

Israel Plans to Launch a Surprise War against Lebanon

Hezbollah Leader: "The Possibility of a War with Israel Is Very High this Summer and I May No Longer be with You"

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Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah held a private meeting this week with his top military commanders in which he warned them to prepare for a hot Summer because Israel plans to launch a surprise war against Lebanon. Sayyed Nasrallah has asked his men to share the reality of the situation and the possibility of war when briefing their men, families and people in the villages and cities in which Hezbollah operates.

He also prepared them for the likelihood of his assassination and the killing of Hezbollah's first line of command in the event of such a war and that they will have to run the war on their own, as they were trained for.

"I may not remain among you for very long; it is possible that the entire first level of leadership could be killed, including myself. Israel may succeed in assassinating many leaders and commanders. The death of some key personalities will not be the end of Hezbollah, because the party doesn't rely merely on individuals but rather on the entire society that is an essential part of its existence", said Sayyed Nasrallah to the gathering.

He added that

"measures and procedures have already been taken to be ready even if this extreme case (the killing of top leaders including Sayyed Nasrallah himself) happens."

The team protecting the leader of Hezbollah imposes tight security procedures on any visitor, regardless of rank or function. No mobile phones or personal rings or belongings are allowed; they must be removed before reaching the meeting place. Commanders gather in different locations and are transported in black curtained buses, in small number, for security reasons. At the end of the meeting, his personal security team leaves the place with Sayyed Nasrallah first and the gathering leaves afterwards, driven back to their desired destination.

"There are strong indications that this war will take everybody by surprise, like the 2006 war. Nevertheless, (the Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin) Netanyahu is preparing himself, unlike (the former PM Ehud) Olmert who was hesitant, when the unprepared Israeli political decision was caught out in July (2006). Israel

can surprise us all like it did in Gaza in 2008 with the objective of removing the threat on its borders once and for all. This is what our people (Hezbollah's allies) should know, and they should from now on be prepared for the worst-case scenario", Sayyed Nasrallah said.



Hezbollah believes Netanyahu has a unique opportunity to attack Hezbollah after forming his government, because Israel may not again enjoy a president in Washington like Trump who offers him (Netanyahu) unlimited support.

Hezbollah estimates that, in case of war, Israel will [dislodge](#) and [relocate](#) all Israeli settlements and villages bordering Lebanon from Naqoura to the Shebaa Farms. Israel would do this to prevent Hezbollah from crossing the borders and taking Israeli hostages. In this case, Hezbollah believes Israel would allow the militants to move in and encircle them from behind. This is called a mobile defensive strategy, with the aim of destroying the attacking forces.

"This is the first time Sayyed Nasrallah has offered such a bleak perspective, raising the chances of war with Israel from 50/50 to 70/30", said a knowledgeable source.

No one within the Hezbollah leadership knows exactly when and how hard the next war with Israel will be. The first expectation is simple: Israel is expected to destroy between 1000 and 2000 objectives in the first days of the war. The Israeli military command believes it is possible to eliminate the threat from Hezbollah, Sayyed Nasrallah believes.

There is no doubt that Israel will start a war immediately if Sayyed Nasrallah is located. Domestic opinion in Israel would likely be able to digest a war for this price regardless of Hezbollah's deadly retaliation.

Sayyed Nasrallah's pessimistic expectation comes as a warning for his commanders to take

all precautions and stay on alert for a sudden war, and to inform the people they are living with. He believes the Israelis, the USA, the British and many Arab states could all participate in the forthcoming war, which gives an indication of how destructive the next round is expected to be.

Moreover, Lebanon is going through a grave economic crisis in which the population can hardly afford a devastating war. The Middle East is entering a new configuration, with Israel expanding its relationship with Arab countries and certain to benefit from their financial and intelligence support in the case of war against Iran's partners in Lebanon.

As far as Hezbollah is concerned, its arsenal seems sufficient. Its precious missiles are enough to sustain a long war against Israel with hundreds of rockets and missiles launched daily. Hezbollah has made sure no missiles are located next to civilian facilities to avoid casualties and financial losses. Sources believe the underground work in the south of Lebanon has become like the tunnels under Paris, similar to Gruyere cheese. Financially, Hezbollah is no longer in need of a high budget since its presence on the front line in Syria is significantly reduced.



For these reasons, would Israel tolerate the presence of a highly trained, organised and irregular army on its borders when the Prime Minister Netanyahu has changed his military strategy?

Sayyed Nasrallah believes Netanyahu is no longer following David Ben Gurion's policy of being content to move the battle into the enemy's territory. He is taking the initiative to eliminate threats anywhere in the region. Under Netanyahu, the Israeli Air Force bombed Iraq (Hashd al-Shaabi Iraqi security forces) on the borders with Syria. Every time he perceived the presence of a sophisticated arms shipment he bombs it immediately regardless of the consequences. He has destroyed warehouses and arms manufacturers in Syria to cripple the Syrian army. Not only that, Netanyahu is now living in a world where the Arab armies are absent or destroyed: they represent no danger to the existence of Israel. For Israel, the only remaining threat is Hezbollah. Why would Netanyahu put up with such a menace on his borders?



Russia, a superpower present in Syria and looking to gain a foothold in Lebanon, is not expected to react against Israel on the ground. Maybe at the UN, yes. But it is to the advantage of Russia to see Syria weaker and not dependant on a strong ally like Hezbollah. Russia can make a deal with the US over Syria - once Hezbollah is eliminated or weakened enough - to remove President Assad from power in exchange for regaining control of Idlib and re-taking the North-East currently under US occupation. Washington would be thrilled with such an option and Trump would be happy with a similar outcome ending the presence of his forces in Syria.

But why this sudden pessimism and increase likelihood of war in Lebanon?

Hezbollah is watching the movements of the US Air Force and Navy in the region, the behaviour of Netanyahu with Gaza (giving the Palestinians what they want to keep them - with Egypt as a guarantor - quiet in case of war against Hezbollah), the US's unlimited support presenting a unique opportunity for Israel to take what it wants, Arab support for Netanyahu, the classification of Hezbollah as a terrorist country by more countries, the repeated warnings of the US establishment to Lebanon against embracing Hezbollah, the enmity against Iran by the Arab states and the tightening of sanctions on the Levants, the "Deal of the Century" scheduled for this summer and the extreme right-wing victory in Israel.



But how will Hezbollah and Iran react? Both are on the defensive and are not expected to take the initiative and attack first. Iran may develop its nuclear capability and surprise the world with an ultimate step to turn the tables and stop the war. But Hezbollah is not going to sit and watch. Measures are being taken to counter Israel's bank of objectives. Hundreds of locations have been emptied and abandoned around the country. Its military leadership has

been distributed and delegated and reserves have been prepared for the worse-case scenario.

Lebanon may not be far at all from paying the price. In 2008, Hezbollah occupied the capital Beirut when the government wanted to disrupt its communication system. It can do much more if there is a danger to its entire existence.

This is the pessimistic view that Hezbollah's commanders are preparing for: they are preparing for the worst. It could well be that Israel is not preparing a military war and is happy to see the US working on its behalf- through economic sanctions on Lebanon, Syria and Iran. But the summer is not far away, a perfect time for Israel to start a war while the sky is clear. Will the Lebanese be able to enjoy a peaceful summer this year or should they instead be preparing to become refugees?

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