Nasrallah is trapped by his own false propaganda

written by Ofir Gendelman | 24.09.2024

For years, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah repeatedly claimed that “Israel is weaker than a spider’s web.” This message was woven throughout his speeches and echoed in Hamas propaganda. The entire Iran-backed alliance believed it. The goal wasn’t just psychological; it had an operational purpose. It was meant to motivate the organization’s operatives, especially the Radwan Force, to train even more vigorously for the conquest of the Galilee, seen as the first step in Israel’s total destruction.

To be honest, albeit regrettably, some Israeli actions reinforced this message in the narrative of the “resistance axis” and Hezbollah itself, rather than undermining it. The refusal to eliminate armed Hezbollah operatives approaching the border, instead chasing them away; the months-long reluctance to destroy two tents Hezbollah erected on Mount Dov beyond the international border line as a challenge to Israeli sovereignty and a sign of its weakness; along with Israel’s internal weakness displayed in the year before the war – all these strengthened Nasrallah’s belief that Israel was indeed a paper tiger that would immediately collapse once the Radwan Force invaded northern settlements and conquered the Galilee.

The 500 casualties Hezbollah has suffered since deciding to attack Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, and the enormous losses Hamas endured in the Gaza Strip following its terror attacks against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, began to change the picture, both within Hezbollah and among the Lebanese public.

Many in Lebanon, even if not among Hezbollah supporters, who witnessed the increasing power of Israeli Air Force strikes in Lebanon and the massive destruction in Gaza, began to express public opposition to the war. This is an unprecedented phenomenon in Lebanon.

The situation took another dramatic turn last week following the pager and radio communication device attack on Hezbollah operatives and senior officials, which took thousands of them out of the fight within seconds. It intensified further with the surprising and, from Nasrallah’s perspective, shocking elimination of the

Radwan Force leadership in the heart of Dahieh.

Although Nasrallah claimed in his speech responding to these events that they didn't affect the organization's operational capabilities, no one in Lebanon believes him anymore. Hezbollah is perceived as weak, and there's a prevailing understanding that in this conflict, Israel undoubtedly has the upper hand – technologically, militarily, and in terms of intelligence.

The Israeli Air Force bombings in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley over the past two days, which hit hundreds of important Hezbollah assets built over many years, and Israeli awareness efforts directed at Lebanese public opinion, aimed at evacuating civilian populations from villages turned by Hezbollah into weapons depots and launch sites for cruise missiles, rockets, and drones, make it clear to every Lebanese and every member of the Iran-backed alliance that Israel is a real tiger. Everyone now understands that underestimating it was a very costly mistake.

Even in interviews with Lebanese commentators on the country's TV networks, it's explicitly stated: "We thought we could destroy Israel and liberate Palestine. We were gravely mistaken."

Even if Nasrallah publicly maintains that the Lebanese front is linked to the Gaza front and that his organization will continue to fire at Israel as long as there's no ceasefire in the Strip, it seems that, watching the refugee convoys traveling from southern Lebanon to Beirut and the significant casualties his organization suffers daily at Israel's hands, Nasrallah surely regrets now believing his own false propaganda.

The consequences of this mistake are now manifesting in Hezbollah's unprecedented and long-term weakening. Every day that the Israel Defense Forces powerfully strikes Hezbollah's infrastructure and denies it capabilities built over decades to harm Israel brings closer the day when northern residents will return to their homes and enjoy long-term peace.

Alongside the military effort, successful influence and psychological warfare efforts on the Lebanese public, whose trust in Hezbollah has been severely shaken and whose fear of Israel has intensified sevenfold, must continue. This axis – which sears the enemy's consciousness – will also ensure long-term quiet on the northern border.

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