

Israeli Bombings could lead to Escalation of Middle East War

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Following the bombings of Beirut by Israel, there is a danger that the US sponsored Middle East war, which is at present characterized by three distinct war theaters (Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq) will escalate and extend to the entire Middle East - Central Asian region.

The bombings of Lebanon are part of a carefully planned military agenda. They are not spontaneous acts of reprisal by Israel. They are acts of provocation.

The attacks could indeed be used as a pretext to trigger a much broader military operation, which is already in the active planning stage. In all likelihood, the bombings were conducted with Washington's approval.

The timing of these bombings coincides with the showdown with Iran regarding its alleged nuclear weapons' program. They should be viewed and analyzed in relation to US-Israeli geopolitical and strategic interests in the broader region.

The Beirut bombings should also be understood in relation to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, which has opened up a new space, for the deployment of Israeli forces.

Since 2004, the US, Israel and Turkey have formulated concrete war plans involving air raids on Iran's nuclear sites. Israel is slated to play a direct role in the US sponsored military operation against Iran, which is also the object of consultations at the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg on July 15-17.

Since late 2004, Israel has been stockpiling US made weapons systems in anticipation of an attack on Iran. This stockpiling, which is financed by US military aid was largely completed in June 2005. Israel has taken delivery from the US of several thousand "smart air launched weapons" including some 500 'bunker-buster' bombs, which can also be used to deliver tactical nuclear bombs. US tactical nuclear weapons have been deployed by the US and several of its allies and could be used against Iran. Israel's thermonuclear missiles are pointed at Tehran.

The participation of Turkey in the US-Israeli military operation is also a factor, following a 2004 agreement reached between Ankara and Tel Aviv.

Extension of the War

Tehran has confirmed that it will retaliate if attacked, in the form of ballistic missile strikes

directed against Israel . These attacks, could also target US military facilities in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, which would immediately lead us into a scenario of military escalation and all out war.

G8

On the agenda of the G8 is a draft UN Security Council resolution pertaining to Iran's alleged (nonexistent) nuclear weapons program, which, according to news reports, has been tacitly approved by Russia and China . This resolution, if adopted, could open the way for punitive bombings on Iran, with the full support of America's European allies.

Israel is now part of the Anglo-American military coalition . If these bombing raids were to be carried out, with the active participation of Israel, both Lebanon and Syria would become part of an extensive war zone.

The entire region would flare up

It is therefore essential that citizens' movements around the world act consistently to confront their respective governments and reverse and dismantle this military agenda which threatens the future of humanity.

Iranian president says Israeli attack on Syria to meet "strong response"

Text of report by Iranian radio on 14 July

In a telephone conversation last night, the Iranian and Syrian presidents condemned the Zionist regime's attacks on Lebanon and Gaza. They called on the Islamic nations to show their support for the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

Mr [Mahmud] Ahmadinezhad expressed grave concerns over the Zionist military's attacks on Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. He described the aggressions as the sign of weakness on the part the illegitimate regime. He said despite what the Zionist officials may think, such actions cannot save the regime.

Commenting on the recent Israeli threats against Syria, the president said that the regime's ever increasing aggressive measures would be interpreted as an attack on the whole of the Islamic world, adding that it would meet with a strong response.

For his turn, the Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, said that by attacking Gaza, the Zionist regime had broken the one-year long ceasefire, and had created a new crisis. He added that the courageous, timely and decisive response by the Hezbollah had surprised and angered the leaders of the regime. Pointing out that many popular groups from various Islamic countries had expressed their willingness to fight the occupiers in the troubled areas, Mr Asad said that Israel would face a fierce response should it decide to commit another mistake and attack Syria. He added that Syria was not afraid of any threats.

Source: Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, in Persian 0430 gmt 14 Jul 06

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