Hezbollah
Before and After the Syrian War

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Abstract

Hezbollah combat forces joined the Syrian Civil War in 2012 in alliance with the Assad regime. This Hezbollah action increased geopolitical uncertainties in the Levant and created a potentially existential crisis for Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah emerged in 1982 as a Shiite terrorist organization and an ideological Shiite proxy for Iran. During the next ten years, Hezbollah evolved into a complex institution; Hezbollah became a major political force in Lebanon and emerged as a powerful non-state military force in the region. Open-literature peer-reviewed documents and vetted media reports provide event and timeline evidence of consistent adaptive behavior patterns by Hezbollah. Hezbollah has three inherent weaknesses that constrain the Hezbollah political potential: Hezbollah depends on Iran for money, weapons, and training resources. Virtually all of this Iranian support flows through a Syrian logistics channel. Shiite Hezbollah is a minority political faction within Lebanon. Hezbollah and the Assad regime are part of an Iranian geostrategic scheme to establish a “Shiite arc of influence” from Iran across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. The Sunni community, led by Saudi Arabia, opposes the Iranian move to be the dominant power in the Middle East. The Shiite and Sunni factions moved from a political dual to open sectarian warfare conducted by Shiite and Sunni proxy forces in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Although Hezbollah effectively intervened to rescue the Assad regime from a successful rebel conquest, there are negative political, material, and social consequences to Hezbollah for the intervention in the Syrian War. These problems will persist into the longer term for Hezbollah.

Keywords: Hezbollah, Lebanon, Syrian Civil War, Iran, Nasrallah, Middle East sectarian conflict.
Dedication

To my parents, Beth and Tony, for instilling in me a belief that I can aspire to anything as long as I am willing to work hard for it, for their encouragement as I continue to work hard for it, and for making me laugh when the hard work made me too serious.
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List of Terms, Abbreviations, or Symbols

AMAL - Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniyya, "The Brigades of the Lebanese Resistance"
al-Intiqad/al-Ahad ("Examine"/"Sunday") - Hezbollah newspaper and website
Al-Manar ("The Beacon") - Hezbollah television network
Al-Nour ("The Light") - Hezbollah radio station
IDF – Israeli Defense Force
IRGC - Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
MNF – Multi-National Force
PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization
SLA - Southern Lebanese Army
UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis examines the hypothesis that Hezbollah will be weakened politically by the Hezbollah entry into the Syrian Civil War unless the outcome of the war reestablishes the Assad government in control of all former Syrian territory. Iran created Hezbollah for three reasons: to export Iranian theocratic ideology and influence; to create a Shiite Islamic state within Lebanon; to be a tool through which Iran could combat Israel. Iran and Syria trained and funded Hezbollah to become an influential organization within Lebanon as related to the original three reasons. Although Hezbollah has not yet achieved the Islamic state within Lebanon, due to both the resistance of the Lebanese populace and the decentralized Lebanese government, Hezbollah still became the major power player in Lebanon and a significant actor within the Iranian geopolitical strategy.

As Hezbollah has emerged as such a significant factor in the Levant, it is important to understand how Hezbollah involvement in the Syrian conflict will affect Hezbollah in the future. This thesis will use research to develop a base of information that identifies trends in Hezbollah evolution and past decision processes. Additional supporting research has examined current reliable expert opinion relative to the Hezbollah history and the ongoing Hezbollah involvement in the Syrian Civil War. These data are combined in an analysis process that gives insight into the “future Hezbollah” after the Syrian civil war involvement.

As Hezbollah worked to achieve all of the reasons for which it was created, it has continuously adapted itself to the present circumstances within Lebanon and evolved into a seemingly less radicalized and more pro-Lebanon entity. During this time, Hezbollah has
continued to receive support from and maintained close relationships with Iran and Syria. Syria, under the Assad regime, has continued to facilitate the transport of weapons, money, training and supplies from Iran into Lebanon. This ostensibly was the rational way Hezbollah and Iran both vocalized support for Bashar al-Assad when the first attack on the Assad regime began under what appeared to be the auspices of the Arab Spring. The actual reason was the Iranian imperative to maintain a friendly regime in Syria to support the geopolitical objective to establish an Iranian dominated Shiite sphere of influence across the northern Middle East. However, Hezbollah did not interfere with the Syrian Civil War until almost two years after it started, until it appeared that the al-Assad regime was losing. Iran summoned the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, for a meeting in Tehran; afterwards, Hezbollah forces began covertly moving into Syria and engaging the rebels. This alarmed the Lebanese government as Lebanon began feeling the war-effects along its shared border with Syria as rebels conducted incursions to go after both Hezbollah and Syrian military officers loyal to al-Assad.

In order to gain an understanding of likely scenarios for the future, this thesis reviews how Hezbollah evolved from a "one-trick pony" organization that conducted terror attacks into a dynamic political and military organism that continues to grow and evolve in response to changes within its environment. At the same time, Hezbollah maintains a fidelity to Iran and their founding purpose: to bring about an Islamic state in Lebanon. This historical evaluation will bring through to the present-day involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War, especially as to how this could affect their popularity both domestically and regionally in the Middle East.

The range of materials used for this thesis will include primary sources such as documents from Hezbollah itself, as well as the transcripts of interviews with key Hezbollah
creators conducted with various media outlets. Established experts, articles from various media outlets, charts and timelines to illustrate Hezbollah activities, will bring additional secondary sources forward from peer-reviewed articles and journals, books so as to provide evidence to the analysis that will be presented.

The rationale behind this thesis is to examine a pivotal moment for the group identified as a "Team A" terror organization (Byman, 2003). If Bashar al-Assad is able to maintain control over all of the Syrian territory, then Hezbollah will be able to make the claim that they personally turned the tide for a foreign government that was under attack and helped to keep them in power. This will put Hezbollah in a unique position that surpasses what they had previously: being the only Arab power that has successfully defended themselves against Israel. The influence that they will be able to wield as a result will be vast in this region and could make them an unstoppable force within Lebanon. On the other hand, their success may create fear within other Lebanese confessions, or religious groups, that Hezbollah will attempt again to change Lebanon into a Shiite Islamic state. This could be setting the stage for another Lebanese Civil War, but it will be one where Hezbollah will have the full and open backing not just from Iran but also from a very grateful al-Assad Syrian government. If Hezbollah dominates Lebanon as a result, this would bring about a Shiite/Iranian arc of influence in the Middle East, which will be unsettling to some of Iran's enemies, namely Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni countries. Potential future conflicts in the Middle East are quite plausible and, if religious-inspired, will be devastating and have ramifications worldwide; this is why it is necessary for the field of Strategic Security.
Chapter 2
Hezbollah 1982-2012

Section A. Factors Preceding Hezbollah Creation

Hezbollah's creation in 1982 was reactionary to several key events that were occurring both within Lebanon and within the Middle East immediately prior to 1982. These events are worth examining, if only briefly, in order to understand the environment that facilitated Hezbollah's birth; the events include the Lebanese Civil War, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Iranian Revolution and the socio-political awakening of Lebanese Shiites. (Norton, 2009; Harfoush, 2013).

The Lebanese Civil War

Two longstanding destabilizing factors contributed to the Lebanese Civil War: the structure of the Lebanese government and the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The French created the Lebanese government template prior to their withdrawal from the colony in 1943. (Gleis, 2012). The French believed that by establishing a confessional system of government in which representation of each religious denomination of Lebanon in various governmental posts would maintain a balance of power that, while fragile, would prohibit the domination of any one sect over another. (Gleis, 2012). Each of the three major religions of Lebanon had assigned to it one of the most powerful positions of the government. The President, as the most powerful role, was to be a Maronite Catholic; the Prime Minister, the second most

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1 Joseph Alaga's book, "Hizbullah's DNA and the Arab Spring" argues that Hezbollah was founded in 1978, based on the unknown whereabouts of Hasan Nasrallah during this time. The argument, while argued, cannot be heralded as definitive based on the evidence Alagha presented.
important role, was to be a Sunni Muslim role; the Speaker of the House, the third most
important role, was to be a Shiite Muslim. (Alaghia, 2013; Samii, 2013). The confessions that
belong to these roles were reflective of a census of Lebanon from 1932. (Norton, 2009). There
has not been a census taken since this time out of a fear that the changing demography of
Lebanon would show that one or two religious groups would outnumber the others and thus
would be able to claim one or more positions of power and change the religious composition of
the government. (Avon, 2012). This has been the source of much tension within the Lebanese
government, as some religious groups believe their representation in government is not an
accurate reflection when compared to their population numbers, while other groups fear they
may lose their positions of power due to a decrease in their population. (Alaghia, 2013). This
has often rendered the Lebanese government relatively ineffective as a result.

The second factor that helped trigger the civil war relates to the Palestinian refugees who
have been encamped in Lebanon since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. (Gleis & Berti,
2012) The Palestinians are a group exploited by all Middle Eastern nations as victims of the
Israeli state. However, these same nations do not allow the assimilation of these "victims" within
their borders, as this would not promote the case against Israel. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) The
Palestinian camps that are located within Lebanon are near the southern border shared with Israel
and camps located in the Beirut suburbs; the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a Sunni
Muslim group and other terror groups use this to their advantage for striking into Israel whenever
possible to cause collateral damage. (Szekely, 2012). A majority of the Lebanese is sympathetic
to the Palestinian cause; however, as the Palestinians provoke the Israeli military to acts of
violence along this southern border, the Lebanese suffer as a result. That the PLO has
disregarded the wellbeing of the citizens within the nation they are “visitors” to also fueled additional tension within Lebanon. (Samii, 2008).

This particular situation ignited the civil war, originally between the PLO and the Maronite Catholics in 1975 and grew to encompass all of the religious sects within Lebanon. Each sect took sides with either the Christians or the Palestinians. Soon after Lebanon’s descent into their civil war, Syria invaded and occupied areas of Lebanon that shared the border with Syria in order to stabilize this area as well as to increase their influence in the country as a whole. (Berti, 2011). Part of this occupied territory included the predominantly Shiite Beka’a Valley.

*Socio-Political Awakening of Lebanese Shiites*

Shiite Islam is the second largest Muslim faith in the Middle East after Sunni Islam; however, due to the number of followers, it is a minority sect of Islam (Saouli, 2011). The prophet Muhammad, before his death, designated his closest male relative, Ali, as his successor in leading the Muslim faith. Ali then designated his son and this tradition continued for a few generations, giving rise to the core Shiite Islamic belief that the only legitimate leaders of the Muslim faith had to be of the house of the Prophet. (Brown, 2004). This created a schism in the Muslim faith between Shiites and Sunni Muslims; as the Sunnis were the numerically larger Muslim faith, they treated the Shiites as apostates and persecuted them throughout much of history. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) Lebanon treated the Shiites as second-class citizens, only allowing them to practice their faith openly as recently as 1926. Their political influence was minimal throughout much of Lebanon’s history since independence in 1943; the highest political role for Shiites is the Speaker of the House, which, in power and influence does not compare favorably to the roles of President and Prime Minister, held by a Maronite and a Sunni,
respectively. The Shiites in Lebanon are a rural, agricultural people, deprived of basic
government provisions such as education and infrastructure. The only political force that the
Shiite Lebanese had until the 1960s were in the form of zu'ama: political leaders who came from
wealthy Shiite families and who maintained their power through a system of patronage.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Shiites were aroused out of their political stupor with the
ideas and movements of Communism, secularism and reformism. These ideas were all very
appealing to the second-class Lebanese Shiites, for they proposed ideas of equality and justice.
However, it was difficult to reconcile these political ideologies with religion, especially
Communism, which is atheistic at its core belief. This was when an Islamic political ideology
began to take hold, which incorporated the ideas of equality and justice but more in line with the
Islamic faith. The popularity of this ideology would really take hold with the singular, Shiite-
inspired event in Persia in 1979: the overthrow of the Shah during the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

_The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979_

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi tightly ruled Iran for over thirty years. The Shah was a
Shiite Muslim, yet he followed the example set by his father: maintaining a secular reign and to
keep Iran on a modern, Westernized path. However, his monarchy was rife with accusations of
corruption; his family and those connected to them became wealthy while others remained in
poverty. The Shah himself was seen as little more than a puppet of Western powers, most
notably the U.S.; his support of Israel also earned him many enemies.

Shiite imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini first came on the scene against the Shah in
1963, when he fought to counter the Shah's "White Revolution", which was meant to be a series
of reforms for Persia. The Shah's SAVAK police force arrested the Ayatollah twice before his
ultimate exile from Iran. Outside of the country, the Ayatollah continued to foment unrest within Iran through tapes of speeches and other communication contraband that were smuggled into the country. Uprisings against the Shah began in 1977 and continued to 1979 when the Shah, beset by external and internal pressures and his own failing health, abdicated and went into exile with his family. The Iranian government invited the Ayatollah to return to the country; shortly after his arrival, a referendum vote changed the name of the country to the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Ayatollah Khomeini as its Supreme Leader. The revolution and subsequent action of the Iranians surprised the international community in general and the Shiite Muslims in particular, who rejoiced at the idea of Shiites being able to take a hold of their fate and live in a nation that reflected their religious values. This would galvanize Shiites around the Middle East to strive for similar situations within their own nations and the Lebanese Shiites were no exception.

*Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982*

Compounding the Lebanese civil war crisis even further was the invasion of a second nation: Israel, who entered southern Lebanon in 1982. (Blanford, 2011). The reason for Israel's invasion was two-fold: first, as an act of vengeance for the attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to Great Britain by a Palestinian terror group. Second, the invasion was an attempt to stabilize Lebanon's southern border and prevent further attacks upon Israel. Even with the civil war raging in Lebanon, the Palestinians were still taking advantage of their location in order to launch attacks into Israel. (Alaghia, 2013). The reaction of Iran, under the theocratic command of the Ayatollah Khomeini, was critical to Hezbollah's creation. Iran offered to send financial and military support to the Shiites in order to assist in the fight against Israel. The Shiite radicals, who ardently admired Khomeini, were more than willing to take him up on his
support of them and their cause against Israel. Khomeini sent money, weapons and members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to both train and indoctrinate these Shiite militants. Syria's occupation of northern Lebanon helped to facilitate and protect the transportation of Iranian supplies and military to the Shiites in Beka'a Valley; they also set-up training camps for these militants in this area. Syria was willing to aid Iran in this effort as they were both allies and because Syria was gravely concerned with the Israeli invasion in the south; Syria had recently suffered two significant losses against Israel in the 1967 Six Days' War and 1972 Yom Kippur War.

Disillusionment with AMAL

Lebanon was not completely without Shiite political/social representation prior to the creation of Hezbollah. In the mid-1970s, an Iranian-born Shiite imam and social leader initiated a Shiite militia group by the name of Musa al-Sadr. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) His intentions in founding this organization were to bring to light the injustices of the Lebanese Shiites due to neglect by the Lebanese government, as well as to protect Lebanese Shiite interests during the civil war. The group, named Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniyya, is Arabic for "The Brigades of the Lebanese Resistance". (Alagha, 2013) The acronym of this name, AMAL, is Arabic for "hope" and it is under this name that the group is known. AMAL was very popular in their beginning; al-Sadr was a charismatic leader who appeared to be sincere in his efforts at improving the overall conditions of the Lebanese Shiites.

Al-Sadr was also sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and through AMAL offered moral support; in exchange, the PLO offered training to the AMAL militia. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) (Alagha, 2013). This in turn allowed AMAL to help fight on the side of the Palestinians during
the civil war. When al-Sadr disappeared in 1978 during a trip to Libya to visit the newly installed leader Muammar Qaddhafi, many Shiites equated this significant loss with the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam, which heightened the popularity of AMAL and of al-Sadr. However, this popularity began to deteriorate when Nabih Berri took the reins of this Shiite militia. The relations between AMAL and the PLO also fell apart during this time, with the PLO accusing AMAL of acting superior to them and AMAL blaming the PLO for endangering the Shiites in southern Lebanon with their attacks against Israel (Gleis & Berti, 2012). AMAL, under Nabih Berri’s leadership, privately welcomed Israel’s invasion as a convenient blow to the PLO forces. (Alaghia, 2013). This agitated the more radical Shiite members of AMAL, who were vehemently opposed to Israel altogether and especially against the invasion; these radical participants broke from AMAL and sought to form their own Shiite groups that would maintain strong opposition against Israel. These individuals would look to the Iranian Revolution for inspiration.

All of the above factors contributed to the framework "necessity" for a radicalized Shiite Islamic organization within Lebanon. Thus, the catalytic chain of events that specifically inspired the creation of Hezbollah was the Lebanese Civil War, Israeli invasion and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Without the Lebanese Civil War, Israel may not have deemed it necessary to invade for the sake of its interests; without the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Iran may not have immediately exported its revolution in the form of weapons, training and indoctrination as it was preoccupied with its war against Iraq. Finally, without the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Shiite radicals of Lebanon would not have had the Iranian Shiite theological model of inspiration to follow. These events were not only critical in the creation of Hezbollah, but they would serve to inspire Hezbollah's actions from its inception until present day.
Section B. 1982-1984

Background – 1982-1984

The creation of Hezbollah in the first half of 1982 within Lebanon was accomplished with the primary support provided by Iran in terms of material and spiritual provisions. Syria, as an ally of Iran, provided secondary support to Hezbollah by allowing Iran to pass freely through its airspace and borders in order to equip its protégé. Two Iranians in particular were instrumental in both facilitating the birth and overseeing the maturation of the Hezbollah organization: Ali Akbar Mohtashamipur, who is credited with the idea of forming Hezbollah from the radicalized Shiite elements of AMAL and Mohammad Hassan Akhtari, who organized both materials and manpower to ensure Hezbollah's growth. (Asharq al-Awsat, 2008) Each served as the Iranian Ambassador to Damascus; through this role, these two men cultivated a strong and stable relationship with Syria to ensure that they remained an ally of Iran (especially during the 1980-88 war with Iraq) and to help facilitate the transport of weapons, materials and military officials to Hezbollah in Lebanon. As many as 1500 IRGC cadre travelled through Syria to Lebanon to oversee the instruction and indoctrination of the Hezbollah militants. These militants arrived in Iran to help fight in the Iran-Iraq War. (Asharq al-Awsat, 2008) By the time Hezbollah began making their presence known within Lebanon, they were well-trained and experienced fighters.

Lebanon in 1982 had many targets for Hezbollah to choose from when it came to their goals of removing Western forces from Lebanon and attacking Israel: first, there was the presence of the Multi-National Force (MNF), headed by the United States and supported by
France, Italy and Britain. The purpose of the MNF in Lebanon was to broker a peace accord between the Israelis, Palestinians and Lebanese. (Blanford, 2011). Second, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) was also present in Lebanon as the result of an invasion to thwart the attacks on Israel from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) who were taking refuge in Lebanon. The backdrop to all of this was the Lebanese Civil War, which pitted Maronite Catholics and their allies against Muslims and their allies.

**Structure 1982-1984**

Some have described the organization of Hezbollah during this time as more of a "cabal" than having any sort of formal structure (Norton, 2007). However, several factors are evidential that a very basic structure was in place from the very beginning of Hezbollah's creation: first, as Iran sponsors Hezbollah, consistent communication must remain between the two entities; the same is true for Syria and Hezbollah, as Syria facilitates interaction between Iran and Hezbollah (Asharq al-Awsat, 2008). As Iran and Syria are both critical to Hezbollah's survival, they are also able to influence Hezbollah actions; a structure would allow Hezbollah to move congruently with, and effectively to, Iranian and Syrian desires. Second, the first two years of Hezbollah's existence shows them carrying out sophisticated attacks with effectiveness against challenging targets, such as the United States, France and Israel; this signifies extensive planning, coordination and funding prior to these attacks, which implies a hierarchical structure in control with Iran providing the funding. (Katzman, 2012; Rabil, 2013). Third, Hezbollah's effectiveness as an organization requires that there be cooperation between all of the members of Hezbollah in a centralized effort to work towards achieving their goals.
To achieve this cooperation, several Shiite leaders worked to create what would become the founding document for Hezbollah, the "Manifesto of the Nine". This document formalized Hezbollah's goals and inspirations; it called for jihad against Israel and adherence to *wilayat al-faqih* ("Guardianship of the Supreme Jurisconsult"), which meant that Hezbollah would defer to an Iranian cleric before carrying out any actions (DeVore, 2012). Specifically, this would mean seeking the approval of the Ayatollah Khomeini prior to any significant actions; this even included the approval from the Ayatollah for the Manifesto once it was completed and signed. This document helped to provide for the Shura, which is a decision-making council of between 7-9 members and plays a leadership role in guiding Hezbollah. (DeVore, 2012; Samii, 2013) Also during this period was the creation of the position of Secretary-General; the Secretary-General is a member of the Shura Council but, as the leader, he represents Hezbollah when communicating between the Council and the Ayatollah in Iran, as well as with the Syrian government. The power in this role is real, but it is at the discretion of Iran and, to a much lesser degree, Syria.

With the demonstration of these factors, the following is a theoretical example of Hezbollah's structure during this time:

**Figure 1: Functional Hezbollah Organizational Chart, circa 1982-1984**

![Diagram](image)

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2 This organization chart shows that Iran and Syria communicate directly with either the Secretary-General or the Shura Council. This does not denigrate the importance of the role of Secretary-General. Both Secretary-General and Shura Council then pass orders along to the other Hezbollah members.
Activity Timeline 1982-1984

This early stage of Hezbollah's existence was primarily to promote terror and strike out at its enemies, as well as the enemies of Syria and Iran. This included attacks on "the West", specifically the United States and France, who were present in Lebanon as part of the MNF and who, in Hezbollah's viewpoint, were coercing the Lebanese government into peace talks with Israel, another enemy who was presently occupying Lebanon. Hezbollah began undertaking terror operations almost immediately in 1982; the rapidity of these attacks as well as the level of sophistication of these operations exemplifies the extensive training received by the IRGC. From 1982 through 1984, Hezbollah conducted one airline hijacking, two assassinations, five murders, six kidnappings, and ten bombings in a total of twenty-two separate terror incidents.\(^3\)

Extensive planning had to occur prior to these attacks to ensure the proper selection of targets; the conduction of surveillance in order to observe patterns and weaknesses; obtaining and constructing explosive materials; training and dry runs would need to be completed. (A Military Guide, 2007).

The targets had to meet prerequisites; they were not random targets, but carefully selected to meet the specific goals of Iran and/or Syria. Most of the terror incidents targeted individuals who hailed from nations that Hezbollah designated as enemies: the United States, Israel and France. Other incidents demonstrate Iran and Syria are the motivations behind Hezbollah’s actions: for example, the two assassinations conducted in 1982 were of prominent opponents to

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\(^3\) The reason the author counts 22 total incidents and not 24 is because the murders were concurrent with other terror acts: four were murdered during the hijacking and the fifth during a kidnapping. However, the author did not want to lessen the impact of the violence of these concurrent acts, which is why they were counted separately.
Syria and Iran: President-Elect Bachir Gemayel of Lebanon and former Iranian General Ghulam Hussein Ovaisi, who had served under the Shah. A number of these attacks occurred outside of Lebanon: General Ovaisi’s assassination occurred in France; a restaurant was bombed near a U.S. Air Force Base in Spain; one hijacking and multiple bombings occurred in Kuwait. This demonstrates not only the ease and effectiveness with which Hezbollah was able to carry out international terrorism; it proves that Hezbollah was not working to benefit Lebanon, but to fulfill aspirations that are in line with the goals of Iran and Syria.

Hezbollah's most important attack during this two-year period occurred on October 23, 1983, when two simultaneous suicide attacks struck the U.S. Marine barracks and the French military compound. The attack on the American barracks killed 241 military personnel; this was the most-deadly attack on Americans overseas since WWII (Geraghty, 2009). The French military attack killed 58 paratroopers (CAMERA, 2006; Norton, 2007). This attack was significant not just for the dramatic loss of life and destruction in one day, but also because this event was directly responsible for the withdrawal of the MNF four months later, thus accomplishing one of Hezbollah's goals. (Hezbollah, 1985) This in turn led the brokered peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel to fall apart, as the Lebanese government could not withstand the pressures from both Syria and Lebanese Muslim groups. (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1984). The failed peace agreement meant that Israel would continue to occupy Lebanon; this perversely served Hezbollah's benefit because they were then able to claim justification for the existence of the group as a "resistance movement" against Israel.
Section C. 1985

Background 1985

The year 1985 was very significant for Hezbollah: they were rapidly gaining both national and international attention for the series of terror attacks that they conducted in the preceding two years; they had triumphantly routed all the Western forces from Lebanon and had contributed to crushing the potential Lebanese-Israeli peace agreement. Hezbollah continued successfully launching attacks against Israel; out of the twenty-two attacks in the preceding two years, five were against Israeli targets and over 100 Israelis killed. Israel, growing increasingly weary at the continuously increasing loss of life and with no prospect at establishing a peace accord with the Lebanese government, began a withdrawal to the South Lebanese border, completed by June 1985 (ADL, 2001). To strengthen the security and protection along this
border, the Israelis engaged a Lebanese militia called the South Lebanese Army (SLA), providing them with funding and support in exchange for helping the Israelis monitor the border against further attacks (Gleis & Berti, 2012). This move proved to Hezbollah that sustained violence against Israel would eventually yield results; this was also the first time in the history of the Middle East where a Muslim-Arab group was able to make the Israeli forces retreat. The culmination of all these events moved Hezbollah to write "An Open Letter: The Hezbollah Program" for publication on February 16, 1985 that introduced Hezbollah as a group and claim credit for their successes. Through this primary source, Hezbollah explained their beliefs and goals as summarized below (Hezbollah, 1985):

- They obey only one leader: the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.
- They are not an organization for Lebanon, but an "umma linked to the Muslims of the whole world".
- The quality of their military skill and might: "Our military apparatus is not separate from our overall social fabric. Each of us is a fighting solider." They advise they fight only "under the tutelage of the Commanding Jurist (Khomeini)."
- Their disgust at the "injustice, aggression and humiliation" brought on by Western occupiers and the Zionist entity (Israel), how they are prepared to die confronting them and specifically claim the attacks against the Americans, French and Israelis that "made the enemy retreat by stages".
- That they have three objectives: 1) expel the "colonialist powers" (which they achieved); 2) bring the Phalangists (Lebanese Christian group) to justice over crimes committed against the Palestinian refugee camps; and 3) call upon the Lebanese to overthrow the current government and install an Islamic government.
• Their rejection of both "the USSR and the U.S.", which was synonymous with the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

• Their desire of the destruction of Israel: "It is the hated enemy that must be fought until the hated ones get what they deserve." "...our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease-fire and no peace agreements..."

"We vigorously condemn all plans for negotiation with Israel and regard all negotiators as enemies."

The overall tone of this letter is uncompromising in its views of the West, Israel and the current Lebanese government, which Hezbollah denounces as an illegitimate Western creation. It further demonstrates how in-step Hezbollah's views are with Iranian theology: an Islamic state is the only government structure worth recognizing; both capitalism and communism are corrupt, un-Islamic and unacceptable.

**Structure 1985**

Hezbollah clearly acknowledges in their "Open Letter" that they have formed a "military apparatus"; this is the first indication of a militia. This militia was known by the name, Islamic Resistance; while Hezbollah claims that "each of us is a fighting soldier", that does not necessarily mean that all members of Hezbollah belong to the militia. The militia's purpose at this time was to fight in the Lebanese Civil War, as well as protect the Shiites within Lebanon (Alaghia, 2013). As noted earlier, members of Hezbollah dispatched to Iran to help fight in the Iran-Iraq War; this provided unique experience for militia members to fight in a continuous war. The Lebanese Civil War, on the other hand, was more of an intermittent conflict, with lapses as long as months between conflicts (Avon, 2012).
In addition, it is important to note that Hezbollah was willing to fight in a foreign conflict, which demonstrates their loyalty to Iran so much as that they will fight for them in a cause that unrelated to Lebanon and its security. To quote Hezbollah: the "military apparatus is not separate from our overall social fabric"; so it also is not separate from the organization as a whole.

Additionally, the complexity of the international and domestic attacks is steadily increasing; this indicates a potential for specialized branches within the jihadist sphere that plan these terror attacks.
Activity Timeline 1985

Immediately after the publication of their 1985 letter and "true to its consistently militant tone", Hezbollah continued its activity against Westerners in Lebanon and Western influence (Norton, 2007). Again, these Hezbollah attacks were consistent not with Lebanese interests but with the ideology of Syria and Iran, to strike out at the West while not appearing culpable. After all, Hezbollah was already successful in getting the United States and France to withdraw from Lebanon; the continued prosecution of these attacks at this point shows that Hezbollah's motivations are not the same as Lebanese national interests. Hezbollah also continued to manage terror attacks both within and outside of Lebanon: within Lebanon, Hezbollah was responsible for one suicide bombing and nine kidnappings of British, French and American citizens. Outside Lebanon, Hezbollah militants hijacked a flight from Athens while also committing one murder, simultaneously bombed two locations in Copenhagen and were responsible for a series of bombings around Paris, France.4 While Figure 4 suggests that the rate of terror incidents is decreasing, the severity of the violence that accompanied these events was increasing. (CAMERA, 2006). For example, all of the March terror incidents were kidnappings, whilst the two incidents in July were bombings.

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4 Hezbollah was responsible for 15 bombings that occurred in Paris from December 7, 1985-September 17, 1986 (Barsky, 2012); the author was unable to locate all of the dates for these bombings. Therefore, the author noted the one confirmed bombing date of December 7 in Figure 4.
Section D. Reality 1986-1990

Background 1986-1990

From 1982 until 1986, Hezbollah's actions were clear and consistent to their stated objectives in the 1985 Open Letter: to be anti-Western, anti-Israel and anti-Lebanon, especially with regard to the Lebanese government. As late as 1988, Hezbollah continued to voice opposition to the Lebanese political system and advanced the cause of an Islamic state in Lebanon. (Alagha, 2013). Sayyid Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, Hezbollah's spokesman, invited others to become part of the 'Islamic project' in Lebanon, refusing to be under the governance of or to co-opt with a non-Muslim regime (Gleis & Berti, 2012) Hezbollah would hold massive Shiite rallies where they would either burn or omit the Lebanese flag and proudly touted the Iranian flag. Hezbollah also began representing their own flag at these rallies: these specially designed flags contain no Lebanese-derived elements, which further demonstrates the disconnection between Hezbollah and Lebanon. Hezbollah's flag bears a striking resemblance to
the flag utilized during the Islamic Revolution in Iran, once again confirming the connection between Hezbollah and its patron.

**Figure 5: Flags of Hezbollah and Iranian Islamic Revolution**

![Side-by-side comparison of Hezbollah flag (left) and Guardians of the Islamic Revolution Flag (right). Image credit: IDFblog.com](image)

As Hezbollah continued to be successful in its terror campaigns within Lebanon and internationally, their influence also increased within the Shiite regions of Lebanon. These regions included Beirut, the Beka'a Valley and southern Lebanon. As Hezbollah continued to argue for an Islamic state for all of Lebanon, they began to impose it on these regions with a strict interpretation of Shari'a law, prohibiting such activities as the sale of alcohol, social gatherings and dancing. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) They also founded al-Nour in 1988, a radio station that broadcasts shows about social, moral and political issues.

**Figure 6: Map of Shiite regions/Hezbollah influence in Lebanon**
As Hezbollah continued to increase and consolidate their power in these regions based on their objectives and with help from the funding being provided to them by Iran, tensions began to increase significantly between Hezbollah and AMAL. There were various underlying causes to this tension: first, AMAL was still popular in the Shiite regions, but they did not have the influence or the funding that Hezbollah enjoyed. Second, AMAL was involved in Lebanese politics; Hezbollah undoubtedly viewed them with hostility and disdain for working with the apostate Lebanese government. Third, Hezbollah did not forget how AMAL had allied itself with Israel upon Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982; this was also not viewed in a positive light. Finally, AMAL disapproved of Hezbollah's acts of violence; in fact, AMAL responded to
one of Hezbollah's kidnappings by attempting a failed rescue attempt of the American kidnap victim, whom Hezbollah later murdered (Norton, 2007). This action by AMAL caused the tensions to erupt on April 5, 1988 and the two militias began a series of skirmishes that quickly escalated into a mini-war. (Alagha, 2013). The Lebanese Civil War was beginning to wind down, so this renewed conflict between two groups of the same religion triggered a backlash amongst the Lebanese populace. This was especially true for those who were non-Shiite and were increasingly wary of Hezbollah's popularity: Hezbollah's anti-Lebanese stance and desire to impose their religious interpretation upon the nation was well known. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) Iran and Syria had to step in for an intervention; as Ahktari, one of the creators of Hezbollah would say later "The confrontation between AMAL and Hezbollah was very bad and had many negative results. It annoyed us very much. That’s why we did all we could to end the problem." (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2008).

Both the domestic and international reactions to this conflict appeared to have alerted Hezbollah to the tenuousness of its situation: regardless of their popularity among the Shiites, the Hezbollah agenda in Lebanon was at risk. Hezbollah became more concerned in 1989 with the signing of the Ta'if Accords that brought about the end of the Lebanese Civil War. The Ta'if Accords posed an existential threat to Hezbollah when it called for the dissolving and disarming of all Lebanese militias. Hezbollah had defined itself as a militia in its 1985 Open Letter; now, they found their existence at stake because of their own words. In order to maintain its weaponry and power, Hezbollah had to convince the Lebanese government that it was not a militia but a resistance movement against Israel, whose army still occupied southern Lebanon. With significant pressure applied on the Lebanese government from Iran and Syria (whose army still occupied northern Lebanon), the government capitulated and granted that Hezbollah was a
resistance organization. (Alagha, 2013) This infuriated the Christian and Sunni Muslim militias, who had already disarmed and desisted in accordance with Ta'if.

In spite of the Syrian and Iranian backing, Hezbollah seems to realize that in order to survive as an organization within Lebanon and to gain traction beyond their Shiite base, that they would have to begin to modify their stance by modifying the anti-Lebanese government, pro-Islamic state rhetoric and evolve a more moderate image.

**Structure 1986-1990**

Hezbollah's structure began to evolve and expand even more during this period. As Hezbollah continued to foster the growth of its influence among the Shiite Muslim base in Lebanon, it had to develop branches (or "desks") to deal with each of the three regions that the Shiite Muslims occupied: southern Beirut, Bek'a Valley and Southern Lebanon. (Norton, 2009) These branches can theoretically streamline under a "Regional Desk". The militia also had to be transformed into a "Resistance Movement" against Israel to skirt the law that was the Ta'if Accord. (Alaghia, 2013) It was also during this time that a budding political branch began; Hezbollah had never interacted with the Lebanese government before, except to condemn it. Now Hezbollah had to communicate with the Lebanese government in order to persuade them to allow Hezbollah to remain armed as a resistance force.
The number of terrorist acts undertaken reflects this tumultuous period that Hezbollah encountered during this time. Initially, Hezbollah was continuing their attacks against the West with ever-increasing vigor: in 1986 and 1987, Hezbollah conducted one bombing in Stockholm, one airline hijacking from the Congo, six murders and eighteen kidnappings all within Lebanon. In early 1988, Hezbollah kidnapped and then murdered one American as well as conducting one suicide bombing. Then the Hezbollah-AMAL war broke out and continued for two years; the signing of the Ta'if Accord, signaling the end of the Lebanese Civil War, followed this. Hezbollah found itself on the edge of a precipice with the decision to either modify its stance so that it could survive long-term until it could bring about its objectives for Lebanon, or continue along its uncompromising route and find itself the target of an uprising.
Section E. 1991-1999

Background 1991-1999

This period marked a time of great transition, not just for Hezbollah, but also for Lebanon as a whole. For the first time in 15 years, Lebanon was no longer at conflict with itself and so began the process of returning to normal as a unified country. They still had two occupying forces within their nation, Israel and Syria, and the prospect of these two countries departing Lebanon any time soon was dim. After the signing of the Ta’if Accords, Lebanon began to prepare itself to hold the first parliamentary elections since 1975. (Gleis & Berti, 2012) Lebanon did have a working, albeit ineffective, government throughout the civil war, but was unable to hold general elections. Hezbollah had always maintained from its inception a rejection of the Lebanese government as apostate; this stance was easy due to these circumstances. Now,

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5 Hezbollah was responsible for 15 bombings that occurred in Paris from December 7, 1985-September 17, 1986 (Barsky, 2012); the author was unable to locate all of the dates for these bombings. Therefore, the author noted the one confirmed bombing date of September 17 in Figure 8.
Hezbollah found itself facing a unique opportunity to become a full-fledged political party that could run for office. Hezbollah was still figuratively reeling from the existential threat that they had just avoided in the Ta’if Accords; even though they were successful in getting themselves designated as a "resistance movement" rather than a militia, it appears that Hezbollah was looking for more opportunities to remove itself further from the now-outlawed militia appellation. Becoming a political party was another such opportunity to legitimize their role in Lebanon. However, this did cause a rift within Hezbollah; some believed that by working with the Lebanese government as a political party that Hezbollah would be abandoning its principles and Islamic-state vision for Lebanon. (Norton, 2007). Ultimately, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, took these issues to Ayatollah Khamenei, who had succeeded Ayatollah Khomeini at his death in 1989. Khamenei gave his blessing for Hezbollah to pursue its political path. (Norton, 2007).

There were many advantages to seeking political office: aside from the official recognition, Hezbollah would have the potential opportunity to influence the Lebanese government in favor of the Shiites, "shape political dialogue to its benefit and head-off problematic initiatives" (Norton, 2007). In order to fulfill the cliché of "winning hearts and minds" (and potential voters), Hezbollah began setting up an extensive network of welfare and revitalization programs in its Shiite strongholds of Beka'a Valley, Beirut and southern Lebanon. Hezbollah built and maintained hospitals, clinics, schools and mosques. Jihad al-Binaa, a construction company founded by Hezbollah, began rebuilding and restoring buildings damaged in the Lebanese civil war. (Saouli, 2011). They started charities to support the disabled, as well as the widows and orphans of martyrs. (Samii, 2008) The Shiites experience was a history of neglect by the Lebanese government; this newfound support within their communities from
Hezbollah gained them plenty of supporters (Norton, 2007). Additionally, the idea of having Shiite representation in government meant a great deal to the Lebanese Shiites who had a long history of political disenfranchisement. (Norton, 2007). Hezbollah did recognize, however, that they would not be able to win on just the Shiite vote alone. In order to calm the concerns of the Christian and Sunni groups concerning Hezbollah's rhetoric about an Islamic state for Lebanon, Hezbollah removed the Shari'a law requirements that they had imposed earlier upon their strongholds (Gleis & Berti, 2012). They also began outreach social programs to facilitate conversations between Christians, Sunnis and Shiites. Soon, Hezbollah was creating some powerful alliances, including with their once-hated enemy, the Phalangists, whom Hezbollah specifically had cited in their 1985 Open Letter as criminals. They also reunited with AMAL, although this alliance was at the behest of Hezbollah's sponsors Iran and Syria who both opposed the conflict albeit for their individual reasons. (Samii, 2008). Hezbollah also capitalized on their terror activities as "resistance efforts" against the U.S., France and Israel during the elections. Israel continued to occupy southern Lebanon, which was becoming more unpopular amongst the Lebanese. One of Hezbollah's political slogans was "They resist with their blood; resist with your vote." (Norton, 2007).

Hezbollah also founded al-Manar ("The Beacon") television network. Including their radio station al-Nour ("The Light"), Hezbollah was able to broadcast propaganda initially in the Shiite-dominated areas and then throughout Lebanon (Jorisch, 2004). Hezbollah also began to publish a newspaper, al-Intiqad (Sinai, 2012). Also known as al-Ahad News, this newspaper is available both in print and online.
Underlying all of Hezbollah's efforts in the political and social realms was the substantial financial support of Iran and some support from Syria; Iran and Syria continued to apply pressure to the Lebanese government and to the various other confessional groups in Lebanon. When the 1992 elections were over, Hezbollah had won eight of the 128 seats in the Lebanese Parliament (Gleis & Berti, 2012). Considering that these 128 seats are to be divided amongst 18 confessions, this was a significant victory for a group who less than four years earlier was vehemently opposed to the Lebanese government and refused to work with them. Hezbollah ran again for the parliament elections in 1996 and municipal elections in 1998, making significant gains in each election (Gleis & Berti, 2012). Hezbollah also continued their stance against Israel, which made them more popular, especially in 1996 when Israel specifically went after Hezbollah in the Operation "Grapes of Wrath"; in spite of the aerial bombardment intended to wipe them out, Hezbollah survived (BBC News, 1998).
Structure 1991-1999

As evidenced above, Hezbollah made some significant strides in how they approached both Lebanon's government and society. These evolutions meant that Hezbollah grew additional branches to support new endeavors in an effective and efficient manner. However, this did not mean that they trimmed back their original branches dealing with resistance and jihad, as will be demonstrated later.
Figure 10: Functional Hezbollah Organizational Chart, 1991-2000

- **Iran/Syria**
  - **Secretary-General**
  - **Shura Council**
    - **Political Organization**
      - **Regional Desk**
        - **Social Services**
          - **International Operations**
          - **Domestic Operations**
            - **Jihadists**
            - **Charities**
            - **Schools**
            - **Hospitals**
          - **Media Outlets**
            - **Beirut**
            - **S. Lebanon**
            - **Beka'a**
              - **Al-Nour**
              - **Al-Ahed**
              - **Al-Manar**
            - **"Resistance Movement"**
Activity Timeline 1991-1999

As Hezbollah was quickly evolving and revamping its image within Lebanon proper, there were not as many terror attacks as had occurred in the previous decade. Hezbollah had not deviated from its original purposes of carrying out attacks against the West and against Israel, in line with the goals of Iran and Syria. However, it is interesting to note most of the attacks conducted by Hezbollah during this time of refurbishing its image on the Lebanese home front were international. During this period, Hezbollah carried out eight bombings; only two occurred in Lebanon against SLA posts in 1995. Considering that the SLA was the Lebanese militia supported by Israel to defend the southern Lebanese border, these attacks were justified as being strikes against Israeli forces. Three of the bombings occurred in Buenos Aires against Jewish/Israeli targets; two other bombings occurred in London against Jewish/Israeli targets. The last bombing was in the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, which targeted and killed 19 American servicemen.

Figure 11: Terror Incident Chart, 1991-1999
Section F. 2000-2005

Background 2000-2005

The eve of the new millennium found Hezbollah reaching new heights in popularity and support from the Lebanese Shiite populace as they continued their resistance position against Israel and the Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). Much to the surprise of Hezbollah and the world, Israel announced their plans for withdrawal from Lebanon by 2000. Monitored by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the entity established specifically to oversee the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon, Israel phased its withdrawal in stages until they were officially out of southern Lebanon on May 24, 2000. Israel set up military posts along the new boundary line at Shebaa Farms. UNIFIL proceeded to take over the territory and allowed the official Lebanese Army to enter in order to re-establish control of the area. This action gave Hezbollah a major boost in the 2000 summer elections, receiving the highest number of votes in the country and allowing them to win twelve seats that for both Hezbollah party members and their political allies (Alagha, 2013). The Lebanese widely believed that there would now be peace along the southern border now that Israel had withdrawn; however, Hezbollah refrained from making any such statements reaffirming this opinion (Norton, 2007; Early, 2006).
Figure 12: Lebanon Before and After Israel Withdrawal

Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah consulted with the Shura Council and then went to the Ayatollah Khamenei: the determination was that Hezbollah would continue to attack Israel in the Shebaa Farms region, as Hezbollah claimed that this was still Lebanese territory. (Norton, 2007) Hezbollah's "resistance force" (as the militia was now known) moved even further south along this border and proceeded to launch missiles into Shebaa Farms, while also committing incursions into this Israeli territory to either kill or kidnap Israeli soldiers to use as bartering chips for captured Lebanese prisoners. However, as the years progressed after the
Israeli withdrawal, some Lebanese began publicly questioning the purpose of Hezbollah now that the Israeli occupiers had left. They believed that continuously attacking Israel, even if just in Shebaa Farms, was "reckless and unjustified". (Norton, 2007).

The Israeli withdrawal also caused Lebanese criticism of Syria; the main purpose for the Syrian invasion was because of the Lebanese Civil War. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 gave Syria an additional reason to continue its occupation to maintain a type of "balance-of-power" within Lebanon. Now that the Lebanese war was over and Israel was gone, there was no longer a justification for Syrian presence in the country. In spite of Syrian pressure on the government, some officials began to come forward and speak out against the Syrian occupation; one of the highest-ranking critics was the popular Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. This was the first time that Hezbollah began to experience serious and effective domestic general political anger since its founding; now that it was holding political power, there was a lot more exposure and threats to its position. There was also a need to address the criticisms launched against its ally Syria who, through its new leader Bashar al-Assad, had continued to strengthen the relationship that it has with Hezbollah (Bartell & Gray, 2012). Hezbollah moved quickly to address these criticisms by assassinating Hariri and twenty-two individuals of his entourage via car bomb on February 14, 2005.
The outrage over the assassination was both domestic and international, resulting in the launching one of the largest, yet peaceful, anti-Syrian protests in Lebanon, known as the Cedar Revolution. Thousands of Lebanese gathered daily to march from the site of Hariri's assassination to Martyr's Square to demand Syria withdraw from Lebanon. With mounting international pressure, Syria conceded and began withdrawing. Hezbollah launched an even larger counter-protest demanding that Syria remain in Lebanon and accusing America of meddling in Lebanese affairs. In spite of Lebanon's genuine division over Syria's military presence, Syria completely withdrew to their border by April 27, 2005.
The loss of the presence of Syria was a blow to Hezbollah's strength; after all, the Syrian military facilitated the transport of weapons and materials into Lebanon from Iran. Hezbollah began to buy land and villages to turn them into restricted and well-fortified military areas to continue to facilitate the supplies shipped from Iran (Alagha, 2013). Hezbollah also continued to provide its various social programs and charities to reinforce its Shiite support base. Even though Hezbollah was successfully combating the challenges they encountered politically, that did not mean they were able to put an end to them.
Structure 2000-2005

Hezbollah at this point is beginning to appear more like a conglomerate than an organization with one purpose; they are multiple parts as government services, commercial enterprises and even entertainment, such as funding sports clubs and cultural societies (Hays, 2012). Their propaganda includes the marketing of their image on t-shirts, key-chains, and baseball caps (Hays, 2012). However, it is important to note that while Hezbollah has continued to add different elements to their overall organization, they have not ever removed or modified elements that they have had since their creation. The evidence of this is that they continue to utilize these elements, specifically terror, in carrying out such attacks as the Rafik Hariri assassination. Nor was that a special circumstance: as Hezbollah and Syria continue to be the target of outspoken critics, they continue to utilize these earlier practices of violence and terror in order to shut down those critics and threaten others who may consider opposing them. There were numerous assassinations against political leaders who had anti-Syrian sentiments. Demonstrating that they are not willing to give up the tactics of violence and terror also leads one to believe that they have not given up fundamental beliefs, in spite of obfuscating them. Overall, this is the last notable expansion of the Hezbollah organization; they will continue to grow in numbers, finance and support, but there are no additional distinct branches of note at this time.
Activities 2000-2005

As before, Hezbollah was pragmatic to modify its actions in accordance with the events that occurred during the 2000-2005 period. First, it moved deeper into southern Lebanon so that it could continue to "resist" Israel by launching rockets daily into Israeli territory and Shebaa Farms. Hezbollah, with Ayatollah Khamenei's blessing, continued to claim Shebaa Farms as Lebanese territory, which provides Hezbollah with justification to continue attacking Israel. (Alaghia, 2013). They also made incursions into Israel to kidnap soldiers to hold them for ransoming back imprisoned Lebanese/Hezbollah and/or Palestinian militants. They also very publicly assassinated two prominent Lebanese officials, the first being Hariri and the second MP Gebran Tueni; these assassinations did come with the collateral damage of bystander deaths and destruction as these assassinations were done via car bombs.
Section G. 2006-2009

Background 2006-2012

Hezbollah continued to strike against Israel in the Shebaa Farms area and Israel proper from 2005 into 2006. Aside from this border conflict, Lebanon was peaceful and rebuilding and seemed to be getting back on track as a stable nation after decades of internal conflict and strife. Politicians were still urging Hezbollah to disarm their militia forces. Hezbollah refused to do so, stating that if Israel decided to invade again, the Hezbollah “Resistance” was the only force that was reliable and experienced in warfare. (Norton, 2007). A series of national discussions was beginning in late spring, early summer of 2006 that were putting Hezbollah on the defensive as to why they were still able to maintain an armed militia while all of the other militias were disarmed and disbanded; there were no more foreign occupiers and Lebanon was at peace. In July of that year, Hezbollah conducted a raid on Israeli territory, ambushing a patrol and killing three IDF soldiers and kidnapping two. (Blanford, 2011). When the IDF went on a rescue mission into Lebanon for the kidnapped soldiers, Hezbollah killed five more and destroyed a tank. (Norton, 2007). Hezbollah was victorious in this skirmish, but it appeared to be the last straw to the Israeli government and they launched a large-scale assault for 34 days against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, causing $4 billion in damage and hundreds of deaths. Hezbollah defended itself by launching up to 150 rockets each day of the conflict into Israel, as well as striking the 3rd-largest city in Israel, Haifa, utilizing long-range missiles. (Matthews, 2008). This demonstrated the enormous weapons-stockpiles that Hezbollah had amassed over the years from Syria and Iran. The conflict ended in a draw; however, as Israel's stated goal was to destroy Hezbollah and they were not able to achieve this in spite of their massive firepower, the
interpretation of the draw by the Middle East was a Hezbollah-success. (Blanford, 2011; Cohler, 2011).

Afterwards, Hezbollah quickly re-organized and set about to restore war-torn southern Lebanon, providing $4,000-$12,000 for each family that lost a home (over 15,000 families), Hezbollah also used the Hezbollah subsidiary, Jihad al-Binaa, as architects and engineers to rebuild homes, doctors from Hezbollah hospitals to dispense free medicine and medical care as well as dispensed 25,000 free meals a day. (Norton, 2007; Alagha, 2013). The quick response by Hezbollah in performing these actions ingratiated the Lebanese Shiites even further to Hezbollah. However, another interpretation of these events could be Hezbollah's quick thinking and reaction to make up for the devastation it had brought upon Lebanon before the blame (correctly) passed to them. Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah admitted that had either he or the Shura Council had an idea of the magnitude of the attack that Israel would launch after the July 2006 kidnappings that they would not have carried out the action that triggered it. (Cohler, 2011). However, his admission that it was the decision of both himself and the Shura Council means that Hezbollah obtained approval from Iran for the attack, as Hezbollah does not act without approval from Iran. The admission of a miscalculation lends credence to the possibility that Hezbollah's subsequent charitable acts (achieved only with Iranian funding) was a means to placate those who were victimized as a direct result of Hezbollah's mistake.
The charitable actions did work because once again Hezbollah hit a peak in popularity, both for their actions against Israel and for their quick reaction to the damage in southern Lebanon, a feat that would be impossible by the virtually powerless Lebanese government. Emboldened, Hezbollah began to challenge the legitimacy of the Lebanese government; they began to demand a one-third veto power in the Council of Ministers as well as the formation of a representative national unity government. (Alagha, 2013). When the government refused to acquiesce to these demands, Hezbollah and its supporters took to the streets in late 2006 and all of the Shiites in the Lebanese Cabinet walked out in an effort to collapse the government. This effort failed, but it did freeze what little effectiveness the government had while it tried to keep itself from the brink of collapse. Hezbollah Secretary-General Nasrallah claimed: "We will defeat the Lebanese government like we defeated Israel in the 34-days war." (Alagha, 2013). Hezbollah staged a number of sit-ins and engaged in a number of skirmishes with other groups, once again heightening tensions within Lebanon that another civil war was brewing. Critics who were still angry over the devastation wrought upon Lebanon, the result of Hezbollah's
provocation on Israel, condemned Hezbollah’s actions as being the result of leaving their militia armed (Norton, 2007). These critics included other members of the Shiite community, demonstrating that Hezbollah did not maintain a monopoly of influence on the Shiites. The Lebanese government countered Hezbollah’s actions by reassigning the head of security at the airport in Beirut, who was a known Hezbollah member; the government followed by launching an investigation into the fiber-optic phone network that Hezbollah owned and operated, advising that it was necessary to their security infrastructure. (Norton, 2007). Hezbollah immediately responded by bringing protesters and Jihad al-Binaa trucks to dump debris, thus making the route to the airport impassable.

Figure 17: Blocking the route to Beirut Airport

Hezbollah also exploited two labor strikes that were occurring in order to ramp up the pressure on the Lebanese government. Supporters of the government tried to reopen the roads
and violent clashes occurred that ended in three deaths and dozens of injuries. The overall action paralyzed Beirut and further terrified the Lebanese of another potential civil war.

Finally, after a year and a half of holding the Lebanese government captive, the Lebanese government finally capitulated and gave Hezbollah the one-third veto power in 2008. The Shiite representatives came back to the government and it appeared that Hezbollah was at their highest level of power and on the brink of dominating the Lebanese government just in time for the 2009 elections; in fact, all political speculation believed that Hezbollah and its allies would conquer in all of the elections. Instead, they suffered a significant defeat, winning only 57 seats for themselves and their allies, while their opponents received 71. (Alagha, 2013).

There are several reasons why this defeat occurred: the first was that Hezbollah overestimated the strength of their popularity among their constituents. Second, the Lebanese populace that were not Shiite had not forgotten Hezbollah's stated goal of 1985 to turn Lebanon into an Islamic state. Third, Hezbollah's own hubris made them aggressively reach for power that they thought was closer than it was in reality. An additional result of this election was that Hezbollah lost the one-third vote that they had fought so hard to achieve and did not attempt to regain it; they also had no opportunities for a physical demonstration of mea culpa, as there had been at the end of the 2006 war against Israel. Therefore, in late 2009, Hezbollah released "The New Hezbollah Manifesto", which they claimed superseded the 1985 Open Letter. When compared to the 1985 Open Letter, this manifesto is longer, more pro-Lebanon, less militant and more humane, such as in the second line of the letter which reveals that Hezbollah has "...expectations and fears that preoccupy us." (Hezbollah, 2009). This is markedly different from the 1985 Open Letter, which states that Hezbollah has "no alternative but to confront aggression by sacrifice." The 2009 Manifesto still denounces the United States and the "Zionist entity"
Israel, but devotes more time to how Lebanon has resisted Israel and does not emphasize Hezbollah's actions, making it more of a collective action (and accomplishment) that all Lebanese can claim. Another similarity is praise of Iran as "a central state in the Muslim world since [through the revolution] it dropped the Shah's regime and its American-'Israeli' projects." (Hezbollah, 2009). There is also a more global outreach in terms of seeking partners against the United States; Hezbollah particularly cites Latin America as a region that should be paid "a lot of respect, attention and appreciation" in how they have rejected the United States. Overall, the letter is more conciliatory; it appears that Hezbollah is again trying to re-make their image from their self-inflicted damage.

Section H. 2010-2013

Hezbollah was attempting their political rebound in Lebanon when another series of events setback their popularity even further. First, the UN indicted several top Hezbollah officials in the assassination of Rafik Hariri in 2005. Hezbollah condemned these indictments. Second, a series of political revolutions, known as the Arab Spring, began to occur in North Africa and then swept into the Middle East. Hezbollah initially was pragmatic in its approach to the unrest; the Hezbollah plan appeared in part to stem from not wanting to alienate further the Lebanese populace who had already been unsettled twice in five years by Hezbollah actions (Stratfor, 2012). Hezbollah gradually began supporting the Shiites in these nations that were experiencing revolution; but it did not matter if the Shiites were the oppressed or the oppressors. (Alagha, 2013). When Syria began to experience the tremors of revolution, Lebanese politicians began to become concerned both because of its proximity to Syria and because of potential Hezbollah reaction. Hezbollah had stated that it would not interfere in any military attack.
targeting Syria and Iran unless there was an existential threat facing either regime. (Alagha, 2013). Najib Mikati, the current Sunni Prime Minister of Lebanon, specifically stated when the Syrian revolution began "the Lebanese government will pursue a line of "dissociation" from either side of the Syrian conflict to keep the fighting from spilling across the border." (Saad, et al, 2013).

Hezbollah Secretary-General Nasrallah, however, opined that the Lebanese government needed to take a more active role in finding a resolution to the Syrian conflict and to open the border between Syria and Lebanon. Iran, meanwhile, began sending weapons, supplies and IRGC members into Syria to help shore up the regime in order to protect the only ally that Iran has had for the last forty years. (Rabil, 2013). It seemed to be a matter of not 'if' but 'when' Iran would call upon Hezbollah to assist with Syria. Hezbollah officials, again trying to take a moderate approach, denied that they would help Syria; that the main objective of Hezbollah was to protect Lebanon from Israel (Daily Star, 2012). However, flare-ups began to occur on the border that Lebanon shares with Syria, specifically in the Beka'a Valley, a Hezbollah stronghold (Hezbollah calls for Syria Solution, 2013). Hezbollah militants began disappearing, followed soon after with funerals for these militants to honor their 'martyr operations', without revealing just what these militants had done that earned them the designation of 'martyr' (Yacoubian, 2013).
It was determined that Hezbollah militants were fighting in Qusair, Syria, under the pretext of protecting the Shiite villages in the area (Neriah, 2012). However, Qusair is of critical importance to both the Assad regime and Hezbollah as a valuable passage of arms between the two countries (Yacoubian, 2013). This battle turned out to be the first major strategic victory for the al-Assad regime against the Syrian rebels. From this point on, Hezbollah no longer attempted to keep it a secret that it was fighting alongside the Assad regime. As the Syrian Civil War continued, it became more apparent that the war originally about overthrowing the regime has evolved into more of a sectarian conflict, of Sunnis versus Shiites, Christians versus Muslims. Hezbollah’s involvement in this type of conflict, as a Shiite defending a Shiite regime, has alienated the Sunnis within both Syria and Lebanon, as well as the Sunnis around the Middle East who initially supported Hezbollah for their resistance against Israel. Hezbollah now appear to be more sectarian-driven, less a "resistance movement against Israel" and more as a 'gun-for-hire' that is self-interested and seeks to protect its patrons, even at the expense of the Lebanese,
especially those that have suffered along the Lebanon-Syria border who have been shelled and killed as a direct result of Hezbollah's involvement. Compounding the matter further for Hezbollah is that, as a direct result of their involvement in the conflict, the Syrian regime has turned around the Assad regime losses into wins and are now successfully routing the rebels in parts of western Syria. All those across the Middle East who desired to see the downfall of all entrenched regimes have begun to blame Hezbollah for their defense of the Assad regime.

Understanding the history and beliefs of Hezbollah is critical to establishing a baseline of patterns and observations that have defined the organization throughout their history, as well as today. In addition, Hezbollah's leadership has essentially remained the same over the last two decades, lending weight to the idea that these established patterns will be indicators of potential actions by Hezbollah in the future. What is important is to now identify those patterns and observations and ascertain how these will affect Hezbollah's actions in their newest role as a Shiite foreign legion to Syria's Assad.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Before compiling and analyzing the data, the author has to conduct an evaluation of the types of data, as well as review the organization the information for the overall thesis. As one of the goals to the hypothesis is ascertaining what will Hezbollah's future be like if situation X is achieved, there first needed to be an evaluation of Hezbollah's past. What was/is Hezbollah's ideology, their methods towards achieving that ideology, the circumstances that surrounded their founding that perhaps influenced the ideology? It is imperative to establish a solid foundation of facts in order to create an understanding of where the group has been in order to rationally and without prejudice determine where they are going. A qualitative research approach is then applied extensively on a variety of published mediums, with the benchmark for most of these materials being of peer-reviewed quality or written by established experts.

Even with this standard, the author of this thesis had to approach the material with as an unbiased view as possible, as well as the discernment for bias from the experts. This data is then collated and cross-referenced, when necessary, with other sources in order to confirm the veracity of facts. There was additional research done outside of the parameters of this thesis topic (one example being on events that influenced Hezbollah) so that the author could both better understand and better explain why such events were influential. This research was also from qualified resources. The research included sources that had conflicting viewpoints from other resources, as well as resources whose viewpoints corroborated. In those cases where peer review literature was limited in availability on a particular topic, the author conducted additional research to find multiple sources that allowed for vetting of the data.
Once this was completed, the analysis process began with a building block approach. First, there was construction of a series of topical timelines of various elements within Hezbollah. The creation of these timelines is for three basic reasons: first, to help frame events chronologically as well as to show cause and effects. Second, the timelines help to detect patterns of behavior to ascertain consistent trends in Hezbollah reactions to uncertainties and problems. Third, the information provided in the timelines demonstrates the various Hezbollah relationships internal and external to the organization. The research presented an orderly and comprehensive set of data that allowed the author to present a complete evaluation of Hezbollah's history from its inception to present time for the reader to understand.

When transitioning to Hezbollah's present involvement in Syria, there had to be a focus to minimize assumptions by seeking out a broad base of source materials. Again, as with the historical perspective of Hezbollah, there was a presumption that various authors would have biases in their work, regardless of the peer-reviews. This, in conjunction with the dynamic Syrian conflict, presented some significant limitations in the research. A data baseline sets forth key geostrategic factors related to Hezbollah before the Syrian War and then allows one to evaluate how these factors have changed in their impact on Hezbollah for the future. The first element of this baseline is an assessment of Hezbollah "power factors" before the Syrian war and now. For the purposes of illustrating this power, the author utilized the Jablonsky model for measuring the power of a state. This power assessment uses established metrics, or "natural and social determinants" for evaluating the “power” of a state which are defined as follows: Natural determinants, which concern tangible elements, are geography, resources, population; social determinants, which are ways people organize themselves and their environment, are economic, political, military, psychological and technical/cyber factors. (Jablonsky, 2006) These factors
are critical not just to how the world perceives a state but how the state perceives itself; this is how "national power" is defined. Hezbollah is a non-state actor and not a state; however, the determinants above are still applicable to the scenario of a non-state actor.

The next step is to look at the factors that brought Hezbollah into the Syrian conflict and how these factors relate to the data presented earlier in the thesis. Finally, an analysis of this data helps to ascertain what possible scenarios may occur in Hezbollah's future because of their involvement in the Syrian conflict. The results of this analysis process will be presented as the thesis findings and the conclusions as related to the thesis statement/problem.
Chapter 4

Literature Review

There is a substantial amount of existing literature about Hezbollah; however, there are certain caveats about this set of information. First Hezbollah was founded as a clandestine organization; Hezbollah has operated in secrecy since the inception. Thus, there is a lack of original documentation from the organization given the secretive nature of Hezbollah; the available documents may not be fully reliable. Second the existing documentation, including peer reviewed materials, tends to be biased ranging from advocates of Hezbollah to arch adversaries. Finally, since the thesis is dealing with a set of contemporary dynamic events there is a paucity of peer-reviewed literature on the Syrian civil war and the impact of that conflict on Hezbollah. The author tried to ensure that current media sources of information were corroborated more than one source.

Hezbollah has evolved constantly and significantly, during the relatively short time it has been in existence, approximately 30 years. (Norton, 2009). There are five basic areas of Hezbollah organization and organizational evolution: military, political, social services, terrorist and diplomatic. While the five areas are all linked, some areas are more influential than others are. Hezbollah’s military and political areas are particularly sophisticated, in large part due to the influence and assistance from Iran and Syria. (Gleis, 2012). Because of enhancements in capabilities and competency in the political and military areas, Hezbollah's influence has increased in Lebanon and the Levant. In particular, the military component of Hezbollah has allowed it to become the dominant actor in Lebanese politics as its military power rivals that of the Lebanese government (Addis, 2011). The military capability reinforces the strength of the
political arm of Hezbollah. The Hezbollah military capabilities have evolved from an elemental terrorist attack ability to a fighting force that has challenged the Israeli Defense Force on the battlefield (Blanford, 2011). The Hezbollah alliance with Iran has paid-off though the receipt of funds, military training, weapons, and strategic guidance. (Deeb, 2013) The current involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War will likely accelerate the next phase of the Hezbollah military capability evolution.

Historical evidence documents how Hezbollah began in 1982 as a radical Shiite terrorist organization as motivated by the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the ongoing problems faced by Shiites in Lebanon. (Kazimi, 2010). Hezbollah has entered the Syrian Civil War as a battlefield ally of the Assad Alawite government; the Assad regime provided comprehensive assistance to Hezbollah in the past. (Martini, 2013). While the outcome has not been fully resolved, the Hezbollah forces have aided the Assad forces to make gains on the ground and roll back previous successes by the rebels. (Sutherlin, 2013). There are three general scenarios for resolution of the Syrian Civil War, all of which have profound geostrategic consequences and relevance to the field of strategic security. Scenario one is a rebel victory that would result in the Islamist extremist rebel elements dominating the post-conflict control of what had been Syria antebellum. This result would pose dangers of terrorist bases for future terror attacks on Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West. Scenario two is the Assad forces prevail with the assistance of Hezbollah, Iran and Russia. This sets the conditions for increased Iranian influence and a drive for a Shiite “arc of influence” from Iran to cover Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Scenario three is that the civil war in Syria progressively becomes a polarized and prolonged sectarian battle between Shiite and Sunni religious antagonists. Each of these scenarios has a singular and great significance to the field of strategic security. Furthermore, Hezbollah plays a major role in each
scenario. Presently, new evidence has emerged as to how and why Hezbollah has become involved in the Syrian Civil War; the next questions that follow will address how this involvement in the Syrian Civil War will affect the next evolution of the military capabilities and political fortunes of Hezbollah in the Levant and the Middle East.

Given that Hezbollah is a relatively recent phenomenon, some 30 years, the various sourced literature is all relatively recent to support investigation of the thesis statement. In fact, the contemporary and dynamic nature of the Hezbollah involvement in the Syrian means new data is continually becoming available. Thus, it is essential that the references provide a stable and reliable frame of reference for the analysis process and the determination of conclusions.

The literature review provides a perspective for references selected from the Bibliography. This perspective relates to the substance of each reference and how the reference fits into the investigation of the thesis statement and the research question:

Thesis Statement:
“Hezbollah will be weakened politically by its entry into the Syrian Civil War unless the outcome of the war reestablishes the Assad government in control of all former Syrian territory.”

Research Question:
Will the involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War affect their political stature if the Assad regime does not reestablish control of all former Syrian territory?


Credibility: Hezbollah DNA is very well documented and researched. Various reviews by established experts give this work high marks for the in-depth use of references.
Reliability: The facts and data in the book correlate well with information found in other sources.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The comprehensive nature and new insights on Hezbollah bring another dimension to analytic thinking on the nature and role of Hezbollah in the Levant.

Summary: As noted above, the factual reference basis for the book Hezbollah DNA is not in dispute. The book tracks Hezbollah from inception to the Syrian Civil War with emphasis on the Shiite roots and the Hezbollah political machinations. The contrarian views of the author on many issues set this book apart from other references. The author even takes exception with the founding date used by most researchers on Hezbollah. The author was also highly critical of selected peers and authors in the literature review section of Hezbollah DNA. This book is useful for the wealth of factual data, references and serves as a counterpoint to some of the “conventional wisdom” written about Hezbollah. As such, it serves as a valuable basis to test and vet conclusions in this thesis and other generally accepted theories about Hezbollah.


Credibility: This is a translation of the original source document published in Arabic by Hezbollah in 1985. The document was recorded by many media throughout the Middle East.

Reliability: The authenticity of the document and accuracy of the translation is verified; the reference is reliable.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This is an original source document on the plans for Hezbollah to move forward into the Lebanese political system as a religious political party.

Summary: As a source document, this reference will help establish the initial strategy how the Hezbollah evolution began into a broader base of political activities in Lebanon and the region. This Hezbollah political strategy ties into the time lines for the terror, military, and political actions by Hezbollah.


Credibility: Professor Augustus Richard Norton is currently a professor of international relations at Boston University and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He has testified before Congress about Hezbollah issues. He has written and lectured on the Middle East.

Reliability: While recognized as an expert on the Middle East and the Shia community in Lebanon (composed of AMAL and Hezbollah) Professor Norton is viewed by some as a moderate in his stated views about many aspects of Hezbollah. He states in his book that he is trying to present a “more balanced, nuanced account of this complex organization” (pp8)

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Many experts consider Professor Norton’s books on Hezbollah and AMAL as the primers for basic information on the Shiite community in Lebanon. The Hezbollah alliance with Iran and Syria and the Hezbollah threat to Israel place Professor’s Norton’s writings in a position of influence and impact in the field of Strategic Security.

Summary: The Norton book is seminal in the treatment of Hezbollah and is part of the foundation knowledge on Hezbollah and the complex environment of Lebanon and the Levant.
Professor Norton tracks in a topical timelines including Hezbollah political and military actions, which will provide support data for the integrated analyses using a similar approach in this thesis. Chapter 5 in his work is especially valuable to provide understanding of the progression of Hezbollah into Lebanese politics and to see how that time line matches other Hezbollah actions. Chapter 6 discusses the continuous Hezbollah commitment to upgrading and expanding the Hezbollah military capabilities. This leads through the various provocations, which culminated in the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. The stalemated 2006 conflict heralded in the Arab world as an Arab victory paid handsome political dividends for Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Arab world. The respective time lines represent the links between the Hezbollah political progress and Hezbollah military achievements. Two peer-level book reviews and found each acknowledging the book as an essential background work in a study of Hezbollah; however, one other reference, Hezbollah DNA, took issue with several points in the Norton book.


Credibility: CAMERA is a pro-Israel group.

Reliability: CAMERA has a record of accomplishment of meticulous fact checking given the attention given to CAMERA reporting. This reference uses historical evidence from a variety of peer-evaluated documents.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This reference is documentation on the terror activities of Hezbollah over the period of May 1982 through August 2006
Summary: This reference provides a time line documentation of the Hezbollah terror history during 1982 and 2006. This reference is used in conjunction with other time lines (military, political, and terror action 2007-present) to support analyses relating to patterns and Hezbollah behavior.


Credibility: Nicholas Blanford is a journalist who lives in Lebanon and has developed a close relationship with the Hezbollah leadership. This relationship spans over two decades and has given him access and an insider view that few western journalists have enjoyed.

Reliability: There is a concern that Mr. Blanford’s close and long-term relationship with Hezbollah leaders has biased his objectivity on certain matters. His factual reporting on military details appears to be accurate in most cases when compared to other sources. However when he includes subjective comments, he seems more sympathetic to Hezbollah than most western writers do.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Warriors of God, Inside Hezbollah’s Thirty-year Struggle Against Israel looks at the history of the Hezbollah virtually continuous conflict with Israel since the inception of Hezbollah. This virtual continuous state of war punctuated by frequent combat has had a strong impact historically in the field of strategic security and promises to continue so in the future.
Summary: The author offers a unique perspective from his insider access to various Hezbollah officials; the presentation is more a compilation of events reported in journalist personal style. He does not provide analyses and there is a clear bias for Hezbollah at some points. The book is useful as a reference for the thesis as it sets out a detailed chronology of Hezbollah military activities. This military time line correlates with the political time line to look for patterns and causative effects.


Credibility: The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is one of the most respected research and analysis institutions in the United States. The CRS employs area experts to conduct thorough investigation of information available on selected topics.

Reliability: The representations in this report are considered reliable based on the broad exposure to critics and other experts who would give close scrutiny in reviewing the information in this report.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This document has a direct impact in the field of strategic security. As an unclassified official government document, it is widely available as a resource. This document was an important part of the background information for the US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism 2012 (published May 2013) and for Congressional hearings conducted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in 2012.
Summary: This CRS report provides a concise look at Hezbollah including a historical context and a snapshot of Hezbollah in 2011. A section specifically looks at the political and military relationships of Hezbollah to Lebanon’s government and society. The report also discusses the Hezbollah relationships with Iran and Syria. This report is an important source of data for the thesis and a useful tool to evaluate other reference materials.

Council on Foreign Relations (2013). The Hezbollah Connection in Syria and Iran, Interviewee: Matthew Levitt, Director, Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence; Senior Fellow, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Interviewer: Bernard Gwertzman.

Credibility: The Council on Foreign Relations is a prestigious institution in the field of international affairs and politics and their work is widely read in government policy and academic circles. Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Reliability: Bernard Gwertzman, Consulting Editor at the Council on Council of Foreign Relations is an experienced journalist who specialized in the Cold War, Communism, and the Middle East. Matthew Levitt, Director, Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence; Senior Fellow, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Interviewer has experience in the US Government intelligence community dealing with terrorism issues and as a lecturer at Harvard University on international affairs.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This interview has specific comments about the role of Hezbollah in the Syrian Civil War and interesting insights about the relationship between
Hezbollah and Iran. These latter insights reflect some new thinking about how Hezbollah may behave in the future and thus are of significance in the field of strategic security.

Summary: Mr. Levitt offers insights into the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran that help explain why Hezbollah delayed its full entry into the Syrian conflict for two years. These same insights present a possible model for near-term Hezbollah behavior. This interview is conceptually useful in the analysis of the thesis hypothesis.


Credibility: Carl Anthony Wege is a Professor of Political Science at the College of Coastal Georgia in Brunswick, Georgia. He has taught courses on terrorism and published articles on Hezbollah and related subjects.

Reliability: The Journal of Strategic Security, which is a Henley-Putnam University publication, published the article. Carl Anthony Wege is considered an expert in the Levant region.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This article impacts strategic security by examining the complex relationship between Syria and Hezbollah; this background helps underscore the importance of Hezbollah's current involvement in the Syrian Civil War.

Summary: This article goes in-depth into the relationship that Syria and Hezbollah have: Syria both desires to control Hezbollah for its own purposes and gains, while fearing reprisals from Iran if they become over-eager in their attempt to control Hezbollah. Hezbollah understands
what Syria's intentions are, but because Syria facilitates the transport of weapons and other aid from Iran to Lebanon, Hezbollah must play along with Syria's whims in order to get what it wants. This article provides important background.


Credibility: Dr. Jacques Neriah is a retired colonel who formerly served as Foreign Policy Advisor to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and was the Head of Assessment of Israeli Military Intelligence. He currently serves the role of a special analyst for the Middle East at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Reliability: Dr. Neriah may have some bias as he is from Israel. However, his experience in military intelligence and foreign policy should allow him to speak quite knowledgably on events that are occurring right on the border of Israel.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Dr. Neriah offers an analysis regarding Hezbollah's at the time of his writing, yet-unofficial, involvement in the Syrian Civil War (this article was published on 10/24/12, prior to Hassan Nasrallah's announcement). Dr. Neriah gives an overview of various reasons that made Hezbollah's entrance into the war an inevitability. He also discusses what will motivate Hezbollah to continue in this war with all of their might.

Summary: The reference covers several key points as to why Hezbollah became involved: the porous, non-defined border that lies between Lebanon and Syria. Hezbollah claims that the villages that lie right across the Lebanese border in Syria are Shiite and thus need protection;
additionally, Hezbollah's ability to "export" its military expertise for the first time in order to achieve Iran's strategic objectives in the region is useful to Iran and Syria objectives. This article provides important background into Hezbollah's involvement in the war, prior to their "official" announcement of their involvement.


Credibility: Mona Yacoubian is Senior Adviser for the Middle East at the Henry L. Stimson Center. She also directs the project Pathways to Progress: Peace, Prosperity, and Change in the Middle East, a joint initiative between the George C. Marshall Foundation and the Stimson Center.

Reliability: Ms. Yacoubian's work while at the Stimson Center focuses on the Arab Uprisings, concentrated on Syria. She previously served as a Special Advisor and Senior Program Officer on the Middle East at the US Institute of Peace, where her work focused on Lebanon and Syria.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This article analyzes Hezbollah's involvement with the Syrian Civil War in light of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah's first public acknowledgment that the group has been involved in the conflict after months of attempting to conceal this fact. As Hezbollah is involved in full combat in this conflict, there is great potential that Lebanon could be dragged unwillingly into the Syrian Civil War; this would cause great instability both within Lebanon and throughout the Middle East as the war grows increasingly sectarian in nature.
Summary: This well written article provides insight into the initial reactions of various groups who are involved, directly or indirectly, with the Syrian Civil War. As the title denotes, this is a gamble for Hezbollah as they previously were known only as a Lebanese defender against Israel, but are now transitioning into a role more complicated, with more repercussions should they fail. This article is utilized the analysis of what Hezbollah risks in getting involved in the war.


Credibility: Rafid Fadhil Ali is a journalist, writer and reporter. From 2003 to 2007, he covered the Iraq war and followed events from the field. Rafid worked for different pan-Arab and foreign media organizations. He is an expert in Iraqi politics and militant groups in the Middle East.

Reliability: The American Foreign Policy Council's World Almanac of Islamism cited Rafid Ali's work. His experience as a journalist has provided him with the opportunity to observe events as they unfold and to learn the perspectives of those involved.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This article reaffirms the theory that Hezbollah is taking quite a risk of affecting its popularity in the Middle East by supporting the Assad regime in Syria. It also reviews the potential for an attack on Israel as a means of unifying the fracturing pan-Arab front into sectarian chaos.

Summary: This article discusses what the ramifications will be if the Assad regime falls in the Syrian conflict, as related to the future of Hezbollah. It analyzes how Hezbollah has grown and
evolved with the support of the Iranian and Syrian regimes and that Hezbollah recognizes their dependence on these two governments; this dependence is why Hezbollah must take this risk in defending the Assad regime.


Credibility: Robert G. Rabil is associate professor of political science and the LLS Distinguished Professor of Current Events at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of Syria, United States and the War on Terror in the Middle East [3] and most recently Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism.

Reliability: Professor Rabil is widely published and considered an authority on Middle East matters. His works are routinely peer reviewed.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This paper complements other documents published by Professor Rabil and relate directly to the strategic issues in the Syrian conflict.

Summary: Professor Rabil discusses why Hezbollah entered the Syrian civil war and the timing of the Hezbollah action. His analysis directly relates to the key issues in thesis statement.

Sutherlin, J. The Syrian Dilemma: a US led Invasion or a UN Sponsored Resolution. (2013). International of Humanities and Social Science, University of Louisiana at Monroe.
Credibility: Professor Sutherlin is widely published on subjects such as national security, energy, and government policies. His publications include articles in the National Defense University Journal.

Reliability: Professor Sutherlin is regarded as reliable based on the history of his work and the type of audiences that review and assess his work.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The referenced paper is a timely input in the fast moving and complex situation in 2013 Syria. The analyses provided by Professor Sutherlin use the dynamics and complexity of the situation in Syria to challenge the analysts in the field of strategic security to a careful review of on the ground realities.

Summary: Professor Sutherlin takes a wider view than most analysts do as he looks at the ongoing Arab Spring and the turmoil throughout the Middle East and North Africa. He challenges some of the former policies such as “boots on the ground” and the tendency for Washington to look at the short term versus what they should consider a “successful outcome”. As Professor Sutherlin looks at the Syria crisis and the ties to Iran and Hezbollah, he expands the vista to include the nuclear weapons issue and economic considerations. This reference will help frame various issues in the analysis portion of the thesis.

Credibility: Joshua Gleis is an independent scholar, international security consultant, and political risk analyst. Benedetta Berti is a lecturer in Middle Eastern studies at Tel Aviv University and an associate fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies. She specializes in terrorism and political violence in the Middle East, radical Islamic organizations and Palestinian and Lebanese politics.

Reliability: This book is the product of four years of research, including meetings and interviews with high-level officials in the Middle East and the West. The resources drawn from a variety of sources include scholarly works, news media reports, and government sources, both foreign and domestic.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This well written book is a primer for two terror groups whose defining aspect is that they are associated with particular nations/regions: Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestine area. While this book is educational for those who wish to learn about these groups, the writing also contains valuable information for experts on Hezbollah and Hamas that make it a worthwhile resource.

Summary discussion of the reference and the plan to use it: This reference gives a solid overview of the two terror groups Hezbollah and Hamas, although for the purpose of my thesis I will be focusing on the writings regarding Hezbollah. This reference discusses a possible rift between Iran and Hezbollah concerning leader Hassan Nasrallah's handling of the 2006 Israeli conflict implying a potential transference of power to certain unspecified Iranian agents. The relationship between Nasrallah and Iran is critical to what happens later with the entry of Hezbollah into the Syrian war. The book offers insight into Hezbollah's concerns over being "lumped together" with al Qaeda, as well as Salafi Muslim extremism, both of which have
fought Hezbollah and have the potential to seriously jeopardize Hezbollah’s position in Lebanon and the Middle East. This book gives some detail as to the military training, tactics, and weaponry provided to Hezbollah by Iran discussing how they wish to utilize these resources in both protecting Hezbollah from Sunni jihadi groups and Israel. The author used this reference to discuss the military capabilities of Hezbollah, as well as the possible influence that Hassan Nasrallah may have had in the first revolution that occurred in Egypt to overthrow the Mubarak regime and the implications for the entry of Hezbollah into the Syrian war.


Credibility: Nibras Kazimi is a Visiting Scholar of the Hudson Institute. Previously, he directed the Research Bureau of the Iraqi National Congress in Washington DC and Baghdad. He also writes articles on the Middle East for the New York Sun.

Reliability: The author has travelled extensively throughout the Middle East, establishing contacts of various political and military stripes. For this book alone, he travelled to Syria five times to gather information 'on the ground'. This particular work cited by both RAND Corporation and the International Journal of Humanities and Social Science in articles related directly to the Syrian Civil War.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Nibras Kazimi’s book was published in 2010; based on evidence he gathered during his travels, his analysis assessed that Syria would become the next major battleground for jihadists keen on overthrowing the Nusayri- 'Alawite Assad regime and
that this war would be sectarian in nature. These prescient conclusions are proving themselves accurate as the current Syrian Civil War rages over this extended period of time.

Summary discussion of the reference and the plan to use it: I found this book to be quite insightful on explaining what the various motivations would be for a conflict in Syria, while also providing historical evidence to back up these claims. Kazimi succinctly analyzes his research and asserts that conflict in Syria is inevitable, almost a full two years prior to the present Syrian war. His retelling of various interactions with members of various Muslim denominations demonstrates the underlying tensions felt across the spectrum of Syrian citizens, as all seemed to articulate a fatalist attitude.


Credibility: Bernedetta Berti is a research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), a Young Atlanticist at the Atlantic Council, and a member of the faculty at Tel Aviv University. She also works as policy and security consultant for a number of NGOs, political risk consulting firms, as well as international organizations. Benedetta's research relates to political violence and conflict in the Middle East. She focuses specifically on political integration of armed groups, democratization, and rule of law.

Reliability: Ms. Berti is a published expert on Hezbollah and Lebanon. Other peer-reviewed journals cite her work.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Ms. Berti has described this work as an attempt to fill a gap in the analysis of terror groups that develop political extensions, the reasoning behind such developments, and how the political and military arms affect each other.

Summary: This work was interesting in its analysis of why militarized groups evolve and develop political branches. Berti lays out convincing evidence regarding factors in play for an armed terror group would adjust this formula in order to accommodate a political arm. She specifically cites Hezbollah as an example of a group that has successfully created a political arm and has managed both their armed and political branches in a sophisticated manner. She describes that when armed groups evolve into political organizations and institutionalize "they tend to become increasingly interested in their own preservation and survival, paying significantly less attention to their original objectives and ideologies..." (Berti, 2011). This aspect is intriguing in that Hezbollah appeared to be doing just that prior to the Syrian Civil War. Now that they have entered the war, it would almost appear that they were going counter to this argument, as they are losing men and weaponry in this conflict. However, it is also very likely that Hezbollah is fighting this war in order to survive, as the collapse of the Assad regime would mean that Hezbollah would lose their supply link to Iran, and the possibility is great that whatever replaces the Assad regime will upset the Shiite balance-of-power in the region.

Credibility: Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Dr. Shimon Shapira is a senior research associate at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Reliability: Dr. Shapira displays a bias towards Israel. However, his work is informed and well-researched using a variety of resources.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Dr. Shapira explains how the death of the Iranian General Hassan Shateri of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) shows the depth of the ties between Iran and Hezbollah, as well as the intricate plans that Iran is working in Lebanon. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, announced that the general was killed in a mission with Hezbollah, confirming that Iranian military is involved with the training and supplying of Hezbollah. There is also evidence that Hezbollah is offering asylum to Alawite officers fleeing the conflict in Syria, in return for training Hezbollah for operations in the Syrian conflict; in particular, the training includes how to operate the various complicated weapon systems that the Syrian regime still has in their possession.

Summary: Dr. Shapira connects various dots to demonstrate the level of involvement Iran has in Lebanon; General Hassan Shateri managed an empire of banks, construction companies, hotels, transportation, media outlets, etc., in southern Lebanon. Iran has, through Hezbollah, facilitated the construction and establishment of an "independent fiber-optic network. This network gives Iran and Hizbullah a telephone, television, and satellite communication network throughout Lebanon." (Shapira 2013) This article also provides information on Hezbollah fighters receiving training from Alawite officers, in exchange for allowing them to move with their families to southern Lebanon. This training is of concern to Israel and provides credence to the reasons for two Israeli airstrikes within Syria. The Israeli airstrikes targeted weapons caches and chemical
weapons' facilities. Israel expressed its concerns that while the Assad regime totters, the sophisticated weapons utilized by the military of the Syrian regime will potentially fall into the hands of Hezbollah fighters and turned upon Israel. This article further explains the relationships between Hezbollah and Iran and Hezbollah and Syria.


Credibility: Abbas Samii is an analyst with the US Department of State. Other positions he has held were with the Project Iran Team at the Center for Naval Analyses and with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc.

Reliability: The Middle East Journal, the oldest peer-reviewed publication on Middle Eastern studies, published this article by Samii.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Mr. Samii's article presents the history of the relationship between Hezbollah and its two patron nations, Iran and Syria. He assesses that the Syrian-Hezbollah relationship was more a matter of common purposes rather than genuine ideological similarities and goals, such as what makes up the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran.

Summary: This article provides historical context of Hezbollah's evolution from a terror group to its current armed and political makeup. The author speculates on whether or not Hezbollah will allow itself to get involved in conflicts outside of Lebanon, as Hezbollah becomes increasingly
invested in Lebanese politics. The author's assessment is that Hezbollah would potentially get involved if Iran were attacked, but that Hezbollah is not very likely to get involved with a Syrian conflict. This, of course, is contrary to Hezbollah's present actions as they are involved in the Syrian Civil War. The paper's well-researched historical aspects and the incorrect conclusion by the author provide a counterpoint in the thesis analyses.


Credibility: Jeffrey Martini is a Middle East analyst at the RAND Corporation, where he works on political reform in the Arab world. He has spent four years living in the Arab world, including three as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco and one in Cairo, Egypt, where he was a 2007–08 fellow in the CASA Arabic language program. Erin York is a research assistant at the RAND Corporation with a focus on Middle Eastern politics and policy and a background in quantitative analysis. She is a former Fulbright fellow to Syria, where she studied Arabic and completed a research project on modern Syrian literature. Most recently, she worked as a researcher for the Project on Middle East Democracy, a Washington, D.C. think tank. William Young is a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation. He spent most of his career in the Middle East and South Asia working on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and counter-proliferation issues.

Reliability: RAND Corporation is a highly respected organization known for their research findings and objective analyses. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure high standards for research quality and objectivity.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: A study-group of 26 SMEs (subject matter experts) wrote this article on Syria and the other external players that are involved in the Syrian Civil War, one of the external players is Hezbollah. The purpose was to evaluate what the interests are of each player involved in this conflict, and how they will be affected if the Assad regime remains in power or if they fall.

Summary: This paper gets at the core of what this thesis proposes: that Hezbollah will be weakened politically should the Assad regime fall. More than half of the 26 SMEs agree that either Iran or Hezbollah will be "the most consequential actor in the outcome of the Syrian conflict" (Martini et al, 2013). They conclude that it is indisputable the dramatic impact that the fall of the Assad regime will have on Hezbollah, as they will be unable to maintain the flow of weapons and other supplies from Iran to Lebanon, where Hezbollah is headquartered. The paper also discusses the religious undertones regarding the Syrian Civil War, as Syria is currently the only Sunni-majority nation controlled by a Shia minority, and this is another factor for Hezbollah's involvement, as they are also a Shia organization.


Credibility: Dr. Ora Szekely is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Reliability: Middle East Policy is a respected journal that has been a forum for U.S. policies in the Middle East for 30 years. Dr. Szekely is a Senior Research Fellow with the Interuniversity Consortium for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This article examines how Hezbollah has managed to maintain its power and influence, even when challenged by the strongest military in the Middle East, the Israeli Defense Force. It also describes how Hezbollah has grown as an organization and increased its popularity through various social services programs that it controls.

Summary: This paper provides critical insight into the success of Hezbollah as a non-state actor/terror organization, mainly through strategy and support of patron state Iran. It also delves into the history of Hezbollah and how Hezbollah expanded from a terror group to a political party/social services provider. The paper also examines how Hezbollah has managed to navigate suspicion and attacks from its political enemies within Lebanon.


Credibility: Michael P. Arena is employed by a large state criminal justice agency where he is an analyst and trainer. He has published in a variety of behavioral and social science journals. He is also the co-author (along with Bruce Arrigo) of The Terrorist Identity: Explaining the Terrorist Threat (NYU Press: 2006) which analyzes various terror or extremist groups and the different factors that help them recruit and sustain members. His major areas of interest include extremist behavior, domestic/international terrorism, security studies, and international policing.

Reliability: Global Crime is a social sciences journal that publishes articles on a variety of criminal activities, from terrorism to drug and human trafficking.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This work examines Hezbollah's alternative means of obtaining financial support through such mediums as drug-trafficking, criminal enterprises and
the African diamond trade. This is useful because it provides insight into how Hezbollah may sustain itself in case the Assad regime collapses.

Summary: This article provides alternate information regarding how Hezbollah sustains itself financially beyond the extensive financial aid from Iran. The material is interesting because it examines Hezbollah's lesser-known involvement in various other criminal activities and how profitable they are for Hezbollah, as well as its potential as an "insurance policy" should it no longer be able to receive support from Iran, via the Assad-supported bridge in Syria. This material is utilized in the analysis portion in determining how Hezbollah may be affected should the Assad regime fall.

Quagmire In Syria: Iran Blunders As Hezbollah Fights To Protect Its Home Base And The Kurds Begin To Take Sides. (2013). Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.

Credibility: This reference is actually a compilation of three papers that bear on the current situation in the Syrian civil war. Two of the papers: “Iran Makes an Epic Blunder in Syria” by Gary Gambill and “Hezbollah’s Necessary War of Choice in Syria” by Aram Nerguizian are particularly important as they address the Hezbollah military manpower issue. Real Clear World published both of these papers. Gary C. Gambill is a contributor to Foreign Policy, The National Interest, and The National Post. Aram Nerguizian is a senior fellow with the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where he conducts research on strategic and military dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa.

Reliability: Although the reference document publisher has clear ties to Israel both papers were authored and originally published in other accepted journals; thus bias is not a practical issue for
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The issue of sufficient military manpower has been a critical question for the Syrian regime in the ongoing civil war. The Alawites are a relatively small minority in Syria; the Sunnis in the national army have defected in sizable numbers placing a heavier burden on Alawite troops. Iran has reportedly dispatched an unknown number of Revolutionary Guard troops to bolster the Assad forces. However, the Hezbollah contribution of combat troops changed the strategic balance back to the regime. There currently are no reliable numbers for the Hezbollah forces in Syria but the results suggest the additional combat power Hezbollah has contributed is significant. The primary strategic security question is which side in the civil war has the manpower staying power in this conflict.

Summary: The Hezbollah manpower issue is fundamental to the military and political condition for the Hezbollah organization’s future. The actual number of fighting men available to Hezbollah is not known and is represented in a wide range as an aggregate of reserves and active force military men. Even the Hezbollah demographic base is questionable as accurate population figures are difficult to ascertain for the Lebanon sectarian factions. The Confessional system of government makes population figures controversial and potentially destabilizing for Lebanon. This reference helps to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Hezbollah in the longer term and how that will impact the Hezbollah political future.

Credibility: Professor Khashan is Professor of Political Science, American University of Beirut. The Middle East Quarterly is a respected journal for scholarly works on the Middle East.

Reliability: The information presented by Professor Khashan is well documented and presented in the peer-reviewed journal Middle East Quarterly.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The consolidated information and expert observations and conclusions by Professor Khashan have a broad impact on understanding Hezbollah intent and objectives. This in turn has a significant bearing on the geostrategic issues in the Levant and the Middle East.

Summary: This article is a useful reference as a source of basic information on how Hezbollah has operated politically in Lebanon; the article also makes the linkage between the Hezbollah military and terror branches in support of the political objectives. The article provides timeline data and insights for further analyses and the thesis conclusions.


Credibility: The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center provides a document that presents historical data verified through various public data sources. The document provides extensive references.
Reliability: The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center is an Israeli organization that is subject to both peer review and hostile scrutiny from other organizations. As such, The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center takes care with all statements about the occurrence of events. The conclusions however must be viewed for any bias.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The discussions framed by The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center are intended for the public at large and the community of geostrategic experts monitoring the Middle East.

Summary: This document provides a time line aggregation of Hezbollah terror activities during the period May 2011 – February 2012. These data added to other information fill in gaps for the Hezbollah terror time line. The appendices contain useful information on the extensive cooperation between Iran and Hezbollah; these data will support analyses and conclusions.


Credibility: The Congressional Research Service is a respected source for a broad range of research and analytic papers in the areas of foreign policy and security. Kenneth Katzman is a Specialist in Middle East Affairs for the Congressional Research Service.

Reliability: The Congressional Research Service is known for well-researched and documented publication.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: This paper covers the various means and strategies that Iran uses to support various terrorist groups and allies. The ramifications of the discussion cover the Middle East.

Summary: The discussion provides useful information about the extent of Iranian support for Hezbollah and how Hezbollah has acted on behalf of Iran in a variety of terror and political incidents. The Iran-Syria relationship is discussed which links the three in the current Syrian war as allies. The time line data from this report and insights will support analyses and conclusions.


Credibility: Dr. Robert G. Rabil is an associate professor of political science at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Syria, United States and the War on Terror in the Middle East (Praeger, 2006); and Embattled Neighbors: Syria, Israel and Lebanon (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

Reliability: This journal is an accepted background and reference source for the Middle East. The article by Dr. Rabil is peer reviewed and one in a series of reports he has written as an area expert.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The paper provides a continuity of perspective for a political evolution by Hezbollah from the founding to the 2009 Manifesto. This perspective gives useful insights into likely directions Hezbollah will pursue in the future.
Summary discussion of the reference and the plan to use it: This paper is a foundation piece for analysis to tie Hezbollah political strategies, military capabilities, and relationship with Iran to the role of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil War. These analyses support the effort to synthesize conclusions regarding likely ramifications on the Hezbollah political future intentions.


Credibility: Frida Ghitis is a world affairs columnist, author, and consultant. She has toured Iraq, both during and after Saddam Hussein's regime, as well as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Her consulting work includes providing political analysis and forecasting.

Reliability: The World Politics Review is an online journal that presents original analyses that cover a variety of topics, including international affairs. Contributors include analysts, scholars, and journalists.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The article, written during a critical battle in the course of the Syrian Civil War, describes the Hezbollah contribution to a victory as the Assad's regime forces were battling for the city of Qusayr. Qusayr is a strategic location as it provides a connection between Syria and Lebanon. This battle was instrumental in revealing the involvement of Hezbollah and Iran in the Syrian Civil War, as control of Qusayr is critical to Iran's ability to ship weapons and materials to Hezbollah.

Summary: This paper marks a turning point between Hezbollah’s "plausible deniability" in their involvement in the Syrian Civil War. This also marked a turning point for the Assad regime, which had been steadily losing up until this point. The battle to gain control of this town by
three separate actors (Assad regime, Iran and Hezbollah), is a clear demonstration of their alliance in a combat situation.


Credibility: The Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies is a respected academic research center. Dr. Yusri Hazran is a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Reliability: The analysis by Dr. Hazran uses data checked by other sources and he caveats many of his comments. For example, he states, “Although no census has been taken in Lebanon since 1932, it is commonly believed that the Shiites have become the single largest religious community in Lebanon, constituting approximately 40 percent of the entire population (or 1.6 million out of a total population of 4 million).” He uses extensive references to document his discussion.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: Dr. Hazran argues in his paper that the Shiite community has gained a position of politically ascendancy in the Lebanon political process, the confessional constitution process notwithstanding. This assertion, if correct, has an important impact on the potential for Iran to play a more influential role in Lebanon through Hezbollah.

Summary: Dr. Hazran argues that the militarization of the Shiite community, in particular Hezbollah is basic to the rise in Shiite influence in the Lebanese political system. Further, he discusses how the Hezbollah maintains the commitment to creating an Islamic state in Lebanon but is politically astute to work within the Lebanon confessional system for the being. Both the
military capability of Hezbollah and the political evolution of Hezbollah are basic to the analyses in this thesis. Dr. Hazran provides a Shiite population in Lebanon as estimated at approximately 40%, which is slightly higher than most other sources. What he does not address is the internal allegiances of the Shiite community between Hezbollah, AMAL and other smaller factions. The number of Shiites in Lebanon giving primary allegiance to Hezbollah is the salient point as the base for Hezbollah military manpower and the associated political strength.

Segall, M., (2012), The role of Iranian security forces in Syria, Jerusalem Viewpoints.

Credibility: IDF Lt. Col. (ret.) Michael Segall, an expert on strategic issues with a focus on Iran, terrorism, and the Middle East, is a senior analyst at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. LtCol Segall has written extensively on the role and threat from Iran in the Middle East.

Reliability: This reference work is extensively documented with information from other credible sources. Furthermore, the author most likely has continuing contacts with his former colleagues in the Israeli Defense Force. There may be some bias in the discussion but overall the discussion and conclusions are consistent with information from other experts in this area.

Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: The Iranian role in the Middle East and in the Syrian civil war has profound geostrategic implications for the region and the world. The perspective from this reference on Iranian objective in Syria and the relationships between the Iran Revolutionary Guard is basic to understanding the current situation in Syria and the Levant. Furthermore, this discussion relates to a greater issue of a widespread Shiite-Sunni conflict.
Summary: This reference provides a view of the likely Iranian goals and intentions to sustain the Syrian Alawite regime in the current conflict. The deep collaboration between Iran and Hezbollah is one essential element of the Iranian strategy. This information shows the symbiotic relationship of Hezbollah and Iran but also illustrates a way to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Hezbollah as impacted by the Hezbollah combat role in the Syrian civil war.


Credibility: A compilation of three references (two from Stratfor Analysis and one from Geo-Strategy Direct) that focus on how the Syrian Civil War is affecting Hezbollah's domestic front, Lebanon. One examines it from the side of the Shiites in Lebanon, the other from the rebels in Syria and then an overall view. Stratfor Analysis and Geo-Strategy Direct are private, pay-for intelligence analysis service organizations that publish email newsletters highlighting a multitude of various intelligence topics that range from foreign affairs to economics and terrorism.

Reliability: Stratfor and Geo-Strategy Direct are private intelligence services that receive contributions from intelligence community personnel on various topics. Their work on the Middle East, and especially on the Syrian Civil War was accurate. Academics and SME professionals alike use these references.
Impact on the Field of Strategic Security: These articles examine two sides of the same coin; how the Syrian Civil War is affecting the Lebanese that have supported Hezbollah, as well as the rebels who are on the receiving end of Hezbollah's actions. With the casualties that Hezbollah is taking under this newer distinction of 'Iranian foreign legion', the Lebanese Shiites are beginning to agree with the Syrian rebels in wanting Hezbollah to remove itself from this conflict.

Summary: These three articles exemplify the complicated situation, virtually a trap that Hezbollah is in regarding the Syrian Civil War. On the one hand, Hezbollah will lose an important ally in the Assad regime should it collapse; the chances are highly probable that the replacement Syrian government would not be friendly to Hezbollah. In that case, the flow of weapons and supplies from Iran to Hezbollah will significantly decrease or even cease. On the other hand, Hezbollah's involvement in the war and the losses they are taking is affecting Hezbollah support from the Lebanese-Shiite community, which does not see this conflict as protecting their interests and are unhappy that their sons are dying in a cause not perceived by them as worthwhile. Meanwhile, other minority factions in Lebanon who have been overshadowed by Hezbollah's power and influence are smelling the blood in the water and are arming themselves for the potential opportunity to overthrow Hezbollah's grip on the Lebanese government allow their own political party to ascend to power. These papers support the analysis of how Hezbollah is likely to react to these various situations.
Subsection 5A: Hezbollah Power – Extent, Strengths and Vulnerabilities

Assumptions

The various references about Hezbollah do not present a complete picture of that organization. Critical elements of information are absent and some data are in conflict. Certain assumptions are necessary to bridge the gaps and conflicts in the reference sources. The method to build and use assumptions is fundamental to the credibility of the thesis analysis and conclusions. First, assumptions apply only when a lack of information or clarification requires an assumption. Second, the assumption design is such that analysis results based on an assumption are not unduly sensitive to reasonable variations in the assumption. Two examples illustrate the concept for constructing assumptions.

The population of Lebanon is an important number in the analysis of the relative power of Hezbollah in Lebanon. However, there is no official Lebanon census since 1932. Several estimates of the Lebanon population exist but these estimates vary. For purposes of this analysis, the assumption is to use the CIA Fact Book as a reasonable source for the estimated population of Lebanon. The various other population estimates fall within a statistically accepted range around the CIA number. Thus, the population assumption represents a ‘most likely’ figure for use in the analyses.

The assumption for the number of Hezbollah fighting personnel is more problematic to determine. Various references provide a significant range of numbers for Hezbollah combat personnel. Two points emerge when these reference numbers are compared. All of the combat
personnel estimates are within a reasonable range except one. Further, the combat personnel estimates within this range are consistent with the estimated number of Hezbollah supporters in Lebanon. Therefore, an assumption using the normalized estimate within the range of Hezbollah combat personnel is reasonable.

Each assumption provides a low sensitivity on the analysis results when variations in the assumptions are considered.

Assumption 1, the current make-up of the Lebanese Shiite population: There has not been an official census made of the population of Lebanon in over 70 years. The reason that there has not been a census is because the three most powerful roles in Lebanese government, as well as the Lebanese Cabinet composition, are based on the proportion of the population that claimed to be of a particular religious sect. Since that time, it is believed that certain groups may have gotten smaller while others have gotten larger, which would upset the status quo in terms of power if an official census were done of Lebanon; as a result, conducting a census is impossible and a borderline illegal action by the Lebanese government. However, that has not stopped various groups from estimating how that census would unfold were it to be conducted. To determine potential Hezbollah power and influence over the Lebanese Shiite population, the CIA Fact Book is the basis for assuming a current population estimate for Lebanon. Other numbers such as the size of the Hezbollah movement and in particular the size of the Hezbollah military organization are either not available or in highly conflicting estimates from various sources. In those two cases, a method is stated below as to how respective numbers were determined for use in this thesis.
Assumption 2, how al Qaeda will impact Hezbollah: Al Qaeda is a Sunni terror organization. One of their many goals is to curtail the spread of Iranian/Shiite influence across the Levant and the Middle East. Al Qaeda will continue to be a serious threat in both Iraq and Syria, which will negatively impact Iran's geopolitical goals, especially if Al Qaeda manages to either overthrow the Assad regime or wrest away control over parts of Syria.

Assumption 3, Iran's immediate political situation: Iran is going to enjoy a period of relative freedom to press the Syrian war support during the discussions with the US over its nuclear weapons' program.

Assumption 4, how Hezbollah will be impacted by Iran: Hezbollah, as always, will continue to follow Iranian orders to support the Assad regime. It will be Iran who determines when and how Hezbollah returns to Lebanon to take on the growing Sunni opposition to Hezbollah there.

Assumption 5, the number of Hezbollah combat personnel: All of the combat personnel estimates are within a reasonable range except one. Further, the combat personnel estimates within this range are consistent with the estimated number of Hezbollah supporters in Lebanon. Therefore, an assumption using the normalized estimate within the range of Hezbollah combat personnel is reasonable.

The first step to determining Hezbollah's power is to identify what Hezbollah is as an entity. There are two fundamental classifications: state and non-state entities. States are traditionally defined as: "A people permanently occupying a fixed territory bound together by common habits and custom into one body politic exercising, through the medium of an organized government, independent sovereignty and control over all persons and things within its
boundaries, capable of making war and peace and of entering into international relations with other states". (FreeDictionary.com) Non-state entities are outside of this definition and can be divided into various groups, from multinational corporations to terror groups (citation). As such, Hezbollah would fall under the category of non-state entity, even though it attempts to work as a state, by providing the Lebanese Shiites with social services, the protection of a trained militia and political authority that works with other nations (Iran and Syria). Defining Hezbollah even more succinctly within this category is more challenging, as Hezbollah is multi-faceted: a political party, a terror group, a charitable social organization, a highly-trained militia. While it is difficult to classify Hezbollah more thoroughly than a non-state actor, it is a mistake to over-simplify by stating that Hezbollah is a political party and is not a terror organization, or vice versa. Hezbollah is like Janus: two faces, but one entity which has quantifiable power. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, Hezbollah's power will be ascertained through the utilization of the Jablonsky model of factors that help measure the power of a state. While Hezbollah is not a state, these predetermined set of factors can still apply as measurements assess and establish a baseline perspective of how Hezbollah rates against the power factors criteria.

The next step is to examine the model of factors that measure the power of a state: geography, resources, population, economic, political, military, psychological, and technical/cyber factors.

Geography Factor

Hezbollah influence pervades Lebanon, but Hezbollah's actual physical presence is specific to certain regions within Lebanon, so a modification to the geography factor will allow for the representation of both physical geography and political geography. Religious sectarianism
is a common and definitive element of Lebanese life, with 18 recognized ‘confessions’ (religious sects) in Lebanon (Norton, 2009). With regards to Hezbollah, even physical geography has a political quality in that Hezbollah influence is dominant in regions where certain sectarian groups dominate, while less so in the areas where other sectarian groups tend to be the populous local group.

The areas that find Hezbollah as the dominating presence are in the Beqaa Valley, southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut, which are all predominately Shiite. (Avon, 2012). While Hezbollah exercises a commanding physical and political control within these areas, not one of the areas is contiguous to another. This fragmented geographic base is both a vulnerability and a limitation to Hezbollah power. However, Hezbollah is able to extend its political influence throughout Lebanon based on the Hezbollah influence and involvement in the national government.

Resources Factor

Jablonsky identifies natural resources providing a state with power only if they can be utilized "to wage war, to operate an industrial base and to reward other international actors through trade and aid, either in modern industrial products or in the raw materials themselves." Possessing these resources is not power if the state cannot develop them and maintain control over them. With regards to Hezbollah, the group faces a serious weakness in that there are no natural resources of consequence that Hezbollah can lay claim to control. Hezbollah is influential in the Bekaa Valley, which is a fertile area predominantly used for agriculture and this may be viewed by some as a natural resource. However, control of this region does not make or break Hezbollah as they derive their power mainly from the resources provided to it by Iran in the form of money, weapons and other supplies.
Population Factor

The Hezbollah population count presents a problem that, again, is particular to Lebanon's sectarianism. The confessional system of government that is currently in place derives from a census conducted in 1932; this established which religious sect obtained which position of power. Out of fear that the current confessional government could be destabilized due to changing demographics in Lebanon, there has not been a formal census legally taken since 1932. There are various estimates of the current population with a recent CIA estimate as 4,131,583 (July 2013 est.). (CIA FactBook, 2013). Now a determination of what percentage of this 4,131,538 (for the purposes of this thesis we will use the figure 4,100,000) would adhere to the Hezbollah cause. Based on an estimate that the current population in Lebanon is constituted of approximately 60% Muslims including Sunni and Shiite sects. (The Lebanese Demographic Reality, 2013) There is no reliable data on the respective numbers of Sunnis or Shiites; for this purpose, an assumption shall be made of an even split which allows for some 2,050,000 Shiites. The Shiites split their loyalties between Hezbollah supporters, AMAL supporters and several other splinter groups; again, there is no reliable data demonstrating the numbers of Lebanese Shiites that follow the various Shiite factions. Based on national voting and subsequent representation a further assumption that 50% of the Shiites support the Hezbollah is reasonable. Thus, an estimate of the Hezbollah Shiite population base in Lebanon is nominally at 1,000,000. This number appears consistent with numbers given for major street demonstrations by Hezbollah supporters. (Alaghia, 2013). While 1,000,000 is a significant number of people, putting this into perspective is that this is approximately 25% of the Lebanese population and as a limited base to draw military manpower for a sustained war.
Economic Factor

Secrecy shrouds the depth and sources of Hezbollah's finances. Hezbollah has no major economic base; Hezbollah operates a newspaper, TV station, radio station and websites for propaganda purposes and has a number of investments. Hezbollah may also be involved in some minor enterprises, such as construction, but these do not constitute major revenue sources. There are reports of Hezbollah being involved in various illegal activities including the drug trade, blood diamonds, stolen goods transfer, money laundering and arms dealing as revenue producing activities. (Taylor, 2013; Levitt, 2013). There is a belief that these activities produce funds estimated around tens of millions of dollars, which is significant but not adequate to support the overall Hezbollah operation. Iran is the primary provider of virtually all of Hezbollah's financial needs, including the large social programs Hezbollah promotes and manages. The amounts provided by Iran through a variety of covert channels range from $100 million dollars to $400 million per year; the estimates of Iran funding the 2006 War exceed $1.2 billion dollars. (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2012). Thus, Hezbollah is financially dependent on Iran for its existence.

Political Factor

Hezbollah has been exceptionally successful within the Lebanese political system considering their origin as a terror group that transitioned to include a political arm, a military wing and a social welfare element. Hezbollah has been very successful in making opportunistic temporary alliances and achieving both seats in the parliament and cabinet in the past, but presently have peaked in the amount of power they can accrue based on the current confessional constitution and the numbers of opposition voters. (Alaghia, 2013). A great deal of the Hezbollah political influence stemmed from three sources: the first of these was military power and the threat to use force to achieve Hezbollah political goals. The second source is Hezbollah's ability
to bring large masses to street demonstrations, effectively bringing Lebanon to a standstill whenever the government or other parties are affecting Hezbollah. The third source is Hezbollah's money and coordination: the 2006 Hezbollah 34-day conflict with Israel and the subsequent billions of dollars spent on reconstruction work to repair war damage gave Hezbollah a strong political boost when there was a great need for it. Hezbollah's general political trend has been positive in terms of popularity and success from 1983-2006; concurrently within that same timeframe, however, Hezbollah has also suffered from a series of small missteps in their ascent to power. Hezbollah, in a calculating manner, accordingly appeared to modify their manner from those missteps, which allowed them time to recover in each case. However, time is a dual-edged sword for Hezbollah, as time (in conjunction with peace) allows the power that Hezbollah has derived from the three sources mentioned above to dissipate. The recent extended period of peace within Lebanon has created a climate of concern that Hezbollah actions could disturb the fragile balances in Lebanon. As a result, there has been a resurgence of opposition by Sunnis and other groups in Lebanon opposing Hezbollah and the Hezbollah militia. Since the end of the war with Israel in 2006, additional Hezbollah missteps in overreach for power have caused a plateau in Hezbollah's political power. Below are some examples where Hezbollah miscalculated in their efforts to secure their position of power:

- Just prior to the 2006 war with Israel, Hezbollah's militia was being faced with a real threat of disarmament due to an upcoming "national dialogue" on the fairness of Hezbollah having their own militia in violation of various Arab agreements and UN statements.

- The 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel lasted only 34 days but revived Hezbollah political fortunes in Lebanon and the Middle East. Hezbollah had kidnapped Israeli
soldiers to justify the need of their armed militia, but Israel hit back harder than Hezbollah expected. In turn, Israel miscalculated the strength of Hezbollah's defenses and ability to launch thousands of missiles into Israel. Israel withdrew after Israel inflicted substantial damage to the Lebanon infrastructure and housing; the Arab world hailed this withdrawal as a victory for Hezbollah. Iran provided substantial compensation to help southern Lebanon recover from the extensive war damage. The primary credit for the rebuilding effort went to Hezbollah (plus euphoria over the Israeli "defeat") both of which enhanced Hezbollah popularity. However, there were elements of Lebanese society who were horrified that Hezbollah was willing to trigger a war, risking Lebanese lives, property and overall stability, just to prove a point regarding their militia.

- Hezbollah sought to capitalize from the post-2006 War political gains and in 2008 Hezbollah demanded 1/3 veto vote from government. (Alaghia, 2013). The Lebanese government resisted the demand and Hezbollah exploited a general strike plus a series of violent acts in order to get their way. Although successful in achieving veto power, those actions again resulted in conditions that almost brought Lebanon into another civil war. As part of the political strategy, Hezbollah demanded a government restructure; Hezbollah Secretary General Nasrallah gave the Cabinet a one-week ultimatum for the formation of a national unity government. (Alaghia, 2013). This was a miscalculation of the popularity of the group, as well as how far the Lebanese Government was willing to go to resist Hezbollah's efforts. While Hezbollah obtained the veto vote, they lost it the next year when the government collapsed. The subsequent election showed Hezbollah not making any substantial political gains, at which point they appeared to withdraw to regroup and did not pursue the veto issue again.
The actual political results for Hezbollah stagnated at the end of 2008; as a result, Hezbollah appeared to humble themselves in an attempt to rebuild their public image: an example of this was their "rescission" of their 1985 Open Letter by replacing it with the 2009 Manifesto, which discussed their successes and their loyalty to Lebanon. (The New Manifesto, 2009) This demonstrates that, on some level, Hezbollah acknowledged that their influence had hit a plateau and they were looking to appeal to a broader Lebanese base.

As Hezbollah continued to deal with a changed political environment in Lebanon, a new complication emerged: late 2010 saw the beginning of what would become the Arab Spring; the general upheaval and chaotic conditions in the Middle East confounded Hezbollah plans for a political re-birth in Lebanon. Hezbollah contributed to jinxing themselves politically through another miscalculation: by selectively providing public support of the Arab Spring while it overthrew Sunni regimes, while opposing the overthrow of Shiite regimes.

As the Arab Spring continued its domino effect across North Africa and throughout the Middle East, Syria began to experience some of its effects. The Assad regime, at first appearing to control the situation, soon found itself at the brink of a deposition. Iran commanded Hezbollah to enter the fight in order to save their mutual ally. Hezbollah obeys because their founding principle is to carry out what the fiqah (Khamenei) commands, no questions asked or rationale used beyond the Hezbollah ideological religious commitment. This does not discount the reality that Hezbollah would wither away without support from Iran. Hezbollah enters the Syrian conflict, which is growing increasingly sectarian, before they have completed repairing their image to the Lebanese
people from their earlier miscalculations. This has further exacerbated their precarious position in Lebanon, where Hezbollah's opponents are growing both weary and angry at Hezbollah's continuation of actions and missteps that threaten Lebanon's security and stability. (Quagmire in Syria, 2013).

Hezbollah's latest action of participating in the Syrian civil war has put Hezbollah's political position on a downward spiral within Lebanon. Hezbollah has grown and matured over the course of 1983-2012 into a powerful non-state actor reflected in their military, political, social services achievements and as a purveyor of terror. However, with their involvement in the Syrian war has altered the perception of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Middle East. The Hezbollah opposition and enemies assert that Hezbollah actions expose the organization to be nothing but an outright pawn of Iran. A further accusation made against Hezbollah is that the group has exposed Lebanon to an internal destabilizing situation derived from the sectarian conflict in Syria.

The dramatic impacts from 2006 to 2013 on Hezbollah fortunes further circumscribe the nature of Hezbollah political power. The analysis of the linkages between the timeline actions and the realpolitik factors of Hezbollah strengths and weaknesses pose a new perspective from those found in contemporary writings. This new perspective demands further examination based on the uncertain consequences from the Syrian civil war that affect Hezbollah and the region at a geostrategic level.

Military Factor

Hezbollah has demonstrated capabilities to exert force through the Hezbollah military units (militia) and clandestine or covert small terror units. Hezbollah's founding purpose is to be
a clandestine terror organization, trained and funded by Iran. (Pick, 2011). Iran's training of the Hezbollah terror cells made them very proficient in assassinations, kidnappings, bombings and terror attacks inside Lebanon and internationally. The fighters that received advanced training in Iran and Syria became the source of the fighters for the early Hezbollah militia. Over the years, this militia engaged in various battles with other groups in Lebanon such as AMAL, Sunni groups, Syrian forces and Palestinians. (Avon, 2012). This included a protracted two-year conflict with AMAL in the late 1980s. The militia received training as local defense elements to fight as defensive forces at the village level; this would prove very effective during the 2006 War. (Matthews, 2008). Some of the Hezbollah militia fighters became the core of what would become the Hezbollah conventional style military units. Iran armed the Hezbollah regular forces with advanced short and medium range rockets and various anti-armor missiles. (Szekely, 2012). However, the Hezbollah forces did not possess any tanks, armored personnel carriers, or the logistics to prosecute offensive combat to capture and hold enemy territory. The Hezbollah offensive capabilities are guerrilla-type attacks, combined with the use of rockets and missiles. One example of this was during the 2006 war with Israel when Hezbollah fired between 4,000 and 5,000 rockets and missiles at Israel over the course of 34 days. (Blanford, 2011). Hezbollah also had built an extensive defensive complex across south Lebanon of defensive bunkers, village strong points, concealed rocket firing positions; militia manned the villages and the Hezbollah regular forces managed the complex tasks of firing missiles and command and control. (Matthews, 2008). The sophistication of the Hezbollah defensive tactics caught the Israeli forces off guard. (Matthews, 2008).
The primary problem in evaluating Hezbollah power from a military standpoint is the secrecy that surrounds the actual numbers of Hezbollah combatants. There are no reliable figures as to the number of Hezbollah regular forces or militia. Various open literature sources provide a range of conflicting information as to the Hezbollah military personnel number. This is one example:

Badran states in his paper 'Hezbollah and the Army of 12,000': “Some analysts, while acknowledging that this was essentially all guesswork, have suggested (without any sourcing) that Hezbollah’s overall fighting force is as large as “20,000-30,000, of which some 25 percent may be full-time active duty personnel.” What is meant by “active duty personnel,” however, remains unclear, as is the nature of the remaining 75 percent of the force as conceived by this analyst. What’s more, the training and tasks of Hezbollah units vary – further qualifying the discussion of how to define the fighting corps of the group.

Meanwhile, another source said to have “contact with Hezbollah” opined that the group’s “top frontline forces and rocket and artillery units combined added up to just 4,000.” The total force, the source added, “was about 10,000 fighters.” If we were to accept this number and line it up with the proposed figures for the group’s fighters deployed in Syria, it would mean that Hezbollah has committed either nearly or more than 100 percent of its total manpower to the Syrian front, leaving the domestic Lebanese front and the border with Israel unmanned.

In reality, most of these figures are grossly overinflated. Hezbollah’s deployment in Syria is probably in the hundreds, rather than thousands. In addition, according to a well-informed Lebanese official, the party’s fighting force counts 5,000 members in total. This
figure fits almost exactly with the view of Shimon Shapira, a retired Israeli Brigadier General who has focused on the group since its inception. In his view, the group’s total force is between five and six thousand fighters.” (Badran, 2013).

Reports of the Hezbollah fighting strength during the 2006 War range from 1,000 regulars and 6,000-19,000 militia. (Hezbollah Fighters and Weapons Capabilities in South Lebanon, 2011). There is a claim Hezbollah mobilized 120,000 for military exercise in 2007. (Alaghia, 2013). The 120,000 claim would represent over 10% of the estimated 1,000,000 Hezbollah supporters that includes all ages and genders; thus the number is highly suspect except as all the personnel in villages in south Lebanon are included.

The Hezbollah core fighting strength is even murkier when examining the estimates of the numbers of Hezbollah combatants currently fighting in Syria. Reports in one venue range from 2,000 to 10,000 Hezbollah fighters in Syria. (Nerguizian, 2013). Such numbers represent figures that equal or exceed the estimates of the total Hezbollah regular force strength.

Thus, no firm statement can be made about exact numbers of Hezbollah fighting strength either as to the core regular forces or as the militia. However, one can make generalizations regarding Hezbollah military power.

- The Hezbollah core regular troops are well training and effective fighters.
- The Hezbollah strategic offensive capabilities are limited to firing missiles.
- Hezbollah has a large inventory of rockets and missiles.
- Hezbollah has a strong defensive network of bunkers and fortified villages across south Lebanon.
- The Hezbollah military strength is comparable to the Lebanese army when the secular issues of the Lebanese army units are considered.
- The Hezbollah military capabilities are wholly dependent on Iran for weapons, money and advanced training.

In the overall contribution to an estimate of Hezbollah power, the Hezbollah military component appears to be the major element of Hezbollah power.

Psychological Factor

Hezbollah has evolved as an effective political and military force due to the underlying ideology that is the foundation of Hezbollah. Referred to as the “psychological” factor estimating power, analysts suggest there is another critical factor to power; that factor is zealotry. Zealotry, while having negative connotations, can also have the interpretation of a positive regarding a collective commitment on a unifying cause or ideology. The intensity and depth of zealotry acts as a multiplier for the other elements of power: examples of zealotry in our contemporary time are the extremist groups like the nation of Iran representing the prime Shiite Islamic ideological motivators of terror groups such as the Iranian prodigy Hezbollah. (Jablonsky, 1997). The religious fervor that drives Iran and Hezbollah complicates Western intuitive senses. Hezbollah derives its power and effectiveness in large measure from the “psychological” factor.

Technical/Cyber Factor

Technical/cyber factors are important elements of power in the modern world environment. Hezbollah maintains a fiber-optic network that it claims is for its security forces' utilization; maintenance of the network is through the Rafik Hariri International Airport (Norton,
Hezbollah also maintains a television network and a radio station, which broadcasts throughout the Middle East and some parts of Europe. Hezbollah has even created video games for children that recreate the 2006 war with Israel and which overall promote anti-Semitism (ADL, 2007). Hezbollah is believed to be cooperating with Iran to develop an advanced cyber warfare capability. (INSS, 2013).

The “Hezbollah power baseline” provides the frame of reference for the analyses of how Hezbollah will change due to their involvement in the Syrian civil war. At the same time, “Hezbollah power baseline” acts as the basis for a number of interim conclusions:

- The Hezbollah political power in Lebanon began to plateau in 2007 and continued until just before Hezbollah's entrance into the Syrian civil war in 2012.
- Hezbollah does not have the military resources to take over Lebanon by force; the national demographics also work against Hezbollah.
- Hezbollah has very limited capabilities to project military force outside the areas that are contiguous to Lebanon.
- Hezbollah would wither as a political force in Lebanon and as a significant threat to Israel without a continued high level of financial, weapons and training support from Iran.
- Hezbollah is dependent on Iran for money, weapons, training and ideological support.
- Without Iranian support, Hezbollah would lose its position of political prominence and become just another one of the eight major Lebanese political parties in a field of over 20 different political parties.
The overall conclusions above estimate the components of Hezbollah power and suggest that Hezbollah is a very important player in the Lebanon national context; Hezbollah has also proven to be a useful factor in the Iran strategy to avoid an Assad defeat in the Syria Civil War. However, Hezbollah has significant vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Foremost is the Hezbollah dependence on Iran for money, weapons and training. While it is highly unlikely that Iran will withhold support from Hezbollah, the geography and logistics will continue to be issues to overcome. Disruption of the supply lines through Syria to Hezbollah could be catastrophic for Hezbollah. The second vulnerability is the simple issue of a finite and problematic manpower base for Hezbollah.

Figure 19 is a synthesis of the timelines and power factors to illustrate the nature of the Hezbollah evolution over time and how Hezbollah added capabilities and functions. (Schiesz, 2014). The vertical axis gives a relative relationship of the various factors at each selected epoch in the Hezbollah history.”
Subsection 5B: Hezbollah Patterns and Observations

Hezbollah's 31 years of existence as an organization is enough history to establish patterns and observations based on evidence. Much like how Hezbollah's various branches are not separate but linked together, so are these individual patterns and observations linked with each other:

*Hezbollah's theocratic ties and allegiance to Iran trump loyalty to the Lebanese constitution and Lebanon.*

Lebanon is a fractured country and society; that representation is required of each religious confession in the government exemplifies the lack of trust the people have that others will treat them equitably. However, in recent years there seems to be one commonality that has emerged amongst a majority of the Lebanese people: a desire for peace after so much war and
the opportunity to rebuild their country. Lebanese political officials represented that sentiment publicly, first in early 2006 and again in mid-2012. In each of these two instances, Hezbollah rejoined with the Lebanese officials that their desires are congruent as being in the best interest of Lebanon. Each time, Hezbollah has followed up these words with actions that have brought violent repercussions upon Lebanon as a direct result. The history of protests, hijackings, kidnappings, murders, assassinations and bombings have no direct benefit to improving Lebanon's situation; in fact, the collateral damage suffered by Lebanon from these actions are even further proof that Hezbollah does not have Lebanon's interests at heart. Rather, Hezbollah seeks to achieve the goals of Iran, as well as their own, at the expense of the Lebanese people and property. Hezbollah is not incapable of committing an assassination without inflicting harm upon others; they simply choose not to so that the flashiness and violence of their attack serves as a warning to others who might be considering opposing Hezbollah. An argument could be made that the one exception where Lebanon benefitted from Hezbollah actions was with the withdrawal of Israel, as Israel was more of a foe to Lebanon as a constant threat; Syria on the other hand was at times a benefactor and at other times a problem. However, the perception was that because Hezbollah's persistent attack on Israel during their occupation was a major reason for their withdrawal, Hezbollah was acting in the Lebanese interests. While the withdrawal was a positive for Lebanon, this outcome more directly relates to Hezbollah's hatred of Israel than of an effort to improve the situation in Lebanon. Further proof of this is Hezbollah's continued attacks on Israel even after they withdrew in 2000. Hezbollah has persisted because they do not want the state of Israel or the Jewish people to exist. The evidence of this is by Hezbollah's attacks on Jewish sites worldwide, which had no impact on Israel's decision to withdraw, nor affected Lebanon in any fashion. These attacks were solely for the benefit of experience for
Hezbollah in committing attacks abroad, to demonstrate Iran's capabilities in exporting terrorism and to achieve the goals of both parties. 

*Hezbollah can be very adaptive in response to political conditions as well as their own miscalculations.*

Hezbollah's leadership are well-educated individuals who are cognizant of their surroundings and appeared to manipulate many situations to benefit Iran first and the organization second. Hezbollah was virulently opposed to the Lebanese government from the beginning of their history until 1991; this was an easy stance to take as the Lebanese government was essentially in hiatus due to the Lebanese Civil War. However, once the war ended and the first general elections were to commence in 1991, Hezbollah participated. This was a dramatic about-face for the group, but Hezbollah recognized three things: that they could obtain legitimacy in the eyes of the Lebanese people through government trappings; that they would be within the government in case the opportunity arose to turn Lebanon into an Islamic theocratic state and to keep the Lebanese government friendly to Hezbollah's patrons by advancing the causes of Iran and Syria. This very intelligent move ensured their survival at a critical moment in Lebanese history.

On the other hand, Hezbollah is also a human organization and as such has a tendency to make mistakes while trying to advance their causes: the one-third veto vote power-grab was a disturbing act to the Lebanese people who recognized that their nation was almost brought to the brink of another civil war by a group that had an avowed goal to turn Lebanon into an Islamic state. Hezbollah had believed their popularity from winning the 2006 war with Israel would counter-balance this grab, but instead it affected them negatively in the subsequent elections.
This is one valid reason why Hezbollah choose at this particular moment to revise their 1985 Open Letter into the 2009 Manifesto; it was their increasing unpopularity due to their actions that forced them to appear to rescind their earlier-stated goal for Lebanon, as well as to calm fears by saying how much they cherished their Lebanese heritage.

*Hezbollah is dependent on Iran for material and financial support.*

Hezbollah would register barely a blip on the radar for anyone domestically or internationally were it not for the financial, logistical and material support that Hezbollah receives from Iran on an annual basis. After all, they are a small group of Lebanese Shiite radicals: a fractional section of a minority faith in a tiny country that has limited political power or influence to affect any of its neighbors. However, with the millions of dollars invested and training by Iran's elite military forces in asymmetrical warfare, weaponry and terror tactics, Hezbollah was able to cause an impact that had ripple effects throughout Lebanon and the Middle East. They were able to become the first-ever Arab force that was able to withstand and fight back an attack from Israel, something whole Arab armies have been unable to achieve; this put Hezbollah on a pedestal for the entire Arab Muslim world.

*In spite of Iranian support, the cliché “numbers count” affects Hezbollah in significant ways.*

While Hezbollah has been able to make its mark within Lebanon and the Middle East with its actions and financing from Iran, it still has to come to terms with its own reality: they are a minority group in every significant aspect. While they are a Shiite political party, there are other Shiite political parties, such as AMAL, that are also competing with Hezbollah for votes and support from within the Shiite Lebanese community. The Shiite political parties in total are but a small representation of the total number of political confessional parties that are within the
Lebanese political system. In terms of military capabilities, Hezbollah holds the advantage as the single most powerful militia in Lebanon, rivaling even the official Lebanese army in terms of skill and weaponry. However, this advantage is not sufficient to take Lebanon by a military coup because the sheer numbers and geography would counter Hezbollah's militia force. The numbers game is one that Hezbollah simply cannot win; at such a disadvantage, with Iranian support Hezbollah can spread enough money around to help increase their influence, as well as the occasional violent attack to both remove some threats to their power and to serve as a reminder of their capabilities.

_Hezbollah's survival requires a Syrian government that is friendly to Iran and Hezbollah._

This observation is the most important as it is what has ultimately led Hezbollah down the road which it now finds itself, as a Shiite foreign legion to Assad's military forces within Syria. Syria has been the conduit of the assistance that Iran has provided to Hezbollah since its very beginnings; the Assad regime, under Hafez al-Assad, provided security to Hezbollah as well as training camps in northern Lebanon, while Syria occupied the area in the early 1980s. The relationship between Syria and Hezbollah had at times been rocky, with Syria often providing funding for Hezbollah's rival AMAL, but overall the relationship never soured to any irreversible level. When Bashar inherited his father's role as President of Syria in 2000, he doubled-down on his support of Hezbollah and relationship with Iran. After years of investment, the "marriage of convenience" between Syria and Iran developed into a deep, co-dependent relationship as they faced the rest of the Sunni Arab world.
Subsection 5C - The Syrian War

When the Arab Spring first erupted in Tunisia and spread across the Middle East, Hezbollah supported the uprisings except in the instances where the Shiites were the governing party, such as Syria and Bahrain. When Syria began to experience unrest, Hezbollah stated that it would not interfere in any military attack, "unless there is an existential danger facing [the regime]..." (Alagha, 2013). However, both Hezbollah and Iran also became gravely concerned with the situation that was brewing in Syria. The Assad family regime has been in place at the head of the Syrian government for the last 40 years. They were the first and only real ally of Iran since their Islamic Revolution in 1979. Iran's geopolitical plans have always been to create an Iranian Shiite arc of influence that would go across Iraq, Syria and the Levant. Assad regime in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon are critical to that goal. However, while the ruling class of Syria is Alawite, which is a branch of Shiite Islam, the majority of the population is Sunni. This has caused an underlying tension within Syria, as the minority is ruling the majority. Furthermore, the tensions that have been integral to the history of Sunni-Shiite relations have added additional strain to Syria's political dynamics; the Sunnis in Syria are not particularly fond of the alliance with Shiite Iran. The odds were very likely that if Assad and his Alawite government were overthrown, the replacement would be a Sunni-based government. Iran would then lose a precious ally, as well as the essential bridge to its foreign legion that Hezbollah represents in Lebanon.

Assad initially tried to put down the rebellions with his army, but a considerable number of soldiers in the Syrian army were sympathetic to the rebels as they were both Sunni Muslim. Either the soldiers refused to obey orders to put down the rebellions or they defected. This caused a major hemorrhaging in the Syrian army ranks, which in turn led to losses in battle and
caused even more defections. The Free Syrian Army (FSA), the rebellious Sunni group that counted among its soldiers most of those who had defected from the regime's army, were making significant advances throughout Syria. The international pressure on Assad to step down was reaching critical levels; Iran saw the handwriting on the wall and summoned Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah for a meeting (Stratfor, 2011). It appeared that the "existential danger" Nasrallah had spoken of was very close at hand for the Assad regime and it was now time for Hezbollah and Iran to get involved to save their ally.

After Nasrallah returned from Iran, there began to be some early indications that Hezbollah had become involved in the Syrian conflict as a rash of funerals began to take place in the Bekaa Valley for Hezbollah members performing "jihad duties" (Hezbollah Intervention, 2012). The FSA began to complain to the international community that Hezbollah militants were crossing over the porous border between Syria and Lebanon and were fighting them in border villages like Qusair. Before long, Assad's military forces supported by Hezbollah combat units stopped the flow of victories by the rebels and the Assad regime gained a strategic advantage on the battlefield in western Syria: the first being the victory of Qusair, which was on a critical crossroads for supplies and militants. In the meanwhile, the FSA began fighting on two fronts: first with the Assad military, but also from within their ranks. This civil war had initially begun as a fight to overthrow a dictator and secure more rights; however, without the FSA rebels intending it, it devolved into a sectarian conflict. Al-Qaeda, the leading Sunni terror organization, praised the rebels for fighting to overthrow Assad in "an Islamic battle against US and Israeli interests" (Ali & Weaver, 2011). The two major radical Sunni groups engaged in fighting in Syria are Jabhat al-Nusra and Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). (al-Monitor, 2013). The rebels rejected this message, claiming that al-Qaeda was trying to make the conflict
sectarian in nature. Nevertheless, al-Qaeda forces began crossing into Syria and joined the fight against Assad with the rebels. Al-Qaeda's militants began imposing Shari'a law in the areas that they captured and otherwise bringing a very strict form of Islam to Syria, which was not what the moderate rebels desired. Therefore, they have begun to either fight the al-Qaeda forces, or have reached out to those they know in Assad's military to negotiate terms of cease-fire. The infighting, plus Hezbollah's skilled military expertise, have helped to place the Assad regime on more stable ground than it was a little more than a year ago.

Retrospectively, Hezbollah's behavior up until the Syrian conflict was predictable based on the patterns and observations established throughout their history. What remains to ascertain is how the involvement in the Syrian civil war will affect Hezbollah in the short-term. If Assad manages to regain control over all of Syria and definitively puts down the FSA and the Sunni extremist rebel forces, Hezbollah will have the unrivaled achievement of successfully keeping a political leader in power. Their militants will have refreshed their military experience since their last battle with Israel in 2006. In addition, the weaponry that Hezbollah operatives and militia forces are employing from the arsenal of the Syrian military will both enhance their skills as well as their own weapons' stockpiles within Lebanon. While Hezbollah already had a military advantage at home, all of these elements will set them even further ahead of the government forces and other indigenous factions. They will be an even bigger threat to Israel and will use this experience and weaponry to maximize on this opportunity in future strikes along northern Israel.

However, Hezbollah is also going to have some serious challenges upon their return to Lebanon. There are various Sunni Arab nations backing the rebels within Syria: now that there is confirmation that Hezbollah has been instrumental to Assad's military successes, Hezbollah is
going to find themselves the target of Sunni ire. Already it is beginning, with the bombing of the Iranian Embassy in Beirut; while one Sunni terror group is claiming responsibility, Iran and Hezbollah are blaming Saudi Arabia as the financier of this attack. Saudi Arabia is blaming Iran for blowing up its own embassy as a way to inspire all of the Lebanese Shiite militants, not just Hezbollah, to continue the fight in Syria. While it remains unclear as to who the culprit really is, what is clear is that Hezbollah and Lebanon can expect more terror attacks in the future as retaliation for the Syrian conflict. In addition to these external threats coming into Lebanon, there will also be strife within Lebanon as other Lebanese Sunni groups also strike out against Hezbollah for fighting their religious comrades in Syria. The Lebanese Shiites may also retaliate if they feel that Hezbollah is responsible for the deaths of family members in friends in the pursuit of fitna and not for a noble martyrdom fighting against Israel. Hezbollah is going to have to find a way to ramp up its social programs and charitable giving in order to help placate its base, but this will be more difficult than previous experiences because of the nature of this conflict, versus the others that were generally against Israel.
Chapter 6
Findings and Conclusions

Hezbollah is a complex organization that often appears contradictory in its statements and actions. These juxtapositions are comprehensive with the understanding that Hezbollah has at its core religious foundational goals motivate Hezbollah to behave opportunistically in order to survive opposition and implement those goals.

The linkages between Hezbollah and Iran as well as Iran and Syria, coupled with the geography of Lebanon/Hezbollah and Syria, make Iran and Syria an integral part of understanding the conclusions related to Hezbollah. The Hezbollah “power baseline” analysis and near-term perspective on Iran and Syria are an essential preface to the findings and conclusions on the near-term for Hezbollah.

Table 1:

Hezbollah “Power” Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hezbollah “Power” Assessment</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Relatively small area of dominant or strong influence in Lebanon</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>No natural resources of consequence</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>A minority within the overall population, estimated at 25% of the population, or about 1,000,000 people</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>No significant industrial base, involved in certain commercial enterprises including TV, radio and news media; involved in a range of criminal enterprises including illegal drugs, smuggling and extortion</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Established as a major political force within Lebanon.</td>
<td>The involvement in the Syrian war has caused an erosion of the political strength in general in Lebanon and set the Sunni minority in an increased and aggressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On balance, due to the participation in the Syrian War, Hezbollah is weakened politically in Lebanon, the Middle East and even within some of the Hezbollah constituencies. The gains in combat experience are either balanced by or are offset by the Hezbollah personnel killed or wounded in the fighting. This is particularly important given the relatively small pool of personnel that Hezbollah can draw from for combat troops. The increased dependence on Iran will further isolate Hezbollah as a pawn of Iran rather than a genuine Lebanese patriot group.

The geostrategic situation has shifted significantly to favor Iran over the past seven months:

- As the Assad forces have gained ascendency on the western battlefield with the assistance of Hezbollah, Iran has new leverage.
- The "nuclear deal" with the West will free needed funds for Iran.
- The US appears to be giving Iran increased recognition as a major power in the region.
The situation in the Syrian civil war appears to have reached a new stage:

- The Assad forces now hold an advantage in western Syria.
- Syria, for the time being, is partitioned roughly into three regions - one controlled by Kurds in the north and northwest; Islamic radicals in the east, northeast and parts of the south; the western portion of Syria including the seaports held by the Assad Alawite regime.
- The Syrian conflict will continue as a sectarian war with outside forces supporting the opposing Sunni and Shiite forces.

The following findings and conclusions relate to Hezbollah as an actor in Lebanon and the Middle East:

- Hezbollah would not have the strength and influence it has today without Iranian financial and material support. Therefore, Hezbollah will only be loyal primarily to its patron, Iran, with secondary loyalty placed with Syria, which provided Hezbollah with the logistics conduit it needed in order to thrive.
- Hezbollah's goals and beliefs present at its founding are still in effect, just obfuscated in order to survive in Lebanon. Hezbollah has paid lip service to its Lebanese credentials; at the same time, Hezbollah used terror tactics and Iranian money to smother opposition and to influence Lebanese Shiites, which form Hezbollah's base of support, as well as others within Lebanon.
- Hezbollah will never have the critical mass of supporters necessary to overthrow the government in Lebanon and impose an Islamic government by force.
Hezbollah will continue to be a tool of influence for Iran in the region to help create the Shiite arc of influence. This newest evolution as an Iranian foreign legion operating at the behest of Iran in Syria both reaffirms its non-allegiance to Lebanon and redefines Hezbollah beyond a simple terror organization to a regional "gun-for-Shiite-hire".

Hezbollah's military role in the future is significant in potential but very scenario-driven. A relatively modest pool of manpower and the lack of a traditional offensive warfare capability circumscribe Hezbollah military prowess. Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian Civil War has dealt a critical blow to their political popularity within Lebanon. This is due to the orders from Iran, Hezbollah entered into a war of fitna (Sunni vs. Shiite), which upsets both Sunni and Shiite Lebanese. Internal conflicts within Hezbollah regarding their primary purpose of fighting Israel is not being upheld. In addition, the loss of life in the Syrian conflict contributes to low morale. It is questionable whether Hezbollah will be able to recover their political strength within Lebanon; already there have been several bombings in Hezbollah strongholds within the past year that indicate an opposition force is amassing against Hezbollah.

Syria is on the path to prevail in the current war. Syria will still have to struggle to regain territory that is now occupied by al-Qaeda and other radical Sunni elements, who entered the war on the side of the rebels. This likely will be a hard-fought, long-term conflict and Hezbollah may find themselves called on again to help the regime.

If there is a reversal of current fortunes and the Assad regime loses, Syria will most likely find itself governed by its Sunni majority. There is a reasonable possibility that a radical Sunni element would take hold of any new Syrian government. In any case, a non-Assad
government will be an enemy to Iran and would not facilitate the transfer of money, weaponry and other materials to Hezbollah.

- Regardless if Assad wins or loses, Hezbollah is going to find itself the target of both internal and external enemies. Those backing the Sunni rebels in Syria include Saudi Arabia among others. Saudi Arabia has already promised a contribution of $3 billion to the Lebanese Army, which is the only other military force within Lebanon that has the potential to successfully stand up against Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia may also sponsor acts of terror against Hezbollah. There are also internal enemies, who have much to gain by removing Hezbollah with any means necessary in order to advance their own goals. As long as Iran backs Hezbollah, Hezbollah is likely to remain entrenched in Lebanese government and social fabric. However, the internal enemies will most likely strike hard while they sense Hezbollah vulnerabilities. This will bring Lebanon very close to another civil war, except this civil war will be along both sectarian and political lines.

- Hezbollah has a long way to go in rebuilding its reputation specifically and the organization generally due to the involvement in the Syrian war. The perspective of many Hezbollah allies is changing when they see Hezbollah serve Iranian purposes so dutifully. Moreover, subjection to Iranian goals is in direct contradiction to the 2009 Manifesto, which stipulates Hezbollah's loyalty to Lebanon.

Forward looking predictive conclusions cannot account for all uncertainties and the inevitable unpredictable events that abruptly change circumstances. For example, the death of King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia or Ayatollah Khamenei in Iran would materially affect the course of events in some major way. Regardless, analytic risks are part of the process of giving policy makers the baseline information needed to prepare for contingencies.
During January 2014, reports emerged that the nuclear program dialog between Iran and the United States included a secret codicil. (Debka, 2014). This secret agreement suggested a rapprochement between the US and Iran that gives Iran a broad latitude for action in the Middle East in return for a public agreement on nuclear matters. The ramifications of such a secret pact would alter the balance of power in the Middle East and directly benefit Hezbollah.

Geopolitical conclusions derived from any such secret agreement are:

- Iran will press forward with an aggressive strategy to establish the ‘Shiite arc of influence’ from Iran across Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.
- The risk of an expanded sectarian war between Sunni and Shiite factions increases.
- Hezbollah will move aggressively to strengthen the Hezbollah position in Lebanon.

Hezbollah entered the war in Syria because there was an existential threat to the Assad regime and that equates to an existential threat to Hezbollah. The Assad regime still has a ways to go in regaining control over the entire country as it was previously defined. However, there is no denying that the progress of Assad's military is as a direct result of Hezbollah and Iranian involvement. While Assad continues to overcome the rebels and solidify his power, Hezbollah is finding itself at the beginning of a long path to regain the reputation that they have lost in Lebanon. Compounding the loss of political reputation is the fact that they are already weary from the loss of life and low morale due to the Syrian conflict.

The past cannot be an accurate predictor of the future; but the past can offer evidential materials that can make near-term assessments of future events and scenarios reasonable. For example in the case of Hezbollah and Iran, there is strong evidence and data that shows very consistent long-term behavior patterns for institutions (Hezbollah, IRGC, and the Iran religious
council of Ayatollahs) and individuals in leadership positions (Hezbollah’s Nasrallah and Iran’s Khamenei). There is an absolute adherence to a radical religious ideology by Hezbollah and Iran. Thus, when correlating the patterns and the ideological forces with the current geostrategic realities in the Middle East the findings and conclusions in this thesis present a rational and a likely near-term forecast for the future of Hezbollah.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Timelines of Hezbollah Actions

Timelines are an important data source to give insights on patterns, cause and effect relationships, and behavior. Hezbollah timelines show categories of actions, such as terrorism, political, military and political; these data provide both a time-event set of relationships that illustrate how Hezbollah reacted and adapted to events in Lebanon and the Middle East; the timeline data also shows how closely Hezbollah is aligned with Iran. The following timelines were developed to support the Hezbollah background and history in Chapter 2 and the analysis process in Chapter 6.

Table A-1

Hezbollah Terrorism Timeline

1982

Hezbollah created with assistance of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps

July 19: The president of the American University in Beirut is kidnapped.

September 14: President-elect Jumayyel assassinated.

November 11: The first Hezbollah suicide bomber struck the Israeli headquarters killing 75 Israeli soldiers.

1983

January 3: Fires Katyusha rockets into Israel; kidnaps an Israeli soldier.

April 13: a suicide bomber attack on an Israeli convoy.

April 18: Hezbollah attacks the U.S. embassy in Beirut with a car bomb, killing 63 people, 17 were American citizens.

Sept. 20: The group attacks the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut with a car bomb, killing 2 Americans and 22 others.

October 13: Suicide bomber attack on Israeli soldiers

November 4: an Islamic Jihad suicide attack on the Israeli headquarters killed 28 Israelis and 32 Lebanese.

December: Vehicle-borne improvised-explosive-device (IED) attacks on the U.S. and French embassies in Kuwait.

1984

January 1984: A diplomat from Saudi Arabia was kidnapped.

February 1984: Hezbollah assassinated a former Iranian general and his brother in Paris. A U.S. professor was kidnapped.

March 1984: U.S. journalist Jeremy Levin was kidnapped.


March 16, 1984: William F. Buckley, CIA Chief of Station at the U.S. embassy in Beirut, is kidnapped and later murdered.

December 4: Hezbollah terrorists hijack a Kuwait Airlines plane. Four passengers are murdered, including two Americans.

1985

March: a British professor and a British businessman were kidnapped. Also seized were U.S. journalist Terry Anderson and French diplomats Marcel Fontaine, Danielle Perez, and Marcel Carton.

May: Jean Paul Kaufmann and Michel Seurat, both French citizens, were kidnapped.

May 8: Reverend Benjamin Weir, a U.S. citizen, was kidnapped.


July: Hezbollah simultaneously bombed the Northwest Orient Airlines office and a synagogue in Copenhagen.

September: a suicide attack on the U.S. embassy annex in East Beirut killed 23 people including two Americans. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.
December: Kuwait Air Flight 221 to Tehran was hijacked; two U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officials were murdered. December, Hezbollah factions were responsible for a series of bombings in Paris.

1986

March 1986: American University director David Jacobsen was kidnapped. Dennis Hill, a British citizen, was killed. Four French television journalists were kidnapped.

April 1986: Hezbollah bombed the Northwest Orient Airlines office in Stockholm and kidnapped two Cypriot students.

September 1986: Two U.S. citizens were kidnapped and the French military attaché in East Beirut was murdered.

October 1986: U.S. national Edward Austin Tracy was kidnapped

December 31: Under the alias Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, Hezbollah announces it had kidnapped and murdered three Lebanese Jews. The organization previously had taken responsibility for killing four other Jews since 1984

1987

January: Two German businessmen, British Church of England envoy Terry Waite, and four U.S. professors were all kidnapped in Lebanon.

June: U.S. journalist Charles Glass was kidnapped

July: Hezbollah hijacked an Air Afrique jetliner en route from Brazzaville, Congo, to Paris and killed one person.

1988

February 17: Hezbollah kidnaps Col. William Higgins, a U.S. Marine serving with a UN truce group in Lebanon, and murders him.

March 11: Suicide bomber attacks Israeli convoy

1989

Suicide bomber attacks Israeli convoy
1992

March 17: With the help of Iranian intelligence, Hezbollah bombs the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 and injuring over 200.

July 1992: Hezbollah bombed the Amia building, a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and injuring hundreds. Hezbollah also attacked the Israeli embassy in London and a Jewish center in North London.

July 18: Hezbollah bombs the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires killing 86 and injuring over 200.

1994

July 18: Hezbollah bombs the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires killing 86 and injuring over 200.

1995

Suicide bombing of South Lebanon Army post.

1996


July: The U.S. military in Iraq announced the arrest of an alleged Hezbollah operative, Ali Mussa Daqduq, who was suspected of involvement in training Iraqi Shiite “Special Groups.”

2001

January: Hezbollah bombed a U.S. embassy vehicle in Beirut.

2002

April 9: Hezbollah launches Katyushas into northern Israeli town. This assault comes amidst almost daily Hezbollah attacks against Israeli troops in Shebba farms.

2003

August 10: Hezbollah shells kill 16-year-old Israeli boy, wound others.

2004

October: failed assassination of MP Hanede.
2005

February 14: Rafiq Hariri assassinated.

December: MP Tueni assassinated.

2006

July 12: Hezbollah attacks Israel with Katyushas, crosses the border and kidnaps two Israeli soldiers. Three Israeli soldiers are killed in the initial attack. Five more soldiers are killed as Israel launches operation to rescue the soldiers and push Hezbollah from its border. During the ensuing war, Hezbollah launches rockets at civilian targets across northern Israel.

November 21: Minister of Industry Jumayyel assassinated.

2007

May: A Hezbollah plot was unveiled in Egypt, with 49 arrested.

June 13: MP Ido assassinated.

September 19: MP Ghanen assassinated.

December 12: Lebanese Army Brigadier-General Francois al-Hajj assainated.

2008

May 26: Eight people were wounded when a bomb went off in Istanbul. The Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* subsequently alleged that the attack had been perpetrated by Hezbollah and had been intended to target the Israeli consul general in Istanbul, Moshe Kimchi. The report’s allegations could not be independently substantiated.

2009

January 8: Attack on US Embassy convoy.

June 8: the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon submitted an indictment and arrest warrants for four Hezbollah militants to the Lebanese prosecutor-general in connection with the Hariri assassination.

2010

Egypt sentences a Hezbollah terror cell to prison.
January 5: Bulgarian intelligence services claimed to have foiled a plot by Hezbollah militants to carry out attacks on Israeli nationals in the capital, Sofia.

January 12: Thai security forces detained an alleged Hezbollah militant, identified as dual Swedish-Lebanese national Atris Hussein, at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. Subsequent reports added that a cache of material used in the manufacture of explosives was discovered during a raid on a storage facility rented by Hussein in the Samut Sakhon district on the outskirts of Bangkok on 16 January.

January 24: IDF chief of staff Lieutenant-General Benny Gantz issued a statement that Hezbollah and other affiliated militant groups were attempting to attack Israeli targets overseas. In fact, he was referring to an attempt to assassinate two Jewish figures in Baku.

February 13: several senior Israeli government and security officials alleged that the Iranian government and Hezbollah had been responsible for an attack on an Israeli embassy vehicle in New Delhi and for emplacing a device under another such vehicle in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, earlier that day. While the claims could not be independently substantiated, Nasrallah denied the allegations in a statement issued on 16 February.

February 14: An attempt to kill an Israeli diplomat in Bangkok.

February 21: The Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security claimed its security forces had detained an unspecified number of alleged Hezbollah militants and members of the “Iranian intelligence services” in an undisclosed area of the country on an unspecified earlier recent date. The statement added that those detained had been gathering intelligence and had acquired weapons for use in a planned attack in Baku, the capital.

July 7: Cypriot authorities arrested a terrorist collecting intelligence on flights to Israel and on tour buses for Israeli tourists.

July: a suicide bomber whom U.S. officials later identified as a Hezbollah operative detonated a bomb on a tour bus transporting Israelis at Burgas Airport. Five Israelis and the Bulgarian bus driver were killed, and 32 Israelis injured.

(CAMERA, 2006; Alaga, 2013; Avon, 2012)
Hezbollah Military Evolution

1983 - 1985: Training by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRG) in terror tactics and small unit guerrilla tactics

1983 – 1990: Terror bombings and kidnappings

1988 – 1989: Local combat with AMAL

1990: Developing bunkers and primitive military operations under guidance from IRG

1992 – 1994: Recruitment and training of new generation of fighters; some training done in Iran; first IEDs

February 1992: Firing 122mm rockets into Israel.

1994: More sophisticated guerrilla tactics; initial use of anti-tank, SAGGER, and anti-air, SA-7, missiles; psychological warfare against Israel; intelligence service; more small scale combat experience with Israel and allies

Nov. 28, 1995: Hezbollah bombards towns in northern Israel with volleys of Katyusha rockets in one of the group's numerous attacks on Israeli civilians.

March 30, 1996: Hezbollah fires 28 Katyusha rockets into northern Israeli towns. A week later, the group fires 16 rockets, injuring 36 Israelis. Israel responds with a major offensive, known as the "Grapes of Wrath" operation, to stop Hezbollah rocket fire.

Aug. 19, 1997: Hezbollah opens fire on northern Israel with dozens of rockets in one of the group's numerous attacks on Israeli civilians.

1997 – 1998: Enhanced weapons and training. Introduced the anti-tank missile AT-4 (SPIGOT) and IEDs with infrared triggers and shaped charges

Dec. 28, 1998: Hezbollah opens fire on northern Israel with dozens of rockets in one of the group's numerous attacks on Israeli civilians.

May 17, 1999: Hezbollah opens fire on northern Israel with dozens of rockets in one of the group's numerous attacks on Israeli civilians.

June 24, 1999: Hezbollah opens fire on northern Israel, killing 2.

Oct. 7, 2000: Hezbollah attacks an Israel military post and raids Israel, kidnapping three Israeli soldiers. The soldiers are later assumed dead. In mid-October, Hezbollah leader Nasrallah announces the group has also kidnapped an Israeli businessman.
May 2000 – July 2006: Assisted by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Hezbollah build a network of missile launch sites in southern Lebanon; Hezbollah develops a complex of minefields, defensive positions and a village defense strategy for southern Lebanon. Hezbollah continues 2-3 provocations per year including firing missiles into Israel, placing IEDs and attempting to kidnap Israeli soldiers or citizens. Western estimates state that Hezbollah had an inventory of over 12,000 short, medium and long range rockets supplied by Iran and Syria. Hezbollah also enhanced intelligence capabilities including COMINT and SIGINT against Israel. By 2006 the Hezbollah combat model was a combination of guerrilla capabilities and sophisticated conventional warfare defensive combat.

July 12, 2006: The 2006 War between Hezbollah and Israel commences. The decentralized system of defensive positions, prepared firing positions and fortified villages proves very effective against the IDF tactics. Hezbollah reported fires some 4,000 – 5000 missiles at Israel during a 34 day period.

August 14, 2006: Cease Fire in the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel.


Table A-3

Ideological and Political Terrorism

1982: Hezbollah, a Shiite group is created with assistance of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

July 19, 1982: The president of the American University in Beirut, Davis S. Dodge, is kidnapped. Hezbollah is believed to be behind this.

November 11, 1982: The first Hezbollah suicide bomber struck the Israeli headquarters in Tyre, Lebanon, killing 75 Israeli soldiers.

April 18, 1983: Hezbollah attacks the U.S. embassy in Beirut with a car bomb, killing 63 people, 17 of whom were American citizens.


Sept. 20, 1984: The group attacks the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut with a car bomb, killing 2 Americans and 22 others.

December 1983: there were vehicle-borne improvised-explosive-device (IED) attacks on the U.S. and French embassies in Kuwait.

January 1984: a diplomat from Saudi Arabia, Hussein Farrash, was kidnapped; he was released in May 1985.

February 1984: Hezbollah assassinated a former Iranian general and his brother in Paris. A U.S. professor, Frank Regier, was also kidnapped.

March 1984: U.S. journalist Jeremy Levin was kidnapped.

March 16, 1984: William F. Buckley, CIA Chief of Station at the U.S. embassy in Beirut, is kidnapped and later murdered.


Dec. 4, 1984: Hezbollah terrorists hijack a Kuwait Airlines plane. Four passengers are murdered, including two Americans.

May 8, 1985: Reverend Benjamin Weir, a U.S. citizen, was kidnapped.


July 1985: Hezbollah simultaneously bombed the Northwest Orient Airlines office and a synagogue in Copenhagen, killing one person.

September 1985: a suicide attack on the U.S. embassy annex in East Beirut killed 23 people including two Americans. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

December 1985: Kuwait Air Flight 221 to Tehran was hijacked; two U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officials were murdered. December, Hezbollah factions were responsible for a series of bombings in Paris.

March 1985: a British professor, Geoffrey Nash, and a British businessman, Brian Levick, were kidnapped. Also seized were U.S. journalist Terry Anderson and French diplomats Marcel Fontaine, Danielle Perez, and Marcel Carton.

May 1985: Jean Paul Kaufmann and Michel Seurat, both French citizens, were kidnapped.

March 1986: American University director David Jacobsen was kidnapped. Dennis Hill, a British citizen, was killed. Four French television journalists were kidnapped.

April 1986: Hezbollah bombed the Northwest Orient Airlines office in Stockholm and kidnapped two Cypriot students.
**September 1986**: U.S. citizens Frank Reed and Joseph Cicippio were kidnapped and the French military attaché in East Beirut was murdered.

**October 1986**: U.S. national Edward Austin Tracy was kidnapped

**Dec. 31, 1986**: Under the alias Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, Hezbollah announces it had kidnapped and murdered three Lebanese Jews. The organization previously had taken responsibility for killing four other Jews since 1984

**January 1987**: two German businessmen, Rudolph Cordes and Alfred Schmidt, British Church of England envoy Terry Waite, and U.S. professors Jesse Turner, Alan Steen, Robert Polhill, and Mithileshwar Singh were all kidnapped in Lebanon.

**June 1987**: U.S. journalist Charles Glass was kidnapped; he escaped in August that year.

**July 1987**: Hezbollah hijacked an Air Afrique jetliner en route from Brazzaville, Congo, to Paris and killed one person.


**March 17, 1992**: With the help of Iranian intelligence, Hezbollah bombs the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 and injuring over 200.

**July 1992**: Hezbollah bombed the Amia building, a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and injuring hundreds. Hezbollah also attacked the Israeli embassy in London and a Jewish center in North London.

**July 18, 1994**: Hezbollah bombs the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires – again with Iranian help—killing 86 and injuring over 200.


**July 1996**: the U.S. military in Iraq announced the arrest of an alleged Hezbollah operative, Ali Mussa Daqduq, who was suspected of involvement in training Iraqi Shiite “Special Groups.”

**January 2001**: Hezbollah bombed a U.S. embassy vehicle in Beirut.

**May 2007**: A Hezbollah plot was unveiled in Egypt, with 49 arrested.

**April 9, 2002**: Hezbollah launches Katyushas into northern Israeli town. This assault comes amidst almost daily Hezbollah attacks against Israeli troops in Shebba farms.

**August 10, 2003**: Hezbollah shells kills 16-year-old Israeli boy, wound others.
**July 12, 2006:** Hezbollah attacks Israel with Katyushas, crosses the border and kidnaps two Israeli soldiers. Three Israeli soldiers are killed in the initial attack. Five more soldiers are killed as Israel launches operation to rescue the soldiers and push Hezbollah from its border. During the ensuing war, Hezbollah launches rockets at civilian targets across northern Israel.

**May 26, 2008:** Eight people were wounded when a bomb went off in Istanbul. The Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* subsequently alleged that the attack had been perpetrated by Hezbollah and had been intended to target the Israeli consul general in Istanbul, Moshe Kimchi. The report’s allegations could not be independently substantiated.

**June 30, 2009:** The UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon submitted an indictment and arrest warrants for four Hezbollah militants to the Lebanese prosecutor-general in connection with the Hariri assassination. On 10 July, Interpol issued red notices for the four Hezbollah militants.

**June 2009:** Hezbollah was alleged by officials to have maintained close links and cooperated with the Zetas drug cartel in Mexico in order to smuggle cocaine from Colombia, through Mexico into the United States; some of the money raised in the process was allegedly channeled to Hezbollah.

**January 5, 2012:** Bulgarian intelligence services claimed to have foiled a plot by Hezbollah militants to carry out attacks on Israeli nationals in the capital, Sofia.

**January 12, 2012:** Thai security forces detained an alleged Hezbollah militant, identified as dual Swedish-Lebanese national Atris Hussein, at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. Subsequent reports added that a cache of material used in the manufacture of explosives was discovered during a raid on a storage facility rented by Hussein in the Samut Sakhon district on the outskirts of Bangkok on 16 January.

**January 24, 2012:** IDF chief of staff Lieutenant-General Benny Gantz issued a statement that Hezbollah and other affiliated militant groups were attempting to attack Israeli targets overseas. In fact, he was referring to an attempt to assassinate two Jewish figures in Baku.

**February 13, 2012:** Several senior Israeli government and security officials alleged that the Iranian government and Hezbollah had been responsible for an attack on an Israeli embassy vehicle in New Delhi and for emplacing a device under another such vehicle in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, earlier that day. While the claims could not be independently substantiated, Nasrallah denied the allegations in a statement issued on 16 February.

**February 14, 2012:** There was an attempt to kill an Israeli diplomat in Bangkok.

**February 21, 2012:** The Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security claimed its security forces had detained an unspecified number of alleged Hezbollah militants and members of the “Iranian intelligence services” in an undisclosed area of the country on an unspecified earlier recent date. The statement added that those detained had been gathering intelligence and had acquired weapons for use in a planned attack in Baku, the capital.
In early July, two Qods Force operatives were arrested in Kenya while preparing a terrorist attack.

On 7 July, Cypriot authorities arrested a terrorist collecting intelligence on flights to Israel and on tour buses for Israeli tourists.

July 2012: a suicide bomber whom U.S. officials later identified as a Hezbollah operative detonated a bomb on a tour bus transporting Israelis at Burgas Airport. Five Israelis and the Bulgarian bus driver were killed, and 32 Israelis injured.

On 20 August, a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) official announced the seizure of $150 million in connection with a Hezbollah money-laundering case first filed in 2011. The case alleged that Hezbollah made use of the U.S. financial system to launder profits from narcotics


Table A-4

Hezbollah Political Evolution

Overview

A Movement Is Born: 1982–84

Hezbollah rises in the early 1980s as a radical Shiite movement under the tutelage of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, headquartered in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley near its ally Syria. The group is bent on expelling Israel and the Western troops who try to keep peace amid rising violence after Israel’s 1982 invasion. In 1983, bombings of the U.S. Embassy and French and American military barracks are widely blamed on Hezbollah or groups linked to it. Ronald Reagan orders U.S. Marines to withdraw.

Syria Ascendant: 1984–99

In the final phase of Lebanon’s civil war, Syria — Hezbollah’s local patron — is left as the dominant power broker; after more years of fighting it helps arrange a truce in 1990. Its troops stay to police the peace, and Damascus emerges as Lebanon’s de facto sovereign. Hezbollah is the only faction allowed to keep its weapons; in 1992, it also begins running parliamentary candidates, even as it fights a guerrilla war during the rest of the decade against Israeli troops remaining in southern Lebanon.
Hezbollah Claims Victory: 2000–05

When the Israelis leave southern Lebanon in July 2000, Hezbollah is widely credited with pushing them out. The group, now powerful politically, resists pressure to disarm, saying it still needs to protect Lebanon from Israel. Beirut re-emerges as a prosperous Arab capital under the guidance of Rafik Hariri, the billionaire Sunni prime minister and Saudi protégé who leads the city’s reconstruction efforts.

Assassination, More War: 2005–10

In February 2005, Hariri is killed in a car bombing. Outrage over the killing, which is widely blamed on Syria, leads to a Syrian military withdrawal and a confrontation between two groups that will now wrestle for control of Lebanon. On one side is Hezbollah and its allies, backed by Syria and Iran; on the other a coalition allied to Saudi Arabia and the West, led by Hariri’s son and heir, Saad Hariri.

The conflict grows sharper after a month long war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. Hezbollah, emboldened by its resistance against Israeli troops, forces a political confrontation that leaves Lebanon rudderless for 18 months. In May 2008, street fighting erupts in Beirut, and Arab leaders, meeting in Doha, give Hezbollah what it wanted: veto power over major government decisions.

Today, Hariri’s Shadow Looms

In mid-2010, word is leaked that the U.N.-backed international tribunal investigating Hariri’s killing will soon indict Hezbollah members. Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, warns that he will not accept such a verdict, and demands that the government distance itself from the tribunal. Saad Hariri, the current prime minister, makes conciliatory gestures but will not denounce the investigation of his father’s death. Hezbollah withdraws from the cabinet, leaving Lebanon once again without a government.

1985: Hezbollah publishes a Manifesto (The Open Letter) of political intent.

1985- 1990: The political competition with AMAL escalates into open conflict.


1996: Hezbollah wins nine seats in Parliament campaigning as “Resisting the occupation”.

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2000: Hezbollah and AMAL form a ‘Shiite alliance’ for the election and win 23 seats.

March 1, 2001: The British government adds Hezbollah’s "military wing" to its list of outlawed terrorist organizations.

February 14, 2005: Rafik Hariri assassinated

2005: Hezbollah wins 14 seats in the election and is part of “The Resistance and Development Bloc which won 23 seats. Hezbollah has two Ministers in the Government.


Table A-5

Hezbollah Involvement in the Syrian Civil War

In 2012 Hezbollah sent a limited number of its military operatives to Syria, mainly as advisors and for security missions.

April 19, 2013, the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Ra’i reported that earlier that month Hassan Nasrallah had visited Tehran. While there he met with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Qods Force commander Qassem Suleimani and other senior Iranian figures.

June 5, 2013, the Syrian army announced its takeover of Al-Qusayr) and the grave of Al-Set Zaynab, located south of Damascus, an important holy Shi’ite pilgrimage site.

July 2013 Hezbollah force support Syrian Army troop in the capture of the strategic city Homs.

Appendix B

Hezbollah Organizational Structure

Hezbollah began as a secretive clandestine terrorist organization under the guidance of the IRGC. As Hezbollah evolved there merged two faces of Hezbollah: a public image and the actual organization which continued as highly secretive. Even the basic information about the Hezbollah is organizational structure, the number of people belonging to Hezbollah, the personnel strength of the Hezbollah military force are all highly elusive and often controversial information. The various experts in the field differ on the specifics of the Hezbollah organizational structure although there is general agreement on certain issues such as the existence of a “Shura Council” which is the ultimate authority for Hezbollah. Further, The Shura Council answers to the authority of Iran. Beyond this issue the various experts provide Hezbollah organizational structures that are nuanced in the differences. The timelines of Hezbollah actions show a range of functional activities including political, military, terrorism, social services, propaganda among others. Each of these activities requires some organizational element to perform the requisite duties in evidence. The thesis developed a number of “functional organizations” that represent how Hezbollah would of necessity have to be organized to have accomplished the actions in evidence. Thesis used the timelines and the various expert presentations on Hezbollah organizations to synthesize a series of Hezbollah “functional organizations” at various pints in time of the Hezbollah evolution.

The following provides examples of the various experts’ ideas on the Hezbollah organizations.

(Cohler, 2011)
Supreme Shura Council
17 members
(Highest Leadership Authority)

General Secretary
and
Deputy Secretary
(appointed by the Shura Council)

Combat Organ

al-Mujawamah
al-Islamiyyah
(Islamic Resistance)
al-Jihad
al-Islami
(Islamic Holy War)

Executive Committee
9 members
(5 are appointed by the Shura Council)

Politburo
15 members
(appointed by the Shura Council)

Security Organ

Jihad al-Bina’
(Holy Reconstruction Organ)

Enforcement, Recruitment
and Propaganda Organ

Operational Security
Central Security
Party Security
Technical Administrative Committee

Mosque Preachers
Hawzat (Circles of Learning)
Mass Media

Agricultural Committee
Power Resources Committee
Water Resources Committee
Islamic Health Committee
Financial Aid Committee
Reconstruction Committee
Environmental Committee

(Acosta, 2007)
(Hayes, 2008).
HEZBOLLAH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

VELEYAT AL FAQIH
*Currently Iranian Supreme Leader
Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

CENTRAL COUNCIL

SHURA COUNCIL

SECRETARIAT GENERAL
*Currently Hassan Nasrallah

MILITARY/SECURITY APPARATUS
*Operated by members of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

JIHAD COUNCIL
*Merged with former Executive Council

REGIONAL OPERATIONS

PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL

POLITBURO

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

AUXILIARY UNITS
- Social
- Education
- Medical
- Finance
- Media
- Syndicate
- External Relations
- Engagement and Coordination

BEIRUT SOUTHERN SUBURBS (HEZBOLLAH HEADQUARTERS)

BEKAA VALLEY

SOUTHERN LEBANON

المقاومة الإسلامية في لبنان

(Phares, 2009)
Hezbollah leadership structure. Based in part on Hamzeh, In the Path of Hezbollah, 26.
Synthesized Hezbollah Functional Organizations

Figure xx Hezbollah Functional Organization 1982

Figure xx Hezbollah Functional Organization 1985
Figure x.x  Hezbollah Functional Organization 1990