

UNITED AGAINST NUCLEAR IRAN

Suggested Changes to U.S. Policy on Lebanon

U.S. Interests in Lebanon

- The starting point of U.S. policy on Lebanon must be what Lebanon can do to further American interests, both within its territory and regionally.
- To the extent that Lebanon cannot deliver on U.S. interests, America's orientation toward Beirut should shift accordingly.
- **At present, the primary U.S. interest in Lebanon is combatting, countering, and degrading Hezbollah**—the primary extension of America's chief regional adversary, the Islamic Republic of Iran. All U.S. action vis-à-vis Lebanon should be primarily geared toward achieving that goal.
- 'Saving' Lebanon or securing Lebanon's prosperity, in and of itself, is not an absolute U.S. interest or necessary component of American foreign policy in the region.
- The emergence of a strong, cohesive, functioning Lebanon that would partner with the U.S. would certainly be a positive development, but it is neither within the ability nor absolute interest of America to create such a Lebanon.

U.S. Aid to Lebanon

- Humanitarian motivations to provide unreciprocated aid to Lebanon, while seemingly lofty, have actually only wasted U.S. energy and financial resources and—given Lebanon's unchanging political makeup—done long-term harm to the Lebanese people.
- **U.S. assistance to Lebanon must be conditioned upon reciprocity and tangible delivery by Lebanon on American requests.**
- **The U.S. should demand Lebanon enact genuine reforms to combat political and economic corruption and waste, and apply its sovereignty to the entirety of its territory to counteract the use of Lebanese territory as either a staging ground for terror groups or a conduit of regional drug smuggling.**
- To the degree that Lebanon delivers on such requests, the U.S. should provide the same level of assistance, and only in those areas where Lebanon produces tangible results.
- The U.S. should not provide aid to Lebanon otherwise, including for Beirut implementing superficial economic or political reforms, or implementing what should be routine political processes – like electing a president or forming a government. These are matters that are primarily, and exclusively, in the Lebanese interest and do not warrant a reward in American

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or Western assistance.

U.S. Actions against Hezbollah

- Sanctions are an important tool, but alone they have proven insufficient to degrade Hezbollah as a whole or its constituent sanctioned parts.
- **Hezbollah's organizational strength remains virtually intact. However, the collapse of Lebanon's economy has limited the group's range of behaviors because it doesn't want to be seen as compounding Lebanon's economic woes with security conflagrations and thus damage its popular support. In providing assistance to Lebanon, the U.S. must be careful not to unintentionally alleviate Hezbollah's burdens.**
- This is why aid and assistance to, and partnership with, Lebanon must be preconditioned upon a deep-seated change in the country's political makeup and the application of the government's sovereignty within its territory.
- Hezbollah, rather than the source of these critical deficiencies within Lebanon's makeup, is a mere symptom and manifestation of these foundational problems.