

# The Beirut barracks bombing: 24 years

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October 23, 1983, Beirut, Lebanon: 241 Marines, soldiers, and sailors killed by jihadists.

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 By Michelle Malkin &bull; October 23, 2007 05:00 PM

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Special Report by Michelle Malkin

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So for 24 years, we have been in an undeclared war with Hizbullah and, by extension, Iran. Or, at least Iran has been at war with us. We have pretended that no such conflict exists under successive US presidents, Republican and Democratic, liberal and conservative. Occasionally, history intervenes and tries to rouse us out of this stupor but so far, to no avail. In 1984, Hizbullah attacked our embassy, killing 5 Americans. In 1985, TWA flight 847 was hijacked by Hizbullah and a Navy diver was savagely beaten to death. They kidnapped and murdered CIA officer William Buckley and Colonel William Higgins, a Marine serving with the UN at the time. (They were kind enough to forward videos of the murders to our government). They fired on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. They have operated around the world, killing Jews wherever there's a soft enough target to hit.

To this day, Hizbullah is beholden to Iran, getting all of its funding and weapons as well as its training through the Revolutionary Guards. They receive an estimated \$250 million a year &ndash; by far and away the largest recipient of Iranian foreign aid. Their fighters are trained in Iran, indoctrinated in Iran, and are more loyal to the &ldquo;Islamic Revolution&rdquo; than they are to Lebanon.

And yet, there are those who are serious when they proclaim they don't want us to &ldquo;start&rdquo; a war with Iran.

This is worse than madness. It is deliberate, self deluded suicide not to recognize Iran as deadly enemy of the United States. Bombing and invading is not the answer, although as the last option available, it may come to that. But we should have absolutely no qualms about attempting to undermine the government of Iran and work for regime change &ndash; peacefully if at all possible. But ultimately, the only peaceful solution would be if the Iranian people themselves overthrew the corrupt and messianic mullahs who currently run that country.

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 24 Years After Barracks Attack, Marines Still 'Tip of the Spear'  
 by Sen. Mitch McConnell  
 Posted: 10/23/2007

The U.S. Marines were honored on the Senate floor Tuesday, the 24th anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said that although terrorists and suicide bombers are still with us today, &ldquo;thankfully for America, so are the United States Marines.&rdquo;

&ldquo;By their courage on the battlefield, and constant risk of danger, today's Marines honor every one of their

forebears who died defending our country," McConnell said. "We continue to fight terror today with a steady hand, even if it is at times paired with a heavy heart. And we are proud of the brave men and women who fight for their country."

On October 23, 1983, two truck bombs struck separate buildings in Beirut housing U.S. and French members of the Multinational Force who were stationed in Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War. The attack killed 241 American Marines, sailors and soldiers. Several hours later, an organization called Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack.

The following are the Leader's remarks as prepared for delivery:

"I rise today in honor of the 241 U.S. Marines, sailors and soldiers who were killed in a despicable suicide bombing attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. That attack occurred 24 years ago today on October 23, 1983.

President Ronald Reagan had dispatched U.S. forces in 1982 to maintain the peace in Lebanon. On the morning of October 23, one Lebanese terrorist drove a truck packed with explosives through three guard posts and a barbed-wire fence, straight into the lobby of the U.S. Marine Corps' headquarters.

The bomb exploded with the force of 18,000 pounds of dynamite. It transformed the four-story cinderblock building into rubble.

It was so powerful, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia later described it as "the largest non-nuclear explosion that had ever been detonated on the face of the Earth."

Some of the men and women lost that day were murdered in their sleep. Others, who saw the truck come crashing in, may have seen the face of the enemy as their last sight on Earth.

Either way, 241 Americans wearing their country's uniform were killed in a brutal attack that shocked America and the world.

Five Kentuckians were among the 241 who died in that attack. They were:

Private First Class Sidney James Decker, U.S. Marine Corps, of Clarkson, Ky.,

Lance Corporal Virgil D. Hamilton, U.S. Marine Corps, of McDowell, Ky.,

Hospital Corpsman Third Class Robert S. Holland, U.S. Navy, of Gilbertsville, Ky.,

Sergeant Thomas C. Keown, U.S. Marine Corps, of Louisville, Ky., and

Sergeant Daniel S. Kluck, U.S. Army, of Owensboro, Ky.

Terrorists and their favorite tactic, the suicide attack, are still with us today.

Thankfully for America, so are the United States Marines.

Founded in 1775, the U.S. Marine Corps has been "at the tip of the spear" in every one of this nation's wars. And they will never be stopped by a terrorist's suicide attack.

This November, the country will celebrate the Corps' 232nd birthday, and thank them for defending our freedoms.

By taking the fight to the terrorists, wherever they hide, the Marines have put terrorists on the defensive, making it less likely they will hit us again here at home.

By their courage on the battlefield, and constant risk of danger, today's Marines honor every one of their forebears who died defending our country.

Mr. President, America still remembers her brave men and women lost in the Marine barracks bombing of 1983. We honor them and their families for their sacrifice.

We continue to fight terror today with a steady hand, even if it is at times paired with a heavy heart. And we are proud of the brave men and women who fight for their country against the would-be terrorists of today and tomorrow."

Mr. McConnell, a Republican, is the U.S. Senate minority leader. He represents the people of Kentucky.

<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=22996>

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10/23/2007

## BEIRUT BARRACKS BOMBING ANNIVERSARY

CATEGORY: War on Terror, History, Middle East, Iran

The driver of the yellow Mercedes Benz truck in Beirut that awful day 24 years ago knew precisely where to go. According to intelligence reports, two members of what was then the underground terrorist organization known as Hizbullah had mapped the layout of the Marine barracks so that the suicide bomber could carry out his mission to maximum effect. He knew the Marines pulling sentry duty had pocketed their ammo clips thanks to some ridiculous rules of engagement. And he was aware that there were no barriers protecting the structure so that his truck laden with 12,000 pounds of explosives would only have to crash through ordinary wood and plaster in order to be positioned perfectly so that detonation would have catastrophic effects on the building.

The truck had apparently been prepared with the help of Syrians and Iranians in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon where several Revolutionary Guard units had been stationed under Syrian protection. An NSA intercept revealed at a trial that convicted the Islamic Republic of Iran of being behind the attack, stated that a message sent from Iranian intelligence headquarters in Tehran to Ali-Akbar Mohtashemi, the Iranian ambassador in Damascus and directed the Iranian ambassador to get in touch with Islamic Amal which has since been identified as the military arm of Hizbullah at the time, and instruct him to "take spectacular action" against the Marines.

When the bomb detonated, it may have been the largest non-nuclear explosion in history up to that time (we used the "Daisy Cutter" in Afghanistan which weighs 15,000 lbs). The entire barracks building was lifted off its foundation and when it came down, it collapsed in a heap of cinder blocks, plaster, and dust. A few seconds after the blast, another suicide truck bomber crashed into the French military headquarters detonating a similar device. All told, 241 Americans lost their lives in the blast. Another 58 French paratroopers died in the other attack that day. It was the worst day for the Marines since the battle of Iwo Jima and the worst day for the US military since the first day of the Tet Offensive in Viet Nam.

While it is not a rock solid certainty that Hizbullah, acting on direct orders from Iran, was behind the attacks, the preponderance of evidence certainly points that way. At the time, Hizbullah was in its initial stages of formation, being trained by Revolutionary Guard units who had infiltrated Lebanon through Syria. At first, Hizbullah was not an independent actor in Lebanon, receiving its orders directly from Khomeini's Iran. The US had just given Sadaam Hussein more than two billion dollars in aid to fight Iran and the thinking is that Khomeini wanted to get back at the US for our support of Iraq. When US forces pulled out the following February, it was simply gravy from the Iranian point of view.

So for 24 years, we have been in an undeclared war with Hizbullah and, by extension, Iran. Or, at least Iran has been at war with us. We have pretended that no such conflict exists under successive US presidents, Republican and Democratic, liberal and conservative. Occasionally, history intervenes and tries to rouse us out of this stupor but so far, to no avail. In 1984, Hizbullah attacked our embassy, killing 5 Americans. In 1985, TWA flight 847 was hijacked by Hizbullah and a Navy diver was savagely beaten to death. They kidnapped and murdered CIA officer William Buckley and Colonel William Higgins, a Marine serving with the UN at the time. (They were kind enough to forward videos of the murders to our government). They fired on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. They have operated around the world, killing Jews wherever there's a soft enough target to hit.

To this day, Hizbullah is beholden to Iran, getting all of its funding and weapons as well as its training through the Revolutionary Guards. They receive an estimated \$250 million a year — by far and away the largest recipient of Iranian foreign aid. Their fighters are trained in Iran, indoctrinated in Iran, and are more loyal to the "Islamic Revolution" than they are to Lebanon.

And yet, there are those who are serious when they proclaim they don't want us to "start" a war with Iran.

This is worse than madness. It is deliberate, self deluded suicide not to recognize Iran as deadly enemy of the United States. Bombing and invading is not the answer, although as the last option available, it may come to that. But we should have absolutely no qualms about attempting to undermine the government of Iran and work for regime change — peacefully if at all possible. But ultimately, the only peaceful solution would be if the Iranian people themselves overthrew the corrupt and messianic mullahs who currently run that country.

It was 24 years ago today that Hizbullah, acting under what is believed to be the direct orders of Iran, made their largest and most successful attack against America. Their masters in Tehran have since been challenging us at every turn, testing our resolve and going so far as to assist our enemies in Iraq. The question now isn't if a showdown will

occur but when.

I don't know if violence can be avoided. I know we must try to do so because the consequences of war with Iran for the entire world would be profoundly dangerous and destabilizing. But the threat Iran poses is intolerable and must be dealt with — one way or another.

UPDATE 10/25:

Reader Mike emails with a correction:

The "Grand Slam" bomb of WWII, weighing 22,000 lbs and dropped from a British Lancaster bomber, was larger.

And for that matter, accidental ammunition explosions of WWI and WWII, in Halifax N.S., Texas, the Bay Area and IIRC, Eniwetok Atoll, each involved several thousand tons of munitions.

I should have mentioned above that the statement about the barracks bomb being the largest explosion ever up to that time was actually from a quote by the trial judge in the suit against the Iranians.

Obviously, he didn't know what he was talking about — any more than I did.

Thanks to Mike for the correction.

By: Rick Moran at 2:16 pm

5 Responses to "BEIRUT BARRACKS BOMBING ANNIVERSARY"  
1Michelle Malkin » The Beirut barracks bombing: 24 years Pinged With:  
4:00 pm

[...] Rick Moran remembers: [...]

2Blogs 4 Brownback Trackbacked With:  
7:11 pm

The Splodydopes Started It&hellip;

Today marks the 24th anniversary of the suicide bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon taking 241 American lives. The terrorists started their cowardly war against us decades ago. The United States will finish the War on Terror, with a &hellip;

3The Anniversary of War - 24 Years and Counting at Conservative Times--Republican GOP news source. Pinged With:  
8:04 pm

[...] From Rick Moran: BEIRUT BARRACKS BOMBING ANNIVERSARY [...]

4FreeSpeech.com » Blog Archives » Remembering: The Beirut Barracks Bombing Anniversary Pinged With:  
11:16 pm

[...] Our enemy has been at war with us now for more than 24 years. Only since 9-11 have we recognized this fact and begun to fight back. Right Wing Nut House » BEIRUT BARRACKS BOMBING ANNIVERSARY The driver of the yellow Mercedes Benz truck in Beirut that awful day 24 years ago knew precisely where to go. According to intelligence reports, two members of what was then the underground terrorist organization known as Hizbullah had mapped the layout of the Marine barracks so that the suicide bomber could carry out his mission to maximum effect. He knew the Marines pulling sentry duty had pocketed their ammo clips thanks to some ridiculous rules of engagement. And he was aware that there were no barriers protecting the structure so that his truck laden with 12,000 pounds of explosives would only have to crash through ordinary wood and plaster in order to be positioned perfectly so that detonation would have catastrophic effects on the building. [...]

5Philadelphia Steve Said:  
1:39 pm

Referring to Ron Paul's supporters as "But just as clearly, there is a dark underbelly to the Paul campaign—a ruthless, mob of internet ruffians who seek to intimidate those who would dare criticize them,"

Please explain to me how they are any different from the rest of Conservatism: Those who so easily apply the label of

&ldquo;Treason&rdquo; (a crime that carries the death penalty) to anyone who ever dared to state their belief that George W. Bush is incompetent.

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The URI to Trackback this entry:

<http://rightwingnuthouse.com/archives/2007/10/23/beirut-barracks-bombing-anniversary/trackback/>

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 Why Hezbollah attacked when it did posted at 12:25 pm on July 22, 2006 by Bryan  
 I may be late getting to this analysis, though I haven't seen it anywhere else.

The big question&ndash;l&rsquo;ve heard it from friends and family, on TV, sluicing throught the tubes of the internets&ndash;is why did Hezbollah choose to attack Israel now? By which, people are actually asking, why did Iran choose to attack Israel now? Because the whole world knows that Iran pulls the strings that make Hezbollah move.

On the surface the timing of the attack seems illogical&ndash;Iran doesn't have nuclear weapons yet, but if things continue on their present course, will have them within 3 to 5 years and could then command the heights among its non-nuclear neighbors. Israel has done everything the so-called international community wanted it to do, pulling out of Lebanon in 2000 and out of the Palestinian territories last year, and thus had earned some sympathy from the world. It should have had that sympathy all along, but never mind that. Patience, though, would be in Iran's favor. Israel can't hold the world's sympathy for very long&ndash;there is too much reflexive hatred for it worldwide. In a few short years Iran could put itself into a position to destroy Israel before she could respond. If Iran thinks it has that time, a patient strategy would make sense.

But this story (h/t Captain's Quarters) hints at an answer. In it, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah claims that his group is now the defacto government of Lebanon. Which means, at least in his thinking, Hezbollah has replaced a democratically-elected government that was hostile to Syria and Iran. And given the relative strengths of Hezbollah and the Lebanese army, he's probably more right than wrong at this point.

Think back to the Cedar Revolution last year. Sparked by the Syrian assassination of Rafik Hariri, it was a defeat for Syria and by extension Iran, and a victory for the US program of democratizing the Middle East. It had turned many Lebanese including prominent political figures like Walid Jumblatt against the Syrians and toward the US and even its Iraq policies. Seen from Tehran and Damascus, the Cedar Revolution was a major defeat, and one that could not be allowed to stand unchallenged.

The democratization program is a dagger at the throat of the mullahs. It is the greatest single threat to their power. As we've seen in the Palestinian Authority, democratization doesn't necessarily mean Arab Thomas Jeffersons will take power. It probably does mean, though, the end of the mullahs' rule once it reaches Iran. Therefore to the mullahs, it's an unacceptable threat no matter who ends up replacing them.

The Iranians have been doing everything short of outright invasion to destabilize our efforts in Iraq, the centerpiece of the democratization effort. Iraq's security forces and army get a little stronger everyday, which means Iraq inches closer to self-sufficiency (in spite of the daily terrorist attacks and whispers of civil war), which means every day brings real democracy (a real challenge to their power) a little bit closer to the mullahs' frontier. From their point of view, anyway.

Israel is always a convenient target to attack for a Muslim power that wants to fracture coalitions or destabilize the region. We saw that in the first Gulf War, when Saddam tried to pull Israel into the war by lobbing SCUDs at Tel Aviv. Pulling Israel in would have fractured the Coalition, peeling off the strong Arab contingent. The effort failed, but from Saddam's point of view it was a shot he had to take. There was no way he could possibly defeat the huge force then arrayed against him, so he had to divide it against itself.

Fast forward to today, and attacking Israel now may be the shot the mullahs have to take, before Iraq is self-sufficient and before democracy takes root in Lebanon and spreads further. Using Lebanon as a forward base makes sense from a logistics point of view and from a political one. The Lebanese government, an infant democracy, is not yet strong enough to resist Hezbollah (assuming it even wants to) and isn't fully rid of Syrian influence. Destabilizing it makes sense from both an Iranian and Syrian point of view&ndash;as a relatively cosmopolitan if weak democracy, its existence is a threat. Handing it to Hezbollah by inflaming rage against Israel and highlighting the impotence of Lebanon's democratic government hands Iran a little piece of empire right on Israel's doorstep, and weakens nascent faith in democracy. And if it succeeds, Israel is weakened and America takes a proxy defeat. Seen this way, Hezbollah's rocket strikes opened up an Iranian/Syrian counterattack against the US and its broad plans to re-shape the Middle East.

If I'm right about this, Israel can't settle for weakening Hezbollah. Israel has to degrade Hezbollah to the point that it's no longer an effective tool for the Iranians, and so that it no longer holds Lebanon as Iran's vassal state. That's a tall order: Hezbollah is dug in and most likely getting resupplied by Tehran and Damascus even now. Air strikes and incursions into southern Lebanon may not be enough to blunt this ideological bulge battle.

Update: According to MENewline, Iran trained Hezbollah for six months prior to the July 12 attack that sparked the war. Dore Gold, former Israeli ambassador to the UN, says the Hez rocket offensive is part of Iran's war with the West. Pat Buchanan would say that that's Israel's way of trying to get us deeper into the war on its side, but then again Pitchfork Pat probably won't acknowledge that Hezbollah has attacked and killed Americans over and over again. Which it has.

(h/t Chris)

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July 22, 2006

Nasrallah Runs Lebanon

Rick Moran of Right Wing Nuthouse sent me a link to an intriguing article in Lebanon's Daily Star, in which Sheikh Nasrallah explains quite clearly how Hezbollah now runs the Lebanese government. Nasrallah gave an interview in which he told A-Jazeera that he has assigned some tasks to government officials regarding international negotiations, and how the Lebanese government has entered into an agreement with Nasrallah to allow Hezbollah to operate at will against the Israelis.

Nasrallah mentioned five points for his program (emphases mine):

First, Nasrallah insisted on an exchange of prisoners, beginning with the longest-held Lebanese detainee, Samir Qantar. However, according to contacts with Israel, the Jewish state would never agree to release Qantar because he killed Israeli civilians.

Second, Nasrallah said he did not care about Arab criticism of Hizbullah. Commenting on the issue, Nasrallah said, "We forgot them as if they [Arab states] do not exist," and advised the Arabs to "leave us alone." Some observers said the latter comment had a "harsh and negative" tone.

Third, by agreeing to conduct negotiations through the government (specifically Speaker Nabih Berri), Nasrallah consolidated an agreement made between Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Berri and Hizbullah last week. Nasrallah also said the government was relaying proposals from the international community and that the resistance was commenting on them. ...

Fourth, Nasrallah said his party would "hold some accountable and forgive others," in response to MP Saad Hariri's accusations that "adventurers who banked on the situation in Lebanon will be held accountable." The ministerial sources saw in this statement an "open threat without clear consequences."

Fifth, Nasrallah's most remarkable stand, in addition to ruling out the possibility of civil war, was his keenness on preserving his alliance with Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun.

Most remarkably, Hezbollah now openly states that it has co-opted the Lebanese government, and that they now do his bidding. That places responsibility for the act of war against Israel back on the Lebanese government, and that means that Israel now can consider the entire nation of Lebanon at war with them -- if Ehud Olmert wants to do so. The international reaction has treated Fuad Saniora as a hostage to Hezbollah's terrorist wing, but this makes him look much more like an accomplice, along with Michel Aoun.

This also explains the official Lebanese statement proclaiming that the same military that could not disarm Hezbollah over the last year would now join the terrorists in the field against the Israelis. It appears that the executive branch of the Lebanese government has either lied about its inability to address the Hezbollah militia forces, or is fooling itself in squaring off with the finest native army in the Middle East. Given this, Saniora's protestations for the last ten days certainly appear to have been empty words indeed. While he pleaded that he lacked the power to disarm the terrorists, he secretly concluded an alliance with them.

Nasrallah's other points bear mentioning as well. He demands the release of Samir Qantar, a Lebanese national held since 1979 by Israel. However, that appears unlikely at best, since Israel convicted him of three murders in Nahariya, including a policeman and a four-year-old girl. Qantar's family says that the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers was "the best news in the world", because they expect Israel to trade him for the two soldiers. Olmert does not appear in any mood to give Qantar's family any good news at all, and this demand will only mean an extension of military action.

So why has Nasrallah decided on the impossible? He put himself in the position of having to deliver Qantar. In 2004, the Germans arranged a swap of 400 Palestinian and 23 Lebanese prisoners for the bodies of three Israeli soldiers killed in 2000 and a live Israeli businessman. Nasrallah did not get Qantar in that trade, though; the Israelis refused to release someone who had killed a policeman and a little girl, especially for an act of calculated murder. Nasrallah promised at the time that he would get Qantar released, and the abduction of the two IDF soldiers this month intended on providing the pressure on Israel to help him validate his promise.

Nasrallah's reputation depends on delivering Qantar, whom Hezbollah built up into a folk hero (for killing a toddler, which tells people enough about the Islamist state of mind). If Nasrallah cannot spring him, then he will have created a lot of damage and destruction for nothing, and once again will have fallen short of his grandiose declarations.

Another Nasrallah point deals with internal criticism from Lebanese politicians, notably Saad Hariri, the son of the slain Rafik Hariri whose assassination wound up pushing Syria out of Lebanon. Nasrallah boldly states that Hezbollah would "hold some accountable", which even the Daily Star interpreted as a threat of further assassinations. One would think that the Hariri family had sacrificed enough for a free and independent Lebanon, but Hezbollah has other plans. If Nasrallah actually acts on that threat, it might be enough to see the rest of Lebanon rise up against the Islamists and start a new civil war to rid the nation of the Hezbollah blight. Nasrallah must be counting on Syrian intervention, but unfortunately for Hezbollah, it looks like Israel will get their first, and in bigger numbers.

Nasrallah also rejects Arab criticism of his actions, claiming that their objections has made Nasrallah "forg[e]t them as if they do not exist". He had better remember them quickly, because if he continues on the path he has chosen, he may need to relocate in one hell of a hurry.

Be sure to read Rick's commentary on this as well.