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## **East of Nakba**

### **Part I. Israel bombs a nuclear plant in Iran**

#### **Chapter 2 Three flight routes**



To bomb Natanz nuclear facilities, three flight routes were studied. One is a route that passes over Syria and Iraq. The second route is from over the Mediterranean Sea, passing through Turkey and intruding in Iran. And the third one is to fly over along the border between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. However, either route invades the airspace of Syria, Iraq, Turkey or Saudi Arabia. The first and third cases, in addition, invade the airspace of Lebanon or Jordan. But Israel didn't care both countries due to its superiority.

The safest route to Iran without invading the airspace of any other countries is to fly over the open seas. It might be a detour route like this; First of all, jet fighters should go south above Red Sea along the Arabian Peninsula. Then they pass through the Strait of Mandab, and fly over the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. After passing through the Strait of Hormuz, jet fighters invade Iran from the Persian Gulf. However, this route was out of the question taking the range of the fighter into consideration. Some military executives lamented that they had no aircraft carrier at all. If they should have an aircraft carrier, they can bomb any place in Iran from the Arabian Sea.

Of the three routes, the Syrian-Iraq route is the shortest and the physical risk is minimum. However, the dispute over the territory of the Golan Heights shadows the serious problem with Syria. Syria is a regional military power. It could result into a full-scale war between Israel and Syria. This idea was rejected first.

Which plan should be chosen, to fly over Turkey or to fly over Saudi Arabia and Iraq? Turkey and Israel are under the same umbrella of the U.S. Iran is an enemy to Israel and a potential threat to Turkey. In other words, if the enemy of Israel is the enemy of Turkey at the same time, it means that the enemy's enemy is an ally. The Israeli military believed that Turkey was less political risk than Syria.

However, there was the anti-Israeli sentiment persistently in Turkey caused by the two incidents taken place several years ago. One was the inspection by Israeli authorities against a Turkish ship

off the coast of Gaza. The other was the insult by an Israeli diplomat to the Turkish ambassador related to the Turkish TV program.

In case of the Turkish ship inspection, a small Turkish-flagged ship that is loading relief supplies for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip was suddenly inspected by Israeli patrol boat off the coast of Gaza. Turkish ship loaded only humane relief supplies such as food, medicine and clothing. However, Israel had believed that there had to be weapons and ammunition. Israelis shot Turkish crews and nine were dead.

The Turkish ambassador insult case took place shortly before the inspection case. Israel claimed about the anti-Semitic TV program aired in Turkey and asked for an official apology. Turkish ambassador to Israel was summoned by the deputy foreign minister to visit his office. Upon entering the room, the Israeli press was already waiting. He saw that only the Israeli flag was on the table. In such places, the press usually leaves as soon as they take a picture, and it is a diplomatic ritual to display the flags of both countries on the table.

Turkish ambassador felt something strange. But he didn't pay much attention and sat on a low and spacious sofa. The deputy minister sat on tall office chair arrogantly and began to speak in Hebrew to the press looking down Turkish ambassador. The Turkish ambassador, who could not understand Hebrew, heard the deputy minister's speech with a gentle diplomatic smile. He had no way of knowing that the deputy minister was giving a ridiculous explanation to the press. If the Turkish ambassador could understand Hebrew to some extent, or if the deputy foreign minister spoke in English, the ambassador would undoubtedly stand up with anger and expressed his protest.

The deputy minister pointed at the Turkish ambassador with his finger and said in Hebrew, "Turkey was deeply ashamed of the anti-Semitic TV program aired in his country and came to apologize." When the news was reported on TV next morning and the intention of the deputy minister became clear, fierce anger was arisen in Turkey. The deputy minister's remarks developed into diplomatic quarrel between the two countries. Finally, Israel apologized to Turkey for the disrespect of the deputy minister.

Two incidents, the death of Turkish crews and the insult of the Turkish ambassador, implanted a deep anti-Semitic sentiment in the hearts of the Turkish people. Israeli foreign ministry and intelligence agencies, therefore, have taken Turkey's national sentiment into account and advised the military to avoid the Turkish route.

As a result of the elimination, the Saudi Arabia-Iraq route was adopted at last. Of course, there are risks in this route, too. However, both Saudi Arabia and Iraq were passive to the United States. Israel judged that there would be no serious problem if they persuaded the top officials in Washington.

There was still one big problem with each route. It was the range of the fighter. All routes exceed the fighter's range of 1,700 kilometers and had to be refueled somewhere on the way home after the mission.

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