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The Escalation Puzzle: Iran, Israel, and Regional Implications

### *Airstrikes on Iranian consulate in Damascus*

An action that resulted in seven deaths, occurred on Monday April 1, when an Israeli air strike took place on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria. Two of them were among the deceased, Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior commander in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and senior commander Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, according to Iran's Foreign Ministry. Zahedi is the most senior general to be assassinated since Qasem Soleimani, who was the leader of Quds Force which was killed by the U.S. strikes in Iraq.

The bombing of Iran's consulate has received major headlines and a robust reaction from both Iran's leadership, as well as Lebanon's Hezbollah, as Iran has sworn to avenge Israel for their actions, and Hezbollah has also vowed retaliation and retribution against Israel. It remains to be seen how Iran chooses to act on its own words of revenge. For Iran to enter a new corner in the current conflict between Israel and Hamas would probably trigger the United States, Israel's strongest ally, which has conveyed that it has no responsibility or knowledge of Israel's attack. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei expressed himself as follows to the state of Israel: "We will make them regretful about the crime and similar acts," (AP News, 2024).

### *Iran's possible revenge*

A possible outcome of the current situation is that Iran's proxies act on Iran's behalf, as Iran provides money, weapons and support to various groups in the region, such as the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, as well as groups in Iraq and Syria. One potential strategy for Iran could be to retaliate in kind for the attack they suffered, to damage a diplomatic building belonging to Israel. On the other hand, Israel has now chosen to close around 30 embassies as the fear of a revenge attack is not completely impossible. From Israel's point of view, this was a move that was probably in their best interest as there has now been a "threat" from Iran. A senior advisor to the supreme leader in Iran on the 7th of

April, did warn that none of the embassies of Israel are safe, following their strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus.

The possibility of Iran attacking Israel with missiles, I doubt such an event would occur, as that kind of an action could lead to the U.S. entering the picture, which could be the spark needed for a third world war. According to Iranian media, Iran has 9 different missiles, with the capacity of which is enough to reach Israel (Al Arabiya, 2024).

### *Iran's top diplomat version*

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic republic of Iran, Mr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian claimed that the attack was a “violation of all international obligations and conventions” and a “serious response” from the international community is needed. Mr Amir-Abdollahian did mention that he also holds the U.S. responsible for Israel's attack as the U.S. gives it support to Israel, which has led to increased tensions between Tehran and Washington (CNN, 2024).

### *Final analysis*

It remains to be seen how Iran will respond, but I anticipate and do expect some form of retaliation on their part. But I do believe the probability of a missile attack from Iran is at low risk. A similar to Israel's strike on a diplomatic compound, or an assault carried out by Iran's proxies, where either civilians or high level officials will pay with their lives. It's my belief that there is a high likelihood of.

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