

## Attack on Iran: Israel Turns to Russia

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Russian senior air defense officers, accompanied by mid-level diplomats have recently visited Israel. The discussions focused on Iran and their contents are only partly known. Israel may be asking Russia to leverage its growing influence within Iran to rein in the latter's nuclear weapons agenda. In return, Israeli sources claim that Israel has shared with the Russian visitors intelligence, including hard to obtain HUMINT, about the Iranian leadership, its oil economy, and military. The Americans were apprised of the discussions. Israel asked Russia not to supply Iran with strategic air defense systems "in the next 3 months" (presumably, until after Israel's aerial bombardment on Iranian facilities). Russia remained non-committal, "noting" Israel's concerns.

Out of courtesy, Netanyahu decided to postpone any military action until after the visit of Gates, the US Defense Secretary at the end of July. But this should not be construed as an abandonment of the martial option. On the contrary: exercises have been stepped up, live ammunition and all. Some of these are taking place at nighttime. Are the Israelis going to attack during the night? Doubtful. But they are sure going to use the cover of the dark to try to rescue pilots shot down over hostile territory and to extract trapped warriors. This means that they will attack in the afternoon, at around 2 or 3 PM.

Attack on Iran: Rift in the Military and the Role of Commandos

July 19, 2009

The targets for Israel's attack on Iran have been chosen: one is close to the sea, the other is inland. Members of Sayeret Matka"l are now conducting joint (often nightly) exercises with Israel's Navy SEALs (the "Shayetet") off the coast of Ashkelon and on the beaches of Haifa. While the deployment of the commandos and other ground forces will be done mostly by air, their evacuation, 4-6 hours later, will be accomplished by sea.

The role of the commandoes was re-defined last week to exclude the kidnapping of Iranian scientists. This change in operational goals followed a row among the upper echelons of Israel's military and intelligence community. Now, Israel's elite warriors are merely to return with soil samples and equipment from the facilities in the wake of the aerial bombardment. They are also to mine the area and to detonate explosives in sensitive locations. They are to avoid Iranian losses of life and collateral damage. Two Mossad A-Teams are already in operation inside Iran, close to the coast, having been deployed there by a submarine last week.

Faced with what it regards as an existential threat, Israel is reviving old and dormant intelligence networks and assets worldwide. Erstwhile members of the Lishka le-Kishre Mada (Laka"m, headed in the 1980s by Rafi "The Stinker" Eitan), or the "Bureau for Scientific Contacts" of Pollard infamy, were recently called to duty. They are working closely with physicists from the Weizman Institute, the Technion, and Tel-Aviv and Beer-Sheba Universities. These combined team of seasoned intelligence operatives and top-level scientists have spent the last two weeks briefing the commando units in their base of operations near Eilat and in the nuclear reactor in Dimona.

Prominent members of the Israeli government, the Headquarters of the Israeli Defense Forces, and the intelligence community are against any military operation in Iran. They believe any such a move would be tantamount to geopolitical and, in the long-term, physical suicide. But they are in the minority. The majority of decision-makers are siding with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu who is pressing for an early military resolution of the problem.

Yet, the very phrase "military solution" is an oxymoron, claim his critics. Iran's nuclear program is spread over 60 sites, some of them deep inland. Redundancy is high and there is no way to take Iran's nuclear capacity out as was done in Iraq in 1981 and in Syria, lately. Better to wait for political change and voluntary disarmament as happened in Libya, they insist.

Attack on Iran to Include Ground Forces

July 16, 2009

An eventual attack on Iran may include ground forces. Units of Sayeret Matka"l ("Headquarters Scouts", Israel's elite special forces) have been transferred to the mock in Biq'at Hayareach ("Moon Vale"), not far from Eilat. They have spent the last few weeks training there: parachuting, paragliding, urban warfare (laba"b in Hebrew), and hand to hand combat.

Special emphasis is placed on explosives. The area is isolated (it got its name from its eerie similarity to the moonscape), but various civilian suppliers have reported massive explosions during the day.

In my previous article, titled "Preparations for Attack in Iran Almost Complete" (dated July 10), I revealed the existence of the training mock near Eilat and Aqaba by the Red Sea. A few days later, Israel made the presence of its Navy in the Red Sea public. Though it has not been a secret hitherto, it has hardly been trumpeted. The navy's role is support the mission with sea-launched precision cruise missiles (of Israeli manufacture). In general, Israel is trying to minimize the involvement of American materiel in its forthcoming foray into Iran.

One word about the "windows" mentioned in my earlier article. As any military planner and intelligence agent knows, these are not actual operational dates. "Windows" are possible operational dates and are dictated by the confluence of weather projections, known troop movements, political and geopolitical circumstances, and military preparedness. Additional windows exist in September and October this year (I have the dates). It is likely, therefore, that Israel will attack in July or August, but no later than October this year.

## Preparations for Attack on Iran Almost Complete

By: Sam Vaknin

July 10, 2009

Late last year, Israel embarked on a coordinated campaign of leaks to the press regarding its determination to take out Iran's nuclear facilities if Obama's then-new administration fails to sway the Iranians diplomatically. Israel is unwilling to accept a nuclear Iran: "It is not an option", say its senior intelligence and military leadership.

On January 20, 2009, I appeared as a guest in the most popular political affairs program in Macedonia ("Glasot na Narodot", or The Voice of the People). I warned that Israel is willing to wait 6 to 8 months for Obama's "diplomacy" with regards to Iran's nuclear capability to show some progress. If Iran remains recalcitrant, Israel plans to bomb two facilities in Iran as it did in Iraq in 1981, I said. Refueling won't be a problem, I assured the program's host, Slobodan Tomic: both Egypt and Saudi-Arabia offered to help.

Israel has decided to go ahead. Taking into account political, geopolitical, military preparedness, and climatic conditions, there are two windows: between July 21 and 24 and between August 6 and 8. Advance teams comprised of Mossad agents and military personnel are already on the ground in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iraq (including in the Kurdish lands, adjacent to Turkey).

A mock has been erected not far from Eilat (near the Red Sea, opposite Aqaba). A defunct airbase in Biq'at Ha'Yareach (Moon Vale) has been resurrected to accommodate Air Wing 10. In a country as small and intimate as Israel, it is amazing that this has been kept a secret: hundreds of recruits and reservists - from mechanics and pilots to cooks and administrators - have been re-stationed there in the last few months.

A mysterious facility also sprouted up not far from Dimona's nuclear reactor, next to a university town called Sde Boker. It is not known what is its role, though speculation is that it is intended to shield the sensitive facility from an Iranian counter-attack. Several batteries of aged Patriot missiles have been recently replaced with brand new anti-missile rockets developed by Israel.

Citizens are reporting dry runs in the skies of the Negev, Israel's traditional air force training grounds and a desert with some resemblance to Iranian conditions. Piecing these scant testimonies together, it seems that the Israelis are concentrating their effort on midair refueling and surgical strikes on multiple targets.

Finally, HAGA (Hagana Ezrakhit), the Civilian Defense Force, a part of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), has been instructed to begin preparations for a possible Iranian counter-strike with long-range conventional missiles. At this stage, Israel is not contemplating chemical or biological warfare (though the distribution of gas masks does seem to be part of the drill).

No one knows for sure where will Israel strike. Wiping off all the widely distributed and impregnable components of Iran's capability to enrich uranium is close to impossible. The after-effects of even a limited air attack may be devastating and not necessarily short-term, as the Israelis are convinced. The price of oil is likely to spike and radicals and extremists throughout the benighted region are bound to leverage the attack to smear and taunt Israel and its allies but, then, what else is new. The Arab countries are likely to breathe a sigh of relief that the Iranian bully has been humbled.

The big question mark is how will the Obama administration react to such a fait accompli that flies in the face of the new President's stated policies. Will Obama try to make an example out of Israel and harshly punish it - or will he merely

verbally lash it and proceed with business as usual? Time will tell. Soon. Sam Vaknin ( <http://samvak.tripod.com> ) is the author of Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited and After the Rain - How the West Lost the East. He served as a columnist for Global Politician, Central Europe Review, PopMatters, Bellaonline, and eBookWeb, a United Press International (UPI) Senior Business Correspondent, and the editor of mental health and Central East Europe categories in The Open Directory and Suite101.

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