

## ‘There Are Worse Things Than an Iranian Bomb’

Jan. 7—Former Israeli Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin (in office 2005-11) has issued a powerful indictment of Prime Minister Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, for attempting to lead Israel into a war with Iran, based solely on “ego and messianic notions.”

In an [interview](#) with *Yedioth Ahronoth*, which was translated into English by Ynetnews.com, and posted on Jan. 4, Diskin’s intervention seems to be aimed at securing Netanyahu’s defeat in the Jan. 22 elections.

The interview was conducted by Dror Moreh, who produced the 2012 documentary “The Gatekeepers,” based on interviews with the last six Shin Bet chiefs. In it, Diskin is quoted saying, “After all these years of fighting terror and seeing so much death and killing in battlefields, on Israeli streets, in refugee camps and in villages in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon—there comes a time when you realize you must do everything, everything, to find some other way to talk and compromise so as to secure a better future for our children.”

Most striking about Diskin’s statement is how it echoes the historic speech of slain Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin at the signing of the Oslo Accords with PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat at the White House, on Sept. 14, 1993, where he said, “We who have fought against you, the Palestinians, we say to you today in a loud and a clear voice: ‘Enough of blood and tears. Enough!’”

### You Can’t Win Wars with Big Talk

Asked by *Yedioth Ahronoth* for his analysis of Netanyahu, Diskin replies, “Netanyahu has a bunch of things going on simultaneously—ideology and a deep sense of royal or elite entitlement alongside deep fears and insecurities when it comes to making decisions. He doesn’t have a solid enough core on which people can count.... You can’t win wars with big talk and

pathos, in which Bibi is undoubtedly the best.”

Diskin is blunt on the madness of an Israeli strike on Iran: “Think of what would happen.... We could be attacked by Hezbollah, by the Islamic Jihad in the Strip, and of course the Iranians would retaliate. Once that happens, we’d have to face rockets from Lebanon, Iran, and the Gaza Strip.”

As for the competence of the Netanyahu-Barak duo: “Do we really believe in the ability of these two, who can hardly run a military operation in the face of Gaza rockets, to get us into this scenario with Iran and also get us out of it?”

And, he adds, “Even if, God forbid, the Iranians have a bomb—which is not at all something I want—it’s still not the worst-case scenario for Israel. It’s awful and we must do everything we can to prevent it, but I don’t see it as the worst. There are worse things that can happen. To me, international conflicts are much worse than an Iranian bomb.”

### An Illegal Decision

Diskin also revealed that there had been a meeting in which the prime minister and the defense minister tried to convince the heads of the Mossad, Shin Bet, and the IDF, “to prepare the military and security systems into launching an operation, when clearly such an operation would mean going to war.” This led to “a very harsh argument with Bibi and Barak.”

“We got up and said that it was an illegal decision, that they couldn’t give us such instructions because it meant that you’re preparing the army for war. And going to war is a decision that only the government can make.... So we had a very heated debate.... The whole thing reeked; and after we protested, many ministers started protesting.... I fear that there are stages where people’s egos and all sorts of messianic notions can drag us to places we never meant to get to.”

Diskin said that Israeli citizens have good reasons to be concerned, adding, “The public must take into account that people such as Meir Dagan and Yuval Diskin—both not known as ‘doves’ on the security level, and people like Gabi Ashkenazi, Uri Sagi, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak—first-rate security officials—are all voicing concern about this move. Suddenly we’re all cowards? No, it comes from a profound lack of trust in these two people and the moves they lead.”