

Israel's elimination of Nasrallah was just and legal under laws of war

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 01.10.2024

All necessary principles and doctrines were met.

The Law Of Exploding Pagers

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 01.10.2024

It is hard to imagine a more surgically precise procedure than the destruction of personal devices that were (literally) held by terrorists.

Nasrallah is trapped by his own false propaganda

written by Ofir Gendelman | 01.10.2024

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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Sorry, AOC: Israel's Precision Attack Against Hezbollah Was

Humane—and Legal

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 01.10.2024

This week, in a scene one would expect from a Hollywood thriller, thousands of pagers and walkie talkies exploded across Lebanon and the Middle East, killing, maiming, or severely injuring thousands of Hezbollah terrorists.

Although the attacks were immediately attributed to Israel, the Jewish state has so far not claimed responsibility. In the event that Israel did carry out the operation, it could only be understood as the most audacious and unprecedented counter-terrorism precision attack in military history, and one that was entirely justified and in full accordance with international law.

The attack not only disrupted Hezbollah's terrorist capabilities and infrastructure; it re-established Israeli deterrence and leveled psychological trauma on the entire terror organization, from its leader Hassan Nasrallah, to the most junior of Hezbollah foot soldiers, who now know that no-one is safe, and every terrorist can be reached at any time.

Lest you be swayed by the false and malicious narratives of those trying to defend Hezbollah or blame the Jewish state, some necessary context is in order.

First, Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based jihadist terrorist organization and a standing army that is funded, supplied by, and serves entirely at the behest of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Like Hamas, Hezbollah *also* has genocidal intentions to annihilate Israel and kill all the Jews, intentions which they have made repeatedly clear and have continuously sought to act on. Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah has said that the entire Middle East will not rest until the "cancerous gland" that is Israel is removed, and on October 8 last year, a day after the Hamas massacre, Hezbollah formally joined the war in the wistful hope that they might help eradicate the Jewish state.

Since then, Hezbollah has fired more than 8,500 rockets at Israel, each an unquestionable war crime, murdering 47 people, including 12 children who were struck while playing football in the Majdal Shams massacre in July. In the meantime, over 80,000 Israelis have also been displaced from their homes in the

north of the country, as a result of the ongoing attacks.

By any stretch of the imagination, Israel is fully entitled under international law, including but not limited to Article 51 of the UN Charter, to exercise its right to self-defense.

Some so-called “experts,” like Ken Roth, former head of Human Rights Watch, and New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, have immediately and reflexively rushed to condemn Israel for violating international humanitarian law, including by unlawfully using booby traps. But what does the law actually state?

Generally speaking, under Article 7 of the Amended Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the use of booby traps in communication devices are indeed prohibited *in certain situations*. There is, of course, an overriding caveat, which is that pursuant to Article 52 of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention I, such acts are permissible in circumstances where the objects in question are no longer used for civilian purposes.

In this case, the pagers and hand-held devices, which were distributed specifically to Hezbollah operatives, were being used for the purposes of communicating, planning and conducting operations. As such, they immediately ceased to be considered “civilian objects” and became legitimate military targets.

Accordingly, their destruction constitutes a clear military objective under customary international law (per Art. 52 of the Additional Protocols), and they are a lawful target of attack.

Under the Principle of Distinction, one of the cornerstone principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), parties to an armed conflict must also at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants.

In this case, the operation was also aimed solely at Hezbollah terrorists. Indeed, only Hezbollah operatives were known to be in possession of these devices, which were *not* widely or generally available, and were in fact ordered by Hezbollah and distributed by Hezbollah leadership specifically to circumvent Israeli intelligence.

Under the Laws of War, parties must also abide by the Doctrine of Proportionality, which requires that any anticipated loss of civilian life must not be excessive in comparison to the potential military advantage to be gained from

such an attack and or action, as well as taking feasible precautions in planning and conducting attacks to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and other persons and objects protected from being made the object of attack.

In this case, the clear military advantage would be to stop the ongoing Hezbollah rocket fire, allow for the 80,000 displaced Israeli residents to safely and permanently return to their homes, and render a large part of an enemy army unable to fight.

Of the 4,000 reported Hezbollah operatives injured, only a handful of civilians were reportedly harmed. That is an *extraordinary* feat in modern warfare and the textbook definition of a precision and proportionate attack.

Lots of people like to claim Israel has the right to self-defense, and yet the moment the Jewish state lawfully exercises that right in an almost unimaginably targeted way, they are outraged, looking to cast Israel as an aggressor. For the record, 8,500 unprovoked and indiscriminate rocket attacks is what might be called an escalation, not the pinpoint accurate response to stop those rockets.

The article was written in collaboration with John Spencer, chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute (MWI) at West Point and host of the "Urban Warfare Project Podcast" and Dr. Mark Goldfeder is Director of the National Jewish Advocacy Center, and teaches at the Touro Law Center.

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Will Hezbollah strike back? It depends

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 01.10.2024

Once the full extent of the damage suffered by Hezbollah becomes clear in the near future, the group's leadership will need to recalculate its approach to the war. The primary factor influencing the organization's conduct will likely be the

number of casualties, both among Hezbollah operatives and civilians.

All-out war or strikes? This is how Hezbollah can respond

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 01.10.2024

The recent elimination in Beirut marks a new phase in the conflict between Israel and the terrorist organization. Israel must fully utilize its intelligence tools to anticipate future responses. If an all-out war breaks out, Israel would be better off initiating a preemptive strike.

Time to Strike Nasrallah's Soft Underbelly

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 01.10.2024

Alongside targeting senior Hezbollah figures and infrastructures, Israel should wisely exploit Nasrallah's Shiite community vulnerabilities.

The key implications of

Hezbollah's Aziz Unit commander assassination

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 01.10.2024

Israel needs to strike these weapon transfers to limit Hezbollah's ability to benefit from the strategic backing provided by Tehran as much as possible.

Our leaders must rally the public for continuation of war

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 01.10.2024

Our leaders must put aside divisive issues and unite in one cohesive front.

Is War With Lebanon Imminent?

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 01.10.2024

As both sides escalate by the day and as the fighting in Gaza simmers down, many Israelis are growing convinced that full-scale war with Hizballah is unavoidable. Are they right?