



Report: Intelligence Warns Israel is now an 'Obstacle to Obama'

by Gil Ronen

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(IsraelNN.com) According to a classified intelligence assessment handed to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, U.S. President Barack Obama and his senior advisors wish to "incrementally diminish U.S. strategic cooperation with Israel."

A report in *World Tribune* quoted an Israeli source familiar with the intelligence assessment who said that "Obama wants to make friends with our worst enemies and [those who were] until now the worst enemies of the United States. Under this policy," the source added, "we are more than irrelevant. We have become an obstacle."

According to the report, which has not been corroborated by news sources other than *World Tribune*, Israeli sources said the U.S. Administration would reject Israel's intelligence opinions on Iran and Syria while advancing the Obama plan to reconcile with the two states, although both were listed as state sponsors of terrorism by the U.S. State Department.

The Israeli intelligence document reportedly predicted that Obama would maintain his policy of appeasing Iran and Syria through 2010. It determined that Obama is convinced that appeasing Iran and Syria would make a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan possible.

Pressure on Israel

"Obama will want to show Iran, Syria and radical Muslims that the United States could pressure Israel on a strategic level," the source said. "The pressure has already begun and will intensify throughout the next year or two."

At the same time, the intelligence officials estimated that Obama would restrict U.S. arms exports to Israel in an effort to deny it systems that it could use in a raid on Iran or Syria. The intelligence sources said this policy was begun during the last year of the Bush administration and predicted that it would intensify under Obama.

Carter: US and Syria Close to Full Relations

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said on Tuesday that the U.S. and Syria are close to restoring full diplomatic ties. "Syrian President Bashar Assad is very eager to restore full ties with Washington," Carter told *Haaretz*. "I wouldn't be surprised if it happens this year," he added, speaking on the phone from Quito, Ecuador, at the start of a four-nation South American trip.

Carter plans to meet Assad in Syria in early June.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar Assad said Tuesday that Obama would face "a serious crisis in the Middle East" if he does not fix the mistakes made by his predecessor George W. Bush, within a year's time.

On a visit to Vienna after meeting Austrian leaders and intellectuals, Assad called on the U.S. to rapidly withdraw its troops from Iraq. This, he claimed, would resolve "50 per cent of the problem," Austrian news agency APA reported.

However, by appeasing Iran and Syria the U.S. is risking alienating Egypt.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned Egypt's rivals in the Middle East Wednesday that he would not tolerate what he called their "tampering with security and stability" in his country, a reference to Iran and the Hizbullah terror militia that it supports.

Mubarak's comments were his the most strongly worded ones since Egypt accused the Hizbullah of plotting attacks in the country. They were also meant to send a strong message to the group's backers in Iran.