

JERUSALEM, WASHINGTON, AND THE IRANIAN BOMB

By [Ari Shavit](#) Haaretz 01 03 2012

Next Monday, in the White House, the man from Washington and the man from Jerusalem will look into each other's eyes. Each will see the abyss in the other's pupils.

The view from Washington: We went into an unnecessary, awful war in Iraq. We're in a complicated, depressing war in Afghanistan. Our economy is finally beginning to recover from the worst crisis it has known since World War II. In November we have elections. So we don't have the slightest intention of doing anything that could entangle us in a third war and a renewed economic recession. By no means will we attack Iran and we won't let Israel attack either. By no means will we impose a maritime blockade on Iran or collapse its central bank. We will not initiate a move that could break the rules and generate a global crisis. We will not allow the fanatics ruling Jerusalem to drag us into an insane, 21st-century-Masada war.

The view from Jerusalem: For 15 years we've been warning them about the Iranian bomb. For 10 years we've been giving them solid evidence. But they ignore us and refuse to budge. They tell us we're Masada-obsessed wackos who haven't recovered from the trauma of Auschwitz. They tell us they're loyal and intelligent and can be trusted. But the facts prove they cannot be trusted. They were wrong in Pakistan and wrong in North Korea and wrong in Osirak. They have betrayed every friend they had in the Middle East. When it transpires they were wrong about Iran as well, they will throw us into the garbage bin of history. But we're no suckers. We know the game and we will disrupt it - we'll preempt them. Instead of withering at their convenience, we'll strike at our convenience. And if the war raises oil prices and brings a Republican to the White House, tough luck. When someone rises to sacrifice you, sacrifice him first.

The view from Washington: The name of the game is "alibi." We know the Shi'ites are resolved and we are weakening and won't stop them. We know we aren't made of the stuff that Harry Truman and John Kennedy were made of. But we have to go through the motions for the sake of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates. We have to go through the motions for Israel and the Jewish community. We've got to win in November. So we're putting on a show that Broadway can only dream of - make-believe warnings, make-believe sanctions, a make-believe military option. Make-believe unlimited support for the Jewish state and moderate Arab state. But after November we're getting rid of the props, dispersing the band and returning the costumes to the storeroom. We'll close some deal with the ayatollahs. We'll get a promise from Ali Khamenei not to set off the first nuclear explosion before 2016. This will ensure that during the second term both the American economy and Iranian centrifuges will be moving full steam ahead. And when the world finds out we were wrong and misled it, we'll say, oops, mistake. We tried, we really did. We have an alibi. Our hands did not enrich that uranium. Really, our heart aches for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates and Israel. The thought of Israel, especially, floods our Democratic heart with compassion.

The view from Jerusalem: Those who claim we entangled the Americans in Iraq in 2003 are lying. The truth is, we warned them at the time that the problem

wasn't Iraq but Iran. But today the situation is different. Only the United States is capable of preventing Iran's nuclearization completely. Only if the United States threatens to use force against Iran will it be possible to prevent the use of force. But America insists on acting as Britain and France did in the '30s. There is no doubt - ultimately the West will sober up. But the West could sober up after Czechoslovakia falls again. So unless the Americans prove to us right away that they have opened their eyes, we'll act before November. The risk is high, but the alternative risk is total. There isn't a state in the world that would take a total risk upon itself. Certainly not the last and only state of the Jewish people.

Next Monday, in the White House, the man from Washington and the man from Jerusalem will look into each other's eyes. Each will see the abyss in the other's pupils. If U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fail again to rise above themselves and don't start working together as allies, they will bring disaster on their nations.