

Obama, Cameron, Netanyahu Push Thermonuclear World War III

by Jeffrey Steinberg

March 20—In the aftermath of back-to-back Washington summits, President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are all dancing on the edge of thermonuclear war and the potential extinction of the human race. To say anything less would be to lie in the face of the greatest threat to humanity in recorded history.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Washington visit in early March, highlighted by his three-hour Oval Office session with President Obama and speeches by the two leaders at the annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) convention, was widely reported in the American mainstream media as a victory for the U.S. President. Obama ostensibly stood his ground and insisted that Israel must cancel any plans for preventive military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities—at least until the completion of the pending P5+1 (UN Security Council Permanent Five plus Germany) talks and the pending imposition of a Western embargo on Iranian oil exports and access to the international banking system.

Unfortunately for the world, nothing could be further from the truth. According to one senior U.S. intelligence official with direct access to the Obama White House, the President gave Bibi everything but the kitchen sink. Behind closed doors, Obama gave Israel precisely the added military assets needed to carry out

an Israeli attack on Iran, according to the source. These assets, according to an Israeli Ministry of Defense source, include additional mid-air refueling tanker planes, upgraded U.S. bunker-buster bombs to penetrate hardened Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordo and elsewhere, and jamming equipment to penetrate Iran's formidable air-defense systems.

According to the Israeli source, President Obama also agreed to work with Israel to secure access to countries bordering on Iran for SAR (search-and-rescue) teams that would be activated to rescue downed Israeli pilots. According to the source, who traveled with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak to Washington recently, the United States might even provide Israel with U.S. Special Forces to abet SAR operations. According to a retired U.S. four-star general, who served for decades in the Middle East, Israel already has secret military training teams in Azerbaijan. The general did not rule out Israeli efforts to access Azeri air bases for an Iran attack, which would cut 800 miles off the distance.

The Israeli source also asserted that the United States and Israel are already at war with Iran. He described seamless cyber-warfare collaboration between the two countries, explaining that Barak has told his cyber-war teams that he wants eight hours of quiet—meaning a massive disruption of Iran's power grid during an initial bombing assault.

The senior U.S. intelligence source suggested that

the Israeli report that the U.S. was about to deliver two new Boeing mid-air refueling tankers could be accurate, but that these would be on commercial contract, and not from the Pentagon's arsenal (the U.S. Air Force no longer purchases the Boeing tankers, following a contract scandal several years ago).

Media Leaks

The reports from these confidential sources have been buttressed in recent days by media leaks, reflecting an intense behind-the-scenes policy battle in both the United States and Israel over the existential issue of war versus diplomacy.

On March 15, Aluf Benn, an editor of the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*, reported that, since his return from Washington, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been boasting that he received a green light from President Obama for an attack. Drawing the parallel between Israel's 1967 preemptive attack on Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and its 1981 bombing of Iraq's Osiraq nuclear reactor, Benn reported that Obama and Netanyahu agreed to publicly disagree over an Israeli attack, on Iran while secretly reaching accord.

That being the case, Benn wrote, then Netanyahu is hinting that in his Washington visit, he received Obama's tacit approval for an Israeli attack against Iran under the guise of opposition. Obama will speak out against it, but act for it, just as the past U.S. administrations publicly condemned the settlements in the territories, but allowed their expansion. And in this manner Netanyahu summarized the visit: "I presented before my hosts the examples that I just noted before you, and I believe that the first objective that I presented to fortify the recognition of Israel's right to defend itself—I think that objective has been achieved."

Benn concluded: "To use Netanyahu's 'duck' allegory, what looks like a preparation for war, acts like a preparation for war, and quacks like a preparation for war, is a preparation for war, and not just a 'bluff' or a



White House/Pete Souza

During Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent tête-à-tête at the White House with President Obama, Bibi got just about everything he came for, despite Obama's public statements to the contrary.

diversion tactic.' Until his trip to Washington, Netanyahu and his supporters in the media refrained from such explicit wording and made do with hints. But since he's been back, Netanyahu has issued an emergency call-up for himself and the Israeli public."

Several days after the Benn story, *Ma'ariv's* top national security correspondent Ben Caspit reported that, for the first time, Netanyahu had gotten the endorsement of a majority of members of his security cabinet for an attack on Iran. Caspit claimed that, since his return from Washington, Netanyahu has been meeting individually with all 14 members of the security cabinet, and now has the informal endorsement of at least eight members. So far, Netanyahu has not formally convened the security cabinet to seek official authorization, but that could happen at any moment.

In response to the accelerating threat of war, the U.S. military and intelligence establishment, which is nearly unanimous in its opposition to any Israeli preventive strike, fired back through a series of leaked stories.

On March 18, James Risen, the national security correspondent of the *New York Times*, published a front-page story, providing previously undisclosed details of the 2010 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program. That update of the November 2007 NIE upheld the conclusion that Iran had abandoned pursuit of a nuclear weapon in late 2003, and had not resumed work on weaponization. According to Risen, the completion of the 2010 NIE was delayed when new intelligence, drawn from intercepts of conversations among leading Iranian officials, suggested that Iran might be preparing to resume work on building an actual bomb. After months of in-depth probing and re-evaluations, the 16 agencies that comprise the U.S. intelligence community concluded that Iran had not resumed bomb research.

Risen also reported that the U.S. evaluation, contained in the still-classified NIE, is shared by the Mossad and other Israeli intelligence services. This same message has been delivered, repeatedly, by top U.S. military and intelligence officials in public testimony. Both Gen. Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, have testified before Congress that Iran's leaders have not yet decided to go for a nuclear weapon.

Motivated To Attack

A senior U.S. intelligence official explained, on condition of anonymity, that Israel's leaders are motivated to attack Iran at this point, despite the recognition that there is no threat of an imminent Iranian nuclear weapons breakout. According to the official, the immediate concern for Netanyahu and Barak is Iran's advanced work on ballistic missiles and precision guidance systems. Iran has developed solid-fuel missiles that can reach targets in Israel, with an improved degree of accuracy, carrying conventional explosives. Once Iran has a large enough arsenal of these longer-range missiles, it will have a devastating, albeit conventional, retaliatory capacity to punish Israel for any preventive attack. It is *this* factor, the source argued, that is driving Israel to attack Iran sooner rather than later. When Israeli Defense Minister Barak refers to a closing window of access to select targets in Iran, he is not actually referring to Iran's ability to harden the targets underground or deep within mountains. He is referring to Iran's ability to devastate Israeli population centers with conventional missile strikes.

In recent weeks, several top-rank American military strategists have warned that any Israeli attack on Iran will lead to thermonuclear war. Harlan Ullman, known as the author of the shock-and-awe doctrine adopted by then-Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Colin Powell, in the 1991 Operation Desert Storm against Iraq, wrote about the imminent danger of thermonuclear war in a highly polemical article, carried by UPI, titled "Dr. Strangelove, Israel and Iran." Earlier, Gen. Barry McCaffrey had also warned that any military strike by Israel against Iran would lead inevitably to nuclear war.



White House/Pete Souza

The slavishly Anglophile Obama, shown here exchanging beer bottles with Prime Minister Cameron, is ready to start World War III, on behalf of his British Imperial masters.

The day after the Risen article was published, the *New York Times* again took the war-avoidance side in another leak, based on a recent classified war-simulation exercise. Pentagon correspondents Mark Mazzetti and Thom Shanker provided a detailed account of a recently concluded two-week war game, *Internal Look*, which began with an Israeli bombing attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. According to the authors, the war game played out a narrative in which the United States found itself pulled into the conflict, after Iranian missiles struck a Navy warship in the Persian Gulf, killing about 200 Americans, according to officials with knowledge of the exercise. The United States then retaliated by carrying out its own strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. In the end, the war game reinforced for military officials the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of a strike by Israel, and a counterstrike by Iran.

'British Brains, American Brawn'

While the Obama-Netanyahu summit drew far greater attention and far more speculation about the actual substance, the two-day love-fest between President Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron may have been far more significant in escalating the drive for global confrontation. While President Obama's personal interactions with Netanyahu have been frictional, the President is a slavish Anglophile, committed to the old Winston Churchill vision that with

British brains and American brawn, we can rule the world. In the current context, the British monarchy is fully deployed through their puppet Obama on a two-track policy. Either Russia and China, the two leading thermonuclear-weapons powers in Eurasia, capitulate to Anglo-American demands for full participation in the bailout of the doomed global financial system, and the de facto imposition of radical population reduction, or the United States and Britain will launch preventive thermonuclear war, knowing full well that Russia and China will retaliate with devastating thermonuclear assaults of their own, wiping out most of humanity.

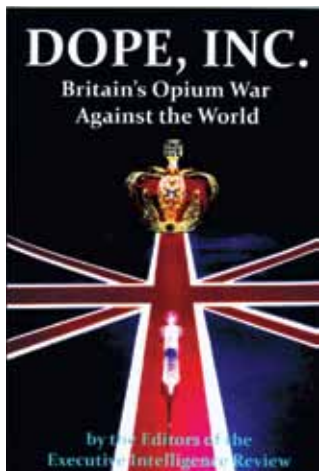
That is the desperate posture of the British Empire, facing the imminent total disintegration of its global financial system.

It is for this reason that Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly stated that the only durable war-avoidance option on the table is the removal of President Obama from office by impeachment, or by invoking the 25th Amendment. Anything short of that puts all of humanity in immediate jeopardy.

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