

## U.S. releases \$100 million in aid to Lebanese Army

Contributed by Traci McMillan - Bloomberg  
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### Lawmakers Drop Opposition to \$100 Million U.S. Military Aid for Lebanon

Two U.S. House Democrats dropped their opposition to \$100 million in new military aid to Lebanon three months after they stalled the package over concern it could help the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah movement.

Representatives Howard Berman of California, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Nita Lowey of New York said they were reassured by an investigation into the Lebanese army's relationship with Hezbollah, which is classified as a terrorist group by the U.S. The lawmakers also had voiced concern over a southern Lebanon shoot-out between Lebanese and Israeli troops on Aug. 3 that killed four people.

The Obama administration produced classified material from an inter-agency review that determined Hezbollah wouldn't benefit from the aid, Berman said in a statement.

"I am convinced that implementation of the spending plan will now have a greater focus, and I am reassured as to the nature and purposes of the proposed package," Berman said.

"Improving Lebanon's ability to defend its borders, stop arms trafficking, build institutions and fight terrorist elements is imperative to the security and stability of the region," Matthew Dennis, a spokesman for Lowey, said in an e-mail.

The Associated Press reported yesterday that the congressional holds had been lifted.

U.S. officials said the \$100 million in aid would continue to support Lebanon's army and assist the government in controlling the country.

The aid still may face hurdles in the Republican-controlled House that takes office in January.

"Unanswered questions remain concerning the long-term impact and long-term strategy of U.S. assistance to Lebanon's military, said Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican who is in line to become chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. "There also appears to be a disconnect between parts of the aid plan aimed at fighting terrorism and helping a government increasingly influenced by Hezbollah," she said in a statement.

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