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DEBKAfile's military and intelligence sources disclose that an Iranian Revolutionary Guards delegation last week signed a secret accord with Hizballah leaders for the integration and operational merger of their missile-rocket and commando units.

This may not have been news to US vice president Dick Cheney, when he "revealed" Saturday, Sept. 6, that Russia had sold advanced weapons to Syria and Iran, some of which had been channeled to Lebanon and Iraq.

However, Israeli president Shimon Peres, who responded by waving aside the need for an Israeli attack on Iran, was clearly out of the picture evolving ominously across the border in Lebanon.

There, Iran and Syria are deepening their stranglehold on Lebanon and preparing to attack Israel by using al-Qods's resources to further fortify Hizballah.

The new accord enables the two terrorist machines to fight under a unified command controlled from Tehran.

Like President Peres, the rest of Israel's policy-making levels appears oblivious to the fact that key elements of Hizballah's fighting machine against Israel have been taken over by the al Qods commander, Ghasem Suleimani, whom DEBKAfile identifies as the senior commander of Iran's terrorist and intelligence networks in the Palestinian territories and the Persian Gulf.

Western military experts point to the contiguous operational control Iran has acquired for al Qods - from Iraq, via Syria, Lebanon and up to the Mediterranean coast of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

Last week, defense minister Ehud Barak warned that Israel is closely and cautiously following developments to the north. "Our enemies" had better not put IDF to the test, he said.

Tehran, Damascus and Hizballah, already inured to such statements from Barak which rarely lead to action, simply ignored this one too.

Iran timed its move to coincide with the French president Nicolas Sarkozy's visit to Damascus last week, hoping all eyes would be fixed on the visit and no one would notice the al Qods team slipping quietly into Beirut for another step to plunge Lebanon further into Iran-backed Hizballah war preparations against Israel.

<http://www.debka.com/headline.php?hid=5562>

Iran solidifies control over Hizballah
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Yaakov Katz , THE JERUSALEM POST

Iran is consolidating its grip on Hizballah and has instituted a number of structural changes to the Lebanese group, under which Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah no longer enjoys exclusive command over its military wing, top Israeli defense officials have revealed.

According to the officials, following the Second Lebanon War, Iran decided to step up its involvement in the Hizballah decision-making process and has instituted a number of changes to the terror group's hierarchy, under which Nasrallah has to receive Iranian permission prior to certain operations.

"There is real Iranian command now over Hizballah," a top IDF officer said. "This doesn't mean that Nasrallah is a puppet, but it does mean that whenever he pops his head out of his bunker he sees an Iranian official standing over him."

Reports of Iranian discontent with Nasrallah had begun to surface following the 2006 war, which Teheran reportedly was not interested in at the time. Several reports in the Arab press claimed that Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had ousted Nasrallah from his post as Hizbullah secretary-general and replaced him with Naim Qassem, Hizbullah's second in command. Iran has denied the reports.

"Iranian supervision grew tremendously following the war," the top officer explained. "Nasrallah is still in a decision-making position but Iran's influence has dramatically increased."

A report in a Syrian opposition paper claimed Sunday that a high-level delegation of Iranian Revolutionary Guards visited Beirut last week to coordinate the integration of some Hizbullah branches into the Guards' Al-Quds Force, which is in charge of Iran's terror activities in Iraq, Lebanon and elsewhere.

According to the Reform Party of Syria, parts of the Hizbullah operation structure will now be under the command of Brig.-Gen. Faramaz Ghasem Suleimani, commander of the Al-Quds Force. Suleimani is listed by the US as a terrorist and the Guards was declared a terror group in 2007.

The paper claimed that Iran's ultimate plan was to dilute Syrian influence over Hizbullah in case Damascus strikes a peace deal with Israel.

Iran's solidification of its control over Hizbullah is seen as an attempt to direct its military forces in the event of a conflict in the Middle East. If Iran is attacked by the US or Israel, it may now be able to order Hizbullah to retaliate on its behalf.

In the past, IDF Military Intelligence has speculated about what Nasrallah would do in such a situation, raising the possibility that Hizbullah would not immediately attack Israel if Iran was attacked.

In another development, Hizbullah's Al-Manar satellite television station has begun using an Indonesian satellite to broadcast across Asia and Australia. Hizbullah asked Indonesia for permission to use the satellite after Thailand kicked Al-Manar TV broadcasts off its satellite in January.

Israel expressed its disappointment with Indonesia's decision, since Al-Manar is full of anti-Israel and anti-US propaganda.

Indonesia's decision to allow the Al-Manar hookup undermines US and European efforts to limit the reach of Hizbullah's broadcasts, the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center said.

This article can also be read at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1220802279314&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>