

Understanding Israel's Pager Attack on Hezbollah

Can you imagine the level of physical and psychological trauma throughout Lebanon and parts of Syria this week as thousands of Hezbollah pagers exploded, leaving many Islamic militants injured, hundreds of them critically, and several of them dead? It sounded like something out of a sci-fi movie more than real life, especially at the scale on which it occurred.

In the midst of all the trauma and suffering, here's what you need to know.

Hezbollah, which in Arabic means "The Party of God," is a Shiite Muslim organization founded in 1982, inspired by the theocratic vision of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. From first to last, it has represented radical Islamic ideology and, in that regard, is no different than Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, ISIS or Hamas. Hezbollah shares the same goals as an Islamic State and has a deep antipathy for America and Israel.

In the words of Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, the current leader of Hezbollah, which is a registered political party in Lebanon holding a fair amount of seats, "[Israel] is an aggressive, illegal and illegitimate entity, which has no future in our land. Its destination is manifested in our motto, 'Death to Israel.'"

Funded by Iran, Hezbollah is primarily based in Lebanon, where it has launched thousands of rockets and missiles into northern Israel for decades, including hundreds in recent weeks alone. According to estimates, Hezbollah currently has between 130,000-200,000 missiles in its arsenal, a staggering amount of weaponry. And these deadly weapons are pointed right at Israel and can reach virtually any location in the land.

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Like Hamas, Hezbollah has no interest in a two-state solution but rather desires the extermination of Israel. Also like Hamas, the terrorist group embeds itself in civilian areas, making it more difficult for Israel to retaliate without inflicting civilian casualties. But its soldiers are said to be better trained than Hamas soldiers, and they are far more equipped militarily than those of Hamas.

All that to say that for decades now, Israel has had to live with a murderous, radical army on part of its northern border, a terrorist army that is regularly trying to slaughter Jewish people and that, right now, has caused many tens of thousands of Israelis to relocate further south.

If this were America rather than Israel, and Hezbollah were encamped in Canada, to the immediate north of many of our states, how long do you think we would allow these terrorists to continue bombing us and forcing our citizens to evacuate? Surely not years, let alone decades.

Finally, Israel said, "Enough is enough," leading to the stunning, mass cyberassault on Tuesday.

From what we can understand, Israel was able to intercept a shipment of pagers from Taiwan (with pagers considered by Hezbollah to be harder to hack and safer to use than cell phones) and implant both explosives and a triggering device into the pagers. The pagers were then delivered as expected to the Hezbollah operatives, to be triggered by a message sent by Israel but appearing to be from Hezbollah headquarters. When the operative checked the message, his phone exploded, leading to ghastly results.

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Some sources claim that Israel was waiting to use this during a time of major war, but when one or two of the militants realized something was wrong with the pagers, they had to act. And act they did.

One online commenter described this as an “Absolutely epic operation that blended cyber + kinetic actions + information warfare against an enemy.” Have we ever seen the like before?

At the same time, as much as I despise the murderous goals of Hezbollah and stand with Israel’s right to defend itself against these terrorists, I also recognize that many human beings, created in God’s image, are suffering in agony right now in Lebanese hospitals. Some of them will be maimed for life, with missing hands, missing private parts, missing eyes or missing ears. Some will never resume normal lives. Many families will be affected. And, reportedly, there were some unintended civilian deaths, including two children.

That’s why I posted this in response:

I grieve over the pain and suffering experienced by all the Hezbollah militants whose pagers exploded today. At the same time, I recognize that they are radical Islamists who chant “Death to Israel,” that they were inspired by Ayatollah Khomeini and have been lobbing tens of thousands of rockets and bombs into Israel for decades. Not one of them would be dead or injured today if not for their incessant attacks on Israel, and as long as they are determined to wipe Israel off the map, they will suffer terrible casualties like today. May they recognize the bankruptcy of radical Islam, may they put down their weapons, and may they find mercy and new life in Jesus.

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Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated

The Line of Fire radio show. He is the author of over 40 books, including "Can You be Gay and Christian?"; "Our Hands are Stained with Blood"; and "Seizing the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival." You can connect with him on Facebook, X or YouTube.