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Hezbollah by its nature doing what is ‘necessary’ in Syria

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The rigorous debate on the reinforcement of the Lebanese militant group, Hezbollah, in the Syrian government’s fight against the outsider-supported rebels has been rekindled by the official confirmation of the group’s charismatic and powerful leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah last week. The opponents of both the Damascus regime and Hezbollah staged severe political attacks on the militant group for its involvement in President Bashar al-Assad’s battle against the opposition, with its role having become a game changer in the Syrian fighting in terms of lending a hand to Damascus.

As Hezbollah’s incursion into the Syrian Civil War has been heavily slammed by the international community, as well as senior Turkish senior officials, the criticism over its involvement has proved to be futile for two reasons.

First, the group was smart enough, particularly compared to the Syrian opposition fighters, that it will be their turn if the al-Assad regime falls, in a region that it perceives as hostile in its very nature, considering the Israeli threat to Lebanon.

Second, as one of the cautious groups in a fragile region that has managed to survive, despite the many political and military attacks in the span of the nearly four decades, Hezbollah has done what has to be done, required by its nature, as well as the antagonism of a fight. Once again assuring the fact that the world is not bipolar, as has been propagandized by major players in world politics, Hezbollah also meant that its role in the fighting in favor of President al-Assad is just as normal as the support for others fighting against the regime.

The reason for the involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian battle has been made clear by the speech of Nasrallah, who called Syria “a backbone of the Lebanese resistance” against Israel and said that the group had entered a new phase in which it had “to fortify the resistance and protect its backbone.” Nasrallah was also precise that Hezbollah could not side with the Americans, underlying the existence of the multi-polar world while also lending an unnoticed criticism of al-Assad, by saying: “Al-Assad’s regime has its positives and negatives. Reform is required ... I have talked to Assad, he vowed to make reforms and was ready to talk to the opposition, but it refused.”

Hezbollah’s reinforcement for the al-Assad regime also marked a new phase in the Syrian fight, with the group now attacking the Salafist al-Qaeda-linked group in Syria. The rising threat of Salafism has been eyebrow-raising for Hezbollah for some time, with the group keeping its traditional stance of remaining mum on the Salafist danger. Thus, their involvement in Syria was not only aimed at saving the regime, but was also the answer to the Salafist danger.

The new phase in the resistance group’s history also hinted at a more clear division within the anti-Israeli sentiment, since Hezbollah has reportedly given an ultimatum to the members and leaders of Hamas in Lebanon to leave the country. Having been hosted in Syria for decades, Hamas decided to leave the country under obvious pressure from its Qatari and Turkish patrons, and Hezbollah has been waiting for its turn to respond, which it would consider “revenge” on the group. It has found an inevitable chance to take over Hamas after its boost to al-Assad in Syria.

Hezbollah’s move into the Syrian war has not been unintentional, since the vigilant group would not take a step that would jeopardize its stance against the U.S. and Israel. The group would be involved in the fighting in two opposite circumstances to make a shift in the course of the country’s future. It would have taken part if it suspects the victory was pinned toward the rebels, but in today’s case, the group decided to put its fighters at the frontline against rebels, since it foresees that the fighting is nearing an end, in favor of al-Assad.

Considering its history and experience in fighting, Hezbollah would not be dragged into a fight that it would lose in the end; instead of debating the “ethics” of its role in the fighting, the outcome of what may be the last stage of the Syrian fighting must be a source of concern for the sake of the region and its stability.