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Hezbollah Leader Hints at Intervention in Syria

By Jason Ditz

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Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah today predicted that the Syrian military would be able to defeat the rebellion, but also hinted at the prospect of deeper involvement in the ongoing civil war, saying Assad has “real friends in the region” that would not allow Syria to fall into the hands of al-Qaeda-linked rebels.

Of course Hezbollah fighters have already been active in Syria’s west, along the border with Lebanon, fighting with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) over Shi’ite villages with large numbers of Lebanese immigrants in the area. Today’s comments may suggest a willingness to go deeper in, if need be.

Nasrallah insisted his troops would protect the Sayida Zeinab shrine, the most important Shi’ite shrine in Syria, and warned that the situation would “get out of control” in Sunni rebels ended up attacking the shrine, claiming they had threatened to destroy it.

Threats to the shrine have attracted fighters from both Lebanon and Iraq. Syrian rebels have threatened to impose regime change in Lebanon to punish them for interference in the civil war, and the fighting has sparked growing sectarian tensions across the region.