

Israel: The Real Lone Star State

Written by Gadi Adelman
Monday, 23 January 2012 01:19



The largest ever joint US-Israeli military scheduled for April has been cancelled. Washington was blamed for postponing and cancelling the event, but it turns out it was Israel all along.

What would have been the largest-scale war games in the two countries' military cooperation history with thousands of U.S. and Israeli Army servicemen, dozens of ships and deck-based aircraft, was called off on January 15th.

The 'Austere Challenge 2012' was more than just war games. Aside from its size and importance it came at a time when both the U.S. and Israel are beyond being 'concerned' about

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Iran.

The missile defense exercise would have had the Israeli Arrow anti-ballistic missile system tested together with the American Patriot system along with the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) missile systems.

The drill would have included the firing of new missiles as well as 3000 American and Israeli soldiers participating together, the largest ever held jointly by the two countries.

Originally the exercise was just postponed and reported as such by both the U.S. and Israel media outlets. Who was really behind the postponement varied depending on which report one read.

Arutz Sheva (Israel National News) [reported](#) on January 15th,

Israel announced Sunday it is postponing the largest-ever anti-missile military exercise with the United States for “technical” reasons days after President Barack Obama called Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to reiterate his “unshakeable” commitment to Israel’s security.

The White House did not elaborate, but the president reportedly told the Prime Minister to back off any plans for attacking Iran.

The report continued with an implication that it would be held 3 months later than planned,

A delay of another three months will give the Obama administration additional time to try to prove its sanctions against Iran are working, hopefully precluding the need for a military strike to stop Iran’s nuclear development.

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One day later the NY Times [reported](#) it was more of a joint decision,

Israel and the United States have agreed to postpone major joint missile-defense exercises that had been scheduled for the spring because of regional tensions and instability, according to Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman.

The move appears intended to avoid further escalating tensions with Iran, which is under intense international diplomatic and economic pressure to curb its nuclear program out of fears that it is seeking to make a nuclear bomb.

Some reports stated that it was due to Israel and "budgetary" reasons but those were quickly denied by Israel. Then reports started to come out that it was Obama and Washington that cancelled the drill.

Given the way the Obama administration has dealt with Israel over the past three years as well as the U.S. administrations handling of Iran that story seemed plausible, but now it seems it was Prime Minister Netanyahu that called off the event.

The Debka File website [reported](#) on January 17th,

"Joint US-Israel drill called off by Netanyahu, to Washington's surprise"

Sources disclose exclusively that, contrary to recent reports published in Washington, Jerusalem - and this site too - it was Israel Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, not the Obama administration, who decided to call off the biggest ever joint US-Israeli military exercise Austere Challenge 12 scheduled for April 2012.

Washington was taken aback by the decision. It was perceived as a mark of Israel's disapproval for the administration's apparent hesitancy in going through with the only tough sanctions with any chance of working against Iran's nuclear weapon program.

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Debka listed 4 reasons for Netanyahu's decision, in part,

1. Washington has taken no action against Iran's capture of the RQ-170 stealth drone on Dec. 4
2. Silence from Washington also greeted the start of 20-percent grade uranium enrichment at the underground Fordo facility near Qom when it was announced Jan. 9.
3. Three weeks ago, on Jan. 3 Lt. Gen. Ataollah Salehi, Iran's Army chief, announced that the aircraft carrier USS Stennis and other "enemy ships" would henceforth be barred from entering the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz . Yet since then, no US carrier has put this threat to the test by attempting a crossing. Tehran has been left to crow.
4. Even after approving sanctions on Iran's central bank and energy industry, the White House announced they would be introduced in stages in the course of the year. According to Israeli's calculus, another six months free of stiff penalties will give Iran respite for bringing its nuclear weapon program to a dangerous and irreversible level.

Given the current state of Iran's nuclear program and using a liberal timeline there is no doubt that Iran will have a nuclear weapon by years end and this something that Israel has stated it will not allow under any circumstances.

This only leaves Israel one way to deal with this threat and if the U.S. will not work with, let alone back them on any type of military intervention, Israel has no choice but to go about it on its own. It's truly a matter of survival.

Just this past Thursday the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had its first parachuted brigade training exercise in more than 15 years. Arutz Sheva reported,

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More than 1,000 paratroopers took part in the exercise, which required each paratrooper to jump from an IAF aircraft and immediately spring into a dynamic battlefield once on the ground.

The soldiers were required to use night vision equipment and the constellations overhead to navigate to their respective battalions. While carrying 60 kilograms (133 lb) of equipment, the soldiers took part in a march and a live-fire training exercise in which they ambushed hills and took over targets.

“This is a regimental parachuting exercise which will test the IDF’s ability to bring a whole brigade of warriors deep into the field,” one commander said.

He explained the reason the IDF is bringing back this type of exercise is so that it can be prepared for any possible scenario.

This is not a first for Israel by any stretch of the imagination. Israel [took out](#) the Iraqi nuclear plant in 1981 and the [Syrian](#) nuclear facility in 2007.

But this is different all together. Both Iraq and Syria had only one plant each and they were not underground. Most importantly, the proximity of both allowed Israel to fly there and back home safely. The distance to Iran and back would require either midair refueling or a stopover to refuel.

The one slight chance and I do emphasize slight chance, for Israel to stop in a neighboring country would be Saudi Arabia who no more wants a nuclear Iran than Israel does. However, even with a Saudi stop over the distance to Iran’s further known sites are still pushing the envelope of Israel’s flying capability to make there and return home.

Three possible flight routes to Iran all involve flying over countries that are hostile towards Israel or at the least would notify Iran of a pending attack. From the south Israel must fly over Jordan, Saudi Arabia and possibly Kuwait, from the north it would have to fly along the Syrian-Turkish

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border, a central flight would cross Jordan and Iraq.

Jordan and Turkey have already made it clear that they do not want their airspace to be used for an Israeli attack against Iran.



Guy Ben-Ari, a research fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. was [interviewed](#) back in 2009. Ben-Ari said the IAF (Israeli Air Force) has been buying and upgrading airplanes specifically for long-distance strikes such as a potential attack against Iran. At least 50 F-15 Raam and F-16 Soufa aircraft have been converted by installing extra fuel tanks for greater range and countermeasures to defeat radar and missiles.

Israel has the capability to refuel in midair as well, but there are so many other factors involved it is mind boggling. At over 1000 miles each way and avoiding detection so that no other country notifies Iran of a pending attack are just a few of the issues Israel would face on such an attack.

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Once Israel is within Iran's airspace you then have the problem of not only the amount of sites that would need to be destroyed, but the distance between them. Their locations and the terrain are another issue as well and that doesn't even begin to cover those sites that are underground.

The Natanz nuclear facility is mostly underground and reinforced with twenty-three meters of soil and concrete. Even with Israel's current GPS guided munitions it would require a minimum of three flyovers with the second and third attack using the cavity of the first to 'dig' deep enough to destroy the plant.

Achieving an attack of this sort would mean that Israeli planes would have to circle or remain in the area which then requires other aircraft to protect those dropping bombs. An attack of this magnitude would not be completed just by the air due to these factors as well as others I have not even touched on.

Israel does have submarines, at least three 1,925 ton Type 800 Dolphin class submarines built in Germany. According to the Global Security [website](#) ,

These submarines have the capacity to carry anti-ship missiles, mines, decoys and STN Atlas wire-guided DM2A3 torpedoes. The surface-to-surface missiles may include the submarine-launched Harpoon which delivers a 227 kilogram warhead to a range of 130 kilometers at high subsonic speed.

Some reports suggest that the submarines have a total of ten torpedo tubes -- six 533-millimeter and four 650-millimeter. Uniquely, the Soviet navy deployed the Type 65 heavy-weight torpedo using a 650-millimeter tube. The four larger 25.5 inch diameter torpedo tubes could be used to launch a long-range nuclear-capable submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM). According to some reports the submarines may be capable of carrying nuclear-armed Popeye Turbo cruise missiles, with a goal of deterring an enemy from trying to take out its nuclear weapons with a surprise attack.

Lastly, is the question of boots on the ground. The last thing Israel would want is to have to have actual troops on the ground that far from home.

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The only time in history Israel ever used troops in a country that did not border their own was in 1976 during 'Operation Thunderbolt', later re-named 'Operation Yonatan' in honor of the only soldier killed, Yonatan Netanyahu, The current Prime Ministers older brother.

That operation, a counter-terrorist hostage-rescue of 102 hostages was carried out by the "Sayaret Matkal" Special Forces of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). An Air France flight was hijacked by Palestinian and German terrorists and taken to Entebbe, near Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

The distance to the Entebbe Airport in Uganda from Israel was over 2500 miles each way and to this day is considered by military experts worldwide as one the greatest military missions in history. After 'Operation Yonatan', the United States military developed highly trained rescue teams that were modeled on the Entebbe rescue.

Even with all the cooperation and training that the U.S. military shares with Israel and visa-versa, this current administration does not want an attack on Iran, especially by Israel.

The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) on January 14,

President Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and other top officials have delivered a string of private messages to Israeli leaders warning about the dire consequences of a strike.

Stepping up the pressure, Mr. Obama spoke by telephone on Thursday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and U.S. Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will meet with Israeli military officials in Tel Aviv next week.

Yes, the U.S. is so concerned over a possible attack on Iran that Obama sent General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff to meet with Israeli leaders last Thursday.

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According to all reports, both American and Israeli, the Dempsey visit is an effort to convince Israel to give diplomacy and sanctions more time to stop Iran's nuclear program. Given the latest IAEA (The International Atomic Energy Agency) report, waiting will only result in Iran achieving their goal of nuclear weapons.

As the NY Times reminded us in their [article](#) 'U.S. General urges closer ties with Israel' just last week,

General Dempsey told Reuters in November that Israel and the United States had different perspectives and expectations. Asked whether Israel would alert the United States ahead of time if it chose to go forward with military action, he said he did not know.

Perhaps now with his visit to Israel he can answer that question, but either way it appears that Israel will end up going it alone, as they have done since 1948.

Or should I say since the time of King David, after all, even then with the Star of David on their flag they were truly the first 'Lone Star State'.