israeli debt has risen steadily—what traders are calling a “saber-rattling” premium.

There have been multiple reports indicating that the stepped-up threats of war against Iran are driven not so much by new intelligence about the Iranian nuclear program as by the US election calendar. *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel's largest circulation daily, published a report by two of its senior journalists last Friday stating, “Insofar as it depends on Binyamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, an Israeli military strike on the nuclear facilities in Iran will take place in these coming autumn months, before the US elections in November.”

On Tuesday, the daily *Ma'ariv* reported that Netanyahu and Barak have set a September 25 deadline for US President Barack Obama to make a commitment that the US will take military action against Iran. The date coincides with the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, which Netanyahu is scheduled to attend.

Israel's Channel 10 News reported Tuesday that US and Israeli officials are seeking to set up a meeting between Netanyahu and Obama around that date. At that time, the sources said, Obama will supposedly commit to using military force against Iran by June 2013 if Tehran has not submitted by then to Western demands that it scrap its nuclear program.

Netanyahu's calculation appears to be that launching a war before the November election in the US would force the Obama administration to join Israel in attacking Iran out of fear of being out-flanked on the right by Republican nominee Mitt Romney, who recently visited Israel and declared that the US should support the Israeli regime if it launches a unilateral war.

According to military analysts, Israel does not have the military capacity to wipe out Iran's nuclear program, but could set it back at least two years through air strikes. Drawing the US into an attack holds the prospect of

inflicting far more extensive damage as well as the potential for an all-out war for regime-change.

Much has been made in the Israeli media of opposition from within the top ranks of Israel's military and its intelligence apparatus to launching a unilateral attack. A number of former military and spy chiefs have spoken publicly in opposition to Tel Aviv carrying out an imminent war. These divisions, however, are of a tactical character, involving different calculations as to how best to prepare a war that would bring in the US military.

Speaking at a Pentagon press conference Tuesday, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta voiced the view that the Israeli regime had yet to make a decision as to “whether or not they will go in and attack Iran at this time.” He stressed that Israel is an “independent... sovereign country” and would act “based on what they think is in their national security interest.”

Panetta went on to make his own provocative attack on Iran in relation to the unfolding civil war in Syria. Presenting no evidence, he claimed that Iran was “trying to train a militia within Syria to be able to fight on behalf of the regime.” The defense secretary said that Iran's role was “dangerous” and was “adding to the killing that's going on.” He added, “The Syrian people ought to determine their future, not Iran.”

These remarks reek of hypocrisy. The reality is that it is Israel, not Iran, that is armed with hundreds of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, in Syria, the US and its allies, particularly the reactionary monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Qatar as well as the government in Turkey, are deeply involved in organizing, arming and training the sectarian militias that are waging a terror campaign to topple the Assad regime. The unsubstantiated charge against Iran that it is assisting its ally Syria with the training of a pro-government militia is yet another threat against Tehran and one more indication that the intervention in Syria is directed at preparing a far more dangerous war against Iran itself.

Under conditions in which the US military has deployed a massive force in the Persian Gulf, including two aircraft carrier battle groups and extensive air power, bolstered by a squadron of the most advanced F-22 fighter planes, the threats and provocations from both Washington and Tel Aviv have ratcheted up tensions to a level in which the outbreak of a full-scale war is on a hair trigger.



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