

Obama says Iran's Capability to Develop Nuclear Weapons is a "Year or More Away", Disregarding US Intelligence Assessments

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Global Research, October 06, 2013
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The US President was recently interviewed by the Associated Press (AP) on a number of issues including the US government shutdown and his recent discussion with Iran's new President, Hassan Rouhani.

President Obama was asked about his conversation with Rouhani and how he perceives Iran's new leadership role. Obama said:

Well, here's what we know: He was not necessarily the preferred candidate of some of the ruling clerics when he initially threw his hat into the ring. He won pretty decisively.

So what we know is, is that in the Iranian population at least, there is a genuine interest in moving in a new direction. Their economy has been crippled by international sanctions that were put in place because Iran had not been following international guidelines, and had behaved in ways that made a lot of people feel they were pursuing a nuclear weapon.

I think Rouhani has staked his position on the idea that he can improve relations with the rest of the world. And so far, he's been saying a lot of the right things. And the question now is, can he follow through? The way the Iranian system works, he's not the only decision maker — he's not even the ultimate decision maker.

But if in fact he is able to present a credible plan that says Iran is pursuing peaceful nuclear energy but we're not pursuing nuclear weapons, and we are willing to be part of a internationally verified structure so that all other countries in the world know they are not pursuing nuclear weapons, then, in fact, they can improve relations, improve their economy. And we should test that.

Obama also stated that the Iranians are a year or more away, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently said Iran is now 6 months way from producing a nuclear weapon. There are media reports that Obama and Netanyahu have a difficult relationship regarding Iran's "alleged" nuclear weapons program. But a recent meeting between the two confirms how much they agree on Iran. Netanyahu and Obama met with reporters a day before Netanyahu was scheduled to speak at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that "It is Israel's firm belief that if Iran continues to advance its nuclear program during negotiations, the sanctions should be strengthened" according to Reuters. The report also confirmed how Netanyahu and Obama agree on the use of force militarily:

Even as Netanyahu called for a “credible military threat” to pressure Iran to comply, Obama insisted: “We take no options off the table, including military options, in terms of making sure that we do not have nuclear weapons in Iran.”

The Obama administration is ignoring the facts of his own intelligence agencies who confirmed in a March 23rd, 2012 Reuters special report titled ‘*Intel shows Iran nuclear threat not imminent.*’ The report stated:

The United States, European allies and even Israel generally agree on three things about Iran’s nuclear program: Tehran does not have a bomb, has not decided to build one, and is probably years away from having a deliverable nuclear warhead.

Those conclusions, drawn from extensive interviews with current and former U.S. and European officials with access to intelligence on Iran, contrast starkly with the heated debate surrounding a possible Israeli strike on Tehran’s nuclear facilities.

The report also said:

Reuters has learned that in late 2006 or early 2007, U.S. intelligence intercepted telephone and email communications in which Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a leading figure in Iran’s nuclear program, and other scientists complained that the weaponization program had been stopped.

The United States and Israel will try to sabotage the upcoming talks between Iran and the US in Geneva. In testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on March 12, 2013, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper’s *Worldwide Threat Assessment* stated the following:

We assess Iran is developing nuclear capabilities to enhance its security, prestige, and regional influence and give it the ability to develop nuclear weapons, should a decision be made to do so. We do not know if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons.

Tehran has developed technical expertise in a number of areas—including uranium enrichment, nuclear reactors, and ballistic missiles—from which it could draw if it decided to build missile-deliverable nuclear weapons. These technical advancements strengthen our assessment that Iran has the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to eventually produce nuclear weapons. This makes the central issue its political will to do so.

Of particular note, Iran has made progress during the past year that better positions it to produce weapons-grade uranium (WGU) using its declared facilities and uranium stockpiles, should it choose to do so. Despite this progress, we assess Iran could not divert safeguarded material and produce a weapon-worth of WGU before this activity is discovered.

We judge Iran’s nuclear decision-making is guided by a cost-benefit approach, which offers the international community opportunities to influence Tehran. Iranian leaders undoubtedly consider Iran’s security, prestige and influence, as well as the international political and security environment, when making decisions about its nuclear program. In

this context, we judge that Iran is trying to balance conflicting objectives. It wants to advance its nuclear and missile capabilities and avoid severe repercussions—such as a military strike or regime threatening sanctions.

Back In April 2010, Senate Committee on Armed Services hearing with Defense Intelligence Agency director Ronald Burgess stated on record that *“Iran’s military strategy is designed to defend against external threats, particularly from the United States and Israel”* and *“to slow an invasion and force a diplomatic solution to hostilities.”* Netanyahu said *“Israel will never acquiesce to nuclear arms in the hands of a rogue regime that repeatedly promises to wipe us off the map”* Again in 2012, Burgess explained to a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that *“Iran is unlikely to initiate or intentionally provoke a conflict or launch a preemptive attack.”* Prime Minister Netanyahu discredit’s Iran’s leadership by saying President Rouhani is *“a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a wolf who thinks he can pull the wool over the eyes of the international community.”* Obama’s view on Iran’s is in line with Netanyahu’s assessment. He told the Associated Press:

Our assessment continues to be a year or more away. And in fact, actually, our estimate is probably more conservative than the estimates of Israeli intelligence services.

So we share a lot of intelligence with Israelis. I think Prime Minister Netanyahu understandably is very skeptical about Iran, given the threats that they’ve made repeatedly against Israel, given the aid that they’ve given to organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas that have fired rockets into Israel. If I were the Prime Minister of Israel, I would be very wary as well of any kind of talk from the Iranians.

But what I’ve said to Prime Minister Netanyahu is that the entire point of us setting up sanctions and putting pressure on the Iranian economy was to bring them to the table in a serious way to see if we can resolve this issue diplomatically. And we’ve got to test that. We’re not going to take a bad deal. We are going to make sure that we verify any agreement that we might strike.

But it is very much in not only the United States’ interest but also Israel’s interest to see if we can resolve this without some sort of military conflict. And so we now have the time to have those serious conversations, and we’ll be able to measure how serious the Iranians are.

Main Stream Media outlet CNN reported that Obama said that he and Netanyahu have a *“good working relationship”* despite past reports that their relationship was rather difficult in terms of the Iranian problem they both shared.

On Monday, Obama said he has a “good working relationship” with Netanyahu, and reaffirmed the U.S. bond with the Israeli people. “Our unshakeable bond with the Israel people is stronger than ever,” he said. “Our commitment to Israel’s security is stronger than ever.”

Both leaders said Iran was a key topic. “Iran is committed to Israel’s destruction, so for Israel, the ultimate test of a future agreement with Iran is whether or not Iran

dismantles its military nuclear program,” Netanyahu said. “That’s the bottom line.” Obama said that if Iran wants sanctions relief, it will have to meet “the highest standards of verifications.”

“It is absolutely clear that words are not sufficient,” Obama said on Monday. “We have to have actions that give the international community confidence that, in fact, they are meeting their international obligations fully and that they are not in a position to have a nuclear weapon.”

Obama and Netanyahu want a war with Iran, although going to war with Syria proved to be a difficult task thanks to Russia’s efforts on preventing a devastating war. The US and Israeli governments will try to discredit Iran’s new leader because the last obstacles to control the Middle East is Syria and Iran. Both countries are targeted by the west, regardless of the Iranian government’s attempt at diplomacy with the West. Israel wants to expand its power in the Middle East with US backing. The Obama administration will make it difficult for the Iranian government to prove that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. Israel wants war and so does the United States. Clapper did say that “generally speaking,” the United States and Israel are “*on the same page*” when it comes to Iran. That is a statement coming from an intelligence official that is proven to be a fact. The US/Israeli Alliance is “*Unshakable*”, that is Obama’s repeated message to the world. Expect the upcoming Geneva talks to hit a wall, and that wall is the US and Israeli Alliance.

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