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*House of Representatives*  
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April 30, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write to urge the reexamination of United States military assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Intelligence reports indicate that Hizballah, a State Department designated foreign terrorist organization since 1997,<sup>1</sup> in Lebanon may be a benefactor of this assistance. It appears that Hizballah has been cooperating with the LAF on numerous accounts. We ask that United States military assistance be suspended until it is certain that U.S. taxpayer's money is not directly or indirectly funding a terrorist organization.

Since 2010, the United States has provided over \$1.82 billion in security assistance investment in the LAF.<sup>2</sup> In recent years the LAF has received an average of \$224 million each year in combined Department of State and Department of Defense military grant assistance.

The UN Security Council has come out with Resolution 1701 following the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon. According to the resolution, there would be "*a buffer zone free of "any armed personnel" -- both Hizbollah militants and Israeli troops -- between the United Nations-drawn Blue Line in southern Lebanon and the Litani River (12 miles from the Israeli border)*".

As you know, Hizballah now possesses an estimated 130,000 to 150,000 missiles that are south of the Litani River, staring down at Israel. Further, reports issued by the Israeli Defense Force show that Hizballah bypasses this resolution by cooperating with the LAF in the form of joint vehicle patrols, and the LAF has even gone so far as giving Hizballah official uniforms.<sup>3</sup>

Given the close link between the terrorist organization and the LAF, and Hizballah occupying two ministerial portfolios in the new Lebanese government, Hizballah and the Lebanese state, in fact, are no longer two separate entities. We are therefore extremely concerned with the easy access of Hizballah to the U.S. military assistance given to the LAF. In a 2016 military parade, Hizballah displayed U.S.-made armored personnel

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lb.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-u-s-lebanon-military-assistance-and-defense-cooperation/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/florida-jewish-journal/fl-jj-hezbollah-partnership-lebanon-army-operational-cover-20181003-story.html>

carriers, presumably taken from the LAF.<sup>4</sup> By continuing to provide this assistance we are contravening U.S. law by funding a terrorist organization.

In February of 2020 our own allies in the Middle East, the Arab Gulf states, have ruled out any aid to Lebanon as long as it continues to cooperate with Hizballah.<sup>5</sup> We ask that our country follow those footsteps by conducting an investigation and freezing any military aid to the LAF until it is certain, beyond any doubt, that our financial military assistance is not being used to fund a designated terrorist organization, thereby threatening our allies in the region and destabilizing the Middle East.

As the leaders of the free world, America must continue to support our allies and democracies around the world. However, we must be vigilant in how we distribute our resources to avoid unwanted consequences such as supporting terrorism and destabilizing regions. We look forward to working with you on reexamining our financial aid to the LAF - a cornerstone of the U.S.-Lebanon alliance.

Sincerely,



W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Brian Mast  
Member of Congress



Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Washingtons-arming-of-the-Lebanese-army-is-an-own-goal-591152>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/arab-official-rules-out-aid-for-lebanon-under-hezbollah-s-sway-1.979485>