

US and Israel reiterate to Moscow: Military option is on the table

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DEBKAFfile's US intelligence sources report indications of impending war preparations against Iran after Tehran's rejections of the UN-brokered proposal to ship its enriched uranium overseas for further enrichment. These sources reveal that the administration is seeking congressional authorization to open America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). Furthermore, the US-Israeli joint US-Israel Juniper Cobra ballistic exercise is in full swing. Finally, US and Israel officials have been instructed to warn Moscow that the military option is still on the table if Iran's nuclear program is not halted by diplomatic means.

The US SPR which contains 727 million barrels of petroleum is only opened in time of war. Under an agreement signed with Israel in 1975, Washington undertakes to supply Israel with its fuel needs for five years in an emergency.

Word of these apparent war preparations appeared Saturday Oct. 31, the day after Iran's senior nuclear negotiator delivered a counter-proposal to the UN-brokered plan to the IAEA in Vienna which excised its main object, which was to reduce the enriched uranium stocks in hand for Iran to make a nuclear bomb.

The joint US-Israeli military exercise which ends Tuesday, Nov. 3, moved to the Tel Aviv arena last Tuesday with US forces drilling defensive action against a prospective Iranian missile attack or a seaborne strike from the Mediterranean on Israel's central conurbation.

For the last three days, Moscow has had nothing to say about the Iranian rejection of a plan which would have sent Iranian uranium to Russia for reprocessing, although Tehran previously indicated to the Kremlin that the international plan would sail through. DEBKAFfile's Moscow sources regard the rebuff as Tehran's response to the suspension of Russian S-300 missile defense batteries after they had already been packed for delivery to Iran.

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