"Israel's Historic Attack on Iran"

This article (which is a collection of three articles from jpost.com) is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website (churchofgodbigsandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of June 21, 2025.

Organized by Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—On June 13, 2025, people around the world heard the news that the nation of Israel launched a powerful attack upon the nation of Iran. Much has been reported about the initial attack and the subsequent reactions.

The purpose of this article is to provide some details as seen through the eyes of The Jerusalem Post. Following are three articles. The author of each article is identified at the beginning of each article.

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An article by Yonah Jeremy Bob titled "Israel's Historic Attack on Iran: A Detailed Breakdown of the 14-Month Build-Up" was posted at jpost.com on June 20, 2025. The article began with a statement: "The first direct exchange between the sides in April 2024 set the stage for the current regional war."

By Yonah Jeremy Bob

Although June 13, 2025, will go down in the history as the date that changed the Middle East forever, likely even more than October 7, 2023, the truth is that the real dates that had already shifted the course of history were April 13-14, 2024.

On that day, concluding a decades-long covert shadow war with Israel, Iran transformed the region by openly and directly attacking the Jewish state with more than 100 ballistic missiles, 170 drones, and dozens of cruise missiles.Israel struck back on April 19, 2024, by attacking one S-300 anti-aircraft defense system that was guarding the Islamic Republic's nuclear facility at Isfahan.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the cabinet (which then included defense minister Yoav Gallant and war cabinet minister Benny Gantz) never seriously contemplated bombing Iran's nuclear sites that April like it considered doing so in October later that year, or like it finally did eight months later on June 13; but it was that first direct exchange between the sides which set the stage for the current regional war.

The Jerusalem Post, with access to a wide range of top political and defense decision-makers, previously revealed the full extent of the debates among Netanyahu, Gallant, then-IDF chief Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi, Gantz, war cabinet minister Gadi Eisenkot, and then-Mossad director David Barnea, culminating in decisions to limit attacks on Israel's arch enemy and to avoid striking its nuclear program—until early May of this year.

Now the Post connects those evolving events to the story of the final shift that led to Israel's historic decision, largely Netanyahu's, to strike Iran's nuclear program—at the minimum, the Natanz and Isfahan nuclear facilities—and to engage in an open all-out war with Tehran, including killing Iran's three top security chiefs in the opening hours of the campaign.

Changing realities, changing personalities

Netanyahu's final decision was less about a sudden point of no return and more about a deep personal evolution and changing national circumstances over time.

For example, the debates about how much to attack Iran had already evolved in October 2024 after the Islamic Republic attacked Israel directly a second time on October 1, 2024, this time with more than 200 ballistic missiles.An overlapping cast of characters debated the issues, but Gantz and Eisenkot were already off the reservation, having quit the government on June 9.

There was even a third round of the least reported debates after October 26, but they were prior to Donald Trump's entering office and replacing Joe Biden as US president.

By that time, Gallant was also mostly out of the loop, given that Netanyahu nixed him as defense minister on November 5, leaving Netanyahu along with defense chiefs Halevi, Barnea, and some of their top advisers.Defense Minister Israel Katz also entered the picture, replacing Gallant.

But given his lack of top military experience and that he is a Netanyahu lieutenant within the Likud Party, he has not held the same potential push-back power on critical decisions as some others.

What was radically new in the debates after October 26, 2024, was that Israel now had ascertained that it could destroy Iran's nuclear facilities nearly at will.

In contrast, up to that point, Jerusalem had worried about the Israel Air Force's capabilities going head to head with Iran's S-300 anti-aircraft defense systems for a long enough stretch to strike a sufficient number of Iranian nuclear targets to bring the program down.

Despite the new assurances, Netanyahu decided on restraint.

Back to April 2024

Rewinding, roughly speaking in April 2024, Eisenkot and Gantz had worried the most about limiting the Jewish state's counter strike to avoid a downward spiral of escalation leading to a regional calamity.

The prime minister also did not want to overdo it, yet he appeared more prepared to roll the dice. This shift of Netanyahu gradually being more confident about using fateful amounts of military force is one of the major stories of the war—and is also critical to understanding the decision to go full-out against Iran last week on June 13.

Barnea, who is often the point man on Iran issues in the defense establishment, favored a real counter strike, but he did not want to commit to an exact course of action without deeply coordinated US support for whatever Israel did to hit back and for its broader war goals.

Gallant and Halevi sounded the most aggressive regarding a counter strike.

Eventually, Netanyahu joined his two defense and military chiefs regarding the concept of attacking Iran's S-300 anti-aircraft missile system that was defending its Isfahan nuclear facility. Even later, Gantz and Eisenkot—both former IDF chiefs—were split on this: Gantz supported such a strike, while Eisenkot continued to oppose it.

By the time Iran attacked Israel a second time on October 1, 2024, the position of top officials had shifted again.While Gallant and Halevi still wanted to strike Iran hard in relative terms, they had moved toward being even more closely aligned with the US and ready to avoid attacking Iran's nuclear program in order to maintain Biden administration support.

HOWEVER, THE largest shift had taken place with Netanyahu. He was evolving from being one of the most hesitant about using force in October 2023 into being the leading hawk on all fronts.

Moreover, he was more ready than ever to defy the Biden administration, given that US Election Day was only a month off and Trump was favored in the polls.

At the time, his readiness to defy American demands was limited to Biden.

However, that mental shift—of being ready to defy Washington not only on smaller tactical issues but also on historic decisive strategic issues—would eventually make him more ready to defy Trump's request last week to hold off on attacking Iran. (The president subsequently said he was in favor of the whole thing, and there was close communications between the two leaders on the possibility of an attack, but Trump still would have preferred more negotiations.)

Still, in October, Netanyahu believed it was critical for the US and its allies to help Israel protect itself from any potential additional rounds of Iranian ballistic missiles attacks.

He was not sure that Biden would have the US help with Israel's defense if Jerusalem launched a larger attack on Iranian nuclear sites, which would itself likely lead to a larger war between the two mortal enemies.

This would change radically by June 2025, given that the Assad regime fell in December 2024, and by June Israel had spent months having achieved complete air supremacy over Syria—something unimaginable in October.

June to October 2024

By June, the picture regarding needing US help on defense had also changed.

Netanyahu still preferred American defense aid against Iran's ballistic missiles and drones.

But he had also seen Israel's own air defense take down large portions of Iran's ballistic missile and drone strikes—not once, but twice—and felt more confident in Israel's defensive capabilities to go it more alone against Tehran's missile arsenal.

Barnea continued to support a middle-of-the-road aggressive approach against Iran, but he was still focused on requiring US support as a restraining factor.

Combining all of those approaches led to Israel's decision to attack the four remaining S-300 missile defense systems in Tehran four months later in October, as well as a dozen other air defense and ballistic missile production targets. They also struck one nuclear-related target at Parchin on October 26.

At the time, Israel said that the significance of its attack was to reduce Iran's ballistic missile production capacity from developing 14 new missiles per week to one per week with a one- to two-year recovery time.

Subsequently, upon starting the current war with Iran, Jerusalem has claimed that Tehran had near-future plans to build facilities that could produce tens of thousands of ballistic missiles—far overshadowing whatever might have been achieved in the October 2024 setback for the Islamic Republic.

These polar opposite Israeli claims in a period of six months could give a person whiplash and says a lot about how dynamic Netanyahu and other decision-makers' approach to these issues became at different points in the war.Maybe the most crucial outcome of Israel's October 26 strike on Iran was that its hammering of Iran's radar, tracking, and air defense capabilities effectively left the Islamic Republic's nuclear program utterly exposed to a future decisive air force strike.

So why, then, didn't Netanyahu immediately order such a decisive strike on Iran's nuclear program on October 27, or at least in the limbo transition period between October 26 and Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025?

Iran's proxies get in the way

A big part of the answer at the time lay with Hezbollah and Hamas. Yes, Jerusalem had removed Iran's best chance of competing in a heavy exchange of

fire between the countries, but Israel was still under heavy fire on October 27 and even past US Election Day.

Around one-third of Israel, mostly in the North, was being attacked by Hezbollah rockets hundreds of times per day. Some rockets were even getting through to central Israel.

That was far fewer than Iran is now getting through and with far less deadly consequences, but the ongoing Hezbollah threat was not something to discount out of hand.

This was true even though Israel was overwhelmingly "winning" the exchange because it would not be a win if it indefinitely sustained heavy Hezbollah rocket attacks.

Hamas in the South no longer had such capabilities, but it still presented a threat, which meant that many southern residents were hesitant about returning to their homes.

Unlike now, when Hamas's hostage number is down to 53, of which only 20 to 23 are alive, the brutal terrorist group still held around 100 hostages, half of whom were still alive—or more than double than who are thought to be alive now.

Israel was also being confronted by almost daily ballistic missiles from Yemen's Houthis, which sent millions of Israelis in the Tel Aviv and central Israel corridors into their bomb shelters every time they were fired. The government believed all of that could end without heavy casualties if it reached deals with Hezbollah and Hamas, without getting into a bigger fight with Iran.

Jerusalem worried, correctly, that a potentially broad military campaign with the distant Islamic Republic could involve multiple rounds of exchanges of many hundreds of ballistic missiles more than before.So top Israeli officials wanted to wipe the playing field clean of the other threats.

Israel only reached a ceasefire with Hezbollah after November 27, 2024, and it was not really stable until February or even March of this year, as the Jewish state and the Lebanese-based terrorist group jockeyed over how the terms of the ceasefire would play out on the battlefield.

Eventually, Israel gained a major upper hand over Hezbollah even beyond what it had gained by November 27, but none of this was a guaranteed outcome in late 2024.

Hostage dealing, Trump's wheeling

The hostage deal with Hamas did not take place until January 19, 2025, the day before Trump took office.Netanyahu needed both Biden's and Trump's support to close the deal, which probably would not have occurred had the Jewish state rushed into open war with Iran.

The Hamas deal successfully took off pressure from the Houthis; and before Israel went back to war with Hamas on March 18 to 19, the US was striking the Yemen-based terrorist group much more aggressively to keep them busy on the defensive.

In fact—and no one will admit to this openly—had Trump kept striking the Houthis and not sealed a "separate peace" with them that left Israel hanging and alone on May 6, Jerusalem might never have started this war at all, or might have considered delaying its attack for longer.

Also, Netanyahu and top IDF and Mossad officials were—mistakenly—almost sure that Trump would be open to a full attack on Iran's nuclear sites at some point in the middle of 2025. This meant that in late 2024, there was no rush.

Taking into account a number of changes from October 2024 to now, the largest factor that changed for Israel and Netanyahu was the removal of moderating voices like Gallant and Gantz (who were aggressive in late 2023 but became more moderate by mid-2024), as well as a feeling that Trump had betrayed Israel several times as 2025 drew on.

The American president turned from calling on Israel to strike Iran's nuclear program in October 2024, to waving off its attack plans in private and then in public in 2025.

Trump started serious negotiations with Iran in mid-April, which included statements by his envoy Steve Witkoff that sounded like he would settle for a JCPOA 2.0—a nuclear deal similar to Barack Obama's 2015 nuclear agreement.

BY APRIL of this year, Israeli officials told the Post that they were in dread of what Trump might agree to, and their trust in him was deeply shaken.

Mossad Director David Barnea and IDF Intelligence Chief Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder, along with Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and others, did all they could to convince Trump's team to harden their negotiating positions, with some success.

But when they saw that Iran was digging its heels to maintain low-level uranium enrichment and refusing to destroy its advanced centrifuge fleet, conceding only that it would put them on ice, these intelligence and diplomatic officials feared the worst could come if a new and bad nuclear deal would be agreed to at any moment.

Had senior Israeli political and defense officials dreamed that such a bad deal was just as likely as Trump green-lighting an Israeli attack or his coercing Iran into a much tighter nuclear deal, some would have likely endorsed launching a major strike during the Biden-Trump transition.

Others, even looking back, would argue that the strategic importance of achieving ceasefires with Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis was worth the price of delaying the strike on Iran until June.

Also, though no Israeli officials would say this publicly, even a mediocre nuclear deal could have given Israel time by reducing the nuclear threat Iran presented in June of being able to potentially produce enough enriched uranium in short order for 10 to 15 bombs.

What is apparent is that Israel's public relations narrative, which specifically in June was that the moment of no return had almost arrived, is at least partially spin.

The real deadline for Israel to act was likely October 2025, when the global sanctions snapback mechanism was due to expire.

If Israel had let that expire without acting, its options and mix of pressures it could impose on Iran would have been greatly reduced.

There was also concern in Israel that after the October 2024 air force strikes, Iran was accelerating its building and moving of underground facilities, such as a new one at Natanz, one much deeper than the underground facility that Israel may have hit in the past.

Growing impatience, getting backstabbed

In the end, the timing of Israel's strike on Iran's nuclear program on June 13, after taking a pass in April 2024 and from October 2024 until June 2025, was more the product of Netanyahu and circumstances on many other fronts evolving than any single date of Iran's reaching a point of no return.

Yes, the Islamic regime had accelerated the activities of its weapons groups so that maybe the time it would take to make a nuclear weapon—or many of them—was reduced from two years to one year or even several months.

But seeing the degree to which Israel had penetrated Iran's nuclear and military programs, it is clear that Jerusalem had a clear line of vision on how far Iran had progressed—and sources had conveyed to the Post not long ago that Tehran was still not that close to the point of no return.

Iran had attacked Israel twice, and Jerusalem had shown restraint both times and was losing patience with that dynamic.

Israel had taken Hezbollah and Hamas mostly off the board, reducing its need for US cooperation and clearing its air force's line of sight to focus on Iran, with fewer distractions.

The Islamic regime's anti-aircraft defenses and efforts to move its sensitive program deeper underground were still at a weak point; but given more time, it would eventually become harder to strike them.

The Houthis were continuing their unending missile fire on Israel. Rather than the terrorist group and Iran understanding Israel's threats at both of them to make progress at getting the Houthis to stand down, that front seemed to be getting worse because Trump had backstabbed Israel on the issue.

Trump had also shocked Israel, cutting a deal with new Syrian regime leader Ahmed al-Sharaa against Israel's wishes and with almost no warnings, leaving Netanyahu and Israeli intelligence more doubtful about how he might surprise them regarding Iran.

And Trump continued to flirt with Iranian diplomacy, letting two of his own deadlines pass, proceeding on a path that only seemed to make sense if he was going to eventually be willing to make concessions that Israel did not want him to make.

Stalled nuke deal, time to act—alone

Then in June, Iran-US negotiations hit an extended, if temporary, wall.The IAEA proclaimed that Iran was ramping up its nuclear program and could potentially produce enough uranium for up to 10 to 15 nuclear weapons; and the nuclear agency made its worst condemnation of the Islamic Republic since 2005, appearing ready to bring the issue to the UN Security Council.

Netanyahu and the air force felt more confident than ever about defending Israel from Iran's expected counter strike mostly on their own, should Trump refuse to help Israel on defense (in the end the US has helped, though in smaller ways than in 2024).

At this point, rather than heed Trump's request to hold off on attacking for some months, Netanyahu reached his own point of no return, where he believed he could roll the dice and change the course of the region one last time, even more dramatically than he did against Hezbollah.

It did not hurt that this would help convince Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein to go along with the prime minister's compromise to save his government from falling over the issue of haredi (ultra-Orthodox) integration into the military, though that was probably just a plus and not a primary consideration.Sometimes history changes in an instant, with little warning, such as on October 7, 2023.

In contrast, the June 13 history-changing war against Iran was at least 14 months of ups and downs in the making.

An article by Herb Keinon titled "Collapsing Proxies, Accelerating Threats: How Netanyahu Methodically Moved Toward Striking Iran" was posted at jpost.com on June 20, 2025. The article began with a statement: "National Affairs: In the end, what seemed for years like empty bluster turned out to be something entirely—A long, calculated wait for the right moment."

By Herb Keinon

Russian President Vladimir Putin, it turns out, had a better instinctive understanding of Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu than then-US president Barack Obama's closest advisers.

In 2012, José Maria Aznar—the staunchly pro-Israel former Spanish prime minister—delivered a lecture in Jerusalem. Aznar, who served from 1996 to 2004, recalled efforts during his tenure to persuade Russia not to sell advanced weapons—particularly the S-300 surface-to-air missile system—to Iran.

He recounted one conversation he had with Putin about this very issue. "Don't worry—you, me—we can sell them everything, even if we are worried about an Iranian nuclear bomb," Aznar quoted Putin as saying. Then Putin leaned in and whispered: "Because at the end of the day, Israel will take care of it."

That was Putin's view at the turn of the century: Russia could sell state-of-the-art defense systems to Iran, knowing full well that if Tehran ever got too close to the nuclear threshold, Israel would act with or without those weapons systems in Iranian hands.

In Washington, however, at least during the Obama administration, the prevailing view was quite different.

Obama administration thought Netanyahu was a coward on Iran

In October 2014, Jeffrey Goldberg, editor of The Atlantic and known for his close ties to the Obama White House, published a much-discussed piece titled "The Crisis in US-Israel Relations Is Officially Here."

It was a moment of deep tension between Washington and Jerusalem, driven by the collapse of peace talks with the Palestinians and escalating disagreements over Iran. At the time, the US was racing toward a nuclear deal with Tehran—an agreement Netanyahu adamantly opposed.

Goldberg opened his article by quoting a senior Obama official who said bluntly of Netanyahu: "The thing about Bibi is, he's a chickens**t."

"I ran this notion by another senior official who deals with the Israel file regularly," Goldberg wrote. "This official agreed that Netanyahu is a 'chickens**t' on matters related to the comatose peace process but added that he's also a 'coward' on the issue of Iran's nuclear threat.

"The official said the Obama administration no longer believes that Netanyahu would launch a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities in order to keep the regime in Tehran from building an atomic arsenal. 'It's too late for him to do anything. Two, three years ago, this was a possibility. But ultimately he couldn't bring himself to pull the trigger. It was a combination of our pressure and his own unwillingness to do anything dramatic. Now it's too late.' "

Well, there's an assessment that didn't stand the test of time. Putin's, however, surely did.

Netanyahu's previous attempts to strike Iran postponed

In all fairness, the Obama official wasn't only trying to belittle Netanyahu. His comments were rooted in real events.

Between 2010 and 2012, Netanyahu repeatedly pushed for military strikes against Iran's nuclear sites, only to be blocked by Israel's own military and intelligence leadership. In 2010, it was IDF chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi who argued that Israel lacked the operational capability to pull it off successfully.

In 2011, the intelligence community, led by then-Mossad head Meir Dagan, voiced staunch opposition. Two key cabinet ministers at the time, Moshe Ya'alon (then minister for strategic affairs) and Yuval Steinitz (finance minister), also withdrew their support.

By 2012, concerns over US objections sealed the issue. The pattern was unmistakable: military resistance, intelligence pushback, cabinet hesitation, and American pressure combined to stay Netanyahu's hand. Despite his fiery rhetoric about the existential danger of a nuclear Iran, he didn't follow through.

Asked about this during a Channel 14 interview on Tuesday, Netanyahu declined to elaborate. He merely confirmed that in 2011-2012, he wanted to strike Iran's nuclear sites but "could not enlist a majority in the security establishment or among the cabinet" to support the operation.

So it was postponed. Until last Friday.

In the interview, Netanyahu explained how everything lined up in such a manner as to make the attack now both possible and necessary—a classic now-or-never moment.

And, ironically, it all began with Hamas's attack on October 7.

October 7 ruined the Iranian strategy

YAAKOV AMIDROR, former head of Israel's National Security Council and a senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, described during a JISS webinar how that attack became a strategic turning point.

Since 1994, he explained, Iran's grand strategy has rested on two foundational pillars—both well understood by Israeli defense planners.

■ The first pillar was the creation of a "ring of fire" around Israel: a regional network of proxy forces capable of threatening the country from muliple directions.

Hezbollah in Lebanon was the cornerstone of this strategy. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad reinforced its southern flank in Gaza. Iran also worked to establish footholds in Syria and Iraq via Shi'ite militias and pushed to gain influence in Judea and Samaria.

Israeli actions thwarted Iran's efforts to use Syria as a launching pad against Israel, but the broader vision remained intact. King Abdullah of Jordan famously dubbed it the "Shia Crescent"—an arc stretching from Tehran through Baghdad, Damascus, and Beirut, encircling Israel with hostility while shielding Iran itself, which is relatively far away, from direct conflict.

■ The second pillar, Amidror continued, was Iran's nuclear program.

The strategy was clear: build a nuclear capability slowly and quietly, and once secured, use it as a protective umbrella under which Iran could project power and expand regional influence—a vision of a vast, resurgent Persian empire.

Hamas head Yahya Sinwar, said Amidror, "ruined the plan and started the war without coordinating with Iran or with Hezbollah. He thought that because he was part of the axis, an important part of the axis, the rest of the axis would join in. That was his biggest strategic mistake."

Israel's most important strategic decision, Amidror said, came just three days later, on October 10.

"All those who say Israel doesn't have a strategy don't understand strategy," Amidror said. "The key decision was to go piece by piece—to deal with each component of the Iranian axis individually."

That meant not immediately opening a northern front with Hezbollah, as some, such as former defense minister Yoav Gallant, had recommended. Instead, Israel avoided a two-front war, concentrated its forces on Gaza, and left only enough troops in the North needed to defend the communities there. Special forces worked inside Lebanon, preparing the ground for a wider battle there, while the IDF focused on dismantling Hamas's military infrastructure in the south.

Until the "beeper" operation last September, when thousands of pagers exploded in the hands and pockets of Hezbollah men, and the tide in the north turned.

From that point, Israel shifted its focus from Gaza to Lebanon. The beeper operation, Amidror stressed, showed how meticulously—and how long—Israel had been planning for a war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Then, Amidror continued, something unexpected happened: the fall of Assad in Syria—triggered by the beating Hezbollah took in Lebanon. Wisely, he said, Israel didn't succumb to temptation and escalate into a direct confrontation with Iran. Instead, it stuck to its strategy of sequential dismantling.

Israel turned its attention to Syria, Amidror said, and destroyed Assad's army, ensuring the rebels who took over the country would not have a centralized military force.

That campaign created something new: a strategic corridor stretching from Israel through Syria and Iraq—two areas now without functional air defense systems—all the way to western Iran. For the first time, Israel had a clear, unobstructed path into the heart of the Islamic Republic.

At the same time, intelligence suggested that Iran—seeing its proxy strategy go up in smoke—was shifting gears: rushing to finalize its nuclear capabilities and dramatically ramping up its missile production program.

Iran had formed a secret group, Netanyahu said in his interview, tasked with solving the weaponization challenge: how to turn its nukes into a weapon. Once that breakthrough was achieved, Israel's window for preemption would close. The threat would no longer be theoretical—it would be existential.

That, Netanyahu said, is when he issued the order to act.

Not only was Iran accelerating its nuclear ambitions, it was also vastly expanding its ballistic missile program. According to Netanyahu, Iran aimed to produce 300 1-ton ballistic missiles per month—or over 11,000 within six years—a total that would be the equivalent of two nuclear bombs.

One would be enough to destroy Israel, he said.

Faced with a double threat—nuclear weapons and the production of thousands upon thousands of ballistic missiles that could overwhelm Israel's air defenses and destroy large swaths of the country—Netanyahu said he had no choice but to strike, and plans worked on for years were made operable.

The prime minister recalled a story he has told before from his days in the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit. During one training exercise, he was learning to dive with the navy commandos. The day was stormy—waves crashed, the wind howled, it was chaotic above the surface. But underwater it was calm. The task was simple: dive, set your compass, and swim toward the objective.

Netanyahu's threats weren't hollow—they were shelved

The point Netanyahu wanted to illustrate: there was a lot of noise around him now, too. But with a compass and a clear mission, he methodically moved toward it.

In the end, what seemed for years like empty bluster turned out to be something else entirely: a long, calculated wait for the right moment. Netanyahu's threats weren't hollow; they were shelved—postponed by internal resistance, international pressure, and unfavorable conditions. But when the strategic stars finally aligned—when Iran's proxy network began to crumble, when Assad fell, when intelligence revealed Tehran was sprinting for the bomb—Israel acted.

Putin may have said it with a smirk, but he wasn't wrong: at the end of the day, Israel would "take care of it." That day, after years of doubt and delay, finally arrived. And the result is not just a stunning military operation—it's a reshaping of assumptions, a recalibration of deterrence, and a reminder that, for Israel, existential threats can never be left to fester indefinitely. They must be confronted.

That, said Amidror, is the most important lesson of October 7.

"We must not allow threats to continue unfolding without trying to cut them off before they materialize. We did not do that with Hamas, with Hezbollah, or with

Iran, and that was a strategic mistake. We need to understand in the future that this is part of our security doctrine: preventing threats from materializing is more important than preserving the quiet and calm of Israel's citizens."

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An article by Amir Bohbot titled "Top Gun Over Tehran: An IAF Fighter Pilot Shares His Journey on the Way to Iran" was posted at jpost.com on June 20, 2025. The article began with a statement: "Deep in Iran — D, a cool-headed fighter pilot, gives a rare account of the strike that stunned Iran and the world. 'We're hitting the missiles heading our way before they're launched.' "

By Amir Bohbot

Captain D., 25, an F-16 pilot, completed flight school two and a half years ago. Against all odds, he participated in the first wave of airstrikes that shocked all of Iran, in a coordinated mission using hundreds of aircraft of various types.

D.: "In the first strike, we hit all sorts of targets. Different types—I can't go into detail."

Did you target air defense systems, command centers, senior figures, weapons systems? What did you hit?

D.: "I didn't hit any individuals . . ."

Was this the longest flight you've ever done?

D.: "Yes."

What do you do during the long flight—1,500 km from Israel?

D.: "Mainly focus. I rebrief myself, speak with the navigator, analyze scenarios and responses, think through how the strike will look at the end point, run simulations in my head."

And on the way back?

D.: "Focus on landing safely (laughs . . .)"

What do you say to each other in the cockpit after the strikes, on the way home?

D.: "There's a little joke between us in the cockpit—there's a moment to talk about the crazy thing we just did. We're up there over enemy territory, above their heads, flying through their airspace, hitting them, influencing things in their area—not over our home."

What about threats on the way to the target, in Iranian airspace?

D.: "When you're that far from home, it's complex—you need to keep that in mind. This is the most threatening area I've ever operated in. I'm always prepared."

A long flight, hundreds of refuelings. How long can you sustain this operational tempo—flying to Iran, striking, and returning?

D.: "Look, people here are eager to go, to make an impact, to strike. I feel we'll continue as long as needed. There's stamina. Also from the support we get back home—from the public, from the home front that has our backs, and all the love the IAF is receiving right now for all the work being done."

Did you feel threatened while you were there?

D.: "No. I didn't experience any real sense of threat - not because I wasn't prepared for it."

How do you describe the Air Force's achievements?

D.: "I saw us hitting those who threaten Israel. We're taking out missiles before they're launched and in the air, we're downing drones heading toward us. And beyond that, we're flying over enemy land, above their heads, operating in their skies, hitting them in their arena—not ours."

When did it sink in—what you'd done? The significance of that first strike over Iran?

D.: "When it came out in the media, who was eliminated, what was destroyed, and what were the other significant achievements. When it was published that we struck launchers and missiles. We're defending the Israeli home front, and in order to keep doing that, we're also targeting anti-aircraft batteries—so that we can maintain air superiority, keep flying there, and carry out our missions."

Right before you flew to Iran, a ground crew arrived, 'signed off' on the plane, and cleared it for takeoff.

D.: "The feeling is one of total confidence. Everyone's in it together—on the same mission."

What was the most emotional moment in that first strike on Iran?

D.: "There are two. The big one is after landing—when I see the coverage of the event's scale, and I realize what I took part in, that I was in a historic operation. It's a powerful, really wild feeling. The second is right after the strike—once it's over, everything went well, and we're already westbound, headed home to Israel. You breathe easily and say, 'Nice. We did it. I did my part in this mission.' "

What do you do right after landing?

D.: "Routine. You go see what the results of your strike were—there's always some debate about what's next. I go check if my name is on the board for the next round—and then I go to sleep."