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THE NATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTE
At George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School



HARPOON:

INSIDE THE COVERT WAR AGAINST TERRORISM'S MONEY MASTERS

March 6, 2018 – Hazel Hall room 120

The National Security Institute hosted Nitsana Darshan-Leitner to discuss her new book, *Harpoon: Inside the Covert War Against Terrorism's Money Masters*, co-written with Samuel M. Katz. Ms. Darshan-Leitner, founder of the Shurat HaDin Israeli Law Center, has focused her career on the judicial battle against terrorist financing.

DISCUSSION WRAP UP

Following an introduction from Professor Darren M. Dick, NSI's Director of Programs, Ms. Darshan-Leitner explored how Israel has tackled terrorist financing, how Shurat HaDin has addressed it in court, and how the fight will evolve in the future.

The History of Harpoon. Ms. Darshan-Leitner first chronicled the history of Harpoon, a unique task force created by former Mossad chief Meir Dagan. In Dagan's pursuit of unconventional methods of fighting terrorism, he chose to focus on the financial networks and industries supporting terrorist operations. Realizing that violence was fed by money that flowed into the West Bank from terrorist groups and other parties from the surrounding nations, Dagan urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to establish a new task force. The result was Harpoon, a secret unit within the Mossad that sought to destroy the infrastructure of terrorist financing.

The New Litigation Strategy. Established in 2002, the Shurat HaDin Israeli Law Center uses legal challenges to target the banks, businesses, charitable organizations, and other entities who fund activities of terrorist organizations. Litigating in both foreign and U.S. courts, Shurat HaDin has achieved favorable judgments and successfully enforced a number of decisions. This litigation strategy, said Ms. Darshan-Leitner, has sent shock waves through the international banking system. Banks have grown increasingly wary of doing business not only with terrorist organizations, but with nonprofit organizations that offer material support to terrorists.

The Future. "Imagine ISIS without social media." With terrorist rhetoric now swiftly crossing borders online, Shurat HaDin seeks more proactive monitoring by Facebook and other social media platforms. Although Facebook has claimed immunity under the Communications Decency Act, and some courts have agreed, Ms. Darshan-Leitner argues that the social media giant is not simply a "conduit" for information; rather, Facebook is extremely involved in its users' experiences, regularly moderating and deleting postings. Ms. Darshan-Leitner further argued that Facebook

inconsistently enforces company policies prohibiting posts that either incite violence or target people. Rather than claiming ignorance or powerlessness in the face of terrorism, she says, “it’s time for the private sector to join the fight.” Ms. Darshan-Leitner called on social media companies to more actively moderate their platforms, to remove prohibited posts calling for violence, and to be held accountable if they shirk their responsibilities.