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***Security implications for the U.S.
from **Iranian** and **Hezbollah**
activities in Latin America and the
Caribbean***

Overall Briefing: UNCLASSIFIED



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Hezbollah Latin America Roots in Lebanese Diaspora

- Politically and economically **well-established** minority in region
 - **7 - 14 million** persons
 - Brazil (5M) incl. Sao Paulo
 - Argentina (1M-3M)
 - Chile, Colombia (Maicao), Ecuador (Guayaquil), Paraguay (Cd del Este), Panama
 - Many LATAM Presidents & other leaders:
 - Luis Abinader, Mario Abdo, Michel Temer, Abdala Bucaram
 - Also: Carlos Slim, Shakira, etc.
- **Import-Export** and other commerce → **Money laundering** opportunities
- Only a fraction are practicing Muslims

Character of **Hezbollah** in Latin America

- Mostly a money-raising organization in Latin America
 - Licit: Remittances/Zakat
 - Illicit: Money laundering (e.g. Chekry Harb '08, Operation Mendaz '15, Cryptomining in TBA, Assad Ahmad Barakat, Sobhi Mahmoud Fayad (\$\$ in TBA); Joseph Nasrallah (Sao Paulo '19)
- **Terrorism** Antecedents in region:
 - Israel embassy BsAs ('92), AMIA ('94)
 - Muhamad Hamdar – Surco, Peru ('14)
 - First Capital Command (PCC) **arms purchases**
 - Rio Olympics - Operation Hashtag ('16)
 - Samir el Debek - **Scoping of US, Israeli, Canal targets** in Panama ('17)
 - **Targeting of** AMCITs, Israelis in Colombia ('21)
 - '23 Op. Trapiche (Brazil); Barakat presence in Iquique ('24)

Could **escalation** in Middle East change **Hezbollah** posture in Latin America?

Other Radical Islamic Groups in Latin America

- Caribbean Basin (Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago)
 - Migration from East Asia during British Commonwealth
 - Generally **tolerant** traditions
 - Adoption by some (marginalized) Afro-Caribbean Communities
 - Recruitment for **attack x JFK Airport** ('07)
 - Trinidad & Tobago:
 - **Jamaat al Muslimeen** & Parliament takeover ('90)
 - “Islamic” street gangs and some mosques with radical Imams (**Rio Claro**: Imam **Nazim Mohammed**) → **Recruitment** of 175 by ISIS to fight in Lebanon/Syria
- Other **ISIS** (fluid affiliations via Islamic communities in region)
 - **Raul Gutierrez** (Cuban in Colombia) '18
 - Brazil (**Haytham Ahmad Shukri Ahmad Al-Maghrabi** + 2 other SDGTs '21)

Iran and Latin America

- Limited commercial engagement and political presence
 - \$1.6B imports from LAC (\$1.2B from Brazil) / \$163M exports to LAC (\$139M to Brazil)
- Post-JCPOA re-engagement with Latin America?
 - Venezuela oil ('20) → Nicaragua ('22), Cuba, Bolivia ('23), BRICS+
- “Normalization of” military dimension
 - Fast boats, missiles, drones to Venezuela
 - Security cooperation with / drones to Bolivia
 - Makran port call in Rio de Janeiro with escort ship Dena
- Qods (Venezuela point of entry, e.g. Conviasa, Emtrasur, Visas)
- Islamic Centers → Madrasas
 - Running Hezbollah agents (e.g. Mosheen Rabbani)
- Other: Cyberattacks from Mexico, Zetas x Saudi ambassador in USA

More to come if Middle East conflict escalates Iran-US fighting?

Risks to the **US Homeland** in Peacetime and Wartime

- **Financing** of **terrorism** elsewhere
- Iran Collaboration on **military technologies**
 - **Missiles, drones** with CAVIM of Venezuela
- **Empowering** and **weaponizing** anti-U.S. regimes
 - Venezuelan refineries, diluents, underwater demolitions (Guyana risk?)
- **Planning / Launching** terrorist attacks against U.S. homeland
 - Issue of **migration flows** from region to US (incl. Venezuelan passports?)
 - Including US relevant supply chains in region (e.g. northern Mexico)
- **Terror attacks** against friends of US/Israel (e.g. Argentina, Paraguay)
- Support in Western Hemisphere to broader **PRC-U.S. warfight** in Indopacific
 - Terrorism, U.S. homeland attacks

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