

Hezbollah Praises Iraqi Takeover of Kirkuk, Calls It Victory Over Trump Administration and Israel

Hezbollah praised the defeat of Kurdish troops in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, calling it a victory over the Trump administration and Israel, the *Jerusalem Post* reported on Monday.

Iraqi troops, flanked by Iranian-backed militias, wrested control of the city and surrounding provinces from the Kurdish Peshmerga, while the Trump administration reportedly monitored the situation.

"Our victory in Kirkuk is a victory over the U.S. and Israel and an answer to Trump's threats to Iran," the *Post* quoted Hezbollah's Sheikh Nabil Qaouk, deputy chief of its forces in southern Lebanon.

"The qualitative and strategic gains achieved by Iraq in Kirkuk is a new achievement for the resistance axis and a new defeat for Trump, America, Israel and others in the region," Qaouk said, according to the report.

In an analysis entitled "Iran's very good week," author and Middle East expert Caroline Glick explained in some detail the implications of Iraq's defeat of Kurdish forces in Kirkuk.

"You have to hand it to the Iranians. They don't play around. Just hours after President Donald Trump gave his speech outlining the contours of a new U.S. policy toward Iran, senior Iranian officials were on the ground in Iraq and Syria not only humiliating the U.S., but altering the strategic balance in Iran's favor," Glick wrote.

Baghdad's Iranian-backed government quashed Kurdish hopes for independence.

When the "combined force of Iraqi government forces and Shi'ite militias took over Kirkuk and other areas," Peshmerga forces in Kirkuk abandoned their posts, Glick explained, noting that Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps directed the operation.

Hezbollah's leaders praised the takeover because it strengthens the prospects of an unimpeded route from Tehran to the Mediterranean, with Israel in its crosshairs. {eo}

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