



## The Threat of a Third Lebanon War Cannot Be Underestimated

July 12 marked the 11th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War. After 34 days of fighting, the UN Security Council Resolution 1701 put an end to hostilities and called on UNIFIL to stand at the Lebanon-Israel border as a peacekeeping force.

However, during all this time, Hezbollah has devoted to rearm, increase its arsenal, improve its strategic capacity via its involvement in the Syrian civil war, build tunnels and missile factories and, in short, **to be better prepared for a new confrontation against Israel** — which might be near.

In this regard, over recent months, some developments are pointing to that worrisome outcome. On July 20, U.S. representative to the UN, Nikki Haley, warned the international community that it should apply more pressure against Hezbollah and its destabilizing attitude, especially towards Israel. A month earlier, Israel's UN representative, Dany Dannon, reported to the Security Council that posing as the agricultural NGO "Green Without Borders", Hezbollah had installed outposts beyond the line allowed by UN Security Council Resolutions 1701 and 1559. At the same time, the chief of staff for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Gadi Eizenkot, was clear about the threat posed by the Iranian-backed Shi'ite terrorist group: **"Hezbollah is a prime priority for the Israeli army"**. Certainly, on June 23, Hezbollah's Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah threatened Israel once more.

It is true that this threat is not new. In July 2015, the IDF published a strategic analysis that showed Hezbollah as the main threat to its country. Indeed, Hezbollah has changed very much since the Second Lebanon War (2006) and today is one of the great challenges for Israel's security.

**Hezbollah is currently a much stronger force than in 2006.** The terrorist group has amassed during these 11 years about **130,000 missiles**, many of them are long and medium range. Among them, they have the Iranian Zelzal 1, which can reach Tel Aviv, and the Russian-made Yajnot, which can reach the port of Haifa and the Israeli gas fields in the Mediterranean Sea. The IDF also estimates that, in the next war, Hezbollah could fire up to **1,500 rockets a day, compared to 200 in 2006** —thus Israel will face a much greater strategic challenge. Furthermore, according to intelligence reports, Iran has built two missile factories in southern Lebanon. Due to high involvement, especially with ground forces, in the Syrian civil war, Hezbollah has gained more experience in combat and improved qualitative levels; its military wing is currently a force of about 65,000 much more sophisticated men than in 2006. According to the U.S. State Department, Hezbollah has become the most sophisticated terrorist group in the world since 2012, the **"A-team of terrorist groups."**

In the same vein, according to the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies report *The Third Lebanon War: The Next Clash Between Hezbollah and Israel in the Shadow of the Nuclear Agreement with Iran*, published in July 2016

and authored by Jonathan Schanzer, Tony Badran, and David Daoud, a new confrontation would be a multi-pronged war, given Hezbollah's involvement in Syria, which could lead to another contender: Iran.

As a result of this threat, the Friends of Israel Initiative (FOII) and the High-level Military Group (HLMG) went to Israel in order to learn about the current situation at the Lebanese border. Thus, as we announced last March, the FOII-sponsored High-level Military Group studied Hezbollah's threat to Israel, assessed its strategic implications, and analyzed Israel's readiness for a new war and how Iran is trying to build a new Shiite crescent from Tehran to Beirut, via Baghdad and Damascus through its proxy in Lebanon with the goal of threatening Israel and the Sunni states. In addition, the HLMG obtained firsthand information from Israeli senior Army and intelligence officials and met with Israel's Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who agreed on their identifying the main threat to stability in the Middle East: **Iran and its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah.**

The HLMG will soon publish a report with key findings and conclusions to alert the West about the danger that Hezbollah represents and the high possibility of a Third Lebanon War—that could be devastating for Israel and Lebanon—and could have profound consequences for the geopolitical transformation of the Middle East. The HLMG will also explain the legal and strategic implications of urban warfare in massive populated areas and how the IDF is training to minimize civil casualties.

**An upcoming war against Israel might be near** and in addition to the military front, a new campaign to undermine Israel's right to defend itself against terror will surely emerge. The Friends of Israel Initiative is ready to take on this unfair campaign and defend that Israel's right to self-defense against Islamic terrorism should be praised and not jeopardized in the West since Israel's security is our own security.

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## Spotlight

### A Historic Visit, an Exemplary Friendship



The Friends of Israel Initiative informed last December about the visit of Israel's President Reuven Rivlin to India. We pointed out how the relations between both countries are flourishing, how bilateral trade has reached five billion dollars and how the military bilateral cooperation has grown exponentially. FOII also mentioned the common challenges that both friendly nations face, such as Islamic terrorism; and also highlighted the good opinion that both societies have of each other.

However, the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi **has been a step beyond just good relations.**

The visit constitutes **the consolidation of a very special friendship that will serve as an example to other countries.** Israel has much to contribute to the world, as we have constantly claimed. Its relations with India constitute an outstanding demonstration about how Israel can be an invaluable partner for democratic and free nations.

Modi's visit to Israel was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister since the establishment of diplomatic relations 25 years ago. On a two-day visit, Modi signed cooperation agreements in areas such as water, agriculture, technology, and defense. The Indian PM also witnessed first hand the strategic situation of Israel, and showed his strong opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially due to the danger that these weapons might fall in the hands of Islamic terrorist groups.

**India and Israel have endured the curse of Islamic terrorism for years.** Both leaders are in agreement on this issue. In this sense, the joint visit of Modi and Netanyahu to Moshe Holtzberg, a boy who lost his parents in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, was especially moving and full of symbolic significance. Modi reaffirmed his commitment against terrorism and said that there is no justification for this type of barbaric actions.

Modi's visit and the strengthening of relations between India and Israel have been an example for the entire Western world, which in the last decade has shown ambiguity towards Israel and its difficult situation in the Middle East. As the Friends of Israel Initiative made clear in the report *Israel: A Vital Asset of the West*, **Israel is a great ally in all areas and its relationship with India is a vibrant example of this.**

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## FOII'S ACTIVITIES

### Events and Activities

#### **ALLEN WEST IN THE 2017 CHRISTIANS UNITED FOR ISRAEL (CUFI) SUMMIT**

The Friends of Israel Initiative Board Member and former Congressman Colonel Allen West addressed the 2017 Christians United for Israel (CUFI) summit in Washington DC on July 17, warning that pro-Arab activists in the United States and abroad were working to erase Jewish history and thus undermine the State of Israel.

Watch his entire address [here](#).

#### **BRUSSELS PRESENTATION OF FOII-SPONSORED LANDMARK REPORT: *FIGHTING TERROR EFFECTIVELY: AN ASSESSMENT OF ISRAEL EXPERIENCE ON THE HOME FRONT***

On June 28, 2017 a delegation of the High Level Home Front Group visited Brussels to present the findings of its landmark report regarding the relevance of Israel's experience in helping other democratic nations to fight terrorism.

See the full event [here](#).

### Op-eds

***How to Fight Islamic Terrorism Effectively? - Learn from Israel***, Breitbart, June 16, Rafael Bardaji and Colonel Richard Kemp. [Read](#) the full op-ed.

### Working Papers

#### ***The United Nations and the State of Israel***

Joshua Muravchik

The author reviews the history of anti-Israel bias in the UN. He also emphasizes that the new leadership of Antonio Guterres can change the current situation and turn the organization into an effective instrument to strengthen peace and to defend human rights.

[Read](#) the working paper.

#### ***The United Nations and the Arab-Palestinian Refugee Industry***

Dr. Asaf Romirowsky

The author addresses the problem of how Palestinian refugees have served as a weapon against Israel in the UN - especially in the UNRWA. Among other recommendations, Romirowsky suggests the dissolution of the UNRWA and the transfer of all its services to the UN High Commissioner of Refugees.

[Read](#) the working paper.

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Follow FOII on social media to keep informed about our activities and about interesting feeds on Israel, the Middle East, and the West.



*"We are making the northern front and the Hezbollah group the highest priority of the IDF"*

*Gadi Eizenkot*

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## Help us now

Your contribution is all the more welcome now that the Friends of Israel Initiative is up and running and you can be rest assured that it will be put to effective use to further the cause.

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