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*News of the day with Nasser Kandil*

**Hochstein Shatters Mikati's Ceasefire Predictions, Heads Back to Washington from Tel Aviv Instead of Beirut**

**Resistance: 995 Dead and Wounded in a Month of Ground Operations... and Khiyam Revives the Glory of 2006**

**Afif: The Battle for Public Opinion... They Have Negotiation Manoeuvres, We Have Battlefield Realities**

*The political editor wrote:*

U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein, alongside Brett McGurk, senior advisor to President Joe Biden, returned to Washington instead of heading to Beirut after their visit to Tel Aviv and meetings with Israeli leaders. Axios reported on the failure of the American delegation's mission, and sources say this indicates that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is still clinging to demands unacceptable to Lebanon, which remains committed to UN Resolution 1701 without amendments, as Speaker Nabih Berri has affirmed. Meanwhile, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati was disappointed, having based his hopes on his prior conversation with Hochstein that raised expectations for an imminent ceasefire.

According to sources familiar with the negotiation process, Netanyahu requested the American delegation's visit, believing that his concessions represented a significant political shift in the war. However, these concessions were largely a response to the resistance's achievements on the battlefield, which exposed the military failures of the ground offensive and showcased the resistance's increasing ability to establish and expand a strategic balance of firepower. Yet, more battlefield pressure remains necessary to bring Israel back to the baseline of Resolution 1701 as the framework for regulating the border situation.

According to the resistance's operations room, the results from a month of combat show that the occupation forces have suffered 995 casualties - 900 wounded and 95 dead - alongside losses of 42 tanks, 5 drones, 4 bulldozers, and an armoured personnel carrier. The operations room reported, "Enemy forces avoid manoeuvring within the sightlines of our fighters due to fear of targeting. They are creating concealed paths, relying on night incursions into border villages, only to retreat after destroying civilian homes and damaging infrastructure. Supply lines to the front remain uninterrupted since the start of the aggression, and the fronts continue to receive weaponry and reinforcements according to pre-established plans". The report added, "Despite the enemy's intense surveillance over southern skies, our fighters continue to load, position, and fire hundreds of rockets daily at enemy positions, reaching deep into their territory

around the clock. The enemy has failed to thwart any rocket launches from Lebanese territory”.

This picture, outlined in the operations room’s report, was central to a presentation by Hezbollah’s Head of Media Relations, Mohammad Afif, during a national media briefing. Afif emphasised that the battle is a struggle for public opinion, both within Lebanon and the occupying entity. The resistance’s strategy seeks to shift public sentiment in Israel, instilling hopelessness in its populace and eroding confidence in its leadership, which endangers its citizens and soldiers alike. In contrast, the battle for public opinion in Lebanon revolves around reinforcing trust in the resistance and its capacity to achieve victory, countering doubts about its credibility and strength.

Afif stated “While we hold undeniable battlefield realities that demonstrate the resistance’s power and accomplishments each day, the occupation and its promoters have nothing but empty negotiation manoeuvres to weaken morale, attempting to manipulate emotions by suggesting an imminent end to the war”. He concluded by highlighting the role of resistance-aligned media, which, despite its limited resources, excels in authenticity and accurately reflects established facts, unlike a well-funded opposition media that thrives on fabrications and builds narratives based on illusions.