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The Cradle's Iraq Correspondent

10.08.2024

Striking Iraq:

How US–Israel attacks are ‘unifying the fronts’

The suspiciously-timed US–Israeli killing spree of Resistance officials across West Asia has deepened the unity of regional resistance fronts, now poised to coordinate a massive retaliation and open a multi-front war.

Between the afternoon of 30 July and early the following morning, West Asia witnessed a series of significant events unfold from the Levant to the Persian Gulf.

The synched US–Israeli military and intelligence operations began around 4pm that Tuesday with strikes on Beirut’s southern suburbs that took down an entire residential building.

Later that evening, following sunset prayers, the Jurf al-Sakhar district in Iraq was hit, followed by a dawn strike on Tehran. These coordinated attacks are believed to be part of a US–Israeli [assassination campaign](#) tied to the ongoing war on Gaza, which has been simmering for nearly 10 months.

Among the most high-profile targets were Hamas politburo chief Ismail Haniyeh and top Hezbollah war commander [Fuad Shukr](#). These assassinations dominated the headlines, overshadowing the [less-publicized](#) US military attack on members of Kataib Hezbollah (KH) in Iraq, which also claimed the life of a [senior Yemeni missile specialist](#), Hussein Abdullah Mastour al-Shabal.

‘Downplay Iraq’

The difference in media coverage may be due to the differing ranks of those targeted and the importance of the strike locations, even though the concept of a [unified resistance](#) front remains central to this conflict, initiated 10 months ago with Hamas’ Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.

The team of military specialists in northern Iraq was targeted under different circumstances. A KH leader informs *The Cradle* that “this team is specialized in weapons development, not implementation.”

His information contradicts the statement from a US defense official, who claimed the strike was a [defensive](#) measure against resistance fighters in Iraq preparing to launch drone attacks against US and allied forces in the region. But as the KH source reveals, there was no imminent threat to US forces by the group’s technical team:

The team members were in the final stage of testing a new technology related to drones, and this is the reason for the American targeting. This technology, which may soon enter into the confrontation, will cause damage that the Americans cannot accept, and the bombing came to block the way to this development, but it failed to achieve its goal.

The group targeted, known as “Al Nour,” included senior KH commander Ahmed Najm Abdul Zahra, also known as Abu Hassan al-Maliki or “Abu Hassan Biden.” The nickname “Biden” is linked to Maliki’s involvement in an attempted operation against Joe Biden when he was vice president under Barack Obama, and took place in Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone during his [surprise visit](#) to Iraq in September 2009. Maliki was arrested and imprisoned by US forces for three years before his release in 2012.

When asked about a possible retaliation to the US attack on Jurf al-Sakhar, the KH leader said that while a response is certain, its circumstances and its relationship to the Iranian response to Haniyeh’s assassination – and the Lebanese response to Shukr’s assassination – will remain ambiguous and difficult to determine:

The nature of the response, its timing, and its relationship with the rest of the fronts will not be revealed at this time.

The source preferred not to comment when asked by *The Cradle* about the bombing of the US Ain al-Assad base on 5 August, in which American casualties were announced. Nor would he confirm if that incident was part of the expected Iraqi resistance retaliation.

To complicate matters, the group believes that other parties were complicit in the US strikes. KH has identified Kuwait’s Ali al-Salem Air Base as the launch site for the US drones that struck Maliki and his cadres in Iraq – it is a claim that Kuwait has sought to deny, but *The Cradle’s* KH source confirms.

Overlapping fronts

A source close to the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) tells *The Cradle* that the confrontation with Israel and the west has expanded quickly to operate within overlapping fronts throughout West Asia.

The circle of confrontation with Israel includes the Islamic Resistance in Gaza and Lebanon, while the Islamic Resistance in Iraq in addition to its operations through Syrian territory as well as the Yemeni Armed Forces carry out the tasks of a wider circle, which is the support front, which produced coordination and joint operations between the two in a wide environment starting from Iraq and the Mediterranean Sea in the north and even the Arabian Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait in the south.

Within the unified resistance fronts, there is a clear division of labor and target banks – though responsibilities could shift at any time as the conflict escalates and deepens. The source explains this notion further:

Despite Lebanon’s location on the Mediterranean Sea and the presence of Hezbollah there, the efforts to impose a naval blockade fall on the shoulders of the Iraqi and Yemeni support front within the division of deliberate roles. Note that the Yemen front has a peculiarity – because Israel targeted the port of Hodeidah, Yemen can, therefore, respond inside occupied Palestine.

In Iraq, despite Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani’s efforts to convince Washington to end the international coalition’s presence in his country – as decided by a parliamentary majority in 2020 – and to redefine, via ongoing negotiations, the military relationship between the two countries, tensions remain high.

Regional resistance against occupation

Major General Yahya Rasul, spokesman for Iraq’s armed forces, condemned the Jurf al-Sakhar bombing, calling it a “heinous crime” and a “blatant attack” on Iraq’s sovereignty. To add to Sudani’s embarrassment, the US bombing strikes came shortly after the PM had publicly and privately implored the Iraqi resistance to refrain from operations against US targets.

Yet, an adviser to the Iraqi Prime Minister, speaking on condition of anonymity to *The Cradle*, suggests that the US strikes did not impact bilateral talks:

There is no indication of the suspension of negotiations between the two countries at the end of the international coalition and the withdrawal of US forces. US Secretary of State [Antony] Blinken’s recent call with al-Sudani included discussing a withdrawal timeline.

This withdrawal, the official says, includes combat forces leaving the “Arab side” of Iraq by 2025 and the Kurdistan region by 2026.

But Hadi al-Amiri, a key figure in the Coordination Framework, a coalition of Iraqi political parties, and Secretary General of the Badr Organization, had expressed impatience with this

timeline, reminding Iraqis that foreign forces withdrew within two years when their numbers were far higher, and questioning why 2,500 US troops now require *three years* to exit.

The US–Israeli assassination campaign against members of the Axis of Resistance reflects a desperate effort to disrupt the growing coordination among these factions as the prospect of a multi-front war looms ever closer.

The assassinations of a Yemeni missile expert in Iraq and Hamas’ Haniyeh while in Tehran illustrate the [Resistance Axis](#)’ deeply intertwined mutual security interests and shared goals of ending the foreign occupation in West Asia. Every American and Israeli step forces this Axis into ever-deepening coordination and operation.

This widening war is no longer a distant possibility, but an unfolding reality driven by the relentless pressure on these interconnected fronts.

AUG 9, 2024