

UNITED AGAINST NUCLEAR IRAN

Translation of interview with Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, on his perspectives and participation in the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah

Al-Alam – Exclusive

During this interview, General Soleimani discussed the hidden and visible goals of the 33-Day War [i.e. Second Lebanon War], and how Hezbollah's leadership managed [both] the military and psychological [aspects of the] war, which [i.e. Hezbollah] alone was and remains the only hope to defend Lebanon.

The following is the full text of the interview. The interviewer questions are in blue.

Interviewer Introduction

In the Name of God the Most Merciful

From the heart of the fire

The first media interview with General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Guard of the Islamic Revolution

In the Name of God the Most Merciful, from Whom we Seek Help.

We welcome you and offer you our most hearty gratitude.

We also offer you our condolences on the occasion of the days of the martyrdom of the Lord of Martyrs [i.e. Imam Hussein] (peace be upon him).

The Office of Preservation and Dissemination of the Remnants of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution acts to explain the opinions of Imam Khamenei on various subjects.

In order to accomplish this goal, it conducts discussions with various officials and thought leaders in all fields.

One of the important issues that was discussed in our interview with the Secretary General of Hezbollah [i.e. Hassan Nasrallah] in Lebanon is the matter of the 33-Day War; This war became the starting point of changes in the region and the Resistance front.

We are honored today by your visit, in your capacity as the commander of the Quds Force and the person who participated personally in the battlefield during the days of this war, so that we may hear your analysis of this momentous event.

Certainly, you have not had until this time any media interviews of this sort [in your capacity] as the commander of the Quds Force, and God willing this interview will be your first in 20 years.

We begin with the first question, to analyze the preliminary reasons for the occurrence of the 33-Day War, especially after the presence of the United States in in the region – i.e. in Iraq and Afghanistan – for 5 years?

The Goal of the Aggression was to Eliminate Hezbollah

There were hidden factors in the 33-Day War, which were the real factors and causes of the war. There were also revealed and clear goals, but these were excuses for the hidden goals that the Zionist Entity wished to push through and achieve. Of course, when I say there were hidden causes and factors, we had information regarding the preparations of the Zionist Entity [for war], but we did not have information that the Enemy wanted to launch a surprise attack. After that, we arrived at two conclusions or issues regarding this result, and that is that it was decided [by Israel] before the onset of the war that the attack would be quick and surprising. The elimination of Hezbollah in this surprise attack was expected, and this war coincided with two important events related to the region as a whole, and another relates to the Zionist Entity in particular.

Regarding the region, the United States had assembled its forces on a very massive scale in the region due to the event of the 11th of September. The only comparable mobilization of forces can be seen during the Second World War, of course from the standpoint of numbers alone.

However, from the qualitative perspective, this mobilization was unprecedented even during the Second World War.

In 1991, and due to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, America carried out its attack. Saddam's defeat had its militarizing implications in our region, and led to the entrenchment of American forces. However, after September 11th [2001], because of America's two massive assaults, almost 40% of US Armed Forces poured into our region in a direct way. After that, and after the passage of time and the changes that occurred, that came to include even the reserve forces and National Guard. So it can be said that approximately 60% of the United States' army entered our region, both between internal and external forces. Therefore, there was a massive military presence from the perspective of numbers, where they had 150,000 soldiers in Iraq alone, and more than 30,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan. This is separate from the coalition forces, which numbered 150,000 fighters in Afghanistan.

The American Presence in Iraq Threatened Iran

Therefore, there were forces comprised of 200,000 fighters, specialists, and trainees in our region in the vicinity of Palestine. This presence, naturally, offered many appropriate opportunities to the Zionist Entity. For the American presence in Iraq prevented the movement of the Syrians in Syria, and was also a threat to the government of Syria. It was also a threat to Iran. Therefore, if you looked at Iraq's geography during the 2006 war – i.e. the 33-Day War – you would find that America placed a barrier of 200,000 fighters between the two main countries of the Resistance Axis, supported by hundreds of planes and helicopters, in addition to thousands of armored devices [vehicles]. Naturally, this reality provided the opportunity to the Zionist Entity to benefit from these circumstances and carry out some action. Meaning, this presence and hegemony was

assumed to have an intimidating effect on Iran, and intimidating and paralyzing Syria, so these two regimes would not be able to do anything.

The Zionist Entity's move was based on this projection, particularly since the American government at the time was the government of Bush the son [i.e. George W. Bush]. This was a stern government, impetuous in its decision-making – particularly the team that governed the White House, and which was a friend to the Zionist Entity. Therefore, they saw an opportunity to initiate such an act.

The Zionist's Goal Was to Create a Total Demographic Change

So, the root of the matter is that the Zionist Entity seized upon the American military presence in the region, and seized the opportunity [created by] the downfall of Saddam [Hussein], the initial American victory in Afghanistan, and the overwhelming atmosphere of fear that America created in the region – whereby it was threatening a large number of political groups in the region and the world [by accusing them of being] terrorist groups [merely] for opposing its policies. The Zionist Entity wanted to seize upon this opportunity, and believed this was an ideal chance to carry out a lighting war, because it had been previously defeated in 2000 AD and withdrew from Lebanon. In reality, it [i.e. Israel] fled from Lebanon after Hezbollah imposed defeat upon it, and now it wanted to return again – not to re-occupy [south Lebanon], but to destroy and demographically alter south Lebanon. This is what became apparent later during the war and with its onset, approximately. Their [i.e. Israel's] main goal was a complete demographic change, so that the popular forces in south Lebanon who had a religious connection with Hezbollah would be removed from Syria – akin to what happened after 1967 with the Palestinians in south Lebanon. A similar project was planned for the Shiites in south Lebanon. This was the former project they implemented with the Palestinians specifically, forcing the Palestinians to leave south Lebanon, and [to] live in several refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and other countries of the Arab world. [Yasser] Arafat was even forced to relocate his headquarters from Lebanon to Tunisia and Morocco. The reality is that they want to create a homeless administration. This was their same intention toward Lebanon's Shiites. I will therefore address what happened before the war so this matter will become completely clear.

The Americans and the Israelis had two important expressions regarding this issue. Bush expressed it in very [vulgar terms](#) at the beginning of the war when the [microphone](#) was working. Because that word is on his [low] level, I cannot repeat it. He said it in support of this matter. Not in support of the war [itself], but in support of the result of this war. The other more polite and diplomatic expression was said by [Secretary of State Condoleezza] Rice when those massacres, killing operations, and chaos in south Lebanon reached their apex, and the bombings which resulted from being drunk on technology and their [alleged] ability to destroy any location they wanted due to their technological precision. Massacres happened which made the horror of the [1996] Qana Massacre pale in comparison. She [Rice] used that expression, whereby she described all of that chaos with her silly analogy as the “birth pangs of the new Middle East.” The clamor of the victims under the rubble, the oppressed children, and the innocent women – she likened this to the pains of labor and childbirth. This was therefore a major event, and these expressions contained evidence [that it was the result of] a large project.

Regarding the Zionist Entity, it had prepared a large [refugee] camp, several ships, and had prepared a camp to absorb the largest number of people possible. They would first transfer 30,000 [people] to the camp inside Palestine [i.e. inside Israel]. Then, in this camp, they would select out the ordinary people and then transfer them to other countries or places; they would arrest those they considered criminals or connected to Hezbollah's organization. They had prepared ships for deportation. Therefore, the war at that phase was [carried out] with a high technological precision, in contrast to all of the [previous Israeli wars] which left behind scorched earth [lit. burned the green and the dry]. In other words, they wanted to attack a whole sect in totality.

One of the Most Important Goals of the War was Uprooting All of Hezbollah and a Certain Sect

At first, they tried to direct the matter at a specific party – i.e. Hezbollah – and then they expanded the matter to the entire Shiite sect in south Lebanon in order to implement this demographic change entirely in the south. This is what can be understood about the hidden dimension of the roots of the war. This is what they admitted later, when they admitted that they intended – meaning [Prime Minister Ehud] Olmert, his defense minister and afterwards been the Chief of Staff of the Army – they said they intended to carry out this war in a surprising manner, and had that surprise attack happened, then most of Hezbollah's positions should have been destroyed in the large-scale airstrikes in the first phase [of the war]. Losses and severe damage would have been inflicted upon 30% of Hezbollah's organization. In the subsequent phase, they wanted to destroy [Hezbollah] completely. However, the basis was seizing upon the widescale American presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and the region, and the desire of the Arab countries to support "Israel" in a war such as this, and their acceptance of the uprooting of Hezbollah and the Shiite sect in south Lebanon. This is what Olmert said in one of his speeches, when he said, "this is the first time that all Arab countries gather together [i.e. unanimously agree.]" Of course, when he says, "all," he means, "most." What he meant here, of course, was the countries of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf Cooperation Council. However, this matter also included Egypt, naturally, and other countries were not excluded from this matter. There were some exceptions at the time. You know that Iraq lacked sovereignty, for the ruler of Iraq at the time was [Paul] Bremer, the American military ruler, and Iraqi sovereignty was controlled by the Americans. The Syrian government was still young and inexperienced, due to the death of Hafez al-Assad. It had just begin to work. So when they [i.e. the Israelis] say, "all [Arab] countries," they mean the majority. He [i.e. Olmert thus] said: "this is the first time that all Arab countries join together to support Israel in its war against an Arab organization." This is what he said, and this expressed an important and serious reality.

Therefore, we must consider that this war had three goals [likely means causes, not goals]:

- First, the opportunity [created by] the American presence and American sovereignty over Iraq, and the terror and fear that the American presence spread throughout the region.
- Second, the readiness of the Arab countries and their clandestine expression of cooperation with the Zionist Entity in its war to uproot Hezbollah and [create] demographic change in south Lebanon.
- Third, the aims of the Zionist Entity itself to seize this opportunity to get rid of Hezbollah forever.

These three objectives were the hidden goals that represented the causes and roots of the war.

You have detailed the hidden reasons for this war very well. What was the excuse for the outbreak of this war and the overt reasons for it?

Hezbollah is the Lebanese people's main [pillar] of support

The overt pretext for the war was Hezbollah's commitment to the Lebanese people – like its other commitments to the Lebanese people, as there was no other force besides Hezbollah which could accomplish this – was to rescue the young Lebanese men who were prisoners in the clutches of the Zionist entity. The Sayyed [i.e. Hassan Nasrallah] had made this promise in one of his speeches, saying, “we will work on liberating the Lebanese prisoners from the clutches of the Zionist Entity, as we have in the past. The Lebanese people had no [other] hope or help to liberate the prisoners – whether they were Druze, Christians, or Muslims – except for Hezbollah. This is the situation today as well, whereby Hezbollah is the [only] support of the Lebanese people in any incident, and to defend itself [i.e. the Lebanese people] in the face of the brutal/monstrous Israeli government. This was a declared position. In previous prisoner exchanges, “Israel” did not release some of the young growing men, who became elderly in prison.

Imad Mughniyeh Was a General in Every Sense of the Word

Hezbollah promised this, and it was not realized in the first prisoner exchange operations. Or, “Israel” didn't agree to free these prisoners. Therefore, Hezbollah initiated its activity to realize this promise which it made to the Lebanese people, so that it could be able to carry out prisoner exchanges as a result of these operations. Therefore, on the basis of special operations, and I don't know what title was applied to the leader of those special operations, should I call him a general? This word has become very commonly used, and he [i.e. Imad Mughniyeh] was above this word in military parlance. In our countries nowadays, the words, “general” and “Emir” have become commonly used. But, in truth, the martyr Imad Mughniyeh was a general in every sense of the word. He was a general in the battlefield, possessing traits akin to those of [Malik al-Ashtar](#). I said when he was subsequently martyred – this is not the place to talk about this now – similar circumstances and expressions were used by the Lord of the Faithful [Imam Ali] when Malik was martyred. The Imam was seized by a state of grief and extraordinary concern, leading him to weep at the pulpit and say:

“Malik, O Malik. By God, had he been a mountain, he would have been a peak; had he been a rock, he would have been solid, and no bird could have reached his height.”

Then he said this very important expression, that, “Malik was to me as I was to the Messenger of God.” The same situation applied to Imad Mughniyeh, in that Imad held this kind of status with the Resistance. And as I have said, if I wanted to not use these common appellations, then I have to liken him to Malik, as in the assaying of the Imam [Ali], the Commander of the Faithful, when he said of him, “let women give birth until [another] like Malik is born.”

Imad was like this personality [of Malik]. He took over the direction of this operation, just as he personally took over the direction of many of the difficult responsibilities and fronts. Directing these special operations were his responsibility, and he would oversee them and direct them in

person. And his operations succeeded. He managed to target a [military] vehicle of the Zionist Entity inside the Occupied Palestinian Lands [i.e. Israel], and to capture two people from inside who were wounded. This actually consisted of three operations, and not one.

The first, which was the basis, was the planning.

The second was crossing the Zionist Entity's very dense, high, and widespread barbed wire and arriving [inside Israel], because the operation was not merely striking and destroying, but there had to be a situation of crossing [the border] and going over to the other side and bringing [back] prisoners. Therefore, it was necessary to work with utmost precision in order to prevent the people inside the car from dying.

Third, speed was of the essence, and the operation had to be finished within mere minutes. This couldn't take fifteen minutes or half an hour. The matter took minutes and seconds. They had to cross over quickly before the enemies arrived, and often the distance between the Enemy and the location of the operation was mere minutes. This was the distance over land. By air, it would have been much quicker, and [the Israelis] could have arrived and retaken the prisoners. The third operations (sic) were quickly returning with the [prisoners] to a secure area, safe from the threats of the Enemy.

The war started under this pretext, and painful strikes were carried out against Hezbollah's positions. What was Hezbollah's reaction in Lebanon in the first hours and days? Particularly since Israel had made Hezbollah taking the two prisoners a pretext for carrying out this barbaric attack, and this naturally created psychological pressures. What was the local opinion inside Iran about the Islamic Republic in Iran would respond and react?

Hezbollah is Always 100% Ready, and This Readiness Has its Reasons

We have to point out two things, because Hezbollah is in a clash with an enemy with which it can have no reconciliation. Meaning, Hezbollah – from an ideological standpoint and political philosophy – cannot reconcile with this Enemy. That Enemy also does not want reconciliation with Hezbollah. Therefore, this enmity between the two sides is a continuous enmity and was at that time an ongoing enmity as well. Therefore, Hezbollah is always and continuously ready from a defensive standpoint. This is one point. So, Hezbollah was not carefree and unprepared; It was ready and prepared, and this readiness had nothing to do with those operations [i.e. the kidnapping operations]. Those operations only increased its readiness and willingness in other dimensions and increased its vigilance and anticipation. However, its readiness was already present on the level of fighting forces, [military] equipment, and capabilities. This is also the case now, in that Hezbollah is constantly ready to the maximum degree, and 100%. Its readiness cannot be likened to other ones, which are described as “yellow” and then rise to a readiness and preparation level of “red.” Or for example, a readiness of 30%, then 70%, then 100%. No. Hezbollah is always ready 100%. On that day [i.e. July 12, 2006], Hezbollah was at 100% readiness, and today they are 100% ready – while, admittedly, the manner of its readiness varies from one period of time to the next for reasons of possibilities and capabilities.

The second point is that any step that Hezbollah wants to take, it first undertakes preparatory security steps. Therefore, when Hezbollah decided to carry out the operations to seize the two Zionist soldiers for the purpose of that important and fateful [prisoner] exchange, it decided first to be ready and self-prepared. This readiness had two components [lit. situations]: The first was readiness in confrontation, and the second was readiness in minimizing [its own] casualties. Therefore – for the entire duration that the Zionist Entity carried out its attacks, particularly in the early hours and the first day and the first days, and had a preplanned target [lit. information] bank and gave all this information to its aerial forces, which carried out bombings upon this basis which contained precise coordinates of Hezbollah's position – due to the prior preparations that Hezbollah had undertaken, we find that they incurred the most minimum possible of losses, either in personnel, equipment, or preparations. In fact, it is possible to say that it [i.e. Hezbollah] was not harmed at all in the early moments, and after 10 days the Entity [i.e. Israel] declared, per its target [lit. information] bank, to have destroyed all of its targets, meaning all of Hezbollah's existing targets. However, it became apparent later that what it [i.e. Hezbollah] carried out was contrary to what was foreseen or hoped for [by Israel], and that was due to the steps and innovations that Hezbollah had undertaken prior to the beginning of its operations, anticipating the enemy's reaction.

Therefore, this is the first point. The second point is that the prior predictions of the war and the estimations of the other party's [i.e. Israel's] reactions, often/most of the time such operations – and the reactions to them – do not lead to a total, major war. There could be retaliation [lit. reactions] for one day, whereby the [Zionist] Entity could heavily target specific areas and points, and then stop the attack. However, this time, the [Zionist] Entity began carrying out all of its operations for which it had previously planned. Meaning, it began implementing that project that it had secretly planned. Of course, now we say it was a secret plan, and I will say later in the clarifications, that we arrived at this conclusion [lit. result] after two weeks on the level of doctrinal belief, and I will say why we reached this conclusion as a belief and not from an informational or intelligence standpoint.

Approximately towards the end of the war we concluded that the enemy had a prior plan and wanted to operate with total surprise. A big part of our understanding rested upon what the enemy itself declared, and based upon that alone the operations turned into a comprehensive war as quickly as could be possible, as if it were a large warehouse of equipment and explosives that exploded in one fell swoop. It was as if that project and plan entered into effect all at once, and this great explosion – which we call the 33 Day War – occurred on the first day that the incident [i.e. the kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers] occurred. I returned to Lebanon – because I had been there one day prior [i.e. on July 11, 2006] – and I returned to Syria. But because all of the roads had been bombed and attacked, particularly the one official road to enter [Lebanon from Syria] called Al-Masna, which is the border crossing between Lebanon and Syria, was in danger of constant bombardment by jets, and those jets would not leave it safe for one second. We had communication with the friends [i.e. Hezbollah] via a secure line, and Imad [Mughniyeh] arrived and took me from Syria to Lebanon by another road, part of which we had to cross on foot and another part via automobile. During those days, [Israel's] focus was still mostly on Hezbollah's administrative buildings in the area of the south [i.e. south Lebanon], and sometimes in the center and the north [of Lebanon]. The first week was almost over, but in Tehran they insisted that I be present to offer clarifications on the situation.

My Report to the Leader of the Revolution [Khamenei] Did Not Contain Any Hope [Lit. Horizon] of Victory

I returned via a side road, and Imam Khamenei was then in Mashhad. I went to meet him in a meeting attended by the three authorities and key officials of the National Security Council, who are mostly specialized in security and information matters. So yes, in Mashhad, I gave a report on the incident. It was a bitterly negative report, in that my testimony did not include any possibility of victory, and the war was an entirely different [type of] war. It was a highly technical war. Twelve-story buildings were leveled with one bomb, and the targets were chosen with precision inside villages, with the distance between villages being very small – these villages were attached to each other and differentiating between them is difficult for artillery. Despite that, [the Israelis were able to] distinguish between one village and the next. The war at that time had already moved on from targeting Hezbollah to targeting a whole sect. There were Shiite villages, neighbored by Christian villages and Sunni villages. But the situation was different for these villages, for in a specific place [i.e. the Christian or Sunni villages] a person could sit and be calm and smoke hookah, and in another place fire and billets rained down upon them. I submitted my report during that meeting, and then the time of prayer arrived. So they got up to perform ritual ablution. I also got up to perform ritual ablution. [Khamenei] performed ablution, revealing his forearms, performing ablution and then returned and gestured to me with his hand to come to him. I went to him, and he asked me if I wanted to say anything to him regarding my report. I said no, only that I wanted to clarify the situation.

Imam Khamenei said: I understand that, but don't you want to say anything else? I responded: no.

Ayatollah Khamenei: The Victory in this War will Be like the Victory in the Battle of the Trench

We prayed and returned to the meeting. My report ended, and then [Khamenei] began speaking. He mentioned several point and said that the points which a certain individual [i.e. Soleimani] mentioned are correct, for this is indeed a very difficult and severe war. However, I think this war resembles the War of the Trench. The Sayyed [i.e. Khamenei] then read the *suras* of War of the Confederacies, or the War of the Trench, which were one war, and he described the situation of the Muslims and companions of the Messenger [i.e. Mohammad] and the situation that prevailed upon their ranks. Then he said, I think the victory in this war will be like the victory in the Battle of the Trench. My heart shook at this statement, because I could never have imagined such a thing from a military standpoint, and I privately wished the Leader [i.e. Khamenei] had not said this, i.e. that the result would be a victory akin to the Grand Messenger's [i.e. Mohammad] in the War of the Confederacies. After that, he singled out two very important points, first he said – and my vision and belief which I relate to the friends is always based upon my experience of over 20 years with [Khamenei], whereby the wisdom emanating from his tongue, mouth and mind are a result and fruit of his piety, and this is precisely what I saw from [Khamenei]. Therefore, anything upon which he casts doubts now, I am sure that in the end it will be ambiguous and indecisive; and anything of which he is assured, I am assured will be useful and positive.

[Khamenei] said, “I believe Israel pre-planned this plan, and wanted to carry it out as a surprise attack and wanted to surprise Hezbollah. But Hezbollah’s operation to kidnap the two prisoners ruined Israel’s surprise.”

I did not possess this information, nor was this information available to Sayyed Nasrallah either. Neither of us had anything like this information, including Imad Mughniyeh. None of us had this information or data.

Hezbollah Saved Itself and Lebanon from Total Destruction by Capturing the Two Prisoners

Ok, well, they were on the border and saw. This was very good news for me because it would help Sayyed Nasrallah a lot, and relieve him. The matter was not so severe at first, but became severe in the end, whereby the number of martyrs and amount of destruction and losses increased. Sayyed Nasrallah made statements which affected many people, and I do not want to repeat those statements, but I found that those statements were very good for him. Someone would be critical and say, “why did Hezbollah subject all Shiites to dangers in order to capture two prisoners,” however [the reality] was that Hezbollah saved itself and the Lebanese people from total destruction by capturing the two prisoners, and this was very good and important news.

We Must Learn the Lessons of *Wilayah* From Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah

Another thing that [Khamenei] said which had a spiritual effect and effect on morale was when he said, “tell them [i.e. Hezbollah] to recite the [Small Jawshan Prayer](#). The Small Jawshan Prayer is not well-known, at least by the common Shiites. It may be different for some. [Khamenei] then clarified that we should not be surprised by this recommendation to read the Small Jawshan Prayer, as some might be surprised when they are told to read *Surat al-Ikhlās* four times or *Al-Fatiha* so a matter may be solved. [Khamenei] said that the Small Jawshan Prayer represents the situation of a person in need, one in an extreme state of compulsion who wants to talk to God. This is the condition of a person in need. That same day I returned to Tehran in the evening, and then I returned again to Syria. I carried with me a very good feeling. I was probably carrying with me something perhaps more valuable than anything else as far as Sayyed Nasrallah was concerned. Imad [Mughniyeh] came again and we returned by that road, and I went to Sayyed Nasrallah and told him what happened. Perhaps nothing else affected Sayyed Nasrallah’s morale like these words. First, he has a particular sense about him that none of us have reached to the same degree, and I think we should all go learn the lessons of *Wilaya* from him, [because] he has a belief and entrenched conviction in the words of [Khamenei], and considers [Khamenei’s words] to be divinely inspired, and therefore pays extreme attention to any word or phrase issued from [Khamenei], and deals with it with great care.

I clarified the matter to him, and he rejoiced a lot at first. [Khamenei’s] words soon quickly spread among the Mujahideen, that the victory in this war would be like the victory in the Battle of the Trench – meaning that it would be trying and difficult, but will end in a great victory. This viewpoint and good news [gospel] spread among the Mujahideen, starting with those who were on the front lines with the enemy, and reached all of the ranks of the Mujahideen.

Second, [Khamenei's] analysis that the Enemy had a pre-planned project [to launch a war] became the basis of Sayyed Nasrallah's activities in clarifying public opinion and alerting people to the intentions of the enemy. Regarding the third matter, the Small Jawshan Prayer spread like wildfire, and it contains many concepts of mystical and spiritual value. It's possible to say that it is one of the best prayers in the [*Mafatih al-Jinan*](#), containing many moral and worship concepts.

This prayer spread greatly, and *Al-Manar* would repeatedly continuously broadcast it in a beautiful and very sad voice. It was also read among the Christians, because it is a self-helping divine prayer that does not really belong to a single sect. Anyone who worships God, and who believes in God or the Divine power will be affected by this prayer; and it had a great effect, and became the start of a new beginning. It can even be said that it was like new blood pumping through the body [lit. existence] of Hezbollah, enabling it to carry on the battle with the enemy with greater hope and self-confidence.

I did not return [to Iran] until the end of the war, and I was there completely for the duration of the 33 days. After the war ended, I returned from Lebanon [to Iran] and participated in a meeting similar to the one in Mashhad – but this time in Tehran, at [Khamenei's residence], attended by all of the authorities and high-ranking officials. I gave a report on what had occurred, and it happened that part of it was published. In addition, I used to send my daily reports via our secure line to Tehran, so that they would be totally apprised of the situation and the battlefield.

What was the local opinion in Iran about how the Islamic Republic in Iran should react and its reactions? Were there opposing opinions among the officials or were they all in agreement on how to respond?

There Was Complete Unity in Iran on Supporting Hezbollah

No, there was no difference of opinion at the time at all. Everyone was in agreement on supporting Hezbollah morally and materially, meaning with weapons, equipment, capabilities, and media and whatever else the Islamic Republic was capable of. Not a single person cast doubt upon that within the regime at least during that period. When I was there, I would hear what would happen, and there was no concern from that regard. There was total unity in the Islamic Republic regarding supporting Hezbollah and striving toward Hezbollah's victory. There was complete unity in the Islamic Republic. There was a devotion to this support, and the main pillar of this support was his Eminence [Khamenei], therefore there was no doubt or hesitation in this regard, because it benefited the Islamic Republic, Islam, and the Islamic world. Of course, there could be differences of opinion regarding several matters, but regarding Hezbollah, there was and there remains until now unanimity all levels [to support the group].

Rarely has the operational dimension of the 33-Day War Been Discussed, and most of the statements and information have been regarding the circumstances of the Zionist Entity during this war. We want to hear from you details about the strategies followed in Hezbollah's operations in Lebanon, given that you actively participated in the battlefield of this conflict?

We Still Have Much to Reveal About the Secrets of the 33-Day War

There are still matters we cannot mention about the 33-Day War, and perhaps that's because only 13 years have passed since that war, and we still have many long years before we can reveal a portion of this war and what Hezbollah did, which is still enveloped in secrecy. However, there are aspects which can be discussed, and which are beneficial, and which include several important points. I will recount here some [of my] memories. Hezbollah had an operations room in the heart of Dahiyeh, and the buildings surrounding it were continuously bombed and destroyed ever night. Two or three large, tall buildings of twelve or thirteen stories, more or less, often more than that, would be completely leveled [by the bombing]. One night when we were in the operations room, and all of the officials in charge of conducting the war were in that room – and that room was not underground, but a regular operations room. It contained communications and contact equipment, so that we could maintain communication and contact with the different actors. I felt at the time, after they bombed the surrounding buildings and destroyed them – it was nighttime, at around 11:00 PM – I felt that serious threat was endangering Sayyed Nasrallah's life, and I decided that we should transfer the Sayyed to another place. Imad and I discussed the matter, and the Sayyed only agreed after much difficulty to leave the operations room. This was not to leave Dahiyeh, but only from the building which we imagined was subject to danger because of [people] repeatedly entering and exiting it, and because the MK planes – meaning the Israeli drones – were constantly hovering above our heads in Dahiyeh, three at a time, and closely monitoring all movements, including motorcycle traffic. Thus, Dahiyeh was totally quiet at 12:00 AM, as if no one lives in the heart of Dahiyeh, where Hezbollah has its main center. We agreed to move from one building to the next, and we moved. The distance between the first and second building was a short one. When we moved, we had barely entered the second building when serious bombing began occurring, and they bombed places near this building. We waited there, because we had a secure line and communication and contact could not be cut off, especially the communications of Sayyed Nasrallah and Imad [Mughniyeh]. Another bombing occurred, and they destroyed a bridge near that building. We felt as if a third bombing would follow those two bombings and that they would bomb this building as well. There were only three people in that building – myself, Sayyed Nasrallah, and Imad [Mughniyeh]. Therefore, we decided to exit that building toward another building. The three of us exited, and there was not a single car [driving in the street], and Dahiyeh was totally dark and completely silent. The only sound was that of the planes of the Zionist Entity over the skies of Dahiyeh. I was wearing a camouflaged military uniform. I took off the shirt, and remained in my undershirt, which was a regular civilian shirt. However, my pants were military fatigues. Sayyed Nasrallah, myself, and Imad [Mughniyeh] exited. Imad told me and the Sayyed, “sit down under the shade of this tree.” Not [really] under its shade, because it was nighttime, and it had no shade. But [he meant to say,] “sit under it to hide from detection [by the UAVs],” even though it couldn't protect us against detection, because the MK planes have infrared cameras that detect a person's body heat and differentiate it from other sources of heat. Therefore, you could not hide anything, and this is what should be understood from this point. We sat in that place, and I

remember the story of [Muslim \[ibn Aqeel\]](#). Not regarding myself, but regarding Sayyed Nasrallah, because the place was the Sayyed's country; Imad went and found a car, and returned quickly. This probably took a few minutes. I want to commend Imad, but I am afraid it will disrupt our session as happened yesterday. But he was unrivaled, especially in planned. When [his] car reached us, the MK planes were hovering above our heads and focusing on us. When the car reached us, the planes began focusing on the car. As you know, when the MK sends it signals, these images are sent to Tel Aviv, and they see the scenes and images in their operations room. It took some time until we were able to move from a hiding place underground to another that was underground, and after that to move from this car to something else that can't be mentioned now, in order to trick the Enemy, and then we returned after midnight to the operations room again.

Hezbollah's Actions Had a Very Important Psychological, in Addition to Military, Aspect

The important point was that there was a rapid acceleration in wars normally. After forty years of military and security work, I can understand this matter. There is a rapid acceleration of wars, and everything is possible in the first moments. Hezbollah, in this war and in every stage of it, was surprising the enemy with new implements and new steps, leaving them dumbfounded. [Hezbollah] couldn't reveal all its methods at once. Therefore, Sayyed Nasrallah had a saying that left the enemy terrified and in great fear. He would progress step by step. First there was the step of Haifa, then he said, "there will be a phase of after Haifa, and after after Haifa." These phases were successive, so the enemy would understand, and they would reveal at every stage a new weapon and prove their abilities in every phase, so they could attack the enemy deep within [its territory, lit. within its depths] as was appropriate for each phase. Therefore, it was proven to the enemy that Hezbollah at that time in 2006 had the ability in the next phase to take the war to a place of danger, to a red stage of danger beyond danger, meaning taking the war into Tel Aviv. Hezbollah possessed this ability, therefore Hezbollah's steps, in addition to their military importance, had a great psychological impact as well. Meaning, [Hezbollah] would carry out its military activities and create challenges and difficulties for the enemy at each stage [of the war] in a specific geographical area of the occupied Palestinian lands [i.e. Israel, not the West Bank/Gaza], and would also psychologically impact the enemy with confusion and severe disturbance.

The second point, regarding the implements and equipment, is that the Enemy thought it reduced Hezbollah's capabilities to the point of zero with the large-scale operations it carried out, or that it reduced them to the lowest point possible at every stage in which the enemy would declare that Hezbollah was no longer capable of firing its rockets and no longer possessed any of its rocket capabilities. Hezbollah on that day and the day after would fire even larger amounts of rockets than the prior day, and firing rockets isn't a simple matter. In a territory being bombarded by heavy artillery, this side [i.e. Hezbollah] has to exit its hiding place, and organize its targets, then fire these rockets without incurring harm or losses [itself], and then return to a place of safety. This is a very difficult thing to carry out, but because of the experience and expertise of the Mujahideen, this matter was carried out with absolute precision due to the precise and intensive training for this matter between the years 2000 and 2006. Meaning from when the Zionist Entity fled [south Lebanon], or its defeat in south Lebanon, these training began in an intensive manner, and carried on non-stop until 2006 as a project launched by Hezbollah, which it called, "Project Sayyed al-Shuhada." Imad [Mughniyeh] oversaw this project, and Imad also planned it. Imad

arranged the precise arrangements and distributions regarding how to act and behave if a confrontation occurred with the Enemy.

Hezbollah Changed the Basis of Traditional Warfare by Transforming Each Point Into a Forward Fortification/Trench

The third point was Hezbollah's tactic, which was contrary to that of traditional warfare. In traditional warfare, there is a forward fortification, and in this war there was none. Instead, each point had a forward fortification – from the frontline on the border between Occupied Palestine and Lebanon, up to the Litani River at least. Every point there, every hill, every village, every house, and every area was a frontline and a fortification. This was not a tangible or known fortification as is common in wars, and as was in our war [i.e. the Iran-Iraq War]. No, this was a special tactic. If I wanted to liken it to something, I would liken all of this tactic that Hezbollah adopted to a wide, smart minefield which contained no free or safe spaces. Therefore, notice the manner in which the enemy moved, and you will see that the enemy failed to enter some of the villages adjoined to the border, like Aita al-Shaab. [Israel] failed to enter these villages, and was not able to enter it, and failed to enter the cities. In the end, [Israel] decided to go from the eastern wadi to enter and advance toward the Litani. In fact, this was a weak point and breaking for the Enemy. The important point here in this war is the blow that Hezbollah directed [at Israel], which resembled the blow that our Sayyed the Commander of the Faithful [i.e. Imam Ali] in the Battle of the Trench, whereby he slayed Amro bin Abed Wad, and the Messenger said that Ali's blow on the day of the Trench equaled the worship of the two realms of mankind and Jinn. Why? Because it saved Islam.

Some Hezbollah Strikes Would Entirely Paralyze Entire Structures of the Zionist Entity

The strikes for which Hezbollah would plan would paralyze entire structures of the Zionist Entity in a surprising manner. One of these structures was the Zionist Entity's naval power. You know that access to the south [Lebanon] had a transportation route. This route went from the banks of the Mediterranean to Sidon, [southward] toward Tyre, and then to the frontlines in the south. In all wars, the Zionist Entity would position its ships in the sea to block this route with precise artillery. This is what they did in this war as well, during the first week. What the Enemy did not envision, and with which Hezbollah succeeded in surprising it, was the matter of naval missiles [i.e. land-based anti-ship missiles]. On that day, [Hezbollah] wanted to use naval missiles for the first time, and it had not used them before that day. All these missiles were secret and hidden in a secret place. The operation was a difficult one. [Hezbollah] had to take the missiles out of their hiding place on a vehicle, which would carry it and take it to the launching point, which was exposed. Opposite this point there were three or four Israeli ships in the sea. Thus, Sayyed Nasrallah and Imad [Mughniyeh] agreed, for it was rumored at the time that the Sayyed had been wounded, and a state of general concern spread among the people in Lebanon. Nasrallah was expected to speak. Up until that day, the Enemy had achieved superiority during that week, and we had failed to carry out a single important action aside from the reaction with rocket fire. This operation had to occur. This [anti-ship] missile had been taken out to its launch-point several times, and they wanted to launch it. But a problem would occur in the launching. Sayyed Nasrallah wanted in his speech to declare this accomplishment [i.e. striking an Israeli Navy ship with an anti-ship missile] as a surprise, according to the Arabic expression. This operation was a surprise attack. We reached the end of Sayyed Nasrallah's speech. The Sayyed's speech was supposed to have been recorded and then broadcast, as if you were now sitting in this room and

recording my works, and then deleting a part of it and broadcasting a part of it, or showing it to me later and I myself would delete a part of it. Sayyed Nasrallah's speech was supposed to have been organized in the [operations] room. There was a side room, and we would sit together with Imad [Mughniyeh] or another brother. The clashes were continuous, and this [anti-ship] missile had yet to be fired, and Sayyed Nasrallah's speech reached its end, and he wanted to say, "peace and the mercy of God be upon you." When he got to this point, and before the Sayyed said this expression, the rocket was fired. It is hypersonic, so it struck its target quickly. Therefore, Sayyed Nasrallah said at the end of his speech, as if he were metaphysically seeing the scene, "you see in front of you now the Israeli ship as it burns." The Sayyed's words coincided with the moment that the missile struck its target. A philosophy underpins this matter, which might not be accepted in the public sphere, but it was by the grace/will [lit. door] of God that the Sayyed's words and this strike coincided. For this strike hit the [Israeli] ship with complete precision. The fact is that these ships have electronic warfare capabilities which can distort the path of the missile, and they have anti-missile defenses which can strike the missile before it hits. But the missile struck and cleaved the ship in two, and that led to end of the Zionist naval power until the end of the war, where none of its naval units were seen, and it was witnessed that the Zionist Entity's entire naval force could be removed from the battlefield with one missile. Of course, this is something that can be subject to analysis and discussion, and can be discussed at length, with the very capabilities of the Zionist entity being one aspect. For the Entity whose entire naval forces can be removed from the battlefield with one missile, it becomes apparent that no matter how many ships it possesses, if one missile can remove its naval forces from the battlefield this time, so the next time they can be removed with two or three missiles. If last time these forces were forced to exit the battlefield by a missile with a 100km range, it will definitely be forced to exit next time by a 300km range missile. This was a miracle and a very great victory. The people who at that time were displaced or subject to bombardment shouted, even while under bombardment, with calls of *takbir* [i.e. they shouted "Allahu Akbar!"] and fired in the air with great joy. This was another surprise and shock that Hezbollah carried out and changed the calculus [of the war]. The Zionist Entity could not compensate and reverse this calculus, until it arrived toward Plain of Khiam and toward the Litani [River] on the 28th and 27th day [of the war]. They were two very difficult days. I had become separated from Imad after we had been in one place, and Sayyed Nasrallah was in another place. We had our meetings at night. We would get ourselves to the Sayyed through a specific way and meet with him. Imad [Mughniyeh] would give a complete report on the battlefield, and would receive the orders given by Sayyed Nasrallah. Day 20 until Day 28 were extremely heavy and difficult days. It can be said that they were the hardest days of these 33 days, and the time has not yet come to discuss some of the matters yet.

Regarding the conditions of the Sayyed and the Mujahideen, Imad [Mughniyeh] carried out an initiative that had an important impact. If we wanted to measure its impact, it could be compared to the message and the promise given by [Khamenei]. It was that important, and the initiative is the message delivered by the besieged Mujahideen on the frontlines of confronting the enemy, while under fire, addressing Sayyed Nasrallah. It was an extraordinary message. When it was read on that day, Imad was crying bitterly and loudly, and he was the one who planned this initiative. I could not find anyone who listened to this voice that was reading the message and not crying. What's most important, however, is the response of Sayyed Nasrallah. If we want to compare it, it can probably be compared to the poems that were declared by companions of Imad

Hussein in Karbala when they were facing the army of the enemy while defending Imam Hussein. The words of the Sayyed, in steadfastness and in appreciation and sanctifications of the actions of his companions and the Mujahideen, resemble the words of Imam Hussein on the night of Ashoura.

These statements, which each had a great impact and were indeed divine speech, these statements and writings by the fighters and Mujahideen from the battlefield and the Sayyed's response to them had a great impact and gave everyone a lot of strength. But matters turned on the 28th day. Here, I have to point out a point that if it is broadcast, I request that everyone who hears it pays close attention. We had many such scenes and incidents in the slaughter of the Sacred Defense and the Imposed War, and I would always say they were signs of our righteousness in the war [i.e. the righteousness of our cause]. The morale of the fighters and their spirits were very high. They would say things behind closed doors. [This is during the Iran-Iraq War] Once, we were in [Shalamcheh](#), and wanted to carry out operations prior to the Karbala 5 Operations. Maybe a year and a half prior. So the enemy wouldn't discover us, we assigned intelligence units for our operations. The water was ahead of us, and on that day two of our young men – Sadeghi and Mousaipour – went to conduct reconnaissance and did not return. We had a brother with a very knowledgeable character. He was young and a student, but was exceptionally knowledgeable, and it could be said that he was virtually unrivaled in his operational knowledge. He reached a level that even great men of knowledge do not reach even after 70 or 80 years, but he reached it. He called me and told me to come [to him], so I did. At the time, our communications were done via RACAL wireless radios. I was in Ahvaz when he called. I went there, and he told me, "Akbar Mousaipour and Sadeghi went, and I returned." I was greatly disturbed, for I thought the enemy had taken prisoners from us before we even began, our operations have been exposed. I said this all in anger. I remained there that night, then I returned. We had many [fighting] fronts. He called me again after two days, and told me to come, so I went [to him]. He said, "Akbar Mousaipour will return." And his name [this very knowledgeable person] was Hussein, so I said, "Hussein," and I used a word which I should not repeat now. Hussein smiled a slight smile at the edge of his lips which remains burned in my mind [lit. implanted in my vision]. Hussein Ibn Gholam Hussein said – he's the one who said this, his father's name was Gholam Hussein, and was a capable high school teacher, as was his mother. He was the son of teachers and educators from both his father's and mother's side, and he was also a teacher even though he was young. When they would say, "sayyed Hussein," there was but one sayyed Hussein, even though there were many whose name was Hussein – but him alone they'd call "sayyed Hussein." I said, "what's the matter?" He said, "tomorrow Akbar Mousaipour will return, and Sadeghi will return after him." I asked him, "where did you find this out?" He said, "you just have to wait here." So remained, and at approximately 1:00 PM – we had a camera we'd call "the rabbit," and we'd wrap it in bags and place it on the tower of the fortification, and the brothers in the intelligence and information [units] were behind the camera. They said, "we see something black on the water," so I went up to them and I saw the matter was as they mentioned. There was something black and stretched out on the water. The young men went into the water and found that it was Akbar, Akbar Mousaipour. The next day Hussein Sadeghi returned. This was a very strange matter. The water, with all its hustle and bustle, returned them to their launch point from the trench and to the same point. Both of them had been martyred. They were martyred in the water, and the water returned them to that same point. It was a very strange matter.

I said to Hussein: Hussein, how did you know this? He said: I saw Akbar Mousaipour in a dream last night, and he told me, “Hussein, we were not captured, but we were martyred. I will return tomorrow at such and such hour, and Sadeghi will return the next day.” Then he told me, and this is a very important sentence, he said, “Do you know why Mousaipour spoke to me? He was from the youth of Sirjan. And [do you know why] Sadeghi did not speak [to me?].” I responded, “No.” He said, “because Akbar Mousaipour had two virtues. The first was that he was married, and the second was that he would not skip the nighttime prayer even while he was in the water. These were his two virtues. So he came and told me.” Hussein [Ibn Gholam] was later martyred.

I want to return to this point, which is that during that very difficult situation, one of the brothers from Hezbollah – who was very religious and observant – who was an official in south Lebanon, said, “I was in a state that was not a state of sleep. I saw a woman come to me, and nearby her were two women. I felt in that state of vision that [this woman] was Sayyedah Zahra, peace be upon her, so I rushed to her blessed feet.” He said, “I told her in Arabic, ‘do you see our situation and circumstances?’ She responded, ‘it will be fixed.’ I said to her, ‘No,’ as if insisting to reach her feet, and insisting to take something from her. After my insistence, she said that the matter would be fixed, and she took out a handkerchief that was covering her face and shook it like so, and said, ‘the matter is finished.’”

A moment later an Israeli helicopter was struck with a missile, and after that the countdown to the Zionist Entity and its defeat began. Its tanks were struck. From that moment, the calculus changed and a new calculus emerged, and for the first time during this war Kornet missiles were revealed, and the first Abrams (sic) tank was struck...sorry, Israeli Merkava tanks...which had not been struck in such a manner until then, and approximately seven tanks were destroyed in one day.

If The War Doesn't Stop, Then Israel's Army Will Be Destroyed and Scattered

At that time, Mr. Hamad bin Khalifa Aal Thani was prime minister, he was the prime minister of the government of Qatar and a foreign minister. He would act as intermediary and come to Lebanon and go. He told a story later and said that in those days they wouldn't permit at all any discussion or talk regarding stopping the war. He was in the United Nations. He said: “I despaired and went to my home to relax. Suddenly, I found the despicable John Bolton looking for me, disturbed, unsteady, and anxious. He said, ‘where are you?’ I responded, ‘Is there anything new?’ He said, ‘let's go to the United Nations,’ so I went. I found the ambassador of Israel to the United Nations [Dan Gillerman] walking around disturbed and very anxious. He said his words to me, ‘now we must stop this war.’ I said, ‘Why?’ They said, ‘if this war is not stopped, then the army of Israel will be destroyed and scattered.’ Because of that, they backed down from all of their prior conditions, and bypassed them, and were forced to agree to Hezbollah's conditions, and accept a ceasefire. And this grand victory for Hezbollah was accomplished.

The 33-Day War Was an Inflection Point and Not Just a Victory

This wasn't a mere victory, but it was also an inflection/turning point, which ended the possibilities and imagination of the Zionist Entity to again attack Lebanon. This equation is still standing to this day, and I think it can't be easily reversed. Hezbollah left this impact on the Zionist Entity, whereby it doesn't even think of attack Lebanon, but made it not even think of

any attack. I tell you that after the 33-Day War, Ben Gurion's preemptive and offensive war strategy was changed – rather, the offensive strategy of the Zionist Entity – bit by bit into merely a defensive strategy. And you saw in the event that happened mere weeks ago, where Hezbollah threatened to strike the Zionist Entity and to avenge its two martyrs, how the Zionist Entity fled three to five kilometers from the zero-point of the borderline to inside its territory [lit. to the depth], to a point where *Al-Mayadeen's* correspondent went to the vicinity of the barbed wire and said: "I am speaking to you from Occupied Palestine." This is the effect of the 33-Day War.

Prayers be Upon Mohammad and the family of Mohammad.

Today, we relive the memory of the Imposed War on Iran [Iran-Iraq War]. How has the culture and thinking of the Imposed War tied to the Resistance Front in the region and maintained its continuity?

Regarding the Sacred Defense war, if we return to the events during the birth of Islam, we would find that the Imam [Ali], the Commander of the Faithful, would follow the example of the Messenger of God [i.e. Mohammad] when he would give advice, write messages, or preach. His primary example was the days of the Messenger, the actions of the Messenger, and the story of the Messenger. When the Lord of the Martyrs [Hussein] wanted an example to rely upon, his example was the Commander of the Faithful [Ali], as an eyewitness and the person who was closest to the story of the Messenger of God, and who expressed this story through example and applied it and made it the basis of his actions. The same applies to our Sacred Defense. This is the relationship between the Sacred Defense war and the other wars of sacred defense. For those serve as a mother, and the axis, and the sacred foundation. I cannot say that if there was no Sacred Defense that there would not have been anything else. But what happened during the Sacred Defense – the circumstances and moral manifestations – was at the loftiest levels. The religious media shone at the time at the highest levels, and the ideological and spiritual situations were at their highest form, without an ounce of perversion. Altruism, jihad, and martyrdom were in their purest form. Even the management and the relationship between the commander and his subordinates, if we were to liken them to anything they could be likened to the rarest scenes from the birth of Islam. The Sacred Defense was the loftiest peak in all fields and situations. Others were a series of mountains, and this is the peak. The Zagros mountains extend more than 1,000 km, but its known peak is Mt. Damavand. Mt. Damavand is the main highpoint in the Alborz mountain range. It is the highest peak in the Alborz mountain range. Pardon me, I said Zagros. The correct [thing to say] was Alborz. The length of this mountain range is 1000km, but the known peak is Mt. Damavand. Our Sacred Defense, compared to other instances of defense, resembles Damavand in the Alborz Mountain range. It is the highest peak of all the rest, which appear as foothills by comparison. This is what can be said if we want to compare.