

McCain for Undermining 'Hizbullah's Appeal'

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Republican White House candidate John McCain has said the international community should not "cede" Lebanon's future to Damascus and Tehran, urging it to "undermine Hizbullah's appeal."

"The international community needs to more fully empower our allies in Lebanon – not only with military aid but also with the resources to undermine Hizbullah's appeal: better schools, hospitals, roads and power generation, and the like," McCain told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Policy Conference (AIPAC) in Washington Monday.

"We simply cannot afford to cede Lebanon's future to Syria and Iran," he stressed.

He said Hizbullah gunmen took up arms against the Lebanese last month, starting the worst internal fighting since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war.

"In the process, they extracted an agreement for a new political arrangement in which Hizbullah and its allies can veto any cabinet decision," McCain told the powerful U.S.-Israel lobby.

He also warned that a nuclear-armed Iran would threaten Israel.

"The threats to Israel's security are large and growing, and America's commitment must grow as well," McCain said in his speech.

"A sponsor of both Hamas and Hizbullah, the leadership of Iran has repeatedly used violence to undermine Israel and the Middle East peace process," he said.

He said Tehran "has trained, financed, and equipped extremists in Iraq who have killed American soldiers fighting to bring freedom to that country. It remains the world's chief sponsor of terrorism and threatens to destabilize the entire Middle East, from Basra to Beirut."

About Israeli soldiers held by Hamas and Hizbullah since summer 2006, McCain said: "These men are being unlawfully held, and they must be set free and returned home to Israel."

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<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&33016D90A1F9FB58C225745D0010B7C9>

Senator John McCain AIPAC Policy Conference 2008

"Tehran's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons poses an unacceptable risk, a danger we cannot allow." Listen to the full speech [Click here to watch the video](#) [Click here to watch video highlights](#) [Read the transcript \(PDF, 33k\)](#)