



Nasrallah Urges 'Liberation Strategy alongside Defense Strategy', Slams March 14's 'Blackmail'

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Hizbullah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on Wednesday called on the national dialogue committee to agree on a “liberation strategy” as well as on a defense strategy, accusing the rival March 14 camp of “blackmail.”

Recalling recent remarks by MP Mohammed Raad, head of Hizbullah’s Loyalty to Resistance bloc, Nasrallah said “remarks about a liberation strategy are not new.”

“Today, we need a defense strategy because Lebanon is threatened by Israel which is violating its airspace everyday, and we need a liberation strategy because the Shebaa Farms and the Kfarshouba Hills must be liberated,” Nasrallah said in a televised speech during the annual iftar banquet organized by the Islamic Resistance Support Organization.

“We need a liberation strategy and we call on the national dialogue committee to devise a liberation strategy as well as a defense strategy. If they don't want to do that, the people have the right to say that the state has forgotten about the land and we will shoulder that duty,” Hizbullah’s leader added.

Hitting back at rival March 14 figures who have said that his party has not yet submitted a paper on a national defense strategy to the national dialogue committee, Nasrallah said: “Until this moment, Hizbullah's paper on the defense strategy has not been discussed although it was submitted in 2006, but no one has debated it.”

“They will not engage in discussions, neither around the dialogue table nor anywhere else, because they are not seeking debate. They have pledged to the U.S., and I don't want to say to Israel, that they will remove the weapons. They are not seeking to protect Lebanon,” Nasrallah charged, referring to the March 14 camp.

“There is one objective: the U.S. wants the weapons, give it the weapons. The March 14 forces have submitted papers revolving around one objective: give your weapons to the army,” Nasrallah added.

He recalled that “several days ago, one of March 14's great leaders said ‘do not tire yourselves out with discussion, because (Syrian) President (Bashar) Assad's regime will fall tomorrow and Hizbullah will surrender its weapons.’”

“He's not concerned with protecting Lebanon,” added Nasrallah.

“They are not seeking to reach a defense strategy that would protect Lebanon but despite that we will not boycott dialogue sessions and we do not want to disrupt dialogue sessions like some are claiming,” Nasrallah stressed.

Last month, President Michel Suleiman postponed a national dialogue session after the March 14 camp decided to boycott the all-party talks.

The next dialogue session is scheduled for August 16.

The March 14 camp had decided to boycott the session over “the refusal of Hizbullah’s leadership to discuss the issue of arms.”

The March 14 forces have announced three preconditions to take part in any upcoming dialogue session: “Handing over the complete telecom data (related to the attempt on MP Boutros Harb’s life), including the IMSI, to the security agencies; lifting the political and factional cover off the suspects; and abiding by the Lebanese Constitution which underlines the exclusive authority of the state over arms.”

But Nasrallah accused the March 14 forces of “seeking blackmail through the issue of telecom data and the other issues.”

“They have claimed that our camp wants dialogue in order to secure the survival of the government and this is incorrect. They want to topple the government and form another through dialogue,” Nasrallah charged.

Turning to the issue of equipping the army, Nasrallah said: “We all agree that we want a strong army, but is the government willing now to accept weapons from Iran for the army? Iran wants to equip the army like it equipped the Resistance. Iran is also willing to help Lebanon in power generation, roads and huge investments, but that is forbidden because of the American veto which no one in the political system dares to defy.”

Hizbullah’s chief stressed that “what protects Lebanon is a balance of terror with Israel.”

He also noted that “you cannot place the weapons under the authority of the state which is not able to resolve the issue of EDL contract workers or to end a sit-in.”

“This sectarian system is too weak to be able to take the decision to defend Lebanon. The moment arms are placed under the state's authority, we will lose the balance of terror because the Americans will then pressure the state not to retaliate against Israel under the threat of economic sanctions,” added Nasrallah.

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