

LEBANON HEATING UP

Since Sunday 05/20/2007 the Lebanese Army is engaged in heavy fighting with "Fatah al-Islam", an Islamic militia in the Palestinian refugee camp Nahr al-Bared, close to the Northern city of Tripoli. The fighting began after a bank robbery in a nearby village, Amioun, went out of control. So far more than 110 were killed, among them more than 40 Lebanese soldiers and the rest are militants of "Fatah al-Islam" along side an unknown number of civilians. Hundreds were wounded and thousands fled Nahr al-Bared that is shelled by tanks. There was always a consensus in Lebanon that Palestinians should be contained strictly to their refugee camps.

Lebanese authority suspects that "Fatah al-Islam" is managed by Syrian intelligence. The confrontation, although still under control, is broadening quickly to a larger confrontation about the international court to judge Rafik Hariri's assassin suspects, that was approved on Wednesday 05/30/2007 by UN Security Council. The decision is a major political embarrassment for Syria. This trial, if it will open, can lead the responsibility for the murder straight to the presidential palace in Damascus, Syria.

The new crisis in Lebanon led to escalation of declarations, to an USA intervention by arm shipments and split the Lebanese politics to the basic pro Syrian and pro American supporters.

In the evening of Sunday 06/03/2007 the conflict expanded to South Lebanon when Jund al-Sham, another Islamic militia in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh, near Sidon, joined the fight by attacking a Military check point. It seems, at this stage, that the country is plunging, very fast, to a general conflict with regional implications.

All signs suggest that the pro Syrian side changed tactics and instead of looking for a direct confrontation with pro American Lebanese government, which can lead to external interference in Lebanon, to undermine Fuad Saniora's government through a campaign of terror.

Indeed on Monday 06/04/2007 a bomb exploded in a bus in a Christian neighborhood in North East Beirut wounding 20. Yesterday, Thursday 06/07/2007, 3 car bombs loaded with hundreds kg of explosives were found in Bar Elias, in the Bekaa valley near the Syrian border. Two Syrian citizens and an Iraqi were arrested in connection with the bombs. In the evening a fourth car bomb exploded in Juniyah, 15 km North of Beirut. One man was killed.

Summary

- An intensive terror campaign can cause collapse of the Lebanese pro American government.
- The risk of a foreign intervention on behalf of Fuad Senoira's government, which is a real possibility in a military decisive confrontation, is a negligible option in a sophisticated terror campaign.

· American or international support by diplomacy, money or arm shipments is not the right answer to terror. Lebanon regime needs much more intelligence support and in this matter it is much more difficult

· In such a dissolvable situation a fast deterioration with unexpected consequences can happen any moment.