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September 20, 2008

HASAN NASRALLAH: A LEADER OR A WHEELER DEALER?



Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah quoted: *We will cut the hand, behead, and pull out the spirit of whoever thinks of disarming Hezbollah.*



Michael Aoun paying tribute to assassinated Hezbollah member Imad Mughaneya in south Lebanon. Aoun defended Hezbollah's weapons by linking it to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This and his stance on the killing of Army Lt. Hana weakened Aoun amongst Christians. His fate is closely connected to Hezbollah.

Leader of the radical Shiite group Hezbollah's Secretary General, Hasan Nasrallah, is a very controversial yet liked personality in the Muslim and Arab worlds. Since the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from southern Lebanon in May 2000, he emerged as a strong and wise leader after claiming victory over the IDF. However, this image has been changing lately due to his divisive speeches and the misconduct of his party's militia inside Lebanon. One his latest speeches took place on September 16, 08, during an *Iftar* held by the Islamic Resistance Support Association. While Nasrallah was supposed to announce his views and ideas regarding local, regional, and international issues, the main theme or goal of his speech was to send hints and warnings regarding the National Dialogue. He did not limit his message to the majority in the Lebanese Parliament (March 14 group), but he rather extended it to the Lebanese President Michael Suleiman who called for the said dialogue, which is going to be under his patronage.

The first blunder in his speech occurred when Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah respects "every person present in the dialogue" claiming that he was very "serious about it." However, he added, "We call for and we insist on increasing the number of participants in the dialogue" claiming that "ethics and national values" compel him to demand the participation of those who support the Resistance. Knowing Nasrallah, it seems that he is not only very serious about the National Dialogue, but he is rather very worried, too. Therefore, his demand to expand the participation to include other pro Syrio-Iranian puppets is a mere attempt to torpedo the Dialogue before it starts. It doesn't take a genius to know that adding more individuals to any debate will only make it harder for participants to debate an idea, but more so to reach an agreement. Furthermore, Nasrallah wants to include more of his allies (lackeys) in order to have a greater chance to obstruct the dialogue and to undermine its success without appearing to be the main and only complainer or individual behind its sabotage while facing the demands of the March 14 group whose leaders are adamant to end the *de facto* state of Hezbollah within the *de jure* state of Lebanon. This means that Hezbollah's weapons and the deployment of its long range missiles all over Lebanon, north of the *Litani* River, will be scrutinized by the majority since the Defense Strategy is the first item on their agenda as well as on the agenda of President Suleiman.



Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah with Iranian Shiite religious leaders Khamenei and Sader



Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah with Syrian president Bashar Assad and Iranian President Ahmadinejad

Moreover, still on the national level, Nasrallah's second faux pas came after claiming "victory" for the insurgency his militia conducted in West Beirut and south Mount Lebanon on May 7-8, 08. Nasrallah seems to be another individual who is obsessed with imaginary victories, which only he can feel and recognize. After celebrating victory of the July 2006 war with Israel, which pushed Hezbollah North of the *Litani* River and which resulted in destroying most of southern Lebanon villages and the main bridges connecting the country, Nasrallah has new victory. He claimed in the mentioned *Iftar* that the operation conducted on May 7 against Beirut was another victory affirming, strangely, that it was a "necessity to save the country." He did not elaborate, however, as to how did such barbaric act against Lebanese civilians has saved the country nor did he mention from whom. Nevertheless, following his "absurd" and vague statement, Nasrallah had the nerve to ask the people of Lebanon to support the "resistance" of Hezbollah. In other words, he simply asked the people he kidnapped, humiliated, tortured, and in some cases killed their loved ones to support the militia, which committed such atrocities. He either must think very highly of *Beiruties* and their ability to forgive without apologizing or even giving them an explanation for his militia's vicious attack on them and their neighborhoods, or he may believe that they are too cowards to refuse his demand. Or maybe he thinks that all Lebanese will sacrifice their children for the "sake of his feet" as one Shiite mother referred to the death of her own son during the 2006 war. (*Feeda Ijrou Sayed Hasan.*)

In addition, Nasrallah called in his speech on the Lebanese people, and government, to trust and support his "resistance" movement even after breaking his earlier proclamation that the "weapons of Hezbollah will never be used inside Lebanon," turned out to be his greatest lie. Furthermore, in his attempt to gain the sympathy of Lebanese people, Nasrallah tried to portray his pro-Iranian militia as a friendly one by referring to it as a "made in Lebanon" resistance. Notwithstanding, his "made in Lebanon" statement comes only days after his true announcement that he was a "proud soldier in the *Welayet el Faqih*" of Iran. The blood of the innocent Lebanese he killed on May 7-8 has not dried, yet, Nasrallah is asking for their unconditional trust and support. These conflicting statements reveal one of two things. It is either Nasrallah believes that the memory of the Lebanese people is too short or that they are mentally challenged, and therefore, they cannot comprehend what he and his militia have done to them in the name or resistance, or his underground hiding and lack of sun rays has taken its toll on his state of mind for he has been coming across as an irrational and incoherent weasel instead of a wise and truthful leader.

On the regional level, Nasrallah still insists that he has achieved a "victory" over Israel in the July war of 2006. What is more disturbing and worrying is that he truly believes that "Israel fell down, as a result of this "victory." This is worrying since despite the daily threats issued by the Israeli officials against Lebanon, Nasrallah believes that Israel is "not able to wage war" against Lebanon or



The destruction of Hezbollah's headquarters in the Southern Suburb of Beirut during the July war of 2006 with Israel.



Members of Hezbollah fighters during Ashura parade in Beirut, Lebanon. They look very similar of the Pasdaran militia of Iran.

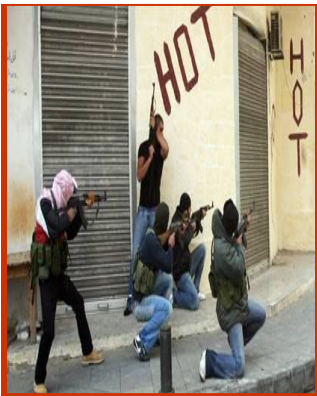
Hezbollah. What's is more disturbing is that Nasrallah's statement includes quotes from the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert telling his cabinet that "the balance [of power] in the region is now destabilized," calling for a peace "settlement with the Palestinians." Does Nasrallah truly believe that Israel is going to throw its hands up in the air and surrender because the balance of power is upset? No; Mr. Nasrallah. During similar cases in the past, Israel did not surrender, but it rather went to war against its enemies to regain its upper hand in the region. This is by no means to be viewed as a support to Israel, but it is rather to warn against another miscalculation by Nasrallah and a call to be more rational and realist when dealing with war and peace decisions for we fear that another of his blunders may destroy Lebanon and devastate its people who have not recovered from Nasrallah's last miscalculated war in 2006. Besides, what if Israel launches another war against Lebanon; will Nasrallah rebuild the country's infrastructure and revive the innocent martyrs? Or will he just claim another "victory," and excuse himself by stating, "I didn't know" any better, again? There has to be a higher degree of rationality, responsibility, and accountability or similar deadly mistakes will reoccur. It is the responsibility of the Lebanese government to take back the decision of peace and war.

Nasrallah's hypocrisy reaches its climax when he praises himself and his *jihadists* by referring to an "important" Israeli website, which posted that an "American military source," with no name or rank, "Confirmed that the Georgian army should be rebuilt on Hezbollah's model, because Hezbollah had demonstrated how a small army can win against huge military forces. His statement clearly reveals that Nasrallah believes that the Americans are convinced of Hezbollah's powers, which may be true. However, Nasrallah fails to realize that suggesting a Georgian Army built on Hezbollah's model by such official does not mean that the US admires Hezbollah, which is on the State Department list of terrorist groups. Instead, Nasrallah must know by now that the US blows out a balloon before it blows it up.

Hasan Nasrallah did not become a controversial figure overnight and without legitimate reasons. The Lebanese people in general and the March 14 audience in particular have been disappointed, disturbed, and suspicious of Nasrallah and of Hezbollah misconducts. The most significant of such misconducts started with Nasrallah's uncalculated war with Israel in 2006, which was followed by his attempt to paralyze the government of Prime Minister Fouad Saniora when Hezbollah and AMAL's ministers resigned from the cabinet, and which was accompany by a year-long sit-in in downtown Beirut, which in turn paralyzed the capital's economy. Last but not least, his war on the predominately Sunni neighborhoods of West Beirut and the Southern portion of Mount Lebanon, mainly the Druze areas was the hair that broke the Mule's back. These transgressions, along with an already growing suspicion of Hezbollah's role in relation to the assassinations and bombings, which targeted their leaders and their neighborhoods, left no doubts in the minds of most Lebanese that Hezbollah and its leader are playing into the hands of Syria and Iran at the expense of the Lebanese state and people. Therefore, many spectators wonder: If Nasrallah prides himself on having the best intelligence network, which he



Members of Hezbollah burning tires and blocking streets in Beirut, during Hezbollah/AMAL attack.



Armed gunmen of Hezbollah and Amal movement take position in Beirut street during clashes with residents on May 7, 2008

claims have penetrated the Israeli Defense Forces and through which he knows what occurs in the halls of the White House and in other world capitals, why can't he figure out, for once, who has been assassinating their leaders and officials within Lebanon and sometimes near Hezbollah's strongholds? Why this internationally recognized "power," which the Americans want to use as a model to build other armies, couldn't for once stop one bombing of their neighborhoods? If Nasrallah receives reliable intelligence from important source, based on which he decide who's a "traitor" and who's an ally in Lebanon, why can't he at least resolve one crime or arrest one assailants? Well, only Hasan Nasrallah can answer these legitimate questions.

On the regional level, ever since the war of 2006, Nasrallah, the "Arab nationalist," has been on the offense against most Arab leaders and states. He never fails to attack the Arab countries, which of course are at odd with Iran and Syria. When lacking a just premise, he criticizes them on internal issues, which are the concern of their own people, if any. His harsh criticism to Saudi Arabia has exceeded in terms of harshness and animosity to that of his criticism to Israel and the "greatest Satan the United states of America.

In conclusion, in order to avoid more bloodshed, it will be wise for Nasrallah to merge his militia into the Lebanese state while his main supporters and lifeline Syria and Iran are still standing, for at the moment he can negotiate and maybe receive the best deal for such merger. However, he must act fast for time is of the essence due to the fact that the patience of the International Community with Iran's nuclear program is running thin due to the lack of cooperation of the Iranian government with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Consequently, the war clock against the Khomeini's regime in Iran is ticking fast, and in case such a war occurs, it is almost a certainty that Ahamdi Najad's regime will face the same devastating ending, which the regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and that of the Taliban in Afghanistan have suffered before due to their foolish standoff with the world's community.

What's more, if Nasrallah fails to *Lebanize* Hezbollah, it will be then true that since the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000, to the invasion of Beirut and Mount Lebanon in May 2008, Hasan Nasrallah has transformed himself from a leader of a resistance admired by most to a wheeler dealer trying to sell the people he slaughtered a resistance that Lebanon needs no more. He is selling them ideas about an enemy that only exists in his mind and in the mind of the radicals for this is their only *raison d'etre*. Meanwhile their real objective has been since the creation of Hezbollah in 1982, has been to replace the Lebanese political system with an Iranian like *Welayet el Faqih*. This is not a secret for it is mentioned in Hezbollah's Manifesto. Soon, however, Nasrallah will realize that this is mission impossible for the Lebanese people know from the blood (their own) on his hands that he is nothing but a savage Persian wolf in sheep closing waiting for the right moment to devour his prey, which in this case is the Lebanese people and their way of life.