The March to War: Israel Prepares for War against Lebanon and Syria

By Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya
Global Research, April 19, 2008
18 April 2008

Region: Middle East & North Africa
Theme: US NATO War Agenda
In-depth Report: IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?,
PALESTINE, THE WAR ON LEBANON

By the start of 2007, reports about major upgrades to the Syrian military, including advances in missile technology, with Iranian help were widespread in Israel. [1] The impression of an imminent war existed across much of the Middle East. Syria, Hezbollah, and Iran were reported in Israel to be preparing for a war to spark in the Levant. [2]

It was also claimed in Israel that Damascus had sent secret messages to Tel Aviv that should Israel continue to reject Syria's peace overtures, a war would breakout in the Golan Heights and that Syrian reservists were forbidden from leaving Syria because of the possibility of combat. [3]

In June, 2007, an inner circle of the Israeli government that would form a "war cabinet" in a Middle Eastern war scenario was categorically informed that a war with Syria would absolutely involve Iranian military intervention. [4]

It is now 2008 and the spectre of war has remerged in the Middle East. Syrian President Basher Al-Assad revealed that his country is uneasy and prepared for the worst once again. Despite Tehran's position that the U.S. would not dare launch a war against Iran, the Iranian military is on standby. The Lebanese military and Hezbollah have also been placed on alert.

"While war is not a preferable option, if Israel declares war on Syria and Lebanon or if America declares war on Iran, Syria would be prepared," the Syrian President told a gathering of Arab intellectuals according to *Al-Akhbar*, a Lebanese newspaper, on April 16, 2008. [5] "We should analyze the situation from the perspective of American interests, because the last war in Lebanon has shown that at some point Israel wanted to stop the fighting, but was forced by the [Bush Jr. Administration] to pursue it further," Basher Al-Assad continued. [6] Thus the threat of war lives on in the Middle East in 2008…

"Miscalculations" in the Levant: Setting the Stage for War?

Hereto, Tel Aviv has been deliberately promoting tensions with Syria and Lebanon. In 2007, Major-General Moshe Kaplinsky, the former deputy chief of staff for the Israeli military, stated during a press briefing that war between Syria and Israel was unlikely as an answer to growing rumours of war that started since late-2006 and the commencement of 2007. The Israeli flag officer however did not rule out an eventual Israeli-Syrian conflict. Major-General Kaplinsky along with many other Israeli commanders and officials repeatedly stressed that a "miscalculation on the border" could spark a conflict between Syria and Israel sometime in the future. [7]

| 1

Not long after the 2006 Israeli defeat in Lebanon, Tel Aviv started crafting the "justifications" for more wars in its surrounding neighbourhood, the Levant. [8] The Israeli definitions of "miscalculation" have been extremely vague and ominous.

Tel Aviv has been involved in the process of creating a military carte blanche, allowing for "flexibility" in its regional approach towards Lebanon and Syria.

"Miscalculations" in the eyes of Tel Aviv range from the domestic affairs of the Lebanese and the events in the occupied Palestinian Territories to the most audacious and bellicose of definitions, such as the reaction of the Syrians to Israeli hostilities.

The secretive air assault, later revealed by the codename Operation Orchard, made by the 69th Squadron of the Israeli Air Force (IAF) against an unheard of facility in Deir ez-Zoir Governorate of Syria on September 6, 2007 could have become a "miscalculation" on the part of Syria had it responded to Israeli provocations.

The Israeli definition of a "miscalculation" also means any arbitrary fire into Israel. *The Jerusalem Post* defined a "miscalculation" that could spark a war with Syria as an incident "along the border, in the form of a terrorist attack that escalates into a larger conflict." [9] Such an incident could easily be sparked through conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

A false flag operation could also bring such an incident about. On July 18, 2007 there was rocket fire from South Lebanon into Israel by an unknown group, something that could have been used as a pretext for war. In Syria, Lebanon, and the Arab World the incident was believed to be the work of the Israelis and their allies in an effort to justify a future war.

Tel Aviv's Orwellian talk of Peace

In May, 2008 the head of the Mossad, the intelligence service of Israeli, said that talks of peace with Syria would lead to war. [10] *Le Nouvel Observateur* reported in July 2007 that the Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, ruled out the resumption of peace talks with Syria while stressing that she believed Damascus posed a problem that must be tackled on a regional scale. [11] When asked about the prospects of peace with Syria, Tzipi Livni responded, "Absolutely not. Syria is pursuing the dangerous game it plays in the region [Middle East]," and added that Syria "remains a threat" to Israel. [12] These statements reveal the conduct of Tel Aviv and its hidden agenda. Within the context of a public declaration of peace during the summer of 2007, they also reveal Tel Aviv's duplicity.

While Tzipi Livni stated that there would be no peace between Israel and Syria, Ehud Olmert stated in a televised interview with the Al-Arabiya News Channel, that he personally wanted peace with Syria. Prime Minister Olmert addressed President Basher Al-Assad, the head of Syria, directly, saying "you know that I am ready for direct talks with you" and added that "I am ready to sit with you and talk about peace, not war." Several days later, Ehud Olmert also stated in Orwellian fashion that he wanted peace with the Syrians, but that peace did not equate to immediate peace negotiations between Syria and Israel and could mean a continuation of the "status quo."

Olmert's statement is doublespeak. Hereto, according to the Israelis, the threat of war exists as a result of the status quo between Syria and Israel. This statement is very important to keep in mind because it indicates that Israel did not want to return the Golan Heights, but wanted something else from Syria as the condition of peace. This is where Tehran comes

into the picture.

Israeli officials were further incriminated by the fact that in 2007 Prime Minister Olmert also said he was not concerned by an imminent war with Syria, but that he was unhappy with the public discussion about peace between Syria and Israel. One should question the logic behind Ehud Olmert's "irritation" regarding public overtures of peace between Syria and Israel. [13] *Realpolitik* is definitely being played by Israel in regards to Damascus in a consorted effort to de-link Syria from Iran and its other allies. In this regard, Damascus publicly insisted that there be no secret talks between Syrian and Israeli officials as to the conditions for peace. [14] The rationale for the Syrian insistence on transparency was to deprive Israel of any means to covertly try to divide Syria from its Middle Eastern allies by generating suspicions of betrayal.

The international press extensively reported Ehud Olmert's statements in 2007 about wanting peace with the Syrians. Israeli officials also repeatedly claimed that the Syrians were the ones rejecting peace. [15] These claims are made despite the fact that all public records show exactly the opposite. Syria's leadership have been calling for peace negotiations between Israel and Syria since the premierships of Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon. Israeli claims of pursing peace for the most part have been part of an international public relations campaign attempting to portray the aggressor as the victim. In the case of Syria peace means that Tel Aviv will not go to war with Damascus if it distances itself from Tehran.

De-linking Syria from Iran: Israel's Real Condition for Peace with Syria

The return of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, which was formerly called the "Syrian Heights" in Israel, to Syria was always the recognized condition for establishing Israeli-Syrian peace.

Dr. Alon Liel, a former director-general within the Israeli foreign affairs ministry and a former Israeli ambassador to South Africa, who was heavily involved with previous Israeli negotiations with Syria, has indicated the real issue holding Tel Aviv from accepting peace. Dr. Alon Liel went on record: he confirmed that 85% of negotiations between Syria and Israel were agreed upon by both Damascus and Tel Aviv. [16] The major issues for establishing peace between Damascus and Tel Aviv were all resolved in 2000; water rights for Israel from Syrian territory, guaranteed Israeli access to the Golan Heights upon its return to Syria, and security guarantees between both parties. [17]

Peace, in the sense of an agreement by both sides, however was unachievable in 1993, 1995, 1996, and 2000 due to Tel Aviv's internal politics. The situation became more so after 2001 with the start of an aggressive U.S. policy in the Middle East. "Israel isn't going to hand over [or return] the Golan [Heights] to an ally of Iran," Alon Liel has insisted as being the problem in regards to peace between both sides. [18]

Tel Aviv has imposed broader demands on Syria as the price of peace. It is in the strategic interests of the U.S. and Israel to isolate Iran, even at the cost of peace with Syria. [19] In this regard, Syrian internal affairs and foreign relations are decisive factors for Israel in regards to negotiations.

Syria and Iran are part of a strategic alliance in the Middle East resisting the interests of America, Britain, Israel, France, and Germany. Other Middle Eastern players resisting the

same foreign interests are additionally allied or associated with Syria and Iran within one tangible bloc, the Resistance Bloc. [20] It is in this context that one understands Israel is not pursuing peace with Syria, but is threatening the Syrians with war if they do not abandon Iran and their allies.

On the eve of major Israeli exercises in which Israel and Syria fought a fictitious war, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Haim Ramon, stated on a radio interview that Syrian anxiety had no basis and that Israel was pursing peace with Damascus, but added "unfortunately Syria is stuck deep in the evil axis of connections with [Hezbollah]." [21] If this is not indicative enough, Haim Ramon also concluded that Damascus has made a strategic choice to preserve its alliance with Iran rather than "pursue peace," which to Tel Aviv would mean a termination of Syrian-Iranian ties. Furthermore, on March 23, 2003 Shimon Peres stated that "peace talks with Syria cannot begin while it keeps supplying Lebanon with weapons." [22] This was a reference to the important role of Damascus as a middle man between Tehran and the Levant.

Neutralizing Syria: Prerequisite for Neutralizing Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran

Damascus is pivotal to the framework of resistance in the Middle East against Israeli, Anglo-American, and Franco-German interests. Syria acts as a bridge between Iran and Iraq at one end of the Middle East and the Levant on the other. Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Iraq, and Iran are all tied together through Syria. [23]

In this regard, Damascus serves as the central link that holds together the forces resisting a new regional order in the Middle East, also known as the "Project for the New Middle East."

What the Israelis have been trying to do, in coordination with the U.S., Britain, France, and Germany is to remove Syria from these alliances and thus splinter or break the link between Iran and the Levant. The main goal is to pressure Syria into making a peaceful political surrender (just as Libya did to Britain and the U.S. in 2003), and to distance itself from Iran and the Arab resistance within Palestine and Lebanon to Israel.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister, hinted in October 2007 that if Syria would not dissociate itself peacefully from Iran, a military solution was inevitable: "Driving a wedge between Syria and Iran, drying up [Hezbollah] by cutting its lines of arms supply, allowing the vital task of stabilizing Lebanon to succeed [meaning empowering client forces in Beirut], and forestalling what now looks as a most realistic scenario of a triple front war of Israel against Syria, Hamas and [Hezbollah] are the strategic fruits concomitant to a Syrian-Israeli peace." [24]

Removing Syria from the "Resistance Bloc" is a prerequisite for Israel, America, and their partners for tackling Iran. With Syria removed from Iran's influence, the entire Levant could be controlled and the resistance in the Palestinian Territories and Lebanon under such players as Hamas and Hezbollah could be significantly weakened. Under such a framework, the Levant could be integrated into the economic order of the so-called "Western Powers" under the Washington Consensus and within the Mediterranean Union: this is where Israeli, Anglo-American, and France-German interests in the Middle East merge.

In 2006, the ultimate objective of the Israeli attack on Lebanon was to remove Syria from its alliance with Iran and insert Damascus within the orbit of a new regional order. With this understanding in mind, the 2006 Israeli attacks on Lebanon were revealed to have been

planned to also target Syria.[25]

War however became a far costlier option for America, Britain, Israel, and their partners and that is why political channels were pursued with Damascus after the 2006 defeat of Tel Aviv in Lebanon. *Haaretz* released a revealing report in August, 2007 about the true nature of the diplomatic mission of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, to Damascus. The intentions of her visit to Damascus were stated to help establish peace between Syria and Israel and better ties with America, but the conditions were not fully disclosed.

Syria was being courted to abandon Iran, just as Italy was courted to abandon Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire by London and Paris before the First World War: "The chairman of the [U.S.] House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Tom Lantos, who accompanied Pelosi, said Assad should be given a final opportunity to disengage from the 'axis of evil.' According to Lantos, in a few years, Sunni Muslims and not Iran under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will be in control in the region, and it is to the advantage of Damascus to know which side to be on." [26]

For Tel Aviv and its partners, if the goal of removing Damascus from its alliance with Tehran can not be achieved through diplomatic dialogue, economics, threats, or pressure then the original course of action, warfare, within a major three-front confrontation is the other alternative against Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories. These hostilities would also be linked to confrontation with the Iranians and could result in a broader conflict in the Middle East and Central Asia. Ehud Olmert declared "I believe that we can expect a calm summer, a calm autumn and a calm winter [which runs from November, 2007 to March, 2008]," when tensions were rising between Syria and Israel in 2007. [27] It is worth noting that tensions began to rise again in the Levant after Olmert's timeframe of calm.

The threats of war in 2007 were partly scare tactics to pressure Syria into yielding and conceding to the geo-strategic interests of America, Britain, Israel, France, and Germany. [28] Up to now, all efforts to remove the Syrians from their alliances have failed.

Clearly, Israel has been preparing for war on a broader regional level. Simultaneously, Tel Aviv has been preparing to shift blame for any possible outbreak of a regional war on the Syrians, the Lebanese, the Palestinians, even the Russians, and foremost on the Iranians.

Operation Orchard: Fabricating a Syria-Iran-North Korea Nuclear Axis

On September 6, 2007 Israeli warplanes violated Syrian airspace and mysteriously attacked an unheard of facility. The Syrian military reported that Israeli aircraft illegally entered Syrian airspace from over the Mediterranean Sea and headed towards northeastern Syria. "Air defense units confronted [the Israeli warplanes] and forced them to leave [Syria] after they drooped [*sic*; dropped] some ammunition in deserted areas without causing any human or material damage," the Syrian military initially claimed. [29] The Syrians immediately also stated that Israel was trying to create pretexts for another war in the Middle East. [30] The U.S. government also entered the commotion by claiming that the White House was aware of the operation and the Pentagon had assisted the Israelis. The White House also claimed that the Israelis had destroyed a facility that was linked to a clandestine nuclear program in Syria. Damascus also maintained that the attacks and the claims about a secretive nuclear program were preludes to U.S. involvement in an Israeli war against Syria. [31]

In this context, Syria restrained itself, fearing that Tel Aviv wanted to entice Damascus into a war. Professor Eyal Zisser, the director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, noted "Any misunderstanding could lead to conflagration. However, the Syrian announcement was surprising in its moderation." [32] The operation was also reported as being a possible test-run for an Israeli attack on Iran. The U.S. and Israel also asserted that the Russian-made air defence systems in Syria did not function. [33] The attacks could have also been a form of pressure to force the Syrians to go to the Annapolis Conference to detect if a war was intended against their country.

The attack was described as an Israeli success by the Bush Jr. Administration and the mainstream media. A propaganda campaign was launched: Through media disinformation and political statements, efforts were placed on establishing the threat of a "Syria-Iran-North Korea nuclear proliferation axis." [34]

The alleged nuclear facility was a Syrian project aided by North Korea and Iran according to the U.S. and Israeli governments. Trying to pin Syria for having weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs is not a fresh approach. In fact just barely a month after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq the U.S. and Britain actively started trying to portray Syria in an Iraq-like manner claiming that Damascus also had hidden weapons of mass destruction (WMD) stockpiles.

In early-April, 2008 it became clear that Israel and the U.S. had been planning on releasing details about Operation Orchard and the alleged nuclear facility attacked by Israel in Syria to further demonize Damascus and to further construct a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) link between Syria, North Korea, and Iran. [35] *The Jerusalem Post* subsequently reported on April 14, 2008 that Israeli experts suggested that the full disclosure about an Israeli attack in 2007 in the U.S. Congress could even "embarrass" the Syrians to the point of militarily responding against Israel. [36]

The Assassination of Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus: Antecedent to War?

On February 12, 2008 Imad Fayez Mughniyeh, a top Hezbollah security official, was assassinated in Damascus by means of a remote detonated car bomb. The intelligence services of America, Israel, Britain, France, Germany, Jordon, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia were all suspected of some form of involvement. According to *The Daily Star*, an English-language newspaper based in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia had helped Israel in assassinating Imad Mughniyeh and a Saudi military attaché was arrested in Damascus due to links to a Syrian collaborator in the assassination. [37]

More than a month following the Mughniyeh assassination, U.S. Vice-President Cheney made a regional tour of the Middle East. "We must not, and will not, ignore the darkening shadows of the situations in Gaza, in Lebanon, in Syria and in Iran and the forces there that are working to derail the hopes of the world," Vice-President Cheney vowed dramatically in a insinuation that conflict was brewing and the U.S. was prepared to aid Israel. [38]

It did not take long for pundits to point toward Mughniyeh's murder as being used in a ploy to launch war in the Middle East. Israel's intelligence and information apparatus started exerting themselves in a misinformation campaign to create doubts about the murder of Imad Mughniyeh. Tel Aviv's aims were to shift the blame on the Syrians in a psychological operation (PSYOP) intended to inseminate doubts and mistrust between Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran, in order to strain their alliance and weaken the Resistance Bloc.

According to Israel's Channel 10, sometime after the assassination of Mughniyeh, Tel Aviv sent Hezbollah a letter through a third party threatening another disproportionate war against Lebanon. Tel Aviv also wasted no time in threatening Syria if Hezbollah launched retaliatory attacks on Israel. [39] In this context, *Reuters* also reported that an unnamed senior Israeli official had spelled out conflict with the Syrians as a reprisal for hostile Lebanese and Palestinian actions against Israel. [40] The root of these so-called hostile actions by Lebanese and Palestinian groups are of a retaliatory nature to hostile actions initiated by Tel Aviv. In many cases, these attacks against Israel are invited by Tel Aviv as a means to create the justifications of postponing peace, annexing territory, and launching war.

In mid-April, 2008, Israeli jets and helicopters created insecurity among residents of Haifa when they scrambled across Israel to intercept an unidentified light plane entering Israeli airspace. [41] Tel Aviv's security and military forces have been on high alert since the Mughniyeh Assassination. [42] On March 18, 2008 an Israeli warship was also dispatched into Lebanese waters, where it was intercepted by an Italian warship, in a move that many in Lebanon saw as a taunt by Israel.

Israel has advertised very publicly that it expects retaliation from Hezbollah. [43] This "retaliation" could also give Israel an excuse for launching another war. The Israeli government also used the opportunity to raise domestic tensions amongst its own citizens. Israeli officials also warned about possible attacks from across the Lebanese border by Iranian-manufactured "explosive-packed drones" or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) sent by Hezbollah. [44]

Creating Pretexts for War in Lebanon

Israel has overtly claimed, as part of a concerted public relations campaign, that Hezbollah increased the range of its rocket arsenal. [45] The public advertisement of the increase in the rocket range of Hezbollah by Tel Aviv stands outside the standardized protocol of Israeli officials who consistently work domestically to keep public confidence in the strength of the Israeli military and security apparatus. Although there was a genuine probability of truth to the Israeli statements, the main objective behind their very publicly advertised declarations were to further build excuses for further Israeli aggression, such as pre-emptive strikes, in Lebanon or the so-called Israeli "Northern Front" and regionally in the Middle East.

In reality, Hezbollah's rocket range was probably upgraded or already capable of hitting deep into Israeli territory before Tel Aviv decided to divulge its knowledge. Hezbollah had already threatened to strike Tel Aviv in 2006 if Beirut were to be attacked by Israeli bombs. The timing of the information by Israeli officials about Hezbollah's rocket range is linked to painting the picture of a growing threat amongst its own citizens and to gain their support for combat.

In the case of Hezbollah, like those of the Palestinian Resistance and Syria, the increased range of their projectiles have been attentively linked to Iran, itself the ultimate target. Starting in March, 2008 the mainstream media in Israel and worldwide reported that the Israeli government had warned that most of Israel, up to the city of Dimona in the Negev Desert, was within the striking range of Hezbollah from Lebanon. *Haaretz* correspondents in addition reported that "Hamas militants who recently returned to the Gaza Strip after training in Iran [held] a detailed plan for upgrading the capabilities of the rockets being developed in the [Gaza] Strip, according to senior Palestinian Authority sources." [46] As a

note, the Palestinian Authority sources being referred to are the unelected Fatah officials in the West Bank who themselves collaborate with Israel. These types of reports have also helped boost the case for war.

The basis for war against Lebanon is an intricate parcel of a broader conflict in the Middle East, which in turn is itself a component of an even larger conflict in Eurasia. The fact that various Palestinian resistance groups have trained in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran is also being used as a justification for war and as a means to tie all three republics closer together as a single enemy axis by Israel. Aside from those in the Palestinian Territories, in the event of a major war the Palestinian groups based in Lebanon and Syria have made it clear that they will fight alongside the Lebanese and Syrians. Palestinians in Egypt and Jordon have also elucidated towards such a course of action too.

With 2008 efforts to implicate Hezbollah in regards to attacks on American and British troops in Iraq have resurfaced. These reports were originally made by London in an effort to link Hezbollah to the roadside bombs in Basra at the start of the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq, but were dismissed. The main British objective of involving Hezbollah as an enemy in Iraq was the foreknowledge that Lebanon would be attacked by Israel in 2006.

On April 8, 2008 General David H. Petraeus, the commander of Coalition troops in Iraq, accused both Iran and Hezbollah of helping the Iraqi forces that attacked the "Green Zone" in Baghdad. [47] He testified to the U.S. Senate about Hezbollah's alleged involvement in killing American and Coalition troops: "Together with the Iraqi Security Forces, we have also focused on the Special Groups [meaning those forces fighting against American and Coalition forces]. These elements are funded, trained, armed, and directed by Iran's Qods [Jerusalem] Force, with help from Lebanese Hezbollah." [48] The allegations by General Petraeus were part of the conscious effort to justify a greater American role in the next conflict against the Lebanese.

The Mediterranean Front

It is clear to the Pentagon, NATO, and Tel Aviv that the Levant stands to ignite a Mediterranean battle-front in the event of a war against Iran. To this end, the marshaling of a relatively invisible NATO war fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean is rigidly tied to war plans against Tehran. [49] The naval build-ups in the Persian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean have been ongoing since 2001 with the strategic aim of preparing the logisitical framework for war against Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestinian resistance, Syria, and Iran.

Paris and Berlin have intense vested interest in the Anglo-American wars in the Middle East. As has been repeatedly uttered by French, German, and E.U. officials the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East are the "eastern borders of the European Union." [50] To this end Nicolas Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union is a declaration of these Franco-German interests that are very much tied to the wars in the Middle East and the establishment of a settlement between the Arabs and Israel in the Levant. [51]

The 2006 Israeli siege against Lebanon, with the active support of American military personnel and planners in Israel, was a phase of this military schedule as well as a dress rehearsal by both sides for a larger Middle Eastern war. Both sides were given the opportunity to re-evaluate their tactics and strategies for such an upcoming war, should it spark. History will see what comes to pass.

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is a writer and geopolitical analyst based in Ottawa who specializes on the Middle East and is currently Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization.

Also see: [The March to War: Syria Preparing for US-Israeli Attacks](#)

NOTES

[1] Ze'ev Schiff, Syria rearms, moves troops closer to Golan Heights border, *Haaretz*, [February 22, 2007](#); Ze'ev Schiff, Israel's message in talks with Gates: Syria is preparing for war, *Haaretz*, [April 22, 2007](#); Yitzhak Benhorin, Syria arming intensely, minister says, *[Yedioth Ahronoth](#)*, May 4, 2007.

[2] Herb Keion, 'Syria, Iran, Hizbullah planning war,' *The Jerusalem Post*, [June 6, 2007](#); Yakkov Katz, 'War with Syria this summer unlikely,' *The Jerusalem Post*, [July 11, 2007](#); Roee Nahmias, Syria's top general to pilots: Be prepared for war, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [October 23, 2007](#).

[3] Smadar Peri, Syria plans war of attrition in the Golan Heights, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [August 2, 2007](#); Aluf Been, IDF, government preparing for possible Syrian strike on Golan Heights, *Haaretz*, [April 2, 2007](#); Yakkov Katz, IDF prepares for Syrian attack on Golan, *The Jerusalem Post*, [April 27, 2007](#); Smadar Peri, Arab official: Syrian general mulling war with Israel, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [August 14, 2007](#).

[4] Ronn Sofer, Syria not planning offensive, security officials say, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [June 11, 2007](#).

[5] Roee Nahmias, Assad: US wants Israel to declare war on Syria, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [April 17, 2008](#); Assad: Syria is preparing for war, *The Jerusalem Post*, [April17, 2008](#); 'We are prepared for Israel war,' *Press TV*, [April 17, 2008](#).

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Amos Harel, IDF deputy chief: Summer war with Syria not likely, *Haaretz*, [July 11, 2007](#).

[8] The Levant in its cotemporary definition is a geographic sub-region of the Middle East that includes Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, Syria, and Jordon. The Turkish province of Hatay, where the city of Alexandretta (Iskenderon) is located, has traditionally been considered a part of the Levant along with small portions of Turkey. The exact boundaries of the Levant are abstract, but the categorization of Levantine countries, in the geographic sense of the word, is unambiguous. The Levant is roughly bordered by Iraq to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the west, the mountain range of the Taurus in the north, and Arabia to the south.

[9] Yakkov Katz, IDF wary of possible war with Syria, *The Jerusalem Post*, [July 11, 2007](#).

[10] Itamar Eichner, Talks with Syria could lead to war, says Mossad chief, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [May 14, 2007](#).

[11] Tzipi Livni, Tzipi Livni : «Nous allons aider Mahmoud Abbas...», interview by Henri Guirchoun, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, [July 12, 2007](#).

[12] *Ibid.*; Tzipi Livni: « Absolument pas. La Syrie poursuit le jeu dangereux qui est le sien dans la région. (…) et demeure une menace… »

[13] Hern Keinon, Olmert: Israel, Syria don't want war, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2007.

[14] Assad sets Golan pullout as condition for future talks, *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), July 18, 2007.

[15] Syria dismisses Olmert offer to hold peace talks, *The Jerusalem Post* and *Associated Press* (AP), July 10, 2007.

[16] Yaakov Lappin, Israel-Syria pact '85 percent done,' *Yedioth Ahronoth*, July 18, 2007.

[17] Adam Entous, Syria may be flexible on key Israeli demand: UN, *Reuters*, July 12, 2007.

[18] Lappin, Israel-Syria pact, *Op. cit.*

[19] Adam Entous, Israel says awaits clear Syrian message on Iran, *Reuters*, July 18, 2007.

[20] The Resistance Bloc is a group of players that can be categorized within one grouping for resisting foreign programs and interests in the Middle East. Iran, Syria, both the Lebanese Resistance and the Lebanese National Opposition, the Hamas-led Palestinian government in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Resistance, the Iraqi Resistance, and various elements of opposition in the Arab World all fall into this regional grouping opposed to Anglo-American, Franco-German, and Israeli interests.

[21] Deputy PM Ramon: 'Israel has no intention of attacking Syria,' *The Jerusalem Post*, April 3, 2008.

[22] Aviram Zino, Peres: Israel will not cede Golan Heights for Syria-controlled Lebanon, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 23, 2008.

[23] It is interesting to note that the outline of this bloc also falls within the perimeters of the so-called "Shia Crescent," an artificial and misleading concept about Shiite ascendancy in a crescent starting from Iran, going through Iraq and Syria, and ending in Lebanon and Palestine. This concept is a brethren-term of the very terminology that conceptualized the "Sunni Triangle" in Iraq, which did not exist until the campaign to occupy Iraq started. Both terms are psychological devices and concepts described as a means to re-categorize and divide the Middle East.

[24] Shlomo Ben-Ami, The way to Damascene conversion, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, October 21, 2007.

[25] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, The Premeditated Nature of the War on Lebanon: A Stage of the Broader Middle East Military Roadmap, C*entre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), September 10, 2007.

[26] Aluf Ben, Israel seeks to reassure Syria: No summer attack, *Haaretz*, April 3, 2007; it should also be noted that the grounds were paved for war against Berlin and Vienna in 1914 by London and Paris by first de-linking Rome from Germany and Austro-Hungary and this is precisely what Washington, D.C. and Tel Aviv have been trying to do in regards to Damascus and Tehran.

[27] Barak Ravid, Olmert: Israel, Syria have no interest in military conflict, *Haaretz*, [August 11, 2007](#).

[28] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, The March to War: Détente in the Middle East or "Calm before the Storm?" *Centre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), [July 12, 2007](#).

[29] Air Defense Units Confront Israeli Aircrafts over Syrian airspace forcing them to Leave, *Syrian Arab News Agency* (SANA), [September 6, 2007](#).

[30] Syria: Israel Is Spreading False Reports In Order To Justify War, *Reuters*, September 30, 2007

[31] Syrian paper warns nuclear rumors may be prelude to US attack, *Associated Press* (AP), [September 16, 2007](#).

[32] Alastair MacDonald, Syria-Israel bombing incident shrouded in mystery, *Reuters*, [September 7, 2007](#).

[33] Report: Russia sent technicians to Syria, *Jerusalem Post*, [October 2, 2007](#).

[34] Sarah Baxter *et al.*, Israelis 'blew apart Syrian nuclear cache,' *The Sunday Times* (U.K.), [September 16, 2007](#); Alexander Kogan, The secretive Syrian-N. Korean alliance, *The Jerusalem Post*, [September 18, 2007](#).

[35] Amos Harel and Barak Ravid, Israel, U.S. plan to release details on Syria attack, *Haaretz*, [April 9, 2008](#).

[36] Yakkov Katz and Herb Keinon, Status of Syria strike hearing unclear, *The Jerusalem Post*, [April 14, 2008](#).

[37] Riyadh accused of role in Mughniyeh assassination, *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), April 10, 2008.

[38] Cheney backs Israel over security, *British Broadcasting Corporation News* (BBC News), [March 23, 2008](#).

[39] 'Israel threatened to attack Damascus,' *The Jerusalem Post*, [March 15, 2008](#); Adam Entous and Daniel Williams, Israel secretly warned Syria about Hezbollah, ed. Dominic Evans, *Reuters*, [March 14, 2008](#); Jon Brain, Israel calms fears of Syria conflict, *British Broadcasting Corporation News* (BBC News), [April 3, 2008](#).

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Hanan Greenberg and Ahiya Raved, Light plane causes scare in north, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [April 12, 2008](#).

[42] Ron Ben-Yishai, Revenge for Mugniyah could ignite conflict in north, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, [April 3, 2008](#).

[43] Yoav Stern, Nasrallah: Mughniyah's blood will lead to elimination of Israel, *Haaretz*, [March 14, 2008](#); Police to beef up forces over Purim, fearing Hezbollah strike, *Associated Press* (AP), March 17, 2008; Avi Issacharooff *et al.*, Hezbollah deputy chief: We have proof Israel killed Mughniyah, *Haaretz*, [March 23, 2008](#); IDF chief: Army prepared for any scenario,

Yedioth Ahronoth, April 18, 2008.

[44] Yakkov Katz, 'Hizbullah may send bomb-laden UAVs,' *The Jerusalem Pos*t, April 6, 2008.

[45] Israel: Hezbollah increases rocket range, *Associated Press* (AP), March 27, 2008.

[46] Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel, Hamas gets Iranian plans for improved Qassams, *Haaretz*, March 31, 2008.

[47] Andrew Gray and David Morgan, U.S. sees Iran and Syria "Lebanon" gambit in Iraq, ed. Philip Barbara, *Reuters*, April 8, 2008.

[48] General David H. Petraeus, April 8, 2008 SFRC Testimony (Testimony, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., April 8, 2008).

[49] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, The March to War: Naval build-up in the Persian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean, *Centre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), October 1, 2006.

[50] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, The Mediterranean Union: Dividing the Middle East and North Africa, *Centre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), February 10, 2008.

[51] *Ibid.*; Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, The Mediterranean Union: NATO's Role in Conquering the Middle East and North Africa, *Centre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), February 18, 2008.

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

About the author:

An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of The Globalization of NATO (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.