

## Terrorists try to Infiltrate Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Contributed by The Tank  
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The Tank Blog by W. Thomas Smith, Jr.

Terrorists try to Infiltrate Refugee Camps in Lebanon [W. Thomas Smith Jr.]According to Naharnet:The Lebanese cabinet called for vigilance on Saturday in the face of reports of new attempts by Islamist militants to infiltrate the country's dozen Palestinian refugee camps.

"The cabinet took note of the reports of infiltration into some of the camps aimed at stirring up tensions between Lebanese and Palestinians and warned against it," Information Minister Ghazi al-Aridi told reporters.

"We will deal with this phenomenon wherever it occurs as we did in Nahr al-Bared," he said, referring to the northern refugee camp which saw a deadly uprising by Islamist militants this summer.

The cabinet "calls on all the relevant security and political authorities to be vigilant," Aridi added.

By longstanding convention, the Lebanese army does not enter the Palestinian refugee camps, leaving security to mainstream militant groups. The Nahr al-Bared siege largely focused on an area beyond the camp's conventional boundaries. ...This is the problem; and that which I have written about (and will continue to do so) during my recent trip to Lebanon: There is a "longstanding convention" of permitting the existence of terrorist-incubating sanctuaries located within sovereign Lebanese territory. Also, the Lebanese government, which is basically being held hostage by Hezbollah and those influenced by Hezbollah (putting their heads in the sand or dismissing HezB's political control, military exercises, and, yes, tactical operations as either marginally normal or nonexistent), is frankly incapable of "dealing with this phenomenon wherever it occurs." But I'll get to that in a moment.

Last night, I was talking with counterterrorism analyst Walid Phares, who said of Hezbollah (a U.S. State Department-listed foreign terrorist organization):They are literally a state within a state. Additionally, most people in the U.S. do not realize just how heavy Hezbollah's influence is. They not only control their own people as well as a slice of the army, but sectors of the government including ministries such as foreign affairs, health, etc. Additionally, Hezbollah controls financial institutions, banks, and other socio-economic infrastructure. This Iranian-backed militia also owns its own media outlets &mdash; television and radios &mdash; and it funds daily newspapers with Iranian petrodollars. Its propaganda arm has infiltrated local, regional and international media via public relations entities acting as fronts. Hezbollah is said to have developed "petro-influence" with foreign media correspondents including photographers and camera crews. Beyond that, the government and defense forces cannot prevent Hezbollah military exercises on sovereign Lebanese territory. There are certain areas &mdash; including the many Palestinian refugee camps across the country and the Hezbollah-controlled southern Beirut suburb, al Dahiyeh, where the legitimate army and police do not enter. And the parliament &mdash; many of whose members are holed up in Beirut's Phoenicia Hotel under heavy military and paramilitary security &mdash; is incapable of electing a president, due in large measure to Hezbollah and Syrian threats.

Moreover, the Naharnet report says, security [within the refugee camps] is left to "mainstream militant groups."

What? Palestinian militiamen, influenced by Hezbollah, are considered "mainstream?" And, yes, there is Hezbollah influence in those camps: One insider telling me, "The jihadist Palestinians inside the camps are in touch with &mdash; and some are trained by &mdash; Hezbollah."

Now to more of Minister al-Aridi's comments: "We will deal with this phenomenon wherever it occurs as we did in Nahr al-Bared."

Yeah, right. Just like they are dealing with the exponentially expanding Hezbollah problem, nationwide.

Let's not forget the terrorists at Nahr al-Bared caught Lebanese defense forces completely off-guard.

In May, national police counterterrorism forces attacked an apartment complex in Tripoli where al-Qaeda-affiliated Fatah al-Islam terrorists were holed up (and this after the terrorists had robbed a bank.). Granted, those counterterrorism forces &mdash; the crack Fouhoud (Panthers) &mdash; took out the Jihadists in short order.

But in response, Fatah al-Islamists in nearby Nahr al-Bared attacked a small Lebanese Army camp and murdered several soldiers while they were sleeping. The battle was on, and despite the heroics of the rank-and-file soldiers, there were some serious tactical and strategic errors made. And, according to some of my sources, those mistakes included a

special forces officer in command of Lebanese Rangers being replaced by a conventional-forces officer, because the latter was a Syrian sympathizer and the former was not. That was just one of the problems.

More to come.

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