

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Amos Harel

17.10.2023

Israel-Gaza War: A Catastrophic Fiasco That Will Cause Political Upheaval

The self-proclaimed Mr. Security, an epithet adopted by his supporters, issued warnings to Iran and Hezbollah, but mocked the need for diplomatic action in the Palestinian sphere, allowing himself to be won over by calm on the Hamas front, without monitoring the state of readiness of the army. When this war ends, the price for this mistake must be paid, as happened to Golda Meir 50 years ago.



The failure of the Israeli intelligence services and poor preparation were not the only problems: it seems that Israel's operational defensive concept vis-à-vis Gaza has been shattered ■ Netanyahu will have to pay a political price for his policy towards Hamas after the war.

At noon on Friday, a senior staff official was chatting with a guest in his office in Tel Aviv. A few minutes after the electronic clock in the office struck 14:00 p.m., the two

realized that they had not noticed the exact time when the Yom Kippur War broke out 50 years ago. The conversation naturally drifted back to the lessons of 1973.



A Tsahal soldier looks at a burning car in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon on Saturday. Photo: Ilan Assayag

"In the occupied territories," the officer said, "we are five minutes away from an intifada." He said it without knowing he was prophesying. The host, like the rest of the IDF, was mostly concerned about what might happen in the West Bank. But under the noses of the defense establishment, an unprecedented Hamas attack was taking shape at the same time, along the Gaza border.

We should be wary of excessive hysteria. But we must not minimize the severity of the calamity that has occurred. Israel has been at war since Saturday morning. The Hamas attack, which took Israeli intelligence by surprise, completely collapsed the operational defensive concept on the Gaza Strip border. More than 250 people have been killed on the Israeli side and more than 1,590 injured, a figure that could rise sharply once all the sites attacked have been recorded.

According to reports from Gaza, dozens of prisoners and bodies have been transferred from Israel to Gaza. Even in terms of hostages [*sic*] and missing persons, this situation is not comparable to the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit in 2006. The government is unlikely to moderate its airstrikes on Gaza to protect the lives of Israeli prisoners. Such considerations are likely to be ignored in the heat of the moment.

Israel has referred to the "[Dahiya doctrine](#)," which involves the systematic destruction of infrastructure in densely populated areas, as a lesson learned from the second Lebanon war in 2006. This is what is happening in Gaza today, with great intensity.

The IDF, the Shin Bet and the police engaged in house-to-house fighting for ten hours in communities and military bases where armed Palestinians had barricaded themselves. In some places, such as the city of Ofakim and Kibbutz Be'eri, terrorists barricaded themselves with hostages [*sic*].

The army is mobilizing reserve forces on the scale of a war mobilization. Terrible massacres have taken place in some communities and army bases. Although thousands of rockets and missiles were fired at the Israeli home front from the south to Jerusalem and into the Tel Aviv agglomeration, this was primarily a diversionary tactic. Hamas' efforts focused on communities along the border. Tragically, they succeeded.



Smoke and flames erupt after Israeli forces hit a tower in Gaza City on Saturday. Photo: Mohammed Salem/Reuters

Israel's reaction has cost dearly, both for the attackers and for airstrikes inside the Gaza Strip. Hundreds of Palestinian lives have been lost and the attacks are expected to intensify overnight and in the coming days. But that's not the only scenario that could erupt.

Although the IDF is concentrating its forces and efforts in the south, they must take into account the possibility of war in various theaters that would include the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and possibly Hezbollah and extremist elements among Israeli Arabs. Hezbollah is waiting to see how events unfold and is considering its actions. We can assume that Hezbollah leader Nasrallah has his finger on the trigger.

The situation calls for a painful historical comparison. Israel's conception of Gaza has collapsed. It has failed in its policy, in the deployment of its defensive forces, in its preparation for surprises and in the total absence of warnings from the intelligence services. On the night of Friday and Saturday, Israel's political and military leaders slept

peacefully at home. The forces were not reinforced because there was no early warning. It was normal to think that Hamas was preparing for new war games.

Military intelligence and the army's general staff went even further: over the past year, they often claimed that Hamas had been deterred by Israel following the results of previous campaigns and that it did not intend to start a new war. In reality, hundreds, if not thousands, of Hamas fighters had been preparing for a surprise attack for months, without any of this having been leaked. Meanwhile, Israel was debating whether to increase the number of workers allowed to enter the country from Gaza for work.



Palestinian workers wait to cross the Israeli-controlled Al-Jalama checkpoint near Jenin on their way to work in Israel. Photo: Raneen Sawafta/REUTERS

The catastrophic result came 50 years and one day after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. This is a huge failure, shared by all political and military leaders, but this issue will only need to be dealt with in depth after the war is over. The problem is that Israel enters this war in an unprecedented state of crisis, in which the extremist and insane behavior of the government has dictated an agenda focused on all things bad.

This does not absolve the professional echelons, but it will certainly hinder the functioning of the state in the difficult days ahead. Hamas learned the lessons of Operation Protective Edge in 2014 and prepared accordingly. During that campaign, although it attempted to carry out attacks using tunnels, the organization largely failed in its efforts to introduce fighters into Israel, with most of these attempts being thwarted by IDF forces.

This time, Hamas attacked army positions where the state of alert appears to have been low and forces limited. Clashes also took place at the headquarters of the Gaza division

and other military bases. The damage to the division's headquarters has severely disrupted the chain of command and control along the entire border fence.

Soldiers, police, and other members of the security forces, as well as volunteer residents, fought heroically to block the fighters already inside the communities. That said, it must be said that there were also terrible examples of problematic readiness for combat and lack of competence on the part of some of the forces taken by surprise. Senior reserve officers, veterans of many wars, who watched videos recorded by Hamas, were utterly shocked by what they saw.



Palestinians break through the security fence between Gaza and Israel on Saturday. Photo: Stringer/Reuters

But the problem doesn't lie just in that or a lack of intelligence. It seems that the whole system has simply collapsed. This did not happen when Israel confronted the Egyptian army or Hezbollah. This time, it was a much smaller group that dealt Israel its most painful blow since 1973 (with casualties in the first few days reaching the levels of the first day of this war), in scenes reminiscent of the horrors of 1948. It should be noted, however, that both wars ended with Israel's victory.

The wall proved useless

Following the temporary freezing of the border crossings, Hamas (Nukhba) special forces turned their attention to a large number of communities along the border, which had no significant defenses. The result is that, even after several hours since the attack began at 6:30 a.m., some communities remain under siege, with fighters roaming around looking

for victims. Unfortunately, these plans are exactly what Hamas has trained for years. Without warning, with a fragile defensive deployment, the walls were breached.

The obstacle built by Israel, a huge wall designed to prevent the digging of offensive tunnels, has been of no avail. It has simply been mocked. The operational gates of the border fence used by the IDF were broken through by Hamas, which swept through the area with armed men in pickup trucks. Retired Colonel Yossi Langotsky, a veteran of military intelligence and paratroopers, warned in an article in *Haaretz* in 2018 that the IDF was building a useless Maginot Line in the Gaza Strip, which would be breached in the event of a crisis. Yesterday it turned out that he was right.

Throughout the day, the voices of the residents of these communities, some of which are occupied by Hamas, were raised. They were heartbreaking. This tragedy unfolded live on television, and the entire nation was able to hear and see it. The long-term consequences for Israelis living along the border, for Israeli-Palestinian relations and for the regional situation will be enormous. The trust and respect between the public and the security forces, and the IDF in particular, has been broken in a way that will be felt here for years to come.



Palestinians celebrate the destruction of an Israeli tank at the Gaza Strip barrier, east of Khan Younis, on Saturday. Photo: Yusef Massoud/AP

In the first phase of this war, Hamas has already produced its victory scenes, which it will celebrate on social media and on television channels. At the same time, the organization and its leaders will face disaster, as will the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. Hamas has won a huge operational victory, but its success may have gone too far.

Israel will respond with immense force, with few restrictions on the use of live fire in densely populated urban areas. When Palestinians circulate photos of mutilated corpses and battered prisoners, of looting and barbaric victory celebrations, Israelis are boiling with blood. Among the targets already achieved in Gaza are skyscrapers used by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but also family homes. Today, against the backdrop of a vicious attack aimed at killing civilians, Israel believes it has ample international legitimacy to act. The results will be felt in Gaza.

The possibility of ground manoeuvres and occupation of the Gaza Strip cannot be ruled out. Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif, who boasted of the defeat they inflicted on the IDF on Saturday morning, could still achieve their desired death as martyrs. Leaders of other organizations in the region are also not safe.

The nightmare scenario unfolding in Gaza may not end there. It is likely to spread to other areas. All this comes as a surprise to Israel, as has been said, at a bad time. Perhaps it is part of Hamas' calculation that it can exploit Israel's weakness.

Given the serious intelligence gaps, we cannot rule out the hypothesis that we do not know what is happening in other areas. Was this action coordinated with Hezbollah and Iran? Is Hezbollah waiting for Israel to use a large number of its Iron Dome interceptor missiles before entering the fray? Presumably, Israel will now be sending dire warnings through various channels to Tehran, Damascus and Beirut.

A misconception

On the eve of Yom Kippur, Maj. Gen. Eran Niv, head of broadcast intelligence for the IDF General Staff, gave an interview to *Haaretz*. It is behind the reissue of an old book [1962] entitled "*Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*," by Roberta Wohlstetter. His analysis of the operational and intelligence failure suffered by the United States in 1941 could, in his view, help us prevent the next failure. The editors of this interview were less optimistic. "The next surprise will come – the question is how Israel prepares for it," the caption read. The events of Saturday showed that the answer was: very unsatisfactory. In the 26 years I've been covering Israeli defense for *Haaretz*, I can't remember a more horrific day. It is all the more awkward because the surprise came in an area where Israel spends billions of shekels for surveillance purposes. When push came to shove, we didn't know anything. But the failure was not only one of information gathering, but also operational and even conceptual. "We've been living in an imaginary reality for years," a senior reserve officer

said Saturday of the fighting in the Gaza Strip, as he hurried toward the northern front and tried to hear news from home.



Israeli civilians evacuated from Kibbutz Holit, near Gaza, on Saturday. Photo: Eliyahu Hershkovitz

"We became too dependent on the sophisticated underground barrier, on technology. We became convinced that Hamas was discouraged and frightened, and that we would always be alert in time. We thought we knew how to analyze their intentions and thoughts. It will be hard to be disillusioned." live on television, and the whole nation could hear and see it. The long-term consequences for Israelis living along the border, for Israeli-Palestinian relations and for the regional situation will be enormous. The trust and respect between the public and the security forces, and the IDF in particular, has been broken in a way that will be felt here for years to come.

A New Political Reality

The war being waged in Gaza is completely changing the cards in terms of diplomatic and political developments. Reserve soldiers who had announced that they would no longer report for duty due to the judicial coup d'état have returned to their units and headquarters. It is likely that some of them are now taking part in the flights that drop huge numbers of bombs on Gaza. The main opposition parties, Yesh Atid and National Unity, have already expressed their willingness to discuss the creation of a unity government.

In the current emergency circumstances, when the alternative is to go to war with Bezael Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir occupying key cabinet posts, there seems to be no choice but to form such a government.

As was the case 50 years ago, the surprise came on the Sabbath. At the end of the Sabbath, [Netanyahu's] spokesmen began their assault. It's the Shin Bet's fault, it's the fault of military intelligence, it's the Chief of Staff's fault, it's the protest movement's fault. The protest will be suspended for the time being, and rightly so, until the war ends. But we cannot give up on a thorough investigation at its climax: what has happened to us and how have we fallen into such a murderous trap?

There were apparently no intelligence warnings, but there were warning signs, from Gaza to the West Bank. All the leaders ignored them. We can expect a huge political impact, as in 1973. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, we must not forget, is responsible for an unprecedented political and security failure.

The self-proclaimed Mr. Security, an epithet adopted by his supporters, issued warnings to Iran and Hezbollah, but mocked the need for diplomatic action in the Palestinian sphere, allowing himself to be won over by calm on the Hamas front, without monitoring the state of readiness of the army. When this war ends, the price for this mistake must be paid, as happened to Golda Meir 50 years ago.

Amos Harel

Original: Israel-Gaza War: A Catastrophic Failure That Will Send Political Shockwaves

Source: [Haaretz](#), October 8, 2023

Translated by CMBL

Source: [Flaxcala](#), October 13, 2023

La Pluma. net 17.10.2023