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Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah boasts of the organization's ability to maintain a balance of deterrence with Israel. By doing that he justifies, in the internal Lebanese arena, its refusal to disarm and repels the demands of his opponents, the supporters of the "New Order" in Lebanon.



Nasrallah speaking at a meeting of The Resistance Culture [i.e., terrorism] Committee:
"The resistance [i.e., Hezbollah] has more than 12,000 rockets... All of northern occupied Palestine [i.e., Israel] is within range of the rockets of the resistance..." (Al-Manar TV, May 23).

Overview

✿ In a fiery speech on the sixth anniversary of the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nassrallah boasted of the organization's ability maintain a balance of deterrence with Israel. It has, he said, **more than 12,000 rockets in its possession**, posing a serious threat to Israel's northern regions. He also spoke of his commitment to free Lebanese prisoners (terrorists) held in Israel and to liberate the Shebaa Farms in the near future. He thus presented himself as **Lebanon's protector**

and rejected demands **from home and abroad** that Hezbollah disarm. In an equally fiery speech **he encouraged the Palestinians to continue their terrorist campaign against Israel**, boasting that **Hezbollah was the first to use suicide bombing attacks in the conflict with Israel**.

The background of the two speeches and their goals

✿ Every year on May 25 Hezbollah celebrates Resistance [i.e., terrorism] and Liberation Day to mark the anniversary of the IDF's withdrawal from the security zone in southern Lebanon. Activities include rallies, parades, speeches, commemorative ceremonies for *shaheeds* [i.e., dead terrorists] killed during the confrontation, expressions of support for their families, special events in the schools and universities and even fireworks in the Beaufort courtyard in southern Lebanon. Such events, which were attended by Amal and Hezbollah representatives, were also held by Lebanese communities in Africa, Europe and Latin America.

✿ The anniversary of the IDF's withdrawal and the events surrounding it were exploited by Hezbollah **to rack up gains in the internal Lebanese arena** and to **counteract pressure to disarm**. Nasrallah's speech before The Resistance Culture Committee was particularly boastful regarding Hezbollah's **military ability**, especially the rockets aimed as a threat to northern Israel, where military and economic infrastructures vital to Israel's existence are located. He claimed Hezbollah's military ability **created a balance of deterrence** with Israel, and at the same time said that its operational ability would **help it achieve its goals**, central to which was the commitment to **liberate Lebanese prisoners** (terrorist-operatives) held in Israeli prisons and to **expel Israel from the Shebaa Farms**.

✿ In describing Israel as "aggressive" and boasting of Hezbollah's ability to respond, Nasrallah **justified Hezbollah's existence as an armed organization**, which he claimed reinforced the weak Lebanese army within the concept of **Lebanese national "defensive strategy,"** which he presented to the national dialog which is

currently being held between the rival Lebanese camps. He also used that argument to counteract appeals from within Lebanon and the demands of the international community and UN Security Council that **Hezbollah disarm and dismantle its military capabilities** (the other armed militias in Lebanon have long since done so) and **allow the Lebanese government to enforce its authority in southern Lebanon.**

Nasrallah's speech before the Resistance Culture Committee

✂ In a fiery speech given before the Popular Resistance Culture Committee on Resistance and Liberation Day, Nasrallah stressed the importance of **Hezbollah's continuing as an armed organization within the concept of "national defensive strategy,"** which he attempted to put forward in the Lebanese national dialog. The main points of his speech were as follows (Al-Manar TV, May 23):

✓ **He described Israel as "an aggressive entity," which is not recognized by Nasrallah.** He detailed what he called "the Israeli threat," whose existence, he claimed, justified fighting against it: "If the brothers in the [national Lebanese] dialog recognize that Israel is the enemy, then the discussion can be concluded. But if we assume that Israel is not the enemy then we are wasting our time...because **without enemies there is no fighting, there is no war and there is no confrontation.**" According to Nasrallah, the existence of the Israeli enemy necessitates the continuation of the confrontation, and the confrontation necessitates "shaping a national defensive strategy" for all Lebanese.

✓ **He boasted of what he called Hezbollah's deterrent capabilities against the Israeli enemy:**

■ **Northern Israel was represented as an Achilles' heel.** He said that Israel had a strong army and a strong economy (supported by the United States), but that it also had certain weak points, and that geography was one of them. **Basic geographical facts,** he said, **gave Lebanon an advantage in its fighting against Israel,** which Nasrallah referred to as "the Israeli entity in occupied Palestine." That was because the northern

region of Israel was vital to Israel in terms of both its economy (tourism, ports, factories, agriculture) and its military strength (army bases and air fields).

■ **Hezbollah, he said, had operational capabilities which enabled it to support the weak Lebanese army and to maintain a balance of deterrence with Israel: “The resistance [i.e., Hezbollah] has more than 12,000 rockets (if not 13,000)... Thus I may say that the entire northern region of occupied Palestine is within range of the resistance’s rockets [i.e., Hezbollah’s rockets]. That is the minimum, naturally. As to what is more distant [that is, regarding rockets which can reach areas further south]... that will remain a secret. Today the north [of Israel] is within range of the resistance’s rockets [i.e., Hezbollah’s rockets], its ports, its bases, its factories and everything located there [in the north]. That creates a balance between northern Palestine and southern Lebanon [and] all Lebanon... We have the capability to destroy very important, sensitive targets in the north of occupied Palestine...”**

■ **Nasrallah boasted that with a word he could make residents of the north [Israel] flee to Tel Aviv: “Today,” he said, “if I go on TV and in the name of Hezbollah say to the residents of the settlements of northern occupied Palestine,¹ ‘I advise you to take to your bomb shelters within the next two hours,’ they will all [flee] to Tel Aviv... a Lebanese [i.e., Nasrallah]... in the name of this talented, victorious resistance [i.e., terrorist organization] can, with a few short sentences, make a great change in occupied Palestine... Is that a [source of] strength for Lebanon or a [source of] weakness?...” [Nasrallah naturally ignores the price Lebanon paid in the past and may pay again for that sort of aggression against Israel...]**

¹ Nasrallah used the terms “settlements” and “northern occupied Palestine” to deny the existence of Israel and to note the “illegitimacy” of the Israeli population centers, which he considers illegal settlements (the Palestinian terrorist organizations use similar terminology). The terms reflect Nasrallah’s true intentions: **to make Lebanon a servant of Iranian strategy calling for a “struggle” against Israel until it is destroyed.**

✓ **He claimed that Hezbollah’s operational capabilities could liberate the Shebaa Farms:**² If, he said, he received popular and government support from Lebanon, then “the Israelis will leave those hills and mountains and leave our lands within a few months as they left [Lebanon] on May 25 [2000]...”

✓ **He expressed his commitment that the Lebanese prisoners held in Israel would be returned “very, very, very soon,”** as he promised in his speech commemorating the anniversary of the capture of **Samir al-Kuntar**³ [a hint that Israelis would be kidnapped as bargaining chips in the release of Lebanese prisoners].

The main points made by Hassan Nasrallah at a mass rally in Tyre

✿ Nasrallah gave another fiery speech at a mass rally in Tyre on May 25 on the sixth anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The following were the main points (Al-Manar TV, May 25).



Nasrallah calls upon the Palestinians to continue the confrontation with Israel, stressing that Hezbollah started using suicide bombing attacks as the main means of subduing Israel (Al-Manar TV, May 25).

² The Lebanese demand for the Shebaa Farms (the slopes of Har Dov in the Golan Heights) is not acceptable to the international community or the UN.

³ **Samir al-Kuntar** is a Lebanese Druze who belonged to a pro-Iraqi terrorist organization run by Abu al-‘Abbas. He was sentenced to consecutive life sentences for his participation in a brutal terrorist attack in Nahariya in 1979. A group of terrorists infiltrated from Lebanon by sea and entered the house of the Haran family, murdering Danny Haran and his daughter Einat. Samir Kuntar killed the four-year old girl with his own hands. Police officer Eliahu Shahar was killed in a rescue attempt. Israel rejects releasing Samir Kuntar in negotiations with Hezbollah.

✓ **He boasted that the suicide bombing attack carried out by suicide bomber (*istishhadi*) Ahmad Qasir at the Israeli headquarters in Tyre in November 1982 was the first such attack of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli confrontation:** “Ahmad Qasir launched the age of suicide activities [*‘amaliyyat istishhadiyyah*] in the conflict with the Israeli enemy... It was also the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict that one action, one blow carried out by one person, killed a hundred [Israeli] officers and soldiers.”⁴ Nasrallah named other suicide bombers from the ranks of Hezbollah who had attacked IDF soldiers in Lebanon⁵ and added that **“the column of suicide bombers [which began in Lebanon] continues in Palestine...”**

✓ **Nasrallah called for the Palestinians to continue the current ongoing violent confrontation (*intifada*) which began a few months after the IDF withdrew from Lebanon.** He said that the suicide bombing attacks carried out by Hezbollah in Lebanon were what caused the “humiliating Israeli defeat” and forced Israel out of Lebanon, unilaterally and unconditionally. The “Lebanese victory,” he said, collapsed the “plan” to expand Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates [a myth with absolutely no basis in fact], and forced Israel to focus its struggle on maintaining its control over “greater Palestine.” The outbreak of the Palestinian *intifada* [i.e., terrorist campaign], which, according to Nasrallah, brought about Israel’s realignment plan, was the beginning of the end of the idea to control all of Palestine. However, he added, directing his remarks to the Palestinians, **“I will not say it is the end of the defeat. We must continue the confrontation [i.e., the terrorism campaign].”**

⁴ Hassan Nasrallah forgot to mention the series of showcase suicide bombing attacks carried out by Hezbollah against American and French targets. The first such attack was carried out using a car bomb driven by a suicide bomber which blew up the American embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people, April 18, 1983.

⁵ For obvious reasons, Nasrallah did not name the suicide bombers who acted against the United States and France.



Terrorist operatives belonging to the so-called Jihad Warriors Battalion, a faction of Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, training in Lebanon (from a TV documentary on the "Palestinian resistance," Al-Manar TV, May 25).

✓ **Nasrallah called for financial aid to the Palestinians in response to the pressures exerted on them [i.e., on Hamas] by the American Congress.** He said that whoever gave money to the Palestinian people today would be perceived by Congress as a terrorist and supporter of terrorism. Therefore, [in defiance] he called upon every Lebanese person to be perceived as a terrorist and for ten days to raise funds for the sake of the Palestinian people. The money, he said, would be collected by the Authority in Aid of the Islamic Resistance [an institute belonging to Hezbollah], however, whoever wished could donate to other institutions on condition the money reached the Palestinian people.

✓ **Nasrallah reiterated that he was committed to "liberating" the Shebaa Farms and the Lebanese prisoners currently held in Israel.** He ended his speech by stressing Hezbollah's (and his personal) commitment to "liberating" the "occupied Lebanese lands" [i.e., the Shebaa Farms] and the Lebanese prisoners, including Samir Kuntar.

The internal Lebanese responses

✿ Hezbollah's endeavors to keep its arms and maintain its terrorist-operational capabilities within the concept of a "national defensive strategy" and have given rise to opposition among anti-Syrian Lebanese who support the New Order. A small sample of that opposition was provided by two columns which appeared in the

Lebanese newspaper **Al-Mustaqbal**, which is owned by the Hariri family. Its editorial policy is anti-Syrian and it provides a forum for the forces of Lebanese independence.

✿ On May 22 and 23, two senior Shi'ite columnists (Qassem Qasir and Nasir al-Assa'ad) wrote columns detailing the **weak points** and the **extremely problematical nature** of Hassan Nasrallah's concepts, and called upon him to provide answers in preparation for continuing the national dialog. The following are the main points of the two columns criticizing Hezbollah:

✓ **Hezbollah does not recognize Lebanon as a country** and maintains “**a parallel army**” even though southern Lebanon has been liberated [from Israel]. **Formulating “defensive strategy” is the absolute right of the country** and not of Hezbollah. Now that Lebanon has been liberated from Israeli occupation and the Syrian sponsorship, it has a historic opportunity to establish a country with a strong army. However, “**what Hezbollah is proposing is very far from the logic or establishing a a country.**”

✓ **Hezbollah stubbornly insists it will retain its weapons until an unspecified date** and it has not proposed specific goals, after whose achievement it will agree to disarm. The lack of clarity means that even if Hezbollah does manage to liberate the Shebaa Farms and secure the release of Lebanese prisoners currently in Israel, it will still retain its weapons.

✓ **Hezbollah is sponsored by Iran:** the column asks **what the Hezbollah position will be if there is an armed confrontation between America and Iran which turns into a regional war. Will Hezbollah remain neutral or will it fight on the side of Iran [and drag Lebanon after it...]? Will Hezbollah act as a local reserve force for the regional [Syrian-Lebanese] axis?**

✓ **Hezbollah serves Syrian and Palestinian interests:** The column asks **why Hezbollah does not protect Lebanese lands and interests.** Why does it not condemn the “acts of aggression” carried out against Lebanon and the Lebanese army by Syria and the Palestinians?

✓ **Hezbollah's weapons have upset the sectarian balance of power in Lebanon:** if Hezbollah continues as a military force it means that the Shi'ites, as opposed to the other ethnic groups, will continue to be to armed. **Why,** asks the article, **will there be weapons only in the hands of Hezbollah and the Shi'ites?**