

## Netanyahu adviser raises "MAD" nuclear scenario

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JERUSALEM, July 9 (Reuters) - Israel must have "tremendously powerful" weapons to deter a nuclear attack or destroy an enemy that dares to launch an atomic strike, a senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted on Thursday as saying.

National security adviser Uzi Arad, in comments to Haaretz newspaper, appeared to allude to what is widely believed to be Israel's own nuclear arsenal and a standing policy of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD). He warned other countries they could bring about their own devastation if they launched an attack.

Israel has never confirmed it has atomic arms.

In excerpts on Haaretz's English-language website of an interview to be published on Friday, Arad said he feared that if Iran became a nuclear power, five or six other states in the Middle East would follow suit. He called such a prospect a "nightmare" for Israel.

"The defensive might we have must be improved and become tremendously powerful, and create a situation in which no one will dare to realise the ability to harm us," Arad said.

"And if they do dare, we will exact a full price, so that they too will not survive."

Israel has three German-made submarines that are widely assumed to carry nuclear missiles.

One of the submarines sailed from the Mediterranean, via the Suez Canal, to Israel's Red Sea port of Eilat last week, in what officials called a signal to Iran of the long reach of its arsenal.

Israel and its Western allies fear that Iran is enriching uranium with the aim of producing nuclear weapons. Iran says it is pursuing only a nuclear power generation programme.

In a 2006 Reuters interview, then-vice premier Shimon Peres, currently Israel's president, said Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for Israel to be wiped off the map, should bear in mind his country also could be destroyed.

"They want to wipe out Israel ... Now when it comes to destruction, Iran too can be destroyed (but) I don't suggest to say an eye for an eye," Peres said. (Writing by Jeffrey Heller, Editing by Alastair Macdonald)



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