

Transcription

Prime Minister Netanyahu CNN Interview
"State of the Union"

EMBARGOED UNTIL 16:00 ISRAEL TIME, Sunday, September 16, 2012

Netanyahu: I think the issue is how to prevent Iran from completing its nuclear weapons program. They're moving very rapidly to completing the enrichment of the uranium that they need to produce a nuclear bomb. In six months or so they'll be 90% of the way there. I think it's important to place a red line before Iran, and I think that actually reduces the chance of military conflict, because if they know there's a point, a stage in their enrichment or other nuclear activities that they cannot cross because they'll face consequences, I think they will actually not cross it. That's been proved time and again. President Kennedy put a red line before the Soviets in the Cuban missile crisis and he was criticized for it, but it actually pushed back the world from conflict and maybe purchased decades of peace.

There wasn't such a red line before Saddam Hussein, on the eve of the Gulf War, when he invaded Kuwait, maybe that war could have been avoided. I think Iran too, has received some clear red lines on a number of issues, and they backed off from them. I think as Iran gets closer and closer to its completion of its nuclear program, I think it's important to put a red line before them and that's something we should discuss with the United States.

Netanyahu: Well, this is something that I'd like to first discuss with the United States, but the principle of the red line that has been so much discussed I think is a way to reduce the chances of conflict, of military conflict and I think the Iranians are very keen on it. Look, they're getting a lot closer. It's not what I say, it's not a question of intelligence, it's a question of something that is verifiable. The IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, just gave us a report saying that Iran has rushed ahead. It basically feels it can proceed without interference, and they have to know that they can't. I think that if they know, there's a good chance they won't cross that line.

Netanyahu: I think that the statement by the President that he's determined to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons is very important and one that we appreciate and obviously share. I think that when he says that implicit in that is that they'll stop before they get to a nuclear weapon which means he'll draw a red line somewhere. And I think it's important to communicate it to them. I wouldn't bet the security of the world and my own country's future from a country that threatens our annihilation, murders civilians en masse in Syria and brutalizes its own people, I wouldn't bet the future on intelligence for a simple reason. American intelligence and Israeli intelligence that cooperate together have had wonderful successes in saving lives and alerting our people, but we've also had our failures, both of us. You just marked 9/11. That wasn't seen. None of us, neither Israel or the United States saw Iran building this massive nuclear bunker under a mountain. For two years they pursued it without our

knowledge. So I think the one thing we do know is what they're doing right now? We know that they're enriching this material, we know that in 6-7 months they'll have got to covered 90% of the way for an atomic bomb material, and I think that we should count on the things we do know in setting the red line, but again, the details of this is something that we're discussing in close consultations with the United States.

Netanyahu: You think so Candy? That's like... It's not legitimate. This is a country that talks about, denies the Holocaust, promises to wipe out Israel, is engaged in terror throughout the world. It's like Timothy McVeigh walking into a shop in Oklahoma City and say: I'd like to tend my garden, I'd like to buy some fertilizer. How much do you want? I don't know, 20,000 lbs. Come on, we know that they are working towards a weapon. We know that. It's not something that we surmise, we have absolute certainty that they are advancing towards the nuclear program. Once they get that material, enriched material out, you could weaponize it in a very small workshop, probably the size of your studio in a country that is huge, it's like bigger than Germany, bigger than France. You're unlikely to discover it and I wouldn't rely on it. We can place clear limits, I think it corners them. I think it assures that at least they'll know that there's a place or a stage that they can't cross. And I think it's the best way to ensure peace or a peaceful solution.

Netanyahu: First of all, I talked about the certainty of their enrichment program, I didn't talk about the other elements, and I spoke about the difficulty of knowing other things but we have no difficulty as the IAEA report just told us about what they are doing in their enrichment program. That we know. For sure. And that's the only thing we know for sure that is verifiable and accessible. We know that. As far as the US and Israel, obviously we have different capability, you're a big country, you are several thousand miles away, you have stronger military capabilities. We're a smaller country, we're more vulnerable. They threaten our very annihilation. So obviously we have different capabilities and different clocks. But in terms of what is happening is Iran is getting closer and closer to completing its work for its first atomic bomb. The differences between us and our capabilities are becoming less and less important because Iran is fast approaching a point where it could disappear from our capability of stopping them, our capability means not only Israel's.

Netanyahu: We had a good conversation. I'm not going to get into the details. I respect the President; I respect also the confidence of our conversation. But I think that this is a matter of urgency and people should understand that, that's what guiding it. What's guiding me, contrary to what I've read in the United States is not the United States' political calendar, it's the Iranian nuclear calendar. And the Iranian centrifuges that are charging ahead simply are not taking time off for the American elections. I wish the Americans would shut down the centrifuges and then we wouldn't have to talk about it. But they don't. In fact they do the very opposite. That's what's driving the urgency of this, and again, we have close consultations with the United States on this issue.

Netanyahu: I think we should have a red line communicated to Iran. That's what I would say. I think it's vital, I know that people value flexibility. I think that's important, but I think at this late stage of the game, I think Iran needs to see clarity. I'm not sure I would have said this three years ago, two years ago, one year ago, but as we get closer and closer and closer to the end game, I think we have to establish

that. That's becoming important because you have to just think about, you see the Middle East, you see these fanatics, storming your embassies, and I want to send my condolences to the American people for the loss of that extraordinary ambassador, and his extraordinary colleagues. We sympathize as no other people does, with the United States. You know that as we face the possibility they are a regime that is guided by the same fanaticism that have nuclear weapons, it's become something very urgent for all of us to make sure that they don't get there. If you want to make sure they don't get there, make sure that they know that there is a line they shouldn't cross, because otherwise they'll cross it, and they'll get there.

Netanyahu: Look, I know that people are trying to draw me into the American election, and I'm not going to do that. But I will say that we value, we cherish the bipartisan support for Israel in the United States, and we're supported by Democrats and Republicans alike. You know, when I spoke at the Congress a year ago, I spoke about Israel being America's most reliable, it's only real reliable democratic ally in the Middle East, and I think people can understand that today even more. I was cheered by Democrats and Republicans alike. This is not... In fact I even got a standing ovation for it. This is not an electoral issue. It is not based on any electoral consideration. I think that there is a common interest of all Americans, of all political persuasions to stop Iran. This is a regime that is giving vent to the worst impulses that you see right now in the Middle East. They deny the rights of women, deny democracy, brutalize their own people, don't give freedom of religion. All the things that you see now in these mobs storming the American embassy is what you'll see with a regime that would have atomic bombs. You cannot have such people have atomic bombs. I believe that's as important for Republicans as it is for Democrats, as important for Democrats as it is for Republicans, as important for President Obama as important as it is for Mitt Romney. It's important for the future of our world.

Netanyahu: Thank you.