

**A
CLOSER
LOOK**

ANALYZING THE NEWS
THAT MAKES A
DIFFERENCE

**How
Dangerous
Is Hezbollah
Now?**

**NASRALLAH SENDS
THREATS ISRAEL'S WAY**



When the head of a terrorist group pulls out a map during a broadcast, you know that he's never going to be showing the best places in the region to find a falafel. And indeed, during a recent media appearance by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, his brandishing of a map of Israel did not involve any food recommendations.

Instead, Nasrallah carefully pointed out the exact targets that he said Hezbollah would target if the conflict between the US and Iran went further. He told Al-Manar: "Iran is able to bombard Israel with ferocity and force. When the Americans understand that this war could wipe out Israel, they will reconsider."

At the same time, Nasrallah played down the idea that he wanted to attack Israel. He claimed that Israel's fear of Hezbollah would keep it from attacking, and he said that the Saudis and other Gulf states had no interest in inciting a war between the US and Iran.

It's clear, however, that Hezbollah is still trying as hard as possible to arm itself for a fight with Israel, and not just through the overland route through Syria, which Israel has disrupted numerous times. Israeli ambassador to the UN Danny Danon told the UN Security Council on Friday that Iran was sending missile technology and other armaments to Hezbollah through the Port of Beirut, using commercial companies as cover. He said that both sea and air routes into Beirut were being used. "The Port of Beirut has become the Port of Hezbollah," he said.

Nasrallah rejected the claim, stating that Danon had just made it in order to justify an Israeli takeover of the port during an invasion to come.

How dangerous is Hezbollah now? Does the use of the Port of Beirut mean that Israel's attempts to stop the arms flow from Tehran to Hezbollah has failed?



YORAM SCHWEITZER,
HEAD OF THE PROGRAM ON
TERRORISM AND LOW INTENSITY
CONFLICT AT INSS

PROF. EFRAIM INBAR,
PRESIDENT OF THE JERUSALEM
INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGY
AND SECURITY

“ In regard to the threats by Nasrallah in regard to the US and Iran: You have to first realize that Hezbollah is not an independent actor. It is fully subordinated to Iran. Iran will use its military capabilities whenever that serves its interests.

The situation in the Gulf shows that while there is tension, the Americans do not have an appetite for a larger military intervention, and Iran doesn't have any interest in provoking such an intervention. They're engaging in brinkmanship.

Trump, for whatever reason—ideological or because of the election schedule—doesn't want to be dragged into a war.

And Hezbollah is being kept by Iran for a rainy day.

Israel is struggling against attempts to arm Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as trying to prevent a pro-Iranian front in southern Syria.

And there is no longer a distinction between Lebanon and Hezbollah—which some Americans, who are sending weapons to the Lebanese army, don't realize. Hezbollah's control of the Lebanese government gives Iran greater confidence that they will be able to do the same in Syria. If they succeed in Syria, they will try to do the same in Jordan.

DR. YOSSI MANSHAROF,
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT JISS AND
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“ Hezbollah has become a major threat to Lebanese society. They've made the port and the airport targets, and one out of three or four houses in southern Lebanon is being used to store Hezbollah equipment. Israel would have to damage major parts of Lebanon in any war.

Israel signaled to Hezbollah and Iran that they should stop using civilians, but they didn't.

On Hezbollah's missiles: They are problematic, but not yet a strategic threat. That was explored by the IDF head of military intelligence Tamir Heiman at a conference that I also spoke at two months ago. He noted that Hezbollah only has a few precise missiles.

On Nasrallah's threats: If Hezbollah would attack Israel because of a US-Iran conflict, it would be the third time it would be dragging the Lebanese—and particularly the Shiites—into a war that doesn't relate to them, as it did in the 2006 war with Israel and in 2011 with the Syrian civil war.

I think that Nasrallah is doing his best to deter Israel and the US from starting a conflict. O

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