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US Preparing ‘Unprecedented’ New Arms Package to Israel for Iran Deal

On July 19, 2015

On Friday, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon confirmed the nation expects significant “compensation” from the US in the form of a major new arms package after the Iran nuclear deal. Today, officials confirmed that they are mulling an “unprecedented” package for Israel.

Last week’s indications were that the figure was formerly in the \$3.7 billion range, but that Israel expected this figure to grow significantly in return for their acquiescence on the pact. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was complaining about the package at any rate, saying the fact that the US is willing to pay him off proves the Iran deal is “bad” for Israel.

In reality, of course, the US is trying to buy off Netanyahu on Iran because they see him as being for sale on the issue. Though officials are downplaying the chances of sending “swag bags” of arms across the region after the Iran pact, it does seem that Israel will be getting one.

The Israeli expectation is that they will get more the longer they hold out, however, and Secretary of Defense Ash Carter is not expected to make an offer during this week's visit, after Netanyahu refused to even address the subject in talks with Obama last week.

Holding off on the deal is a gamble for the Israeli leadership, however, particularly with Netanyahu publicly spurning the idea. If it becomes increasingly clear that the Israel Lobby's efforts will not secure a veto-proof majority in Congress to kill the deal, the administration may decide Israel doesn't need buying off, or at least not at such a gaudy price.