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## Syria, Hizballah are building a massive wall in eastern Lebanon

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Syria deepens its footprint in Lebanon

Hizballah and Syria are building a massive fortified wall, running from Rashaya Al-Wadi on the western, Lebanese slopes of Mt. Hermon (85 kilometers southeast of Beirut) in the south, to the Lebanese Beqaa Valley town of Aita el-Foukhar, in the north, **DEBKAFfile's** military sources reveal.

The structure, 22 kilometers long in parallel to the Lebanese-Syrian border promises to be one of the biggest fortified structures in the Middle East. It is designed as an obstacle against any Israeli tank forces heading through Lebanon toward the Syrian capital,

Damascus. When it is finished, the barrier will isolate a key Lebanese border region - 14 kilometers wide and 22 kilometers long - from the rest of the country and place it under Hizballah-Syrian military control.

This region is inhabited most by Druzes and Christians.

The project became possible in the last year, after Lebanon's Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, turned away from his pro-Western allegiance and threw in his lot with the pro-Syrian camp, lining up with Syrian president Bashar Assad and Hizballah's secretary Hassan Nasrallah and buying into the military alliance headed by Iran.

Behind the rising wall, Hizballah and Syria can freely smuggle weapons across concealed from outside surveillance, while deepening Syria's footprint in Lebanon.

In any case, as **DEBKAFfile** has disclosed, they pulled off their subterfuge for getting the Scuds across by stationing two Hizballah brigades on the Syrian side of the border for training in the new missiles. When Israeli failed to make good on its threat to strike those missiles if they reached Hizballah hands, Damascus and Hizballah felt free to go forward with Part Two of their plan for Lebanon's militarization - first the Hizballah militia's transformation into a modern army with sophisticated weapons, and now the raising of a fortified wall and creating a Syrian-controlled buffer region inside Lebanon, 55 kilometers east of Beirut and 35 kilometers north of South Lebanon and the Israeli border.

According to our military sources, Syria intends to keep that region off-limits to Lebanese military access -except for Hizballah. Syrian troops, officers and arms stores are to be based there and maintained in a state of war readiness.

Syria stands to gain another prime strategic asset with its control of Rashaya Al-Wadi, at the southernmost point of the new wall: This scenic village commands the Taim valley, whence flow a number of water courses that feed the River Jordan and the Sea of Galilee; for the first time in many years, Damascus will be placing a hand on one of Israel's primary water sources.

Satisfied that the Netanyahu government will continue to sit on its hands, Syria and Hizballah are not hiding the massive barrier project's progress. Long convoys of trucks crossing in from Syria can be seen converging on the site, loaded with cement and other building materials.

Our Middle East sources report that the project is so immense and the work so intensive, that shops in Damascus have run out of cement, forcing many other construction works in Syria to a standstill.