

GNITN - Special Edition

Israel At War – Day 427

Is Damascus Falling?

A Military Coup

We read in a [report](#) from *The Times Of Israel* that rebel forces are taking one city after another and the Assad regime is teetering on the edge of collapse:

Israel is said to be preparing for the possibility that the Syrian army may collapse in the face of rapidly advancing rebel forces, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holding security deliberations on the matter on Thursday night.

Things are happening so quickly and Israel is taking precautions if Syria does fall into the rebel's hands:

Channel 13 reported that the IDF now assesses the rebels may pose a real threat to the continuation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's rule. According to a report on Channel 12, Israel has been surprised by the weakness of the Syrian army, as it continues to swiftly lose ground to the jihadist-led fighters.

Israel is also warning Iran to not get involved:

The report added that Israel has sent a strong warning to Iran not to send weaponry to Syria that could reach the hands of the Hezbollah terror group in Lebanon.

There is concern that these rebels, who are not supporters of Israel, could extend their control to the Israeli border. Israel told these insurgents to not so that:

Kan news reported, citing two unnamed sources, that Israel and the United States are "detecting signs of certain collapse" in the Syrian army, and that one of Israel's main concerns is that the rebels will advance as far south as the Israeli border with Syria in the Golan Heights.

Channel 13 said Israel has conveyed messages to rebel leaders to stay away from the border.

It's Happening Quickly

As we continue to read in the *Times* article the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is ready to act:

Earlier on Thursday, Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi held an assessment on the developments in Syria, as the rebels led by Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) captured the key central city of Hama, a little more than a week after they launched their offensive, just as a ceasefire took hold between Israel and Assad's ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah.

The rebels are advancing at a fast pace:

Last week the rebels took control of Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, and have since pushed south, capturing Hama on Thursday and advancing further south to Homs, a key central city that functions as a crossroads connecting Syria's most populous regions.

The IDF will not allow these rebels to also become a threat to Israel:

The Israeli military assessment was held with the IDF General Staff Forum, the military's top brass.

“The IDF is following events and is preparing for any scenario in attack and defense,” the military said in a statement. “The IDF will not allow a threat near the Syrian-Israeli border and will act to thwart any threat to the citizens of the State of Israel.”

As we noted, things are happening fast, faster than the IDF estimated:

Amid the growing concern, two senior Israeli officials told the Axios news site that the collapse of regime defense lines in the past 24 hours had happened faster than expected.

Two scenarios are seen as troubling:

A US official who also spoke to the site said that Israel has expressed concern to Washington over both a potential radical Islamist takeover of Syria and an increased presence of Iranian forces in the country to back Assad.

As in their sentiments about the Iran/Iraq war of the past, some Israel sources that they want both sides to diminish each other:

At the same time, an official told The Times of Israel anonymously that Israel’s interest in the renewed fighting in Syria is “that they continue fighting one another.”

They added: “It’s entirely clear to us that one side is Salafi jihadists and the other side is Iran and Hezbollah. We want them to weaken one another.”

Regardless, the IDF is preparing for either side to prevail:

The official stressed that Israel is not getting involved on either side. “We are prepared for any scenario and we will act accordingly.”

Simmering For Some Time

This isn’t a new fight, but one that was mostly quiet until now:

Until last week, the war in Syria had been mostly dormant for years, but analysts have said the violence had been bound to flare up as the conflict was never truly resolved.

After years locked behind frozen frontlines, the rebels have burst forth to mount the swiftest battlefield advance by either side since a rebellion against Assad descended into civil war 13 years ago. The capture of Hama has given them control of a strategic central city that opposition forces had never previously managed to seize.

Another city has fallen to the insurgents as they also announce the next city they want to capture: *Rebels were seen on television parading through Hama into Thursday evening to the sound of celebratory gunfire. Other footage showed detainees pouring out of the city prison after rebels freed them.*

The insurgents said they were ready to march on south towards Homs, which links the capital Damascus to the north and to the port cities on the coast. “Your time has come,” said a rebel operations room in an online post, calling on Homs residents to rise up in revolution against government forces.

They are also trying to build their coalitions and change the way they are seen:

The most powerful rebel faction is the Sunni Islamist HTS, the former al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria. Its leader Abu Mohammed al-Julani has pledged to protect Syria’s religious minorities and has called on them to abandon Assad, but many remain fearful of the insurgents.

The group has sought to moderate its image in recent years, but experts say it faces a challenge convincing Western governments it has fully renounced hardline jihadism.

What's Next For Damascus?

Some people are thinking that one of the oldest cities in the world, Damascus will be destroyed as predicted by the Bible in **Isaiah 17:1**:

The special word about Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city. It will be destroyed and laid waste. (NLV)

Many theologians are still not sure why it will happen other than Syria is an enemy of Israel which is good enough for me. But now we're seeing a real time reason for Damascus to be taken out as a city and it doesn't matter who controls it. Even though the rebels are telling Israel they are both fighting against the same foe and that the enemy of your enemy is your friend, they are not in support of Israel's right to exist when push comes to shove. Short term these rebels are taking down a regime that is aiding and abetting Israel's demise by allowing terrorists to work freely inside their borders. And they are friends of Iran and their proxies so we need to understand that. But if these rebels get their hands on the weapons stockpiles in and around Damascus they could be just as bad for Jews. Nothing changes prophetically in my view. Israel doesn't want the current regime or any other terrorist group to have those weapons of war. And we need to remember that the man leading the revolt has a \$10 million dollar bounty on his head by the US right now. He is not a good man and certainly not someone we should be celebrate in any capacity. As for how this fits in Bible prophecy, on his *Telegram* channel, Amis Tsarfati tells us his opinion on Damascus being destroyed:

To those asking if this is the biblical fall of Damascus as described in Isaiah 17, let me clarify: Isaiah 17 speaks of a physical destruction that will turn the city into an uninhabited place. There are two possibilities: either the ongoing civil war will lead to this devastation, or an external force will be responsible. The Bible does not specify who will cause this destruction; we can only speculate on the who and the why.

However, noted Bible prophecy teacher Bill Salus tells us that verse 9 points to Israel doing the damage:

In that day their strong cities will be like places left empty among the trees, or like high branches which they left behind because of the sons of Israel. The land will be laid waste. (Isa 17:9, NLV)

Regardless of how it happens, and I believe that the IDF will be heavily involved the city of Damascus will be destroyed as the Bible predicts.