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Contributed by W. Thomas Smith, Jr.
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VENEZUELA: Our sources continue reporting to us the depth of the problem regarding international terrorist groups — Hizballah, Hamas and al-Qaeda — coordinating efforts with Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, and (as has been widely reported for months) establishing Venezuela as a “terrorist bridge to other Latin American countries.” Of course this is a serious threat to America’s marginally defended southern front. LEBANON: Speaking of Hizballah, Hamas, and Venezuela; The Los Angeles Times is reporting on the recent “Beirut International Forum for Resistance, Anti-Imperialism, People’s Solidarity and Alternatives,” which not surprisingly was organized by Hizballah, specifically Hizballah’s so-called think tank, the Center for Consultative Studies and Documentation. According to the Times, the forum “showed how much the self-described “camp of resistance” had invested in the Gaza conflict. The gathering also underscored how widely Iran and Hizballah have sought to broaden ties among organizations and governments that, regardless of their ideological differences, are united in opposing Israel and its primary patron.” The Times describes the event: “Black clerical turbans bobbed up from the sea of long, curly hair and fashionable berets. Venezuelan leftists sought an interpreter to speak with Egyptian nationalists. Iranians handed out DVDs celebrating the assassin of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and baseball caps that carried a quote from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: “Israel must be wiped out.”

“Many snoozed during former U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark’s speech about American foreign policy in the 1950s. But all perked up when the Shiite militia Hezbollah’s No. 2, Naim Qassem, delivered a fiery keynote speech slamming the United States and Israel’s war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.” Incidentally, Qassem has openly said suicide bombing is a legitimate means of waging war. Qassem is not only the deputy commander of Hizballah, but is a Shia Muslim cleric who was specifically appointed to command the military wing of Hizballah by Iran’s Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Those in attendance, according to the Times, include: “Nasserites from Egypt; Sunnis and Shiites from all over the Middle East; Marxists and various activists from India, the Philippines and Western Europe; and a delegation of lawmakers dispatched by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.” In his speech, Qassem said, “We are with Hamas and Iran, and we add Chavez from Venezuela and Bolivia.” ALGERIA: In a developing story, at least 40 terrorists — members of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb — were killed in a biological-weapons training, testing, and/or development mishap. According to Investor’s Business Daily: “From the sound of it, [the terrorists] were likely killed by a strain of the bubonic plague — the deadly rat-borne bacterial disease that ravaged much of the world in the 13th and 14th century, wiping out fully a third of Europe’s population. An airborne version, pneumonic plague, is equally deadly.

“The details are horrific. The Algerian victims were said to be afflicted with horrible boils in different parts of their bodies, dying in excruciating pain after just a few hours. It’s an awful way to die.

“Since AQLIM boasts of 1,000 members in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Nigeria, the loss of 40 terrorists will barely scratch the surface of their membership.

“What worries us is that if the “accident” was part of a wider program to create a deadly bioweapon to be used against civilians — possibly in the U.S. or Europe — then we are in serious danger.” Visit W. Thomas Smith Jr. at uswriter.com.