

Headlines in Western media seek to manufacture consent for Israeli terrorism

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By Ivan Kesic

In a twisted interpretation and in line with the preestablished propaganda narrative, the Western media unanimously declared Israel's aggression against Iran as "retaliation."

From CNN to Fox News to Axios to the New York Times to the Washington Post - all major Western media outlets rallied behind the Tel Aviv regime as it added fuel to the already raging flames.

In the early hours of Saturday, the regime jets carried out a fresh act of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, attacking several sites in Tehran, Khuzestan and Ilam provinces with missiles.

Although most of the missiles were intercepted and the military damage was minor, the regime's move represented a serious escalation as four servicemen on Iranian soil were martyred in the attacks.

The motive for the attack was face-saving after a barrage of Iranian ballistic attacks pounded Israeli military and intelligence sites earlier this month that again laid bare the inefficacy of much-hyped Israeli air defense systems such as Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow.

Iran's 'Operation True Promise II' was carried out as a response to the cowardly assassinations of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Iranian military commander Abbas Nilforoushan by the Israeli regime.

Iran's military action was in full accordance with its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, and a direct response to the regime's repeated acts of aggression, including the violation of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Manipulative headlines used by major US television networks and newspapers
The same applied to 'Operation True Promise I' in April when Iran retaliated after the Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate building in the Syrian capital of Damascus.

These facts, however, were deliberately disregarded by most of the Western media outlets while reporting on Saturday's aggression against Iran, offering the audience a decontextualized interpretation of the Israeli regime as a victim "retaliating" against the Iranian attack.

A cursory look at Western media, of which a sample of about 20 are selected here, it is noticeable that they all shaped the headline in the same suggestive way, using the same terminology.

The term "retaliation" has been used by all these outlets for the Israeli act of aggression against Iran, while also employing other terms such as "reprisal", "response" and "payback," while ignoring the full sequence of events that have shaped this region in the past year.

The list of media outlets that employed such terminology includes major US networks CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox News, together covering over three-quarters of the American audience.

It also includes six of America's most circulated newspapers, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and New York Post.

Among them, Fox News went the farthest in its pro-Zionist bias, stating in its headline that Israeli "retaliatory" strikes against Iran followed a "missile barrage targeting Israelis," although only military targets were precisely targeted and there were no settler casualties.

The Washington Post stated that the Israeli attacks add to the "cycle of tit-for-tat strikes" between the two sides, without specifying who started that cycle by provocatively targeting the other side.

Most other media outlets in the story summary and the text itself treated the Iranian retaliatory ballistic attack as the "cause" and did not mention what preceded it.

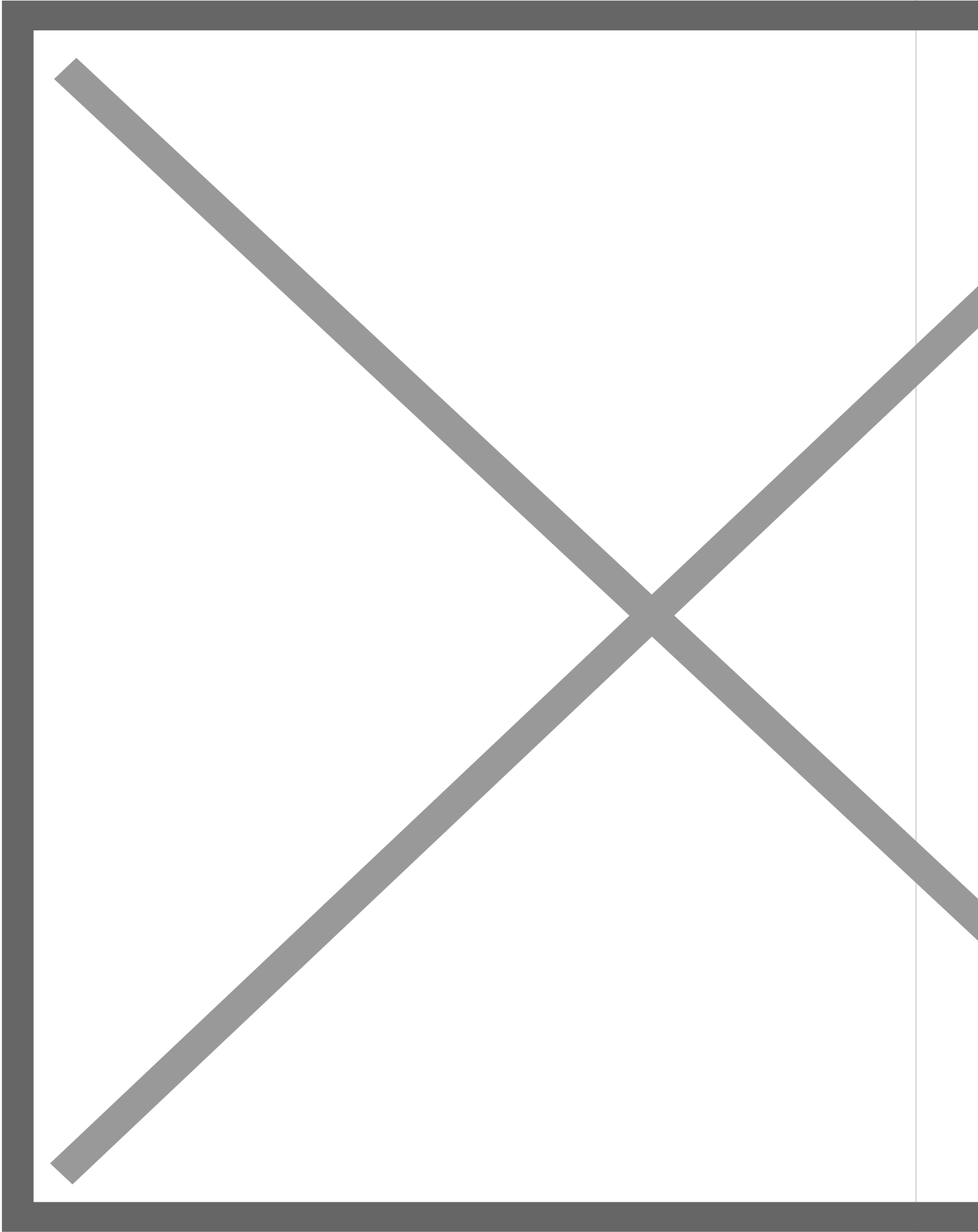
In this way, media analysts say, the deception of the majority of the American public has been completely achieved and there has been no progress since the times when by similar propaganda methods they turned the majority of the population for military aggressions in the West Asia region.

Other US media that resorted to the same distortions by describing Israeli aggression as "retaliatory" are the news agency Associated Press (AP), National Public Radio (NPR), the state propaganda broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), news websites Al-Monitor and Axios, etc.

Among the international media, the same terminology in the headlines was also used by the French pan-European television network EuroNews, the newspaper Le Monde, the British television news channel Sky News, the Saudi television network Al Arabiya, Emirati news website The National, and of course, the Israeli media.

Congruently, the headline of the five mentioned major American television networks for the Iranian retaliatory attack from the beginning of the month was again almost uniform, "Iran launches missile attack on Israel," without mentioning that it was retaliatory in nature.

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These identical headlines with unanimous manipulation of the context are by no means a coincidence, according to media analysts, but a reflection of centralized propaganda emanating from the top of the American regime and projected further onto the media and client states.

Such statements and the aforementioned media headlines are the result of unquestioningly following the official American narrative that the Israeli regime is a "victim" and that their aggressions on all surrounding countries are "the right of self-defense."

Social media users took to X, formerly Twitter, to call out the hypocrisy of Western media outlets. "This is ridiculous pro-Israel propaganda in the media. Israel's attack on Iran was not "retaliatory"; Iran's response to Israel was retaliatory," wrote journalist Ben Norton.

"Israel started this by first bombing Iran's consulate in Syria, then launching an attack inside Tehran, then killing an IRGC general."

Peter Daou, a political analyst, said these distortions are how the propaganda works.

"You'll notice mainstream US media outlets using the word "retaliatory" in describing Israel's attack on Iran. That's how state propaganda works," he wrote.

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