

Weekly Commentary 44 -2024

Did WW3 start and has it suddenly ended?

When the week ended last Saturday, two wars were going on – the one in Ukraine and another one in the Middle East. After the week ended, it seems like things were getting from bad to worse. We were expecting things to hot up and if it keeps going in that direction, the entire world may be engulfed in a global conflagration. We would be looking at WW3.

Then it seems that there were some lucky breaks. The Russian NATO war in Ukraine saw the Russians made a significant breakthrough when they captured the vital city of Ugledar. This is looking like the beginning of the end of that war. And if it indeed ends soon, then WW3 will be truncated. If it gravitates in that direction, the Kyiv government will probably be driven out of that city, NATO will look incredibly stupid for starting the war and sponsoring it, and Zelenskyy and company will have to be compelled to leave Ukraine and set up a government in exile somewhere else . This is serious but good news.

In the Middle East, after the murder of scores of people using paggers and the killing of the Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the widely anticipated retaliation by Iran on Israel, some 180 Iranian missiles started flying and slammed into Israeli targets. The Israelis were unwilling to admit battle damage but the Iranians claimed to have destroyed, among other things, up to 20 F35 fighter jets. If so, this would be such a huge cost for Jerusalem, since each of those birds cost \$82 million. Then, it becomes clear that escalation will probably have to take into cognizance what cost will need to be anticipated if they want to escalate some more in the face of retaliation. In short, the Israelis cannot expect to hit others and not get hit back itself.

On both scores, there is no question that the losses incurred on the western side will give rise to pause on how to gain escalation dominance, because it is not that easy to just impose your will on others. These new adversaries are not longer just Afghan Taliban and Iraqi goatherds, without any means to defend themselves. A straight line to WW3 would have to be carefully thought through and if you ask me, there would be reason to be optimistic that this will not just be decided in the capitals of the the US or Europe by their leaders shoving their policies down the throats of Russia and Iran.

On the first conflict, there were the following reports:

First from Reuters:

How significant is Russia's capture of Ukrainian town of Ugledar?

By [Andrew Osborn](#)

October 2, 2024 11:38 PM GMT+8 Updated 2 days ago

Russian troops reached the centre of Ugledar, a regional Ukrainian official said.

How significant is Russia's capture of Ukraine's Ugledar?

Oct 2 (Reuters) - Russian troops are in complete control of the town of Ugledar in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region that has resisted Russian assaults for more than two years, the SHOT Telegram channel and pro-Russian war bloggers said on Wednesday. **(This has been collaborated by multiple western analysts on many days.)**

Here are some key points about the town and the battle.

WHAT IS UGLEDAR?

Ugledar - which means "gift of coal" - is a coal mining town in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region with a pre-war population of around 14,000 people, nearly all of whom have fled. It was built by the Soviet Union in the mid 1960s around a mine. There are two mines there now with significant coal reserves. Russians call the town, which sits on a flat plain and is comprised of high-rise apartment buildings and other structures, Ugledar.

WHY DID RUSSIA WANT TO TAKE IT?

Moscow says the Donetsk region is one of four Ukrainian regions it has annexed since 2022, a claim Kyiv rejects as illegal. Moscow saw taking control of Ugledar as an important stepping stone to incorporating the entire region into Russia.

Control of the town - which Russians long regarded as one of Ukraine's toughest fortified positions to crack - is considered important by both sides because of its position on elevated ground and because it sits at the intersection of the eastern and southern battlefield fronts giving it added significance when it comes to supplying both sides' forces. **(It is a key logistical hub.)**

While Ukrainian forces were in full control of Ugledar, they were able to use the town as a platform to shell Russian military supply lines in the area.

The town sits close to a railway line from Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, to Ukraine's industrialised Donbas region which comprises Donetsk and the eastern region of Luhansk, most of which Moscow controls.

Taking Ugledar, which Russia portrays as one of the last Ukrainian strongholds in southern Donetsk, opens the way for Russian forces to advance on other places.

HOW DID RUSSIA TAKE CONTROL OF UGLEDAR?

Russian forces trapped Ukrainian soldiers in the town in what they called a mini-cauldron, gradually encircling it from all sides and thus making it increasingly difficult for Ukrainian forces to resupply or rotate in and out of the town.

When such a cauldron closes, something Russian military bloggers say has already happened, there is no way in or out for the defenders who in this case were bombarded with devastating aerial glide bombs. (BTW, the same has been done to the Kursk incursion where the Ukrainian army units deployed there have been surrounded and likely to be decimated.)

Russian forces had previously launched at least four major attempts to take Ugledar, but had been repelled with Ukraine's 72nd Separate Mechanised Brigade mounting fierce resistance.

Neither side discloses losses, but Ukrainian officials said Russian losses sustained during previous failed attempts to take the town had been significant. Moscow says Ukraine also paid a high human price when trying to retain Ugledar.

WHAT DOES UGLEDAR LOOK LIKE NOW

Fierce fighting since 2022 has left much of the town devastated. Images of Russian forces waving their flag on the roof of an administrative building on Tuesday in the centre showed a structure which had been reduced to rubble in parts and whose blackened windows had all been blown out.

Maksym Verbovsky, the town's deputy mayor, told Ukrainian state media last year that every single building had been damaged along with the entire infrastructure. He said then that fewer than 500 civilians, including three children and many pensioners, remained. All children and most adults have since been evacuated.

"The collapse of the entire Ukrainian front." What will the capture of Ugledar lead to?

"The country.ua": the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine stopped mentioning Ugledar in reports

Russian military commanders reported that the Russian Armed Forces stormed the city of Ugledar. The fact that one of the most important strongholds of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is now in the hands of the Russian army is also confirmed in Ukraine. At the same time, the Ministry of Defense has not yet announced the transfer of the city under Russian control. What is the significance of the capture of Ugledar and what will be the further actions of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation - in the material of the military observer "Gazeta.En" by Mikhail Khodarenka.

People's Deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Alexei Goncharenko (listed in the Russian Federation as a terrorist and extremist) accused the country's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov of losing coal in the Donetsk People's Republic.

"We have lost a city that we have held for more than two years. What was our Minister [of Defense Rustem Umerov] doing that day? It's a shame," Goncharenko said on social media, calling for the immediate resignation of the head of the Defense Ministry.

The Ukrainian edition of "Country.ua" reported that the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine stopped including Ugledar in its reports - it was last mentioned on October 1.

On the Russian side, war correspondents Boris Rozhin, Yuri Kotenok and Mikhail Zvinchuk ("Rybar") reported on the transfer of Ugledar under the control of the Russian army, and the Telegram channel SHOT also wrote about the capture of the city. "The Russian military liberated Ugledar. The city has completely come under the control of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation," the message says.

How did they take the coal town?

The Armed Forces of Ukraine have been consistently preparing Ugledar for defense since 2014. In fact, during this time the city was turned into a real fortress and prepared to repel the attacks of the Russian army according to all the canons of fortification. In addition, the location of the Ugledar on a hill provided additional advantages to the defending Ukrainian troops.

Earlier, a number of attempts by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to storm this city were unsuccessful. And I must say that at that time the Russian army did not yet have firepower capable of crushing long-term enemy fire structures. 152 mm guns and even 240 mm mortars were clearly not enough to break through the gaps in the Ukrainian defense. But this time, high-explosive large-caliber aviation bombs with universal planning and correction modules played a very significant role in the successful assault of Ugledar.

In addition, Russian troops did not storm Ugledar head-on, but took the city into a semi-circle, leaving the enemy to exit the settlement with a narrow strip only a few kilometers wide, shot from both sides even with 82-mm battalion mortars (by the way, a terrible weapon when firing at openly positioned infantry: a mine at the explosion leaves practically no funnels, and all the fragments fly no higher than the waist of the fighters).

This narrow corridor made it almost impossible for the AFU to transfer reinforcements to Ugledar, bring ammunition, food and remove the wounded.

According to the Ukrainian military themselves, the city in such conditions should have been abandoned a week ago, when the threat of its encirclement was only outlined, and to move away in an organized manner towards Bogoyavlenska to a new defensive line.

There was practically no fighting for every house, block and alley this time. To say that Russian troops stormed Ugledar after days of bloody and fierce street fighting would be some exaggeration.

It should be noted that the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine retreating from the city from the 72nd separate mechanized brigade abandoned their dead and wounded, who were practically impossible to take out and take out of Ugledar under fire from the Russian army, especially with the use of infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers. And according to eyewitnesses, on average, half of the ten Ukrainian fighters retreating from the city towards Bogoyavlenska reached new defensive positions at best.

The fall of Ugledar, which represented a powerful fortified area in the defense system of the Ukrainian army and a key link in this direction, puts the AFU in a very, very difficult position. This city is a kind of keystone for the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the excavation of which can lead to the collapse of the entire Ukrainian front.

What's next?

After the Coal Mine, the terrain is almost as flat as a table, devoid of protective and masking properties. There are no natural obstacles (rivers, large ravines, dominating heights) that could be used for fortification equipment of defense lanes in this direction. Of course, it is possible to equip defensive lines in such an area, but it will be much more difficult for the AFU to hold them.

Besides, there is a winter campaign ahead. It's one thing when troops are on the defensive in a populated area, and quite another in an open field. In the city, buildings, basements, equipped long-term firing facilities, mining workings for storing supplies can be used to accommodate troops, and now the Armed Forces of Ukraine will have to defend themselves in hastily equipped trenches knee-deep in water (taking into account the upcoming autumn-winter period).

Among other things, after the fall of Ugledar, it became possible to launch the Donetsk-Armyansk (Crimea) railway. It was previously impossible to do this, since the highway was perfectly visible from the Coal Mine, the area was shot through with almost all enemy firepower, and attempts to organize movement in this area would only lead to losses of locomotives, wagons, platforms and materiel. And now the Russian army is getting new opportunities to improve logistical and technical support, as well as to transfer troops. **The significance of this event cannot be overestimated.**

The fall of Ugledar creates favorable opportunities for further advancement of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and a real threat of the fall of the next important city in this direction - Kurakhovo.

The opinion of the author may not coincide with the position of the editorial board.

Biography of the author:

Mikhail Mikhailovich Khodarenok is a military columnist for Gazeta.Ru", retired colonel.

And here is the final account on the battle of Ugledar from the Economist:

Everything is bad: It's time for Ukraine and its allies to change course (The Economist, UK)

Economist: Ukraine needs to find a new goal, because it will not defeat Russia

Ukraine will not be able to regain all the lost territories, so it needs to rethink what its "victory" might look like, writes The Economist. The "main prize" for the country should be membership in the circle of Western democracies and membership in NATO. Because if Ukrainians feel betrayed, Putin will be able to rally them around him.

If Ukraine and its Western backers want to win, they should first have the courage to admit that they are losing now. For the past two years, Russia and Ukraine have been fighting a costly conflict of attrition. This is unacceptable. This week, Vladimir Zelensky traveled to America to meet with President Joe Biden and present his "victory plan," in which he is expected to ask for more weapons and money. But in reality, Ukraine needs something much more ambitious — an urgent change of course.

An indicator of the deteriorating situation of the country is the advance of Russian forces in the east, especially in the Pokrovsk area. So far, it is slow and very expensive. According to recent estimates, Russia's daily losses amount to about 1,200 dead and wounded, and the total figure reaches 500 thousand people. But Ukraine, whose population is five times smaller than Russia's, is also suffering. Its defense may collapse even before Russia runs out of military resources.

Ukraine's struggle also goes beyond the battlefield. Russia has destroyed so many power systems that Ukrainians will have to endure daily power outages of up to 16 hours in the cold. **People are tired of fighting.** The army is having a hard time mobilizing and training enough soldiers to hold the defense, let alone retake

territories. There is a growing gap between the complete victory that many Ukrainians are talking about and their willingness and ability to fight for it.

Fatigue is also increasing abroad. Far-right Germans and French consider support for Ukraine a waste of money. Donald Trump may well become president of the United States. He is capable of anything, but his words speak of a desire to sell Ukraine to Russian President Vladimir Putin. If Zelensky continues to ignore reality, insisting that the Ukrainian army can return all the lands taken by Russia since 2014, he will alienate supporters of Ukraine and further split Ukrainian society. Regardless of who wins in the United States in November, the only hope for maintaining American and European support and uniting Ukrainians is a new approach that must begin with an honest statement by the leaders about what victory means to them. **(Even as of last week, Biden is still lying about what is going on in the Ukraine war.)**

As The Economist has long argued, Vladimir Putin is in conflict with Ukraine not over territory, but in order to prevent it from becoming a prosperous, Western-oriented democracy. **(Not quite true, Putin has warned repeatedly against Kyiv joining NATO and putting an army on its borders.)** Kyiv's partners must influence Zelensky to convince his people that this remains the main prize. No matter how much he wants to expel Russians from all over Ukraine and from Crimea, he has neither the people nor the weapons for this. They and the West should adhere to the previously voiced desire for the reunification of the country. **(if you ask me, Zelenskyy is a stupid nihilistic man and is incapable of knowing what's good for his country and his people).**

In exchange for Zelensky's acceptance of this grim truth, Western leaders must ensure that his main military objective is credible and provide Ukraine with the necessary military capabilities and security guarantees. If it can give Russia a convincing rebuff on the battlefield, it will demonstrate the futility of further major offensives. **(They have tried in 2023 and has failed to even dent the Russian defensive lines. If it didn't work then, when they had plenty of weapons, money and men, why would they succeed now after a war of attrition that has bled the country white?)** Regardless of whether a formal peace agreement is signed, this is the only way to end the **(slaughter/)**fighting and ensure the security on which Ukraine's prosperity and democracy will ultimately depend. **(Ukraine needs a much better and more experienced leader than they have in Zelenskyy whose only line is, give me more money and weapons and we will have victory. Totally delusional.)**

New arms supplies will be required, which Zelensky is asking for. Ukraine needs long-range missiles to hit military targets deep inside Russian territory and air defense systems to protect infrastructure. What is important is the need to produce their own weapons as well. Today, the country's arms industry has received orders worth seven billion dollars, which is only a third of its potential capacity. **(This is nonsensical because Russia has destroyed the energy infrastructure of Ukraine.)** Arms companies

from America and some European countries have already begun to take part in the process. (Oh yah??? Who? Where?)

Others should follow their example. The supply of weapons of domestic production is more reliable and cheaper than Western ones. We should not forget about innovations. There are about 250 UAV manufacturing companies in Ukraine, and some of them are world leaders in this regard, including those behind the recent attack on a huge Russian weapons depot in the Tver region. (China has stopped the export of drones to Ukraine...)

The second way to increase confidence in Ukraine's defense for Biden is to declare that it needs to be invited to NATO now, even despite the division — and maybe in the absence of an official truce. Biden is known to be cautious on this issue. (This is delusional as no western country wants their boys coming home in body bags. Talk big, thump the chest and quietly just let Ukrainian boys keep on dying.) Such a statement on his part, approved by the leaders of Great Britain, France and Germany, will go far beyond today's official rhetoric about the “irreversible path” to membership. (Like I said, nonsensical rhetoric...). There will be contradictions, since NATO members are obliged to support each other in the event of an attack on one of them. Opening the discussion on this guarantee in accordance with the Fifth Article of the alliance's Charter, Biden could unequivocally state that it would not apply to Russian-controlled Ukrainian territory, as was the case with East Germany when the West joined NATO in 1955, and that in peacetime there would not necessarily be foreign troops in Ukraine, as in Norway in 1949.

Membership in NATO comes with risks. If Russia strikes Ukraine again, America may face a terrible dilemma: support Kiev and risk war with a nuclear adversary, or abandon and weaken its alliances around the world. The latter, by the way, is one of the reasons why China, Iran and North Korea support Russia. Putin makes it clear that he considers the West to be the real enemy. It is a mistake to believe that peace can be achieved by leaving Ukraine to its fate.

In fact, a divided Ukraine by itself can become a dangerous neighbor. Corruption and nationalism are already flourishing there today, but if Ukrainians feel betrayed, Putin can unite battle-hardened militias around him against the West and NATO. He managed to do something similar in Donbas, where after 2014 some Russian-speaking Ukrainians turned out to be ready to wage a guerrilla war against their compatriots. (This is the fallacy of the western argument for boots on the ground. Top commentators who study these events have said there is no evidence that Russia has any plans to invade NATO, and in fact, they tried to join NATO but was rebuffed by the Clinton administration. And you don't prepare for war by imagining that the other side will invade you; you can prepare defensively but you don't invite a warring nation into NATO just because of an irrational fear. Kyiv is a trojan horse in NATO...)

For too long, the West has been hiding behind the excuse that if Ukraine has a goal, it will decide for itself what kind of weapons it needs. However, Zelensky cannot define victory without knowing the level of Western support. (Then it is obvious that they should have been more circumspect all along and not kick the bear in the eye, and provoke the invasion in Feb 2022. The countries of the Global South see it clearly shortly after the propaganda waned in the summer of 2022 – it was NATO which provoked Ukraine to take on Russia.) But the plan outlined above is capable of self-reinforcement. A more decisive pledge to join NATO will help Zelensky rethink victory; a convincing military objective will deter Russia; NATO will benefit from the modernization of Ukraine's military industry (It is absurdly too late for that.). Developing a new victory (victory??, what a joke..against a country that beat the mighty Wermacht taking 27-28 million people KIA fighting the Nazis in WW2, defeated Napoleon in 1812 and now the entire NATO in 2022???) plan will require certain efforts from Zelensky and Western leaders, and doubts will only lead to Kyiv's defeat. And then things will get a lot worse (indeed it is already happening).

As it turns out, no politician will start a war unless he is confident of winning it. That's what the collective west thought would happen when they misled Ukraine, led by fools, up the primrose garden and promised them money and weapons for as long as it takes to fight the Russians. They were wrong. After the first year, when the Russians got into their stride, the Ukrainians were no match. But for 2.5 years, instead of coming to terms with their failure at arms, they chose to lie and deceive their own citizens about it. And the mainstream media, instead of being an objective voice when there was evidence to the contrary, just got into the Biden habit of Russian bashing. The provocation, if they kept it up, would have lead to WW3 and possibly nuclear armageddon. The western politicians were just callous about it all; always on a verbal attack of Putin and Russia, when none of them can beat Russia in a war if they went into it. And until the Europeans started to rebel, starting with the June EU parliamentary elections and now extending to provincial elections in Germany's Brandenburg, some of these NATO countries might have sent troops to fight in Ukraine.

This whole sorry Ukraine project reflects western attitudes that used to prevail on the Vietnam war. As we all remember, Vietnam started as a colonial war, of France against Vietnam. The French were arrogant and did not think anything about the ragtag band that rose against them. They thought they had superior arms but in the end was defeated on the battlefield at Dien Bien Phu. The Americans were more circumspect but could not get out of the mentality that the peasant army could not match up to American power. Is there any difference in this war against Russia? Not very much.

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- 1) Firstly, the western powers were always underestimating Russia. Starting from the meme that Russia incompetent and was no more than a gas station pretending to be a country, they thought that economic sanctions would collapse the Russian economy in a matter of months. They were so wrong.

Once you estimate your foe, you are in a hole of your own making. NATO never got out of that hole.

- 2) You would think that liberal democracies would not engage in propaganda. Oh no, they were masters at it. From the line that liberal democracies would always act in the interest of their own people, to the warped belief that all the democracies were the good guys and everybody else was the devil incarnate, this misplaced sense of right and wrong led to continuous lying about what was going on. And worst of all, they believed in their own propaganda including the line that the Russians would run away when NATO rolled out its wunderweapens. The wunderweapens were all proven ineffective because the Russians found ways to counteract the expensive weapons at low cost. The western tanks were too heavy in the soggy plains of Ukraine, the HIMARS missiles were not useful after a few rounds when the Russians figured out how to jam the signals, and even the F16s – a quarter of them are no longer working – when they needed pristine airfields to fly out of. Pristine airfields in Ukraine?
 - 3) The thought that Slavs are inferior to them and the long years of the cold war, led an debilitating Russiaphobia, and clouded the judgement on their military capabilities. In particular, they regarded Putin to be just another autocrat. They forget the fact that Putin is a patriot and that is an important difference from the run of the mill banana republic leader. The man is truly an intellectual who knew his history – in fact a lot more intelligent than every western politician in power today. And this attitude of the western leaders led to their thinking that the Russian people would kick Putin out on a whim. In fact all of Putin's counterparts are gone or going to be gone, from Boris Johnson to Biden to Macron to Schultz. All gone and Putin will still be there for another seven years. What a joke!
 - 4) When you fight a proxy war against a major foe, you had better find someone of sufficient intelligence and capability to know what they are doing. The NATO countries did not. Left to a civil servant from State Department to make the choice, the US picked Zelenskyy to head up the Kyiv government. What background did this clown have? Zip. Did he have the education to understand the intricacies of the relationship between Russia and Ukraine. History? No he did not. Did he have the experience to run a war? No, Zelenskyy only line was we will not surrender any ground, including at the battle of Ugedar. This was the Hilterian approach to fighting and the Ukrainians went down like the Nazis. The man was totally incompetent although he had a flair for continuously asking for money and weapons, sacrificing manpower needlessly until the country had no more.
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Then there was the other war – the one in the Middle East. And it happened right after Israel assassinated the head of Hezbollah – Hassan Nasrallah:

Here is an account of the escalation:

Iranian strikes on Israel: what happened and why did Iran attack?

What type of missiles did Iran use, what damage did they cause – and what will follow?

Oliver Holmes

Wed 2 Oct 2024 11.35

Iran launched high-speed missile barrages at Israel on Tuesday night, Tehran's largest-ever attack on its regional foe. The strikes, which Iran said were aimed at military bases, were largely thwarted by Israel's aerial defences with support from its global allies, including the US and the UK.

What did Iran fire?

Tehran deployed ballistic missiles, which use trajectories outside or near the limits of Earth's atmosphere, in the attack. It used similar weapons against Israel earlier this year.

Why did Iran attack?

While details of the timings and nature of the attack were not known in advance, it was not a surprise.

World powers have for months predicted a "regional escalation" from Israel's war on Gaza, in which it has killed 40,000 Palestinians. That followed an attack by Hamas militants on 7 October 2023 that killed about 1,200 Israelis. Israel is now fighting allegations of genocide at the world's highest court.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have now expanded the war to Lebanon, which they are bombing heavily.

Lebanon is home to Iran's key regional ally, Hezbollah, which has been firing rockets into northern Israel in response to the bloodshed in Gaza.

Last week, thousands of pagers and walkie-talkie radios belonging to members of Hezbollah exploded across Lebanon, killing scores and wounding thousands of others, including civilians. On Friday, Israel assassinated the Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah. In July, the Hamas political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed in the Iranian capital – an attack attributed to Israel.

Israeli attacks have devastated the southern suburbs of Beirut, the capital, as well as villages in the country's south. At least 1 million people in Lebanon – a fifth of the population – are now displaced.

The US has warned of an escalation but at the same time supported Israel's attacks both diplomatically – by arguing its case at international institutions such as the UN – and materially, by sending it the bombs and weapons it has used to kill thousands.

What damage did the Iranian missiles cause?

The impact of the damage is being assessed. The IDF said on Wednesday some of its airbases were hit. Images posted by Israelis showed craters in central and southern parts of the country.

No injuries have been reported in Israel, but one person was killed in the occupied West Bank, authorities there said.

Iran said the attack targeted military installations but at least one rocket had hit an Israeli school.

The US president, Joe Biden, described Iran's attack as "ineffective".

What will happen now?

Netanyahu says Iran 'will pay' for missile strikes while Tehran warns of 'stronger' attacks

Iran said its attacks were over, although it has more missiles ready to be fired if Israel responds.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said Tehran had made a "big mistake" and vowed that "it will pay for it".

No damage, eh? That's what the Israelis and Biden said. Of course, the Biden White house has been dishonest about Ukraine, so what should we expect him to tell the truth now? As a matter of fact, we should not.

IDF acknowledges some Iranian missiles hit airbases, says no major damage caused

Offices, maintenance areas damaged, but not any aircraft or critical infrastructure; military says Iran didn't fire hypersonic missiles as claimed; IDF chief vows 'powerful' response.

By **Emanuel Fabian**

2 October 2024, 4:34 pm

The Israeli military on Wednesday acknowledged that some of its airbases were hit in Iran's massive ballistic missile attack on the country a night earlier, but stressed that no harm was caused to the functioning of the Israeli Air Force.

The missile impacts damaged office buildings and other maintenance areas in the bases, according to the military.

All of the missile impacts in the airbases were deemed by the military as "ineffective," meaning that no harm was caused to the continuous operations of the IAF.

The military reported no damage caused to fighter jets, drones, other aircraft, munitions, and critical infrastructure.

Highlighting the ineffectiveness of the Iranian attack, which consisted of a massive salvo of some 200 ballistic missiles fired at Israel, the military noted that the IAF continued its operations in the following hours, including major strikes against Hezbollah in Beirut, support for ground forces in southern Lebanon, and strikes in Gaza.

No major injuries were caused in the attack, with only two civilians lightly hurt by shrapnel in Tel Aviv, according to medical services.

The IDF said that it measures the effectiveness of an attack based on how much damage was caused to critical infrastructure and assets and how many casualties were caused, and not how many missiles ultimately impacted. Air defenses successfully prevented such damage and major casualties, it said.

The IAF was also readying for a response against Iran, per the political echelon's instructions.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi reiterated on Wednesday afternoon that Israel would respond to the missile attack, vowing that the military had the capability to "reach and strike any point in the Middle East."

"And those of our enemies who have not understood this so far, will understand it soon," he said in a video statement, during a visit to the Tel Nof Airbase.

"Iran fired about 200 missiles at the State of Israel yesterday. Iran attacked civilian areas and endangered the lives of many civilians. Thanks to proper civilian behavior and high-quality defense, the damage is relatively small," Halevi said. "We will respond, we know how to locate important targets, we know how to strike accurately and powerfully."

Iran fired the massive salvo at Israel on Tuesday night, sending almost 10 million people into bomb shelters as projectiles and interceptors exploded in the skies above.

The Israel Defense Forces said that it intercepted “a large number” of them.

According to the military, the missiles launched at Israel on Tuesday were not hypersonic as Iran had claimed.

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said it had used Fattah missiles for the first time, which it has described as a “hypersonic missile.”

Hypersonic weapons, which fly above Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, could pose crucial challenges to missile defense systems because of their speed and maneuverability. Iran described the Fattah as being able to reach Mach 15 — which is 15 times the speed of sound.

The military said that Iran does not possess hypersonic missiles, and the missiles launched at the country were not maneuverable.

Israel’s air defenses were “effective,” the IDF said late Tuesday. The US also participated in the defense of Israel, both by detecting the threat from Iran ahead of time and intercepting some of the missiles, according to the military.

The IDF said there were “isolated” impacts in central Israel and several more in southern Israel. It emphasized that there was no damage to the “competence” of the Israeli Air Force in the attack, and said the IAF’s planes, air defenses, and air traffic control were operating normally.

One of the missiles impacted a school in Gadera, in central Israel, with photos and videos from the scene showing severe damage to the school building. Nobody was injured. Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo, the Home Front Command chief, visited the site of the impact alongside first responders.

At a security cabinet meeting in a secure bunker near Jerusalem in the aftermath of the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Tehran had made a “big mistake tonight” and vowed that “it will pay for it.”

Iran said it fired the missiles into Israel in response to attacks that killed leaders of Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Iranian military. It referenced Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Revolutionary Guard Gen. Abbas Nilforoushan, both killed in an Israeli airstrike last week in Beirut. It also mentioned Ismail Haniyeh, a top leader in Hamas who was assassinated in Tehran in July in a suspected Israeli attack.

A previous attack using 300 missiles and drones in April — the first ever direct Iranian on Israel — was thwarted with the help of the US military and other allies. Israel reportedly responded at the time with an airstrike in Iran, targeting an air defense system near a nuclear site, but wider escalation was averted.

Agencies contributed to this report.

Satellite imagery appears to show damage at air base after Iranian missile strike

Photo shows hole in roof of hangar at Nevatim, in southern Israel, with no other apparent damage; IDF has said its capabilities were unharmed

By **AP** and **ToI Staff**3 October 2024, 2:37 pm

A satellite photo of Israel's Nevatim air base after Iran's missile attack appears to show damage to hangar roof, October 2, 2024

New satellite images of a key Israeli military air base appear to show a large hole in the roof of an aircraft hangar, indicating damage caused by a missile fired by Iran Tuesday in its massive barrage on Israel.

Images of the Nevatim air base in southern Israel on Wednesday show the damage to the roof in a row of buildings near a runway. Large pieces of debris can be seen spread around the building.

Nevatim is home to the Israeli Air Force's most advanced aircraft, including US-produced F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter jets.

Israel's military did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the satellite images, but acknowledged that some of its airbases were hit in Iran's attack. However, the damage was deemed "ineffective," meaning that no harm was caused to the continuous operations of the Israeli Air Force or to fighter jets, drones, other aircraft, munitions, or critical infrastructure.

The missile impacts damaged office buildings and maintenance areas in the bases, according to the military.



Missiles launched from Iran towards Israel are seen in the West Bank city of Nablus, October 1, 2024. (AP Photo/Majdi Mohammed)

Tuesday's Iranian salvo consisted of some 180 missiles and sent almost 10 million people into bomb shelters throughout Israel as projectiles and interceptors exploded in the skies above.

The IDF said that it intercepted "a large number" of them. According to the military, the missiles launched at Israel on Tuesday were not hypersonic as Iran claimed.

No Israelis were hurt by the missiles. One Palestinian man was killed in Jericho when the fuselage of an apparently intercepted missile slammed into the street as he walked by.

A previous attack using 300 missiles and drones in April — the first ever direct Iranian assault on Israel — was thwarted with the help of the US military and other allies. Israel reportedly responded at the time with a limited airstrike in Iran, targeting an air defense system near a nuclear site, but wider escalation was averted. However, Jerusalem has vowed a significant response this time.

The confrontation between Israel and Iran has grown more direct in recent months. The Islamic Republic suffered major blows when leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah were assassinated, and has since vowed to attack the Jewish state in response.

July saw Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh killed in a guesthouse in Tehran, hours after attending a swearing-in ceremony for the new Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied involvement in the assassination, yet the Islamic Republic's foreign minister promised a "measured and well calculated" response against Israel.

Iranian Media Claims Israeli F-35 Fighters Destroyed In Missile Strike **Peter Suci**

Oct 2, 2024, 12:41pm EDT

Updated Oct 3, 2024, 08:23am EDT

Iran launched its largest attack on Israel to date, firing upwards of 180 missiles on Tuesday. Experts have suggested it was larger and more complex than the strikes conducted in April, and the attack employed the Islamic Republic's Fattah-1 and Kheybarshekan missiles. Israel has claimed that most of the incoming missiles were shot down, and no Israelis were killed—although Palestinian officials reported that a Palestinian man was killed by falling debris.

Damage was also reported to be minimal, but on social media on Wednesday, many pro-Iranian supporters echoed reports from Iranian state media that the missiles successfully struck Israeli airbases. Claims were made that the attack destroyed entire squadrons of the Lockheed Martin F-35I Adir—the Israeli Air Force's fifth-generation fighter.

Videos on social media showed missiles targeting Tel Aviv, and showing the devastation that the IAF's F-35s were purported to cause in Gaza. Iranian propagandists have also alleged that Nevatim Air Base, the home of two F-35I squadrons, was also "completely destroyed" in the attack.

In late September, Israel assassinated Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah when it dropped dozens of bunker-busting bombs over the terror group's underground headquarters in the Dahiyeh suburb of Beirut.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed to attack Israel in response, as he himself was rushed to a secure location for fear of being similarly targeted.

"The blood of the martyr shall not go unavenged," Khamenei said in the statement then.

Emanuel Fabian contributed to this report.

Massive Iranian ballistic missile strike on targets in Israel launched on October 1 has targeted Nevatim Air Base, among other key targets in the country. The facility hosts both of the Israeli Air Force's F-35 fifth generation fighter squadrons, and was previously intended to host a third squadron of the fighters after they were delivered. Iranian media sources have reported that the facility was "completely destroyed" in the attack. Footage from Israel has confirmed the impact of dozens of ballistic missiles which Israel's air defence network failed to shoot down, with targets impacted including the headquarters of the intelligence agency Mossad, located in Tel Aviv which was levelled by the attack. Labelled "True Promise 2," the operation follows a year of escalating tensions between Tehran and Tel Aviv, and represents a long awaited retaliatory attack after an Israeli strike on Tehran on July 31. Iran was previously reported to have agreed not to retaliate if Israel deescalated hostilities, with Israel's invasion and intensive bombardment of Lebanon and assassination of the leadership of the Iranian aligned militia group Hezbollah having been seen to have broken this agreement.

Reports have indicated that the bulk of Nevatim Air Base's F-35s - over 20 fighters - were destroyed in the attack, with the stealth fighters representing one of the most high value targets in Israel. The facility has been widely referred to as Israel's "most important air base" due to the importance of the F-35 in the country's fleet. Israel fields just two squadrons of the costly stealth jets, and relies on them heavily as the remainder of the fighter fleet relies on largely obsolete avionics and old mechanically scanned array radars. F-35s play a central role in Israeli plans for potential attacks on Iran, with their stealth capabilities and advanced avionics, including electronic warfare systems and other air defence suppression features, making them optimal assets for such operations. **The destruction of F-35s is thus an important step towards limiting Israel's ability to respond with further escalation.** Although Israel has a third squadron's worth of F-35s on order, significant issues with production, which remains at a fraction of initially planned rates, has resulted in a very long delivery queue, and means Israel will only begin to receive the newly ordered fighters from 2028.

Israeli and Western officials have widely stressed the need for a strong response against Iran, with White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan stating: "There will be serious consequences for Iran as a result of this attack and we will work with Israel to make sure that happens." The Israel Defence Forces announced that its response will be "seen by the entire Middle East," with Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz stating that the entire "free world" had to support Israel - a reference to expected Western support for future Israeli attacks. The influential U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham meanwhile called on President Joe Biden to authorise attacks on Iranian oil refineries.

The Iranian strike has demonstrated the severe limitations of Israel's air defence network, despite the country having by far the densest and most sophisticated network of any Western aligned actor - rivalled only by that of Taiwan. Israeli media

outlets reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a number of ministers were forced to remain in a fortified underground location in Jerusalem for hours during the attack, with Western correspondents reporting that massive explosions could be felt across Tel Aviv. The current state of the Israeli fighter fleet remains highly uncertain, and alongside the reported destruction of Nevatim Air Base, other fighter losses have been reported including losses of F-15s at Hatzetim Air Base.

Previous minor losses were also reported, but not confirmed, after intensified Hezbollah rocket artillery and drone strikes on facilities such as Ramat David Air Base.

Massive Iranian Missile Strike ‘Completely Destroys’ Israeli F-35 Base Nevatim: Stealth Fighters Destroyed - Reports

Middle East , Missile and Space

Military Watch Magazine Editorial Staff

October-1st-2024

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Did Iran Just End Israel's Invasion of Lebanon? One Missile Barrage May Be All It Takes

Middle East , Ground

Military Watch Magazine Editorial Staff

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Major Iranian ballistic missile strikes on Israeli targets on October 1 have according to multiple sources caused serious damage to the country's military infrastructure, with the attacks launched under Operation True Promise 2 in retaliation for an Israeli attack on Tehran on July 31. The damage done by the operation has raised questions regarding whether Israel can still continue its ongoing invasion of neighbouring Lebanon, which had begun less than two days before the Iranian strikes were launched. Multiple sources have reported that the strikes targeted key air bases such as Hatzerim Air Base, where Israeli F-15s are based, as well as Nevatim Air Base which hosts all of Israel's F-35 stealth fighters. Iranian sources have reported that the latter facility was "completely destroyed" with multiple F-35s lost. Reports have since emerged that missile strikes also targeted troop concentrations, including

a particularly large concentration of tanks and armoured vehicles, which could further seriously complicate future Israeli offensives.

Israeli and Western officials have widely highlighted the need for retaliation against Iran, which raises the possibility that the invasion of Lebanon will be pressed lower down the country's list of priorities. The missile strike is expected to raise morale among Israel's adversaries across the region, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ansurullah Coalition forces in Yemen, various militia groups in Iraq, and a range of Palestinian militia groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Footage of Palestinians celebrating the strikes, after a full year of intensive hostilities with Israel, has widely circulated. The impact on morale is considered particularly important following multiple Israeli successes in targeting the leadership of adversary organisations, including the assassination of Hezbollah General Secretary Hassan Nasrallah and other key Hezbollah and Iranian leaders on September 27 in a large scale bombing raid on his bunker in Beirut.

While the extent of the damage to Israeli ground forces remains uncertain, recent strikes are expected to at the very least seriously disrupt planned offensives into Lebanon. The loss of F-35s could be a particularly serious blow, as while the fighters' stealth capabilities are of limited value in Lebanese airspace due to the lack of local air defences, Israel lacks any other fighters with comparably modern avionics and advanced sensors. F-35s provide a much greater degree of situational awareness than other Israeli aircraft, and are well optimised for targeting ground forces with complex networks of fortifications such as those of Hezbollah. The United States has accordingly from late 2023 taken steps to "accelerate F-35 weapons capabilities and increase spare parts supply rates," surging supplies to Israel to allow its small stealth fighter fleet to generate more sorties against Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian targets. **The loss of these assets, and possibly of F-15s as well, would undermine Israel's ability to utilise its air power to facilitate advances into Lebanon. The nature of the Israeli response, and those of its close allies in Turkey and the Western world, remains uncertain. (So for the time being, no WW3...)**

In other words, it will not be a simple straight line to escalation and WW3. Thank goodness...

Then there is the third story in our Commentary this week. This regards the technology war the US has been waging against China. Up until yesterday, Washington has been applying pressure on Holland not to sell any ASML lithography equipment to China. ASML is arguably the Netherlands most prominent company, as it has a monopoly on these lithography machines to make semiconductor chips. The country was forced to comply, but is now refusing to comply, as reported below:

The Netherlands resists US call to ban more chip-making equipment sales to China, pledges to defend interests

- **The European country is home to ASML, which dominates the market for deep ultraviolet lithography machines**
- **ASML has not sold China more advanced extreme ultraviolet lithography machines because it has not been granted a license as the Netherlands faces US pressure**

Bloomberg/SCMP

Published: 11:15am, 23 Nov 2022

The Netherlands will defend its economic interests when it comes to the sales of chip equipment to China, a senior Dutch official said, further evidence of the country's resistance to meekly following Washington's attempts to cut off China from semiconductor technology.

The European country is home to ASML Holding NV, which dominates the market for one-of-a-kind, cutting-edge chip-making equipment that has become a focus of the US government's attempts to limit China. Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Liesje Schreinemacher told lawmakers on Tuesday that the Netherlands will make its own decision regarding ASML's chip gear sales to China amid trade rule talks with the US and other allies.

"It is important that we defend our own interests – our national safety, but also our economic interests," Schreinemacher told lawmakers at the parliament in The Hague. "If we put that in an EU basket and negotiate with the US and in the end it turns out we give away deep ultraviolet lithography machines to the US, we are worse off."

If this is the case, this is a clear loss to the US. If China can progress towards 2nm chips, which it will get to anyway eventually, but can now do it faster, the American empire will decline faster.

Yeong, Wai-Cheong, CFA

Fintech Entrepreneur, Money Manager and Blogger

Un-Influencer in a World full of Hubris

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