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# Amos Gilad: When Iran goes nuclear, the region will go nuclear

*Defense Ministry political-military director says it's time to declare Syria dead*

• By YAAKOV LAPPIN

As soon as Iran gets a nuclear bomb, Egypt will develop its own nuclear weapon, and Saudi Arabia will purchase one from Pakistan, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Amos Gilad, director of political-military affairs at the Defense Ministry, warns.

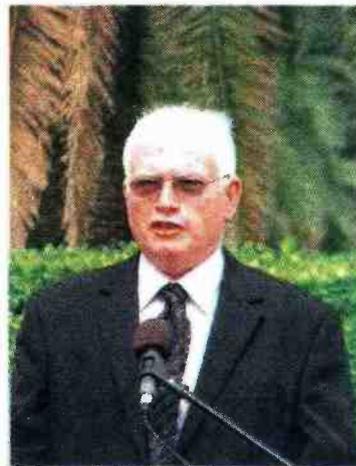
"The Arabs will not tolerate the Persians having the bomb. From the moment the Iranians get the bomb, the Egyptians have the resources, capability and know-how to achieve nuclear capabilities, and the Saudis will run to buy the bomb from the Pakistanis with a 'member's discount,'" Gilad said, speaking at a conference held by the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya on Tuesday.

Iran is trying to get nuclear weapons and won't give up on this goal in talks with the global powers, Gilad cautioned, adding that the Islamic Republic would not forfeit "any essential component in its quest for nuclear capabilities. This is true even if it agrees to reduce uranium enrichment for tactical needs and maintaining the stability of the regime there."

He said he was "disturbed that they [the international community] are going for an interim agreement mechanism. After six months, there will be another six months, and then there will be cracks in the wall of sanctions."

Israel exercises a great deal of deterrent power, he stated. "The sense among our rivals is that we can deal with every aggregate of strategic threats."

The good news in the region, he continued, is that in Egypt, the



AMOS GILAD  
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Muslim Brotherhood has been beaten back by Field Marshal Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, meaning that a ring of Islamist powers has not formed around Israel.

The Egyptians have managed to block "between 90 and 95 percent of [smuggling] tunnels to Gaza, and are fighting a determined war against al-Qaida in Sinai," he said. "In Turkey, [Prime Minister Recep Tayyip] Erdogan has been substantially weakened and returned to his natural dimensions. The stability of the Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan is an optimistic point of light."

Turning his sights to Syria, Gilad said there was "no military threat to the north. The Russians, the Iranians and Hezbollah allow the Assad regime to survive with artificial life-support. There is no Syrian state, but there is a regime. And there's a difficult humanitarian problem. I'd like to officially declare Syria dead, but the date of the funeral is not yet known."