

Justice Department Investigates Efforts to Crack Down on Hezbollah

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has ordered a review of law enforcement efforts to shutdown Hezbollah's money-laundering and drug-trafficking operations during the Obama Administration.

Sessions ordered the Department of Justice (DOJ) to "evaluate allegations that certain matters were not properly prosecuted and to ensure all matters are appropriately handled."

This was sparked by last Friday's report by *Politico* that the previous administration sought to hinder a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) investigation (code named Project Cassandra) into Hezbollah's criminal activities, in order to placate Iran as the controversial Iran nuclear deal was being hammered out by the Obama Administration.

Congress is also investigating whether the Obama Administration thwarted the investigation.

Project Cassandra was a highly-classified operation that began in 2008. The DEA investigation found that Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy, had laundered nearly one half billion dollars and was actively transporting cocaine into the United States. *Politico's* shocking report indicates that the Obama Administration threw roadblocks in front of investigators and also failed to prosecute major players in the criminal enterprise. DEA officers had worked for years on the project, operating out of a facility in Chantilly, Virginia. The agency sought approval for arrests, prosecutions and financial sanctions—none of which were allowed by the Obama White House.

Hezbollah is not your ordinary criminal organization. It is

the largest non-state terrorist group and organized crime syndicate in the world. Hezbollah is both a terrorist organization and a military organization. It is also a political party with members seated in the Lebanese Parliament. Iran, the world leading state sponsor of terrorism, is its patron. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps trains Hezbollah fighters. In exchange, Hezbollah—on behalf of Iran—trains Shi'a terrorists across the Middle East and North Africa in order to give Iran the veneer of deniability in its nefarious operations in places like Iraq and Yemen.

Hezbollah uses suicide attacks, kidnappings, assassinations, rocket fire and missile attacks to terrorize and kill innocent civilians. It supports Islamist terrorists around the globe, including those in South America and the United States. It is one of the major conduits of illegal drugs that make their way into the United States, much of it through the Mexican border. The group is responsible for killing more Americans than any other terrorist group except al-Qaeda, including the 241 U.S. Marines killed in the barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983. In the so-called Second Lebanese War, Hezbollah killed 163 Israeli citizens.

Hezbollah provides the foot-soldiers for Iran as part of that country's attempt to destabilize the Middle East and to diminish the influence of the United States in that region of the world. Its military component is the size of a medium-sized army, with as many as 100,000 soldiers. Its military budget is approximately one billion dollars, money obtained directly from Iran and through its illegal drug trade.

The *Politico* report was well-sourced and credible. It cannot be dismissed as a political hack job. The details of the article are extremely troubling. The investigations by the Department of Justice and the U.S. Congress are warranted, as *Politico* is not a right-wing news organization and its allegations are serious matters of national security. To turn

a blind eye to an international terrorist organization in order to broker an ill-advised nuclear agreement with the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism is the irony of ironies—and, if true, the Obama Administration's efforts to derail Project Cassandra wreaks of disrespect for law enforcement, a cavalier approach to national security, and a casual disregard for the victims of the drug trade across the United States.

Everyone who believes in the Rule of Law, and in those sworn to protect us, should pay attention to the efforts of Congress and the Justice Department to get to the bottom of this alleged miscarriage of justice. It is a matter of utmost seriousness. At the very least, the DEA and the Department of Justice should re-authorize Project Cassandra and continue their efforts to oppose Hezbollah and bring its operatives to justice.

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