

Revisiting the Israel's de-proxification Strategy: What is next?

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	Palestine/Gaza – HAMAS	Lebanon – Hezbollah	Yemen – Houthis	Syria – Iran affiliated groups
The End-state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue hostages to save domestic public opinion Dismantle Hamas and remove remaining Hamas members Annex Gaza Annex all Palestine at the second stage and close an independent Palestine file <div style="background-color: #e0f2e0; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">STATUS: Largely Achieved</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut off supply lines of Hezbollah with Iran De-couple Hezbollah and Iran Degrade to a level unable to conduct attacks to Israel Cease it from being an armed group in Lebanon. <div style="background-color: #e0f2e0; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">STATUS: Largely Achieved</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-capacitate Houthis Support the Western and the Gulf efforts for maritime security at the Red Sea to ensure their support and sustain their positive approach. De-couple Houthis and Iran <div style="background-color: #f0e68c; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">STATUS: Partially Failed</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oust Iran and its affiliated groups out of Syria Demilitarize Syria and prevent the takeover of military equipment by the STG or other potentially hostile/adversarial groups A New Syria that is forcefully pacified Indirectly empower the PKK/YPG led SDF to hamper the unitary Syria efforts, assuming the PKK/YPG stands out as a viable counter-balance to other groups. <div style="background-color: #e0f2e0; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">STATUS: Largely Achieved</div>
What happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 52 thousands of losses, uninhabitable Gaza 90% Gaza residents forcefully displaced within Gaza, Key leadership were neutralized, including the consecutive Hamas leaders Hamas degraded to a tipping of dissolution as mostly lost its ability of launch attacks, except sporadic ones which are still effective Limited International Reaction against Israel, including the ICC arrest warrant for Netanyahu & Def.Min. Mismatch between the ISR ambitions and Hamas resilience, inevitable attrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Hezbollah leadership, including Hezbollah leader Nasrallah, were neutralized Hezbollah was largely pushed to the north of the Litani River Hezbollah HQs, weapon depots, missile launchers, and air defense systems were degraded in southern Lebanon and Beirut ISR opted for signing a ceasefire not to get worn out its ground forces and alleviate internal pressures due to the penetrating Hezbollah drones After the enaction of the ceasefire, IDF continued its operations, kept 5 posts "indefinitely" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alongside the US and UK, ISR conducted air strikes Houthis' weapon caches and positions in Yemen Houthis succeeded to target many commercial ships, but failed to inflict significant damage on western military ships Houthis launch missiles directly into Israeli territory Degraded maritime traffic in Red Sea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran affiliated groups de-capacitated, logistic supply lines were cut, remaining units were forced to leave Syria. Israel destroyed at least 90% of the Syrian military capacity Israel destroyed Syrian public buildings, especially those of the land registry and civil registration offices. Occupied the Golan Heights and Hermon Mount to pressure Damascus Iran affiliated armed groups mostly eliminated from Syrian territory, but weak government creates permissive ground for IRN influence
What is happening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the failed ceasefire IDF has restarted its operations aiming to control whole Gaza and defeat Hamas, while incurring casualties due to the sporadic attacks of Hamas Continued efforts for ceasefire Hamas retains the capacity to conduct sporadic attacks, keeps the hostages, while IDF is failing to clear Gaza from Hamas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ceasefire agreement, supervised by the US and FRA Israel withdrew its forces from southern Lebanon, but continues to violate the ceasefire and hit the targets in Lebanon, Redirect its focus away from Lebanon, where it failed to attain all objectives, advance on the ground, and prevent the penetration of drones. SYR stability reduces the likelihood for restoring the supply lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewed consecutive airstrikes on Houthis aiming to degrade its military capacity. Degrading the Houthis through airstrikes Movements and actions of the Western task groups Delivery of anti-ship missiles sea-shore defense missiles to Houthis (GAME CHANGER-need to be monitored) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent the emergence of the potential adversarial or hostile groups in Syria, continues to target military targets, and advances to get closer to Damascus to seize initiative for pressuring the new government, ISR continues to leverage PKK/YPG/SDF and Druzes to prevent the effort for a unified, stable, and strong government to sustain its operational freedom, SYR seeks grounds for normalizing relations with all neighbors including ISR.

Fusion4Strategy Assessment:

- ISR turned the October 7 HAMAS attack into an opportunity to neutralize its arch-enemy IRN, annex Palestine, and Golan Heights,
- The overarching objective of the adopted strategy is to de-proxify IRN in a short-phased manner, since the IRN-affiliated armed groups were being accepted as the most formidable asymmetric strength of IRN in the ME,
- In the initial phase, ISR focused on the elimination of HAMAS which has largely been achieved, though HAMAS not completely been eliminated, as it retains the ability to conduct sporadic attacks and inflict casualties on the IDF,
- In the second phase, ISR simultaneously targeted IRGC elements & proxies in Syria and Lebanon. Taking advantage of HTS' overthrow of Assad, SYR was demilitarized with coordinated airstrikes to prevent the rise potential adversarial groups that could pose a threat to Israel. However, a destabilized SYR bears the risk of opening space for IRN influence,
- As an aggregated outcome, for the first time in 40 years, IRN was forced to be withdrawn to its borders, excluding Shia militias in IRQ, which will likely be one of the next targets. ISR will likely capitalize on the differences of IRQ and IRN's Shia understanding, thanks to the growing nationalism in IRQ among Shia groups. Once ISR succeeds, IRN's ambitions to access to the EMED will severely be hampered.
- As part of the de-proxification strategy, ISR will likely concentrate on the degradation of Houthis in Yemen, to sustain the support of the Europeans states with the military support of the US and UK naval assets. In recent days, the conducted airstrikes confirms the trajectory in that direction. The overall strategic ends are highly likely tailored not for the complete elimination, but for significant degradation of the proxies preventing their ability to conduct any coordinated and large-scale attacks.
- Succeeding to attain the objectives of the de-proxification of IRN raises the questions on the subsequent phase of the ISR strategy, which is likely to be defined as the post-Iran ME as part of the de-Iranification strategy, with potential regional and global implications. On the other hand, IRN's possible counter actions to ISR deserves further examination.