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**The battle for hearts and minds: Within Hamas's effort to perpetuate a victory myth in Operation Cast Lead, its spokesmen release false descriptions about events of the fighting and their false successes. The difficulty for Hamas lies in the discrepancy between the (false) rhetoric and the situation on the ground.**

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Gaza in flames, which rise to create the 'v' of victory (Hamas forum PALDF, January 19, 2009)

## Overview

1. In like manner to the second Lebanon war and previous wars, Operation Cast Lead was also a virtual war of TV screens, media, and public opinion. The battle for the hearts and minds is now entering its critical stage, with Hamas attempting to create a narrative according to which it has won the war (“divine victory”) or at least was not defeated standing against the fearsome war machine of the IDF. That effort is coordinated by the Hamas leadership in both Damascus and the Gaza Strip and is shared by the Hamas media, Al-Jazeera (which gives strategic support to Hamas’s propaganda campaign) and Iran and Syria (which support Hamas).

2. Hamas’s attempt to create a narrative of victory is clearly drawn from Hezbollah’s success in the second Lebanon war, **despite the considerable difference** between the Lebanon war and the Gaza war. **Unlike Hezbollah**, Hamas is having a hard time pointing out actual military victories or significant losses caused to the IDF and to Israel’s civilian population; its rocket attacks on Israel proved to be not as effective as Hezbollah’s, and the Israeli home front, unlike in the second Lebanon war, mostly supported the war, its goals, and the political and military leadership. Moreover, Israel’s political leadership has remained fairly cohesive so far, unlike the strong differences of opinion which accompanied the second Lebanon war and the time period that followed (which provided Hezbollah with much raw material for its propaganda).

3. That battle for hearts and minds is mostly reflected in the post-war boasting of Hamas leaders, spokesmen and supporters, who said time after time that Hamas “won” and that Israel was unable to achieve its goals. While the initial signal was given by the Hamas leadership in Damascus, what stood out was the speech made by Hamas’s head of administration **Ismail Haniyah** the day Hamas announced it was willing to agree to the ceasefire. **Ismail Haniyah**, who spent the war hiding and keeping a low media profile, mentioned a “divine victory” (*nasr illahi wa rabbani*) in his speech, emphasizing that the victory did not belong only to Hamas or any other organization, and that it was rather a “popular victory” of all Gaza Strip residents. Hamas therefore imitates Hassan Nasrallah, who started his “divine victory” campaign while the second Lebanon war was still being waged. Ismail Haniyah was outdone by Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman **Abu Obeida**, who contributed his share to the perpetuation of the “victory” myth by presenting false data on the IDF’s casualties and descriptions of alleged “victories” on the ground (Al-Aqsa TV, January 19).

## "The divine victory"

**Student: Ismail Haniyah**



Ismail Haniyah declaring "the divine victory", "a historical and strategic victory" (Al-Jazeera TV, January 18, 2009)

**Teacher: Hassan Nasrallah**



Hassan Nasrallah with a poster in the background that says "The Divine Victory" during the second Lebanon war



Hamas leaders under the title "You are the hope of [our Islamic] nation"; Khaled Mash'al is signing 'v' for 'victory' (PALDF, January 18, 2009)



Khaled Mash'al waving his fist as a sign of defiance and victory (PALDF, January 18, 2009)

4. It can be expected that Hamas's effort to perpetuate the myth of victory, which already has the support of Iran and Syria, will continue and even increase following the withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip. The public relations campaign will probably take the form of statements made by Hamas leaders, mass demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, military parades, and displays of power to show that the military wing did not suffer a blow (the first "victory

procession” was held by Hamas on January 20). At the same time, and in order to try and overcome the objective discrepancy between statement and fact, Hamas may attempt to carry out a **“public relations terrorist attack”** in order to create an **image of victory** which Hamas still does not have and illustrate that Hamas is determined to continue on the path of “resistance” (such as a multi-casualty terrorist attack against Israel’s civilian population or IDF soldiers).



Thousands of Gazans took to the streets in a victory procession, expressing joy about “the victory of the resistance” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 20)

5. Following is an analysis of several components in the victory myth which Hamas attempts to perpetuate, as evidenced in statements made by Hamas leaders and on the Hamas media, in comparison to the situation on the ground. To illustrate the discrepancy between those components and reality, we have added our own analysis of the **weak points** we are seeing in messages that Hamas attempts to deliver to the Gaza Strip population and to other target audiences in the Arab/Muslim world and in Western countries.

## Major messages comprising Hamas’s victory myth

### Message no. 1: who is to blame for the war? Hamas was the victim of a “plot” and should not be blamed for the outbreak of the war

6. That is an apologetic message meant to counter internal and external allegations (mostly from Egypt) that Hamas’s provocative behavior, primarily the continuing rocket fire and the thwarting of the lull in the fighting, prompted the Israeli assault (and therefore Hamas is responsible for all the suffering caused to Gaza Strip residents as a result of the war). As usual, Hamas portrays itself as the victim, spinning a conspiracy theory about being the victim of a “plot”, denying allegations of its responsibility for the Israeli attack.

7. That conspiracy theory was reflected in Ismail Haniyah's "victory speech" (Al-Jazeera TV, January 18). He said that for a long time, Israel had been preparing the "political, regional, and international scene" for its military offensive, being part of an **"overall conspiracy"** designed to eliminate the Palestinian issue, the "firm stand" of the Palestinian people, and the "resistance" (i.e., Hamas and the other terrorist organizations). "That is a war our people was forced into with no choice", Ismail Haniyah stressed in his speech.

8. **The weak point of the message:** Hamas's claim that it was the victim of a "plot" is countered by its arrogant, provocative behavior in the period of time which preceded Operation Cast Lead, which led to the derailing of the lull in the fighting, and the prolonged rocket fire, which lasted eight years. That makes it difficult for Hamas to portray itself as the innocent victim of a "plot" and contributes to an international understanding (and to a great extent to an understanding in Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, and other Arab countries) about the motives behind Israel's decision to launch Operation Cast Lead. That awareness of Hamas's fault and the legitimacy of Israel's military move, coupled with the desire to see the Hamas entity in the Gaza Strip weakened, has already prompted Egypt to strongly criticize Hamas (while criticizing the Israeli side as well) while the operation was still underway. It is our assessment that, after the dust has settled, that awareness is likely to result in **strong internal Palestinian criticism** when the magnitude of the destruction brought about by Hamas on Gaza Strip residents becomes apparent.

### **Message no. 2: Israel only acts against the civilians residing in the Gaza Strip**

9. **Hamas's public relations system and those who support it (mainly the Al-Jazeera channel) are hard at work on de-legitimizing Israel's operations in the Gaza Strip by bringing up the false claim that the IDF deliberately hit many civilians (mainly children) and failed in its efforts to hit the Hamas terrorist infrastructure.** The basis for that message, which served well the purposes of Hezbollah in the second Lebanon war, was laid by Hamas during the fighting, and it is likely to continue pushing it with even greater effort following the IDF's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip (using media coverage of the destruction and casualties caused as a result of the operation). Hamas and its supporters may also attempt to reinforce that message by claiming that the IDF made use of illegal weapons and fired

indiscriminately at civilians, and also by lawsuits and a political campaign against Israel in Western countries.<sup>1</sup>



A poster showing a Palestinian child supposedly hit by a phosphorus bomb (Palestine-info, January 20, 2009)

10. During the war, that message was accompanied by the constant, systematic broadcasting of graphic scenes showing civilians (mainly children and women) hit in IDF attacks. However, Hamas avoided publishing information on the hundreds of terrorist operatives hit in the operation and addressing the severe blow sustained by its military infrastructure (Hamas even warned surfers on its main online forum not to publish information on those killed or injured in the fighting). Even after the war, Hamas is making an effort to **play down the damage done to its operatives and military infrastructure**. Those who follow Hamas's propaganda, the statements made by its leaders, and Al-Jazeera TV, may get the impression that the IDF's activity in the Gaza Strip focused solely on harming the civilian population, while terrorist operatives are not seen and not heard. **Similar media tactics were also followed by Hezbollah**, which prevented the coverage of its military infrastructure in south Lebanon during the second Lebanon war and focused all the media attention on the damage done to civilians and the devastation caused to the southern suburb of Beirut (Al-Dahiya).

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<sup>1</sup> Ismail Haniyah stressed that international investigative teams must be dispatched to study the "war crimes perpetrated by the enemy in the Gaza Strip". He also demanded that the "leaders of the occupation" be brought to the international criminal court (Al-Jazeera TV, January 18). Ismail Haniyah and Hamas leaders as well as countries supporting Hamas ignore the fact that firing rockets indiscriminately at population centers in Israel (which they take pride in) and placing terrorist infrastructure inside civilian populations and using them as human shields are **war crimes**.

11. **The weak points of the message:** the killed civilians are a **powerful weapon** in the hands of Hamas. Using that weapon, they were able to win over the Arab street and inspire hatred against Israel among Arab and Muslim audiences in the Arab and Muslim world, in the Middle East and elsewhere (including Egypt, Jordan, Persian Gulf states, and among Israeli Arabs). **However, it is our assessment that, over the long run,** the exaggerated use of that “weapon” may prove to be a **double edged sword** due to several reasons: **first**, the elites of the Arab world (unlike the Arab street) are well aware of **Hamas’s responsibility** for the numerous civilian casualties caused by the placement of Hamas’s military infrastructure inside densely populated areas and Hamas’s provocations which preceded the Israeli operation; **second**, the population of the Gaza Strip is aware of the blow taken by Hamas’s military, security, and administrative infrastructures, making it difficult for Hamas to downplay the magnitude of the blow it took over time; **third, that propaganda campaign eventually helps increase Israel’s deterrence in the Gaza Strip, the Middle East, and elsewhere,** seeing as, once again (following the second Lebanon war), Israel is perceived as being willing to take aggressive action when its vital interests are at stake and when its civilian population comes under attack.<sup>2</sup>

### **Message no. 3: portraying Hamas as an organization which takes care of the restoration of the Gaza Strip and the needs of the civilians**

12. Another one of Hamas’s responses to the considerable devastation caused in the Gaza Strip and the civilian casualties could be **emphasizing its commitment to rebuild the Gaza Strip in the post-war period.** Ismail Haniyah already rushed to declare that Hamas would provide emergency assistance to all the families whose homes were destroyed or damaged: “We will rebuild what the occupation has destroyed” (Al-Jazeera TV, January 18). Just as Hezbollah attempted to maximize its political profit from the Iranian, Arab, and international assistance to Lebanon, Hamas may also attempt to take charge of distributing the assistance to the Gaza Strip as a means to improve its image with Gaza Strip residents. On the other hand, Egypt and the international community may have a strong interest in funneling the humanitarian assistance (and even more so the assistance to rebuild the Gaza Strip) through the Palestinian Authority and Abu Mazen (so that Hamas may encounter difficulties in making political gains from the Arab and international assistance).

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<sup>2</sup> Similarly to the considerable damage suffered by Beirut’s southern suburb (Al-Dahiya), where Hezbollah’s headquarters was located, which triggered condemnations of Israel but also strengthened its deterrence power. Two and a half years later, Hezbollah still avoids acting against Israel through Lebanon, not even during Operation Cast Lead.

### Message no. 4: putting on a representation of so-called military “successes” made by Hamas in fighting the IDF

13. Inspired by Hezbollah, the Hamas propaganda emphasizes its ability to **continuously fire rockets** at Israel during Operation Cast Lead, including at Israeli cities not hit prior to the operation. Hamas spokesmen noted that, before the war, the rockets only reached Ashkelon (up to 20 km from the Gaza Strip), but during the war it reached such distant places (located up to 40 km from the Gaza Strip) as Beersheba and Ashdod. During the war, Hamas’s propaganda even bragged that more population centers (up to Tel-Aviv) would be put in the range of fire (Hamas’s Al-Aqsa channel showed a clip with the text: “Tel-Aviv, all options are available to us”). **Abu Obeida**, the spokesman of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, claimed that Hamas’s rocket abilities were not hit during the fighting and even improved (in practice, there was a noticeable **decrease in the extent of fire** as the fighting was drawing to a close).

#### Shooting for Tel-Aviv—the Hamas version



Image from a clip in which Hamas threatens to hit Tel-Aviv as well. The text reads: “Tel-Aviv [in big red letters], all options are available to us” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 10, 2009)

#### Shooting for Tel-Aviv—the Hezbollah version



Tel-Aviv and neighboring cities in a propaganda clip broadcasted by the Al-Manar channel during the second Lebanon war. Hezbollah added Hebrew subtitles for the Israeli viewers.



The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades released a poster titled “Izz al-Din al-Qassam—invincible army”. The poster shows Hamas operatives and rockets launched at Israel in the background (PALDF, January 18, 2009)

14. Hamas is also attempting to convey the message that its forces were able to withstand the fearsome Israeli war machine, as described in the **wildly exaggerated** account of Ismail Haniyah, who said that there were seven IDF divisions operating in the Gaza Strip, a mighty air force that carried out more than 2500 raids, and psychological warfare directed by “hundreds of experts” (Ismail Haniyah’s speech on Al-Jazeera TV, January 18). Hamas claims to have managed to stand up to the enemy, to prevent the IDF from entering the heart of the civilian area, and to push back its forces from the Gaza Strip. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida claimed that Israel used enough military force to “occupy dozens of countries”, but that “resistance” operatives held their ground in the “war of salvation” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 19).

### Building an image of Hamas victory in the Gaza Strip



A poster showing a demolished Israeli tank with the title: “Gaza—Victory rather than Defeat”. The poster was produced by the “Information Team for Supporting Gaza and Curbing the Aggression” (www.paldf.net)



A poster that reads: “Victory for the Resistance, Allah willing” (PALDF, January 19, 2009)

15. The exaggerated description of the IDF forces and their abilities **was coupled by descriptions of alleged military “successes”** which Hamas spokesmen were keen to boast of as the fighting was coming to an end. For example: a false announcement on abducting an IDF soldier on January 12, publications about a rocket attack (which never happened) on an IDF base 50 km away, the supposed destruction of 11 Israeli tanks, taking (false) responsibility for the fire that broke out at a chemical factory in Ashdod, and more. Of particular note was the “victory speech” of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman **Abu Obeida** (Al-Aqsa TV, January 19), which was rife with false descriptions of the “heroic campaign and war of salvation” waged by Hamas. Thus, for example:

- a. According to Abu Obeida, no less than **80 (!) IDF soldiers** were killed, including 49 soldiers killed in direct clashes with the terrorists. Abu Obeida claims that the IDF is loathe to publish the real number of casualties, reporting instead that they died in car accidents (according to IDF Spokesman data, as at January 19 **ten soldiers were killed during the operation, including four who died as a result of friendly fire**).



**False information: Al-Qassam [Brigades] kill 80 Israeli soldiers and injure 980**  
(Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, January 20)

- b. According to Abu Obeida, 48 operatives of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades were killed in the fighting against the IDF (the actual number of operatives from Hamas and the other terrorist organizations killed during the fighting amounts to hundreds, yet Hamas continues its effort to hide or play down the number of casualties).

c. Abu Obeida described events that did not actually take place: hitting four helicopters, destroying 47 tanks, bulldozers, and APCs, taking two IDF soldiers prisoner and their killing by IDF helicopters, dozens of actions behind enemy lines, etc.



Abu Obeida (January 19) declaring Hamas's "victory"  
(Palestine-info, January 20, 2009)

16. **The weak point of this message:** the false statements made by Hamas about the IDF's alleged losses and about events that never happened have yet to create the desired effect in Israeli and Palestinian public opinion. As for the claim about the constant rocket fire, the weak point in that, in our assessment, is **the low effectiveness of most of Hamas's self-manufactured rockets** (unlike Hezbollah's effective rocket fire in the second Lebanon war). While the rocket fire was, indeed, constant, it gradually diminished as the fighting went on (as at February 19). During the fighting, **three civilians and one IDF soldier** were killed as a result of the rockets (compared to 53 civilians, one third of the total war casualties, who were killed in the second Lebanon war as a result of Hezbollah's rocket attacks).

17. What is more, the Israeli home front functioned properly during the rocket fire in Operation Cast Lead, not providing Hamas's propaganda with enough "proof" to establish an image of victory.<sup>3</sup> Also, the relatively low number of Israeli casualties as a result of the rocket fire stands in stark contrast to the significant number of casualties in the Gaza Strip, which might come back to haunt Hamas if it continues pushing that message (according to Palestinian reports, more than 1300 people were killed, more than 5400 were wounded, and about 22,000 buildings were destroyed). **The gap between the small number of casualties in Israel as a result of the rocket fire and the losses and devastation caused by the war in the Gaza Strip may**

<sup>3</sup> In this paper, we do not go into details about the reasons for the large gap in the number of casualties as a result of Hezbollah's rocket attacks compared to the number of casualties caused by Hamas's rocket fire. It is our assessment that it was a result of the inferior quality of most of Hamas's rockets, a small arsenal of standard rockets (compared to Hezbollah), better functioning of the Israeli Home Front Command and the Israeli population (applying the lessons learned in the second Lebanon war) and the effectiveness and successes of the IDF activity in the Gaza Strip, which made it difficult to launch rockets as the fighting progressed.

reignite and even aggravate the ongoing internal Palestinian debate about the effectiveness of using the “weapon of rockets”.

### **Message no. 5: Israel did not attain its goals in Operation Cast Lead**

18. That message is based on an attempt to attribute to Israel far-reaching goals **that were never set by the Israeli leadership** when it decided to launch Operation Cast Lead. Hamas claims that it was not defeated, that its will to fight was not broken, its military capabilities were not destroyed, its rocket arsenal was not eliminated, its leadership (for the most part) remained unharmed, and its operatives and military infrastructure deep inside the urban territory were not hit. Another claim is that the IDF did not enter the dense urban territory due to its fear of casualties, preferring instead to retreat and flee from the “Gaza mud” without attaining its goals (goals which Hamas attributed to Israel). Hamas also claimed time and again that its administration offices and civilian facilities continued to function “even while the storm was raging”. Moreover, Hamas spokesmen emphasized that the movement’s principles, mainly the “resistance” (the continuation of its terrorist strategy) are kept and that it would not give them up as part of the arrangement leading to the end of the fighting.

### **Hamas’s determination to continue the struggle against Israel until its destruction**



The entire territory between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan is Arab and covered with a kafiya.<sup>1</sup> The message is that the war is for the entire Palestine and it will end with Palestinian victory (PALDF, January 19, 2009)



A fist representing the “resistance” (terrorism) breaking a Star of David which represents Israel (PALDF, January 19, 2009)

## Israel ran away from the “Gaza mud”



Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum explains that the losses caused by the “resistance” to the IDF forced Israel to look for ways out of the “Gaza mud” (Al-Aqsa TV, January 16)

19. **The weak point of that message** is the considerable discrepancy between the situation on the ground and the rhetoric used by Hamas leaders and spokesmen. In practice, the military and administrative infrastructures of Hamas took a **severe blow**, even though the operation was never designed to uproot Hamas. Hamas’s mechanisms of control over the population stopped functioning, or functioned in a very partial manner, as a result of the hits caused by the Israeli Air Force raids. During the fighting, Hamas gave no response to the distress of the civilian population, which is well aware of that. **By closely monitoring the information coming out of the Gaza Strip**,<sup>4</sup> Hamas has so far been able to prevent the exposure of the severe blows taken by its forces and the faulty operation of its administration facilities. Over time, however, the information will leak out and Gaza Strip residents—as well as the Arab and Muslim world—will realize the extent of the blow taken by Hamas, possibly making it more difficult for it to present an image of invincibility.

<sup>4</sup> Similar phenomenon was observed with Hezbollah during the second Lebanon war. Hezbollah’s achievements in the battle for hearts and minds stemmed also from its ability to prevent access to its military infrastructure in south Lebanon. Hezbollah had foreign, Arab and western reporters covering the Lebanese civilian casualties and the damage sustained by the Lebanese civil infrastructures, caused by the Israeli attacks. For details see: [“Hezbollah as a case study of the battle for hearts and minds”](#) (June 2007).

## Appendix

### Establishing the myth of “divine victory” by Hezbollah<sup>5</sup> in the second Lebanon war

#### Hezbollah’s divine victory...



An Italian UNIFIL convoy passing south of Beirut near a large Hezbollah signboard that reads “The divine victory” (in French) (Reuters, September 3, 2006, photo by Muhammad Azakir).



Hezbollah supporters (some of them with the organization's flags) watching a Hezbollah parade in the southern suburb of Beirut. On the building is a giant poster with text in Arabic (lower left) that reads: *Nasr min Allah* (“divine victory”) (Reuters, September 22, 2006, photo by Ayman Sa'idi). Posters and flyers about the “divine victory” were spread all across Lebanon.

1. In order to inculcate the myth of divine victory in various target audiences, Hezbollah launched a large-scale public relations campaign during the war and even stepped it up as the fighting came to an end. In that campaign, it praised Hezbollah’s military abilities, justified the abduction of IDF soldiers, and played down Israel’s achievements. That campaign was waged through the written and electronic media, and it was participated by Hezbollah’s operatives and supporters in Lebanon. Huge posters and signboards in three languages (Arabic, English, and French) could be seen all across Lebanon, praising the “divine victory”.<sup>6</sup> Al-Manar TV and Radio al-Nur glorified the victory and aired songs of praise to Nasrallah and Hezbollah (such as a song called “Your Victory Has Rocked The World”).

<sup>5</sup> For details see: [“Hezbollah as a case study of the battle for hearts and minds”](#) (June 2007).

<sup>6</sup> This phrase, while conveying the religious message, also glorifies Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah: in Arabic, *Nasr min Allah* (divine victory) brings to mind the name of Nasrallah.

2. It is our assessment that Hezbollah's "divine victory" campaign was based on three major components:

a. **The military failures of Israel which contributed to the success of Hezbollah's battle for hearts and minds.** The major achievement of which Hezbollah boasted was the IDF's failure to stop (or significantly decrease) the rocket fire until the very end of the war. That was coupled with operative failures of the IDF in south Lebanon and a problematic conduct of the Israeli government vis-à-vis the Israeli civilian population. Hassan Nasrallah boasted: "In the War of July, we were facing a global war against the resistance, but we won that global war, against all those who entertained false hopes to beat us, destroy us, and eliminate us..." (Al-Manar, April 8, 2007).

b. **The strong internal criticism in Israel of the IDF and the political leadership at the end of the war,** and the numerous failures exposed about the coordination of the war and the handling of the civilian population were excellent raw materials for the Hezbollah propaganda to perpetuate the myth of "**winning the war**" and to claim that the Israeli PM was "drowning in the sea of defeat". Hezbollah also made use of the Vinograd Committee report and the controversy it stirred in Israeli society and politics.

c. **In contrast, the achievements made by Israel during and after the war were played down:** the hit of the long-range rocket arsenal, the capabilities of the Israeli Air Force which were shown during the war, the large-scale deployment of the Lebanese army and an upgraded UNIFIL force in south Lebanon which makes it difficult for Hezbollah to operate there, the destruction of Hezbollah's outposts along the border, hitting Hezbollah's infrastructure in Beirut, the strong criticism against Hezbollah in Lebanon and in the Arab world. **Those achievements were not emphasized enough in Israel (against the backdrop of the stream of criticism of the IDF and the political leadership) and therefore were not always appreciated in Lebanon and in the Arab world, thus not undermining the myth of victory.**

### **Arguments with internal critics**

3. As the dust settled after the second Lebanon war, and as the Lebanese public came to grips with the sights of destruction, criticism increased **about the price Lebanon had to pay for Hezbollah's military adventure.** More and more, the organization was forced to deal with the

accusations of its internal opponents, saying that it had dragged Lebanon into an unnecessary war, and with calls to disarm and apply Security Council Resolution 1701.

4. Faced with the strong accusations made by his opponents on the internal Lebanese scene, Hassan Nasrallah was forced into **defensive** and give answers to the strong criticism leveled against him. Thus, he admitted that he was **wrong** in assessing Israel's reaction, saying that if he had known that the abduction of the two Israeli soldiers (an act he considers legitimate) would lead to a war, he would not have done it. Another false claim brought up by Nasrallah was that the abduction derailed an Israeli-American plan to attack Lebanon in October 2006, forcing Israel to take action against Hezbollah before completing its preparations. That media defensive was accompanied by a political initiative (backed by demonstrations and protests) to topple the Lebanese government and to reschedule the elections to an earlier date—or to establish a government where Hezbollah would have the right of veto.

### **Nasrallah's interview to Lebanese channel New TV (August 27, 2006)**



**Nasrallah's interview to the Lebanese New TV, August 27, 2006**

**Interviewer:** "... If I had asked you on July 11 [the day before the abduction] whether you believed that there was only one percent chance that the abduction would result in the kind of war that took place, would you have carried out the abduction?"

**Hassan Nasrallah:** "I would tell you, no! Definitely not!"

**Will Khaled Mash'al be asked a similar question about the Israeli response to Hamas's rocket fire?**