

The Silent Strike: How Israel Bombed a Syrian Nuclear Installation and Kept It Secret

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Articles & Testimony

In this special feature article, Institute senior fellow David Makovsky draws on interviews with some two dozen Israeli and American officials who knew about the 2007 Israeli attack on Syria and explores what it could mean for potential military action against Iran's nuclear facilities. Included is a behind-the-scenes account of private meetings convened by then Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert and high-level defense and intelligence officials to decide whether to proceed with an airstrike despite the very real threat of retaliation. Israel had shared information on the suspected reactor with Washington, but U.S. officials replied that they would prefer to pursue a diplomatic route.

Despite fundamental differences between the Syrian and Iranian cases, the pressing question today is whether the lessons of the successful 2007 strike can be applied to the current impasse with Tehran, and whether Israel and Washington view the threat the same way. As Olmert told the author during one conversation, Israel "cannot tolerate an enemy with militarized nuclear power. We did not tolerate it in the past, whether it was in Iraq or Syria, and we cannot tolerate it in Iran." At the same time, Olmert wants Israel to work with the international community on Iran, "particularly with the United States." ❖

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