

**Key Findings  
of  
Congressional Delegation to the Middle East  
July 21 – 25, 2006  
Including Representatives Hoekstra, Harman, Renzi and Issa**



*With Israeli soldiers along the Israel/Lebanon Border on July 22, 2006*

We had two missions –

The Speaker asked us to undertake a mission of support for the people of Israel in their struggle to combat terrorism. Hezbollah and Hamas initiated the current crisis by killing and capturing Israeli soldiers in undisputed Israeli territory and attacking innocent civilians. And we made clear not just to Israelis, but also to Arab leaders that we are standing with Israel and with moderate Arab leaders ... and standing firmly against terrorism.

In our capacity as Members of the Intelligence Committee, we spoke to key intelligence and security officials in the region to gain a better understanding of the continuing growing and evolving terrorist threat throughout the region.

Below are the key findings from our trip:

- 1) **Key leaders in the region are looking aggressively for a solution to the current crisis.**
  - Leaders in the region need a short-term solution that also will build a framework/foundation for sustainable long term solutions.

- Any solution to the current crisis must include crippling Hezbollah.
- Any agreement made to end this crisis needs to be between the Lebanese government and Israel.
- A multi-national force, possibly associated with NATO, will probably be necessary in the short term to secure Southern Lebanon.

2) **This is a complex and persistent area of tension. Its history is more than just the current TV images.**

- We have seen the pictures from Lebanon and Israel. They are heart-wrenching. But those pictures do not depict the events that led to this crisis. In 2000, Israel pulled out completely from Lebanon. Two years ago, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1559 which required the government of Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah. The government of Lebanon failed to do this.
- The Lebanese armed forces require significant training and equipment in order to confront Hezbollah and effectively control its borders with Israel and Syria.
- For the past 6 years, Hezbollah has embedded itself in the towns and villages across Southern Lebanon and in Beirut. The weapons systems which Hezbollah acquired during this timeframe are so indiscriminate that they are used more to terrify the Israeli populace than to target effectively any Israeli military facilities or personnel.
- Innocent civilians on both sides of the border are suffering. Key to ending the crisis will be the involvement of international agencies to facilitate humanitarian assistance.

3) **Moderate Arab governments should play a constructive role, and they deserve our support.**

- This battle is not about America and Israel versus Islam or the Arabs. This is about the forces of moderation across the Middle East versus the forces of extremism.
- We met with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority. He wants peace and security for both Israel and Palestine. He believes in a two-state solution. His problem is that Hamas *is* the government in the Palestinian authority and they are undermining him at every turn.
- The US and the International Community must support President Abbas. Yes, he must do more to disarm Hamas, but we must do more to help him.

- In Jordan, we met with His Majesty King Abdullah – a long-time friend and ally of the United States who is working tirelessly across the Arab world to build a coalition against extremism. Moderate Arab governments will have to jointly confront Syria and make them choose – either you are for moderation and peace ... or you are for Iran’s brand of extremism and violence.

**4) Terrorist organizations wage a sophisticated war effort including military as well as communications efforts.**

- Once again the terrorists have incorporated into their game-plan a well-coordinated and thought out communications plan. Their military plans may facilitate their communications strategy. IE: By hiding among civilian population and infrastructure you guarantee a certain level of civilian damage. (Note: Israeli and UN statements indicate this is occurring but we were not able to independently assess the extent of the activity).

**5) Leaders in the region are beginning to recognize the threats to them posed by terrorist organizations and Iran.**

- The leaders in the region recognize the tentacles of Iran stretching into the current crisis and the region as a whole. They’re nervous about it and acknowledge that they need to be more active in developing solutions. Responses to both Iranian influence directly and terrorism indirectly.
- Iran and Syria provide guidance and sanctuary to terrorists, not just Hezbollah in Lebanon but also to Hamas.
- Iran funds, trains, and equips Hezbollah and Hamas. Iran, and its partner Syria, are giving safe haven to terrorist leaders. Their agents are helping to kill Americans in Iraq. Iran is threatening to rip apart the Middle East, pitting the forces of moderation against the forces of extremism ... seeking to create a civil war between Sunnis and Shia.