

THE BRAVE LITTLE FORCE DEFEATS AL QAEDA STRONGHOLD

Contributed by CRNews, Mideast Newswire, Pics-Agencies
Monday, 03 September 2007
Last Updated Monday, 03 September 2007

Dr Walid Phares
Director, Future Terrorism Project
Foundation for the Defense of Democracies

Today, the Lebanese Army completed its victory over the Fatah al Islam forces in the Nahr al Bared stronghold in Northern Lebanon. The "little brave force," backed by the country's civil society and by the Cedars Revolution accomplished in one small area what major armies are hoping to achieve globally: defeat al Qaeda. On this Sunday September 2, the Lebanese soldiers and officers finally took the last bunker of the al Qaeda linked Jihadi terror group. Immediately after, the civilian populations in Northern Lebanon, from Sunni Tripoli and Dennieh, Maronite Zghortan and Besharre, Orthodox Kura, and multiethnic Akkar, expressed their joy to see the Jihadist removed. The local victory of the Lebanese Army -despite the threat of multiple identical groups in the country preparing for clashes- shows that, what I called a "brave little force," can confront and defeat Terrorists when the Government is focused on such a policy. The Lebanese Army is ill equipped, is emerging from 15 years of Syrian occupation and is under the pressure of pro-Jihadist Parties and politicians including Hezbollah and its allies. But nevertheless, the multiethnic military force produced a victory on the ground. It faced off with well trained Jihadists who used suicide bombers, snipers, slaughter of innocents, and all the panoply of weapons they have. But, as the pictures have shown over the past few months, the Lebanese military were fighting on their soil, and had their population supporting them. Bottom line: they won this one battle, by themselves with their own arms, tanks, helicopters and more than a hundred casualties. This was their Fallujah which they freed alone.

But as important is the support received by the military from the various Lebanese communities. This second test since the Cedars Revolution shows that a cross sectarian solidarity exist against the barbary of the Jihadi terrorists. Among the army's casualties, Sunnis, Christians, Druse and Shia. Tripoli, mostly Sunni with Christian and Alawi communities stood firmly by the Lebanese Army. In the rest of the area, civilians from all religions also supported their soldiers. This attitude sent chilling messages to Hezbollah and his Syro-Iranian allies: When you are confronting an army backed by its people, you have little chance of intimidating it. Also a message to many in the international media who -sympathetic to Iran and Syria- projected the masses to turn against the Army. Dead wrong: Not only the Lebanese civilians stood by their armed forces and Government, but a majority of Palestinians in the camps sided with Mahmoud Abbas against the Jihadists of Fatah al Islam. This is an experiment that deserves the attention of the Free World, as Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Palestine are witnessing the Terror war against surging democracies. The soldiers close to their societies can win in the War on Terror.

Pictures and comments that speaks to Lebanon's war on Terror

The Following are pictures selected from the public data of major news agencies. Also comments by the Cedars Revolution News Service (CRNS).

Lebanese soldiers secure the area at the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian camp. Reuters.

CRN Comment: Hundreds of Lebanese soldiers and officers were killed in the battles with al Qaeda's forces in Northern Lebanon. But Lebanese sources say the "experience in fighting al Qaeda has been immense."

Map locating the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon. Lebanese troops killed at least 27 Islamist militants and captured some 15 more when they made a desperate bid to break the army's three-month-old siege of their refugee camp redoubt.(AFP Graphic)

CRN Comment: More than one Jihadi stronghold exist in Lebanon, especially on the southern coasts of the country.

Two Lebanese soldiers wave to people as they celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Tawil)

CRN Comment: Lebanon's soldiers reflect its civil society. Mostly educated, from various communities and follow the Western doctrines of engagement despite the 15 years of Syrian Baathist occupation. Analysts believe that Hezbollah has a number of partisans inside the Lebanese Army.

A Lebanese army convoy patrols the entrance of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp as a military helicopter flies overhead in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. At least 20 Islamist militants were killed in a battle with the Lebanese army on Sunday when the fighters tried to flee a Palestinian refugee camp in north Lebanon, a security source said. REUTERS/Omar Ibrahim (LEBANON)

CRN Comment: Lebanese Army helicopters participated in the battles against al Qaeda. Military sources in Lebanon say the Army needs more advanced helicopters to contain the other potential threats. Observers in the West believe such new type of helicopters could be sent to Lebanon after the Presidential elections.

Smoke billows from the destroyed and besieged refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared in northern Lebanon, 30 August 2007. Lebanese troops killed at least 27 Islamist militants and captured some 15 more when they made a desperate bid to break the army's three-month-old siege of their refugee camp redoubt. (AFP/Anwar Amro)

CRN Comment: The type of fortifications built by al Qaeda and its affiliates in Lebanon is very complex. Most of the bunkers are situated within civilian neighborhood. The Lebanese Army had to proceed gradually to avoid civilian casualties.

Lebanese soldiers gesture on the outskirts of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. (Omar Ibrahim/Reuters)

CRN Comment: The type of soldiers "produced" by the battles against al Qaeda will determine the future encounter with the Terror forces.

Lebanese civilians wave national flags and chant slogans after the Lebanese army took over of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. (Ayman Saidi/Reuters)

CRN Comment: The positive reaction by the civilians after the victory at Nahr al Bared shows the fundamental inclinations of the populations.

Lebanese civilians celebrate after their army took control of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. (Omar Ibrahim/Reuters)

CRN Comment: It is to note that the military action against al Qaeda in Lebanon, triggered a significant Sunni opposition to the Takfiri and Salafist forces in the country.

Lebanese army soldiers celebrate as they sit on top an armoured vehicle outside the Palestinian camp of Nahr al-Bared in northern Lebanon. Lebanese troops seized control on Sunday of a Palestinian refugee camp from die-hard Islamists, achieving what Prime Minister Fuad Siniora called their "biggest victory over terrorists." (AFP/Anwar Amro)

CRN Comment: The equipment of the Lebanese soldiers is to notice: Helmets from Old American, Soviet, French and even Syrian origin.

A Lebanese soldier hold hands with residents as they celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Tawil)

CRN Comment: The trends among the youngest of Lebanese, outside Hezbollah's zones, shows a sympathy to the Lebanese Army.

Lebanese civilians wave national flags and chant slogans after the Lebanese army took over of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. (Ayman Saidi/Reuters)

CRN Comment: Hezbollah and Syrian propaganda attempted to project Lebanese civilians as supporters of the Jihadists. But the natural reaction of the Lebanese youth is in support of their Army.

Lebanese civilians chant slogans and wave national flags as they celebrate the army taking over of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. REUTERS/Omar Ibrahim

CRN Comment: The Cedars Revolution seem to have reemerged in Northern Lebanon as a result of the Lebanese Army victory against al Qaeda.

A Lebanese girl holds the national flag and flashes the victory sign to celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Tawil)

CRN Comment: Contrary to what Hezbollah's propaganda claims, Lebanese women are overwhelmingly against Jihadism, particularly al Qaeda, because they will be the first ones to be oppressed if an Islamist regime is established.

Lebanese residents wave the national flag as they celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo)

CRN Comment: Without the Petrodollars from Iran, the masses in Lebanon move naturally with their national armed forces. The Cedars Revolution can be seen in different opportunities.

Lebanese people ride in a vehicle as they wave the national flag to celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp as troop convoys poured into the area in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo)

CRN Comment: Northern Lebanon's kids are free from the threat of al Qaeda's madrassas.

Residents carry Lebanese soldiers on their shoulders as they celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Tawil)

CRN Comment: Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, if freed from radical organizations would be inclined to live in Peace with each other.

Residents carry a Lebanese soldier on their shoulders as they celebrate the end of fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007. Resistance by al-Qaida-inspired militants in a northern Palestinian refugee camp collapsed Sunday, hours after a mass breakout left 39 militants dead, Lebanese security officials said, signaling an end to three months of fighting. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Tawil)

CRN Comment: If the Lebanese Army is empowered to deploy on all Lebanese territories, including the Lebanese-Syrian borders and if the militias are disarmed, the same pictures will be seen all over the country.

Masked Palestinian militants hold a copy of the Quran, Islam's holy book, in the Ein-el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, near the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, in this Feb. 3, 2006 file photo. The Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh on the edge of the southern city of Sidon is where most of the Palestinian radical groups are based and where plots against Israel and Western influence in Lebanon, and against Lebanese foes, are believed to be hatched. It's the largest of the 12 camps in Lebanon, housing about 45,000 of the 400,000 Palestinians whose exile dates from Israel's creation in 1948. (AP Photo/ Mohammed Zaatari, File)

CRN Comment: Against the rise of freedoms and democracy among Lebanese, particularly Muslims, the Jihadists play the religious card blindly. But they have failed in Northern Lebanon. Lebanese Muslims rejected al Qaeda.

A Palestinian militant displays a picture of al-Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden in the Ein-el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, near the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, in this Feb. 3, 2006 file photo. The Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh on the edge of the southern city of Sidon is where most of the Palestinian radical groups are based and where

plots against Israel and Western influence in Lebanon, and against Lebanese foes, are believed to be hatched. It's the largest of the 12 camps in Lebanon, housing about 45,000 of the 400,000 Palestinians whose exile dates from Israel's creation in 1948. (AP Photo/ Mohammed Zaatari, File)

CRN Comment: This is the leader of the Terrorists in Lebanon. But Usama Bin laden was rejected by the majority of Lebanese, including the Sunnis.

Lebanese troops on an armoured personnel carrier advance into the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. At least 20 Islamist militants were killed in a battle with the Lebanese army on Sunday when the fighters tried to flee a Palestinian refugee camp in north Lebanon, a security source said. REUTERS/Omar Ibrahim (LEBANON)

CRN Comment: The Lebanese Army has fought a battle for the liberation of Lebanon from the Terrorists. It deserves the support of the Free world.

A Palestinian Islamic militant carries an automatic rifle and flags as he deploys in the Taamir and Taware neighborhoods adjacent to Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, in the southern city of Sidon, Lebanon in this June 6, 2007, file photo. The Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh on the edge of the southern city of Sidon is where most of the Palestinian radical groups are based and where plots against Israel and Western influence in Lebanon, and against Lebanese foes, are believed to be hatched. It's the largest of the 12 camps in Lebanon, housing about 45,000 of the 400,000 Palestinians whose exile dates from Israel's creation in 1948. (AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatari, File)

CRN Comment: Here are the faces of Terror against Lebanon and the free world.

Lebanese soldiers take a break on the outskirts of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in north Lebanon September 2, 2007. At least 20 Islamist militants were killed in a battle with the Lebanese army on Sunday when the fighters tried to flee a Palestinian refugee camp in north Lebanon, a security source said. REUTERS/Omar Ibrahim (LEBANON)

CRN Comment: And here are the faces of the soldiers of liberation..the little brave force that defeated al Qaeda

September 3, 2007, CRNnews