

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2007

President Nicolas Sarkozy
Elysée Palace
Paris, France

President Sarkozy:

We are writing to congratulate you on your recent election victory, and express our best wishes and highest regards in your first weeks as President of France. We deeply value the historic ties between our two nations, and look forward to working with you both bilaterally and in the context of the European Union (EU). We are also writing to express our deep concern regarding reports that your government invited Hezbollah to participate in a conference in Paris later this month. While we share your vision of restoring stability and peace to the region, Hezbollah has destabilized Lebanon through its ongoing support of terror and role as a proxy of Syria and Iran. Given its violations of international demands to disarm and refusal to renounce terrorism, we urge you to exclude Hezbollah from the upcoming Paris talks, and take a leading role in designating Hezbollah as a “terrorist organization” both within France and the EU.

As you know, for twenty-five years, Hezbollah has targeted numerous countries including the United States and France, beginning with the horrific 1983 bombing of the Multinational Force barracks in Beirut in which 241 American Marines and 58 French paratroopers were killed. Since then, Hezbollah has killed French diplomats and soldiers in Lebanon and Kuwait, and kidnapped French citizens in Lebanon. Between 1985 and 1986, Iran – working through Hezbollah – carried out a campaign of terror in the streets of France that left 13 dead and injured hundreds. More recently, Hezbollah has established a discernable presence in Europe – especially Germany and France – where its operatives fundraise and recruit, as well as plan and prepare for terrorist attacks. German security services have evidence of 900 Hezbollah activists operating within its borders, and it is widely believed that a network also exists in France.

In recent years, Hezbollah has used Europe as a launching pad for terror, from which its operatives have infiltrated Israel attempting to carry-out attacks. Hezbollah has established a wide logistical support network in Europe, which allows it to organize and fundraise under the auspices of charities and use the European banking system as a conduit for channeling money to its operatives from Iran. In September 2006, the U.S. Treasury Department unveiled the transfer of more than \$50 million to Hezbollah through the Iranian Bank Saderat’s London branch. There is no question that Hezbollah has taken advantage of its operational freedom in Europe, and the EU must do more to combat this growing threat.

The United States, Canada, and the Netherlands have all classified Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, and the United Kingdom and Australia have placed the "Hezbollah External Security Organization" on their terrorist lists. On March 10, 2005, the EU Parliament voted overwhelmingly to adopt a resolution that affirmed Hezbollah's involvement in terrorist activities and ordered the EU Council to "take all necessary steps to curtail" Hezbollah. Four days later, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the European Union to add Hezbollah to its terrorist list. This was followed by a letter to EU High Representative Javier Solana in July 2006 signed by nearly half of the House urging the EU to add Hezbollah to its terrorist list.

President Sarkozy, in the past year, you have expressed your deep concern about Iran's increased belligerence toward the international community, including its blatant support of Hezbollah. In your presidential campaign, you stated that "there are more than suspicions about the links between Hezbollah and Iran," in addition to emphasizing your support for stronger sanctions against Iran. You also publicly classified Hezbollah as an "aggressor" in last summer's war with Israel, and – according to press reports – referred to Hezbollah as a "terrorist organization" while visiting the United States. Given its destabilizing presence in Lebanon, recent acts of aggression against Israel and undeniable ties to Iran, we strongly urge you to translate this sentiment into action and advocate for the addition of Hezbollah to the EU list of terrorist organizations, as well as the French terrorist list.

The inclusion of Hezbollah on these lists would be a critical step toward weakening and disarming this militia, as first demanded in the American/French-sponsored United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1559 (2004) and reiterated in resolutions 1680 and 1701 (2006). According to two recently released UN reports – including one by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon – weapons smuggling continues across the Syrian border into Lebanon, where some experts speculate Hezbollah is preparing for new attacks against Israel. Recent events also suggest that Hezbollah is colluding with Syria to destabilize the Lebanese government as a means of obstructing the investigation surrounding the 2005 murder of former Prime Minister Hariri. While we deeply appreciate the French government's role in seeking justice for this horrific crime, it is critical that the United States, France and the EU continue to work together to bolster the government of Prime Minister Siniora against Hezbollah's malevolent designs. Hezbollah represents the problem – not the solution – in Lebanon, and it is in this regard that we believe Hezbollah must be excluded from the upcoming French-led talks.

Members of the European Union have taken legal action against Hezbollah, including the 2005 deportation of a Hezbollah agent from Germany, and the French government's 2004 banning of Hezbollah's television station, *al Manar*. At the same time, however, such measures have fallen short of significantly impacting Hezbollah's operational freedom in Europe. Adding Hezbollah to the EU terrorist list would significantly constrain its activities by prohibiting all financial transactions and freezing its assets in EU Member States. Repercussions of such action would impact the network worldwide, as alluded to by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in March 2005. In an interview aired on *al Manar*, he reportedly stated that the designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization by the

EU would mean "the sources of funding will dry up and the sources of moral, political and material support will be destroyed."

At this juncture, the European Union is uniquely positioned to actualize the fears of Hezbollah, but it has not reached the requisite 27-member consensus to modify its terrorist list. At the same time, the EU has added several individuals affiliated with Hezbollah to its list, as well as groups increasingly supported by Hezbollah including the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It defies logic that the EU would take a series of actions against members of Hezbollah and, at the same time, omit the organization from its terrorist list.

President Sarkozy, as Interior Minister for nearly five years, you successfully fought terrorism and thwarted criminal activities in France, including hate crimes. Your strict law enforcement and counterterror policies helped to bolster national security, combat intolerance and promote justice and human rights. We admire and respect these policies, and are confident that, as President, you will take a leading role in combating fundamentalism and terror within France and the EU. It is in this regard that we hope action will be taken by your government, along with your counterparts in the EU, to address the growing threat posed by Hezbollah.

The exclusion of Hezbollah from the upcoming Paris talks would send an unequivocal message that France will not tolerate Hezbollah's role as a destabilizing political force in Lebanon. Moreover, its designation as a "terrorist organization" by both France and the EU would serve as another critical example of transatlantic cooperation to combat global terrorism, enhance Middle East security and confront the growing threat posed by Iran. As demonstrated at this month's G-8 Summit, the United States, France and the European Union can best achieve shared foreign policy goals when we remain united in our policy and resolve. It is with the deepest respect that we urge you to exclude Hezbollah from upcoming political consultations and take the lead in advocating for Hezbollah's addition to both the French and EU terrorist lists.

Sincerely,

Robert Wray

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Brad Sherman

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Alan D. Gellb

Jim Lee

Ed Rye

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See Nyrick

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Alvin Heston

W. D. Heston

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