

Undermining Israeli Deterrence: Hezbollah Is Preparing to Shoot Down a Drone. Netanyahu's "Election War"

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Hezbollah is preparing to down an Israeli drone in the coming days, after leaving time for Israeli politicians and media to increase their criticism and attacks on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accused of undermining Israel's vital deterrence strategy in force since 1955.

The Secretary General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, has decided to make his own contribution to the forthcoming Israeli elections, expected on September 18, by backing the failure of Netanyahu's candidacy. Hezbollah achieved the first part of its two-part plan by hitting a military vehicle last Sunday on the 3.8 km road between Yiron and Avivim. The attack caused the destruction of the Israeli vehicle and inflicted casualties among the five soldiers inside- notwithstanding the Israeli denial of casualties. The hit was filmed by Hezbollah's cameras and shows the firing of two anti-tank Kornet guided missiles.

The attack came as retaliation against Israel's violation of UN resolution [1701](#) which in its first article stipulates "the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations". Indeed, Israel sent two suicide drones last month to blow-up a Hezbollah military asset in a suburb of Beirut, after killing two Hezbollah members in a direct targeted killing in Syria. That triggered an overt threat by Sayyed Nasrallah to hit back, which gave Israel ample time to take counter-measures. Israel deserted its military positions all along more than 100 kilometers of the UN blue-line separating Lebanon and Israel, to the extent of 4 to 5 kilometers and more. This was interpreted as an admission of cowardice by the Israeli Army, shaking its reputation as the "[eighth](#) strongest army in the world." This hide and seek followed a televised threat by a "non-state actor". Hezbollah doesn't have tanks or jets in Lebanon but its guerrilla skills gained through decades of experience, in particular in the Syrian war, have transformed it into a an organised, strong, "non-regular" army.

Well-informed sources indicate that

"Israel deserted their military barracks and all positions along the Lebanese borders for fear of being bombed by Hezbollah's rockets, notably the Burkan (Volcano) that can carry over 1000 kg of explosive and cause a large number of casualties".

Sayyed Nasrallah is striking a painful chord by highlighting one of the most strategic foundations of the state of Israel, which the current Prime Minister has failed to uphold. It is one of the principles of Israel's existence to achieve military superiority, maintain

disproportionate military responses, impose escalation dominance and deterrence, and raise the “cost of Israeli blood” to a level untenable for any enemy population. These are the key [principles](#) introduced by Moshe Dayan and by the first prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, also [said](#):

“We should be prepared to go on the offensive with the aim of smashing Lebanon”.



This objective seems far-fetched today, due to Netanyahu’s blind personal ambition for re-election. The Israeli Prime Minister targeted Syria hundreds of times without achieving any strategic objectives. He did not manage to remove Iran from Syria; on the contrary, the Syrian government is more linked to Iran than ever. He didn’t achieve the destruction of Hezbollah’s military capabilities (as it happened, a couple of Kornet missiles were sufficient to shake Israel’s image, and a simple threat on a television forced the Israeli army to abandon defense of its borders). The former Israeli Chief of Staff General Rafael Eitan [said](#) once:

“When we have settled the land all the Arab will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged cockroaches in a bottle.”

It seems Hezbollah, unlike Syria and Iraq, has confounded Israel’s expectations and has stood up to this vision of the future in a robust manner.

Netanyahu went to Iraq to hit Iran’s allies but achieved nothing but blowing up a few among hundreds of warehouses, creating a clear and serious menace to US forces established in Iraq.

US President Donald Trump can do little now to save his close friend and advisor the Israeli Prime Minister.

The US can’t fight Netanyahu’s war of election for him, nor can it prevent Israel from

shaking under the blows of Hezbollah. Netanyahu walked on the edge of the abyss to boost his image but now he has faltered. Israel will remember not how he hit Syria and Iraq, but how its deterrence has been damaged and its reputation shaken by Netanyahu's ill-considered actions and responses.

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