

Congressional Testimony

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The Iranian bungled operation to use proxies to assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States and to purposefully plan the operation inside the United States is a stunning rebuke to the Obama administration's policy of negotiation and isolation with the Iranians. Indeed, Republican and Democratic administrations since 1980 have failed to deal effectively with the harsh reality that Iran is our number one strategic enemy in the world. Frankly, the Iranians stated as much in 1980, that the United States was the enemy of the Islamic Revolution and their intent was to drive the United States out of the region. Therefore, they have been systematically killing us for over 30 years.

In 1983 their proxies the Hezbollah blew up the American Embassy, the Marine Barracks in Lebanon and the Embassy Annex the following year

with a total of almost 500 lives lost. We not only had no response to this tragedy but we pulled our troops out of Lebanon. In 1983 the Iranian backed Al Dawa extremist groups blew up the US Embassy in Kuwait and attacked Raytheon's residential area killing and wounding over 80.

In 1984, the CIA station chief in Lebanon, William Buckley, was captured and eventually killed, which was the beginning of an Iranian backed campaign to take high profile hostages over a 10 year period. This led to the poorly conceived and ill fated operation by the Reagan administration to exchange arms for hostages with the Iranians. In 1985 TWA flight 847 was seized while enroute to Rome and was forced to land in Beirut, which led to the killing of a US Navy diver and dumping his body on the tarmac. Eventually the airplane hostages were released as the Israelis released hundreds of extremist terrorists from Israeli jails.

In 1996 the US Air Force Kobar towers barracks in Saudi Arabia was blown up by the Iranian backed Hezbollah killing 19 and wounding almost 400. Again, although our intelligence identified the culprits as Iranian backed Hezbollah, we had no response and eventually shut down the US military bases in Saudi Arabia.

Since 2003 in Iraq the Iranians have provided rockets, mortars, enhanced IED'S and money to the Shia Militia who were directly involved in killing U.S. troops in Iraq. Moreover, the Iraq Shia Militia were trained by the Iranian special operations force, the Qods force, at training bases in Iran. While the Iranians were defeated politically and militarily in Iraq in 2009, the President's recent decision to withdraw all our troops from Iraq puts our hard fought gains in Iraq at risk and plays into the hands of the Iranians. Similarly, the Iranians are supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan with money and ammunition.

The action arm for Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism outside of their borders is led by General Qasim Soliemani, who has been in charge for over 15 years. General Soliemani has no military or political boss, he answers to only one person, the supreme leader in Iran, Khomeini. We must conclude that for General Soliemani to plan an operation inside the United States that would result in Americans being killed, surely, the supreme leader at a minimum approved the plan and may in fact, directed it.

Moreover we must ask ourselves has U.S. policy with respect to Iran been working? We appear to have a policy of rhetorical condemnation when the Iranians engage in behavior adverse to the US interests, we also engage in negotiations, which are on again off again, while the Iranians continue to pursue nuclear weapons. We have imposed some limited sanctions on the Iranians and attempt to isolate them in the world which

as best as we can tell also has had no impact on their pursuit of nuclear weapons or their sponsorship of terrorism.

We also must admit that the Iranians are not without their own challenges. Having 2 fledgling democracies on their borders in Iraq and Afghanistan is a huge geopolitical threat to their tyrannical control of their own population and preservation of their regime. The Arab Spring is a repudiation of radical Islam, indeed, the people in the streets are seeking political reform, social justice and economic opportunities which are the mainstream of western democracies. Certainly the Iranians are attempting to take advantage of the opportunities the social unrest of the Arab Spring provides but no one is demonstrating on behalf of their flawed values. Losing a state sponsored terrorist like Ghadafi is a setback as is the upheaval in Syria, their number one ally in the region.

All that said, it is time to review our strategy for Iran against the harsh reality that despite our rhetoric, attempts to negotiate, isolate and sanction, the fact is the Iranians continue to use their proxies against US interests and continue to pursue nuclear weapons. Therefore, one must conclude the obvious that, our policy has failed and failed, miserably.

What can we do? First and foremost begin to treat Iran as the strategic enemy they truly are. And, as such, develop a strategic competitive framework that counters every major interest the Iranian regime engages in. For example, seize the financial assets which are outside of Iran, much as we did with the Al Qaeda, limit their ability to trade by denying their ships, entry to ports around the world, limit the ability of their central bank to operate effectively, conduct an offensive cyber campaign against military and economic interests inside of Iran, conduct covert operations led by the CIA in cooperation with other agencies to target the Qods force and their proxies. Provide money, information and

encouragement to the dissident leaders inside Iran to use their population to put pressure on the regime.

In my view, these measures have a realistic chance to compel a behavior change or possibly even the regime to fall. This much I do know, if we continue the half measures of the past the Iranians will continue to kill us, will continue to sponsor terrorism and use their proxies against our interests and will continue to pursue nuclear weapons.

The next nightmare for the world is around the corner, an unchecked Iran with nuclear weapons.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

