Report: Obama protected Hezbollah to appease Iran

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The Obama administration shielded one of the world’s most notorious Islamic terror groups from prosecution, derailing a years-long investigation of the group in an effort to curry favor with Tehran in an effort to secure a nuclear deal with the rogue regime, a new investigative report claims.

In 2008, the Drug Enforcement Administration launched what was dubbed “Project Cassandra”, a secret criminal investigation into the Lebanon-based Shi’ite terror group Hezbollah.

According to an investigative report published by Politico Monday, a team of DEA agents aided by dozens of US and foreign security and law enforcement agencies spent eight years mapping out Hezbollah’s intricate web of organized crime operations and other money-making schemes around the globe aimed at funding the terror group’s operations in the Middle East.

Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy in Lebanon, conducted hundreds of terror attacks against Israeli forces during the 1980s and 1990s, and was responsible for the 1983 bombing of a US Marine Corps barracks in Beirut which left 305 people dead, including 241 American servicemen.

In 2006, Hezbollah carried out an unprovoked attack on Israeli forces inside Israeli territory, killing three, and taking two captive. The attack sparked a month-long war between Israel and the Shi’ite terror group, which pounded northern Israel with missiles, rockets, and mortar fire.

But the Lebanese terror group has also demonstrated a global reach, aiding the perpetrators of the [1992 suicide bombing](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/193874) of the Israeli embassy in Argentina which killed 29, and being widely suspected of carrying out the [1994 bombing](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/161706) of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires, killing 85.

Hezbollah also funneled weapons to Muslim militias in the Balkans during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and killed six people, including five Israelis, in [a bombing attack in Bulgaria in 2012](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/215038).

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Hezbollah has also operated inside Syria to strengthen the Assad regime, an ally of Iran.

To fund its extensive operations both in the Middle East and around the world, Hezbollah established an organized crime empire which brought the group some $1 billion annual from gun running, drug dealing, and money laundering.

DEA officials monitored Hezbollah involvement in the cocaine trade, including shipments from South America to Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. Some of the money was laundered by purchasing used cars in the US in bulk, then selling them in West Africa.

Yet when the DEA pushed for the prosecution of suspects tied to Hezbollah, the Obama Justice Department repeatedly rebuffed its requests.

“This was a policy decision, it was a systematic decision,” said David Asher, an analyst involved in Project Cassandra.

“They serially ripped apart this entire effort that was very well supported and resourced, and it was done from the top down.”

At the same time, the Obama administration was pursuing a rapprochement with Hezbollah’s patron, Iran, with the goal of reaching a comprehensive deal regarding the rogue regime’s nuclear program.

In 2010, then-CIA Director John Brennan signaled the Obama administration’s willingness to compromise with Iran’s Lebanese ally, stating publicly that the administration was interested in working with “moderate elements” in Hezbollah.

“Hezbollah is a very interesting organization,” Brennan said, saying that it had evolved from being “purely a terrorist organization” into a political party.

In pursuing a deal with Iran, the Justice Department under President Obama refused to prosecute a Hezbollah operative popularly known as “Ghost”, Politico reported, and hampered efforts by Project Cassandra against the Hezbollah official suspected of being one of the world’s biggest cocaine traffickers and a supplier of chemical weapons to the Assad regime in Syria.

Former White House spokesman Kevin Lewis denied the allegations by officials from Project Cassandra.

“There has been a consistent pattern of actions taken against Hezbollah, both through tough sanctions and law enforcement actions before and after the Iran deal.”

But former Treasury official Katherine Bauer told the House Committee on Foreign Affairs this February that the Obama administration had “tamped down” on investigations against Hezbollah officials in an effort to placate Iran.

“Hezbollah is using so-called legitimate businesses to fund, equip, and organize [its] subversive activities. Under the Obama administration, however, these investigations were tamped down for fear of rocking the boat with Iran and jeopardizing the nuclear deal.”