

Military Escalation in the Middle East: Is Israel Planning a Multi-Front War against Its Arab Neighbors?

Top US and Israeli Military Officials Meet Unannounced in Southern Israel

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If you watch the US mainstream media's 24 hour news coverage on recent events around the world no matter what time of the day it is, Covid-19 and China dominate the headlines while ignoring recent escalations in the Middle East involving Israel and its Arab neighbors as they come closer to another war in an already devastated region.

The Times of Israel reported that the Israeli government

“sent a message to Hezbollah warning the Lebanese terror group against any retaliatory action in response to the killing of one of the organization’s fighters in an airstrike in Syria on Monday night, which was attributed to Israel.”

According to various reports, Israel has killed one of Hezbollah’s fighters Ali Kamel Mohsen Jawad in another cross-border attack in Syria last week and now fears that Hezbollah will retaliate, but Israel’s military and intelligence community has issued a statement aimed at Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria warning them not to retaliate considering that Israel would most likely launch a multi-front attack on all entities involved. The report said that *“the airstrike attributed to Israel on Monday night hit weapons depots and military positions belonging to Syrian regime forces and Iran-backed militia fighters, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.”*

For the record, *The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights* (SOHR) is a UK government funded pro-opposition group to the Assad Government. In a statement by the Israeli army, *“The IDF holds the Syrian regime responsible for the fire against Israel earlier today”* and that *“the IDF will continue operating with determination and will respond to any violation of Israeli sovereignty.”* What was revealing was an unannounced meeting between the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley and Israel’s top military leaders including Defense Minister Benny Gantz:

US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, made an unannounced visit to Israel, meeting with Defense Minister Benny Gantz, IDF chief Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi and Mossad director Yossi Cohen, along with other top brass.

Israeli television commentators speculated on the possible significance of the visit, particularly regarding the threat posed by Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah. *“In light of a situational assessment in the IDF and in accordance*

with the Northern Command's defense plan, the IDF's deployment will change in both the military and civilian arena. with the goal of strengthening defenses along the northern border," the IDF said in the statement. In a tacit threat, the IDF preemptively warned Beirut that it sees the state of Lebanon as "responsible for all actions emanating from Lebanon"

Something big is about to take place as the IDF "*cleared some troops out of positions directly along the border, moving them deeper into Israel, so that they would not represent a clear target for Hezbollah, while still allowing them to defend the frontier*" according to the report.

However, Milley's visit at the Nevatim Air Base in southern Israel is significant according to another report by the *Times of Israel* '*US military chief visits Israel to talk regional threats, amid tensions in north*' stating that "*the visit came at a time of heightened tensions with Iran and its allies across the Middle East.*" General Milley was briefed by Israel's Intelligence agencies including Mossad and Israel's military intelligence unit, Aman on the threat they face from Iran and its allies. After the briefing, Gantz declared that "*the need to continue the pressure on Iran and its proxies that threaten regional and global stability*" signaling to it's neighboring enemies "not" to test Israel.

Lebanon has two major problems to deal with besides another catastrophic war, for starters it has a severe economic crisis with a collapsing currency.

The other problem is their newly discovered offshore oil and gas reserves which the US and Israel would love to get their hands on. Lebanon's offshore oil reserves is estimated to be at 865 million barrels and has gas reserves that range from 25 trillion cubic feet (*an estimate published in 2018 by the Chatham House which is part of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, a think tank based in London*) to 96 trillion cubic feet in 2013, an estimate claimed by the Lebanese Energy Minister at the time, Gebran Bassil. Either way, Lebanon hosts Hezbollah on its territory and has discovered an abundance of natural resources in its offshore territories, its a prime target for Israel and the US.

War Will Begin in the Middle East, Not Asia?

The recent incident involving Iran's Mahan air passenger plane traveling from Tehran to Beirut over Syria and a US F-14 fighter jet who apparently came dangerously close to the plane according to Iranian media is a sign of aggression that sends a message to Iran and its allies including Hezbollah that the US and Israel is prepared for war. Israel does not want Washington to focus on China since the upcoming US elections are months away and Israel is not sure what is going to happen come this November with Trump and his pro-Israel administration. Israel cannot afford to have Washington start a new war with China so for the time being tensions between the US and China will lead to a new Cold War 2.0.

The Middle East is an important region that remains a strategic part of the world's economy with its valuable natural resources, a fact too important to ignore for western Big Oil interests and Israel. The meeting between US and Israeli military officials is significant and should be taken seriously, but the world is consumed with news on Covid-19 and China. Another Middle East war can happen either before or after the November elections and that depends on how desperate Israel becomes. Israel can pull Washington's strings and ignite a war between the US and Iran before the situation intensifies in the South China Sea.

While the world is occupied by a virus and the tensions in the South China Sea continue between the US and China and an upcoming Presidential election, a new conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors is a real possibility, making it one of the most dangerous periods in human history.

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