

LEBANON: Israelis say spy chief killed Hezbollah commander Mughniyah

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A panel of experts assembled by Israel's most powerful television channel honored Israeli Mossad chief Meir Dagan as the nation's "man of the year" for, among other things, killing Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyah in the Syrian capital in February, according to a recent report in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

Up until now, Israel has publicly refused to acknowledge any role in the car bomb blast that killed Mughniyah, who was suspected of masterminding attacks on Israeli targets around the world and was believed to have been the brains behind the Hezbollah militia's surprise performance in the 2006 war with Israel.

Many in Syria and Lebanon suspect the Jewish state's security services had a hand in the assassination.

But according to Haaretz journalist and frequent government critic Gideon Levy, the Israeli Channel 2 panel last week cited "the killing of senior Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyah in Damascus, a few more mysterious and unnecessary killings and, of course, the bombing of the alleged nuclear site in Syria" as accomplishments that made Dagan deserving of 'at least 10 Israel Prizes.'

The television station aired rare footage of outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert meeting Dagan in his office telling him, "You did well," according to Levy.

Levy quoted political analyst Emmanuel Rosen praising the selection: "[He is] a man who has done only good. [He is] a man who would cut the throats of terrorists with his own hands, using a box-cutter — a man of action with a knife in his teeth.

— Borzou Daragahi in Beirut Photo: Mossad chief Meir Dagan. Credit: File

photo <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2008/10/lebanon-israeli.html>-----

Killer of the year

By Gideon Levy, Haaretz White smoke emerged from the tribal campfire on Rosh Hashanah Eve, announcing Channel 2 News' choice for man of the year. Commentators from the most popular and influential media outlet in the country announced their decision after holding a shallow and absurd discussion. "[He is] a man who has done only good," political analyst Emmanuel Rosen said of the selection, speaking on behalf of judging panel. Who is this rare and illustrious person who did so much good? Mossad chief Meir Dagan. An excited Rosen added: "[He is] a man who would cut the throats of terrorists with his own hands, using a box-cutter - a man of action with a knife in his teeth." By way of supporting their decision they presented a "rare journalistic achievement": a glimpse of a meeting between our hero Dagan and outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. The images echoed Communist Romania or North Korea: Olmert hosting Meirkeh, as the Mossad head is called by U.S. President George Bush, in his office. Both said very little in front of the cameras. "You did well," the prime minister said to Rosen, about the recognition. Then two character witnesses were called in. Major Gen. (res.) Yossi Ben Hanan spoke about how Dagan once killed a terrorist with his own hands, though of course he did not specify how, and reminisced about how they had once traveled together in the Far East. National Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer added: "I recommend that you don't get too close to him - I suggest your story had best be favorable." Later the panel made intimations about his doings in the past year: The killing of senior Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyah in Damascus, a few more mysterious and unnecessary killings and, of course, the bombing of the alleged nuclear site in Syria, operations that they said should make Meirke deserving of "at least 10 Israel Prizes."

Indeed, our man of the year is a declared killer. Whether by box-cutter or car bomb, his craft is killing. His killer instincts are our source of pride, the peak of our creativity. We should be thankful to Rosen and friends: They did not even try to sugar-coat anything. They did not pick a humanist, a scientist, an industrialist or an author; Attorney General Menachem Mazuz came in second and Olmert third, but Dagan is our killer of the year. He himself is not the problem. Rather, it's the disgusting worship of people of his kind. Never has the head of the Mossad been such a dark figure with so much blood on his hands. Never has anyone thought of picking the Mossad chief, of all people, as man of the year. It is doubtful whether there is any other free country where the top journalists would consider choosing the head of such an organization as man of the year. Only in Israel. Only in Israel are Dagan's past activities still censored. He is responsible for much of the blood that was shed in Gaza in the 1970s and Lebanon in the '80s. A shocking expose prepared by two reputable journalists a few years ago about his doings in Lebanon was never published. That report would have only made the Channel 2 dream team panel worship Dagan even more, and supported his image as a killer with a knife in his teeth.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1025604.html>

