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Downplaying Diplomacy, Obama Threatens To Attack Iran

By Jason Ditz

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Obama today, and in the interest of keeping up his pro-Israel bonafides, President Obama followed up the meeting with a statement threatening military action against Iran.



Usually that's nothing to be taken too seriously. Threatening Iran is just something a good host does for Israeli officials, who are constantly harping about war with Iran. The timing makes this quite different, however.

President Obama has been just as eager to keep sabotaging international diplomacy with Iran as anybody has, but having gotten dragged kicking and screaming into a diplomatic deal in Syria is now finding himself swept up in serious diplomatic efforts with Iran. Peace is seen as a major

problem within Israel's ruling parties, and Netanyahu's visit was being trumpeted as an attempt to scare Obama away from the table.

Having gotten a pro forma threat out of Obama, Netanyahu is claiming victory, saying he is "reassured" by Obama's commitment to the go-nowhere status quo of the past several decades, and Israeli outlets are presenting this as Netanyahu having "got what he wanted" out of the talks.

What President Obama says, his true intentions, and what political expediency requires are three very different things, however, and just because he issued the same empty threat of war the US has punctuated its Iranian relations with for the past several decades doesn't mean Netanyahu has successfully killed the diplomatic push.

And even if President Obama sees it that way, strong support for diplomacy among the American public is going to make it hard to quietly go back to a hostile policy toward Iran just because it's what Netanyahu wants.