

HEZBOLLAH AND ITS POSITION TOWARDS
ISRAEL

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ABSTRACT

HEZBOLLAH AND ITS POSITION TOWARDS ISRAEL

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This thesis analyses how Hezbollah has perceived Israel since its establishment. In this study it is argued that Israel is the main enemy of and source of hatred for Hezbollah. The references of this overall statement are the ideology and political, social and military history of Hezbollah. The armed struggle of Hezbollah against Israel started with the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon evolved into both a political participation with the continued armed militia in the period between 1982 to today. During this period, in addition to its armed conflict with Israel, Hezbollah came on the stage with social services for Lebanese society and political propaganda in Lebanese elections. The intersection point of these three identities is the endless encouragement of Hezbollah for a determined resistance against Israel. While on the one hand Hezbollah defines Israel to be the most dangerous threat for the world, in addition to being a prominent enemy for the Arab and Muslim community; on the other hand Israel regards Hezbollah to be the highest impact menace. Consequently, the thesis is finalized with outputs and predictions taking all historical and ideological aspects into concern.

Keywords: Hezbollah, Israel, hatred, struggle and Lebanon.

ÖZ

HİZBULLAH VE İSRAİL'E KARŞI DURUŞU

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Bu tezde Hizbullah'ın kuruluşundan bu yana İsrail'i nasıl algıladığı analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada, İsrail'in Hizbullah için ana düşman ve temel nefret kaynağı olduğu savunulmuştur. Bu genel söylemin referansı Hizbullah'ın ideolojisi ile politik, sosyal ve askeri tarihidir. Hizbullah'ın İsrail'e karşı silahlı mücadelesi, 1982 yılında İsrail'in Lübnan'ı işgali ile başlamış ve 1982'den günümüze kadar olan bu dönemde silahlı bir milis kuvvetiyle birlikte devam eden politik bir katılıma dönüşmüştür. Bu süreçte İsrail'le silahlı çatışmalarına ek olarak Hizbullah; Lübnan halkı için sosyal hizmetleri ve Lübnan seçimlerinde politik propaganda ile de sahneye çıkmıştır. Bu üç kimliğinin kesişim noktası, Hizbullah'ın İsrail'e karşı kararlı bir direniş için gösterdiği sonsuz teşviktir. Bir yandan Hizbullah İsrail'i Arap ve Müslüman dünyası için öne çıkan bir düşman olmasının yanında dünyanın üstündeki en büyük tehdit olarak tanımlarken diğer yandan da İsrail Hizbullah'ı en yüksek derecede etkili bir başbelası olarak görmektedir. Sonuç olarak bu tez, tüm tarihsel ve ideolojik açılar göz önüne alınarak elde edilen bazı çıkarım ve öngörülerle sonlandırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizbullah, İsrail, nefret, çatışma ve Lübnan.

To My Family and My Fiancé

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the current world arena, “radical movements” are one of the most striking issues and consequently, understanding radical groups as actors is of critical importance in order to be able to properly evaluate and predict the direction of world politics. Today, Hezbollah of Lebanon is one of the most popular radical organizations in the world both due to its highly visible actions and its ideological position.

My enthusiasm to study this subject stems from a previous study of mine prepared for my M.A. class on radical politics by İhsan D. Dağı. In the previous study I examined how Hezbollah’s hatred was fed by Israel. Hence I aimed to study further by considering Israeli phenomenon from Hezbollah’s eyes. The research question of this thesis is how Hezbollah perceives Israel with the main objective being to prove that Israel is the primary enemy of Hezbollah.

In this study, the methodology of historical analysis is applied. While the thesis was prepared different types of sources were utilized including books and articles by Israeli, Western and Arab intellectuals and the speeches of and interviews with Hezbollah leaders and top Israeli officials.

To give a very brief overview, Hezbollah is claimed to have adopted its name from the Quran (V, 56), a name which means that they are a group of Muslims with a revolutionary character and agenda. In other words, Hezbollah, the so-

called the followers of Allah, claims to exist for the purpose of defeating the followers of Satan.¹ The foundation of Hezbollah in 1982, quite significantly, corresponds with the Israeli military invasion of Lebanon. Indeed the foundation was a reaction to this violent attack, when the group established itself as an Islamic and freedom fighting movement committed to defending the liberation of the territories occupied by Israel and repelling the Israeli forces.² Although many perceived the purpose of the Shiite revolutionaries as being the transference and reapplication of the Islamic Revolution in Iran to Lebanon, it is noteworthy that it was the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982 which played a significant role in the actual establishment of Hezbollah. From the following speech of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in July 2006, it may be concluded that even an Israeli point of view considers the invasion to be the birth of Hezbollah: “When we entered Lebanon... there was no Hezbollah. We were accepted with perfumed rice and flowers by the Shia in the south. It was our presence there that created Hezbollah”³

According to Christoph Reuter, the 1982 Israeli invasion not only resulted in the direct engagement with the Shiite community via the injection of an Iranian contingent in Lebanon (Biq’a area) but also led to the spread of considerable radical and militant Shiite movements.⁴

Hezbollah, being a Lebanese umbrella organization of the various radical Islamic Shiite groups and organizations, seems functionally to be the next version of the 1980s coalition group known as Islamic Jihad.⁵ While the influence of the 1982 Israeli invasion on Hezbollah’s establishment was noted above, it would be

¹ Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb’allah In Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997), 40.

² Hizbullah Press Office. 1998. Statement of Purpose [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html>

³ Newsweek, 18 July 2006. Quoted in Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah – A Short History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 33.

⁴ Ranstorp, 29-30.

⁵ Shaul Shay, *The Axis of Evil: Iran, Hizballah, and the Palestinian Terror* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 63.

negligent to deny the considerable influence of Iran on both Hezbollah's foundation and its vision. Indeed Iran, being an initial model for Hezbollah to transform Lebanon, was the source of inspiration for Hezbollah in its revolutionary movement.⁶ Consequently, Hezbollah's plans and actions initially involved a strong motivation to transform Lebanon from a multi-confessional state to the Iranian-styled Islamic one, until this idea was postponed for an indeterminate amount of time due to the current socio-political conditions in Lebanon.

Turning into the best-organized political entity in Lebanon with the largest base of popular support by 1990s⁷, Hezbollah officially appeared on Lebanon's political stage in 1985. Actually, Hezbollah had been active since the early 80s, claiming their first confessed suicide assassination on November 11, 1982,⁸ but had not yet made their entrance into the public arena.

In order to achieve a fuller understanding of Hezbollah as a group, the core figures of the organization deserve a deeper analysis. Because Sheikh Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah is the most senior and sophisticated cleric in Lebanon and considering his loyalty to Ayatollah Khomeini, he is commemorated as the "*Khomeini of Lebanon*".⁹ At the time of the civil war, Fadlallah underlined the requirement for the foundation of a "daw-lat al-insan" or "human state" by which it would be possible to help people to help themselves and one another by providing resources for such social action to be possible. This concept has turned into a great source of inspiration for the rise of many private social service associations, most of which serve the Shiite community specifically. Some of these institutions and parties were directly linked to Fadlallah while some others

⁶ Ranstorp, 48.

⁷ Norton, 16.

⁸ Christoph Reuter, *My Life Is A Weapon : A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 58.

⁹ Ranstorp, 42.

were led by other party members.¹⁰

After Fadlallah, the second most important man within the Hezbollah hierarchy appears to be Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, defined as Hezbollah's senior political figure and current leader.¹¹ For a period Nasrallah worked as an Amal official after serving in the al-Da'wa party.¹² Despite his Najaf educational background and being a religious follower of Khamenei, he doesn't have a top level position as a marja'al taqlid. However, Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has been the moderator of the group's highest governing body, the Consultative Council of Hezbollah – the Majlis al-Shura – since the 1992 assassination of his predecessor, Sayyid 'Abbas al-Musawi by Israel.¹³

The other significant figure in the organization's history was Imad Fayeز Mugniyah, who is known as the key planner of Hezbollah's worldwide terrorist organizations. Experts claim Mugniyah trained with al-Fatah during the Lebanese civil war. Soon after Israeli forces repelled PLO and al-Fatah from Lebanon in 1982, Mugniyah is said to have joined the newly founded Hezbollah and to have been promoted to senior levels in the organizational structure.¹⁴ Mugniyah was frequently a part of the US's "most wanted terrorists" list during his life.

As any act is a material reflection of an idea, Hezbollah is fed by an ideology which also needs to be examined. According to authorities, Hezbollah and its manifesto, referred to as the *Open Letter*, are inseparable phenomena in the same way that none of the movements in the history can be imagined mutually

¹⁰ Norton, 107-112.

¹¹ Hezbollah (a.k.a. Hizbollah, Hizbu'llah) [online]. Council on Foreign Relations. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155>

¹² Ranstorp, 30.

¹³ Dudley Knox Library, *Hizballah* [online]. Naval Postgraduate School. [cited 9 May 2008]. Available from: <http://www.nps.edu/Library/Research/SubjectGuides/SpecialTopics/TerroristProfile/Current/Hizballah.html> and Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

¹⁴ Hezbollah (a.k.a. Hizbollah, Hizbu'llah) [online]. Council on Foreign Relations. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155>

exclusively from their foundational ideologies. In their organizational manifesto, the *Open Letter*, the group announced its goals and objectives, its means to reach said goals, its perception of the world power structure, including Christianity and Israel in particular, and its overall ideology. The self-definition of Hezbollah in the *Open Letter* is as follows: “We are the sons of the umma (Muslim community) - the party of God (Hizb Allah) the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran.”¹⁵

The positioning of the group against the world order, and the major targets they focus on, take a considerable place in their manifesto. They clearly put in the *Open Letter* that - as the sons of their *umma* - they will not disappear until they face their enemies and realize the following three objectives: expelling the US, France and their allies from Lebanon; punishing all Phalanges for their crimes committed against Muslims and Christians, and finally giving the right to their people to choose the form of Islamic government they would like to live in and thereby establishing a future form of governance. This form of governance, they claim further, must be an Islamic regime as no other type could resist the possible attempts of imperialistic powers to envelope and overtake their country.¹⁶

To better understand Hezbollah, it is crucial to analyze it with respect to three aspects: The Umma Concept, the world division approach and the question of religious discrimination. To start with, despite their Shiite origin, the group has an Umma perception through which they embrace the whole of the Muslim world; thus, in addition to its significant responsibilities, Hezbollah also possesses the mission of representing Islam.¹⁷ Secondly, in Hezbollah’s dialectic understanding

¹⁵ The Hezbollah Program 1985. *Jerusalem Quarterly*. Fall 1988, (48). http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/Hiz_letter.htm. Quoted in The Hezbollah Program 1985 [online]. Zionism. [cited 7 May 2008]. Available from: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Hezbollah_Charter.htm

¹⁶ The Hezbollah Program 1985 [online]. Zionism. [cited 7 May 2008]. Available from: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Hezbollah_Charter.htm

¹⁷ Ibid.

of the world, it can be divided into two groups: the oppressors (*mustakbirun*) and the oppressed (*mustad'afun*). It is within this structure that Hezbollah fights the battle for justice and equality, believing it is only to be reached via an activism accompanied by a revolutionary process. Hezbollah and Iran have compared the battle against the tyrants with the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and used this as a tool to convince others of their world view.¹⁸ The third aspect of concern is Hezbollah's perception of Christians. As it is strictly referred to in the *Open Letter*, at every opportunity, a brief example of their attitude may be grasped from the following excerpt: "We don't wish you evil. We call upon you to embrace Islam so that you can be happy in this world and the next. If you refuse to adhere to Islam, maintain your ties with the Muslims and don't take part in any activity against them..."¹⁹

The path to "the one Islamic World Plan" requires four steps of action, which are prioritized by the group as follows: the armed struggle against Israel, the overthrow of the Lebanese regime, the release of Lebanon from any kind of Great Powers and, finally, the re-foundation of Lebanon in the form of an Islamic political entity with the participation of greater masses of the Islamic community, the Umma. Basically, as can be observed from Sheikh Nasrallah's own statements, Hezbollah moves along two main axes, the former of which is its submission under the rule of and in adherence to Khomeini, while the latter is the battle against the Israeli enemy.²⁰ It is an apparent fact that when the rhetoric of Hezbollah is analyzed, Israel surfaces as a continuous center of focus. Furthermore, Hezbollah ideologically opposes the idea of making an agreement with Israel and even rejects any person or party offering this idea, viewing them as an enemy.²¹

¹⁸ Ranstorp, 46.

¹⁹ The Hezbollah Program 1985 [online]. Zionism. [cited 7 May 2008]. Available from: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Hezbollah_Charter.htm

²⁰ Ranstorp, 48.

²¹ The Hezbollah Program 1985 [online]. Zionism. [cited 7 May 2008]. Available from: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Hezbollah_Charter.htm

Although Hezbollah confirms that Islam does not accept violence as a method in order to gain power and this method shouldn't be implemented by Muslim people²², they frequently performed armed attacks against Israeli and non-Islamist powers. Since the struggle against Israel began, they experienced a transformation from a secret radical armed group to a moderate political actor in Lebanon which also has included its own armed branch for the past seventeen years. As for Hezbollah, they act and take steps always in accordance with their interpretation of Islam and their holy guide book, the Quran.²³ As such, in order to justify and legitimize the terrorist attacks organized by Hezbollah, the second man of the group, Sheikh Naem Qassem claimed repeatedly that these attacks have nothing to do with terrorism or suicide. Instead he stated: "Jihad is a fundamental basis for us. We do not use it as a means of imposing our views on others, but consider ourselves in a state of jihad to defend our rights."²⁴

In terms of the assistance Hezbollah receives from external sources, two states are important in terms of both financial and political support: Iran and Syria. Undoubtedly, the role of these two actors is not a coincidence. Rather, each has specific motivations for their support, some of which include the following: as for Iran, the foundation of Hezbollah was based, at least to some extent, on the extension of the "Islamic Revolution" into Lebanon. Therefore, although Hezbollah has also defined itself as a national political group, Iran has consistently provided aid for the armed activity of Hezbollah.²⁵ Iranian Revolutionary Guards have undertaken the responsibility of training, organizing and funding all Shia militias.²⁶ As for Syria, Hezbollah provided an ideal means

²² Hizbullah Press Office. 1998. Statement of Purpose [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html>

²³ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face Of Terrorism* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 1.

²⁴ Reuter, 64-65.

²⁵ Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006), 269.

²⁶ Nasr, 223.

to maintain an alliance with Iran and also indirectly strike at Israel and the US while keeping in line with its Lebanese allies, such as the Amal Movement.²⁷ Syria has provided military and political assistance to the group since the period of Bashar al-Assad, beginning in July 2000.²⁸ Specifically for Syria, one of the core reasons for their loyal support of Hezbollah is the Golan Heights issue, which has very strategic importance in their fight against Israel.²⁹ Furthermore, Syria undeniably is a great network and supply route for Hezbollah's various military equipment needs.³⁰ While Iran is said to have predominance in terms of its percentage of financial donations to Hezbollah, and Syria likewise plays an important buttressing role, a considerable amount of support for the group is also reported to come from Shiite individuals.³¹

Finally, to conclude this overview of Hezbollah, three strategic components upon which such an organization is built should be analyzed in detail: the military aspect, the political configuration and the social role. The armed capacity of Hezbollah, according to an Israeli source in 2006, is composed of approximately four thousand terrorists, eleven thousand rockets, anti-tank weapons and heavy mortars.³² When the political identity of Hezbollah is analyzed, it can be easily concluded that it is a nationalist political party which is also involved in the Palestinian Question, in accordance with Lebanon's identity as an Arab state and thereby an actor in this great conflict.³³ When Hezbollah's role in the social life of

²⁷ Norton, 34-35.

²⁸ Shay, 132-133.

²⁹ Who are Hezbollah? [online]. BBC News. [cited 28 April 2008]. Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4314423.stm

³⁰ What is Hezbollah? [online]. ABC News. [cited 29 April 2008]. Available from: <http://www.abcnews.go.com/WNT/Mideast/story?id=2189860>

³¹ Hezbollah? It is a double faced-Janus [online]. Reset-Dialogues on Civilizations. [cited 6 May 2008]. Available from: <http://www.resetdoc.org/EN/Interview-Norton.php>

³² The Hezbollah Program 1985 [online]. Zionism. [cited 7 May 2008]. Available from: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Hezbollah_Charter.htm

³³ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

Lebanon is observed; it is possible to assert that, especially in the south of the country, it acts like a state within the state. Because the Lebanese Government has virtually no active role in providing social services despite the crucial needs of the residents, Hezbollah has taken this role upon itself.³⁴ The establishment of such a social network and services among the Shiite population began even before Hezbollah's official foundation. Nowadays, Hezbollah has become a very systematic social institution performing as an umbrella organization under which a group of institutions supplying a broad range of services operate. Among the services given the most important are: monthly support and supplemental nutrition, education, housing and health aid for the poor and the orphans. In addition, the reconstruction of war areas is also a notable provision. All these services have proliferated throughout Lebanon and have been implemented to include all Muslims with no sect discrimination.³⁵

Having provided a brief background for the study, I would now like to outline the content of the thesis chapter by chapter, thereby better illuminating the argument presented. This study is composed of five chapters, each of which focuses on a specific aspect as follows:

- The first chapter is that which has been read above. It functions as an introduction to understand the rhetoric, perspective, aims and dimensions of Hezbollah. This chapter introduces Hezbollah to the reader by providing her with fundamental, mainstream information.
- In the second chapter, the history of Hezbollah and the milestones and turning points of Hezbollah's identity are examined through the filter of its hostility towards Israel. The methodology applied in this chapter involves handling selected historical events in the military, political and social dimensions.

³⁴ Reuter, 72.

³⁵ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

Among the history covered in this section armed struggles, political elections and advances in social services are the three primary foci.

- In the third chapter, the ideology of the group, the political structure in Lebanon, Hezbollah's own actors, the question of authority, Hezbollah's Islamic state ideal and its other goals, the transformation of the group, and its perspective on the issues of terror and democracy are analyzed comprehensively. Finally, an introduction to its perception of Israel, the US and the West is given from an ideological point of view.
- After all the required groundwork has been laid to understand Hezbollah in the first three chapters, the main argument of the thesis is studied in the fourth chapter. The key question of this chapter is how Hezbollah perceives and positions itself with regard to Israel. Furthermore in this chapter, Hezbollah's image from an Israeli point of view is also handled. According to Hezbollah, Israel is not alone in its attempt to achieve its Zionist plans. Its allies are claimed to be the US and the West. As a result of this, the other questions of how Hezbollah perceives the US and the West are likewise answered in a detailed manner.
- In the last chapter the general overview of the study and its principal conclusions are given while projections about the future of Hezbollah – Israel relations are presented.

The following chapter will describe and consider the recent history of Hezbollah's hostility towards Israel.

CHAPTER TWO

HEZBOLLAH: ITS FORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

When the history of Hezbollah's hostility towards Israel is analyzed, it is observed that the milestone events are concentrated in three major areas: military, political and social. Hence, in this chapter the history of its hostility will be studied with regard to these three dimensions.

2.1. Hezbollah as a military organization

At the beginning, Hezbollah was established as an armed militia and this identity has never faded. Hence, if the history of Hezbollah's hostility towards Israel is analyzed, the armed struggles comprise a significant facet of this hostility. Below, these armed conflicts, which resulted in mass damages, bloodsheds and migrations, are considered.

2.1.1. The Main Armed Conflicts With Israel

2.1.1.1. 1982 Israeli Invasion and the Early Developments of Hezbollah

The idea of invading Lebanon was born in the mind of Israel as a result of its strong irredentism and surfaced because the regional balances of power tended toward Israel. When Israeli irredentism is examined, its source emerges without significant deliberation: the militarist Zionism of Vladimir Jabontinsky, the founder of militant Zionist Revisionist Movement, and his Irgun movement that

was managed by Menachem Begin.³⁶

On June 1981 Ariel Sharon became the defence minister of Begin's government. The great goal he wanted to achieve was the full scale invasion of Lebanon. He believed that Israel would not be comfortably secure without the extermination of the Lebanese PLO.³⁷ Up until June 1982, the prime minister of the time, Begin, and his Likud government developed a plan to carry out a broad military attack on Lebanon as a result of which they aimed to achieve several goals including: driving the PLO out of the country, damaging Syria, who was the final Arab confrontation state, because of their disobedience, and, last but not least, transforming the political structure of Lebanon such that the new regime would desire strong political relations with Israel.³⁸ However, both in April and May 1982, the decision of the Israeli parliament to invade Lebanon was delayed due to opposition from several ministers.³⁹

The situation changed when, on June 3, 1982, the Israeli ambassador to England, Shlomo Argov, barely survived an assassination attempt by Palestinian terrorists of Abu Nidal; this event became the *raison d'être* of the invasion. Ariel Sharon was strongly convinced that this assassination attempt would serve as legitimate justification for an invasion. Not surprisingly, the Israeli response to this attack came very quickly. The Israeli Defense minister, Sharon, immediately directed 80.000 soldiers into south Lebanon in order to end once and for all the attacks on

³⁶ Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of The Middle East* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 183.

³⁷ Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksOnLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

³⁸ Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 61.

³⁹ Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksOnLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

Israel by eliminating all Palestinian terrorists.⁴⁰ Even though the attacks to central and southern Beirut started on June 4, 1982, it wasn't until the next day that the Israeli government officially declared the 1982 invasion, which they called "Peace for Galilee". In spite of the fact that the UN Security Council Resolutions 508 and 509 required that Israel withdraw her troops unconditionally, Israel continued the operations.⁴¹

After a strenuous fight in Beirut and a 52-day-long siege of the capital city, a Multi National Force (MNF) composed of troops from the US, France and Italy aided in the departure of the PLO soldiers, with their arms, to Tunis.⁴² As a result of the attacks, more than 20.000 people, many of whom were Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, were killed.⁴³

Shortly thereafter, in September of 1982, pro-Israeli Christian leader Bashir Gemayel was assassinated and this was also engendered a heavy bombardment over Beirut. The Christian Phalangist Lebanese forces entered the Palestinian refugee camps located in Sabra and Shatila with the support of Israel. By September 16, 1982, the Phalangists and Israeli forces had caused a bloodshed in which approximately 2.000 Palestinian and Lebanese refugees were killed. Israel

⁴⁰ Norton, 33; Randall Price, *Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflict* (Eugene, Oregon:Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 108 and Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksonLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁴¹ Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksonLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁴² Mats Wärn. 1997. Breakdown and War. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/breakdown.html>

⁴³ Dan K. Barrett. 1997. History of Aggression in Lebanon [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/350/355/occupation/israeli-terror-in-lebanon.html>.

was blamed by masses for these deaths.^{44,45}

At the time, the young Shiite revolutionary candidates were already resolutely preparing for the emulation of the Iranian Islamic revolution in Lebanon. Not surprisingly, the invasion changed the political climate and shifted the would-be revolutionaries to the extremist level of establishing Hezbollah.⁴⁶

When the post-invasion era is observed, Israel seems not to have achieved her goals completely. While the PLO structure was devastated, it wasn't totally eliminated; instead, Arafat and the PLO survived and relocated to Tunis. On top of that, the dream of having a friendly and peaceful neighbour was destroyed. The Israeli troops could not prevent a multi-factional civil war which turned Lebanon into a partitioned country composed of multiple clashing groups. Not surprisingly, the Israeli forces suffered most from the increasing attacks by the Lebanese fighters supported by Iran, some of whom included the current members of Hezbollah. The prolonged existence of Israeli forces in Lebanon wasn't welcomed at home as well due to its increasing costs and it led to the establishment and empowerment of extremist groups like Hezbollah, supported by Iran.⁴⁷ In short, Israel created her own Vietnam in Lebanon, finally deciding to permanently give up in 2000.⁴⁸ Within the framework of this crisis and the chaos arising from it, Hezbollah was established. However, the politicization of Hezbollah and its transformation to an organization with a manifesto were thanks to the leadership

⁴⁴ Dan K. Barrett. 1997. History of Aggression in Lebanon [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/350/355/occupation/israeli-terror-in-lebanon.html> and Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksonLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁴⁵ See more details about the history of Hezbollah between 1982 and 1985 in Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksonLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁴⁶ Norton, 33.

⁴⁷ Peter Mansfield, *A History of The Middle East*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 314.

⁴⁸ Hinnebusch, 187.

of Imam Musa al-Sadr.⁴⁹ In fact, it would be an incomplete and simplified explanation to claim that Hezbollah emerged as a result of the 1982 invasion. Because of the intervention of Iran and the roles of Iran and Syria, the political mobilization period of the Lebanese Shiites actually started in the 1960s. Moreover, the corruption of the current Lebanese government also played a major role in the group's establishment.⁵⁰ Until the mid-80s, the group worked to complete its organizational structure,⁵¹ at which time, emerging as an ideal combination of Lebanese Shiite militants and Islamic Iran, Hezbollah rapidly turned into the most influential and respected Shiite militia movement in the region.⁵²

Secretly backed by the sponsorships of Iran and Syria, Hezbollah didn't announce itself with a formal declaration until February 15, 1985, when it publicly affirmed its foundation through a well-known communiqué entitled "al-Risalah al-Maftuha" ("The Open Letter").⁵³ In The Open Letter sent to a Beirut daily newspaper to clarify their foundational objectives, the group declared how they positioned themselves in terms of the military, politics, and their understanding of jihad.⁵⁴

In related writings by Hezbollah, the group underlined the applicability of their manifesto and its adaptability at any time and in any environment as they pursued their goals.⁵⁵ Via this political manifesto called "Hezbollah's Open Letter to the

⁴⁹ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, New York : Syracuse University Press, 2004), 19-20.

⁵⁰ Amal Saad Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah : Politics and Religion* (London, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2002), 7; Harik, p 21; Hamzeh, 15 and Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon: Clans, Parties and Clerics* (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2005), 114.

⁵¹ Norton, 34.

⁵² Hamzeh, 25-26.

⁵³ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁴ See more details about the content of Open Letter in Harik, 66-68 and Norton, 35-41.

⁵⁵ Harik, 66.

Downtrodden of Lebanon and the World”, the group declared where it stood with respect to the political structure of Lebanon and their views on the Lebanese political system. The document included Hezbollah’s point of view towards several domestic and foreign political issues, as well.⁵⁶

By 1985, Israeli forces had left most parts of Lebanon⁵⁷, but did continue to occupy several parts of southern Lebanon both via Israeli soldiers and the Lebanese militia, called the Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). The leading group protesting the occupation was, as would be expected, Hezbollah’s Islamic Resistance.⁵⁸ The toll of the four-year long war for Israel was 1216 funerals and great damage to the economy. Their insistent presence in Lebanon in the following years persisted in being a costly endeavor for Israel, as well.⁵⁹

2.1.1.2.1993 Operation Accountability

As a response to the killing of seven Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah resistance forces, and also Hezbollah’s rocket attack on northern Israel one week before, Israel organized a heavy armed attack on South Lebanon in 1993 which was called Operation Accountability or the Seven Day War.⁶⁰ The casualties of this attack, which includes those incurred by the naval, artillery and air force, were 130 dead Lebanese civilians, 300.000 people leaving their houses, hundreds of destroyed houses and tens of ruined mosques, cemeteries and schools. Specialists argue that the operation didn’t only aim to punish Hezbollah, but, considering the massive and extensive nature of the destruction, also aspired to seriously damage the villages, thereby leading to a refugee flow towards Beirut which would force

⁵⁶ Shanahan, 115.

⁵⁷ See more details about what Israel made before withdrawal in Harik, 40-41.

⁵⁸ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

⁵⁹ Price, 110.

⁶⁰ Harik, 115.

the government to restrain the Hezbollah guerillas.^{61,62} Even though it allowed for a release of Israeli tension, the operation was tactically a failure because Israel couldn't take advantage of the friction between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government and, perhaps even more important, it gave Damascus an opportunity to maintain the mediation and cease-fire between Hezbollah and the Israelis, a situation which Israel did not favor.⁶³ No doubt, it was the US that authorized Damascus to mediate, resulting in an unwritten agreement between Israel and Hezbollah called "*The July 1993 Understandings*". According to this agreement, any attack on civilians was prohibited but the right for a counter-attack was permitted in case of one side's violation of the rules. Thus, between July 1993 and April 1996, reminiscent of the rules in the Middle Ages, if one side were to attack civilians, the other side would likewise be justified in such an attack.⁶⁴

2.1.1.3.1996 Grapes of Wrath Operation

After both sides settled on the unwritten agreement following Operation Accountability, neither side violated the agreement for a period of time. This cease-fire lasted until April 1996, when an Israeli troop killed a teenager and wounded a few more people outside the combat area. Hezbollah claimed this action to be a breach of the agreement and they responded immediately, firing rockets into northern Israel. Even though this attack didn't take any Israeli lives and led to only very limited material damage, Israel reacted strongly. Soon after this rocket attack, the Israeli side started a campaign that they called the "Grapes of Wrath" in which they organized air attacks on Lebanese infrastructure, bridges,

⁶¹ Dan K. Barrett. 1997. History of Aggression in Lebanon [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/350/355/occupation/israeli-terror-in-lebanon.html>.

⁶² Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksonLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁶³ Harik, 115-116.

⁶⁴ Background information on major Israeli campaigns against Hizbullah since 1993 [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/conflict-south.html>

electric stations and any places suspected to be supporting Hezbollah guerillas. Similar to the previous operation, Israel rigidly warned the Lebanese government that an even a stronger attack might follow unless they put pressure on the guerillas.^{65,66} Soon after the attacks jumped to several UN forces in the region, on April 25, the UN General Assembly insisted Israel stop the operation immediately. The next day, with the simultaneous participation of the US Secretary of State in Jerusalem and the French Foreign Minister, a ceasefire agreement was announced. The final toll for the ‘Grapes of Wrath’ operation was 165 funerals of Lebanese civilians with an additional 401 wounded.⁶⁷

As Israeli government officials state, both of the campaigns in 1993 and 1996 served the same goals and objectives. Both of them aimed to incur massive destruction in South Lebanon, intending to force the Lebanese government to block the guerillas.⁶⁸

Hezbollah, on the other hand, operating from a nationalistic perspective, underlined its duty to resist and emphasized its determination to continue the struggle until every occupied Lebanese land was liberated. Believing the duty to preserve Lebanon rested on its shoulders, Hezbollah founded a group called the multi-confessional Lebanese Brigades (LMCB) to be the armed resistance against

⁶⁵ Harik, 117; Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksOnLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx> and Background [online]. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon [cited 01 June 2009]. Available from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/background.html>

⁶⁶ See more details about this operation in Harik, 121-122 and Chronology of Israeli attacks on Lebanon [online]. Arab Media Watch [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/ChronologyofIsraeliattacksOnLebanon/tabid/352/Default.aspx>

⁶⁷ Harik, 122.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 112.

Israel on November 3, 1997, only two months after the son of Hassan Nasrallah was killed by Israeli soldiers in a confrontation in southern Lebanon.⁶⁹

2.1.1.4.2000 Israeli Withdrawal

On April 2000, "in full accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978)", the Israeli government declared its decision to withdraw from Lebanon by July of the same year.⁷⁰ With this decision, Israeli officials added that they wanted to cooperate fully with the UN. After an involvement spanning almost a quarter century in Lebanon, on May 24, 2000, IDF completed its withdrawal. The prime minister of Israel, who led this withdrawal, asserted that by this means, they would get rid of what is called the Lebanon Syndrome and all the side-effects of involvement in Lebanese internal struggles. Barak believed that only after the withdrawal would Israel ensure peace and comfort on their border. The day of the withdrawal was announced in Lebanon to be holiday and one of the happiest parties celebrating this event was, unquestionably, the members of Hezbollah. The withdrawal stood for the victorious end of Hezbollah's struggle against Israeli troops in the region.⁷¹

This withdrawal was the fruit of Hezbollah's strict determination in their resistance and was unique by its being the first victory of an Arab organization against Israel. What's more, there were no concessions required in return for the withdrawal, which the Arab world had never encountered before. Because, in any previous ceasefire or agreement with Israel, her Arab counterpart used to have to give several compromises. Furthermore, Hezbollah proved that it was possible to

⁶⁹ Joseph Elie Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology* (Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 169.

⁷⁰ See more details about the Resolution 425 and 426 in Background [online]. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon [cited 01 June 2009]. Available from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/background.html>

⁷¹ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 88.

fight with a tiny but determined Islamic guerilla force against the giant Israeli army.⁷²

Only a few months after the withdrawal, the Palestinian uprising referred to as the second Intifada occurred in September 2000.⁷³ In October, the Intifada was concentrated in Al-Aqsa, after which Hezbollah started its armed struggle against Israel again to support their Palestinian brothers. Hezbollah accurately foresaw that Israel was focused fully on Palestine and wouldn't have the opportunity to attack Lebanon at the same time. Hezbollah predicted correctly and their systematic weekly attacks on the IDF met with no response during the Barak prime ministry period. However, Ariel Sharon's rise as Barak's successor and his subsequent military strategy surprised Hezbollah. After the killing of one Israeli soldier in an attack on the IDF in 2001, Israeli air forces shifted their strategy and started bombing Syrian radar stations in Lebanon instead of attacking possible Hezbollah targets. For a period Hezbollah was confused because this shift in strategy prevented them from retaliating. However Hezbollah didn't lose time by waiting for a direct attack on Hezbollah targets from Israel and instead immediately retaliated for Israel's attacks on Syrian military targets. This time Hezbollah's mission was to guard the Syrian interests in Lebanon.⁷⁴ This event showed Israel, the US and the West that Hezbollah was apparently enthusiastic to defend any anti-Israeli movement and thus the withdrawal of Israel from Southern Lebanon was not an end to its struggle, but only the beginning.

⁷² Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 89 and 94; Mansfield, 359 and Eyal Zisser. (2002). The Return of Hezbollah. *Middle East Quarterly*. Fall: 4. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com.

⁷³ Norton, 92.

⁷⁴ Harik, 185-186; Eyal Zisser. (2002). The Return of Hezbollah. *Middle East Quarterly*. Fall: 6-8. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com and Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 97-98.

2.1.1.5.2006 Lebanon War – *Harb al Tummuz*

In July 2006, Hezbollah organized an operation within Israeli boundaries and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. Here, the aim of Hezbollah was organizing a ransom to rescue the Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails and emphasizing its support to the Intifada.⁷⁵ What Hezbollah expected from Israel was a light bombardment and a subsequent swap operation to exchange soldiers with prisoners.⁷⁶ Israel's response, however, differed drastically from Hezbollah's anticipations. Israel rapidly configured a giant operation against Lebanon including air, land and sea forces for 8 weeks from July 13 to September 8. In this attack – called as Harb al Tummuz by Lebanese people – Israel had three specific objectives: retrieving the two soldiers, disarming or debilitating Hezbollah's militia, and removing them from south Lebanon.

During this war, Israel's tactic was to totally dismember the Lebanese infrastructure, seriously wounding the nation's economy. Its connection to the external world was nearly severed, the result of which exports, industry and foreign investment were adversely affected. The overall damage in Lebanon tallied almost \$15 billion. In addition, more than one million people were dislocated, almost 400 children under the age of 12 and a total of 1,200 people died, with more than 4,000 people handicapped or wounded. Across the border, Israel was bombarded with 4,000 Hezbollah rockets, resulting in the death of 119 Israeli soldiers and 39 civilians and approximately 5,000 Israelis were wounded. Even though these rockets weren't highly destructive, they did have a considerable psychological impact on Israeli people. Almost two million people relocated to safer areas or lived underground during the attacks. Overall financial damage of the war on Israel was \$6 billion.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 1. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 2-3. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com and Norton, 7 and Lara Deeb.

While outside observers accused Israel of violating humanitarian laws through an excessive use of force, the Israeli authorities rejected these claims, arguing that they obeyed the international weaponry standards.⁷⁸

In order to give an end to the war, under the arbitration of the UN, a Resolution called UNSC Resolution 1701 was signed between Israel and the Lebanese cabinet on August 11, 2006. This resolution included the ceasing of the ongoing hostility and the disarmament of Hezbollah as well. The two Hezbollah ministers voted “yes” in these decisions, apparently indicating that Hezbollah officially gave consent to the agreement and its obligations. Nasrallah stated upon the deal that they would agree the terms of the resolution because it was for the sake of national interests and the strength of Lebanon laid in its resistance and national unity.⁷⁹

This war, lasting more than a month, did not threaten Hezbollah’s existence, on the contrary, it even strengthened it. Even Barak confirmed, Hezbollah rapidly regained a more powerful arsenal. Hezbollah now has even stronger missiles which can reach any of Israel’s inhabitants.⁸⁰

As a result of the resolution signed, the organization tended toward *infatih* and more Lebanonization. It focused more on its social movement and progressed on the path of becoming a mainstream political party.⁸¹ Though some authorities

2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

⁷⁸ Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 5. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

⁷⁹ David Axe. (2006). Israel and Hezbollah: Their Weapons of War. *World Politics Review*. International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com and Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 5-6. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

⁸⁰ Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 14. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

⁸¹ Ibid.

claimed that Hezbollah's image was destroyed within Lebanon, a wider majority believed that Hezbollah even increased its popular support.⁸²

2.1.2. Other military activities against Israel

The struggles studied so far are not the only military confrontations between the two parties. Beyond the wars and retaliations discussed above, Hezbollah has engaged in attacks against Israel or Israeli interests in various other forms. The most notable of these are suicide attacks and bombings, hijacking, and hostage taking.

2.1.2.1. Suicide attacks & bombings

Hezbollah garnered undeniable fame for its suicidal bombings by Lebanese Shiites especially frequent between 1983 and 1985. The major targets of these attacks were most of the time Israeli elements and its allies in Lebanon, the US and France. The very well planned bombings resulted in tens and even hundreds of casualties and brought considerable success. Most often, it was Islamic Jihad instead of Hezbollah that claimed the credit for the attacks, and Hezbollah leaders were careful to avoid taking responsibilities for the bombings. When the limited military capacity of Hezbollah is considered, the suicide attacks were very efficient tools to achieve political goals.⁸³ Even though Fadlallah had emphasized the importance and necessity of unconventional methods, the suicide bombing issue needed to be clarified. He interpreted suicide attacks as a part of Jihad in the case when it is impossible to fight against the enemy through conventional means and when the attacks aimed at a serious political impact on the enemy. For Fadlallah, if a soldier makes the suicide attack simply because he thinks that he will be killed one way or another but the situation is different. He underlined that both cases are finalized with death, but while one fits the laws of conventional

⁸² Richard Burkholder. (2006). Lebanese See Hezbollah as Politically Stronger After Conflict With Israel. *Gallup News Service*, 1. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com and David Axe. (2006). Israel and Hezbollah: Their Weapons of War. *World Politics Review*. International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com

⁸³ Martin Kramer. (1990). The Moral Logic of Hizballah. In *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, edited by Walter Reich [online], Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/MoralLogic.htm>

war, the other one does not.⁸⁴ Up until 1985, the suicide attacks organized by Hezbollah resulted in policy changes in their enemies, demonstrating considerable success. However by late 1985, Fadlallah declared a change in their approach. He stated that the suicide attacks should be arranged only in cases when a proportionally higher political or military change can be achieved. He accepted that the past attacks were successful but the current circumstances were not suitable for it. In 1986, Sayyid al-Amin stated that suicidal operations may once again be applied in necessary situations. In fact, suicide bombing against the Israeli forces in Lebanon in October 1988 indicated that if the circumstances fit, suicide bombings were again possible tactics.⁸⁵

The mostly remembered suicide attacks and bombings by Hezbollah within Lebanese borders are as follows:⁸⁶

- The first suicide attack by Hezbollah against an Israeli target was on November 4, 1983, when a car bomb exploded near IDF Headquarters in Tyre and resulted in the deaths of sixty one people—28 IDF soldiers and 33 Lebanese and Palestinian detainees. Though Islamic Jihad claimed for its responsibility, it showed the characteristics of previous Hezbollah attacks.
- After IDF took stronger measures surrounding their headquarters, Hezbollah carried attacks to roads. On June 16, 1984, a car bomb exploded near an IDF convoy at the south of the Zaharani, injuring five soldiers.
- On February 5, 1985, in al-Burge al-Shimali a car bomb exploding near an IDF convoy led to the injuring of ten soldiers.

⁸⁴ Martin Kramer. (1990). The Moral Logic of Hizballah. In *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, edited by Walter Reich [online], Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/MoralLogic.htm>

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Peter Chalk, *West European Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Evolving Dynamic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., and Hampshire, London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 77.

- On March 10, 1985, in Egel Gate near Metullah a car bomb exploded, causing the deaths of twelve Israeli soldiers and injuring fifteen others.
- On March 12, 1985, near Ras al-Ayin, a car bomb exploded but did not result in any casualties.
- Again in October 19, 1988, a Toyota pickup loaded with 250 kilograms of explosives was detonated against an IDF convoy at the border control in Metullah.
- On December 30, 1999, again a suicide attack against an IDF convoy was organized in Marj Ayoun.⁸⁷

Hezbollah carried out attacks on Israeli targets outside Lebanon, as well. In March 1992, the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed as a response to the termination of Abbas Musawi in which 29 people were killed and 250 were injured. Two years later, another attack on Jewish community's building (AMIA) in Buenos Aires was organized as a reaction to an IDF air raid on a Hezbollah camp in Ein Dardara.⁸⁸ Again in 1994, a car bomb attempted to make a suicide attack on the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok, but it failed because of a car breakdown. In 1995, Hezbollah attempted to attack Israeli Shipping in the Malacca Straits, but it was prevented by Singaporean intelligence. Hezbollah is suspected to have involved in the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in London in July 26, 1994, as well.⁸⁹

2.1.2.2.Hijacking & Hostage Taking

Hijacking and hostage taking have been effective methods by Hezbollah to achieve a number of political aims: First, they used the hostages for bargaining in prisoner swap and exchange operations. Hostages were also used to convince

⁸⁷ Shay, 94-95.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 93.

⁸⁹ Shmuel Bar. (2007). Deterring Non-state Terrorist Groups : The Case of Hizballah. *Comparative Strategy*. (26): 477-478. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com.

enemy governments to act in favor of Hezbollah in specific cases. Third, the organization utilized this method to create grave anxiety in foreigners in regard to their security. This fear, in most cases, was able to effectively curb the activities of foreign spies in Lebanon. In addition, holding hostages put power in the hands of Hezbollah in cases of attacks and retaliations as the counter-side always had to be anxious about the lives of their hostages. Finally, taking and holding hostages led to increased media attention and via these activities the group got the opportunity to highlight the unnoticed injustices.⁹⁰

In the mid-80s, Hezbollah started to kidnap Israelis and Westerners to use them as bargaining chips on political issues and as exchange tools for liberating prisoners in Kuwaiti, Israeli and Western jails.⁹¹ Several striking examples of these activities are stated below:

- The kidnapping of Associated Press journalist Terry Anderson in Western Beirut on March 16, 1985.
- The kidnapping of English journalist John McCarthy who was going to Beirut for a news film on the kidnapping of Keenan on April 1986.
- The kidnapping of an Israeli, Elhanan Tennenbaum, from Europe in October 2000.

The most striking example of the hijackings by Hezbollah was in 1985 when terrorists linked to the group attacked TWA Flight 847. The plane flew between Algiers and Beirut during the negotiations on the liberation of several Shiite prisoners held by Israel.⁹²

⁹⁰ Martin Kramer. (1990). The Moral Logic of Hizballah. In *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, edited by Walter Reich [online], Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/MoralLogic.htm> and Shay, 91.

⁹¹ Shay, 88.

⁹² Harvey W. Kushner. (2003). *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* [online], New York: Sage Publications, Inc., [cited 01 July 2009], 166-167. Available from: http://books.google.com.tr/books?id=ZOfkAoDb_2IC&pg=PA166&lpg=PA166&dq=hezbollah+h

2.1.3. Conclusion of Military Dimension

None of the authorities can ignore that, though its struggle against Israel and thanks to both the moral and financial sponsorship of Iran, Hezbollah has become the most professional and strategic guerilla force of the world.⁹³ Starting from a little armed militia, they developed their capabilities and strategies, in the end, transforming into one of the most equipped tactical and influential militant organization of our time. The more Hezbollah grew, the bigger threat they became for Israel.⁹⁴

The *infatih* period – i.e the politicization of Hezbollah⁹⁵ – starting in the 1990s brought the questions whether Hezbollah would totally shift to the political arena after disarmament but the recent experiences appear to indicate that this is not the case. Hezbollah demonstrated that it could exploit its dual identity – both political and military – successfully, using them simultaneously to achieve its goals.⁹⁶ Even though it doesn't sound very realistic, the idea that Hezbollah might be powerful enough to defeat Israel engendered greater respect and prestige in relation to other Arab Nations in conflict with Israel. The increasing armed capacity of Hezbollah which turned it into a mini-military empire located in “*Hezbollahland*” in Southern Lebanon, and the tolls of the military operations to Israel led to the conclusion for Israel that, it would be smarter to delegate the maintenance of peace along the borders to the international community and focus

[ijackings&source=bl&ots=-r-u2wpMZn&sig=pmpzR6bP1De0ZkfFzd-gGIBXWig&hl=tr&ei=9JmrSuXcCeHLjAfrvZXsBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1#v=onepage&q=hezbollah%20hijackings&f=false](#)

⁹³ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 92.

⁹⁴ Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah: Facing the Change. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/change.html>

⁹⁵ See more details in ideology chapter of the thesis.

⁹⁶ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 90.

more on the real problem: Iran. Israel has already concluded that it is possible to defeat Hezbollah only by cutting off the support it receives from its sponsors, Iran and Syria. Hence, Israel is aware of the fact that it should find a platform on which it may negotiate and align with Iran and Syria on the Hezbollah issue. However, negotiating with Iran is not an easy task and the time is passing rapidly.⁹⁷ No doubt, possible pressures on and negotiations with the players—i.e. Hezbollah, Iran and Syria—will be the key determinant for the future of the region.⁹⁸

2.2. Hezbollah as a political organization

2.2.1. General Overview

It can be reasonably argued that Hezbollah's electoral performance and success in Lebanese politics is a good example of how political Islam adds value to its own secular societies.⁹⁹ Nasrallah has seemed to manage the dual identity of the group, namely military and political, very successfully.¹⁰⁰

It was not an easy decision for Hezbollah, in the 1990s, to start participating in the political arena. They confronted the problems and anxieties that any military organization operating behind a manifesto would do: whether or not it can express itself both to its supporters and to society and the communities in the right way. Because, for Hezbollah, there was always a risk of being perceived as

⁹⁷ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 104.

⁹⁸ International Crisis Group. (2003). *Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?* [online]. Amman/Brussels: International Crisis Group. [cited 25 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2121&l=1&m=1>

⁹⁹ Harik, 96.

¹⁰⁰ Nahum Barnea. (2006). Israel vs. Hezbollah. *Think Again*. November/December: 28. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

opportunistic or as losing its uncompromising principles. It has, nonetheless, seemed to successfully manage this transition.¹⁰¹

While the group represented the interests of Shiites in Lebanese Politics, apart from other fundamentalist movements, it cooperated with the government and other Lebanese authorities to add value to Lebanon's socio-political life.¹⁰² The political participation of Hezbollah was an alternative means of expressing its hostility against Israel and this adventure in the political arena has witnessed several milestones throughout history, including their involvement in parliamentary and municipal elections.

2.2.1.1.1992 Parliamentary Election

By 1989, while Amal was already a political party, Hezbollah was still a radical movement removed from the mainstream of Lebanese politics. The shift of Hezbollah to a political identity required even deeper ideological transformations than that demanded of Amal.¹⁰³ Despite all the risks and difficulties, Nasrallah announced their decision to participate in the elections on July 3, 1992.¹⁰⁴ This was the first post war election and many of the militia groups had an intention to have seats in the parliament; hence, there were numerous players participating in the elections. Hezbollah underlined its intention enter the Lebanese political system, but it preferred to do this in addition to its ongoing armed struggle against Israel as the Ta'ef Accord¹⁰⁵ allowed them to do. While Hezbollah gained 8 of totally 128 seats of the parliament, its non-Shiite allies got extra 4 which made their total coalition seats 12. Owing to the respect of the Lebanese people to Hezbollah coming from its honorable struggle against Israel and because the other

¹⁰¹ Harik, 4.

¹⁰² Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html> and Harik, 19.

¹⁰³ Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke. *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 218.

¹⁰⁴ Norton, 101.

¹⁰⁵ See more details in Chapter 3: Ideology.

strong Shiite representative party, Amal, wasn't able to satisfy the expectations of Shiites, Hezbollah succeeded in gaining almost 10% of the total seats in its first year of representation.¹⁰⁶ Rather than religious themes, in its party electoral platform, Hezbollah emphasized its intention to battle economic exploitation and underdevelopment, fighting against inequalities in the political system, personal opportunity and freedom, and last but not least, security.¹⁰⁷ This political expansion helped the group to weaken the claims of its enemies about its terrorist identity as well.¹⁰⁸

2.2.1.2.1996 Parliamentary Election

As would be expected, the major focus of the Shiite community has been Israel's military occupation in South Lebanon and their resistance to it. Hezbollah, thus, in an effort to exploit its strongest competitive advantage and focus on this idea of resistance, designated its 1996 electoral campaign slogan as: "They resist with their blood, resist with your vote."¹⁰⁹ In the 1996 election, Hezbollah gained 9 seats compared to its 12 seats in 1992 election. But in both of the elections, it managed to be the largest single party bloc in the legislative chamber. Indeed, in both elections, the results didn't reflect the full potential of the party in the Shiite arena because the competition was restricted in "resistance areas".¹¹⁰ With this election, Hezbollah showed once again that the group continues its struggle against Israel in the political arena.

2.2.1.3.1998 Municipal Election

The election of 1998 was the first municipal election after more than three decades. Perhaps the most important property of this election was the fact that it

¹⁰⁶ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html> and Harik, 50-51.

¹⁰⁷ Norton, 101-102.

¹⁰⁸ Harik, 52.

¹⁰⁹ Norton, 102.

¹¹⁰ Harik, 95.

was removed from the manipulations and interventions by the government and by Syria, unlike the previous parliamentary elections. What's more, even in case of any manipulation, the people of the districts had the opportunity to find out and question any abnormal results. Hence, it was a more respected election in terms of fairness and it presented a better opportunity for the participants to demonstrate their real potential.¹¹¹ Hezbollah's performance was impressive in most of the regions that it would have expected to be successful in. For example, in the city of Nabatiyeh, it won 18 of 22 total seats. This election was very important to Hezbollah as it provided evidence of the positive response to its armed resistance struggle and affirmed that it had not lost support as a result of this resistance. Moreover, Hezbollah had the chance to see its influence on the society.¹¹² Consequently, the group proved that it was already a very serious threat to Amal in the political arena.¹¹³ From this time on, Hezbollah garnered the sympathy of Lebanese society.

2.2.1.4.2000 Parliamentary Election

In the year 2000, the parliamentary election coincided with the unilateral withdrawal of Israel, causing Hezbollah to expect at least four or five extra seats in the parliament. However, the Syrian Ceiling – *the saqf al-suri* – in the procedure limited this possibility. The influence of Syria on Lebanese politics led Hezbollah to make a coalition with Amal, resulting in the acquisition of 23 seats in southern Lebanon and more than a quarter of the total 128 seats in the parliament by the Resistance and Development Bloc, together with Amal.¹¹⁴ The popularity of the party led to several speculations in the parliament that Hezbollah might even expect a position in the cabinet. However, this situation was quite debatable because this position could lead to several problems with

¹¹¹ Norton, 103-104.

¹¹² Harik, 106-107.

¹¹³ Ibid., 107-109.

¹¹⁴ Norton, 102.

respect to the image of the Lebanese government in the eyes of the US and the West. A cabinet including members who are listed in the FBI's world's most wanted list could lead to dire political consequences for Lebanon.

To conclude, regardless of whether the election of 2000 would provide a seat on the cabinet to Hezbollah, it demonstrated the increase in its popularity and its comparative rise against its rivals in the resistance areas. It can be argued that the esteem bestowed upon Hezbollah is a reward for their resistance against Israel which gave solid results that year.¹¹⁵

2.2.1.5.2004 Municipal Election

In the 2004 municipal election, Hezbollah enriched its program in the Beqaa and Hirmil regions. Thanks to its efficient governance in the recent years and also its leading role in the liberation of South Lebanon, Hezbollah's popularity increased dramatically. Furthermore, Hezbollah's successful negotiations in the body swap operations in 2004, by which four hundred Palestinian and twenty three Lebanese prisoners were released from Israeli prisons, led to further augmented victories for it in this election. Owing to this event, they didn't only get the municipality of Baalbek but also took control of twenty six other local municipalities in the Beqaa region. Due to the liberation of South Lebanon, 67 new municipalities held elections for the first time in 2005. Hezbollah secured the governance of most of these municipalities as well. When the final performances of the 1998 and 2004 municipal elections are compared, it may be observed that Hezbollah experienced considerable advances in terms of its base, popularity, vote count and number of municipalities.¹¹⁶

2.2.1.6.2005 Parliamentary Election

The most important advance in the 2005 elections was the representation of Hezbollah for the first time in the cabinet with two members in addition to

¹¹⁵ Harik, 148-149.

¹¹⁶ Hamzeh, 131-133.

winning 35 seats of the total 128, with 100% success in securing the seats in the south.¹¹⁷

In the 2005 election, Syria withdrew its intervention in the elections which led to a more objective and less manipulated electoral period. Though the elections were carried out within the law in 2000, they had still been organized by Syria. In 2005, with Syria's withdrawal, the election resulted in a parliament dominated by anti-Syrian party members. Among the three big blocs, the Amal-Hezbollah bloc was the second largest with 35 seats. The 2005 election was also unique in that, for the first time, the Lebanese government permitted international observers to monitor the parliamentary elections.¹¹⁸

2.2.1.7. Conclusion of Political Activities

Today, it has been more than two decades since the invasion of Israel and more than 12 years since Hezbollah transformed itself from a radical militia to a moderate and mainstream political party with a resistance wing.¹¹⁹ During this time period there have been several elections since the civil war and a dramatic drop in civil violence.¹²⁰ When it firstly participated in the 1992 parliamentary elections, Hezbollah won 8 seats owing to its loyalty to resistance. Thereafter, it participated in each of the parliamentary and municipal elections. As these years passed, Hezbollah learned how to design a coalition government, how to govern a municipality, how to represent the interests of a community and how to consider

¹¹⁷ Norton, 130 and Arab Media Watch. *The myth that Hezbollah is a terrorist organisation* [online], [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/MediaMyths/Hezbollahisaterroristorganisation/tabid/314/Default.aspx>

¹¹⁸ Arab Media Watch. *2005 Parliamentary Elections* [online], [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/Default.aspx?tabid=169>

¹¹⁹ Harik, 2.

¹²⁰ Anthony Cordesman 2006. *Lebanese Security and the Hezbollah* [online]. CSIS. [cited 29 April 2009], 3. Available from: http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060714_lebanese_security.pdf

an action from a political point of view.¹²¹ Moreover, it finally succeeded in attaining a strategic ministry like the Water and Electricity ministry.¹²² Clearly this transformation represents a considerable success story for Hezbollah.

2.3. Hezbollah as a social organization / movement

2.3.1. General Overview

In addition to its gradually increasing role in politics, the organization succeeded in expanding its facilities within the Shiite community as well.¹²³ It developed impressive social service programs all around Lebanon which are very popular with the Shiite community, a community covering more than 40 % of the total population.¹²⁴ This social structure was respected by many non – Shiite Lebanese people as well.¹²⁵

In the 1970s and 80s, with the contribution of several heroic Shiite leaders like al-Sadr and Fadlallah, the organization developed a Shiite Muslim social welfare network. The group has today evolved into an umbrella organization under which social networks and organizations from social welfare institutions to schools and

¹²¹Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 91.

¹²² Anthony Cordesman 2006. Lebanese Security and the Hezbollah [online]. *CSIS*. [cited 29 April 2009], 3. Available from: http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060714_lebanese_security.pdf

¹²³ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 92.

¹²⁴ Arab Media Watch. *The myth that Hezbollah is a terrorist organisation* [online], [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/MediaMyths/Hezbollahisaterroristorganisation/tabid/314/Default.aspx>

¹²⁵ Daniel Byman. (2003). Should Hezbollah Be Next?. *Foreign Affairs*. 82, (6): 60. Brookings, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/byman20031101.pdf>

clinics have been opened, providing services which fill the gaps in the social services of the Lebanese government.¹²⁶

In order to identify the most noted of said institutions, a shortlist may be formed as follows:

- The associations of the Martyr (*al-Shahid*, founded in 1982) and of the Wounded (*al-Juraha*, established in 1990) – the two NGOs administrated by Hezbollah and looking after the relatives of the martyrs and the wounded.
- The Educational Institute (*al-Mu'assasa al-Tarbawiyya*, founded in 1991) managing the education sector and aspiring to redefine the Shiite societal structure.
- The Help (*al-Imdad*, founded in 1987) for the poor and the deprived, a branch of the Iranian mother organization.
- The Islamic Society for Health (*al- Haya'a al-Suhiyya*, established in 1984) running 46 medical centres.
- The Jihad for Construction (*Jihad al-Bina'a*, established in 1988) providing building and several other urban services.
- The Consultative Centre for Studies and Documentation (CCSD, founded in 1988), a research center preparing reports on social, economic, political, financial and administrative issues.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html> and Socialist Worker. 2006. The organization Bush condemns as "terrorists", Who is Hezbollah? [online], [cited 13 May 2009], 5. Available from: http://socialistworker.org/2006-2/602/602_05_Hezbollah.shtml

¹²⁷ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders. (2005). Know the enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception. *Third World Quarterly*. 26, (1): 187-189. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com and Simon Haddad. (2005). A Survey of Lebanese Shi'i attitudes towards Hezbollah. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. 16, (3): 322. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com (accessed June 1, 2009).

Owing to all these carefully structured and well organized institutions and NGOs, Hezbollah left a positive impression on both Shiite and non-Shiite Lebanese society, by which it increased both its political and social clout.

2.3.2. Media

Less than two years after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah began utilizing a different weapon that it hadn't wielded previously: a 24-hour satellite TV station.¹²⁸ Being one of the most popular Arab satellite TV channels, Al-Manar was an important means of propaganda for Hezbollah.¹²⁹ As the chairman of Al Manar, Nayyef Krayyem stated, this TV channel is a great political, social and cultural weapon to use against the enemies.¹³⁰ It would be difficult to deny the influence of programming which includes images of a man with rifles, a boy with a stone running towards an Israeli tank or a funeral with crying moms of the martyrs, not to mention the distinctive and determined voice of Nasrallah talking on the importance of the destruction of the Zionist Entity.

The basic message being dispersed through Al-Manar is simple: "Jihad [holy war] is the only way to salvation and the experience of the Islamic and the Lebanese resistance is the best proof," as Sheikh Naim Qassem stated.¹³¹ One of the greatest contributions of Al Manar to Hezbollah was that via this channel Hezbollah had the chance to highlight its difference from the other fundamentalists, a difference which required emphasis given America's claim that Hezbollah is no different from the others.¹³² What's more, owing to the channel, the name of which means

¹²⁸ Nicholas Blanford. (2001). Hizbullah sharpens its weapons in propaganda war. *Christian Science Monitor*. 94, (25). International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com

¹²⁹ Norton, 93.

¹³⁰ Nicholas Blanford. (2001). Hizbullah sharpens its weapons in propaganda war. *Christian Science Monitor*. 94, (25). International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Harik, 196-197.

the lighthouse, all the Muslim people with access could now receive specific messages against their enemies through an alternative and even more influential means rather than simply via the mosques.

In addition to its TV channel, Hezbollah also had radio stations, namely al Bashair (the Messenger or Herald) which was affiliated with Fadlallah and al-Nur (the Light) which was affiliated with Hezbollah.¹³³

An interesting expansion of Al Manar was its decision to broadcast in Hebrew as well. Via these programs, Hezbollah aimed to give messages to both the Israeli civilians and the soldiers about the threats that were waiting for them in South Lebanon. In addition, Al Manar has a plan to arrange a daily news program in Hebrew because Hezbollah has determined that the best way of destroying an enemy is by first understanding it.¹³⁴

Last but not least with regard to media influence, the group manages three websites: one for its press office, one to describe the attacks on Israeli targets (www.moqawama.tv) and a third for the news and the information about Al-Manar TV (www.manartv.com).¹³⁵

Hezbollah, which began employing propaganda during their political expansion period, now has a notable specialization in the art of propaganda via its very strong, popular and widely varied media tools.

¹³³ Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 60-61.

¹³⁴ Nicholas Blanford. (2001). Hizbullah sharpens its weapons in propaganda war. *Christian Science Monitor*. 94, (25). International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com

¹³⁵ Maura Conway. (2002). What Is Cyberterrorism?. *Current History*. December: 438. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com and Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders. (2005). Know the enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception. *Third World Quarterly*. 26, (1): 183. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

2.3.3. Conclusion of Social Dimension

Starting with the 1990s, Hezbollah began a great transformation at the end of which it has successfully positioned itself to be a political and social force. Today, in addition to being a military phenomenon, it has made a serious impression on the minds of the world authorities with its political and social identities.¹³⁶

While Hezbollah developed its base with a sustainable social and media investment, it played the game of psychological warfare through its media tools very successfully against its enemy.¹³⁷ Today a special bureau is monitoring Israeli media and gathers information to obtain important broadcasts and this bureau is very interestingly headed by a Hezbollah fighter who was imprisoned in Israel and learnt Hebrew in order to communicate with his Israeli guard.¹³⁸

From a different point of view, one may note that through these social expansions, over and above the dramatically increasing support it has received, Hezbollah also had the opportunity to legitimize itself, and to at least partially throw off the terrorist image often affiliated with the group in the eyes of Western organizations.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 95.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹³⁸ Harik, 160-161.

¹³⁹ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders. (2005). Know the enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception. *Third World Quarterly*. 26, (1): 187. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

CHAPTER THREE

THE IDEOLOGY OF HEZBOLLAH

3.1. Political Structure in Lebanon, Hezbollah's Own Internal Dynamics and Actors

From many aspects, Lebanon is a meeting point where antagonistic powers conflict in terms of their wills and interest. None of the authorities may ignore that its location, the political waves blowing over it, its “independence to date” experiences, and finally its domestic social and demographic structure together have a destructive impact on Lebanon's today and tomorrow. Due to its above stated structure and cosmopolitan composition, the sects and factions located in Lebanon often asked for the intervention of foreign support which was never refused as foreign powers were always ready to react to any disturber. In short, Lebanon is an arena of struggle where no clear victories are experienced and is a mirror reflecting regional and international tendencies.¹⁴⁰

There are two main sources that the current political structure of modern Lebanon is shaped by: the former being the 1926 constitution, the latter being the unwritten National Pact of 1943. As of 1989, The National Reconciliation Charter – in other words: the Taef Accord - which finalized the Lebanese civil war, led to several modifications to both of these documents. However, despite these finetunings, the

¹⁴⁰ Mats Wörn. 1997. A New Order : the Era of the Ta'if Accord. In A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/worn/new-order.html>

basics, on which both the Taef Accord and the constitution depend, remained unchanged.¹⁴¹

The first Lebanese constitution, which was inspired by the French Third Republic, was published when Lebanon was governed by France via a League of Nations Mandate. A brief review of the constitution quickly reveals that, there was a lack of know-how about how to manage sectarianism and this led to the inclusion of some contradicting passages. However, this shouldn't overshadow the fact that owing to this constitution, Lebanon transformed to the freest¹⁴² and most democratic Arab State, as it still is today. Tactically the central government was weakened as much as possible to simultaneously preserve the interests of a broad range of religious groups in Lebanon. Structurally, the constitution divided the state into three branches: The executive branch being composed of the president, prime minister and cabinet; the legislative branch¹⁴³, which consists of a National Assembly and finally the judicial branch is made up of four *courts of cassation* (three for civil and commercial cases, and one for criminal cases).

Aside from the constitution, the other source feeding the political structure of Lebanon is the 1943 National Pact which is the fruit of long discussions between Bechara al-Khoury, a Maronite, and Riad al-Solh, a Sunni and the first president and later the prime minister of Lebanon. By the end of the mandate, both

¹⁴¹ Arab Media Watch. *Lebanon : Political Structure – Background* [online], [cited 13 May 2009]. <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/PoliticalStructure/tabid/172/Default.aspx>

¹⁴² The freedom given by this constitution doesn't only include the political and civil rights and several other guarantees but it also embraced the freedom of the press, speech and associations and equality before law. (Arab Media Watch. *Lebanon : Political Structure – Background* [online], [cited 13 May 2009]. <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/PoliticalStructure/tabid/172/Default.aspx>)

¹⁴³ On top of principles of suffrage, the seats are allocated in a special way: half of the seats go to members of Muslim sects and half to Christians. As for the sects, the seats are divided proportionately among 17 officially recognized of them. In this division every official sect is assigned a quote for the district in which they are predominant. (Arab Media Watch. *Lebanon : Political Structure – Background* [online], [cited 13 May 2009]. <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/PoliticalStructure/tabid/172/Default.aspx>)

Christians and Muslims were anxious about their future in new Lebanon. While Christians were afraid to be assimilated among Muslims, Muslims despite being guaranteed the separation from Syria, were still uncomfortable because of the risk of Western hegemony in the country due to the strong relations of the Christians with France. The unwritten Pact was an assurance of the consensus between the two parties including the following sacrifices: Christians would avoid asking for the intervention of the West and furthermore, they would consent to the Arab Identity of Lebanon which would make it compulsory to collaborate with the other Arab States. Muslims, on the other hand would recognize Lebanon within its currently defined borders, respect the intellectual and cultural ties of Lebanon to the West and remain neutral in case of any inter-Arab conflict.

According to the pact, taking the 1932 census as reference, public offices would be divided proportionately among the sects regardless of the future demographic changes. In addition, the top political positions would be distributed among the sects and the presidency, prime ministry and Chamber of Deputies representation would be assigned to the Maronite, Sunni and Shia sects respectively. This principle is still obeyed. The remaining seats of the parliament would also be allocated between the Christians and the Muslims with a ratio of 6 to 5 which later turned into a one to one ratio according to the Taef Accord.¹⁴⁴

In order to give an end to 15 year old Lebanese Civil War which turned into a serious barrier to regional welfare, leaders of three regional countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Algeria – constituted the Tripartite Committee in 1989. With the contribution of US, Syria and prominent groups in Lebanon; the so-called Taef Accord was realized. The Accord didn't aim to change either the Constitution or the National Pact, instead it intended to reflect the demographic facts of Lebanon by providing a more realistic angle to these documents. Therefore the Accord represents an attempt to institutionalize the National Pact and the concept of political sectarianism in Lebanon. What is more, the Accord is

¹⁴⁴ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

a re-expression of Lebanese identity which took place in the Constitution by re-defining Lebanon to be a free, sovereign, united and democratic republic having an Arab identity.¹⁴⁵ The Taef Accord provided a more stable and secure Lebanon in comparison with the Civil War Lebanon.¹⁴⁶ However, approved by the Accord, the relocation of 40.000 Syrian troops within the territories of Lebanon up until the reconstitution of the Lebanese Army led to further anxieties within the minds of the Christians.¹⁴⁷

The weak governmental structure of Lebanon and the under-representation of Shiite Muslims in parliament – whose allocation of seats is arranged with the proportion in 1932 census despite the relatively higher increase in Shiite population in Lebanon – led to the rise of Shiite movements through social networks. Hence they tried to compensate the lack of representation and the disequivalent impoverishment resulting from inadequate funding from government.¹⁴⁸ Even though in the beginning, Hezbollah did not want to give support to the Taef Accord as it was regarded to inadequately resolve the gaps in the political system; however, they also recognized that owing to this Accord, the Civil War was brought to an end. On top of that Hezbollah's interest didn't coincide with the Lebanese political system as it seemed to work in the favour of the Maronite Elites. Despite its defense, the group takes part in the system under the pressure of the Syrian and Iranian governments.¹⁴⁹ It is hard to ignore that, Hezbollah benefited from the Taef Accord to a considerable extent, though it didn't give consent to it at all. The Syrian government which took the

¹⁴⁵ Arab Media Watch. *Lebanon : Political Structure – Background* [online], [cited 13 May 2009]. <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Lebanon/PoliticalStructure/tabid/172/Default.aspx>

¹⁴⁶ Mats Wärn. 1997. A New Order : the Era of the Ta'if Accord. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/new-order.html>

¹⁴⁷ Harik, 45.

¹⁴⁸ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

¹⁴⁹ Shanahan, 124.

responsibility to preserve the boundaries of Lebanon after the Civil War, formed a model in which Hezbollah would be the only armed faction to resist against Israel. Owing to Syria's pressure on the Lebanese government, Hezbollah strengthened its military potential and got socially more and more strong thanks to the weak Lebanese government.¹⁵⁰

Lebanon's specific problems such as its civil war, the conditions it experiences, and the conflict between Israel and Palestine in the South makes Hezbollah unique in terms of both ideology and activity compared to other fundamentalist groups.¹⁵¹

In spite of the fact that it takes a role in the resistance as a militia, Hezbollah is an Islamic political movement with a well-structured organization to better approach to its goals. The intellectuals of Hezbollah assert that it isn't realistic to establish an Islamic regime in Lebanon due to her quite small size, heterogeneous structure and location neighbored by very powerful states. Hence, they believe that Lebanon can't be the plan itself but rather the part of a broader plan beyond its territories in order to meet the desired regime. Not surprisingly, here-stated broader plan coincides with the Islamic vision of Khomeini.

The source of inspiration in the organizational hierarchy of Hezbollah is, as would be expected, Khomeini's concept of the Rule of the Jurist, the top management governing the Islamic Republic.¹⁵² The ulama – well qualified clerics governing the nation toward Islam – as it is stated in Open Letter, the Shura Council, effective as of 1980, is the top management authority in the group. When the structure and responsibility of the Council is observed, it may be realized that politics and religion are closely interlinked. What's more, the council is a distinct sign of the elitist mindset of Hezbollah. In this framework, the clerics are regarded to be more equipped with respect to the Law of God and to be higher than the

¹⁵⁰ Shay, 66.

¹⁵¹ Harik, 28.

¹⁵² Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html>

average Muslims in terms of Islamic status.¹⁵³ The council influences the masses through the concept of “consciousness of unification” which corresponds to the commonly agreed directives to gather all Muslims. This format resembles the strict loyalty of the Shiites to marja.^{154,155} The council of seven members includes sub-branches, each of which is responsible for a different functioning of the organization from financial to military issues. On the other hand, the group also has domestically located councils in Beirut, the Bekaa and the south. With the council on the top and the bases in these locations, the organizational structure of Hezbollah resembles a hierarchical pyramid.¹⁵⁶ Since it also participates in Lebanese state politics it has a politburo and executive council, as well. While Fadlallah is claimed to be the spiritual religious leader of Hezbollah according to some authorities, he personally supports that religious scholars should politically be neutral and serve with equal distance to multiple organizations. Although any single member is free to emulate to any marja they desire personally, the group at the top managerial level obeys the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei officially. No doubt, the issues of political obedience and religious imitation may be either mutually or partially exclusive for any single person. Hassan Nasrallah, who doesn’t rank highly enough to be a marja despite his education in Najef and who religiously

¹⁵³ Hamzeh, 44.

¹⁵⁴ Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html>

¹⁵⁵ However, according to Martin Kramer, pluralism in marja and Shiites’ freedom to choose which marja they will follow has become an obstacle for the unification of people in Lebanon by Hezbollah. What’s more, Hezbollah is not the official ruler of Lebanon, hence it has no legitimate right to unify the people. As a result, again from Kramer, Hezbollah should pervasively reach every level of the society through numerous clerics and agitators and influence people under an Islamic atmosphere via the mosques, schools and Islamic associations they have founded and operated. (Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html>).

¹⁵⁶ Hamzeh, 44.

follows Khamanei, is the present political leader of Hezbollah, titled Secretary General since 1992 and he reports to the current Iranian Faqih, Khamanei.^{157,158}

Undoubtedly, the leaders of a group like Hezbollah are safe to the extent they are preserved by the military and security organs of the group. Not surprisingly within such a framework, these organs are commanded directly by the leading clerics, mostly by the current secretary general. The military and security apparatus of the group are well-camouflaged which make it difficult for their enemies to detect them. Islamic resistance, being the military organ of the organization is composed of two main sub-groups named the enforcement and recruitment section and the combat section. While the former trains the new militants ideologically, the latter gives advanced military education. This organ has a semi-autonomous structure in which the separate cells do not communicate with each other; hence the group ensures its secrecy even in the case that one cell becomes known to the enemy. On the other side, the second organ, referred as the Security Organ, is perhaps the most secret body in the organization led by a senior cleric whose loyalty to the council and the secretary general is not even questioned. This organ is also divided into two main branches, namely the party security and the external security. While the former is responsible of the internal security matters, within the group or from a broader view, within Hezbollah's social network, the latter, which is also known to be the encounter security, is responsible for gathering intelligence for the party's favour, helping to prevent the party from penetration by enemies.

To conclude, Hezbollah has both a military and a political identity which is a natural consequence of its ideology, location and position. While the complex organizational structure of Hezbollah leads to a strictly disciplined management,

¹⁵⁷ Lara Deeb. Hezbollah : A Proxy for Iran and Syria? [online]. Third World Network [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: www.twinside.org.sg/title2/resurgence/191/cover4.doc

¹⁵⁸ Hamzeh, 78-79.

owing to its dual identity, the group has the elasticity to shift from military to political apparatus in line with the requirements of current conditions.¹⁵⁹

3.2. The Ideology of Hezbollah

With the growing prominence of political Islam, Islamic movements around the world have likewise emerged and increased in consequence. Most of the time, such movements are knitted together with violence and horror, thus giving them a similar appearance. Moreover, because of their association with Islam, they are frequently put in the same box and evaluated through a rigid filter of critique, especially by Western observers and the media. However, in order to avoid any mistakes in observation, any given movement should be analyzed in terms of the purpose of its existence, its environment and its standpoints apart from such generalizations or associations. As a result, any political movement, regardless of whether it is Islamic or not, needs to be particularly examined taking its own particular context into consideration.¹⁶⁰ This context may be a composition of political view, ideology and religion.

Religion, which plays one of the most important roles in the uniqueness of any religious-based movement, has a similar impact on Hezbollah, as well. Hence it is crucial to analyze the group through the lens of Islam, specifically Shiism, for a more accurate observation. Shiism – symbolized with the colours; black, red and green – is the core sect of Hezbollah and the Karbala event at which Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed, was to be martyred is the turning point in Shiite history. The experiences in this event led to the incorporation of Shiite identity and are definitely helpful in the determination of the basic tenets of Shiite ideology.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Hamzeh, 71, 73 and 78-79.

¹⁶⁰ Mats Wörn. 1997. Introduction. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/worn/introduction.html>

¹⁶¹ Shanahan, 11.

Islamic radical ideology anticipates the abolishment of the present order and the replacement of this order with a fairer one. It generally targets current socio-economic disequilibrium in Islamic societies and from time to time tries to change it via radical methods such as conventional armed forces.¹⁶² Olivier Roy states that radical Islamists find it compulsory to transform the society fundamentally and as a prerequisite of this, they aim to possess the rule of the mother state they act within.¹⁶³ This claim is valid in the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon, to a considerable extent.

While the ideology of Hezbollah is a composite of Shiism and Islamist radical ideology, it is a unique blend, referred to as Shiite radicalism which is often used interchangeably with Shiite fundamentalism. Shortly, Shiite Fundamentalism is the religious revival among the Shiites which started nearly five decades ago. Najef where Hezbollah's leaders were trained in the 1960s and 1970s became the base camp of Shiite fundamentalism. Basically Shiite Fundamentalism is akin to the phenomenon of Islamic Fundamentalism; however there is a differentiation coming from the history between the former and the latter. Shiites have always been an oppressed minority in the region for more than four centuries, as a result of their conflicts with the predominant Sunna in terms of politics, economics and sociology. These conflicts fed the differentiation and it was embodied and surfaced under the rule of the Khomeini regime.¹⁶⁴

3.3. Who is to Rule?

To better understand the structure of the organization, the key actors and the definitions of organizational positions require a closer look. To find a satisfactory answer to the question "who is to rule" within the Hezbollah apparatus, both the religious and political dimensions should be considered because the group has a

¹⁶² Shay, 15.

¹⁶³ Olivier Roy. 1997. Islamists in Power. In *The Islamism Debate*, edited by Martin Kramer. Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern&African Studies, 69.

¹⁶⁴ Shay, 15-16.

strongly intensive Shiite identity, on one hand, while it has a systematic political organization, on the other hand. In Shiism, the concept of “Imamate”, which started with Ali as the first caliph or Imam, is the most respected and obeyed centre of authority. As for the Shia sect the concept of imam not only refers to a prayer leader but also includes a political authority. Shanahan expresses that: “...the Imam would be the exclusive authoritative source of religious knowledge and the sole diviner of the correct path for people to follow in their lives.”¹⁶⁵

Like most of the other Shiites do, Hezbollah has also adopted to the model of “Twelver Shiism”.¹⁶⁶ According to this tradition, Ali, being the first ring of the chain, is believed to be followed by the next ten Imams after whom the Twelfth Imam; Muhammad al-Muntazar, is regarded to have gone into occultation in the 9th century.¹⁶⁷ Believers of Twelver Shi‘ism – who submitted themselves to twelve pure and sinless spiritual leaders – hope that close to doomsday, the twelfth imam, who has been hidden for twelve centuries, will come back.¹⁶⁸ The return of the guided Imam is the mark of the end of time and after coming back, he will provide the rule of divine justice in the world according to Shia belief. However, the Sunni sect of Islam doesn’t adopt this kind of belief.¹⁶⁹ The loyalty to the Mahdi is the basic foundation of faith among Shiites. They demonstrate this loyalty via following his path until the day he will return.¹⁷⁰ During this occultation period, the power is temporarily delegated to the religious scholars, “*Mujtahidun*”, in the Shiite universe and they are responsible for ruling the Shiite

¹⁶⁵ Shanahan, 10.

¹⁶⁶ Shay, 18.

¹⁶⁷ Shanahan, 10.

¹⁶⁸ Henry Munson, “*Islam and Revolution in the Middle East*” (New Heaven:Yale University Press, 1989), 16 and Mats Wärn. 1999. Shiism and resistance. In *Staying the Course: the "Lebanonization" of Hizbollah - the integration of an Islamist movement into a pluralist political system* [online] Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Master Thesis [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn2/shiism.html>

¹⁶⁹ Nasr, 67-68.

¹⁷⁰ Shay, 18.

world in terms of religion through the filters of Shiite dogma and traditions.¹⁷¹ The vital mission of clergymen in the Shia community is to interpret the shariah by applying to the sources; the *Qur'an* and the *sunna*.¹⁷²

In the original text of the Open Letter, Hezbollah clearly expressed which resources it obeys:

The main sources of our culture are the venerable Koran, the infallible Sunna and the decisions and religious opinions made by the jurisprudent who is the authority on tradition among us. These sources are clear, uncomplicated and accessible to all without exception and they need no theorization or philosophy. All they need is abidance and application.¹⁷³

The concept of Wilayat al-Faqih, meaning the guardianship of jurisconsult or the governance of the jurisprudent, is one of the cornerstones in the ideology of Shiism; hence in that of Hezbollah.¹⁷⁴ *Marja' at-taqlid*, which Shiites emulate as a model, is the name of the faqih's status.¹⁷⁵ Actually the most just and knowledgeable specialist in the area of Islamic Law is supposed to be the commonly obeyed *Marja* across the Muslim world; however, this is not the case for the present time, hence there are more than one *Marja* among whom Shiites are free to follow.¹⁷⁶ Hezbollah officially follows the marja of Iran since the Khomeini period. For Shia belief, wilayat al-faqih is not equal to the Imam and

¹⁷¹ Olivier Roy. 1997. Islamists in Power. In *The Islamism Debate*, edited by Martin Kramer. Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern&African Studies, 71 and Shay, 18.

¹⁷² Shanahan, 133.

¹⁷³ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 3. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

¹⁷⁴ Ghorayeb, 59.

¹⁷⁵ Nasr, 70-71.

¹⁷⁶ It is the fact that there is no unique religious leader all around the Shia world. In the Shia universe, Ali Khamenei in Iran; Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah in Lebanon; the Iranian Sistani, the Afghan Muhammad Ishaq al-Fayyad, the Pakistani Bashir al-Najafi al-Pakistani, and the Iraqi Muhammad Said al-Hakim in Najaf; Muhammad Taqi Mudarressi in Karbala; Hossein Ali Montazeri in Qom are the most senior of these supreme ayatollahs at the present time. The Shia clerics have incomes from religious taxes and charities as directly proportional to respect from believers' towards him. (Nasr 2006, 71.)

his fallibility is one of the basic differences between the two. However, Hezbollah has great respect for the faqih, being the highest religious authority. This respect stems from the fact that the faqih is both the blessedly ordained and inspiring ruler of the religious community, and – as Khomeini also supported – is the determined representative of Mahdi until he returns.¹⁷⁷ In addition, the statements from Nasrallah allow one to further understand the importance given to the faqih by Hezbollah. Nearly two decades ago he declared that: “ ‘He who rejects the authority of the Wali al-Faqih, rejects God and Ahlu’l – Bayt [this refers to the descendents of Imam ‘Ali and his wife Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter] and is almost a polytheist.’ ”¹⁷⁸

One who wants to participate in the group should unconditionally obey the supreme authority of Wilayat al-Faqih. In addition, all Shura members confirm the intervention of the Faqih without questioning while he steps only in very crucial issues, indeed. It is an undeniable fact that the faqih has political power over all Shiite including Hezbollah, in addition to his recognition as the highest Shiite religious authority. Khomeini asserted that the Islamic state could only be governed by a leader specialized in the shariah and Islamic jurisprudence. Referring to respected religious resources such as Qur’anic command, some hadiths and directions from Ali, Khomeini concluded that instead of being involved only in ritual problems, the power of *fuqaha* (plural form of faqih) should also have influence in political, economic and legal matters of religion. Actually the Faqih has an ordinary decision-making and intervention procedure. When a case is directly related with the umma – such as who is good or bad – the faqih proactively makes a decision and declares it but when a case is related with the specific issues or states like political participation he waits for his interference to be requested.¹⁷⁹ Among all issues the faqih is involved with, jihad is rather debatable. Considering the traditional Shia faith, only the Mahdi has the right to

¹⁷⁷ Ghorayeb, 62 and 64.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Sayyid Hassan Nasru’llah quoted in al-‘Ahd, 26 Sha’ban 1407. Quated in Ghorayeb, 64.

¹⁷⁹ Ghorayeb, 43, 59, 61, 65 and 68.

declare jihad and until he returns Shiites possess no responsibility for jihad; however, Khomeini opposes this belief and asserts that the Mujtahid has both the task of leading Muslim community and participating in jihad.¹⁸⁰

According to Hezbollah the faqih should have a limited intervention in political arena, which can be applied in rather more significant matters to define the general frames and perspectives such as jihad, political order, etc. As a result of that, the group has considerable flexibility in decision-making, keeping loyal to generally marked boundaries. To exemplify, Hezbollah applies martyrdom as a military tactic although the Faqih did not officially sanction it.¹⁸¹ Moreover Hezbollah participated in the 1992 general elections in Lebanon by the confirmation of the Faqih.¹⁸² On top of the guidance by Wilayat al-Faqih on Hezbollah owing to its Shia identity, the group has its own internal organizational structure as a natural necessity to be ruled as stated in detail under the previous sub-title of the study.¹⁸³

3.4. Islamic State and Hezbollah

Khomeini, the architect of Islamic revolution in Iran, underlines the revolutionary character of Shiites with the following statements in his book “Islam and Revolution”: “...the Shi’is have always believed in rebellion –sometimes they were able to rebel, and at other times they were compelled to keep silent.”¹⁸⁴

Khomeini’s philosophy basically paraphrases the fundamental issues of Shiite Islam and adapts its recommendations to the modern lives of the current century. According to his philosophy man should take an activist approach in order to achieve his goals, which in the case of the Shiites is salvation. Not surprisingly,

¹⁸⁰ Shay, 87.

¹⁸¹ Ghorayeb, 67.

¹⁸² See more details in faqih’s political decisions in Ghorayeb, 67-68.

¹⁸³ Lara Deeb. Hezbollah : A Proxy for Iran and Syria? [online]. Third World Network [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: www.twinside.org.sg/title2/resurgence/191/cover4.doc

¹⁸⁴ Henry Munson, 26-27.

Khomeini's philosophy is built on and fed by the Shiites' deprivation and socio-economic sufferings throughout history.¹⁸⁵

The Islamic State stands for a predominantly Islamic society gathering under an Islamic republic. It is both the producer and the derivative of a moral and religious Islamic community as supported by Hezbollah. The mentality of the Islamic state is built on two basic principles of Islam: justice and preciseness. Hence, its eternal goal is a world order where justice and preciseness are sustainably maintained.¹⁸⁶ The aim of Khomeini was to establish the regime in the name of all holy things, the regime being the Islamic State.¹⁸⁷ Khomeini, who objected to a passive waiting period until the return of Mahdi, emphasized the need for the establishment of an Islamic state.¹⁸⁸ He described the features of the desired regime as follows:

'It is not dictatorship: the leader must rule according to divine law, not his own will. It cannot be an elected system in which representatives of the people can legislate, nor a popular republic which makes people their own rules. It is the rule of Divine law as interpreted and applied by the Just Faqih – the duty of people is to obey in accordance with Koran'.¹⁸⁹

As for Khomeini's philosophy the ultimate goal to achieve is a unified revolutionary Islamic authority which can only be possible when the national boundaries and variations in Muslim sects are erased, and Muslims rebel against their local authorities.¹⁹⁰

Khomeini's philosophy is clearly followed by Hezbollah, which is distinguished from the mainstream Shia approach due to its enthusiasm for

¹⁸⁵ Shay, 85.

¹⁸⁶ Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam & Politics in the Contemporary World* (Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, 2004), 26 and Ghorayeb, 38.

¹⁸⁷ Edwards, *Islam & Politics in the Contemporary World*, 56.

¹⁸⁸ Ghorayeb, 59.

¹⁸⁹ S. Zubaida, *Islam: The People and the State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 17. Quoted in Edwards, *Islam & Politics in the Contemporary World*, 57.

¹⁹⁰ Shay, 23.

establishing the Islamic State without waiting for the return of the Imam. The party underlines its intention to establish the Islamic state through the consent of people in its Open Letter. This approach is a clear proof of its obedience to Khomeini's philosophy.^{191,192} Although followers of Khomeini and desirous of an Islamic state, Hezbollah approaches the establishment of this state carefully. The Islamic approach of Hezbollah is composed of two successive processes, the former of which is the Islamisation of society in the short term while the latter is the peaceful transformation of Lebanon to an Islamic State in the long term. However, the socio-economic and demographic conditions of Lebanon led the group to participate in the democratic arena by recognizing the multi-confessional system.¹⁹³ Although the Islamic state is a permanent component of its ideology, the group didn't force the members in order to establish an Islamic State. Nasrallah explains this situation as the reflection of the "no pressure" principle in Islam and he claims the Islamic state should only be a tool to reach absolute justice.¹⁹⁴ Parallel to this statement, the Hezbollah Press Office declared in the "Statement of Purpose" document of the group that:

We don't seek the application of Islam by force or violence but by peaceful political action, which gives the opportunity for the majority in any society to adopt or reject it. If Islam becomes the choice of the majority then we will apply it, if not, we will continue to coexist and discuss till we reach correct beliefs.¹⁹⁵

According to the group's approach it is believed that in spite of the multi-religious and multi-sectarian structure of the Lebanese society, it is possible to establish the Islamic State via persuasion, education and conversion rather than applying force.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Hezbollah believes that there has been no government or rule

¹⁹¹ Ghorayeb, 34 and Shanahan, 116.

¹⁹² Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>

¹⁹³ Fuller and Francke, 235-236.

¹⁹⁴ Ghorayeb, 36.

¹⁹⁵ Hizballah Press Office. 1998. Statement of Purpose [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html>

¹⁹⁶ Fuller and Francke, 223, 227.

worth emulating other than the times of Imam Ali and Hassan. The group espouses that among all, the Iranian Islamic state is the closest one to the ideal Islamic State.¹⁹⁷

As declared in Khomeini's philosophy, as well, Hezbollah embraces all Muslims as the part of the umma.¹⁹⁸ According to Nasrallah, the group is accused of performing in the interests of Iran, however he doesn't deny this and add that Iran has no further interest but Islam and the Muslim World and as such, there is no reason to avoid supporting Iran. On the other hand, one of the founders of Hezbollah, Ibrahim al-Amin declared that: " "The Iranian regime does not rule through Islam. Islam rules through the regime in Iran, and it will eventually rule the entire earth." "199

Hezbollah evaluated the elimination of Israel to be more urgent than the establishment of an Islamic state in society, in order to establish the absolute justice. But this doesn't fall into disagreement with its view that Islam is the most appropriate tool to provide justice.²⁰⁰

3.5. Hezbollah and Jihad

As an author from the Israeli side once said:

...it is also obvious today that the military mission of Hizbullah, including its armed struggle against Israel and the West, is central to the organization's world-view and practical agenda. Without it, Hizbullah would cease to exist as the heroic

¹⁹⁷ Ghorayeb, 34.

¹⁹⁸ However; for Hezbollah, Shias are at the heart of umma while the rest of Muslims are at the periphery. What's more, the party membership is observed to be limited only to the Shia Muslims, as a result of which no non-Shia people are planned to take a part in the administrative branch of the Islamic regime. (Ghorayeb 2002, 45, 70 and 77.)

¹⁹⁹ Martin Kramer, *Hezbollah's Vision of the West* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1989), 28. Quoted in Mats Wärn. 1997. Hezbollah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html> and Harmon, 121.

²⁰⁰ Ghorayeb, 38.

organization its followers have come to admire and support—a transformation that Hezbollah's current leaders will go to every length to avoid.²⁰¹

Numerous armed attacks executed in the name of *Jihad* and justifications of suicides referring to the definition of Jihad, make it crucial to discuss the concept of jihad and its nature. The most basic definition of jihad is an armed struggle against infidels. Furthermore, jihad, as an Islamic command to fight injustice, signifies an effort for the sake of religion that comprises the conversion of infidels to Islam and the maintenance of more prosperous conditions for Muslims.²⁰²

With reference to the principles of Islamic ideology, jihad is accepted as a legitimate defensive struggle when its purposes are to expel a tyrannical ruler and to form a universal Islamic order.²⁰³ Jihad is a unique source of motivation for Muslims to participate in wars against oppressors and a self-justifying source of action as it positions this battle to be a religious duty in which the death of any Muslim at the battlefield will be rewarded with the degree of martyrdom (shahid).²⁰⁴ The group believes that its martyrs are placed at the highest level of all martyrs in paradise.²⁰⁵ The following statements from Nasrallah explain the main logic of martyrdom for Hezbollah: “ ‘Maybe some people think we crave martyrdom because we like to die in any way. No, we like to die if our blood is valued and has a great impact [on Israel].’ ”^{206,207}

²⁰¹Eyal Zisser. (2002). The Return of Hezbollah. *Middle East Quarterly*. Fall: 4. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com.

²⁰² Harik, 57-58 and Esposito, 26.

²⁰³ Esposito, 27; Shay, 63-64 and Shanahan, 113.

²⁰⁴ Harik, 57 and Ghorayeb, 129; Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html> and Esposito, 33.

²⁰⁵ Ghorayeb, 131-132.

²⁰⁶ Nasru'llah. 1997. *Kalam al-Nas*. Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, March. Quoted in Ghorayeb, 133.

²⁰⁷ What is more, Nasrallah utilizes the religious rhetoric which states that whoever lives longer will be judged more harshly. Therefore, it encourages or even forces one to think s/he should look

The great pride that Hezbollah feels thanks to their martyrs in the path of jihad and the continuity of Jihad – until their goals are achieved – may be understood from the following declaration of Hezbollah after Imad Moghnieh was killed by Israel:

The martyr, may his soul rest in peace, had been a target for the Zionists for more than 20 years. Almighty Allah has chosen him to be a martyr on the hands of His Prophet's killers who know that we have a long battle with them ... We pledge to continue the martyr's path until achieving complete victory, God willing.²⁰⁸

For Hezbollah the fulfillment of the divine mission to struggle in jihad is regarded to be a more estimable and a greater triumph for the religion and the world, even if the liberation of Lebanese territories hasn't been accomplished. To this end, the "will to be martyr" differentiates any Hezbollah fighter from an ordinary Israeli soldier.

The phenomenon of Jihad is strongly associated with self-sacrifice. For Muslims the most beautiful and preferable death is the one in the name of God.²⁰⁹

Hezbollah demonstrated its loyalty to jihad within these sentences in the letter:

Each of us is a combat soldier when the call of jihad demands it and each of us undertakes his task in the battle in accordance with his lawful assignment within the framework of action under the guardianship of the leader jurisprudent. God is behind us, supporting us with His care, putting fear in our enemies' hearts and giving us His dear and resounding victory against them.²¹⁰

to be one of the martyrs while being included in the jihad against Israeli because then s/he can be assured that the judgment in afterlife will be less. It means that a member prefers dying rather than living for jihad, by the belief that one is guaranteeing her/his life in paradise, and simultaneously (an) Israeli soldier/s in hell. This certain situation, of course, has led to the increase in the number of martyrs. In that case, from the group's perspective, to conquer Israel in the afterlife is more valuable than to do that in the war/fight. (Ghorayeb 2002, 128.)

²⁰⁸ *Hizbullah: Islamic Resistance Leader Imad Moghnieh Martyred* [online], [cited 30 April 2009]. Available from: <http://english.hizbollah.tv/essaydetails.php?eid=2343&cid=235>

²⁰⁹ Ghorayeb, 128 and 130-131.

²¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 3. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

The death of Imam Hussein is perceived by Shiites as the prominent type of defensive jihad and self-sacrifice.²¹¹ In addition, his death in Karbala is accepted as the most senior martyrdom owing to it being the demonstration of extreme deprivation. The voluntary death of Imam Hussein has become a solid justification for Hezbollah's suicide missions despite the fact underlined by religious scholars that any kind of suicide is prohibited in Islam.²¹²

Having established the basic principles behind jihad, where and to whom it is performed are subject to query. The answers to those questions are quite clear for Shiites. In Shia belief the world is divided into three sections. These are; firstly Dar al-Iman over which Shia authority has dominance, secondly the area of Islam in which Muslims live and lastly the area of the infidels where non-Muslims exist. The primary struggle of Shiites is against the area of Islam and they aim to provide its transformation into Dar al-Iman. On the other hand, the struggle against the land of non-Muslims is of second priority in their agenda and is implemented through the principles of Jihad. Shia Muslims, who suffered from the handicaps of being a minority for centuries in the Muslim World, have spent their lifetimes in the locations that they desired to convert to Dar al-Iman however there has been no place for them which can be called Dar al-Iman for centuries.²¹³

For Hezbollah, the Shia division of the world into three sections is not denied, but there exists also for them a more fundamental universal division : "the oppressors versus the oppressed". Regardless of wealth, wherever deprivation and exploitation exists, inherently, "the oppressed people" exist there, as well. It is possible to encounter this approach in almost all of its political behaviours and rhetoric. The other universal division, according to the Sunni tradition, Dar al-

²¹¹ Nasr, 133.

²¹² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 44; Ghorayeb, 132-133 and Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html>

²¹³ Shay, 17-18.

Islam versus Dar al-Harb is fairly different from the Shia one formulated by Khomeini. While the division by Sunnis is based on solely a religious feature that of Shiites is related with multiple dimensions beyond religion. For example; if a person is socially and economically deprived, politically oppressed and culturally repressed by someone, whether Muslim or not, s/he is on the side of oppressed according to the Shiite division. The oppressed perception of Khomeini is close to that of the Qur'an, although the Qur'an doesn't have such a perspective in economic terms. In this frame, the US with Israel takes the lead, as the most oppressive of Hezbollah's enemies. The different occupants of the oppressive lands succeed them in the ranking of oppressors. Then, as the third one, the tyrannical regimes that direct and dictate the oppressed people while submitting to the West appear. It may easily be concluded that any oppressed person on earth is oppressed by one of the above stated three groups.²¹⁴ Any occupation by Israel or foreign powers is regarded as oppression and the oppressed get automatic sympathy and the support of the party unless they get Western aid. As an outcome of this thinking, Shiites - suffering from Israeli occupation in South Lebanon and being of lower class in terms of educational, occupational and economic status in Lebanese Society – are a clear instance of the oppressed.²¹⁵

While on the one hand it is very clear for Hezbollah that all of its armed struggle or attacks are performed in the name of jihad, on the other hand what the group named to be oppressors call all the group's actions to be "terror".

3.6. The Terror and Hezbollah

Islamic fundamentalism intends to counter the West in the military, technological, scientific, economic and cultural arenas; and is enthusiastic to confront with the

²¹⁴ Ghorayeb, 19, 16-17 and 21-22; Mats Wärn. 1999. Shiism and resistance. In *Staying the Course: the "Lebanonization" of Hizbollah - the integration of an Islamist movement into a pluralist political system* [online] Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Master Thesis [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn2/shiism.html>

²¹⁵ Ghorayeb, 18 and 21.

infidels physically.²¹⁶ After the 9/11 attacks, the word “terror” was pronounced so frequently together with words such as “Islam”, “jihad” and “fundamentalist” that a myth like “terror’s religion is Islam” appeared.²¹⁷

No doubt, the historical process in the region contributed to the emergence of Hezbollah, to a considerable extent. As Augustus Richard Norton also supports, the Shia politics may be more precisely analyzed through political science and behavior rather than attributing their actions to radical fanaticism. It is impossible to deny that the extreme violence of the Shiites is an outcome of years of misery and marginalization.²¹⁸ Several impulses resulting in the birth of Hezbollah as a guerrilla movement are stated below:

- The emergence of Shia political activism in Najef and the continuous communications of the clerics across the Shia world.
- The separation of conflicting radical Shiite groups from Amal as they are against Amal’s secularisation.
- The invasion of South Lebanon by Israeli forces in 1982
- Iran’s impact on the group after the Islamic revolution.²¹⁹

However, over time, Hezbollah transformed from a so-called “terrorist”²²⁰ group to a serious force having influence in the political arena.²²¹

²¹⁶ Shay, 14-15.

²¹⁷ Harik, 7.

²¹⁸ Mats Wärn. 1997. Introduction. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/introduction.html>

²¹⁹ Fuller and Francke, 212-215.

²²⁰ See more details about the definition of terror in Chalk, 22, and Fuller and Francke, 244.

²²¹ Robert Spencer, *Onward Muslim Soldiers, How Jihad Still Threatens America and the West*, (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2003), 72.

Hezbollah's view toward violence and alleged terrorism is largely shaped once again by Khomeini. In Khomeini's view, "revolutionary violence" is not only a forgivable act but also a central tool of problem solving both within the individual himself, and within Islamic Society. On the path to a totally pure Islamic society, the battle starts primarily within the Shiite community followed by wider but again Islamic circles. However, the struggle doesn't end in the Islamic arena but extends to the termination of the corrupters of the world, who are considered the "source of evil": the superpowers. As the Shiites are acting on behalf of all the oppressed on earth, their leader Khomeini doesn't direct his message to a specific group or area, instead it is regarded to be universal.²²² The universality of this message which is accompanied with Khomeini's revolutionary violence, raises the much – debated question of: "whether Hezbollah is an international terrorist group or not".

The term; international terror has several definitions by different legal scholars, experts and institutions, any of which may serve, in the end, to better understand the relation between Hezbollah and terrorism. To exemplify, according to the researchers of the Rand Corporation the definition of international terror is: "A single incident or a series of incidents that are contradictory to accepted law, accepted diplomatic arrangements and accepted laws of war."²²³

On the other hand, researchers from Interate Project, define international terror to be²²⁴:

The use or threat to use violence for political aims by an individual or group acting on behalf of or against an existing government. The aim of the activity is to influence a target audience which is broader than the action's direct victims; and the victims, perpetrators or their links cross boundaries.²²⁵

Three circumstances to determine whether political terror is international are designated by Paul Wilkinson as follows: to be directed against foreign citizens or

²²² Shay, 23.

²²³ Rand Corporation, Chronology of International Terrorism. Quoted in Shay, 7.

²²⁴ Shay, 7.

²²⁵ Interate Project – International Terrorism : Attributes of Terrorist Events. Quoted in Shay, 8.

targets, to be executed by governments or organizations from more than one country and finally to be aimed at influencing the policy of a different foreign country.²²⁶ As above stated three definitions also support, many authorities are inclined to believe that Hezbollah's cross-border military activities are clear examples of international terror.

Born during the decolonization period, the use of violence or force was easily and naturally justified in case of resistance and was left to the self-determination of the inhabitants involved in ancient times. In the modern context, it is observed that the United Nations structured and limited the use of violence by declaring that no country has the right to the use of force that may threaten the political freedom or territorial sovereignty of another country. Recently, the organization upgraded its approach to the use of violence via a further statement that if any country uses of force against another one, the downtrodden country acquires the legal right to use violence towards its counterpart. In addition, the UN also permits under clearly-defined conditions that other countries can assist the downtrodden one during her legal use of violence towards the one proclaimed to be unjust. The "1949 Geneva Convention", being the internationally recognized legal organizer for use of force, asserts that the civil community directly has the right to regulate civilian rebellion when the occupying force breaks this convention and adds that even in case of further tyranny, the civilians can use military power. Within the regulations of Fourth Geneva Convention, the UN Security Council declared Israel as an occupying force and demanded that Israel retreat after the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon in 1978. Therefore this situation gave birth to the right to say that Hezbollah used its own legitimate right while implying resistance forces in the South.²²⁷ In its own words, Hezbollah tries to preserve its soil in the South and West Bekaa by struggling against the Zionist Jewish occupation and it defines this act to be a legitimate right which was applied on several occasions by Western states throughout history, as well. In

²²⁶ Shay, 8.

²²⁷ Harik, 165-166.

addition, the group underlines that categorising the resistance on its own soil against Israel as terrorism is an absolute injustice and a way of ignoring the Bill of Human Rights and the UN Charter.²²⁸

3.7. Hezbollah's Manifesto and Goals

The Open Letter – the manifesto of Hezbollah which was published on 16 February 1985 – was dedicated by Hezbollah to the downtrodden in Lebanon and the whole world. In this letter, the group gave information about its identity, its “arrogant” enemies, especially the US and why it struggled against them, its close Zionist and Phalanges.²²⁹

The friends, its goals and demands in Lebanon and the coordination between the group defines its friends as the world's downtrodden people and any people, party or organization who confront its enemies and who don't conflict with the group. In the letter Hezbollah appeals to its own friends by stressing their common enemies and goals, such as:

O partisans and organized people, wherever you are in Lebanon and whatever your ideas, we agree with you on major and important goals embodied in the need to topple the American domination of the country, to expel the Zionist occupation that bears down heavily on the people's lives and to strike all the Phalangist endeavors to control government and administrative affairs, even though we may disagree with you on the methods and level of confrontation.²³⁰

Within this framework, Hezbollah declares its objectives on Lebanon in the letter as follows:

²²⁸ Al-Mashriq. 1997. Hizbullah:Views and Concepts [online], [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/hizballah-background.html>, and Hizbullah Press Office. 1998. Statement of Purpose [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 28 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/statement01.html>

²²⁹ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], a. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

²³⁰ Ibid., 6.

- The absolute removal of Israel from Lebanon and the liberation of Jerusalem from the current occupation.
- The cleaning of Lebanon from the US, France and their allies and eternal avoidance of Lebanon from any imperialist impacts.
- The punishment of all Phalanges enforced and supported by the US and Israel for their crimes committed against all Lebanese people regardless of their religion.
- Delegation of the freedom and initiative to choose under which government to be ruled.²³¹

To sum up, the Open Letter is a programmatic document giving serious tips on the religious, political and social mindset of the group together with its short and long term goals in the way going to eternal salvation.

3.8. *Infitah* and the Transformation of Hezbollah

Hezbollah has not remained stagnant over the years but has rather adjusted and transformed according to the demands of the day, perhaps most obviously in the political arena. One significant area of transformation for Hezbollah was their willingness to embrace a new policy, *infatih* (opening), in the political discourse. The policy of *infatih* is completely compatible with the multi-confessional structure of Lebanon and led to the establishment of good relations with those who may be called “others” in the society such as the Christians or the Druze. As well as encouraging the other groups to embrace the goals of Hezbollah and to accept the union of forces against Israeli oppression, Fadlallah – as he noticed the difficulty of the establishment of Islamic regime in Lebanon in the short term - easily adopted and backed up the implementation of *infatih* in the Lebanese political arena. Then, he expressed clearly that for the sake of Lebanon, it was

²³¹ Fuller and Francke, 222 and Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues ‘Open Letter’ on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 6. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

reasonable to sustain a dialogue between Christian and Muslim people. This policy, adopted after the decision to participate in the elections of 1992, had the intention of persuading the others that they could live together in a peaceful environment.²³²

It is not difficult to observe that as time passed, the terms and conditions in Lebanon led to a significant adaptation in Hezbollah's political rhetoric. In its early years the group regarded itself as different from Amal and declared that while it is based on Islamic identity, Amal is founded on Lebanese national identity. However, after this adaptation, it declared itself to be representing all Lebanese people. This undeniable change correlates with the transformation in its perception of the nation state. While, at the beginning, Hezbollah perceived the issue of nation state not to be beyond the geographical entity; later on, it started to bear the components of history, race and language in mind within the concept of nation state. Thus the party confirmed the fact that there is no obstacle for any member to embrace their national ties with their countries. It can be inferred that contrary to the past, the national sentiment got stronger within the party. For instance, several patriotic rituals like placing the Lebanese flag next to that of Hezbollah in the general meetings and praying for the martyrs after playing the national anthem came frequently to the stage.²³³ Through this nationalist wave blowing over the group, Hezbollah aimed to strengthen the Arab character of Lebanon thereby ensuring that it didn't remove itself from any Arab issue, including that of Palestine. Moreover, although Hezbollah had initially focused on the struggle against Israel in anywhere, after a time period, it restricted itself to fight to Israel within Lebanon. To this end, the group undertook new goals after May 2000 and put the issues like the liberation of Sheba Farms and backing for the Palestinian struggle at the forefront of their agenda.²³⁴

²³² Harik, 75, 77, 70 and 73.

²³³ Ghorayeb, 84-85.

²³⁴ Shay, 65.

Though it was embedded in the ideology of Hezbollah, the group's insistence on its pan – Islamic attitude toward Israel shifted to rather domestic issues of Lebanon. This nationalist approach was catalyzed with the transition of the group from an armed resistance militia to a political party being represented in the parliament. Its embracing of the *infatih* policy facilitated Hezbollah's gaining extra seats in the parliament – even in the cabinet via getting the ministry of Energy – on top of getting extra support from the Christians in its resistance against Israel, hence helping to eradicate its terrorist image in some people's minds.^{235,236} Moreover, as a result of this participation, it has the chance to have a legal and official hope to maintain the political order it deserves and right to interfere in the issues the group doesn't approve of and change the direction taken on these issues. In case of no change, it will also have the possibility to justify its armed attacks to an extent due to its political involvement. To sum up, the group obtains the opportunity to be officially recognized as a Lebanese political entity by political authorities which would otherwise ignore the group or refuse to communicate directly with it.

Despite their more recent acceptance of Lebanese national identity, Lebanon is not the only country that impacts Hezbollah's political movements. The fact that there is not a direct political tie between the group and Iran doesn't mean that the group is not influenced by Iranian in political issues. For instance, Nizar Hamzeh and As'ad Abu Khalil claim that the greatest facilitator in the Lebanonisation policy – by means of which the group recognized the heterogeneity of Lebanon and became one of the Lebanese political movements – and participation of the group in elections, is the shift of the Iranian political administration from radical to the moderate.²³⁷ Again, as a result of the transformation in the political realm,

²³⁵ Lara Deeb. 2006. *Hizballah : Primer* [online]. Middle East Report Online. [cited 14 May 2009]. Available from: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>; Harik, 75 and Anoushiravan Ehteshami. (1999). Is the Middle East Democratizing? *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. 26 (2): 214. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/195923>.

²³⁶ See more details about its dialogue with Christians in Harik, 73-79.

²³⁷ Mats Wärn. 1999. Shiism and resistance. In *Staying the Course: the "Lebanonization" of Hizballah - the integration of an Islamist movement into a pluralist political system* [online] Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Master Thesis [cited 29 April 2009].

Hezbollah has softened its military wing to a considerable extent in recent years as a result of which it aimed to reach to a broader range of supporters and to increase its popularity.²³⁸

However the adaptation of the group to diplomacy doesn't indicate a cease-fire as, the moderation through *infatih* doesn't stand for a full liberalization free from Islamic obligations. It is obvious from the increasing military power of the group with the encouragement of Iran in the recent years that Hezbollah is not in a mode of disarmament. Rather, the military power is viewed as an alternative for the solution of any conflict that may not be obtained within the diplomatic framework.²³⁹ Despite the fact that Hezbollah declares its tolerance to voices or thoughts different from its own, its real intention can be detected in how difficult it is for divergent ideologies to survive within the organization. Both Islamic and the other religious political parties have the right to be active in the political arena unless any of them behave disrespectfully or disobey to the principles of Islam and the Islamic hegemony over state and community, according to the Article 26 of the Iranian Constitution. However, ideological parties or groups aren't able to become a political player considering this principle. Hence, the principle embraces religious minority parties simultaneously excluding the ideological ones. The reason of this fact is that primary goal of religious minority groups that present and defend the rights of its electorate don't conflict with the condition which was put by the article while that of ideological parties does as it threatens the order.²⁴⁰ To sum up above stated loyalties to traditions and principles can't shadow the apparent progress of Hezbollah in terms of diplomacy and political correspondence.

Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn2/shiism.html>, Ghorayeb, 46-47 and Eyal Zisser. (2002). The Return of Hezbollah. *Middle East Quarterly*. Fall: 4. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com.

²³⁸ Shanahan, 122.

²³⁹ Eyal Zisser. (2002). The Return of Hezbollah. *Middle East Quarterly*. Fall: 4. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com.

²⁴⁰ Ghorayeb, 41-42.

3.9. Democracy and Hezbollah

Thanks to the emergence of the infitah period and the political participation process, the concept of democracy has started to be mentioned more frequently than in the past together with Hezbollah. While once upon a time it was absurd to evaluate Hezbollah through the filters of democracy – as it was born from the ashes of an anti-secular Amal faction²⁴¹ – today this term is a popular current agenda both for the party itself and external observers.

Hezbollah adopts to and is inspired by Iran's model of political pluralism. According to this principle, the people have the right to select their own representatives but this process goes through the filter of the Council of Guardians. What's more, the Council of Guardians applies the legislation upon the Islamic community, remaining loyal to the Islamic rules in any act or decision. Thus both the Islamic constitution and principles allow little room for people's sovereignty. The presidency, the Council of Experts and other political councils are areas of human as opposed to divine hegemony in addition to parliament. No doubt, the Iranian Islamic state model has been enforced and even oriented to various democratic processes and procedures in terms of its general structure such as presidency, elections, political parties, parliamentary cabinet and referendums; however this fact is not sufficient to say that its system is democratic, because of its limited ideological parameters.²⁴² Moreover, Ahmed Nizar Hamzeh mentioned in "*In the Path of Hizbu'llah*" that Hezbollah has already started to transform into a political party but is still quite a ways from the conventional secular parties located in Western democracies in terms of its governance and structure.²⁴³

Actually, the concept of the Islamic state has no tolerance for groups or lines of thought which are against the presence of an Islamic state. Some aspects of the

²⁴¹ Fuller and Francke, 222.

²⁴² Ghorayeb, 40-41, 42 and 48.

²⁴³ SEMP. 2001. *Lebanon's Hizbullah — Conventional Political Party or Terrorist Group?*[online], [cited 13 May 2009]. Available from: http://www.semp.us/publications/biot_reader.php?BiotID=183

notion of the Islamic state system aren't fully adaptable to democracy.²⁴⁴ From Fadlallah's point of view:

...Islam does accord people the right to choose, 'but this does not mean unlimited choice'.²⁴⁵ The political options available to people must fall within the ideological parameters of Islam and the framework of the *Wilayat al-Faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurisconsult/Governance of the Jurisprudent).²⁴⁶

While Hezbollah gives consent to religious pluralism which takes place in Article 64 of the Iranian constitution, it gives this support within several pre-determined borders. The group supported the idea that the part of Christian people should be taken into consideration in a predominantly Islamic society if there is an undeniable existence of Christian people such as is the case in Lebanon. Again according to Iranian constitution, if the minority population is not of a considerable size, there is no need for the representation of this group in the administration. Though Fadlallah approves of the employment of minority group members in all state offices excluding the position of presidency, Hezbollah keeps a bit more conservative stance regarding issue as may be deduced from the absence of Christians in group administration.

The transformation era made it easier for the authorities to consider Hezbollah in light of democracy. Its transformation in the course of time from a resistance movement to a broad social group is the rational outcome of its orientation to democracy and entrance in to the political arena. By this metamorphosis Hezbollah became a social, political, and resistance movement.²⁴⁷

When an in-depth analysis is conducting to decipher Hezbollah's interpretation of democracy, some contradictions rise to the surface. According to some respected scholars; while on the one hand Hezbollah – like the other participatory Islamists

²⁴⁴ Ghorayeb, 43-44 and 48.

²⁴⁵ Martin Kramer. The Oracle of Hizballah: Seyyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. In *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders in the Middle East*, edited by R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 157. Quoted in Ghorayeb, 41.

²⁴⁶ Al-'Ahd, 20 Rabi' al-Awwal 1407. Quoted in Ghorayeb, 41.

²⁴⁷ Ghorayeb, 44, 45, 46 and 53.

– doesn't approve of democracy as the best model of governing from an ideological point of view, it recognizes democracy as a valid system of government and thus, as a tool for communication of power on the political field on the other hand. This political approach may clearly be observed in its discourse on justice and stance on public freedoms. Finally when group's self-interpretation of democracy is questioned, the following statement coming from Nawwaf Moussawi, still Hezbollah's IR officer, gives us a solid perspective. According to him, Hezbollah has always been not only a resistance movement, but also a national political party which regards the unity of Lebanon to be the ground for consensual democracy, though the critics are not convinced with the current outcomes yet.²⁴⁸

3.10. Hezbollah's Israel, US and the West Perception

Although Hezbollah is a fundamentalist Islamic movement whose aims serve Islam, none of the authorities can deny that the Israeli occupation has a considerable impact on and contribution to its establishment.²⁴⁹ According to Nasrallah, if there was no Israeli invasion the organization would still have been established however not earlier than 10 to 20 years ago.²⁵⁰ After the civil war, Hezbollah saw serious respect from the Lebanese community and this was a rightful outcome of the giant hatred that emerged after the subversive invasion of Israel in 1978 and 1982 and the determined resistance of the group to take revenge for the oppressed Lebanese people.²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ <http://english.hizbollah.tv/essaydetails.php?eid=5454&cid=220> [cited 30 April 2009], Ghorayeb, 55 and Edwards, *Islam & Politics in the Contemporary World*, 102.

²⁴⁹ Ghorayeb, 34-35 and Mats Wärn. 1997. Introduction. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/introduction.html>

²⁵⁰ Mats Wärn. 1997. Introduction. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/introduction.html>

²⁵¹ Harik, 49.

As a result of the fact that the Iranian Islamic leaders perceive the superpowers to be the biggest obstacle against the rise of Islam, Hezbollah intensifies its focus on the state of Israel, the so-called American spearhead in the Islamic world. Hezbollah regards the duty of resistance against Israel as the foremost of all its priorities. Hezbollah's primary interest in this issue can be identified by considering the group's relationship with Lebanon and Lebanese society. As the salvation of Jerusalem is a highly valued duty for Muslims and is an obligation of Muslims, it becomes irresistible to battle against Israel. What's more thanks to the divine call for Jerusalem's liberation, an armed struggle against Israel is easily justified within Islamic universalism. Hence, Hezbollah invites all Muslim to gather against the superpowers and participate in its holy battle to eternally remove Israel.²⁵²

However, Hezbollah's call to battle is not only against Israel. It perceives a wider scope of infidels including the West in the letter that follows: "Our people could not withstand all this treason and decided to confront the imams of infidelity of America, France and Israel."²⁵³

Regarding the battle against the West and Israel as a part of the one between Islam and evil powers,²⁵⁴ Hezbollah named the United States as the Great Satan, and France and Israel as the Small Satan. As for Hezbollah, Israel is the infidel planning to conquer Lebanon and transform her into an imperialized branch, in cooperation with the US and France. Hence, the main objective of the group is the removal of both the impacts and the army of Israel out of the land. However, the

²⁵² Ghorayeb, 112; Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah : Islam as Resistance and Solution. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/hizballah.html> and Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah: Facing the Change. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/change.html>

²⁵³ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 5. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

²⁵⁴ Shay, 64.

story doesn't end with the eradication of Israel from Lebanon. Rather, the struggle will continue until the victory of Islam over Judaism is maintained for Hezbollah. From its perspective, the struggle in the area between Israel and the Muslim umma is a trace of Prophet Mohammad's battle with the Jews which took place centuries ago. In addition to this parallel; Islam orders every Muslim to reclaim their previously stolen land such as the Arab land in the Middle East which is claimed to have been stolen by Israel and which should be taken back as soon as possible. This offers a further justification for the struggle. The leastbut not least justification for acting against Israel, it is a mainstream belief in Islam that every Muslim has a responsibility for the liberation of Islamic Areas, called Dar-al-Islam, from the current occupiers of these lands, namely Israel in this case.²⁵⁵

The *Dawa* of "Confrontation to Israel" is a struggle between Arab World v.s. Israel, before being a struggle between Islamic Umma v.s. Israel as the occupied areas such as Golan Heights, South Lebanon etc. are more Arabic than they are Islamic. However for Hezbollah, Jerusalem, which has a religious sanctity for the Islamic Community, but which is located in the official territories of Israel, should be separated from Israel immediately by a fundamentalist "Jerusalem Army" as it believes that no one should shape the fate of such a holy land. The main activator behind this will is not the physical integrity of Palestine but rather the meaning of the land for the Islamic Umma. In addition, in the battle for Palestine, it is the oppressed Muslims – who it calls "our Muslim people in Palestine" instead of "people of Palestine" – living in her rather than Palestine herself that motivates Hezbollah.²⁵⁶ Parallel to this perception, Hezbollah explains its reasons of hostility towards Israel and her allies – America and Western states – as follows in the Open Letter:

They have attacked our country, destroyed our villages, massacred our children, violated our sanctities and installed over our heads criminal henchmen who have perpetrated terrible massacres against our nation. They are still supporting these

²⁵⁵ Shay, 64.

²⁵⁶ Ghorayeb, 73-74 and 79.

butchers who are Israel's allies and preventing us from determining our destiny with our free will.²⁵⁷

In the open letter, by using Khomeini's emphasis on US, Hezbollah identifies the US as the mother of any disasters in the Muslim World hence, regards its struggle against the US to be a legitimate right.²⁵⁸ On top of that, according to experts, both the Sunni and Shiite fundamentalist groups tend to converge regarding one eternal goal, that being a battle against the US.²⁵⁹

Under this subtitle, an overall answer to the question "What is the image of Israel and thus her allies: the US and the Western States, in the mind of Hezbollah?" is given in short. An in-depth analysis of Hezbollah's perception about Israel and her allies together with their approach to Hezbollah will take place in the next chapter of the study.

²⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 4. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Walid Phares, *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 67.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEZBOLLAH'S POSITION TOWARDS ISRAEL

4.1. Israel From Hezbollah's Perspective

4.1.1. How Hezbollah Perceives Israel

In the current world system, Israel has an undeniable reputation as having one of the strongest military powers in the Middle East, one of the highest welfare levels of the world in terms of economics and a loyal collaboration with the world's greatest superpower, the US.²⁶⁰ Its existence, location, political and military acts, allies and ideology are the greatest source of hatred against Israel, a hatred which is growing day by day in the mind and the heart of Hezbollah.

When the establishment of Hezbollah is considered, the occupation of South Lebanon by the Israeli forces may easily be evaluated as a prominent catalyst. However, the hostility of Hezbollah towards Israel can not be explained by this occupation alone. Owing to both the Muslim and the Arabic identity of Hezbollah, its hatred stems from the emergence of the Israeli State in the land of Palestine.²⁶¹

To better understand this hatred and reaction, the "Zionism" approach of Israel should be analyzed. Zionism is "the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel

²⁶⁰ Jacques Hersh. (2009). Inconvenient Truths about 'Real Existing' Zionism. *Monthly Review*. May: 21. Ebscohost, <http://www.ebscohost.com>

²⁶¹ Ghorayeb, 134.

which corresponds to an Israeli State located preferably in the land of Palestine".²⁶² In the 27th World Zionist Congress arranged in 1968, the main purposes of Zionism were declared to be: the unity of the Jewish people by putting Israel at the center of their life, the gathering of all Jewish communities to their homeland in Erets Yisrael, the strengthening of the State of Israel, the protection of the Jewish identity and last but not least, the preservation of the rights of all Jewish people on earth. From the Arab point of view, Zionism can be blamed as a major reason for the conflict being experienced in the Middle East for the last several decades. According to the Arab World, neither the presence of a Jewish community nor the religion of Judaism disturb them at all, but rather they find the political ambitions of Zionism to be imperialistic.²⁶³ From the Arab perspective, while on the one hand, the European colonial rule is removing its hands from India, Asia and most parts of Africa, the establishment of Israel is a message underlining Western colonialism over native Arabs.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, according to several Arab Muslim authorities, Israel is a Zionist state rather than a secular Jewish state and this Zionist evil's mission is to occupy Muslim lands to terminate Islam.²⁶⁵

Hezbollah regards the Israelis or the Zionist world as the most threatening enemy for the entire world, in addition to being a prominent enemy for the Arab and Muslim community. According to Hezbollah, Israeli society can be defined as a Zionist society which has extreme and fundamental views and deep rooted hostility towards all Arabs and the Muslim world. In Hezbollah's view, Israeli society, as a result of their Zionist character, has an ineradicable hatred towards Arab and Muslim people.²⁶⁶ Hence, Israel is an aggressive presence that

²⁶² L. Carl Brown, *Diplomacy In The Middle East, The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd, 2004), 123.

²⁶³ Price, 17.

²⁶⁴ Ussama Makdisi. (2002). "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History. *The Journal of American History*. 89, (2): 554. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3092172>

²⁶⁵ Price, 15.

²⁶⁶ Ghorayeb, 140, 142 and 143.

practices terrorism, of which occupation is considered a part.²⁶⁷ With the dream of the establishment of a Greater Israel, Israel is regarded as conforming to an expansionist design of politics, with the consent and involvement of the Israeli government.²⁶⁸ Therefore, while Hezbollah considers Israel the greatest present misfortune in the universe, this does not only relate to the perceived illegitimate establishment of Israel, it is also connected to the political and military actions of Israel. Not surprisingly, Israeli occupation in Southern Lebanon in 1982 is seen as a part of this Zionist Project to Hezbollah and initiated the establishment of the group with an ever growing hatred.²⁶⁹

When the political positioning of Hezbollah is compared with that of Al Qaeda, it can be asserted that Al Qaeda is anti-Jewish while Hezbollah is rather anti-Zionist as they aim to give an end to the Jewish ethno-religious hegemony and oppression.²⁷⁰ The objection of Hezbollah against this ethnic exclusivism can be observed in the declaration of Hezbollah leader Musawi, which calls for “eliminating Israel,” implying not ethnic cleansing but rather “the destruction of a racist system founded upon Zionism.”²⁷¹

Actually, the hatred of Hezbollah against Israel—i.e. the state—may be observed in any declaration or interview by and about Hezbollah. Hezbollah defines Israel

²⁶⁷ Mats Wörn. 1999. Transformation: from clandestine to public. In *Staying the Course: the "Lebanonization" of Hizbollah - the integration of an Islamist movement into a pluralist political system* [online] Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Master Thesis [cited 30 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn2/transformation.html#42back>

²⁶⁸ Ghorayeb, 140.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 135 and 141.

²⁷⁰ Anders Strindberg and Mats Wörn. (2005). Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and al-Qa'ida Compared. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 34, (3): 36. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486776>

²⁷¹ Ibid., 37.

as an absolute evil and extremely hates Israel²⁷² For instance, in an August 2000 video broadcast on the group's Al-Manar satellite channel, Nasrallah declared:

Israel is utterly null and void, and it's a raping, deviant, occupying, terrorist, cancerous entity that has no legitimacy or legality at all, and never will" while a chorus sang, "From the land of angry Jerusalem, drive out the raping occupier ...Strike them with the stone, slingshot, and knife."²⁷³

In another instance, Mohammad Fneish, Lebanese politician and one of prominent members of the group, declared in one of his interviews that the group has never sensed enmity towards any Lebanese organization or group unless they have a good relation with the enemy state, Israel. Shortly, this was the only criterion for Hezbollah. In this direction, it can be said that South Lebanese Army is the only group being reasonable to that category.²⁷⁴

This endless hatred of Hezbollah against Israel not surprisingly is embodied in a long-lasting "struggle"—as the following part will analyze in detail—against this so-called Zionist movement.

4.1.2. Hezbollah's Struggle Against Israel

Hezbollah considers itself a popular resistance group in Lebanon against the activities of Israel: occupation, in particular, which they define to be a form of terrorism.²⁷⁵ At first glance, Hezbollah's fight is based on territory and against the one enemy, Israel.²⁷⁶ The determination of Hezbollah in its eternal struggle against the main enemy can be observed in Nasrallah's definition of "the eternal

²⁷² Ghorayeb, 134.

²⁷³ Avi Jorisch. 2004. Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah's Al-Manar television. *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. 62-63. Quoted in Patrick Devenny. (2006). Hezbollah's Strategic Threat to Israel. *Middle East Quarterly*. Winter: 38. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

²⁷⁴ Harik, 77.

²⁷⁵ Al-Mashriq. 1997. Hizballah: Views and Concepts [online], [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/hizballah-background.html>

²⁷⁶ Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn. (2005). Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and al-Qa'ida Compared. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 34, (3): 26. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486776>

battle between the good and the evil” as follows: “As prophesised by the Qur'an (5:56), these forces of good and evil are locked together in a perpetual battle, which will result in the ultimate triumph of the former over the latter.”²⁷⁷

Therefore, Hezbollah asserts that its struggle against Israel will continue unless Israel is abolished or eradicated and adds that the withdrawal of Israel from Southern Lebanon won't be enough to stop its struggle.²⁷⁸ In fact, as for Hezbollah, it is even the start of it. Because the struggle against Israel has a key role in realizing their ideological agenda, it is a perfect tool of justification for Hezbollah's armed power in Lebanon, as well. This sacred fight is promised by the organization to last until several core goals are achieved and required conditions are permanently maintained as stated below:

- The liberation of Shebaa Farms and “Seven Villages” regions which are claimed to belong to Lebanon but which have been ruled under Israeli order since the foundation of Israeli state in 1949.
- The preservation of sovereignty of Lebanon and the Lebanese which includes Hezbollah's dedication and determination to respond to any action that they believe to threaten the sovereignty of Lebanon.
- The retrieval of Lebanese prisoners and detainees and even those of Palestinian organizations.²⁷⁹
- Giving support to the struggle of Palestine.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Ghorayeb, 69.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 134.

²⁷⁹ For this purpose they even organize some kidnappings on Israel such as the October 7, 2000 kidnappings of IDF soldiers and an Israeli civilian; Elhanan Tanenbaum for a swap for Dirani and Obeid. Hence then, in January 2004, Israel and Hezbollah come to deal for exchange of prisoners, abductees and bodies. The mediator of swap was German Ernest Uhlau. In this operation, while Israel released 424 prisoners including Abdel Karim Obeid and Mustafa Dirani; Hezbollah released the Israeli civilian Elhanan Tanenbaum and the bodies of the three Israeli soldiers kidnapped in 2000. (Shay 2005, 136)

²⁸⁰ Shay, 136.

For Hezbollah, the struggle against Israel takes precedence over its other goals.²⁸¹ One of Hezbollah spokesmen once declared that the top priority given to the armed resistance against Israel is a natural result of the fact that, if Israeli occupation isn't ended, the region including Lebanon can't be re-established on an ideal basis.²⁸² Hezbollah's loyalty to and determination for the duty of resistance carries over to its political behavior as well. As specialists align on it, Syria forced Hezbollah to cooperate with Amal for the southern constituency in the elections of 1992 and 1996. However, Hezbollah knew very well that once it went to the elections alone, it could hold many parliamentary seats but instead, Hezbollah chose to accept the demands of Syria because it gave priority to the resistance against Israel. Because, Hezbollah noticed that unless it confirmed and applied Syria's demands, its resistance priority could be jeopardized. For instance; if Hezbollah didn't realize her wishes, its resistance activities in South Lebanon would be threatened by Syria.²⁸³

The nature and framework of the struggle of Hezbollah against Israel may more clearly be defined with a simple comparison of the group with other fundamentalist movements. For instance, as Naem Qassem supports, Al-Qaeda chose to attack US interests regardless of location. It chose the whole world as the war arena and the enemy as all Americans across the globe. In contrast, Hezbollah chose to confront the State of Israel, in particular, due to their role as "occupier," and it restricts the war arena to the Middle East and the enemy to Israelis living in the Israeli State. It clearly underlines that neither the Jews, nor even Israelis living

²⁸¹ Harik, 81.

²⁸² Mats Wärn. 1999. Transformation: from calendestine to public. In *Staying the Course: the "Lebanonization" of Hizbollah - the integration of an Islamist movement into a pluralist political system* [online] Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Master Thesis [cited 30 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn2/transformation.html#42back>

²⁸³ Ghorayeb, 115-116.

at other locations on earth are their primary focus in this struggle.²⁸⁴ However, this specification altered with the passage of time to an extent. Even though two Shia movements – Hezbollah and Amal – were mutually engaged in conflict with Israel as the primary enemy, they differed over the density and border of the conflict. Amal had limited the conflict to only the Security Zone, because, according to them, the main reason of the struggle was to preclude the possible giant Israeli reprisal towards Lebanese people. However, Hezbollah didn't limit itself as Amal did. The group considered the Security Zone as a primary location among the possible places in which it wanted to attack Israel for 'the purpose of overall removal of Israel'; it opposed to the idea of limiting the density and border of the conflict.²⁸⁵ Within the framework of the continuous and intransigent combat against Israel – this antagonism has been embedded in the intellectual structure of Hezbollah – and via their consent for applying any possible way, the group has felt the compulsion to endeavor to struggle against the main enemy state. And this conflict will last until Israel's annihilation and the freedom of the holy city, Jerusalem, will be realized.²⁸⁶ Jerusalem stands for "the holy Islamic symbol and cause of the Muslims" for Hezbollah. Hence, the group completely opposes the possibility of giving Jerusalem - which has significance for Muslims both in the past, present and the future - to anybody or any presence.²⁸⁷

After dealing with Hezbollah's hostility toward Israel, three important issues having to do with its struggle against Israel should be analyzed: Hezbollah's justification on the use of violence against Israel, the uncompromised

²⁸⁴ Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn. (2005). Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and al-Qa'ida Compared. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 34, (3): 35. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486776>

²⁸⁵ Shay, 62.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 130.

²⁸⁷ Ghorayeb, 152.

approach to have a dialogue and a peace settlement with Israel and lastly the liberation of Palestine.²⁸⁸

In an open letter, Hezbollah not only justify its use of force, but also defines itself to be a right and just resistance power against the actions of Israel and the superpowers, which are claimed by the group to cause nothing except subjugation and oppression for the Third World.²⁸⁹ Parallel to this, Fadlallah, the group's spiritual guide, implements and justifies the activities of the group which translated the act of getting angry to resistance.^{290,291}

As confirmed by the International Relations Officer of Hezbollah, Moussawi, the group regards the resistance duty as the only way to free Lebanon from the Israeli occupation.²⁹² Likewise, Hezbollah appears to have been unwilling to use katyushas in the attacks on Israel, but it justifies itself by stating that it is obliged to resist and that it is the only possible way. With Hezbollah's own statements, they justify their struggle as follows:

For one country to rain down rockets on another is an unprovoked crime. But for a people without a country to fire rockets on those who forcibly took their country—and who then corralled them into camps, isolated them from the world, and regularly slaughter them with weapons far deadlier than unguided projectiles—is a rather different matter.²⁹³

²⁸⁸Ghorayeb, 142.

²⁸⁹ Norton, 38 and Mats Wärm. 1997. Hizballah: Facing the Change. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warm/change.html>

²⁹⁰ Harik, 61.

²⁹¹ See more details about the ideals of Nasrallah on the struggle of Hezbollah against Israel in Harik, 71-72.

²⁹² Hizbullah official. 2008. *Resistance is still the most effective way for countering "Israeli" aggressions* [online], [cited 30 April 2009]. Available from: <http://english.hizbollah.tv/essaydetails.php?eid=5454&cid=220>

²⁹³ M. Junaid Levesque-Alam. 2009. *Israel's rationale for murder: No One is innocent* [online], [cited 06 May 2009]. Available from: <http://dissidentvoice.org/2009/02/israel%E2%80%99s-rationale-for-murder-no-one-is-innocent>

In short, Hezbollah regards Israel to be a very seductive to struggle against. Not surprisingly, this hatred and desire to struggle has considerably reflected in the Israeli agenda, turning Hezbollah into one of the major national threats for Israel, at least as serious as Syria, Iraq and Iran. The considerable shift in the way Israeli perceives Hezbollah may be observed in August 2002 annual report on national security by the National Security Council. As this report states, both with its current activities and the presence of Iranian forces in Lebanon, Hezbollah turns out to be a very serious strategic threat. Even though it seems quite impossible for a so-called militant and radical terrorist group to turn into a strategic threat for a military power like Israeli State, the conditions made it possible. Hezbollah has a serious military power possessing more than 10,000 missiles ready to attack Israel. In addition, the determination and victory of Hezbollah in removing Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon made them a role model which has proved, as Nasrallah stated, that will power and determination is stronger than military power.²⁹⁴

4.1.3. The Possibility of Negotiation with Israel

When such a long-lasting and serious struggle occurs, the question of negotiation naturally comes to minds.

Hezbollah's use of violence against Israeli cities and forces may be an apparent way for Israeli government to express a rationale to get rid of the international pressure on it to stop its massive-damage military executions.²⁹⁵ As Friedman once stated, Hezbollah led to a great challenge for Israel because of their massive civilian casualties while trying to strike Hezbollah fighters. Undeniably, these civilians are either the families or the neighbors of the real militants and are not very easy to distinguish.²⁹⁶ Both because of its structure and such handicaps,

²⁹⁴ Eyal Zisser. Hizballah and Israel : Strategic Threat on the Northern Border. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 86-88.

²⁹⁵ Harik, 1.

²⁹⁶ <http://english.hizbollah.tv/essaydetails.php?eid=7803&cid=249> [cited 30 April 2009].

Israel cannot go on fighting guerilla wars in the future. Despite its military power, any single mistake may lead to intolerable results and the Israeli public has no further patience for this issue. Actually, neither Hezbollah nor Israelis are eager to continue a war.²⁹⁷

However, when the history of struggle is observed, the most apparent fact is the strict posture of Hezbollah not to recognize any Israeli leader. The possibility of coming to an agreement with Israel is almost totally ignored by Hezbollah in the open letter because the group considers any negotiation with Israel to be a subjection and consent of the occupation of Palestine by Israel. The group underlines its determination on this issue in the letter as follows:²⁹⁸ “ “We condemn strongly all the plans for mediation between us and Israel and we consider the mediators a hostile party because their mediation will only serve to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Zionist occupation of Palestine”(179). ”²⁹⁹

As for Hezbollah, when Palestine made an agreement with Israel, that would mean that Palestine recognizes and legitimizes the entity of Israel as a state. In the cases of Nasrallah’s penalizing the PLO and Qassem’s condemnation of the negotiations between Israel and Palestine, this posture may easily be seen. What’s more, Hezbollah claims that Israel tries to fool the PLO under the name of peace negotiations, and in these processes its ultimate aim is to settle Palestine. From the perspective of Hezbollah, this condition justifies its belief that Israel never makes an agreement that serves the benefit of Arabs.³⁰⁰

Though it may not be categorized as a peace-settlement negotiation, it is possible to observe several on-purpose dialogues and one – shot agreements between Hezbollah and Israel in the history of the struggle. When the profile of such

²⁹⁷ Nahum Barnea. (2006). Israel vs. Hezbollah. *Think Again*. November/December: 28. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

²⁹⁸ Norton, 38-39.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 39.

³⁰⁰ Ghorayeb, 151-152.

consensus platforms is analyzed, it is realized that there is no direct dialogue, instead several organizations like UNIFIL or some European states are the mediators, acting as buffers. In many of these negotiations, German negotiators played a considerable role.^{301,302} In addition, the mediations include no long-term solution offers, but they are rather like simple bargains on body swap operations and prisoner exchanges.

To sum up, without the exceptions stated above, Hezbollah is strictly loyal to its principles on negotiation. Furthermore, Hezbollah not only objects to negotiation between itself and Israel, but also that of any other Middle Eastern Arab state, as well.³⁰³ As For Hezbollah, it is not even possible to debate coming to terms with Israel, being a state founded by the Jews, and for the Jewish, in an environment where Israel occupies the land of Palestinian Muslims and the Muslim Holy places.³⁰⁴ The following sentences very clearly support this claim:

The ultimate objective is to destroy Israel and to liberate Palestine. Thus “Israel’s final departure from Lebanon is a prelude to its final obliteration from existence and the liberation of venerable Jerusalem from the talons of occupation” (173). This absolutism explains the operational links between Hezbollah and the rejectionist Palestinian groups that have opposed the efforts of mainstream PLO officials to make peace with Israel.³⁰⁵

4.1.4. How Hezbollah approaches the Palestinian Issue

Within the struggle of Hezbollah against Israel, the Palestinian Issue plays a major role. Not surprisingly, the importance given by Hezbollah to the purpose of liberating the occupied zone is more than that of getting political power.³⁰⁶ The

³⁰¹ Norton, 87-88.

³⁰² See more details about the exchange of Lebanese and Israeli prisoners and bodies in Norton, 88.

³⁰³ Shay, 131.

³⁰⁴ Beverly Milton-Edwards. Political Islam and the Palestinian – Israeli Conflict. In *Islamic Attitudes to Israel*, edited by Efraim Karsh and P. R. Kumaraswamy, (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2007), 83.

³⁰⁵ Norton, 39.

³⁰⁶ Ghorayeb, 112.

group describes the establishment of Israel as usurping the Palestinian land, so it calls these territories not Israel, instead, occupied Palestine. As for Hezbollah, the occupied territories is more than a piece of homeland lost by the Palestinians, rather, it is emphasized as having been a part of the Muslim world, “taken away by the settler Jews”.³⁰⁷ Hezbollah is very keen on their claim that the occupation of Palestine land is part of Israel’s Zionist Project on Arab lands, namely “level one” of the Zionist expansionist approach³⁰⁸ because the group believes that the abolishment of Arab and Muslim lands through Judaisation of all Palestine is the main purpose of Zionist project. Although this claim seems very extreme and exaggerated, traces of this claim can be observed, according to Hezbollah, in the Israeli damages on mosques and other Islamic components.³⁰⁹

In the Balfour Declaration on the Palestinian issue, it is clearly expressed that a Jewish homeland should not cause harm to the rights of the Palestinian inhabitants; however, this has not been the case. As for the Zionist project, there are two groups of people claiming the same piece of land, and there is no possible way of avoiding a conflict between the incoming settlers and the Palestinians.³¹⁰ Within the framework of the Zionist project, Israel also leads to disadvantageous conditions for Lebanon, outside her own borders as well. However, as a counter attack, the Muslim community around the world attempts to stand in opposition against Israelis because, in the light of what is stated above, Hezbollah concludes that Israel wants to have hegemony not only over Muslim world but also over the whole world as an eternal goal of their Zionist approach.³¹¹

Therefore, Hezbollah approves that Israel is not a legitimate state despite the fact

³⁰⁷ Phares, 94.

³⁰⁸ Ussama Makdisi. (2002). "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History. *The Journal of American History*. 89, (2): 553. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3092172>

³⁰⁹ Ghorayeb, 140-141.

³¹⁰ Hinnebusch, 155.

³¹¹ Ghorayeb, 141.

that many decades passed since its foundation.³¹² In addition, Nasrallah didn't regard the people of Israel to be Israeli citizens, and named each of them aggressors who deserve no mercy.³¹³ Hence it should not be surprising to observe that: when Nasrallah referred to the territory where resistance has intensified, he refers to it as "occupied Palestine", not Israel.³¹⁴

From another perspective, according to Lebanese politicians, there is no way nor desire to turn Palestinians into Lebanese citizens. According to President of the time, Emile Lahoud, Palestinians are kindly unwanted on Lebanese Land. An article by Jubran Tuwayni that took place in an-Nahar noted that "Lebanese are not ready for more sacrifices for Palestine." In short, the Lebanese elite align on keeping Palestinian Issue as an issue of Palestine.³¹⁵

To conclude, one of the highest priorities on Hezbollah's agenda is the resolution of the Palestinian Issue and the way they plan to resolve is through struggle rather than diplomatic negotiation.

4.1.5. Hezbollah's Positioning in the New World Conjunction

As the number of radical fundamentalist groups appears to be increasing day by day, it is very important to observe how Hezbollah positions itself, how it is perceived in Muslim world and how it differentiates itself from other organizations.

When the structure and tactics of Hezbollah are observed, its double-identity is easily recognized. While it engages in a regional fight against Israel through

³¹² Ghorayeb, 134-135.

³¹³ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders. (2005). Know the enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception. *Third World Quarterly*. 26, (1): 176. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

³¹⁴ Mats Wärn. 1997. Hizballah: Facing the Change. In *A Voice of Resistance: The Point of View of Hizballah* [online]. Al-Mashriq. [cited 29 April 2009]. Available from: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/warn/change.html>

³¹⁵ Maysoun Sukarieh. 2000. Shatila Dispatch: "We Are Still Palestinians". *Middle East Report*. (217): 19. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1520167>

support by Iran and Syria, it is also a considerably strong player in Lebanese politics as the representative of the Shiite community. The leader of the organization, Nasrallah seems to have set a nuanced balance between these two identities by both gaining the support of the streets and taking attention of the world politics to their focus on Lebanese national security as if it is the only eternal aim.³¹⁶

As Nasrallah stated, they strictly oppose the existence of fanatic radical and tyrannical groups who are stuck in a Middle Age mindset, and removed from logical thinking, religion, brain and morals but who claim to be Muslim or having to do with Islam. According to Nasrallah, they insist on sectarianism ignoring national liberation and this choice results in divisive and destructive consequences. He very strongly underlines that unless they stop this dissension, they won't have the chance to terminate the most serious weapon in the hands of the US and Israel.

No matter if it is secular or Islamist, Hezbollah supports the essential nationalism of the third worldist perspective, which may easily be noticed at their reaction to Al-Qaeda's religious purity, as they call it.³¹⁷ What is more, the group expresses itself to be rather less destructive which may be concluded by observing how Hezbollah condemned the 9/11 Twin Towers Bombings multiple times.³¹⁸

Bringing all these pieces together, Hezbollah become the idealistic organization for the growing masses of young Muslims bent on terminating the Zionist state of the Jews. As a result of Hezbollah's determined struggle against Israel, the Shiite

³¹⁶ Nahum Barnea. (2006). Israel vs. Hezbollah. *Think Again*. November/December: 22. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

³¹⁷ Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn. (2005). Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and al-Qa'ida Compared. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 34, (3): 28-29. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486776>

³¹⁸ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders. (2005). Know the enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception. *Third World Quarterly*. 26, (1): 180. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

militia garnered undeniable support from the whole Middle East, which is predominated by Sunnis.³¹⁹

In its current struggle, Hezbollah maintains its popularity in South Lebanon through the way it struggles with Israel. Many in Lebanon consider that, for a number of years, the group has been the strongest and the most sustainable resistance force in Lebanon against Israel.³²⁰ Two unique components of Hezbollah's character strengthen the capability of the group to struggle with Israel: the first being the group's close relation with the state and public support and the second being the top priority of this holy mission superseding any other interests of the group. Hezbollah has a good relationship with the government and the society of Lebanon whose priorities match the group's interests.³²¹ After the PLO left Lebanon and thanks to Iran's motivation for Shiites to keep close to Hezbollah in order to achieve their interests, a significant amount of support from the Lebanese was provided in the continuous jihad strategy of the group towards Israel.³²²

There are several dimensions of the resistance to Israeli occupation, including religious, national and political reflections, not only for the Lebanese but also for Arabs and Muslims. As for the religious dimension, the importance of the liberation of holy places and the termination of the oppressors as stated in the open letter are the strong sources of motivation. As an example of its national dimension, the foundation of the multi-sectarian resistance group in late 90's, the *Lebanese Brigades of Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*, in addition to ordinary Islamic Resistance Forces, may be considered. In the political

³¹⁹ International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center. 2006. Zarqawi successor's emphasis on networking leading to open ties with Hizbullah [online]. Geo-Strategy Direct. [cited 01 June 2009]. Available from: www.ebscohost.com

³²⁰ Harik, 163.

³²¹ Ibid., 81.

³²² Ibid., 51.

dimension, its declaration of itself as both a Lebanese Islamic resistance and a political party can be given as an example.³²³

As time has passed, the requirement of a political strategy inviting popular support – a vital step to removing Hezbollah’s terrorist image – was seen to be a critical accompaniment to the military strategy. Because, military strategy was not sufficient to be successful alone in the resistance period. While it led to very slow and limited progress, it was responded by massively destructive reactions of Israeli forces, as well.³²⁴ But history has witnessed the fact that Hezbollah has never considered diplomacy to be a major tool of resolution. Hence, according to authorities, besides a well-established infrastructure, Hezbollah should maintain satisfactory planning, monetary resources and logistics to carry out a continuous armed struggle against Israel.³²⁵

According to Nasrallah, the group is the undeniable owner of a considerable victory believing that they have destroyed the strong perception that it is nearly impossible to beat Israeli forces. He believes that the Israeli Army is not as strong as most people think. Even some Israeli analysts note that Hezbollah succeeded to turn the 22 year Israeli presence in Lebanon into a bloody curse, as it had once happened to America in Vietnam. In fact, Nasrallah strongly underscores that unless his organization had sacrificed considerable efforts through their anti-Zionist resistance, they would have achieved no satisfactory results in negotiations to force Israel to withdraw. He adds to this claim that, during recent years, the group has done more than it promised.

Nasrallah regarded the attempts of Israel and Syria to replace armed struggle with negotiations in Palestinian Issue to be the great fault of Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat. He claimed that in every such negotiation attempt Yasser Arafat was the party making the sacrifices and whose eternal end would have been a very little

³²³ Ghorayeb, 84.

³²⁴ Harik, 3.

³²⁵ Ibid., 29.

piece of land excluding Jerusalem including no army and surrounded by dominating Israeli forces. As for him, the future of resistance in the Palestinian Issue will and should be even more violent and strong, contrary to negotiation attempts. Not surprisingly, Nasrallah once called on Palestinians to take a knife, a stone, a gun or whatever they can find and fight against both Israel and the Accord after the so-called unfortunate Wye Plantation Accord was signed in October 1999.³²⁶

Bringing all the inputs together, one may conclude that Israel is both the reason for existence and the greatest enemy of Hezbollah. Hence, neither Hezbollah nor Israel will sleep comfortably in Jerusalem until one of them is eternally terminated.

As it is stated in the open letter, the US and the West are portrayed as the great Satan, under the shadow of which the little Satan, Israel, sustains its existence. So, the positioning of the US and the West towards Hezbollah also requires considerable attention in this study. Hence, in this part, I plan to focus on how Hezbollah perceives the US and the West.

4.2. Hezbollah's Perception of the US

Hezbollah, the establishment of which corresponds with the 1982 Israeli Invasion in Lebanon, has a strong hatred towards the US. Hezbollah is completely aware that during this invasion, Israel used the weapons of the US and was supported by US diplomacy. The fact that Israel killed thousands of civilians under the consent of the US made the US a major political enemy of the organization.³²⁷ The position the US takes in the conflict resolution process between Israel and Palestine, which Hezbollah sees as distant from any sustainable resolution, makes the Middle East Muslims think the US is hostile to Muslims and quite insensitive

³²⁶ Scott Peterson. (2000). Hizbullah's stance: ambiguity. *Christian Science Monitor*. 92, (41). International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, www.ebscohost.com

³²⁷ Ussama Makdisi. (2002). "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History. *The Journal of American History*. 89, (2): 551-552. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3092172>

to their priorities.³²⁸

According to historical holy leader of the Shiite's, Khomeini, the biggest problem that the deprived and the oppressed societies of the world have ever confronted is America. He once stated that, the US is always brazen and enthusiastic to commit any kind of crime in order to realize its economic, political and cultural plans to maintain hegemony across the globe. He added that America has a perfect organizational structure to disseminate global propaganda to reach its aims, and the tools that the US applies in this plan are its international Zionist agents located all over the world. He finally underlined that because of all these destructive intentions of America, Iran minimized her relations with this so-called Great Satan, and not surprisingly, America has started to seek reasons to initiate a war against Iran as a response to this avoidance.³²⁹

The close relationship between the US and Israel has lasted for nearly fifty years.³³⁰ The US seems to continue to cooperate and act together with Israel which is regarded as the most democratic state in the region for the US.³³¹ The US took pride in being Israel's closest and best friend in the world, as confirmed by Bush in his public speech in May 2008.³³²

Israel tries to work on terrorism policy together with the US in the latter's anti-terrorist campaign against Hezbollah. Israel encouraged the US to take Hezbollah into her own anti-terrorist policy. Within this policy, Israel had the chance to provoke the US to punish Lebanon unilaterally because it overlooked Hezbollah

³²⁸ Augustus Richard Norton. 2002. America's Approach to the Middle East: Legacies, Questions, and Possibilities. *Current History*. January: 5. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

³²⁹ Ussama Makdisi. (2002). "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History. *The Journal of American History*. 89, (2): 551. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3092172>

³³⁰ Jacques Hersh. (2009). Inconvenient Truths about 'Real Existing' Zionism. *Monthly Review*. May: 20. Ebscohost, <http://www.ebscohost.com>

³³¹ Harmon, 152.

³³² Jacques Hersh. (2009). Inconvenient Truths about 'Real Existing' Zionism. *Monthly Review*. May: 20. Ebscohost, <http://www.ebscohost.com>

while US maintains anti-terrorist policy all around the world. Although this punishment – generally in economic arena³³³ – didn't aim to completely abolish the stable conditions in Lebanon, Israel became stronger in the war against Hezbollah through utilizing this condition. As an economic sanction, for example, the US wanted to freeze the bank accounts of the group from Lebanon. Moreover, as related with this US policy, Rice warned the Lebanese government in her interview in the channel of ABC. She said that: “ ‘Lebanon's efforts to reinvigorate its economy and advantageously integrate itself into the global economy will remain thwarted if Beirut doesn't respond to America's demands.’ ”^{334,335}

But this doesn't mean that the US completely terminated its economic relationship with Lebanon. The two states secretly continued their economic relation with each other as it can be seen in the case that the US attempted to convince its allies to give support to Lebanon in the Paris II Economic Conference, 2002. By observing these developments, it can be inferred that the US intended to show Lebanon how far it can go. Within the framework of this policy, the US became aware of the fact that Lebanon couldn't really stop Hezbollah's jihad activities through these methods, so the US began to apply force on Syria, to obtain the stagnation through the Lebanese government in the Lebanon – Israel border. From the standpoint of Israel, the timing of the emergence of the American anti-terrorist policy is fairly convenient. The main reason for that statement is that the condition in Lebanon became more dangerous for Israel after the execution of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 and, since then, the US played the role as the cooperative front to struggle in Lebanon with Israel.³³⁶ Not surprisingly, the 9/11 attacks in New York led to a great understanding, sympathy and empathy in the US towards Israel

³³³ The active role played by US about this issue can be noticed in the events that include US Ambassador Vincent Battle, Lebanese leaders and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice; ex-foreign minister of Bush government. (Harik 2005, 178)

³³⁴ Interview, ABC Television, 11 November 2001 quoted in Harik, 179.

³³⁵ See more details about these economic sanctions in Harik, 178-179.

³³⁶ Harik, 177-179.

which encouraged Israel in its struggle against the anti-Zionist players in the region.³³⁷

As a consequence, America has become the biggest and most preferable target for terrorist organizations because it has provided much support and aid to Israel.³³⁸ Likewise, as mentioned by Byman, the declaration of Nasrallah that “Death to America was, is and will stay our slogan,” demonstrated the Hezbollah’s intense hatred toward America.³³⁹ It is very apparent that in every opportunity, Hezbollah doesn’t hesitate to express this hatred and take actions to neutralize the deep impact of America in the Middle East. For instance, while on one side, a senior Hezbollah leader declared the group’s strategy to prevent the US from exploiting Lebanon as a tool in her strategy to bring so-called democracy to the Middle East, on the other hand, Naem Qassem, the deputy secretary general of Hezbollah mentioned in an interview for Beirut’s Al-Nahar newspaper that they aimed to keep the US away from Lebanon to block her intention to use Lebanon as a crossing point into their new Middle East.³⁴⁰

While the US image in the mind of Hezbollah requires attention, the counter-perception should also be considered. In order to understand the nature of the image of Hezbollah in the eyes of the US, it would be quite satisfactory to refer to the description of Hezbollah by the US State Department. The department states that Hezbollah is either known or suspected to have participated in more than a few anti-American and anti-Israeli terrorist attacks. Additionally, it adds that three members of the organization are listed in the FBI’s top twenty-two most wanted

³³⁷ Ilan Greilsammer and Thomas C. Hilde. (2002). The Israelis and September 11th. *South Central Review*. 19, (2/3): 69-71. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3189866>

³³⁸ Harmon, 152.

³³⁹ Daniel Byman. (2003). Should Hezbollah Be Next?. *Foreign Affairs*. 82, (6): 54. Brookings, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/byman20031101.pdf>

³⁴⁰ International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center. 2006. Hizbullah leader outlines strategic objectives of ongoing conflict [online]. Geo-Strategy Direct. [cited 01 June 2009]. Available from: www.ebscohost.com

terrorists in the world.³⁴¹ In short, the US is not very welcoming towards Hezbollah at all. Supporting this claim, in his speech on September 20, 2001, George Bush declared that their war on terror would start with al-Qaeda but will continue with others and specifically a few of them needed extra interest, one of which was no doubt, Hezbollah. Not surprisingly, most US authorities forecast Hezbollah to be the next target of the US in her war against terror. Parallel to this, a group of scholars and officials led by William Cristol and Richard Perle, shared their idea with president Bush that Hezbollah should be a part of the to do list in any war against terror.³⁴²

The first terrorist attacks against the people of the US and the West took place in 1980s in West Beirut, and it was Hezbollah undertaking this attack while the US claimed Iran to be responsible for it. According to Harik, despite the fact that this attack was directed by Hezbollah toward the US and Western civilians located in West Beirut, the major underlying reason of this aggression was to force the US and Israeli troops to move out of West Beirut. However, this main reason didn't register for the US and couldn't lead to a change in its mindset.³⁴³

While most of the authorities comment on the “should do's” of the US, Harik supports that Hezbollah's taking part in the US's annual terrorist organizations list is not a surprise because the American government has no solid precaution to prevent the sponsors of Hezbollah terror: Iran, Syria and Lebanon.^{344,345} The support that Hezbollah gets from its sponsors is difficult to ignore. Even though Israeli intelligence claims the opposite, US intelligence declared that Hezbollah's military capabilities didn't seem to diminish but instead were observed to be recovered immediately after the 34 day war with Israel. Without ongoing support,

³⁴¹ Harik, 38.

³⁴² Daniel Byman. (2003). Should Hezbollah Be Next?. *Foreign Affairs*. 82, (6): 54. Brookings, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/byman20031101.pdf>

³⁴³ Harik, 27-28.

³⁴⁴ See more details about this list in Harik, 163.

³⁴⁵ Harik, 163.

this recovery capacity would be a fiction. However, support is never for free. According to specialists, Hezbollah is Iran's key weapon in its war against the US which could easily be exploited to attack the US targets in Lebanon, Iraq and anywhere else in the Middle East.³⁴⁶ According to respected American strategists, if one day, the US decides to focus more intensely on the Hezbollah case, she should take indirect actions against the organization. In other words, pressure on Syria and Iran, if possible, would be more influential. As a result of this tactic, through the right motivations, Hezbollah might be directed to focus more on Lebanese politics rather than anti-American attacks. While the US should consider the political identity of Hezbollah and the possible advantages and support that this identity may bring, Hezbollah should also take the fact that any direct and proactive confrontation against the US may lead to loss of civil support. However this doesn't mean that the organization will remain subdued in any case and Fadlallah underscores this with his motivation about attacking any American interests everywhere in case of any American confrontation.³⁴⁷

4.3. Its Perception on West

According to Edwards, to cooperate and to compromise with the Christians and Jews is forbidden only by extreme religious groups and not by Islam. These groups have sensed and acted in accordance with anti-Christianism (anti-Westernism) and anti-Semitism.³⁴⁸ For Hezbollah, the impossibility of a dialogue or compromise is true for both Western states as well as with Israel.³⁴⁹

Fadlallah comments that there is no conflict between the US and the West in terms of the intellectual framework for the civilization idea; hence, they have serious problems with the West, namely, the states which aim to interfere in the

³⁴⁶ International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center. 2007. U.S. intelligence sees Hizbullah as a military threat, Iran proxy [online]. Geo-Strategy Direct. [cited 01 June 2009]. Available from: www.ebscohost.com

³⁴⁷ Adam Schatz. (2004). In the Search of Hezbollah. *New York Review of Books*. 51, (7). <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17060>

³⁴⁸ Edwards, *Islam and Politics in the Contemporary World*, 205.

³⁴⁹ Ghorayeb, 140.

economies, policies and security of the Muslim world. In addition to these declarations, he adds that under the mask of freedom and democracy, the Western states try to realize their insincere plans.³⁵⁰

Although Hezbollah's conflict with the West is based on a civilizational spectrum, the mainstream policy in the region which is biased against the US, together with the political interventions in Lebanon contributes to the hatred towards the West.³⁵¹ From the point of the organization, the West despises Hezbollah and accepts it as a group which consists of terrorists and only opposes forbidden things in Islam such as drinking alcohol, gambling, etc.³⁵²

Finally, Hezbollah believes that the international organizations dominated by the Western states are in the same line with Israel, so while it emphasizes the events where Israel was in the wrong, it also condemns these organizations for taking sides with Israel.³⁵³

To conclude, while Israel is the major focus of the group, any state encouraging and making alliance with Israel – on its path to accomplishing its Zionist plan – becomes a potential enemy of Hezbollah.

³⁵⁰ Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn. (2005). Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and al-Qa'ida Compared. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 34, (3): 32-33. Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4486776>

³⁵¹ Ghorayeb, 135 and 88-111.

³⁵² Norton, 38.

³⁵³ Central Intelligence Agency. *Hizballah Issues 'Open Letter' on Goals, Principles - [Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizballah to Downtrodden in Lebanon and World]* [online]. Near East/South Asia Report [cited 12 May 2009], 5. Available from: http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000361273

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Hezbollah has been a very significant actor in Middle East politics owing to the mutual relations, either positive or negative, with the major players of the region: Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. In addition, its confrontation with the US and the West as the allies of Israel, and the actions of the group to express its hatred have made Hezbollah a serious figure in the world agenda as well. From its foundation to its transformation period, in every decision or in any action it is possible to see the marks of Israel. Hence, this thesis analyzed Hezbollah's perception of Israel in order to better understand Hezbollah itself.

The main questions in this study are first how Hezbollah perceives Israel, including its struggle against and hostility and hatred toward Israel, and how this perception affects its mindset, positioning and executions. Based on the study of the aforementioned perception, the main argument of the thesis is that Israel is the primary enemy of and source of hatred for Hezbollah.

Before approaching the heart of the study, the fundamental information about the group is analyzed at the beginning of the thesis. Then, in order to fully comprehend the group and its hatred to Israel, a detailed observation of its military, political and social history is scanned through the filter of Israel in the second chapter. In the historical overview which follows, the

determination and sacrifices of both sides are remembered as the bloody and destructive armed confrontations are recounted. Finally, the structural and methodological transformation of Hezbollah is detailed from a political perspective.

Through this transformation, Hezbollah turns from the radical armed militia to a respected political party with an armed resistance wing. The political identity of the organization has helped to convince some outside actors, such as the EU and the UN, to categorize the group as a legal entity operating in Lebanon. Moreover, Hezbollah's participation in the all of the municipal and parliamentary elections since 1992 is considered. When the progression in the election results is analyzed, it is proven that the group's determination for resistance, together with its successful performance in governance, result in quantitative gains in the political realm.

From the social perspective, Hezbollah's pragmatism to benefit from the gaps in the social services provided by the government of Lebanon appears to have greatly impacted their reputation and popularity. While Hezbollah aided the improvement of the social and life standards of the Shiite population of Lebanon, it likewise saw returns on this investment in terms of the sustainability and loyalty of the support behind it. The group works as a charity organization that helps those in need and at the same time as an institution giving education. From this perspective, Hezbollah is like a state within a state in Lebanon. Moreover, by utilizing from technological developments such as its TV channel, radio station and its own web sites, Hezbollah is able to declare its own wishes and intentions and to conduct a propaganda war towards Israel in its holy struggle. It broadcasted the speeches and programs in accordance with its own policies and perspectives in these media tools. Both through its social services and media, Hezbollah gives the simple but effective message to all Lebanese people that "we are always here for you."

With the overview provided in the history chapter, it may further be concluded that Hezbollah has a structure organized hierarchically in such a

manner that its military, political and social activities are closely integrated with one another. Hence all the executions having to do with these activities are arranged in an integrated fashion. When many of the other terrorist organizations are analyzed, they appear to set some barriers between their military and political wings. However, in Hezbollah's case, the group exemplifies effective integration of these two important aspects.³⁵⁴

In the third part of the thesis, to clarify the argument, Hezbollah's basic ideological tenets are explained in detail. Hezbollah has adopted the understanding of jihad since its establishment under the influence of the wilayat al-faqih in Iran. According to this understanding, when the guerillas of Hezbollah confront Israeli soldiers, they are convinced that, if they die in that struggle, they will unquestionably become one of the "*honoured*" martyrs going to heaven.

Hezbollah is quite enthusiastic and determined to transform society into an ideal society fully adapted to and abiding by the Islamic order. The group aspires to a state order ruled by Divine Law and opposes any insistence on the will or selection of the people. While Hezbollah initially aimed to bring the Islamic Revolution to Lebanon, in the course of time, its priorities evolved considerably given the contemporary conditions in Lebanon. The multi-confessional structure of Lebanon persuaded the group that their hope for revolution may come to fruition only in the future and is not yet a realistic possibility.

According to Hezbollah, the world is divided into two groups: the oppressed versus the oppressors. It announced itself to be the protector of the downtrodden in the world and showed its commitment to this issue with its sustained support to its Palestinian brothers. Israel and her close allies, the US and the Western states, on the other hand, are regarded by

³⁵⁴ Shmuel Bar. (2007). Deterring Non-state Terrorist Groups : The Case of Hizballah. *Comparative Strategy*. (26): 473-474. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

Hezbollah as the oppressors.

With the start of *infatih* period Hezbollah redefined itself to be a national entity as well. Hezbollah's adoption of the policy of Lebanonization aided it in its struggle against Israel, although this policy was in contrast to the ideal of the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. By the transformation period, Hezbollah had become the movement representing the rights of Shiites, the Lebanese people, Muslims and all the oppressed around the world such that its dimension and popularity considerably expanded.

Within the second chapter Hezbollah is shown to have a very detailed, well-structured ideology which is an impressive combination of its religious and political objectives. Within this chapter, it was observed that Hezbollah has delayed its aim to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon for an unlimited time due to the current socio-political conditions in Lebanon. Finally, it was noted that Hezbollah didn't feel it had completed its goals after removing Israel from South Lebanon, but instead it still has plans to completely destroy the Zionist order.

Lebanon is a country which is confronted continuously with mischief and conflict because of its confessional structure and the intervention of outside forces in the internal affairs of the country in accordance with their own interests. So if the eternal aim of Hezbollah – the obliteration of Israel – becomes a reality, Hezbollah will not cease to exist because it is also a national movement. Whether Hezbollah emerged as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 is an outstanding debate. While some authors claim that the invasion is the only *raison d'être* of Hezbollah, others argue that the invasion simply secured the establishment of the group and became only one of the reasons but not the basic and single one.

Due to Hezbollah's increasing power both as a political entity and an armed group, its close relations and strong networks with the Lebanese state and people, and its strong determination to be successful in the fight against Israel in all

arenas, Hezbollah seems to be a sustainable, long term enemy for Israel. What is more, Hezbollah's increasing presence in the political and social arenas contributes to the removal of Hezbollah's terrorist image in the eyes of world authorities.

The US authorities claim that Hezbollah is the second target after al-Qaida in their counter terrorism policy. On the other hand, Israel acts under the consent of the US and asks for help and guidance from the US on many issues. Hezbollah feels a similar hostility towards the US. The phrases from the group to define the US like "death to America" and "Great Satan" are a clear indicator of this hatred. Both the US and the West have shifted their strategy to negotiate with the sponsors of Hezbollah rather than directly with the group in recent years.

In the fourth chapter, Hezbollah is defined as an organism fed by its hatred toward Israel. Hence it prioritizes this struggle against Israel over its other ideals. When the statistics of its gains in this struggle are considered, it can easily be said that Hezbollah has been and continues to be more and more successful.

At the beginning of the study, I thought that I would study a complete terrorist organization focusing mainly on military actions. However, I had the opportunity to observe both the social and political identities of Hezbollah with very striking examples. In addition I had a bias against Hezbollah, believing it to be an extremist group which excludes the members of all other sects and religions. But during the *infitah* period, Hezbollah started to enlarge its scope and to cooperate with both the Sunnis and even with the Christians in Lebanon.

While this thesis was still being prepared Lebanon held its most recent parliamentary election in June of 2009. In this latest election, Hezbollah seemed to lose slightly its share of the vote, which was contrary to expectations. However like any other political party in the modern world, Hezbollah may also experience several fluctuations from time to time. Nevertheless, Hezbollah's political adventure which started with the 1992 election and has continued in a consistent

fashion until today indicates that Hezbollah will be a strong player in the Lebanese political arena for years to come.³⁵⁵

In a very recent interview conducted by Magnus Ranstrop with Hezbollah, Nasrallah emphasized that they completely own the results of the last election and Hezbollah will keep its conciliatory approach while the national unity is preserved.

Nonetheless, Hezbollah still continues to increase its arsenal and doesn't appear to have any intention of abandoning its military identity as stated many times in a previous chapter of the thesis.³⁵⁶ Even the Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livini, stated that the strongest army in the world could not successfully disarm Hezbollah. In addition, the Israeli government is anxious that the increasing arsenal of Hezbollah may turn into a new and stronger struggle against Israel, which it isn't eager to confront directly.³⁵⁷

Hence the Israeli side has an intention from the international community to maintain the peace all along its borders; as a result, Israel may focus better on its so-called real threat: Iran. According to authorities, the only way for Israel to defeat Hezbollah is through interactions and discussions with Iran and Syria because without its sponsors it is impossible for Hezbollah to survive. Unless Israel finds a way to communicate with Iran – either diplomatically or militarily – and Syria, as well, Hezbollah will continue to be a serious threat.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Lee Hudson Teslik and Ayten Tartici. 2009. Lebanon's Parliamentary Elections [online]. *Council on Foreign Relations*, [cited 09 September 2009]. Available from: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/19578/>

³⁵⁶ Alex Matine. What Will Hezbollah Do?[online]. *An Interview With Magnus Ranstrop, ICSR*, [cited 09 September 2009]. Available from: <http://icsr.info/blog-item.php?id=48>

³⁵⁷ Joseph Alagha. (2008). The Israeli – Hizbullah 34 – Day War : Causes and Consequences. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 30 (2): 1. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

³⁵⁸ Nahum Barnea. (2006). Israel vs. Hezbollah. *Think Again*. November/December: 28. Ebscohost, www.ebscohost.com

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