

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY MELVIN GOODMAN

17.04.2024

Iran and the US Say Enough, Will Israel Go Along?



Iranian missiles passing over w:Al-Aqsa after IRGC hit Israel with multiple airstrikes. Photograph Source: Mehr News Agency – [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

First, the good news. U.S. military and intelligence operations in the Middle East over the past weekend operated at high levels of efficiency. The U.S. had premonitory intelligence from Turkey as well as the Swiss who manage U.S. diplomatic contacts with Iran. U.S. CENTOM commander, General Michael Kurilla, and his senior staff were sent to Israel and helped to coordinate the interception of Iran's drones and missiles. The British and the French were also involved in the intercept operation, which means that Israel should stop messaging that it is alone in the fight against Iran.

Even Jordan took part in the campaign against Iran, which was incredibly courageous in view of the large Palestinian population in the Hashemite Kingdom. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also appeared to be sympathetic with Israel regarding Iran's use of force.

President Joe Biden was at his best in the 48 hours that really mattered. Most importantly, Biden has advised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to “take the win” and desist from any retaliation. Biden has scored important diplomatic points over the past two weeks by emphasizing the need for greater humanitarian aid to be delivered to Gaza and for Israel to be more humane in its horrific military campaign against a tortured Palestinian population. U.S. support should allow Netanyahu to stand up to his right-wing and messianic coalition that advocates an Israel from the “river to the sea.”

Ironically, Iran at the moment is part of the “good news” story. The conventional wisdom in the United States is that Iran has conducted a “blatant and powerful act of direct war” against Israel. However, the Iranian attack has been a long time coming in view of the past ten years of Israel’s cyberwar against Iran; the assassination of senior Iranian nuclear scientists on Iranian territory; and the killing of at least 18 Iranian generals and military commanders. The drone and missile attack on April 13th was carefully calibrated to target the Nevatim air base in southern Israel, which is Israel’s largest air base, as well as the Golan Heights. The F-35s that attacked the Iranian “consulate” in Damascus flew from that base in southern Israel and they flew over the Golan Heights.

Iran apparently had no intention to cause civilian casualties and gave ample warning of its plans, which allowed the U.S.-Israeli coordination to take place. Like President Biden, the Iranian leadership has stated that Tehran’s military operation is over and that no additional military force will be applied. It is clear that the Iranians calibrated and telegraphed their operation, and that the use of absurdly slow-flying drones was largely performative. It appears that Iran has no interest in a wider regional war, but that national pride required a response to Netanyahu’s reckless attack in Damascus on April 1st against a consulate building that claimed diplomatic immunity.

Now the bad news. The Iran-Israeli war is no longer a so-called shadow war. Israeli decision making has now failed miserably on two major fronts. Netanyahu’s unwillingness to take Hamas seriously allowed the horrific events of October 7th, which marked the greatest civilian losses in Israel’s history. And Netanyahu’s attack in Damascus at a time when domestic Israeli elements as well as a number of international actors were trying for a deescalation of the war with Hamas marked a strategic setback for Israel. Netanyahu’s war has become a moral and military failure, and he was wrong from the start in not giving the highest priority to release of the hostages. He continues to place additional obstacles in the way of gaining the release of more than 100 hostages in the hands of Hamas, Palestinian Jihad, and possibly others.

Unfortunately, Israeli hard-liners as well as many war hawks in the United States who have wanted to avenge the U.S. hostage crisis since 1979 will increase their demands for retaliation against Iran. If the Gaza War should become secondary to a greater Iran-Israeli War and an even larger regional war, the political and military casualties will be far greater and could weaken Biden's chances for reelection in November 2024. If Netanyahu believes that only continued war can help his own chances of political survival, then the risk of escalation remains great. The fact that Netanyahu is taking credit at home for standing up to Biden and the United States does not augur well for the near term.

Biden should stand up to Netanyahu and correct the serious U.S. mistakes of the past. These include doing Israel's bidding in Lebanon in the 1980s; providing arms to Iran in the Iran-Contra operation of the 1980s; declaring Iran to be part of an "axis of evil" when Tehran was cooperating with the United States in Afghanistan; the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003; and of course the U.S. complicity with Israel's genocidal campaign against Gaza over the past six months. The emphasis now should be on a cease fire in Gaza; release of the hostages; a surge of humanitarian assistance to Gaza; and talks with Iran that could lead to diplomatic recognition.

The absence of any damage to Israel from Iran's attack has provided an opening for a diplomatic effort. Israel has an opportunity to end its diplomatic isolation if it demonstrates restraint, and the United States has an opportunity to use its leverage in the region. There is probably no opening for a "modus vivendi" with Iran, but it is possible to reach out to Tehran, which faces serious domestic problems and has no stomach for a wider war. This will require Biden to stand up to Netanyahu and to take serious diplomatic steps in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf that include the start of an U.S.-Iranian dialogue.

Melvin A. Goodman is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and a professor of government at Johns Hopkins University. A former CIA analyst, Goodman is the author of [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#) and [National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism](#), and [A Whistleblower at the CIA](#). His most recent books are "American Carnage: The Wars of Donald Trump" (Opus Publishing, 2019) and "Containing the National Security State" (Opus Publishing, 2021). Goodman is the national security columnist for counterpunch.org.

APRIL 16, 2024