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Netanyahu's Secret War Plan: Leaked Document Outlines Israel's "Shock and Awe" Plan to Attack Iran

By Richard Silverstein
March 25, 2013

[Netanyahu's "Secret war plan" was leaked in August 2012 to Tikun Olam. This article by Richard Silverstein was originally published on August 16, 2012.]

In the past few days, I received an Israeli briefing document outlining Israel's war plans against Iran. The document was passed to me by a high-level Israeli source who received it from an IDF officer. My source, in fact, wrote to me that normally he would not leak this sort of document, but:

"These are not normal times. I'm afraid Bibi and Barak are dead serious."

The reason they leaked it is to expose the arguments and plans advanced by the Bibi-Barak two-headed warrior. Neither the IDF leaker, my source, nor virtually any senior military or intelligence officer wants this war. While whoever wrote this briefing paper had use of IDF and intelligence data, I don't believe the IDF wrote it. It feels more likely it came from the shop of national security advisor Yaakov Amidror, a former general, settler true-believer and Bibi confidant. It could also have been produced by Defense Minister Barak, another pro-war booster.

I've translated the document from Hebrew with the help of Dena Shunra.

Before laying out the document, I wanted to place it in context. If you've been reading this blog you'll know that after Bibi's IDF service he became the marketing director for a furniture

company. Recent revelations have suggested that he may have also served in some capacity either formally or informally in the Mossad during that period.

This document is a more sophisticated version of selling bedroom sets and three-piece sectionals. The only difference is that this marketing effort could lead to the death of thousands.

This is Bibi's sales pitch for war. Its purpose is to be used in meetings with members of the *Shminiya*, the eight-member security cabinet which currently finds a 4-3 majority opposed to an Iran strike. Bibi uses this sales pitch to persuade the recalcitrant ministers of the cool, clean, refreshing taste of war. My source informs me that it has also been shared in confidence with selected journalists who are in the trusted inner media circle (who, oh who, might they be?).

This is Shock and Awe, Israel-style. It is Bibi's effort to persuade high-level Israeli officials that Israel can prosecute a pure technology war that involves relatively few human beings (Israeli, that is) who may be put in harm's way, and will certainly cost few lives of IDF personnel.

Bibi's sleight of hand here involves no mention whatsoever of an Iranian counter-attack against Israel. The presumption must be that the bells and whistles of all those marvelous new weapons systems will decapitate Iran's war-making ability and render it paralyzed. The likelihood of this actually happening is nearly nil.

There will be those who will dispute the authenticity of this document. I'm convinced it is what my source claims, based on his prior track record and the level of specificity offered in the document. It references cities by name and the facilities they contain. It names new weapons systems including one Israel supposedly hasn't even shared with the U.S.

No, it's real. Or I should say that while it's real, it is the product of the Israeli dream factory which manufactures threats and then creates fabulist military strategies to address them. The dream factory always breaks the hearts of the families of those whose members fall victim to it. It never produces the result it promises, nor will it do so here.

Remember Bush-era Shock and Awe? Remember those promises of precision-guided cruise missiles raining death upon Saddam Hussein's Iraq? Remember Bush's "Mission Accomplished" ceremony on the deck of the USS Lincoln, only six or seven years premature? Remember the promises of decisive victory? Remember 4,000 U.S. dead, not to mention hundreds of thousands of Iraqis?

Now, think of what an Israeli war against Iran could turn into. Think about how this sanitized version of 21st century war could turn into a protracted, bloody conflict closer to the nine-year Iran-Iraq War:

The Israeli attack will open with a coordinated strike, including an unprecedented cyber-attack which will totally paralyze the Iranian regime and its ability to know what is happening within its borders. The internet, telephones, radio and television, communications satellites, and fiber optic cables leading to and from critical installations—including underground missile bases at Khorramabad and Isfahan—will be taken out of action. The electrical grid throughout Iran will be paralyzed and transformer stations will absorb severe damage from carbon fiber munitions which are finer than a human hair, causing electrical short circuits whose repair requires their complete removal. This would be a Sisyphean task in light of cluster munitions which would be dropped, some time-delayed and some remote-activated through the use of a satellite signal.

A barrage of tens of ballistic missiles would be launched from Israel toward Iran. 300km ballistic missiles would be launched from Israeli submarines in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf. The missiles would not be armed with unconventional warheads [WMD], but rather with high-explosive ordnance equipped with reinforced tips designed specially to penetrate hardened targets.

The missiles will strike their targets—some exploding above ground like those striking the nuclear reactor at Arak—which is intended to produce plutonium and tritium—and the nearby heavy water production facility; the nuclear fuel production facilities at Isfahan and facilities for enriching uranium-hexafluoride. Others would explode under-ground, as at the Fordo facility.

A barrage of hundreds of cruise missiles will pound command and control systems, research and development facilities, and the residences of senior personnel in the nuclear and missile development apparatus. Intelligence gathered over years will be utilized to completely decapitate Iran's professional and command ranks in these fields.

After the first wave of attacks, which will be timed to the second, the "Blue and White" radar satellite, whose systems enable us to perform an evaluation of the level of damage done to the various targets, will pass over Iran. Only after rapidly decrypting the satellite's data, will the information be transferred directly to war planes making their way covertly toward Iran. These IAF planes will be armed with electronic warfare gear previously unknown to the wider public, not even revealed to our U.S. ally. This equipment will render Israeli aircraft invisible. Those Israeli war planes which participate in the attack will damage a short-list of targets which require further assault.

Among the targets approved for attack—Shihab 3 and Sejil ballistic missile silos, storage tanks for chemical components of rocket fuel, industrial facilities for producing missile control systems, centrifuge production plants and more.

While the level of specificity in this document is, in some senses, impressive, in one critical aspect it is deficient. Muhammad Sahimi points out that the current chief of the Revolutionary Guards, when he assumed his position in 2007, deliberately addressed the issue of over-centralization of command and control by dividing the nation into 31 districts. Each of these has its own independent command and control facilities and mechanisms. So Israel wouldn't be able to knock out a single facility and paralyze the IRG. They'd need to knock out 31 separate sets of facilities—a much harder task.

There seems also to be an assumption that Iran's leaders and nuclear specialists live nice domestic lives and that Israeli intelligence knows where they all live and can easily target them. In truth, the most senior Iranian military and scientific figures live clandestine lives and it's hard for me to believe even the Mossad knows where they are and how to target them.

So it appears that Netanyahu believes he's fighting Saddam circa 2003. During that war, the Iraqi Revolutionary Guards *were* centralized and knocking out one C&C center *could* decapitate the entire military apparatus. But Iran has learned from Saddam's mistakes. It isn't fighting the last war as Bibi appears to be. It is preparing for the next one. While Israel may have new tricks up its sleeve that no one in the world has yet seen, if it doesn't understand the nature of the enemy, its defenses, its structure, etc. then it can't win.

