

Haaretz | Opinion

Opinion | Israel Is About to Embark on Yet Another Unavoidable 'War of Choice'

Friday 27 September 2024, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 26 September 2024).

Israel's wars of choice follow a regular pattern; it's incredible how regular it is. They always begin with the declaration that Israel doesn't want them. Absolutely not - or not now. That's the first call to run and prepare the bomb shelters. After Israel announces that it doesn't want a war, it begins agitating for it.

File: Israeli artillery soldiers fire across the border into southern Lebanon from a position on the frontier in northern Israel in 2006. Credit: Oded Balilty/AP

The other side, which is also said to be uninterested in a war, provokes and incites for fear of being seen as weak; the folly is apportioned equally. Meanwhile, [urgent diplomatic negotiations](#) are held in a bid to avert the war. The reports are optimistic. Israel, which does not believe in diplomacy as a matter of principle, cooperates with the mediators and casts the blame on the other side. It gave diplomacy a chance. Check it off.

The fire intensifies. Israel can't restrain itself. There's a complete consensus in Israel that things can't continue like this. The air force begins to attack. Color returns to the cheeks of Israelis, to the last of the Zionist leftists. [Pagers, headquarters, squads, launchers](#) and senior officials all go up in flames. Our amazing capabilities are dizzying. Victory looks closer than ever and with it the total solution, which has never been closer. Finally we showed them, and ourselves too. It's a heady feeling. After weeks of anxiety and depression, a ray of light. The rocket division commander was assassinated, as was Hezbollah's No. 3.

This week we were at that stage. Enthusiasm about the air force was sky-high, we stood tall again, two hosts on Channel 14 News asked their guest to bring to the studio next time a plastic bag dripping blood with the head of [Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar inside](#). Not everyone is a barbarian, but everyone supported the air force bombings. After all, what did you want us to do? Airstrikes are war at rock-bottom prices. In the absence of air defense in Lebanon and of course in Gaza, this is a clean war. Without Israeli victims. The Israel Air Force's planes bomb, kill, destroy and return safely to base.

No one cares about the incidental damage, which isn't incidental at all. Who would dare to come out against destroying three floors of an inhabited six-story apartment building in order to kill the commander of the rocket division? And who would dare to say anything against an operation as exciting as the explosion of the pagers. Even 500 fatalities in a single day, as was recorded this week, were entirely justified.

The euphoria is short-lived, but there's no shortage of blood. Mainly on the other side. Bodies, the injured and the disabled, the destruction and the displacements are piling up into a colossal disaster. Israel promised that it [doesn't want a ground operation](#), absolutely not. Or not at the moment. The

pressure of the bombings will do the job, after all, and the enemy will surrender from the air. A few more sorties and Kibbutz Manara will come to life again.

And then a missile is fired at Greater Tel Aviv, as one was Wednesday morning, followed by another and yet another, despite the great successes of the air force and the impressive data on “reducing capabilities.” (Every war and its linguistic innovation: “the maneuver” in Gaza, “reducing capabilities” in Lebanon.) Israel is still not considering a ground operation.

But soon, with the increase in missiles fired by our battered enemy, the voices get louder. The military correspondents clamor for a ground operation. We have to finish the job. We must. There’s no choice. Maybe only a limited operation. A few kilometers and we return. Maybe a security zone, a small, temporary one.

The Tank Corps goes out at dawn. Every groove made by their chains in the loose earth deepens our entanglement irremediably. They won’t leave for years. Neither Gaza nor Lebanon. Lebanon will turn into Gaza, as will the West Bank, and all three will become hell.

The Israel Defense Forces will sink deeper and deeper. The residents of Metula will be able to see the ruins of their homes only on a good day, and only with binoculars, for many years to come. We are about to have another successful war that will bring us another victory. It too was decreed by our cruel fate, an unavoidable war like that.

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P.S.

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