



ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

out the clear and present danger Iran poses to the entire world. While Western democracies collapse under the weight of their weakness, Israel stands tall, ready to confront Iran's nuclear ambitions and dismantle Hezbollah once and for all.

Commentary...

Time to Say: Kudos to Netanyahu! By Avi Abelow

The latest joint intelligence and military offensive against Iran has proven that despite international hostility, Prime Minister Netanyahu has shown himself to be the sole leader capable of steering Israel through some of its darkest moments. The world, together with a vicious internal Israeli opposition, may try to bury him in accusations and court cases, but Netanyahu continues to do what no one else dares to: he is protecting Israel against threats that go beyond its borders and extend into the very heart of the Middle East.

Let's not sugarcoat it. On October 7, we Israelis lived through a tragedy that will be forever seared into our collective memory. In a single day, Hamas terrorists murdered more than a thousand Israelis in cold blood. Remarkably, the international response sent "thoughts and prayers" while simultaneously creating obstacles to Israel's justified military response. Subsequently, the Biden administration betrayed its special alliance with Israel by withholding crucial weapons at a most critical juncture. As Israel fought for its survival, the so-called leader of the free world decided to "punish" our country for defending itself. This resulted in a months-long delay for Israel to push forward with an offensive in Rafah, and prevented us from rescuing the hostages.

In the end, Netanyahu demonstrated genius. Despite the international community's position against Israel, Netanyahu insisted that the Israel Defense Forces and security agencies continue moving forward.

The Biden administration, joined by its European counterparts, doesn't seem to understand - or care - that Israel is not fighting solely for its own safety. Netanyahu has made it crystal clear that Israel's war against Iran and its proxies is a fight to ensure the stability of the entire free world. Sadly, the West has become complacent and, worse, continues to bend over backward to appease terror regimes. Netanyahu is the sole leader with the clarity and backbone to take immediate and urgent action.

Under Netanyahu's leadership, Israel has achieved what no other country could even dream of. The Prime Minister ordered consecutive strikes that caused a truly seismic event in the Middle East. Iran suddenly found itself without its prized Hezbollah proxy to terrorize Sunni Muslims in the Middle East. Beyond saving Israel from future rocket attacks, Netanyahu handed a victory to millions in the region suffering under Iranian hegemony and, in turn, is making the entire region, and the world, a safer place.

The Sunni world, which had long seen Israel as its enemy, now (grudgingly) respects Netanyahu. They understand that by taking out Hezbollah's leadership, Israel didn't only protect its citizens but weakened Iran's stranglehold over their Sunni-majority nations.

Netanyahu is leading Israel to victory against a background of numerous personal challenges: ridiculous court cases in Israel, a local media that despises him, and despicable allegations at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

All the while, Netanyahu has stayed focused on the task at hand — protecting Israel, standing up to international pressure. A lesser leader may have crumbled under the weight of such accusations, but Bibi has always been a leader unshaken by pressure.

Add to the above the absurdity of the Biden-Harris approach to Israel as they follow in the disastrous footsteps of the Obama administration, empowering Iran with nuclear deals and treating Israel as a pariah for daring to defend itself. Included in this group are Biden, Harris, Blinken, Clinton, and Kerry, each having pushed a failed strategy that gave Iran more power. Again, Netanyahu has been the sole leader to call them out on this wrong position.

In his powerful speech at the United Nations, Netanyahu again laid

The lightning-fast attack and victory we witnessed against Hezbollah's leadership is monumental, but the job isn't done. Hezbollah still possesses tens of thousands of rockets in its arsenal; Iran's nuclear program is nearly at full capacity.

I have no doubt that with Netanyahu in charge, and G-d's help, we will prevail. We need a world that understands what's at stake, but even if they don't, Netanyahu continues to make it clear: the Jewish state of Israel will do whatever it takes to survive. And while the Biden administration plays politics with our security, Netanyahu is out there, delivering results that matter.

Beyond being a great leader for Israel, Netanyahu has shown that he is the leader of the free world. He's doing the work, defending democracy and freedom, while the "global powers" continue to fail us. The time has come to recognize that as long as Netanyahu is at the helm, Israel's — and the world's — future are in safe hands. (IsraelNationalNews.com Sep 30)

Iran's Strategic Dilemma after Israeli Strikes on Hezbollah

By Yaakov Lappin

Israel's assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and its large-scale attacks on Hezbollah's command structure and firepower infrastructure in Lebanon have left Iran facing a critical dilemma.

Iran, which spent decades arming, funding and equipping the Hezbollah terror army, now faces the challenge of responding without getting directly involved in the conflict—a move that could have significant repercussions for the Islamic Republic, both regionally and domestically.

Col. (res.) Michael Segal, an expert on Iranian strategic issues who is today chief information officer at Acumen Risk, a Tel Aviv-based intelligence and risk consultancy, told JNS, "At this time, including after the elimination of Nasrallah, Iran does not intend to get itself involved in the combat, and expresses support for the 'resistance axis.'"

Segal argued that Iran is fearful of direct involvement in the war, due to the consequences such a move might provoke within its own borders. The Islamic Republic has been careful to avoid becoming entangled in direct military confrontations with Israel.

"Iran sees the 'project of its life' in Lebanon being destroyed, but this too is not enough to cause it to become involved directly and to risk an Israeli response, especially since it has seen how far Israel is willing to go despite American pressure and the calls for a truce, and after the speech of Prime Minister Netanyahu at the U.N. General Assembly, where he directly threatened Iran," said Segal.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, recently issued a public statement reiterating his support for Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed factions in the region. However, according to Segal, Iran's primary concern is avoiding a scenario that drags it into direct conflict.

Tehran's apparent leaning towards nonintervention also carries risks for it. "Iran could lose a lot of its prestige in the Islamic world in light of sitting on the side while the leadership of Hezbollah is erased," Segal explained.

"Iran will likely act to try to rebuild Hezbollah and develop what is left of it," Segal said, noting that Tehran will continue to uphold the idea of Hezbollah as a key instrument of "resistance" against Israel. Iran's strategy of fighting through proxies remains intact, he added.

"It is willing to fight until the last Palestinian, Lebanese and Yemenite, without spilling Iranian blood. The Iranian interest is

above all not to get dragged into war with Israel and the United States.”

Regarding the next generation of leadership of Hezbollah, it seems as if its selection will be highly influenced by Iran, which will try to find someone “in its image, whether it is [Hezbollah Deputy Secretary-General] Naim Qassem or [the head of its Executive Council] Hashim Safi al-Din, he added.

The idea behind Hezbollah will remain, and spreading it further to Iraq and Yemen as well can be expected of Iran. “In any case, we are still in the eye of the storm, and the situation requires precise intelligence assessments, but it seems that the events of the past week will leave a deep impression on the sectarian fabric of Lebanon and on the regional arena, as well as Iran’s relations with the Sunni countries, especially with Saudi Arabia. It seems as if Israel managed to restore to a significant degree its deterrence,” said Segal.

Regarding the nuclear file, Iran appears to have lost the tool it built—Hezbollah—to defend against an Israeli strike on its atomic facilities, and this could contribute to Tehran’s decision not to directly get involved, in the absence of Hezbollah’s leadership, Segal assessed.

“It is possible that Iran will choose other ways to defend its nuclear program, maybe through a declaration that it is a threshold state, or to head to the other direction and enter into ‘serious negotiations’ with the West to buy time that could lead it to nuclear capabilities,” he added.

Professor Uzi Rabi, head of the Program for Regional Cooperation at Tel Aviv University’s Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, said that this is an important turning point in the region.

“The elimination of Nasrallah is a dramatic milestone. The ‘resistance axis’ is in a state of bewilderment. There is an opportunity for a strategic shift in the balance of power in the region,” he said.

“Israel is doing major work here in the name of the free world and is presenting the Americans with an opportunity to enter the picture and sketch out a geo-political map in line with their interests and those of their allies,” Rabi added.

Iran’s interest does not include seeing the Islamic Republic rush to Hezbollah’s aid, and according to Rabi, Tehran will likely engage in diplomatic efforts behind the scenes to secure a ceasefire favorable to Hezbollah and, if possible, to Hamas as well. However, “Israel will not be able to accept such conditions, and may launch a limited ground maneuver [into Lebanon],” he said.

“It is important for Israel to continue military pressure to eventually obtain an arrangement that finally solves the problems created in this region,” said Rabi.

Regional analyst Avi Melamed, a former Israeli intelligence officer, said that so far, “Comments from senior Iranian officials hint at a reluctance for direct Iranian retaliation, which could provoke a broader Israeli response, potentially involving Israel’s coalition partners.”

Melamed said Iran is likely to rely on its remaining proxies across the region to continue its strategy of asymmetric warfare against Israel, while avoiding direct military action that could escalate tensions with Israel and its Western allies.

One of Israel’s immediate concerns is preventing the resupply of Hezbollah by Iran. The Israel Defense Forces has indicated that it is actively working to cut off the flow of weapons and equipment from Tehran to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Israeli Air Force commander Maj.-Gen. Tomer Bar, during a briefing at Tel Nof Airbase on Sept. 26, said, “In Lebanon, we are now going to prevent any possibility of transferring weapons from Iran to Hezbollah, vis-à-vis what we have removed from Hezbollah now.”

The IDF has also warned Iran not to send weapons resupply to Hezbollah via Beirut’s civilian airport.

“The security of Hezbollah, its ability to recover from what happened to it in recent days, depends on the open faucet from Iran,” Bar said.

He also stressed that Israel is preparing for a ground maneuver in Southern Lebanon, if necessary, to further dismantle Hezbollah’s capabilities. (JNS Sep 30)

The Absurdity of Calls for a Ceasefire Between Hezbollah and Israel By Steve Rosenberg

In the complex tapestry of Middle Eastern geopolitics, few situations are as fraught with contradictions as the ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. During the past 11 months, Hezbollah has relentlessly bombarded Israel with more than 11,000 rockets, forcing more than 96,000 Israelis to evacuate their homes in the northern Galilee region. Yet each time Israel retaliates to defend its sovereignty, the international community—led by various Western powers and organizations, including the United States—hastily calls for a ceasefire. This reaction raises critical questions about the nature of conflict, the ethics of intervention and the absurdity of expecting peace from an aggressor like Hezbollah, a proxy for Iranian interests.

To understand the current dynamics, one must recognize that Hezbollah’s actions are not merely isolated incidents; they are part of a broader strategy aimed at destabilizing Israel and asserting Iranian influence in the region. The group’s military capabilities have been significantly bolstered over the years, thanks to Iranian funding and support. With a stockpile of sophisticated weaponry and an ideology steeped in resistance to the West and its allies, Hezbollah operates with a sense of impunity that allows it to launch attacks with little fear of immediate repercussions. These unnecessary calls for a ceasefire give Hezbollah further acceptance of their actions. When people like former U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta call Israeli counter-military actions “terrorism” but don’t say a word after 12 young Druze Israelis are killed in a bombing in Majdal Shams, that is the idiocy we are dealing with.

The international community’s call for a ceasefire is particularly perplexing given the asymmetric nature of the conflict. While Israel strives to defend its citizens and maintain its territorial integrity, Hezbollah operates from civilian areas, effectively using the population as human shields. This tactic complicates any military response and creates a moral dilemma for Israel, which must balance the urgency of defense with the ethical implications of civilian casualties. However, when Israel engages in defensive actions, the immediate reaction from various governments and organizations is to cry for a ceasefire, as if the onus of restraint lies solely on the nation under attack.

U.N. Resolution 1701, passed in 2006, serves as a pertinent reference point in this discussion. The resolution calls for a permanent ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel and explicitly prohibits military actions between the Blue Line and the Litani River. However, the reality on the ground starkly contrasts with this resolution. Hezbollah has systematically violated its terms by maintaining a military presence in Southern Lebanon and launching attacks against Israel. The international community’s selective adherence to this resolution illustrates a troubling double standard, where the aggressor is not held accountable, and the defender is pressured to exercise restraint in the face of persistent violence. Of course, we are keenly aware of what side of this fight the United Nations stands on.

Moreover, the call for a ceasefire fails to consider the implications of appeasement in international relations. History has shown that yielding to aggression without addressing the underlying issues often leads to a cycle of violence rather than resolution. Calls for a ceasefire can unintentionally legitimize Hezbollah’s tactics, sending a message that such behavior can be met with international acceptance, provided the response is sufficiently measured. This undermines the principles of deterrence that are crucial for maintaining stability in the region.

In addition, the insistence on a ceasefire ignores the broader context of Hezbollah’s strategy. The group thrives on portraying itself as a defender of the Lebanese people against Israeli aggression despite its actions resulting in widespread suffering for those same civilians. By calling for a ceasefire without demanding that Hezbollah cease its attacks, the international community inadvertently reinforces this narrative. It positions Hezbollah as a legitimate player in the conflict while sidelining the legitimate concerns of Israeli citizens who live under constant threat.

The irony of the situation becomes even more pronounced when

one considers the underlying motivations of the entities calling for a ceasefire. In many cases, these calls come from countries that have historically been reluctant to confront Iranian influence in the region. By urging Israel to cease its military operations, they divert attention from Hezbollah's provocations and the need for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of instability. This reluctance to address the role of Iran and its proxies in perpetuating conflict suggests a broader failure of international policy in the region.

The continued failed diplomatic efforts by the Biden administration and Vice President Kamala Harris highlight the limitations of trying to engage in dialogue with a terrorist organization like Hezbollah. Diplomacy relies on mutual recognition and willingness to negotiate, neither of which Hezbollah has demonstrated. Attempts to approach Hezbollah with diplomatic overtures not only distract from the urgent need to address their aggressive actions but also risk sending a message of legitimacy to a group that has repeatedly violated international norms and targeted civilians. Instead of pursuing unproductive talks, the focus should be on enforcing existing resolutions, like U.N. Resolution 1701, as a starting point for holding Hezbollah accountable for its actions and ensuring that it complies with international law.

Moreover, the calls for a ceasefire often come at a time when the situation on the ground has not evolved in a manner conducive to lasting peace. The expectation that a simple cessation of hostilities will pave the way for dialogue is fundamentally flawed. Lasting peace requires more than just a pause in fighting; it necessitates a comprehensive strategy that addresses the security concerns of all parties involved. Without a framework that holds aggressors accountable and promotes genuine dialogue, ceasefires can quickly devolve into temporary respites that only prolong the cycle of violence.

It's hard to tell what this fall and winter will look like now that Israel has taken control of the war with the incredible killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the rest of the Hezbollah leadership. This looks like a job that might be difficult to fill in the coming weeks. Iran and its terrorist proxies should be terrified. This is not the time for talk about ceasefire or diplomacy. It's time for continued strength by Israel and, hopefully, its partner, the United States. The expectation that Israel should sit idly by while its citizens continue to be targeted, only to be met with demands for restraint upon retaliation, reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of self-defense. True security for Israel—and, by extension, for the region—requires a recognition of the need to confront those who threaten peace, not just in words but in actions.

These calls for a ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel illustrate a troubling inconsistency in international relations. The burden of restraint cannot rest solely on the shoulders of the nation defending itself against sustained aggression. Instead, the international community must adopt a more nuanced approach that recognizes the complexities of the conflict, holds aggressors accountable and fosters conditions conducive to lasting peace. Only then can we hope to move beyond the cycle of violence that has plagued the region for far too long. The time has come for a re-evaluation of strategies, a commitment to genuine dialogue and a refusal to accept the absurdity of calls for a ceasefire without addressing the underlying realities of the conflict. (JNS Sep 30)

By Seeking Victory, Israel Exposed Washington's False Assumptions By Jonathan S. Tobin

Since Oct. 7, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has largely played by the rules set down by his American allies. Though it didn't spare him from constant unfair criticism in which President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of State Antony Blinken often echoed Hamas propaganda about civilian casualties in Gaza, Netanyahu was determined to avoid an open split with the United States.

But in the last weeks as he began serious efforts to force Hezbollah and its Iranian paymasters to back down and stop firing on northern Israel, the prime minister is trying something different. Rather than be

tied into the futile and self-defeating Biden policy that treats diplomacy as an end unto itself, he has chosen a strategy that gives his nation a reasonable chance to achieve victory over its enemies.

This has proven to be as great a shock to Washington as it has been to Tehran and its Hezbollah auxiliaries in Lebanon. As a series of articles in *The New York Times*, acting as always as the reliable mouthpiece of the administration and the foreign-policy establishment, have made clear, the expert class thinks Netanyahu has gone rogue. From their point of view, he has exposed Biden as not only unable to "control" what the administration still considers a dependent minor ally and to prevent a war that it wants no part of, regardless of the consequences.

One may dismiss any *Times* analysis of the current situation as coming from the same outlet that eulogized slain Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, as a "skilled orator" who was a much a warrior for social justice as for terrorism and whom it incredulously claimed believed in a future for Israel in which all people would live in peace and justice with each other—a messianic era that could, of course, only be achieved, after the Jews were subjected to genocide.

But there's no underestimating the shock being felt in the State Department, the National Security Council and at liberal think tanks as Israel's offensive against Hezbollah has not immediately resulted in disaster for the Jewish state and Netanyahu. The Biden-Harris team and its disgraced special envoy to Iran, Robert Malley, and its special envoy for Lebanon, Amos Hochstein, spent the last four years working hard to appease both Iran and Hezbollah. Thus, the series of devastating blows delivered to the terrorists by Israel is a grave disappointment to an administration that has been determined to rein in the Jewish state's desire for security on its northern border, even if that meant tolerating the depopulation of the region due to Hezbollah missile fire.

The conceit of American policy has been a belief not only in the virtues of diplomacy and holding onto the futile hope—at the heart of former President Barack Obama's dangerous 2015 Iran nuclear deal—of a rapprochement with Tehran. It was also predicated on the assumption that any large-scale attack on Hezbollah would inevitably fail and lead to a far wider conflict that would only lead to catastrophe for Israel and the West. This defeatist mindset was similar to the belief that Hamas could not be overcome but only contained, and that any effort to stop, rather than to tolerate (as Obama's deal had done) Iran's nuclear program was similarly doomed.

So, the fact that in two weeks, Netanyahu and Israel have exposed these assumptions as dead wrong is not only a humiliation for the Biden-Harris foreign-policy team but has turned their worldview upside down.

As long as Washington was continuing to send the weapons that Israel needed to fight Hamas and Hezbollah, albeit that they were slow-walked rather than expedited, Netanyahu played along with American concerns about Israeli strategies and tactics in fighting the war in Gaza. What followed was an unnecessarily slow grind that has allowed Hamas and Israel's detractors to claim that the ground campaign was a failure and to encourage those who continue to call for a ceasefire that would allow the terrorists to survive, and thus claim that they had won. Though the Israel Defense Forces has achieved many of its objectives, this perception that its efforts were largely futile has helped encourage the last remnants of Hamas to hold on and refuse to release the remaining hostages that it took on Oct. 7.

But after a year of frustration and faced with the need to do something to force Hezbollah to stop firing on northern Israel and to get Israelis back into their homes, Netanyahu has finally had enough of American second-guessing and obsessive belief in diplomacy and multilateralism.

Starting with the intelligence coup that resulted in the exploding beepers and walkie-talkies—and then precision strikes that took out major Hezbollah commanders and its leader Nasrallah—Israeli forces not only demonstrated their tactical brilliance. They also punctured the myth of Hezbollah's invincibility that first took root during its successful guerilla war to oust Israel from Southern Lebanon in the

1980s and 1990s. What began as a Shi'ite militia was transformed by Iran into a formidable military force that also was perceived as having defeated Israel in the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

Using its military muscle, Hezbollah eventually took effective control of a country divided by decades of ethnic conflict, thus delivering to Iran control of a strategic outpost adjacent to Israel. It then used that military power to achieve another Iranian victory in Syria, where helped by Iranian forces and Russian airpower, starting in 2011, it won the civil war there for the brutal Bashar Assad regime, handing that tortured nation over to Tehran's dominance.

All that fed the American belief that Hezbollah ought not to be challenged. Its possession of up to 200,000 missiles that might be fired at Israel in the event of an all-out war—a number that would overwhelm Israel's vaunted missile-defense systems, and result in mass casualties and destruction—was seen as a decisive weapon for which Israel had no answer.

That assumption held even after Hezbollah responded to Hamas's Oct. 7 massacres in southern Israel with missile fire that forced tens of thousands of Israelis to flee their homes. For a year, Hochstein (the author of a 2021 deal forced upon the government led by Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid that handed over some of Israel's offshore natural-gas fields to Lebanon/Hezbollah) has worked hard to pressure the Israeli government not to do anything more than reply ineffectively to Hezbollah fire. This was done to convince the terrorists and Tehran that they were in no real danger of a serious Israeli effort to change the strategic equation.

But Netanyahu and the Israeli military understand a few facts about their opponents that the Americans don't seem capable of comprehending.

First, as powerful as Hezbollah is, it is not invincible. Its leadership is mortal, and for all of their obsessive secrecy, had come to believe in their own myths. They were also aware that if they started a large-scale war with Israel, they could do great damage but not defeat the Jewish state. The only certain result of such a conflict would be the devastation of Lebanon. That is something that might rouse the various ethnic groups living there and regionally, which have sullenly accepted Hezbollah and Iranian dominance, to reassert their independence.

Second, and more importantly, Hezbollah's value to Iran had little to do with its desire to hold onto Lebanon or Syria.

The purpose of those 200,000 Hezbollah missiles and rockets was not the defense of Lebanon or the corrupt and despotic Hezbollah regime in Beirut. They exist to defend Iran, not the terrorists.

Iran created Hezbollah as part of its imperial project to create Shi'ite hegemony over the region—a quest that must be judged as at least partially successful, given their effective control of a section of the Middle East that comprises Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. In recent years, Hezbollah's main utility has been to act as a fail-safe security system for the Islamist regime in Tehran. Those missiles and the ability to rain down death on Israel only exist to protect the mullahs and their Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps henchmen in the event of an Israeli or Western attack on Iran's nuclear project.

That's why, despite the constant temptation to use Hezbollah's power to hurt Israel, especially when it is under attack from Hamas or even when Iran itself made some stabs at attacking the Jewish state (as with its spectacularly incompetent missile attack in April), the orders from Tehran have always been for Hezbollah to hold their fire.

The reason is obvious. Should Hezbollah fire its missiles under circumstances that would not protect the Islamist regime, not even the great harm they could do to Israel could make up for the damage that this would do to Iranian security.

That is why the systematic destruction of Hezbollah's leadership—namely, its communications and ability to wage war—not to mention the threat to its supposedly impregnable weapons supplies is so worrying to Tehran.

The ability of the Israelis to target Hezbollah's leaders has certainly gotten the attention of Iranians, who realize that they could be afforded the same treatment—a conclusion reinforced by its assassination of Hamas "political" leader Ismail Haniyeh on July 31 in Tehran.

More than that, they see that the commitment to keep up the

missile fire on northern Israel is something that has finally convinced Netanyahu and the IDF that an effort to take out Hezbollah's military power is not only possible but the most rational course available to them.

There are, of course, no guarantees that the series of Israeli airstrikes on Hezbollah targets and what is now assumed by many to be an inevitable ground invasion of Southern Lebanon will achieve Israel's main objective. As much as the clever beeper explosions and the killings of terrorists like Nasrallah and other Hezbollah leaders have cheered Israelis (and others in the region who have good reason to despise the Iranian auxiliaries), if this effort doesn't force Hezbollah to stop firing on Israel and allow Israelis to return to their homes, then none of it can be considered a success.

As such, it is a gamble, but a reasonable one given the choices facing Netanyahu. If he were to follow U.S. advice and accept a ceasefire with Hezbollah, it would—like the various similar deals with Hamas that Washington has tried to force on the Israelis—do nothing to help the people of northern Israel and only reinforce Iran's regional power.

That set up Israel with a choice between a certain defeat for Israeli security via American diplomacy or a chance to achieve a genuine victory over Hezbollah and Iran via a decisive military offensive. Under those circumstances, what Netanyahu is doing is the opposite of the charges of reckless and cynical adventurism that have been lodged against him by the administration and its liberal media cheerleaders.

Netanyahu's plan of action has been both rational and calculated to exploit the weaknesses of Hezbollah and Iran.

As we've already seen, Iran has shown its cards in this standoff. Using the Israeli strikes or even a ground invasion as an excuse for an all-out war against Israel would be self-defeating. Doing so now with Hezbollah having already suffered crippling blows would obviously be unwise. More than that, it would result in the eradication of Iran's ace in the hole in the event of an attack on its own regime. Preserving what is left of Hezbollah's deterrent power, such as it is after the last two weeks, should be more important to Tehran than saving face against the Israelis.

They can either let Hezbollah be pushed out of Southern Lebanon and see its vital missile arsenal seriously diminished or it can order its terrorist proxies to stand down against the Israelis.

Might Israel have miscalculated? It's entirely possible. There are no guarantees in any war. But given the advantage that the Israelis have already seized in this conflict, the risks of disaster have been seriously reduced.

Contrary to the calumnies hurled at him by both domestic and foreign critics, in making this choice, Netanyahu is not cynically prolonging the post-Oct. 7 war to stay in office. Much to the dismay of his opponents, it is clearly boosting his popularity. But if that is so, it is because—like his decision to pursue a war to destroy Hamas—he is following the will of the Israeli people, who want their sovereignty reasserted over all of their country and see the terrorists constrained, if not completely defeated.

At this point, it's clear that the offensive has to a large extent restored Israel's deterrent power against its enemies that it lost when the military and intelligence establishments, as well as the government, were caught unawares on Oct. 7. It was Israeli military power that convinced moderate Arabs to make peace with it, not the 30 years of failed peace processing that followed the disastrous 1993 Oslo Accords. As Lee Smith correctly noted in Tablet magazine, Netanyahu and the IDF have reminded the world—and most specifically, Washington and the Europeans—that wars can be won. And the way they are won is by killing the enemy, not by making concessions to genocidal terrorists in diplomatic agreements.

That is a lesson that liberal Americans refuse to learn no matter how many times it is proven true. But it is one that the people of Israel, who are still under siege, understand. Netanyahu's decision to try for victory is the kind of rational choice essential to their survival and that of the West. It's a shame that the government in Washington, which still claims to be the leader of the free world, has forgotten this essential piece of wisdom. (JNS Sep 30)