

NO AGREEMENT ON IRAN & PALESTINIANS



DEBKAFfile Special Report

May 18/09. US president Barak Obama stood by his demand for a Palestinian state while Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu continued to avoid this formula in their talks at the White House Monday, May 18, their first since both took office. Still the atmosphere in the three-and-a-half hour conversation was friendly and earnest as [the two agreed to disagree](#).

Obama stressed that a nuclear-armed Iran would be a threat not only to Israel and the US but a destabilizing factor for the world and the region. However, he said he is in the process of reaching out to Iran and is confident he can persuade its leaders that a nuclear bomb is not in their interest either. He refused to set a deadline for their dialogue, and spoke of a few months. These talks can't go on forever while Iran moves ahead with its nuclear program, he said adding: "At the end of the year we'll see where we stand."

Netanyahu was less sanguine: **"A nuclear-armed Iran which calls for Israel's destruction is unacceptable and would give terrorists a nuclear umbrella."**

The US president called on Israel to stick to the road map as "ratified at Annapolis" (which Netanyahu has rejected). However hard this is, he said, Israel must stop settlement activity. The Palestinians must fight terror. Obama pledged US involvement in peace talks as a strong partner.

Netanyahu said he was ready to start talks with the Palestinians immediately. He wanted the Palestinians to rule themselves, [but peace means they must recognize Israel as a Jewish state with the right to defend itself and live in security](#).

The US president remarked that Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia should be constructively involved in the Israel-Palestinian peace track and do more to develop relations with Israel.

Following the White House summit, Netanyahu will hold talks with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and members of Congress.

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US-ISRAEL SUMMIT SHADOWED BY OBAMA'S SOFT STAND ON IRANIAN ENRICHMENT

Iran has consistently fooled international nuclear monitors

May 19/09. **DEBKAF***file's* Washington sources report that the gap between US president Barack Obama and Israel prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Iran was wider even than on the Palestinian issue. Overshadowing their outwardly easy conversation was the US president's growing inclination to meet Iran halfway on uranium enrichment and call off UN and American sanctions if Tehran allows international monitoring of the process.

Our intelligence sources report that Obama is seriously considering taking up the Anglo-German proposal for an international monitoring mechanism strict enough to preclude Iran's attainment of weapons-grade enriched uranium.

The president was convinced by American intelligence and nuclear experts that this can be done. **He also believes that nothing will persuade Tehran to cede its right to enrichment activity on its soil.**

Israeli intelligence and military experts take the opposite view. They believe the Anglo-German plan gives Iran the perfect cover for concealing its race for a nuclear bomb, a misgiving shared by the political and military establishments of the moderate Arab governments in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

It is their view that if Obama adopts this plan, **Iran can be sure of arriving at a nuclear weapon capability by the end of 2010.**

This dispute did not come up in the Obama-Netanyahu conversation. Both skated around the Iranian nuclear threat separately without touching on options outside diplomacy. The US president said he was in the process of "reaching out" to Iran and **was confident he could persuade Tehran's rulers that a nuclear weapon was not in their best interest if they wanted to be fully accepted as part of the international community.** He did not mention uranium enrichment or a military option against Iran. Neither would he accept a deadline for negotiations with Tehran, except to say that at the end of the year, "we will see where we stand."

But asked later to comment, **Netanyahu said: "We will defend ourselves."**

Seen from outside Washington, by Iran's neighbors, Israeli and Arab alike, **President Obama has made Iran the gift of seven clear months for developing its nuclear capabilities and enrichment undisturbed.**

The only thing left to the Israeli prime minister was to commend "the president's firm commitment that Iran will not attain a nuclear weapon."

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