

# Deadly game of anticipation

## Israel great loser in intelligence war against Iran



By Navid Kamali  
Foreign affairs expert

### OPINION

*The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, in Tehran marks a pivotal moment in the regional and international dynamics of West Asia. Along with its subsequent developments, whether visible or hidden, it was so impactful that the future of the region will be shaped by its consequences.*

*The Israeli regime's brazen terrorist act in carrying out a high-profile assassination in the heart of Tehran signifies Tel Aviv's persistent audacity that has crossed Tehran's clearly defined red lines. This assassination has had far-reaching consequences in the intelligence, political, and security arenas, each of which alone could significantly affect the region's future outlook.*

*Interestingly, Tehran, contrary to the expectations of Israel, clearly emphasized the need to respond to this terrorist act but without specifying the exact time and place. This approach has placed Israel, which long claimed to have the world's strongest intelligence and espionage apparatus, in a complex and unstable situation. Analysts believe that the uncertainty regarding the timing and nature of Iran's response has imposed heavy costs on the Israeli regime and has profoundly affected the psychological and security environment in the region. Hebrew media outlets have even reported an increase in psychological disorders within Israel's panic-stricken society.*



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (C) speaks in front of Iran's top military figures during a meeting at the IRGC Aerospace Force achievements exhibition in Tehran in 2023.

WANA

### Consequences of uncertainty, ambiguity

One of the major challenges the Israeli regime currently faces is the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the timing and manner of Iran's response. This uncertainty, especially at a time when Israel is grappling with multiple internal and external crises, has exerted immense pressure on its politicians and security institutions. While some Israeli and American analysts speak of an imminent Iranian response, the delay in Iran's reaction and the lack of clarity regarding its nature have left Israel in a state where its focus and security capabilities are severely compromised. This situation has also led to significant confusion in Israel on various fronts. On one hand, Israeli intelligence agencies are striving to make accurate predictions about Iran's possible response. On the other hand, the prolonged period of anticipation and the absence of an immediate Iranian reaction have challenged these predictions significantly. This issue is evi-

dent in the statements of Israeli officials, who have spoken of a constant state of alert among their security and military forces and expressed concern over the potential repercussions of Iran's response. In recent weeks, Israel has been exerting intense pressure on its intelligence and security agencies, led by Mossad, which is responsible for the regime's espionage operations. For decades, these agencies have portrayed themselves as successful in preventing any attack or threat from regional actors. However, following Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, also known as the October 7 operation, these same agencies find their capabilities in countering what they refer to as "threats from the Resistance Front" severely questioned. This decline in credibility and capability is noticeable not only at the intelligence level but also at the operational level. Indeed, Tel Aviv is now confronting an "intelligence torment" that has not only eroded its intelligence capacities but also set the stage for a broader

security crisis. It is important to note that Iran's strategy of imposing intelligence torment on the Israeli regime's strategic apparatus, without firing a single shot, has inflicted significant damage on the Zionist regime and its Western allies. The hundreds of millions of dollars spent daily to maintain the readiness of American and European forces in the region are just a small part of these losses. This intelligence and security crisis has become even more complicated, especially given the internal and political challenges faced by Israel's security cabinet. While Netanyahu and his cabinet are desperately trying to maintain domestic stability and counter external threats, these crises and security challenges are further weakening the ruling faction in Israel. Social and political pressures within Israel have clearly increased, and public dissatisfaction with the cabinet's performance, particularly in managing security crises, has reached its peak.

### Iran's smart strategy in intelligence war

Iran's approach and, by extension, that of the other members of the Resistance Front in dealing with this situation reflects a smart strategy, guided by the wisdom of Iran's Leader and the innovative actions of Iran's armed forces, particularly the IRGC. Their strategy is based on the principles of psychological and intelligence warfare. For instance, Brigadier General Ali-Mohammad Naeini, the new spokesperson for the IRGC, emphasized Iran's serious intent to respond to the assassination of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh during a recent press conference that drew considerable international media attention. He explicitly stated that the timing and location of this response depend on Iran's calculations. These measured and intelligent remarks not only signal the start of a new phase of psychological and media oper-

ations by the IRGC but also clearly demonstrate Iran's strategy of challenging the opponent's calculations and imposing psychological and intelligence pressure on the Israeli regime. In reality, Iran, through the smart and calculated use of its media and intelligence capabilities, has managed to create a situation where Israel and its Western allies are forced to maintain a constant state of alert without being able to predict the quality, quantity, or even the likely timing of Iran's response. This strategy, based on the principles of cognitive warfare and disrupting the enemy's decision-making system, is far more effective than a direct military attack. In other words, Iran, by leveraging psychological and intelligence warfare, has not only put significant pressure on the Israeli regime but also severely disrupted Israel's security and intelligence calculations and forecasts.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (2nd-L) and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant (2nd-R) meet at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv on August 25, 2024. The monitor screens were blurred by the IDF.

ARIEL HERMONI/IDF

### Int'l concerns, diplomatic reactions

Recent developments have also heightened international concerns about the potential for a widespread war in the region. Diplomatic reactions from European countries and the United States indicate that they are well aware of the possible consequences of a military confrontation between Iran and Israel and the irreparable damages that Israel could take. At the same time, diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and prevent an imminent punitive response from Iran have clearly intensified. The repeated requests for Tehran to exercise restraint and avoid escalating tensions reflect the deep concern of these countries about the potential for a major military crisis in the region. The United States and its European allies are trying, through both overt and covert diplomacy, to prevent a regional conflict that could threaten their strategic interests in the Middle East. In this context, diplomatic trips and behind-the-scenes negotiations to reduce tensions and either prevent or mitigate Iran's response have significantly increased. However, according to Western sources, these efforts have yet to yield tangible results, and concerns about the scope and depth of a possible blow to Israel remain high. Given all that has been discussed,

it seems that Iran's response to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh is not likely to take the form of a direct military strike but rather a hybrid warfare approach, maximizing the use of psychological and intelligence warfare. This carefully crafted response will have long-term strategic consequences that will spell a bleak future for the Israeli regime. This approach, based on the principles of cognitive warfare and the exploitation of media and intelligence capacities, clearly demonstrates Iran's capabilities in crisis management and in imposing its preferred conditions on its enemies. In conclusion, considering all the recent developments and backed by the admissions of Western and Israeli think tanks and analysts, Iran's intelligence power and strategic capabilities have been effectively displayed for all to see, indicating a fundamental shift in the regional power dynamics. Simultaneously, these developments reveal a deep intelligence and security shortfall within the Israeli regime and its trans-regional allies. In other words, by employing psychological and intelligence strategies, the Islamic Republic has managed to ensnare not only Israel but also its Western allies, led by the United States, in a long-term crisis, the repercussions of which may be felt far beyond regional borders.

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The photo shows a pedestrian overpass with a large banner depicting the slain leader of Hamas Ismail Haniyeh (C) and other figures assassinated by Israel, in Tehran, Iran, on August 14, 2024.

AFP