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IN COOPERATION WITH THE ADELSON INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, SHALEM CENTER

THE EIGHTH HERZLIYA CONFERENCE

ON THE BALANCE OF ISRAEL'S NATIONAL SECURITY

"ISRAEL AT SIXTY: TESTS OF ENDURANCE"

JANUARY 20-23, 2008

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Published in *Comparative Strategy*, 26:469-493
October 1st 2007

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This article was downloaded by:[Bar, Shmuel]
On: 7 January 2008
Access Details: [subscription number 789309238]
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Comparative Strategy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713769613>

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Online Publication Date: 01 October 2007

To cite this Article: Bar, Shmuel (2007) 'Deterring Nonstate Terrorist Groups: The Case of Hizballah', *Comparative Strategy*, 26:5, 469 - 493

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/01495930701750307

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01495930701750307>

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Deterring Nonstate Terrorist Groups: The Case of Hizballah

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In the months before the "Second Lebanon War" of 2006, Israeli policy did not prevent Hizballah from taking actions that Israel considered highly unacceptable and ultimately resulted in the Israeli decision to conduct military operations against Hizballah's power base in Lebanon. However, this does not vindicate the conventional wisdom that Israeli deterrence of Hizballah failed in a simple, unambiguous fashion. Rather, Israeli deterrence signals were not clear and Hizballah did not understand that it was crossing "red lines" that would result in Israel undertaking high-intensity military operations in Lebanon. This paper explores the deterrence relationship between Israel and Hizballah, with particular reference to the 2006 conflict and its impact on that relationship.

Executive Summary

The object of this study is to analyze Israeli successes and failures in deterrence or compellence of Lebanese Hizballah vis-à-vis a variety of threats: low-intensity warfare against the Israeli forces in Lebanon; proxy attacks inside Israel, the West Bank and Gaza; attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad; and the a large array of rockets and missiles with a strike capability of hitting most of Northern Israel.

It is a widely held view in Israeli defense and security circles that terrorist organizations per se lack the organizational characteristics and assets that can be threatened in order to achieve deterrence, but as they develop social, political or state-like manifestations, they become more susceptible to deterrence. Therefore, the mainstream of Israel's policy toward terrorism was based primarily on disruption and preemption. However, in the case of Hizballah, it was believed in Israel that many of these characteristics and assets existed: a strong hierarchal line of command and control; material interests that can be threatened; a strong affinity to its constituency (the Shiites in south Lebanon), whose interests Hizballah had to take into account; and potential leverage of its patrons (Iran and Syria).

The Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000 was accompanied by high-level deterrent statements to the effect that Israel would retaliate strongly for any violation of the UN-sanctioned border. However, this posture was compromised shortly thereafter. Since then, the conflict between Israel and Hizballah has been characterized by a high level of ambiguity regarding Israel's "red lines" and potential response to their crossing.

Israeli efforts to deter Hizballah took a number of forms:

1. **Direct attacks on Hizballah camps or leaders.** This tactic was used sparingly; the killing of Abbas Moussawi, the first Secretary General of Hizballah in February 1992 was not part of a strategy of deterrence or a larger intention to target Hizballah

- leaders at large, but more a target of opportunity. However, the lethal Hizballah response to that event (both in launching of rockets at northern Israel and the attack on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires) effectively deterred Israel from repeating such operations.
2. **Threatening the Shiite population of south Lebanon** according to a calculus of “if there is no security in Kiryat Shmona, there will be none in south Lebanon.” The Israeli assumption was that Hizballah was dependent on its constituency, particularly after the Israeli withdrawal and the expectations for reconstruction in the south, and moreover since the Syrian withdrawal, and would be attentive to its interests in stability.
 3. **Indirect deterrence by means of pressure on the Lebanese state.** Israel attempted to provoke the Lebanese administration to pressure Hizballah (directly and indirectly through Syria) at least twice during the 1990s (operations Accountability in 1993 and Grapes of Wrath in 1996). The fruits of these attempts proved limited; they succeeded in imposing agreements, first formal and then written, that prohibited both sides from attacking civilian targets.
 4. **Indirect deterrence through Hizballah’s close patron, Syria.** Israel made no attempts to threaten Iranian interests in order to deter Hizballah. A number of attempts were made to pressure Hizballah through threatening Syrian interests (attacks on Syrian radars in Lebanon, buzzing Bashar Asad’s home in Ladhakiya). Some of these efforts resulted in temporary restraint on the part of Hizballah.

It is noteworthy that in all cases in which Hizballah deemed it necessary to restrain itself, it succeeded in maintaining total control over its forces. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the Palestinian arena. This ability of the object of deterrence is essential for the success of deterrence; without effective command, the cost-benefit calculus that is understood at the leadership level is not translated into actions on the ground.

These efforts, however, had to take into account the counterdeterrence that Hizballah had developed. This was based on two pillars: the threat of rockets/missiles to northern Israel; and the threat of attacks on soft Jewish/Israeli targets abroad. Over the years, Hizballah succeeded in creating a balance of deterrence, as a result of which Israel never retaliated (or even threatened to retaliate) against Hizballah for: (1) its involvement in proxy Palestinian terror; (2) infiltration of terrorists into Israel from abroad or (3) attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad; (4) abductions of Israeli citizens abroad; (5) build-up of its extensive infrastructure in south Lebanon, including acquisition of long range rockets; and (4) attempts (including a successful one in October 2000) to abduct Israeli soldiers from Israeli territory. In all these cases, Hizballah assessed that Israel was deterred from reacting strongly (or at all) in the Lebanese arena by Hizballah’s threat to Northern Israel. Hizballah’s operations abroad were all seen in the context of retaliation for out-of-the-ordinary actions by Israel and not a standard element in the organization’s *modus operandi*.

Hizballah’s self-image and assessment of Israel are central factors for its susceptibility to Israeli deterrence. This is manifested in a number of areas:

1. The quintessentially Shiite self-image of the “permanently oppressed” who have nothing to lose is mobilized to form a sense of victory by dint of having fought, with less regard to actual material losses.
2. The strong apocalyptic trend in Iran, which sees the reappearance of the Hidden Imam (Mahdi) and the final battle between Good and Evil as imminent, makes the organization more risk-prone and less susceptible to deterrence.

3. Hizballah's self-image as part of a greater entity—the Islamic Revolution—with its center in Iran may arguably bring it to be willing to sacrifice Hizballah's Lebanese interests for the sake of the greater Iranian good.
4. The “cobweb theory,” promoted by Nassrallah, which depicts Israel as a makeshift society that will fall apart the moment there is a real threat on the civilian population, gave Hizballah an unwarranted level of confidence in its own counterdeterrence.
5. The discussions in the free Israeli press and uncoordinated “background” briefings by senior military officers, which highlighted the domestic and diplomatic obstacles that Israel would encounter in implementing a threat of massive reprisal against Hizballah, played a significant role in Hizballah's perception of Israel's deterrence.

Notwithstanding the above, Hizballah's perception of Israel's military capabilities was never flawed. Hizballah had no doubt throughout the conflict with Israel that the latter had superior force, which could, if used, cause intolerable damage to Hizballah and to Lebanon. However, it believed that Israel's threat of high-intensity deterrence would be effectively constrained by the existence of Hizballah's low-intensity counterdeterrence, along with domestic and international pressures against a second Lebanese adventure. Hizballah always understood that this balance of deterrence was valid only as long as it did not cross a red line.

However, Israel never spelled out this red line, and therefore Hizballah construed from Israel's responses since May 2000 that as long as the attacks remained within the limits of a defined territory (Shaba and the area), weaponry (short-range weapons), and types of attack (crossborder shooting, local incursions, and kidnappings), Israel would not view them as a change of the situation. The Hizballah assessment prior to the fighting of summer 2006 was that Israel would react to an infiltration with the usual menu of artillery fire and air attacks on Hizballah bases near the border. Israel would not receive international support for retaliation against Lebanon itself. Israel would react extensively, according to this assessment, only in case Hizballah exceeded these territorial and military parameters by incursions in other areas of the border or launching sustained attacks with medium- and long-range rockets on Israeli cities. Even then, Israel would refrain from attacking non-Hizballah Lebanese targets. The Olmert government was perceived as averse to military conflict. Therefore, in the absence of any clear signal from Israel, Hizballah had no reason to assume that the Olmert-Peretz team would react differently than their predecessors to such an attack.

Israeli deterrence of Hizballah leaned heavily on *indirect deterrence*, via the Lebanese state, Syria, and Iran. Hizballah's dependence on money and weapon supplies from Iran and via Syria was seen by Israel as its Achilles' heel. However:

1. Attempts to pressure the Lebanese state have been largely unsuccessful; the makeup of Lebanese society and the internal balance of power have created a powerless central government.
2. Israel has refrained from attempting to deter Hizballah through Iran. This is due to the absence of a direct line of engagement with Iran, preoccupation with Iran's own missile capabilities and nuclear program, and the concern that Iran may retaliate by attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.
3. Attempts by Israel to pressure Syria in order to restrain Hizballah have witnessed limited and temporary success. Certain periods of relative quiet reflected Syria's concerns that Hizballah actions may precipitate a wider conflict. However, the potential for indirect deterrence of Hizballah by threats to Syrian interests has reduced over the last years: since Bashar al-Asad came to power the Syrian-Hizballah relationship has almost reversed itself, and Nassrallah seems to have more influence on Bashar than vice versa. The Syrian

withdrawal from Lebanon also enhanced the value of Hizballah for Syria, diminished Syria's direct leverage over Hizballah's strategy and day-to-day behavior, and reduced Syria's exposure to Israeli targeting, since any attack on a Syrian target now entails incursion into Syria proper.

Conventional wisdom following the "Second Lebanon War" of July–August 2006 has been that Israel failed to deter Hizballah. However, a deeper observation of the history of the Israel-Hizballah conflict shows that the failure were not due to Hizballah's disregard of Israeli deterrent signals, but rather the absence of such signals. Israel had given no reason to believe, either by declarations or by previous actions, that a crossborder operation to kill and abduct soldiers would be a crossing of a red line and would incur a harsh response.

The fighting of summer 2006 has already affected the deterrence relationship between Israel and Hizballah. On one hand, Israel's failure in targeting the Hizballah leadership and in preventing the continuous firing of short-range rockets boosted Hizballah's self-image and tarred the perception of Israeli intelligence dominance. On the other hand, for the time being, the last round has made it clear to Hizballah that, for the present, it cannot return to the former rules of the game.

Preface

This object of this study is to analyze the Israeli successes and failures in deterrence or compellence of the Lebanese Hizballah. Israel has been pitted against the threat of Hizballah since the founding of the organization by Iran in 1982. The threats posed by Hizballah, which Israel has attempted to deter, include four main categories of threats:

1. Intermittent low-intensity warfare against the Israeli forces in Lebanon until May 2000 and against Israeli military targets across the border (mainly in the area known in Arabic as the Shaba farms and in Hebrew as Mt. Dov) since then. This threat is characterized by a high level of coordination and a central military command with a high level of command and control.
2. Planning of terrorist attacks inside Israel through operatives recruited abroad and infiltrated into Israel and terrorist attacks from the West Bank and Gaza (mainly since the outbreak of the second Intifadah) acting through Iranian Palestinian proxy organizations, through Palestinians recruited directly by Hizballah, and even through recruitment of Israeli Arabs.
3. Terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad (primarily in Western Europe, South America, and Southeast Asia).
4. The existence of a large array of rockets and missiles with a strike capability of hitting most of northern Israel, which serves as a deterrence against Israeli attempts to punish Hizballah for any of the above activities and as an option for use at the behest of Iran if Israel or the U.S. attacks it.

The methodology of this study is based on analysis of events and series of events that exemplified Israel's attempts to deter Hizballah. The concepts used in this study are borrowed from modern theories of deterrence. These, however, tend to focus on the relationship between states and on the high end of potential conflict: confrontation between regular armies or nuclear conflict between states. These theories naturally overshadowed traditional descriptions of coercion—deterrence and compellence—which states have employed since time immemorial to deter nonstate elements (insurgents, guerillas, and terrorists).

The relationship between a state (Israel) and nonstate terrorist organizations is, by nature, asymmetric. This asymmetry makes doctrines of deterrence that were formulated for relationships between states unsuitable to many cases. The asymmetry, however, differs from case to case. The degree of state-like attributes of the organization, or the links between such an organization and a state with state-type interests, has a significant influence on strategies that can be implemented to coerce that organization. The most salient of these attributes are: level of leadership command and control and the existence of a vertical hierarchy; a social agenda and responsibility towards a given population; control over territory; methods of financing; and purely national agendas or transnational/religious agendas. These attributes can explain many of the differences between the roads taken by different terrorist organizations, from national movements such as the IRA to transnational religious ones such as al Qaeda.

This study will distinguish between *strategic* and *tactical* deterrence. Israel has succeeded in maintaining the former vis-à-vis neighboring states through both high-end conventional capabilities on the ground and in the air and through an assumption by those neighbors of an Israeli nonconventional capability. Deterrence of terrorist organizations, however, has been based—when it existed—mainly on *tactical deterrence* through day-to-day actions that add up to an ever-shifting perception of the object of deterrence regarding Israel's resolve to act against it. This perception is laden with cultural and psychological overtones and passed through overlapping prisms of history, culture, language, ideological axioms, modes of transmission and reception of information on the "other," and, finally, the psyche of the leadership of the party to be deterred, identification of the decision makers with the interests that are threatened, and the dynamics of threat assessment within that leadership. All of these must be assessed in order to arrive at a proper discussion of deterrence.

The study analyzes the threat that Hizballah posed to Israel over a period of a decade and a half and Israel's policy of direct and indirect deterrence toward the organization. The paper will deal with the questions:

1. What was the nature of the threat that Hizballah posed to Israel?
2. Did Israel have a clear policy of deterrence and signaling deterrence, and was this policy consistent throughout different governments?
3. What was the image of Israel's capability/willingness to respond to provocations in the eyes of Hizballah and its sponsors? To what extent were those images situation-dependent or linked to a specific group of Israeli leaders?

This study was prepared as part of a project performed at the Institute for Policy and Strategy in Herzliya with the participation of Dr. Shmuel Bar (team leader), Mr. Shmuel Bachar and Ms. Rachel Machtiger (Research Fellows). The conclusions of the project as presented in this paper are entirely the responsibility of the author.

The Threat of Hizballah to Israel

Relevant Aspects of Command and Control

Hizballah is built in a hierarchic structure that integrates all the areas of the organization's activities: military, political, social, and so forth. Decisions on all these matters are taken in an integrated fashion. Hizballah has never claimed—like many other terrorist organizations—that there is a firewall between the "political" and "military" wing of the organization;

on the contrary, it prides itself on the complete integration of the two aspects.¹ The top leadership of the organization is comprised of a Deciding Consultative Council (DCC) (*majlis shura qarar*), which is composed of nine members, two of whom are senior Iranian officials.² The Secretary General, Said Hasan Nassrallah, stands at the head of the DCC. The DCC is responsible for a number of subordinate councils, headed by its members: political, military, judicial etc (see diagram in the Appendix). The day-to-day activities of the organization, though, are handled by an Executive Council³ with the tactical planning and execution of military and terrorist activities administered by the Jihad Council, headed by Imad Moghniya. It is noteworthy that Moghniya, who is responsible for this central subject, spends much of his time in Iran and is arguably the most intimately connected to Iran of the entire Hizballah leadership. Moghniya is a member of the DCC, however in the light of his status as wanted by the U.S., he uses the cover name of Jowad Nour al-Din.⁴

The Jihad Council controls its units via regional headquarters that enjoy relative autonomy after the strategic decision on a military operation has been taken. The central control of the leadership is facilitated by full-scale C4 systems supplied by Iran. From this point of view, Hizballah is more like a regular army than a terrorist organization. However, its unique situation as a regular army which deals solely in “special operations” and guerilla has created a command-and-control structure that is both hierarchal and provides a high level of autonomy. The central command of the short-, medium- and long-range rockets—all deemed by Hizballah as its strategic weapon—was exemplified in the summer of 2006, when an agreement was reached on a ceasefire of twenty-four hours for humanitarian supplies; Hizballah ceased all fire completely and renewed it with a barrage of 250 rockets the moment the ceasefire was over.

The logistic and operation autonomy of the regional and subregional units is a lesson that Hizballah learned from Israel’s first wide-scale operation against the organization (Accountability) in 1993, in which Israeli attacks on headquarters and central depots succeeded in eroding Hizballah’s firepower. At the same time, the Jihad Council has the ability to mobilize troops, to move them from one area to another, and to concentrate rocket fire on one target inside Israel. The Jihad Council also has direct command over “special units,” which have been involved in what the organization dubs “quality operations” such as infiltration into Israel and kidnapping soldiers.

Though he is keen to project the feeling that all strategic issues are agreed upon in the DCC, since his election as Secretary General in 1992, Nassrallah has evolved into an autocratic leader, weaving around himself a personality cult.⁵ Psychological sketches done by Israeli Intelligence on Nassrallah depict him as megalomaniac, self-centered, fearful for his own fate (in spite of protestations that he is willing to become a martyr), and, most important, a person with great faith in his own analytical capabilities and therefore able to analyze the enemy (Israel) on his own.

It appears therefore that there is little if any influence of other members of the leadership on the forming of Israel’s deterrent image in the eyes of Nassrallah.⁶ On the other hand, Israel’s image in Nassrallah’s eyes is greatly influenced by his consultations with Iran and much of the intelligence that colors Hizballah’s perceptions of Israel’s capabilities and intentions comes from IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) intelligence.

The Threat in the Lebanese Theater

The main threat posed by Hizballah to Israel is in the Lebanese theater. The threat that Hizballah posed to Israel from Lebanon and that Israeli military policy makers saw a need to deter included a number of levels:

1. A *strategic level* that involved the acquisition and deployment of rockets and missiles in Lebanon that would become a deterrent against future Israeli action and would be later used in a confrontation.
2. An *operational level* that included the building of an extensive setup of fortifications and logistic infrastructure in the south that would provide Hizballah with an ability to sustain Israeli air attacks and continue attacking the north of Israel.
3. A *tactical level* that was characterized by actual attacks on Israel in areas that Hizballah chose.

On the strategic level, Hizballah's strategy in the Lebanese theater leaned on three pillars:

1. *Nonaccountability*—of both Hizballah as a nonstate actor without the constraints, responsibility transparency, or accountability of a state, and of Lebanon as a weak dysfunctional state without the ability to impose its will on Hizballah—was seen as freeing Hizballah to act against freely against Israel.
2. *Apathy of the international community*. The fact that the UN and the international community had been accustomed to Hizballah attacks on Israel in the Shaba area and seemed to be unwilling to engage in order to impose UN resolution 1559 enhanced Hizballah's freedom of operation.
3. *Image of deterrence of Hizballah* as an invisible army, an immeasurable power too risky to deal with on the ground in south Lebanon, and as possessor of a strike capability that can threaten Israel's homefront⁷ and Hizballah's ability to infiltrate terrorists into Israel or to use its Palestinian agents to perform acts of terrorism.

On the operational and tactical level, Hizballah's doctrine of "asymmetric warfare" has been characterized by:

1. Emphasis on disinformation, camouflage, and surprise.
2. A high level of tactical coordination combined with a low imprint and decentralization of the organization's C4 system (use of physical communication within south Lebanon).⁸
3. A high level of tactical intelligence thanks to the close proximity to Israeli forces and Iranian and Syrian aid.
4. Massive fortification of positions in south Lebanon against Israeli AF strikes, in order to force Israel to engage the Hizballah fighters on the ground.
5. Positioning fighters and rockets within civilian populations and use of those populations as human shields.⁹
6. High redundancy of weapons to counteract Israel's ability to cut off the south from supply routes in Syria and the Bekaa valley.
7. Coordinated attacks based on IED attacks complemented by ambushes of Israeli infantry, and mechanized patrols, coordinated artillery, and rocket fire across a given sector by a number of teams.
8. A high level of psychological operations, including documentation of the attacks and use of the videos in its propaganda.

It is noteworthy that during this period the organization did not launch any suicide attacks. These attacks were the trademark of Hizballah in the early 1980s and Hizballah prides itself on having introduced this method into the Israeli-Arab conflict and the conflict with the West in general.¹⁰ The discontinuation of this method may have been the result of the fact that Israel had reduced the level of friction with the local population, which limited the opportunities for such operations along with procedures that the IDF developed

to lower the risk of allowing a suicide bomber to approach its troops. It seems however, that this derived as well from the trend of Hizballah to adopt more regular modes of military operation.

From 1986 onward, Hizballah changed the parameters of its military action against Israel and adopted tactics of frontal surprise attacks by small units numbering tens of Hizballah fighters, supported by artillery and using regular military tactics. At the same time, Hizballah learned the value of operations for capture of Israeli soldiers and holding them without divulging any information on their state of health or even if they are alive or dead. Hizballah took note of the effects of such action on the Israeli public in the wake of the capture of Yosef Fink and Rahamim al-Sheikh in February that year and of Ron Arad in October. *Hizballah learned that holding Israeli prisoners who may or may not be alive had a deterrent effect on Israeli willingness to engage Hizballah militarily; the concern that an Israeli action which would break the "rules" that Hizballah had set down would result in the latter killing the Israeli POWs. Israeli attempts to counter this effect by taking Hizballah prisoners did not achieve any real results.*

Hizballah stepped up its attacks against Israel after Desert Storm in February 1991 and the Madrid Conference of October that year. The *raison d'état* behind the escalation was clearly Iran's fears that Syria's participation in the peace process may bring about agreements in the context of which the Iranian hold in Lebanon would be weakened or even terminated. Raising tension with Israel in the south, therefore, was seen as the preferred option for preventing such an eventuality.

Since the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000, Hizballah attacks have been usually restricted to the Shaba area. This restriction was defined by Hizballah as deriving from its own choice and the rules that it had set down, while it reserved the "right" to attack Israel along the border. The very choice of the Shaba farm area reflected Hizballah's analysis of what Israel would—and would not—tolerate. During the demarcation of the border by the UN, Hizballah raised a series of reservations regarding other points along the border, which have been part of Israel since the era of the British Mandate. These were backed by Syria and even incorporated in Lebanon's official response to the UN committee. However, despite the fact that the "merits" of those points were not fundamentally different to those of Shaba, Hizballah refrained from operations in those areas. This restraint was the direct consequence of Hizballah's assessment that attacks in those areas would be perceived by Israel as attacks on sovereign Israeli territory and would provoke a harsher response.

*The threat to act outside of the Shaba area served Hizballah therefore as a deterrent against Israeli attacks outside of this theater. Hizballah openly warned that if Israel attacks outside of that area, "no settlement along the border will be immune."*¹¹ Since the Israeli withdrawal, there have been cases of attacks that have gone beyond the Shaba area; however, in all of these cases, Hizballah either pointedly declared that these were exceptional responses to Israeli operations that it claimed had broken the rules, or refrained from taking responsibility.¹²

It is worth mentioning that when Palestinian organizations in south Lebanon attempted to act independently in a way that would be perceived as an infringement on the "rules of the game," Hizballah disrupted their activities. Hizballah would not allow Palestinian organizations to draw it into a wider conflict with Israel at a time not of its own choice. Hence, it presented a paradigm whereby the Palestinians wage their resistance against Israel from "inside" (albeit with Hizballah support), whereas Hizballah is the sole "Lebanese resistance." In practice, Hizballah was acting on its assessment that actions that went beyond the rules that it had imposed after the withdrawal may trigger a stronger Israeli reaction.

The Threat in the Palestinian Theater and inside Israel

Hizballah involvement in the Palestinian theater has grown constantly since the outbreak of the second Intifadah in October 2000. Hizballah has been the go-between for Iran and the Palestinian organizations, via their headquarters in Damascus, which transfer large sums of Iranian money, weapons, and ammunition, in addition to ideological instruction to Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza. Hizballah has developed an elaborate relationship with almost all the Palestinian organizations operating in the West Bank and Gaza. The main groups with which Hizballah has maintained intimate operational links are those with close links to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas. A prime case in point of Hizballah's influence on Hamas can be seen in Nassrallah's warning after the abduction of the Israeli soldier Gilead Shalit in Gaza that Hamas must not free the soldier without obtaining the release of all the Palestinians in Israeli jails. The struggle to release the prisoners, according to Nassrallah, is worth sacrifices and struggle.¹³ This statement was perceived as an Iranian message to Hizballah not to cave in to pressure by Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian Authority to solve the crisis by releasing Shalit.

Along with its institutionalized links with those organizations, Hizballah has actively recruited Palestinians for terrorist attacks that were directly financed and organized by itself. Some of these Palestinians were recruited when visiting Iran in the framework of Iran's offer to wounded Palestinians to recuperate in Iranian hospitals. It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of the terrorist attacks carried out in the Palestinian territories and Israel in the last two years have been instigated and funded by Hizballah.¹⁴

Hizballah's involvement in smuggling arms for Iran to the various Palestinian groups include organizing smuggling via the sea (the *Santorini*—May 2001¹⁵—and the *Karin A*—January 2002).¹⁶ The *Karin A* shipment was facilitated by Imad Moghniya. Hizballah was also instrumental in organizing smuggling of rockets to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad via Jordan in June 2001.

Hizballah saw involvement in the Palestinian theater and operations inside Israel launched from Europe as legitimate acts that would not provoke an Israeli response. This assumption was not based on Israel's prior behavior vis-à-vis the Palestinians; the "Peace of Galilee" operation in June 1982 was launched in response to an attack by Abu Nidal (not even Fatah) in London, and Israel bombed PLO headquarters in Tunis (October 1 1985) in retaliation for the murder of Israeli citizens in Larnaca, Cyprus and in Barcelona, Spain the week before. *Hizballah's reasoning therefore was based on its perception that Israel would be deterred from implementing the same paradigm by Hizballah's threat to northern Israel.*

The Hizballah threat *inside Israel* is primarily in the field of intelligence gathering and recruitment of Israelis from minority communities (Arabs and Druze) for intelligence and smuggling of arms.¹⁷ Another area in which Hizballah poses a threat within the borders of Israel is through infiltration of terrorists recruited abroad for attacks inside Israel. The most prominent of these cases were those of British citizen Hussein Maqdad (1986),¹⁸ the German Steven Smirk (1997),¹⁹ British citizen Jihad Shuman (2001),²⁰ and the Lebanese Fawzi Ayub.²¹

The Threat of Hizballah Terrorism Abroad

The threat of Hizballah terrorism against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad was demonstrated in at least five separate incidents: the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires (1992); the bombing two years later of the Jewish Community Centre in Buenos Aires, AMIA (1994),²² a Hizballah plot to bomb the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok that failed due

to a fluke accident with the car that was to participate in the bombing (1994); an attempt to attack Israeli shipping in the Malacca Straits (1995), which was disrupted by Singaporean intelligence; and the kidnapping of an Israeli, Elhanan Tennenbaum, from Europe in October 2000. It is possible that Hizballah was also involved in the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in London (26 July 1994).

In addition to the actual attacks listed above, Hizballah operatives have also been involved in cases of recruitment of agents for Iranian intelligence, and casing of Israeli and Jewish targets. Hizballah infrastructure is particularly strong in south America (Brazil, Peru, Argentina), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia), West Africa (Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone), and Europe (UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands).

Hizballah's operations abroad were all seen in the context of retaliation for out-of-the-ordinary actions by Israel. The first attack on an Israeli target in Buenos Aires (the Israeli Embassy, 17 March 1992) was a retaliation for the killing of the previous Secretary General of Hizballah, Abbas Moussawi by Israel (it took place on the 30-day anniversary of his death). The second attack (the Jewish Community Center, 18 July 1994) took place after the Israeli bombing of a Hizballah training center in the Bekaa valley and the abduction of Sheikh Mustafa Dirani. In Israel there were those who believed that Hizballah perpetrated the two attacks to prove that it had a "long arm" and that there were numerous Israeli soft targets abroad that could be hit, if Israel were to use its own "long arm" against Hizballah or Iran.²³

Israeli Deterrence Policy towards Hizballah

Direct Deterrence

Israeli policymakers, intelligence chiefs, and counterterrorism experts are almost all unanimous in their view that direct deterrence of Hizballah (or of any other terrorist organization) is extremely difficult. According to one such senior expert, Israel never tried to deter terrorist organizations in their "terrorist aspects." *However, once those organizations had added social or state-like manifestations, they became susceptible to deterrence in those areas.*²⁴ According to this expert, this concept was particularly manifested in the case of Hizballah. *To the extent that Israel succeeded in posing a direct deterrent to Hizballah, it was by threatening Hizballah's social interests (the Shiites of the south of Lebanon), political interests in Lebanon, or extra-national relations with its proxies.*

A dissenting voice in this regard was that of one former Director of Mossad, who pointed out that a number of terrorist organizations were deterred from acting against Israel after Israel had eliminated their leaders. The successors felt the need for a period of relief from Israeli pressure that could only be attained by refraining from terrorism. According to this view, deterrence of Hizballah, like that of any other terrorist organization, could only be the result of sustained pressure that would bring the organization to review its priorities and place the priority of a breathing spell above that of performing terrorism against Israel.²⁵

Hizballah's own self-image is a central factor for its susceptibility to Israeli deterrence. The self-declared status of the "permanently oppressed," who have nothing to lose, is an attempt to immunize the fighters of Hizballah against "defeatist" attitudes regarding Israel's superior power. This image, however, is a central element in Shiite theology. Another element that plays a role—though it is difficult to assess how great a role—is the strong Mahdist trend, which sees the final battle between Good and Evil as imminent, followed by the reappearance of the Hidden Imam.²⁶ The emphasis on the imminent reappearance

of the Hidden Imam, or Mahdi, is central to the indoctrination that Hizballah has received from the IRGC and has been elevated by Ahmadinejad to a prime tenet of his presidency.

The susceptibility of Hizballah to direct deterrence is also related to its self-image as an entity unto itself, as opposed to being an extension of Iran. Israel has always seen Hizballah as primarily an Iranian organization in Lebanon (see below). *Hence the assumption has been that the real decision maker—Iran—would be willing to sacrifice local (Lebanese) interests of its proxy for the sake of the greater Iranian good.* The picture obtained from Hizballah ideological literature found in south Lebanon during the 2006 war supports this conclusion.

Israel's deterrent posture toward Hizballah evolved with the parameters of confrontation, according to four periods:

1. The period between the founding of Hizballah in 1982 and the Israeli withdrawal to the Security Zone in June 1985.
2. The period of the Security Zone between 1985 and May 2000
3. The period since the May 2000 withdrawal.
4. The period which is now taking shape after the ceasefire of August 2006.

Israel's deterrent posture in south Lebanon took shape after the main withdrawal of Israeli forces to the Security Zone in 1985. Israel attempted to create deterrence towards Hizballah on the basis of threats of high-intensity attacks in retaliation for Hizballah's low-intensity warfare against Israel. The failure of this deterrence brought Israel to embark during this period on two major operations, Accountability (July 1993),²⁷ and Grapes of Wrath (April 1996),²⁸ in a bid to reinforce the credibility of Israel's deterrence. The target of these two operations was primarily the military infrastructure of Hizballah. However, Israeli policymakers had no illusions that a satisfactory level of direct deterrence could be achieved by such means.²⁹ Therefore, the undeclared agenda of these operations was to create indirect deterrence by pressure on the Lebanese government.

In light of the Israeli counterterrorism strategy in other theaters, the absence of a strategy of targeted killing vis-à-vis Hizballah is noteworthy. The killing of Abbas Moussawi, the first Secretary General of Hizballah, in February 1992 was not part of a strategy of deterrence or a larger intention to target Hizballah leaders at large, but more a target of opportunity. However, the lethal Hizballah response to that event (both in launching of rockets at northern Israel and the attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires) effectively deterred Israel from any such future actions that could be attributed to it. Nevertheless, at that time, Israel formed a special forces unit, Egoz (Walnut), which specialized in "quality operations" against Hizballah in southern Lebanon. Until the Israeli withdrawal of May 2000, the goal was primarily to deter Hizballah from attacks on Israeli targets in the Security Zone and on Israel's allies in south Lebanon. *The driving principles of the Israeli military strategy for direct deterrence during this period was based chiefly on deterrence by denial.* This was accomplished through reliance on the South Lebanese Army (SLA) for day-to-day security, Israeli positions in secured outposts outside of settled areas,³⁰ readiness to respond in real time to Hizballah actions within south Lebanon with artillery stationed inside the Israeli border, and air power. Israel also carried out occasional special operations against specific Hizballah targets (such as the abduction of Sheikh 'Ubeid and Sheikh Dirani), with the object of gaining intelligence and a bargaining card for the MIA Israeli aviator Ron Arad.

Since the withdrawal, the goal has been to deter Hizballah from rocket attacks on Israeli population centers in the north, shooting across the internationally recognized border. While this has never been publicly acknowledged, it has been evident from Israel's reactions to Hizballah attacks inside the Shaba region and the Ghajar village. Israel signaled by the

restrictions it took upon itself that it has accepted the “rules of the game” that Hizballah had imposed.

Israel did not link the Lebanese theater with Hizballah terrorism inside Israel or the West Bank and Gaza or abroad. In fact, Israel did not present any form of deterrence vis-à-vis Hizballah involvement in terrorism within the Palestinian territories and Israel. Despite clear intelligence that linked Hizballah to attacks abroad and in Israel, Israel neither reacted militarily against Hizballah nor threatened the organization with retribution.

Indirect Deterrence

Both Iran and Syria separately saw Hizballah as an important—sometimes central—pillar in their deterrence of Israel and even the U.S., and as a convenient tool for causing harm to Israel without having to take direct responsibility and bear the consequences. The relations between Hizballah and its two patrons, though, are not equal. While Israel found it convenient to declare Hizballah a “proxy of Iran and Syria,” most Israeli decision makers and military planners were well aware of this difference. The support of the former was a necessary condition for Hizballah’s very existence and for its terrorist policy, but not a sufficient condition. The sufficient condition was provided by the Syrian willingness to serve as a conduit for Iranian (and its own) military support and a facilitator of Hizballah’s independent status in Lebanon.

Israel, therefore, saw Hizballah’s dependence upon money and weapon supplies from Iran and via Syria as its Achilles’ heel. Without the full cooperation of Syria, Iran will not be able to provide Hizballah with money and weapons; were Syria to have denied Hizballah freedom of action in Lebanon (at least during the period when the Syrian army was in Lebanon), it would not have been able to function openly as it did. Consequently, deterrence of Hizballah was perceived as deterrence of these two countries, and deterrence of the two patrons of Hizballah was perceived by Israel as potential leverage for deterrence of Hizballah.

Iran. The relationship between Iran and Hizballah is critical for an understanding of the conditions for deterring the latter. As noted above, Hizballah is, for all intents and purposes, an extension of the Islamic Republic into Lebanon. The symbols, ideology, and goals of the organization are dictated by Tehran and are commensurate with those of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Furthermore, Hasan Nassrallah is not only the Secretary General of Hizballah (a “democratic” title that belies his autocratic power), but the personal representative of Ayatollah Khamene’i in Lebanon. The “Deciding Shura Council” of Hizballah includes as full members two senior Iranian representatives, who sit on the council *ex officio*. No less important is Hizballah’s almost total dependence on Iran for its budget; the Iranian annual support of Hizballah is estimated at \$100 million. Until 2000, when Bashar al-Asad came to power in Damascus, all of Hizballah’s arms came from Iran.

As Hizballah grew stronger, its value grew for Iran. The importance of Hizballah as the most successful Iranian proxy in the Muslim world and a major weapon of deterrence against Israel and the U.S. determined the extent of risk that Iran was willing to take in order to maintain the organization’s strength. The patron-proxy relationship between Iran and Hizballah evolved into an almost total identification of the two with each other. Israeli attempts to deter Hizballah had to relate, therefore, to the larger picture of possible Iranian reactions as well as pure Hizballah ones.

Israel has not been able to develop deterrence against Hizballah based on indirect deterrence via Iran. Israel has no direct line of engagement with Iran (except for Hizballah)

and has no leverage to pressure it. Israeli thinking on deterring Iran focuses on Iran's own missile capabilities and nascent nuclear program. Furthermore, Israel has been effectively deterred from direct confrontation with Iran by the threat of attacks on Israeli and Jewish institutions abroad.

Syria. Syria has been perceived as the “weak link” and susceptible to deterrence as a lever to deter Hizballah. Israel frequently emphasized the Syrian role on the same level of that of Iran in an attempt to pressure Syria to restrict Hizballah by declaring it as being accountable for the actions of the organization. Syria was perceived as:

1. A political supporter of Hizballah, who by defending Hizballah's acts as legitimate takes implied responsibility.
2. A military supplier of Syrian arms directly to Hizballah (this aspect of Syrian involvement actually began with Bashar al-Asad, whereas his father was much more cautious in exposing Syrian support of Hizballah). It is noteworthy that in the war of July–August 2006, the lion's share of rockets (220 and 302 mm) launched at Israel were Syrian and not Iranian.
3. Facilitator of Iranian support in terms of training, free movement of Hizballah and IRGC personnel through Damascus, finances, and transfer of military supplies, including long-range rockets.
4. The “landlord” of Lebanon, who determines the conditions by which the Lebanese government accepts Hizballah as an armed militia after all other militias were disarmed and coordinates with Hizballah its attacks on Israel, and therefore can prevent those attacks.
5. Possessor of an effective intelligence picture of Hizballah, so that even if Hizballah did not coordinate an action with Syria in advance, Damascus could know about it and put pressure on the organization to refrain, if it so willed.

While all these did not add up to the nature of the proxy-patron relationship of Hizballah with Iran, there is no doubt that without the Syrian support, Iran would find it extremely difficult to build up Hizballah's military strength in Lebanon. Therefore, as long as Syria was physically occupying Lebanon, there were Syrian targets that could be hit to “punish” Syria for not restraining Hizballah and to induce it to take steps to cajole or coerce the organization into restraint.

Israeli deterrence of Syria as a leverage against Hizballah was employed on various occasions and in various ways:

1. Passing of warnings, from Israel to Syria via foreign (European and Arab) diplomats and leaders, that Israel holds it responsible for Hizballah's actions. It is not clear how many—if any—of these messages reached Damascus, and in any case, Israel never received a response.
2. Military retaliation against Syrian targets in Lebanon in retaliation for Hizballah attacks.
3. Low-flying warning flights of Israeli fighter jets (including sonic booms) over the Assad home in Ladhahiyya.
4. Pressure on the Lebanese government (operations Accountability and Grapes of Wrath) so that it would pressure Syria to pressure Hizballah.

Neither the messages nor the military actions have evoked a permanent change in Syria's parameters of support of Hizballah or a change in Hizballah's strategy. However, while Syria rejected the argument that Hizballah acted on its behalf or takes orders from Damascus and declared its commitment to Hizballah's right to act as it sees fit to

liberate Lebanese lands,³¹ certain periods of relative quiet reflected Syria's leverage over Hizballah—directly and through Iran—and were the result of Syrian concerns that Hizballah actions may precipitate a wider conflict.³² A case in point is the agreement that Dennis Ross reached with Hafez al-Asad (3 December 1995) to make every effort to stop the violence in southern Lebanon for the duration of the negotiations between Israel and Syria (the Wye Plantation talks between December 1995–February 1996).³³

The Syria-Hizballah relationship has evolved over the years, with Syria losing much of its leverage over the organization as a result of a series of regional changes. The most relevant milestones in this process were:

1. *The Israeli withdrawal in 1985 to the Security Zone.* After this event, Hizballah became the main tool in Syria's arsenal for attacking Israeli forces. Syria's support was critical to Hizballah and Iran for supplying Hizballah and maintaining the links between Hizballah and its mentors in the IRGC. During this period Syria was still ruled by Hafez al-Asad, who did not tolerate any affront to Syrian predominance in Lebanon. The Syrian military command in Lebanon demanded and received full transparency of Hizballah and Iran in return for facilitation of their activities.
2. *The Taif Accords (1989).* The dismantling of all other militias in Lebanon left Hizballah as the only armed militia and strengthened it both vis-à-vis all other Lebanese parties (particularly Amal in the Shiite community and against the anti-Syrian groups). Syria played a pivotal role in achieving legitimization of this status for Hizballah as the "Lebanese resistance" against Israeli occupation and enjoyed the exclusive clout that the organization achieved as a result. However, the fact that Hizballah remained the only armed militia (except for the Palestinians in the refugee camps) enhanced its importance for Syria and gave it more room for maneuver, weakening the Syrian hold on it.
3. *The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000.* On the face of things, the withdrawal threatened the legitimacy of Hizballah's status; if there was no Israeli occupation, there could be no justification for an armed "resistance" outside of the armed forces of the Lebanese state. Syria had a vested interest in preserving Hizballah's right to resistance. Hence, it supported Hizballah's claim that the Sheba farm area (occupied by Israel with the Golan Heights in June 1967) was part of Lebanon, and therefore Israel had not implemented a total withdrawal and the *raison d'être* of Hizballah's resistance remained in force. Syria then even refused an Israeli offer to settle the dispute by declaring that the area is Lebanese and withdrawing from it.³⁴
4. *The death of President Hafez al-Asad and the ascendancy of his son Bashar al-Asad to power.* the presidency of Bashar was arguably the most important event in Syria-Hizballah relations and enhanced the relationship far beyond anything it had seen in the era of Hafez al-Asad.
5. *The "Cedar Revolution,"* or "Beirut Spring," which resulted in the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. Syria's weakened position in Lebanon left it more dependent on, and hence more constrained to give backing to and less able to control, its Lebanese proxies—primarily Hizballah—whose room of maneuver vis-à-vis a weakened Damascus grew even more.
6. *The Israel-Lebanon war of Summer 2006.*

The ability to deter Hizballah through Syria must take into account the balance of power between the two. During the six years since Bashar al-Asad came to power, there has been an increasing feeling in Israeli intelligence and defense circles that the patron-proxy relationship has almost turned around and Nassrallah personally has more influence on Bashar than vice versa. Hafez al-Asad's policy toward the organization—as toward other

Lebanese factions—was to keep them at arm's length and allow the security bureaucracy to deal with them. Bashar got acquainted with Hasan Nassrallah when his father appointed him as responsible for the "Lebanese portfolio" and spent many hours in talks with him, during which Bashar developed what seems to be an unabashed fascination with Nassrallah's personality and leadership. Various explanations for this admiration have been offered, including a psychological need for a charismatic and authoritative role model in lieu of his father and an acute awareness of his own leadership deficiencies, resulting in admiration of a man who has the very leadership traits that he lacks. When he rose to power, this admiration was expressed in Bashar's willingness to invite Nassrallah to the presidential palace and even to allow fighters of Hizballah to march on special occasions in Ladhahiyya.³⁵ The events of summer 2006 have strengthened Bashar's admiration of Hasan Nassrallah. Bashar's speeches increasingly bear the imprint of the arguments and rhetoric of Hizballah and Iran, and Bashar's commitment to his alliance with Nassrallah has grown.

However, as noted above, with the Syrian withdrawal, the value of Hizballah for Syria has grown, and as a result Syria's direct leverage over Hizballah's strategy and day-to-day behavior has diminished drastically. This has also affected Israel's options for deterring Hizballah. Since the Syrian withdrawal, any Israeli attack on a Syrian target entails incursion into Syria proper. Even if Syria can be convinced that its interests are threatened by Hizballah's activities, Syria's dependence on Hizballah to protect its interests in Lebanon, since it has lost its own military presence, precludes the more ham-fisted sort of pressure that Damascus used to wield in Lebanon. Consequently, Israel has lost an important mode of indirect deterrence toward Hizballah due to Syria's loss of leverage in Lebanon.

Lebanon. The failure of direct deterrence toward Hizballah brought Israel to attempt indirect deterrence vis-à-vis Lebanon. Israel warned Lebanon that it holds responsibility for attacks directed against Israel from its "sovereign" territory. This rather legalistic claim was meant to put pressure on the Lebanese government to restrain Hizballah, lest it find itself targeted as well. Officially, during the last war (July–August 2006), Israel stated that "the Lebanese government is fully responsible for attacks that come from their sovereign territory and must take immediate action to peacefully return the two abducted soldiers. If not, the government will face the consequences of its decisions"³⁶

Along with declarations, Israel made attempts at indirect deterrence by punishment. The prime examples of this were Operation Accountability (July 1993) and Operation Grapes of Wrath (April 1996), and a number of attacks on Lebanese infrastructure in the late 1990s that were aimed at generating pressure on the Lebanese government, and through it on Hizballah.

One central assumption in Israel's attempts to deter Hizballah was that it could be influenced by threats to its Shiite constituency in south Lebanon. It was believed that Hizballah would be deterred if it believed that an act on its part would cause a wide-scale Israeli attack in south Lebanon, which would undermine the prosperity that that area enjoyed since 2000. A case in point is the attacks of the Lebanese press and even some traditional Shiite clerics on Hizballah for being willing to sacrifice not only the interests of Lebanon per se, but of its own Shiite constituency for those of its two patrons—Iran and Syria. Nassrallah's contrite appearance on al-Manar after the war, in which he claimed that had he believed that there was even one percent of a possibility that Israel would react as it did and wreak destruction in Lebanon, he would not have ordered the operation, is indicative of Hizballah's susceptibility to this pressure.

After the Syrian withdrawal, Israel was constrained not to pressure the new anti-Syrian Lebanese government headed by Fouad Siniora. The fact that the new Lebanese

government (in contrast to the pro-Syrian president, Emile Lahoud) did not support Hizballah, was involved in a dialogue with it to bring about its disarmament, and was supported by the West made it difficult for Israel to use leverage over it as a “host state” against Hizballah. Therefore, in spite of Israel’s official stand regarding Lebanon’s culpability for Hizballah’s attacks in the summer of 2006, Lebanese government targets were not attacked.

The Eye of the Beholder—Israel in Hizballah’s Eyes

Israel’s deterrent image in the eyes of Hizballah is first and foremost that which is formed in the eyes of its leader, Hasan Nassrallah. Nassrallah’s predominance in projecting the strategy of Hizballah is such that almost all references to Israel’s deterrence (or lack of deterrence) can be traced back to his statements.

Victory and defeat are linked in Nassrallah’s worldview to nonstrategic and intangible issues. In his rhetoric, he dwells on concepts of honor and nobility; the abduction of the soldiers in July 2006 was operation The Fulfilled Promise (*al-wa’ad al-Sadeq*), the Shiites of south Lebanon will return to their homes with honor (*karama*).³⁷ The need to register a psychological victory is evident as well in the use by Nassrallah of bluntly derogatory and offensive language to describe PM Olmert.³⁸ The goal of this rhetoric is to rank the physical harm that Israel can inflict on Lebanon—and hence Israel’s deterrence toward—Shiites and Hizballah as relatively insignificant in contrast to the “real” issues.

In his speeches—particularly those directed towards Israelis—Nassrallah flaunts his “knowledge” of Israeli society; declares that he reads Israeli press (*Haaretz* and *Ma’ariv*) and claims to have intimate intelligence of Israel. His perceptions of Israel, however, are highly ideological. His cobweb theory,³⁹ which depicts Israel as a makeshift society that will fall apart the moment there is a real threat on the civilian population, reflects the traditional picture that has had currency in the Arab world and Iran for decades.

The cobweb theory notwithstanding, Hizballah’s perception of Israel’s military capabilities was never flawed. Hizballah had no doubt throughout the conflict with Israel that the latter has superior force, which could—if used—cause intolerable damage to Hizballah and to Lebanon. Material collected in various skirmishes and in the war of 2006 show that the organization had a high level of intelligence on Israel. On the basis of this intelligence, Hizballah’s analysis of Israel included the following components:

1. The Israeli Air Force has precision weaponry and will be employed in the opening stage of any attack to decapitate the leadership. This can be neutralized by building reinforced bunkers and hiding places for the leadership in advance.
2. Israel is an open society and it will be impossible for Israel to achieve strategic surprise in a blow against Hizballah.
3. The Israeli army is a regular army reinforced by reserves. In any case, mobilization and movement of forces to the Lebanese theater will take time, which can be used by Hizballah to strike Israel’s population centers.

The flaw in July 2006 therefore was not in Hizballah’s reading of Israel’s power, but rather in its image of Israel’s willingness to use that power (intention). A number of cases of confrontation between Israel and Hizballah brought Nassrallah to the conclusion that the real Israeli deterrence was much lower than the objective Israeli capability. Five events that were pivotal in forming this conclusion were:

1. Israel's responses to Hizballah attacks on IDF forces in the Security Zone, which were primarily defensive and were interpreted by Hizballah as deriving from an Israeli fear of endangering troops in offensive action.
2. The abrupt end to the Grapes of Wrath operation in 1996, which demonstrated the susceptibility of Israel to international pressure due to civilian casualties on the Lebanese side.
3. The Israeli withdrawal from the Security Zone and Israel's abandoning of its allies in south Lebanon, which was seen as a sign of lack of resolve and weakness.
4. Israel's acceptance of Hizballah's new rules of the game in the Shaba area after May 2000.
5. The absence of any Israeli reprisal for the abduction of three Israeli soldiers in October 2000 and Israel's measured (in the eyes of Hizballah, deterred) reactions to Hizballah attacks since that event.

The lessons from these cases and others were, in the eyes of Hizballah, that Israel's use of its power was constrained by four main factors:

1. *Domestic*—Hizballah's assessment of Israel's deterrence stems first and foremost from an ideologically biased reading of Israeli society (the ideological axiom that Israeli society is not indigenous to the country leads to the conclusion that it will fall apart under sufficient pressure. According to the assessment in Hizballah, the Israeli public lacked the resilience for a war that would affect the civilian population and was particularly sensitive to loss of lives of soldiers. Israeli elections were also assessed by Hizballah as limiting Israel's willingness to get involved in escalation in the North. This was the reasoning behind Nassrallah's cobweb theory of Israel that he made public in a speech in Bint Jubeil (25 May 2000). According to this theory, the Israeli leadership was aware of the low resilience of the populace to sustained attacks on the homefront, and hence would refrain from military actions that may risk precipitating such attacks by Hizballah.
2. *Military*—Hizballah believed that the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifadah in October 2000 would preclude Israel from opening an additional front and reduce the appetite of Israel's leaders for retaliation against Hizballah.
3. *Foreign*—Israel was perceived as firmly controlled by the U.S. Hence, Israel would not allow itself to become embroiled in another "Lebanon War" unless the timing and the circumstances were desirable to Washington. In a roundabout way, it was believed that the U.S. involvement in Iraq would restrain Israel from deep military involvement in Lebanon.
4. *Humane*—Hizballah is aware of Israeli constraints in causing civilian casualties and took that into account in its deployment in the villages of south Lebanon and in the integration of military and civilian elements in its headquarters in Beirut.

A fifth contributing factor to Nassrallah's low assessment of Israel's deterrence was the low esteem which he felt—or at least demonstrated—toward Israel's political and military leaders. A recurrent motif in Nassrallah's speeches was the description of the Israeli leadership as "confused," while Hizballah's acts were aimed at increasing this confusion no less than they were meant to achieve any military goal.⁴⁰ According to Nassrallah, the organization planned the abduction (and subsequent killing) of the three soldiers in October 2000 on the basis of a sound assessment that Israel, "defeated" after its withdrawal, would not carry out its threats to retaliate.⁴¹ The Israeli media had reiterated for some time the motif of Nassrallah's credibility. It appears that this motif has been picked up by Nassrallah, who has frequently referred to it when directly threatening Israel and uses this image to

intensify his own deterrent image. In the same vein, he makes frequent use of the motif of promising a “surprise” and warning that Hizballah has capabilities that Israel does not know about.⁴²

It also should be noted that during the 2006 fighting between Israel and Hizballah, the latter had access to a constant stream of information from the media. Marvin Kalb astutely describes this “asymmetry of information” between Israel, an open society, and the closed decision making of Hizballah:

To do their jobs, journalists employed both the camera and the computer, and, with the help of portable satellite dishes and video phones, “streamed” or broadcast their reports from hotel roofs and hilltops, as they covered the movement of troops and the rocketing of villages—often, (unintentionally, one assumes) revealing sensitive information to the enemy. Once upon a time, such information was the stuff of military intelligence acquired with considerable effort and risk; now it has become the stuff of everyday journalism. The camera and the computer have become weapons of war.

For any journalist worth his or her salt, this should spark a respectful moment of reflection. Not only did this new and awesome technology enable journalists to bring the ugly reality of war to both belligerents (and others around the world), serving as a powerful influence on public opinion and governmental attitudes and actions; it also became an extremely valuable intelligence asset for both Israel and Hezbollah, and Hezbollah especially exploited it. If we are to collect lessons from this war, one of them would have to be that a closed society can control the image and the message that it wishes to convey to the rest of the world far more effectively than can an open society, especially one engaged in an existential struggle for survival. An open society becomes the victim of its own openness. During the war, no Hezbollah secrets were disclosed, but in Israel secrets were leaked, rumors spread like wildfire, leaders felt obliged to issue hortatory appeals often based on incomplete knowledge, and journalists were driven by the fire of competition to publish and broadcast unsubstantiated information. A closed society conveys the impression of order and discipline; an open society, buffeted by the crosswinds of reality and rumor, criticism and revelation, conveys the impression of disorder, chaos and uncertainty, but this impression can be misleading.⁴³

The latest war has demonstrated that Hizballah's perception of the strength of Israel's deterrence is a derivative of its own counterdeterrence. Nassrallah reiterated in his speeches that the Israeli public “knows that he speaks the truth” and that his threats to retaliate against Israeli cities should be taken seriously. Toward the end of the war, his oblique references to hitting targets “further than Haifa” in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Beirut became more explicit and he declared in a prime-time televised speech that “if you [Israel] bomb our capital, Beirut, we will bomb your capital [sic] Tel Aviv.” The fact that Hizballah did not succeed in carrying out that threat was an immediate blow to the organization's deterrence.

Summary: Lessons for the Future of Deterrence of Hizballah

Conventional wisdom following the “Second Lebanon War” of July–August 2006 has been that Israel's experience in attempting to deter Hizballah has been spotted with tactical

successes and, lately, a strategic failure. However, a deeper observation of the history of the Israel-Hizballah conflict shows that the failures were not due to Hizballah's disregard of Israeli deterrent signals, but rather to Israeli failure to transmit those signals, both in a declaratory manner and on the ground. From the above discussion, however, we may surmise that *Hizballah did not challenge Israeli deterrence—as it saw it—in its decision to abduct Israeli soldiers in July 2006. Israel had given it no reason to believe that such an act would no longer be considered within the rules of the game.* This is reflected in Nassrallah's statements in August 2006 that had he assessed that were there even one percent possibility that Israel would respond as it did in the war (e.g., wide-scale bombing of Lebanon), he would not have ordered the abduction of the Israeli soldiers that sparked the war. The absence of a firm Israeli response to previous attacks or a clear Israeli warning was the basis of a logical assumption that Israel would not respond harshly to the abduction.

Israel's "sin of omission" in this context was mainly in the absence of a clear policy for projection of unambiguous deterrent messages and credible intolerable prices. This, however, is not unique to Israel; it is largely due to the dilemma that any democratic country has in transmitting a consistent signal of deterrence to a terrorist organization. The discussions in the free press and uncoordinated "background" briefings by senior military officers, which highlighted the domestic and diplomatic obstacles that Israel would encounter in implementing a threat of massive reprisal against Hizballah, played a significant role in Hizballah's perception of Israeli deterrence.

Hizballah has never doubted Israel's military superiority or capability to inflict harm to the organization and/or Lebanon that would outbalance any benefit that the organization could reap from its attacks on Israel. However, Hizballah believed that Israel's threat of "high-intensity deterrence" would be effectively constrained by the existence of Hizballah's "low-intensity counterdeterrence" in conjunction with domestic and international pressures. Hizballah always understood that this balance of deterrence was valid only as long as it did not cross a "red line." Israel never spelled out this red line and therefore, Hizballah construed it from Israel's behavior in a long series of clashes with the organization, in terms of territory, weaponry, and types of attack:

1. *In terms of territory*—Hizballah believed that attacks that would take place in the disputed area, first in south Lebanon and the after the Israeli withdrawal in the region of the Shaba farms and the Ghajar village, would be tolerated by Israel as compatible with the rules of the game that had been set immediately after the Israeli withdrawal.
2. *In respect to the types of weaponry employed*—Hizballah refrained from using its "strategic weapons" (medium- and long-range rockets) or even from launching short range rockets (Katyushas) across the border. The leaders of Hizballah and Iran assessed that use of rockets would serve as a *causus belli* for Israel. The option of massive rocket fire on Israel's population centers was reserved as a deterrent to prevent Israel from attacking Hizballah headquarters or the organization's strategic targets deep in Lebanon. To use that weapon on a sporadic basis would impinge on the organization's deterrence for a time it would be needed.
3. *In terms of types of attack*—it was believed that Israel would tolerate small arms and light artillery fire across the border, local incursions, and even attempts to kidnap Israeli soldiers.⁴⁴

Indeed, all the cases in which Hizballah was not deterred were concentrated territorially in the areas which were perceived as tolerated by Israel (south Lebanon and then Shaba and Ghajar), and were characterized by use of weapons that did not exceed the parameters that

Hizballah believed that Israel could tolerate. The fact that Israel refrained from extracting a price for those attacks proved to Hizballah the validity of its theory.

On the other hand, Hizballah was deterred from crossing what it perceived as Israel's red lines. In all the skirmishes that took place before and since the Israeli withdrawal of May 2000, Hizballah attacked only Israeli villages on the border and did not make use of its medium and long-range rockets. The fact that it saw cross-border infiltration in areas outside the eastern sector of the border (Ghajar, Shaba) as liable to provoke an undesirable Israeli reaction is evident in Hizballah's blocking of Palestinian organizations in south Lebanon from performing action on their own across the border.⁴⁵ There is no doubt, however, that the last round has altered Hizballah's perception of Israel's deterrence, making it clear that, for the present, it cannot return to the former rules of the game. Evidence of this is in Nassrallah's statement that while he does not believe that Israel will renew the war, due to domestic considerations, Hizballah will refrain from launching attacks in the Shaba area, though it "reserves the right" to do so.

The Hizballah assessment was, therefore, that Israel would react with a usual menu of artillery fire and air attacks on Hizballah bases near the border, an occasional attack on a Syrian post, and so forth. Since Israel and the international community had accepted—as Hizballah saw it—the nonaccountability of the Lebanese State for Hizballah's actions, Israel would not receive international support for retaliation against Lebanon itself. Israel would react extensively, according to this assessment, only in case Hizballah exceeded these territorial and military parameters by incursions in other areas of the border or by launching sustained attacks with medium- and long-range rockets on Israeli cities. Even then, Israel would refrain from attacking non-Hizballah Lebanese targets.

The linkage between Israeli politics and Hizballah tests of Israel's deterrence and attempts to draw new lines and rules is also noteworthy. Hizballah often took advantage of Israeli political circumstances to create precedents of provocation without Israel retaliating with force. Hizballah's assessment of Israel in the summer of 2006 was based on experience with the previous Barak and Sharon governments. The Olmert government was perceived as being averse to military conflict. Therefore, in the absence of any clear signal from Israel, Hizballah had no reason to assume that the Olmert-Peretz team would react differently than their predecessors to such an attack. Ostensibly, the fact that the new Israeli government retaliated with force in Gaza to the abduction of an Israeli soldier should have alerted Hizballah to such a contingency. However, by the same token, Hizballah may have taken into account that the Israeli reaction in Gaza derived from the government's need to justify the further unilateral disengagement in the West Bank and that, in any case, the Palestinians lacked the deterrent weapons that Hizballah threatened to use. Israel had not used the Gaza precedent to warn any other enemies and therefore, rightly, Hizballah did not see it as a possible reason to refrain from action.

As noted above, Israel has never retaliated against Hizballah in Lebanon for acts of terrorism committed by the organization through (1) its involvement in Palestinian terror, (2) infiltration of terrorists into Israel from abroad, or (3) attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.

It appears that Hizballah believed that its denial or nonconfirmation of its responsibility would suffice to preclude domestic and international support for an Israeli retaliation in the Lebanese theater for such actions. This sense of impunity extends to Iran itself, which appears not to fear the exposure of its diplomatic missions to an accusation of complicity in a terrorist attack. Nevertheless, though Hizballah has increased its involvement in the two former types of attacks—apparently confident that Israel will not respond to them—the spate of attacks abroad in the 1990s has not continued. One possible reason may be the

American retaliation against Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and Iran's concern not to give the U.S. an excuse to attack it. Another explanation is that those attacks were seen by Hizballah and Iran as case-specific retaliation for what they perceived as an Israeli crossing of red lines in the conflict and signals to Israel that Hizballah has a global reach, which it refrains from using as long as Israel does not cross its red lines. In fact, since then Israel has not targeted key members of the Hizballah leadership.

In retrospect, individuals involved in Israeli security and defense policy formation have pointed out that Israel's inaction in the face of those attacks not only impaired Israel's deterrence, but enhanced Hizballah's own deterrence against Israel—the ever-present threat of international terrorism.⁴⁶ Similarly, Israel's inaction in the face of Hizballah's building of fortifications on the Israeli border and amassing a large arsenal of rockets allowed Hizballah to build up a deterrent against Israel that eroded Israel's own.

Notes

1. Mohammad Fanush to *al-Manar*, 18 January, 2002, Hasan Nassrallah to *al-Majala* (Saudi Arabia), 24 March, 2004, Hasan Nassrallah to *al-Mostaqbal* (Lebanon), 31 December 2000.
2. One representative of the IRGC/al-Qods force and one representative of the Iranian embassy in Beirut.
3. Headed by Hashem Safi al-Din.
4. Nassrallah rarely refers to Moghniya, though he has denied the claim that Jawad Nour al-Din is a cover name for Moghniya.
5. A recent expression of this cult is the emphasis on Nassrallah during and after the last Lebanon war. During the war, he was almost alone among the Hizballah leadership who appeared in the media. The dramaturgy of his hiding during the war and his "disappearance" until the mass rally that the organization held (22 September) was staged to arouse associations with the "Hidden Imam." The name that he chose for the war itself, *al-intissar al-illahi* (The Divine Victory), derives from the Arabic root of his own name, Nassr-Allah (Victory of God).
6. Interview with Brig. Gen (ret.) Yossef Kuperwasser, former Deputy Head of MI, 10 September 2006.
7. Hizballah's arsenal includes: 122mm Katyusha (range 20 km), 240 mm Fajr-3, (range 40 km) and Fajr-5, (range 72 km) and Zelzal-2 rockets (210 km and payload of 600 kg). Other elements that were used by Hizballah to augment this image included: AA missiles SA-7 and SA-14, a naval unit, CS-802 coast-to-sea missiles, ultra-light planes, and a mini-RPV that the organization demonstrated and succeeded in flying into Israel (8 November 2004) loaded with a camera (Hizballah propaganda exploited this feat to show that the organization has ways to collect information on Israeli targets and could potentially load explosives on the RPV instead of a camera).
8. The Hizballah *modus operandi* was based on forming a forward command post, manning forward observation posts by senior commanders of the organization, and employing artillery to support the attack. The Hizballah teams were specialized (mining, explosive devices, antitank, etc.).
9. During the fighting in July 2006, Israel dropped fliers calling on the civilians to leave. Hizballah fighters prevented Shiites from leaving their homes (with success mainly in the main Hizballah-dominated villages), thus using them as human shields.
10. These first attacks were the October 23, 1983 attack on the Marine compound in Beirut that killed 241 Americans and 56 French troops and the November 1982 attack on the Israeli compound in Tyre. On Hizballah's pride in this method, see Hasan Nassrallah to *al-Manar*, 25 May, 2006.
11. *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 18 February, 2001, *al-Ahad* (Lebanon), 23 February 2001.
12. The most salient of these instances included, first, a crossborder attack near Kibbutz Met-subah in which six Israelis were killed. The al-Aqsa Brigades of Fatah issued a communiqué taking responsibility, but the assessment in the IDF was that the terrorists were Palestinians who were trained and directed by Hizballah and infiltrated from Lebanon. Hizballah pointedly refused to "confirm or

deny” its involvement in the attack, but is “proud” of its support of the Palestinians. Second, on 2 August 2003 a senior Hizballah activist, Ali Hussein Saleh, was killed by a car bomb. Hizballah accused Israel and the next day fired three rounds of anti-aircraft shells in the air over Israeli towns along the border. Hizballah claimed that the rounds had been fired against Israeli planes which had crossed the border. This was the beginning of an escalation that resulted in Hizballah rocket fire into the Golan and the death of an Israeli from the anti-aircraft fire (10 August).

13. *al-Safir*, 1 July, 2006.

14. According to Israeli security sources.

15. The *Santorini* was captured on 6 May 2001 after having been involved in three previous smuggling attempts by the PFLP-GC from Tripoli (November 2000), by Hizballah from Jiyah beach south of Beirut (April 2001), and by the PFLP-GC from Tripoli (May 2001). Various weapons were found aboard the boat, including dozens of barrels filled with Katyusha rockets, antiaircraft (Strela) and antitank missiles, mortars, small arms, and ammunition.

16. On the early morning of 3 January 2002 the Israel Defense Forces seized a ship called *Karine A*, carrying 50 tons of weapons and ammunition for the Palestinian Authority. A naval commando force seized the ship’s crew some 500 km off the Israeli coast. The ship was carrying a variety of weaponry, including short- and long-range katyusha rockets, antitank missiles (Low and Sagger), mortars, mines, explosives, sniper rifles, shotguns, and more.

17. A number of cases were uncovered, the most important ones being: In July 2002, a group of Israeli Arab drug dealers from Nazareth and Ghajar, who were suspected of transferring to hostile elements in Lebanon computer programs, maps, other objects, and classified intelligence documents in exchange for drugs and weapons. In September 2002, ten Israeli citizens, residents of the Galilee, were arrested on suspicion of providing intelligence to Hizballah in exchange for drugs and money. The principal detainee was IDF Lt.-Col. Omar al-Hayeb from Beit Zarzir, who provided Hizballah with information on the deployment of IDF units in the area around the Shabaa Farms, maps of the North, information on Israeli military officers and Israeli military planning. Other cases included the 24 January 2003 arrest of a network of Hizballah agents which included Israeli drug dealers and Israeli Arabs and the arrest of Nissim Netser, an Israeli of Lebanese origin who procured intelligence material (maps, etc.) for Hizballah. Details from the Information Center for Intelligence and Terror in Gellilot.

18. Hussein Maqdad was a Hizballah operative who entered Israel with a foreign passport and was wounded in his hotel room in East Jerusalem while preparing a bomb in 1996.

19. Steven Smirk was a German citizen who converted to Islam and was recruited by Hizballah while in Lebanon. He was sent to Israel to perpetrate a suicide attack and arrested in November 1997.

20. On 5 January 2001, a British-Lebanese citizen named Jihad Shouman was arrested on suspicion that he was sent to Israel to perpetrate a terrorist attack on behalf of Hizballah. In his hotel room a large sum of money was found, along with a skullcap like that worn by religious Jews, a timer, and three cellular phones. Shuman was born in Sierra Leone of Lebanese parents but inherited British citizenship from his father. He was recruited to Hizballah during a visit to Lebanon. His recruitment and training were completed during visits to his handlers in Malaysia. Finally, he was sent to London to prepare for his visit to Israel. He was supposed to have dug up explosives, which were cached near Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem, but was arrested while attempting to find the cache, tried, sentenced, and jailed.

21. Fawzi Ayoub was arrested in Israel in June 2002. He entered Israel from a European country carrying a false American passport, and checked into a hotel in downtown Jerusalem. A number of days after arriving he traveled to Hebron, where he was arrested by the Palestinians. During his stay in Israel, he met with another activist who accompanied him and assisted him on his mission. The two were instructed by their operators abroad to retrieve weapons from a hiding place and use them to perpetrate an attack. Ayoub had been a member of the External Security apparatus of Imad Moghniya, Hassan Nassrallah’s deputy for military affairs.

22. There is no doubt regarding the responsibility of Hizballah and Iran for the two Buenos Aires attacks. Yousuf Aljouni and Abu al-Foul, two of the Hizballah operatives who were involved

in this attempt were arrested in Jordan for smuggling weapons to Palestinian terrorists in 2001. The suicide bomber in the AMIA attack was a member of Hizballah, Ibrahim Hussein Berri, who came to Argentina a few days before the attack and made farewell calls to his family in Lebanon before the attack. According to the information that has accumulated since then, the planning of both attacks in Buenos Aires was assigned to the "External Security" apparatus of Imad Moghniya. On the eve of the attack there was a steep increase in communication between the Iranian embassy in Buenos Aires and Tehran. The involvement of Hizballah in the attack on the US military base in Khobar (Saudi Arabia) reflected the same trend.

23. From discussions with a number of former senior Israeli intelligence officers.

24. Private communication with Maj. Gen. Yaacov Amidror.

25. Private communication with Shabtai Shavit.

26. A phenomenon which transpires from the Hizballah indoctrination documents found in southern Lebanon.

27. Operation Accountability (*din ve-heshbon*) took place from 25–31 July 1993. The concept behind the operation was to induce indirect deterrence through massive artillery, air, and naval fire around Lebanese civilian targets that would cause massive flight of Lebanese refugees to the north. Israeli bombing destroyed Lebanese infrastructure and civilian targets, such as major electricity stations and bridges. Accountability was the result of the Israeli understanding that direct deterrence would not yield results in the case of Hizballah, and hence the only option was to generate indirect deterrence through the host state, Lebanon. This, it was believed, could be achieved because economic damage due to destruction of Lebanese infrastructure would bring the international actors that were heavily invested in the reconstruction of Lebanon to prevent future outbreaks; mounting pressure of the refugees from the South who flooded Beirut would force the government to take action; and the Shiite population of the South would rebel against Hizballah for having brought about the Israeli reaction. It was clear, therefore, that targeting Hizballah targets alone would not achieve the goal and Israel had to run the tightrope between massive air and artillery attacks that would create an overwhelming refugee problem for the Lebanese government, on one hand, and, on the other hand, humanitarian consideration so as not to be seen as deliberately targeting civilian targets. The operation ended with a set of unwritten "understandings" brokered by the U.S. These stipulated that both sides would refrain from attacking civilians. Israel's hope that the destruction of infrastructure and the pressure of refugees would galvanize the Lebanese government into restraining Hizballah turned out to be unfounded. The "public opinion" of the refugees had little impact on the Lebanese government, and the latter had no real leverage over Hizballah. The understanding of Accountability resulted in Hizballah restraint in not targeting Israeli targets inside Israel, but effectively constrained Israeli deterrence by prohibiting Israel from retaliating against Hizballah in civilian areas. Thus Hizballah could, under the cover of the understandings, continue to attack Israeli military targets, while Israel had few Hizballah military targets at which to strike.

28. Operation Grapes of Wrath (*Invei Za'am*) began on 11 April 1996 and lasted 16 days. The goal of the operation was to cause increasing damage that would force large numbers of refugees to move to the North and put pressure on both the Hizballah leadership and the Lebanese government. The Israeli Air Force attacked rocket launchers, Hizballah installations, and personnel, as well as civilian infrastructure (houses, bridges, and the Beirut electric power stations), while the Israeli Navy blockaded the ports of Lebanon South of Beirut. Hizballah retaliated with massive rocket fire on Israeli population centers along the border. The military action was accompanied by intensive psychological warfare from both sides, urging the residents of south Lebanon and northern Israel to flee the area. An estimated 300,000 Lebanese fled north, and an estimated 30,000 Israelis fled from the Lebanese border to the south. The operation ended abruptly in the wake of a misfire of an Israeli artillery shell, which fell in the midst of a UN camp in Kafar Qana (18 April) that had taken in large numbers of refugees.

29. Interviews with Israeli policymakers and intelligence officers, Prof. Moshe Arens, former Heads of Mossad, Ephraim Halevy, General Danny Yatom, et alia.

30. A tactic that was referred to derisively by Nassrallah as the Israelis staying in their "cages."

31. See *Tishrin* (Syria), 1–4 July 2001.

32. One interesting example was the accidental shelling of an elementary school in Arab Salim by SLA artillery, wounding twenty-four children, while Israeli and Syrian delegations were meeting at Shepherdstown. Such an event would have automatically brought a barrage of rockets on Northern Israel. In this case, Israel apologized and Hizballah announced that it would not retaliate. There is no doubt that Hizballah's restraint in this case was due to Syrian pressure.

33. Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York: 2004), p. 232–233.

34. The offer was made during the deliberations with the UN over demarcation of the border. Private communication.

35. Nasrallah himself admitted at one time that he had never had a personal, face-to-face meeting with Hafez al-Asad. al-Manar TV, June 10, 2001.

36. IDF spokesman. <http://www1.idf.il/DOVER/site/mainpage.asp?sl=EN&id=7&docid=54350&Pos=1&last=0&bScope=False>

37. This is a pre-Islamic (*Jahili*) term, which is a part of the Arab set of values transferred to Islam, and refers to male honor endowed upon one's family, tribe, and people.

38. He is described as effeminate and incapable.

39. Presented in a speech that Nassrallah gave in Bint Jubeil on 26 May 2000, after the Israeli withdrawal from the Security Zone.

40. Examples of the image of Israel as "confused": Deputy SG of Hizballah, Naim Qassem after an Israeli APC was hit by a IED in Lebanon (17 October 1995): Israel will not retaliate because it is in a state of confusion; Hizballah analysis after a AT missile attack on 16 February 2001, *al-Ahad*, 23 February, 2001. *al-Intiqad*, 6 July 2001, in the wake of the attack in Matzuva (12 March 2002) *al-Intiqad*, 15 March, 2002, *al-Intiqad*, 29 March 2002.

41. *al-Intiqad*, 1 August 2003.

42. For example the mini-RPV that infiltrated Israeli airspace in November 2004.

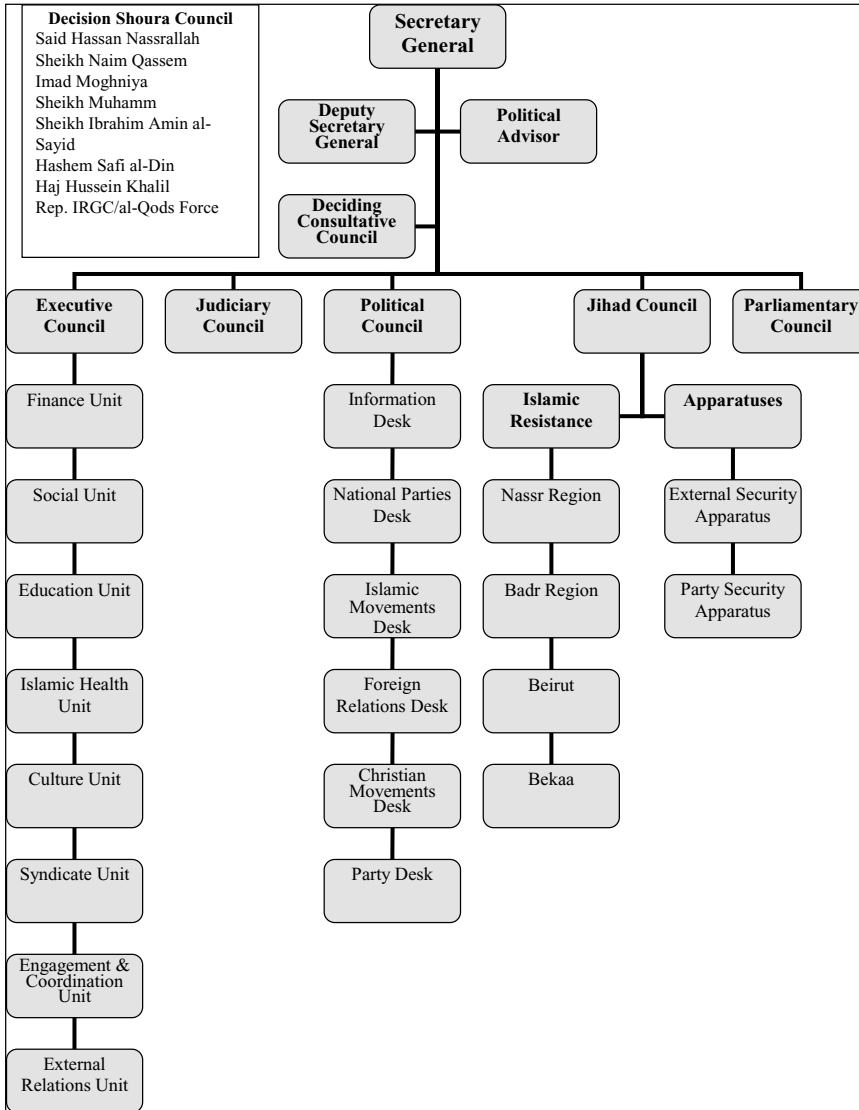
43. Marvin Kalb, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Faculty Research Working Paper Series, RWP07-012, February 2007, pp. 4–5.

44. During 2005 and 2006 there were a number of attempts by Hizballah to abduct Israeli soldiers on the border. These were disrupted until the successful attack in July 2006. Israeli Military Intelligence indicated in its annual assessment that Hizballah was not deterred from these attempts by the fear of Israeli retaliation and that one of the likely scenarios for escalation was success of such an attempt. Lecture by Brig. Gen (ret.) Yossef Kuperwasser at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) in Herzliya, Israel, 10 September 2006.

45. In a few cases when Palestinian organizations attempted to infiltrate the border without coordination with Hizballah, the latter took steps to prevent them, and clarified that the role of the Palestinians is to attack Israel from "inside" whereas the border with Lebanon is the prerogative of the "Lebanese Resistance" (i.e. Hizballah).

46. This opinion was voiced by a number of senior intelligence and military officers interviewed in the course of this study.

Appendix - The Organizational Structure of Hizballah



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