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## Morsi to shop for nuclear-capable missiles in Beijing en route for Tehran. Netanyahu, Obama meet Sept. 27

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Chinese Dong-Feng 21 nuclear capable missiles

The White House has fixed an appointment for President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to hold talks on Sept. 27, debkafile's Washington sources report. Netanyahu will spend ten days in the United States, during which he will address the UN General Assembly and launch Israel's counter-attack on the virulently anti-Semitic themes of Iran's official anti-Israel propaganda.

This timeline indicates that the prime minister is inclined to accommodate President Obama by delaying once again an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear program until after the US presidential election on Nov. 6.

It stands to reason that Netanyahu would not fix a date with Obama to take place after an attack, or that the president would receive him. That being the case, there will not be much for them to talk about.

Obama stood up to the blasts from a number of influential American editorial writers and strategic analysts who urged him to offer Israel a solemn commitment for a pre-emptive American offensive against Iran from the Knesset podium, as a means of holding the Netanyahu government back from military action in the fall of 2012. Another suggestion was for the president to formally notify the US congress of his plans for military action if Iran persisted in speeding the development of its nuclear weapon capacity.

Obama rejected both suggestions – and Iran continued to accelerate its advance towards a nuclear weapon undisturbed.

Thursday, diplomats close to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, disclosed that Iran had installed another 1,000 uranium enrichment machines in its fortified underground facility at Fordo, and was expanding its production of 20-percent refined uranium.

Experts not bound by the IAEA's diplomatic constraints report that enrichment climbed to 30 percent some months ago and was now on the way to 60 percent. At least 3,000 centrifuges were now spinning at Fordo.

Israel recently passed information to Washington that Iran had already developed a radioactive (dirty) bomb.

Yet US official spokesmen keep on intoning that there is still room for diplomacy - even after all the parties admitted that the Six Power talks with Tehran broke down irretrievably weeks ago. And Friday, Aug. 24, seven hours of argument between the IAEA and Iranian representatives failed to dent Iran's implacable opposition to any reduction in its nuclear drive or the slightest transparency.

One can only conclude that, even after Iran has the bomb, the mantra "there is still room for diplomacy" will continue to issue from official US mouths and the Washington-Tehran dialogue drag on, possibly through new channels, as it does with Pyongyang.

After they meet, the US President may reward the Israeli Prime Minister with a marginally more assertive statement about Iran as a sort of consolation prize for his restraint. But that will not change the fact that neither has raised a finger to halt a nuclear Iran, both preferring to bow to domestic political pressures and considerations.

Their inaction has given two Middle East leaders a major boost for progress on their own nuclear initiatives.

Last March, Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who was recently appointed head of general intelligence, travelled secretly to Beijing and returned with Chinese President Hu Jintao's consent to sell Saudi Arabia nuclear-capable CSS-5 Dong-Feng 21 MRBM ballistic missiles. He also agreed to send over Chinese nuclear engineers and technicians to help Saudi Arabia develop uranium enrichment and other nuclear production capacities.

This work is already in progress at the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology near Riyadh.

In the last few weeks, Saudi Crown Prince Salman launched negotiations with Tehran on a non-aggression pact and other understandings covering bilateral cooperation behind America's back on such issues as Syria.

It should be obvious from this development alone that the Middle East nuclear race, which both President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu admitted would be triggered by a nuclear Iran, unless preempted, is in full flight, a fact of which they have neglected to inform the general public in both countries.

But there is more.

After less than three months in office, the Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi is following in Saudi footsteps: He will kick off his first foreign trips next week with a visit to Beijing, where he hopes to take a leaf out of the Saudi nuclear book. He then touches down in Tehran, ostensibly to attend the Non-Aligned Organization's summit opening there on Aug. 26, but meanwhile to cultivate ties with Tehran for common action in the Middle East.

He has laid the ground for this by proposing the creation of a new "contact group" composed of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey to disentangle the Syrian conflict – again behind America's back.

The optimistic presumption that the Egyptian president will have to dance to Washington's tune to win economic assistance is proving unfounded.

And Obama's hands are tied.

In June 2009, he bound his administration's Middle East policy to mending American ties with the Muslim Brotherhood. Today, he can hardly starve the new Cairo administration of financial aid.

And the Egyptian president is riding high. Believing he can get away with it, he may even proclaim from Tehran that the two nations have decided to resume diplomatic relations after they were cut off for 31 years.

This chain of events confronts Israel with three strategic predicaments:

1. Even if Riyadh, Cairo and Tehran are unable to come to terms in their first efforts at understanding, the fact remains that Saudi Arabia and Egypt have set their faces toward détente with Iran.
2. Saudi Arabia and Egypt are on the road to a nuclear weapon although Egypt is still trailing far behind.
3. In the five weeks remaining before the Obama-Netanyahu meeting, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and China will be moving forward vigorously toward their strategic, military and nuclear goals, while the US and Israel will be stuck in the doldrums of their interminable argument over who goes first against Iran – if at all.