

Israel's Operation Rising Lion: A significant hit or just a roar?

written by Joseph Rozen | 07.07.2025

The preemptive attacks by Israel against Iran's nuclear sites and ballistic missile capabilities were a showcase of Israel's astonishing intelligence power and precise execution. These came a day after diplomatic efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program, led by the US, failed to produce any effective agreement or mechanism to achieve that goal.

Thus, the military option was inevitable. Israel had to take immediate military action to prevent Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold—something intelligence suggested was just weeks, possibly days, away. Iran had stockpiled over 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 per cent—a level that serves no civilian purpose whatsoever. In addition, the Iranian regime did not hide its goal of destroying Israel. The combination of intention and capabilities left no other choice.

Israel received a green light from Donald Trump's administration to execute the attacks, but until later stages, it was unclear if the US would join Israel and attack the Iranian nuclear sites. Trump's decision to attack three nuclear sites, including Fordow, was actually in line with his policy to end wars and not start them.

Soon after the US attacks, Trump was already making efforts to end this chapter between Iran and Israel and announced a ceasefire, including heavy pressure on Israel not to retaliate against Iran's deadly missile attacks directed at civilians in the early hours of the ceasefire.

In his effort to end the war, Trump and his team were quick to declare that the Iranian nuclear program had been destroyed. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli politicians followed suit and announced that all military goals of the operation were achieved, and the Iranian nuclear program is no more. At the same time, the Iranian regime tried to downplay the Israeli and American attacks, claiming that some nuclear sites were hit, but it was not serious.

As the fog of war dispersed, indications of the real damage to the Iranian nuclear

program revealed that the truth is somewhere in the middle. What did the attacks achieve then?

On the military domain, Israel was able to remove senior commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian military, who oversaw the missile systems, command and control, and the Iranian proxies in Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, and Gaza.

Israel also dramatically reduced the missile capabilities of Iran, destroying the manufacturing lines and successfully targeting about 70 per cent of the missile launchers and about 50 per cent of all missiles that posed a direct threat to Israeli civilians.

In the nuclear domain, Israel eliminated the scientific knowledge base of the Iranian nuclear program, destroyed the industries that were supplying the nuclear program with the necessary components, mainly the centrifuges, and hit the enrichment sites badly, so that it will take Iran years to rebuild its nuclear capabilities.

In addition, many institutions of the Iranian regime were targeted, such as the main prison, internal security headquarters, the regime's broadcasting service, and more. But it stopped short before an actual regime change could happen, and the regime's leader, Khamenei, was not targeted due to American pressure.

It is still too early to tell the exact result of the Israeli and American attacks, but it is safe to say that the immediate nuclear threat from Iran was destroyed. Israel showed aerial superiority, exposed the weakness of Iran's missile defences, and restored its position as a regional power.

At the same time, the regime has tightened its grip on society to prevent any attempt to overthrow it. The survival of the regime means that the ambition of destroying Israel hasn't disappeared, and it could resume its military nuclear program in a matter of years if it decides to. Since the ceasefire is not rooted in an agreement and is based merely on deterrence, the situation remains fragile.

Thus, any future arrangement with Iran must address the nuclear issue and the missile capabilities but also acknowledge the current geopolitical conditions and not allow Iran to return to the situation existing before the Israeli attacks. Current diplomatic efforts in Europe and PM Netanyahu's meeting with President

Trump demonstrate the right direction, although so far, Iran is not willing to resume diplomatic talks, and the international community has doubts regarding a diplomatic solution to stop Iran. Thus, such efforts should go hand in hand with the military option to immediately respond to any future violations by the Iranian regime.

In a broader geopolitical context, the Israeli achievements against Iran have the potential to reshape West Asia. The US is trying to leverage the positive momentum to end the war in West Asia, reach a deal for the release of all Israeli hostages, and advance normalisation with Saudi Arabia and Syria, with which Israel has admitted to having established direct channels. Such developments would also contribute to the realisation of India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), connecting India and Europe through West Asia and Israel.

The international community has the opportunity now to build upon the Iranian regime's weakness to construct a robust non-proliferation framework and not allow the situation to drift back toward the dangerous status quo of a nuclear threshold state. For Israel, the challenge is maintaining the deterrent effect of this operation while preparing for the possibility that Iran will eventually test these new red lines. The success of this strategy depends not only on Israel's military capabilities but also on sustained international support and the possibility of positive political change within Iran itself.

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