

Act of War: Israel Attacks Syrian Weapons Depot Containing Advanced Russian Arms

Israeli forces attacked the site. The target were components of Russia's SA-300 anti-aircraft missile system

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This report by Richard Silverstein on the Israeli attack was initially published by Global Research on July 7.

Recent reports by RT tend to confirm that Israel did attack a Syrian weapons depot in Latakia and that the operation was conducted out of a Turkish military base. (M. Ch, GR ed, July 15, 2013)

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A massive explosion last Thursday at a major Syrian weapons depot in Latakia, not far from the main port of Tartus, completely destroyed the facility and munitions stored there.

Tartus is Syria's main port. It is largely controlled by the Russian military, and the route by which all weapons transported by sea would enter Syria. As such, any advanced Russian weaponry would enter via Tartous and might be stored in the Latakia depot.

✘ Though the Free Syrian Army took immediate credit for the attack, it was not the responsible party.

A confidential Israeli source informs me that Israeli forces attacked the site. The target were components of Russia's SA-300 anti-aircraft missile system which had been shipped by Russia to Tartus and stored in Latakia.

Israel and exerted tremendous pressure on Vladimir Putin to cancel its contract to supply the missile batteries to Syria, since once they were operational they would render Israeli aircraft more vulnerable to attack. Israel, of course, will countenance no front-line state having even defensive weapons which give it superiority over Israeli weapons systems. In response to Israeli entreaties, Russia's leader refused to budge and recommitted to providing the weapons to Assad. Apparently, he'd begun to follow through on his promise with these first shipments.

This is Israel's third attack inside Syria since January. It considerably escalates the conflict there since it is the first known attack by Israeli forces which destroyed Russian armaments.

Though Putin was surely warned by Israel that this would happen if he went forward with the arms deal, actually attacking Russian munitions is an act to which Putin will not take kindly, to say the least.

Assad bragged publicly a month ago that the SA-300 deliveries had arrived. Turns out he was right. Perhaps he shouldn't have shot his mouth off.

Israel's Channel 10 aired a claim by Syria rebels that Israel attacked and Israel journalists tell their viewers that they know things they're not allowed to tell. A clear indication of Israeli involvement. Haaretz reports that a Syrian army source called the explosion the result of a technical failure, which hardly seems credible.

My source further notes that the FSA coordinated with the IDF and launched a rocket attack on nearby government military installations in order to distract loyalist forces from the real target. But the rebels played no role in the attack on the munitions cache. Their claim of responsibility conveniently takes Israel off the hook (until people read this report) and lessens pressure or condemnation on Israel for its third major attack inside Syria since January.

It's all the stranger that Haaretz's Amos Harel, in writing about the incident would write this:

"Israel wasn't mentioned in connection with Thursday's incident in Latakia. It doesn't intervene in events in Syria."

Apparently, Israelis believe that "intervention" means invading the country with boots on the ground. When it sends its jet planes to bomb Syrian targets inside the country, that's not considered intervention. This is further evidence of Israeli delusions and self-denial about their level of interference in the affairs of frontline Arab states. Such refusal to acknowledge Israel's real role allows Israelis to believe falsely they're innocent bystanders, sometimes even victims (!) in the affairs in the region.

How does Harel think Israel coordinated the FSA diversionary attack near Latakia? With smoke signals?

No, Israeli intelligence has created a tacit alliance with the rebels who serve Israel's interests when Assad acts in ways Israel believes will harm it. Hezbollah's role in the Qusayr fight may have caused alarm in the Israeli defense ministry, which may've seen this as further evidence of escalation inside Syria. If Israel could take Hezbollah down a peg or two after its victory taking the Syria town on Assad's behalf, it would be eager to do so. In this sense, the Syrian civil war is a proxy battle between Israel and Hezbollah who are itching for their next direct confrontation (the last one being in 2006).

Israel [launched a very similar raid](#) several months ago on the Sudanese capital Khartoum, in which it destroyed a major government arms depot. It's known that Iran ships its weapons to Hamas and Syria via ports on the Arabian Sea, from where they're shipped via Sudan to points north. Again, Israel has sucked countries throughout the region into the vortex of its own conflict with the Palestinians. If this doesn't prove that this conflict is a major destabilizing force in the region, nothing will.

The area attacked is in the Alawite heartland of northwestern Syria. As such, Assad would think of it as one of his most secure bastions. Violating it as Israel has done would be meant to show Assad that he has no sanctuary from which to hide and serve as a psychological blow. At least, Israel would hope to convey such a message.

[Haaretz's Hebrew edition reports](#) that Israel may've chosen this time to attack because the

attention of the international media was focussed on the Egyptian coup, which served as a convenient distraction.

Another factor to keep in mind is that the recent assistance that Hezbollah offered to Assad in sending 4,000 fighters to subdue the strategic town of Qusayr would come with a price. Hezbollah would not be shy is extracting its share of the bargain, which would certainly involve transshipment of advanced Iranian or Russian weaponry via Syria to Lebanon, where the Lebanese militia would use it against Israel in any future military confrontation.

Another possibility is that Russia, which recently confirmed that it would honor its contract with Assad calling for delivery of the SA-300 anti-aircraft system. It's possible Russia had begun shipping components of these missile batteries to Assad.

[This site speculates](#) that Israel used cruise missiles launched from its German-built Dolphin submarines to destroy the complex. If true, it would mean that German built advanced armaments were being used by Israel in a pre-emptive attack violating the territorial sovereignty of another Mideast country. Though Israel could just as easily have used its own air force to do the job.

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