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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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Press TV

Think Tank: Israel unlikely to attack Iran in 2012

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The head of the London-based Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) has ruled out the possibility of a premature Israeli military strike against Iran in 2012.

“My judgment is that an Israeli attack on Iran of an overt kind is unlikely this year,” said John Chipman at a Wednesday press conference on the annual assessment of the global military power balance.

He made reference to the Monday meeting of the US and Israeli leaders in Washington, and noted that during the session, US President Barack Obama gave assurance to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “in effect, that if Israel took US advice and did not attack prematurely, that when the threat matured, the United States would, if all other options failed, use the military option.”

This is while, Netanyahu reiterated earlier that "when it comes to Israel's security, Israel has the right, the sovereign right, to make its own decisions."

The IISS chief also referred to the Strait of Hormuz as Iran’s trump card and said in case of any military strike, Tehran can either choke the strategic energy bottleneck or impose stringent bureaucratic restrictions on the shipping in the waterway.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies accuse Iran of pursuing military objectives in

its nuclear energy program. Washington and Tel Aviv have also threatened Iran with a military strike against its nuclear installations.

Iran has repeatedly refuted the Western allegations regarding its nuclear energy program, arguing that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it is entitled to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Iranian officials have promised a crushing response to any military strike against the country, warning that any such measure could result in a war that would spread beyond the Middle East.