

War Rumors Rock Israel

By David Dolan

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SHALOM FROM JERUSALEM,

Widespread media reports of possible imminent war with Syria—probably initiated by an attack upon the Jewish state by Syria’s puppet Hizbullah militia force in Lebanon, supported by Palestinian Hamas fighters in the Gaza Strip, and possibly by Iran itself—have spread like wildfire this week here in Israel. Military analysts say this indicates something is indeed occurring on the ground to raise the war alert, as confirmed by army sources. The cancellation today of a scheduled visit to Europe next week by Israel’s Defense Minister has only added to the war jitters.

On Wednesday, Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Harel warned that Israel will respond “with a heavy hand” against anyone trying to target the country. Israel TV newscasts this evening are all featuring reports and analysis of the tense situation along the northern borders with Syria and Lebanon. Analysts are saying that while neither side probably wants war, the current tense situation could easily spiral out of control, given the heightened military alerts on both sides.

This all comes as Israel makes final preparations for the largest civilian home front war exercises ever conducted in the country, due to begin on Sunday and last through next Thursday. The cabinet is scheduled to meet Sunday morning in a special session meant to simulate an actual war emergency, followed by war drills in many hospitals, army bases, emergency response services, municipalities, police stations, etc. An actual war siren will be sounded on Tuesday morning at 10 AM all over the country. People everywhere will be instructed by the media in the coming days to respond then as if an enemy attack was in progress, to test their preparations for the same.

Jerusalem Post military reporter Yaakov Katz confirmed on Israel state television tonight that IDF forces are on the highest possible level of alert in the north, in response to intelligence information that the Iranian-backed Syrian regime—supplemented by major army reserve call-ups reported in various Arab media outlets in London and elsewhere in recent days—have recently moved two armored brigades into the Lebanese Beeka Valley, where Hizbullah has its main military bases.

Katz said that while neither Israel or Syria probably wants a full war right now, the Syrians are wary that Israel will attack them if Hizbullah launches the promised “revenge” response to the killing of arch terrorist Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus on February 12, which the radical Lebanese group and its Iranian paymasters blame on Israel, despite denials of responsibility from Jerusalem. Katz added that Syria may be preparing for war because it knows that Hizbullah has a major operation pending against Israel, probably supported, if

not ordered, by Iran—whose extremist Shiite leaders have vowed to avenge the car bomb attack on Mughniyeh, who was closely associated with them.

Speculation that a major conflict might be brewing grew substantially after the Israeli security cabinet held a special meeting on Wednesday—usually only convened in times of heightened military tensions or activity—mainly to discuss the situation in the north. The cabinet then announced that authorities will begin distributing anti-gas mask and biological weapons kits to the general public in the coming days—adding to the growing sense of crisis. Still, officials pointed out the distribution process would take some time, and therefore did not indicate that Israeli leaders thought major conflict was necessarily imminent. This assertion was repeated today by President Shimon Peres, who said that mounting talk of imminent conflict was exaggerated.

Nevertheless, various Israeli media outlets reported today that officials suspect that Syria may have transferred chemical weapons to Hizbullah forces, including deadly Sarin nerve gas. This comes after Iranian Armed Forces Chief Hassan Firouzabadi hinted in February that short range nuclear warheads might have been sent to the rogue Lebanese militia force, which is partially commanded by Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Meanwhile a Syrian parliament member was quoted in the Arabic media today as confirming that his country is currently monitoring Israeli military communications with the help of advanced Iranian equipment and listening outposts set up in Syria.

Today's announcement that Defense Minister Ehud Barak had cancelled a scheduled visit to Germany next week because of the heightened war tensions with Syria has definitely caught the attention of the Israeli public. All of the new war talk comes as the country's hotels are fuller than they have been since just before the Palestinian Al Aksa terrorist war was launched in September 2000, with record numbers, especially American Jews, scheduled to come here next month to celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary.

I continue to do weekly radio news reports (<http://prophecytoday.com/html/ptrn.php>) on Israel and the region for several media outlets, including a Saturday update heard over the Prophecy Today radio network and a Monday report broadcast on the American Moody Radio network (www.mbn.org). I recently appeared on two "Front Page Jerusalem" panel discussion programs with Jerusalem Post columnist Calev Ben David, heard over the US Salem Network, and I also continue to record weekly feature reports on Israel that are broadcast during Janet Parshall's national radio program.

Last week, I filmed some TV reports in the besieged Israeli town of Sderot and the Gaza Strip border area for the Inspiration TV network, scheduled to be broadcast in May. I also received a final copy of a television special that I host on camera about the biblical Ark of the Covenant, which should be broadcast in the coming months—details to follow. I am currently completing a feature article on Israel's 60 years as a modern state for the Jerusalem Post's Christian Edition, which will also be printed in other publications connected to the International Christian Embassy. The Post article is scheduled to appear in May. I sincerely hope it will not be trumped by yet another war before it is printed, but of course I realize, given the present news, that this could well be the case. I was supposed to be in the United

States on a speaking tour at present, but cancelled that some months ago mainly due to personal family reasons. Now I am wondering if I was simply meant to be here for whatever action might take place over the next two months—but obviously only time will tell. One thing IS certain: We who live here do appreciate your prayers very much in these traumatic days.

David Dolan is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived and worked in Israel since 1980.

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- **HOLY WAR FOR THE PROMISED LAND** (Broadman & Holman), his latest book, is an overview of the history of the Israel and of the bitter Arab-Israeli conflict that rages there, plus some autobiographical details about the author's experiences living in the land since 1980. It especially examines the important role that militant Islam plays in the conflict.
 - **ISRAEL IN CRISIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD?** (Baker/Revell), which examines the political and biblical prospects for a regional attack upon Israel, settlement in the disputed territories, and related topics, is also available for purchase, along with an updated edition of his popular end-time novel, **THE END OF DAYS** (21st Century Press).
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You may order these books at a special discount price by visiting his web site at www.ddolan.com, or by phoning toll free **888-890-6938** in North America, or by e mail at: resources@yourisraelconnection.org.

DAVID DOLAN'S DVD, "FOR ZION'S SAKE" which has been broadcast four times on nationwide television in the States, is available for purchase. Click the title under "BOOKSTORE" for more details.

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