

Hezbollah Hate with a U.S. Link

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Why are local Lebanese subsidiaries of major American corporations -- like PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble and Western Union -- lending comfort and support to terrorists by advertising on Hezbollah television?

Al Manar -- the Arabic word for beacon -- is the official television station of Lebanon's Party of God, more commonly known as Hezbollah. That Iranian-backed and -funded group has been implicated in the attacks against the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 Americans in 1982, the U.S. Embassy in Beirut that killed 12 Americans in 1984, the Israeli Embassy and Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people in 1994 and numerous other terrorist attacks, murders and kidnappings over the years.

Al Manar is Hezbollah's outreach to the world, a self-described "station of resistance." Founded in 1991 as a mom-and-pop operation that barely reached beyond Beirut's southern suburbs, Al Manar now transmits via satellite 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with the expressed goal of waging "psychological warfare against the Zionist enemy."

As Al Manar's Chairman of the Board Nayef Krayem said to me, "There is no act of resistance that can be classified as terrorism." It is no surprise then that Al Manar's programming glorifies suicide bombers, exhorts Palestinians to kill Jews and revels in the carnage of terrorist attacks on civilians. The fact that Al Manar almost always has immediate footage of terrorist outrages or Hezbollah attacks across the Israel-Lebanon border adds to the speculation that Al Manar officials are themselves party to Hezbollah's operational planning. As emerged during a recent North Carolina trial of two Hezbollah operatives, Al Manar employees conduct pre-operational surveillance of potential targets and engage in other logistical and financial support activities for terrorist acts.

Hezbollah, of course, targets America as well as Israel. Sheik Hassan Izz-Adin, in his capacity as a member of Hezbollah's political council and director of Hezbollah's media-relations unit (which directly oversees Al Manar), said to me: "America will fall just like the Romans and the British. While it now controls the world, this will change. We cannot accept American domination and American terrorist actions."

What is most shocking is not the vitriol of Al Manar's message or its high-tech facility for international broadcasting. What is most shocking is the extent of advertising it carries by local subsidiaries of major U.S. corporations. The fact that they advertise only on Al Manar's local television outlet in Lebanon, not on Al Manar's satellite station, suggests they want to keep their commercial links to terrorists away from the prying eyes of U.S.-based viewers.

For Americans, advertising on Al Manar may not only be in bad taste; it may be illegal. Hezbollah is officially named a "specially designated terrorist group" under Executive Order 13224. This designation empowers the U.S. government to impose financial sanctions against those "that support or otherwise associate" with Hezbollah.

Additionally, Executive Order 12947 and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act prohibit the provision of "financial, material or technological support" to any specially designated terrorist group.

And the U.S. code makes it illegal to "knowingly provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization." At the very least, these statutes and executive orders provide the basis for an investigation into the legality of Al Manar advertising by U.S. firms.

But even if there are technical loopholes behind which corporate lawyers can hide -- i.e., it is the subsidiary's fault, not headquarters' -- should they? After all, the millions of Americans who hold stock in these companies would be outraged to know that these all-American brands are used to help celebrate murder, terrorism, anti-Semitism and coarse hatred of American values.

Of course, maybe corporate honchos have no idea what is going on in their names in faraway Lebanon. Regardless, all commercial dealings between U.S. companies, their subsidiaries abroad and Al Manar must come to an immediate end.

In the meantime, with American lives put at stake every day by the venality of Hezbollah and its allies in the jihad against America, Pepsi and other U.S. corporations should be put on notice -- by shareholders and the Department of Justice alike -- that advertising on Al Manar is not the choice of a "new generation," or any other generation for that matter. ❖

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