

Fighting Near the Shores of Tripoli: Lebanon's, Not Libya's

Contributed by W. Thomas Smith Jr.
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Over the weekend, we received word that fighting was taking place in-and-around the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, not far from where last year's fighting took place between the Lebanese Army and the Al-Qaeda affiliate group Fatah Al Islam in the bloody battle of Nahr al-Bared.

The current fighting, which is now being widely reported throughout the Western media, is between pro-democracy Sunnis and pro-Syrian Alawites (allied to Hezbollah).

According to the AP:

"It was not immediately possible to determine whether the Tripoli violence was an isolated event or residue from last month's clashes . . . Our sources are telling us, the fighting in Tripoli is most certainly connected to last month's attacks by Hezbollah, the Doha agreement — which greatly increased the power and influence of Hezbollah (and Iran and Syria) in Lebanon — and the ongoing albeit under-reported attacks launched by Hezbollah and its allies across the country since mid-May.

Readers may also recall from our reporting at World Defense Review (here, here, and here) that resistance groups began forming across the country almost immediately following the Doha talks in Qatar. And as I reported at Human Events:

"On Sunday evening [May 18], sources informed us that members of the pro-democracy movement in Lebanon had, hours earlier, formed a 'resistance group against terrorism.' Monday we learned the resistance group — formed in Beirut — was composed of Christians, Druze, and Muslims (both Sunni and Shia), all committed to resisting Hizballah. There also are reports of a like-minded Sunni resistance group forming near Tripoli. According to Ya Libnan, Lebanese parliamentarian Mohammed Kabbara, a Sunni, says, 'Hezbollah is seeking to shift its battle — after invading Beirut — to the Bekaa, and now Tripoli's turn has come.'

Tom Harb, secretary general of the World Council of the Cedars Revolution, tells us, 'This is clearly a strategy of Hezbollah and a continuation — by other means and in other regions of the country — of the terrorist attacks launched by Hezbollah against the Lebanese people last month.' Sources very close to the Lebanese Army also are telling us, the attacks in Tripoli, the Bekaa Valley (last week), and elsewhere, are part of a much broader two-part strategy on the part of the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah axis to both increase the pressure on the Lebanese Army and the Interior Security Forces (national police) — spreading legitimate Lebanese forces thin and keeping them off-balance — and to perhaps create or increase fissures within the Army leadership and the rank-and-file. Updates will follow.

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