

Al Qaeda operatives relocated from Iraq to Lebanon

Contributed by DEBKAFfile
Saturday, 13 December 2008

UNIFIL, northern Israel on terror alert

Al Qaeda operatives relocated from Iraq to Lebanon. UNIFIL, northern Israel on terror alert
DEBKAFfile Exclusive Report

December 12, 2008, 11:56 AM (GMT+02:00)

Early Thursday, Dec. 11, the UN peacekeeping force's South Lebanon command declared the Palestinian Ain Hilwe camp near Sidon a no-go zone for the force's convoys for fear of attacks by al Qaeda. Supply convoys using the main coastal road from Beirut to Sidon were restricted to travel by night between 3 and 5 a.m., under armored vehicle escort.

The day before the al Qaeda alert, Dell Dailey, counter-terrorist operations director at the US State Department, reported that al Qaeda had responded to heavy US military in Iraq by shifting some of its fighting strength to Lebanon, though not in large numbers. He spoke during a visit Beirut.

DEBKAFfile's military sources report that this strength has split between two Palestinian camps: Ain Hilwa and Nahr al-Barad near the northern town of Tripoli. US intelligence expects them to focus on four targets:

1. One group will attempt cross-border strikes in northern Israel. A second has managed to infiltrate the Gaza Strip after landing in Egyptian Sinai by sea.
2. United Nations peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, who have been put on terror alert.
3. US installations and premises in Lebanon as well as Sixth Fleet vessels opposite its shores.
4. Pro-Western politicians in Lebanon.

According to our counter-terror sources, the al Qaeda cell in the north is keeping its head down. However, They are confident enough to strut around the camp fully armed.

Acting on a request from Washington, Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas this week replaced the Fatah commanders who admitted al Qaeda to Ain Hilwe and collaborated with the newcomers. Shots were later heard from the camp.

One of the functions of the undercover US mission recently established in Beirut – and revealed exclusively by DEBKAFfile – is to liaise with the Lebanese army in operations against al Qaeda, as well as guarding the Lebanese government against a Syrian or Hizballah takeover. Washington does not rule out the possibility of al Qaeda building a new stronghold in the country for a broad new offensive in Lebanon and against Israel.

<http://www.debka.com/headline.php?hid=5768>