

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 4:33 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Sunday Times: Israel hits missile site in dry run for Iran

From: Lyman, Princeton N
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 04:05 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Kennedy, Patrick F; Boswell, Eric J; Sullivan, Jacob J; Sherman, Wendy R
Subject: Fw: Sunday Times: Israel hits missile site in dry run for Iran

From: Hadas, Julian A
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 03:37 PM
To: Lyman, Princeton N; Stafford, Joseph D; S-USSESSS-Division Chiefs; Khartoum POL ECON AM DL; 'molly_j_miller'
Cc: Pekkinen, Jennifer M; Meyers, Rachel L
Subject: Sunday Times: Israel hits missile site in dry run for Iran

FYI – London's *Sunday Times* carried a detailed article yesterday on alleged Israeli involvement in the Yarmouk explosion last week, citing high-level officials in the Israeli MoD. Please also note highlighted section.

Title: Israel hits missile site in dry run for Iran
Source: *Sunday Times (London, England)*. (Oct. 28, 2012): News: p31.
Document Type: Article
Full Text: Sunday Times

Full Text:

Byline: Uzi Mahmaini Tel Aviv and Flora Bagenal Nairobi

A LONG-RANGE Israeli bombing raid last week that was seen as a dry run for a forthcoming attack on Iran's nuclear facilities has destroyed an Iranian run plant making rockets and ballistic missiles in Sudan.

Eight Israeli F-15I planes -- four carrying two one-ton bombs, escorted by four fighters -- struck the giant Yarmouk factory on the southwestern outskirts of Khartoum, the capital, in the early hours of Wednesday.

The raid, in which two people died, triggered panic across the city. Witnesses said they heard a series of loud blasts followed by the sound of ammunition exploding.

"It was a double impact -- the explosion at the factory and then the ammunition flying into the neighbourhood," said Abd-al Ghadir Mohammed, 31, a resident. "The ground shook. Some homes were badly damaged."

According to western defence sources, the 2,400-mile return flight took the Israelis four hours, with the jets flying south along the Red Sea and crossing into Sudan from the east, bypassing Egypt's air defence system.

"This was a show of force but it was only a fraction of our capability -- and of what the Iranians can expect in the countdown to the spring," said a defence source, referring to possible airstrikes against Tehran's nuclear programme.

Preparations for the attack in Sudan began more than two years ago after Mossad agents suffocated Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, the top weapons buyer for the Palestinian group Hamas, in his hotel in Dubai.

Before they left Mabhouh's room they removed a number of documents from his briefcase.

One of them, according to intelligence sources, was a copy of a defence agreement signed in 2008 by Tehran and Khartoum. It committed Iran to build weapons in Sudan under full Iranian command.

The Israelis discovered later that a large contingent of Iranian technicians had been sent to the Yarmouk factory, where Human Rights Watch had reported in 1998 that chemical weapons were being stored.

Under Revolutionary Guard supervision, the Iranians were building advanced Shahab ballistic missiles and rockets at a plant in the factory compound.

"The Iranians had been facing growing difficulties in transferring weapons and munitions to Hamas and their other allies in the region," an Israeli defence source said.

A British munitions adviser added: "There is a very clear and established arms smuggling network that goes through eastern Sudan northwards to Sinai and then on to the Gaza Strip."

The threat of a new source of missiles set off alarm bells in Israel. "These ballistic missiles could be launched towards Israel from either Sudan or from the Sinai peninsula," an Israeli security expert said. "They pose a direct threat."

Major-General Amir Eshel, the new commander of the Israeli air force, assured Binyamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, that the strike would succeed. He personally supervised the operation from the air force's command and control bunker in Tel Aviv.

Training took many weeks, using a model of the factory. At least two long-haul rehearsals were held. America was alerted and closed its embassy in Khartoum to avoid any revenge attacks.

It was just before 10pm last Tuesday that the F-15I pilots took off from an airbase in southern Israel. Several hours earlier, two CH-53 helicopters had set off, flying low over the Red Sea.

Each carried up to 10 commandos as a rescue team should a pilot be forced to bale out. They landed in darkness and waited for the jets to arrive.

Radio traffic was muted as the jets raced towards the Red Sea. "There were two potential obstacles," a military source said. "The first was Djibouti civil air traffic control. The second was not to 'wake up' Egyptian radar." The Israelis nevertheless maintained the advantage of surprise.

After 90 minutes, the jets linked up with a Boeing 707 refuelling tanker. Then, with full tanks of fuel, roughly 18 tons each, they crossed into Sudan.

At this stage a Gulfstream G550 filled with electronic warfare equipment began to jam the Sudanese air defence system and the radar at Khartoum airport.

"Sudan's air defence is based on old but lethal Russian SA-2 anti-aircraft missiles and a squadron of over 20 Russian MiG-29 interceptors," a military source said.

The F-15I fighters flew high above their comrades, ready to pounce if the MiGs took off. But they remained grounded throughout the attack.

Immediately afterwards the squadron leader, an Israeli colonel, flew low over the factory to survey the destruction. Halfway home, he sent a coded message to his commanders.

In Tel Aviv the chief of the defence staff picked up the phone to Balfour Street -- Netanyahu's Jerusalem home.

"All went well," he said. "The guys are on their way home."

Pre-emptive attack

1 Eight Israeli F-15Is sent on mission to bomb munitions plant

2 Planes evade Egyptian radar. Electronic warfare equipment jams Sudan's air defences

3 Eight tons of bombs dropped on Yarmouk plant while Sudan's MiG-29 squadron sleeps

Israeli strike force The Yarmouk plant - the explosions shook Khartoum 1 Boeing 707 tanker Jets refuel over Red Sea after 90 minutes of flight 4 F-15I jet bombers 4 F-15I interceptors 2 CH-53 helicopters 1 Gulfstream G550 electronic warfare plane The Yarmouk plant - the explosions shook Khartoum Fajar rocket

Uzi Mahmaini Tel Aviv and Flora Bagenal Nairobi

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