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Netanyahu: Hamas and Islamic State are "Branches of Same Poisonous Tree"

Israel Takes Measures to Become Cyberwar Superpower

Israel aims to become a cybersecurity superpower, and to do that, the Israeli military is launching an ambitious program to groom the next generation of cyberwarriors while they are still in high school. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the program's prominent cheerleader.

Netanyahu wants to partner Israel's high tech military with the country's venture capitalists and young computer talent to offer clients defensive strategies against the kind of hack attacks that have hit eBay and Target, South Korean banks and Google in China. At a recent conference devoted to cybersecurity, Netanyahu described the Israeli military's cyber units as locked in constant battle with "hacktivists" and state-sponsored actors, such as Iran, in daily duels that take place in dark rooms in front of computer screens.

Netanyahu said the cyber fight reached a peak during the 50-day Gaza war this summer. It included attempts to disrupt Israel's electrical grid and enter systems guarded by the Israel Defense Forces. Israeli cyber-units crashed the official Hamas website.

Erel Margalit, a member of the Israeli parliament said recruiting the best young minds is essential for Israel's cyber defense and economy. "In any war game," he said, "the kids always beat the generals."

[Arutz Sheva]



In a blistering speech to the United Nations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Hamas and the Islamic State group are "branches of the same poisonous tree," both bent on world domination through terror, just as the Nazis were. Netanyahu also lashed back at Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who had accused Israel of carrying out war crimes and waging a "war of genocide" during the fighting in Gaza. Netanyahu said Hamas committed "the real war crimes" in Gaza

by using Palestinian civilians as human shields.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting, the Israeli leader argued that Israel's fight against Hamas and the U.S. military campaign against the Islamic State are part of the same cause — the defeat of Islamic extremism. Netanyahu railed against world leaders for simultaneously condemning the Jewish state for its war with Hamas and praising President Barack Obama for attacking Islamic State militants and other extremists in Syria and Iraq. "They evidently don't understand that ISIS and Hamas are branches of the same poisonous tree," the prime minister said, referring to the Islamic State group by one of its acronyms. He added: "When it comes to its ultimate goals, Hamas is ISIS, and ISIS is Hamas."

Netanyahu said ISIS and Hamas, as well as other Muslim extremist movements, from al-Qaida and Nigeria's Boko Haram to Somalia's al-Shabab and Lebanon's Hezbollah, share the goal of imposing militant Islam on the world. He likened them to "another fanatic ideology that swept into power eight decades ago" — Nazism. To protect global peace and security, he said, "we must remove this cancer before it's too late."

Turning to another regional enemy, Netanyahu warned that the gravest threat to the world today is the danger of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. "It's one thing to confront militant Islamists on pickup trucks, armed with Kalashnikov rifles. It's another thing to confront militant Islamists armed with weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Netanyahu said Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's condemnation of the spread of terrorism last week amounted to "one of history's greatest displays of doubletalk." He accused Iran itself of mounting terrorist attacks all around the world, and lumped the country in with Islamic extremist

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movements. “To say that Iran doesn’t practice terrorism is like saying Derek Jeter never played shortstop for the New York Yankees,” he said.

Netanyahu criticized the efforts of six world powers to reach a nuclear deal with Iran, saying: “To defeat ISIS and leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power is to win the battle and lose the war.”

He also launched a scathing attack on the U.N. Human Rights Council, accusing it of continually singling out Israel for criticism when other parts of the world are awash in atrocities. He called the Human Rights Council’s name “an oxymoron” and charged that the body has become “a terrorist rights council.” Netanyahu said the council’s treatment of Israel reflects “the return of one of the world’s oldest prejudices.” “It’s called anti-Semitism. It is now spreading in polite society, where it masquerades as legitimate criticism of Israel,” he said.

Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s executive committee, said Netanyahu’s speech was “a blatant manipulation of facts” aimed at misleading world leaders “through a combination of hate language, slander and argument of obfuscation.”

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki took issue with Netanyahu over the similarities between Hamas and Islamic State. She said that while the U.S. considers both terrorist organizations, “we obviously believe that (Islamic State) poses a different threat to the United States.” Saeb Erekat, chief Palestinian negotiator, said Netanyahu, in his remarks, “buried” the possibility of a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the pre-war borders of 1967. Erekat also complained that Netanyahu branded those who dare to stand up to Israel as anti-Semites.

In his address, Netanyahu questioned how Israel can be accused of genocide, saying no country has gone to greater lengths to avoid civilian casualties by warning Gazans before attacks on neighborhoods. “In what world is genocide warning the enemy’s civilians in advance?” he asked. To make his point about the Palestinians putting weapons in civilian areas, Netanyahu held up a photo he said was taken by a French TV network showing two rocket launchers near an apartment building where three children were playing. “Israel was using its missiles to protect its children. Hamas was using its children to protect its missiles,” he declared.

Iranian diplomat Javad Safaei took the floor at the end of the assembly meeting saying Netanyahu rushed to the General Assembly “to hopelessly wage another war against the whole Islamic world and civilization, associating them baselessly with the ISIS terror group and propagating Iranophobia and Islamophobia.” [Yahoo]

Rights Group Accuses Israel of War Crimes in Gaza

Human Rights Watch, an international rights group has alleged that Israel committed war crimes during this summer’s Gaza war, saying it reached that conclusion after investigating attacks on or near United Nations-run schools housing displaced Palestinians. According to its investigation, the New York-based group said no military targets were apparent in the area of the schools and that some of the attacks were indiscriminate.

“The Israeli military carried out attacks on or near three well-marked schools where it knew hundreds of people were taking shelter, killing and wounding scores of civilians,” Fred Abrahams, adviser at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. “Israel has offered no convincing explanation for these attacks on schools where people had gone for protection and the resulting carnage.”

Israel argues that the civilian death toll during the 50-day summer war was Hamas’ fault, accusing the Islamic militant group of launching rockets — and drawing retaliation — from school yards, residential areas and mosques. The Israeli military announced it had launched its own probe into cases involving Palestinian civilian casualties during the war, including the shelling of a U.N. school. The announcement was apparently meant to send a signal that Israel can police itself as it faces the specter of international war crimes probes.

The Gaza war left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, the majority of them civilians, according to Palestinian and U.N. officials. Israel says the number of militants killed was much higher and accuses Hamas of using civilians as human shields. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and six civilians were killed.

About a quarter of a million Palestinians displaced by the violence were seeking shelter in U.N.-run schools.

In one instance, Israel said it had fired mortars toward Hamas fighters operating near a school in response to anti-tank fire directed at them. The military said one mortar landed in the school courtyard, which according to video footage it released claiming to show the strike, was empty. Human Rights Watch said that seven Palestinian witnesses disputed the claim.

Human Rights Watch said another attack, was “unlawfully disproportionate.”

The US State Department accused Hamas of using schools for military purposes but also expressed concern that Israel’s response may have put civilians at risk.

The Israeli military has expanded its legal teams and gathered reams of evidence, including photos and video clips, meant to prove that Hamas used civilian areas for cover when firing rockets and to show that Israel showed restraint in its responses. [Yahoo]