

Israel Can Go the Distance

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Last week, Time Magazine reported that an Israeli airstrike in the Sudan involved "dozens of aircraft." The raid knocked back a sizable overland arms shipment from Iran to the Gaza Strip, but -more importantly- demonstrated just how far (literally) the Israelis are willing to go to break stuff that makes them nervous.

Here's an interesting bit of trivia. The distance between Tel Aviv and Khartoum is roughly the same as Tel Aviv and Tehran, with most of Iran's nuclear facilities located in the western half of the country. Though the IAF's fleet has boasted KC-130H tankers for some time, whether or not Israel had the lungs for such a distant strike was arguable. Now, the debate is over.

Sure the successful strike doesn't satisfy the question of Iran's robust IAD network (Sudan doesn't have one), nor does it offer any insight into a safe ingress/egress route in and out of Iran. But, it does show the Israelis have the legs -and the stones- to prosecute the fight over long distances, and refuel their strike aircraft in close proximity to their Arab neighbors.

Aside: IAF tankers flew a refueling track over the Red Sea, smack in the middle of Egyptian and Saudi airspace. The Egyptians fly F-16s that are a similar, though inferior, variant of the Israeli F-16i, and the Saudis fly AWACs guided F-15s.

I've heard rumors that the IAF was ready to knock back Natanz yesterday, should they hear the trumpet's blast. Even though these guys have proven time and time again that failure isn't in their vocabulary, factoring in distance and enemy defenses left me skeptical. Now? Hey, I'm a believer.

And just for fun...

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