

RELEASE IN PART B6

**From:** H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 1, 2012 1:10 PM  
**To:** 'Russorv@state.gov'  
**Subject:** Fw: H: fyi. see poll numbers, too. Sid

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**From:** sbwhoeop [redacted] [mailto:sbwhoeop [redacted]]  
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<http://andrewsullivan.thedailybeast.com/2012/02/obamas-most-dangerous-gop-opponent-netanyahu.html>



Andrew Sullivan

29 Feb 2012 12:08 PM

## Obama's Most Dangerous GOP Opponent: Netanyahu

This is disturbing news:

Israeli officials say they won't warn the U.S. if they decide to launch a pre-emptive strike against Iranian nuclear facilities, according to one U.S. intelligence official familiar with the discussions. The pronouncement, delivered in a series of private, top-level conversations, sets a tense tone ahead of meetings in the coming days at the White House and Capitol Hill.

What it amounts to is a formal declaration that, if the US attempts at any point to differ seriously with Israel's far right, the alliance is over. That's after the most serious sanctions ever imposed on Iran, a covert war, and greater isolation for the Tehran regime both at home and abroad than at any point since 1979. Meanwhile, we get news analysis from the NYT that minimizes the potentially catastrophic global consequences of an Israeli-initiated war against another Muslim nation. But even the minimum is alarming:

Administration, military and intelligence officials say Iran would most likely choose anonymous, indirect attacks against nations it views as supporting Israeli policy, in the hope of offering Tehran at least public deniability. Iran also might try to block, even temporarily, the Strait of Hormuz to further unsettle oil markets. An increase in car bombs set off against civilian targets in world capitals would also be possible. And Iran would almost certainly smuggle high-powered explosives across its border into Afghanistan, where they could be planted along roadways and set off by surrogate forces to kill and maim American and NATO troops — much as it did in Iraq during the peak of violence there.

So Israel would, without warning, put US troops and Western civilians at direct risk of terrorist assaults, would likely tip Pakistan into even more outright hostility to any cooperation with the West, and rally the Iranian opposition to its foul regime. It would destroy the global coalition against Iran, increase even further its own global isolation, and only set back Iranian nuclear development for a few years - and make it, or a Third World War based on religion, inevitable. My own fear is that global recruitment for Jihad would boom as well - reversing all the gains of the last three years. The war would also galvanize Islamist parties in the new Arab democracies, giving Israel more ammunition in blocking any rapprochement between the US and the Muslim world. And following this essential blackmail, the Israeli government would doubtless rally much of the US Congress, the entire GOP, its media outlets (like Fox, and the Washington Post), and a key part of the Democratic fundraising machinery to side entirely with Israel against the US president.

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I don't think you can understand the Republican strategy for this election without factoring in a key GOP player, Benjamin Netanyahu. He already has core members of the US Congress siding openly with him against the US president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman - like McCain, Lieberman and Butters. Netanyahu's war would be designed to rile up not only his own neo-fascist base, but also encourage American evangelical voters to turn out against Obama, the "anti-Christ", while other Greater Israel fanatics, like Sheldon Adelson, keep bankrolling as many Greater Israel GOP nominees as they can. A global war which polarizes America and the world is exactly what Netanyahu wants. And it is exactly what the GOP needs to cut through Obama's foreign policy advantage in this election. Because it is only through war, crisis and polarization that extremists can mobilize the emotions that keep them in power. They need war to win. Here's a prediction. Netanyahu, in league and concert with Romney, Santorum and Gingrich, will make his move to get rid of Obama soon. And he will be more lethal to this president than any of his domestic foes.

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## Obama's Most Dangerous GOP Opponent: Netanyahu, Ctd

Some new details on the Israeli prime minister's recruitment of US senators to push back against their own president and chairman of the JCOS:

Netanyahu and his advisers briefed a group of senators and senior congressmen during the past two weeks on the Iranian issue, and asked them to pressure Obama on the matter. Last week, Netanyahu met a group of five senior senators over lunch, headed by Sen. John McCain, who ran four years ago against Obama for president. Netanyahu reportedly told the senators he was not interfering in U.S. politics and expected U.S. officials not to interfere in Israeli politics either.

So Netanyahu gets McCain - the president's last electoral opponent - to make the following public statement:

"There should be no daylight between America and Israel in our assessment of the [Iranian] threat. Unfortunately there clearly is some."

And the "unfortunately" is clearly, in McCain's view, Obama's fault.

What to make of all this? I'd say, as I did earlier today, it's a further escalation of Netanyahu's attempt to use US domestic politics to back a war on Iran. First we get McCain et al on Israeli soil backing the Israeli prime minister against the US president and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Then we get the report that Israel is preparing to strike alone. Now we hear via Haaretz that Netanyahu is demanding that Obama threaten a US military strike if Iran does not back down on its secluded nuclear research, rather than repeat the "all options are on the table" diplo-speak. Could this confusing set of signals have something to do with this:

A new poll of Israeli public opinion found surprisingly low levels of support for a military strike against Iran -- and especially if Israel has to go it alone. Just 19 percent of Israelis believe that Israel should strike Iran's nuclear facilities if it must do so without American support. A significantly higher number -- 42 percent -- support a military strike if Israel has American support. Thirty-four percent do not support a military strike at all.

So Israelis are deeply conflicted on this - something you won't find reported every day on the op-ed page of the Washington Post. That's why Netanyahu desperately needs US cover for an attack; and is furious he cannot simply push them around as he was once wont to do. Nonetheless, he has a united Republican front in Romney, Santorum and Gingrich, funded by Greater Israel fanatics like Sheldon Adelson, and in desperate need of a way to ignite the Christianist base. He will have a chunk of Democrats as well - and next week's AIPAC conference to beat the drums for war. He also has the potential to send oil to \$7 a gallon by election day - and tip Europe and the world into both a new terror crisis and a deeper, longer recession. All of this is leverage to get Obama to do something of enormous risk to the Middle East, the West and the wider world, and launch a war that America, rather than Israel, would have to own.

That's the card Netanyahu will come to Washington to play against the president next week. It's not a weak one. But it's a brittle one, given Israeli public opinion, the huge potential costs and minimal security benefits.

One can only hope Obama has the cool to respond: "Remember Suez, prime minister. Remember Suez."