

The murder of Hassan Nasrallah: Imperialism abandons all restraint on global war

WSWS Editorial Board
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The *World Socialist Web Site* denounces Saturday's murder of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, along with hundreds of civilian residents of Beirut, by Israel and the United States. The massive bombardment that killed Nasrallah is a clear violation of multiple international laws of war, including prohibitions on assassination and indiscriminate bombings of civilian areas.

With Nasrallah's murder, the imperialist powers are demonstrating that they will stop at nothing in their quest to reimpose shackles on the former colonies.

Nasrallah served as secretary-general of Hezbollah since 1992. The group was formed as an "Islamic Resistance" against Israel's occupation of Southern Lebanon between 1982 and 2000, inspired by the 1979 Iranian Revolution. During Israel's 2006 invasion of Southern Lebanon aimed at crushing Hezbollah, the group mobilized widespread popular support, forcing Israel and the Bush administration to accept a UN-backed ceasefire that was widely seen as a debacle for Israel. Now, Israel has seized upon the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas to exact bloody revenge for this embarrassment.

On Saturday, Israeli F-15 warplanes dropped 85 bombs, the majority of which were US-provided 2,000-pound bunker busters, onto an underground compound where Nasrallah was meeting with other leaders in the center of Lebanon. The strikes completely obliterated multiple high-rise apartment complexes.

"The attack leveled at least four large buildings in two locations and caused heavy damage to an area spanning 1,000 feet," reported the *Washington Post*. "One video, filmed from a window, shows at least four distinct columns rising above the southern Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh. The plumes appear to be dozens of feet wide and high, billowing above the buildings below. Screams are audible in the background."

The attempt of the White House to distance itself from the attack was not only absurd from the beginning but was quickly contradicted. Israel rapidly published footage of Israeli jets taking off with the bombs underneath their wings, sending a clear and deliberate signal that this massacre was "made in the USA."

US President Joe Biden quickly and publicly endorsed the murder of Nasrallah, declaring, "His death from an Israeli airstrike is a measure of justice for his many victims." Biden added, "The United States fully supports Israel's right to defend itself against Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis and any other Iranian-supported terrorist groups." He also said he "directed my secretary of defense to further enhance the defense posture of U.S. military forces in the Middle East region to deter aggression and reduce the risk of a broader regional war."

The repeated claims by the Biden administration that it is seeking a "ceasefire," "de-escalation" and a "peaceful solution" to the Middle East crisis are simply wartime disinformation, aimed at facilitating the White House's real goal of inflaming a regional war targeting Iran. Netanyahu's government, funded and armed by the United States, is not an independent actor but functions as America's proxy.

Critically, Netanyahu ordered the murder of Nasrallah from New York City, the day he delivered a warmongering tirade at the United Nations General Assembly threatening war with Iran. "There is no place in Iran that the long arm of Israel cannot reach. And that is true for the entire Middle East," he menaced.

Netanyahu's speech at the United Nations bluntly explained the role of the Gaza genocide and Israel's murder campaign in Lebanon as part of a US-led drive to reorganize the Middle East.

Netanyahu centrally referenced a map he displayed one

year ago at the United Nations on September 22, 2023, three weeks before the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas. The map showed Israel encompassing all of the Palestinian territories, as part of a geopolitical framework with the US-aligned Middle Eastern states of Egypt, Sudan, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, in a sort of Israeli empire.

Netanyahu said, “This is the map I presented here last year. It’s a map of a blessing. It shows Israel and its Arab partners forming a land bridge connecting Asia and Europe.”

He then held up a second map identifying Lebanon, Iran, Syria and Iraq. “Now look at this second map. It’s a map of a curse. It’s a map of an arc of terror that Iran has created and imposed from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean.” He said that Israel is “committed to removing the curse.”

He declared, “With American support and leadership, I believe this vision can materialize much sooner than people think.”

The “New Middle East” outlined by Netanyahu is a critical component of the global war drive of US imperialism, including the war against Russia in Ukraine and the US military buildup in the Pacific targeting China. Nasrallah’s murder took place as the US is on the verge of approving strikes by NATO weapons deep inside Russia, in the face of threats by Russia to respond by using nuclear weapons.

All over the world, US imperialism is deliberately crossing every “red line” that had previously restrained its conduct of global war.

The declaration of the Israeli pilot who took part in the murder, “We will reach everyone, everywhere,” is, in fact, the slogan of US imperialism as it seeks to reconquer the world through force. Every war crime—terrorism, assassination and even genocide—is being normalized.

The killing of Nasrallah is only the latest in a series of murderous bombings and assassinations orchestrated by Israel targeting Hezbollah and other allies of Iran. On September 17 and 18, Israel triggered the detonation of thousands of bombs that it had smuggled inside communication devices used by Hezbollah leaders. Just more than a week ago, Israel killed senior Hezbollah commander Ibrahim Aqil in Beirut. These events came just two months after Hamas’s political bureau chief, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed by Israel in Iran.

In the middle of an ongoing rampage by Israel against Hezbollah’s senior members, how could its leader hold a high-level meeting in Beirut? Nasrallah believed

that the US and Israel would not dare to carry out such a massive strike in the Lebanese capital. This miscalculation was based on a bankrupt political perspective—one that is shared by the governments of Lebanon, Syria and Iran.

The response of the regimes of the Middle East to the Gaza genocide and assault on Lebanon is a demonstration of the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism.

Some, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are key allies of the United States as it facilitates Israel’s Gaza genocide and the colonial carve-up of the Middle East. Others, like Iran, endlessly proffer compromises with the imperialist powers in an effort to strike some sort of negotiated settlement that leaves them intact. They are desperate to find an accommodation with Israel and the United States, because they are terrified of the revolutionary implications of any serious struggle against them.

In his 1927 document, “The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin,” Leon Trotsky explained that the principal concern of the bourgeoisie in the backward countries is the preservation of its wealth and privilege against the working classes. “It is a gross mistake to think that imperialism mechanically welds together all the classes of China from without. ... The revolutionary struggle against imperialism does not weaken, but rather strengthens the political differentiation of the classes.”

The Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese ruling classes are no more capable of conducting a systematic struggle against imperialism than was Chiang Kai Shek in China.

A revolutionary alternative can only be built on the foundation of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution. The settlement of accounts with Zionism, the vicious attack dog of American imperialism, cannot be achieved except through the development of a movement of the working class in the Middle East and throughout the world.

The movement against war must be animated by the perspective of international socialism, aimed at ending the obsolete nation-state system that is inseparably bound up with imperialist war and colonialism and replacing it with socialism.



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