

Chapter 7: Weakening Iran and the Axis of Resistance

The formation and cohesion of the resistance front composed of the Iranian Shiite axis and the Palestinian resistance organizations eroded Israeli deterrence and increased the sense of dangerous self-confidence among Israel's enemies. Therefore, a correct definition of victory in war entails weakening the axis led by Iran, cracking its cognitive cohesion, and challenging its sense of achievement.

Hezbollah: In order to ensure the safe return of the residents in the north to their homes and to provide them with a sense of security, the threat of a widespread attack by Hezbollah on Israeli territory must, at the very least, be removed. A reality must be created in the region bordering Lebanon, which will resemble the period after the Second Lebanon War and before the Radwan force was deployed in the north and along the border.

This security reality necessitates pushing the military capabilities of the Radwan force away from the border and stabilizing the new situation through a framework of understandings with the state of Lebanon, and indirectly with Hezbollah, based on agreements that will be achieved through American mediation and oversight. Even if these agreements are reached, the IDF will prepare for a strong defense of northern communities against the threat of a surprise attack, and the working assumption should be that the agreements will not hold up over time.

Supervision and monitoring (international and Israeli) of the implementation of the agreements must be renewed, namely, the widespread deployment of Lebanese military forces (including close supervision by the United States and France) and a renewed deployment of UNIFIL along the border. While these forces will not engage in combat with Hezbollah, their presence in the area will limit Hezbollah's ability to return to the border area and its freedom of action.

The IDF's readiness for war in the north must be enhanced. Although continuing the policy of the current use of force and diplomatic pressure could lead to renewed stability, preparations must be made should the effort fail. If this happens, and if Hezbollah thwarts a planned course whose purpose is to remove the threats from the border area, Israel will be required to launch an attack on Hezbollah and Lebanon to remove the threat. Therefore, Israel must prepare its home front and its population for the consequences and the complexities of an extensive war against Hezbollah.

Iran: Pressure must be exerted on Iran (American support is essential!) to compel it to restrain the pro-Iranian militias, thereby influencing Hezbollah and curtailing its activity. Thus far, Iran is paying a small price for its involvement in Hezbollah's (and Hamas's) actions.

The war has exposed the weaknesses in Iran's approach, which must be exploited to undermine its regional strategy:

1. Constraints on controlling the militia forces;
2. The danger of strategic escalation as a result of their tactical action;

3. The limitations on being able to influence Israel's behavior and deter it from action;
4. Wearing down of the strength of Hezbollah and the militias in Syria, to an extent that jeopardizes their role as defenders of Iran;
5. Strengthening the strategic connection between Israel and the United States through the action of envoys.

The Nuclear Project:

Parallel to its war against Israel, Iran continues to develop its nuclear project. While it may not be on the verge of building a bomb, it is advancing toward the nuclear threshold. However, its progress in the field receives no response from the United States, the international community, or Israel. The international approach toward Iran is that of containment. In order to divert Iran from the dangerous path it is taking, Iran must face international consequences. All of the following steps require close coordination with the United States:

1. Sanctions in the UN Security Council in response to Iran's violation of the agreements it has signed;²
2. Increased monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency of Iran's nuclear program and discussion of Iranian violations in the next quarterly Governor's Committee meeting (June 2024);
3. Advancement of a proposal for a new nuclear deal that will permit the rolling back of capabilities, alongside a diplomatic process that will allow for the partial lifting of sanctions;
4. Increasing readiness for military action against Iran's nuclear facilities, also as a signal to the American government (requires coordination with the United States and cooperation with it).

² This necessitates a reversal by one of the European countries, as there is no veto power.