

Ex-defense minister says John Bolton pushed for Israeli strike on Iran

Shaul Mofaz and three other former IDF heads warn of Tehran's ambitions, but advise against tearing up nuclear deal.



Shaul Mofaz speaks at Kinneret College in northern Israel on December 22, 2014. (Flash90)

A former Israeli defense minister and chief of staff said Sunday that John Bolton, US President Donald Trump's incoming national security adviser, once pushed him to order airstrikes against Iran.

"I know John Bolton from when he was the US ambassador to the UN. He tried to convince me that Israel needs to attack Iran," Shaul Mofaz told a Jerusalem conference held by the Yedioth Ahronoth daily.

"I don't think this is a smart move — not on the part of the Americans today or anyone else until the threat is real," he added.

Mofaz was IDF chief of staff from 1998 to 2002, after which he served as defense

minister until 2006. Bolton was appointed by US president George W. Bush and served as ambassador in the UN in 2005-2006.

Mofaz did not say what prompted Bolton to push for an attack on Iran, though the ambassador has advocated for Israeli strikes against Iran in the past and called for regime change there.

Bolton, who is known for his hawkish views, was tapped by Trump last week to replace H.R. McMaster, a US Army general.



In this file photo from February 24, 2017, former US Ambassador to the UN John Bolton speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Oxon Hill, Maryland. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File)

Though he advised against attacking Iran, Mofaz said “the Iranian threat is very significant to Israel’s security.”

“Iran today is also already on the borders of Israel — in Syria and Lebanon. It is impossible to guarantee a future for the children of Israel if Iran has a nuclear weapon,” he said.

Mofaz was speaking alongside three other former Israel Defense Forces chiefs who also issued warnings over Iran’s nuclear program.

“Iran is striving for a nuclear weapon, which in its view will give it strategic immunity. The world needs to guarantee it doesn’t get there,” said former chief of

staff Benny Gantz.

Though they warned of Iran's nuclear ambitions, Mofaz, Gantz, Moshe Ya'alon and Dan Halutz all said they were nevertheless against abrogating the 2015 agreement meant to curb the Iranian nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for the deal to be "fixed or nixed" and Trump has said he will pull the US out of the deal if it is not changed to make restrictions on Iran's nuclear program permanent or address Tehran's ballistic missile program and support for terror groups.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-defense-minister-says-john-bolton-pushed-for-israeli-strike-on-iran/>

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