



Middle East Spotlight

Focusing on the Real Issue

This past April, authorities in Thailand thwarted a major terror plot orchestrated by Hezbollah to target Israeli tourists in Bangkok during Passover. With the deadline for nuclear talks between the P5+1 and Iran mere weeks away, the attempted attack by Tehran's main terrorist proxy is a scary reminder of who we're dealing with on the other side of the negotiating table.

The attack in Thailand was discovered by Israeli intelligence, which uncovered the lethal plots of two terrorists connected to Hezbollah. Investigators also believe at least nine suspected foreign terrorists with ties to the Lebanon-based terrorist organization are currently operating throughout the country. Hezbollah, an Iranian-sponsored organization, has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United States since 1995, and remains on numerous foreign terrorist organization lists.

While the latest incident reinforces analysts' growing concerns about Hezbollah's international operations, Iran's main subsidiary also continues to pose a mounting threat to Israeli national security. Over the past four months, at least four Hezbollah-led terror attacks have been aimed at Israel from the Syrian and Lebanese border.

In response, this spring American policymakers announced the introduction of new legislation that would ramp up economic sanctions against Hezbollah. Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC), Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) authored the Hezbollah International Financial Prevention Act of 2014 (H.R. 4411), which addresses the growing threat posed by the Iranian proxy by sanctioning Hezbollah's fundraising channels.

This legislation makes it clear that U.S. policymakers understand the negotiating partner they're dealing with. Despite the lure of Iran's charm offensive, members of Congress know the importance of sending a clear message—though we are hopeful for productive negotiations with Iran, we will not do business with terrorists.

The Islamic Republic continues to sponsor terrorism against Americans, Israelis and Jews around the world—all while it maintains its quest toward a nuclear weapons capability. As American Jews, we must ensure our focus, and the focus of our legislators, remains on protecting ourselves and the world from those who seek our destruction. By continuing to reach out to our representatives to make them understand the issue, we can feel confident that the United States will do the right thing.