

Subcommittee on
**International Terrorism
and Nonproliferation**

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Press Release

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"Hezbollah's Global Reach"

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Hezbollah threat is grave, indeed. A former Deputy Secretary of State declared in 2002 that "Hezbollah may be the A-team of terrorists and maybe al-Qaeda is actually the B-team." Hezbollah's lethality is magnified by the support it receives from state sponsors of terrorism, primarily Iran.

Before September 11th, Hezbollah --which means "Party of God"-- was responsible for more American deaths than any other terrorist group. This included the 1983 suicide attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon, which killed 241 Americans --and ushered in the modern age of suicide attacks-- as well as the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, and 1996 attack on Khobar Towers.

Hezbollah has again seized the world's attention. I was in Haifa this summer as it rained rockets on much of northern Israel. These were terrorist attacks: rockets fired indiscriminately, intended to kill and intimidate civilians. Today the Administration will testify that Iran and Syria have *not* stopped arming Hezbollah, despite U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701.

Hezbollah isn't just a menace to Israel, Lebanon and the region. According to the State Department terrorism report, Hezbollah has "established cells in Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia." One witness will tell us that Hezbollah's organizational and logistic network exists in over 40 countries; this includes a significant presence in our own hemisphere, in the tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. The network operates in West Africa, where Hezbollah has been active trading

“blood diamonds,” an issue the Africa Subcommittee explored when I chaired it.

Many Americans may be surprised to learn that Hezbollah's global reach includes significant activities on U.S. soil. A recent news report asserted that the FBI had more than 200 active cases involving suspected Hezbollah members at one point last year. The vast majority of this activity has been linked to fundraising or other criminal enterprises. Yet we must be concerned that this existing network could be used should Hezbollah, perhaps prodded by Iran, decide to strike inside our country.

A particular focus of the ITNP Subcommittee has been Hezbollah's ability to enter the United States. Mahmoud Kourani, who was indicted in 2004 for being a “member, fighter, recruiter and fundraiser for Hezbollah,” having trained in Iran, was smuggled across our southern border. His brother is a top Hezbollah militia leader. Further, Salim Boughader Mucharrafille, a Lebanese-Mexican operating out of Tijuana, smuggled at least 200 individuals, including Hezbollah sympathizers, into the U.S. Even *after* the 9/11 Commission report on terrorist travel highlighted this link between human smugglers and terrorists, border security efforts remain woefully neglected.

Border security must be a pressing concern because the Islamist terrorist threat facing us is so deadly. Hezbollah is sophisticated and well-armed. It possesses unmanned aerial vehicles, over 10,000 Katyusha rockets, radar-guided anti-ship cruise missiles, medium-range Zelzal missiles and its own television station. Many of Hezbollah's weapons are courtesy of Iran, along with training. There are reports that Iran will soon transfer sophisticated shoulder-fired missiles to Hezbollah. These can knock a plane out of the sky. A nuclear-armed Iran, should that day come, would be even more bold in supporting Hezbollah's activity in the Middle East, and beyond.

Hezbollah may be the "A-team." Maybe it's only the "B-team." In today's era of proliferating WMD though, even the "C-team" is a worry. Hezbollah certainly makes that grade.

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