



CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY

**national security
policy proceedings**

6
Fall 2011

JACK SPENCER

*After Japan
(Assessing Nuclear Energy)*

AMB. ROGER NORIEGA
Ignoring Latin America

SAMARA GREENBERG

*To the Arab Spring,
Lessons from Lebanon*

MICHAEL BRAUN

*Terror & Drugs at
the Southern Border*

NATIONAL SECURITY
POLICY PROCEEDINGS

Volume 6

Fall 2011

FRANK J. GAFFNEY, JR.
Publisher

BEN LERNER
Editor-in-Chief

DAVID REABOI
Associate Editor

© 2011 THE CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY PRESS
WASHINGTON, DC

securefreedom.org

Copyright © 2011 The Center for Security Policy

All rights reserved. *National Security Policy Proceedings* is published in the United States by the Center for Security Policy Press, a division of the Center for Security Policy.

THE CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY
1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 835-9077
Email: info@securefreedom.org

For more information, please see **securefreedom.org**

Many of the presentations included in this volume can be found in video form
at **youtube.com/securefreedom**

The views expressed herein do not necessarily
reflect the views of the Center for Security Policy.

CONTENTS

- BEN LERNER
5 *Note From The Editor*
- JACK SPENCER
7 *After Japan (Assessing Nuclear Energy)*
- AMB. ROGER NORIEGA
15 *Ignoring Latin America*
- MICHAEL BRAUN
23 *Terror & Drugs At The Southern Border*
- SAMARA GREENBERG
31 *To the Arab Spring, Lessons from Lebanon*

Note from the Editor

For the past several years, the Center for Security Policy has been privileged to host its biweekly National Security Group Lunch on Capitol Hill. The purpose of the lunch is to bring together national security practitioners from Congress, the executive branch, the think-tank community, grassroots organizations, the private sector, and elsewhere, to receive expert briefings and discuss strategies for advancing the national security model that Ronald Reagan referred to as “Peace through Strength.”

Over the years, the lunches have been addressed by Members of Congress and key members of their staff, former Assistant Secretaries of Defense and State, White House advisors, bestselling national security authors, and preeminent scholars in topics such as the ideology of jihad, North Korea, Russia, nuclear deterrence, Afghanistan, border security, Latin

America, the Patriot Act, and the International Criminal Court, among many others.

National Security Policy Proceedings represents the Center's compilation of transcripts of remarks given by featured speakers at these gatherings. In some cases, speakers have chosen to submit their remarks to Proceedings as original articles. Additionally, Proceedings includes book reviews of recently published national security-themed books, reviewed by eminent scholars in the field.

In publishing Proceedings, the Center has sought to provide the reader with authoritative yet accessible commentary on the most pressing issues of national security, foreign affairs, defense policy, and homeland security. Because the speakers and those in attendance are routinely in contact with one another and are often collaborating on analytical and educational efforts, it is our intention that Proceedings give the reader a unique window into how those in the national security policy community convey and exchange ideas with one another, among friends and colleagues.

We are pleased to present this fall 2011 issue of Proceedings, and we look forward to continuing to utilize this publication to make a significant contribution to the national security discourse.

Ben Lerner

Editor-in-Chief

After Japan (Assessing Nuclear Energy)

JACK SPENCER

I'm going to take just a brief moment to run down what's going on in Japan. But before I get into that, I want to make clear that we are very early in the process of understanding what happened there and we could find a whole new set of facts that could lead to very different conclusions than what we have today. We had the earthquake, followed by a tsunami. These reactors actually survived the earthquake. It was the tsunami that took out the power that led to all of the problems we're having now. The problem was essentially that water could not be pumped into the reactors. This caused the cores to

Jack Spencer is Research Fellow for Nuclear Energy Policy at the Heritage Foundation. Mr. Spencer gave these remarks at the CSP National Security Group Lunch on 25 March, 2011.

overheat and hydrogen pressure to build inside the vessels. The reactor operators had to release this pressure from the reactor vessels, but unfortunately, they were unable to release this pressure into the atmosphere. [*Author's note: it has since been reported that the inability to release this hydrogen pressure into the atmosphere was the result of defective valves, which rerouted the hydrogen into the reactor buildings.*] This buildup then led to the explosions that led to other problems we're now witnessing. Everything we're seeing now is a function of not being able to feed that water through the reactor in an efficient sort of way.

One of the unexpected problems that occurred was the loss of water coolant in the spent fuel cooling pools. The explosions that occurred seem to have caused leaking in the pools, which led to the water falling, thus exposing the spent fuel rods. Once exposed, the rods started to break down, releasing additional radioactivity and radiation into the site, making it that much more difficult of a situation to address. Throughout the process, we've heard some information about breaches of containment, which is a big deal. It's never happened before in commercial nuclear power. It is unclear whether the original reports of this were accurate. Unfortunately, now there have been additional reports. It seems that there may have been a breach in reactor number three, which is significant because they think it could be a breach of the actual vessel. And this is a MOX reactor, which contains more plutonium than normal lightwater reactors. Though technically it is unclear that the presence of additional plutonium will complicate matters, it must be noted that plutonium will be present in all used reactor fuel as a function

of the normal reactors that take place using uranium fuel, not just those using MOX—it certainly does from a public relations perspective.

But again, they don't know if there was an actual breach or not. It could have been pipes leaking; it could have been any number of things. The reactors seem to have been largely stabilized and they're really dealing with these spent fuel pools now. And now they have the possible breach of containment at reactor number three. I'd be happy to go into any details about the specifics of this—those reactors; do we have those in this country? How have we responded to these sorts of things here?

So with that said, I'll explain how this may or may not impact nuclear power in the United States. First, a couple of facts. We have 104 nuclear power reactors in the United States today. They provide about twenty percent of our electricity. They provide seventy-three percent of our emissions-free electricity. For those of us who are concerned about that, it's domestic electricity. It's secure electricity. It's affordable electricity. It's the least expensive form of electricity that we have in this country. That's not to say that future reactors will be as inexpensive as the current ones, but it is simply a statement of where things are today. It's these characteristics that really gave rise to the desire to possibly build new reactors in this country despite not having permitted any new reactors since the mid-70s. In fact, some of my recent research uncovered the fact that our current nuclear regulatory commission has never overseen a complete reactor permit from beginning to end. All of the permits that it has issued were started under the previous organization, the Atomic

Energy Commission. It has taken on new reactor permits, but it hasn't issued any yet. That's part of the problem.

People started thinking more about nuclear energy in probably the 2004/2005 timeframe, recognizing that we need more nuclear power, that more nuclear power could be advantageous to us. But the problem is that government policy has made it extraordinarily difficult to build new nuclear power plants in this country. I would argue that that has been a function of two basic things: 1) We have an onerous regulatory environment; and 2) we have a nuclear waste management policy that is dysfunctional. Now, it's interesting to note the nuclear waste policy angle of it.

If you look at the evolution of nuclear power in the United States, there's always been a lot of government support, government interaction, government intervention, and government driving of the nuclear industry. Over time, this interaction with the government has declined in two sectors of the fuel cycle. If you think of nuclear power, it's basically three sectors. You have front end, which is the fuel stuff; you have operations, which is nuclear power plant operations and electricity production; and you have spent fuel management, or the back end.

If you look at the evolution of the industry in the United States, you've had privatization of the first two sectors. We now do enrichment privately in this country. We do mining privately. We do all these things privately. Operations have been privatized, largely operating without subsidy. Not completely without subsidy, but largely without subsidy. And these two parts of the fuel cycle are those that give us this extraordinary efficiency that we see in our 104 nuclear power

plants, this extraordinary low cost that we see in the plants. The one place where this isn't the case is in nuclear waste management -- that's what the government continues to control and that, I would argue, is one of the key components to fix in order to have a successful future for nuclear power.

This is true for two basic reasons. The nuclear power operators are largely disconnected from what happens to the waste, because the government's in control of it. I would propose to you that one of the keys to having an economically successful, sustainable nuclear industry in this country is to reconnect nuclear power operators or plant, or waste producers to the responsibility for managing that waste. And that's important for these reasons. Once you're responsible for that waste, financially, then you become more interested in how you achieve that solution. Rather than a government solution, which hasn't worked, you put people who actually know about nuclear technology, who know how to operate nuclear power plants, who know how to deal with nuclear operations, put them in charge of it. That will drive them to come up with a solution. That will create a market incentive to come up with new ways to deal with nuclear waste and will push us towards having a sustainable solution.

This approach also has the added benefit of driving technology on the front end of the fuel cycle. Because if you're responsible for the nuclear waste, then you're going to be concerned about what kind of characteristics those waste streams have. What defines that? It's the way your fuel is engineered, the way the reactor technology is used. So if you're responsible for that waste, then you're going to get out into the marketplace and look for who can provide you nuclear power

that gives you a waste stream that's easier to manage. This, then, begins to drive technological evolution on the reactor side, and on the fuel side.

I bring this up because this is really where a lot of the debate's going right now. Should we build thorium reactors? Should we build small-modular reactors? Should we build high-temperature gas-cooled reactors? Should we build liquid metal fast reactors? These are all the sorts of things that people are talking about. What our proposal would do is take those sorts of decisions out of the Department of Energy, out of the government, so it's not a matter of who can gain political favor, and put it into the hands of the private sector so that those technologies that bring the most to bear in the marketplace will be those that move forward. I believe that it's this sort of marketplace, this competitive marketplace that will drive the cost of nuclear power down, allow the best technologies to move forward, and ensure that we maximize the potential of nuclear energy which in turn will get us to a secure, domestic source of energy that can continue to push America and economic growth forward without subjecting us to the whims of not-so-friendly forces abroad.

Ultimately, we're going to have a debate after Japan about whether or not nuclear energy has a role to play. And I think that that debate will be relatively short. I think events in Japan will have some impact, but I don't think it's going to be a Three Mile Island type situation. I think that there's broad recognition that we have a fifty-year history of safety with nuclear power. What's happening in Japan doesn't erase the fifty-years of safe operations we have in this country.

Once we have that debate, then we're going to get into the next part, which is "what do we do now?" And that's sort of where we were before Fukushima. And that's why I think it's important that we talk about what we need to do not just to build the next one, two, three, or four reactors, but for years down the road. Because policy in this area tends to focus on the near term. Let's give them loan guarantees. Let's do this, that, or the other. Those policies are fine if what you want is near term action. But as with all subsidies, progress will end when the subsidy ends unless we address the underlying issues that give rise to the need for subsidies to begin with. To have a long-term nuclear renaissance, what we need is a nuclear industry that is competitive, diverse, and economically sustainable. And in order to do that, we need to make reforms on the waste management side and on the regulatory side. And I think with that, I'll leave it there.

MAN:

Jack, can you talk a little bit about the homeland security dimensions of nuclear power? How concerned should we be about the vulnerability of a nuclear plant to a terrorist attack?

JACK SPENCER:

We should be concerned, without question. But I would suggest, though, that like tsunamis and earthquakes, terrorists and terrorist threats is not something new to those who operate and regulate nuclear power plants. One of the interesting things with the tsunami and earthquake issues is that many people haven't really thought about this stuff before. And they kind of think that maybe our operators and our

regulators haven't thought about these things before. But they have. That's why our reactors are, I would argue, very safe. Regarding terrorists and terrorist threats, we did things in the wake of 9-11—the containments we're all becoming very familiar with, those are the new reactor designs. They're tested at standards to withstand airplane attacks, for example. Past ones have gone through those same sorts of tests and standards. Defense, in depth, that exists at our nuclear power plants is really second to none. I mean, they not only use guns and guards, but also technical means to secure nuclear power plants. In addition to all that, if a nuclear power plant were to somehow be compromised from inside job sort of stuff, there are still enough safety mechanisms that I believe would shut it down. It might not be a great situation, but you wouldn't have an explosion or anything of that nature. The other issue that people bring up a lot regarding this is the security of the materials. This is especially true as we get into some of the waste management issues with things like reprocessing. One of the important things to recognize: people often think that the private sector's not adequate to control these sorts of things. And maybe alone it's not. But what the US government has done a very good job of over the years is developing strong relationships with companies and contractors who oversee nuclear operations and who are highly regulated and highly professional in managing special nuclear materials like HEU, like plutonium. Plutonium's not something in commercial nuclear power, but if we get into reprocessing, it could be; plutonium could be something that could be a proliferation concern that has to be properly managed.

Ignoring Latin America

AMB. ROGER NORIEGA

During his March, 2011 trip to Latin America, President Obama managed in all of his prepared texts not to mention Venezuela or the threat that we're facing there from China and Iran. Frankly, when I was Assistant Secretary and Ambassador to the OAS during the Bush Administration, the President was preoccupied with many

Ambassador Roger Noriega is a Visiting Fellow with the American Enterprise Institute. He previously served as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Amb. Noriega gave these remarks at the CSP National Security Group Lunch on 1 April, 2011.

other things. But President Bush cared very much about these issues and he managed to construct some of the best relations that we've had in modern history with Brazil—and that was primarily because of his personal diplomacy with President Lula, a man of the left. He also established extraordinarily important alliances with Colombia and Mexico. Even on the way out the door, President Bush showed real leadership in stepping up and saying we have to help Mexico with the Merida Plan. And in return, the new president, Felipe Calderon, was open like never before to U.S. cooperation across the board to confront this common threat that we face from the narco-terrorist groups that terrorize both of our countries in different ways. Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico are the three most important relationships in Latin America for the United States, and the Obama administration has succeeded in damaging each of those relationships.

When President Calderon traveled to Washington in March 2011, he came mostly to raise concerns about the lack of real cooperation under the \$1.4 billion Merida Plan. In two years, the Obama administration has spent less than half of that total. The lack of progress has been so manifest that President Calderon used very undiplomatic language to refer to the problems that he was having with our ambassador there, who, through his contacts with the different Mexican agencies, was undermining Calderon's effort to unite them to make it one fight in Mexico. The ambassador, Carlos Pascual, had to resign. This is a nadir in the U.S.-Mexico relationship of the last fifteen years, since the passage of NAFTA.

Over the last two years, without the presidential attention that President Bush brought to the issue, U.S.-

Brazilian relations have been adrift. President Lula wandered off and undermined our efforts, for example, at the U.N. on Iran sanctions with a sort of wildcat diplomacy, making common cause with Turkey and others, to almost give Iran a reprieve from further sanctions, before Hillary Clinton had to step up and save that process.

I'm a little more optimistic about what our relationship will be with the new president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff. Brazil is an important country and we must have strong relations. But, frankly, as I noted, it requires some presidential attention. There are significant economic and political benefits to be had from a good relationship with South America's largest country and one of the most dynamic economies in the world, but we need real leadership from the president.

Finally, with Colombia, we see Hugo Chavez making an extraordinary effort to get close to the Santos government, because he senses that the White House is not paying attention and is not giving Colombia the same kind of backing that President Bush gave President Uribe. And there are practical implications for failing to approve the free trade agreement and the almost hostile relationship of the State Department toward Colombia. We lost Walid Makled, a narco-trafficker kingpin, because Colombia decided to extradite him to Venezuela. He was captured in Colombia under a warrant from the DEA because he's wanted in New York for drug trafficking. Makled has accused forty senior officials of the Venezuelan government of complicity in narco-trafficking. He has ties to the Hezbollah network in South America, which I identified in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed. But we will not get custody of him because President Santos of

Colombia has committed to sending him to Venezuela instead. Venezuela wants him on murder charges. And U.S. authorities are not going to get their hands on him, because the administration failed to act, because they were perfectly comfortable with Santos trying to warm relations up with Venezuela. And the Colombians no doubt gained points within the Obama administration for ignoring the abiding threat that Venezuela and Chavez pose to our interests.

So those are tangible results of a lack of engagement from this administration. They have deluded themselves that all they have to do is ignore Chavez and he'll behave, or not to provoke him and the problem will go away. But let me tell you what is wrong with that. Chavez has succeeded in building strategic relationships with rivals and outright enemies of the United States: Cuba, China, Russia, and Iran. For example, the Chinese are going after Venezuela big time as a source of petroleum. A few years ago, the U.S. imported about 1.7 million barrels a day of oil from Venezuela. Today, we are at about 750,000 barrels a day. The Chinese, about five years ago, were importing 40,000 barrels a day. They're now at 600,000 and the number is growing. They're building the refineries and the tankers that will carry Venezuelan oil to China and replace us completely, because that's the way Chavez wants it. He doesn't want to have any dependence on the United States for that oil. The Chinese are voracious consumers and Chavez has every intention of driving U.S. oil companies out of Venezuela.

The Iran issue in the Western Hemisphere is very troubling. An AEI colleague who focuses on Iran told me that, in his assessment, Iran's relationship with Venezuela is one of

Iran's most important, if not the most important, relationship it has in the world. Iran uses Venezuela as a platform to evade international sanctions that are meant to control its rogue nuclear program. Iran is mining uranium today in Venezuela and is trying to obtain nuclear technology. Iran is using Venezuela to project the Hezbollah network into South America. The second-ranking official in the Venezuelan embassy in Damascus, Syria, a man named Ghazi Atef Salameh Nassereddine Abu Ali, coordinates the Hezbollah network in the Western Hemisphere with Iranian support. The heads of Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad held a terror summit in Caracas right under the nose of the Obama administration in August 2010. These are people that don't leave their Middle Eastern lairs for fear of assassination. They are wanted people and they're being feted in Caracas and planning operations in our hemisphere. This is a troubling legacy of neglect and, frankly, if it weren't for the United States Congress, we wouldn't be getting anywhere in responding to these provocations. Thankfully we have leaders like Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Connie Mack, and others who are stepping up to the plate and forcing the administration to focus on this problem. Law enforcement agencies are active as well-- the DEA in particular is trying to get its arms around this issue and has put a lot of resources behind that. And we need Treasury to get into the game to take a look at Venezuela's indispensable role in support for terrorism and for Iran in the Western Hemisphere. I'll stop there and take any questions you might have.

ROGER NORIEGA, (RESPONDING TO A QUESTION):

The fact that the United States is, or was, a market for seventy percent of Venezuela's oil is a leash on Chavez. But we won't even jerk that leash, because we're afraid of how he may react. The problem is he *wants* greater independence, as evidenced by the relationships with Iran, Cuba, China, and Russia. He doesn't want to have any dependence on the U.S. market. So we have basically given Chavez a free pass because, as a State Department official said in June of last year, we hope to continue our mutually beneficial oil relationship. Well, guess what? *Chavez doesn't want to continue it.* We need to stop pulling our punches. I'm not arguing for war or confrontation or anything like that. But at least recognize and understand what Chavez is up to and organize some sort of policy response internationally to the wrongdoings going on in the region. The real predicament for a post-Chavez government in Venezuela is that it will owe forty billion dollars to the Chinese in oil prices that are below market rate. That is what Chavez conceded to the Chinese. He is so desperate for cash that he committed to them for twenty years, providing oil at a rock bottom rate. The Chinese basically shook him down. And in all likelihood there will be a major confrontation with the U.S. as Chavez pursues his objective to force American oil companies out of Venezuela. He will have to essentially expropriate U.S. property, to an extent we haven't seen in fifty years in this hemisphere.

MAN:

There was a report yesterday about a possible bill circulating through Congress designating the drug cartels in

Mexico as foreign terrorist organizations. Do you think that's a good idea?

ROGER NORIEGA:

To the extent that it allows U.S. law enforcement the ability to use more of its tools to freeze assets, to arrest people, to restrict their movements, yes, it would be a positive development. And one final comment: The Justice Department said last year that the largest organized crime threat in the United States is Mexican drug trafficking organizations. So President Calderon is literally fighting the other end of the same monster that—through a million gang members in the United States that sell cocaine and other drugs on our streets—threatens our own citizens. So it's the United States' fight too and we need to do everything we can to prevail over this menace. It's more than designating them—we need to have the intelligence resources, the law enforcement resources, and the political will to do something about the problem. Thank you.

Terror & Drugs At The Southern Border

M I C H A E L B R A U N

There are roughly forty-five or forty-seven foreign terrorist organizations formally designated by our government. Of those, more than half are now involved in one or more aspects of the global drug trade in an effort to help keep their movements alive.

By the way, that's an ultra-conservative number-- it's far greater than just beyond half. I believe it's somewhere much closer to seventy to eighty percent of those groups.

So why are they doing this? Quite frankly, they're

Michael Braun served as Assistant Administrator and Chief of Operations with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Mr. Braun gave these remarks at the CSP National Security Group Lunch on 11 March, 2011.

becoming involved in drug trafficking, or some aspect of the global drug trade, or other transnational organized criminal activity, because we have been extraordinarily successful at prosecuting the global war on terrorism. State sponsorship for terrorism remains on the decline post 9-11, which causes these groups to look to other ways or other means to fund their operations. We have also done yeoman's work, with our coalition partners, at identifying very powerful private donors and significantly disrupting those funding streams from around the globe.

The second reason, and biggest reason, why more and more of these groups are turning to drug trafficking, involves the tremendous profit that can be made in the global drug trade. Don't use my numbers. Look at the United Nations, UNODC's numbers, with respect to the four most significant illicit global markets in which terrorist organizations are involving themselves. Let's look at their numbers. The global drug trade generates about 322 to 325 billion dollars a year in profit for the trade in general. Alien or human trafficking comes in at second, at about 32 billion; arms trafficking at about ten billion; and the black diamond trade generates about a billion. Those are the four biggest illicit markets that these groups are turning to. Is it any wonder why more and more of them are turning to drug trafficking?

It's important to understand, also, that the cost of a terrorist attack is minimal. What costs a great deal of money is the care and nurturing of the terrorist organization. You've got to recruit. It's not cheap, because you want to make sure you're recruiting the right people. You've got to indoctrinate once you believe you've successfully recruited. That costs a lot of

money. You're working in a clandestine environment. You have to acquire and operate safe houses. You have to pay for counterfeit passports and other documents, which cost a lot of money. You have to arm your organization. That all costs tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars a year, to operate a terrorist organization. So let's now drop down from the thirty thousand foot level to the treetops.

Let's talk about Hezbollah for a minute. And I'll use them as the quintessential example, I believe, of a Middle Eastern terrorist organization that has made a monumental transition, just like the FARQ did eighteen years ago. When the Soviet Union came apart at the seams, eighteen, nineteen years ago, the illicit funding stream into Cuba, downward into terrorist organizations like the FARQ, Sinderio Luminoso and others operating in Latin America, dried up almost overnight. It took the executive secretariat of the FARQ about five minutes to convene a meeting and make the corporate decision that they were going to have to involve themselves in the global drug trade, in the cocaine trade, if they were going to keep their movement alive. In eighteen short years, this forty-seven-year-old organization went from an organization that was driven purely by ideology to one that is driven absolutely by greed. In eighteen short years, they have evolved into the world's single largest manufacturer and distributor of cocaine in the world. But wait a minute: they're a designated terrorist organization. They have evolved into what I term a "hybrid" terrorist organization—one part designated terrorist organization and one part global drug trafficking cartel.

Let's look at the Hezbollah. They're headed down the exact same path. They are entrenched all over Latin America

now. They are exploiting ungoverned space in the tri-border area of Latin America. They are leveraging it to their advantage. They're also exploiting West Africa in a large way and I'll talk about that more in just a minute. They're moving tons of cocaine, typically out of the Andean region into Venezuela-- thank you Hugo Chavez—and from there into West Africa, then on to emerging markets for cocaine all over Europe, into Russia, and some other locations. They're making hundreds of millions of dollars a year behind this activity. If you look at the recent Department of Treasury FINCEN sanctions against the Lebanese Canadian Bank—I think February the 10th—FINCEN cited the strong ties of the bank to a Lebanese cocaine trafficking organization that was moving over two hundred million dollars a month through that bank. And there are unequivocal ties to corporate Hezbollah, revealed by this DEA-led investigation that led to those Department of Treasury sanctions. There's evidence, folks. Not just intelligence. There's evidence that will pass the judicial test. Because if it wasn't there, those sanctions would have never been invoked on 10 February.

The Hezbollah are absolute masters at identifying existing smuggling infrastructures around the globe. I don't care if it's in the Sahel area of northern Africa, or in the tri-border area of Latin America, or on our southwest border. They're masters at identifying these existing infrastructures, smuggling infrastructures, and leveraging them so they can move virtually anything they want, whether drugs, weapons of mass destruction, operatives or whatever.

They are on our southwest border. In 2003, a high-level Hezbollah operative used an existing drug and alien

smuggling system, or if you will, organization in Tijuana to move into the United States, obviously illegally. And he made his way all the way into the city of Detroit before the FBI was able to get their hands on him. As recently as just about four or five months ago, the Mexican Federal Police busted up a Hezbollah recruiting cell on our southwest border. What are they doing there? Stop and think about it. Mexican drug trafficking organizations absolutely dominate the drug trade in our country today. The National Drug Intelligence Center, led by the Department of Justice, tells us that over two hundred and thirty cities are now plagued and basically dominated by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Does anyone in this room think for one minute that Hezbollah doesn't recognize that for everything that it's worth, and is not working hard to leverage what that process and system and cartels can do for them? They absolutely are.

Now, let me close by talking about one other aspect of the growing drugs and terror nexus that causes me to lose sleep to this day. I talked about the growing demand for cocaine in Europe. Massive amounts of cocaine are now flowing from the Andean region into West Africa, and into Europe through the soft underbelly of Spain.

We have known for a long, long time that in places like Guinea Bissau in West Africa-- the classic example of ungoverned space-- we've known that Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaeda, AQIM, have been there and working that area for a long time. It's of strategic importance to them. But now, we have the most sophisticated organized crime groups the world has ever known, Colombian and Mexican drug trafficking cartels, occupying the same exact space at the same exact time

as those Middle Eastern terrorist organizations. Why? Because they were sent there to set up the transshipment infrastructure that was necessary to move those tons of cocaine into Europe via West Africa.

I've been to Guinea Bissau. It is a nasty place. There's not a lot to do there. As we speak, right now, terrorist operatives and operatives from Colombian and Mexican drug trafficking cartels are staying in the same shady hotels; they're sharing the same prostitutes in the same sweaty brothels and they're drinking at the same nasty bars, because there's no place else to go. What are they doing? I'm not an academic -- this is coming from somebody that fought this for thirty-five years as a practitioner in nasty places all around the world. I'll tell you what they're doing. They're talking business; they're sharing lessons learned. That's what they're doing. That's what organized crime does. I as a terrorist turn to a Colombian trafficker and say: "We're having a great deal of difficulty moving our tens of millions of dollars in cash out of Latin America. Can you help me?" "Oh, yeah, we can absolutely help you." "We're having some trouble getting our hands on AK-47s and ammunition. Can you help us?" "Of course we can."

Let's drill down and talk about the real underlying strategic threat posed by all of this. I don't care if you're a member of the Norte Valle cartel or the Sinaloa cartel or you're Osama bin Laden. You send your toughest young sergeants and lieutenants to places like Guinea Bissau to move your strategy, your ideas, your criminal enterprise forward. That's what you do. And those tough young sergeants and lieutenants, who are now rubbing shoulders together, are building very close, interpersonal relationships. It's one thing

to say something we've known for a long time: that corporate Hezbollah has the ability to pick up the phone and call corporate Hamas and ask for a favor. It's entirely something different when we think that in the not too distant future, or possibly now, a key leader of a Middle Eastern terrorist organization may have the ability to pick up the telephone and call a close friend who is a member of the Sinaloa cartel and ask for help. And if you think it's not going to happen, understand that those tough young Turks, those sergeants and lieutenants, will naturally ascend upward through the ranks of their organizations in the years to come. The close personal relationships they're developing now will undoubtedly develop into important inter-organizational relationships in the future. We need to be doing everything that we possibly can to break up these groups coming together in ungoverned space like Guinea Bissau, other places in West and North Africa, and to the south of our homeland in the Tri-Border area of Latin America, *but we are not*. Thank you very much

To the Arab Spring, Lessons from Lebanon

SAMARA GREENBERG

Review of *The Road to Fatima Gate: The Beirut Spring, the Rise of Hezbollah, and the Iranian War Against Israel*

by Michael J. Totten (2011 Encounter Books)

In the battle between Israel, the Arab states, and Iran, Lebanon's Fatima Gate has become the front-line. The gate, once a border crossing between Lebanon and Israel, is today padlocked; it has been closed since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 after years of holding the area as a buffer zone against attacks from Hezbollah militants. Fatima Gate has

Samara Greenberg is a senior research associate at the Jewish Policy Center and the deputy editor of *inFOCUS Quarterly*.

since become a tourist site, attracting Hezbollah supporters who throw stones at Israeli troops on the other side. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was rumored to be planning a detour to the gate during last year's visit to Lebanon to throw a symbolic stone at Israel himself. And while he didn't make it all the way to the gate, his influence there is felt all the same.

So journalist and Middle East expert Michael Totten describes the situation in Lebanon as he recounts his time there in his first stab at book writing. In *The Road to Fatima Gate*, Totten excels at telling his story of revolution and optimism, using words that paint such a vivid picture they take the reader inside Beirut in 2005 and 2006 during what could arguably be called the Arab World's first 'spring.'

The starting point for Totten's account is the event that sparked the Beirut Spring, or what some call the Cedar Revolution—the assassination of then Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, father of the recently ousted Prime Minister Saad Hariri, on February 14, 2005. For good reason, many Lebanese believe the car bomb that took out the elder Hariri was planned by Syria, as Hariri advocated for the end of Syrian domination over Lebanon, in place since the former's 1976 invasion. His assassination, however, kicked-off events—including Lebanon's largest rally in history—that ousted Syria after 29 years of occupation.

Similar to today's 'Arab Spring,' the Lebanese air was full of excitement. "Beirut at that time looked and felt like the beginning of a new Middle East," Totten writes. But while Damascus was officially gone, Lebanon was not free. "Ousting the Baathists...produced the same result in Lebanon that it

did in Iraq,” Totten explains, “a power vacuum that would soon be filled by the Islamic Republic regime in Iran,” this time via Hezbollah.

Hezbollah, a Shia militia group founded in 1982 with the goal of ousting Israel from Lebanon, “was genuinely popular” while Israeli forces remained in the country’s south. But under the guise of being a Zionist “resistance” group, Hezbollah, with the help of Iran, increased its arsenal so much so that by the time of the Beirut Spring in 2005—five years after Israel’s departure—the militia had officially created a true state-within-a-state situation in South Lebanon, marking Iran’s front line with Israel.

But having a front line wouldn’t be enough. “Eventually, the state would have to absorb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah would devour the state,” Totten writes. Indeed, although Hariri’s anti-Syrian March 14 Coalition won big in the fair parliamentary elections following Syria’s withdrawal, Hezbollah used its political influence backed by brute force to become a powerful bloc in Lebanon’s governing cabinet. Then in January 2011, when the uprisings in the Arab World were just beginning, Lebanon’s official end came when 11 pro-Hezbollah ministers pulled out of the Parliament, forcing its collapse. With Hezbollah’s choice for prime minister, the pro-Syrian Najib Mikati, winning the nomination soon thereafter, and Hezbollah itself coming to dominate the new Lebanese Cabinet, six years after Lebanon’s ‘spring,’ Hezbollah has full control of the state.

Totten’s story is ominous. At its core, *The Road to Fatima Gate* is a warning to the U.S. and democracy-seeking participants of the current Arab uprisings of what can happen

when a political vacuum is created in today's Middle East: Iran, in its quest for regional domination, will try to fill that void.

Of course, this doesn't mean Tehran will. In a traditionally strong state such as Egypt, it is unlikely that the military would let its power slip into Iranian hands. Indeed, Iran's wrath will more likely be felt in weak states such as Yemen, where President Ali Abdullah Saleh is losing his grip. But even so, Iran under President Ahmadinejad is cunning and never misses an opportunity. Given the post-Mubarak foreign policy direction Egypt is forging, Iran will likely have its chance to establish a direct presence in the once-unfriendly country as well as in Gaza, whose borders with Egypt were recently opened to pedestrian traffic. While there, Iran will likely partner with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to advance its goals, perhaps using the popular Islamist group to undermine Cairo.

What does this mean for the U.S.? Make alliances with likeminded Middle Eastern states and peoples, and stand behind them. "Some anti-Americans in March 14 told me the reason they didn't trust America wasn't because they hated the U.S. but because Americans were unreliable allies," Totten writes. While unfortunate, the Lebanese are not wrong. Take recent events in the Middle East: The White House called for longtime ally Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to immediately begin transitioning from power less than one week after Egypt's protests began, but has been exceptionally timid toward longtime enemies such as Syria's Bashar al-Assad.

It also means that in the Middle East, Iran's support of terrorist proxies is unraveling governments in the region, one-by-one. The solution? According to Totten, an internal overthrow of the Iranian regime for a more liberal, democratic one. As he notes, "According to the *Financial Times*, a majority of citizens in eighteen Arab countries thought Iran was more dangerous than Israel." With statistics like that, it's time Washington forgets engagement and takes action by supporting Iranian dissidents who stand up to the Mullahs.

By intertwining personal experiences with history, Totten's book is a must read for anyone interested in understanding Lebanese politics and Iranian methods of domination in the changing Middle East. It is also a warning for the U.S. and democratic advocates of the 'Arab Spring.' As with Lebanon, the environment in which the 'spring' has sprung is ripe for subversive suspects whose taking root would not only harm the United States' interests in the region, but set back the Arab populations' struggle for greater freedoms as well. It happened in Lebanon, and it could happen again.

Today, the Fatima Gate is a daily reminder of what once was—relatively peaceful relations between the Israeli and Lebanese people, and what is—Iran's takeover of Lebanon via Hezbollah. It represents the lost chance of securing a democracy for the Lebanese, and with it a stable life. Most of all, however, it is a forewarning of what the Arab World's uprisings may inadvertently produce.