

WASHINGTON, DC – On Thursday, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) wrote a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urging her to exert the strongest possible pressure on the government of Lebanon to arrest and extradite convicted terrorist Mohammed Ali Hamadi to the United States.

Hamadi brutally murdered U.S. Navy Diver and Waldorf resident Robert Stethem on June 14, 1985 and was released from his life sentence in Germany late last year. Last week, the press reported that Hamadi has resumed activities with Hezbollah.

“Hamadi is one the FBI’s Most Wanted Terrorists, yet inexplicably he is on the loose,” Hoyer said. “He has already taken an American life and his recent reunion with Hezbollah provides even greater urgency to bring him to justice—before he strikes again.”

The text of the letter to Secretary Rice follows:

September 21, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice

Secretary of State

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

I am writing to urge you to exert maximum diplomatic and political pressure on the government

of Lebanon to immediately arrest and extradite to the United States Mohammed Ali Hamadi, one of the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists, who on June 14, 1985, brutally murdered United States Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem.

In December 2005, I was shocked to learn that Hamadi was abruptly released from his life sentence in Germany and was permitted to return to his native Lebanon. It is now my understanding from recent press reports that Hamadi has rejoined Hezbollah, the terrorist organization that has led a 24-year global campaign of terror. This development must give the United States renewed incentive to bring this terrorist to justice.

At the time of his death, Petty Officer Stethem was just 23 years old. A Waldorf, Maryland native, Petty Officer Stethem joined the Navy shortly after graduating from high school and was assigned to Naval Station Norfolk. On June 14, 1985, Petty Officer Stethem was returning from an assignment in Greece aboard TWA flight 847 to Rome. The plane was hijacked by Hamadi and three other terrorists, who promptly singled out Petty Officer Stethem as an American serviceman. He was bound and beaten for hours, tortured, and ultimately killed, his brutalized body deliberately dropped onto the tarmac of the Beirut International Airport. While Hamadi's three conspirators escaped capture, Hamadi himself was later arrested at the Frankfurt Airport and sentenced in 1989 to life in prison. Regrettably, the German government ignored repeated requests by the United States for Hamadi's extradition, so that he could stand trial in this country. Ultimately, the Germans released him last December.

I urge you, as our nation's highest-ranking diplomat, to implore the Lebanese government to arrest Mohammed Ali Hamadi and to extradite him to the United States, where he will be tried and held accountable for the murder of Petty Officer Stethem. Furthermore, I urge you to make clear to the Lebanese government that its actions in regard to Hamadi will carry important weight in the relationship between our two nations. Hamadi, a terrorist murderer, must be held accountable. The memory of Robert Dean Stethem, as well as justice, demands it.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important issue.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

STENY H. HOYER

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