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**HIZBALLAH: TERRORISM, NATIONAL  
LIBERATION, OR MENACE?**

**Sami G. Hajjar**

**August 2002**

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Authors Note: There are many English spelling variations of Arabic names such as Hizballah (Hezbollah; Hizb'ullah, Hizbollah); Shiite (Shi'a, Shi'i); Shab'a (Shebaa, Cheb'a); al-Qa'ida (Al Qaeda), and so on. In this monograph, I will use one consistent spelling throughout unless the term is part of a direct quote, in which case the original spelling will be retained.

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## FOREWORD

The Lebanese Hizballah, or the Party of God, has been a player in Lebanese and regional politics since 1982. It gained international notoriety as a result of the 1983 suicide attack that claimed the lives of 241 U.S. Marines, then stationed in Lebanon. Hizballah was also responsible for a series of kidnappings of U.S. and Western hostages during the 1980s, and attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina during the 1990s. Since its inception, Hizballah has been engaged in a prolonged fight against Israel and its South Lebanon Army (SLA) ally, and took credit for the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 and the dismantling of the SLA. It remains at odds with Israel over its continued occupation of an enclave in the Golan Heights along the Lebanon-Syria border. Hizballah is a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause.

In his State of the Union address in January 2002, President George W. Bush specifically mentioned Hizballah as part of a “terrorist underworld” that threatens U.S. interests. Hizballah has been on the Department of State’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations since 1997.

The author of this monograph, Dr. Sami Hajjar, reviews the history of Hizballah since its inception in 1982, and examines its role in the recent political turmoil of Lebanon and the region. Not only is Hizballah’s role central in the dispute over the Shab’a Farms enclave between Lebanon and Israel, it is part of an entangled set of linkages involving Syria, Iran, the United States, the European Union, and the Palestinians. The challenge that Hizballah poses to U.S. policy in the Middle East involves complicated strategic issues, not merely problems of terrorism that could be dealt with by countermeasures.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as a contribution to the national security debate on this important subject as our nation engages in a war on terrorism with diverse international manifestations.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

SAMI G. HAJJAR was born in Beirut, Lebanon. He was educated at the American University of Beirut where he obtained a B.A. and M.A. in Public Administration, and the University of Missouri-Columbia where he obtained a Ph.D. in Political Science in 1969. He was a Professor of Political Science at the University of Wyoming from 1966-1987 where he taught a variety of courses including Middle East Politics and Islamic Political Theory. Hajjar was also assigned for 2 years to the Wyoming Governor's Office and worked on international trade promotion. In 1987 he joined the U.S. Information Agency and served in Saudi Arabia as Cultural Affairs Officer, and in the United Arab Emirates as Public Affairs Officer, before returning to Washington in 1992 as Gulf Desk Officer. In 1993 he resigned the Foreign Service to become consultant to the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies in Abu Dhabi. In September 1994 until his retirement in January 2002, Dr. Hajjar served at the U.S. Army War College as Professor and Director of Middle East Studies in the Department of National Security and Strategy. He is currently on assignment with the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. Dr. Hajjar is the author of numerous professional articles in Middle East studies, public administration, and political science.

## SUMMARY

In this monograph, the author advances the thesis that the conditions that give rise to acts of terrorism must be dealt with as urgently as combating those responsible for such acts. In the case of Hizballah, those conditions are essentially political. The situation contributing to the rise of Hizballah involves the political, economic, and social circumstances of the Shiite community of Lebanon as the country began to experience civil strife in the mid-1970s. The immediate cause for the creation of the organization was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, resulting in the prolonged occupation of south Lebanon.

The monograph examines the formation and development of Hizballah in the context of the Lebanese confessional political system that rests on a delicate balance between the country's religious sects. Historically, the system favored the Christian and the Muslim Sunni communities, but as the Shiite community became the largest sect in Lebanon, it demanded a greater share of the nation's pie. Hizballah has its roots in this larger Shiite insurrectionist movement.

As a religious party, clerics occupy a central role in Hizballah's leadership structure. The party organization is hierarchical with a definite link to Iran, since Iranian religious and political leadership is an important source of guidance. Several organizational entities direct and control the party's functional and regional activities, including social services and military wings. Additionally, Hizballah's ideological culture rests on a Manichean view that divides the world between oppressors and oppressed. Politically, the United States and Israel are viewed as having a symbiotic relationship, and regarded as oppressors and evil.

Hizballah's work on the behalf of its constituency and its resistance activities against the Israeli occupation of South

Lebanon earned the party a respectable bloc of seats in the Lebanese Parliament, and the admiration of many Arabs and Muslims. In the dispute between Lebanon and Israel—also involving Syria and the United Nations (U.N.)—over the Shab’a Farms enclave located on the eastern slopes of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, Hizballah plays a pivotal role. Even beyond the Shab’a Farms border dispute, the entire Lebanon-Israel border issue is made complicated for lack of clear documentations dating to the French and British mandate period, position adjustments made by Israel during its occupation of south Lebanon, and U.N. involvement in demarcating the border to certify Israeli withdrawal.

For the United States, Hizballah is regarded as a terrorist organization. The Arabs, on the other hand, view Hizballah’s activities as legitimate national liberation efforts. Both views are supported by objective evidence. Utilizing a geographic context, the author assesses the threat of Hizballah at the Lebanese, regional, and international levels. Lebanon remains a fragile body politic, and events on the Lebanon-Israel border involving Hizballah and possibly Palestinian refugees in the area could rekindle civil strife. At the regional level, Hizballah’s efforts on behalf of the Palestinians and the quest to liberate the Shab’a Farms could trigger a wider regional conflict especially because of the intimate involvements of Syria and Iran in these efforts. Finally, no credible evidence exists linking Hizballah to recent international terrorist incidents.

The author concludes with several observations: Hizballah is a complex party firmly grounded in the culture of its constituency and is part of Islamic national liberation movements, it is engaged in guerrilla warfare against Israeli occupation, and despite its identifiable organizational structure, has a mercurial center of gravity. His recommendations: The United States should not engage Hizballah militarily, should encourage Israel to vacate the Shab’a Farms, and should give priority to the Syria-Israel



track in the peace process. The menace of Hizballah is related to what is fundamentally a strategic challenge to U.S. Middle East policy that cannot be resolved through tactical measures.

## **HIZBALLAH: TERRORISM, NATIONAL LIBERATION, OR MENACE?**

In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, President George W. Bush informed Congress and the American public that one of the goals of his administration “is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction.” He went on to name the regimes of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as the culprit states, and with their terrorist allies, that “constitute an axis of evil. . . . They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving the means to match their hatred.”<sup>1</sup>

The Department of State, pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act as amended by the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, designates certain international organizations and groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). These designations are valid for 2 years, after which they expire. The Secretary of State can redesignate an organization if it has been determined that the organization has continued to engage in terrorist activity.<sup>2</sup> The Lebanese organization Hizballah (literally, Party of God) has been designated as FTO in the State Department’s reports for its involvement in several anti-U.S. terrorist attacks in the 1980s, and attacks on the Israeli Embassy and other Jewish targets in Argentina in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

Given the symbiotic relationship between Iran and Hizballah, the U.S. concern about Hizballah garners added significance following the President’s inclusion of Iran in the “axis of evil” triumvirate. This monograph examines Hizballah as a challenge to U.S. policymakers in planning the war on terrorism. It delineates the threats posed by Hizballah and their political ramifications for Lebanon, the region, and U.S. policy objectives in the Middle East.

The circumstances that gave rise to Hizballah, the precarious nature of the Lebanese political system in the wake of that country's civil war, and the volatile nature of the region in light of the unsettled Arab-Israeli conflict are complicating factors for U.S. policymakers in confronting the challenge of Hizballah. My primary thesis is that the conditions that give rise to acts of terrorism must be dealt with as urgently as combating those responsible for such acts if the war on terrorism is to be won. In the case of Hizballah, those conditions, as will be demonstrated, are essentially political. This thesis explains why the war on terrorism will be unconventional and a long ordeal.

### **Formation and Development of Hizballah.**

The principal cause of Hizballah's creation was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The invasion took place in the context of momentous regional political and security developments in which Lebanon became a focal point. A major development in the modern history of the region was the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 that brought Sinai, Gaza, and the West Bank under Israeli occupation. While Lebanon was not directly involved in the war, the impact of Arab defeat was to reverberate in Lebanon a few years later and seriously threaten its unity and independence.

The Arab response to the Israeli occupation was the "war of attrition" that Egypt waged between 1967-70, and Syria's prompting Palestinian commandos to infiltrate Lebanon and wage attacks on Israel. This military strategy led the Palestinians to conclude that Arab armies were incapable of confronting Israel in conventional warfare, and they adopted guerrilla warfare tactics as means for liberation and eventual statehood. Their main base of operations after the 1967 war was in Jordan whose majority population consisted of Palestinian refugees. Shortly thereafter, Palestinian guerrilla organizations found themselves in a struggle with the government of King Hussein over control of the country. In September 1970 the king got the upper

hand, and scores of Palestinian fighters were forced to leave the country.<sup>4</sup> It was the influx of large numbers of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon and the reality of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), headed by Yasir Arafat, becoming a “government within a government” that contributed directly to Lebanon’s prolonged civil strife, which began in earnest in mid-1970. Lebanon became the launching site for Palestinian guerrilla activities against Israel and for Israeli retaliations. Ultimately these skirmishes led to the eruption of full-scale civil war between leftist Muslims supported by Syria and the PLO, and conservative Christians supported by Israel. As the civil war progressed, the authority of the central government of Lebanon collapsed in 1976, with the Army breaking down along sectarian lines, and Syria and Israel intervening directly to defend their interests. The Israeli 1982 invasion that expelled the PLO leadership to Tunis and resulted in the prolonged occupation of south Lebanon was the single direct event that gave rise to Hizballah, but the organization was spurred by the general unsettled regional political environment following the 1967 war.<sup>5</sup>

Because of Lebanon’s confessional political system that allocates major political offices and bureaucratic appointments along religious sectarian lines, significant demographic shifts could destabilize the very foundations of the system. These foundations were based on the 1943 National Pact—Lebanon’s unwritten constitution—among the country’s traditional leaders at the time. It established the representation ratio of 6/5, whereby the Chamber of Deputies (parliament) would be made up of six Christian deputies for every five Muslim deputies, the president of the republic would be a Maronite Christian, the Speaker of Parliament would be a Shiite, and the prime minister would be a Sunni Muslim, and so on, accounting for all senior positions in government. The logic of this arrangement was based on the country’s 1932 census in which the Maronite Christians constituted a plurality of the population, and all Christians comprised a slight majority of the Lebanese.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, system survival favored the status quo and meant that the delicate balance between the Christian and Muslim communities had to be preserved. This is why Lebanon has never had an official census after 1932.<sup>7</sup>

The same system that gave political advantages to the Christians also gave them relative economic advantages over time. But also over the years, the Shiite community, traditionally concentrated in the rural Beqa' valley and south Lebanon by virtue of its heavy involvement in the agricultural sector, began to increase in numbers due to higher birth rates common among rural communities. The economic gap between the Shiites and the Christians, as well as between the Shiites and the commercially oriented Sunni community, began to widen.<sup>8</sup> Since the political system was inelastic, the Shiite community was being gradually transformed from a passive and marginal group to a more activist group demanding a greater share in Lebanon's pie. The transformation was largely due to a gifted cleric, Musa al-Sadr, who was born in Iran to a family with some roots in Lebanon. He arrived in south Lebanon in 1959 to lead the Shiite community of the coastal city of Tyre. He rapidly rose to become the acknowledged leader of Lebanon's Shiites on the strength of his educational background as a lawyer and religious scholar, religious training and tutelage under leading Ayatollahs in Iran and Iraq, charismatic personality, and oration skill.<sup>9</sup> Utilizing traditional Shiite symbols and institutions, Al-Sadr was able to energize the Shiite community by virtue of his rise to the position of chairman of the Shiite Higher Council. He urged the community to become more assertive and to seek emancipation from economic deprivation that had been associated with the community's agrarian traditions. This he attempted to accomplish within the existing Lebanese political system, considering the Shiite community an existential part of the Lebanese mosaic.<sup>10</sup>

Approximately 3 years into the civil war, and a few months following the Israeli invasion in March 1978 to destroy Palestinian bases and establish a "security zone" in

the south, Musa al-Sadr accepted an official invitation to visit Libya. On August 31, 1978, al-Sadr, along with two companions, disappeared, and their whereabouts and fates remain a mystery to this date—hence the title of Fouad Ajami’s book, *The Vanished Imam*.

Al-Sadr has become a larger-than-life figure among the Shiites of Lebanon. No comparable personality has come forward to replace him, although Nabih Birri, a lawyer by training, not a cleric, and currently Speaker of Parliament, took over the leadership position of “*Afwaj al-Muqawamah al-Lubnaniya*” (Legions of the Lebanese Resistance), known by its acronym AMAL (Amal) which means “hope,” that al-Sadr created in 1975 as a Shiite militia. Initially, al-Sadr, it seemed, intended his militia to fight Israel in the south and to be an auxiliary to the Lebanese Army. However, Amal became but one of several armed groups representing major Lebanese religious factions and various Palestinian groups that dotted the Lebanese landscape as civil strife began to rage.<sup>11</sup>

Radical members of Amal formed Hizballah. They objected to Amal’s moderate policies and Nabih Berri’s presumed willingness to seek political accommodation rather than military confrontation in the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion. These members were previously associated with other various Shiite groups. Prominent among them was the Lebanese *al-Da’wa* (Call) movement whose intellectual roots were based on the 1960s Shiite revival movement in Najaf Iraq, and with Islamic Amal, the breakaway faction of the main Amal movement. The party’s formation was aided by the fact that Syria permitted at the time some 1,000 members of the Iranian *Pasdaran* (Revolutionary Guard) consisting of military and civilian instructors to locate in the Beqa’ valley. The Iranians provided funds and training that directly contributed to the rapid rise of Hizballah and its anti-Western and anti-Israeli stances that were in line with Syrian and Iranian policies.<sup>12</sup>

Ideologically, Hizballah was inspired by the two prominent ayatollahs associated with Shiite revivalism—the Iraqi Baqir al-Sadr and the Iranian Ruhallah Khomeini. Baqir al-Sadr founded the Iraqi *al-Da'wa* party in 1968, whose purpose was to organize Muslim believers to seize power and create an Islamic state as a prelude to spreading the Islamic *da'wa* to the rest of the world. Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, executed by the regime of Saddam Hussein in 1980 for his support of Iran's Islamic revolution, was a major source for Hizballah's radical ideas. The other principal source was Ayatollah Khomeini, who for many years was in exile in Najaf where he masterminded the 1979 Iranian revolution and became that country's Supreme Leader. From Khomeini, Hizballah adopted the "theory that a religious jurist (*Vali-Faqih*) should hold ultimate political power. The authority of this jurist, both spiritual and political, may not be challenged; he must be obeyed. Hizballah sees itself fulfilling the messianic role of turning Lebanon into a province of Islam."<sup>13</sup> The hardened political realities of Lebanon, however, led Hizballah's leadership to reevaluate the party's ideological basis and political strategy.

Professor Magnus Ranstorp points out, in his extensive study on the party, that its establishment with Iranian assistance occurred in three phases.<sup>14</sup> The first phase is a reference to the initial arrival of Iranian *Pasdaran* into Lebanon immediately after the 1982 Israeli invasion. They provided the radical Islamic Amal with military training and embarked "on the systematic recruitment and ideological indoctrination of radical Shi'ites in the Biqa'a area."<sup>15</sup> Their successful recruitment efforts were aided by substantial Iranian funding that paid for military training centers and a number of community services such as schools, clinics, hospitals, and cash subsidies to the poor. During this early phase, the founding Shiite clergy drafted Hizballah's charter and constitution, calling for the establishment of an Iranian-style Islamic republic in Lebanon. Sheikh Subhi al-Tufaili, a founding member, was

declared in the Biqa' city of Ba'albek, in December 1982, as president of the envisioned Islamic republic of Lebanon.

The next phase involved Hizballah's activities in the southern outskirts of the capital city of Beirut where large numbers of Shiites lived in desperate conditions, most having been displaced from their farms and homes in the south because of the Israeli invasion and occupation of that region. In addition to the party's ability to recruit members due in part to the assistance of prominent clergy of *al-Da'wa* like Sheikh Hassan Nasserallah (who rose later to the position of secretary-general and oversaw the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000), it was able to attract Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, a leading Shiite personality. Ayatollah Fadlallah was a central figure in the Lebanese Shiite community as head of the Council of Shiite Religious Scholars, and his association with Hizballah gave the party a major boost and a spiritual guide aligned with Iran.<sup>16</sup>

The last phase was associated with Hizballah's expansion into southern Lebanon. A number of factors conjoined to propel the party to prominence in the south. The ouster of the Palestinians from the region by the Israel in 1982; the failure of Amal to challenge the Israeli presence in the region; the success of Hizballah's attack on the U.S. and French contingencies of the Multinational Force on October 23, 1983, in Beirut; the relative successes of suicide attacks against Israeli targets in south Lebanon; and the influx of Iranian aid and influence through such local clerics as Sheikh Ragib Harb (assassinated by Israeli agents in 1984)—all helped to raise the militancy fervor of the party. Consequently, Hizballah created a military wing in the mid-1980s under the name *Al-Muqawama al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Resistance) whose purpose was the liberation of south Lebanon from Israeli occupation. All these developments contributed substantially to the prominence of Hizballah and presented a serious challenge to Amal as the major representative of the Lebanese Shiite community. As Ranstorp observed:



The rapid growth and popularity of the Hiz'ballah in these three regions was achieved not only by a successful combination of ideological indoctrination and material inducement by Hizb'allah through the infusion of Iranian aid and military assistance. It was also achieved by the ability of the Hizb'allah leaders to mobilize a destitute Shi'i community, disaffected with the continuing Israeli occupation, and unite it within the framework of an organisation with clearly defined and articulated political objectives. This was achieved through the provision of concrete and workable solutions to the fundamental political, social, and economic needs of the Shi'a community in the absence of any central Lebanese authority and in the presence of the civil war.<sup>17</sup>

### **Organization and Ideological Evolution.**

As a party and movement whose ideology is grounded in religious thought, clerics occupy a central role in the leadership structure. The religious character of the leadership results, furthermore, in a party organizational hierarchy with emphasis on the role of *ulema* (clerics) in society that is in line with Shiite practice. Authority flows from the top, and control of party members is enhanced by the fact that the lines of authority are traced back to and sanctioned by religious *ulema*. Such an organizational philosophy means that "[t]he highest authority in the Hizb'allah clerical hierarchy is not only allotted to the most learned practitioners of Islamic jurisprudence, obtained only after many years of religious training and scholarly activity, but is also based on the number of students and followers belonging to each cleric."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, and as Rasnstorp goes on to explain, the link that Hizballah has with Iran contributes further to the control the leadership has over the organization. This is because the Iranian religious and political leadership is a source of ultimate (final) guidance on issues that otherwise might be a cause of dissensions or disagreements. It would be incorrect to deduce, however, that Hizballah's leadership is totally subservient to Iran's ayatollahs. For instance, Hizballah's Lebanese spiritual guide, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah,

is critical of the *Velayate Faqih* (guardianship of the jurisconsult) concept as practiced in Iran, and regards himself as much a grand ayatollah with independent standing among the broad Shiite community. This is especially significant for, since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, there has not been an acknowledged *Vali-Faqih* in Iran. Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Khamene'i, holds the title of Supreme Leader (*Rahbar*), not the prestigious designation *Vali-Faqih*. The net result was that Fadlallah's influence as Hizballah's spiritual mentor has increased since the death of Khomeini. Still, Iran's status as the leading Shiite nation and its financial contributions to the coffers give its leadership considerable influence, although not outright control.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. A. Nizar Hamzeh, who has written extensively about Hizballah, constructed an organizational chart of the party based on its various activities, publications, and newspapers reports. For purposes of this monograph, a general overview of the party's organizational structure based on Hamzeh's exposition is presented.<sup>20</sup>

Hizballah's highest decisionmaking entity is a Supreme *Shura* (consultative) Council. Its 17 members are predominantly clergy but include a group of security and paramilitary leaders. This council makes the party's strategic decisions in all areas of legislative, executive, judicial, political, and military affairs. Decisions are by a majority vote, and if need be, matters could be referred to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i, in Iran. The link to Iran is, therefore, more than tactical or cursory.

The day-to-day activities of the party are supervised by representatives of the party's regional or district heads (the four districts are Beirut, the southern suburbs, the South, and the Biqa') plus five additional members appointed by the Supreme *Shura* Council. The Secretary General is an ex-officio member. He and his deputy are entrusted with administering the affairs of the party and are its most visible leaders. Currently the Secretary General is Sayyid

Sheikh Hasan Nassrallah, a gifted orator and a brilliant strategist.

A supervisory organ of the party is a 15-member Politburo that coordinates the works of the various party committees. The committees, of which there are several, focus on three main functional areas: security issues, social services including financial and administrative affairs, and religious activities including propaganda and mass media. It is generally acknowledged that the social services the party engages in have been extremely effective and are what endear it to many in the Shiite community of Lebanon. They include assistance in medical needs, housing, public utilities, and even financial aid to a clientele that numbers in the thousands. Hizballah, in this regard, performs services that are usually expected of local governments.

Lastly, Hizballah's organizational chart includes what Hamzeh labels as a "combat organ" made up of two sections: the Islamic Resistance (*al-muqawamah al-Islamiyah*) whose members are combatants when mobilized; otherwise they have normal civilian occupations—a fact that makes them a difficult target for enemy forces. The second section is the Islamic Holy War (*al-jihad al-Islami*), and, together with the first section, it comes under the direct supervision of the Supreme *Shura* Council. Furthermore, the first section "was in charge of suicidal attacks against Western and Israeli targets, the second one leads more conventional attacks against Israeli troops in the south."<sup>21</sup>

Ideologically, we have already noted the association that Hizballah has to Iran. This link guided the Hizballah leadership to develop basic radical ideological stances involving beliefs regarding the nature of conflict, the character of the ideal state, relations to other Muslims, and views of the Western world.<sup>22</sup>

Hizballah adheres to a Manichean notion of the world as being divided between oppressors (*mustakbirun*) and

oppressed (*mustad'ifin*). The relationship between the two groups is inherently antagonistic—a conflict between good and evil, right and wrong. This is a central concept in Hizballah's ideology, which, if rigidly applied to the realms of regional and international politics, would allow little room for compromise. The conflicting relationship cannot be resolved by some mechanism leading to a win-win situation. Rather, “the meek shall inherit the earth,” not in the life after, but here and now through their activism. Also, oppression takes economic, cultural, political, and social forms, and oppressors transcend any particular nationality or religion. Consequently, in the context of Hizballah's immediate political reality, the economic circumstances of the Shiites in Lebanon and Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, a region inhabited primarily by Shiites, identifies them as oppressed. Political activism is required to rectify their economic condition, and military resistance is essential to deal with the occupation.

As for the conception of the state, readers familiar with the Shiite notion of the Hidden Imam recognize that an ideal government cannot be established until the return of this divinely-anointed Imam.<sup>23</sup> In the absence of the ideal, Hizballah adheres to a concept of an Islamic state akin to the one preached and practiced by Iran. Being an Islamic movement, Hizballah regards it imperative to establish an Islamic state as a religious duty, and because it is the best form of government capable of bringing about the political ideals of justice, equality, and freedom until the return of the Hidden Imam (Mahdi). In the words of Hussein al-Musawi, founder of Islamic Amal,

we are faithful to imam Khomeyni politically, religiously and ideologically. In accordance with Khomeyni's teaching we strive to fight all manifestations of corruption and vanity in this world, and all who fight the Muslims. . . . Our struggle is in the east as well as the west. . . . Our goal is to lay the groundwork for the reign of the Mahdi of earth, the reign of truth and justice.<sup>24</sup>

The creation of an Islamic state means, in more concrete terms, that such a state will be based on *Sharia* law (Islamic law). *Sharia*, however, has multiple sources, and each is subject to different interpretations by the various sects and scholars, not to mention that there is no unanimity on the authenticity of all the acknowledged sources. In the context of the Lebanese confessional mosaic, it is not surprising that Hizballah's scheme for an Islamic state is opposed by the Christian community, Sunni Muslims, Druze, and even a majority of Shiites who prefer the laxity of a secular Lebanese republic. Aware of this reality and based on the Quranic verse "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256), Hizballah does not include the establishment of an Islamic state as part of its political program, although the concept remains central to the party's ideology.

Also ingrained in Hizballah's ideology is a complex notion of Islamic universalism deduced from yet another expression of the Manichean vision. It is a vision akin to St. Augustine's dichotomy that groups humanity into a "City of God" and a "City of Satan." In Hizballah's construct, Muslim believers, presumably all Muslims regardless of sect, constitute the "Party of God" in a general sense. They are the "*umma islamiyyah*" (Islamic nation) and that binds them together. The antithesis of this group would be, obviously, the "Party of Satan" or the multitudes of unbelievers.<sup>25</sup>

The regional implication of this ideological outlook is that Hizballah regards Palestinians as members of the "Party of God" or *umma* whose plight concerns the entire *umma*. Additionally, Jerusalem, which contains Islam's third holiest site, is not the exclusive concern of the Palestinians, but its liberation from Israeli occupation is the responsibility of all Muslims. "Thus, it is the martyrdom, imprisonment, displacement, and overall struggle of the oppressed Palestinian nation to liberate its land from the oppressor, Israel, which earns it Hizbu'llah's utmost respect and camaraderie."<sup>26</sup> To provide aid and comfort to the Palestinians becomes an article of faith—a religious duty to

come to the assistance of fellow Muslims. As a matter of principle, Hizballah's leadership was loath to sit idly by during the Israeli incursion into Palestinian-controlled areas in April 2002. Israeli threats of massive retaliation against Syria and Lebanon, however, constrained Hizballah's military activities against Israel along the border. Hizballah was pragmatic enough to confine its across-the-border muscle-flexing largely to the disputed Shab'a Farms region that it regards part of its "Lebanese national" duty to liberate, as will be explained below.

How Hizballah views the West and its civilization at the ideological and pragmatic levels is of special interest to this inquiry. Ghorayeb's analysis of these points reveals the complexity and sophistication of Hizballah's views especially about the United States.<sup>27</sup> Samuel Huntington's theory of "clash of civilizations" appears valid insofar as Hizballah believes in a cultural conflict between Islam and the West. It is a conflict far deeper than any political or ideological conflicts that separate them as two distinct civilizations. Ever since the rise of Islam and its contact with the West through the centuries, including contacts with the Crusaders and later with European colonists, relations have been a "civilisational struggle" in which each side believes in the superiority of its culture. Leading the Western charge in this struggle is the United States that Hizballah regards, as the Islamic Republic of Iran had, as the "Great Satan." Other Western countries such as Britain and France are considered simply "evil." Operationally, Hizballah believes that the struggle takes the form of Western conspiracies against the Muslim World. In the Middle East, the United States and Israel are the main conspirators. In this symbiotic relationship,

According to Fadlu'llah and Hizbu'llah, the US' regional policy is not based on real US interests but on Israeli interests. Therefore, the US does not have an American policy in the Middle East, but an "Israeli policy," which stems from the US' ideological commitment to Israel. So closely intertwined are Israel's and the US' interests that the two states are deemed

identical and are alternately cast as being the other's instrument. On the one hand, Israel is depicted as the US' "spearhead" in the region, while on the other, the US is portrayed as Israel's "tool."<sup>28</sup>

More recently, Fadlallah, not unexpectedly, accused the U.S. administration of being a full partner in Sharon's incursion into Palestine in April 2002. Fadlallah believes the entire episode of the Israeli incursion was based on a pre-agreed upon U.S.-Israeli plan, and Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to the region was part of this plan to give political support to Sharon's campaign.<sup>29</sup>

Given this perception of the United States and its pro-Israeli policies in the region, Hizballah believes that the United States is in fact the lead terrorist state in the world. On the basis of these deeply-held convictions, Hizballah justifies acts of violence, including suicide bombing, against the oppressor enemy. In an interview with CBS anchor Dan Rather, Hizballah's Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qasim referred to suicide bombing as "martyrdom operations":

We don't call them suicide operations because suicide comes out of a loss of hope in life, while martyrdom is a love of life . . . [These] operations are the only power the Palestinians have against the sophisticated Israeli military machine. Balance cannot be reached unless these operations are carried out in the heartland of the enemy.<sup>30</sup>

Also in this interview, Qasim declared that Hizballah does not believe in the legitimacy of the state of Israel for it was established at the expense of Palestinians, and that the current party's plans "have nothing to do with Americans" because of their support of Israel. But in a veiled warning, ". . . what happens in the future has to be decided in the future."<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, however, and despite its negative image of the West, Hizballah does not reject everything Western as evil. Hizballah, it appears, places high value on western and

especially American education in the fields of science and technology. Many of its members are graduates of Western schools and use their knowledge in the service of the party's social, medical, and information activities.

From this general sketch of Hizballah's organizational structure and ideological constructs, it is possible to conclude that the party is a sophisticated movement deeply rooted in its environment. Its appeal and popularity are enhanced by regional developments whereby the United States and Israel increasingly appear as enemies of Islam and the Arabs. And despite the fact that Hizballah was created as a reaction to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the party is now far from being an "issue party" likely to fade as political circumstances change. Hizballah has managed to adapt successfully and accommodate evolving circumstances, becoming in the process an active player in Lebanon's political system, and an admired symbol of anti-Israeli resistance throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

The ability of Hizballah to adapt successfully and accommodate—read moderate—and still retain its legitimacy with its constituency is because of its link to Iran. It was primarily the struggle between the moderate and hardliner leadership in Iran following the death of Khomeini in 1989 and the emergence in the same year of the moderate regime of President Ali Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani that caused a shift in Hizballah's orientation. Rafsanjani, interested in rebuilding the Iranian economy, began to chart a course based on normal international behavior. Influenced by the new Iranian orientation of openness, Sheikh Fadlallah urged Hizballah to become more open and involved in the Lebanese political system. The ideological implication was that the notion of an Islamic Republic in Lebanon had to be abandoned, if only for tactical political reasons.<sup>32</sup> Fadlallah's push for the "Lebanonisation" of Hizballah, as Nizar Hamzah explained, was reflected in 1991 in the election of Sayyid Abbas Musawi, considered a member of the party's moderate



faction, as Secretary General. After Musawi's assassination in February 1992 by the Israelis, his successor, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, continued the policy of rapprochement by positioning the party to participate in the Lebanese parliamentary elections and to close the "western hostages" file by completing the release of all hostages in 1992. Hizballah members won eight parliamentary seats in the 1992 elections, with four additional seats won by nonmembers affiliated with its electoral list. As a result, Hizballah constituted the largest single party bloc in Parliament. In the 1996 elections, the party did not fare as well and was represented by seven members and three affiliates. But in the 2000 elections, it improved its showing and won nine seats and three affiliates due to its popularity even with Christian voters who credited it with forcing the Israeli withdrawal in May. By its active participation in the electoral process, the party

was clearly admitting not only the realities of the Lebanese system but also that the road to the Islamic state could be a model of participation in elections rather than the revolutionary approach. Thus, evolutionary and not revolutionary approach has become the main feature of Hizballah's new policy.<sup>33</sup>

Under Nasrallah's leadership, Hizballah continues to pursue a strategy of pragmatism, accommodation, and engagement in the Lebanese political system and causes. The one cause that propelled Hizballah into prominence regionally and internationally was the liberation of south Lebanon from Israeli occupation. The party's early history of attacks against U.S. and western targets in Lebanon,<sup>34</sup> military operations against Israeli forces and their South Lebanese Army (SLA) ally, and continued efforts to liberate the Shab'a Farms enclave, have earned the party the scorn of the United States and Israel as a "terrorist" organization, but the admiration of most Lebanese and Arabs as heroes of national resistance fighting for a legitimate and just cause. And even the "understandings" that Israel reached with Hizballah, which will be detailed below, added to the

legitimacy of Hizballah's cause and image as a pragmatic and responsible actor.<sup>35</sup>

The discussion thus far suggests that the enigmatic Hizballah was born of insurgency, reared in violent circumstances, and matured with seemingly greater sense of realism and pragmatism. The next section discusses the issue of the Shab'a Farms that is the current focus of Hizballah's military operations. These operations and the Lebanese claim that the Shab'a Farms enclave is occupied Lebanese territory are feared to be by the United Nations (U.N.), the United States and other western nations a flashpoint that could trigger a major war engulfing the entire region.<sup>36</sup>

### **Shab'a Farms Dispute.**

The Shab'a Farms dispute is the last major remaining territorial dispute between Israel and Lebanon—a dispute that began with the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon in 1978 (Operation LITANI) and the subsequent establishment of a “security zone” in a border enclave controlled jointly with its SLA allied militia. The Shab'a issue is more than a legal question involving the right of sovereignty over the disputed area; it is the hook used by Lebanon and Syria to link the Lebanon-Israel track to the Syrian-Israel track in the Middle East peace process. It involves the larger question of a peace settlement to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanese and Syrian lands leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Hizballah is the tactical instrument contributing to that end. Understanding the complexities of these relationships is critical to finding a resolution of what the United States and Israel regard as Hizballah's terrorism.

During his second term of office, President William J. Clinton became personally involved in the Middle East peace process. As U.S. diplomatic efforts intensified to move the process forward, Syrian President Hafez al-Asad became apprehensive about the possibilities of separate

“deals” between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and the Lebanese, leaving Syria isolated. The late President Asad had always preferred a comprehensive approach to the peace process whereby all of the tracks would be settled simultaneously rather than individually.<sup>37</sup> This approach, he reasoned, would give the Arab side greater bargaining weight in negotiations with Israel. Consequently, when the Palestinians signed the Oslo Agreement with Israel in May 1994, which appeared to have paved the way for a separate Palestinian-Israeli deal, the coupling of the Lebanon and Syrian tracks became that much more important for the Syrians. The disproportionate political influences that Syria had over a wide-spectrum of Lebanese institutions, groups, and personalities, not to mention the reportedly 35,000 troops deployed there, ensured that Lebanon had little room to maneuver on the issue of coupling the two tracks. From a Syrian perspective, furthermore, the linkage serves its interest in the peace process and prevents its being isolated. Syria gains an important card—the “Lebanon card,” which includes Hizballah and potentially the Palestinian refugees—to play at the negotiation table with Israel that possesses overwhelming advantages in economic, technological, and military terms, not to mention U.S. support. Without the “Lebanon card,” Israel could not be induced to give away much in negotiations with the Syrians.<sup>38</sup>

Specifically, the coupling of the tracks meant that negotiating peace with Israel involved the issues of simultaneous Israeli withdrawal from occupied Lebanese and Syrian lands. Hence, when Prime Minister Ehud Barak declared his intention to unilaterally withdraw from Lebanon by July 2000, President Lahhoud of Lebanon complained:

[I]t is no longer a secret that Israeli maneuver including the proposal for unilateral withdrawal without a comprehensive and just peace, is a proposal that does not seek peace but a security arrangement for Israel at our expense and is designed

to shift all other burdens on us, foremost of which is the Palestinian problem.<sup>39</sup>

What was interesting about Lebanon's position on Israel's unilateral withdrawal, which took place in May 2000, was the fact that U.N. Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 425 called for such a withdrawal; i.e. unilateral and unconditional, which was what Lebanon had been calling for all along. On the other hand, by agreeing to link its track with Syria, Lebanon involves itself in the peace process based on UNSC resolutions 242 and 338 adopted in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war that called on the parties to exchange "land for peace." All along, the Lebanese have considered that these U.N. resolutions, and hence the "land for peace" formula, do not apply to them since no Lebanese lands were occupied in the 1967 war. For the Lebanese, Israel was to comply with UNSC resolution 425 and withdraw unconditionally to the international border. But herein lies the problem; how to define the international border?

The recognized border between Lebanon and Israel is the international boundary line agreed upon by France and Great Britain in 1923 when Lebanon and Palestine were under their respective mandates. This exact line was recognized in 1949 by independent Lebanon and the newly created State of Israel in Palestine as the Armistice Demarcation Line that remained undisputed and uncontested by either country until Israeli incursions into south Lebanon beginning 1978. During Israel's prolonged occupation of south Lebanon, border issues began to surface, and when Israel withdrew unilaterally, a new dimension to the border definition was added to the debate, namely the border line between Lebanon and Syria in an area in the Golan Heights that is under Israeli occupation. This is the area known as the Shab'a Farms.<sup>40</sup>(See Map 1.)

**Map 1.**

One issue of concern to the Lebanese was that Israel had shifted the international border to the west (in an area along the Armistice Line separating the Lebanese village of Kafr Killa and the Israeli town of Metulla in the north and running south to the vicinity of the Lebanese town of Mays al-Jabal) in order to control eight high-ground strategic positions or outposts. The border “adjustments” at Lebanon’s expense were for security considerations; Israel moved the 1923 line “away from cities and villages contiguous to the border” in order “to make up for that which British and French surveyors did not attach importance in the 1920s: the military defense of the border with Lebanon.”<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, Israel withdrew to a line set by the U.N. in 1978 that, from an Israeli viewpoint, left no outposts on Lebanese lands. The 1978 line, in the estimation of the U.N., corresponded as closely as possible to the 1923-49 line based on available cartographic documentation. Hizballah, however, took issue with this view, arguing that there are Israeli border positions that remain on Lebanese soil.<sup>42</sup>

Another border issue was the question of the Lebanese “seven villages,” known collectively as the Hounine villages, which were incorporated into Palestine as a result of the French-British 1923 compromise that delineated the border between the two countries. In 1999, Lebanon’s Prime Minister Salim al-Huss acknowledged that U.N. Resolution 425 did not apply to the seven villages since they were not part of the area occupied by Israel in 1978, but that their recovery was a Lebanese objective. Probably Lebanon’s raising of the issue of the “seven villages” was to signal that the entire Lebanese-Israeli border demarcation can become the subject of entangled legalistic debate in future peace negotiations if, as they suspected, the Israelis were seeking “land swap” and border adjustments.<sup>43</sup>

The Lebanese-Syrian border along the western edge of the Golan Heights, known as the Shab’a Farms region, is the subject of dispute between Lebanon and Israel as to whether Israel had completely withdrawn from Lebanon in compliance with U.N. Resolution 425. It is the flashpoint

region where Hizballah concentrates its military operations against Israeli occupation forces.

The disputed area lies on the western slopes of Mount Hermon that has been under Israeli occupation since June 1967. The exact size of the area is not clear; western sources designate it as being “approximately 25 square kilometers,” while Lebanese sources believe it to be “over 100 square kilometers.” Both sources agree that the Shab’a Farms enclave begins at a point north on the slopes of Mount Hermon facing the village of Shab’a and runs in a south-western direction for about 16 kilometers to near the farms of Al-Noukhaylah and Mughr Shab’a in the vicinity of the Lebanese-Syrian-Israeli border line. The discrepancy in estimating the size is apparently due to disagreement on how far eastward the farms extend along various points on the north-southwestern line. Essentially, the exact size of the area is unknown.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the Lebanese claim that the area in question consists of 14 farms, 13 of which are Lebanese while one, Mughr Shab’a, is Syrian, and the enclave is home to some 1,200 families. Also, since occupying the area, Israel has established four settlements and expropriated vineyards to supply a winery that the settlers built there (by some accounts, there are no vineyards in the Shab’a Farms), erected military observation and listening posts, benefited from the ground water of the area, and developed a ski resort that “yields a billion dollars per annum from tourism.”<sup>45</sup> The dispute is centered on the question: Should Israel vacate this area according to the terms of Resolution 425 or is this area subject to a final settlement based on Resolution 242?

Maps of the tri-border region between Lebanon, Syria, and Israel place the Shab’a Farms enclave in Syria, but the village of Shab’a (also Che’baa’ on some maps) that gave its name to the farms is clearly in Lebanon. Still, the exact demarcation line of the Lebanese-Syrian border in that area is unclear. According to Dr. Issam Khalifeh, Lebanese University professor of modern history, there was a French-British agreement on February 4, 1935, which

considered the Lebanese and Syrian border to follow the watershed running down the side of Mount Hermon so that the western slopes of Mount Hermon are Lebanese while the eastern slopes are Syrian.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Prados notes that “with regard to Lebanon and Syria, France, which had mandates for both countries, did not define a formal boundary between the two, although it did separate them by administrative divisions.”<sup>47</sup> This viewpoint was subscribed to by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, who noted that “with respect to Israeli withdrawal from a segment of joint Lebanese-Syrian border area, there seems to be no official record of a formal international boundary agreement between Lebanon and Syria on the basis of which the border could be easily delineated to ascertain the withdrawal.”<sup>48</sup>

U.N. Resolution 425 (1978) called on Israel “immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory.” It established a “United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces . . .,” and requested the “Secretary General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of the present resolution.” The withdrawal requirement did not come into play until 22 years later, following the completion of Israeli forces’ pullout on May 24, 2000. In pursuing the mission of certifying Israel’s withdrawal, a U.N. survey team, in consultation with appropriate Lebanese and Israeli officials, determined a “virtual Lebanese-Israeli border line—or a line of withdrawal” commonly referred to as the “Blue Line.” (See Map 2.) The Secretary General

emphasized that the U.N. was not establishing a border, but rather was drawing a line for the purpose of confirming Israeli withdrawal in compliance with Resolution 425. It was the intent of the Secretary General, however, that the line should conform as closely as possible to the recognized international border.<sup>49</sup>



**Map 2.**

The “Blue Line” was largely based on the 1949 Lebanese-Israeli Armistice line with minor “adjustments” to accommodate terrain and other features. However, the portion of the Blue Line along the Syrian occupied Golan Heights and Lebanon was based on the line separating the areas of operations of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and U.N. Disengagement Observer Force (the U.N. force in Golan). The result was to place the Shab’a Farms in Syria. The U.N. decision was based on Syrian and Israeli maps submitted in connection with the 1974 Golan Heights disengagement agreement (which created a UNDOF Zone) that placed the Shab’a Farms within UNDOF’s area of operations, and hence within Syria. The Lebanese rejected this conclusion, and their official position was summed up by Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hammoud who said, “the Blue Line, or withdrawal line or with any other name, should not impede our right to take back occupied lands, especially the Shabaa Farms.”<sup>50</sup>

Lebanon argues that the Lebanon-Syria border along the Golan Heights was demarcated and agreed to by both countries in 1943, and in 1951 the Shab’a Farms were transferred to Lebanon. There does not seem to be proof on whether this agreement was in a form of a written pact—copies of which are alleged to be found in the U.N. archives—or an oral agreement. Perhaps a stronger evidence is deeds showing ownership of the land belonging to Lebanese citizens. Interestingly, Syria supports Lebanon’s claim. Finally, and more recently, the Israeli scholar, Dr. Asher Kaufman of the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University, reported on the basis of his research at the Cartographic Institute in Paris, that documents dating to the French Mandate period support Lebanon’s claim to the land.<sup>51</sup> Still, the U.N. rejected the Lebanese claim but without prejudicing any future border agreement between Syria and Lebanon.<sup>52</sup>

The ambiguity of the Shab’a Farms’ identity impacts the implementation of U.N. Resolutions 426 (1978) adopted tangentially with Resolution 425. UNIFIL, established by

Resolution 426, had the mission, in addition to confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, of “restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. . . .” Because Lebanon does not regard that Israel has completed its withdrawal, it has thus far refused to deploy the Lebanese Army to the south to bring the area under its control. Consequently, the entire Lebanon-Israel border remains a potential flashpoint—a “Red Line” as is often referred to in the Lebanese press.

We should note that a segment of the Lebanese population, which follows the political line of General Michel Aoun, the exiled former Army Commander and head of state, subscribes to his argument that the Shab’a Farms are not Lebanese, the “issue is a lie . . . let Syria give us a documentation that the farms are Lebanese lands and we will liberate them. . . .”<sup>53</sup> This viewpoint is propagated in the United States by a pro-Israeli lobby organization known as “United States Committee for a Free Lebanon” (USCFL). An article in the organization’s monthly bulletin stated, “The Shabaa Farms ‘dispute’ is a figment of no one’s imagination, but a deliberately-crafted Syria pretext for sponsoring paramilitary attacks against Israel and a justification for its continuing occupation of Lebanon.”<sup>54</sup>

Issues surrounding the Lebanon-Israel border boil down to the following: an internationally recognized border line based on the 1923 French-British agreement; an Armistice line that largely corresponds to the 1923 line; a Lebanon-Syria line along the Golan Heights whose legal status is questioned by the U.N.; a Blue line drawn by the U.N. that the Lebanese dispute; and an imaginary Red line corresponding to the Blue line, which, if violated, could lead to acts of violence with serious implications to the peace process. Actors directly involved in these issues are, of course, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, the U.N., and Hizballah. Indirectly involved actors are the countries and entities (Palestinians) with interest in the wider Middle East peace process including the United States, some European

countries, and Iran. Hizballah, then, is a unique bead in a string of beads—easily identifiable but difficult to separate without consequences. How should the United States deal with the challenge of Hizballah? The answer to this question, as should be obvious by now, is not simple, for the issues surrounding the challenge are complex and their underlying concepts are elastic and subjective. The following section will address these points.

### **Issues: Heads and Tails.**

The 2001 Department of State report on terrorism noted that although,

Hizballah has not attacked US interests in Lebanon since 1991, it continued to maintain the capability to target US personnel and facilities there and abroad. During 2001, Hizballah provided training to HAMAS and the Palestine Islamic Jihad at training facilities in the Beka'a Valley.<sup>55</sup>

The report goes on to accuse Hizballah of exporting weaponry to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza for use against Israeli targets. Additionally, the report notes that the Lebanese government condones Hizballah's actions against Israel considering them "resistance activities"; it failed to hand over to U.S. authorities three senior Hizballah operatives wanted for terrorist activities, refused to freeze the organization's assets, and concluded that "The United States and Lebanon did not agree on a definition of terrorism. . . ." <sup>56</sup>

Hizballah's reaction to the report was swift, coming a day after its release by the State Department. It issued a statement in which it referred to the United States as "organizer and manager of evil in the world," rejected the accusations levied on it, and declared that the United States seeks the surrender of the "citadels of rejection and opposition" to its and its Zionist ally's schemes to subject the region to their security, economic, and political interests. The statement concluded, "we clearly state that American

threats will not deter our legitimate efforts to regain [our] rights and to free our lands from the shackles of occupation, hegemony and dependency.”<sup>57</sup> In a nutshell, Hizballah believes that its portrayal as a “terrorist” organization is because of U.S.

persistent attempts to de-legitimize Hizballah’s right to resist the Israeli occupation . . . the US’ criteria for terrorism are the rejection of its domination and the refusal to succumb to Israel. . . . In this way, ‘the brute is made to appear innocent and the victim is made to appear brutal’, a perversion of the truth which constitutes an act of ‘political and intellectual terrorism’. . . .<sup>58</sup>

Lebanon did not comment immediately on the State Department’s report, but Syria, which the report listed as a state-sponsor of terrorism and accused of providing “safehaven and logistical support to a number of terrorist groups” including Hizballah, reacted through its foreign minister. He rejected the accusation and claimed “if we are to be fair about the issue of terrorism, then Israel should be placed on top of the list.”<sup>59</sup>

The difference between the United States and the Arabs on the subject of terrorism in the Middle East is like the popularized difference between the sexes—they come from different planets. The core of the problem is the lack of a universally agreed upon definition. The endeavor to delimit the concept inevitably leads to related discussion of legitimate and illegitimate acts of violence, war crimes, terrorist organizations, terrorist states, state-sponsored terrorism, and so on. As a conference on the topic summarized:

Terrorism is a term of elastic definition that historically has been applied to a wide variety of phenomena. Key debates center on who qualifies as a terrorist, what methods terrorists employ, what their motives are, and who their victims are. Particularly contentious is the question of whether state actors can be considered terrorists, and whether terrorism should be viewed as personally motivated crime or politically motivated

war. We are unlikely to reach a consensus because the ambiguity of the term is politically useful.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the improbability of a widely accepted definition of terrorism, the concept, to have any meaning whatsoever, must include violence inflicted on innocent people for political objectives. To the extent that Hizballah inflicted violence on innocent people for political ends, it did engage in terrorism (as have a host of other actors in the region). Also, to the extent that Hizballah conducted (conducts) military activities against Israeli forces occupying Lebanon, it did (does) engage in national liberation. More important than what label to sew on Hizballah—terrorism or national liberation—is how to assess objectively its threat and constructively to contain and, eventually, end it. A prerequisite of such an objective, however, is a clear understanding of the threats and their ramifications.

### **Threats Analyses.**

One way to theoretically analyze the issues and threats emanating from Hizballah is to utilize a geographic context. The applicable levels of analyses include the local (Lebanon and the immediate border area involving Israel and Syria), regional (Middle East countries and entities involved in the peace process), and international (other nations especially the United States and European countries involved in the peace process). It should be emphasized that, in reality, the threats and related issues at the three levels are intertwined and directly impact one another.

At the local level, the primary threat is the potential for escalating violence between Hizballah and Israel that could lead to a wider conflict involving Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and possibly other states in the region. Since its founding in 1982, Hizballah, as already noted, had engaged in acts of violence against a variety of targets, but mainly against Israeli forces in Lebanon and their surrogate, the now defunct South Lebanon Army. The exchanges between Hizballah and Israel often led to civilian casualties and to

accusations and counter accusations of terrorism. In April 1996, and in response to an increasingly intolerable situation involving repeated attacks on northern Israel by Hizballah *Katyusha* rockets, the Israeli government, facing upcoming elections, launched Operation GRAPES OF WRATH. The operation involved heavy bombardment of south Lebanon and resulted in an attack on April 18 on the UNIFIL compound near the village of Qana where Lebanese civilians had taken refuge. The outcome was a massacre in which over 100 Lebanese civilians, including women and children, were killed.<sup>61</sup> A U.N. report stated that the Israeli attack on Qana was deliberate, a claim that Israel rejected, arguing that stray rounds were responsible for the hit.<sup>62</sup>

Concerned about the rise in civilian casualties on both sides of the border, then U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher brokered an “understanding” on April 26, 1996, between Israel, Lebanon, Hizballah, and Syria that effectively ended the Israeli “Grapes of Wrath Operation.” The key item of what has become known as the “April Understanding” was that “the two parties (Lebanon and Israel) commit to ensuring that under no circumstances will civilians be the target of attack, and that civilian populated areas and industrial and electrical installations will not be used as launching ground for attacks.”<sup>63</sup> The application of this understanding was the responsibility of a Monitoring Group consisting of the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel.

Strictly speaking, Hizballah was not a party to the “April Understanding” since the Israeli official position was refusal to negotiate, and hence enter into an agreement, with terrorists. In reality, however, Hizballah was the intended party to the agreement, albeit indirectly. The reference to Lebanon in the “April Understanding” was pro forma, and the inclusion of Syria was in recognition that it exercised a measure of control over Hizballah and the Lebanese government. The implication of these facts meant that Hizballah was gradually acquiring recognition as a

legitimate resistance movement and an organization that could be counted on to uphold its end of the deal. Since then, Hizballah leaders, and especially the party's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, have gained a measure of international respectability and credibility. Nassrallah has met with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, European officials, and with other party leaders, and granted numerous press interviews, including ones to major U.S. networks.<sup>64</sup> The meeting in July 2000 with Kofi Annan prompted a pro-Israel Lebanese-American group to complain that the meeting "justified and legalized the political entity of Hizballah in Lebanon to the international community,"<sup>65</sup> while the more sympathetic American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee viewed the meeting as reinforcing "Hizballah's status as a legitimate political movement and genuine liberation force, universally recognized outside the US and Israel."<sup>66</sup>

Despite the United States having sponsored the "April Understanding," the distinction between terrorism and resistance is what separates it from its European allies with regard to Hizballah. This was clearly evident following the events of September 11, 2001, when the United States pressured European countries to include Hizballah on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations. Ultimately, however, Hizballah was kept off that list, largely because of the role played by France insisting that Hizballah was not a terrorist organization.<sup>67</sup> Still, while Hizballah remains on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations, Bush's national security advisor recognized the social and political roles of Hizballah but suggested that it cleanse itself of its "terrorist wing that is largely responsible for the problems we face in regions such as the Middle East."<sup>68</sup> Reading between the lines, the United States is seemingly willing to live with a rehabilitated Hizballah perhaps in recognition of the organization's position in the delicate balance in Lebanon's body politic. This is a sobering approach to the challenge of Hizballah that minimizes the



potential threat of renewed civil war in Lebanon, which would destabilize the region further.<sup>69</sup>

Hizballah, like most Muslim political organizations, has been supportive of the Palestinian *intifada* more by word than deed. Its television station, Al-Manar, broadcasting anti-Israeli rhetoric and pro-Islamic and Arab themes, is a popular station with Palestinians as it reinforces their path of resistance to occupation. In his speeches, Nassrallah often reminds his Arab and Muslim audiences that resistance is a “spirit” that cannot be annihilated and calls for supporting the Palestinians.<sup>70</sup> The party’s spiritual guide, Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, had even issued a *fatwa* (religious opinion) that condoned martyrdom operations (suicide missions) equally by men and women.<sup>71</sup> As Palestinian-Israeli relations deteriorated and tensions rose due to increased incidents of suicide bombing, Hizballah showed willingness to provide material support to the Palestinians. It provided weapons to the Palestinians and declared that it assists the Palestinian fighters in “obvious and not so obvious a manner.”<sup>72</sup> When Israel invaded the West Bank in March 2002, Hizballah offered to release an Israeli captive it holds in exchange for the release of Palestinian fighters besieged in Jenin. Israel, however, ignored the offer.<sup>73</sup> Hizballah also attempted to respond to the Israeli siege of Ramallah where Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat was holed up in his compound by increasing its shelling of the Shab’a Farms and attacking seven Israeli posts in the region.<sup>74</sup> Those actions, however, had no military impact on Israel’s operations in the West Bank, although they bolstered Hizballah’s image in the region as true to its ideological commitments.

Still, and since the Israeli invasion of the West Bank, there has been a trend of escalating tension on the Lebanon-Israel border.<sup>75</sup> Israeli intelligence sources anticipate that Hizballah is preparing to carry out “quality attacks,” thus causing an escalation.<sup>76</sup> Possibly in anticipation of such an attack, Israeli troops were reported to be reinforcing their positions along the western side of the

Shab'a Farms enclave while Hizballah was constructing new positions in the front-line area. These activities gave rise to two conflicting speculations. One was that the Israelis were planning on evacuating the occupied Shab'a Farms and their construction activities were for the purpose of establishing a new line of defense. The withdrawal would be part of a deal sponsored by the United States in coordination with Germany in exchange for which Syria and Lebanon would secure the border area, disarm Hizballah, and transform it into a regular political party.<sup>77</sup> Adding credence to this interpretation is that Israel-Hizballah contacts through German mediators over prisoner exchange issues have been on-going for some time. Evidence of this was the release in June 2002 of a Hizballah prisoner held by Israel in exchange for information about Israeli prisoners held by Hizballah.<sup>78</sup>

The opposite interpretation was that the construction activities on both sides of the border are in anticipation of a major showdown between the two sides. And with Hizballah reportedly in possession of long-range rockets that could reach Israel's industrial complex in Haifa, flare-ups in the Shab'a Farms area could have serious consequences if Israel decides to respond with a major military assault.<sup>79</sup> A showdown has been made possible for Syria's "President Bashar al-Asad does not understand the strategic significance of his actions vis-à-vis Hizballah. . . . He is giving free rein to Hizballah, and in the end a flare-up will be inevitable."<sup>80</sup> The threat at this level would be Syria permitting Hizballah to cross the 'Red Line,' and "thus propelling a chain reaction that could result in a general war between Syria and Israel."<sup>81</sup> An otherwise low intensity conflict could spiral out of control if the brinkmanship game played by Hizballah, Syria, and Israel is not managed cautiously.

At the international level, the main concern centers around Hizballah having a "global reach" to conduct "terrorist" acts against U.S., Israeli, and other Western targets on its own or in consort with other groups such as

al-Qa'ida. While there is in the open literature clear evidence linking Hizballah to acts of terrorism in the past (kidnappings of Westerners, attack on U.S. Marines in Lebanon, hijacking of TWA flight in 1980s, and attacks on Jewish targets in Argentina in 1990s), no credible and convincing evidence has been published connecting it to contemporary acts of international terrorism.

The most serious accusation is an alleged link to al-Qa'ida. Israeli Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer stated at the United Nations that "al-Qaeda is entering Hizballah in Lebanon, and if they work together, this is not a great thing for the free world."<sup>82</sup> The Lebanese have dismissed such statements as "lies" and "malicious allegations" coming from a single source, namely Israel.<sup>83</sup> Lebanon's Information Minister Ghazi al-Uraydi also denied an ABC News report of al-Qa'ida presence in Lebanon, and Hizballah asserted that it has no links to al-Qa'ida.<sup>84</sup> Most knowledgeable observers would seriously doubt any such links, if not for ideological reasons, then because Hizballah's current leadership is more sophisticated strategically than to venture down such a volatile and losing path.

There have also been reports of Hizballah ties to North America. Hizballah cells were suspected of being active in Canada and the United States primarily to raise funds through sympathizers, and possibly through links to mafia-style groups engaged in illegal trafficking such as money laundering and cigarette smuggling.<sup>85</sup> It should not come as a surprise that among North America's Muslim communities, some groups sympathize and provide financial support to Hizballah, nor that some individuals are engaged in illicit money-making ventures. No open convincing evidence exists that these groups are cells organized and controlled by Hizballah in Lebanon. The post-September 11 security environment naturally leads to zealous speculations and open willingness to err on the side of extreme caution. These and similar reports such as Hizballah's attempt to set up a terror cell in the 1990s in

Singapore to blow up American and Israeli ships<sup>86</sup> were strongly denied by Hizballah.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, the party has not been shy to confirm its support of the Palestinians. The preponderance of evidence is that Hizballah's focus is primarily centered on Lebanese occupied lands and secondarily on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It has no operational interests, other than diplomatic, beyond these spheres.<sup>88</sup> The party may indeed have a global reach, but for almost 2 decades that reach has not produced credible threats outside the Lebanon-Israel theater linked to it. In the concluding section that follows, I will offer some additional general observations and policy recommendations.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations.**

This monograph examined at length the origin, structure, and goals of Hizballah. To a degree, it also alluded to Hizballah's *modus operandi* involving the use of political, diplomatic, and military means to achieve its goals. What is critical in this concluding section is to speculate on the future and its implications for U.S. policymakers as they fashion an antiterrorism strategy.

It is my contention that a U.S. strategy premised on the simplistic assumption that there is no difference between a good terrorist and a bad terrorist, and no distinction should be made between terrorist organizations, is highly risky. Using the analogy of a disease, the object is to correct the abnormality—not to destroy the disease by destroying the patient. Lebanon's stability, and potentially that of the whole region, hinges on how the United States decides to execute the war on terrorism beyond the effort in Afghanistan to destroy the Taliban and Al-Qa'ida.

An initial observation is that Hizballah is a complex party that is firmly grounded in the culture and the political experience of its Lebanese Shiite constituency. It is not a one-issue party that will wither away once that issue is resolved. Nor is it likely to disappear once its current goals

of liberating Lebanese occupied territories, seeing Palestinians achieve their aspiration of independence, and the return of Muslim holy places in Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty are reached. It is a powerful voice for the Shiites in Lebanese affairs and their link to the larger Shiite community in the region, especially Iran.

What this observation implies, furthermore, is that, while Hizballah is a religious-based organization like Al-Qa'ida and other Islamic groups in the area, it differs from Al-Qa'ida in a very fundamental way. Al-Qa'ida, with its *Wahhabi* heritage, adheres to a messianic vision that would make the "world safe for Islam," so to speak. In seeking to please Allah, al-Qa'ida takes anti-Western, anti-Jewish and anti-Christian stances, and its foremost mission is to rid the land of Islam of nonbelievers. Also, it views itself as a *Jihad* movement fighting external enemies of Islam who must be dealt with more urgently than local enemies.

By contrast, Hizballah is part of Islamic national liberation movements, like Hamas, that come about because of circumstances affecting their countries. They have little interest in operations outside their immediate environment. Additionally, Hizballah, grounded in the history of repressed Shi'ism (Shiites having been a repressed and often despised minority in the Sunni-dominated Islamic world), pursues a less lofty vision that would "make Shiites safe in the world." In seeking to please Allah, Hizballah does so by pragmatically attending to the political, social, and economic needs of its constituency. Such pragmatism to satisfy the immediate needs of the community has also been manifested on many occasions by Iran's Ayatollahs as they attempted to steer the ship of state. Khomeini's accepting a ceasefire in 1988 to end the Iran-Iraq war that began in 1980 when continuation of hostilities would have threatened the Islamic Revolution, Rafsanjani's attempts at liberalization in the 1990s, and current President Khatami's attempts to institute social and political reforms—all indicate flexibility in response to

changing circumstances. This is a strategic culture that is in stark contrast to the Taliban or the al-Qa'ida who would rather perish than modify their rigidly held beliefs.

The second pertinent observation is that the exact location of the Lebanon's borders with its neighbors, and especially in the Shab'a Farms region, is uncertain. Certain, however, is that the Shab'a Farms enclave is a territory occupied by Israel. Hizballah's paramilitary operations against Israeli occupation forces in the area cannot be labeled terrorism. In this regard, Hizballah could be said to be engaged in guerrilla warfare, not terrorism. This, however, does not mean that Hizballah is not tainted by acts of terror, either unprovoked or in response to specific Israeli activities such as assassinations or abductions of Hizballah leaders. Therefore, pinning the exclusive label of "resistance" or "terrorist" organization on it is not possible with any degree of objectivity.

The third general observation is that Hizballah is a "fluid" or umbrella organization. Although it has identifiable leadership structure, it is sufficiently decentralized and dispersed, enabling its mission-oriented military units to generate command and control structures to accomplish their goals. The experiences Hizballah has had battling the Israelis and their allied SLA militia, their access to Syrian supply lines, and ties to Iran's *Pasdaran* and their weapons caches, make Hizballah a risky military target. Its center of gravity is mercurial, and its patrons are state actors capable of triggering a serious regional conflict.

In his June 24, 2002, speech on peace in the Middle East, Bush minced no words in labeling Hizballah a terrorist organization, along with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, for it seeks the destruction of Israel. This and the administration's doctrine of preemptive action may lead to a U.S. precipitous military action against Hizballah with counterproductive results. My policy recommendations follow:

1. *The United States should not engage Hizballah militarily.* The option of either sending the Marines or Special Forces to tackle Hizballah is unrealistic. Its end result will not amount to more than a “feel-good” mission. If there was a military solution to Hizballah, then Israel, experienced in dealing with it and knowledgeable about its area of operations, would have exercised it. Furthermore, U.S. military intervention would be opposed by a majority of Lebanese, convinced that Hizballah is struggling to liberate occupied Lebanese lands.

2. *The United States should encourage Israel to vacate the Shab’a Farms.* This strip of land has limited tactical and strategic value to Israel, which will eventually withdraw from it as part of a peace deal involving the Golan Heights. The argument against this suggestion is that unilateral withdrawal under pressure from Hizballah would give hope to Palestinian groups that pressure works against the Israelis. This argument, however, is fallacious since Israel had withdrawn unilaterally from south Lebanon while Palestinian resistance was already underway.

More important, ceding the Shab’a enclave to Lebanese sovereignty would deny Hizballah its principal justification to be involved in guerrilla war operations against Israel. It will eliminate the major catalyst for border fighting. To be sure, Hizballah will continue to argue that Israel has not fully withdrawn from Lebanon as there remain other disputed areas along the Israel-Lebanon border, but these are small swathes of land that Lebanon would want to resolve diplomatically with Israel as part of a final peace settlement. Israeli withdrawal from the Shab’a Farms enclave would place the Lebanese government under intense international pressure, as well as domestic pressure from several quarters, to rein in Hizballah and deploy the Lebanese Army to the border region.

3. *The United States should give priority to the Syria-Israel track in the peace process.* The old adage concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, “there can be no

Arab-Israeli war without Egypt, and there can be no Arab-Israeli peace without Syria” remains true today. A settlement between Syria and Israel will lead to a simultaneous peace between Israel and Lebanon. Syria would no longer have any cause to use the “Lebanon and Hizballah cards” against Israel. Hizballah would lose its ability to operate militarily against Israel without Syria’s assistance and will be transformed into a regular Lebanese political party.

None of the above policy recommendations address Hizballah’s rejection of the legitimacy of Israel and the desire to seek its destruction. In this ideological stance, Hizballah seems to parallel the Iranian position. The Iranian Ayatollahs, and Hizballah likewise, have often acted more Palestinian than the Palestinians with respect to the peace process and Israel. At the same time, the Iranian leadership is on record as supporting a final peaceful settlement that is agreeable to the Palestinians. Should there be a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue, the wind of Palestine will no longer fan Hizballah’s ideological wings. In short, once all these political issues have been resolved, Hizballah’s national liberation, terrorist, or menacing activities will cease.

It should be evident that these policy recommendations correspond to the local, regional, and international levels of analyses. As such, they are linked to one another, so that an Israeli withdrawal from the Shab’a Farms enclave without the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights would lead Hizballah and Syria to raise other issues to perpetuate the conflict. This built-in dynamic of the situation gives Hizballah a seat at the table of the strategic game played by regional state actors. These actors hold the bigger stakes, and they decide if and how Hizballah plays the game. However, and because of the complexities of the Iranian-Syrian axis, Hizballah may succeed on occasion in manipulating these actors for its own purposes.



In closing, I see no military solution to the menace of Hizballah. Certain countermeasures to foil known planned operations, disrupt funding, and destroy training camps are indeed possible, and in some instances, even necessary. In the final analysis, however, such tactical measures will not resolve what is fundamentally a strategic problem and challenge to U.S. Middle East policy.

## ENDNOTES

1. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "The President's State of the Union Address," January 29, 2002.

2. See Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, "Fact Sheet," October 5, 2001.

3. These reports are compiled every 2 years, and to date the State Department has issued the 1997, 1999, and 2001 reports. They are available on the web at [www.state.state.gov/www/global/terrorism](http://www.state.state.gov/www/global/terrorism).

4. For a detailed discussion of events leading to the confrontation between King Hussein and the Palestinians, see "Black September in Jordan 1970-1971" available on the web from [www.onwar.com/aced/data/bravo/blacksept1970.htm](http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/bravo/blacksept1970.htm).

5. For a detailed discussion of the Lebanese civil war, see Walid Khalidi, *Conflict And Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*, Harvard University: Center for International Affairs, 1979; also, Dilip Hiro, *Lebanon Fire And Embers: A History of the Lebanese Civil War*, New York: St. Martin Press, 1992.

6. For detailed discussion of the Lebanese political system, see Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon*, New York: Random House, 1968; and Enver M. Khoury, *The Operational Capability of the Lebanese Political System*, Beirut: Catholic Press for the Institute of Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, 1972, especially chapter 4 devoted to the characteristics and functions of the confessional system.

7. While no official census has been taken, on several occasions there has been a number of credible accountings of Lebanon's population by nongovernment sources that clearly showed the Shiites becoming the country's largest group. See the population table in Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, Boulder:

Westview Press, 1992, p. 50. Parenthetically, Halawi's book must rank among the best scholarly works on the Shiite community in Lebanon.

8. See *Ibid*, pp. 60-68, in which Halawi clearly demonstrates the economic plight of the Shiite community relative to the Christians and the Sunnis that led to their mobilization as a political force. Also see Enver M. Khoury, *The Crisis in the Lebanese System: Confessionalism and Chaos*, Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976, pp. 35-38. Seeking to explain the causes for the civil war in Lebanon, Khoury discusses the economic disparities between the few rich and many poor, the mountain region and the south as one of the causes that translates into the gap between the largely Christian and Shiite communities.

9. For a detailed biography of al-Sadr, see Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.

10. Halawy, p. 165.

11. Ajami, pp. 168-169.

12. For a detailed discussion of Islamic groups in Lebanon, see A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Islamism in Lebanon: A Guide," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Issue 3, September 1997. Available from CIAO (columbia international online) at [www.cianet.org/olj/meria\\_Sept97.html](http://www.cianet.org/olj/meria_Sept97.html).

13. *Ibid*. p. 2. For a detailed biography of Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, see T. M. Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shi'a Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," available from Al-Da'wa's web page at <http://dawaparty.freeyellow.com/sadr/8613.html>, accessed March 8, 2002.

14. Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon*, New York: St. Martin Press, 1997, pp. 34-40. My discussion of the three phases will rely on this source unless noted otherwise.

15. *Ibid*, pp. 34-35.

16. *Ibid.*, pp.36-37

17. *Ibid.*, p. 39

18. *Ibid.*, p. 41

19. *Ibid.*, p. 42-44. Most writers on Hizballah have assumed that Ayatollah Fadlallah is the party's spiritual guide or that it was his brainchild. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, however, notes that Fadlallah is not affiliated with the party in an organizational sense, and further, he and Hizballah have denied such an association and have rejected reference to him as the party's spiritual mentor or guide. On the other hand, Fadlallah is an eminent religious scholar who may be regarded as a source of inspiration rather than a spiritual mentor. See Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 6.

20. For a detailed discussion of Hizballah's organizational chart, see A. Nizr Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: from Islamic revolution to parliamentary accommodation," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1993, pp. 325-328. My discussion is based on this source.

21. *Ibid.* p. 328. Note that Hamzeh's discussion varies from that of Ranstorp who refers to an additional unit called Majlis Shura al-Karar (Deciding Assembly) made up of 12 clerics under the leadership of Sheikh Fadlallah and which is responsible for all strategic matters. (Ranstorp, p. 45) But if we accept that Fadlallah has no organizational link to the party, then a Deciding Assembly could not be an integral part of Hizballah's organizational chart.

22. Saad-Ghorayeb deals extensively with these and related concepts. I shall rely on her work in presenting an abbreviated summary of the concepts relevant to this study.

23. The concept of "Hidden Imam" is what defines the Twelve sects of Shiism and is adhered to by the overwhelming majority of Iranian and Arab Shiites. The reference is to the 12th Imam, direct descendent of the first Imam, Ali bin Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad, who mysteriously disappeared and who is believed to return one day to establish justice on earth.

24. Quoted in Eyal Zisser, "Hizbullah in Lebanon: At the Crossroads," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Issue 3, September 1979. The term "Mahdi" means the "guided One" and is a reference to the Hidden Imam.

25. See Saad-Ghorayeb, p. 69 ff. I have labeled this a "complex" vision because in this black-and-white division, the place of non-Muslim believers (specifically the Jews and Christians) is precarious. A detailed discussion of this point is beyond our scope.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

27. See *Ibid.*, Chapter 5. I will essentially summarize some of her main points on this issue.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

29. "Fadlu'llah: Powell's Visit to Support Sharon's Campaign," Beirut *As Safir*, (Arabic Internet Edition), April 18, 2002.

30. *CBS Evening News*, April 17, 2002. Full text available on line from *www.CBSNEWS.com*.

31. *Ibid.* Also, Ghorayeb points out that in the Qasim (and Hizballah) view, the party's hostility towards Israel is not only because it occupies south Lebanon, but also because of its occupation of Palestine and Jerusalem. The implication is that the conflict with Israel cannot be resolved politically. See Ghorayeb, p. 134.

32. Interestingly, Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli, the first secretary general of the party, was one who supported the Iranian moderates. However, he ended leading the "revolution of the hungry" in the Lebanese Biqa' which led the Lebanese government to issue an arrest warrant against him. During the Israeli incursion into Palestine in April 2002, Tufayli made statements to the press supporting Palestinian resistance, but also stated his total rejection of the Lebanese political system and the legitimacy of the Lebanese government and all of its institutions. See Beirut *Assafir*, in Arabic, Internet Edition, April 18, 2002.

33. Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizballah: from Islamic revolution to parliamentary accommodation," p. 325. It should be noted here that Hizballah was opposed to the Taif agreement (October 1989) that reconstituted the Lebanese policy along more equitable distribution of political power and government positions among the major religious sects, but the party's participation in the 1992 elections signaled an implied and a de facto acceptance of that agreement. Also see Augustus Richard Norton, "Hizballah: From radicalism to pragmatism?" *Middle East Policy*, Vol. V, No. 4, January 1998, pp. 147-158; and Graham Usher, "Hizballah, Syria, and the Lebanese Elections," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, Winter 1997, pp. 59-67.

34. These involved the suicide car bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in April 1983 that killed 63 people, including 17 Americans; a suicide bombing attack at the headquarters of the U.S. peacekeeping force in October 1983 that killed 241 U.S. servicemen and a simultaneous attack on a French base in Beirut that killed 58 people, and an attack in November 1983 on the Israeli Army headquarters in

the then occupied Lebanese city of Tyre that killed 29 Israeli military personnel.

35. See Eyal Zisser, "Hizballah in Lebanon—At the Crossroads," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Issue 3, September 1997, p. 92. Human Rights Watch issued a detailed report on the Grapes of Wrath Operation that killed 154 and injured 351 Lebanese civilians that the Lebanese call the "Qana Massacre" and alluded as well to "Operation Accountability." See Human Rights Watch/Middle East, "Operation GRAPES OF WRATH," Vol. 9, No. 8(E), September 1997.

36. The visit of Secretary of State Powell to Israel in April 2002 to bring an end to the Israeli incursion into the Palestinian Authority's autonomous areas and an end to Palestinian violence was, by most accounts, regarded as a failure. The Bush administration, however, played up one positive and immediate result from his visit, namely, his 1-day trip to Beirut and Damascus to diffuse the tense situation on Israel's northern border that led to greater involvement of Lebanese security forces in the southern region and a marked reduction in Hizballah's military operations. Also Terje Roed-Larsen, the U.N. Middle East Special Envoy, warned the Lebanese government that any violations and provocations along the "Blue Line" (The Israeli-Lebanese border line as defined by the U.N. to certify complete Israeli withdrawal in July 2000) could destabilize the entire region. See Beirut *Assafir* (Internet edition in Arabic), April 23, 2002.

37. This Syrian strategy towards the peace process has not changed during the administration of Bashar al-Asad. As the United States signaled its willingness to be actively involved in the peace process to bring about a final resolution of the Arab-Israeli problem along the lines of the "Saudi Vision" as proposed by Prince Abdullah, Syria publicly stated its concern that the Arab peace initiative was being "Americanized" and set on a path of separate tracks. See UAE *Al-Khaleej* (Arabic Internet Edition), April 30, 2002.

38. See Sami Hajjar, "The Israel-Syria Track," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VI, No. 3, February 1999, p. 124.

39. Abu Dhabi *Al-Ittihad* (Arabic Internet Edition), November 23, 1999.

40. For a full and detailed analysis of the border issues between Lebanon and Israel, see Frederic C. Hof, "Defining Full Withdrawal: Re-Making the Lebanese-Israeli Border," *Middle East Insight*, May-June 2000, pp. 29-36.

41. *Ibid.* p. 34.

42. *Ibid.* p. 35.

43. For detailed discussion of the border issue, see “Al-Huss: Lebanon to Drop Claim on 7 Israeli Villages,” Beirut *The Daily Star* (English Internet Edition), December 22, 1999; also “The Seven Villages: The Most Dangerous Lebanese Negotiations File,” Abu Dhabi *Al-Ittihad* (Arabic Internet Edition), December 2, 1999. On the Israeli interest in border adjustments, see French Press Agency report in Abu Dhabi *Al-Ittiad* (Arabic Internet Edition), October 12, 1999.

44. See Hof, p. 33; and Yammut Bassem, “The Strategic and Economic Significance of Shaba’a Farms,” Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 7, 2001. Also see Alfred B. Prados, “The Shib’a Farms Dispute and Its Implications,” CRS Report for Congress, August 7, 2001. Prados observed that “there are no precise boundaries to the Shib’a Farms area.”

45. Bassem, *Ibid.* A complicating factor is the issue of water rights in the vicinity of the south western region of Shab’a Farms involving the Hasbani river and its tributary, the al-Wazzani. See, for example, Arie O’Sullivan and Herb Keinon, “Lebanon warned not to divert river,” *The Internet Jerusalem Post*, March 15, 2001; Mohammad al-Mashnouq, “The Riparian Strategic Framework of the Lebanese-Israeli Confrontation,” Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 26, 2001; “Israel diverting Lebanese and Golan waters through the Dhahran oil pipeline,” Abu Dhabi *Al-Ittihad*, (Arabic Internet Edition) January 1, 2000.

46. Beirut *The Daily Star*, May 5, 2001.

47. Prados.

48. U.N. Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), S/2000/460, May 22, 2000, paragraph 14; full text available in Beirut *As Safir*, (Arabic Internet Edition), May 23, 2000. [author’s translation of text].

49. Prados, p. 2.

50. XINHUA News Agency, (Internet English Edition), May 24, 2001.

51. "During the French Mandate, Shaba was Lebanese," Tel Aviv *Haaretz* (English Internet Edition), June 26, 2002.

52. Lebanon's position is detailed by Prados, pp. 6-7; and Hof, p. 33.

53. Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), April 10, 2002.

54. Gary C. Cambill, "Syria and the Shebaa Farms Dispute," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 5, May 2001, p. 1. The influence of USCFL was demonstrated in conjunction with H.R. 4483, the Syria Accountability Act of 2002 in which the USCFL Task Force joined with some members of Congress (Dick Army, Eliot Engel, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Howard Berman, Eric Cantor, and Alcee Hastings) in urging co-sponsorship of the bill, which imposes a variety of penalties on Syria for its support of terrorism, occupation of Lebanon, development of weapons of mass destruction, and violations of U.N. oil sanctions against Iraq. Those on the mailing list of USCFL received this solicitation via e-mail on May 9, 2002.

55. United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, May 2002, p. 57.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), May 23, 2002.

58. Saad-Ghorayeb, p. 94. The view that Hizballah, (also Hamas, and Islamic Jihad) is a national liberation movement and not terrorist organization is widely accepted in the Islamic world. For example, the Mufti (chief Muslim cleric) of Russia Sheikh Nafi'ullah Ashyroff made statements supporting this viewpoint and also accused the United States of practicing terrorism against Muslims. See his interview in Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Editions), January 9, 2002.

59. Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), May 23, 2002.

60. "Terrorism: Threat and Response," in Conference Brief compiled by Carolyn Pumphrey, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College and Triangle Institute for Security Studies, Duke University, February 2002. For a detailed academic discussion of terrorism, its definition, utility, types, and uses in the Middle East, see Gary C. Gambill, "The Balance of Terror: War By Other Means In The Contemporary Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Autumn 1998, pp. 51-66.

61. See "Road-mending in Lebanon," *The Economist*, August 3, 2000.

62. U.N., "Report of the Secretary General's Military Advisor Concerning the Shelling of the U.N. Compound at Qana on 18 April 1996," S/1966/337, May 7, 1996.

63. State of Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Understanding" available from [www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MEAH00qj0](http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MEAH00qj0).

64. For example, British ambassador to Lebanon Richard Kinchen met in December 2001 with Hizballah's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah to initiate dialogue with the group that "was involved in legitimate political and social activity . . .," Beirut *The Daily Star*, December 13, 2001. See also "Hizballah Official Interviewed on Party Issues, Meeting with UK Envoy" in London *Al-Arab al-Alamiyah* (in Arabic), December 18, 2001, p. 6. Also, there were press reports that Israel was negotiating, through a high-ranking German intermediary with Hizballah, a deal involving information about captured Israeli Brigadier General (res.) Elhanan Tannenbaum in exchange for maps of minefields in southern Lebanon. Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Edition), February 25, 2002. The prisoner exchange negotiations have apparently expanded to include Marwan Barghouti, head of the Fatah Tanzim, captured by Israel during its invasion of the West Bank in April 2002. See "General: Israel assassinated non-Jew in hunt for missing Arad," Tel Aviv *Haaretz* (English Internet Edition), June 26, 2002. Nassrallah has also met with other Europeans such as the Austrian ambassador to Lebanon and with the European Parliament member Hans Svoboda in conjunction with alleged U.S. attempts to foil Hizballah-European dialogue; see Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), February 13, 2002.

65. Nagi Najjar, "The Reality of fighting Terror," United States Committee for a Free Lebanon, May 2002. Available at <http://freelebanon.org/articles/a254.htm>.

66. American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Action Alert, "ADC Takes Strong Stance Against coverage of NC cigarette Smuggling Case," July 31, 2000. Available at <http://www.adc.org/action/200/31july2000.htm>.

67. See "Three Countries Resist U.S. Pressure," Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), January 4, 2002; and Khalil Fleihanb, "France Credited With Keeping Hizbullah Off EU 'Terror List'," Beirut *The Daily Star*, December 31, 2001.

68. Hisham Milhem, "Acknowledging Its Social and Political Role, Rice Renews Demand that the Lebanese Government Abolish the



Terrorist Wing of Hizballah,” Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), December 12, 2001. Likewise, Former Middle East envoy Dennis Ross stated that Hizballah’s resistance to Israeli occupation is not terrorism, but that past acts of terrorism that the party engaged in is why it is included on the U.S. terrorism list. He noted the important social activities of the party in several regions of Lebanon. See “Ross: The Resistance of Hizballah Is Not Terrorism,” Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 23, 2002.

69. Mr. Karim Baqradouni, president-elect of the Christian and pro-western Kata’eb (Phalange) Lebanese party told U.S. Embassy official that targeting Hizballah would lead to a civil war in Lebanon, and that all Lebanese support the resistance regarding it as a legitimate right. See Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), December 20, 2001.

70. See Sayyed Hassan Nassrallah’s speech to the General Arab Conference for the Defense of the Resistance and the Intifada held in Beirut, Lebanon on December 20, 2001, as reported in Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Edition), December 21, 2001. He has openly called on Arab leaders during the Arab League summit in Beirut in March 2002 to provide weapons to the Palestinians. See Beirut *The Daily Star*, March 18, 2002; and Abu Dhabi *Al Khaleej* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 25, 2002.

71. See Ibrahim Mousawi, “Faddlallah explains religious basis for suicide attacks,” Beirut *The Daily Star* (Internet Edition), June 8, 2002; also see Beirut, *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), April 2, 2002. This *fatwa* was issued in the wake of a suicide bombing in Israel carried out by a Palestinian young woman.

72. A statement made by Shaikh Na’im al-Qassim, Deputy Secretary General of Hizballah, Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 22, 2002. Earlier Nassrallah announced that three party members arrested in Jordan were attempting to smuggle Katyusha rockets to the Palestinians (the detainees were later freed by the Jordanians at the request of the Lebanese government), Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 9, 2002. Also the Palestinian weapons ship seized by Israel in January 2002 had some link to Hizballah as Israel and the United States alleged. See State of Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Seizing of the Palestinian weapons ship Karine A, January 4, 2002” available at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH010k0>, and Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), January 11, 2002. Hizballah rejected accusations of involvement in arms shipment, Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Edition), January 11, 2002. And yet another fishing vessel carrying weapons to the Palestinians was sunk off the Lebanese coast by Israel

alleging that its weapons and military equipment cargo were purchased with the help of Hizballah, Tel Aviv *Yedi'ot Aharonot* (in Hebrew), May 13, 2002, p. 6, FBIS Document ID: GMP20020513000093. Lastly, there was a report that a Hizballah operative managed to slip into the occupied territories to help organize attacks on Israel, see Tel Aviv, *Ha'aretz* in English, March 6, 2002, p. 1.

73. Cilina Nasser, "Hizballah's captive-for-fighters swap offer to Israel still firm," Beirut *The Daily Star*, April 12, 2002.

74. "Hizballah Shells the Farms and Israel Targets Civilians," Beirut *An Nahar* (Arabic Internet Edition), March 31, 2002.

75. See Sami Kaleib, "Paris is Concerned About Rising Tension on Lebanon's Border: A Regional War is Possible," Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), April 4, 2002.

76. Jerusalem, *The Jerusalem Post* (English Internet Edition), June 5, 2002. See also Nicholas Blanford, "Hizballah Prepares to Open Up Front Along the Israeli Border," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 2002, pp. 26-28. Also see Karen DeYoung, "Hezbollah Buildup in Lebanon cited," *The Washington Post*, June 15, 2002, p. 17.

77. Abu Dhabi Al Khaleej (Arabic Internet Edition), June 6, 2002.

78. Daniel Sobelman, "Israel Eyes Prisoner Swap, Frees Hizballah Man," Tel Aviv *Ha'aretz* (English Internet Edition), June 11, 2002; "Stirring the Prisoners File: Release of Mohammad al-Barzawi," Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), June 11, 2002.

79. See Nicholas Blanford, "Hizballah and Israeli Army Set for 'Serious Clash'," Beirut *The Daily Star* (Internet Edition), June 8, 2002.

80. Amos Har'el, "Senior Officers Warn of New Wave of Hizballah Infiltrations," Tel Aviv *Ha'aretz* (English Internet Edition) June 4, 2002.

81. Tel Aviv University, The Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, *Bulletin*, No. 27, November 2001, p. 3. Also see article by Ehud Ya'ari, "While Syria Sleeps," *The Jerusalem Post* (Internet Edition), February 25, 2002, in which he referred to the U.S. warning that Hizballah has the ability and perhaps the intention of sparking a regional war. Additionally, Ya'ari noted that Hizballah possesses at least 7,000 *Katyusha* rockets that threaten all the Galilee up to the outskirts of Haifa, constructing a second line of defense deep in South Lebanon as a barrier against Israeli armored advance, and that Syria, under the

leadership of a young president, is being manipulated by Hizballah under Iranian guidance.

82. Xinhau News Agency, February 6, 2002. Also see Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), February 7, 2002.

83. Maurice Kaldawy, "Lahoud Flays Israeli Media's 'Aggression'," Beirut *The Daily Star* (Internet Edition), February 8, 2002. Israeli press sources, in addition to accusing Hizballah of providing training to al-Qa'ida, alleged that Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri, who is close to the Saudi royal family, is providing financial support to al-Qa'ida. See "Israeli Press Allegations," Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), June 14, 2002.

84. Ibrahim Awad, "Al-Uraydi: Suspect Report; There is No Al-Qa'ida Organization in Lebanon," London *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, in Arabic, May 22, 2002, p. 3; and Beirut *The Daily State* (Internet Edition), March 23, 2002. See also "Hizballah Official Denies US 'Accusation' on Protecting al-Qaida Member," FBIS Document ID: GMP20020617000208, Entry Date June 17, 2002.

85. See Stewart Bell report on supporting Hizballah in *Toronto National Post* (Internet Edition), February 13, 2002; and "Washington Raises Specter of Hizballah 'Cells' in US," Beirut *The Daily Star* (Internet Edition), February 15, 2002. On the cigarette smuggling story, see on line *Detroit Free Press* report, "Smuggled Smokes Linked to Hizballah," *www.freep.com*, July 22, 2000; and "Smuggling Case Trial Begins," *The Washington Post*, May 21, 2002, p. A03. Hizballah has denied any involvement with the people charged in the case, and Hizballah Member of Parliament Abdullah Qasir stated that U.S. accusations are "not based on facts and realities, but rather on political motives." Beirut *The Daily Star* (Internet Edition), June 14, 2002.

86. *Boston Globe*, June 9, 2002, p. 26.

87. Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), June 11, 2002.

88. Hizballah Members of Parliament have conducted in the Spring of 2002 an extensive tour of European, Arab, and African nations to bolster the image of the party and to deflect what they claim are concentrated efforts by the United States to constrain and isolate it. See Beirut *As Safir* (Arabic Internet Edition), June 14, 2002.

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