

**Kalashnikovs into Plowshares:
Counterterrorism Psychological Operations
Strategies Against Hizballah**

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Hizballah Development Within its Cultural, Political, Historic Context²

<i>LEBANON/IRAN/SYRIA/ISRAEL</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>HIZBALLAH</i>
Lebanon gains independence.	1943	
Civil war erupts between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon.	1958	
	1959	Imam Musa al-Sadr invited to become religious leader of the Shia in Lebanon.
Six Day War	1967	Al-Sadr founds the Lebanese Shia Islamic Higher Council, <i>Majlis al-Shii al-Aala</i> .
PLO expelled from Jordan and subsequently establishes enclave in Lebanon.	1970-1971	
	1974	Al-Sadr founds the “Movement of the Underprivileged” to champion the social, political, economic interests of the downtrodden Shia community of Lebanon.
Intra-confessional civil war erupts in Lebanon.	1975	Amal is formed.
Syria deploys troops into Lebanon.	1976	
Israel invades Lebanon as part of “Operation Litani.”	1978	
Iranian Revolution brings Khomeini and his strident brand of fundamentalist Shia Islam to power.	1979	Al-Sadr disappears during trip to Libya invoking notions of the Shia theology of the vanished 12 th Imam.
	1980	Nabih Berri is appointed head of Amal, Hussein Mussawi appointed deputy and head of Amal militia.
Israel annexes the Golan Heights.	1981	Hussein Mussawi breaks from Amal and forms Islamic Amal to operate as vanguard of Iranian Revolution-style fundamentalist Shia Islam in Lebanon, and its transformation into an Islamic state.
Israel invades Lebanon to excise PLO bases used to attack Israel and create a ‘security zone’ along	1982	Hizballah is formed. Detail of Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrives in Lebanon to assist with

² This timeline heavily draws upon the chronology written by Hala Jaber in *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 219-222.

Lebanon's southern border with Israel. Multinational peacekeeping forces arrive in Lebanon. PLO evacuated from Beirut.		development of Hizballah. Lebanese resistance is initiated against Israeli troops. David Dodge is kidnapped. Massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatila refugee camps. First suicide bombing destroys Israeli military headquarters in Tyre.
	1983	Hizballah forms its first <i>shoura</i> , or ruling council. U.S. embassy bombed by Hizballah agents.
Multinational forces withdraw.	1984	Rash of hostage taking occurs by various groups associated with Hizballah. First issue of Hizballah's newspaper, <i>Al-Ahed</i> , is published. The social welfare and health organizations Jihad al-Binaa and Islamic Health Committee are founded to help impoverished Shia.
Israel retreats into 'security zone' of southern Lebanon.	1985	Hizballah's "Open Letter" group manifesto is published.
	1987	Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini establishes branch in Lebanon to provide improved welfare and infrastructure for Shia.
	1988	"Battle for Supremacy" erupts between Amal and Hizballah.
Ayatollah Khomeini dies. Taif Accord ends civil war in Lebanon.	1989	Damascus Agreement brokers peace between Amal and Hizballah.
First parliamentary elections in 20 years held in Lebanon.	1992	Sayyed Abbas Musawi is assassinated by Israeli gunships. Hassan Nasrallah is elected as new Hizballah secretary-general. Hizballah operatives bomb the Israeli Embassy in Argentina.
Israel launches 'Operation Accountability.' Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat sign peace accord.	1993	
	1994	Hizballah agents bomb an Israeli cultural center in Buenos Aires.
Rabin is assassinated.	1995	
Israel launches 'Operation Grapes of Wrath.' Binyamin Netanyahu is elected prime minister of Israel.	1996	Khobar Towers bombed in Saudi Arabia; Hizballah is suspected of involvement.

Israel withdraws from ‘security zone’ of southern Lebanon. 2000

2001-present Hizballah increases arsenal of rockets in southern Lebanon, and takes more bellicose stance against Israel. Draws closer operational association with Al Qaeda terrorist organization.

“Hezbollah may be the A-team of terrorists and maybe Al Qaeda is actually the B-team,” Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said recently. “They’re on the list and their time will come. There is no question about. They have a blood debt to us and we’re not going to forget it. It’s all in good time.”³ Although Armitage was referring to Hizballah’s place within the U.S.-led war on terrorism, his sentiment—the “blood debt”—may have a more personal intensity. Armitage had served as Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Reagan administration and during the rash of violence against U.S. forces acting as peacekeepers in the early 1980s amidst Lebanon’s civil war and the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. In 1983, 241 U.S. Marines were killed when a suicide bomber associated with Hizballah destroyed their barracks in Beirut. Prior to the attacks of September 11th, 2001, the Marine barracks bombing had been the single deadliest terrorist attack against Americans. Also prior to September 11th, Hizballah terrorism is thought to have killed more than three hundred Americans, more than any other terrorist group.⁴

Senator Bob Graham, a former member and chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has argued that Hizballah poses a more immediate threat than Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction. “In my opinion, there’s no question that Hezbollah is the greater threat, and yes, we should go after it first and go after it before we go to war with Iraq.”⁵

Hizballah remains one of, if not the most sophisticated and deadly global terrorist organizations in the world today. Its terrorist infrastructure features an arsenal of terrorist cells ranging throughout the world, including the United States, and a proven track record of devastating attacks that include the pioneering rash of suicide bombings in the 1980s. Hizballah continues to receive military and terrorist training, weaponry, material, funding, logistical assistance, operational guidance, and diplomatic cover from Iran, as well as tacit protection and support within its Lebanese home bases from Syria. Some

³ *Frontline World*, “Lebanon—Party of God,” Public Broadcasting Service, 2 May 2003. Available from <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/lebanon/index.html>; Internet; accessed on 2 September 2003.

⁴ Jeffrey Goldberg, Interviewed by *The New Yorker*, New Yorker Online, 7 October 2002. Available from http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?online/021014on_onlineonly01; Internet; accessed on 8 August 2003.

⁵ Senator Bob Graham, quoted in an interview with Ed Bradley, “Hezbollah: ‘A-Team of Terrorists’”, *60 Minutes*, CBS, 18 April 2003.

experts fear that Iran may in the future pass along weapons of mass destruction to the group.

Having driven Israel from Lebanon in 2000, Hizballah now seems to be posturing through word and deed to aid the Palestinian resistance against Israel, providing guerrilla and terrorist training to Palestinian militants and arraying a fearsome arsenal of rockets and conventional weaponry along the southern Lebanese border against Israel. Hizballah has also seemed to nervously bristle with the prospect that it is likely the next target in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, and has issued veiled reminders of its global terrorist capabilities and a willingness to turn them squarely against the U.S. should it threaten the group or its state patrons. On this topic, the *Washington Post* has reported that Hizballah has developed an ad hoc tactical cooperation with Al Qaeda among low and mid-level operatives, offering training and logistical assistance.⁶ The article goes on to report:

Although cooperation between al Qaeda and Hezbollah may have been going on at some level for years, the U.S. war against al Qaeda has hastened and deepened the relationship. U.S. officials believe that after al Qaeda was driven from Afghanistan, leader Osama bin Laden sanctioned his operatives to ally themselves with helpful Islamic-based groups, said a senior administration official with access to daily intelligence reports.⁷

The worrisome aspect of this cooperation is that a weakened Al Qaeda may take advantage of Hizballah's robust global network of terrorist cells, training camps, and fundraising operations and exploit this logistical infrastructure for further terrorist attacks. Many analysts believe that Iran and Syria have attempted to stem Hizballah's relationship with Al Qaeda, knowing that it would only hasten the U.S.-led war on terrorism swinging against them, while other officials believe that Al Qaeda and Hizballah's conflicting religious foundations—Sunni and Shia Islam respectively—prevent the two groups from cooperating in anything more than what seems to be this current emergency union of necessity.⁸ Hizballah as an organization and movement remains immensely popular throughout the Arab and Muslim world as a heroic vanguard of Arab-Muslim resistance, empowerment, and dignity.

This is all the latest incarnation of Hizballah—whose name is derived from Koranic scripture and means “Party of God”—which according to the U.S. State Department, has also been referred to in its various guises as Islamic Jihad, Revolutionary Justice Organization, and the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine. The number of aliases seem fitting for so Janus-faced and complex an organization as Hizballah.

Born in the early 1980s from the bloody conflict of the Lebanese civil war, Hizballah was founded by radical Shia clerics with the help of Iranian Revolutionary Guards as a

⁶ Dana Priest, and Douglas Farah, “Terror Alliance Has U.S. Worried; Hezbollah, Al Qaeda Seen Joining Forces,” *Washington Post*, 30 June 2002, sec. A, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

defensive militia organized to protect the embattled Lebanese Shia community, and also serve as the vanguard for a revolutionary brand of Shia fundamentalism that promised salvation and empowerment for the long-abused Lebanese Shia through a revolutionary wholesale societal return to its fundamentalism tenets with the ultimate vision of establishing an Islamic state.

Hizballah has been regarded for the past two decades from various perspectives not simply as a global terrorist organization par excellence, but also as a national liberation movement enjoying immense popularity and reverence throughout the Middle East as a result of its many successes: the role it played in energizing Lebanese Shia mobilization and empowerment, and its martial prowess in defending first the Shia community and then all of Lebanon from Israel, eventually expelling a heretofore unassailable Israeli military from its occupation of southern Lebanon, an act which was lionized as the first and only Arab/Islamic ‘victory’ over Israel; its vanguard role in carrying forward the inspirational and salvationist banner of fundamentalist Shia Islam and the Iranian Revolution; as a legitimate political party ingrained within the fabric of Lebanese politics that has enfranchised and dutifully served the interests of its constituent Shia; and as the administrator of much-needed social welfare services within Lebanese Shia communities. Further, Hizballah has also benefited immensely from the layered and at time cross current dynamics of command guidance, operational assistance and militant training, and material and weaponry largess offered by its patron states, Iran and Syria, who regard it as a proxy force aiding their geostrategic agendas, primarily against Israel. Hizballah thus emerges as a complex political organization with a revolutionary Shia fundamentalist ideology, and political, social, and terrorist wings. As a result, it is difficult to discern at any one time Hizballah’s exact organizational composition, politics, leadership orientations, constituent elements, and most important, a clear picture of its terrorist apparatus, which seem to evolve and fluctuate to some degree depending upon the angle of analysis.

The confluence of Hizballah’s legacy of bloody terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and soldiers, and its current “global reach”—the term U.S President George Bush used to identify terrorist groups marked for elimination in the U.S-led war on terror—provides compelling rationale for U.S. counterterrorism operations against the group. Within this context of a rigorous U.S.-led war on terrorism, Armitage’s words suggest that a vengeful U.S. reckoning with Hizballah looms.

This paper will address the potential psychological operations component of an overall counterterrorism strategy against Hizballah. Based upon an analysis of Hizballah’s organizational dynamics—particularly its ideological foundation, motivations, operational energies, and command structure—this paper will present possible counterterrorism strategies against Hizballah utilizing strategic psychological operations as developed by Dr. Jerrold M. Post: inhibiting recruitment, causing internal group dissent, facilitating exit from the group, and reducing support for the group leaders.⁹ The

⁹ Jerrold M. Post, “Current Understanding of Terrorist Motivation and Psychology: Implications for a Differentiated Antiterrorist Policy,” Conference Report, *Terrorism: An International Journal* 13, no. 1 (1990): 66.

first part of the paper will present an overview of Hizballah's development within its particular historic, cultural, and political context, examining its core ideological framework and group dynamics, and noting pivotal episodes in its evolution as an organization and movement that expose tensions and fissures vulnerable to counterterrorism psychological operations. The second part of the paper will present potential counterterrorism psychological operations strategies.

[Birth and Development of Hizballah Within its Cultural, Political, Historic Context]

As Martha Crenshaw and Jerrold Post have noted, analysis conducted for the formulation of group-specific counterterrorism strategies must examine that group within its particular cultural, political, historic context.¹⁰ Each terrorist group is unique in motivation, organizational structure, modus operandi, strategic orientation, and group psychological complexion, all of which is developed from the conditions and dynamics of its cultural, political, historic context. As Martha Crenshaw has suggested, "The causes and effects of terrorism are comprehensible only in terms of political conflicts in specific historical time periods. There are commonalities among instances of terrorism, but each case is unique."¹¹

Thus, this group uniqueness requires an equally unique tailoring of counterterrorism strategies appropriate to the particular structure, dynamics, strengths, and weaknesses, of the group. Specifically, Post has suggested that differentiating between the structures yields valuable insight into group dynamics that are susceptible to counterterrorism programs.¹² In this vein, the overall strategy for counterterrorism psychological operations attempts to identify sinews and nodes of the group's ideological motivation, internal dynamics, and operational structure that can be manipulated to weaken or implode its terrorist activities.

Thus, because Hizballah is a complex political organization composed of political, social, militant, and terrorist wings, all rooted in a Shia fundamentalist ideological ballast it is crucial in any counterterrorism analysis of the group to differentiate between its constitutive elements in order to develop adequately nuanced and agile strategies that target the motivations and capabilities for the terrorist activities, while sparing, for example, the social welfare apparatus so as to avoid radicalizing the next reserve of terrorist recruits through blunt and provocative measures against the wider community.

1970-80's Lebanon

Hizballah was formed within the tumultuous milieu of the late 1970s to early 1980's Lebanon. Fractious and bloody civil war wracked the country as various confessional

¹⁰ See Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), and Post, "Current Understanding of Terrorist Motivation and Psychology: Implications for a Differentiated Antiterrorist Policy," 65-68.

¹¹ Crenshaw, p. 24.

¹² Post, "Current Understanding of Terrorist Motivation and Psychology: Implications for a Differentiated Antiterrorist Policy," 66.

groups and sects battled to gain ever larger segments of what was perceived to be a finite reservoir of political power in the Lebanon. Following Lebanon's independence in 1943, the National Pact codified a delicate balance of political power distribution between the ethnic and religious confessional groups through supposed proportional representation based upon a suspect 1932 national census. The National Pact established a fixed hierarchy of government posts reserved for particular confessions—the president was to be Christian Maronite, the prime minister Sunni Muslim, and the speaker Shia Muslim—and the ratio of government deputies between Christians and Muslims was fixed respectively at 6:5. The results of the 1932 census were vehemently called into question, but the Christians rejected any attempt for an updated survey, thus safeguarding their majoritarian power.¹³ Martin Kramer describes that “when Lebanon became independent in 1943, the Shi'ites were the despised stepchildren of a state governed by (and for) Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims.”¹⁴

The Shia community had long suffered as the most impoverished, disenfranchised, and despised confessional sect within Lebanon. The Shia went without some of the most basic infrastructure of civilized society, such as running water, schools, roads, and hospitals.¹⁵ When Israel invaded southern Lebanon in 1982 to combat the resident PLO militants who were staging attacks against Israel, the Shia suffered the brunt of Israeli-PLO fighting. As Shia refugees fled north to the southern suburbs of Beirut, their living conditions grew no better. Neglected by both the Lebanese government and self-serving Shia community leaders, the refugees settled into urban squalor. As Hala Jaber describes,

The Shiites began to build their makeshift homes in the vicinity of the city dump and Beirut's common sewer. The suburbs gained a reputation as the Shiites' slums, commonly referred to as the 'Belt of Misery'. Piles of garbage, mixed with sewage from burst pipes, littered the streets and emitted an offensive stench. During Lebanon's torrential winter rainfall the roads flooded, cars sank into the mud and pools of filthy water attracted flies and rats. With each passing season, the area appeared to have deteriorated and always threatened to further decline. Electricity was a luxury, ninety per cent of the district lacked running water and the few existing telephone cables no longer functioned. It was hard to fathom how the residents survived in such a desolate environment.¹⁶

The Shia had also experienced a radical demographic shift in the 1970's—the product of increased Shia birth rates and an influx of 300,000 Palestinian refugees expelled from Jordan in 1970—that caused the Shia population to swell to 60% of the Lebanese

¹³ Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 10.

¹⁴ Martin Kramer, “Hizbullah: The Calculus of Jihad,” in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*, ed. M. Marty and R.S. Appleby, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993; Available from <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/Calculus.htm>; Internet; accessed on 6 August 2003.

¹⁵ Jaber, p. 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

population.¹⁷ Yet the delicate balance of confessional power fixed in the National Pact did not allow for the Shia popular majority to translate into increased proportional political power. The poverty, discrimination, and neglect suffered by the Shia within the “Belt of Misery” cultivated an embittered, reactionary sentiment that provided the fertile soil of discontent which Hizballah would come to cultivate.

Musa al-Sadr

Coming to Lebanon following his seminary studies in the Shia holy city of Najaf in 1959, Imam Musa al-Sadr laid the intellectual groundwork for what would become the Shia grassroots religious and political awakening to communal activism. In 1967 al-Sadr founded the *Majlis al-Shii al-Aala*, the Lebanese Shiite Islamic Higher Council over which he presided, which initiated efforts to develop political representation for the Shia community. In 1974 al-Sadr founded the “Movement of the Underprivileged” which was later reorganized into the political party Amal, soon becoming Lebanon’s key Shia party. Through these initiatives al-Sadr nurtured an emancipatory socio-political identity and energy for the Shia, agitating for greater Shia power and enfranchisement vis-à-vis other Lebanese confessional groups. But in 1979 al-Sadr vanished during a trip to Libya, an event that engaged the Shia theology of the missing 12th Imam who is believed to be the true leader of Islam and whose return will presage the Day of Judgment.¹⁸ “According to the dominant tradition in Shia Islam, Ali, Hussein and their successors are known as the Twelve Imams. The Twelfth Imam, or *Mehdi*, is believed to have disappeared in 874 and gone into occultation until the anointed time comes for him to return and end tyranny, bringing the full and final revelation of God’s word. Until this date, the Shia believe they are living in the *ghayba* era, concealment period.”¹⁹ The disappearance of al-Sadr thus had deep theological resonance for the Lebanese Shia. As Hoffman notes, “The disappearance of the Imam created a vacuum within Amal that made the party fertile ground for Iranian influence, and rendered the movement susceptible to the fundamentalist call of the revolution which had brought Khomeini to power earlier that year.”²⁰

The Prowling Defensiveness of the Shia Identity

The disenfranchisement, abuse, and poverty the Shia of Lebanon suffered at the hands of rival confessional groups only heated an already long-simmering cauldron of communal Shia bitterness and resentment. The Shia legacy and memory as a persecuted religious minority is one that has become rooted in its very theological group identity, and within the conditions of late 1970’s Lebanon this identity began to brim with a counterpart element: the bristling, flexing urge for communal emancipation and defensive lashing out. This defensive and martial aspect of the Shia identity has deep and historic theological roots. Following the death of Prophet Mohammed in the seventh century A.D., two competing branches of Islam emerged over the issue of Mohammed’s rightful successor. The Sunnis reasoned that because Mohammed had not designated a successor, one could be elected by religious associates close to him, while the Shia contend that

¹⁷ *Frontline World*, “Lebanon—Party of God.”

¹⁸ Jaber, p. 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁰ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 229.

Mohammed had named his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as successor. Thus, the schism breaks down along the question of if Islam will be governed through familial or executive succession. Ali was murdered in 661 A.D., and his son, Hussein, was named head of the Shia leadership. Challenging for his perceived right to the Caliphate, Hussein and 100 of his followers marched against the sitting Caliph. But en route Hussein and his entourage were set upon and slain by the army of the Sunni Caliph, Yazid, at the Iraqi town of Karbala in 680 A.D.²¹

The minority Shia, who perceive themselves to be the embattled true heirs to Islam's leadership, have since developed a theological identity—inspired by the narrative of Hussein's courage and death fighting for his rightful position as leader of Islam—around a bristling, self-sacrificing martial defense of their community, as well as a secondary tenet of intentional concealment of their religious hues and activism in order to allow them to live within a hostile religious environment.

The Najaf Clerical Cohort

The founding nucleus, subsequent leadership, and ideological wellspring for Hizballah emerged from a clerical alumnus educated in the Shia holy city of Najaf, Iraq, which as Jaber describes was “the ideological hub of Shia Islamic thought in the sixties and seventies.”²² As Martin Kramer describes, the school meditated on heady, radical fundamentalist teachings:

There, in a setting of pious fastidiousness, they studied sacred law, theology, and philosophy, according to medieval pedagogical methods. From the late 1950s to the late 1970s, Najaf was also a place of great intellectual ferment, fueled by the fears of the ulama [Shia clerics] that their Islamic values and religious autonomy were threatened by Westernizing influences. Their response was to elaborate a theory of an Islamic state that could offer a satisfying alternative to the doctrines of nationalism and communism, which had made inroads even in Najaf. The ulama thought, lectured, and wrote on such subjects as Islamic government, Islamic economics, and the ideal Islamic state.²³

This Najaf school of Shia thought included al-Sadr; Mohamed Hussein Fadlallah who would become Hizballah's spiritual leader; Abbas Musawi, a founding member of Hizballah; Hassan Nasrallah, its present Secretary-General; as well Ayatollah Khomeini who while in Najaf refined the fundamentalist conceptual outlines for the establishment of an Islamic state which he was later to implement during the Iranian Revolution of 1979.²⁴ This Najaf brand of Shia fundamentalism promoted by the aforementioned clerical cohort was passed along to protégés, and associated with the Al Dawa party of Iraq. Perceived as a threat to Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated government, many of

²¹ Jaber, pp. 84-85.

²² Ibid., p. 20.

²³ Martin Kramer, “The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah,” in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); available from <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/MoralLogic.htm>; Internet; accessed on 6 August 2003.

²⁴ Jaber, p. 20.

the Shia clerics were driven from Najaf or arrested. Those who fled returned to Iran and Lebanon and in effect were missionaries of their revolutionary Najaf Shia Islam: an energized determination to work for Shia emancipation and ascendancy through a salvationist return to the fundamentalist tenets of Shia Islam, with the ultimate goal of building fundamentalist Shia society into an Islamic state based upon Islamic law, or *sharia*.

The Najaf Shia fundamentalism found fertile ground in Iran, eventually coming to fruition in the Iranian Revolution and resulting Islamic Republic of Iran. For the Lebanese members of the Najaf cohort, the success of these fundamentalist Shia tenets in producing the Iranian Revolution created excitement that they would have similar salvationist and empowering effect on the downtrodden Shia of Lebanon. Kramer:

All of the Lebanese Shi'ite clerics who studied in Najaf during those years were indoctrinated to some extent with the ideal, at an impressionable moment, and in austere conditions of intense Muslim piety. They came away from Najaf with a coherent criticism of the world as it is, an often revolutionary program for change, and friendships spanning the Shi'ite world of scholarship.... It is the Najaf background of the leading Lebanese Shi'ite clerics in Hizballah which accounts for the movement's rapid and complete assimilation of the doctrines now championed by the Islamic Republic of Iran.²⁵

It must be noted that the resonance of the Najaf school among the Shia of Lebanon was not simply the product of the heady theological climate surrounding the Iranian Revolution. Fadlallah, and original member of the Najaf clerical cohort, had in effect laid the religious ground work—much as al Sadr had laid the political groundwork—that quickened this religious revolution among the Lebanese Shia. He had come to Lebanon from Najaf in 1966 and had preached the virtues of the Najaf school well before Khomeini's Iranian Revolution burst onto the Islamic world.

But it was the immediate inspiration of Khomeini's Iran that helped to amplify the Lebanese Najaf clerics' message among the Shia of Lebanon. The message promised Shia ascendancy and redemption through fundamentalist activism, and presented the ameliorating epic vision of an empowering and prosperous Islamic society in Iran's image. The message found a fertile soil among the long abused and impoverished local Lebanese Shia. Through their own charismatic station within Shia society as clerics, the Najaf clerical cohort was able engage the already simmering Shia identity of an embattled and persecuted minority—posited within the continuing inter-confessional conflict and abuse they experienced—and combined with the cohort's experience of being driven from Najaf these factors only reinforced the reactionary Shia communal energies and posture of bristling defense. This environment served to galvanize the communal mentality that enemies surround, leading to ironclad group solidarity against the perceived threat, and the charismatic Najaf cohort leadership seen as guiding them to victory and salvation. The Shia fundamentalist al Dawa party of Iraq had also been

²⁵ Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah."

uprooted by Saddam Hussein's clearing of Najaf, and its core ideology also found its way to Lebanon as the precursor, together with Amal, of Hizballah.

Catalyst for the Blooming of Hizballah: The 1982 Israeli Invasion of Southern Lebanon, "Operation Peace for Galilee"

The emergence of Hizballah from the milieu of civil war and heady religious revolution occurring in Lebanon during the late 1970s and early 1980s is best described by Jaber:

The cataclysmic succession of events—civil war, Israel's 1978 invasion and Sadr's disappearance—was capped by the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The fate of Sadr and the triumph of Shia Islam under Khomeini, at a time of civil ferment in Lebanon, was a potent political and theological cocktail for the Lebanese Shiites. Sadr had politicized the Lebanese Shiites and the Iranian revolution had catapulted Shia Islam on to the world stage. When Israel invaded for the second time in 1982, the force which ultimately emerged to resist its occupation was the child of these ground-breaking events.²⁶

Israel had invaded in 1982 to excise the PLO's enclave in southern Lebanon—a de facto state within a state—from which it was staging attacks upon Israel, and create a "Security Zone" along Lebanon's southern border. As Israeli-PLO fighting intensified, the U.S. feared that prospects for regional peace would be scuttled and deployed a contingent of 800 Marines as part of a multinational peacekeeping force that included French and Italian soldiers.

The Israeli invasion was initially welcomed by many in southern Lebanon who had suffered under the PLO's anarchic rule. PLO officials were accused of a number of abuses including rape, robbery and extortion.²⁷ Early on, Israeli troops had a pacifying and stabilizing effect on the Shia areas of southern Lebanon. But those conditions were to be short lived, as Israeli occupation soon became abusive and deadly.

On October 16th 1983 in Nabatiyah, Lebanon Israeli forces disrupted the Shia holy festival of Ashura which celebrates the martyrdom of Shia Islam's central theological figure Hussein. The action was perceived by those in Nabatiyah as intentionally provocative, and inflamed anti-Israeli ire and unrest. The confrontation that day led to a heavy-handed Israeli response that left two villagers dead, and which served as the catalyst for a vengeful Shia mobilization to communal defense and activism against Israeli forces.

Thus, inspired by the activism of the Najaf school of Shia fundamentalism, and compelled by the sectarian conflict of Lebanon and the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, Hizballah began to coalesce in 1982 as an underground religious revolutionary and communal resistance organization. Hizballah soon established a consultative council

²⁶ Jaber, pp. 13-14.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

and swelled its militia ranks. Seen as a promising vehicle for establishing the Iranian Revolution in Lebanon and also of combating Israel, Iranian funding and sophisticated military training soon arrived with the 1,500-2,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRG's) dispatched to the Bekaa Valley by Tehran to help establish Hizballah as movement and fighting force. This assistance from Tehran proved utterly crucial for Hizballah's development first into a robust guerrilla force and later into the powerful and complex organization it is today. Hizballah's core power based soon solidified in the Bekaa Valley, with regional commands in the southern suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon. As the key powerbroker in Lebanon, Syria also provided key assistance in facilitating and protecting the flow of Iranian personnel and material through Damascus that were linking up with Hizballah units.

Despite the PLO abuses against them in Lebanon, the Shia developed a definite sympathy for Palestinian suffering as an oppressed and evicted minority and their attendant irredentist cause. With the Palestinians as an immediate example, the Shia appreciated that the only way to regain land stolen by Israel was to fight bitterly for it.²⁸ With a guerrilla militia trained by the IRG's and equipped with relatively advanced Iranian weaponry, Hizballah set out to defend the Shia community from rival confessional militias and resist the Israeli occupation, and began to wage a bloody attritional guerrilla war of resistance against Israeli forces which was to last nearly twenty years.

[Hizballah's Raison d'Etre, Ideology, and Narrative]

Hizballah's founding group ideology and narrative was revealed to the world in the form of the "Open Letter to Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World". In it, the U.S. and Israel are perceived to be at the root of all problems and evil confronting Muslims and Lebanon, and therefore must be beaten back, and going further contends that Israel must be destroyed. It goes on to argue that because of the oppression and abuse suffered by Shia at the hands of these foreign invaders, the members of Hizballah had no choice but to fight back to defend and liberate the Shia religion, community, and dignity.

The following are excerpts from the Open Letter which will be quoted at length:

We declare frankly and clearly that we are a nation that fears only god and that does not accept tyranny, aggression, and humiliation. America and its allies in and the Zionist entity that has usurped the sacred Islamic land of Palestine have engaged and continue to engage in constant aggression against us and are working to constantly humiliate us. Therefore, we are in a state of constant and escalating preparedness to repel the aggression and to defend our religion, existence, and dignity. ...²⁹

Thus, we have seen that aggression can be repelled only with sacrifices and

²⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁹ Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander, eds, *The Terrorism Reader* (New York, NY: Meridian Books, 1987), pp. 315-316.

dignity gained only with the sacrifice of blood and that freedom is not given but regained with the sacrifice of both heart and soul. We have opted for religion, freedom, and dignity over humiliation and constant submission to America and its allies and to Zionism and their Phalangist allies. We have risen to liberate our country, to drive the imperialists and the invaders out of it and to determine our fate by our own hands. ...³⁰

Our people could not withstand all this treason and decided to confront the imams of infidelity of America, France, and Israel. ...³¹

For the sake of the truth, we declare that the sons of Hizballah's nation have come to know well their basic enemies in the area: Israel, America, France, and the Phalange. ...³²

Our sons are now in a state of ever-escalating confrontation against these enemies until the following objectives are achieved: Israel's final departure from Lebanon as a prelude to its final obliteration from existence and the liberation of venerable Jerusalem from the talons of occupation. The final departure of America, France, and their allies from Lebanon and the termination of the influence of any imperialist power in the country Giving all our people the opportunity to determine their fate and to choose with full freedom the system of government they want, keeping in mind that we do not hide our commitment to the rule of Islam and that we urge to choose the Islamic system, which alone guarantees justice and dignity for all and prevents any new imperialist attempt to infiltrate our country. ...³³

As for Israel, we consider it the American spearhead in our Islamic world. It is a usurping enemy that must be fought until the usurped right is returned to its owners Our struggle with usurping Israel emanates from an ideological and historic awareness that this Zionist entity is aggressive in its origins and structure and is built on usurped land and at the expense of the rights of a Muslim people. Therefore, our confrontation of this entity must end with its obliteration from existence. This is why we do not recognize any cease-fire agreement, any truce or any separate or nonseparate [*sic*] peace treaty with it.³⁴

Hizballah's ideology thus is a synergistic melding a Shia fundamentalist consciousness and narrative, inspired by a political agenda of redemptive Shia fundamentalist revolution in the image of Khomeini's Iran coupled with compelling energies to confront the Shia community's proximate threats—the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, continuing sectarian strife within Lebanon, and the struggle for greater political influence and social welfare faculties for the Shia community.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 316.

³¹ Ibid., p. 316.

³² Ibid., p. 316.

³³ Ibid., p. 317.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 317.

Hizballah ideology was thus masterfully engaged with the popular sentiment and resonated not only with the immediate conditions of the downtrodden and victimized Shia community, but also tapped into the intrinsic Shia theological identity and narrative of martial activism. It is as if the Hizballah message had said in essence to the Shia of Lebanon: “Just as we have always been abused and persecuted—since the days of Hussein—we now must continue to fight for our survival against those who would subjugate or destroy us and our religion. But do not fear in this fight, for we are God’s chosen few, and it is His will that we prevail.” In a profoundly telling explanation, Nasrallah describes Hizballah’s understanding of the popular political climate and its attempts to incite support for the movement through the resonance of its ideology:

The second effort was spreading the word among the people, first, in a bid to raise their morale, and second to instill in them a sense of animosity towards the enemy, coupled with a spirit of resistance in the face of the occupying forces. This required us to use a language of indoctrination rather than realpolitik. People then were not in need of political analysis, they were in need of being incited and goaded. They did not need to be lectured, they needed to be freed.³⁵

Hizballah’s ideology, galvanizing dynamics, and operational code are thus intractably wrought within the epic Shia theological and nationalist identity and narrative as Islam’s embattled, anointed few. For the Shia religious-national narrative, revolutionary defensive energies and martyrdom are entrenched within the its theological identity since its very origins following the death of Mohammad when Hussein and the perceived rightful Shia heirs of Islam died fighting to wrest control from their Sunni usurpers. This mindset provides the interpretive lens through which the Shia fundamentalist worldview is focused. It is a worldview that regards the Shia experience as a crucible of a besieged Islamic minority, compelled to a vigilant, bristling defensive posture against threats to the religion. Modern events are overlaid upon this narrative and it in turn becomes a heuristic interpretive framework for the Shia mindset—in essence an ontological narrative. The confluence of events occurring in 1970’s-80’s Lebanon and Iran—the legacy of the oppressed and besieged Shia of Lebanon, the inspirational example of the Iranian Revolution, the leadership of the Najaf clerical cohort arriving as standard bearers of that salvationist Shia fundamentalist vision, and the immediate threats of inter-confessional civil war and of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon—all provided powerful resonance and engagement with this enduring narrative among the Lebanese Shia. This Shia mindset climatized a uniquely ripe environment for a robustly resurgent Shia fundamentalism to be cultivated and bloom with the guidance of charismatic clerical personalities and the promise of militant vengeance against its oppressive and threatening enemies.

³⁵ Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, quoted in an interview in *Al-Safir*, quoted in Jaber, p. 50.

[Militant Activities]

Hizballah's 15 years guerrilla war against Israeli forces in Lebanon was not considered, in its entirety, as terrorism by the U.S. Department of State, but rather a national liberation resistance.³⁶ This is not to say that Hizballah did not employ what would be considered terrorist tactics. Indeed, Hizballah in many ways pioneered the majority of the tactics associated with modern terrorism such as suicide bombings, multi-pronged, and simultaneous attacks.³⁷ With the training and material assistance of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hizballah developed a sophisticated and fearsome guerrilla and terrorist apparatus that exists to this day. Hizballah deftly combined larger scale conventional attacks with guerrilla raids and terrorist bombings to present a robust and dynamic militant front that ultimately succeeded in winning a bloody attritional guerrilla war against Israeli forces in Lebanon, forcing their withdrawal in 2000.

Hizballah's guerrilla operations were considered to be of a remarkably high "professional caliber"³⁸ likely reflecting the paramilitary training imparted by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. At every stage, Hizballah employed the strategy of asymmetric guerrilla warfare, focusing on leveraging its strengths against Israeli weaknesses. Its tactics synergized light-caliber hit-and-run ambushes and bombings against Israeli front lines with heavy-caliber attacks with machine guns, tank fire, and surface-to-air missiles against Israel's mid and rear flanks. Hizballah also employed complex sequential operations, combining a bombing with a follow on conventional assault or secondary bombing.³⁹ By alternating between larger assaults and more classic guerrilla and terrorist operations, Hizballah was able to keep Israeli forces off balance—never knowing which type of attack to prepare defenses against—and maintained its ability quickly retreat into the cover of local villages.⁴⁰

Hizballah is of course notorious for its rash of deadly terrorist attacks, both within Lebanon and abroad. As mentioned, Hizballah terrorists brought the tactics of the suicide bombing and simultaneous bombings onto the world stage. The most pronounced example of this style of terrorism was the concurrent suicide bombings of the U.S. Marine barracks and the French peacekeepers' barracks in Beirut in 1983. Massive explosions destroyed both buildings, killing 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French soldiers. It is thought that the Italian peacekeeping contingent was also a target that day, but the plan was scrapped after it was realized that the Italians were sleeping in tents, a less desirable target for a bombing.⁴¹ Other major terrorist attacks include the suicide truck bombing of

³⁶ United States Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, *Terrorism: Near Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 2002*, by Kenneth Katzman, Updated 13 February 2002, p. 5.

³⁷ Faye Bowers, "Why Hizballah May be the Next Terror Target for U.S." *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 April 2003; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0425/p02s01-usgn.html>; Internet; accessed on 8 August 2003.

³⁸ Jaber, p. 37.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ John Kifner, "In Long Fight With Israel, Hezbollah Tactics Evolved," *New York Times*, 19 July 2000, sec. A, p. 12.

⁴¹ Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 1) *New Yorker*, 14 & 21 October 2002.

the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983 that killed 63; the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984; the hijacking of TWA flight 847 during which a U.S. Navy diver was killed; the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 that killed 38; the bombing of an Israeli cultural center in Buenos Aires in 1994 that killed 95; and Hizballah's suspected involvement in the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in which 19 U.S. servicemen were killed.

Hizballah also conducted a rash of kidnappings in the 1980s of westerners, journalists, and even the CIA Beirut station chief. As Magnus Ranstorp describes, "In a wider sense, Hizb'allah hostage-taking activity also served to enhance its revolutionary credence and image as the true defender of the Lebanese Shi'a community against the enemies of Islam, especially as it played an instrumental role in expelling foreign forces out of Lebanon and through its tireless armed campaign against Israel."⁴²

Hizballah tactics were constantly evolving in response to Israeli operations. Hizballah scrutinized past attacks to identify "lessons learned" regarding the effectiveness of the tactics and modified them as needed. Hizballah improvised in the use of conventional weapons at their disposal, for example steering guided anti-tank missiles into chinks in Israeli fortifications, and incorporated others that were decidedly low-tech—such as bombs camouflaged as rocks to be placed along roads traveled by Israeli military—but that were highly effective in an asymmetric guerrilla war against a superior conventional military.⁴³ As Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, a commander of Hizballah forces in southern Lebanon, explained:

The Resistance was always trying to gain new experience as well as improve and update its military tactics to a level that would guarantee it success. It has always competed with the enemy on the methods used in the conflict. From the beginning, the Resistance's experts spent much time concentrating on studying and analyzing the ways and means of changing the caliber of the fight. They scrutinized the types of weapons used by the enemy, how they used them and what their effects were, as well as studying the psychological state in which the soldiers returned to Lebanon to fight."⁴⁴

It is important to note Hizballah's consciousness of Israeli psychology and morale. As part of its guerrilla war, Hizballah employed a deft psychological operations campaign against Israel, videotaping bloody Hizballah attacks on Israeli troops and passing the footage along to Israeli television in an effort to undermine support for the war among the Israeli public. Similar tactics, in fact likely using the same footage, were used to stir support for Hizballah within Lebanon.

The Hizballah propaganda machine remains a polished and highly effective component

⁴² Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (London, U.K.: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 192-194, quoted by David J. Whittaker, *The Terrorism Reader* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2001), p. 51.

⁴³ Kifner.

⁴⁴ Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, quoted in Jaber, p. 42.

of the movement, and a key source of cultivating popular support and recruitment. Once again, Sheikh Nabil Qaouq:

While it is important for Israel to portray the battle as a fight between Israel and Hezbollah, it is more important for us to show it in its true form—a war, not just between Hezbollah and the Israeli soldiers but one in which the whole of Lebanon and its people are in danger. In this we can say that Hezbollah has largely succeeded in transforming the outlook of people towards its Resistance. We can now honestly say that we have reached a stage where we have raised popular awareness as well as gaining the people’s support for the Resistance—both Christians and Muslims alike.⁴⁵

Whereas the Israeli occupation of Lebanon was a largely unpopular policy, translating down to confused and uncommitted Israeli troop morale, Hizballah militants believed that they were fighting to defend their lives, land, villages, families, and religion against foreign occupiers, and were utterly committed to the fight and prepared to die for it. Thus, Hizballah’s combat intensity and focus likely surpassed that of the Israeli military.

Militants and Terrorists

The majority of Hizballah’s guerrilla militancy and terrorist attacks were perpetrated and claimed by a panoply of militant groups thought to be closely affiliated with Hizballah. These included Islamic Resistance, Islamic Jihad, and what has been termed Hizballah’s Special Operations Command.

Islamic Resistance was the original military wing of Hizballah, at one point numbering 5,000 fighters. In the early 1990s the group was granted greater operational autonomy from Hizballah’s central leadership for operations in southern Lebanon in order to capitalize on local commanders’ and fighters’ knowledge of the area. Major operations, however, still needed to be approved by Nasrallah and the ruling council. Qaouq spoke in 1997 of the evolution of Islamic Resistance capabilities, operations, and popular support:

You see Hezbollah, on the military level, has taken massive steps forward from when it first started. When the invasion first took place we did not have the experts nor the experience that we do now. The Resistance today can boast of having specialized regiments each with its own particular weaponry. We now have an infantry, an engineering division, an artillery force, a general staff, signals body and the financial backing required to carry on. In other words we have all the ingredients of a regular army. Of course this took a lot of time to arrive at and we benefited a lot from our experiences. The Resistance is on a different psychological level than it ever was before. A main factor which has played a vital role in our positive attitudes and performance is that we are strengthened by the people’s support for us and their adoption of our cause. This is something very significant.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, quoted in Jaber, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, quoted in Jaber, p. 39.

Although Islamic Resistance seemed to be Hizballah's more official militant associate group, Islamic Jihad emerged as its most violent, though its relationship with Hizballah remains somewhat opaque. Islamic Jihad's core of hardened fighters conducted some of the most deadly and destructive attacks associated with Hizballah including the U.S. Marine and French peacekeepers barracks bombings. While most Hizballah officials will issue blanket denials of any knowledge or association with Islamic Jihad, it is thought that the group is composed of smaller terrorist cells controlled by Hizballah commanders, typically in cooperation with Iranian agents.⁴⁷

Today, Hizballah is widely considered one of the premier terrorist organization in the world. The U.S. State Department declares its strength at a "few hundred terrorist operatives."⁴⁸ Hizballah terrorist capabilities remain some of the most far ranging and sophisticated of any terrorist organization in existence. In particular, Hizballah's bomb-making capabilities—of the type used in suicide and vehicle bombings such as the 1983 barracks bombings—has achieved a highly destructive level of proficiency and become in some ways its terrorist hallmark. Today, Hizballah is thought to be developing the faculties for building "mega-bombs" that can bring down large buildings such as office towers.⁴⁹

Hizballah runs terrorist and paramilitary camps—sometimes in conjunction with Iranian assets—in the Bekaa Valley and the "Tri-Border" region of South America connecting Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. The Bekaa Valley camps have developed a reputation for their highly sophisticated training and have hosted other terrorist groups such as ETA, the Red Brigades, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, and the IRA.⁵⁰

The U.S. State Department claims that Hizballah is also active in the southern suburbs of Beirut, and southern Lebanon, and is known to have established cells in Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia.⁵¹ Hizballah's particularly strong presence in the Tri-Border region includes, in addition to training camps, major fund raising initiatives.

Most contemporary international terrorist operations associated with Hizballah are attributed to its shadowy Special Operations Command group which is thought to be headed by Hizballah's most notorious terrorist figure, Imad Mughniyah. Mughniyah is believed to receive substantial operational guidance from his Tehran handlers to whom he primarily reports. Although developed and under the direction of Mughniyah, the global network of terrorist cells—located throughout the Middle East, South America, North

⁴⁷ Martin Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 136, quoted by David J. Whittaker, *The Terrorism Reader* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2001), p. 48.

⁴⁸ United States Department of State, Counterterrorism Office, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, 30 April 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2002/pdf/>; Internet; accessed 2 September 2003.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 1).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*.

America, the U.S., and Europe—are organized through an informal association.⁵² The cells coalesce and disintegrate to conduct attacks under various cover names, and enjoy a certain level of tactical autonomy.⁵³ Hizballah’s global terrorist network also has set roots within the United State. As Senator Bob Graham has noted, “[Hizballah] has a significant presence of its trained operatives inside the United States waiting for the call to action.”⁵⁴

[Political Activities]

Hizballah entered the Lebanese political system as an official political party following the Taif Accords of 1989 that ushered in a more equitable national political system and brought the Lebanese civil war to an end. Popular among the Shia community for its genuine responsiveness to, and championing of, Shia political empowerment and interests, Hizballah today has 12 seats in Lebanon’s parliament. Salim al-Hoss, a Sunni Muslim former prime minister of Lebanon remarked of Hizballah as a political party:

They have been very active in parliament. It is distinguished from other parties in the fact that its dealings with people are in general morally upright. Many of the previous parties collapsed because of the transgressions that their military wings committed. To a large extent, Hezbollah has succeeded in not falling into this trap. Hezbollah has shown that it is in total harmony with itself and in its position of opposition to the government in general. Its stance on the various issues debated in parliament is also clear and united.⁵⁵

As part of its political wing, Hizballah runs a spectrum of media: an official website; *Al Ahed* (The Pledge) weekly newspaper first published 13 June 1984; *Al Nour* (The Light) radio station launched during the Amal-Hizballah war; and *Al Manar* (The Beacon) television station watched by 10 million people each day in the Middle East and Europe.⁵⁶

In particular *Al Manar* is a powerful component of the Hizballah movement. As noted, it served as a key element of Hizballah’s successful 18-year guerrilla war against Israel, and it is also integral to the strength and success of Hizballah in terms of both galvanizing support and recruitment, and as an invigorating propaganda medium for the Hizballah cause and ideology. The images of Hizballah violence resonate with separate wider target audiences and serve two dichotomous purposes. The first is to cultivate support for the movement among potential sympathizers and constituents within the Shia community, extolling the righteousness and bravery of the movement in defense of the Shia community and Lebanon as a whole. The second purpose of *Al Manar* propaganda, used to great effect, was in undermining Israeli troop moral and popular public support

⁵² U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, By Rex Hudson, et. al. (Guildford CT: Lyons Press, 1999), p. 178.

⁵³ Carl Anthony Wege, “Hizbollah Organization,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 17 (1994): 157.

⁵⁴ Bradley.

⁵⁵ Salim al-Hoss, quoted in Jaber, pp. 210-211.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 1).

for its occupation of southern Lebanon. Almost nightly, footage of bloody Hizballah attacks and dead Israeli soldiers would make its way to Israeli television exposing the gruesome costs of Israel's occupation. On this point, Qaouq has remarked, "The use of media as a weapon had an effect parallel to battle.... By the use of these films, we were able to control from a long distance the morale of a lot of Israelis."⁵⁷ An official with the United Nations peacekeeping forces there suggested that "seventy-five percent of Hezbollah's war was the videotapes."⁵⁸ To this point, 'war' may be a misnomer, as the attacks may have had a terrorizing effect on the Israeli public. Terrorism is after all, at its core, a "particularly vicious form of psychological warfare"⁵⁹ which when transmitted and amplified through the media can assume the role of a strategic weapon.

In Hizballah's war of propaganda, the adventures and deaths of Hizballah militants and terrorists—portrayed as 'martyrs'—are glorified each night on *Al Manar*, their names lionized for the Hizballah community. Current events are skewed through Hizballah's revolutionary and fundamentalist narrative; Israel and other perceived 'enemies' are demonized, and Hizballah resistance venerated. Nicholas Blanford describes common *Al Manar* programming:

Each day, a familiar collage of images flashes across the screen to the tune of martial music: men dressed in camouflage uniforms waving their rifles in triumph, a funeral procession of chanting Palestinians, Israeli soldiers aiming rifles at stone-throwing Palestinian children. Often there is the distinctive voice of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's leader, vowing the destruction of the 'Zionist entity.'⁶⁰

Nayyef Krayyem, *Al Manar's* chairman, openly identifies the station's role in psychological operations: "*Al Manar* is an important weapon for us. It's a political weapon, social weapon, and cultural weapon."⁶¹ Recently, the station has turned its focus to 'coverage' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this regard *Al Manar's* news director Hassan Fadlallah has admitted, "We cover only the victim, not the aggressor. CNN is the Zionist news network, Al Jazeera is neutral, and *Al Manar* takes the side of the Palestinians."⁶² Jeffrey Goldberg describes *Al Manar's* propagandist lineup:

A program called "The Spider's House" explores what Hezbollah sees as Israel's weakness; "In Spite of the Wounds" portrays as heroes men who were wounded fighting Israel in South Lebanon. On a game show entitled "The Viewer is the Witness," contestants guess the names of prominent Israeli

⁵⁷ Sheik Nabil Qaouk, quoted by Kifner.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Kifner.

⁵⁹ Jerrold M. Post, "Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product Psychological Forces," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁶⁰ Nicholas Blanford, "Hizbullah Sharpens its Weapons in Propaganda War," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 December 2001; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/1228/p6s2-wone.htm>; Internet; accessed on 8 August 2003.

⁶¹ Nayyef Krayyem, quoted by Blanford, "Hizbullah Sharpens its Weapons in Propaganda War."

⁶² Hassan Fadlallah, quoted in Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 1).

politicians and military figures, who are played by Lebanese actors. Al Manar also has a weekly program called “Terrorists.”⁶³

“Terrorists,” as described by Jeffrey Goldberg after interviewing the Washington Institute for Near East Policy’s Avi Jorisch who has seen the show, “airs vintage footage of what it terms ‘Zionist crimes,’ which include, by Hezbollah’s definition, any Israeli action, offensive or defensive.”⁶⁴

[Social Welfare Activities]

Hizballah’s social welfare activities were initiated shortly following the group’s founding. In addition to its militant activities during the early 1980s, Hizballah, with Iranian assistance, had also stepped into the governmental vacuum in the Shia “Belt of Misery” slums of southern Beirut to provide social welfare and public works in an effort to improve living conditions there. The welfare organizations Jihad al Binaa, Construction Jihad, and the Islamic Health Committee were established in 1984, and in 1987 the Iranian social welfare group, the Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini, began operations with Khomeini’s express blessing in the southern Beirut suburbs.⁶⁵ With the crucial financial backing of Iran, the Hizballah and Iranian social welfare organizations provided direct monetary welfare payments to needy families; delivered water supplies and generators; constructed hospitals and schools; established the area’s first employment office; dug wells; repaired sewers; and collected garbage. Hizballah also embarked upon a system of providing a number of small business loans; initiated venture capital investments; and pursued commodities trading—all without involving the element of interest which is proscribed by Islamic law.⁶⁶ Hizballah also had emergency reconstruction crews that could enter towns following an Israeli bombardment to repair damage.

Thus, these actions demonstrably portrayed Hizballah as champions and guardians of the Shia community. Further, the transformative promise of Hizballah’s revolutionary Islamic fundamentalist vision, and the export of the Iranian Revolution directly into the slums, engaged and energized the downtrodden Shia with hope of future empowerment and prosperity through a fundamentalist society. Hizballah had now set its roots within the Shia community and galvanized support and sympathy for the organization, even among those Shia who did not support the totality of Hizballah’s agenda.

It has been also argued that at times Hizballah’s social welfare programs were not a completely altruistic endeavor. Some have said that Hizballah used the programs to beholden recipients and coerce them into becoming involved in the organization lest their welfare be cut off. Further, such programs and the reconstruction crews served a strategic purpose in that they allowed Shia families to remain in their villages during the war instead of fleeing as refugees, as a result deterring Israeli forces from occupying

⁶³ Jeffrey Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 1).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Jaber, p. 147.

⁶⁶ For a complete description of Hizballah and Iran’s social welfare initiatives see Jaber, pp. 148-166.

them, and also provided its militant wing with the societal cover and logistics crucial to any guerrilla insurgency.

Many of these social welfare programs continue to this day, in particular providing much-needed hospital and school services to the Shia community,⁶⁷ and remain a primary engine of Hizballah popularity. Hizballah hospitals are generally modern and accessible, and its schools are known for their high academic standards—although aspects of their mandatory Islamic Studies curriculum include indoctrination of religiously sanctioned militancy, jihad, and martyrdom, inculcating the next generation of Shia at an age of great impressionability of the glory and nobility of martial acts in the name of Islam.

Hizballah has continued to pursue business ventures including small-business loans, real estate and venture capital investments, and also speculation in the stock markets. According to Walter Laqueur, the group has established “supermarkets, bakeries, building, farming, bookshops, and clothing sales to true believers, partly to finance its terrorist activities.”⁶⁸ On the whole, Hizballah’s political and social welfare activities have entrenched the group within Lebanese society as a sort of de facto municipal government, extremely popular within its Shia powerbase.

[Recruitment, Membership Profile]

Hizballah has long drawn recruits from the impoverished, victimized, and embittered Lebanese Shia community, and in particular from the restless young living in the slums of South Beirut. In the 1990s, a typical recruit was in his “late teens or early twenties, from a lower-middle class family.”⁶⁹ During the 1980’s Hizballah used suicide commandos as young as 17, but in the 1990’s its cadres were filled with older, more mature recruits.⁷⁰

The grinding poverty, despair, and resentment felt by the Shia community made the allure of a purposeful and vengeful life of terrorism, one sanctioned and even commanded by God, against those perceived to be causing the hurt, virtually irresistible. Qaouq also notes the religious motivations of Islamic Resistance recruitment and fighting in that “when the Resistance was launched it was primarily triggered by our religious obligation as well as our national duty. But the national duty could never overtake the fervor of our religious responsibility.”⁷¹

For many of these recruits it was likely an easy transition from conducting regular terrorist attacks to self-sacrificing, or suicide attacks. Their deep sense of alienation and vengeance as a result of the oppressive conditions under which they lived probably led

⁶⁷ See Neil MacFarquhar, “To U.S., a Terrorist Group; To Lebanese, a Social Agency,” *New York Times*, 28 December 2001, sec. A, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 136.

⁶⁹ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, p. 177.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁷¹ Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, quoted in Jaber, p. 42.

them to perceive the glory that would be bestowed upon them and their families once they became martyrs of the cause, and the paradise awaiting them in Heaven after their death, as an attractive alternative.

Today, Hizballah's recruitment for its military branch includes not only the impoverished, but also professionals such as doctors and engineers.⁷²

[External Aid and Support]

Iran

According to the U.S. State Department, Hizballah "receives financial, training, weapons, explosives, political, diplomatic, and organizational aid from Iran...."⁷³ Iran regards Hizballah as a surrogate militant and terrorist force that can be employed surreptitiously as a strategic asset to further Iran's foreign policy goals, or simply to conduct clandestine direct action, against other countries—typically the U.S., Israel, and other Western countries—without exposing itself to direct attribution that may invite a harsh response from the target countries.

Since Hizballah's founding, the tempo, reach, and sophistication of its operations have been crucially dependent upon such Iranian largesse.⁷⁴ This assistance has been the sine quo non of Hizballah's militant wing, integral to its development into one of the most sophisticated and deadly terrorist operations in existence. Iran has bankrolled Hizballah an estimated \$2 billion since the early 1980s,⁷⁵ with financing in the range of \$100 million per year.⁷⁶ In particular, the services of Iranian intelligence and the Iranian diplomatic apparatus through the provision of international logistics and diplomatic cover facilitated the majority of Hizballah's operations abroad. Further, it is thought that the majority of major Hizballah-related terrorist operations seem to be either guided or approved by Iranian hard-line religious officials and intelligence agencies.

Syria

Throughout Hizballah's development, Syria has exercised a hegemonic influence over the group, and Lebanon as a whole, buttressing Hizballah enclaves and operations against Israel, and acquiescing to and controlling the channels of Iranian involvement with Hizballah in Lebanon. Syria's tacit and active support for Hizballah's continued guerrilla operations against Israel provides Damascus with valuable political leverage in its efforts to reclaim from Israel its perceived rightful tracks of the Golan Heights, referred to as the Sheeba Farms. The equation is simply put to Israel: In return for its land, Syria will work to mute and dismantle Hizballah. Until then, it is assumed that Hizballah will continue to receive, as the U.S. State Department claims, "diplomatic, political, and logistical support

⁷² U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, p. 178.

⁷³ United States Department of State, Counterterrorism Office, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*.

⁷⁴ Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, p. 136.

⁷⁵ John Burns, "An Arab Militia, Glimpsing Victory, Could Lose Peace," *New York Times*, 28 February 2000, sec.A, p.1.

⁷⁶ Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 1) *New Yorker*, 14 & 21 October 2002.

from Syria.”⁷⁷

Both Iran and Syria are likely reevaluating their relationship with Hizballah in light of the U.S.-lead war on terrorism and the U.S. pledge to end terrorism’s state-sponsorship. Iran and Syria seem to be treading much more carefully, seeking to avoid the appearance of blatant involvement in terrorism that may provoke a harsh U.S. response.

Popular Lebanese Support

Hizballah has always enjoyed a large swath of support or sympathy from the Shia of Lebanon who regard the group as a noble defender of their community, as well as the champion for reformative and empowering socio-political agenda based on the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic society. The U.S. State Department believes that Hizballah now has “several thousand supporters.”⁷⁸ During its long resistance war against Israel, Hizballah cultivated a more broad-based popularity in Lebanon that included middle-class Shia professionals in addition to its traditional constituency of the downtrodden working class Shia. However, following the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, many Lebanese after 25 years of war are eager to realize a peace dividend and would prefer that Hizballah’s militancy be subdued so that the political and social wings of Hizballah can more effectively work for Shia prosperity and reconstruction.⁷⁹ A restaurant owner in Bint Jbeil was quoted by the *New York Times* recently as pithily remarking, “Hezbollah did the right thing, but Israel is gone. It’s time for their fighters to go sit in their houses.”⁸⁰

[Group Structure and Leadership]

Without access to classified intelligence, the exact nature of Hizballah’s shadowy group and leadership structure remains a largely speculative enterprise, save for its prominent, public officials. Historical accounts and the available material analyzed on Hizballah’s leadership and organizational structure do not point to a neat contemporary picture, and therefore this analysis is thus based on an informed approximation of those structures.

In general, Hizballah’s organizational structure should be regarded as a complex political organization incorporating a militant, political, and social wings, and an associated terrorist wing known as the Special Operations Command that operates as a relatively more autonomous entity and which is thought to take much of direction from Iran.

Leadership and Command

In 1983, Hizballah formed the *Majlis al-Shoura*, its central leadership consultative council which began with three members but is now of indefinite number. This *shoura* is led by clerics who guide and approve Hizballah military, political, and social welfare

⁷⁷ United States Department of State, Counterterrorism Office, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* 2002.

⁷⁸ Ibid..

⁷⁹ MacFarquhar, “To U.S., a Terrorist Group; To Lebanese, a Social Agency.”

⁸⁰ Quoted by MacFarquhar, “To U.S., a Terrorist Group; To Lebanese, a Social Agency.”

issues and activities.⁸¹ The *shoura* is headed by a secretary-general, at present Hassan Nasrallah, who coordinates the other members. Split into two bodies: the *shoura qarrar*, or decision-making body which as the name implies is the leadership of Hizballah that makes final decisions regarding the organization; and the *shoura tanfeed*, or executive council that implements those decisions.⁸² Hizballah also runs a form of politburo for its elected political officials. Each member of the *shoura* is charged with the oversight of a particular field or issue portfolio. Along these lines as of the mid-1990s, Marius Deeb describes:

There are seven specialized committees, each dealing with a specific subject matter, such as ideology, finance, politics, information, military affairs, social affairs, and judicial affairs. The consultative council and the specialized committees are replicated in the three regions in which Hizballah operates [Bekaa Valley, southern suburbs of Beirut, and southern Lebanon].”⁸³

Supposedly, decisions are made consensually between the secretary-general and the *shoura* members, and the secretary-general is in theory forbidden from making unilateral decisions. The *shoura* is elected every two years by clerics and particularly devout senior Muslims.⁸⁴ In turn the *shoura qarrar* council elects the secretary-general who must explicitly be from its ranks.

Naiim Qassem, a deputy secretary-general of Hizballah explains the doctrinal solidarity and esprit de corps of the ruling elite—its commitment to the purity of the movement, not self-interest:

We are working to create a trend, not to create an idol to worship. We are an Islamic current which derives its origins from our beliefs and principles. We do not allow anyone to reach a certain position within the group if he lacks the principles that we carry. Our strategy works on the promotion of principles as the basis for uniting the forces, unlike other parties who, due to the lack of common, basic beliefs, ended up suffering from corruption in the ranks of their leadership and working for their self-interest by exploiting the needs of their people.⁸⁵

It seems as though Hizballah leadership power has come to be consolidated and embodied in secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, whose charismatic leadership over the past ten years as head of Hizballah’s religious revolutionary and national resistance struggles has exalted him as a highly powerful and revered figure throughout Lebanon and the Middle East. Nicholas Blanford says that, “his enemies fear and respect him in

⁸¹ Jaber, p. 52.

⁸² Ibid., p. 66.

⁸³ Marius Deeb, “Shia Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria,” *Third World Quarterly* 10 (April 1988): 692-693, quoted by Wege, “Hizbollah Organization”: 156.

⁸⁴ Jaber, p. 66.

⁸⁵ Naiim Qassem, quoted by Jaber, p. 62.

equal measure.”⁸⁶ Blanford goes on to say, “People adore him. I mean, I talked to some Hezbollah fighters that speak of him almost as they would a wife or a mother. They think of him before they go to sleep at night, that he’s always in their thoughts, so he has this tremendous power over the rank and file.”⁸⁷ In a telling observation, Blanford describes that “some kids in the Gaza Strip even dress like him, down to the beard and the glasses. At one event, a boy playing Nasrallah was flanked by one child who played a security guard, and another child dressed as a suicide bomber.”⁸⁸

Nasrallah’s charismatic leadership is likely channeled, energized and reinforced by the deep resonance, inspiration, and popularity of Hizballah’s salvationist religious ideology and mission—which promises visions of Shia societal reformation and ascendancy, empowerment, and prosperity through a return to the fundamentalist tenets of Shia Islam—among the abused and impoverished Shia of the world in need of such a dominating, savior-like leader. For them, Hizballah’s religious visions and group activism engage their reformatory aspirations, provide renewed identity and purpose, help to ameliorate their perceived trauma and alienation, and otherwise provide the psychological solace they seek. Likewise, Hizballah’s struggle for communal defense and national liberation against Israel—which is perceived as the only Arab-Muslim ‘victory’ against Israel, coming in the form of its withdrawal from Lebanon as a result of Hizballah’s guerrilla war of resistance—has marked the group in the eyes of the Middle East as a heroic and glorious guardian of Shia, Muslim, and Arab interests, and as a source of pride and dignity for those communities. In many ways, Nasrallah may perceive himself in the likeness of Khomeini as the ultimate, iconic Shia religious revolutionary. Recent actions suggest that he may be attempting to consolidate his image and power in that regard by seeking to carry on the revolution at all costs, for as a charismatic leader it is the source of his power, prestige, and psychological fulfillment.

The precise operational control over Hizballah militant and terrorist attacks remains murky. Immediate direction seems to be through both central and local Hizballah command in Lebanon, with input from Iranian liaisons. For example, major Islamic Resistance operations needed to be approved by the secretary-general and the shoura.⁸⁹ However, Hizballah did not necessarily have control of some of the panoply of sister militant groups operating in Lebanon in the 1970’s -80’s that had been established by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and while their violence was often attributed to Hizballah, it may not have been at their behest.

Further, Hizballah militancy also seems to be strategically guided by Iran, pending a degree of operational veto power exercised by Lebanon’s hegemonic neighbor Syria. Iran seems to play a profound role in orchestrating Hizballah terrorism, sometimes allegedly without the knowledge of Hizballah leadership. This seems to be the case with

⁸⁶ Nicholas Blanford, “Hizbullah Chief Offers Carrot, Stick,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 July 2003; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0731/p01s03-wome.htm>; Internet; accessed on 11 August 2003.

⁸⁷ Nicholas Blanford, quoted by Bradley.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Jaber, p. 39.

Islamic Jihad attacks that likely had less immediate control from central Hizballah command, supplanted instead to a substantial degree by the Iranians. Former CIA Operations Officer Robert Baer, who served primarily in the Middle East, elaborates on this point in relation to hostage-taking:

[Islamic Jihad] was a very distinct organization, which was separate from Hezbollah because you had the consultative council which only had a vague idea of what the hostage-takers were doing. The hostage-takers were taking orders from Iran.... It's very clear that special security in Hezbollah took its order for all the important years from the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Hezbollah itself accepted money and spiritual leadership from Iran, but it had nothing to do with terrorism. Ninety-nine percent of Hezbollah, people in Hezbollah, know nothing about it. They don't have the slightest idea how it works, who's behind it—the Iranian role. And that nuance, I think, is missed in Washington today.⁹⁰

Baer goes on to contend, “It's not Hizbullah that is doing the terrorism out of Lebanon. They didn't do the U.S. Embassy in 1983 nor the Marines. It was the Iranians.”⁹¹ Further, Imad Mughniyah's Special Operations Command also seems to be a somewhat rogue element, whose exact association with Hizballah leadership remains unclear, but does seem to be controlled to some extent by the Iranians. Thus, when speaking of ‘Hizballah terrorism,’ it is important to acknowledge Iranian involvement, and even outright command, of many Hizballah-related terrorist operations.

[Key Leadership Personalities]⁹²

Sayeed Hassan Fadlallah

As Hizballah's most enigmatic figure, Grand Ayatollah Sayeed Hassan Fadlallah has been considered Hizballah's spiritual advisor since the group's founding. Born in the Shia holy city of Najaf, Iraq in 1935 to a Lebanese father who had been a teacher, Fadlallah pursued a life as a poet in his early years.⁹³ Fadlallah later studied at seminary in Najaf before coming to Lebanon in 1966. Although he is regarded as Hizballah's spiritual leader, Fadlallah has maintained a definitive distance from the group, rejecting any assertion that he is part of Hizballah's leadership. Hizballah leadership had consulted him early and regularly during its founding on key religious and political issues, offering him a wider, more influential role within the movement, but Fadlallah elected to remain

⁹⁰ Robert Baer, “Interview: Robert Baer,” Interviewed by Frontline, “Terror and Tehran,” Frontline, Public Broadcasting Service, 2002; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/tehran/interviews/baer.html>; Internet; accessed on 11 August 2003.

⁹¹ Robert Baer, quoted by Blanford, “Hizbullah Chief Offers Carrot, Stick.”

⁹² Regretably, time did not allow for a detailed survey of biographical information for the development of a comprehensive political personality profile. Instead, provided will be a brief sketch of three key personalities within Hizballah noting salient characteristics that may be manipulated as part of counterterrorism psychological operations.

⁹³ Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, p. 135.

independent of the group.⁹⁴ This independence allows Fadlallah to maintain a greater pan-Shia populism—engaging with regular Shia unaffiliated to Hizballah. He is the most senior and revered cleric within the Shia community, with a large and loyal following; nearly 20,000 followers attend his Friday sermons.⁹⁵

Fadlallah's rhetoric has been at various times complementary to Hizballah actions as well as critical of them, but is always marked learned thoughtfulness and care. Yet on the whole, Hizballah ideology and activities are closely consonant with his sermonizing and theological judgments. As such, Fadlallah seems to maintain a profound influence over Hizballah operations through his near exclusive power of spiritual guidance and religious legitimization of those actions via his theological judgments.

It is a very real possibility that Fadlallah disdains Iran's involvement both spiritually and operationally in Hizballah and Lebanon. It would seem that he may have experienced a certain rivalry with the iconic legacy of Khomeini, who became the original *faqih*, the ultimate spiritual leader of the Shia revolutionary movement of the early 1980s, despite the fact that Fadlallah had been a notable cleric preaching similar tenets in Lebanon well before the ascendancy of Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution. Fadlallah has historically continued to generally diverge from the Hizballah *faqih* choice. Fadlallah has also overtly struggled for Hizballah's complete independence from Iranian control. Jeffrey Goldberg learned through those close to Fadlallah that he regards Hizballah's supreme ideological patron, Ayatollah Khamenei, as in Goldberg's words "a mediocre thinker and cleric."⁹⁶

The aloofness Fadlallah maintained in relation to the Hizballah leadership may be an effort to distance himself from Iranian control and portray himself as a pure, unaffiliated candidate for *faqih*. Like a political candidate running for office—which closely resembles the tradition dynamics of religious populism integral to Shia Islam, where a cleric's power is a product of the size of his organic flock and is not apportioned through strict hierarchy, but rather ebbs and swells in size with the resonance of their charisma and sermonizing—Fadlallah's populist stance may be strategic maneuvering to garner the widest swath of a pan-Shia following that may be used to hasten his ascendancy to *Faqih*. Similarly, in eschewing any official role with Hizballah, Fadlallah seems to be maneuvering into position to realize his aspirations for becoming the spiritual guide for the global Shia community, or *al-Halat al-Islamiyah al Shi'iyah*. As Martin Kramer describes, "Fadlallah himself aspires to be Lebanon's great persuader, a man of religion who stands above the mire of Lebanese militia politics, and to whom all will eventually turn for mediation."⁹⁷ Further, Fadlallah's arm's length stance in terms of Hizballah involvement likely has a survivalist motivational component as well in that he distances himself from a Hizballah leadership that is constantly vulnerable to Israeli assassinations.

⁹⁴ See Subhi Tufeili, quoted by Jaber, pp. 68-69.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 1).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah."

However, the harmony of Fadlallah's theological rhetoric with that of Hizballah, and thus his suspected deep involvement with the group proved too compelling for some countries seeking to bring Hizballah down. In retribution for Fadlallah's suspected blessing of the 1983 Marine barracks bombing, a car bomb exploded near Fadlallah's house in 1985 in an apparent assassination attempt allegedly planned jointly by the CIA and Saudi Arabia. Fadlallah survived the attack, but the bomb killed 85 and wounded almost 200. In any case, Fadlallah maintains a powerful influence over Hizballah activities as a result of his respected theological jurisprudence, and in distancing himself from Hizballah seems to be pursuing his ambitions to achieve a station of larger, pan-Shia spiritual leadership.

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah has been Hizballah's Secretary-General since 1992. Born in 1960 as the son of a grocer, Nasrallah traveled at age 15 to the seminaries of Najaf and became a protégé of Abbas Mussawi. Nasrallah fled Iraq in 1978 as the regime of Saddam Hussein began a crack down on radical Shia clerics in Najaf, and made his way to Lebanon. He soon joined the Amal militia but grew restless with what he perceived to be its overly secular and passive character.⁹⁸ Nasrallah later became a Hizballah commander in the Bekaa Valley during the 1980s.

Nasrallah succeed Abbas Mussawi, following his assassination by Israeli gunships, to become Hizballah's youngest Secretary-General at age 32. As secretary general, Nasrallah has consolidated considerable power. He is known as an agile politico, who features the use of ambiguity as part of his political transaction skills repertoire, and can deftly negotiate between the often crosscurrent political considerations of Hizballah's rival political factions and state patrons, Iran and Syria.⁹⁹ Shimon Shapira, an advisor to former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the author of a book on Hizballah, remarked that Nasrallah can easily "integrate the pragmatic and the ideological," when it comes to political interaction. As noted earlier, Nasrallah can be seen as a charismatic leader of both Hizballah the organization and Hizballah the movement.

In regards to Nasrallah's contemporary leadership, analyst Eyal Zisser observes that "Hizbullah's unprecedented success in its struggle against Israel and the West appears to have gone to its leaders' heads. This is especially true of its secretary general who now sees himself as a hero on a divine mission—due in part to his portrayal as a Shi'ite mastermind in the Israeli and Western media."¹⁰⁰ Thus, it seems as though Nasrallah's immense popularity—derived through charismatic leadership—has lead to an his exalted

⁹⁸ Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, p. 136.

⁹⁹ Susan Sachs, "Jubilant Hezbollah Chief Leaves His Next Move Open," *New York Times*, 26 May 2000, sec. A, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Eyal Zisser, "The Return of Hizbullah," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2002); available from <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php?id=499>; Internet; accessed on 6 August 2003.

self-concept as *The* Shia revolutionary leader. This would suggest that Nasrallah has fused his identity, and possibly his psychological stability, with the maintenance of his position and power as Hizballah's leader. In this situation, Nasrallah is likely to seek to safeguard his position, as well as the cohesiveness and momentum of the Hizballah movement at all costs.

Imad Mughniyah

Imad Mughniyah¹⁰¹ is widely considered to be one of the most dangerous terrorist individuals in the world today. Born on July 12, 1962 in the village of Tir Dibba, near Tyre, Lebanon, Mughniyah grew up as a militant in the Yasir Arafat's Fatah movement operating in Lebanon. Mughniyah received advanced training in explosives as an operative for Fatah's elite bodyguard unit, Force 17, but defected to join up with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. At one point following the expulsion of Palestinian militants from Lebanon, Mughniyah served as a bodyguard for Fadlallah. In 1982, Mughniyah's village was occupied by Israeli troops and he witnessed his Palestinian friends being killed and expelled from Lebanon. He and family then fled to the Shia enclave of southern Lebanon where he was later injured by artillery fire. This experience likely embittered and radicalized Mughniyah against Israel and the Arab governments, U.S., and Western world that he considered complicit in the Israeli outrages through their passivity, and likely infused him with a burning drive for revenge against them. Finding outlet for this rage, Mughniyah soon rose to become the primary operational leader in the majority of bombing attacks and kidnapping against Western personnel in Lebanon and abroad in the 1980s under the banner of the Islamic Jihad militant group.

Today, Mughniyah heads Hizballah's international terrorist apparatus—the Special Operations Command—and is believed to have established terrorist cells and cultivated agents in South America, Europe, Southeast Asia, West Africa, and the United States.¹⁰² Mughniyah's global terrorist network certainly poses a pronounced, and for some American officials, a preeminent threat to American interests, capable of striking U.S. assets virtually anywhere, including the U.S. homeland. The Special Operations Command is thought to have been responsible for 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, and the 1994 bombing of the Jewish Cultural center also in Buenos Aires. Mughniyah is also reported to have had personal meetings with Al Qaeda's leader Osama bin Laden in the mid 1990s to discuss collaborative operations,¹⁰³ and thus is suspected of possible involvement in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2000 bombing of the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen.¹⁰⁴ He is thought to take his guidance from, and report to not Hizballah leadership, but rather the office of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, as well as the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Ex-CIA

¹⁰¹ The majority of Mughniyah's biographical information is drawn from his profile in U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, pp. 178-179, as well as Jeffrey Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 2) *New Yorker*, 28 October 2002.

¹⁰² Goldberg, "In the Party of God," (Part 2).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *Frontline World*, "Lebanon—Party of God."

officer Robert Baer says that “in the 1980s...he took his orders directly from Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. ... He was paid by them, he took orders, he put out communiqués. Occasionally he would do things on his own, when he’d get angry about something. He was an independent player. He was probably a nightmare to run for the Iranians, but he carried out their orders.”¹⁰⁵ He also serves as a key organizer of fundraising activities abroad, particularly in the Tri-Border region of South America.

Mughniyah remains a ghostly figure within Hizballah. As Goldberg explains, “For a decade, the American and Israeli governments have made repeated attempts to capture or kill him. The Israeli Air Force, which frequently dispatches fighter jets across Lebanon, has equipped many of its airplanes with advanced signal intelligence ‘packages,’ and uses these to track his whereabouts.”¹⁰⁶ In conjunction with his terrorist operations against U.S. citizens, the FBI has cited Mughniyah as one its most wanted terrorist individuals, placing a \$25 million bounty on him. Knowing there is a manhunt out for him, Mughniyah is believed to have systematically expunged his civil records trail—such as schooling and passport files.¹⁰⁷ Only two pictures are known to exist of him but it has been reported that he is “short and chubby with a babyish face,”¹⁰⁸ though it is also believed that he has had plastic surgery.¹⁰⁹ Little is known of his exact whereabouts or current activities, and he is thought to avoid extraneous travel. Analysts believe that he currently resides within traditionally protective redoubts in Iran and Lebanon.

He is known to be both charismatic and “extremely” violent which suggests a malignant narcissistic personality—likely to be at the same time engaging due to a high degree of self-confidence and a willingness to use whatever rhetoric will manipulate others to his self-service regardless of its veracity, and an inability to empathize with others allowing him to visit implacable and extreme levels of violence upon them.

[Dynamics of the Religious Fundamentalist Terrorist Mindset]

For a nuanced understanding of Hizballah’s ideology, activist energies, and group and leadership dynamics, it is crucial to examine the nature of Hizballah’s fundamentalist Shia Muslim character as it relates to the wider theoretical context of religious fundamentalist groups and terrorism. Religious fundamentalist terrorist groups can be the most ideologically and organizationally cohesive, and the most operationally vigorous strain along the spectrum of religious and political terrorism.

The groundswell that responded to Khomeini’s visions of an Islamic Republic and the restless Lebanese Shia responding to the Najaf clerical cohort are illustrative example of

¹⁰⁵ Robert Baer, “Interview: Robert Baer.”

¹⁰⁶ Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 2).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁹ Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 2).

revolutionary leadership¹¹⁰ and aspects of the charismatic leader-follower relationship.¹¹¹ The revolutionary leader is, rather obviously, the standard bearer of The Revolution, and is described by James MacGregor Burns:

[Revolution is] a complete and pervasive transformation of an entire social system. It means the birth of a radical new ideology; the rise of a movement bent on transforming society on the basis of that ideology; overthrow of the established government; creation of a new political system; reconstruction of the economy, education, communications, law, medicine; and the confirmation and perhaps deification of a new leadership.... A revolution requires conflict, as does all leadership. But revolutionary conflict is more extreme; it is dramatized in the characters of saints and devils, heroes and villains. As the lines become more sharply drawn between the establishment or elite and the poor and the rebelling, doctrine and purpose are hardened in the crucible. Finally, there must be a powerful sense of mission, or end-values, or transcending purpose. These processes can be summarized in a phrase: the raising of social and political consciousness on the part of both leaders and followers.¹¹²

Thus, such transformative visions are the essence of religious fundamentalism in general, and Islamic fundamentalism in particular, in as much as it promised to redeem and empower the Lebanese Shia through a wholesale socio-political return to the strict, literal tenets of Islam.

The charismatic leader-follower relationship occurs when a severely psychologically distressed or wayward group—either or both chronically psychologically traumatized due to the group members' ingrained fragile or wounded identities and self concepts, or, when otherwise psychologically healthy individuals are temporarily distressed and driven toward the sanctuary of leadership dependence due to extreme external or social conditions and stresses—is engaged by charismatic leadership promising salvation and an ameliorating explanation of the followers' plight through a process of displacing the group dysfunctions and troubles onto an outside scapegoat group, and emphasizing continued group salvation only through that leadership. The leadership derives an equally salvationist and therapeutic synergy from the followers' affirmation or reverence of the leadership ideology or personality. While the Lebanese Shia community is not necessarily populated with a severe endemic psychological fragility and trauma susceptible to the siren of the charismatic leader, the community's particular environmental conditions of extreme conflict during the Lebanese civil war and Israeli invasion into Lebanon likely traumatized the group into a temporary valence for such a charismatic leader. The Najaf clerical cohort had encountered their flock in need of salvation in the form of the impoverished and restive Shia of Lebanon—an embattled minority throughout history—and promised salvation through their revolutionary brand of fundamentalist Shia Islam.

¹¹⁰ See James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 201-240.

¹¹¹ See Jerrold M. Post, "Narcissism and the Charismatic Leader-Follower Relationship," *Political Psychology* 7, no. 4 (1986): 675-687.

¹¹² MacGregor Burns, p. 202.

When this charismatic leader-follow relationship takes the form of a religious fundamentalist terrorist organization—as is likely the case with Hizballah’s terrorist wing—the group cohesiveness and operational intensity and dedication is especially strong.

The disintegrated psychology, traumatized and alienated by normal society is particularly susceptible to being drawn into the terrorist lifestyle in order to obtain the psychological succor found in its redemptive provision of a sense of belonging and of noble purpose—two dynamics absent for the individual’s identity in normal society.¹¹³ In joining the group, the individual with an incomplete or traumatized self concept recasts his or her identity within the crucible of the group morality, ideology, logic, and mindset. Once complete, this process produces a redemptive renaissance of the individual identity, now fused with that of the group’s—garnering through it the sense of belonging and noble purpose longed for—and, as such, the psychological integrity of the individual identity is now intractably wrought with that of the group’s. Thus, an attack on the group’s ideology or cohesion is an attack on the individual psychology and must be put down for the survival of both.¹¹⁴

Key to understanding the group behavior of radical groups, and terrorist groups in particular is an appreciation of Wilfred Bion’s “basic assumption” concept of group dynamics. Bion suggests that group mentalities coalesce around one or all of three basic assumptions in relation to a dominating leader: the dependency group, the pairing group, and the fight-flight group.¹¹⁵ As Post describes, “The dependency group turns to an omnipotent leader for security. Acting as if they do not have independent minds of their own, the members blindly seek directions and follow orders unquestioningly.... In the pairing group, the members act as if the goal of the group is to bring forth a Messiah, someone who will save them. There is an air of optimism and hope that a new world is around the corner. And the fight-flight group organizes itself in relationship to a perceived outside threat.”¹¹⁶ Post goes on to suggest that all three of these basic assumption groups are present in various hues in terrorist groups.¹¹⁷

The aforementioned psychological dynamics—the fragile psychology’s attraction to the terrorist lifestyle, the charismatic leader-follower relationship, and Bion’s basic assumption groups—are present in a great many types of terrorism and are especially strong in religious fundamentalist groups.

¹¹³ Post, “Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product Psychological Forces.”

¹¹⁴ Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997) p. 144.

¹¹⁵ Post, “Narcissism and the Charismatic Leader-Follower Relationship”: 684.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 684-685.

¹¹⁷ Jerrold M. Post, “Notes on a Psychodynamic Theory of Terrorist Behavior,” *Terrorism: An International Journal* 7, no. 3 (1984): 250.

To define generally religious fundamentalism, it is a dogma that promises a redemptive and ameliorating return to a glorified theological past for the ideological, moral, and societal tenets necessary to confront a distressing, pessimistically modernizing present. For the individual nurturing a fragile, unformed identity, the absolutist tenets and sacred purpose of religious fundamentalism are sirens heralding the psychological sanctuary of a prescriptive and unconflicted ideology and lifestyle, borne of a reliance on faith, that the individual craves. What greater savior, literally and figuratively, for the wounded and wayward psychology than the all-encompassing, salvation-promising precepts and lifestyle commanded by God? When this fundamentalism comes in the form of the terrorist group—offering not only the salvation of the fundamentalist vision, but also a sense of belonging and purpose in bringing that vision to fruition—it is a nearly irresistible combination for the individual fragile identity.

In the charismatic leader-follower relationship the charismatic leader helps to interpret the world for his followers, engage sources of collective trauma or grievance, and identify the appropriate scapegoat enemy, thereby solidifying group cohesion and singleness of collective mentality and purpose. This relationship can be especially powerful and implacable in the fundamentalist religious group as this collective mentality and purpose is perceived as being mandated by God. The religious charismatic leader offers what Post terms a “salvationist truth” which deeply resonates with the traumatized, wayward group called to the siren psychological succor of the religion’s absolutist, prescriptive belief system.¹¹⁸ As Post writes, this religious charismatic leader-follower relationship can be swung into fervent violence by a “destructive charismatic” leader focusing the paranoid group energies into a hatred and violence against a perceived enemy of the religion:

By channeling righteous rage against opponents of the faith, the destructive charismatic leader exploits, manipulates, and encourages the paranoid dynamic in his followers and thereby maintains the equilibrium of the group. The paranoid follower attacks his own disowned feeling that he has projected on the enemy. Because the feelings must be disowned to restore psychological harmony, the follower can have no empathy for or psychological contact with the target. The zeal of the torturer, the alacrity of the killer. Represents his eagerness to destroy the devalued and disowned part of the self.¹¹⁹

In this religious fundamentalist group climate, a polarizing world view is adopted by the group, delineating between the terrorist group as righteous, and perceived enemies of the religious who are not. Their world becomes an absolutist one of “us vs. them,” “righteousness vs. evil,” and the “believers vs. the unbelievers.” Often this separation between the “righteous” in-group and “evil” out-group allows for the perception that

¹¹⁸ Robins and Post, p. 145.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 145-146.

implacable hatred and violence may be leveled against the unbelievers as urged by God's command.

The aforementioned group dynamics leading to religious fundamentalist violence are certainly present in most every religion for which Islam is no exception. Despite Islam's complex character—embodying enlightened teachings of benevolence and civility, as well as being susceptible, as is any religion, to its scripture inspiring violence that is perceived to be mandated by God—the comprehensiveness of Islam's influence over all aspects of Muslim life in some fundamentalist societies makes its resort to, and even demand of, fundamentalist violence all the more fervent and invasive. Fundamentalist Islam holds that Muslims around the world are downtrodden because they have lost their way from the true path of Islam, and that only a return to the religion's fundamental tenets will renew the righteousness and prosperity of Muslim society.¹²⁰ The prescriptive Islamic tenets for Muslim society are codified in the form of *sharia*, or Islamic law, and the issues surrounding its implementation judged by clerical authority through *fatwas*, or religious rulings. A core Islamic approach to the sanctity of violence can be found in the enigmatic concept of *jihad*. The true meaning of *jihad*—literally defined as “to struggle,” generally understood in the service of God—is an inherently subjective term, informed by the particularly salient clerical interpretation and guidance of the situation. *Jihad* gives sanctified outlet to the activist religious energies and particularly those derived from fundamentalist persuasions. But *jihad* can refer to struggling in both martial and peaceful manners. The violent, war-making interpretation of *jihad* is widely regarded by most Muslims as having a purely defensive connotation—resisting those who implacably imperil Islam or Muslims. However, Islamic extremists bend upon aggressive offensive violence in the name of Islam have perverted the notion of *jihad* in order to sanction their premeditated violence. As Robins and Post describe, “Radical Islamists hearken to the original teachings of Muhammad who affirmed that those who wage war in God's service are engaged in a religious-political act and will be divinely assisted. The struggle is to convert, to subjugate, or to eliminate the unbeliever. The Qur'an gives stronger voice to justifying violence in defense of the faith than do either the Old or the New Testament.”¹²¹ The extremist interpretation of *jihad* most often used by militant Islamic fundamentalist movement is perceived to command an unyielding and violently offensive struggle against threatening ‘enemies’ of Islam who could take the form of non-Muslim infidels, perceived heretics, and Muslims who have betrayed the pure tenets of Islam. The anointment of these enemies and the attendant justification of violence against them is once again an inherently subjective process, skewed to the particular psychological dynamics and mindset of the interpreter.

A further core tenet of fundamentalist Islam is the striving for the establishment of an Islamic state as the ultimate form of fundamentalist *sharia* integration within Muslim society. Robins and Post describe the religious rationalization underpinning what for radical Muslims is an imperative of establishing an Islamic society and conducting

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 150.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 152.

offensive jihad against those who do not support this goal. To the Islamic fundamentalist “only Islamic governments are legitimate, and only governments that are based on Islamic law, the shari’a, are Islamic. In their view, both governments and individuals who fail to follow the shari’a strictly are guilty of unbelief and are the equivalent of atheists even if they call themselves Islamic. Their unbelief demands holy war.”¹²²

The closest modern manifestation of this goal is the Iranian Revolution of 1979 lead by Shia Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini that provided inspiration to fundamentalist Shia around the world, most intensely in Lebanon. Khomeini tapped into the Shia national narrative and mentality of historic victimization and persecution, and, in classic destructive charismatic form, fixed the Shia compensatory energies for emancipation and retribution in a violent struggle against the anointed external culprits—corrupting Western governments, and infidels—whose defeat would ameliorate the legacy of wrongs visited upon Shia and usher in an empowering Shia renaissance and ascendancy. Khomeini’s brand of radical fundamentalist Shia Islam painted the world in the absolutist religious tones common to the radical religious group: the diametrically opposed forces of good and evil, and the uncompromising need to utterly cleanse the world of that evil. In this vein, Khomeini utilized particular interpretations of Koranic scripture as rationalizations for the jihadist violence necessary to confront the perceived enemies of Islam. The most pronounced enemies included ‘satanic’ Western governments, as well as corrupt Muslim governments that had betrayed true Islam and abandoned the goal of the establishment of an Islamic state. Bruce Hoffman explains this Shia fundamentalist perspective regarding the illegitimacy of secular governments, and the attendant reverence of the Iranian Islamic Republic:

Under this rationale, legitimacy can be conferred only through the adoption of Islamic law in order to facilitate the return of the Prophet Mohammed to earth as the Messiah. Accordingly, since Iran is the only state to have begun the process of redemption by creating a ‘true’ Islamic state, it must be the advocate for the oppressed and aggrieved everywhere. Violence and coercion are not only permissible to achieve the worldwide spread of Islamic law, but a necessary means to this divinely sanctioned end.¹²³

Also on this topic Robins and Post note:

Khomeini not only justified striking out at the enemies of the true faith but made it obligatory to do so. His ideology was appealing on a highly personal level. In effect, he instructed Muslims that their personal trauma would be resolved through violent action for which they would be rewarded; they could resolve their personal existential crises by pursuit of political-military action against “illegitimate” regimes.¹²⁴

¹²² Ibid., p. 151.

¹²³ Hoffman, p. 96.

¹²⁴ Robins and Post, p. 153.

The abused and despised Lebanese Shia, followers of what has traditionally been the marginalized, oppressed, and alienated of the two branches of Islam, found great purchase in Hizballah's ideology and its promise of redemptive and compensatory ascendance to strength through a return to the tenets of Islamic fundamentalism and its focused activist energy on the establishment of an Islamic state. As Martin Kramer describes:

Through the agency of Hizballah, the poor village boy or slum-dweller became a true Muslim, a member of a religious-political community spanning three continents, and a soldier in a world movement led by the Imam Khomeini for redressing the imbalance between Islam and infidelity. This was a mission above human history, a task of eschatological significance. A sense of divine purpose accounted for Hizballah's appeal and eased its resort to violence, not only in Lebanon but throughout the world.¹²⁵

Further, as noted earlier, the revolutionary charismatic leader-follower relationship takes on a particular intensity when it assumes a religious form. In this relationship the charismatic cleric leader is not simply an erudite theological authority but also embodies a direct conduit and interpreter of God's will, and thus maintains a pivotal role in rationalizing and sanctifying acts of violence ostensibly committed in God's name. This relationship is certainly present within the Shia tradition, and pronounced within Hizballah, as clerics play a pivotal role in interacting with the masses, guiding and sanctifying Hizballah violence through *fatwas*. Clerics who have or continue to occupy positions of influence and power upon Hizballah include al Sadr; Khomeini; Hizballah's spiritual leader, Fadlallah; and Hizballah's current secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah.

[Religious Leadership Structure of Hizballah]

As an organization fundamentally built upon Shia fundamentalist thought and tenets, Hizballah, and its activities, are beholden to religious sanction and its conferring legitimacy in the eyes of the wider Shia, and Muslim communities. As such clerical authority associated with Hizballah exercise a profound influence over Hizballah through their respected religious guidance, legitimization, and sanction of Hizballah activities.

As Hizballah began to gain popular traction as a movement, it was forced to ponder how its leadership cadre would be structured. Although inspired by the powerful personal leadership of Khomeini's Iran, Hizballah realized that they possessed no figure of Khomeini's stature and were also aware that a certain operational structure and security was needed for the movement to operate within the Lebanese sectarian environment, and as a result Hizballah adopted a hybrid of both political and religious organizational

¹²⁵ Kramer, "Hizballah: The Calculus of Jihad."

arrangements.¹²⁶ As noted earlier Hizballah's overall leadership, operational guidance, and policy formulation would come to be embodied in a ruling council, or *Majlis al-Shoura*, which was to be led by clerics, and headed by a secretary general elected from their ranks. A lower-level functionary council would maintain issue-area portfolios and implementation and administrative responsibilities for Hizballah policy issues. Thus, Hizballah formed a type of clerically-led governing apparatus with a political executive structure. Khomeini's vision of the true Islamic state based exclusively upon *sharia* demanded that clerics act as the essential leaders of the reformation as they are considered to be morally superior to the general population.¹²⁷ Further, in a fundamentalist Islamic state, clerics were considered, logically, to be the exclusive arbiters and interpreters of *sharia*, and thus the prime leaders of any Islamic society. As Hala Jaber explains:

According to Shiite doctrine, only the Prophet and his descendants, the Twelve Imams, had the right to lead and guide the Muslim people, because they were seen as infallible. The mujtahids, religious scholars, were deemed capable of taking over the responsibility of commanding the Muslim masses, by virtue of their faultless religious knowledge and scholarship. Some even went as far as believing that these scholars had inherited the infallibility of the Imams and possessed a unique insight into the truth.¹²⁸

Atop the pinnacle of the religious scholars is the supreme clerical authority, the *Wali al-Faqih*, who is regarded as the ultimate guardian and leader of the Shia nation. Thus, *mujtahids* occupied a mediating role between the Ayatollah and the Shia masses who populate their mosques.

Key to appreciating the profoundly influential religious leadership element within Hizballah is an understanding of the fundamental dynamics of clerical authority and influence in the Shia community. In the Shia religious tradition clerical authority and power is utterly grounded in the resonance and draw of the clerics' charisma, or *baraka*, and sermonizing among the Shia masses, and is built up and consolidated by popular following, not structured hierarchy. It is a decidedly populist and fluid arrangement as popular preference for clerics may shift often depending upon the purchase of their *baraka*. The popularly-bestowed power can be considered analogous to a democratic political process. The more *baraka* a cleric demonstrates, the larger the draw of supporters, and with them the greater his power in the Shia clerical hierarchy. Thus, while not a purely direct charismatic leader-follower relationship as with Khomeini in the Iranian Revolution, Hizballah leadership embodied a clerical coterie whose collective personal *baraka*—transmitted to the masses by virtue of their socially-engaging positions as local clerics—acted as a complementary conduit for Khomeini's iconic Shia personality and message, and awakened the impoverished and abused Lebanese Shia with the revolutionary and salvationist message of Hizballah's Islamic fundamentalism. Martin Kramer further describes this leadership arrangement:

¹²⁶ Jaber, p. 63.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Hizballah began as a coalition of ulama [Shia clerics], each of whom brought with him his circle of disciples; and while the movement's Iranian guides have sought to break down these intermediate allegiances in order to control the rank and file directly, the effort has met with only partial success. The individual adherent of Hizballah is likely to be a follower of the movement through a Lebanese Shi'ite cleric who serves as his guide. That cleric may himself be a follower of the movement through a cleric senior to him, and so on. These relationships, which extend at their highest levels to the Shi'ite world's foremost clerics in Iran and Iraq, provide Hizballah with enough informal structure to enforce a modicum of internal discipline, implement higher decisions, and raise needed funds."¹²⁹

A pronounced example of this charismatic leadership hierarchy is embodied by Sheik Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. While not an official member of Hizballah, Fadlallah is widely regarded as the group's "spiritual leader" and most revered cleric. He can also be seen as the primary charismatic leader for the Lebanese Shia in conveying the tenets of the Najaf school of fundamentalist Islam and the legacy vision of Khomeini's Iranian Revolution. Kramer:

Hizballah's adherents pledge their ultimate allegiance to the Imam Khomeini, but he cannot address his Lebanese following directly, for his Persian oratory cannot transcend the linguistic frontier. And so Iran depends upon Fadlallah's brilliant Arabic rhetoric to carry the message of Islamic republicanism to Hizballah. He is an imperfect medium, for Fadlallah has his own agenda; but no other Lebanese Shi'ite cleric comes close to rendering the service as effectively as he does.¹³⁰

Fadlallah, however, has diverged from Hizballah in the choice of Faqih, rejecting Khomeini. Some believe that this move may be the result of Fadlallah's rivalry and rejection of the Khomeini theological legacy and involvement in the Lebanese Shia arena, and his ambitions for ascendancy to a more regal position of pan-Shia spiritual leadership.

Thus, Hizballah's leadership structure seems to consist of a rather amorphous hierarchy of overlapping political-religious structures and flexing dynamics of control and allegiance. Working with Hizballah's consultative council, Nasrallah seems to have consolidated a substantial amount of executive control over Hizballah's political and strategic operations. Nasrallah seems to combine a certain 'revolutionary' charisma and clerical credentials, with deft political acumen. It is reasonable to believe that from this position he also influences to authoritative degree its militant operations, although Iran seems to exercise a profound degree of influence, if not direct orchestration of the majority of Hizballah militancy and terrorist attacks. The crucial unknown is Iman Mughniyah, head of Hizballah's Special Operations Command, its hardcore terrorist

¹²⁹ Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah."

¹³⁰ Ibid.

wing. Mughniyah seems to have developed his own private terrorist network, based upon his personal contacts and oversight. While Nasrallah may exercise influence over him and he likely takes many of his orders from Tehran, the material suggests that he also has a substantial amount of operational autonomy and personal initiative. This makes Mughniyah a potentially uncontrollable rogue agent. Iran in turn emerges as a major powerbroker in Hizballah operations, particularly in its influence over Mughniyah's Special Operations Command terrorist network.

It would also seem that Hizballah's true leadership powerbase can be found in the form of the Shia religious hierarchy whose leadership dynamics and currents provide a powerful organic leadership backbone within Hizballah and Lebanon as a whole. As a revolutionary Islamic fundamentalist organization, Hizballah's ideology, *raison d'être*, and organizational motivations and energies are compelled and justified Shia fundamentalist dogma. As such, the group requires constant sounding of its actions and direction as to their consonance with *sharia*. Thus, clerical leadership pervades nearly every aspect of Hizballah's operations and political sphere, leveraging its power through the medium of judging and sanctioning the religious legitimacy of Hizballah actions. These clerical edicts on Hizballah actions carry a powerful influence in accrediting them to the Shia masses, and this popular perception of the sanctity of Hizballah's actions is the fundamental dynamic in maintaining the ideological integrity, popular support, and relevance of Hizballah as an organization and movement. The Shia clerical hierarchy remains the prime arbiter of Hizballah's message, revolutionary legitimacy, and popular appeal, and operates through an interrelational layering and rippling of high-level clerical authority—many of whom sit on Hizballah's *shoura*—down through the individual charisma of local clerics to produce, in a derivation of Post's original charismatic leader-follower relationship, a cascading and organic charismatic coterie leadership-follower relationship. The religiously-colored charisma remains at each level, energized by the belief that each cleric is an arbiter and conduit of both God's will and *sharia* code, and thus is the ultimate arbiter of Hizballah's operational legitimacy as a revolutionary religious movement and organization.

[Religious Rationalization of Violence]

Religiously-inspired terrorism remains the most deadly form of terrorism compared to others within the terrorist typology, such as political terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism. The perception of divine imperatives compelling religious violence inculcates the attackers with an impassioned sense of sacred mission—a mission commanded by God, based upon a holy emergency, and for which the attacker will ultimately answer to that God—and produces a zealous focus to please God through an exemplary execution of the mission. Because the mission is mandated by God, there can be no questioning of its intent, and in this capacity, the attacker is able to disengage any restraining sense of personal morality or responsibility in conducting the attacks that may otherwise constrain the level and scope of violence. The attacker perceives himself or herself as simply following God's commands, for which it would be sacrilegious to question. Fundamentalist religious terrorism seeks no dialogue with the world at large, no agenda for improving upon aspects of existing society, but rather uses its self-perception as a

besieged religion anointed with a sacred righteousness to strike out against the rest of the world deemed unrighteous—against the perceived enemies of the religion such as infidels, heretics, apostates—or a radical wholesale transformation of society in line with the revered fundamentalist tenets. Hoffman suggests that this “sense of alienation also enables the religious terrorist to contemplate far more destructive and deadly types of terrorist operations than secular terrorist, and indeed to embrace a far more open-ended category of ‘enemies’ for attack.”¹³¹

In contrast, those conducting political terrorism generally attempt to carefully craft the level of violence so as to avoid alienating the actual or potential constituency the group purports to be defending or championing, as well as the audience it hopes to sway, and thus any gravitation to gratuitous violence is restrained by political, ideological, and practical considerations. Conversely, fundamentalist religious terrorism’s only constituency and audience is God and the immediate religious community the attackers belong to, both of which are perceived to demand that the holy struggle and mission be carried forward against enemies of the religion to the fullest degree possible.¹³² To this point Hoffman explains:

Terrorism thus assumes a transcendental dimension, and its perpetrators are consequently unconstrained by the political, moral or practical constraints that may affect other terrorists. Whereas secular terrorists, even if they have the capacity to do so, rarely attempt indiscriminate killing on a massive scale because such tactics are not consonant with their political aims and therefore are regarded as counterproductive, if not immoral, religious terrorists often seek the elimination of broadly defined categories of enemies and accordingly regard such large-scale violence not only as morally justified but as a necessary expedient for the attainment of their goals.¹³³

Indeed, the extreme interpretations of holy scripture used as justification for religious terrorism often call for extreme levels of violence in God’s name, seeking to attack and eliminate as many “enemies” as possible. Once again, Hoffman:

This absence of a constituency in the secular terrorist sense leads to a sanctioning of almost limitless violence against a virtually open-ended category of targets: that is, anyone who is not a member of the terrorists’ religion or religious sect.¹³⁴

Thus, fundamentalist religious terrorism experiences none of the political or moral restraints of other forms of terrorism, and actually encourages, even demands, from on high extreme violence. It displays the radical religious group dynamics and mentality mentioned earlier—in which the alienated and fragile psychologies and identities of the group members find solace and a redemptive and empowering renaissance of identity by

¹³¹ Hoffman, p. 95.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 94-95.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 94.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

being recast with the group's collective religious and moral mentality—and paints an absolutist worldview filled with stark dichotomies of good and evil; us vs. them; the 'true-believers' vs. the heretics, infidels, and apostates. Crucially, it exposes the "others" as threatening not only to the group religion, but also the integrity of the group and the individual psychologies fused within it. This dynamic can lead to fervent, wanton levels of violence on the part of religious group members because they perceive the enemies to threaten the survival the religion, and with it the very survival of the members who have bound their identity to it. The solidification of this in-group, out-group worldview—and particularly the emphasis of the in-group's self-perception as the anointed righteous few, and the perception of the out-group as evil and threatening to the religion—allows the radical religious group to dehumanize its perceived enemies as 'criminals,' 'infidels,' 'pigs,' once again loosening the moral restraints on visiting violence upon them because they are either perceived as inhuman or deserving of suffering and death.¹³⁵

With regard to Shia fundamentalism, the Shia religious rationalizations of violence draw upon the events surrounding the very founding of the Shia branch of Islam and its group narrative as an embattled minority. The exemplar of the martyrdom of Hussein in defense of Shia dignity and religious entitlement is an inspiring theological foundation for the Shia identity's martial culture. Amid its long history of militancy and besieged mentality, the Shia community has come to embrace self-sacrifice in defense of their religious nation. As Martin Kramer explains:

There is the 1,400-year legacy of Shi'ism, a legacy of martyrdom and suffering, resting on an ancient grievance: the belief that Islamic history was derailed when political power passed out of the hands of the family of the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. In the subsequent course of history, Shi'ism has sometimes erupted as a form of protest against the existing order in Islam; at other times it has retreated into an other-worldly preoccupation with messianic redemption."¹³⁶

In practical terms, Hizballah violence proved militarily successful within the context of its revolutionary resistance against Israel. Suicide bombing attacks and kidnapping—widely cited as hallmark tactics of Hizballah's terrorist operations—were especially powerful weapons of resistance for an insurgency massively outgunned. The suicide bombings were also potent symbols of the religious fervor and commitment underpinning Hizballah's membership and religious ideology.

The violence perpetrated by Hizballah—once again, particularly the suicide bombings, and kidnappings—is on its face proscribed by the tenets of Islam. However, through the powerful legitimizing force of clerical edicts Hizballah has successfully employed a unique "moral logic"¹³⁷ to rationalize suicide them as components of a defensive *jihad* against threats to the Shia community. But, as Kramer further explains:

¹³⁵ Ibid. .

¹³⁶ Kramer, "Hizbullah: The Calculus of Jihad."

¹³⁷ See Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah."

Jihad had its requirements. The Islamic law of war is the codification of a moral sensibility. While it is open to some interpretation, it is not infinitely elastic. Some of its provisions compel violence—acts of punishment or resistance. But other provisions forbid violence against persons afforded protection by the law. The believing public had to be persuaded that Hizbullah's actions were not criminal but 'in the nature of a jihad, launched by the oppressed against the oppressors.'¹³⁸

Thus, the sanctioning of Shia fundamentalist violence required rationalization through the jurisprudence of clerical authority. In this capacity, Fadlallah emerged as the prime jurist and articulator on the sanctity of Hizbullah violence, reconciling and legitimizing it with Islamic prohibitions against certain forms of violence. As the senior and most respected Shia cleric associated with Hizbullah, his judgments carried profound weight and were looked to for guidance from within Hizbullah. Thus, Fadlallah exercised substantial influence over Hizbullah violence, corraling it through his dispensation of judgments, sanction, and condemnations, and his rationalizations can generally be considered representative of Hizbullah's overall ideological position on the subject. Because Hizbullah's ideology, *raison d'être*, and motivational energies are rooted in Shia fundamentalism, it cannot afford to be seen as sacrilegious in its violence, lest the purity of its revolutionary be revealed as a sham. Fadlallah's nuanced thoughts on *jihad* and the use of violence are at times compelling and insightful, and at others seem to be simply naked rationalization, and all of his judgments were couched on a case by case basis, specific to the particular attack in question. This dualism spoke to Fadlallah's seemingly genuine theological thoughtfulness and conflict on the subject; he is known to believe that in everything good there is something bad and *visa versa*.

On general violence in the name of Islam, Fadlallah cautions that it must only be used in extraordinary circumstance with few or no options:

We do not hold in our Islamic belief that violence is the solution to all types of problems, rather, we always see violence as a kind of surgical operation that a person should use only after trying all other means, and only when he finds his life imperiled... The violence began as the people, feeling themselves bound by impotence, stirred to shatter some of that enveloping powerlessness for the sake of liberty.¹³⁹

On the meaning of violent *jihad*, Fadlallah declares that it is a purely defensive concept: "We are not preachers of violence. Jihad in Islam is a defensive movement against those who impose violence."¹⁴⁰

On the subject of suicide bombings—known romantically within the Hizbullah sphere as

¹³⁸ Kramer, "Hizbullah: The Calculus of Jihad."

¹³⁹ Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, "Islam and Violence in Political Reality," *Middle East Insight* 4, nos.4-5 (1986): 4-13, quoted in Hoffman, p. 97.

¹⁴⁰ Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, quoted by Laura Marlowe, "A Fiery Cleric's Defense of Jihad," *Time*, 15 January 1996, quoted in Hoffman, p. 97.

al-Amaliya al-Istishhaadiya or martyr's attack—Fadlallah has argued that each act must be judged on its specific nature within its particular operational context, but that such operations in general should only be employed in extraordinary circumstances:

In many cases, I stated that these martyrdom operations are not justified, except in very difficult cases. I can say that I have not issued any fatwa since the beginning of these operations and up to now. On the contrary, I am one of those who stood against all this commotion for fatwas. Despite the positive points which come out of this action, I believe that there are many negative points.”¹⁴¹

According to Fadlallah, due to the asymmetry of power between Hizballah and Israeli forces, extraordinary circumstances of conflict were present, calling for extraordinary means of combat—such as suicide attacks—that could be allowed in terms of a defensive jihad if their intent is “to have a political impact on an enemy whom it is impossible to fight by conventional means,” in which case, “[the fighter's] sacrifice can be part of jihad.... Such an undertaking differs little from that of a soldier who fights and knows that in the end he will be killed. The two situations lead to death; except that one fits in with the conventional procedures of war, and the other does not.”¹⁴²

Also on this point, Fadlallah further elaborates, “We believe that suicide operations should only be carried out if they can bring about a political or military change in proportion to the passions that incite a person to make of his body an explosive bomb.” Thus, a sanctified self-sacrificing attack in the name of jihad must be a last resort, and is indistinguishable from a regular soldier in a conventional war if his death too is a forgone conclusion. Further, such an attack must not be simply an impulsive singular action, but must resonate a deeper political effect against the enemy. Interestingly, this strategy seems to be consonant with the fundamental strategy of terrorism which similarly is meant to have a wider intimidating psychological effect upon a target audience that associates itself with the victims of the act of terrorism. It would seem that Fadlallah is explicitly calling for Hizballah violence to take on terrorist intent.

However, Fadlallah would likely bristle at the suggestion that Hizballah intentionally pursues a strategy of terrorism, rationalizing it rather as a component of a legitimate war of resistance:

We don't see ourselves as terrorists, because we don't believe in terrorism... We don't see resisting the occupiers as a terrorist action. We see ourselves as mujihadeen who fight a Holy War for the people. Faith, whether religious or political, is all. To the individual terrorist, or supporter of terrorism, a murder can be an expression of the defense of freedom; a car-bomb which kills civilians can be a blow struck in a war of liberation; a kidnapping and murder can be a step towards justice. The intensity of conviction that justifies one man's justice at any price almost inevitably means that the freedom or justice of others will be

¹⁴¹ Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, quoted by Kramer, “The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah.”

¹⁴² Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, quoted by Kramer, “The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah.”

ignored, or at worst trampled and destroyed.¹⁴³

The kidnapping of westerners and journalists by Hizballah in Lebanon during the 1980s was a primary tactic for applying pressure against western governments, and bartering for the release of Hizballah prisoners. Kidnapping and hostage-taking is also proscribed by Islam and Hizballah's theological reconciliation of this fact, as articulated by Fadlallah, is particularly problematic and conflicted. As Kramer notes, "Fadlallah himself would not provide a compelling moral logic for the hostage taking and kidnapping, because he had reached the conclusion that neither could be justified on Islamic moral and legal grounds. The sanction Fadlallah had bestowed upon the self-sacrificing bomber he withheld from the kidnapper and hijacker of innocents."¹⁴⁴ The indeterminate nature of the hostage's politics and involvement with the enemy makes his or her kidnapping an illegitimate act in terms of a justified defensive *jihad*. Fadlallah argued that such kidnappings may gratuitously and sacrilegiously punish innocents.

On the whole, the rationalization of Hizballah violence was not only sounded against Islamic tenets for its legitimacy and righteousness, but also took into account the political considerations typical of secular political terrorism. As a result, Hizballah in general did not employ violence wantonly. As Martin explains,

It was also obvious that Hizbullah's collective choices regarding the extent and intensity of its violence had a clear political rationale. Hizbullah was also a political movement, and indeed saw politics as an inseparable part of religion. When it employed violence, it did so for political and not ritualistic purposes—to bring it closer to power. In making its choices, Hizbullah weighed benefits against costs. Violence drove enemies into retreat and created a zone of autonomous action for Hizbullah. But it simultaneously invited punitive retaliation and at times created political complications for Iran.¹⁴⁵

As Kramer goes on to explain, Hizballah violence could not be totally theologically pure if it was to be effective within the Lebanese context:

In the end, Hizbullah's violence could not help but demonstrate the movement's contradictory character. Hizbullah was Islamic by day, Lebanese by night. What seemed right in the mosques did not always work in the alleys. Hizbullah's clerics had to know when to avert their eyes from the compromises between the ideal and the real.¹⁴⁶

In the end, the debates and theological tensions surrounding the religious sanction of Hizballah suicide missions and kidnapping was never fully resolved, but rather generally pivoted on a combination of demanding religious criteria, and the efficacy of the

¹⁴³ Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah, *Invisible Armies*, quoted in Alison Jamieson, *Terrorism* (Hove, East Sussex: Wayland, 1991), p. 33, quoted in Hoffman, p. 230.

¹⁴⁴ Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizb'allah."

¹⁴⁵ Kramer, "Hizbullah: The Calculus of Jihad."

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

particular act of violence in furthering the Hizballah agenda. Kramer: “In retrospect, some of Hizballah’s acts of violence met these demanding criteria; some did not. It soon became clear that in the real world, violence could rarely be pure.”¹⁴⁷

A key aspect of Hizballah’s rationalization of violence are the methods used for inculcating the glory of martyrdom and *jihad* among the general public. Crucially, this indoctrination begins at an early age as Hizballah-run schools emphasize self-sacrifice and *jihad* as part of the Islamic studies component of the curriculum, teaching, as Jaber describes, that “paradise is their reward for battle.”¹⁴⁸ *Al Manar*, Hizballah’s television station extols the glory of Hizballah soldiers killed resisting Israel. Now martyrs, their names scroll nightly across television screens throughout Lebanon.¹⁴⁹ Both are powerful means of sensitizing the Shia of Lebanon to the necessary and lionized martial aspect of the Hizballah-led struggle.

[Hizballah Today: Key Evolutions, Ideology, and Raison d’etre]

The evolution of Hizballah is marked with a number of pivotal moments in which the group experienced a certain level of crisis. Hizballah’s response to these crises reveals salient insights into its organizational dynamics and motivations.

The Taif Accords

Despite its ideological foundation in the bedrock of Shia fundamentalist Islam, Hizballah has demonstrated shrewd ideological pragmatism in response to developments in its socio-political environment. The first major organizational crisis Hizballah faced followed the signing of the Taif Accord of 1989 that ended Lebanon’s inter-confessional civil war and removed one of the causal pillars of Hizballah’s *raison d’etre*—the sectarian threat against the Shia of Lebanon. The accord attempted to create a more equitable distribution of governmental power among the various confessional groups. At the urging of hegemonic Syria, Hizballah was not forced to disarm as all other confessional militias were. Hizballah’s patrons, Iran and Syria, both backed the Accord and pressured Hizballah to enter the newly created political sphere in Lebanon. Relenting, Hizballah ran in the parliamentary elections of 1992—Lebanon’s first in twenty years—winning eight seats. Although Hizballah’s ideological ballast in *sharia* and its goal of establishing a revolutionary Islamic republic led it to regard the Lebanese political system as illegitimate, Hizballah rationalized its entry into politics as simply responding to the will of its core constituents, the Lebanese Shia who had elected the Hizballah representatives, and not at the behest or appointment of the government which in Hizballah’s eyes remained illegitimate. Hizballah further argued that it could best champion the Shia cause and pursue its ideological goals by working for change within the political system. Hizballah also realized that it could gain greater legitimacy overall as an organization and movement by becoming an official political party. Hizballah’s overall motivations for entering politics were likely the result of the pressure applied by its patron states, and also the realization that it risked being political marginalized as a movement amid the new

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Jaber, p. 89.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

Lebanese political system. Today, Hizballah is entrenched within Lebanese politics as a viable and popular political party, holding a total of twelve seats in the Lebanese parliament. Thus, recognizing strategic and practical necessities, Hizballah demonstrated a certain organizational and ideological flexibility and pragmatism in modifying its strident Islamic fundamentalist platform to adapt to the shifting socio-political conditions.

Israeli Offensives

Three major Israeli military offensives against Hizballah and southern Lebanon in the first half of the 1990s served to reveal in Hizballah its fight-flight basic assumption group dynamics. In 1992, Israeli gunships assassinated Abbas Mussawi, Hizballah's secretary general, killing in addition his wife, one-year old baby, and bodyguards. To that point, the popularity of Hizballah's militant energies had been flagging. But Mussawi's assassination stoked a vengeful fervor within the Shia community and served to reinvigorate the perception of Israel's imminent threat against the embattled Shia, in turn bringing the bellicose Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah to power and rallying Hizballah's militancy. Similarly, the Israeli offensives code named "Operation Accountability" in 1993 and "Operation Grapes of Wrath" in 1996—both of which by most accounts ruthlessly and indiscriminately targeted the Lebanese and particularly Shia civilian population—served to once again to energize popular support for the Hizballah guerrilla resistance, and stoke hatred for Israel and the perceived complicity of the West. These episodes reveal in Hizballah Bion's fight-flight group dynamic in that when perceived to be, or actually demonstrably imperiled by external enemies, Hizballah and its supporters are likely to become more cohesive as a group, and invigorated in mindset, purpose, and operations, closing ranks to defend against its enemies. The attacks reinforced Hizballah's embattled, revolutionary narrative that enemies surround and that Hizballah and the Shia are indeed in the thick of the fight for their cause, rallying supporters and recruits to its heady realism and immediacy. Previous group tensions and fissures are likely to melt away in favor of a more resolute group solidarity, and operations are likely to take on greater focus and intensity.

The Israeli Withdrawal

The seminal moment in Hizballah's contemporary evolution occurred with the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. To that point, Hizballah had ascended within the Arab world as a venerated bulwark of Shia and Arab empowerment, ascendancy, and dignity through resistance, with a rallying cry of defensive *jihad* against foreign invaders. With the Israeli withdrawal, reverence for Hizballah in the Middle East reached new heights. Hizballah was lionized as a heroic and victorious vanguard of Arab-Muslim strength, particularly in relation to Israel.¹⁵⁰ But riding this wave of popularity also brought home the realization that the core compelling pillar of Hizballah's *raison d'être* as a revolutionary national liberation movement—the Israeli occupation of Lebanon—had been removed. Thus, the Israeli withdrawal lead to the crossroads of a Hizballah crisis of identity: Was it to beat its Kalashnikovs into plowshares and transform itself from a militant orientation to more political and social pursuits, translating its literally hard-fought popularity into political and societal power through a process of

¹⁵⁰ Zisser.

“Lebanonization”? Or did the Hizballah movement compel a continued Islamic fundamentalist struggle against the so-called ‘illegitimate Zionist entity’ and a hastening of the establishment of an Islamic state?

Reading from Hizballah’s contemporary declared ideological platform gleaned from the official Hizballah website, one may get the feeling that Hizballah is well on its way to “Lebanonization,” its rhetoric focusing primarily on socio-political issues. The following are excerpts from the website’s self-titled section “Hezbollah: Identity and Goals”¹⁵¹:

[Hizballah’s] emergence is based on an ideological, social, political and economical mixture in a special Lebanese Arab and Islamic context. ...

The seed of resistance is also deep in the ideological beliefs of Hezbollah, a belief that found its way for expression against the Zionist occupation of Lebanon. And that is why we also find the slogan of the liberation of Jerusalem rooted deeply in the ideals of Hezbollah. Another of its ideals is the establishment of the an Islamic Government. ...

[Hizballah is committed to introducing the] true picture of Islam, the Islam that is logical...the civilized Islam to humanity...Islam that is confident in achieving justice...protects all human rights...supports education...offers medical support. ...

Hezbollah also has its own cultural plan to attract and convince through civilized and humanitarian means as specified in the human rights laws, far from any use of violence or coercion. ...

It should be clear that the kind of Islam that Hezbollah seeks is a civilized one that refused any kind of oppression, degradation, subjugation and colonization. Hezbollah also stretches its arm of friendship to all on the basis of mutual self-respect. ...

The Islamic path that Hezbollah follows is one of a message that aims to establish peace and justice to all humanity whatever their race or religion. Hezbollah does not have a problem with anyone, but it feels responsible towards him or her to clarify the Islam far away of any fanaticism. ...

Hezbollah does not wish to implement Islam forcibly but in a peaceful and political manner, that gives the choice to the majority to either accept or refuse. If Islam becomes the choice of the majority only then will it be implemented. If not it will then continue to co-exist with others on the basis of mutual understanding using peaceful methods to reach peaceful solutions. And that is how the case should be to the non-Islamists as well.

¹⁵¹ See “Hezbollah: Identity and Goals” in Hizballah’s official website; available from http://www.hizballah.org/english/frames/index_eg.htm; Internet; accessed on 25 August 2003.

These passages should be noted for their exceedingly benevolent tone, touching upon populist and modern—at times Western—concepts of democratic rule and consent, universal human rights law, social welfare, religious and communal tolerance and respect, and peaceful interaction. All of which is meant to be reflective of the “true picture” of “civilized” Islam. However, it must be emphasized that nearly all the language maintains a major intrinsic exception: it likely does not apply to Israelis and Jews, and secondarily to corrupting Western presence, against whom Hizballah seems to implicitly reserve the right to bring violence to bear based as part of its long-standing, and un-repudiated, ideological stance rejecting Israel’s right to exist and its fundamental goal of ‘liberating’ Jerusalem and Palestine. Indeed, despite its rather enlightened tone, this rhetoric does not match Hizballah’s recent actions, particularly with regard to Israel.

Against Israel

While continuing its political involvement and ambitions in Lebanon, Hizballah leadership seems to be seeking to maintain its traditional cohesiveness and organizing and motivating *raison d’être* as a group by transposing a modernized version of its core ideology into the contemporary strategic reality Hizballah finds itself within. As will be shown, under the leadership of its secretary-general, Hassan Nasrallah, Hizballah has attempted to carry forward its traditional identity and organizational energy as a revolutionary Shia fundamentalist movement fighting in the name of national liberation and resistance, particularly against Israel which it regards as an illegitimate entity, with the ultimate goal of ‘liberating’ Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine, and ultimately establishing an Islamic state in the region. To accomplish this transposition, Hizballah seems to have reoriented its strategic and operational focus into a particularly aggressive posture toward Israel.

To begin, Hizballah rhetoric has of late become increasingly anti-Semitic in tone. It has come to span not only the racism of anti-Semitism, but also an almost biological hatred of Jews, and a theological animosity of anti-Judaism.¹⁵² As Jeffrey Goldberg notes, “Hezbollah has been at the vanguard of this shift toward frank anti-Semitism, and its leaders frequently resort to epidemiological metaphors in describing the role of Jews in world affairs.”¹⁵³ Goldberg goes on to quote Hizballah scholar Amal Saad-Ghorayeb who in turn quotes a Nasrallah speech in which he remarked, “If we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak and feeble in psyche, mind, ideology and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew. Notice, I do not say the Israeli.”¹⁵⁴ Hizballah rhetoric continues to demonize Israel as a scheming threat, bent on regional domination: “Over the last 50 years,” Nasrallah begins, “the State of Israel has proved that it is an expansionist state, and wants to dominate the region, and it is not convinced of what it has already. It always intervenes in the affairs of the other countries in this region, as it happened in Lebanon.”¹⁵⁵ Nasrallah has also said, “I don’t believe in the

¹⁵² Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 1).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Hassan Nasrallah, quoted by Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, quoted in Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 1).

¹⁵⁵ Hassan Nasrallah, quoted in an interview with Ted Koppel, “Interview with Hezbollah Leader,” *ABC News*, 20 October 2003.

State of Israel as a legal state because it was founded on occupation.”¹⁵⁶

The upsurge in anti-Semitism, and “anti-Judaism,”¹⁵⁷ is an alarming portent of the potential for increased Hizballah violence against Israel when combined with Hizballah’s seeming strategic shift to a more militant and confrontational position towards Israel over both its claims over the Sheeba Farms area of the Golan Heights that Hizballah contends has been illegally annexed from Syria, as well as a greater ideological emphasis on Hizballah’s continuing rejection of Israel’s existential rights.

This anti-Semitic rhetoric serves primarily to dehumanize Jews and Israelis in the minds of his believing audience, a dynamic that, as noted earlier, loosens the perceived moral restraints on attacking and killing them by portraying them as sub-human or deserving of death. Thus, a common dynamic in religious violence, this process of codifying an “us vs. them” polarization and dehumanization of “them,” in addition to being intellectually abhorrent, can have horrific effects in terms of Hizballah’s anti-Semitic rhetoric in facilitating—in essence, preparing the psychological groundwork—for escalatory levels of anti-Semitic violence. Violence against Jews and Israelis is indeed at times urged on and sanctified through religious command imparted by the extreme zealous elements of the Islamic fundamentalist establishment girding Hizballah’s ideology. To this point Goldberg has noted that this upsurge in Hizballah anti-Semitism has become disturbingly “eliminationist” in tone, similar to Nazism.¹⁵⁸

Operationally, Hizballah’s renewed focus on its aggressive rejection of Israel has been confirmed by its leader Hassan Nasrallah who declared:

One of the central reasons for creating Hizbullah was to challenge the Zionist program in the region. Hizbullah still preserves this principle, and when an Egyptian journalist visited me after the liberation and asked me if the destruction of Israel and the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem were Hizbullah’s goal, I replied: ‘That is the principal objective of Hizbullah....’ We face an entity that conquered the land of another people, drove them out of their land, and committed horrendous massacres. As we see, this is an illegal state; it is a cancerous entity and the root of all the crises and wars and cannot be a factor in bringing about a true and just peace in this region. Therefore, we cannot acknowledge the existence of a state called Israel, not even far in the future, as some people have tried to suggest. Time does not cancel the legitimacy of the Palestinian claim.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Concept of Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, quoted in Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 1).

¹⁵⁸ Jeffrey Goldberg, paraphrased from his lecture at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. on 16 January 2003. See Jeffrey Goldberg, and Martin Kramer, “The Terrorism of Hizballah: Ideology, Scope, Threat,” Event Summary, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C., 16 January 2003; available from http://wwics.si.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event_summary&event_id=16184; Internet; accessed on 5 June 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Zisser.

This ideological and strategic refocusing of Hizballah operations to an offensive posture against Israel may have had a proximate impetus not only in the Israeli withdrawal, but also, following conveniently close on its heels, with the eruption of the Palestinian Al Aqsa intifada within Israel that provided a ready, noble front for Hizballah's revolutionary fundamentalist and anti-Israel ideology. As Nasrallah declared, "The intifada in Palestine today is our front line, so that our support is not only an obligation but also a necessity, and we have, therefore, taken it upon ourselves to aid the intifada, not only in words but in deeds."¹⁶⁰ Hizballah likely welcomed the seemingly smooth transition of ideological motivation and strategic orientation to a nearby struggle, also against Israel, that closely mirrored its own 18-year conflict. In the words of Nicholas Blanford, taking up the Palestinian struggle has, "granted Hizballah a new relevance."¹⁶¹

Amid Hizballah's renewed sense of group mission against Israel, some see Hizballah as preparing for a regional conflict involving itself, Israel, Syria.¹⁶² The touchstone of Hizballah's militancy revolves around the territorial fate of the disputed Sheeba Farms area of the Golan Heights. Hizballah insists that the Israeli withdrawal for Lebanon is not technically complete until Israel returns this parcel of land to Syria, and the group uses this issue as a de facto casus belli necessitating continued sporadic attacks on Israeli soldiers in the area.

Reports have recently emerged that Hizballah has established and trained Palestinian militant and terrorist cells to carry out attacks on Israel from the Palestinian territories.¹⁶³ Under the alleged command of its most notorious and powerful terrorist operative, Imad Mughniyah, Hizballah is suspected of orchestrating the recent attempt to smuggle heavy weaponry—including long-range rockets, anti-tank missiles, and explosives—from Iran to the Palestinian Authority aboard the ship the *Karine A* that was intercepted and impounded by the Israeli Navy.¹⁶⁴

Hizballah has also embarked upon a major arms build-up and mobilization along its southern border. The group has stockpiled a substantial arsenal of rockets to be arrayed against Israel, many of which were provided by Iran, with some arriving from Syria, that have longer ranges than those it had used in the past. Hizballah is now capable of striking as far into Israel as Haifa, Israel's main port city.¹⁶⁵ The sheer number of

¹⁶⁰ Hassan Nasrallah, quoted in Zisser.

¹⁶¹ Nicholas Blanford, "Emboldened by U.S. Jibes, Hizballah Prepares for War." *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 February 2002, Available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0208/p07s02-wome.html>; Internet; accessed on 8 August 2003.

¹⁶² See Zisser.

¹⁶³ See Mathew Levitt, "Hizballah's West Bank Foothold," *Peacewatch*, no. 429, Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 20 August 2003; available from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Peacewatch/peacewatch2003/429.htm>; Internet; accessed on 4 September 2003.

¹⁶⁴ Hanna Rosin, "Israel Says Ship with Weapons Was Loaded in Iran," *Washington Post*, 6 January 2002, sec. A, p. 19; and Hanna Rosin, "Israel Displays Arms Seized on Ship; Sharon Uses Event to Condemn Arafat," *Washington Post*, 7 January 2002, sec. A, p. 12.

¹⁶⁵ Michael R. Gordon, "Militants are Said to Amass Missiles in South Lebanon," *Washington Post*, 27 September 2002, sec. A, p. 1; See also Eyal Zisser, "The Return of Hizballah," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2002); available from <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php?id=499>; Internet; accessed on 6 August 2003.

rockets—over 10, 000—and their concealability creates a substantial conventional deterrence against Israeli preemptive strikes against both Hizballah and Syria who seeks to maintain pressure on Israel over the Sheeba Farms issue. Hizballah also seems to be consolidating control of its power base in southern Lebanon, attempting to establish an autonomous Hizballah-administered enclave similar to the PLO-run fiefdom decades ago.

These bellicose operational developments indicate a shoring up of Hizballah's military position and deterrent against Israel, both through conventional rocket and guerrilla capabilities, as well as through Hizballah-orchestrated Palestinian terrorism within Israel. On the whole, in addition to its escalatory and hateful anti-Semitic rhetoric, it would seem that Hizballah is girding, or planning, for conflict against Israel.

Response to 9/11, Iraq War

Fadlallah and Nasrallah have denounced the September 11th terrorist attacks as against Islam and the concept of Jihad. Fadlallah has stressed that the attacks were “not compatible with sharia law” or that of the concept of *jihad*, “There is no concept of jihad as aggressive combat.” He went on to say that bin Laden has misinterpreted Koranic scripture by being blindly motivated by “personal psychological needs” and a “tribal urge for revenge.”¹⁶⁶ Nasrallah echoed this reasoning saying, “We reject those methods, and believe they contradict Islam and the teachings of the Quran, which do not permit this barbarity.”¹⁶⁷ This rhetoric may be an attempt to moderate Hizballah's image as potentially complicit in the September 11th attacks and avoid becoming a target of U.S. retribution.

However, perceiving that Hizballah may still be next in line for the U.S-led war on terrorism, Nasrallah has gone on the rhetorical offensive, contending that in having armed and trained the Afghan mujihideen in the 1980s that, “We believe that the American administration has always exercised terrorist and aggressive policies and backed terrorist groups and regimes,” going on to say, “The American administration is a sponsor of terrorism, so ethically and legally it is not qualified to categorize terrorism.” Nasrallah finished, “We believe the Bush administration is being dishonest in claiming to be against terrorism. It has been exploiting the events of Sept.11 to achieve its long-term strategies throughout the world.”¹⁶⁸

In a demonstration of his rather sophisticated thinking, Fadlallah has presented a differentiated view of the Muslim-Christian debate underpinning much of contemporary world affairs saying,

We say we don't hate the American people, on the contrary, we love them. If some people have harmed the American people, there are many American political figures who have harmed us, and we don't hold the American people

¹⁶⁶ John Burns, “Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad,” *New York Times*, 27 January 2002, sec. 1, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ Bradley.

¹⁶⁸ Hassan Nasrallah, quoted by Blanford, “Hizbullah Chief Offers Carrot, Stick.”

responsible for what their administration, or some of its members, did to us. So why are they holding all the Muslims accountable for what some Muslims do? We ask the Congress, all the U.S. politicians: ‘Why do you hate us?’¹⁶⁹

Also, in a cautionary observation regarding the international effects of September 11th and the U.S.-led war in Iraq, Fadlallah recently commented,

This war has united the Islamic world from border to border against the United States. If more massacres take place and if more occupation is seen, I fear that we are to witness a wave of terrorism that no one will be able to control in the Islamic world, because this psychological tension may create a state of irrationality in which individuals will act by nature to carry out a terrorist act here or there without the presence of any organization that push them to do so. That’s why we said in the beginning, after Sept. 11, that if the United States wants to fight terrorism, it has to do so in a civilized fashion through improving its policy with the peoples of the Arab and Islamic world because violence begets violence.¹⁷⁰

On the whole this is not an unreasonable argument, and both comments suggest that Fadlallah maintains a more keen, moderate, and thoughtful understanding of contemporary world affairs and Hizballah’s place within it. As such, Fadlallah seems to have the potential to be a powerful and respected leader for moderation within Hizballah.

Hizballah’s position on the short list of targets in the U.S. war on global terrorism—as well as its key patrons Iran and Syria—is thought to be a major concern for the Hizballah leadership. Nasrallah seems to be intent upon obliquely emphasizing the reach and danger posed by Hizballah’s global terrorism capabilities—again with integral support from Iran and Syria—in threatening American interests as a form of deterrence against overt U.S. counterterrorism operations against the group. In addition to Nasrallah’s more bellicose rhetoric calling the U.S. a terrorist-supporting state, Hizballah spokesman Hassan Ezzeddin, on Nasrallah’s behalf, has issued a thinly veiled threat in response to American counterterrorism ambitions, commenting that, “The American administration will be held accountable for any offensive against Lebanon, and we emphasize that we are in full readiness to confront any eventuality and defend our people.”¹⁷¹

Nasrallah’s Continuation of Hizballah by Other Means

Hizballah’s overall strategic reorientation as guided by Nasrallah suggests that he is seeking to solipsistically maintain the perception of compelling external threats and societal dysfunctions that necessitate and justify Hizballah’s continued revolutionary mission. Nasrallah achieves this by transposing the majority of the traditional causal factors compelling Hizballah’s religious revolutionary *raison d’être* onto the contemporary context—reclaiming the Sheeba Farms, fighting on behalf of Palestinian

¹⁶⁹ Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, quoted by Tom Masland, “‘We Don’t Trust America,’” *Newsweek*, 7 April 2003, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Hassan Ezzeddin, quoted in Goldberg, “In the Party of God,” (Part 2).

liberation, ‘liberating’ Jerusalem and Palestine from Israeli control, defending against a U.S.-led war against the group, and ultimately establishing an Islamic State. By amplifying the perception of revolutionary necessity, Nasrallah maintains the galvanizing resonance and dynamics of Hizballah’s founding ideological *raison d’être*, and with it maintains the very cohesiveness and operational vigor of the group. Nasrallah is attempting to re-energize within Hizballah Bion’s fight-flight basic assumption dynamic that creates a galvanizing militant energy, stoking the embers that Hizballah’s familiar, traditional enemies still pose threats in modern guise and the revolutions goals are yet unfulfilled, and thus confirms the continued need for prowling, activist militancy and maintains the rallying group cohesion derived from that siege mentality. Through these dynamics, Nasrallah consolidates and safeguards his attendant position of power as both Hizballah’s leader, and as the Arab-Muslim world’s most popular and revered contemporary revolutionary leader. This process also attempts to mask the wider truth that the core compelling justification for Hizballah militancy—the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon—had been removed, and shroud the realization that on this score, the militancy of the movement had eclipsed its original agenda.

Nasrallah’s actions seem to exhibit the leadership traits bound up in the fundamental internal dynamics of an underground group set forth by J.K. Zawodny in which the brooding, restless internal energy of the inactive terrorist group, churning for an outlet in the form of violent action, imperils the power and position of the leader due to his or her perceived passivity and impotence—characteristics anathema to the action-oriented radical group.¹⁷² To stave off these internal dynamics, maintain group solidarity and purpose, and shore up his or her position by remaining in the lead of group energies, the leader is typically compelled to order the group to action, however imprudently, as an outlet for the energy lest it bubble over into group dissent and disintegration. As Post summarizes, “A terrorist group needs to commit acts of terrorism in order to justify its existence and in order to maintain its cohesion.”¹⁷³ Further, it seems as though Nasrallah’s identity as a heroic revolutionary leader has become fused with the fitness of the revolution itself. As a mirror-hungry charismatic leader, his psychological stability and wholeness is provided succor through the reverence of the revolutionaries he leads who confirm and reinforce his grandiose self-concept, thereby assuaging menacing internal self-doubt. His position as revolutionary leader of Hizballah has become his psychological lifeline, and thus he is likely to attempt to maintain the revolution, and Hizballah’s role as vanguard at all costs. Further, it may also be a good example of Post’s argument on terrorist motivation that the “cause is not the cause”—the cause motivating the group’s terrorist energies is not the ideological ‘cause’ that it espouses, but rather the therapeutic psychological effects the group members seek through the execution of terrorist violence.¹⁷⁴

[Potential Counterterrorism Psychological Operations Strategies]

¹⁷² Concepts of J.K. Zawodny as described by Post, “Notes on a Psychodynamic Theory of Terrorist Behavior,” : 253.

¹⁷³ Post, “Notes on a Psychodynamic Theory of Terrorist Behavior” : 254.

¹⁷⁴ See Post, “Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product Psychological Forces,” p. 35.

General Strategy

Overall, the scope of counterterrorism psychological operations against Hizballah should be focused on isolating the group's militant and terrorist wing from Hizballah's political and social welfare wings, delegitimizing militant activities, and emphasizing instead the prosperous vision for the group through "Lebanonization" as an exclusively political party that maintains its social welfare administration. The strategies should seek to rechannel activist energy both within the group and among its followers away from the militant wing and its operations and toward the political and social wings, emphasizing that the compelling causal factors necessitating Hizballah's revolutionary and resistance militancy are no more, and that continued militancy is a politically counterproductive and sacrilegious enterprise.

In this regard, useful would be any methods that would serve to minimize or remove the perceived sources of communal threat, and the social, political, religious dysfunction that necessitate Hizballah's revolutionary militancy in the collective mind of the group and its Shia supporters. In essence, by removing Hizballah's source of threat or compelling mission—the windmill against which to tilt—the militant group grows closer to collapse, or at least finding no need for its lance. In Hizballah's case, this means emphasizing the Israeli withdrawal, the improving conditions for the Shia community through political and social welfare initiatives, the implacable reality of Israel's existence, and the fizzling of the Iranian revolution.

Because Hizballah is a complex organization and political movement, not simply a terrorist group, with a substantial amount of entrenched popular support among regular Shia, in addition to pan-Islamic and pan-Arab adoration, to attempt to bring down the organization as a whole would be utterly foolish and counterproductive. To attack Hizballah's social welfare and political wings—which have been key in improving the lives of the long impoverished and abused Shia of Lebanon, and developing in them a greater sense of nationalist pride and political clout—would likely serve to re-alienate and re-radicalize a wide swath of that community, driving them toward the communal siege mentality and compensatory defensive militancy of Hizballah's terrorist wing. Thus, the over all strategy must be one of a 'disarming' the militant wing and allowing it to wither, while preserving and bolstering the social welfare and political wings.

The restive radical group, perceiving an external threat, group trauma, socio-political dysfunction, and filled with revolutionary energy, must be steered away from a mindset that regards violence and terrorism as the only means of ameliorating their caustic environment and realizing their reformative agenda. The energy must be given outlet, and perceived grievances shown able to be assuaged through political recourse. As Post has noted:

In these complex movements, one can make a case that should the movement as a whole see terrorist actions as counterproductive to their goals, the overall organization will produce internal constraints supporting political solutions and rejecting terrorist actions. By the same token, when legitimate political pursuits

of its goals are frustrated so that only violence seems to advance those goals, the hand of the terrorist wing of such movements will gain strength. Accordingly...it is necessary to have political movement along with the necessary security measures. The members of the movement must be able to envisage political, social, and economic progress toward their goals. In dealing with these movements, a policy based on security measures alone cannot succeed.¹⁷⁵

The strategy should thus exploit the latent Lebanese Shia sentiment seeking a peace dividend after decades of war and promote the notion that the modern path to Shia dignity, prosperity, and ascendancy as a community is found in the process of “Lebanonization”, a consolidation of its hard fought popularity and stature as a national liberation movement and militia into that of a national political party, figuratively beating its Kalashnikovs into plowshares. Further, by emphasizing that the religious revolution that justified militancy has been won, and amplifying the public call for a peace dividend, Nasrallah’s support and power as the Shia revolutionary leader will be severely undermined.

Hizballah derives the core of its militant strength and energy from the compelling and sanctifying influence of its religiously-based ideology on group operations, and particularly militant and terrorist actions. It is an ideology that also deeply resonates within the Shia community of Lebanon, and which provides the fervent rallying cry for militant recruitment. This ideology combines the historic narrative and religious identity of the embattled Shia and their legacy of compensatory defensive zealotry and activism, urged on by fundamentalist interpretations of *sharia* and *jihad*, and inspired by the example of the Iranian Revolution. The Shia fundamentalism from which Hizballah grew pervades nearly every aspect of the group—its core ideology, organizing dynamics, and operational code. As such, clerical authorities exercise an immense influence over Hizballah through their unique power of sanctifying its operations in accordance with *sharia* code, and through their uniquely influential organic and popular charismatic leadership of the Shia masses—established through the Shia tradition of clerical authority being derived from popular support—thus acting as exclusive arbiters of accreditation for Hizballah’s ideology and activities. It is therefore crucial that counterterrorism psychological operations against the group engage, empower, and extol moderate respected clerics whose interpretations of Shia theology will promote more benevolent and merciful interpretations of religious activism that temper and delegitimize extremist religious violence as sacrilegious within the Shia contemporary context. In this way, moderate clerical authority can shepherd Hizballah energies away from militancy and terrorism to more benign political and social initiatives.

Because Hizballah’s operations and cohesion as a movement are intractably bound up within an epic Shia theological and nationalist identity—utterly guided, sanctioned, and impassioned by clerical interpretations and rulings—the pervasive charismatic power of

¹⁷⁵ Post, “Current Understanding of Terrorist Motivation and Psychology: Implications for a Differentiated Antiterrorist Policy,” : 67.

clerical authority within Hizballah makes it a *sine quo non* for the effectiveness of any counterterrorism psychological operations strategies.

The strategy should avoid challenging, bellicose language towards the group which will only serve to galvanize a closing of ranks within Hizballah and stoke a reinvigorated group solidarity and purpose against the threatening outside enemy. Such an approach would needlessly reaffirm within Hizballah Bion's fight-flight basic assumption group behavior, and confirm their 'fantasy war'—although at times for the Shia of south Lebanon, the war was all too real—against which Hizballah had been oriented. As Post has written:

To attack such a group, to retaliate against such a group, is to justify its fight against the establishment, to justify its belief that it is in a fantasy war with the establishment, that it is “us against them.” To attack such a group is to reduce the internal divisiveness and to produce group cohesion.¹⁷⁶

Instead, psychological operations should adopt oblique, disarming approaches and language directed toward the militant wing and in discussions of militant activities while simultaneously “talking up” the power of the political and social welfare cadres in an effort to shift group energies and popular support to them.

[Application of Post's Counterterrorism Psychological Operations Strategies to Hizballah]

Inhibit Recruitment

- As noted earlier, engage and empower influential moderate clerical leadership to delegitimize, through more peaceful theological judgment of *sharia* and *jihād*—conveyed via the clerics' influential organic and popular charismatic leadership—Hizballah violence as sacrilegious and unnecessary in the contemporary Shia Lebanese context. Emphasize the dissonance of Hizballah's religious justifications for its violence with that of its proclaimed ideology and agenda of a “civilized” and benevolent Islam. Support the moderate political and social wings as the ‘true’ expression of a prosperous and noble Islamic state as referenced in Hizballah's ideology. These efforts should make joining Hizballah's militant and terrorist wings less attractive to the typical recruit.
- Engage and promote the benefits of, current efforts toward, and popular sentiment for Hizballah's realizing a peace dividend and pursuing “Lebanonization” that would make its militancy and terrorism irrelevant and counterproductive for Shia interests.
- Emphasize the improved political, social, and economic conditions for the Lebanese Shia, focusing on Hizballah's political and social welfare activities, in order to mute the pernicious societal conditions that may traumatize and

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 67.

radicalize individual psychologies such that they develop a particular valence for the perceived psychological succor—a renaissance of a strong, purposeful, noble identity—wrought within Hizballah’s militant, terrorist lifestyle. This should reduce the waiting reservoir of alienated, impoverished, and rage-filled recruits seeking to assuage these feelings with Hizballah militancy. By highlighting the personal happiness associated with a peaceful and prosperous lifestyle in mainstream Lebanese society, a lifestyle invested with familial commitment and individual purpose and hope, many will be dissuaded from the dangerous militant or terrorist lifestyle.

- Attempt to secularize Hizballah schools to stave off the inculcation at formative early ages of Islamic fundamentalism’s extremism and militancy.
- Emphasize that the religious revolution is over and that with it must go the revolutionary leadership of Nasrallah. Reveal the perceptions of compelling threats and unfinished ideological missions that Nasrallah uses as justifications for a continuation of Hizballah militancy to be a sham, thus severely undermining Hizballah’s *raison d’être* and Nasrallah’s charismatic leadership position calling recruits to Hizballah service.
- Counter *Al Manar* and other mediums of Hizballah propaganda through the infusion of alternative news sources that convey a more objective and honest reporting of the realities on the ground in Lebanon, the region, and international relations. In this manner, the Hizballah ontological narrative will not dominate Shia thinking and interpretation of the world, skewed to portray enemies surrounding them and the necessity and glory of defensive Hizballah violence. Such efforts should “de-romanticize and de-mythologize” Hizballah’s ideology and attendant violence and terrorism.¹⁷⁷

Stoke Dissent within Hizballah

- Promote popular support and engagement with rival, moderate Shia leaders within and outside the group to boost their position and power in Hizballah against the radicalism of Nasrallah. Key targets in this regard should include moderate clerics, including the well respected and ambitious Fadlallah.
- Similar to the strategy noted above, engage and empower influential moderate clerical leadership to delegitimize Hizballah violence and group direction as sacrilegious and unnecessary, thus in extreme and undermining contradiction to Nasrallah’s leadership.

Facilitate Exit

- Emphasize that the primary revolutionary goals proclaimed as necessitating Hizballah’s militant *raison d’être* have largely been accomplished—

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 68.

empowerment and ascendancy of the Shia community in Lebanon, and the expulsion of Israeli forces from Lebanon. Thus, there is no longer a need for Hizballah militancy and terrorism

- Increase the perceived need and allure for a shift in personnel within Hizballah from its militant wing to its political and social welfare wings and programs.
- Similar to programs Northern Ireland, encourage militants to translate their martial power and popularity into political power by becoming politicians, administrators, governors, etc.
- Promote an attractive alternative life to soldiering and terrorism through the establishment of terrorist “retirement” or “demobilization” plans that provide nest egg pension, housing, or jobs to draw militants away from the group and help to integrate them within mainstream society.

Reduce Support for Group Leaders

- As noted earlier emphasize that the religious revolution is over and that with it must go the revolutionary leadership of Nasrallah. Reveal the perceptions of compelling threats and unfinished ideological missions that Nasrallah uses as justifications for a continuation of Hizballah militancy to be a sham, thus severely undermining Hizballah’s *raison d’être* and his charismatic leadership position.
- As noted earlier, counter *Al Manar* and Hizballah’s other propagandistic mediums to reveal Hizballah’s militant leaders’ ‘true’ unattractive and ignoble nature. In this regard, strategic counter-propaganda initiatives such as alternative sources of news, television and radio programs can, as Post has written, “usefully play a role in deromanticizing and demythologizing the terrorists—who are not Robin Hoods and who should not be depicted as heroes. Bombing and burning innocent victims is not the occupation of heroes, however justified the cause in the name of which these actions are taken.”¹⁷⁸
- As noted earlier, engage and empower influential moderate Shia leaders, particularly clerics, and the administrators of Hizballah’s political and social wings to compete with and undermine Nasrallah’s leadership.
- Dissuade Iran, Syria, and the Lebanese government through aggressive diplomatic inducements to curtail and cease support for Hizballah’s militant and terrorist activities or force such support to be refocused on Hizballah’s political and social welfare faculties and initiatives. It is absolutely crucial to end Iran’s support for Hizballah terrorism, as it is Iran which has largely built Hizballah’s terrorist wing into the sophisticated and deadly global network that it is today. Ending Iran’s provision of training, weaponry, operational orchestration, international logistics,

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

intelligence assistance, and diplomatic cover is likely to severely cripple Hizballah's terrorist capabilities.

- As noted earlier, promote efforts and popular sentiment for Hizballah's realization of a peace dividend. Emphasize that continued militant activity as directed by Nasrallah may undermine these programs, drawing resources and focus away from and jeopardizing positive political and welfare programs. Further, emphasize that Nasrallah's militancy may provoke harsh, retaliatory actions from the U.S. and Israel, and that such violence will not make the Lebanese Shia any safer or more prosperous. Convey that life will not be better with Nasrallah's militancy. Quite the contrary, it might result in a worsening of conditions. As Timur Goksel, spokesman for the United Nations monitoring force in southern Lebanon, observed recently on the topic of Hizballah provoking a wider regional war, "All those guys have families in those villages, they would be the biggest victims if Hezbollah started something."¹⁷⁹

[Conclusion]

In conclusion, Hizballah remains one of the premier terrorist organizations operating today, with robust and global terrorist capabilities, and an overarching complex political organizational structure that includes highly popular political and social welfare wings. Thus, counterterrorism psychological operations against Hizballah should, in broad strokes, attempt to rechannel and refocus the galvanizing religious revolutionary energies and ideology of the group away from its militant and terrorist wing and toward its political and social welfare wings and programs in order to encourage the process of "Lebanonization," and in so doing facilitate the isolation and withering of its militant and terrorist wing. These strategies must emphasize to Hizballah and the Lebanese Shia that the extraordinary conditions present in Lebanon over the past 30 years that were perceived to necessitate and compel Hizballah's emergence and militancy as a revolutionary religious movement must be revealed, through the charismatic leadership of moderate clerical authority, to no longer exist. Further, the Shia fundamentalist ballast that served to command and justify Hizballah violence must also be undermined or rejected by moderate clerical authority. By removing the sanctity and *raison d'être* of Hizballah militancy and terrorism, its appeal among soldiers and potential recruits should flag, leading to its decay. The ultimate message of counterterrorism psychological operations against Hizballah should be that the religious revolution has ended, and thus it is God's will that the revolutionary guards demobilize and beat their Kalashnikovs into plowshares.

¹⁷⁹ Timur Goksel, quoted by Daniel Wakin, "Hezbollah Seen Making Subtle Changes After War in Iraq," *New York Times*, 11 May 2003, sec. 1, p. 16.

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