

## Lessons from Lebanon and a Life Lost

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Daniel's story is Israel story in the Lebanon war against Hezbollah, and it is our story as Washington-area Jews.

Daniel is the son of Avinoam Shiran, a senior cardiologist in the Carmel Medical Center in Haifa. When Daniel was 10, he moved to Rockville when his father obtained a fellowship at the Washington Hospital Center. His family joined the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington in Rockville.

My wife, Fran, and I had become friendly with Daniel's grandfather, Israeli professor Menahum Rebhun, during his sabbatical year in Brussels, when I was U.S. ambassador to the European Union.

Daniel was an exceptional young man, brilliant at math and science. He quickly learned English at Rockville's Farmland Elementary School, then excelled at Tilden Middle School. On his return to Israel, he enrolled in the prestigious Ha'Reali High School and grew into a strapping, handsome young man.

Rather than follow his father's advice to use his talents in a safe intelligence unit, he was determined to join a combat unit. Three times he was turned down because of a congenital ankle problem, but with persistence he was allowed into the elite Golani combat unit.

On Aug. 4, Staff Sgt. Shiran was killed while leading his force into the village of Merkaba, searching for Hezbollah weapons. He was buried in Haifa's military cemetery, the same day he was struck down by Hezbollah.

Daniel's story, that of a gifted young Israeli killed before reaching the prime of life, was repeated by scores of other Israeli soldiers who died in Lebanon. His story brings home to us the sacrifice Israel's young people make to secure the first Jewish state after 2,000 years of exile. What broader lessons can we draw?

First, the Lebanon war galvanized American Jewry as no event had since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Through the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, area Jews alone contributed \$13.8 million to a United Jewish Communities emergency fund in the space of a few weeks. Nationwide, federations raised several hundred million dollars to help move children and the elderly out of range of the Hezbollah rockets; upgrade bomb shelters; provide shelter and food.

Second, there will be many questions the government-appointed commission will answer about the conduct of the war on the quality of intelligence; the reliance on air power; the adequacy of equipment for the soldiers. They must be answered in a searching way, regardless of the political consequences, to avoid future problems.

Third, and most important, did the Lebanon war make another war with Hezbollah less likely? Daniel's father fought in the first Lebanon war in 1982. Will another generation of Israelis die in a third Lebanon war?

It is important to put the war into context. For sure, there was not a knockout blow to Hezbollah. It maintains thousands of rockets. The UNIFIL force is not taking active steps to disarm Hezbollah, search for weapons or patrol the Syrian-Lebanese border to stop the arms flow to Hezbollah. The Israeli hostages remain in captivity.

But Israel's fierce response to Hezbollah's attacks will make renewed attacks less likely. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah admitted that had he known of Israel's response, he would not have attacked Israel in the first place. Hezbollah was weakened and their host, Lebanon, paid a serious price. Hezbollah would receive no support from the Lebanese people for another spate of attacks.

The Lebanon war that took Daniel's life exposed an existential threat to Israel. Though determined, well-armed and fanatical, Hezbollah cannot threaten Israel's existence. The source of their support is Iran, with a lethal mix of a radical ideology, medium-range missiles that can already reach Israel, and an appetite for nuclear weapons.

Israel must step up its missile defense system. It must make it clear that any nation threatening Israel with weapons of mass destruction will receive a massive response. But, Israel cannot take on Iran alone. A pre-emptive Israeli military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities is not feasible. Israel must depend upon the determination of the United States and Europe to provide incentives and sanctions to slow Iran's nuclear program until more rational Iranian leaders are in place.

Israel must not let the world forget the dangers involved. This should be the lasting legacy of Daniel Shiran.

*Stuart E. Eizenstat was President Jimmy Carter's chief White House domestic adviser. He also held senior positions in the Clinton administration and led Holocaust restitution negotiations.*