

# **After the 'deterrence collapse 3 options for the Israeli response to Iran**

## **Iran vs Israel**

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## After The 'Deterrence Collapse,' 3 Options for The Israeli Response to Iran

Israeli analyses and assessments have unanimously agreed that the Iranian drone attacks deep into Israeli territory should serve as a red alert for decision-makers in the Israeli security establishment, despite what they described as an "impressive achievement" by the Israeli defense system in collaboration with the United States.

Israeli analyses have also concurred that Iran has surpassed and broken the fear barrier by launching an attack on Israel from Iranian territory for the first time since the Islamic Revolution. This reflects the collapse of Israeli deterrence, with Tehran daring to challenge Tel Aviv and escalate tensions into a state of emergency and psychological warfare since targeting the Iranian consulate in Damascus and assassinating leaders of the Revolutionary Guard, notably Hassan Mahdavi, commander of the "Quds Force" in Syria and Lebanon.

Despite the diminishing deterrence capability and Iran's audacity in attacking Israel, Israeli analysts' readings indicate that the unprecedented Iranian attack, intercepted by Israeli defense systems in collaboration with the United States and regional countries, represents "operational success," potentially paving the way for forming a US-Israeli-Arab alliance against Iran.

According to analysts' estimates, the Israeli military is not in a rush to respond to the Iranian attack at the moment, although this could harm deterrence capabilities. Analysts agree that the attack in Iran could exacerbate the situation and drag the region into a regional war, especially after Tehran succeeded in attacking Israel and establishing a concerning precedent.

- **Deterrence Collapse**

Under the headline "Netanyahu waited amid victory celebrations... A dismal failure of deterrence against Iran," Ariel Shemidberg, the newsroom editor at "Walla" website, wrote an article heavily criticizing Netanyahu's handling of the Iranian threat, saying: "Despite the achievement of the defense system, Iran managed to unsettle us for two weeks and strike deep into Israeli territory. On the other hand, Shemidberg says, "There has also been a monumental failure regarding Israel and the United States' ability to create deterrence against Iran, which has demonstrated immense strength and unprecedented courage, a sign of the collapse of the



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terror balance. The balance of terror against Hezbollah in Lebanon was also not entirely balanced, which Israel fears."

The article's author recommended that the Israeli elites wait and postpone expressions of joy and victory celebrations, saying: "We have not won yet. Israel is still far from achieving its goals and victory, as evidenced by the families of the abducted, and tens of thousands of residents of the north and south who are still displaced from their homes and are moving around as refugees in their own country for the past 6 months."

- **Response Options**

Regarding the military side and anticipation of the Israeli response, military analyst Amir Bouhbout believes Israel faces a dilemma of "containing the attack or responding with a strike in Iran, risking escalation and dragging the region into a regional war?"

As a result, the military analyst says, "Senior officials in the Israeli General Staff will be asked to assess Iran's potential responses. They will also need to receive a series of recommendations on whether to respond forcefully and exact a price from the military bases of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and its locations or choose to assassinate Iranian security personnel."

Bouhbout also believes that it will be incumbent upon the leaders of the General Staff to consider whether they will settle for a limited operation, where Israeli Air Force pilots carry out a mission at a distance of 1500 kilometers to strike a symbolic Iranian target, such as a government building, weapon depots, oil wells, and even Iranian ships sailing in the sea.

As for the third option, based on statements from the Israeli army spokesman and Defense Minister Yuval Galant, the military analyst estimates that Israel will not rush into a response. It will carefully consider the degree of response at the appropriate time, indicating that Israeli assessments agree that Iran aims to destroy air bases and surpass the Israeli army in the Middle East.



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- **Netanyahu's Approach**

As part of the criticism of Netanyahu's performance during the Iranian threats and drone attacks that reached deep into Israeli territory, Israeli writer Carmela Cohen Shlomi described Netanyahu as "cowardly" for neglecting Israel during the Iranian attack, which was handled by US President Joe Biden, who took charge and returned it to its senses.

"After difficult hours during which Israeli citizens were searching for someone to explain to them what was happening," Cohen wrote in an article on the "Zman Yisrael" website, "an elderly, pale, and sweaty man appeared on the screen wandering near the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv, asking, 'Is there 7 shekels (2 dollars) here? I need to go to a friend's shelter.'"

"With these words, the Israeli writer described Netanyahu and summarized his approach in managing Israel's affairs during emergencies, saying: 'He destroyed everything and still holds onto a draft speech ending with the phrase 'Together we will prevail,' using Iranian attacks to divert attention from protests and promote the idea that Israel is in danger.'

Writer and political analyst Ben Caspit seemed more explicit when he wrote in an article for Ma'ariv newspaper that the Iranian drone and missile attacks on Israel were the lowest point reached by Netanyahu's government, which continues to experience failure and shortcomings even in the realm of national security.

According to Ben Caspit's perspective, Israel suffered a heavy and unprecedented public humiliation from Iran, stating, 'Israeli deterrence, which prevented Iran from directly attacking us, has collapsed, as have joint international deterrence efforts. The Iranians have broken the fear barrier. From now on, Iran is openly against Israel.'

Referring to the delayed and potentially undisclosed nature of the response, Ben Caspit says, 'As expected, Biden tried to pull Netanyahu down from the tree and avoid a quick and harsh reaction, and it seems he has succeeded in doing so, at least for now.'



The political analyst believes that Israel reopening its airspace and resuming flights at Ben Gurion Airport 'means that the likelihood of an immediate Israeli response, promised by Netanyahu's close associates, has become slim, and the natural need to teach the Iranians a harsh lesson and make them pay a heavy price now confronts the complex strategic reality in the Middle East.'"