

Editorial Warmongering At Iran's Kayhan

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The hardline Iranian newspaper *Kayhan* is closely tied to the government; its editor Hossein Shariatmadari is appointed by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and he remains an advisor to him. On December 6, *Kayhan* carried an editorial demanding that Iran not hesitate in striking Israel for its likely assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the nuclear scientist, and IRGC major general, who headed Iran's nuclear program. That report on the *Kayhan* editorial is here: "Direct conflict with Israel 'could make Iran regional superpower,'" by Neta Bar, [Just this summer](#) the Arrow 2 interceptor successfully passed flight tests:

Israel's Defense Ministry said Thursday it conducted a successful test of the country's advanced missile defense system against long-range ballistic attacks.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz said the successful flight test

of the Arrow-2 interceptor was part of Israel's technological effort that "ensures that we will always be one step ahead of our enemies."

The test was conducted overnight in central Israel, jointly with the U.S. Missile Defense Agency.

Arrow-2 is part of the multi-layered system Israel has developed to defend against both short- and mid-range rockets fired from Gaza and Lebanon, as well as Iran's long-range missiles. It includes Iron Dome, David's Sling and the Arrow-3 system – capable of defending against threats from outside the atmosphere.

Israel and the United States jointly tested Arrow-3 successfully last year in Alaska. The system was developed by Israel Aerospace Industries and U.S. aviation giant Boeing and became operational in January 2017. The Arrow-2 has been in use even longer and has been deployed in recent years to counter Syrian missiles.

Israel's multi-layered aerial defense systems were designed to cope with a future war in which it is assumed Israel will be targeted with massive missile fire toward all parts of the country. The Arrow rocket system is designed to intercept the longest-range missiles, including outside the atmosphere.

At Kayhan, it's clear that military matters are not their strong suit.

Will the Supreme Leader listen to the editors of Kayhan? If Iran dares to retaliate for the killing of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, by attempting to strike Israeli targets and possibly American military bases in the Middle East as well, it must keep that response to a minimum. Iran's response to the assassination of Qassem Soleimani should serve as a model; Iran had notified Iraq's government ahead of time; Baghdad then informed the Americans, who could then take shelter; as a result, American

soldiers suffered concussions, but no Americans were killed.

Iran cannot afford a serious conflict right now. Its economy is in free fall; the impoverished population is increasingly disaffected, chanting "No to Palestine! No to Lebanon!" as a way of protesting the money sent abroad by the government to Iran's proxies and allies. If on top of this, Iran rashly attacks Israel, and calls down upon itself the wrath of the Israeli Air Force, it will be very sorry. Ashkenazi, Gantz, and Netanyahu have all warned Iran not to put Israel to the test. And if, even more heedlessly, Iran were to attack American military bases in the Middle East, as Kayhan demands must happen now, even with Trump in office, and the Americans were to use their bunker busters to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities built inside a mountain at Natanz, the clerical regime could not survive the humiliation.

Which leaves one thinking that if the Supreme Leader decides to follow the advice of his friends at Kayhan, that will be just the decision that Jerusalem, and Washington, will now be able to use to their advantage. Go to it, Ayatollah Khamenei. The ghost of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh wants you to avenge his death. Don't wait. Do something now. Make our day.

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