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زبانهای اروپایی

Author: Viktor Mikhin

05.05.2024

Will Iranian-Israeli peace endure?



Iran's first direct successful attack on Israel for its many brutal attacks on Syria, Lebanon, Iran and the annihilation of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank has dramatically changed the rules for all state and non-state actors in the Middle East. On 13 April, for the first time in nearly 190 days, Palestinians in Gaza were able to sleep without fear of Israel's constant aerial presence in the skies over the Strip, which has been mercilessly carpet-bombed since 7 October.

The results of Iran's successful attack on Israel

The reason: for the first time in history, Iran launched drones and missiles directly at Israel from its territory in retaliation for Israel's brutal, unprecedented air strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on 1 April, which killed 16 people. Although Iran's attack on Israel

ended within hours, it gave a brief respite to the Palestinians in Gaza, who have faced a relentless Israeli onslaught that has so far killed some 34,000 people and injured some 100,000, most of them civilians – the elderly, children and women.

After Israel attacked with more than 300 drones and missiles, the Iranian mission in New York immediately informed the UN that Tehran had halted its retaliation. Tel Aviv said it had intercepted 99 per cent of the drones and missiles fired by Iran with the help of an international coalition including Jordan. But as it later turned out, the famous ‘Iron Dome’ was quietly breached, and had it not been for the US and Britain shooting down 99 per cent of the drones (the missiles safely reaching their targets), there would have been nothing left of the Nevatim and Ramon military bases. Suffice it to say that the Jordanian air defences alone, which were not threatened, shot down more than half of the Iranian drones and not a single missile.

In its 18 April edition, the Israeli newspaper Maariv reported that Israel’s air defences only managed to repel 84% of the Iranian attack. The newspaper also questioned claims by an Israeli army spokesman that 99% of Iranian missiles and drones were intercepted by Israeli anti-missile systems. According to published reports, visual evidence from satellite imagery left no doubt that the Iranian attack targeted one of the buildings at the Dimona nuclear facility, where rooms thought to be impenetrable were hit twice. The Israeli bases at Nevatim and Ramon, in the heart of the Negev desert, were hit by Iranian missiles four and five times respectively, according to a released video. A huge swarm of hundreds of Iranian drones hit many Israeli defence sites on the evening of 13 April.

Netanyahu’s reaction

In the days that followed, while speculation over Israel’s response to the Iranian attack occupied the attention of diplomats, the media and the public, Palestinians in Gaza were once again subjected to a brutal Israeli attack. Unable to respond honourably to Iran, Netanyahu, who for the first time in his life received a decent armed response, will now take out his anger and revenge on peaceful, unarmed Palestinians. Any hope of a ceasefire has been further undermined, and fears of a possible Israeli ground offensive on Rafah, the southern town where large numbers of Palestinian civilians have sought refuge from the evil Israeli war machine, have been heightened.

Iran’s first direct attack on Israeli territory would have serious political and possibly humanitarian costs for Gazans, say Arab diplomatic and official sources. They warn that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is now likely to feel less reluctant to launch an offensive on Rafah (as he has been reluctant to do with the Palestinians). And it seems to be

just around the corner. In this case, after the US vetoed and blocked a draft resolution to admit Palestine as a full member of the organisation, the UN can do nothing to help the Palestinian grief and suffering. No matter how many tears the UN secretary-general sheds in public, the Biden administration has given Israel a huge tranche, blessing it to continue destroying the people of Gaza. After all, the bombs and missiles that will be dropped from planes will all be branded “Made in USA”. The entire Arab press and the media of the Global South, in other words the vast majority of the world’s population, have long believed that the US is equally involved in the destruction of the Palestinians of Gaza.

According to the Western media, Netanyahu is now trying to tell Western leaders over and over again that it is time for them to recognise that he was right to invade Rafah and establish a new Israeli-style political reality and security in Gaza. He reminds anyone who calls him, advising a cautious and carefully calculated response to the Iranian attack, that Israel must respond appropriately to Tehran. But he relies first and foremost on the US and its forces to launch a preemptive strike against Iran and unleash World War III, in which the prime minister apparently believes he will survive, let alone achieve a phantom victory. And now **the Israeli newspaper Haaretz has noted**: “For us, the problem is not Hamas, but the civilians of Gaza. And these civilians will now pay the price not only for the choice Hamas made on 7 October, but also for Tehran’s attack on 13 April”.

Jordan’s special position

Jordan, which has had a peace treaty with Israel since 1994, announced it was closing its airspace hours before Iran launched a series of drones and missiles. The country’s air defences were also put on alert. In other words, Amman was warned by the Iranians of the start of hostilities against Israel. An honourable act! Two days later, after reopening its airspace, Amman announced that it would not stand by if its airspace was violated again. Apparently, only Iranian missiles will be shot down, but not American and Israeli missiles aimed at Iran – they will be given a green light.

And it is unlikely that the Israelis, and especially the Americans, will warn Amman of the start of hostilities against Tehran. They live in a completely different reality from the Iranians and see themselves as masters – the US in the world, Israel in the Middle East. This is the reality of the current situation in the Middle East and the level of decency of its participants. There have been reports in the Israeli press that Israel is now planning to increase water supplies to Jordan to show its appreciation for Amman’s role in helping to intercept rockets. Perhaps this is a kind of thirty pieces of Judah’s silver.

Incidentally, the King of Jordan, artificially created by the British after the First World War on part of the territory of Palestine and Saudi Arabia, is Abdullah II. He was named in honour of his grandfather, Abdullah I, the first Emir of Jordan. But his fate was unenviable – he was shot in 1951, as patriots said at the time, “for collaborating with Israel and betraying the country’s national interests”. I wonder if this history can be repeated today, and what the fate of the current King of Jordan will be?

Israeli reactions and actions

It is understandable that Netanyahu had to respond to this successful strike by Tehran in order to save face. **The US intelligence community**, which is in full cooperation with the Israelis on all fronts, has been discussing with Israel several options for action, one of which was a massive strike. Journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Seymour Hersh** reported on 24 April, citing sources.

“In a series of behind-the-scenes negotiations, the Israelis were told they had three options for retaliation”, he wrote in his article. The first was the option of a “massive, devastating strike” that would provoke an escalation and further damage Israel’s standing in the world community. The second scenario was a “limited strike against the greatest threat to Israel and the world” by destroying a nuclear facility in the Iranian city of Natanz in Isfahan province.

But Israel, Hersh continues, chose the third point – the opportunity to “show its hidden hand – the ability to preempt, the ability to hypersonic guidance at will”. On 19 April, world media reported that **Israel had retaliated against Iranian territory** with explosions **near the international airport** in Isfahan province. According to Iranian television, air defences **destroyed several unmanned aerial vehicles** over the province. Iran’s Fars news agency reported an explosion near Isfahan airport and the 8th base of the Iranian Army Air Force (Hashtam Shikari base). It also reported that air defence systems were activated in response to the flight of several small drones (three explosions). The state agency IRNA reported that air defence systems had been activated in several provinces.

The Iranian news agency Tasnim reported that Iran’s nuclear facilities in Isfahan were perfectly safe. A little later, a CNN source said that Iran’s nuclear facilities “were not the target of the Israeli strikes”. In addition, an Iranian official announced that no missiles were used in the attack on Iran and that the sounds of explosions were the result of air defence systems. This ineffectual response from Tel Aviv is apparently due to the stern warning issued by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. He specifically told CNN that if Israel took military action against Iran, the response would be “immediate and at the highest level”.

For now, there is a temporary lull in the Middle East as all parties calculate their options for further hostilities. But will this be to the benefit of the region itself and its peoples? Wouldn't it be better to sit down at the negotiating table and work things out? But this is unlikely to happen as long as there is a unipolar world created by the West for itself and for itself. Isn't it time to create a multipolar world where all parties and countries have the same rights and obligations?

04.05.2024

*Victor MIKHIN, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences,
especially for online magazine “[New Eastern Outlook](#)”*