



Hezbollah's leader said Friday that the Islamic militant group had captured three spies in its ranks, two of whom were allegedly recruited by the CIA to spy for Israel.

It was the first time the Iranian-backed group has claimed that it had been penetrated by spies, a rare acknowledgment of a security breach for an organization that has maintained a cohesive image. The U.S. Embassy in Beirut denied the allegation.

In his televised speech, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah said CIA members at the embassy had recruited at least two Hezbollah members and the group was investigating whether the U.S. intelligence agency or another foreign agency recruited a third.

"We now have proof that this embassy is a spying nest and that some U.S. diplomats are intelligence officers penetrating and recruiting Lebanese society and Lebanese political factions," he said.

Nasrallah did not name the suspects, saying he wanted to protect their families "whom I know personally." All three confessed their actions to a Hezbollah "spy combat unit," he said.

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