



Syria as a Powder Keg: The Najrah Attack

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الشريط الإخباري

إصابة ثمانية عسكريين جراء عدوان إسرائيلي استهدف أحد المواقع بمحيط دمشق

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دمشق-سانا

أصيب ثمانية عسكريين ووقعت أضرار مادية جراء عدوان إسرائيلي استهدف موقعا في محيط دمشق.

وذكر مصدر عسكري في تصريح لسانا أنه حوالي الساعة العاشرة و5 دقائق من مساء اليوم شن العدو الإسرائيلي عدواناً جواً من اتجاه الجولان السوري المحتل مستهدفاً أحد المواقع في محيط دمشق.

وبين المصدر أن العدوان "أسفر عن إصابة ثمانية عسكريين بجروح ووقوع بعض الخسائر المادية".

متابعة أخبار سانا على تلغرام

<https://t.me/SyrianArabNewsAgency>





1. In standard, boilerplate Arabic phrases often repeated in similar, if not identical, reports, Syria's state owned news agency, SANA, reported an attack shortly before midnight on May 2nd, 2024.
2. The report states that according to a military source in a statement to SANA the attack began just five minutes after ten o'clock at night. The military source stated that the attack was "an air attack" from the direction of the "Golan Heights," which the Syrian news agency described as 'occupied Syrian territory.' The attack allegedly targeted "a site on the outskirts of Damascus." It was later revealed to be Najrah, a suburb located outside of Damascus, the capital of Syria.
3. The attack caused eight soldiers to be injured. The report did not specify whether or not the soldiers were Syrian or otherwise. It could be that the soldiers were from a military other than Syria's, as many different nations currently occupy Syria. Damascus regularly hosts Russian, Iranian, or Lebanese soldiers. In addition to the injured soldiers, the attack caused material damage.
4. Generally speaking, SANA's reports contain a remark, noting how its anti-air defense systems

struck a number of the rockets or artillery. The reports from May 5th, however, do not contain these designations.

5. In particular, Syria's anti-air defense systems are extremely limited. The earliest data on its network of anti-air defense systems comes from a Russian article published in the famous newspaper, «Военно-Промышленный Курьер», one of the first newspapers to focus almost exclusively on geopolitics: «Войска ПВО Сирии имеют в своем составе две дивизии, 25 зенитных ракетных бригад (до 150 батарей), полки зенитной артиллерии и две бригады радиотехнических войск. Они



خلال غارة إسرائيلية على محيط دمشق - إرشيفية من المرصد السوري لحقوق الإنسان

الشرق الأوسط

هجوم إسرائيلي على محيط دمشق يسفر عن جرح 8 عسكريين

إسرائيل شنت الهجوم الجوي من اتجاه الجولان

سوريا



оснащены 685 ПУ ЗУР (ЗРК С-75 – 320, С-125 «Печора» – 148, «Квадрат» – 195, С-200ВЭ – 44, «Оса» – 60, «Бук» М2Э – 18), 36 ЗРПК «Панцирь-С1», ПЗРК «Стрела» и «Игла», орудиями калибра 23, 37, 57 и 100 мил- лиметров, РЛС П-12, П-14, П-15, П-30, П-35, П-80, радиовысотомерами ПРВ-13 и ПРВ-16. В ПВО си- рийских сухопутных войск насчитывается 55 ЗРК ближнего действия («Стрела-10» – 35, «Стрела-1» – 20), до 4000 ПЗРК «Стрела» и «Игла», до 2000 орудий зенитной артиллерии (100-мм КС-19, 57-мм С-60, 37-мм пушки, ЗСУ-23-4 «Шилка», ЗУ-23-2). Истребительная авиация ВВС располагает 309 самолетами (40 МиГ-29, 30 МиГ-25, 80 МиГ-23, 159 МиГ-21), базирующимися на 21 аэродроме.»[1]

6. The author adds that Syria's network of anti-air defenses have the following capability: "Всего этого достаточно для нанесения вероятному противнику определенного урона, но мало для отражения массированных ударов современных ВВС и ВМС НАТО."

7. It is with this network of anti-air defense systems that the SANA news agency's reports in standard, boilerplate Arabic phrases often repeated in similar, if not identical, reports, that Syria's means of air defense shot down a few of the projectiles, rockets or missiles (i.e., "وسائت دفعنا الجوي تصدت لصواريخ العدوان وأسقطت بعضها"). It is thus easier now to imagine what is meant by this phrase, as well as many others, so often repeated in SANA's reports, despite the phrase's absence from the May 5th report.
8. An AlArabiya report, which contains far more details than Syria's own state owned, described the attack with context. The report by AlArabiya, for instance, mentions that Syria's state owned television channel reported that "Israel executed the air strike from the direction of the Golan Heights." AlArabiya noted: "It is the first time since targeting Iran's consulate last month." AlArabiya reported further that "Tehran is only talking about [military] advisers who are assisting Syrian forces with [militants] located along the border with Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, or Israel."
9. The article from AlArabiya confirmed reports by French news agencies, such as *Le Journal de Montréal*, that Iran is reducing its presence. The article stated: "Iran is reduced its military presence in Syria after Israeli strikes that targeted a number of [Iranian] military leaders, according to a source close to Hizbollah and a source in Syria's Observatory for Human Rights."
10. *Le Journal de Montréal*, one of the few French language dailies to touch upon the subject, published an article outlining the reasons for Iran's decision to redeploy its forces from the capital Damascus and the southern border with Israel.[2]
11. The author states: "L'Iran, allié du régime en Syrie, a fortement réduit sa présence militaire dans ce pays où il est sous le coup de frappes de plus en plus intense imputées à Israël, ont indiqué mercredi à l'AFP une source proche du Hezbollah et une ONG."



12. Citing the Agence France-Press (AFP), a Russian article from *PBK* details how Iran began to redeploy their forces from the capital Damascus and the southern border with Israel, detailing further the actual nature of Iranian withdrawal.[3]

Hebrew Language Sources

13. Israel's major mainstream media outlets did not appear to report immediately on the attack, as is

often the case. No report from *Maariv* (i.e., מעריב), *The Land* (i.e., הארץ), or *The Latest Notices* (i.e., ידיעות אחרונות) published reports on the attacks. It did not appear as though Israel's Ministry of Defense issued a statement in regards to the attack. Israel's military censor forbids news agencies from attributing the origin of an attack to Israel. Generally, these reports relay information published in the Arabic press, which is usually the first to report on these attacks.

14. Since no Israeli news outlet reported on the attack, there is little to no basis to confirm the the reports published in the Arabic press. The Arabic press, for instance, failed to provide video footage, GPS information, or details of any kind, indicating beyond a shadow of a doubt that Israel did, indeed, attack the site. Accordingly, these attacks are 'unconfirmed' Israeli attacks.

Breakdown in the Levant & Arabian Peninsula

15. The most recently confirmed attack by Israel on Syrian soil occurred on April 1st, 2024. The



- attack, about which Israeli media issued multiple reports, struck an alleged ‘consulate’ building adjacent to Iran’s own diplomatic embassy in Damascus, causing the death of more than seven high ranking Iranian commanders.
16. Preceding these attacks, confirmed reports noted that
- Israel struck multiple targets before April 1st, 2024. On March 18th, 2024, for instance, both SANA as well as AlArabiya reported that Israel attack a target in Syria.[4]
17. Against the backdrop of these continuous attacks, the United States, on which Israel is a dependent, began to sanction

countries in the Levant and on the Arabian Peninsula. The United States, for instance, sanctioned Turkey together with the United Arab Emirates, for operating a clearing house with which to settle contracts, at least one or more of which were in regards to oil, in a currency other than the dollar well before the beginning of the year.[5]

China, and Turkey and declared, as early as Saturday, May 4th, 2024, that the United States would 'shuffle' American interests from one base to another. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the United States is transferring its military assets from a base in the UAE to one in Qatar, the home of the famous Arabic language news agency, Al-Jazeera.



United Arab Emirates

18. The UAE, which was one of the first countries to retaliate, issued a request for the United States to begin notifying the U.A.E. before the American military, which is stationed at a base in the country, conducts missions from its base. The United States, in turn, retaliated against the UAE's retaliation in two ways. It issued a second round of sanctions targeting specific industries together with Russia,

19. "The U.S. arranged with Qataris in recent days," the Journal noted, "to bring in the additional jet fighters, reconnaissance planes and armed drones to Al Udeid, according to a person familiar with the discussions." [6]

20. The shift from the UAE to Qatar is a deliberate response to the breakdown of US-Emirati relations on the Arabian Peninsula, the likes of which appear to be headed for a further breakdown, as the United States continues to advance its policy to isolate Russia economically at the expense of lucrative trade relations with its neighbors or with countries in the Levant or Arabian Peninsula.

Turkey

21. The United State's treatment of Turkey, for instance, is driven primarily by a desire to replace Erdogan with a State leader far more compliant with U.S. led NATO's policy to isolate Russia economically with sanctions, tariffs, or a prohibition on its free trade. U.S. led NATO's policy on Russia, however, operates in the complete absence of any kind of substitution for its free trade. Russia, for instance, supplies Turkey with cheap coal. The United States, however, has not proposed a source of cheap coal other than the one that Russia supplies. It is not as though Turkey's need for cheap energy, for instance, arises out of thin air. These relationships, which are regulated more so by the economy than by the personal decisions of leaders, are an outcome of the objective reality of capitalist development, the likes of which no one can escape. The inescapability of capitalist development dictates, to a certain extent, the outcome of these events beyond what idealistic conceptions may behold for a new vision of the world.
22. A report published by the *Financial Times* before an update indicated that Russian finance has 'slumped' as a result of the sanctions imposed on Russia together with several other countries such as Turkey in the Levant and the UAE on the Arabian Peninsula. The report contains a few pieces of data, indicating the severity of the effect the sanctions the Biden administration imposed through an executive order issued on December 22nd, 2023, three days before the fall of Ukraine's Marinka in the (i.e., "Вугледар" / "Угледар"). [7]
23. A comparison of Turkish trade data indicates a fivefold reduction in the 'volume' of trade Turkey conducted with Russia. The data is conflated with unnamed countries, at first described as "five former Soviet countries" but later as "[Russia's] neighboring countries." In terms of Turkey's exports of "high-priority" goods — items mainly for civilian use but identified as critical for the war effort, such as microchips, 'the volume' increased to \$586mn in 2023. The newspaper, however, describes the increase as "a fivefold

increase on prewar volumes.” In contrast to 2023, the volume decreased to “\$93mn in the first quarter of 2024.” The figure does not indicate whether the data is from a quarter or a year. Despite the convoluted data, the result is an overall decrease in the volume of Turkey’s exports.

24. In terms of Russia's own ‘war machine,’ the newspaper mentions how “Vladimir Potanin, the oligarch who controls Norilsk Nickel metals group, recently said sanctions had cut the company’s revenue by at least 15 per cent since 2022, in part because of 5 to 7 per cent commissions to middlemen on export transactions.”
25. The newspaper, however, does not present any data on how these changes to Turkish exports or Russia's own heavy industry have actually effected Russia’s war machine. Russia’s war machine, for instance, continues to produce a wide range of weapon systems. Have the results of the US Executive Order issued on December 22nd, 2023 actually had an effect on Russia’s ability to produce weapon systems?

Russian Weapon Systems against the Backdrop of Sanctions in the Levant and on the Arabian Peninsula

26. According to a well-known agent from Ukraine’s own intelligence agency, Vadim Skibitsky, who appears to be far more intelligent than the fully extendable NATO marionette Kiril Budanov, the Russians continue to produce weapon systems.[8] Among the weapon systems Russia continues to produce are the following:

- про артилерійські боєприпаси 122 та 152 калібру, то російські підприємства виготовили близько 2 мільйонів таких боєприпасів у 2023 році.
- вони можуть відрізнятись 115-130 стратегічних ракет в залежності від місяця.
- вони мають можливість виробляти 100-115 ракет саме цього оперативно-тактичного класу (на кшталт Х-31, Х-59 тощо)
- вони можуть виготовити (стільки вони, наприклад,

зробили протягом грудня)
330-350 одиниць цих БПЛА

- вони мають можливість виробляти 100-115 ракет саме цього оперативно-тактичного класу (на кшталт Х-31, Х-59 тощо)
27. Russia's ability to produce these weapons, the majority of which refer to artillery—broadly speaking, indicates that the US Executive Order issued on December 22nd, 2023 has not significantly reduced Russia's ability to produce weapon systems.
28. One of the results, however, that the newspaper only hints at is startling. The dollar is no longer being used to conduct trade for imports or exports with Russia. It should be alarming for anyone views the preservation of the dollar as a dominant currency as a primary objective for foreign policy. In a recent article published by the Wall Street Journal entitled “The Dominant Dollar Faces Competition in the Oil Market,” the newspaper reported how no less than “[twelve] major commodities contracts settled in non dollar currencies in 2023, compared

with seven in 2022.” In the period from 2015 to 2021 there were only two contracts settled in a currency other than the dollar. The sanctions on Russia are expected to accelerate this trend, as the BRICS alliance seeks to eliminate America’s ‘dollar dominance.’

29. The newspaper states: “Russian importers and exporters are also settling more trades in roubles because of the difficulties of swapping the currency for dollars and euros, according to financiers involved.” In turn, the “rouble’s limited convertibility” is inspiring exchange in gold, converting roubles into gold or from roubles into gold. The “the lost volume of trade in dollars” becomes an opportunity for gold, one of the aspects of the UAE’s clearing house the United States cannot regulate with sanctions on the dollar.
30. U.S. led NATO’s policy to isolate Russia economically is not a centerpiece in a reformist agenda for the improvement of human relations from one end of the world to the next. It is not a new policy for spreading ‘democracy,’ many features of which are no more than

‘nominal’ platitudes to a ‘Constitution’ overthrown long ago, to Russia. The policy derives solely from the understanding that the eastward expansion of NATO is one of the many different aspects of power the United States must guarantee to ensure its continued ability to play a decisive—the primary, leading, definitive role—in the determination of currency, energy or military contracts, the three most important aspects of an ever emerging struggle for the geopolitics of the world. Should countries in the Levant or Arabian Peninsula decide to advance the trend against settling major contracts for basic commodities in a currency other than the dollar, the United States will not have the power to regulate the ‘the dollar-based financial system.’ The UAE clearing house, therefore, exacerbates the fear, anxiety, or panic Ukraine’s U.S.-led NATO generals share in common with the most influential purveyors of the Biden administration’s foreign policy agenda.[9]

31. With the struggle for dominating influences in the Levant or on the Arabian Peninsula begins to take shape in one form at one

time that involves direct military confrontation, in other forms at other times that involve business, diplomacy or politics at others, the amount of powder, igniting nitrocellulose, or explosives the competing nation states pack into the Syrian powder keg portends a conflagration that may extend wildly beyond its borders, joining forces hitherto fore unallied into blocs for local, regional, or global war.



32. The class nature of the impending outbreak of global conflagration requires nothing less than a class solution. Workers in Turkey, Iran, Russia, the Emirates, or the United States must understand how the global powers exploit its people. The Ukrainians, who are the “Eastern European manpower” combined with the “technological capabilities of

NATO,” are nothing more than cannon fodder. With Ukrainians being used as cannon fodder, the world powers have no higher use for human beings than for their aspirations on the world scene.

STOP WAR IN THE MIDEAST

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[1] - [“ПОСЛЕ ГИБЕЛИ «Призрака»,” «Военно-Промышленный Курьер», 13—19 Июля, 2012. № 27 (444)]

[2] — [L’Iran a réduit sa présence militaire en Syrie, Le Journal Montréal, Avril 24, 2024]

[3] - [Почему Иран начал вывод своих военных из Сирии. АФР сообщила об уходе подразделения КСИР из Дамаска и с юга арабской республики, РБК, 04.25.2024]

[4] — [المرصد السوري : ضربات إسرائيلية استهدفت محيط منطقة بيرود بريف دمشق ، العربية، ٠٣.١٩.٢٠٢٤]

[5] — [“U.S. Tightens Vise on Russian Money,” WSJ, March 20th, 2024]

[6] — [“U.S. Shuffles Military Assets in Middle East,” WSJ, March 20th, 2024]

[7] - [Russian finance flows slump after US targets Vladimir Putin’s war machine,6, Cinco de Mayo, 2024]

[8] - [“Вадим Скібіцький: У росіян є мотивація воювати за гроші, щодня до армії йде близько 1000-1100 осіб, РБК-Україна, 15 Січня 2024] Among the weapon systems Russia

[9] - [ذعر — روسية تتقدم بسرعة على جبهة، أوكرانيا الشرقية وسيطر على قرية جديدة، العربية، ٠٤.٢٨.٢٠٢٤]