

Opinion: Citizens of Israel, Get the Bomb Shelters Ready

In Iran, Syria, Lebanon and beyond, they're watching, listening and drawing conclusions from Israel's conduct during the last round of hostility with Gaza.



Iron Dome anti-missile system fires interception missiles as rockets are launched from Gaza towards Israel as seen from the city of Ashkelon, Israel October 27, 2018.REUTERS/Amir Cohen

- We must give credit to Netanyahu: He prevented another Gaza war
- Netanyahu's top ministers call for elections after defense chief's resignation
- Bennett: I asked to be defense minister, Israel's deterrence is eroding

Avigdor Lieberman cannot pretend his hands are clean. Contrary to his public disavowals, he was a full partner ("a responsible policy is needed") in the policy of permissiveness being carried out, for quite some time now, by Benjamin Netanyahu and the defense establishment.

As defense minister, Lieberman did not put up a real fight against the prime minister, who declined to task the IDF with destroying the terror infrastructure and capacities in Gaza. In his meetings with the military chiefs, Lieberman did not ask them to come up with creative ways to destroy the weapons factories and take the leaders of the armed terror forces out of action.

He did not say to them: You're against conquering Gaza? Then use your imaginations and come up with smart, sequenced operations that don't require Gaza's conquest. You have all the means and manpower necessary, and more. Get to work.

Many have heard Gadi Eisenkot say that if Hezbollah were to fire even a fraction of its 150,000 rockets, the results would be catastrophic. But the IDF chief of staff has also reassured his audiences that the army has trained and is prepared to

confront such a danger, and that the enemy will be very sorry if it dares fire rockets at Israel. For many years now, the IDF has been contending rather continuously with the danger of the Hamas rockets, and fierce warnings have been issued to that terrorist group as well. In these years, Eisenkot could have proven in the south – to Iran, Hezbollah and the Israeli public – that his warnings regarding rockets in the north are credible.

Has he proven this? Do Hamas and Islamic Jihad have reason to be “very sorry,” or sorry at all, for the thousands of rockets they’ve fired? The air force may bomb “quality targets,” but how could 470 rockets have fallen on southern Israel this past week? If Eisenkot can’t prevent rocket barrages on this front, where the resistance is much less potent than what would be expected in the north, then why should Hamas (or we) believe him when the day comes – and it surely will come – that Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah’s fate will be any different than that of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar?

In an ongoing failure that could cost us thousands of casualties and damage to the most vital infrastructure, we’ve allowed Hezbollah to arm itself with a huge trove of missiles, including strategic ones, without any real effort to prevent it. Hamas has learned from this and armed itself with thousands of rockets too. While Hezbollah restrains itself for the time being, Hamas goes on firing them at civilian targets in Israel.

In Iran, Syria, Lebanon and beyond, they’re watching, listening and drawing conclusions from all this. Whenever Iran decides, it could instruct Hezbollah to fire rockets at Israel, and not just at the north.

The IDF is also studying the situation and drawing conclusions, we’re told. Maybe. But when it comes to Hezbollah and Hamas, we can plainly see that such statements don’t mean much.

Residents near the Gaza border, already anticipating the coming rounds of rocket attacks, are venting their fury. Opposition leaders say Netanyahu should be ashamed. Yet they refrain from directing the same criticism at the ones backing – and some say leading – the policy of permissiveness: the defense establishment.

This is the truth, and it is known to all, particularly to the enemy. Citizens of Israel, get the bomb shelters ready.

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