

## [Israel Facing the Islamist Declaration of War Part III](#)

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### **Hassan Nasrallah's "Victory"**

The Islamist war against Israel has by now entered its third week; and there seems to be no sign of a speedy end to it. While the Israelis have used their superior air power to neutralize Hezbollah-dominated areas in Lebanon, they have failed to stop the daily barrage of rockets on Haifa and other towns and cities in northern Israel. Of course we should not forget the unbelievable damages that have been inflicted on Lebanon as a result of the presence and activities of Hezbollah. While radio, television, print and online media give us day-to-day details of the war, it is necessary to pause and reflect on the peculiar workings of the **Islamist Mind**, and its proclivity to distort and reinterpret reality. It is only as we analyse the functioning of this mind, that we will be able to understand the utterly serious nature of the Islamist war on Israel.

These thoughts came to me after reading an op-ed article in the 22 July edition of *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*. Its title was, *Hassan Nasrallah's Victory*. Here are excerpts from the article, followed by my analysis and comments.

*"Come on now; beware of the claim of Hassan Nasrallah that his war is actually the war of the entire Islamic nation! This is a lie. It's Iran's war in the region. I would like to know this: what is the definition of defeat, and what constitutes a victory in the Middle East? How can we tell the victor that he did in fact achieve a victory? And how can we announce to the defeated that he had actually suffered a real defeat?"*

*"Let's begin with the Arab states, and consider the October 1956 war when Egypt was attacked by Britain, France and Israel. In fact it was the United States that forced the invaders to end their attack on Egypt, and to withdraw from the Suez Canal area, and the Sinai. Was that really Egypt's victory?"*

*"And what about the June 1967 War when Israel conquered the West Bank, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. Eventually it evacuated the Sinai; but that happened thanks to lengthy diplomatic negotiations. Please, let's never forget that many of those who planned our wars with Israel don't even possess the skill of a new recruit, let alone the role of commanders!"*

*"And as we seek to understand what constitutes a real victory or a real defeat, we shouldn't forget Saddam Hussein's boasting of defeating the Coalition Forces in the 'Mother of all Battles.' When the dust settled, was the outcome Saddam's victory or his utter defeat?"*

*"Thus far, I have dealt with the Arab states. How about the achievements of Arab organizations such as al-Qaida? Where are Osama ben Laden and his colleague Ayman*

*Zawahiri? They are hiding in a hole somewhere in the rugged areas of Afghanistan or Pakistan; but they still claim that they have not been defeated, since they are still alive! "I am writing these words on 22 July as Israel is destroying Lebanon, while Hassan Nasrallah is hiding in a secret place; every now and then, to appear on al-Manar TV station informing us that since the Israelis have not succeeded in killing him, that constitutes his victory!*

*"No nation throughout history has ever achieved progress unless it initiated a realistic diagnosis of its condition; calling a defeat by its name and a victory by its name. I am not writing these words in order to discourage the Arabs during these critical days; on the contrary, I am sounding this urgent wake-up call! Please, please listen to my words!"*

### **Analysis**

This article, in one of the most widely-read Arabic online newspapers, dealt with one of the most serious conditions that afflict the Arab-Muslim mind, **namely its propensity to deny reality**. The author went over the history of the Middle East during the last fifty years, and pointed to several events that ended up with disastrous Arab defeats in their never-ending confrontations with Israel. And yet in the popular mind, those defeats have been considered as victories. Having listed them, this brave Arab intellectual pleads, and almost shouts his plea to his fellow-Arabs: **please, please it's time to wake up. Stop living in a fantasy world.**

### **Comments**

The Arab-Muslim mind's inability to recognize a defeat is a symptom of a chronic condition in the Islamic culture. Several decades ago, an Egyptian author dealt with this condition in a book entitled, *"Al-Ma'qool wal-lama'qool fi Tirathina al-Fikri"* (***The Rational and the Irrational in our Cultural Heritage.***) In his book of 495 pages, he documented the co-existence, in the Arab-Islamic culture, of two contradictory motifs, **the rational and the irrational**. And quite often, the irrational motif dominated the Arabs' understanding of the world, where fantasy takes over, and renders them unable to properly deal with their problems.

I thought of the literary works of this modernizing Egyptian intellectual upon reading another article in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* dated 28 July. It decried the terrible influence of empty slogans upon the Arab mind. After enumerating several of them, the author remarked: *"All these various instances I have mentioned, possess one common denominator, namely an 'Irrational' trait that clings to these slogans."*

As the world witnesses daily the continued destruction of Lebanon, many Arabs rush to announce "victory" by pointing to those incidents when Israelis suffered casualties in their confrontation with Hezbollah's fighters. This disconnect with reality was mentioned on 27 July, in the online edition of the **Jerusalem Post** by KHALED ABU TOAMEH, in his article, **"How the Arab world views the conflict"**

*"As the Israel-Hizbullah war enters its second week, many Arabs are once again talking about the shattering of the myth that has haunted them since the humiliating defeat of the*

*Arab armies in 1967 - that the IDF [Israeli Defence Force] is invincible. The fact that Israel has been fighting for two weeks against a relatively small militia in Lebanon - comprising several thousand fighters - is itself seen by the Arab masses as a kind of victory.*

*“Many Arabs continue to argue that the intifada ended in the defeat of Israel, which was forced to sign the Oslo Accords with the PLO and to withdraw from Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel's reluctance to use heavy weapons during the first intifada was also interpreted by many Arabs as a sign of weakness.*

*“Judging from the reactions on the Arab street, there are still too many young Arabs who sincerely believe that Israel can be eliminated. Throughout the Arab and Islamic world, hatred for Israel is so immense today that, if given the chance, tens of thousands of women and men would join Hamas and Hizbullah almost immediately.*

*“But for now, most of the anger on the Arab street is being directed against corrupt monarchs and presidents, many of whom are seen as obstacles on the road to launching a full-scale war against Israel.”*

I have often said that to face the Islamist war against the Infidels (Jews, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists) is far more difficult than the Free World's confrontation with the USSR. As Stalin and his successors tried to dominate the world, they faced the combined forces of the United States and Western Europe. During all the years of the Cold War, the two sides were led by rational people. We may think of the Cuban missile crisis, and Russia's attempt to bring its missiles to the Western Hemisphere. When President Kennedy decided to force the Soviets out of Cuba, they blinked, and eventually withdrew their weapons.

It's far more difficult to deal with the irrational Islamist leaders such as the president of Iran, or the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon. The reason lies in the fact that in the Islamist worldview there is an irrational element that twists reality, and gives its believers a Utopian view of the world. Even when defeated, and after Lebanon has been destroyed, they would still claim victory.

As I put the finishing touches on this op-ed article, I learned that the Israeli troops have pulled out of Bint Jbail, in south Lebanon. They killed several Hezbollah fighters, and almost destroyed the entire town that was once a thriving market place for the region. I won't be surprised if this strategic move of Israel will be interpreted as a great victory for Hezbollah, and its leader Hassan Nasrallah! It's really a frightful prospect to deal with people whose disconnect with the real world is shocking, because they can still handle powerful weapons of death and destruction. It's not going to be an easy task for the “International Community” to bring peace to Lebanon and Israel.

**Note:** As there are no standard rules for the transliteration of Arabic words, **Hezbollah** is also spelled, **Hizbullah**.