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Israel Confirms ‘Widespread’ Strikes Against Syria

By Jason Ditz
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The Israeli military is confirming that it is launching “widespread” artillery and air strikes against Syrian military targets across the Golan frontier, saying the attacks are meant to send a “strong message” about cross-border fire that landed in an empty field in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

There was no reported damage in what hit Israeli territory, though it did start some brush fires. Exactly what was hit in the Israeli attacks on the Syrian side isn't entirely clear. Syrian state media is claiming only property damage, though the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claimed a number of casualties

While Israeli officials are solid on the idea that the attacks are "retaliation," there appears to be more than a little confusion among Israeli military sources on who they are actually retaliating against, as they have already issued three distinct statements blaming three different groups for the stray fire.

In the wake of the incident, defense sources were blaming the Palestinian faction Islamic Jihad, though almost immediately thereafter they were claiming the Iranian military's Quds Force had fired deliberately at Israel as part of "retaliation" against Israel, and insisted Iran was wholly responsible. That narrative didn't last long, however, until they'd declared Syria's government wholly responsible.

They seem to have settled on blaming the Syrian government, for convenience if nothing else, as it gives them a bunch of easy-to-hit military targets all over the frontier. Since Israel attacks Syria on a fairly regular basis, and often without even this much pretext, it was likely just the simplest course of action for them.

The timing is interesting, as Israeli media reports have talked up the possibility of launching an outright invasion of Syria in recent days, and are presenting the latest incident as the first time fire from Syria has landed inside Israeli territory in over 40 years.