

High military tension over Iranian presence on strategic Lebanese peak

Contributed by Debkafile
Tuesday, 15 July 2008

DEBKAfile's military sources report that Israel has placed its military and air forces on its northern borders on high alert after Iran and Syria ignored Jerusalem's warning, relayed to Washington, that the continued presence of Iranian, Syrian and Hizballah officers on the strategic Lebanese Sannine peak may spark a military clash.

Monday, July 14, two days ahead of the prisoner swap with Hizballah, Israel's army spokesmen disclosed that Iranian officers had assumed command of Hizballah's fighting units.

Our military sources report that the disclosure, which further fueled the cross-border tension, referred to the Iranian officers in command of Hizballah teams atop the 7,800-foot Mt. Sannine peak, whence they can monitor and menace US Sixth Fleet movements in the eastern Mediterranean and Israeli Air Force flights.

Iranian officers have also been attached to Hizballah's anti-air, surface, and shore-to-ship missile units across Lebanon.

All Israel's military, police and security contingents are also on the ready in case of trouble flaring immediately after Israel and Hizballah exchange prisoners Wednesday. They estimate that once the exchange is out of the way, Hizballah will unleash a cross-border assault and terrorist action inside Israel, its promised revenge for the killing of their military commander Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus last February for which they blame Israel.

Israel's restraint against Hamas's missiles campaign from Gaza, despite repeated threats, has left Hizballah and Tehran unmoved by its warning on Lebanon.

The electrical vibes on the Israel-Lebanese border have not reached Paris or impacted President Nicolas Sarkozy's drive, encouraged by the Bush administration, to end Bashar Assad's international isolation and so cut him away from his alliance with Iran and ties with Hizballah.

The very opposite process is racing fast forward in the Middle East. In Lebanon, Syria and Iran are operating in close sync to carve Lebanon up between them and seize strategic locations - fully exploiting the willful blindness of Paris and Washington.

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