

Scenario: Israeli Strikes To Center On Russian-Built Nuclear Plant

The Iranian syndrome

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Israel has not yet responded to a new report of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the Iranian nuclear program published on Tuesday. The Israeli press reports that the Prime Minister's office continues to analyze the document. Until the official reaction is available, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his colleagues not to discuss the issue with the media.

A possible air strike on Iran has always been used as an intimidating factor of international politics. However a recent statement made by Israeli President Shimon Peres who admitted that the possibility of a military attack against Iran is now closer than the application of a diplomatic option is adding a new dimension to the problem.

What targets will be hit and what are the possible repercussions of this strike?

First of all, with all its might Israel can hardly wipe out Iran's nuclear program (whatever purposes it may have) by a single strike.

Unlike the 80s, Iran's modern-day nuclear program includes a wide network of industrial enterprises and scientific organizations scattered all over the country.

To damage a program like this is possible only by launching a large-scale offensive which will either selectively hit the nuclear industry or the whole of Iran's infrastructure as it was the case with Yugoslavia that had to give up its nuclear program after the strikes in 1999.

A possible offensive could lead to more activities on the part of Hezbollah and Hamas in the Palestinian territories which may also complicate or even ruin the Israeli operation against Iran.

Thus Israel is more likely to resort to an ostentatious air strike pinpointing the specific target and hoping that this will make Iran quit its nuclear program.

The atomic power plant in Buser is the ideal target for this purpose due to a number of reasons.

First, it is the most famous of all the Iranian nuclear sites.

Secondly, a successful strike on this target will seriously damage the country's energy system.

Thirdly, the Buser power plant is situated on the coast of the Persian Gulf and more accessible than sites near Tehran and in the Eastern parts of Iran.

An air strike on Buser would be accompanied by attacks on anti-aircraft defense bases and airfields. The Iranian airfield in Buser, as well as Shiraz, Abadan and Omidie would almost certainly come under attack.

The Iranian Air Force can hardly intercept attacking planes. It is armed with outdated American planes built in the 70s and several Mig-29 fighters that were brought to Iran by Saddam Hussein in 1991.

The anti-aircraft defense looks more intimidating because it is reported to be equipped with modern anti-aircraft missile systems TOR and some Chinese replicas of the 3PC C-300. If this is true, then this may pose main the threat to the Israeli air force.

The strike will be almost certainly extremely destructive, as the Israeli Air Forces have repeatedly shown that they are able to hit distant and protected targets. No one can predict the political consequences though.

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