

**The Map of Terrorist Groups in Lebanon:  
The Syrian *Moukhabarat* Connection**

On August 13, 2007, Lebanese Army General Michael Suleiman shed some light on the military situation in Naher El Bared and the fight against **Fateh el Islam** terrorist group. In the process, General Suleiman mentioned that such a terrorist group is definitely linked to Al-Qaeda, yet, he added, it has no connection to Syria whatsoever. Such distortion of the truth triggered this document, in which most of its intelligence information came from the same Army that General Suleiman is the commander.

## **Background**

The Palestinians came into Lebanon in two main influxes. The majority of them came in after the establishment of Israel in 1948, while the second influx occurred after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Originally, they were set up in different refugee camps throughout Lebanon. However, over the years many of them moved out of the camps and resided in the main coastal cities of Lebanon especially Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli and Tyre. Currently they number 420,508 out of which 239,736 live inside the camps, with 180,772 spread out through the cities mentioned above. This number constitutes approximately 10% of Lebanon's population.

The Palestinians lived peacefully in Lebanon until 1967. After the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and with support from most Arab countries, especially Syria, the Palestinians started getting arms shipments into their camps in Lebanon and started training their "guerillas" inside the camps and in some other remote areas of Lebanon. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed and most of the armed Palestinians factions joined under its umbrella. After their clashes and their defeat by King Hussein of Jordan in 1970, (Black September) there was an enormous influx of armed Palestinians into Lebanon by way of Syria.

It did not take long for the PLO to establish a state within a state and to start interfering in the Lebanese political process as well as in disrupting the daily lives of the Lebanese people. Moreover, the Palestinian camps became training grounds and unreachable havens for most international terrorist groups. This led to several clashes between the Lebanese army and the PLO. These clashes came to an end after the 1973 Cairo agreement between Lebanon and the PLO.

Several security incidents between the Palestinian armed forces and the Lebanese army, as well as with Lebanese citizens, culminated in 1975 into a major deflagration leading to the start of the Lebanese war. During the first seven years of the war, the PLO played a major role in directing the conflict and was responsible for the massacres of thousands of Lebanese and the displacement of tens of thousands more.

Their role was greatly diminished, however, after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. After the end of the Lebanese war in 1990, the Palestinian armed presence was limited to their refugee camps. However, after the death of Yasser Arafat, and the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, the fundamentalist groups, through Syrian intelligence training, financing, and directing gained momentum and allied themselves with Lebanon's Hezbollah, which took upon itself the role of the Syrian *Mukhabarat* (Intelligence.)

Ever since its departure from Lebanon, Syria has been sending hundreds of armed Palestinian militants into Lebanon in order to destabilize the security situation

in the country under the pretext of defeating the American-Zionist plan for the new Middle East, which is believed to be a mere “plot” to destabilize the region.

### Map of the Palestinian Camps of Lebanon:

#### I – Camps of South-Lebanon:

These camps are of strategic importance because of many factors among which we mention:

In these camps are based the headquarters of the **Fatah** organization of Yasser Arafat and his senior officers. These camps are the major human resources reserves of **Fatah** and other organizations.

These camps are poorly influenced by Syria but are infiltrated by Syrian intelligence. Within these camps are important logistical support facilities and major ammunitions stocks.

Islamic extremists of **Bin Laden** and others find a safe heaven beside the “**Ussbat Al Ansar**” in these camps.

#### A – Nabateyeh camp:

This camp is empty from any armed Palestinian organization and has no military or paramilitary activity within it. It is of no interest at security and military levels.

#### B - Rachideyeh camp (suburbs of Tyre):

It is one of the most important camps in Lebanon. During the past 10 years the **Fatah** of Yasser Arafat enforced its presence and influence within it. The weapons flow to the camp and to other camps was very intensive during the past three years reaching mainly the **Fatah** movement and less to the **Hamas** and the **PIJ**. Palestinians from different organizations were buying huge quantities of weapons and ammunitions for strategic purposes.

The **Fatah** headquarters are based in the Rachideyeh camp. The general commander of **Fatah** in Lebanon is major general Sultan Abul-Aynayn appointed by Arafat himself. **Fatah** controls 90% of the camp and is supported by the great majority of its population. The remaining 10% are controlled by the **Democratic Front of Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)** of Mr. Nayef Hawatmeh (Syrian obedient) and by the **Popular Front of Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** of former Abu Ali Mustafa (Mustafa Al-Zibri was killed by the Israelis).

In Rachideyeh **Hamas** and **PIJ** are nearly absent and have very rare influence. No presence of **PFLP-GC** has been significantly reported.

#### C - Borj Al Chamali camp (suburbs of Tyre):

Controlled also by **Fatah** like Rachideyeh, the distribution of influence is exactly like in Rachideyeh:

90% for **Fatah**, 10% for **DFLP** and **PFLP**. No presence of **PFLP-GC**, **Hamas** and **PIJ**. Within the three camps around the city of Tyre the **Fatah** can mobilize up to 2500 well trained and well organized men, where as **DFLP** and **PFLP** can mobilize a

few dozens of men. Syrian influence within these camps is weak but Syrian intelligence covert activities are intensive.

#### **D - Ain El Helweh camp (suburbs of Saida):**

The largest Palestinian camp in Lebanon (around 75000 people). The **Fatah** is controlling 90% of the camp. The **Fatah** leader in the camp is Colonel Mounir Al Makdeh. This camp is a strategic human resource and a strategic logistical base for the **Fatah** of Arafat. In Ain El Helweh alone the **Fatah** can mobilize up to 2500 well trained and well organized men. In this camp is also present the

Palestinian Islamic radical organization “**Ussbat Al Ansar**” (**[Islamic] Supporters League**”). The leader of this organization is Abdul-Karim Al Saadi “Abu Mohjen”, very well known for his subversive activities in Lebanon and linked openly to **Al Jamaa Al Islamya** of North-Lebanon, to other Islamic radical small groups in South-Lebanon, and to **Bin Laden’s Al Quaida**. We strongly believe that Abu Mohjen is the **Bin Laden’s** appointed leader in Lebanon and that he controls and coordinate the activities of **Bin Laden’s** men in Beirut, Saida and Tripoli. Abu Mohjen controls around 10% of the camp mainly in an area called Braxat in the suburbs of Ain El Helweh and has a group of 200 armed and very well trained and indoctrinated men. Furthermore, Abu Mohjen offers logistical and intelligence facilities to **Bin Laden’s** men. There are doubts about his financial resources that may be from **Bin Laden’s**. The **Hamas** and **PIJ** are present but have no influence; their presence is rather at a propaganda levels. They are making efforts to recruit men and to create goodwill with the help of the Iranian money they get from **Hezbollah**, with a limited success till now. The **PFLP-GC** has an office near the camp in a close location to the Saida Governmental Hospital. This office is protected by the Lebanese Army intelligence.

#### **E - Myeh Wmyeh camp (suburbs of Saida):**

This camp has not an important military activity within it. The main influence is for the **Fatah** whose leader is Colonel Mounir Al Makdeh based in Ain El Helweh. Makdeh leaves the camp of Ain El Helweh from time to time under a false identity and meets with senior Palestinian leaders in safe houses in the Metn and Kesrwan area. We don’t know if the Syrian and the Lebanese intelligence know about that matter.

### **II - Camps of Beirut:**

These camps are relatively weak military wise compared to the camps of South-Lebanon and North-Lebanon. They are very influenced by the Syrian intelligence whose activity is very intensive within them. The different Palestinian organizations have extra-camps activities in Beirut. These activities are mainly intelligence and financial. Recently and during the past 5 years the Iranian intelligence started to have intelligence activities within the camps through several organizations like the **PFLP-GC** (Syrian obedience and excellent relationships with Iran. **Jihad Jibril [Jaafar]**, the son of Ahmad Jibril was assassinated in Beirut on May 20, 2002. He used to travel often to Teheran. The **PFLP-GC** offers military assistance for **Hezbollah**-training and operational). Iran is also starting to have some more influence through **Hamas** and **PIJ** and is financing them.

### **A - Borj Al Barajneh camp (southern suburbs of Beirut):**

In this camp the situation is special. Palestinian people in there have kept their initial family and tribal belongings since they arrived in 1948. It is a camp of tribes and families among whom the Miliji tribe and the Abul Aynayn family. The main people there came from Gaza strip and its neighborhoods and most of them are supporters of Arafat.

The distribution of influence is estimated to be as follows: **Fatah** 55%, **PFLP** 15%, **DFLP** 10% and the remaining is between **PFLP-GC**, **Hamas** and **PIJ**. The **PFLP-GC** has around 120 armed men in the camp and the other organizations including **Fatah** and the **DFLP** combined forces are about 1000 men.

The **PFLP-GC** has 4 major offices in the camp (very close collaboration with Syrian and Iranian intelligence): One in the Mosque square, another near Jaffa hospital, another in the Anan square and the fourth one near the western entrance of the camp close to Beirut Airport main road. The **Hamas** activities are mainly concentrated in the suburbs of the camp like in the Mihanyeh square, the Baajour square and the Zeineddine Square.

### **B – Sabra and Chatila camps (Beirut):**

The military activities in these camps are much smaller than during the 70's and the early 80's. The total number of armed men within them is estimated to be 600 men distributed as follows: **Fatah** 300 men, **PFLP-GC** 150 men, **Hamas** and Jihad combined forces up to 150 men. The **PFLP-GC** has intensive intelligence activities outside the camps in the surrounding streets like Fakhani and the suburbs of the Arab University of Beirut in covered offices located in private apartments. The concentration of **Hamas** groups is around "Al-Shark" cinema and around Gaza hospital inside the camps.

### **C – Mar Elias camp (Beirut):**

It is a small camp without significant military activities. The main influence is for the **PFLP-GC** that undergoes security activities in 3 offices like one located in the Hamoui roastery building and another one near the camp in the "Audi Bank" building. The **PFLP-GC** has around 100 armed and trained men; **Hamas** and **PIJ** have a small presence. The **PFLP** and the **DFLP** have each one an office and totalize both around 150 men. In this camp **Fatah** doesn't exist and Arafat is a banned man.

### **III – Camps of North-Lebanon:**

These camps, like their counterparts of South-Lebanon are strategic because they are a human resource reserve and a huge logistical and ammunitions support bases. The difference with the South-Lebanon camps is that the Syrian influence is much more important than in South and that **Fatah** is not the sole decision maker there. Islamists largely infiltrate these camps. These Islamists are in the different Palestinian organizations and do not constitute a separate group.

#### **A – Beddaoui (northern suburbs of Tripoli) and Nahr El Bared (suburbs of Minyeh) camps:**

The **Fatah** of Arafat controls only around 40% of these 2 strategic camps. The **PFLP-GC** controls around 25% of them where as **PIJ** and **Hamas** control 15%. The **PFLP** and the **DFLP** are very weak there. In these two camps Syrian are the major power through **PFLP-GC**, **Hamas**, and **PIJ**. These camps are the major ammunitions stocks for the **Fatah** and the **PFLP-GC**. The **Hamas** and **PIJ** have relationships with the Islamic Lebanese organizations of North-Lebanon. **Bin Laden** has several safe houses there and that this camp is harboring major groups of his. Another powerful terrorist group is **Fateh al Islam, which has** a great presence in Nahr el Bared. (See below)

#### **IV - Camps of the Bekaa valley:**

##### **A - Wavel camp (Baalbek):**

It was an old British army base during World War I and World War II. It is a very weak camp, very much infiltrated by the Syrian intelligence. All Palestinian organizations have small offices there: **Fatah** controls 10% of the camp. The remaining is distributed between the **PFLP-GC**, the **Saika**, **DFLP**, **PFLP**, **Hamas** and **PIJ**. The camp is not strategic and is totally under Syrian control.

##### **A – The Bekaa:**

- In **Taalabaya** area there are offices and military bases for the **DFLP** and the **PFLP**. Their security activities are very intensive there.
- In **Koussaya** east of Zahleh the **PFLP-GC** has an important office. In Koussaya the **PFLP-GC** has a training base, an important ammunitions stock and a full battalion of guerillas (150 - 250 men).
- In The **western Bekaa** (Kamed Al Lawz, till Marjeyoun area)(look at the Map) more than a full battalion of guerillas of the **PFLP-GC** is deployed (250 to 500 men).
- In **Barr Elias** there are offices for the **Hamas** (behind the Hochaymi Gas Station) and offices for the **Fatah al Intifada**, which is run from Damascus by Colonel Abu Moussa who runs fortified bases in the Bekaa Valley. These bases were established when the area was controlled by Syria's army which ended its deployment in Lebanon in April 2005. **Fatah al Intifada's** activities are mainly located in the Bekaa valley, but also in the Naameh area and in a part of South-Lebanon.

##### **B – Naameh (Mount-Lebanon the coastal part of the Shouf):**

A strong artificial cave where are an ammunition stock, a medical facility installation with doctors and nurses with a full guerilla battalion of 250 men for the **PFLP-GC**.

## V -- SUNNI INFLUENCE ZONE

North-Lebanon is traditionally a zone of influence of Sunni Islamic radicalism since the crusades centuries ago. In this area no armed radical organization has any free movement. Syrian intelligence is controlling the area very closely because Damascus is afraid of the spreading of Sunni radicalism to Syria through the Lebanese-Syrian border. The actual existing Sunni radical organization is the **Jamaa al Islamya** of **Sheikh Fathi Yakan**, but it is unorganized and unarmed according to the classical standards; it is very popular among the population and can mobilize up to 2000 men regardless of its weak structure. To counterbalance this problem Syria encouraged other Sunni radicals in North-Lebanon to organize themselves and is controlling their organizations very closely: The **Ahbache (Jamiyat Al Machari' al Islamya)** of Sheikh Karakirah and the **Islamic Tawhid** of Ussama Shaabane. Bin Laden found a very favorable popular base in North-Lebanon and the Dennyeh clashes on the eve of the 2000 New Year's Day between his men and the Lebanese army put an end to his semi-covered activities, but we have specific information that he still has safe houses and allies there.

## VI – New Developments and Camps activities:

1- on February 28, 2007, at 14, 00 PM, Fares Hamed Terkawi (20 years old, Syrian nationalist) entered the Baddawi camp and was going to **Fateh al Islam** bureau of security (*Lajna Amniyya*) of the Camp. He was arrested and interrogated by the Palestinian responsible Khalil Ismail Dib. The Syrian guy had a bag in which there was 7000\$ + military clothes+ computer and files.

2- Few days ago a big responsible for **Fateh al Islam** (Abo Khaled al Jaza2iri) arrived to Baddawi camp coming from Ain Helweh. He is training militants in Baddawi and **Fateh al Islam** is using "counter-fitting machine to forge passports and other documents especially Thailand and Spanish ones. The machine could be placed in the Khachan building inside the camp.

3- There are hundreds of **Fateh al Islam** militants from different nationalities (Syrians, Tunisians, Iraqis, Yemenis, Saudis...) coming thru Syria to the Baddawi camp. Mohammad Obeid (a.k.a. Abo Hazifa Al Baghdadi) welcomes them and he provides residences in the place of Samed and Taawouniyya in the camp for them. He is also the one training them.

4- Chehab Kaddour (a.k.s. Abou Hourayra) is a 40-year old from Mechmech Akkar. His parents live in Zahriyya, Tripoli. He was a responsible in **Haraket Tawhid** of Bilal Chaabane and he was arrested for years during the 1985 incidents in Tripoli. Kaddour is very fanatic and he is considered the "*mourched el-dineh*" [Spiritual Leader] for the group.

He was killed by the Lebanese Internal Security Forces on August 6, 2007 when he failed to stop on a check point in Tripoli, North Lebanon. The Lebanese Army has been battling **Fateh al Islam** terrorists in Naher El Bared since June 1, 2007 after some of its members slaughtered 30 Lebanese soldiers in their sleep beheading many of them.

5- Abd el Rahman Alia who is married to a Palestinian woman and obtains an American citizenship gives English lessons in different institutions in Tripoli. He used to work with the Syrian State Security Lieutenant Habib al Mohammad. Abd el Rahman alia is currently collecting info about the Palestinians in the Baddawi camp.

6- On March 13, 2007, the Lebanese police have busted a Syria-based terrorist network grouping operatives on charges of carrying out the twin-bus bombings in the mountainous town of Ain Alaq northeast of Beirut last February. While these terrorists hold Syrian and Saudi identification documents, two of them are Palestinian refugees from the camp of **Yarmouk** near the Syrian capital of Damascus.

Two of the terrorists that remain at large are believed to have been hiding at north Lebanon's **Nahr el-Bared** refugee camp. Police confiscated a "large quantity of explosives" which were hidden in a Beirut apartment of a Syrian suspect identified as Mustapha Siyor.

Members of the network infiltrated into Lebanon from Syria last November under the cover of the so-called "**Fatah-Islam**" group, which was set up by Syrian intelligence with the objective of carrying out terrorist attacks to destabilize Lebanon and to block the ratification of the international tribunal which would try suspects of the 2005 assassination of ex-Premier Rafik Hariri and related crimes.

The daily newspaper al-Moustaqbal reported on Nov. 30 that Syrian President Bashar Assad has sent 200 terrorists to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon to assassinate 36 Lebanese public figures.

Police reported that **Fateh al Islam** group is just a "cover" for the terrorist network that operates in Lebanon from bases controlled by the so-called **Fatah-Intifada** group, a Syrian-controlled faction that broke away from Yasser Arafat's mainstream **Fatah** early in 1983 as part of an effort by the late Syrian President Hafez Assad to create a substitute for Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO.)

## **VII- Conclusion:**

The Palestinian presence in Lebanon has been creating a very unstable situation in Lebanon. Their youth and their armed groups have been manipulated by the Syrian *Moukhabarat* for decades. First, the Syrian Baath regime used them to destabilize Lebanon and to incite wars. Today, the same Syrian regime has been recruiting them to fight against the coalition forces in order to destabilize Iraq, just as they are using Hamas to destabilize the Palestinian territories, and Hezbollah to destabilize Lebanon.

## **VIII – Recommendations:**

1. Enforce the UNSC resolution 1559 and 1701 along with the Taef accord.
2. Find a permanent solution to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, taking into consideration, the socio-economic factors and the high population density in the country, as well as the fragile religious and demographic balance. Since most Palestinians are Sunni Muslims, perhaps relocating

them to Iraq could serve to balance the Shiites of Iraq and to act as a buffer zone between Iran and the Arabs of the Gulf.

3. Shield Lebanon from the many conflicts of the Middle East to guarantee stability and peace in the country may lead to stabilizing the entire region, including Iraq.
4. Control the Lebanese and Iraqi borders with Syria to prevent movement of more terrorist groups and weapons into these countries.

Only then, Lebanon, Iraq, the Palestinian territories and the whole Middle East region will find peace.

END.

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