

25 Years Since the AMIA Bombing: Latin America's Deadliest Attack and the Implications for Today's Counterterrorism Challenges

Welcome Remarks provided by Benjamin Gedan

Opening Remarks provided by Ambassador Fernando Oris de Roa

Keynote Remarks provided by Ambassador Nathan Sales

A Conversation with Miguel Bronfman, Daniel L. Glaser, and Emanuele Ottolenghi.

Moderated by Toby Dershowitz.

GEDAN: Welcome to the Wilson Center. My name is Benjamin Gedan. I'm a senior advisor to our Latin American program and I'm the director of our Argentina Project. I'm so pleased to have with us today, our president, Jane Harman, former Congresswoman, as well as Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, members of the diplomatic core, representatives from the Departments of Treasury, Defense, State, Congressional staffers and other distinguished guests.

We'd also like to thank all those who are joining us online, and thank all of you for your interest. Before we begin, I want to thank our cosponsors at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The images we just saw of the AMIA Bombing from July of 1994 resemble the aftermath of an earthquake, with rescuers digging desperately through rubble to find survivors. But the destruction of this Jewish community center in Buenos Aires was not caused by a natural disaster, but rather a suicide bomber who had rammed a van filled with explosives into the building, murdering 85 people, including a five year old, and injuring 300 others.

In 2004, Argentina appointed special prosecutors, including Alberto Nisman, to determine who had ordered and arranged this massacre. Two years later, they delivered their verdict. The highest echelon Iranian government officials were directly responsible for the AMIA attack, they wrote. And instructed the terrorist organization, Hezbollah to carry out the operation.

In 2007, Interpol issued international arrest warrants, known as red notices, for the bombing suspects, in addition to warrants issued by judges in Argentina. Yet 25 years since the bombing, not one suspect has been arrested or extradited to Argentina to stand trial. Worse still, several of the suspects retain positions of influence in Iran, and they travel freely. Two of the alleged bombers are currently senior advisors to Iran's supreme leader. Another, who served as defense minister in Iran until 2013, are now president of Iran's Supreme National Defense University.

Despite these international and Argentine arrest warrants, the suspects have visited at least 20 countries since the bombing, including China, Russia, Turkey, and even Argentina's neighbor, Bolivia. For two decades, annual vigils, including in Argentina and throughout the United States, have kept alive memories of this brutal act of terrorism. The US Congress, for its part, has regularly passed resolutions drawing attention to this tragedy.

But despite these and other expressions of solidarity with survivors and victims' relatives, the international community has largely failed to hold accountable the masterminds of the state sponsored attack against the AMIA. Argentina has done its part. For many, though not all of these past 25 years, the country, under different political parties and leaders, has courageously stood up to Iran year after year, and pleaded for the international community to do the same. Just this month, Argentina's foreign ministry recognized the 25th anniversary of the AMIA bombing by calling the case a cause embraced by the whole Argentine people who must spare no efforts to shed light on the bombing and to prosecute those responsible.

To do our part to answer Argentina's pleading for international assistance and solidarity, we've decided to host today's discussion, to invite the Argentine ambassador, Fernando Oris de Roa, the state department's senior counter terrorism coordinator ambassador, Nathan Sales, and a group of esteemed panelists. I hope you find the conversation valuable.

I'd now like to invite Ambassador Oris de Roa, a good friend of the Wilson Center of the United States, to provide some remarks, followed by our keynote speaker, Ambassador Sales, who served as Secretary of State Pompeo's senior advisor on counter terrorism issues, and who has worked closely with the Argentine government and other Latin American government on this critical counter terrorism challenge. Many thanks again for your presence and support.

ORIS DE ROA: Good afternoon and thank you, Benjamin.

Pasteur – Pasteur entre Tucumán y Viamonte Pasteur between Tucumán and Viamonte, a neighborhood so familiar to us. Watching this video, this is the kind of thing that we watch via CNN or something, these events happening somewhere else in the world, never ever imagining that this could happen in Buenos Aires, and in the middle of Buenos Aires, where my mother and I would go there frequently. And all these people that you have heard about where, still are, fortunately, our neighbors. And one of them just said, “Estaba allí y me salvé.” I was there and I was saved.

That may be the case for him. It's not the case for all of us. Until we actually find justice, we will not be fully saved. But thank you, Benjamin and the Wilson Center, thank you FDD for inviting me, Argentina, to this very important meeting. One of the several events that we will participate in celebrating this unbelievable, unacceptable anniversary.

As you know, on June 24th, the Embassy of Argentina organized commemorative event at the Hill. We thought it would have to be there because it was the right setting for us to thank all branches of the United States Congress, Department of State, The White House, the Jewish civil organizations, and also many friends from other embassies, like Israel that is also here today. And as I said Monday, at that Monday, Argentina has chosen from its very beginning to be both the land and people open and receptive. That specifically includes welcoming those who were persecuted in their places of origin.

In the framework of freedom and equality of opportunities, different communities made their contribution to the forming and progress of the Argentine society. Among them, of course, we can count with the Jewish immigration, which made a substantial part in the creation of a

plural society based on peaceful and tolerant coexistence, with a great commitment to Democratic values.

Next July 18th will mark as, we all know, the 25th anniversary of the most brutal attack ever suffered in Argentina's history. The AMIA bombing, 25 years looking for justice, keeping alive the memory of those who lost their lives, those that didn't get a chance to defend themselves.

The pain will never cease. The wounds cannot be completely healed. But impunity makes it a lot worse. It is important for the history of Argentina and the entire region, for the history of the Jewish community, that justice has to prevail, that is the respect that we owe to the memory of the victims. It is what makes us stronger to fight against terrorism.

The government of Argentina is fully committed to doing justice for the 85 families and hundreds of wounded of this terrorist attack at AMIA and it will not cease in its objective, and the objective is that all people involved in this attack appear before Argentine courts, be interrogated, and eventually convicted. The Argentine Republic continues to request the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate with the Argentine judicial authorities. At the same time, we ask the countries that are friends of Argentina to accompany us in this claim, avoid receiving or sheltering and diplomatic immunity any of the accused for whom international arrest warrants have been made, and red notices have been circulated by Interpol.

All the countries in the world are responsible for fighting to eradicate terrorism. Every country in the world is responsible for eradicating antisemitism. We must end terror without nuances, without contemplation, without speculation, whether it would be political or economic. We should do it without second thoughts. We cannot live prisoners of terror or to succumb to the confusion. Terrorism is our main enemy. The most cruel, the most coward, the most ruthless. The one that has the largest inhuman dimension. The attack on AMIA made us feel terror and we were not used to terror.

Hatred and destruction became unfortunately something that now we had to be aware of. All Argentines were victims of AMIA. Although the terrorists targeted one of the most important institutions of the Jewish community, an institution that served the community, it was also a blow against the democracy and freedom. Terrorism does not discriminate race or religion. Its objective is to destroy everything that opposes its totalitarian beliefs.

This 25th anniversary gives us the opportunity to say to the world that those who want to spread terror will never succeed because we will not allow the attack to fade into oblivion. Argentina remembers the same way we repudiate any manifestation that denies the Shoah anywhere in the world.

As President Macri said more than once, from the very beginning of this first speech in the opening session of Congress, "The government will not forget the victims of terrorism."

There's no better tribute to the victims of AMIA attack than we search for justice and keep it in our permanent memory. A daily, not an annual, but a daily effort is necessary. I am

glad, finally, to have Ambassador Sales follow my presentation. My government will host next week a second Western hemisphere counter terrorism conference, an opportunity we believe to move forward in this combating of hatred and difference. So thank you very much.

SALES: Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to begin by saying thank you to the Wilson Center and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies for hosting this important event and inviting me to speak I honor of this sad and solemn occasion.

I'm pleased that we're joined by my good friends, the Ambassador of Argentina, Fernando Oris de Roa, as well as Benji Krasna, the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Israeli Embassy here in Washington. Gentlemen, thank you for honoring us with your presence here today.

Thank you as well, to Miguel Bronfman, AMIA's chief lawyer, who has traveled here to join us on this occasion.

Next Thursday, July 18th, will mark 25 years since the Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina, or AMIA, was bombed in Buenos Aires. I'm here today to speak about the victims, to honor their memory. I'm also here to speak about the perpetrators and to tell you what we're doing to prevent future atrocities like this one.

This bombing was carried out by the Lebanese terrorist group, Hezbollah, with the full support and direction of Iran. In attacking AMIA, these terrorists targeted not just Argentina, but all of us who call the Western Hemisphere home. We will never forget this attack. And every day, we work to ensure that no future attacks like this happen again. That is why, as you've heard, Argentina, in cooperation with the United States, will host a ministerial meeting next week in Buenos Aires, to bolster our collective efforts to protect this hemisphere from the scourge of terrorism.

The victims of this horrific attack, 85 people were killed and hundreds more were injured, were both native born Argentines and immigrants. They were Catholic and Jewish, religious and secular. They were intellectuals and workers, doctors and janitors, lawyers and students. They had names. They had families. They had children. They had friends. They had plans for the future, which for them never came. Let us honor the memories of those who were tragically lost. The youngest AMIA victim, Sebastian Barreiro, was five. He died holding his mother's hand as they walked in front of the building. The oldest victim, Faiwel Pablo Dyjament, was 73 and a tailor.

Let us remember Martin Figuero. He was a contractor. He planned to use the money he made working on the AMIA building to take his family on vacation. He left behind a wife and six children.

21 year old Paula Czysewski was a law student. She was visiting AMIA for the first time to meet up with her mother.

56 year old Jacobo Chemanuel was buried in the rubble for 36 hours, alongside Martin Cano. Jacobo encouraged Martin to hold on, despite the incredible pain he felt. Martin survived. Jacobo did not.

The body of 19 year old, Augusto Daniel Jesus, was not identified until 2016, the last victim to be named. His mother, Maria Lourdes Jesus, also died in the blast.

Let us pause for a moment of silence as we remember these and all the victims of this cowardly attack.

The AMIA bombing wasn't Hezbollah's first attack on Argentina. In 1992, Hezbollah bombed the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 people and wounding 242 more. Besides the embassy, a Catholic church, a school, and a home for the elderly were destroyed. Most of the victims were Argentine citizens, and many of them were children. Among the dead was Father Juan Carlos Brumana, who died in the rubble of his church.

As Argentina's president, Mauricio Macri, emphasized two years ago on the 25th anniversary of the embassy bombing, "It is necessary to understand that it was not an attack on the embassy or on Jews, but against Argentina." Indeed, it was.

Now the evidence in both cases points clearly at Hezbollah, but why would a Lebanon based terror group, which purports to be a defender of Lebanon, attack targets in South America, in Argentina. Argentina hadn't taken any actions against Hezbollah. Argentina hadn't taken any actions that harmed Lebanon. The reason, of course, is that the group's patron, Iran, wanted to attack Argentina, and that was all that was needed.

Secretary Pompeo recently emphasized that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terror. That was true in 1994 and it's still true now. The leaders in Tehran endorse the AMIA attack. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, or IRGC, provided the funding and the logistical supports, and Hezbollah, long the IRGC's most deadly and capably proxy, carried out the operation.

We adjoin President Macri and the Argentine government in seeking justice for the victims of the AMIA attack and their families. Iran has a responsibility to repudiate terrorism and cooperate fully with Argentine authorities in this investigation. 25 years later, still waiting. There are still six international arrest warrants, Interpol red notices that are outstanding. These are based on criminal charges filed in Argentina and they concern the arrest of the Iranians and Hezbollah members who are suspected of participating in the AMIA attack. These include several senior Iranian officials, Ahmad Vahidi, the former IRGC Kutz Force Commander and Defense Minister. Mohsen Rezai, the former commander of the IRGC. And Ali Fallahian, Iran's former Minister of Intelligence.

There are also arrest warrants outstanding for Mohsen Rabbani and Ahmad Asghari, who served at Iran's embassy in Buenos Aires, as well as for Hezbollah operative, Samuel Solomon Alraeda.

It's also appropriate today to reflect on prosecutor, Alberto Nisman's, heroic efforts to investigate the AMIA bombing. In 2004, Nisman took over an investigation that had been plagued by mismanagement and corruption. He pursued the case doggedly and tenaciously over the next 11 years in an effort to get to the bottom of this deadly attack. Nisman faced obstacles at every turn. He received death threats against himself as well as his children. He was undaunted in his pursuit of the truth, up to the day he was murdered in 2015. We continue to stress the importance of resolving the circumstances of his tragic death and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the AMIA bombing that Nisman so assiduously investigated.

It's been a quarter of a century since the AMIA bombing, yet the threats from Iran, the IRGC, and Hezbollah remain undiminished. The regime in Tehran continues to provide hundreds of millions of dollars every year to terrorists around the world. It has provided Hezbollah alone some 700 million a year. It does this despite the ongoing economic turmoil that's impoverishing many of its people. Tehran's priorities are clear. It doesn't seek to boost economic growth at home or to reduce Iran's growing unemployment. What the regime prioritizes is buying guns and bombs to export terror.

We've talked about Hezbollah plots in Argentina in the 1990s, but this is far from a historical matter because Hezbollah continues to have our hemisphere squarely in its sites today. One of Hezbollah's highest placed collaborators in the region has been Tareck El Aissami, former vice president under the Venezuelan dictator, Nicholas Maduro. When he was head of Venezuela's passport agency, he was suspected of providing Venezuelan passports to Hezbollah operatives. Hezbollah's propaganda machine now touts him as a possible successor to Maduro, calling him a strong man in the shadows, a close friend of the Lebanese resistance, and a Syrian regime of Bashar Al Assad.

Apparently they meant that as a compliment. Well, this administration doesn't see it that way. In 2017, the Treasury Department listed El Aissami as a specially designated narcotics trafficker under the Kingpin Act.

Another example is Mohammad Hamdar, an alleged Hezbollah member who was arrested in 2014 and is currently on trial in Peru on terrorism charges. Assad Ahmad Barakat, a key Hezbollah financier, is now sitting in jail in Brazil, awaiting extradition to Paraguay on several criminal charges. Then there's Nader Farhat, a Hezbollah supporter who was recently extradited from Paraguay to the United States to face federal money laundering charges in Florida.

More broadly, the tri border area of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil continues to be a node of Hezbollah activity. For decades, Hezbollah has taken advantage of the loosely regulated region to raise money and plan possible attacks. We assess that some of the planning for the AMIA bombing took place there.

Hezbollah's also active right here in the United States. In 2017, the FBI arrested two Hezbollah operatives, Samir El Debek and Ali Kourani, in Michigan and New York, respectively. El Debek allegedly was surveilling potential targets at Hezbollah's direction in

Panama, including the Panama Canal. Kourani spent years surveilling military and law enforcement facilities in the US. He was just convicted by a jury in New York for his crimes.

Indeed, Hezbollah and its Iranian patron spread terrorism across the globe, from attacks against our diplomatic facilities in Iraq to terror plotting in African countries such as Kenya and Nigeria, from plots against Gulf neighbors to planning bombings and assassinations in the heart of Western Europe, no place is safe from Iran's malevolent reach.

Hezbollah has financiers, operatives, front companies, and other assets in Lebanon, in the Gulf, in Africa, in Asia, and here in the Western Hemisphere. In recent years, Hezbollah operatives have been caught preparing attacks as far as field as Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cyprus, Egypt, Peru and Thailand. Its weapons caches have been discovered in the Gulf, in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa. Hezbollah likes to masquerade as a defender of the Lebanese people, but these actions reveal its true agenda, global terrorism.

In 2012, Hezbollah bombed a bus in Bulgaria, killing five Israeli tourists as well as their Bulgarian driver. That attack took place as well on July 18th. So Argentina and Bulgaria are now joined together in sharing a bloody anniversary. As we remember the victims of this deadly plot, we also call on Bulgaria to complete the trial of the Hezbollah members charged in absentee, consistent with its domestic law.

Let me tell you now what the administration is doing to crack down on Hezbollah and other Iran backed terrorists, both around the globe and here in our own hemisphere. Under the leadership of President Trump, we've intensified our counter terrorism efforts against Iran, the IRGC and Hezbollah worldwide. Most notably, in April, Secretary Pompeo took the unprecedented step of designating the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization, or an FTO. And that designation concerned the entire IRGC, including its kutz force. This was the first time the United States has ever designed part of another government as an FTO. And the US government now formally acknowledges the reality that the IRGC doesn't just finance or promote terrorism, it actively engages in terrorism as a tool of statecraft.

To counter Hezbollah, we're using law enforcement and financial tools to disrupt its networks. We're targeting its financial resources and squeezing it out of the international financial system. We're hitting it in the wallet and we'll deny it the funds it needs to commit terrorism around the world. The US government has designated over 150 entities and individuals with ties to Hezbollah, including more than 50 just since last year.

The state department's Rewards for Justice Program recently offered up to \$10 million for information leading to the disruption of Hezbollah's financial mechanisms. This is the first time we've ever issued an RFJ reward focused solely on Hezbollah financing. It was an important step in our maximum pressure campaign against Tehran and its terrorist proxies. In 2017, the State Department issued RFJ offers for two Hezbollah leaders with American blood on their hands, Talal Hamiyah and Farad Shukr. Shukr is a senior military commander who played a central role in Hezbollah's 1993 bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American service members. Hamiyah is the head of Hezbollah's external security organization, their global

terrorist arm, which is responsible for the group's campaign of terrorism across the globe. These were the first RFJs targeting Hezbollah in more than a decade.

We've also sanctioned Jawad Nasrallah as a specially designated global terrorist. Jawad Nasrallah is the son of Hezbollah's secretary general and a Hezbollah leader in his own right. And in recent weeks, the US has designated Hezbollah security and intelligence chiefs, along with two Hezbollah members of the Lebanese parliament. Our sanctions are starving Iran, the IRGC, and Hezbollah of the money they need to promote terrorism worldwide. This administration is using every tool at our disposal to dismantle Hezbollah's global financial network, including its participation in drug trafficking and other crimes.

The good news, Hezbollah's feeling the pinch. As our sanctions on the Iranian regime have taken hold, Hezbollah has had to tighten its belt. The group's secretary general is now publicly asking for donations. "The resistance needs your support," he has said. We will continue to increase the financial pressure and impose costs on the Iranian regime and its terrorist proxies until they abandon their maligned and outlaw behavior. In this hemisphere, we're actively working with our partners to counter Iranian and Hezbollah terrorism. We're partnering with key multilateral players, like the Organization of American States, and the 15 member Caribbean community, or CARACOM. We also have robust bilateral counter terrorism cooperation throughout the region, including with countries such as Argentina, Panama, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, and Colombia.

Next week, we will intensify these efforts at a counter-terrorism ministerial meeting held in Buenos Aires, a follow up to a similar session that we hosted here in Washington last December. We applaud President Macri and his administration for their leadership in hosting this meeting. President Macri well knows the costs of Iran-backed terrorism. He has courageously renewed Argentina's resolve to never suffer another attack. And he is determined to reopen the investigations of the 1992 and 1994 bombings, and to bring the perpetrators to justice. Impunity must end.

In Buenos Aires, we'll discuss how to bolster our counter-terrorism capabilities and work together to build partnerships, to strengthen security, and to eliminate gaps. We'll continue to seek ways to block terrorist travel and cut off the flow of money to these groups. And we'll discuss the need to attack the nexus between transnational crime and terrorism. We'll also be making some additional announcements in Buenos Aires, so stay tuned.

One of the lessons from the Argentina bombings a quarter century ago is that no country is safe from terrorism. And so we all have a stake in ridding the world of this scourge. The only way we can secure ourselves, the only way we can prevent mourning more victims like Sebastian Barreiro, Paola Czyzewski, and Father Brumana is by cooperating closely, working together for our joint security, and by facing the terrorist threat openly and honestly.

Thank you all.

DERSHOWITZ: Wow. First, thank you very much for those pointed remarks, and for being with us today, Ambassador Oris de Roa. And also thank you to Ambassador Sales for that

most powerful global tour of Iran and Hezbollah's malign activities, but also, what we're doing about it, 25 years later, we can do something about it, and thank you for sharing that with us.

I also want to add my welcome to the many Ambassadors and diplomats from Latin America and elsewhere who are here today. And I want to specially welcome Benjamin Krasna, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Israel. As Ambassador Sales noted, not only was the AMIA Jewish Community Center bombed by Iran backed Hezbollah, this was actually the second attack, right? The attack on the Embassy of Israel in 1992 in which 29 people were killed, 242 others were injured. Both events as were stated were attacks on Argentina, both must be regarded as antisemitic attacks, and both call out for ensuring justice for their victims and holding accountable those responsible.

A warm welcome to you and all those joining us here today. And I also want to welcome all those who are here on live stream. And a warm welcome to our panelists.

Miguel Bronfman is an Argentine lawyer based in Argentina, specializing in criminal and international law and human rights. In 1998, he started to work on the criminal proceedings for the attacks on the AMIA, and since 2008, he has led the legal team that represents the AMIA on every single judicial related matter. Miguel traveled all the way from Argentina to be with us here today, so thank you so much for coming. And I know you're leaving after this to join the ministerial meetings back in Argentina.

The Honorable Daniel Glaser is a principal with the financial integrity network. Danny previously served for some 20 years, was it, Danny? At the Department of Treasury, most recently as Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes. He was also head of the U.S. Delegation for the Financial Action Task Force.

My colleague, Emanuele Ottolenghi is a senior fellow at FDD and an expert at FDD's Center on Economic and Financial Power. His research specializes on Hezbollah's illicit threat networks in Latin America, especially in the tri-border area. In Iran's use of sanctions evasion, he's been a great resource for government and law enforcement. Thank you Emanuele for being here.

Miguel, I'm going to start with you. You have worked on legal matters on behalf of the AMIA for some 20 years. I think nobody really knows the AMIA case better than you do. In fact, you compiled a book on it that just last night we posted to AlbertoNismon.org if you're interested in looking at the tremendous number of documents associated with the case.

Now many people know that Interpol issued the red notices. We talked about it here today. But tell us just very briefly, what is the strongest evidence you have? What is the core evidence tying Iran and Hezbollah to the AMIA case?

BRONFMAN: Okay. Well thank you, Toby. I'd like to take a minute. I'm here on behalf of AMIA so I'd like to thank you all for coming here. I know you have very busy schedules in Washington D.C. and you make time to come here. So for us it's very important. And thank you Toby and Benjamin for this event. For us, it's very important to have our voice heard here.

As for your question, the answer could be very long. Like ordinary crime, terrorist tactics are very complex crime. So you can build the case by putting together many, many pieces of evidence. It's not just one, two, or three. You have to really make an ensemble of different pieces of evidence.

And in the '90s, in Buenos Aires, the list of possible suspects that would carry such attack was very short. Today terrorism has taken many different forms and has attacked in many different places. But back then, the suspect list was really short.

So the truth is, even though the international arrest warrant and the red notices are from 2007, both Iran and Hezbollah has been in the case from day one. In fact, the first judge in charge of the case issued a resolution only two weeks after that attack saying Hezbollah and Iran are behind this attack.

Both Iran and Hezbollah had motives to carry on this attack. Different motives but came together. On the case of Iran, the sudden cancellation by the Argentine government of the nuclear contracts that were in effect since the late '80s. And in the case of Hezbollah, Israel had arrested one of its leaders just 40 days before that. Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah chief, publicly said claiming vengeance, he said, "Our arms are long. If not, see what happened in Argentina two years ago." He was talking about, of course the Israeli Embassy bombing in 1992, which in turn had taken place because Israel had killed the chief of Hezbollah back then, Abbas al-Musawi.

Iran had a structure of intelligence and espionage in Argentina through the diplomatic officials. Hezbollah had the financial and logistical support needed through the Tri-Border Area. I know, one thing is to know who did it and the other thing is to prove who did it. So this is the information regarding who did it, and along the years, all the evidence very slowly because in the '90s all the information, for example to get the travel information about the person would take much longer than these days.

So slowly all the information was gathered in the file. Now we are sure about who, where, and when took the decision to carry on the attack, why, which were the motives, which were the reasons, who was responsible for carrying out the attack, Hezbollah, who was the suicide driver that drove the car bomb against the AMIA building and made explosion, it was a Lebanese person. His name, Ibrahim Berro, belonged to a family in Lebanon, very active in Hezbollah. He had two brothers who had also emulated in terrorist attacks.

We know exactly when the operational group enter the country, July 18, and when they exited the country, July 18. So there's a lot of evidence that really support these accusations.

DERSHOWITZ: Great. I think 25 years later, a lot of people may think that the case frankly is dormant. If you could just take a couple minutes and tell us, what is the status of the AMIA case from a legal perspective? Right? There are three separate cases. One is the original case, having to do with the bombing itself. Then of course there's the case about the attempted cover up of Iran's role in the 1994 bombing. And then of course as it was mentioned earlier, there is the investigation into the assassination of Alberto Nisman. I'm sure there are other parts of

these things. But take a moment to just tell us what's the status of the case today. And if you don't mind, also addressing briefly the Interpol red notices. What's the status of those?

BRONFMAN: Okay, the red notices are in full effect. This by Iran's Air Force along this year's. Interpol has innovated the red notices every time, so now they are in full effect. That's why we complain when we know that one of the accused Iranians travel outside their country and they're not arrested, because they should be arrested. That's the last part of your question.

The case has several different fronts. On the main investigation, which is still open, we have new prosecutors after Alberto Nisman's assassination, in office. And we are not happy with the work. We have been saying this publicly. We understand it's difficult to be in charge of a case that's been going on for so long, but still we would like to see more activity on the new prosecutors. And we are complaining about that and we are going to use all the attention we're going to get this next week to put the focus on that.

The main investigation is related to Iran and Hezbollah, although we know a lot of information as I just said. There are still many things that we don't know and we want to know. Also, we are convinced, we have always been convinced, there was a local connection in the plot, in the bombing. One of the people with an international arrest warrant and red notice is a Lebanese citizen, al-Rada, and al-Rada was married to an Argentine woman who, as we know, is living with him in Lebanon.

There were also involvement in the handling of the van that was used as the car bomb by probably corrupted police officers in early '90s was a common daily thing in Argentina. And all those things still need to be fully investigated. There were some attempts. They failed and we're still pushing and fighting for the prosecutors to retake the case again seriously.

You asked me about the trial, for the cover up. Well, this is the outcome of Alberto Nisman's complaint, the complaint that cost him his life. As I'm sure you all know, he claimed that the former president and a group of former officials have made a deal with Iran regarding the AMIA case in order to cover up the Iranians to help them lift the red notices. And in exchange of commercial favors or trades.

Well, at the beginning, they tried to shut down the investigation. After a couple of years, investigation was finally reopened. Now the former presidents is waiting, in fact, for the trial to begin. She's accused of cover up and treason, very serious crimes.

Now, this is on Election Day and I'm sure you also know, she's a candidate for vice president. So as it works in Argentina, most probably the court will wait to see what happens in elections, and then they will decide if the trial starts this year or never, according to the results of the elections.

And about Alberto Nisman, we are still very worried about that. I have no words to describe how we felt when we knew that our prosecutor in charge of the AMIA case had been murdered. We knew he had been murdered from minute one.

Thankfully, the investigations that followed, it took some time but have confirmed that he was in fact assassinated. And that he was assassinated because of his work as the federal prosecutor of the AMIA case. That has been stated in court, judicially, not only by the first instance prosecutor and judge. By the Court of Appeals, and even by the Supreme Court.

But that's not enough, of course. We need the crime to be fully solved. We need to know who ordered the assassination, who did it, and exactly why? It's not enough to say, "Because of the AMIA case." We need to know why, what was behind or what was the prosecutor after that gave place to such a horrendous thing.

So we are still with a prosecutor, Diano, the one who's in charge of the investigation. We would like for him, if he doesn't have enough resources that he ask for them. If he is not receiving collaboration then he should denounce it. We are not satisfied when what we see is silence. We need more answers. Everybody, the whole country needs answers about that.

DERSHOWITZ: I mean, every couple of weeks I see another piece of evidence emerging from the case. Phone records and all kinds of things. Thanks for the update. I know it's a very quick update because these cases are rich, but they are ongoing and they're worthy of our continued attention.

We may come back to some of those details, but I want to turn to Emanuele. Emanuele, you spent a lot of time looking at the Tri-Border Area, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. And the TBA, as Ambassador Sales mentioned, was very important in terms of logistics, planning and financing of the AMIA bombing. Back in 2004 and 2006, the Treasury Department designated Hezbollah financiers associated with that.

How would you define the threat in the TBA today, many years later?

OTTOLENGHI: Thank you, Toby. And thanks to the Wilson Center for having us here together for this event.

Some people think that I focus too much on the TBA. Certainly in some of the countries contiguous to the TBA. And perhaps that's part of the real problem in the TBA, in the Tri-Border Area because despite the fact that Hezbollah has had a well-documented robust presence for more than three decades now, there is a lack of recognition of this reality. It is often downplayed and when we have evidence of financial crimes such as contraband, smuggling, money laundering, arms trafficking, drug trafficking, and significant crimes connected to currency manipulation exchange, movement on currency across the borders without declarations, violation of banking regulations and so on, it's often dismissed as simply being tax evasion or just something attributable to the general lawlessness of the area.

What to me is significant and what drew my attention to focusing on the TBA very much ever since FDD started, my project looking at Iran and Hezbollah in Latin America is the fact that when you go to the TBA as you can also do in a handful of other locations in Latin America, what you find is a miniature reproduction of the entire Hezbollah social welfare apparatus of control and indoctrination of the Shia community in Lebanon. You'll find mosques, schools,

youth movements, charitable organizations that are not just there to serve a numerous Shia Lebanese community, which is present there. Has been for a long time. Has been very much part of the fabric of different tier society of the TBA.

But the values inculcated to the kids in the schools which are named as Brazilian Lebanese or Paraguay and Lebanese but are really Shia Lebanese under the control of Mahdi, the school network of Hezbollah. The values inculcated are the ones of Hezbollah. The clerics are Hezbollah clerics. Treasury in 2010 actually designated a Shia cleric inside the mosque, the Mesquita do Brás, the largest Shia mosque in Latin America in San Paolo, Brazil.

As the Hezbollah chief representative in Latin America, this cleric is very close to all the clerics in the other Shia mosques in the region. He's, until recently, been traveling around keeping contacts and building networks.

So whenever you see this kind of investment, that is a sign that Hezbollah values enough the community they're targeting to ensure that over decades, the Shia Lebanese there maintain a level of loyalty and connection to Hezbollah in Lebanon. And we have it on record from Treasury in the designations from 2004 and 2006 that actually some of the Hezbollah financiers targeted were in charge of ensuring that those business people member of the community who did not want to toe the line and align themselves and acquiesce to this type of situation, would be extorted and threatened and pressure to conform and to align.

And so, I think that when you take that into account, that is already an important sign. And it is consistent with the strategy that both Hezbollah and Iran have had in Latin America of using religious institution cultural centers as a façade to deploy, and to establish a presence, to spread influence, to gain support, to build alliances.

The second point is that of course, as I was saying initially, the Tri-Border Area remains a hub of illicit trade. If trade-based money laundering and illicit finance had some sort of a heat print from outer space, the Tri-Border Area would glow red in a way that very few other places in the world would do.

And it's rightfully so because despite the popularization of the location by recent Netflix productions suggesting that it is a kind of remote dirt road area in the jungle, like mullahs in the jungle. The Tri-Border Area is very much First World. It's a large metropolitan area of combined one million residents, more or less. It has the second largest by size hydroelectric dam in the world, first largest one in terms of electric production, which brings tens of thousands of middle class educated professionals to live in the area from both sides of the border, Paraguay and Brazil.

It has the second largest waterfalls in the world. UNESCO, a heritage location, the Iguazu Falls which draws a tourist industry, has a free-trade zone in Paraguay, which of course brings shoppers. So it has free airports that can land B-747. The Brazilian airport alone handles 4.5 million people a year. So it is a place with three currencies, three languages, three jurisdictions. And porous borders, weak controls, and corrupt institutions that allows for an incredible amount of flow of money.

The Federal Police of Brazil established in 2017, that the average value of the illicit economy in the TBA alone is \$18 billion a year. So it is a mecca for money laundering. And money laundering and Hezbollah in the same place means terror finance.

DERSHOWITZ: So you talked about porous borders, and that's one reason that it's sort of a ripe area for organized crime. Can you talk just very briefly, what are the tactics that Hezbollah used in the Tri-Border Area? What is the financial infrastructure look like?

OTTOLENGHI: Again, for anyone who's visited, what's striking is that you kind of expect reading about it to find a lawless place, but actually it's a relatively friendly area. Especially the commercial zone in Ciudad del Este on the Paraguayan side.

Now the first problem is of course there is only one bridge connecting Brazil and Paraguay. There's an average of 100 thousand people crossing that bridge on a daily basis. One of the reasons is that as soon as you cross the bridge, you don't even need to travel from the bridge to the commercial zone. It's right there. And it's a shopping mecca. On Black Friday you can buy an iPhone for \$450. You can buy Ralph Lauren polo shirts for \$40. If you don't want to pay Netflix, Amazon Prime or HBO subscription, you can buy a scrambler for \$130 produced legally in Brazil but low-priced in Paraguay. Which you can then connect to your internet and you can watch TV for free.

Now, the phone you buy, I'm not sure is authentic. More likely it won't. The polo shirts have been produced in a sweat shop using illegal immigrants or overworked underpaid workers somewhere else in Latin America, then it has been shipped by contraband across the Andes, and so on.

And so the entire Tri-Border economy, especially on the Paraguayan side, relies on these incredible price differentials which is visible across the entire range of products. Now, what is the role of Hezbollah financiers there? The role is to both manage an enormous volume of trade, both fake and authentic. A lot of merchandise comes but a lot of false invoicing is generated just to move value. And the movement of value is put to the service of criminal activities.

Now Paraguay increasingly has become over the years a transit point for Andean cocaine coming from Bolivia and Peru, and increasingly from Colombia. First of all, to the local Brazilian market, which is exploding as a cocaine consumer, but also then to be shipped on to Europe, through Africa, to the United States, and even beyond.

So the presence of these incredible efficient well-oiled trade-based money laundering machine allows for ill-gotten gains from crime to be quickly and efficiently laundered. And the community's there to do it through trade by money laundering, full control of money exchange, houses, and pretty much the entire range of endeavors.

Now, why is this so important for United States? I think national security, not just for the region. For two reasons. The first is that actually, when you look at these trade-based money laundering operations, the vast majority of them goes through United States. They buy

merchandise, or they pretend to buy merchandise in China, through Hong Kong. But then they have intermediate companies, mostly located in Miami.

Now one would say, "Why would Hezbollah take the risk of being caught in the United States when they can just ship through China, from China directly to Latin America?" The answer is that criminals and terrorists and everybody else wants access to the gold standard of the financial system, and want to dollarize its ill-gotten gain.

So that is the first one. The second, just to conclude, is this and this relates to the AMIA. When we fight terrorism, we are often thinking that we're fighting people hiding in the shadows, conspiring to blow up buildings and people. To blow up buildings and people, especially when you talk about an on-state actor as Hezbollah, you actually need a whole complex range of logistical support and procurement to carry out the terror attacks.

Ambassador Sales mentioned before, Cypress, London which was recently in the news because of a warehouse where three tons of ammonium nitrate hidden in ice packs was found and related to a Hezbollah plot. Well, you can't walk into the CVS Pharmacy on DuPont Circle and buy three tons of ice pack from first aid kits without raising suspicion. What you need is a legitimate company that does import/export on medical supplies that will buy that and will provide it to those who will have the technical expertise to carry out the terror attack. That's what happened with the AMIA, that's what happens usually with these terror attacks, and therefore these economic infrastructures which are used most of the time to launder money and raise funds for terror finance, can also be activated for the procurement of explosives that can be used in future attacks.

DERSHOWITZ: And real quick answer, you keep talking about the gains that accrued to Hezbollah. Is it possible to quantify them real briefly?

OTTOLENGHI: So it's very difficult to quantify an illicit economy. There are estimates which we've heard \$700 million a year from Iran, then it's assumed that Hezbollah raises \$300 million a year on its own through a variety of other activities.

When I look at the value of single operations that have been exposed through sanctions and bi-prosecutions in the United States, take the Iman Juma case with the Lebanese Canadian Bank where \$200 million a month were being laundered through one single network. And we know that Hezbollah usually takes between, from a range of about 10 to 20% commission on these types of operations. And when I look at the size of the illicit economy on the TBA alone, \$18 billion a year, as I mentioned according to the Federal Police in Brazil, my assumption is we're talking way up above a billion dollars a year in money raised through illicit activities alone.

DERSHOWITZ: Danny, we're going to get you in just one second. I don't want to leave Latin America just yet. In a second we're going to zoom out and look at Hezbollah outside of the region.

But Miguel, I just wanted to come back to you. Just summarize, what are the keys lessons learned from the attacks and what things still might need to be done inside Argentina in the fight against terrorism? Real briefly.

BRONFMAN: Yes. Thank you, Toby. Well, there have been many lessons. The first and most painful is that terrorism can head everywhere, which in the early '90s was not so well assumed. And that's why the first year of investigations were quite solitary for investigators and the Jewish community. Then different attacks around the world took place and they started to look back at what had happened in Argentina in a different way.

So that was one of the first lessons. Another lesson is that Hezbollah is very present in the region, as well as Iran. There was an indictment in 2013 in the case that showed and folded all the ways that Iran had infiltrated the whole country. I think that's why on the work on Hezbollah and the Tri-Border Area is very important and crucial.

And specifically related to the AMIA case and to Argentina, there are several things that still need to be improved. I'm talking about modern legislation. The first judge always complained that he had to investigate this case, which was so complex, with the same tools that he had to investigate an everyday crime. And nothing has changed in that respect. We still have the same, which was already old. We still have the same old criminal code from the early '90s. We need a new anti-terrorist legislation. All the countries that had suffered need a new anti-terrorist legislation. All the countries that had suffered terrorism have updated and modernized their legislation; Argentina has not.

We need more training for the security forces, for sure. We need a way that the intelligence services can coordinate. That was very clear along the investigation that the different intelligence units in the country that were operating, they were either operating for their own benefit, their own purpose or for different motives, but they were never operating in a coordinated way.

That's crucial because those are the people and the agencies who are going to move the investigation forward; it's not the judge, it's not the prosecutor. The judge and the prosecutor just receive the information that these agencies can bring them. So if they're not working in a coordinated way, the result will be what we had in the Americas, a very long and slow and painfully – painful investigation.

DERSHOWITZ: Great thanks. So understandably, we've talked a lot about Latin America but, Danny, you have spent 20 years looking at Hezbollah issues, and Hezbollah funding streams. Ambassador Sales gave us a great tour. What I want to know is, many terrorist organizations are getting savvy; they're covering their tracks, they're using new techniques and technologies in addition, of course, to the traditional ways that they raise money. How does Hezbollah fit into this picture?

GLASER: Well, thanks Toby. First of all, I'll just say really quickly, thank you to FDD and to the Wilson Center for inviting me. It's an honor to be here, and it's an honor to be with this distinguished panel. This is a fun topic for me to talk about. It's a sad and tragic topic, but it's

heartening to see all these people here who are interested in this and who care so much about this issue. With respect to Hezbollah globally, when you think about its economic and financial wealth, there's really – you could divide it into lots of different smaller categories. But I think you could divide it into two major categories; the money it gets directly from Iran, and everything else.

It clearly gets hundreds of millions of dollars annually from Iran. I think Emanuele said the number is 700 million. I'm not up to date on the most recent numbers, but it's hundreds of millions of dollars for sure, annually, from Iran. I do believe that's the primary source of wealth for Hezbollah and that everything else it gets is all nice-to-have money. To be serious about thinking about Hezbollah financing, it really does need to begin with the money that it receives directly in cash from Iran.

Then you get the Hezbollah Inc., which is just – Hezbollah is a multinational corporation that has financial interests around the world that engages in many different activities. Some legal, some illegal, and it's got a lot of quite unsavory people that are affiliated with it in a variety of ways, including many people in the tri-border area, including people, as Ambassador Sales mentioned in Venezuela. I actually think that Hezbollah is much more integrated in the Western Hemisphere than people realized, and that's commonly talked about.

It seems anytime we look somewhere, we find Hezbollah in the Western Hemisphere. But it's like this big map of the Western Hemisphere that's completely dark, and then you shine a flashlight on it, and where you shine the flashlight you see Hezbollah and you say, "Oh, look. There's a Hezbollah center." But then it turns out, you shine your flash at somewhere else, Sao Paulo, you mentioned, "Oh, look. There's Hezbollah." You shine your flashlight on an organization, "Oh, look. There's Hezbollah."

I think that if we turn the lights on completely, we would see Hezbollah is quite integrated in the Western Hemisphere and is even in the United States. My good friend and former colleague at Treasury Department, Matt Levitt, speaks and had written quite extensively on Hezbollah fundraising that occurs right here in the United States. The tri-border area's an important place, but Hezbollah Inc. exists worldwide.

In terms of strategies that we've deployed to try to address this – and a lot of it was discussed by Ambassador Sales earlier – I think, going back, and especially after the bombings in Argentina, there was intense focus on looking at the far-flung Hezbollah financial networks and the financial networks that support them here in the Western Hemisphere and in the tri-border area and other places. That was important work. That work was work that continued through the Bush administration, into the Obama administration. It was work that focused in the Western Hemisphere, it was work that focused in West Africa and in other places.

We came to a conclusion, and this is going to be slightly at odds with what Emanuele said, but I don't think it's too much at odds with it. We came to a conclusion somewhere, I don't know, somewhere in like 2011, 2012, that going after Hezbollah sort of on the periphery was going to be – was nice to do and important to do in terms of disrupting their capabilities around the world, but that if we really wanted to send a message to Hezbollah that we were going after

them in a strategic way, that we were going after them in a way that was going to damage their ability to operate, we needed to do two things. We needed to target Iran and target the ability of Iran to supply Hezbollah, and we needed to challenge Hezbollah in Beirut.

We needed to show them that we could make their life uncomfortable in Beirut, in the Lebanese financial system. And, look, Hezbollah's really, really scary. If I lived in Lebanon, I'd be scared of Hezbollah. But the US Treasury Department's kind of scary also, when you're in the international financial system. There was an opportunity to sort of put your finger on the scale a little bit. No one thought we were going to uproot Hezbollah from South Lebanon, but we did think that we could send a message that we were prepared to challenge them in the Lebanese financial system in Beirut.

Then it's been mentioned, the Lebanese-Canadian bank and various actions that were taken, and various actions that congress took around that time to really make it much harder for Hezbollah to engage in financial activity. And then even that most recent designations by the US government on the Hezbollah parliamentarians. Again, all of that goes to unsettling Hezbollah where it thought it could feel comfortable. That's an absolutely vital part of any financial campaign against Hezbollah.

They're going to continue to get money from Iran. We're not going to bankrupt Hezbollah. But we could make it costlier, riskier, less efficient, and we could make them feel uncomfortable. We could make them feel that there is no place for them to hide. That's been, frankly, the consistent financial strategy against Hezbollah from – over the past ten years and up until today. It's was very gratifying for me to hear some of the things that Ambassador Sales was saying. I really do think that it's – unfortunately it's a target-rich environment, but that also creates lots of opportunities to continue to put them on their heel and continue to be part of what needs to be an overall effort, all of government effort to defeat Hezbollah.

DERSHOWITZ: So I want to put this question to whichever panelists want to answer it. I'd be remiss if I didn't address the story that's so pervasive in the Argentine press this morning, which is that Argentina may issue, this week, some report, say even Thursday, may issue something akin to an executive order designating Hezbollah as a terrorist entity in the exact same way that the United States designated Hezbollah, in the exact same way that other countries around the world – some other countries around the world, designate Hezbollah. Argentina doesn't have a terrorism list right now, so whatever mechanism they may need to do this, we'll see what that is.

Talk to me about what the impact of this is. How important is it? Emanuele, you'll probably want to say something, so I'm going to start with you first. I have just volunteered you.

OTTOLENGHI: Thank you. Yes, I do want to say something. First of all, with the caveat that it hasn't happened yet, and we understand that this step still has to face some internal hurdles perhaps; it's something extremely commendable that should be welcomed, applauded, supported that Argentina is taking the lead on. You can't begin to solve a problem as long as and until you actually recognize it. And you recognize it by calling it by its name, and that's been part of the problem in Latin America. There is, for a variety of reasons; local political, historical, and so on,

a reluctance to call and recognize Hezbollah – and also legal by the way, to recognize Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

So the fact that Argentina on the 25th anniversary of the AMIA is getting ready, hopefully, to do that, is very important and it shows the way for other countries. Again, Ambassador Sales mentioned the fact that other countries in the region, allies, have been supportive of the effort to combat Hezbollah, to go after Hezbollah networks. He mentioned the arrest in September of last year of Assad Ahmad Barakat, enforced... on the Brazilian side of the TBA.

He mentioned the fact the Nader Farhat, whom he called a Hezbollah supporter and I'm glad that the US government is openly naming him as a Hezbollah supporter has been extradited from Paraguay. I want to commend the former government of Paraguay led my former President Cartes, under whose watch he was arrested. I want to commend the prosecutors and the judicial system for ensuring all of the outside influences and efforts to torpedo the extradition process failed, and he's now safely in the jail at the courthouse in Miami.

We need, moving forward, to have local government call a spade a spade; Say Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, one, and, two, they need to invest more and work for a situation where, when they arrest Hezbollah financiers, not just at our behest but because they themselves have the courage and the ability to build-up these cases, they can actually carry out justice in their own countries.

We are in a situation now where you have governments who, in the past, were reluctant to do so, who are now willing to extradite Hezbollah financiers to face justice in the United States. I would like to see, and maybe this is a long-term project, both Paraguay and Brazil recognize, just like Argentina seems poised to do, that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, create the legal framework and also empower prosecutors and judges and investigators, law enforcement agencies, with resources, capacity, know-how, instruments and knowledge to go after Hezbollah down there.

GLASER: I'll just very quickly add to that and agree with everything that Emanuele said. I think there's a reluctance in a lot of countries and a lot of communities to call an organization a terrorist organization that also does other things. If it's a terrorist organization, but it's also a political party; if it's a terrorist organization, and it's also a social movement, or also provides social services; or it also has a seat in government, then there's a reluctance to call it a terrorist organization.

I actually think the United States gets it right. If it's an organization that engages in terrorist activities, then it's a terrorist organization through and through, and it doesn't matter about the other things that it does. We have to understand that it may be providing important services and address that issue, but it doesn't matter what it does. If it engages in terrorist activities, it is a terrorist organization, 100%. I think it's important that Argentina's taken this action. I think other countries should take this action. I think the countries, particularly the European countries that have designated the "military wing" of Hezbollah as a terrorist

organization, need to designate Hezbollah as a whole as a terrorist organization because there's no such thing as the "military wing."

I've had so many conversations with friends in Europe – What exactly is the "military wing" of – Nasrallah himself says he doesn't understand what the military wing of Hezbollah is, that there is no such thing. We need to understand that these groups, this is what they are. We need to identify them as such, and we need to treat them as such from A to Z.

DERSHOWITZ: Audience, we're going to get to questions in just a second, so start thinking about what you want to ask our panelist. But before we do that, let me invite you, Miguel, to address that.

BRONFMAN: On this last topic? Yes. I totally agree. In fact, following with – which I had just said. I'm a bit concerned because I received some rumors, let's say, this morning from Argentina that the government is about to finish the decree ordering a register for terrorist organization, that will be first step. The second one will be related to Hezbollah and, apparently, sorry, they are considering designating just the military branch, military which –

GLASER: Which doesn't exist.

BRONFMAN: Which, it doesn't exist. Exactly. It would be, in my view, completely useless. Hopefully someone is going to address this matter properly in Argentina before it's finally issued.

DERSHOWITZ: And if Argentina takes this step, do you think it will encourage others in the region to follow suit?

BRONFMAN: I think it's essential that Paraguay and Brazil follow these steps and they do exactly the same.

DERSHOWITZ: Great. Audience, I invite your questions. Is there a mic? I think we have a question right here. Wait for the mic. Thank you. Could I ask you to keep your questions brief? We're short on time. And, if you wouldn't mind, please introduce yourself. Thank you.

HUMPHREY: I'm Peter Humphrey, an intelligence analyst and a former diplomat. We have some capacity to actually empty bank accounts and even make them disappear. I often wonder why we don't use that tool more often, in fact, every day. What I want to ask though is, how strong are the hawala networks that would allow these organizations to get around such an intelligence operation? Is a lot of this money moving through hawala, some of it moving through hawala, most of it moving through hawala?

DERSHOWITZ: Thank you. Danny?

GLASER: I think most Hezbollah related money, not talking about the money from Iran which comes in cash to Lebanon, in terms of Hezbollah Inc., it moves through the financial system the way any other large multinational corporation's money moves through the

international financial system. Sure there are informal remittance networks that are associated with some of their activity in particular, the more hardcore, illegal activities. There's a certain – I understand there's a certain mystique to the word hawala. A hawala is just a particular regional version of an informal remittance system, but an entity like Hezbollah is not going to be reliant on informal remittances; they're using the financial system.

I'd be kind of curious how you think that we could just empty out peoples bank accounts. But we can talk afterwards because I don't think it's quite as easy as that question implies.

OTTOLENGHI: I'd be kind of curious too.

If I may just add, the certainly... word pertains to Latin American operations, most of... many of which are related to laundering money for criminal organizations in exchange for a commission which then goes to finance Hezbollah. The bulk of the value moves through trade-based money laundering. Because it is designed to look like legitimate transactions, it goes through the financial system.

There's a case that was recently adjudicated in Miami involving a Lebanese merchant based in Miami that was trading with the TBA through two partners who were cousins, one in Hong Kong, one in the TBA. He moved 155 million dollars a year – sorry, for three years, through his company's bank account, only 70 million dollars declared. The vast majority was transactions through the bank account; only a tiny amount was moved to Lebanon through Bitcoin and small amounts were moved by cash.

The bulk is still, as Danny said, exploiting the formal financial system. That's actually why they're vulnerable, because we have the tools to actually target them effectively.

GLASER: And just to underscore, there is pure informal remittance that happens on a small scale – we saw it with Al-Qaeda and group – but to move any significant amount of money through an informal system, you're still going to need bank accounts. You're still going to need bank accounts. The informal remitters – in certain cases, the hawaladars – they have bank accounts. The money doesn't move magically. So the formal system is still absolutely, absolutely vital for Hezbollah.

DERSHOWITZ: Other questions. Can you – there's a mic right behind you. Thank you.

BOGDAN: Thank you.

DERSHOWITZ: And would you introduce yourself, please?

BOGDAN: Yes. Thank you very much. My name is Camelia Bogdan. I'm a Woodrow Visiting Fellow here at the Wilson Center, but I'm also a judge specializing in money laundering and an expert of the European Commission back in Romania. For me, it's very awkward from what you've described so far. Why don't you carry financial investigation and the domestic investigation that - in the domestic case in Argentina, in order to efficiently tackle the assets of

Hezbollah? And from what you've mentioned, you have some allegation of severe political exposed persons of corruption?

You mentioned the person that is running from the vice-president in Argentina. You have, also, a very strong anti-corruption instrument that may be used in order to seize or going after a non-conviction based confiscation, should you be afraid that your legal system is corrupt and may not be eager to handle the case or if a trial cannot be opened. That is why I'm thinking, why don't we integrate the financial investigation in the case? Because 25 years – and if you mentioned that earlier, that trade-based money laundering is being perpetrating, this is a very basic technique of money laundering. They are really insulting your capacities of efficiently fighting them; they are not using any sophisticated typologies of money laundering in order to launder the money in Argentina. Thank you very much.

DERSHOWITZ: Either of you want to answer briefly?

GLASER: Well, I can just stress that the last part, just to say, trade-based money laundering is not a primitive form of money laundering. Some of the most sophisticated money laundering networks in the world are trade-based money laundering. The black market pesos exchange is probably the number one money laundering network in the world. That was the – Ambassador sales didn't use the word "black market pesos exchange", but that's what he described perfectly when he was talking.

This is a money laundering network that, when I first came into government in the late nineties, I remember getting briefings on in the late nineties. It still exists today, and it's actually stronger, broader and more sophisticated than it was 25 years ago, or more than 25 years ago. Trade-based money laundering, again, it involved financial institutions. All of these transfers that are happening in trade-based money laundering need to be settled, and they're settled through financial institutions 90% of the time or more.

DERSHOWITZ: I think we have time for one quick question. Any other questions from the audience? Please.

HARLEY: Thanks. My name's Emmanuel Harley. I'm a communications intern for the Global Peace Foundation. Just a quick question about the counter-terrorism ministerial in Buenos Aires. I was wondering if you guys were looking – what strategies would you use to bring more attention to this particular case and to get more traction going forward?

BRONFMAN: Yes, we're definitely looking forward for the ministerial. In fact, we are going to brief the assistants about the case, not so much about the case itself, but what we still need to improve the investigation, what things are still pending, in which fields Argentina might still need a lot of help from the other countries. So, yes, we are waiting for them.

DERSHOWITZ: And, Miguel, I'm actually going to ask you to close this portion for us. You've traveled the farthest. This is something – I think it's safe to say we've all looked at this issue, it's close to our hearts, but this is personal for you. Would you just close with a couple of remarks?

BRONFMAN: Yes, sure. Thank you, Toby. Well, I was thinking, Ambassador Sales, he surprised me because he mentioned by their names, several of the victims. I don't think it was by chance, but he mentioned young people, a little kid and two girls that were in their twenties. Then he also mentioned other victims. I would like to evoke Sebastian Barreiro memory. He was a little boy walking by his mother's hand, just every morning to kindergarten, and the bomb killed him. Rosa, his mother, survived, and she's still waiting for justice for her son.

He was only five years old. He would be 30 now. Maybe he would be a father also. I think his absurd death symbolizes what terrorism is in its more – in its most basic form, which is death, destruction and manipulation of innocent lives. There's no repair for such a loss. I've been in contact all these years with all the relatives, all the parents who lost their children; adults who lost their partners; people who lost friends, siblings. There's no way to mitigate the pain or repair the damage.

So the question is: what's to be done? What's left for all of us? And why it's so important to seek for truth and justice? I've asked myself these questions many times all through these years, these mostly frustrating years. I don't have a definitive answer. But there's a teaching – I'm not very well-versed in the Jewish traditional teachings, but I've learned of one that I think brings some light into this matter; it's written in the ethics of the father's book. By virtue of three things does the world endure: truth, justice, and peace.

So as we see, justice is in between. So the scholars explained, this is not casual; it's in between because justice feeds from truth in order to achieve peace. When truth is corrupted, you cannot get justice and, therefore, you will not achieve peace. That's why, after 25 years, as I said, frustrating years and painful years, we are still doing this work. As we all see – as we all saw at the end of the video that opened the event, we want no less than the truth, and we demand nothing but justice. Meaning, we still need to fight against impunity, and we need trust and we need justice in order to, one day, achieve peace, which means, no more innocent lives shall be killed by terrorist bombs.

It's difficult, it's painful, but we still need to do it. I think we owe it to Sebastian Barreiro, to the 84 victims, to their parents, to their daughters and sons, to their siblings, to all the relatives, and even to the survivors – as we saw in the video as well – who survived the bombing, but for whom some part of them died that day, forever. And we also need to do it for the future generations. I'm glad to see many young faces here that show interest in this case that happened so far away; 25 years ago. That's rewarding for me.

We still need to do it for the farther – the future generations. When I think about the future generations, I was 22 when I started, I'm 47. I became a father as well, so I see things differently now. I think the challenge is double. We need to fight for justice and truth and seek, demanding and keep doing it, but still preserving our values, still preserving our principles, doing it while we still stand for the rule of law. I think that's the most important message we can give today.

DERSHOWITZ: Thank you for your message, for your words. Thanks to our audience for your questions. Thanks to our panel for a very, very thoughtful discussion. I also want to add

my thanks to Benjamin Gedan and all of his colleagues at the Wilson Center. FDD's cohorts of today's discussion. A special thanks to Erin Blumenthal, and my FDD colleagues for their hard work. If today has stimulated you to look at some of the source documents associated with the AMIA bombing, I mentioned briefly earlier that we've recently updated a lot of these documents to a website we put up after Alberto Nisman was murdered. The URL is albertonisman.org.

Our belief was that, whoever killed him didn't just want to kill him, but they wanted to bury his work; his investigations, his findings. So there's a wealth of information there for law enforcement, for the policy community and for the media and others. I'll just close with this thought, and it's just a reflection of what I said in the very beginning. Some may have asked what can be done to bring a measure of justice in this case 25 years after the attack; I get frustrated when I hear people say, "We will never find out who did this. We will never hold people accountable." If this program today shows anything, it's that there are ways to bring justice, both for the victims of the AMIA and for – just something that you said just now, Miguel, which is, we have to fight against impunity.

What our panelists did for me today was to show just how many tools there are in our toolkit. Just how many options there are so that the perpetrators of this are not left to their own devices and operating with impunity and acting with impunity. There are so many things that can be done. There are a myriad of things that can be done. I would argue they should be done. It's up to all of us to ensure that that happens. Thank you all for joining us today.