



Missiles launched from Iran toward Israel streak across the night sky as seen from Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on October 1, 2024, during Operation True Promise 2.
 ● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

From battlefield to broadcast

How IRGC's media office amplified Iran's military power



By Navid Kamali
 Foreign affairs expert

OPINION
 EXCLUSIVE

Operation True Promise 2 stands as one of the most significant displays of the Islamic Republic of Iran's military prowess in recent years. Not only did it mark a highly successful missile strike against targets within the occupied territories but also became a powerful symbol of Iran's dignity and strength on both regional and global scales. Launched in response to the terrorist actions of the Zionist regime, the operation successfully showcased Iran's advanced missile technology and defensive capabilities to the world.

However, what elevated Operation True Promise 2 beyond a mere missile strike and ensured its lasting success in the public consciousness as a bright testament to Iran's defense capabilities was the strategic and sophisticated media outreach that accompanied it.



In times of limited military conflict, where there is no immediate existential threat to the nation, the public's views are often shaped based on the information they receive. This underscores the necessity for military forces to engage actively with the media — not to manipulate or control the flow of information but to foster a relationship of trust and mutual understanding that ensures accurate representation of military operations.

Through meticulous planning in public relations and information dissemination, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) not only communicated the military message of the operation effectively to both domestic and international audiences but also presented a powerful image of Iran in the regional and global arenas. This image clearly reflected the strength and determination of the Iranian nation in defending its interests and contributed to enhancing the country's immunity against foreign threats in the complex geopolitical environment of West Asia. This image-building success was the result of a skilled media team within the IRGC, whose intelligent interaction with the media and the accurate narrative they constructed transformed Operation True Promise 2 into a symbol of deterrence and national pride, while simultaneously solidifying Iran's position as an undisputed regional power.

The IRGC's recent experience demonstrates the historical connection between military operations and dominating the media. More specifically, it reflects a scientific approach to military image-building, drawing on lessons learned from history. Over time, various methods have been used to document military conflicts, from ancient carvings on stone tablets to modern live video from battlefields. Throughout this evolving process, media has always served as a tool to shape public perceptions of wars and military engagements.

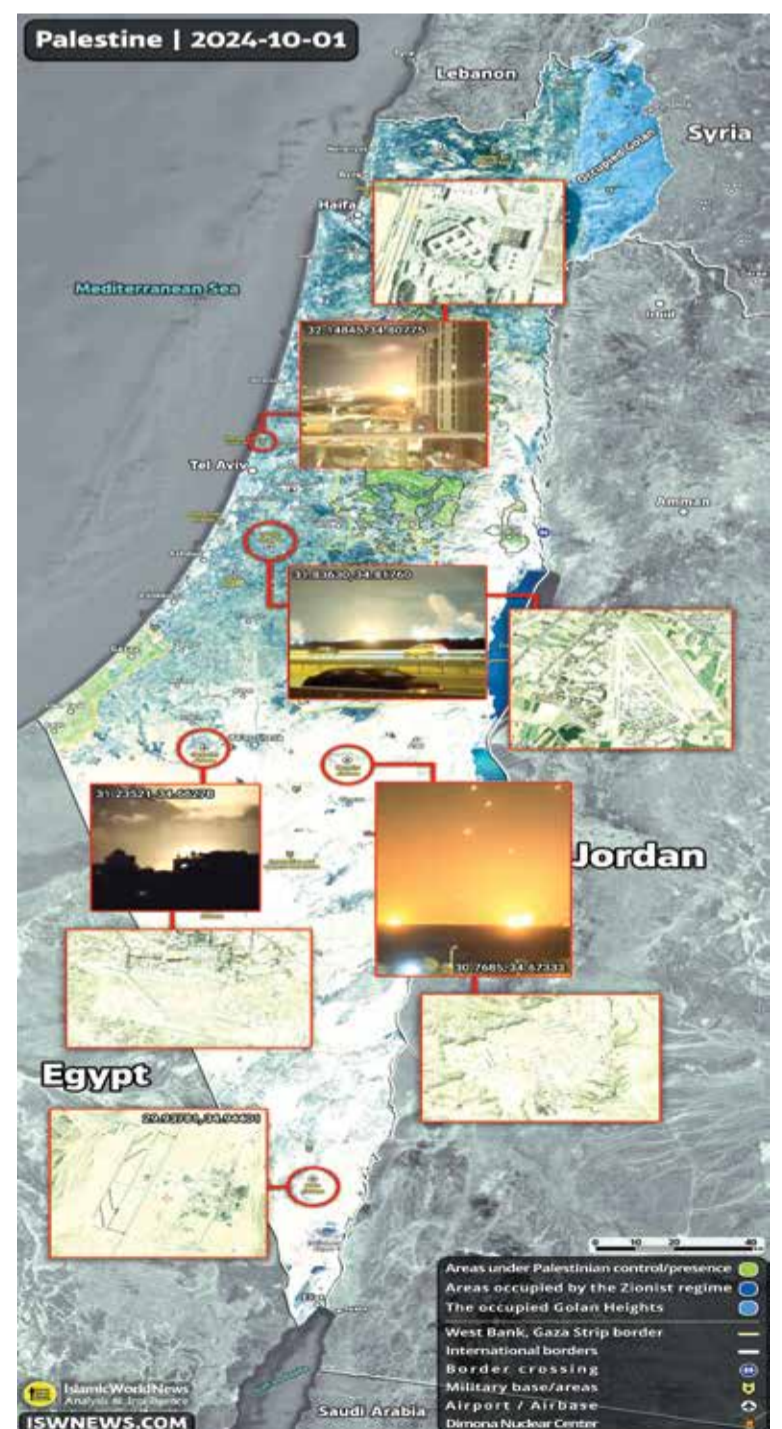
However, historically, armed forces have primarily focused on the hard aspects of warfare, often neglecting its softer dimensions. With the development of societies, especially following the rise of mass media in the 20th and 21st centuries, military forces have increasingly realized the importance of these softer aspects, particularly the battle for "hearts and minds".

In the modern era, victory is no longer defined solely by territorial gains or inflicting heavy casualties on the

enemy. Success is now intrinsically tied to public support, both domestically and internationally. This support, in turn, is heavily influenced by the narratives and images conveyed through media. This makes media not just a chronicler of events but a powerful actor in the conflicts of the modern age, capable of reinforcing or weakening military strategies and affecting the defensive deterrence of a nation.

Given the growing importance of directing the "spectacle" in the defense and security domains, military think tanks have extensively studied the impact of media on public opinion in recent decades. Research shows that media, particularly television and online platforms, can shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, especially in the short term. In the long term, media exposure can deeply influence public perceptions. In times of limited military conflict, where there is no immediate existential threat to the nation, the public's views are often shaped based on the information they receive. This underscores the necessity for military forces to engage actively with the media — not to manipulate or control the flow of information but to foster a relationship of trust and mutual understanding that ensures accurate representation of military operations.

Historically, the relationship between the armed forces and the media has been marked by distrust. For example, during the Iraqi-imposed War on Iran, the emphasis of the Iranian military on operational security conflicted with the role of the media, resulting in limited visual documentation of the military's heroic efforts. In contrast, mismanaged media access during the Vietnam War is a classic example of how poor media management can weaken military objectives. Unrestricted access to journalists during the Vietnam War led to widespread critical reporting, which ultimately undermined public support for the war and forced the US government to end the conflict.



The photomap includes photographs of targets Iran attacked during Operation True Promise 2, showing missiles in the sky, explosions nearby, or satellite images of military bases.
 ● ISLAMIC WORLD NEWS