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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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23.04.2024

Iran's Retaliation Against Israel: The Theater and the Spectators



Iran's drone attack on Israel. Image by NDTV.

It is not easy to write about a fluid situation where events can change unpredictably by the minute. This is especially the case when it involves a mercurial figure like Benjamin Netanyahu, the narcissist Hebrew version of Donald Trump, who views the longevity of the Israeli Jewish apartheid as contingent on his own political survival.

In the aftermath of Iran's "calculated" retaliatory strike in response to the bombing of their diplomatic mission in Syria, which resulted in the deaths of 12 Iranians, including two high-

ranking military officials, Western leaders are repeating the same mistake when they lined up behind Joe Biden to embrace the Israeli Prime Minister following October 7. They failed to condemn the Israeli aggression against the Iranian embassy, and are now calling on Iran to refrain from retaliation following the most recent Israeli attack on Isfahan.

Western leaders, who were deaf and mute after Israel's unprecedented attack on the Iranian diplomatic mission in Damascus, suddenly awakened from their hibernation following Iran's retaliation. The depths of Western double standards seem boundless when an Iranian limited response, which resulted in no Israeli fatalities, elicits more condemnations than the Israeli murder of 34,000 individuals and Netanyahu-made starvation on 2.4 million human beings.

The Iranian retaliation against Israel was not surprising. However, I found it puzzling that Iran chose to disclose the timing of their military plans to neighboring Arab countries, especially those with normalized relations with Israel. Predictably, this information was immediately relayed to U.S. intelligence. It's not hard to imagine whom the U.S. might have subsequently shared this information with.

Given my limited knowledge of war strategy, primarily gleaned from reading Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" nearly 40 years ago, I recall the emphasis on deception and misdirection tactics to confuse and outmaneuver the enemy. Hence, I wonder if Iran's decision to announce the launch of drones and ballistic missiles well in advance of reaching their targets was a deliberate act of deception, or if it was intended to mitigate further escalation with Israel?

While it may seem counterintuitive to announce military actions in advance, there could be strategic reasons behind such a move. It's very conceivable that Iran's public announcement was a strategic move aimed at gathering intelligence and gauging the reaction and capabilities of the U.S. integrated multinational defense system that spanned from northern Iraq to the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. They could also learn how the synchronized air defense batterers operate, as well as their ability in intercepting old generation missiles and drones.

On the other hand, Iran did not hide its intention to avoid further escalation in its measured retaliation. In his speech on the occasion of National Army Day, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi made it clear that Iran's retaliation was deliberate, and limited.

While Iran could have undoubtedly gathered numerous military insights from the events of April 14th. On the political front, however, there remains much for us to learn, too.

Growing up, I remember hearing much of the ring nations or Arab countries surrounding historical Palestine. These countries were considered as the forefront supporting the Palestinian revolution in fighting the Zionist occupation. I never realized that one day most of

these ring countries would become a safety buffer zone to protect Israel on the east, and to suffocate the Palestinian resistance in Gaza from the west.

This was evident in the Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi's forthcoming interview with CNN stating that Jordan will shoot down any "objects that . . . violate [Jordan's] airspace," or "pose a danger to Jordan."

The minister spoke as if Jordan had any meaningful control over its airspace. In reality, Jordan's skies were an orgy of Israeli, American, British and French jets scrambling to shoot Iranian drones and missiles. Actually, the flying objects posed danger only when Israel and et al. turned Jordan into a graveyard for the crashing drones/missiles before reaching Israel.

In this context, it's imperative for writers to consistently question and challenge authorities, refraining from defending systems or individuals in power. Over the past six months, Arab and Muslim nations have not done much to halt the Israeli genocide or alleviate the starvation in Gaza. Likewise, it's equally important to acknowledge those actors such as Yemen's humble efforts, the resistance in southern Lebanon, and the recent actions by Iranian. These modest efforts stand in stark contrast to Arab countries that have opened their ports and land routes for Israeli shipments, bypassing Yemen's actions in the Red Sea, or those directly abetting the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

Furthermore, the Iranian "measured retaliation" has shown that the presence of Western forces in Arab countries isn't geared toward defending those nations, but rather serves as an advanced defense system primarily aimed at protecting Israel. This presence was promptly activated to attack Yemen when it blocked Israeli vessels from transiting through Bab el Mandab. Interestingly, the regional air defense system remained inert even when Iran targeted the American base in Iraq in January 2020, or when its missiles struck suspected Mossad facilities in northern Iraq, or throughout the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. Indeed, while Israeli officials talked about intelligence cooperation with Arab countries in the past, they bragged that it "was the first time that we saw the alliance work at full power," defending Israel.

It's therefore disheartening to witness government owned media outlets and for-hire pundits in the Arab world dismiss the Iranian retaliation as mere theatrics. While it's important to engage in an honest and constructive debate about Iran's "limited" response to the Israeli attack, this discussion should be within the context of, and focused on, advancing Iran's support for Palestine, rather than serving as a platform to rationalize Arab governments' impotence.

As someone not versed in military matters, I cannot speculate on the intentions of nations. However, as an observer, I would prefer to attend a theater sending airborne messages capable of penetrating, regional and international, Israeli air defense systems, while delivering an unequivocal message that Israel is not beyond reach. Maybe the GCC Arab monarchies, as well as Jordan and Egypt, should also contemplate producing their own theatrical productions rather than attempting to cancel the Iranian “show.”

This would certainly beat being mere spectators in an Israeli-produced theatrical performance of the food airdrops, knowing that their “immature act” would neither relieve hunger nor end the genocide in Gaza.

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APRIL 22, 2024