

## Iranian general leads Hizballah war exercise integrated with Tehran, Damascus

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Hizballah's military maneuver Saturday, Nov. 22, in an area south of the Litani River barred by the UN gave Iran's Al Qods chief, Gen. Qassem Suleimani, a chance to personally check on its Lebanese proxy's ability to draw up battle lines at speed against a potential Israeli tank incursion of the Beqaa Valley.

DEBKAFfile's military sources also disclose exclusively that the exercise provided Tehran's first opportunity to test the functioning of the senior staff quarters in Khoramshahr near the Iranian-Iraqi border, which have taken over direct command of the Lebanese terrorist group.

Its maneuver was fully integrated with the military exercises staged across Iran over the week-end and coordinated with Syrian army headquarters in Damascus.

For the first time, all the pro-Iranian military elements on Israel's borders have now been pulled together for a joint maneuver by a high-ranking Iranian general. As of Nov. 22, therefore, Iran, Syria and Lebanon are tightly meshed into a Tehran-led combined front against any war contingency.

This development seriously upgrades the peril Iran poses to Israel's security and brings it right up to its back door.

On the ground, Hizballah's field commanders practiced interchanges - and tested their communications links - with Syria's 10th and 14th divisions deployed opposite South Lebanon and the Israeli border positions on Mount Hermon, Mount Dov and the Chebaa Farms.

Formally, the al Qods Brigades is a unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps, but Gen. Suleimani, whose mandate covers Iran's extraterritorial surrogates and sponsored terrorist movement, enjoys broad autonomy and answers directly only to supreme ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Engrossed in a tough election campaign, Israel's leaders responded feebly to this development, merely commenting on Hizballah's "brazen" violation of UN Security Council ceasefire resolution 1701 of 2006, which closed Lebanon south of the Litani to Hizballah gunmen. One defense ministry official affirmed that Hizballah had been armed with "tens of thousands of Iranian rockets," without indicating what Israel intended to do about this menacing arsenal.

Hizballah manipulated from Tehran and Damascus is going full steam ahead with its war preparations without apparent fear of Israeli interference.

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