



IN LEBANON, HEZBOLLAH HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT

Mordechai Kedar of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said recently, “There has been no state of Lebanon for some time now.” Instead, Hezbollah, the “Party of God,” controls Lebanon’s “parliament, government, [and] president, and all of the other state institutions are nothing more than a façade for players directed by Nasrallah [Hezbollah’s leader].”[1]

The Lebanese Armed Forces’ Cooperation with Hezbollah

Significant evidence indicates that rather than curtailing Hezbollah’s power by disarming the terrorist organization and removing it from Israel’s border, as stipulated by UN resolution 1701 agreed to after the 2006 Lebanon War, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has proven ineffective at combating Hezbollah and, on many occasions, even collaborated with the terrorist-army.

The LAF, which has enjoyed over \$2 billion dollars in US aid since 2005, regularly works synergistically with Hezbollah. Tony Badran of Foundation for the Defense of Democracies argues that this synergism is “codified in the LAF’s doctrine.” The doctrine praises Hezbollah (the “Resistance”) for its defeat of Israel, using language symbolic and reminiscent of “the Iranian revolutionary template” and “licenses the LAF’s joint deployment and extensive coordination with Hezbollah.”[1]

The Israeli Alma Research and Education Center issued a report in January 2020[1] which notes a significant rise in Shiites serving in the LAF which may be preparation for its morphing into a proxy of Hezbollah-itself a Shiite proxy of Iran.[2]

According to Lebanese media reports, there has been “almost daily” coordination between the LAF and Hezbollah against Syrian rebel groups for some time.[1] Israel’s Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman has said that “the Lebanese army has turned into an integral part of Hezbollah’s command structure,” essentially asserting that Hezbollah controls the LAF.[2] A former UNIFIL peacekeeper claimed that in his personal experience, “the Lebanese Armed Forces are sharing information 100 percent with Hezbollah.”[3]

Hezbollah and Lebanon's Political System and Social Sectors

For over a decade, Hezbollah has been called an integral part of Lebanon's political system,[1] and such a depiction could not be truer in recent years, to the detriment of the Lebanese people. Since 2018, Hezbollah and its allies have held a majority in Lebanon's parliament, granting the terrorist organization access to government resources, recognition as a political entity, and validation in the eyes of some of the Lebanese people.

In fact, Hezbollah's sophisticated network of healthcare and social services has helped the military organization morph into a prominent political player in Lebanon.[1] In sum, Hezbollah "maintains an extensive security apparatus, political organization, and health and social services network in Lebanon, with a payroll of around 80,000." [2]

With hospitals, health centers, schools, student scholarships, a satellite television network (Al-Manar), and numerous seats in the Lebanese National Assembly, Hezbollah has thoroughly infiltrated Lebanon.[1]



Hezbollah members applaud Nasrallah, the group's secretary general

[1] A.J. Caschetta, "Funding Lebanon is Funding Hezbollah," Jerusalem Post, Jan 13 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Funding-Lebanon-is-funding-Hezbollah-614062>

[2] <https://israel-alma.org/tag/lebanon/>

[3] Tony Badran, "American Policy in Lebanon Isn't Policy. It's Poetry," FDD, Oct 27 2017, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2017/10/27/american-policy-in-lebanon-isnt-policy-its-poetry/>.

[4] Aryeh Savir, "Increased Ties Noted between Hezbollah and Lebanese Army," Jewish Press, Jan 13 2020, <https://www.jewishpress.com/news/middle-east/lebanon/increased-ties-noted-between-hezbollah-and-lebanese-army/2020/01/13/>.

[5] Hanan Khaled, "Hezbollah will not impose veto law: Nasrallah," Daily Star (Beirut), May 2, 2017, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/May-02/404216-lebanon-security-has-improved-nasrallah.ashx>; "Lebanese Army Challenges Israeli Provocative Actions on Border," Al-Manar, February 27, 2017, <http://english.almanar.com.lb/201760>.

[6] Dan Williams, "Israel says Hezbollah runs Lebanese army, signaling both are foes," Reuters, Oct 10 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-israel-lebanon/israel-says-hezbollah-runs-lebanese-army-signaling-both-are-foes-idUSKBN1CF25R>.

[7] Ben Evansky, "UN peacekeeping patrol filmed coming under attack by Hezbollah in Lebanon," Fox News, Aug 28 2019, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-peacekeeping-patrol-filmed-coming-under-attack-by-hezbollah-in-lebanon>.

[8] <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03932720701722852>

[9] <https://mepc.org/hezbollahs-social-jihad-nonprofits-resistance-organizations>

[10] Adam Turner, "Lebanon and Hezbollah Fact Sheet," Endowment for Middle East Truth, Feb 14 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Funding-Lebanon-is-funding-Hezbollah-614062>.