Summary

- The Israeli and Lebanese governments want to start direct peace negotiations in Washington on Monday.
- This is a unique opportunity for both countries.
- But success can only be achieved if the Shiite terrorist organization Hezbollah is eliminated militarily.
- The Lebanese government knows that only the Israeli army, the IDF, is willing and able to do this.
- It is therefore in their interest that Israel continues the fight against Hezbollah regardless of the peace negotiations.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has the entire population and the political opposition behind him in this war against the terrorist organization.

From Sacha Wigdorovits

Whether the Mullah regime in Iran can be toppled remains uncertain even after more than six weeks of war. Especially as the current 14-day ceasefire, which US President Donald Trump has offered for domestic political reasons and economic considerations, is a mistake. It only benefits the government in Tehran. For the Iranian people, however, who see the war as an opportunity to get rid of the hated murderous regime, the ceasefire is a bitter disappointment.

It also represents a step backwards for the West as a whole, not just for Israel. At the moment, Iran still has long-range missiles and therefore remains a threat to us all. This will not change as long as the mullahs are in power. Because no treaties can be agreed with a government of religious fanatics and war criminals. They will always be broken. History and common sense teach us this.

And this is also reflected in the current situation: despite the alleged ceasefire, Iran is still attacking its Arab neighbors in the Gulf with drones and missiles. The Strait of

Hormuz, which is important for transporting oil to Europe and Asia, is also still closed. It is therefore to be hoped that President Trump will realize after all how useless negotiations with the Iranian regime are and that, together with Israel, he will once again attempt to defeat the regime in Tehran by military means.

Peace with Israel seems possible in Lebanon …

The situation in Lebanon is different from that in Iran. There, the Israeli army is continuing its fight against Hezbollah. A battle that the Shiite terrorist organization broke off at the beginning of March when it broke its ceasefire with Israel at the behest of the mullahs in Tehran. Since then, it has once again been firing rockets at the northern part of the Jewish state, including the cities of Haifa and Naharyia.

As a result of this shelling, over half a million Israelis in the north of the country have had to spend a large part of their time in shelters for weeks or have even been forced to leave their settlements and seek safety further south. The warning time before a rocket hits, which remains before fleeing to the shelter, is between 15 and 60 seconds, depending on the location. It is nothing new that this is “forgotten” in the Western media.

Hezbollah was able to attack Israel because the Lebanese government is unable to enforce the promised “monopoly on the use of force” in its own country. Such a “monopoly on the use of force” would amount to disarming the terrorist organization. The government in Beirut made this promise in November 2024, when Israel agreed to a ceasefire with Hezbollah in response to American pressure.

However, it was already clear at the time that the Lebanese government would not be able to control Hezbollah. The Lebanese army is inferior to the terrorist group in terms of manpower. In addition, numerous Shiites serve in it, who are closer to their fellow believers in Hezbollah than to their own government. This is why some of them support the terrorist organization with army weapons.

Hezbollah also has nothing to fear from the supposed “UN peacekeeping force” UNIFIL stationed in Lebanon. This force has always been wary of getting in the way of the terrorists and at least allows them to operate in silence. An inspection of the border between Israel and Lebanon shows how Hezbollah has been allowed to set up its weapons depots unhindered just a few meters from UNIFIL bases.

Supported by Iran, and previously also by Syria, the Shiite terrorist organization is

thus still holding Lebanon and the Lebanese government hostage.

“Hezbollah is working to abolish the Lebanese state,” writes Peter Germanos, the former chairman of the Lebanese military court, who now teaches as a professor at the Catholic Saint Joseph University in Philadelphia, on “X” (formerly: “Twitter”). “It wants to turn Lebanon into a missile platform managed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.”

… but first Israel must neutralize Hezbollah

It is therefore also in Lebanon’s interests for Israel to continue the fight against Hezbollah until it has been eliminated militarily – even if the government there does not admit this publicly. Because only Israel is in a position to render the Shiite terrorist organization harmless. This is why the Lebanese government is now ready for peace talks with Israel, without Israel first laying down its arms in the fight against Hezbollah.

These are Lebanon’s very first direct peace negotiations with the Jewish state, which it still does not officially recognize. After more than four decades of internal and external military and political power struggles, peace would offer Lebanon the chance of stability and reconstruction. For its part, Israel could finally offer its population in the north of the country peace and protection from rocket attacks.

In the fight against Hezbollah, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu therefore has the entire Israeli population and political opposition behind him. He is unlikely to repeat the mistake of 2024 and stop fighting Hezbollah before it is eliminated as a military factor. This is at least to be hoped for in the interests of Israel and Lebanon.

Sacha Wigdorovits is President of the Fokus Israel und Nahost association, which runs the website fokusisrael.ch. He studied history, German and social psychology at the University of Zurich and has worked as a US correspondent for the SonntagsZeitung, was editor-in-chief of BLICK and co-founder of the commuter newspaper 20minuten.