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U.S., Israel at Odds Over Iran Nuclear Program

Egypt's Morsi: To Rethink Israel Pact, Build Iran Ties

Egypt's Islamist president-elect, Mohamed Morsi, wants to "reconsider" the peace deal with Israel and build ties with Iran to "create a strategic balance" in the Middle East, according to an interview published recently by Iran's Fars news agency. The stated goals are certain to alarm Israel and the United States as they adapt to the new direction Egypt will chart with Morsi at the helm. They could also boost Iran's influence in the Middle East at a time of heightened tensions between Tehran and the West.

"We will reconsider the Camp David Accord" that, in 1979, forged a peace between Egypt and Israel that has held for more than three decades, Morsi was quoted as telling a Fars reporter, just before his election triumph was announced. He said the issue of Palestinian refugees returning to homes their families abandoned in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the 1967 Six-Day War "is very important." Morsi added though that "all these issues will be carried out through cabinet and governmental bodies because I will not take any decision on my own."

Morsi also said he was ready to improve ties with Iran. The Islamic republic broke off diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1980, a year after Cairo signed the peace deal with Israel. "Part of my agenda is the development of ties between Iran and Egypt that will create a strategic balance in the region," Morsi was quoted as saying. Iran's foreign ministry welcomed Morsi's triumph. However, its message made no mention of Iran and Egypt resuming diplomatic ties. [AFP]



President Barack Obama (R) meets with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office in March.

The White House recently expressed confidence that American intelligence will know if Iran escalates its nuclear program in a sprint to build an atomic bomb. The announcement came a day after Israel's defense minister warned that the allies might not know "in time" to prevent it.

"We have eyes, we have visibility into the program," press secretary Jay Carney told reporters at his daily briefing. "We feel confident that we would be able to detect a break-out move by Iran towards the acquisition of a nuclear weapon."

"We believe there continues to be the time and space to pursue this course," Carney said, referring to punishing American and international economic sanctions on the Islamic republic. "It is the best course of action to ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon. We take no options off the table, and we consult with our allies all the time about the situation in Iran with regards to this program."

But Carney's professed confidence about the quality of the information regarding Iran's nuclear program, widely seen by American and Israeli officials as an attempt to acquire the ability to build a nuclear weapon, appeared to conflict sharply with that of Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak. Barak told Israel Radio that news reports of a new American intelligence assessment that Iran has made surprising progress towards a nuclear weapon makes it "less clear and certain that we will know everything in time about their steady progress toward military nuclear capability."

Israel has warned that it views a nuclear-armed Iran as a threat to its very existence and reserves the right to use military force against Tehran's atomic program. "We work very closely with our Israeli counterparts on this issue. We share information as a matter of course, and we share an assessment of where Iran is, and what its capacities are, and what the timelines look like," Carney said. He

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Jay Carney,
White House press secretary

noted that “international inspectors” from the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency have had access to key atomic sites in Iran.

“It is our firm belief that there is time and space to pursue the diplomatic option that includes extremely, and increasingly, ag-

gressive sanctions, includes diplomatic isolation, and international condemnation,” he said.

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has repeatedly accused President Obama of being weak in the face of Iran’s defiance of international pressure.

Israel’s Haaretz newspaper has reported that Obama had received a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) - the consensus assessment of the American intelligence community - that “Iran has made surprising, notable progress in the research and development of key components of its military nuclear program.” Carney declined to comment on the news report, but some American officials bristled at what they saw as a naked Israeli effort to pressure Washington into taking a more hawkish line.

If correct, the new NIE would be yet another shift in American intelligence agencies’ assessment of just what Tehran is doing, though nothing as momentous as NIE compiled in 2007. That report said Iran had halted its military nuclear program in 2003 and that there was no clear evidence that those efforts had resumed. The NIE came in the aftermath of the Iraq War intelligence debacle, in which the United States incorrectly insisted Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Iran flatly denies that it seeks nuclear weapons and insists that it aims only to bolster its ability to produce energy for civilian purposes.

Some American officials say that Iran wants the ability to build a nuclear weapon, not necessarily to actually acquire an atomic arsenal.

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told the Senate Intelligence Committee earlier this year that: “We assess Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons, in part by developing various nuclear capabilities that better position it to produce such weapons, should it choose to do so. We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons.” He underlined that Iran was guided by a rational “cost-benefit” approach that he said gave the international community leverage to shape Tehran’s decision.

[Yahoo.com]

New Israeli Device Can Help Visually Impaired “See” Using Music

Israel Researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed a device that converts images into music to help individuals without vision reach for objects in space. Sensory substitution devices (SSDs) use sound or touch to help the visually impaired perceive the visual scene surrounding them. The ideal SSD would assist not only in sensing the environment but also in performing activities based on this input. For example, accurately reaching for a coffee cup, or shaking a friend’s hand.

In a new study, Hebrew scientists trained blindfolded sighted participants to perform fast and accurate movements using their new SSD, called EyeMusic. The EyeMusic employs pleasant musical tones and scales to help the visually impaired “see” using music. This non-invasive SSD converts images into a combination of musical notes, or “soundscapes.” The device was developed by Prof. Amir Amedi and his team at the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC) and the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada at the Hebrew University.

The EyeMusic scans an image and represents pixels at high vertical locations as high-pitched musical notes and low vertical locations as low-pitched notes according to a musical scale that will sound pleasant in many possible combinations. The image is scanned continuously, from left to right, and an auditory cue is used to mark the start of the scan. The horizontal location of a pixel is indicated by the timing of the musical notes relative to the cue (the later it is sounded after the cue, the farther it is to the right), and the brightness is encoded by the loudness of the sound.

The EyeMusic’s algorithm uses different musical instruments for each of the five colors: white (vocals), blue (trumpet), red (reggae organ), green (synthesized reed), yellow (violin); Black is represented by silence. Prof. Amedi said “The notes played span five octaves and were carefully chosen by musicians to create a pleasant experience for the users.”

“We demonstrated in this study that the EyeMusic, which employs pleasant musical scales to convey visual information, can be used after a short training period (in some cases, less than half an hour) to guide movements, similar to movements guided visually,” explained lead investigators Drs. Shelly Levy-Tzedek, an ELSC researcher at the Faculty of Medicine, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and Prof. Amir Amedi. “SSDs may have great potential to provide detailed spatial information for the visually impaired, allowing them to interact with their external environment and successfully make movements based on this information, but further research is now required to evaluate the use of our device in the blind,” concluded Dr. Levy-Tzedek.

[Israel Herald]

BBC Olympic Coverage Declared East Jerusalem as Palestinian Capital

As originally reported on the BBC Sport website's coverage of the London Olympic games that featured country profiles of all of the competing nations, other than Israel, every country's profile includes a listed capital city. The BBC's Olympic country profile for Israel omitted a capital city, while the only partially-recognized entity of "Palestine" had a listed capital, "East Jerusalem."

Palestine	Israel
	
	
Key Facts	Key Facts
Capital East Jerusalem	Top medal sports (pre-2012) Sailing Judo
Population 4,400,000	Population 7,300,000
Size 6,335km ²	Size 22,072km ²
Languages Arabic	Languages Hebrew Arabic

The description of the capitals provoked a rebuke from the Israeli Government, shown at right.

In response, the BBC amended the country profiles. The Palestine profile was changed to include the following: "Palestine is recognized as a competing country by the IOC but is not recognized as a modern state."

According to the BBC, in place of a capital, Palestine has an "Intended seat of government," which states: "East Jerusalem. Ramallah serves as administrative capital."

As for the profile of Israel, according to the BBC it still had no capital city. Instead, it side-

stepped the issue by including a "Seat of government," which stated: "Jerusalem, though most foreign embassies are in Tel Aviv." [HonestReporting.com]


לשכת ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER'S BUREAU

Foreign Press & Public Affairs
Adviser

היועץ לתקשורת חוץ
וקשרי חוץ

July 18, 2012
כ"ח תמוז, תשע"ב

Mr. Paul Danahar
Middle East Bureaux Chief
British Broadcasting Corporation
Jerusalem Technology Park Tower Bldg.
Jerusalem 96951

Dear Paul,

I am dismayed by the BBC's decision to discriminate against Israel on the BBC's Olympic website.

Every country (and non-country) participating in the London 2012 games has been given a page on your website with background information about the country, including mention of the capital city. Every country (and non-country), except Israel.

Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel, and accordingly we respectfully request the immediate rectification of this matter.

Yours truly,


Mark Regav

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919 טל': 02-6705354, פקס: 02-5618642
3 Kaplan St. Hakiryia, Jerusalem 91919, Israel, Tel: 972-2-6705354, Fax: 972-2-5618642