# **October Surprise DA**

## 1NC Shell

Obama winning election now

Plan unpopular

#### Obama will authorize Israel to strike Iran if he perceives that he is losing the election

Pat Buchanan, 4/15/12, columnist, MSNBC political analyst, author; he has been a senior advisor to three Presidents, a two-time presidential candidate, and nominee of the Reform Party, “Bibi's Dilemma -- and Barack's”, Creators.com)

An Israeli attack on Iran, which President Obama and the U.S. military strongly oppose, would also put the issue of a U.S. war with Iran front and center in the presidential election.¶ What would America do; what would Obama do?¶ The election of 2012 could turn on that decision.¶ Should Iran retaliate against Israel, the Israeli lobby and the neocons would demand that America come to Israel's defense. Mitt Romney, the GOP hawks, evangelical Christians, conservative commentators and many Democrats would echo the demand, no matter who started the shooting.¶ A clamor would arise for us to finish the job of smashing Iran's nuclear facilities.¶ As Israel is admired and Iran's regime is detested, Obama could never declare neutrality. And should he order the U.S. military to go to Israel's aid, his re-election might well be assured.¶ As commander in chief and first diplomat, Obama holds all the cards.¶ If Iran is accommodating, the sanctions he has imposed will be seen as successful. If Iran balks in negotiations, he can impose new sanctions.¶ If Iran walks out of the talks, he can issue ultimata.¶ If Israel attacks Iran, he can come to Israel's defense and finish the job of destroying Iran's nuclear facilities. If done close to the election, this would assure Obama's re-election. The "October surprise" of 2012.¶ What are Iran's interests and options?¶ Tehran cannot want war with the United States. For whatever the damage done to U.S. interests, the destruction of Iran's air, naval and missile forces and nuclear program would be total.¶ The smartest course for Iran to pursue is to demonstrate to the West that she is reasonable and anxious to prove she has no present or future intention of building atomic weapons.¶ Which is what Iran was doing in Istanbul.¶ No wonder Bibi is frustrated. If there is no U.S. attack on Iran by November, and Obama wins, there may never be a U.S. attack on Iran.¶ Israel cannot do to Iran what Bibi wants done to Iran. Only Obama can.¶ But how does Bibi get Obama to do it, before November?

#### Consensus among military experts that strikes a catastrophic idea- would not produce desired results and would risk engendering backlash and global war

(Nicholas D. Kristof, 3/24/12, Pulitzer-Prize-winning NY Times columnist, expert on international and presidential politics, author, “The False Debate About Attacking Iran”, NY Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/opinion/sunday/kristof-the-false-debate-about-attacking-iran.html>)

I WONDER if we in the news media aren’t inadvertently leaving the impression that there is a genuine debate among experts about whether an Israeli military strike on Iran makes sense this year. There really isn’t such a debate. Or rather, it’s the same kind of debate as the one about climate change — credible experts are overwhelmingly on one side.¶ Here’s what a few of them told me:¶ “I don’t know any security expert who is recommending a military strike on Iran at this point,” noted [Anne-Marie Slaughter](http://www.princeton.edu/%26#126;slaughtr/), a Princeton University professor who was a senior State Department official earlier in the Obama administration.¶ “Unless you’re so far over on the neocon side that you’re blind to geopolitical realities, there’s an overwhelming consensus that this is a bad idea,” said W. Patrick Lang, a former head of Middle East affairs for the Defense Intelligence Agency.¶ “Most security experts agree that it’s premature to go to a military option,” said Michèle Flournoy, who has just stepped down as the No. 3 official in the Defense Department. “We are in the middle of increasing sanctions on Iran. Iran is already under the most onerous sanctions it has ever experienced, and now we’re turning the screws further with sanctions that will touch their central bank, sanctions that will touch their oil products and so forth.¶ “So it has been bad for them and it’s about to get worse,” Flournoy added. “The overwhelming consensus is we should give some time to let that work.”¶ Granted, American officials are deeply alarmed about Iran’s nuclear program, although the fear is not so much that Iran would use nuclear weapons against Israel or anyone else. Iran apparently developed chemical weapons to respond to Iraq’s chemical attacks during the Iran-Iraq war, and it showed restraint with them. Rather, the biggest fear is that if Iran tests and deploys nuclear weapons, other countries will follow. [These could include Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/22/opinion/the-bomb-and-the-bomber.html?_r=1), setting off another round of nuclear proliferation.¶ Officials and security experts make several broad points about why a military strike on Iran anytime soon would be an abominable idea.¶ First, it would set back Iran’s program by only one to three years — and then it presumably would go ahead more covertly and with more domestic support than ever.¶ Second, this wouldn’t be a single strike but would require sorties over many days to attack many locations. And the aim would be in part to kill the scientists running the program, so there would be civilian casualties. Day by day, anger in the Muslim world and around the world would grow at Israel — and at America. The coalition pressuring Iran through sanctions might well dissolve.¶ Third, a regional war in the Middle East could result, sucking in the United States. Iran could sponsor attacks on American targets around the world, and it could use proxies to escalate attacks on American troops in Afghanistan.¶ Fourth, oil supplies through the Persian Gulf could be interrupted, sending oil and gas prices soaring, and damaging the global economy.¶ Fifth, sanctions and covert methods like the [Stuxnet](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/computer_malware/stuxnet/index.html) computer worm have already slowed Iran’s progress, and tougher sanctions and covert sabotage will continue to delay the program in a low-risk way.¶ Granted, everything I say here may be wrong. Israel’s 1981 attack on the Osirak reactor in Iraq and its 2007 attack on a Syrian nuclear project both went smoothly, without retaliation. The attacks set back those countries’ nuclear programs much more than skeptics had expected.¶ Yet there’s good reason to think that Iran is different, partly because its program is so dispersed and protected. More broadly, war is inherently unpredictable, and Israel has often been horrendously shortsighted in its interventions. Its invasion of Lebanon in 1982 turned into a quagmire that [helped lead to the emergence of Hezbollah](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/weekinreview/16worth.html), while its [de facto support for Hamas](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123275572295011847.html) in Gaza in its early days harmed everyone (except Iran).¶ Let’s also remember that as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bangs the drums of war, that may empower Iranian hawks. “The continual threat of a military strike is as likely to convince them to move ahead as to deter them,” Slaughter notes.¶ Whether Israel will attack Iranian nuclear sites is one of this year’s crucial questions, and people in the know seem to think the odds are about 50-50. We don’t know that the economy would be harmed or that a war would unfold, but anyone who is confident about what would happen is a fool.¶ So as we hear talk about military action against Iran, let’s be clear about one thing. Outside Netanyahu’s aides and a fringe of raptors, just about every expert thinks that a military strike at this time would be a catastrophically bad idea. That’s not a debate, but a consensus.

## Uniqueness

### Diplomacy/No Strikes Now

#### Obama trying to preserve peace now- at least until election

(Los Angeles Times, 4/27/12, “Biden touts Obama's foreign policy record;

In a speech, the vice president aims to use the issue as a weapon against Romney”, Los Angeles Times)

In his 45-minute speech at New York University, Biden tried to link the president's successes in foreign affairs to his stewardship of the economy. He argued that the auto industry rescue and other economic policies "made us stronger not only at home, but abroad."¶ He also blamed Romney's "loose talk" of war with Iran, in part, for unsettled oil markets and higher gas prices at home. Republicans have blamed Obama's energy policies for a recent surge in prices.¶ The Democrats' focus is not without risk. The political advantage could shift before November, particularly given the standoff with Iran over its nuclear program, Europe's economic crisis, the precarious state of the war in Afghanistan and other hot spots.¶ James Carafano, an analyst at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said the Obama campaign had "done everything possible to try to get through between now and November with nothing happening. It's kind of the opposite of wag the dog, and the October surprise."¶ "Unless there is something catastrophically bad or catastrophically good that happens between now and the election, people are going to vote for their candidate based on other issues," he added.¶ "Foreign policy highlights many of the president's strengths -- this balance of deliberation and decisiveness -- and highlights a lot of Romney's weaknesses, of both not being sure quite where he stands and also that it seems he's surrounded by the very people who got us into this mess from the far right," said Tom Perriello, a former Democratic congressman from Virginia who is an analyst for the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank.¶ To the extent that Romney has engaged with Obama on foreign policy, he has focused on the administration's tense relationship with Israel's leaders and alleged "appeasement" of Iran.

#### Obama is bribing Netanyahu to hold off strikes now

(John Feffer, Co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, 3/13/12, “Bribing Israel”, Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-feffer/bribing-israel_b_1342357.html>)

The bully came to Washington. The American president told him in no uncertain terms that the United States would not support a military attack on Iran at this moment. The bully met with 13,000 of his U.S. supporters in an effort to pressure the White House. It didn't work. The bully went home empty-handed.¶ This is the conventional news analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to Washington, his discussion with President Barack Obama, his speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and his consequent loss of face. Many elements of this analysis are true. So, for instance, it's certainly true that the Israeli hawk failed to convince the Obama administration to green-light an attack during the so-called zone of immunity before Iran achieves its putative desire of membership in the nuclear club. It's certainly true that Netanyahu's hard-line speech on Iran quite nearly brought down the house at the AIPAC shindig, where the audience included more than half the members of Congress. And finally, the Obama administration did indeed hold to its position of "diplomacy backed by pressure." ¶ For many observers, Obama has gone at least a pawn up in the intricate chess game with Israel. The president "established a position his critics may find hard to assail," concluded The Guardian's Chris McGeal. "He forced those many members of Congress and beyond who have conflated America's interests with Israel's on to the back foot by saying that on Iran there are differences -- and he will serve U.S. interests first." James Fallows in The Atlantic agreed: "The question is whether this tone genuinely buys Obama more time and freedom of action, rather than constraining his next decisions. I am betting we will look back on this as a chessmaster move. I am hoping that, too."¶ But this story of Obama the diplomat standing up to Netanyahu the bully omits some important information. During Netanyahu's visit, the Obama administration reportedly offered Israel a package of advanced military technology, including bunker-busting bombs and long-range refueling planes, as long as it postponed any attacks on Iran until 2013. In other words, Obama wasn't only buying time, he was bribing Israel to prevent the kind of October surprise -- or even July surprise -- that might derail his reelection bid. And he was doing so with precisely the weapons that Israel could use to execute an attack on Iran.¶ Bribery is deeply embedded in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Half of all U.S. overseas military assistance, after all, goes to Israel. That's $3 billion a year. And it will continue to rise every year until 2017, thanks to an agreement worked out under the Bush administration. And military assistance to Israel is unlike assistance to other countries in quality as well as quantity. "Israel's $3 billion is put almost immediately into an interest-bearing account with the Federal Reserve Bank," explains Walter Pincus in the Washington Post. "The interest, collected by Israel on its military aid balance, is used to pay down debt from earlier Israeli non-guaranteed loans from the United States. Another unique aspect of the assistance package is that about 25 percent of it can be used to buy arms from Israeli companies. No other country has that privilege."¶ That Israel has been cutting its military spending -- an otherwise admirable decision -- means that the United States is increasingly picking up the slack. It also means that Israel, in theory, has increased its dependence on the Pentagon, which should translate into more U.S. political leverage over Israel. But with rare exceptions, the United States has not exercised this leverage. Israel, as I have argued elsewhere, is to the United States what North Korea is to China. These client states take everything from their putative benefactors except advice. Indifferent to international law, armed to the teeth, and isolated in their respective regions, Israel and North Korea dance to their own tune, however discordant it might be for everybody else.

#### Obama unwilling to engage until after elections

(Washington Times, 3/27/12, “Obama's secret plan;

National security takes a back seat to president's re-election”)

There is only one thing scarier for the future of America than all of the debt and bad policies President Obama has built up since his 2008 election: It's what the prospect of an Obama second term would bring. And the president isn't being honest about what his secret plans are. ¶ That Mr. Obama has dangerous ideas up his sleeve and won't be forthcoming about his true agenda during this year's presidential campaign were exposed in candid comments he made to Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on Monday. On the subject of sensitive arms-control negotiations, the U.S. president advised, "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." This admission begs the question: Flexibility to do what? What agreement with Russia does Mr. Obama want to sign that he thinks would be so damaging to his re-election chances that he would need to wait until afterward to perpetrate it? If such a hidden intention would be dangerous to his re-election, it surely wouldn't be a safe policy for our national defense.¶ Mr. Medvedev responded to Mr. Obama's plea by saying, "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir," referring to former and incoming Russian President Vladimir Putin, the strongman who has held the reins of power in Moscow one way or another since 1999. There is no mistaking whether Mr. Obama's request to delay major diplomatic relations until after the election was motivated entirely by his own political considerations, an uncomfortable reality reflected in the beginning of the repartee between the two presidents. Mr. Obama explained, "On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this, this can be solved but it's important for him [Mr. Putin] to give me space." Mr. Medvedev replied, "I understand your message about space. Space for you... ."¶ The insidious nature of this back and forth is due to the fact that Mr. Obama didn't know a microphone was on and thought his conversation with the foreign leader was confidential. That he would be so forthcoming about making U.S. national security second fiddle to his personal quest for re-election is startling. That his candor benefits Russia - a strategic competitor to the United States and former longtime enemy - is scary. Mr. Obama already signed the ill-advised "New Start" Treaty, which allows Moscow to expand and modernize its nuclear stockpile while America unilaterally cuts down our own arsenal. It is the president's self-centeredness, combined with a cavalier lack of respect for the global perception of U.S. power, that has many security analysts speculating about a rash October surprise to help his electoral bid.¶ This isn't the first time Mr. Obama has tried to cut a backroom deal to push off serious action until after the election. Three weeks ago, he reportedly offered Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bunker-buster bombs and other sophisticated military assistance if Israel would agree to wait until after November to bomb Iran. Such wheeling and dealing shows that Mr. Obama is willing to do anything to win re-election. But when national security is subjugated to politics, America loses.

#### Obama cautions loose talk

(**Charleston Gazette**, “Obama warns against 'loose talk of war' President also says U.S. will not hesitate to use force on Iran”, **3/5**/12)

President Barack Obama said Sunday the United States will not hesitate to attack Iran with military force to prevent it from acquiring a nuclear weapon, but he cautioned that "too much loose talk of war" recently has only helped Tehran and driven up the price of oil.¶ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, standing his ground against what his country perceives as a threat to its existence, said that he perhaps most appreciated hearing Obama say that "Israel must be able to defend itself, by itself, against any threat."¶ Speaking to a powerful pro-Israel lobby, Obama appealed to Israel for more time to let sanctions further isolate Iran. He sought to halt a drumbeat to war with Iran and hold off a unilateral Israeli strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.¶ "For the sake of Israel's security, America's security and the peace and security of the world, now is not the time for bluster," Obama told thousands at the annual American-Israel Public Affairs Committee's policy conference. "Now is the time to let our increased pressure sink in, and to sustain the broad international coalition that we have built."¶ Quoting Theodore Roosevelt, Obama said he would "speak softly, but carry a big stick" - and warned Iran not to test U.S. resolve.¶ Obama's widely anticipated speech came one day before he meets at the White House with Netanyahu, who planned to address AIPAC late today. Three GOP presidential candidates - Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich - were scheduled to speak to the conference via satellite Tuesday, a critical day in the campaign when 10 states vote.¶ To Israel and to Jewish voters in this country, Obama promoted his administration's commitment to the Mideast ally.¶ "You don't have to count on my words. You can look at my deeds," Obama said. He defended his record of rallying to Israel's security and political sovereignty, saying: "We have been there for Israel. Every single time."¶ Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. U.S, Israel and many allies see no sign of that, and Israeli leaders openly have discussed the possibility of a military strike.¶ "Let's begin with the truth that you all understand: No Israeli government can tolerate a nuclear weapon in the hands of a regime that denies that Holocaust, threatens to wipe Israel off the map and sponsors terrorist groups committed to Israel's destruction," Obama said.¶ Obama said he would use all sources of American power, but that only true resolution would come from diplomacy.¶ U.S. officials worry that an Israeli attack on oil-power Iran could drive up pump prices and entangle the U.S. in a new Mideast confrontation during this year's presidential election season. They want to give diplomacy and economic penalties more time to work.¶ The United States and Europe have pursued more severe banking and other economic penalties separately. The toughest take effect this summer and target Iran's oil business and powerful central bank.¶ "I firmly believe that an opportunity remains for diplomacy - backed by pressure - to succeed," Obama insisted.¶ And in his greatest detail to date, Obama spelled out the consequences of a military campaign against Iran.¶ "I would ask that we all remember the weightiness of these issues," Obama said. "Already, there is too much loose talk of war."¶ The economic implications were on Obama's mind, too, as gas prices soar to the forefront of American concern ahead of the election.¶ In Israel, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said American pressure would not affect Israeli thinking on how to cope with the threat.¶ "We are an independent sovereign state, and at the end of the day, the state of Israel will make the most correct decisions as we understand them."¶ Many analysts believe an Israeli attack would result in a region-wide conflict, including Iranian attacks on American troops in the Persian Gulf, and could damage the world economy by causing oil prices to skyrocket. It also remains unclear how much damage a military strike would do to Iran's nuclear program. Many of the country's nuclear facilities are buried deep underground.¶ The Republican presidential candidates have accused Obama of failing to slow down Iran's nuclear pursuit. But Obama says world is more united than ever against Iran, and he blames Republicans for trying to drive a wedge between him and Jewish voters.¶ "You've had no evidence that the president is prepared to take steps to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons. They talk and the Iranians build. They talk and the Iranians build," said GOP candidate Newt Gingrich said before Obama's speech. "We're being played for fools."¶ The Iranian threat all but shoved aside the quest for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, the dominant theme of Obama's speech to AIPAC last year, and the thrust of his Israeli policy focus to date. Peace talks between the two sides have stalled. On Sunday, Obama offered no new path, calling for the two sides to work toward separate states in peace.

### October Surprise Now

#### Obama planning October Surprise now- military deployments prove

 (**Say Anything, 4/28**/12, “Is Obama Setting Up an "October Surprise" to Help Him Win in November?”,

<http://sayanythingblog.com/entry/is-obama-setting-up-an-october-surprise-to-help-him-win-in-november/>)

Is Obama Setting Up an "October Surprise" to Help Him Win in November? This sure looks like it:¶ The U.S. military has deployed several F-22s, the nation's most advanced fighter jets, to an allied base less than 200 miles from Iran. ¶ The Air Force strongly denies this deployment is meant as a show of force against Iran or that it is in some way related to a potential strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. Rather, it says this is all part of a routine deployment and "security cooperation with regional partners."¶ The Air Force won't say how many jets were sent or exactly where they are stationed, but privately, U.S. officials have told Fox News the jets are in hangars at the United Arab Emirates' Al Dafra Air Base, a fact first reported by Aviation Week.¶ The F-22 has not yet seen combat. The jets were not used in Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya. They are stealth, and they specialize in air-to-air combat, but can also strike air-to-ground if needed. As one Air Force official put it, "this is America's premier fighter jet. It has no rival."¶ "It has no rival" is a masterpiece of understatement. Training in the F-22 Raptor takes place at Eglin AFB in Florida, and only the very best F-15 pilots are chosen. In mock air-to-air combat drills, against the world's best fighter pilots, in the very best F-15s, the ones we don't sell to Israel and Taiwan, the Raptor had a 10 to 1 kill ratio. The F-22 Raptor is an air superiority platform without equal.¶ And sending these fighters to the Gulf, when the Israelis are most likely preparing for a strike of their own against Iran's nuclear weapons program, sure won't hurt Obama's electoral chances with either the pro-Israeli Jews or the increasingly disenchanted independent voters come November.¶ The next round for Iran nuclear negotiations, which many consider to be the country's last diplomatic opportunity, takes place on May 23 in Baghdad.¶ Hmmm!

#### Israel planning October Surprise from Azeri bases- Obama support

(New Straits Times (Malaysia), 4/17/12)

There's another new fact that gives pause. Of course, it's not just for the Israelis that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Thus, their blooming friendship with Azerbaijan, Iran's northern neighbour.¶ The basis of Azeri-Iranian hostility is not just that borders are always dangerous, but that 20 per cent of Iran is Azeri, including the supreme leader; and Azeris don't like Persian attitudes towards them and consider them a threat.¶ Comes Mark Perry's extraordinary piece in Foreign Policy, an influential magazine. He is convinced on evidence that Israel is planning to use Azeri bases for their not-so-secret October surprise - the old Soviet era bases not so far from Iran. There are great opportunities and risks for both sides. But the Israelis must have a back-up to an American stonewall; their air force can't make the round trip to the Iranian nuclear sites.¶ To me, who once spent a sabbatical studying Persian Gulf strategic realities, the article is convincing. But the Israeli lobby is trying to discredit it with a conspiracy theory, that it's another attempt by Satan Obama to prevent that wonderful attack on Iran; that it's obviously leaked.¶ Well, to me, who has spent enough of his professional life dealing with professional leaks, it lies in a grey area. Of course, the piece was based on leaked high intelligence. Did Obama authorise this? That's not the way it works.¶ The greatest spy of America's 20th century, Dickie Bissell, told my class once how he artfully "briefed" Ike about the plans to assassinate Fidel Castro, without Ike actually "knowing" about it, let alone authorising it. You think calligraphy is a highly subtle art? Study leaking in DC.¶ The serious question is not, "was it leaked", but is it true. Well, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, quite a dedicated dictator, has described his country's relationship with Israel as an iceberg: "nine-tenths of it is below the surface".¶ And what is above the surface is plenty of Israeli military and security assistance. By announcing that they'll go after the source of the leak, the Obama administration is confirming that the leak doesn't consist of made up facts.¶ Elliot Abrams, a neo-con former president George W. Bush adviser and invariably an all-out friend of Israel, says it's "preposterous" that Azerbaijan would "rent out" its country for an Israeli attack on Iran. Accusations aren't arguments; he can't deny the facts on which the speculation is based. We can't predict the future, but we can see it with more clarity if we look carefully at what others are secretly doing to have enhanced capability for serious military action. So let's look at the facts and ignore the self-serving conspiracy theory.

#### Iran resistance to sanctions means October surprise likely now

(Antiwar, 2/18/12, website that opposes war, imperialism, and attacks on freedom, “Obama Officials: Iran Sanctions Will Fail, Leading to War”)

While insisting that they "want to see sanctions work," Obama Administration officials are convinced that the sanctions won't lead Iran to abandon their civilian nuclear program and that either the US or Israel will attack Iran as a result. ¶ The new reports come just one day after Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta conceded that Iran isn't actually developing a nuclear weapon, and DIA chief Lt. Gen. Ronald Burgess said that Iran was unlikely to start any war on their own.¶ Officials say Obama has been telling Israel he wants to "give sufficient time" to the current round of sanctions before starting the war, though they say that in the end the result will start be a war because Iran is "behaving like sanctions don't matter."¶ It does seem to have pushed back the start of the war a bit, however, as Panetta had previously predicted Israel would launch an attack between April and June, but Obama advisors are now calling September or October the "sweet spot."¶ This could mean a literal October surprise, with President Obama either starting a huge war with Iran just ahead of the 2012 presidential election, or having Israel do so and jumping in immediately thereafter.¶ Such a timing for the war could be seen as politically desirable for the president, with several of the Republican candidates condemning him for not being more hawkish against Iran, and likely to center a foreign policy debate on him not starting this particular war.

#### Obama willing to use force

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## I/L

### October Strikes-Israel Forces Obama’s Hand

#### Iranian leaders strike early to draw in Obama support- can’t risk losing constituency

(Fred Kaplan, 4/12/12, Slate Magazine, senior Schwartz fellow at the New America Foundation, author of [*1959: The Year Everything Changed*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470602031/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=slatmaga-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0470602031)*,* <http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2012/04/nuclear_iran_why_israel_may_want_to_attack_before_the_presidential_election_.single.html>)

In fact, if the Israelis really are intent on attacking the Iranian nuclear facilities, they’re likely to do so before this November’s American presidential elections. If they started an attack and needed U.S. firepower to help them complete the task, Barack Obama might open himself up to perilous political attacks—for being indecisive, weak, appeasing, anti-Israel, you name it—if he didn’t follow through. It could cost him the votes of crucial constituencies. If the Israelis tried to pressure the United States into joining an attack after the election, Obama would have (to borrow a phrase from [another context](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2012/03/the_future_of_nuclear_missile_defense_president_barack_obama_told_dmitri_medvedev_that_he_will_have_more_flexibility_after_he_is_reelected_.html)) more flexibility. So, to the extent the Israeli leaders have decided to attack (and it’s not at all clear they have), they are probably thinking: much better sooner than later.

#### Defending Israel would guarantee re-election

Pat Buchanan, 4/15/12, columnist, MSNBC political analyst, author; he has been a senior advisor to three Presidents, a two-time presidential candidate, and nominee of the Reform Party, “Bibi's Dilemma -- and Barack's”, Creators.com)

An Israeli attack on Iran, which President Obama and the U.S. military strongly oppose, would also put the issue of a U.S. war with Iran front and center in the presidential election.¶ What would America do; what would Obama do?¶ The election of 2012 could turn on that decision.¶ Should Iran retaliate against Israel, the Israeli lobby and the neocons would demand that America come to Israel's defense. Mitt Romney, the GOP hawks, evangelical Christians, conservative commentators and many Democrats would echo the demand, no matter who started the shooting.¶ A clamor would arise for us to finish the job of smashing Iran's nuclear facilities.¶ As Israel is admired and Iran's regime is detested, Obama could never declare neutrality. And should he order the U.S. military to go to Israel's aid, his re-election might well be assured.¶ As commander in chief and first diplomat, Obama holds all the cards.¶ If Iran is accommodating, the sanctions he has imposed will be seen as successful. If Iran balks in negotiations, he can impose new sanctions.¶ If Iran walks out of the talks, he can issue ultimata.¶ If Israel attacks Iran, he can come to Israel's defense and finish the job of destroying Iran's nuclear facilities. If done close to the election, this would assure Obama's re-election. The "October surprise" of 2012.¶ What are Iran's interests and options?¶ Tehran cannot want war with the United States. For whatever the damage done to U.S. interests, the destruction of Iran's air, naval and missile forces and nuclear program would be total.¶ The smartest course for Iran to pursue is to demonstrate to the West that she is reasonable and anxious to prove she has no present or future intention of building atomic weapons.¶ Which is what Iran was doing in Istanbul.¶ No wonder Bibi is frustrated. If there is no U.S. attack on Iran by November, and Obama wins, there may never be a U.S. attack on Iran.¶ Israel cannot do to Iran what Bibi wants done to Iran. Only Obama can.¶ But how does Bibi get Obama to do it, before November?

#### Israel blackmailing Obama- support will win him re-election

(Investor’s Business Daily, 3/16/12, “Outsourcing Diplomacy”)

According to the Christian Science Monitor, the Russian-language Moscow daily Kommersant reported Wednesday that a prominent but unnamed Russian diplomatic source said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asked Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to deliver an ultimatum to Tehran. ¶ Clinton's message, passed on Monday during a United Nations Security Council session, warned that the six-nation talks coming up next month in Turkey on Iran's nuclear program are the "last chance" for the Islamofascist regime before the U.S. gives up on talk and agrees to a military option¶ The Monitor noted that Kommersant "is a pro-business, liberal newspaper that is generally considered reliable when it cites official sources, although today's story does not provide any direct quotes from the unnamed diplomat."¶ The Kommersant report was published the same day that British Prime Minister David Cameron and President Obama shared a news conference in which the president warned that "the window for solving this issue diplomatically is shrinking . . . and I hope that the Iranian regime understands that."¶ The anonymous Russian diplomat was touting the notion of an "October surprise" attack on Iran that would help Obama get re-elected.¶ U.S.-Israeli preparations for a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities "are well underway," the source contended, and barring a significant diplomatic development, it's sure to happen before Election Day in November.¶ "The Israelis are de facto blackmailing Obama," the diplomat was quoted as saying. "They've put him in this interesting position -- either he supports the war or loses the support of the Jewish lobby."¶ The Jewish vote may, in fact, rise as an issue this year. As an IBD editorial noted Thursday, a 2003 video shows Obama speaking at a Chicago dinner to honor radical former PLO spokesman Rashid Khalidi, who was cozy enough with the future president to hold a political fundraiser in his home for him in 2000. The demonstrably anti-American Khalidi has strongly advocated Palestinian violence against Israel.

#### Israel will attack before elections to screw Obama’s chances- Obama has no option but to support

(Ali Ezzatyar, lawyer and writer, director of the committee to establish the Berkeley Program of Entrepreneurship and Democracy in the Middle East, 3/8/12, “An October Surprise: Will Israel Attack Iran?”, The Moderate Voice)

A plurality of Israelis believe that Barack Obama is the least Israel-friendly president in American history. They harbor suspicions about his intentions in the region and generally believe he may abandon Israel in ways unprecedented to presidents before him.¶ An attack on Iran this year is unquestionably dangerous to Obama's reelection. There is no scenario where a unilateral attack by Israel will not hurt Obama's chances. We probably do not need to discuss how a failed attack, the most likely scenario of a unilateral Israeli strike according to most analysts, would be disastrous for U.S. interests and the president personally. But even a successful Israeli attack would wreak havoc on financial markets, on American interests in the region, and portray Obama as a man with no control over a key region for U.S. interests. This is the most likely scenario for an unlikely Republican win in November 2012.¶ Even if the American public is critical of an Israeli strike, the hawkish Republican candidate-turned-president, who has been distinguishing himself all year long on the principle of being forceful with Iran, comes to power with Israel's interests in mind. It is win-win for Israel.¶ If Israel waits long enough to ensure there is no sanction from an Obama administration for its attacking Iran, but not until after the elections themselves, it can both perform an operation it has been planning for years, and one which it sees as vital to its long-term survival, while supplanting the president of its largest benefactor that it wants to see gone anyway. Could Israel be planning an October, or perhaps August / September surprise? It wouldn't be the first time Iran has been used to win a U.S. election. (Remember this one?)¶ The odds of an Israeli attack on Iran are the highest they have been in ten years.

#### Iran talks unsuccessful- strikes likely

(CSM, “Iran nuclear talks: New plan barely masks failure”, 6/19/12)

A 'tense' and 'tough' round of Iran nuclear talks ends in Moscow without a compromise, but fearing the fallout from a collapse in negotiations, world powers set a new round for July.¶ World powers, all too fearful of the ramifications of an outright collapse of talks with Iran on its nuclear program, on Tuesday decided to mark an inability to reach even a minimal agreement with Iran by scheduling another round of discussions for sometime next month.¶ But the case of diplomatically kicking the can down the road seemed unlikely to mask the bleak prospects for compromise with Iran on its nuclear ambitions - and that reality appears certain to agitate world oil markets, speed up the clock ticking on yet another military confrontation in the Middle East, and become a major factor in the US presidential campaign.¶ Russian officials who hosted this week's round of talks in Moscow and European Union chief diplomat Catherine Ashton, who led the negotiating from the world powers' side of the table, acknowledged at the end of what were called "tense" and "tough" discussions Tuesday that no compromise had been found between two sides that remained far apart.¶ Lady Ashton told reporters at the end of talks Tuesday that there is still a "very very long way to go" before Iran adequately addresses concerns about its nuclear program.¶ The best Ashton could muster was an agreement to meet again on July 3 in Istanbul - but even that meeting will be at the lower expert level, and thus won't include the high-level (and potentially decision-making) officials who attended the Moscow meetings, such as Ashton and Iran's chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili.¶ The Moscow talks were unable to bridge any of the yawning gap separating the two sides - what might be called a three-demands-to- two faceoff.¶ The P5-plus-1 world powers, composed of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - the US, Russia, China, Britain, and France - plus Germany, had three basic demands, which they summarized as "stop, shut, and ship:" To address international concerns that it is amassing the elements of a nuclear bomb, Iran should stop enriching uranium to 20-percent purity, a level not far from weapons-grade; shut its underground nuclear facility at Fardow; and ship its stockpile of 20-percent-enriched uranium out of the country.¶ On its side, Iran had two key demands: that the international community recognize Iran's right to enrich uranium under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and that world powers (specifically the US and the EU) agree to soften economic sanctions on Iran as an inducement for Iran to accept certain limits on its nuclear program.¶ The failure of the two sides to find any common ground was already sending jitters trough the global energy market, with oil prices ticking upward. But the stalemate seemed certain to further complicate the already prickly Iran issue for President Obama.¶ On one side, foreign policy hawks will almost certainly declare the bankruptcy of Mr. Obama's diplomatic approach to Iran - which they will say is masterfully playing the world for time to achieve nuclear weapons capability - and will call for tougher measures on Iran and even closer cooperation with Israel on the issue.¶ On the other hand, dovish foreign-policy advocates will chide Obama for failing to calm the winds of war by refusing a compromise with Iran. Already the commentator Robert Wright, writing in The Atlantic, says Obama, by refusing any compromises, is drifting toward war with Iran out of fear of the pro-Israel lobby.¶ Pressure is certain to mount on the administration to walk away from the talks - especially now that Iran has rejected the world powers' "stop, shut, and ship" trio of demands. Already on Friday, a near-majority of US senators sent Obama a letter demanding the administration drop the talks and proceed to even tougher economic sanctions if the Moscow talks failed to secure a set of commitments from Iran on curbing its nuclear program.¶ "It is past time for the Iranians to take the concrete steps that would reassure the world that their nuclear program is, as they claim, exclusively peaceful," 44 senators said Friday in a bipartisan letter coordinated by Sens. Robert Menendez (D) of New Jersey and Roy Blunt (R) of Missouri. "Absent these steps, we must conclude that Tehran is using the talks as a cover to buy time as it continues to advance toward nuclear weapons capability."¶ Echoing the world powers and the three key demands they presented to Iran in the talks, the senators said the stop, shut, and ship trio of demands was the "absolute minimum" Iran would have to accept to justify any continuation of diplomacy.¶ The announcement of a July meeting of low-level officials representing Iran and the six world powers is unlikely to quiet congressional demands for even tougher constraints on Iran's oil trade. At the same time, the failure in Moscow will almost certainly renew talk of US-assisted Israeli air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.¶ Opponents of further negotiations with Iran are likely to cite Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has repeatedly warned the Iranians that the US is "not interested in talks for talks' sake."¶ And with a presidential campaign heating up, American voters should expect to hear growing talk of an "October surprise" and what an attack on Iran would mean for the electoral outcome in November.

#### Obama trapped- no choice but to support

(Weekly Cutting Edge, 1/28/12, “Obama’s Iran Choice”)

An article in New York Times suggests that there is a method to the madness of the Republican presidential candidates' hawkish rhetoric on Iran.¶ I had thought that the reason all the Republican candidates (with the exception of Ron Paul) are such noisy warmongers is because that is their natural proclivity - and because it pleases donors (such as Sheldon Adelson, Newt Gingrich's big campaign funder) who base their political choices on Binyamin Netanyahu's desires.¶ But Times reporter Mark Landler suggests that one of the results of this year's conveniently timed Iran crisis is to present President Barack Obama with a choice of two options, either of which the GOP could successfully exploit to defeat him in the election.¶ As Landler points out:¶ "In late June, when the campaign is in full swing, Mr. Obama will have to decide whether to take action against countries, including some staunch allies, if they continue to buy Iranian oil through its central bank."¶ After fierce lobbying by the White House, which opposed this hardening in the sanctions that have been its main tool in pressuring Tehran, Congress agreed to modify the legislation to give Mr. Obama leeway to delay action if he concludes the clampdown would disrupt the oil market. He may also invoke a waiver to exempt any country from sanctions based on national security considerations.¶ Under normal circumstances, a president's decision to invoke a national security waiver on any foreign policy matter is hard to challenge. In this case, the president's concern that imposing new sanctions would cause oil prices to soar (and disrupt economic recovery) would be good reason to pass on the latest congressional sanctions law.¶ But the political consequences of waiving could be dire.¶ Remember, the sanctions law in question is a creation of AIPAC and has been at the top of its agenda during this entire Congress. If Obama waives it, Netanyahu would use the media to make sure that his displeasure was known. The lobby, the Republican presidential candidate and even many of AIPAC's Democratic cutouts on Capitol Hill would all scream bloody murder.¶ Senator Mark Kirk (Republican-Illinois), perhaps the member of Congress closest to AIPAC, told the Times that he would not look kindly on a waiver - and neither would the lobby.¶ The first waiver would trigger a whole lot of other waiver applications, potentially gutting the policy... The pro-Israel community would not want a gutting of the sanctions," he said.¶ But what if Obama just takes the path of least political resistance and imposes the sanctions as AIPAC wants?¶ Then, oil prices rise.¶ According to the Times: "Already, Iran's leaders are manoeuvring to drive up oil prices, whether to signal that sanctions could bring repercussions, or to mitigate the effects of reduced sales. Iran's threat to shut off the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil passes, sent prices soaring this month."¶ "The article also quoted Stuart Eizenstat, a former top official at the Treasury and State Department who helped devise our Iran policy during the Clinton administration. According to Eizenstat, "sanctions could harm the economy and his [Obama's] re-election chances".¶ In other words, Obama will likely be harmed politically no matter which way he goes on sanctions.¶ Of course, the sanctions issue is just a subset of the larger "war or no war" question. The same political forces that support "crippling" sanctions (which may cripple us, our allies and ordinary Iranian citizens more than the Iranian regime) also favour keeping the war option "on the table" in case our efforts to thwart Iran's nuclear program fail.¶ As is the case with sanctions, there are two options. One is to go to war, a policy that would tear the country (and especially the Democratic Party) apart in an election year. The other is to try to negotiate an end to Iran's nuclear program but, if that fails, simply accept an Iran with a nuclear capability and "contain" it. That is what we have done with North Korea and Pakistan and did for many decades with the Soviet Union. That course would infuriate the lobby.¶ Another political lose-lose.¶ Fortunately, there is a third course, which applies to both the sanctions and the war questions: we can negotiate.¶ Writing in The Atlantic, Robert Wright, a foreign policy expert, suggests a way out of the current deadlock would be to establish a nuclear-free Middle East:¶ "The idea is that Israel and Iran would open themselves up to highly intrusive inspections - of their declared nuclear facilities and of any suspicious undeclared sites - and other nations in the region would agree to monitoring as well. As Israel became assured that there were no nuclear weapons programs afoot in the region, it would gradually reduce its nuclear stockpile until, years or even decades from now, it had no nuclear weapons - but could live secure in the knowledge that none of its adversaries had them either. (Israel might preserve "breakout capacity" - the ability to produce a nuke in a matter of months.)"¶ Wright goes on to say that the main objection to this plan is the belief that Israel would never accept it. But according to a poll conducted by Israel's Dahaf Institute (an equivalent of the Gallup organisation) and cited in a New York Times piece by Steven Kull and Shibley Telhami, that is simply not true.¶ [W]hen asked whether it would be better for both Israel and Iran to have the bomb, or for neither to have it, 65 per cent of Israeli Jews said neither. And a remarkable 64 per cent favoured the idea of a nuclear-free zone, even when it was explained that this would mean Israel giving up its nuclear weapons. A clear majority also bought into the idea of opening Israel's and Iran's nuclear facilities to "a system of full international inspections".¶ The same poll finds that only 43 per cent of Jewish Israelis support a military strike on Iran, although 90 per cent assume Iran will eventually develop the bomb.¶ The nuclear-free option is worth pursuing, as is every possible alternative to war. President Obama should start the process by reaching out to Iran quietly, with the single goal of avoiding war, reducing tensions and ending the threats and counter-threats. It is possible he is already doing that, although the White House (with an eye or two on AIPAC) is denying it.¶ One last point: Why is it relatively uncontroversial to negotiate with the Taliban - who harboured the terrorists who killed 3,000 US citizens on September 11, 2001, and who have terrorised millions of Afghans for decades - but the idea of talking to Iran is considered beyond the pale?¶ The answer should be obvious. AIPAC and its congressional cutouts go wild at the thought of negotiating with Iran (or Hamas, for that matter) but are relatively indifferent to the Taliban who, of course, are far from Israel.¶ So we can talk to the thugs of the Taliban to bring about some sort of settlement. But we can't even consider talking to the government of Iran.¶ What a shameful way to conduct foreign policy.

### Obama Strikes- War Presidency

#### Obama will strike- war presidency will gain sympathy

(Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 7/27/12, RISKS OF WAR BEWARE THE FACTORS THAT COULD DRAW IN THE U.S.)

¶ The other obstacle to America being able to shift priorities and concentrate on domestic needs, as opposed to fighting another expensive and questionable war, is a possible "October surprise." Such an election-year event would have the administration of President Barack Obama starting something prior to Nov. 6 in order to influence the outcome -- something, for example, that might suddenly give him the mantle of a "war president," which usually conjures sympathy and allegiance from the voters. Think of President George W. Bush in 2003.¶ Mr. Obama has showed no tendencies in that direction, but as the race heats up, who knows?

### Obama Strikes- Strategic for Re-election

#### Obama sees Iran strikes as way to get back into election contest

(Daniel Pipes is the president of the Middle East Forum and the Taube distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, 12/28/11. The Australian)

Bomb Iranian nukes? Almost two years ago, when Obama still held a threadbare popular plurality among Americans of +3 per cent, I suggested that a US strike on Iranian nuclear facilities ``would dispatch Obama's feckless first year down the memory hole and transform the domestic political scene'' to his benefit. With one action, he could both protect the US from a dangerous enemy and redraw the election contest. ``It would sideline healthcare, prompt Republicans to work with Democrats, make netroots squeal, independents reconsider and conservatives swoon.''¶ As Obama's popularity has sunk to -4.4 per cent and the elections loom less than a year away, his incentive to bomb Iran has substantially increased, a point publicly discussed by a colourful range of figures, both American (Sarah Palin, Pat Buchanan, Dick Cheney, Ron Paul, Elliott Abrams, George Friedman, David Broder, Donald Trump) and not (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Fidel Castro). Healthcare, employment, and the debt offer the President little solace, the Left is disappointed, and the independent vote is up for grabs. Skirmishes over sanctions and drones could be mere distraction; an attack on Iranian facilities would presumably take place in the first half of next year, not too self-evidently close to the US elections.

### Obama Strikes- He Be Crazy

#### Obama thinks he’s above the law- will launch Iran strikes

(Jeffrey T. **Kuhner**, columnist at The Washington Times and president of the Edmund Burke Institute, **3/16**/12, “ Oust Obama; President’s globalist doctrine undermines American sovereignty”, The Washington Times)

The Obama administration believes it is above the law. It now openly claims that President Obama can go to war without congressional authorization. This is a flagrant - and dangerous - violation of the Constitution. It is a naked abuse of power. It begs the question: Is this an impeachable offense? A congressional resolution has been introduced to warn that such high crimes and misdemeanors will trigger impeachment proceedings. It's about time. ¶ Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta recently gave congressional testimony saying that the United States no longer needs the approval or consent of Congress before launching a major military offensive. In particular, Mr. Panetta - to the amazement of Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican - argued that the administration needs only "international permission" to engage in war. In other words, Mr. Panetta stressed that international approval from the United Nations or NATO trumps the sovereign authority of Congress. The administration is now contemplating whether to topple the brutal regime in Syria or wage devastating airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. Mr. Obama seems to view Congress and our system of checks and balances as a nuisance. He is engaged in a massive power grab, behaving more like a Roman emperor unfettered by the will of the people and its duly elected representatives. His worldview is clear - and ominous: America is no longer a self-governing republic, but a supranational state.¶ This brazen assault upon congressional constitutional prerogatives has inspired remarkably little resistance. Like ancient Rome, republican institutions are slowly being drained of authority, power flowing to an arrogant, ever-growing leviathan. One congressman, however, finally has drawn a line in the sand. Rep. Walter B. Jones, North Carolina Republican, has issued a resolution stating that should Mr. Obama - or any other president - use offensive military force without prior and clear authorization by Congress, this would constitute an impeachable offense.¶ "The issue of presidents taking this country to war without congressional approval is one that I have long been concerned about," Mr. Jones said. "Just last week, President Obama's Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta told the United States Senate that he only needed to seek 'international' approval prior to initiating yet another war, this time in Syria. Congress would merely need to be 'informed.' This action would clearly be a violation of Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution."¶ He added: "Enough is enough. It is time this country upholds the Constitution and the principles upon which this country was founded."¶ Mr. Jones is a patriot. He is a rare breed in Congress: a conservative constitutionalist who believes in putting America first. He rightly seeks to reimpose constitutional and legal limits upon the president's ability to make war. Mr. Jones has implemented a trigger mechanism to potentially rein in the lawless, scandal-ridden administration. His resolution enshrines one absolute principle: The Constitution applies to Mr. Obama - as it should to every president.¶ Mr. Obama has already pushed the constitutional limits. Take his war in Libya. The decision to overthrow Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi was done without congressional authorization - something President Bush received for his military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Hence, the Libya adventure was arguably unconstitutional. It was a war undertaken without even the legal fig leaf of congressional consent. It violated the War Powers Act, which insists that any military action past 60 days must receive congressional approval. Mr. Obama simply circumvented Congress. His behavior was that of a creeping dictator.¶ Moreover, he insisted that the Libya operation was legitimate because it had U.N. approval. Unaccountable international bureaucrats are to have more authority over U.S. armed forces than Congress. Mr. Obama also encoded the pernicious principle of "leading from behind." In other words, the world's superpower must engage in national self-abnegation for fear of upsetting Washington's coalition partners. Instead of leading NATO, Mr. Obama wants America to be subsumed by it. The results of the Libya war were disastrous. Gadhafi's murderous regime has been replaced by an Islamist Libya. Al Qaeda and the Taliban have infiltrated the country's military, its large stockpiles of weapons plundered. Shariah law is being imposed. Libya is becoming a hotbed of jihadist radicalism. In other words, Mr. Obama waged an illegal war that ended up empowering America's mortal enemies. If that is not a "high crime and misdemeanor," then what is?¶ The administration is hoping to entrench the Libya model. This was the purpose of Mr. Panetta's comments. From now on, Mr. Obama will launch military interventions based on a new doctrine: globalism. He hopes to erect a new world order where international bodies supersede American national sovereignty. U.S. military power is to become a tool of transnational socialists. George Soros is in, George Washington is out.¶ It is not just foreign policy. Mr. Obama has repeatedly behaved in an authoritarian, lawless fashion. He abused congressional procedures to ram through Obamacare. He has named numerous policy "czars" with Cabinet-like powers without the Senate's advice and consent. He has made recess appointments while Congress was not in recess - a blatant transgression of constitutional authority. He has sued states, such as Arizona and Alabama, simply for trying to enforce federal immigration laws, which the president is legally obligated to uphold.¶ This is why voters must conduct the ultimate impeachment: Remove him from office in the November election. Until then, should Mr. Obama attempt an October surprise by bombing Syria or Iran in order to cynically win re-election, Mr. Jones has given Republicans the firewall to stop him. We don't serve the president. He must serve us.

#### Obama will strike Iran- trust Santorum; he knows

(Think Progress, 7/5/12, “[Santorum Claims Obama Might Bomb Iran To Win Election](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/07/05/511564/santorum-obama-might-bomb-iran/)”, <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/07/05/511564/santorum-obama-might-bomb-iran/>)

Former Republican Senator from Pennsylvania [Rick Santorum](http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/santorum_rick) may have ended his presidential campaign in April, but his [conspiracy theorizing](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/04/10/461730/santorum-ends-campaign-foreign-policy/) about Barack Obama’s foreign policy hasn’t stopped. Santorum, who has previously stated that if elected president [he would attack Iran](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/01/02/396306/santorum-iran-attack-plan/) and claimed Obama is helping Iran [acquire nuclear weapons](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/02/10/422683/rick-santorum-accuses-obama-of-helping-iran-acquire-nuclear-weapons/), [told right wing radio host](http://www.spreecast.com/events/malzberg-talk-with-rick-santorum) Steve Malzberg on Thursday that Obama may bomb Iran in October to ensure his reelection.¶ Read the exchange:¶ STEVE MALZBERG: Even doing something against Iran, which probably fundamentally in his core, he doesn’t want to do because all he wants to do is have dinner with Ahmadinejad.¶ RICK SANTORUM: … Foreign policy is just something that is a distraction to him. Something that we will deal with later….What he believes he needs to do to win the election is some sort of October Surprise…there is no question that is one of the things that I’m sure he will look at.¶ MALZBERG: We’re talking about possibly attacking Iran. You wouldn’t be surprised?¶ SANTORUM: I don’t know…It would not surprise me that this president would do anything to let the country know that he’s on the watch and that he is a vital player in keeping us safe.¶ Obama has declared [numerous](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0312/73588.html) [times](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-57391681-503544/obama-to-gop-rivals-war-in-iran-not-a-game/) that the military option is on the table, but the administration has also [spoken honestly](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/04/26/472058/romney-camp-iran-honest-consequences/) about the negative consequences of an attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities. U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice stated in March that the administration sees a diplomatic resolution as “[the best and most permanent way](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/03/08/440627/rice-iran-diplomacy-finite-window/)” to resolve the crisis. That position was [echoed by the Mitt Romney campaign](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/06/14/499762/williamson-iran-obama-negotiated-settlement/) last month.

### Obama Strikes- Stop GOP Criticism

#### Obama strikes to end GOP criticism on foreign policy

(Antiwar, 2/18/12, website that opposes war, imperialism, and attacks on freedom, “Obama Officials: Iran Sanctions Will Fail, Leading to War”)

While insisting that they "want to see sanctions work," Obama Administration officials are convinced that the sanctions won't lead Iran to abandon their civilian nuclear program and that either the US or Israel will attack Iran as a result. ¶ The new reports come just one day after Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta conceded that Iran isn't actually developing a nuclear weapon, and DIA chief Lt. Gen. Ronald Burgess said that Iran was unlikely to start any war on their own.¶ Officials say Obama has been telling Israel he wants to "give sufficient time" to the current round of sanctions before starting the war, though they say that in the end the result will start be a war because Iran is "behaving like sanctions don't matter."¶ It does seem to have pushed back the start of the war a bit, however, as Panetta had previously predicted Israel would launch an attack between April and June, but Obama advisors are now calling September or October the "sweet spot."¶ This could mean a literal October surprise, with President Obama either starting a huge war with Iran just ahead of the 2012 presidential election, or having Israel do so and jumping in immediately thereafter.¶ Such a timing for the war could be seen as politically desirable for the president, with several of the Republican candidates condemning him for not being more hawkish against Iran, and likely to center a foreign policy debate on him not starting this particular war.

### No October Strikes- No Political Incentive

#### No incentive to strike-especially in election year

(Aaron David Miller, Aaron David Miller, a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, served as a Middle East negotiator in Republican and Democratic administrations, 3/8/12, “Iran and U.S. Election-Year Politics”, International Herald Tribune)

One of the most dangerous myths these days is that President Obama's Iran policy has been taken hostage by election year pandering to Israel. ¶ Myths and facts conflate all too easily in our opinion-driven politics. One of the most dangerous these days is that President Obama's Iran policy has been taken hostage by election year pandering to Israel and the pro-Israel community in America.¶ It's a pernicious trope that runs counter to reality. If anything, election year uncertainties will work far more to make Obama a cautious warrior when it comes to green lighting an Israeli attack against Iran or launching one of his own.¶ The notion that 5.5 million American Jews in tight alliance with the country's evangelical Christians hold America's Middle East policy hostage is one of the most dangerous yet enduring myths of American politics and foreign policy.¶ It is particularly strong in Europe and in the Arab world, where the inability to understand either how American politics actually works or the depth of the U.S.-Israeli relationship lead to a cardboard conspiracy theory whereby an Israeli prime minister turns the White House and Congress into Israeli occupied territory.¶ Israel's supporters and detractors further cloud the debate by willful or unintentional distortions. For too many pro-Israel advocates, American support for Israel has little to do with domestic politics and everything to do with the deep value- affinity and common interests that bind the two countries; for too many of Israel's detractors and critics, politics is all there is; without the influence of American Jews, the argument goes, the president would have a much freer hand when it comes to protecting the national interest.¶ Both sides have it wrong. The pro-Israel constituency has a powerful voice, to be sure, particularly in Congress, where politics dominate. But that community doesn't have a veto, or anything close to one. And there's little historical evidence to the contrary. Presidents don't seek out fights with an important domestic constituency, particularly in an election year; but when a smart and determined president chooses to follow the national interest rather than a narrow political one - from arms sales to the Arabs to the peace process, the White House prevails. Sometimes the fight is messy; but willful presidents with the national interest at their back usually win out.¶ Given the tone and tenor of the conversation on Iran in Washington these days, you wouldn't think so.¶ The narrative is that a president caught up in election-year politics is at the mercy of the Israelis (pushing him to let them attack Iran or do the job for them), their supporters in America (even more worried about Iran with nukes), Congress (pressing the administration to be tougher), and the Republicans (waiting to pounce).¶ Could anyone listening to Barack Obama this week at the Aipac policy conference draw any other conclusion? The president's rhetoric has toughened, but his Aipac speech was smart politics and also smart policy. He has a stake in signaling the Iranians that this issue is at the top of his agenda and that they shouldn't be relaxed about military action; reassuring the Israelis that he takes their concerns seriously without giving into an irrepressible slide toward war; and communicating to the Russians and Chinese that he plans to raise the pressure on Iran while leaving open the possibility of diplomacy, however slim that may be.¶ The reality is that if this were 2011, and not an election year, and the current tensions were as high as they are now, the president's policy would be very much the same - buy time to determine if nonmilitary pressure against Iran can work (oil sanctions will kick in this summer); reassure Israel of his seriousness but don't give ironclad commitments (yet) that America will take care of the Iranian nuclear problem if Israel will stay its hand. The president isn't there yet.¶ This is hardly pandering. Obama is trying to square a circle on Iran which for the time being can't be conclusively squared. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will seek a green light to take military action if he deems it necessary; the president wants a red light - for now - to give nonmilitary means more time to work. Neither will get what he wants. But what will emerge - and what should emerge - is enough of a consensus to ratchet up pressure and avoid war for now. The notion that Obama is conceding the playing field to a trigger-happy Israel just doesn't add up.¶ Nor does the president believe he needs to toughen up his approach in order to pre-empt attacks from his political opponents. Foreign policy is not figuring prominently in this campaign and bellicose words from his Republican challengers are out of step with the American public's main priority: the economy.¶ Obama has been tough enough on national security to get the benefit of the doubt. The last thing Americans want is another military adventure abroad, and the Republicans know it. Iran hasn't yet become a dynamic issue in America's electoral politics, and the administration is trying to keep it that way.¶ If election politics is having an influence in the president's thinking on Iran, it's paradoxically serving as a brake, not as a catalyst to war. An Israeli strike on Iran carries many risks and uncertainties, and America will almost certainly be drawn in.¶ This isn't about boots on the ground (Iraq and Afghanistan), but it will still be prolonged and messy, and getting into wars with small powers in faraway places has proved a lot easier than getting out of them. Even George H.W. Bush's stunning victory over Saddam Hussein didn't help him at the polls, and Obama knows this.¶ Presidents don't need uncertainties in an election year, which is why the so-called October surprise has always been a risky proposition. In the months leading up to an election, the last thing the president wants is oil at $200 a barrel, financial markets in the United States and around the world reeling, the foundering of a fledgling economic recovery at home, and more dead Americans in Afghanistan as Iran turns up the heat in terror attacks.¶ Obama may be a war president - the first since Lyndon B. Johnson to inherit a shooting war (in Obama's case two). And without a diplomatic fix for the Iranian nuclear issue (unlikely) or sanctions dissuading Iran (unlikely), the president may have to consider getting into another one with Iran. But just not now. And he will do his best to persuade the Israelis to be patient as well.¶ Whether the president can succeed is another matter. But one thing is clear: Barack Obama has convinced himself that discretion on Iran is now the better part of valor. And the approach of the November elections has only made that easier to rationalize.

#### Obama approach cautious- especially in election year

(Aaron David Miller, Aaron David Miller, a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, served as a Middle East negotiator in Republican and Democratic administrations, 5/7/12, “Hail to the not-now president”, Los Angeles Times)

If you're looking for a two-word summary of how the administration is approaching some key foreign policy issues, from Iran to Syria, there's no better description than "not now."¶ Barring some unexpected turn that forces the president's hand, there will be no October surprises. What you see now is what you're going to get through November: a cautious approach on the issues of the day that avoids bold, unilateral action.¶ And that's just fine. The last thing America needs right now is an ill-advised diplomatic blunder or military intervention. In the world Barack Obama inherited, presidential discretion in foreign policy really is the better part of valor.¶ Context matters. And whatever the president's original risk-ready instincts when it came to transformative foreign policy initiatives, they are now fully under control. Obama came into office with the goal of altering the trajectory of the nation's foreign policy. But after flirting with engaging the mullahs and the Syrians and pressing Israel on settlements, the administration came to its senses.¶ Obama settled into a less reckless, less ideological approach than his predecessor. But it was one very much consistent with Bush 43's policies. The war on terror intensified, Gitmo remained open, sanctions on Iran toughened and relations with the Israeli prime minister settled down. It was no love-fest, but neither did it have the tensions of the president's earlier campaign to push a settlements freeze.¶ The president's approach to national security issues -- including the bold operation to find and kill Osama bin Laden and the intensification of the drone war -- made him look tough. Even Bush 43's speechwriter, Michael Gerson, called Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech "manly." And his orderly but earlier-than-scheduled withdrawal from Iraq made him look politically savvy.¶ Obama has emerged as a smart, risk-averse foreign policy president. His instincts are well suited for the times. The public is tired of costly quagmires abroad and instead is focused on domestic issues.¶ The Republicans Party is having a hard time finding a way to attack him on foreign policy and is relegated to drawing distinctions without much difference on issues such as Iran and Syria. To be sure, the handling of the Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng and Obama's crowing about getting Bin Laden on the one-year anniversary of the raid that led to his death suggest the president isn't immune from stumbles. But he's proved deft and competent, guided by a smart, deliberate and cautious style.¶ And so emerges the "not now" president. If there's any doubt, look at U.S. policy responses toward Iran, Syria, the Arab-Israeli issue and North Korea. The goal is process, not outcome; deliberate, not bold initiatives; and multilateral, not unilateral action. The administration may be prepared to do something on any of these issues after November; it's just not going to happen now.¶ Iran is the clearest example. No president could ever tell an Israeli prime minister not to defend the nation, but Obama made it as clear to Benjamin Netanyahu as any U.S. president could that a unilateral Israeli strike would be a very bad idea.¶ For Obama, an Israeli attack would mean higher oil and gasoline prices, roiled financial markets, regional tensions, a stalled American recovery and more attacks on U.S. troops in Afghanistan. And for what? At best, an Israeli strike would buy a year or two until Iran's nuclear program would be back on track, this time with more international legitimacy and support from the Russians and Chinese.¶ For Obama, handling Iran these days means tougher sanctions, buying time and space, restraining the Israelis and seeing if the five-nation talks with Tehran can produce a deal. More likely, there will be no big deal on the nuclear issue this year, but no war either. And not getting into another military conflict abroad is a good thing for a president who's focused on extricating the United States from two of the longest wars in American history.¶ Ditto on Syria. Despite the brutality of the Assads, Obama is moving slowly, cautiously and multilaterally. A few neocons, some liberal interventionists and a couple of U.S. senators are urging more aggressive action, but the president has avoided even the appearance of the slippery slope of military intervention. That could change if the killing reaches new levels. But Obama will go to great lengths to avoid another open-ended military commitment.¶ The president also has de-escalated his war with Netanyahu. Israeli settlement activity continues. There are no negotiations with the Palestinians, and it's unlikely there will be any. If Obama is reelected, he may choose to try to press the Israelis on peace issues. But right now, it's just another one of those "not now" issues.¶ To Obama's critics who argue that the president is sacrificing American interests and leadership with his "not now" approach, I'd say give me a realistic alternative. Yes, the president is making a virtue out of necessity because on these three issues, the only options run from bad to worse.

#### Obama bribing Netanyahu to postpone attacks- he thinks peace key to re-election

(Washington Times, 3/27/12, “Obama's secret plan;

National security takes a back seat to president's re-election”)

There is only one thing scarier for the future of America than all of the debt and bad policies President Obama has built up since his 2008 election: It's what the prospect of an Obama second term would bring. And the president isn't being honest about what his secret plans are. ¶ That Mr. Obama has dangerous ideas up his sleeve and won't be forthcoming about his true agenda during this year's presidential campaign were exposed in candid comments he made to Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on Monday. On the subject of sensitive arms-control negotiations, the U.S. president advised, "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." This admission begs the question: Flexibility to do what? What agreement with Russia does Mr. Obama want to sign that he thinks would be so damaging to his re-election chances that he would need to wait until afterward to perpetrate it? If such a hidden intention would be dangerous to his re-election, it surely wouldn't be a safe policy for our national defense.¶ Mr. Medvedev responded to Mr. Obama's plea by saying, "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir," referring to former and incoming Russian President Vladimir Putin, the strongman who has held the reins of power in Moscow one way or another since 1999. There is no mistaking whether Mr. Obama's request to delay major diplomatic relations until after the election was motivated entirely by his own political considerations, an uncomfortable reality reflected in the beginning of the repartee between the two presidents. Mr. Obama explained, "On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this, this can be solved but it's important for him [Mr. Putin] to give me space." Mr. Medvedev replied, "I understand your message about space. Space for you... ."¶ The insidious nature of this back and forth is due to the fact that Mr. Obama didn't know a microphone was on and thought his conversation with the foreign leader was confidential. That he would be so forthcoming about making U.S. national security second fiddle to his personal quest for re-election is startling. That his candor benefits Russia - a strategic competitor to the United States and former longtime enemy - is scary. Mr. Obama already signed the ill-advised "New Start" Treaty, which allows Moscow to expand and modernize its nuclear stockpile while America unilaterally cuts down our own arsenal. It is the president's self-centeredness, combined with a cavalier lack of respect for the global perception of U.S. power, that has many security analysts speculating about a rash October surprise to help his electoral bid.¶ This isn't the first time Mr. Obama has tried to cut a backroom deal to push off serious action until after the election. Three weeks ago, he reportedly offered Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bunker-buster bombs and other sophisticated military assistance if Israel would agree to wait until after November to bomb Iran. Such wheeling and dealing shows that Mr. Obama is willing to do anything to win re-election. But when national security is subjugated to politics, America loses.

#### Obama bribing Netanyahu for peace- Israel reliance on US for military assistance gives Obama leverage in holding off strikes

(John Feffer, Co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, 3/13/12, “Bribing Israel”, Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-feffer/bribing-israel_b_1342357.html>)

The bully came to Washington. The American president told him in no uncertain terms that the United States would not support a military attack on Iran at this moment. The bully met with 13,000 of his U.S. supporters in an effort to pressure the White House. It didn't work. The bully went home empty-handed.¶ This is the conventional news analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to Washington, his discussion with President Barack Obama, his speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and his consequent loss of face. Many elements of this analysis are true. So, for instance, it's certainly true that the Israeli hawk failed to convince the Obama administration to green-light an attack during the so-called zone of immunity before Iran achieves its putative desire of membership in the nuclear club. It's certainly true that Netanyahu's hard-line speech on Iran quite nearly brought down the house at the AIPAC shindig, where the audience included more than half the members of Congress. And finally, the Obama administration did indeed hold to its position of "diplomacy backed by pressure." ¶ For many observers, Obama has gone at least a pawn up in the intricate chess game with Israel. The president "established a position his critics may find hard to assail," concluded The Guardian's Chris McGeal. "He forced those many members of Congress and beyond who have conflated America's interests with Israel's on to the back foot by saying that on Iran there are differences -- and he will serve U.S. interests first." James Fallows in The Atlantic agreed: "The question is whether this tone genuinely buys Obama more time and freedom of action, rather than constraining his next decisions. I am betting we will look back on this as a chessmaster move. I am hoping that, too."¶ But this story of Obama the diplomat standing up to Netanyahu the bully omits some important information. During Netanyahu's visit, the Obama administration reportedly offered Israel a package of advanced military technology, including bunker-busting bombs and long-range refueling planes, as long as it postponed any attacks on Iran until 2013. In other words, Obama wasn't only buying time, he was bribing Israel to prevent the kind of October surprise -- or even July surprise -- that might derail his reelection bid. And he was doing so with precisely the weapons that Israel could use to execute an attack on Iran.¶ Bribery is deeply embedded in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Half of all U.S. overseas military assistance, after all, goes to Israel. That's $3 billion a year. And it will continue to rise every year until 2017, thanks to an agreement worked out under the Bush administration. And military assistance to Israel is unlike assistance to other countries in quality as well as quantity. "Israel's $3 billion is put almost immediately into an interest-bearing account with the Federal Reserve Bank," explains Walter Pincus in the Washington Post. "The interest, collected by Israel on its military aid balance, is used to pay down debt from earlier Israeli non-guaranteed loans from the United States. Another unique aspect of the assistance package is that about 25 percent of it can be used to buy arms from Israeli companies. No other country has that privilege."¶ That Israel has been cutting its military spending -- an otherwise admirable decision -- means that the United States is increasingly picking up the slack. It also means that Israel, in theory, has increased its dependence on the Pentagon, which should translate into more U.S. political leverage over Israel. But with rare exceptions, the United States has not exercised this leverage. Israel, as I have argued elsewhere, is to the United States what North Korea is to China. These client states take everything from their putative benefactors except advice. Indifferent to international law, armed to the teeth, and isolated in their respective regions, Israel and North Korea dance to their own tune, however discordant it might be for everybody else.

## Strikes Bad

#### Consensus among military experts that strikes a catastrophic idea- would not produce desired results and would risk engendering backlash and global war

(Nicholas D. Kristof, 3/24/12, Pulitzer-Prize-winning NY Times columnist, expert on international and presidential politics, author, “The False Debate About Attacking Iran”, NY Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/opinion/sunday/kristof-the-false-debate-about-attacking-iran.html>)

I WONDER if we in the news media aren’t inadvertently leaving the impression that there is a genuine debate among experts about whether an Israeli military strike on Iran makes sense this year. There really isn’t such a debate. Or rather, it’s the same kind of debate as the one about climate change — credible experts are overwhelmingly on one side.¶ Here’s what a few of them told me:¶ “I don’t know any security expert who is recommending a military strike on Iran at this point,” noted [Anne-Marie Slaughter](http://www.princeton.edu/%26#126;slaughtr/), a Princeton University professor who was a senior State Department official earlier in the Obama administration.¶ “Unless you’re so far over on the neocon side that you’re blind to geopolitical realities, there’s an overwhelming consensus that this is a bad idea,” said W. Patrick Lang, a former head of Middle East affairs for the Defense Intelligence Agency.¶ “Most security experts agree that it’s premature to go to a military option,” said Michèle Flournoy, who has just stepped down as the No. 3 official in the Defense Department. “We are in the middle of increasing sanctions on Iran. Iran is already under the most onerous sanctions it has ever experienced, and now we’re turning the screws further with sanctions that will touch their central bank, sanctions that will touch their oil products and so forth.¶ “So it has been bad for them and it’s about to get worse,” Flournoy added. “The overwhelming consensus is we should give some time to let that work.”¶ Granted, American officials are deeply alarmed about Iran’s nuclear program, although the fear is not so much that Iran would use nuclear weapons against Israel or anyone else. Iran apparently developed chemical weapons to respond to Iraq’s chemical attacks during the Iran-Iraq war, and it showed restraint with them. Rather, the biggest fear is that if Iran tests and deploys nuclear weapons, other countries will follow. [These could include Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/22/opinion/the-bomb-and-the-bomber.html?_r=1), setting off another round of nuclear proliferation.¶ Officials and security experts make several broad points about why a military strike on Iran anytime soon would be an abominable idea.¶ First, it would set back Iran’s program by only one to three years — and then it presumably would go ahead more covertly and with more domestic support than ever.¶ Second, this wouldn’t be a single strike but would require sorties over many days to attack many locations. And the aim would be in part to kill the scientists running the program, so there would be civilian casualties. Day by day, anger in the Muslim world and around the world would grow at Israel — and at America. The coalition pressuring Iran through sanctions might well dissolve.¶ Third, a regional war in the Middle East could result, sucking in the United States. Iran could sponsor attacks on American targets around the world, and it could use proxies to escalate attacks on American troops in Afghanistan.¶ Fourth, oil supplies through the Persian Gulf could be interrupted, sending oil and gas prices soaring, and damaging the global economy.¶ Fifth, sanctions and covert methods like the [Stuxnet](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/computer_malware/stuxnet/index.html) computer worm have already slowed Iran’s progress, and tougher sanctions and covert sabotage will continue to delay the program in a low-risk way.¶ Granted, everything I say here may be wrong. Israel’s 1981 attack on the Osirak reactor in Iraq and its 2007 attack on a Syrian nuclear project both went smoothly, without retaliation. The attacks set back those countries’ nuclear programs much more than skeptics had expected.¶ Yet there’s good reason to think that Iran is different, partly because its program is so dispersed and protected. More broadly, war is inherently unpredictable, and Israel has often been horrendously shortsighted in its interventions. Its invasion of Lebanon in 1982 turned into a quagmire that [helped lead to the emergence of Hezbollah](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/weekinreview/16worth.html), while its [de facto support for Hamas](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123275572295011847.html) in Gaza in its early days harmed everyone (except Iran).¶ Let’s also remember that as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bangs the drums of war, that may empower Iranian hawks. “The continual threat of a military strike is as likely to convince them to move ahead as to deter them,” Slaughter notes.¶ Whether Israel will attack Iranian nuclear sites is one of this year’s crucial questions, and people in the know seem to think the odds are about 50-50. We don’t know that the economy would be harmed or that a war would unfold, but anyone who is confident about what would happen is a fool.¶ So as we hear talk about military action against Iran, let’s be clear about one thing. Outside Netanyahu’s aides and a fringe of raptors, just about every expert thinks that a military strike at this time would be a catastrophically bad idea. That’s not a debate, but a consensus.