The Next Goal is Deir Ezzor

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Syrian army with Lebanese forces successfully fighting IS / Israel threatens with bombs on Damascus

Figure 1: Syrian soldiers on Monday near Qara in the Qalamoun mountains Photo: AFP / Louai Beshara

A nearly historical photo in Arabic media was taken at the beginning of the week. In the Lebanese-Syrian border region of Qalamoun there were soldiers marching the Lebanese and the Syrian national flags — and the flag of Hezbollah, the Shi’ite “Party of God” in Lebanon. Hezbollah is de facto the most powerful military force in Lebanon, and has been supporting the government’s forces in the struggle against Jihadist militia and other anti-governmental formations for years in neighboring Syria.

Soldiers from all three armies have cooperated in the last few weeks with the expulsion of around 400 remaining fighters from the “Islamic State” (IS). The Lebanese army attacked the positions in Lebanon, the Syrian army and Hezbollah advanced from Syria.

After an armistice agreed by Hezbollah, the IS fighters came out last weekend and were taken away on Monday with their families in the direction of Abu Kamal in


\footnote{neues Deutschland, 8/31/2017}
eastern Syria (province of Deir Ezzor). They were accompanied by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, August 28, 2017, after the withdrawal of the Israeli troops in May 2000, proclaimed it as the second day of the Liberation of Lebanon, “whether the Lebanese government acknowledges this or not.” The IS had no alternative when Hezbollah agreed. According to Nasrallah. The aim of the struggle in the Qalamoun was not “the liberation of 140 square kilometers of Lebanese territory,” but the liberation of all of Lebanon from terrorists.

After the reconquest of Qalamoun in western Syria, the Syrian army, with its allies Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, is concentrating on the liberation of Deir Ezzor and securing the borders in the east and south of the country. Hourly, new reports arrive from the front, the advance on Deir Ezzor is taking place in three columns from Rakka through the Euphrates Valley, from Tadmur / Palmyra and Hama in the southeast, explained Brigadier general Mohamed Deeb in conversation with the author in Ithfariya. The small village is located in the desert east of Homs on the road to Rakka. Soon one would be knocking at the gates of Deir Ezzor, the general said. On the next day, the Syrian troops had advanced up to 70 km closer to Deir Ezzor.

In preparation for the next Astana talks, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced on Tuesday in Kuwait the establishment of a fourth de-escalation area in Idlib. He hoped that the legal foundations for the agreement could be signed in mid-September in Astana. The Idlib province bordering Turkey is currently controlled by the Nusra Front, which has prevailed in a bloody battle against other combat organizations. The Nusra front, supported by Qatar and Turkey, might have been encouraged by their sponsors to be moderate and to enter into an agreement. This would also mean that the generously flowing humanitarian aid to Idlib, including the Federal Government, will not be stopped.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, is trying to enforce his own interests in the future balance of power in Syria. At a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, on Tuesday, he accused Iran of building rocket factories in Syria and Lebanon to destroy Israel. “Israel will not accept it, and the UN should not accept it,” Netanyahu said. If Iran continues to interfere in Syria, Israel will bomb the Syrian Presidential Palace without asking others. Similarly, Netanyahu is said to have already spoken at a meeting with the Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has said that Iran is Russia’s most important ally in Syria and the Middle East and will continue to be so.

Jordan is on a new approach to Syria. On Friday, Jordanian government spokesman Mohamed Momani told Jordanian TV that Jordan’s relations with Syria were “going in the right direction.” It is calm and stable in the border between the two countries. It was hoped that the Jordanian-Syrian border crossings would soon be reopened. Momani, who also serves as the Jordanian Minister of Information, spoke of a “very important message that everyone should hear.”
On the occasion of the forthcoming Eid al-Adha, the Islamic festival, thousands of Syrian refugees from Turkey have flocked back to their homeland to celebrate the feast with their relatives. 44,000 people were registered at the border crossing Bab al-Salameh, north of Azaz. After the feast, people could return to Turkey, Turkish border authorities said. The people visit relatives in Azaz, Jaarabulus, Al-Bab and other places around Aleppo, occupied by Turkey or controlled by armed groups supported by Turkey.

Hundreds of trucks with humanitarian aid have been provided to people in almost every part of the country in recent days. Eid al-Adha begins on Friday and lasts four days. It is considered the highest festival in Islam.

Source: