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**HEZBOLLAH: PSYCHOLOGICAL
WARFARE AGAINST ISRAEL**

by

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HEZBOLLAH: PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST ISRAEL

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ABSTRACT

Since the 34-day war in 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel, psychological warfare has re-emerged as a topic of interest. Many experts have asked the question: how could a non-state actor defeat Israel—a regional superpower—in such a short amount of time? Hezbollah also defeated Israel in 2000 when it forced the state to unilaterally withdraw from southern Lebanon after an 18-year occupation. Although Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy contributed greatly to these two successes, there also are other factors that contributed to Israel's failures. First, Israel incorrectly assessed its enemy which resulted in the development of overly ambitious objectives for Lebanon in addition to the application of inappropriate strategies. Israel underestimated the level of support Hezbollah enjoyed from the Lebanese population through years of political participation and providing security, economic, and social services. Second, Israel's aversion to casualties inhibited it from choosing more bold military strategies. Third, Hezbollah waged effective guerrilla warfare against Israel's conventional military efforts. By embedding itself within the civilian population, the group became a difficult target to attack through conventional warfare. Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy played a crucial role in exploiting Israel's military mistakes and its aversion to casualties.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Hezbollah is a professional militant organization and political party that came into existence between 1982 and 1983 partly as a result of Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982, and through the assistance of Iran and Syria.¹ Since its creation, the group has positioned itself as a resistance movement with a stated objective of freeing Lebanon from the manipulation of imperialist powers, in particular the United States, France, and their allies.² Starting in 1992, it began to evolve into a reputable political party after deciding to enter the political mainstream by participating in Lebanon's parliamentary elections in an effort to legitimize its resistance.³ By 2005, the group decided to participate officially in the government's cabinet by reaching out to other political groups during the parliamentary elections and appointing ministers that were close to the party and a minister from within its own ranks.⁴ Hezbollah's current political objective consists of maintaining its weapons in order to protect Lebanon and the Middle East region from Israeli and US influence.⁵

Aside from its evolution as a political party, Hezbollah has been credited for Israel's ultimate military withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 and again in 2006 following the 34-day war despite having only a few hundred guerrilla fighters.⁶ The

¹ Augustus Richard Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30 (2000): 23-24; and International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis." <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm> (accessed August 21, 2008).

² Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 39.

³ Amal Saad Ghorayeb, "Lebanon: The Paradox of Hezbollah's Arms," *Arab Reform Bulletin* 3, no. 5 (September 2005), www.CarnegieEndowment.org (accessed August 21, 2008).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁵ International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

⁶ For articles claiming that Hezbollah was responsible for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 and retreat during the 34-day war in 2006, see: Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 1-19; and Dr. Pierre Cyril Pahlavi, "The 33-Day War: An Example of Psychological Warfare in the Information Age," *The Canadian Army Journal* 10 (2007): 12-24.

group is recognized for having employed an effective military strategy since the 1990s which combined conventional and psychological warfare.⁷ Although this strategy is not new, Hezbollah was unique in that it subjected “virtually all of its military operations to its propaganda and mass media requirements.”⁸ To what extent did Hezbollah’s unique psychological warfare strategy prevent Israel from achieving its military and political objectives in Lebanon between the 1990s and 2006? This thesis will investigate how Hezbollah’s psychological warfare strategy impacted Israel’s military and political objectives in Lebanon during this time period by reviewing secondary academic sources and related propaganda.

B. IMPORTANCE

Psychological warfare is different from conventional warfare in that it uses non-violent methods to deliver messages to target audiences in order to further the war effort. Target audiences are broken down into three categories: the domestic, neutral, and enemy audience. This type of warfare has three components: the target audiences, the messages and themes, and the channels of communication.⁹ If employed effectively, psychological warfare can serve as a force multiplier for the weaker adversary in asymmetric conflicts.

According to some experts, the two wars that took place in Lebanon from 1982 to 2000 and the summer of 2006 are perfect examples of “modern asymmetric conflicts which . . . ended in unexpected victory by David over Goliath.”¹⁰ During both conflicts, Israel was forced to quit because the government was unable to convince its domestic audience that the fight was worth pursuing, despite its military superiority as the world’s fifth-largest military.¹¹ This may be partly a result of Hezbollah’s psychological warfare

⁷ Schleifer, 5; and Norton, “Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal,” 31.

⁸ Schleifer, 5.

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Pahlavi, 12.

¹¹ For articles claiming that Israel quit because the government was unable to convince its domestic audience that the fight was worth pursuing, see: Schleifer, 2; and Pahlavi, 12.

campaign which targeted various groups within Israel's population and government.¹² By systematically examining the psychological warfare strategy lodged by Hezbollah against its enemy, one may be able to identify the extent to which a sub-state actor was able to cause a regional superpower to lose confidence in its military superiority.

While Israel was experiencing a self-image crisis, Hezbollah was winning the "hearts and minds" of its domestic audience and gaining credibility among the regional and international community.¹³ Although the group has been placed on the US State Department's list of terrorist organizations, the Europeans still refuse to formally classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. This is impressive considering that the group espouses anti-Western ideology and rhetoric and gained notoriety during the 1980s for its suicide bombings, kidnappings, and hijackings.¹⁴ By looking at the strategic communications strategy employed by Hezbollah against their domestic and neutral target audience, one may be able to identify how a terrorist organization was able to overcome its own negative public image while sabotaging its enemy's.

Currently, the United States' Global War on Terror being carried out in Iraq has striking similarities to Israel's asymmetric conflict with Hezbollah. The United States, as the Goliath, increasingly is experiencing an image crisis both at home and in the international community as a result of its military actions abroad. Meanwhile, the insurgents have been able to manipulate the opinions of their supporters and the neutral target audiences by employing psychological warfare strategies of their own.¹⁵ Lessons learned from Israel's conflict with Hezbollah can be used to develop an effective US public diplomacy strategy against terrorism in the Middle East and elsewhere.

¹² Schleifer, 8.

¹³ Schleifer, 2; Pahlavi, 7.

¹⁴ Pahlavi, 7; and Kim Cragin, "Hizballah, the Party of God," in "Aptitude for Destruction," ed. Rand Corporation (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005), 41-43.

¹⁵ Colonel Thomas Hammes, USMC, *The Sling and the Stone* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2006), 208; and Maura Conway, "Terrorism and the Making of the 'New Middle East': New Media Strategies of Hizbollah and al Qaeda." http://64.233.179.104/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:arJz335_rfIJ:www.ir.dcu.ie/503/01/new_media_2007.pdf+%22maura+conway%22+AND+%22new+media+strategies%22 (accessed August 31, 2008).

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

Determining the extent to which Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy impacted Israel's political and military objectives in Lebanon between the 1990s and 2006 will be complicated because there are many other causal factors. First, Israel's military and political objectives in Lebanon between 1990 and 2006 will be identified. Second, Israel's perceived failure in achieving these objectives will be assessed. This will be difficult for the 34-day war because opinions vary whether Israel or Hezbollah won in 2006.

Third, Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategies between 1990 and 2006 will be identified. These strategies will be compared to Israel's perceived failures in order to determine whether they correlate. As stated earlier, it will be difficult to isolate the impact that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy had on Israel's military and political objectives from other causal factors. However, it will be presumed that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was the primary factor for why Israel was unsuccessful in achieving its military and political objectives in Lebanon between 1990 and 2006.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Dov Waxman in his article, "Between Victory and Defeat: Israel after the War with Hizballah," both the 1982 and 2006 wars were voluntarily initiated by Israel.¹⁶ Consequently, these wars were more controversial because the country and its leadership became morally responsible for its outbreak and subsequent deaths on both sides.¹⁷ The 1982 Israeli invasion was launched in order to destroy the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as a political and military force in Lebanon and install a pro-Israeli government in Beirut. The first objective was partially achieved; however, the second was not, and Israel did not withdraw from Lebanon until 2000.¹⁸ Although the

¹⁶ Dov Waxman, "Between Victory and Defeat: Israel after the War with Hizballah," *The Washington Quarterly* 30 (2006-07): 28-29.

¹⁷ Waxman., 28-29.

¹⁸ Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal," 23.

2006 war was in response to Hezbollah killing and capturing Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers across an internationally recognized border, Israel's response was seen as disproportional. Fed up with Hezbollah, the Israeli government decided to commence an all-out war in order to finally eliminate Hezbollah's mini-state in southern Lebanon and replace it with Lebanese government sovereignty. Instead, the war resulted in a cease fire with both sides claiming victory. Also, the public perception within Israel and around the world was that Israel, for the first time in history, lost a conflict.¹⁹

There is general consensus that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was a contributing factor for Israel's military withdrawal in 2000 and 2006, as seen in Ron Schleifer's article, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel" and Dr. Pierre Cyril Pahlavi's article, "An Example of Psychological Warfare in the Information Age."²⁰ However, there is no consensus on the extent to which psychological warfare contributed to Hezbollah's military success. Schleifer states that "Hezbollah's shrewd application, and refinement, of psychological warfare . . . ultimately proved a key factor in Israel's decision to quit Lebanon in 2000."²¹ Pahlavi emphasizes that Hezbollah's success during the 2006 conflict was a psychological triumph over Israel. Also, the conflict was not merely a cross-border dispute, but an asymmetric war in the information age.²² This assertion would suggest that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was the deciding factor for Israel's military withdrawal. Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, on the other hand, acknowledge that media coverage was a weapon during the 2006 conflict, but they only conclude that Israel was victimized more than Hezbollah by it. They do not assess the extent to which psychological warfare contributed to Israel's withdrawal.²³

¹⁹ Waxman, 28-29.

²⁰ Schleifer 2; and Pahlavi, 21.

²¹ Schleifer, 2.

²² Pahlavi, 21.

²³ Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon of Asymmetrical conflict," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12 (2007): 43.

There also is agreement that Hezbollah has been more adept at leveraging the media for their military and political purposes than Israel has.²⁴ Schleifer claims that the “visual media proved one of Hezbollah’s most effective weapons.”²⁵ Martha Conway, in a case study, assessed that the group was extremely successful in employing their television station, al-Manar, as “weapon in their information war.”²⁶ Pahlavi explains that one of Hezbollah’s crucial assets was its ability to establish a privileged working relationship with international press correspondents. Israel, on the other hand, was unable to do this.²⁷

Nonetheless, opinions vary as to why Hezbollah was more effective than Israel in waging psychological warfare. Pahlavi believes that one of the reasons Israel was less successful was because it subordinated psychological warfare to its confidence in its military supremacy. In contrast, Hezbollah made psychological warfare a priority because of its weaker military status.²⁸ This is demonstrated by the fact that psychological warfare objectives eventually began to dictate the organization’s military operations.²⁹ Kalb and Saivetz believe that Israel mostly was hurt by its open society because it was unable to control messages being disseminated from its own media. Hezbollah, on the other hand, was able to maintain total control of the daily messages delivered through journalism and propaganda to the rest of the world.³⁰ The relative priority of psychological warfare to Israel and Hezbollah and the openness of their respective societies are both sound explanations for why Hezbollah won the information war. However, it would be difficult to determine which factor was more important.

²⁴ For articles claiming that Hezbollah was more adept than Israel at leveraging the media, see: Pahlavi, 19; Kalb and Saivetz, 44-45.

²⁵ Schleifer, 6.

²⁶ Conway, “Terrorism and the Making,” 7.

²⁷ Pahlavi, 19.

²⁸ Ibid., 16-17.

²⁹ Schleifer, 8.

³⁰ Kalb and Saivetz, 43-44.

Some authors, such as Waxman in “Between Victory and Defeat: Israel after the War with Hizballah,” and Augustus Norton in “Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon,” argue that Israel failed during the 1982 and 2006 wars partly because they pursued a flawed strategy.³¹ For example, during the 1982 war, Israel believed that by punishing the Lebanese people in general, Beirut would be moved to stop the resistance. However, this punishment actually increased support for the resistance, even among non-Shi’a Lebanese. Furthermore, killing of innocent civilians intensified the perception that Israel was an evil entity.³² Similarly, during the 2006 war, Israel hoped that if Lebanon was made to suffer for Hezbollah’s actions, the government finally would rein-in the organization. Again, this strategy produced the opposite results. The government also was accused of poor planning, intelligence blunders, overreliance on airpower, and providing insufficient ground troops and supplies.³³

Although most of the literature reviewed focused heavily on Hezbollah’s psychological warfare successes during both wars, very little was discussed regarding what, if anything, the organization did wrong. Identifying weaknesses of Hezbollah’s psychological warfare capabilities and strategies would be useful in developing counterstrategies. None of the literature reviewed discussed suggestions for developing a comprehensive strategy to combat Hezbollah’ psychological warfare techniques.

Not surprisingly, the literature reviewed used conflicting terms to describe the conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah. For example, Conway described it as “cybercortical warfare,” which she defines as public diplomacy in a conflict situation.³⁴ In another article, Conway describes the conflict as “information warfare.”³⁵ Schleifer

³¹ Waxman, 29.

³² Norton, “Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal,” 27.

³³ Waxman, 31.

³⁴ Maura Conway, “Cybercortical Warfare: The Case of Hezbollah.org,” (paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research Joint Sessions of Workshops, Edinburgh, UK, March 28 – April 2, 2003) 4.

³⁵ Maura Conway, “Terror TV? An Exploration of Hezbollah’s Al-Manar Television.” http://doras.dcu.ie/499/1/terror_tv_2007.pdf. (accessed August 31, 2008) 1.

and Pahlavi view it as “psychological warfare.”³⁶ Kalb and Saivetz described the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel as “asymmetric warfare,” emphasizing the use of media as a weapon.³⁷ Although Colonel Hammes, USMC does not address the conflict specifically in his book *The Sling and the Stone*, his definition of “fourth-generation warfare” also could apply.³⁸

The prevailing notion is that the media will continue to be important in today’s asymmetrical warfare environment.³⁹ For example, Kalb and Saivetz conducted content analysis of global media and interviews with many diplomats and journalists and concluded that the media is no longer an “objective observer.” Instead, it now is a “fiery advocate, becoming in fact a weapon of modern warfare.”⁴⁰ Colonel Hammes explained that the media increasingly will shape the policy of actors participating in fourth-generation warfare.⁴¹ Even the head of Hezbollah’s media relations department was quoted as saying, “We believe that the media has an important role in the conflict, as important as the military wing.”⁴²

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis uses a historical case study of Hezbollah’s psychological warfare strategy between 1990 and 2006 in response to Israel’s military activities in Lebanon. The historical study examines Israel’s military and political objectives in Lebanon during this time period and the degree to which it failed or succeeded. It also examines Hezbollah’s psychological warfare strategy against Israel during this time period. The group’s psychological warfare strategy is broken down by target audiences, messages and themes, and channels communication. A comparative study is done to assess the impact

³⁶ Schleifer, 2; and Pahlavi, 12.

³⁷ Kalb and Saivetz, 43.

³⁸ Hammes, 208.

³⁹ For articles or books discussing the increasing importance of the media in asymmetrical warfare, see: Kalb and Saivetz, 43; Hammes, 210; and Conway, “Cybercortical.”

⁴⁰ Kalb and Saivetz, 43.

⁴¹ Hammes, 210.

⁴² Conway, “Cybercortical,” 12.

that these comprehensive psychological warfare strategies had on Israel's military and political objectives. This analysis should provide a basis for assessing the impact that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategies had on Israel's perceived military and political failures in Lebanon. Information was obtained from online think-tank sources (e.g., The Crisis Group), secondary academic sources, and a survey of propaganda disseminated by the group during these two wars (i.e., television, online, journals, etc.).

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis begins with a background on Hezbollah, including how it was created, its objectives and ideology, methods for achieving its objectives, organizational structure and significant relationships. Next, Israel's military and political objectives in Lebanon between 1990 and 2006 are outlined with an assessment defining the extent to which it failed or succeeded. Following this, Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategies during this time period are examined by identifying the group's target audiences, messages and themes, and channels of communication. The thesis concludes with a comprehensive assessment determining the extent to which Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategies directly or indirectly contributed Israel's perceived failure in Lebanon. This section also discusses what, if anything else, Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategies achieved such as escaping defeat or playing into Israel's nationalistic goals of creating an enemy.

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II. BACKGROUND ON HEZBOLLAH

A. INTRODUCTION

Hezbollah has been credited twice for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon—first in 2000 after an 18-year long occupation and then again in 2006 after the 34-day war.⁴³ The question many ask is to what extent did the group's psychological warfare strategy prevent Israel from achieving its military and political objectives in Lebanon? This thesis suggests that although Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy played a key role in these two wars, it was not the deciding factor.

To set the background for the arguments made in this thesis, this Chapter explains how and why Hezbollah was created. Second, it briefly defines the group's objectives and ideology in order to understand why it has such strong animosity towards Israel. Third, in order to appreciate what this non-state actor accomplished in relation to the fifth largest military in the world, the organizational structure of Hezbollah is outlined. Fourth, the methods employed by the group—to include military, political participation, providing social services, and psychological warfare—to achieve its objectives are explained. Fifth, the significant relationships Hezbollah has within and outside Lebanon are discussed to illustrate that the group is more than a Shi'a Islamist organization.

B. CREATION OF HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah is a professional militant organization and political party that came into existence between 1982 and 1983 as a result of Shi'a marginalization, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.⁴⁴ The Shiites in Lebanon were prime targets for social mobilization because traditionally they were relatively powerless—socially, economically, and politically—compared to the Maronite Christians

⁴³ For articles claiming that Hezbollah was responsible for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 and retreat during the 34-day war in 2006, see: Schleifer, 1-19; and Pahlavi, 12-24.

⁴⁴ Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal," 23-24; and International Crisis Group, "Hizballah and the Lebanese Crisis." <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm> (accessed August 21, 2008).

and Sunni Muslims.⁴⁵ According to Norton, the “Shiites were the most deprived community in Lebanon. They were the poorest, the least educated, and the least likely to benefit from government-provided services such as health facilities or public utilities.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Shiites primarily were located in southern Lebanon where the PLO and Israel battled each other during the 1970s. Consequently, the Shiites carried the brunt of the PLO-Israeli conflict in southern Lebanon.⁴⁷

According to authors Doug McAdam, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, in order for a group to mobilize, members need to have a legitimate grievance about some particular aspect of their lives, and have reason to believe that collective action will solve the problem.⁴⁸ The 1979 Iranian revolution provided hope to the Shiites, who already were demoralized and now exhausted from the hostilities taking place in Lebanon. The events in Iran provided an example of what a determined Shiite effort against oppression could accomplish.⁴⁹ Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah later gave further explanation for why the group and its followers had such a strong sense of optimism:

In the Quran, God promises the mujahidin victory if they do jihad and go to war, and they are doing exactly that. Ever since we started the resistance in 1982, and up to today, we rely on the fact that God will grant us victory if we obey him. Only God can grant the young men of the resistance peace of mind, and although we have no missiles or aircraft to shell Tel Aviv with, the Israelis live in constant fear of our operations.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Augustus Richard Norton, “Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shiites of Lebanon,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 482 (1985): 110-111.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁸ Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, “Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes—toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

⁴⁹ Norton, “Changing Actors,” 116.

⁵⁰ Nicholas Blanford, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, ed. Nicholas Noe (London: Verso, 2007), 231.

With a grievance and sense of hope for the Shi'a already in place, the catalyst for the establishment of Hezbollah was the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel.⁵¹ Initially, the Shi'a and Christian population in southern Lebanon, wanting to be rid of the PLO, welcomed Israel. The expulsion of the PLO provided the Lebanese with an opportunity to reclaim control over the south.⁵² However, Israel soon forged an alliance with the Maronite Christians to the detriment of Shi'a welfare.⁵³ The Shi'a once again marginalized and bearing the brunt of Israel's occupation soon grew resentful towards the Jewish state.⁵⁴ Even former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was quoted saying: "When we entered Lebanon . . . there was no Hezbollah . . . it was our presence there that created Hezbollah."⁵⁵ Another former prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, similarly commented that Israel had the "genie out of the bottle."⁵⁶

Consequently, most of the elements necessary for social mobilization were present in Lebanon for the Shi'a: grievances, a belief that something could be done to change the situation, and a catalyst. Motivated to spread its Islamic Revolution model, Iran provided the mobilizing structures necessary for Hezbollah to be created.⁵⁷ Mobilizing structures are defined as "those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action."⁵⁸ First, Iran deployed up to 15,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards to the Bekaa in order to recruit

⁵¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 33.

⁵² Eyal Zisser, "Hizballah in Lebanon: At the Crossroads," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 1 (1997): 4. <http://meria.idc.ac.i/journal/1997/issue3/jv1n3a1.html> (accessed February 1, 2009).

⁵² Cragin, 47.

⁵³ Zisser, 4.

⁵³ Cragin, 47.

⁵⁴ Daniel Isaac Helmer, "Flipside of the COIN: Israel's Lebanese Incursion between 1982-2000." *The Long War Series Occasional Paper 21* (2006): 36.

⁵⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 33.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁵⁸ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3.

members and assist with their religious indoctrination and military training.⁵⁹ Iran also provided Hezbollah with considerable economic assistance and weapons to carry out military operations against Israel.⁶⁰ Additionally, it helped the group develop a social service network, based on the Iranian model, which was instrumental in spreading their ideology and generating collective action.⁶¹ Starting in the 1990s, Iran also encouraged and helped Hezbollah to transition into politics.⁶²

In addition to support from Iran, the group received considerable assistance from Syria in the form of training, financing, weapons, and a transit route for Iranian weapons. Early on, Syria viewed support for Hezbollah as a means to maintain an alliance with Iran, directly and indirectly harass both Israel and the United States, and keep its Lebanese allies in line.⁶³ According to author Kim Cragin, Hezbollah profited from the unique relationship it had with its sponsor states—Iran and Syria—which allowed it to grow exponentially quicker than militant groups lacking state sponsors.⁶⁴

C. OBJECTIVES AND IDEOLOGY

Hezbollah did not formally announce its existence until February 1985 through a public manifesto detailing its objectives and ideology. The three stated objectives of the group were to: 1) resist Israel's occupation of Lebanon, 2) reject Lebanon's political system which Hezbollah perceived as corrupt, and 3) support the creation of an Islamic state within the country.⁶⁵ The ultimate goal of the group has been to destroy Israel and to liberate Palestine. This would be pursued after accomplishing their first objective—

⁵⁹ Blanford, *Voice*, 5; and Zisser, 4.

⁶⁰ Cragin, 47.

⁶¹ Imad Salamey and Frederic Pearson, "Hezbollah: A Proletarian Party with an Islamic Manifesto – A Sociopolitical Analysis of Islamist Populism in Lebanon and the Middle East," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18 (2007), 423.

⁶² Wehrey, 59.

⁶³ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 35.

⁶⁴ Cragin, 40.

⁶⁵ Blanford, *Voice*, 5.

driving Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.⁶⁶ However, after Israel officially withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah's new priority has been to maintain its armed status in order to protect Lebanon and the Middle East region from Israeli and US influence.⁶⁷

Hezbollah has many lenses through which it views the world. First, according to Avi Jorisch, the group has categorized its enemies into three concentric circles—the first circle obviously consisting of Israel and the United States. The group justifies violence against both Israeli civilians and military because they are recognized as occupiers. Furthermore, Israel's mere existence is an act of terrorism which categorizes Hezbollah's resistance as counterterrorism. Similarly, the United States is perceived to be the primary supporter of Israel, therefore supporting state terrorism. The second circle consists of any other country that illegally inhabits land and oppresses the indigenous population. The final circle represents any government or international organization, such as the European Union, that is submissive to the United States and the West in general.⁶⁸

Second, Hezbollah considers the community of believers to consist of Arab and non-Arab Muslims. However, they are followers of Wilayat al-Faqih, which places Iran at the epicenter of the group's "religious and pan-Islamic worldview."⁶⁹ They consider Ayatollah Khomeini to have been the "divinely inspired ruler" of the community of believers.⁷⁰ Khomeini, after his death, was followed by Ali Khamene'i.⁷¹ Third, Hezbollah divides the world into two main groups: the oppressed and the oppressors which also represent good and evil. Jorisch claims that by dividing the world into these two categories, the group is able to justify working with both Muslim—Sunni and

⁶⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 38-39.

⁶⁷ International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

⁶⁸ Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah's Al-Manar Television* (Washington DC: Washington Institute of Near East Policy, 2004), 15-16.

⁶⁹ Cragin, 38-39.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

Shi'a—and non-Muslims. He also asserts that the ultimate qualifier for the group to work with another group is the latter's attitude toward Israel, the United States, and the West in general.⁷²

D. METHODS

This section describes the methods that Hezbollah has employed to achieve its objectives since its creation in 1982. The group has evolved considerably over time, first gaining notoriety as a Shi'a terrorist organization and now recognized as a reputable Lebanese political party with a strong military wing and providing critical economic, educational, and social services that the Lebanese state is either unwilling or unable to provide. In addition to these methods, the group has been able to win the support of the Lebanese population through a psychological warfare campaign that employs an extensive media apparatus.

1. Military

From about 1983 to 1988, Hezbollah pursued resistance through local and international terrorism as it conducted multiple suicide bombings, kidnappings, and hijackings primarily against Israeli, French and US targets.⁷³ Around 1985, the group also began to conduct guerrilla warfare against IDF and South Lebanese Army (SLA) targets in southern Lebanon⁷⁴ Hezbollah conducted these attacks in order to position themselves as the “protectors of the Lebanese (not just Shiite) population of southern Lebanon from the vicissitudes of Israeli occupation.”⁷⁵ Consequently, the group was careful when conducting military operations to avoid causing unnecessary collateral

⁷² Jorsch, 15.

⁷³ Cragin, 41.

⁷⁴ Pahlavi, 41-43.

⁷⁵ Helmer, 55.

damage.⁷⁶ According to Cragin, most analysts credit the training provided by Iran's Revolutionary Guards for Hezbollah's early tactical accomplishments.⁷⁷

Beginning around 1988, after Syria forced a truce between Hezbollah and its rival Amal, the group was able to focus more on improving its capabilities—particularly in the area of guerrilla and psychological warfare. As a result, by the early 1990s, Hezbollah was successfully attacking Israeli military outposts in the security zone. It also was able to infiltrate the SLA and expand throughout southern Lebanon. In response, Israel started to exert more pressure on Hezbollah through counterterrorism operations. Also during this time, the group became more concerned with operational security because it had to operate in areas with less support.⁷⁸

During the early 1990s, Hezbollah briefly reverted back to international terrorism when it bombed the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992, conducted a suicide attack against a Jewish cultural center again in Buenos Aires in 1994, and then carried out a bombing against the Israeli embassy and charity headquarters in London in 1994.⁷⁹ These attacks were retaliation for the Israeli assassination of the group's former leader, Abbas al-Musawi. Some experts believe that Hezbollah resorted to this tactic again because it was unable to respond militarily against an IDF effort to target and remove leaders of the group.⁸⁰ However, by 1996 the group was able to project the image that it was winning battles against the IDF on a daily basis, primarily through kidnappings, roadside bombs, and its own media. As Israel responded to these attacks with air strikes, Hezbollah would respond by broadcasting the collateral damage and then firing rockets into northern Israel.⁸¹ This cycle of violence continued until 2000 when Israel finally decided to withdraw from southern Lebanon.

⁷⁶ Helmer, 55.

⁷⁷ Cragin, 47.

⁷⁸ Cragin, 44-45.

⁷⁹ Jorsch, 12.

⁸⁰ Cragin, 46.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

After Israel's withdrawal, many outside the organization began to question whether Hezbollah needed to maintain its armed status.⁸² The group argued against this by claiming that its resistance surpassed liberation and included strategic defense. They also rejected any notion of subsuming its arms under central command of the Lebanese army.⁸³ Hezbollah also began efforts—with the help of Iran and Syria—to increase its military capabilities. For example, the group immediately resumed control of southern Lebanon after the unilateral withdrawal of Israel and began to create its own military infrastructure throughout.⁸⁴ They built up their tactical and strategic arsenal by acquiring an impressive inventory of anti-tank weapons and short, medium, and long range rockets and ballistic missiles from Iran and Syria.⁸⁵ They also received several C-802 anti-ship missiles and 30 unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran that were capable of carrying explosives.⁸⁶ During this time, Hezbollah also carried out mostly symbolic attacks against Israel, primarily in the disputed Shebaa Farms area. These attacks consisted of cross-border raids and mortar attacks.⁸⁷

2. Political

In an effort to generate greater legitimacy for Hezbollah's resistance, the group decided, in 1992, to enter the political mainstream as a political party.⁸⁸ Interestingly, Hezbollah initially eschewed political participation after the signing of the Taif Accord in 1989, which put an end to Lebanon's civil war and created the state's sectarian political

⁸² International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

⁸³ Ghorayeb, 1.

⁸⁴ Blanford, *Voice*, 9; STRATFOR, "Lebanon: Hezbollah's Communication Network," <http://www.stratfor.com/> (accessed May 9, 2008).

⁸⁵ Waxman, 30; and Uri Bar-Joseph, "Israel's Military Intelligence Performance in the Second Lebanon War," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 20 (2007): 586 and 590.

⁸⁶ Bar-Joseph, 586.

⁸⁷ In speeches made directly after the withdrawal, Nasrallah continued with Hezbollah's resistance agenda by contesting the disputed Shebaa Farms area occupied by Israel, demanding the release of remaining Lebanese prisoners, and by encouraging or sometimes even helping Palestinians carry out military operations. These issues, which were a priority in Nasrallah's rhetoric, later were referred to as the "bleeding wounds." Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

⁸⁸ Ghorayeb, 1.

system.⁸⁹ This change of heart was prompted by the urging of its sponsor and financier, Iran. Following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, a more pragmatic leadership took form in Iran under President Hashemi Rafsanjani.⁹⁰ In an effort to downplay the influence that Iran's ideology had on its foreign policy and to improve relations with its Arab neighbors, Rafsanjani strongly encouraged Hezbollah to "become more a part of Lebanon and less an extension of Iran."⁹¹

Therefore, starting in the early 1990s, the group attempted to gain more support for their resistance by integrating into Lebanon's parliamentary system while maintaining continued military pressure on the IDF in the southern security zone.⁹² Nasrallah also publicly justified Hezbollah's entry into the political arena by stating, "it is important for the party to be represented in the Lebanese parliament in order to contribute to the elimination of political confessionalism, which is one of the party's main goals."⁹³ Nasrallah primarily was responsible for implementing the group's political campaign and creating ties with other sectarian groups within Lebanon.⁹⁴ Even in 1999, Iran's new president Muhammad Khatami reminded Hezbollah to maintain good relations with the other sectarian groups in Lebanon.⁹⁵

Nonetheless, Hezbollah's political design for Lebanon has been uncertain. Some experts claim that the group desires Islamic law or the "rule of the shari'a." The group itself has publicly stated that once the country is free from internal and external domination, the Lebanese people will determine their fate. They claim that if the people choose freely, they will choose Islam.⁹⁶ However, since entering politics in 1992, the

⁸⁹ Frederic M. Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills: Hizballah's Psychological Campaign Against Israel in South Lebanon," *small Wars and Insurgencies* 13 (2002): 58.

⁹⁰ Wehrey, 59.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁹² International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis"; Cragin 40; and Wehrey, 59.

⁹³ Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah quoted by Wehrey, 60.

⁹⁴ Wehrey, 59.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁹⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 39.

group has never mentioned the creation of an Islamic state in its election programs. Also, none of its members in parliament or in elected positions of local government have called for an Islamic state or attempted to pass laws or policies that would suggest a strategy towards this goal.⁹⁷

3. Social Service Network

In addition to military and political methods, Hezbollah from the beginning created an extensive social service network in order to win the support of the population in the security zone and surrounding areas.⁹⁸ This method likely was pursued not only as a mobilizing tactic for resistance, but also as a grass-roots approach to achieving the group's third, long-term objective—the creation of an Islamic state within the country.⁹⁹ At first, this network was created in order to lessen the hardships of impoverished Shi'a but eventually was expanded to also support Sunnis and Christians. Hezbollah's Construction Campaign, Jihad al-Bina, provided social services and public utilities that the Lebanese government was either unwilling or unable to provide for its citizens.¹⁰⁰ Some of these services included operating hospitals, orphanages, schools, gas stations, and providing scholarships, road paving service, and sewage systems.¹⁰¹

Through this social network system, Hezbollah was able to achieve its “state within a state” status. Some notable examples of the group's services include compensating 2,300 farmers and rebuilding over 5,000 Shi'a homes after Israel's 1996 “Operation Grapes of Wrath” campaign, treating roughly 60,000 women and 10,000 children in Hezbollah-run hospitals each year, creating a network of Shi'a elementary and

⁹⁷ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, “Know Thy Enemy: Hizbullah, ‘terrorism’ and the Politics of Perception,” *Third World Quarterly* 26 (2005): 179.

⁹⁸ Helmer, 54.

⁹⁹ Blanford, *Voice*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Wehrey, 57.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

middle schools, and providing basic provisions for citizens after a harsh storm in 1992.¹⁰² It also operates a broad range of sporting and cultural clubs that help to recruit potential members.¹⁰³ Hezbollah also helps to settle disputes by operating civil courts at mosques and religious centers.¹⁰⁴ In short, the group was able to fill a void left by the Lebanese government by providing services to those in need of economic, educational, social, and sometimes religious services. Consequently, many Lebanese citizens became dependent upon Hezbollah, making it extremely difficult for them to turn against the group—even when threatened by outside force.¹⁰⁵

4. Psychological Warfare

Hezbollah was able to mobilize Lebanese citizens to support their resistance to Israel's involvement in Lebanon through military, political, and social methods. However, above and beyond these methods, the group also employed psychological warfare to rally support for their resistance and also wear down the enemy's will to continue in Lebanon. As stated in the previous Chapter, psychological warfare "consists of delivering messages by nonviolent methods, to target audiences—domestic, neutral, and the enemy—with the aim of furthering the war effort."¹⁰⁶ Hezbollah's strategy involved the use of a "sophisticated media capability to amplify the psychological impact of its guerrilla tactics and acted, in effect, as a counterweight to the IDF's conventional military strength."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Graham Usher, "Hizballah, Syria, and the Lebanese Elections," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26/2 (1997): 64; Nizar A. Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly* 14/2 (1993): 327; Wehrey, 57; Assaf Kfoury, "Hizb Allah and the Lebanese State" in *Political Islam: Essays from the Middle East* Report, ed. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press 1997): 141-142.

¹⁰³ Wehrey, 57.

¹⁰⁴ Imad Salamey and Frederic Pearson, "Hezbollah: A Proletarian Party with an Islamic Manifesto – A Sociopolitical Analysis of Islamist Populism in Lebanon and the Middle East," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18 (2007), 425.

¹⁰⁵ Wehrey, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Schleifer, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Wehrey, 54.

Hezbollah's sophisticated media apparatus consists of newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, and the internet.¹⁰⁸ The group started off only using newspapers and magazines to convey its messages throughout the 1980s. The weekly newspaper *Al-Ahed* was first disseminated in 1984 followed by the weeklies *Al bilad*, *Al Wahda*, *El Islamilya*; and the monthly *Al Sabil*. The first radio station, al-Nour was founded in 1988, followed by two other stations. Then, in 1991 the group launched the heart of its media apparatus, the television station al-Manar.¹⁰⁹ These radio and television stations originally broadcasted only Arabic language programs targeting the local Arab population.¹¹⁰

Over time, the group began to broadcast programs in Hebrew in order to target Israeli soldiers serving in Lebanon. Hezbollah overcame skepticism and captured the attention of the enemy by filling its programs with information that would be deemed useful to intelligence analysts or the Israeli media. Eventually, all of Israel's television stations began to broadcast Hezbollah's videotapes because they were the only published visual record of the war. This material also began to be published in the foreign press.¹¹¹ The manager of al-Manar admitted that the station's goal was to infiltrate the mind of every Israeli and affect their perception of what was happening in Lebanon. This would require a thorough understanding of Israeli society. Therefore, al-Manar created a department made up of Hebrew speakers whose job it was to monitor Israeli radio and television continuously throughout the day.¹¹²

Although starting to broadcast in 1991, al-Manar was not officially sanctioned by the Lebanese television community until 1996. Initially, the Lebanese government felt directly threatened by the revolutionary agenda broadcasted by the television station. After "Operation Grapes of Wrath" in 1996, the station began to gain greater acceptance

¹⁰⁸ Schleifer, 13-14.

¹⁰⁹ Jorisch, xiii.

¹¹⁰ Schleifer, 13-14.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 13-14.

¹¹² Wehrey, 66.

by the government and the Lebanese population.¹¹³ In 2000, the station started to transmit via satellite. In 2001, Hezbollah leadership placed the station under the direct control of its senior committee which is chaired by Nasrallah.¹¹⁴ This chain-of-command demonstrates once again how important the group views media.¹¹⁵ According to author Victoria Firmo-Fontan, the station at one time described itself on its website as the “first Arab establishment to stage an effective psychological warfare against the Zionist enemy.”¹¹⁶ Even after the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the television station tailored its messages to generate an attitude conducive to collective action against Israel through resistance, according to Conway.¹¹⁷

According to Schleifer, Hezbollah’s military strategy was unique because of the way it combined conventional and psychological warfare. Specifically, the group subjected almost all of its military operations to its media requirements.¹¹⁸ Al-Manar was a central part of this strategy.¹¹⁹ Every Hezbollah unit deployed with a cameraman who recorded their operations. After making appropriate edits—such as deleting scenes or adding music and narration—the clips would then be broadcasted on al-Manar. The footage was selective in that it only showed scenes that favored Hezbollah, even if the fighters eventually were defeated by the IDF in that particular operation.¹²⁰ Consequently, al-Manar helped give the perception that Hezbollah was doing better on the battlefield than it actually was.

Starting in 1996, Hezbollah began using the internet to spread their resistance message. As of 2003, they had four official websites available in Arabic and English:

¹¹³ Wehrey, 65.

¹¹⁴ Conway, “Terror,” 3.

¹¹⁵ Conway, “Cybercortical,” 12.

¹¹⁶ Victoria Firmo-Fontan, “Power, NGOs and Lebanese Television: A Case Study of al-Manar TV and the Hezbollah Women’s Association,” in *Women and the Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression*, ed. Naomi Sakr (London & New York: IB Tauris, 2004) 177.

¹¹⁷ Conway, “Terror” 5.

¹¹⁸ Schleifer, 5.

¹¹⁹ Conway, “Terror” 7.

¹²⁰ Schleifer, 6.

Hizbollah.org, which is the group's official homepage; moqaawama.org (Islamic Resistance Support Association), which posted significant events on Israeli targets; manartv.com, which is al-Manar's website; and nasrollah.net, which is the official homepage of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.¹²¹ According to Gabriel Weimann, Hezbollah also operates at least 50 other websites that can be organized into seven categories: news and information, welfare and social services, religious indoctrination, personal websites for leadership, anti-Israel websites, and bulletin boards.¹²² Experts point out that most terrorist organizations avoid posting their violent activities on websites if they maintain an online presence. However, Hezbollah and Hamas are the exceptions to this rule. Hezbollah in particular had a "Daily Operations" section that provided statistical data on its military successes—updated every minute. Another section listed the number of dead martyrs along with the number of Israeli soldiers and collaborators killed.¹²³

Hezbollah also has a media relations department which is overseen by Hassan Ezzieddine, a member of the Political Council. This department reportedly is responsible for reviewing media coverage of Hezbollah, whether its newspapers, television or radio broadcasts. They also are responsible for all of the group's websites.¹²⁴ The importance of this department is illustrated by a statement made by Ezzieddine in 2001:

We feel that the media can be effective in creating a special climate in public opinion on the main issues of interest . . . We are heading toward a new sensitive security situation (in the region) which means we need to follow events very closely so that we can informatively help shape international and Arab public opinion . . . We believe that the media has an important role in the conflict, as important as the military wing.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Conway, "Cybercortical," 11.

¹²² Gabriel Weimann, "Hezbollah Dot Com: Hezbollah's Online Campaign," 9-13. <http://cmsprod.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/34396BDB-6C0E-4931-A077-697451885123/34393/Weimannedited.pdf> (accessed August 29, 2008).

¹²³ Yariv Tsfati and Gabriel Weimann, "www.terrorism.com: Terror on the Internet," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25 (2002): 321.

¹²⁴ Conway, "Cybercortical," 12.

¹²⁵ Hassan Ezzieddine quoted by Nicholas Blanford, "Hizbullah Steps up Psychological Warfare: Party believes that the Media Plays Critical Role in Palestinian Uprising," *Daily Star*, September 8, 2001, Beirut.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Hezbollah currently is headed by Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, replacing the group's original leader, Abbas al-Musawi, who was assassinated by Israeli security forces in 1992. Second in command is Deputy Secretary General Sheik Naim Qassem. Beneath both leaders, the group is governed by a Shura Council consisting of 17 members. The group has a separate political and military wing; the latter oftentimes is referred to as the Islamic Resistance. The political wing is controlled by a Politburo consisting of 15 members while the military wing is controlled by regional commanders.¹²⁶

Overall, the group has approximately 20,000 to 25,000 supporters.¹²⁷ Estimates on the number of fighters belonging to the militant wing are either ambiguous or conflicting. For example, author Anthony Cordesman estimates that there were approximately 2,000 to 3,000 fighters before the 2006 war, with Israel claiming to have killed more than 500 fighters. He also claims that there are between a several thousand to more than 10,000 reservists.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, Cragin estimates that the group has approximately 500 to 4,000 fighters.¹²⁹ These inconsistent ranges illustrate how little is actually known about the group's strength which likely is a result of good operational security by Hezbollah.

F. SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

This section explores the significant relationships Hezbollah has within Lebanon and throughout the Middle East region. Although it primarily is an Islamic Shi'a group, Hezbollah has not discriminated against sects or religions within Lebanon when it comes

¹²⁶ Cragin, 38.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Anthony Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons' of the Israeli-Hezbollah War (working draft)," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/060817_isr_hez_lessons.pdf. (accessed 16 January 2009); and Cragin, 38.

¹²⁹ Cragin, 38.

to providing social services or cultivating relationships.¹³⁰ External to Lebanon, Hezbollah also has developed and maintained relationships with states and non-state actors outside their sect such as Syria and Hamas. The group has proven to be quite pragmatic when it comes to whom they will cooperate with in order to maintain their weapons and further their resistance against Israel and the United States. This demonstrates that although Hezbollah uses religion to mobilize its rank and file, the leaders are willing to modify the group's ideology for the sake of achieving its objectives. In a sense, it demonstrates that the leaders are rational actors as opposed to religious zealots.

1. Internal

Lebanon's political system is based on sectarian communities or confessions. Since the country's independence in 1943, each of the 17 recognized sects were given political privileges, to include senior positions in the bureaucracy, membership in parliament, and positions in the high political office proportionate to the community's size. The highest political positions were awarded to the Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi'a. The Maronites, who were considered the plurality, were given the presidency. The Sunnis, considered the second largest community, were given the premiership which is considered to be the second highest political position in the country. The Shi'a, considered the third largest community, were given the speakership of the parliament, which holds weaker constitutional powers than the presidency or premiership.¹³¹

Within Lebanon, there are currently two primary political coalitions: the anti-Syrian March 14 group which controls the parliament and consists mostly of the Sunnis and some Maronites; and the pro-Syrian March 8 group which is led by Hezbollah and Maronite leader Michel Aoun. Historically, Hezbollah has gone through great lengths to appear non-sectarian, but a series of events over the last four years has caused a power struggle within Lebanon over sectarian lines and threatens to further erode support for

¹³⁰ According to Cragin, Hezbollah's charitable organizations also have contributed to support among Lebanese Christians, Cragin, 51. Also, the group's social service network gained the support of many Palestinians that used to be serviced by the PLO, Salamey and Pearson, 425.

¹³¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 11.

Hezbollah's arms.¹³² These events include the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and subsequent withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, the 34-day war with Israel in 2006 and internal political competition that erupted in sectarian clashes in 2007 and 2008.¹³³

2. External

Hezbollah's relationship with the United States and its allies has been strained. In 2001, the United States labeled the group a foreign terrorist organization possessing global reach. This label authorizes the imposition of sanctions on any third party that fails to freeze Hezbollah assets or extradite its operatives.¹³⁴ The primary charge against the group rests on allegations that it has consistently been involved in a series of terrorist or terrorist-related activities since its creation.¹³⁵ Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt criticized Hezbollah during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.¹³⁶ In May 2008, a United Nations envoy warned that Hezbollah "maintains a massive paramilitary infrastructure separate from the state . . . that constitutes a threat to regional peace and security."¹³⁷

In the early years, Iran was said to have a say in all of Hezbollah's major decisions. However, after Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, the group gained some independence from Tehran.¹³⁸ Today, Hezbollah's autonomy from Iran is relative; the Islamic state no longer is as intrusive and meddling as it once was.¹³⁹ This probably is the case because Iran's power and influence throughout the region has grown; therefore, they likely are less dependent on Hezbollah to serve as a sole proxy in the Arab world.

¹³² International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

¹³³ The Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA World Factbook: Lebanon," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html> (accessed August 25, 2008); International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis"; Jim Quilty, "Lebanon's Brush with Civil War," Middle East Report Online (2008), <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero052008.html>, 1-2.

¹³⁴ Harb and Leenders, 175.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹³⁶ International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

¹³⁷ Quilty, 3.

¹³⁸ International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

However, the group still relies heavily on Iranian military and financial assistance, training and overall support. Also, the group's leadership still feels deeply loyal to the Iranian Revolution.¹⁴⁰

Syria also has provided considerable support to Hezbollah in the form of money and weapons.¹⁴¹ As mentioned earlier, Syria initially viewed support for Hezbollah as a way to maintain a partnership with Iran, indirectly attack both Israel and the United States, and keep its Lebanese allies in line.¹⁴² However, Syria's 2005 military withdrawal from Lebanon and the subsequent end of its direct political control over the country changed its relationship with the group.¹⁴³ According to a former Hezbollah advisor, "ever since Syria withdrew from Lebanon, it intervenes with Hezbollah only when its vital interests are at stake."¹⁴⁴ The group still depends on Syria as the only transit route for Iranian weapons.¹⁴⁵

Hezbollah's ultimate goal of destroying Israel and liberating Palestine explains its operational affiliation with rejectionist Palestinian groups that oppose the peace process that mainstream PLO officials and Israel have pursued for the last sixteen years.¹⁴⁶ Specifically, it is suspected of "providing advice, arms, and logistical – financial support to Palestinian groups, including Hamas, the Al-Aqsa Brigades and Islamic Jihad."¹⁴⁷ After the start of the Palestinian Intifada in September 2000, Hezbollah deliberately began to broadcast continuous anti-Israeli propaganda into Palestinian homes through their television station al-Manar. Since then, al-Manar has become one of the most widely watched television stations in Palestinian homes.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, "Hezbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

¹⁴¹ Cragin, 47.

¹⁴² Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 34-35.

¹⁴³ International Crisis Group, "Hezbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 39.

¹⁴⁷ Harb and Leenders, 176.

¹⁴⁸ Blanford, *Voice*, 9.

Hezbollah also has been accused of working with al-Qaeda. This working relationship allegedly includes al-Qaeda members visiting Hezbollah training camps and Hezbollah providing shelter to al-Qaeda fugitives. Ties between the two groups are said to range from low-level operatives up to Osama Bin Laden and deceased senior Hezbollah official Imad Mughniyeh.¹⁴⁹ However, there are conflicting reports saying that Hezbollah does not get along with al-Qaeda. As mentioned above, Hezbollah decides whether it will cooperate with another group based on its attitude toward Israel, the United States, and the West.¹⁵⁰ However, in 1997 Hezbollah condemned Ayman al-Zawahiri for the al-Qaeda's massacre of civilians in Luxor, Egypt.¹⁵¹ Also, al-Qaeda considers the Shi'a to be unbelievers who must be killed. This ideological conflict makes it unlikely that the two groups would cooperate.

Throughout the 1990s, Hezbollah made a conscious effort to establish and maintain good relations with the foreign press. This was done in an attempt to erase the negative images held by many about the group because of their involvement in terrorism during the 1980s—especially kidnappings of foreign journalists. Hezbollah also needed to counteract messages that the Israeli government was disseminating about the group. Press conferences were held as part of a public relations strategy. For example, in 1999 the group invited approximately 70 journalists to the security zone and served them beverages and pastries. They also educated the group on their weapons systems, provided an interview with a martyr's widow, and issued a press release about an operation against the IDF that killed one Israeli soldier—only 35 minutes after the operation occurred.¹⁵² These efforts likely contributed to improving the image of Hezbollah throughout Lebanon, regionally and internationally.

¹⁴⁹ Harb and Leenders, 176.

¹⁵⁰ Jorisch, 15.

¹⁵¹ Harb and Leenders, 178.

¹⁵² Wehrey, 67.

G. CONCLUSION

This Chapter provides a background on Hezbollah in order to give context before discussing Israel's involvement in Lebanon in Chapter III and Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy against Israel in Chapter IV. The goal of this thesis is to prove that Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was not the deciding factor that prevented Israel from achieving its objectives in Lebanon. This Chapter first explains why and how the group was created; both Iran and Syria played a key role in mobilizing the traditionally marginalized Shi'a against Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon.

Second, this Chapter defines the group's objectives and ideology which establishes Israel and the United States as the ultimate enemy. Interestingly, the group is willing to work with other state and non-state actors who also are against Israel and the United States, regardless of their religion or sect.¹⁵³ Third, the means through which Hezbollah pursues its objectives is explained which include military, political, social, and psychological warfare methods. Fourth, a brief description of the group's organizational structure is provided in order to demonstrate its minuteness compared to Israel, the fifth largest military in the world. Fifth, the significant relationships Hezbollah has within and outside Lebanon is explained.

In sum, although limited in size and conventional military might compared to Israel, Hezbollah's critical strength appears to be its internal legitimacy and the support it receives throughout the region by other anti-West actors such as Syria, Iran, and Hamas. Internal legitimacy has been gained through years of political participation, and by addressing the security, economic, and social needs of the Lebanese population.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, many Lebanese are dependent on Hezbollah and any attempt to detract support away from the group would need to take this relationship in mind. Outside Lebanon, relationships have been developed or maintained on the basis of a common enemy, Israel and the United States.

¹⁵³ Jorisch, 15.

¹⁵⁴ Norton, "Changing," 110-111; and Schleifer, 6-7.

III. ISRAELI ACTIONS IN LEBANON

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to determine the extent to which Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy prevented Israel from achieving its military and political objectives in Lebanon from 1990 to 2006, this Chapter examines Israel's involvement within Lebanon during this time period. First, it defines Israel's military and political objectives and the strategies employed to achieve them during three time periods: 1) the period starting in 1990 after Hezbollah started to use psychological warfare until Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, 2) the period since the 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon to the 34-day war in 2006, and 3) the period during the 34-day war. Second, it examines whether Israel achieved its military and political objectives within Lebanon during these time periods. Israel's objective generally was to deter Hezbollah through a deterrence-by-punishment strategy during the occupation and 34-day war, with minimal force and diplomacy used in between the two conflicts. However, the Jewish state was never able to achieve this objective.

B. 1990 TO 2000 WITHDRAWAL

In March 1978, the Israeli government launched the "Litani Operation" in response to repeated terrorist attacks by Palestinians based out of Lebanon. This operation consisted of 8,000 Israeli soldiers driving PLO forces north of the Litani River in order to move PLO Katyusha rockets out of striking range of northern Israel.¹⁵⁵ This campaign was significant because it was the first time since 1948 that Israel conducted a major cross-border invasion using conventional forces.¹⁵⁶ Three months later, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) stationed itself in a buffer zone while Israeli forces withdrew. However, three years later PLO forces returned to southern Lebanon

¹⁵⁵ Laura Zittrain Eisenberg, "Israel's Lebanon Policy," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1997) 1. <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue3/jv1n3a3.html> (accessed January 10, 2009).

¹⁵⁶ Eisenberg, 1.

along with increased Syrian influence throughout the country.¹⁵⁷ These series of events, in addition to an assassination attempt against Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom Shlomo Argov, set the stage for Israel's June 1982 "Operation Peace for Galilee" which resulted in Israel's 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon.¹⁵⁸

This section discusses Israel's objectives during its occupation of Lebanon in the 1990s after Hezbollah started to employ psychological warfare, up until Israel's unilateral withdrawal in May 2000. It also examines Israel's strategy for achieving these objectives. Third, this section addresses how Israel failed to achieve its objective which was to prevent Hezbollah from attacking within the security zone in Lebanon and into northern Israel. It also was unable to turn the Lebanese population against the group which instead emerged from the occupation with more prestige.

1. Objectives and Strategy

The main reason for Israel's occupation of the southern security zone was to protect the settlements and towns of northern Israel from guerrilla infiltration or attack.¹⁵⁹ Israel also wanted to deter Hezbollah from attacking Israeli and ally targets in the security zone¹⁶⁰. Both objectives would be achieved by leaving behind only a small number of IDF soldiers, while equipping and supporting the SLA to serve as a buffer in the zone between northern Israel and anti-Israeli forces in south Lebanon.¹⁶¹ Israel attempted to achieve deterrence through high-intensity attacks—consisting of artillery attacks and airstrikes—along with special operation missions in response to Hezbollah's low-intensity warfare.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Eisenberg, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Eisenberg, 1; SGM Herbert Friedman (Ret.), "Psychological Operations during the Israel-Lebanon War 2006, PsyWar.org, <http://www.psywar.org/israellebanon.php> (accessed 3 February, 2009)

¹⁵⁹ Clive Jones, "Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and the War in South Lebanon 1985-1997," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 8 (1997): 83.

¹⁶⁰ Shmuel Bar, "Deterring Nonstate Terrorist Groups: The Case of Hizballah," *Comparative Strategy*, 479.

¹⁶¹ Eisenberg, 5.

¹⁶² Bar, 479.

In response to sustained rocket attacks into northern Israel by Hezbollah, Israel twice resorted to an indirect-deterrence-by-punishment strategy: “Operation Accountability” in 1993 and “Operation Grapes of Wrath” in 1996.¹⁶³ The military objectives of these two campaigns were to destroy Hezbollah’s ability to conduct military attacks within southern Lebanon and into northern Israel. This would be accomplished by eliminating their camps, supply lines, arms depots, and fighters.¹⁶⁴ The Israeli government also hoped to cause resentment among the Lebanese civilian population against Hezbollah for inciting Israel’s military response and for them to ultimately “pressure Beirut to pressure Damascus to pressure Hezbollah to stop its activities.”¹⁶⁵

“Operation Accountability” was launched in response to the deaths of nine IDF soldiers operating within a defined combat zone in July 1993. The Israeli government and public were frustrated because of the ineffectiveness of Israeli countermeasures against Hezbollah. Since the Israeli public and government already were sensitive to IDF losses, the decision was made to rely on mass bombardment rather than infantry in a ground operation. Artillery and airstrikes were used against not only Hezbollah, but also targets that would create a mass exodus of refugees from Shi’a villages towards Beirut that hopefully would pressure the Lebanese government to rein in Hezbollah.¹⁶⁶

“Operation Grapes of Wrath” was more extensive in that it targeted not only Hezbollah, but also non-Shi’a civilian targets throughout the port cities of Tyre and Sidon up to Beirut. Even power stations on the outskirts of Beirut were targeted to send a stern message to the Lebanese government. Warnings were given to civilians through radio broadcasts and leaflets to leave their homes. At least 400,000 Lebanese fled north to

¹⁶³ Bar, 479.

¹⁶⁴ Jones, 83.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶⁶ LT COL Kenneth C. Schow, Jr., USAF, “Falcons against the Jihad: Israeli Airpower and Coercive Diplomacy in Southern Lebanon,” (Master’s thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1994), 22-23; Wehrey, 61.

escape the air attacks. Israel hoped that this mass exodus of non-Shi'a in addition to damage inflicted by airstrikes would pressure the government to curtail Hezbollah's activities in the south.¹⁶⁷

2. Results

Israel was unable to achieve any of its established objectives throughout its occupation of southern Lebanon, and instead incurred a cost of more than \$1 million per day and 25 soldiers each year.¹⁶⁸ Hezbollah was not deterred since the group was able to continue carrying out attacks against the settlements and towns of northern Israel. Instead, a cycle of violence developed where Israel's military action in southern Lebanon was met by guerrilla style tactics from Hezbollah, instigating further retaliation from the IDF. Invariably the IDF response would cause significant collateral damage for two reasons: 1) it was difficult to distinguish Hezbollah from the rest of the population, and 2) the IDF wanted to send a message to the general population that it was dangerous to provide a safe haven to terrorists. Hezbollah would use the collateral damage to their advantage by broadcasting it to the world and then further respond by launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. This dual strategy—negative press and inciting fear among northern Israelis—usually caused Israel to cease their military incursion.¹⁶⁹

Israel's failure to achieve deterrence is further demonstrated by the fact that it was provoked into launching "Operation Accountability" and "Operation Grapes of Wrath" in response to Hezbollah rocket attacks into northern Israel in 1993 and 1996 respectively. The primary objective of these two campaigns was an extension of the reason Israel maintained a southern security zone in Lebanon—to protect northern Israel from guerrilla attacks. However, once again Israel failed in achieving this aim because immediately following each operation, Hezbollah launched Katyusha rockets into Israel.¹⁷⁰ The magnitude of Israel's failure also can be demonstrated by the fact that after 2,000 air

¹⁶⁷ Jones, 98; and Wehrey, 61.

¹⁶⁸ UN sources reported by Wehrey, 63.

¹⁶⁹ Helmer, 55.

¹⁷⁰ Schow, 22-23.

strikes and 25,000 artillery shells, “Operation Grapes of Wrath” did not succeed in destroying any Katyusha rocket launchers while killing only 24 Hezbollah fighters.¹⁷¹

The cease-fires ending both operations explicitly stated that neither Hezbollah nor Israel would deliberately attack the other’s civilians. However, the agreements did not rule out continued warfare within southern Lebanon—the other primary objective of the two campaigns. Immediately following each cease-fire agreement, Hezbollah resumed its guerrilla attacks against the IDF.¹⁷² Israel also was unable to turn the Lebanese civilian population against Hezbollah during both campaigns. Instead, the Lebanese—regardless of their religion or sect—felt compassion for the refugees and blamed Israel for the devastation rather than blame Hezbollah. Even worse, Hezbollah emerged from both battles with more prestige, not only in Lebanon but throughout the Middle East.¹⁷³ For example, at a news conference during “Operation Grapes of Wrath,” Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri likened Hezbollah to the French Resistance in World War II.¹⁷⁴ Also, both Christians and Muslims protested daily in favor of Hezbollah in addition to providing donations for the Islamic Resistance.¹⁷⁵ In short, both “Operation Accountability” and “Operation Grapes of Wrath” can be counted as strategic failures for Israel and successes for Hezbollah.

In 1999, General Ehud Barak was elected as the prime minister of Israel under a campaign promise that he would withdraw from Lebanon within one year of assuming office.¹⁷⁶ After 18 years of military occupation in southern Lebanon, many in the Israeli government and its population had grown weary of the war and believed that the cause was no longer worth the cost.¹⁷⁷ Barak fulfilled his campaign promise and in May 2000,

¹⁷¹ Wehrey, 61; and Helmer, 58.

¹⁷² Eisenberg, 5.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷⁴ Wehrey, 61.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁷⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 88.

¹⁷⁷ Schleifer, 2.

Israel unilaterally withdrew from southern Lebanon.¹⁷⁸ Within Lebanon and throughout the Middle East, Israel's withdrawal was interpreted as a victory for Hezbollah. It also was seen as an indicator that Israel increasingly was unable to defeat Arab aggression because of its public's intolerance for casualties. Some experts believe that the Palestinian Second Intifada, which broke out soon afterwards in September 2000, partly was a result of this perception.¹⁷⁹

C. POST-2000 WITHDRAWAL UNTIL 34-DAY WAR

This section examines how Israel's policy towards Hezbollah following the 2000 unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon ultimately failed to prevent the group from continuing on its trajectory of becoming a strategic threat. First, it outlines Israel's military and political objectives towards Hezbollah from 2000 until 2006, which was to deter and contain the group.¹⁸⁰ Next, it discusses Israel's strategy for achieving these objectives which was to use minimal force and diplomacy.¹⁸¹ Minimal force actually emboldened Hezbollah, while diplomacy failed because Lebanon, Syria, and Iran were either unwilling or unable to contain Hezbollah.¹⁸²

1. Objectives and Strategy

After the 2000 withdrawal, the main objective of the Israeli government was to prevent rocket attacks against northern Israel and contain Hezbollah, but without having to go back into Lebanon.¹⁸³ This constraint largely was a result of competing priorities that existed within Israel at the time. In particular, Israel was more preoccupied with the Palestinian uprising that was taking place in the West Bank and Gaza. The Intifada was absorbing much of Israel's attention; therefore, the government could not afford a second

¹⁷⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short*, 88.

¹⁷⁹ Waxman, 29.

¹⁸⁰ Waxman, 28; Inbar, 1; and Bar, 471.

¹⁸¹ Waxman, 28; Bar, 471-472.

¹⁸² Bar, 471-472.

¹⁸³ Efraim Inbar, "How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanon War," *Middle East Quarterly* (2007): 57; and Bar, 479.

front against Hezbollah. Also, Israel did not want to risk an escalation of violence with Hezbollah that would instigate conflict with Syria or disrupt the economic development that was taking place in northern Israel following the withdrawal from southern Lebanon.¹⁸⁴

For three months after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, there was peace along the Lebanon-Israel border. However, after the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000, Hezbollah resumed cross-border raids and mortar attacks against Israel, primarily in the disputed Shebaa Farms area. Nasrallah cited the "bleeding wounds" as justification for Hezbollah's continued resistance against its enemy.¹⁸⁵ During this time period, the group's attacks were more symbolic, claiming a little more than ten casualties over the next five years.¹⁸⁶ In response, Israel demonstrated restraint and reacted proportionally to Hezbollah's attacks which resulted in a strategy of mutual deterrence through a "balance of terror."¹⁸⁷ In order to contain Hezbollah, Israel emphasized diplomacy with Lebanon, Iran, and Syria.¹⁸⁸ Israel viewed Hezbollah's dependence on Syria and Iran for money and weapons as a critical vulnerability.¹⁸⁹

2. Results

It can be asserted that Israel's direct deterrence strategy failed since Hezbollah was not discouraged from carrying out attacks against northern Israel. The tense period of peace that existed between Israel and Hezbollah collapsed in July 2006 when Hezbollah conducted an attack inside Israel, killing three soldiers and capturing two. As

¹⁸⁴ Inbar, 57.

¹⁸⁵ In speeches made directly after the withdrawal, Nasrallah continued with Hezbollah's resistance agenda by contesting the disputed Shebaa Farms area occupied by Israel, demanding the release of remaining Lebanese prisoners, and by encouraging or sometimes even helping Palestinians carry out military operations. These issues, which were a priority in Nasrallah's rhetoric, later were referred to as the "bleeding wounds." Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

¹⁸⁶ Gary Gambill, "Hizbullah and the Political Ecology of Postwar Lebanon," *Mideast Monitor* (2006): 5.

¹⁸⁷ Waxman, 28.

¹⁸⁸ Inbar, 1; Bar, 471.

¹⁸⁹ Bar, 480.

a diversionary tactic, the group also conducted mortar and rocket attacks against IDF outposts and civilian communities along the border. These attacks were more brazen than usual because they occurred outside the Shebaa Farms area and against Israeli civilians, thereby breaking the informal rules that were established and followed by both Israel and Hezbollah during the preceding six years.¹⁹⁰ In response, Israel retaliated by launching the 34-day war—officially ending the deterrence-through-minimal-force strategy.

Israel also failed to contain Hezbollah through diplomacy with Lebanon, Iran, and Syria as the opposite actually occurred—Hezbollah grew in numbers, capabilities, and reputation.¹⁹¹ For example, Hezbollah immediately resumed control of southern Lebanon after the unilateral withdrawal of Israel and began to create its own military infrastructure throughout.¹⁹² The group built up their tactical and strategic arsenal by acquiring an impressive inventory of anti-tank weapons; and short, medium, and long range rockets and ballistic missiles from Iran and Syria.¹⁹³ They also received several C-802 anti-ship missiles and 30 unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran that were capable of carrying explosives.¹⁹⁴ Hezbollah also was permitted by the Lebanese government to continue to develop as a political party, in addition to providing support to Lebanese citizens through their social service network. Meanwhile, Hezbollah also actively supported Palestinian militants by providing financing, training, and equipment.¹⁹⁵ Aware of these activities, many Israeli officials soon began to realize that Hezbollah constituted more than a nuisance, but a strategic threat.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ Waxman, 28.

¹⁹¹ Bar, 489.

¹⁹² Blanford, *Voice*, 9; STRATFOR, “Lebanon: Hezbollah’s Communication Network.”

¹⁹³ Waxman, 30; and Bar-Joseph, 586 and 590.

¹⁹⁴ Bar-Joseph, 586.

¹⁹⁵ Gambill, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Inbar, 57.

D. 34-DAY WAR

This section examines how the 34-day war in 2006 proved to be a strategic failure for Israel and a strategic success for Hezbollah. First, Israel's military and political objectives for this war are briefly outlined, which were to reestablish deterrence, eliminate the threat posed by Hezbollah, and obtain the release of the captured soldiers. Second, this section discusses how Israel failed to achieve these objectives through a deterrence-by-punishment and a psychological warfare strategy. Instead, Israel further degraded its deterrence in the region and gave Hezbollah the psychological upper hand not only in Lebanon, but also throughout the Middle East region and rest of the world.¹⁹⁷

1. Objectives and Strategy

Although opinions vary regarding what Israel's goals were for the 34-day war, it appears that it had two political objectives: 1) reestablish their deterrence throughout the region by sending a stern message to Hezbollah that it would not tolerate cross-border attacks on its soldiers and citizens, and 2) create a new order within Lebanon where the government exercised sovereignty over its territory and eliminated Hezbollah's status as a "state within a state."¹⁹⁸ As with "Operation Accountability" and "Operation Grapes of Wrath," Israel hoped to increase Lebanon's political will to rein in Hezbollah by making the population suffer for the group's activities.¹⁹⁹

Israel's military objectives were to: 1) degrade or eliminate Hezbollah's strategic missile and rocket threat, 2) create a security zone along the Israeli border free of Hezbollah military positions; and 3) obtain the release of the two captured Israeli soldiers through military operations. Essentially with the first two military objectives, Israel hoped to hasten the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution

¹⁹⁷ Pahlavi, 14.

¹⁹⁸ Dan Fayutkin, "The Second Lebanon War: A One-Year Perspective," *Defense and Security Analysis* 24 (2008): 213-214. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14751790802125029> (accessed January 10, 2009); Waxman, 29; and Anthony H. Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons' of the Israeli-Hezbollah War (working draft)," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060817_isr_hez_lessons.pdf. (accessed 16 January, 2009).

¹⁹⁹ Waxman, 29.

(UNSCR) 1559, which was passed in 2004 and called for the disarmament of Hezbollah and the deployment of Lebanese troops to the Israeli border.²⁰⁰

As with “Operation Accountability” and “Operation Grapes of Wrath,” Israel resorted to a deterrence-by-punishment strategy to achieve the political and military objectives mentioned above. Airpower was used almost exclusively, with stand-off weapons used to target not only Hezbollah targets, but also targets that would cause considerable pain to the civilian population in order to turn off support for the group. Ground forces played a minimal role in the hostilities because Israel still had an aversion to casualties after its 18-year occupation of Lebanon.²⁰¹ Dangerous strategies that risked extensive casualties were ruled out also because the government wanted to maintain economic stability. This mindset ultimately limited options that the IDF could pursue to achieve Israel’s objectives.²⁰² Consequently, the government waited until the last week of the war to mobilize enough reservists and threaten a credible ground invasion.²⁰³

The deterrence-by-punishment strategy was accompanied by an extensive psychological warfare campaign. During the conflict, the IDF activated its reserve psychological warfare unit to plan and execute a number of operations.²⁰⁴ The strategy was designed to demonize Hezbollah within Lebanon and the international community, gain support and cooperation from the Lebanese population, and intimidate and demoralize Hezbollah fighters.²⁰⁵ First, Israel set up websites during the conflict that appeared Lebanese in origin with messages such as, “Help Lebanon eradicate Hezbollah’s evil and get back its independence, freedom and prosperity.”²⁰⁶

Second, anti-Hezbollah leaflets were dropped from Israeli aircraft almost on a daily basis to warn civilians of impending attacks, to request cooperation from Lebanese

²⁰⁰ Waxman, 29-30; and Cordesman, introduction.

²⁰¹ Sarah E. Kreps, “The 2006 Lebanon War: Lessons Learned,” *Parameters* (2007): 76.

²⁰² Kreps, 76.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

²⁰⁴ Pahlavi, 15.

²⁰⁵ Friedman.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

citizens, and to tarnish Hezbollah's reputation. For example, thousands of leaflets were dropped over South Beirut on 13 July saying:

To the inhabitants of Lebanon: Due to the terrorist activities carried out by Hezbollah which destroys the effort to find a brighter future for Lebanon . . . The Israeli Army will continue its work within Lebanon for as long as it deems fit to protect the citizens of the State of Israel. For your own safety and because we do not wish to cause any more civilian deaths, you are advised to avoid all places frequented by Hezbollah. You should know that the continuation of terrorist activities against the State of Israel will be considered a double—edged sword for you and Lebanon. The State of Israel.²⁰⁷

Several leaflets also were dropped over Lebanon depicting Hezbollah as a proxy for Syria and Iran. For example, the leaflet shown in Figure 1 depicts Nasrallah as a puppet being controlled by two hands labeled as Syria and Iran.²⁰⁸ The text reads:

To Lebanese citizens: How long? How long will you be marionettes in the hands of Syria and Iran? How long will Hezbollah, the fifth column, continue to put your independence and safety in danger? Hezbollah and its leader are hurting the peace and prosperity of Lebanon that was created after a great effort. Israel will continue to use all of its power to strike Hezbollah and to bring peace back to the area. The State of Israel.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Friedman.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Figure 1. Leaflets dropped by Israeli forces on 18 July. (From: Friedman)



Third, Israel transmitted similar messages to mobile phones and across hijacked phone lines.²¹⁰ For example, cell phone users received text messages appearing as news updates. One text message read: “Make your voice heard! Do you feel Hezbollah are to blame for the current violence?”²¹¹ The message prompted recipients to reply if they agreed with the text.²¹² Lebanese civilians also received phone calls throughout the day, starting as early as 0530 in the morning, with recorded messages such as:

Oh Lebanese people, we tell you not to follow Hezbollah. We will continue to strike and no one will bring your prisoners back from Israel except the Lebanese government. Hassan, have you realized yet that the Israeli army is not as delicate as a spider’s web? It’s a web of steel that will strangle you! This is the state of Israel. This resistance . . . is forcing you to stay at home like rats. Who is it that’s putting your life in danger? Who is using you as human shields? We don’t want to harm you. We’re

²¹⁰ Pahlavi, 16; and Friedman.

²¹¹ Friedman.

²¹² Ibid.

bombing the infrastructure so Hezbollah will have no means of firing its rockets. We know you wanted to hit Israel, but you have confronted a house made of steel. This is the Israel Defense Forces.²¹³

Fourth, in order to influence the international community, Israel provided the foreign press with stories that favored the Jewish state, such as interviews with Israeli civilians who were victimized by Hezbollah's bombardments.²¹⁴ Fifth, in an attempt to intimidate the group, Israel hijacked Hezbollah's television channel, al-Manar, and broadcasted derogatory images of Nasrallah, dead Hezbollah fighters, and bombed Hezbollah facilities.²¹⁵ Israeli television also aired images of the IDF allegedly moving Hezbollah corpses in body bags.²¹⁶ Finally, in an effort to diminish Hezbollah's psychological warfare capabilities, Israel also deleted the content of most of the group's websites and made unsuccessful attempts to destroy their television station, al-Manar.²¹⁷

2. Results

There is considerable debate regarding whether Israel achieved its first political objective of reasserting deterrence against Hezbollah and other threats throughout the region.²¹⁸ According to Cordesman, deterrence is based on perception and as the saying goes, "Perception is reality."²¹⁹ Therefore, Israel needed to create the perception among Arab states and their populations that the cost and risk of allowing non-state actors like Hezbollah to operate within their borders was too high. Israel would achieve this by inflicting massive damage against Lebanon and its civilian population as retribution for not controlling Hezbollah.²²⁰ Although it inflicted considerable damage through

²¹³ Friedman.

²¹⁴ Pahlavi, 16.

²¹⁵ Weimann, 17; and Friedman.

²¹⁶ Friedman.

²¹⁷ Weimann, 17; and Pahlavi, 16.

²¹⁸ For literature that discusses debates regarding whether Israel reasserted deterrence in the region through actions taken during the 34-day war, see: Cordesman, 6-7.

²¹⁹ Cordesman, 6.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

airpower, Israel also signaled weakness because of its sensitivity to casualties which made the government reluctant to commit ground forces. According to author Efraim Inbar, this widespread perception throughout the Arab world actually invites aggression rather than act as a deterrent.²²¹

Additionally, Cordesman states that some Israeli experts outside the government believe that the damage inflicted by Israel against Lebanon's civilian population also weakened deterrence.²²² One estimate states that Israel's air strikes resulted in more than 1,200 civilians being killed, 130,000 homes destroyed, and more than \$7 billion damage to the economy and infrastructure.²²³ Consequently, many think that this level of destruction and casualties—arguably disproportional to the capture of two soldiers—actually increased hostility against Israel among the Lebanese and other Arab populations, thereby creating more support and volunteers for Hezbollah.²²⁴

Israel also did not achieve its second political objective which was to change the political landscape in Lebanon so that the government finally would exercise control over Hezbollah.²²⁵ However, the war and subsequent events internal to Lebanon did succeed in splitting the country and political system in two. One group consists of mostly Shi'a who suffered the brunt of Israel's retaliation and view Hezbollah's weapons as the only legitimate deterrence against future threats. The other group consists of most Sunnis and some Christians who blame Hezbollah's recklessness for Israel's retaliation.²²⁶ In short, Israel was unable to convince the Shi'a, many of whom are dependent on Hezbollah for social services and protection, that the group was more a liability than an asset. Until the Lebanese government can replace Hezbollah in providing these basic needs, the group's popularity likely will continue unabated.

²²¹ Inbar, 3.

²²² Cordesman, 6; and Waxman, 31.

²²³ William K. Mooney, Jr., "Stabilizing Lebanon: Peacekeeping or Nation-Building," *Parameters* (2007): 28.

²²⁴ Cordesman, 6; and Waxman, 31.

²²⁵ Cordesman, 7.

²²⁶ International Crisis Group, "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis."

The first military objective of Israel, eliminate or degrade Hezbollah's strategic missile and rocket threat, was not achieved. Instead, Hezbollah was able to launch approximately 4,000 rockets into northern Israel during the hostilities, forcing thousands into bomb shelters and displacing half a million people.²²⁷ Hezbollah also was given the opportunity to improve its military capabilities through lessons learned and afterwards was able to re-supply its medium- and long-range rocket arsenal.²²⁸ According to Cordesman, Hezbollah's success probably provided strong incentive for Iran and Syria to continue their covert support to the group.²²⁹

At first glance, it seemed that Israel would achieve its second and third military objective which was to create a Hezbollah-free security zone along the Lebanon-Israel border and obtain the release of the two captured soldiers. UNSCR 1701 was drafted by the United States and France, and passed on August 12, 2006 to end the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. The language and details of the resolution were more favorable to Israel than to Lebanon and Hezbollah for several reasons. First, it blamed Hezbollah for the outbreak of the war and ordered it to immediately cease all attacks. Second, Israel was only ordered to stop offensive operations and allowed to stay in southern Lebanon until replaced by a sufficient number of troops from UNIFIL and the Lebanese army.²³⁰

Most importantly, the resolution called for the establishment of a security zone along the Israeli border free of Hezbollah military positions. Finally, it also ordered the unconditional release of the captured Israeli soldiers, but not for three Lebanese soldiers that Israel was holding.²³¹ However, although UNIFIL forces and the Lebanese army were deployed to southern Lebanon, Hezbollah maintained that it would remain armed and present not only in southern Lebanon, but also throughout the country.²³² Also,

²²⁷ Waxman, 31.

²²⁸ Fayutkin, 215.

²²⁹ Cordesman, 8.

²³⁰ Waxman, 33-34.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

²³² Blanford, *Voice*, 378.

Israel was unable to obtain the unconditional release of the two captured soldiers.²³³ Therefore, the resolution was unsuccessful in bringing Israel's second and third military objective to fruition.

Beyond not achieving any of the political and military objectives, Israel also suffered a major psychological set-back. According to Pahlavi, "the Jewish state forfeited the psychological upper hand on all fronts: domestic, regional and international."²³⁴ A public opinion poll conducted by newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* revealed that most Israelis believed that the army had not achieved any of the campaign's objectives, UNSCR 1701 represented a moral defeat for Israel, and that the country had lost the war.²³⁵ Another opinion poll taken the day that UNSCR 1701 was passed showed that 58 percent of Israelis believed the country had failed to achieve few if any of its war objectives.²³⁶ The government and army were harshly criticized for its perceived arrogance, under-estimating Hezbollah's resistance, over-estimating its own capabilities, establishing overly ambitious objectives, and not sufficiently preparing for the war.²³⁷

At the regional level, Israel lost the public and historic backing of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia against Hezbollah during the war. All three countries initially condemned Hezbollah's aggression against Israel and blamed it for instigating the hostilities. However, their criticisms stopped as Arab public opinion became enraged by growing Lebanese civilian casualties caused by Israel's bombing campaign.²³⁸ For those countries that supported Hezbollah from the start of hostilities, such as Iran and Syria, Israel's failure likely was interpreted as a victory for Hezbollah. This perception can be explained by an insightful comment on modern counterinsurgency warfare made by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger during the aftermath of the Vietnam War,

²³³ Pahlavi, 13.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

²³⁶ Ynet, "52 Percent of Israelis: IDF Failed," <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3291214,00.html> (accessed February 1, 2009).

²³⁷ Pahlavi, 14.

²³⁸ Waxman, 34.

“the conventional army loses if it does not win . . . the guerrilla wins if he does not lose.”²³⁹ Consequently, Pahlavi believes that Israel’s inability to win actually enhanced the prestige of Hezbollah and increased the credibility of its propaganda efforts among the Arab and Muslim population.²⁴⁰

E. CONCLUSION

This Chapter examines Israel’s military and political objectives in Lebanon from 1990 until the end of the 34-day war in 2006, and how it was unable to achieve any of them with the strategies employed. The findings from this Chapter are compared with Chapter IV in order to determine the extent to which Hezbollah’s psychological warfare strategy contributed to Israel’s failures in Lebanon. Chapter V concludes that Hezbollah’s psychological warfare strategy was not the deciding factor in preventing Israel from achieving its objectives.

Israel’s primary objective throughout these three time periods was to deter Hezbollah from carrying out attacks in southern Lebanon and against northern Israel. During the 1990s, the group pursued deterrence-by-punishment through high-intensity conventional attacks in order to destroy Hezbollah’s ability to carry out violent acts and eliminate Lebanon’s support for the group. This was an inappropriate prescription against an asymmetric threat, causing significant collateral damage, and ultimately angered the Lebanese civilian population. Furthermore, Israel’s aversion to civilian casualties restricted the use of ground forces over time. After an 18-year occupation, the government realized that its strategy was failing and ordered a unilateral withdrawal from in 2000 because of mounting public pressure.

Thereafter, Israel attempted to deter Hezbollah through minimal force and diplomacy. Mild responses, however, further deteriorated Israel’s deterrence which already was bruised from the 2000 withdrawal from southern Lebanon and then the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza. Israel signaled that it was either unwilling or unable to fight. Israel also failed to contain Hezbollah with diplomacy because Syria, Iran, and Lebanon

²³⁹ Henry Kissinger quoted by Pahlavi, 14.

²⁴⁰ Pahlavi, 14.

were either unwilling or unable to control the group. Instead, these states helped or permitted Hezbollah to grow into a strategic threat. The outbreak of the 34-day war marked the end of this strategy.

During the 2006 conflict, Israel once again reverted back to deterrence-by-punishment through the use of overwhelming conventional force—primarily airpower—to eliminate Hezbollah’s ability to carry out attacks and turn off Lebanese support for the group. The Jewish state, more than ever, was unwilling to commit large numbers of ground forces because of its sensitivity to casualties. Not surprisingly, this strategy once again failed because it was inappropriate against an asymmetric threat embedded within the civilian population. Extensive collateral damage angered the Lebanese civilian population and elicited harsh international criticism. Eventually Israel was forced to quit because of domestic and international pressure.

IV. HEZBOLLAH'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE STRATEGY

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to determine the extent to which Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy prevented Israel from achieving its military and political objectives in Lebanon from the 1990 to 2006, this Chapter examines Hezbollah's overall response to the Jewish state. The Chapter is broken down into three time periods: 1) 1990 to Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2000, 2) following Israel's withdrawal up until the 34-day war in 2006, and 3) during the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah. First, Hezbollah's overall objectives and strategy within each time period are defined. Second, the group's psychological warfare strategy to include its target audiences, messages, channels of communication, and desired effects are outlined.

From 1990 to 2000, Hezbollah's objective was to resist Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon by demoralizing the enemy and pressuring it to withdraw and by winning the support of the Lebanese population. This goal was pursued through a combined strategy of guerrilla and psychological warfare, political participation, and an extensive social service network. Hezbollah succeeded in achieving its objective. Subsequent to Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2000, the group continued resistance against Israel's occupation of the disputed Shebaa Farms area through guerrilla and psychological warfare. It also pursued its ultimate objective—destroying the Jewish state—by providing advice, training, equipment, funding, and psychological warfare support to the Palestinians.²⁴¹ Hezbollah was not able to destroy Israel, but it likely contributed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, thereby distracting attention away from Lebanon. Nonetheless, the group eventually miscalculated when it captured two Israeli soldiers in 2006, events which instigated the 34-day war. During this conflict, Hezbollah's objective was to survive Israel's military attacks by waging guerrilla and psychological warfare. The group succeeded in achieving this objective.

²⁴¹ Harb and Leenders, 176.

B. 1990 TO 2000 WITHDRAWAL

This section discusses Hezbollah's response to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon starting in the 1990s until the unilateral withdrawal in May 2000. First, it discusses how Hezbollah's overall strategy against Israel's occupation was resistance waged by guerrilla and psychological warfare. Second, it breaks down the group's psychological warfare strategy based on target audiences, enemy and domestic. In short, Hezbollah attempted to wear down its enemy and pressure it into quitting Lebanon. It also attempted to win the support of all Lebanese citizens regardless of their religion or sect.

1. Overall Objectives and Strategy

Throughout the 1990s Hezbollah wholeheartedly pursued its first declared objective—resisting Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon. The group employed two different strategies, one against the enemy and the other against the Lebanese population. Against the enemy, Hezbollah employed a strategy that combined guerrilla and psychological warfare.²⁴² This two-fold approach was designed to demoralize the IDF and SLA, influence Israeli public opinion by exploiting their sensitivity to casualties, and ultimately influence Israeli decision makers to unilaterally withdraw from Lebanon.²⁴³

Hezbollah also set out to increase Lebanese support for its resistance agenda through a tri-fold strategy consisting of psychological warfare, participating in Lebanon's political system and creating and maintaining an extensive social service network. Hezbollah understood that it could not wage a long war against Israel without gaining the support of the local population. The group also refrained from attacking northern Israel unless provoked by Israeli attacks against Lebanese civilians.²⁴⁴ This restraint helped Hezbollah establish itself as a legitimate resistance movement as opposed to a fanatical terrorist group among the Lebanese.

²⁴² Blanford, *Voice*, 5; and Schleifer, 6.

²⁴³ Schleifer, 8.

²⁴⁴ Wehrey, 61-62.

2. Psychological Warfare Strategy

As mentioned earlier in Chapter II, psychological warfare as defined by Schleifer “consists of delivering messages by nonviolent methods, to target audiences, domestic and neutral as well as among the enemy, with the aim of furthering the war effort.”²⁴⁵ The following sections go in further detail about the psychological warfare strategy used by Hezbollah during the 1990s against their enemy and domestic audience, to include messages and themes. Although psychological warfare also is employed against neutral audiences, this section will refrain from addressing this audience in depth because international criticism appeared to be less of a factor during this time period.

During the 1980s, the group delivered its messages through newspapers and magazines. It was not until the late 1980s and 1990s that Hezbollah was able to reach the Lebanese population by radio, television and the internet.²⁴⁶ From 1991 until 2000, nearly 60 percent of al-Manar’s broadcasting consisted of news, religious, sports, and cultural programs. The remaining 40 percent was coverage of combat in the southern security zone.²⁴⁷ In short, up until Israel’s withdrawal in 2000, the majority of Hezbollah’s propaganda efforts were dedicated to strengthening Lebanese support for the resistance while also pressuring Israeli viewers to demand from their government a unilateral withdrawal.²⁴⁸

a. *Enemy Audience*

Hezbollah’s enemy audience was broken down into three categories: 1) the SLA, 2) the IDF, and 3) the Israeli public.²⁴⁹ According to Schleifer, there were six general themes or messages directed toward the enemy audience. First, Hezbollah communicated their determination and readiness to sacrifice everything in order to achieve their objective. Second, they impressed upon the enemy that what was before

²⁴⁵ Schleifer, 2.

²⁴⁶ Conway, “Terror,” 2-3.

²⁴⁷ Wehrey, 65.

²⁴⁸ Conway, “Terror,” 19.

²⁴⁹ Wehrey, 63-66; and Schleifer, 8.

them would be a long struggle, ultimately in favor of Hezbollah. Third, the group attempted to portray the IDF's efforts as futile in the face of Hezbollah's counterstrategy. Fourth, Hezbollah frequently reiterated their goal, which was for Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon. Fifth, Hezbollah attempted to instill an overwhelming sense of guilt in the soldiers and Israeli public.²⁵⁰

The SLA specifically was targeted with an aggressive campaign of intimidation and infiltration. The objective of the strategy was to foster distrust within the SLA; create distrust between the SLA and IDF; demoralize SLA soldiers, thereby encouraging desertions; and increase collection capabilities. Hezbollah did this by routinely publishing the names of senior leadership within the SLA, which consisted mostly of Christians and Druze, in addition to targeting them for assassination. Hezbollah also maintained records on SLA enlisted soldiers, consisting mostly of Shi'a (almost 70 percent), threatening to punish them when caught.²⁵¹ Press conferences often were held featuring deserters enticing SLA soldiers to abandon their posts in exchange for the good life. As a reward, SLA soldiers were offered amnesty in addition to a financial bonus if they deserted or agreed to serve as informers. Hezbollah also transmitted radio broadcasts reminding the SLA that Israel frequently abandoned its allies. As Israel received mounting pressure to withdraw from Lebanon, SLA soldiers increasingly feared for their livelihood and safety.²⁵²

The IDF was targeted with a campaign of harassment and intimidation. The objective of this strategy was to undermine the self-confidence of Israeli soldiers serving in southern Lebanon.²⁵³ Hezbollah used guerilla tactics such as attacking military outposts in southern Lebanon in order to raise a flag, killing or wounding officers, capturing Israeli soldiers, or laying mines along Israel's northern border. However, these attacks were not intended to conquer territory, but to send a

²⁵⁰ Schleifer, 11-12.

²⁵¹ Wehrey, 63.

²⁵² Ibid., 63-64.

²⁵³ Schleifer, 5-7.

psychological message.²⁵⁴ During each operation, guerrilla units would deploy with a combat cameraman to record images of these attacks from the frontlines. Video footage would then be taken back to al-Manar for editing; specific incidents in the operation were highlighted with music and narration. Starting in 1991, these videos repeatedly were aired in Lebanon on al-Manar and al-Fajr, helping to shape the perception that Hezbollah was militarily superior compared to the IDF. These videos sometimes even were distributed to foreign media such as Associated Press and Reuters, and made its way onto Israeli television.²⁵⁵ Hezbollah also used its primary radio station, al-Nur, to urge IDF soldiers to stop fighting.²⁵⁶

The Israeli public was broken down into three subgroups: 1) the Zionist Left, which favored Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon; 2) Israeli families with members serving in southern Lebanon, particularly the mothers; and 3) Israeli decision makers.²⁵⁷ The objective with this audience was to demoralize the Jewish state and cause division among the population over the occupation of Lebanon.²⁵⁸ This would be achieved by exploiting Israel's sensitivity to casualties. Starting in 1996, al-Manar began broadcasting in Hebrew after adding antennas that expanded the station's range to include northern Israel and western Syria. With this extended range, Hezbollah was able to directly address the Israeli public and warn them about the cost of remaining in Lebanon. They did this partly by disseminating images of dead Israeli soldiers directly into Jewish homes through al-Manar. The station even went as far as airing videos for Israelis that understood English and Russian.²⁵⁹

During the same year, Hezbollah began using the internet to make appeals to the parents of Israeli soldiers. For example, the group posted an interview with four mothers of Israeli soldiers serving in southern Lebanon entitled, "I Don't Want My Son

²⁵⁴ Schleifer, 8.

²⁵⁵ Schleifer, 5-6; and Conway, "Cybercortical," 6.

²⁵⁶ Wehrey, 67-68.

²⁵⁷ Schleifer, 9.

²⁵⁸ Jorisch, 26-29.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-29.

to Die in Lebanon.”²⁶⁰ According to Conway, many parents of Israeli soldiers serving in southern Lebanon also admitted to looking up Hezbollah websites for updates.²⁶¹ Some of the information posted by Hezbollah included up-to-the-minute statistical data on its military successes, to include number of IDFs and collaborators killed and number of dead martyrs.²⁶²

Hezbollah specifically targeted IDF reservists or regular officers for attacks because they correctly assessed that these casualties would have a harsher impact on Israeli public opinion.²⁶³ By the end of the 1990s, Israel stopped sending reservists to serve in the occupation zone partly because of these attacks.²⁶⁴ One of Hezbollah’s most notorious propaganda efforts against the Israeli public took place in 2000 when al-Manar aired “Who is Next?” clips that showed numerous photos of killed Israeli soldiers, followed by a blank silhouette with a large question mark.²⁶⁵ Station managers admitted that their intent with these broadcasts was to “get into every (Israeli’s) mind and affect Israeli public opinion.”²⁶⁶ Station managers also admitted that in order to do this, they needed to acquire a thorough understanding of Israeli society. They did this partly by establishing a Hebrew Observation Department, staffed by Hebrew speakers, to monitor Jewish radio and television 24 hours a day.²⁶⁷

b. Domestic Audience

As mentioned earlier, Hezbollah attempted to gain the support of all Lebanese citizens by framing their resistance as a national rather than sectarian

²⁶⁰ Conway, “Cybercortical,” 13.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁶² Tsfati and Weimann, 321-325; and Conway, “Cybercortical,” 12.

²⁶³ Schleifer, 8.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁶⁵ Wehrey, 66.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

struggle.²⁶⁸ According to Schleifer, there were six general messages Hezbollah directed against their domestic audience which were a “mixture of Islamic and revolutionary secular motifs, taken from the arsenal of Shi’a fundamentalism, on the one hand, and the annals of twentieth-century national liberation movements, on the other.”²⁶⁹ First, the group tried to dispel fears that they were a proxy for Iran and instead emphasize Israel as a common enemy. This was done in order to unite not just the Shi’a, but also Christian, Sunni, and Druze population behind their resistance agenda.²⁷⁰

Second, Hezbollah frequently highlighted Jerusalem’s significance as the third most important city in Islam, and where Mohammad ascended to heaven.²⁷¹ This probably was done in order to justify why all Muslims, not just Palestinians, should support the pursuit of liberating Israel from Jewish control.

Third, resistance was portrayed as a just cause against infidel invaders, destined to bring about a better future worth suffering for. This message attempted to exploit a prevalent Arab sense of inferiority and discrimination by the West.²⁷²

Fourth, the group admitted that the struggle would be long, but again would result in victory.²⁷³ Hezbollah likely understood that in order to maintain support from its domestic audience, a realistic timeline would need to be given, but with the hope of eventual success.

Fifth, Hezbollah used religious messages to demonize Israel in addition to inundating its domestic audience with images of death and destruction caused by the Jewish state. Sixth, the group portrayed resistance as part of God’s will.²⁷⁴ Hezbollah

²⁶⁸ Wehrey, 58.

²⁶⁹ Schleifer, 10.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

disseminated these messages not only through their media apparatus, but also through their social service network and through political participation.²⁷⁵

The group first attempted to win the support of the Lebanese Shi'a population—traditionally marginalized—by addressing their security, social, and economic needs.²⁷⁶ For example, the group generously paid its fighters in order to prevent them from joining the SLA, and it rebuilt Shi'a homes destroyed during Israeli attacks. Hezbollah also established and operated an extensive social service network consisting of mosques, and religious, education, and social welfare systems.²⁷⁷ According to Frederic Wehrey, these humanitarian efforts inspired many Shi'a to endure Israel's attacks with unwavering loyalty to Hezbollah. He further states that “for the Shi'a population to have ceased their material and moral support for Hezbollah's fighters . . . they would have literally bit the hand that fed them.”²⁷⁸ Hezbollah attempted to create this same sense of dependency with the Christian and Sunni population. However, the group also attacked non-Shi'a that supported the IDF.²⁷⁹

The group worked to instill in its Shi'a fighters a psychological advantage over the better equipped IDF and SLA by propagating the idea of martyrdom, defined as, “sanctified death in the service of a defensive jihad.”²⁸⁰ Nasrallah was quoted saying, “the fighter's strength and superiority does not stem from the type of weapon he carries, inasmuch as it stems from his will . . . and his advance towards death.”²⁸¹ The concept of martyrdom is appealing to some Shi'a for historical and cultural reasons; Imam Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed is revered among the Shi'a as the ultimate martyr figure. Hezbollah fighters killed during battle were honored through postcards, posters, videos, billboards, and even key chains sold in the suburbs of southern Beirut.

²⁷⁵ Schleifer, 7.

²⁷⁶ Norton, “Changing,” 110-111; and Schleifer, 6-7.

²⁷⁷ Schleifer, 6-7.

²⁷⁸ Wehrey, 58.

²⁷⁹ Schleifer, 7.

²⁸⁰ Wehrey, 56-57.

²⁸¹ Hassan Nasrallah quoted by Wehrey, 56.

Families of these men also were provided with pensions, housing, and various other social services.²⁸² According to Wehrey, the group paid out over \$90 million during just four years to families of wounded or killed Hezbollah fighters.²⁸³ These efforts helped to boost the morale of Hezbollah fighters and ensure a steady stream of volunteers.²⁸⁴

C. POST-2000 WITHDRAWAL UNTIL 34-DAY WAR

This section discusses Hezbollah's response to Israel following its unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. First, it discusses how Hezbollah continued its resistance against Israel by carrying out military operations in the contested Shebaa Farms areas and by supporting the Palestinians during the Second Intifada which started in September 2000. Second, it examines the group's psychological warfare strategy waged against its enemy and domestic audience; the latter which now also consisted of Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank. During this time period, the group was able to focus almost exclusively on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis by broadcasting not just in Lebanon, but throughout the region and rest of the world because of technological advances. Psychological warfare was used to promote the group, recruit new members, demonize Israel, and encourage violence among Palestinians against Israel.

1. Overall Objectives and Strategy

After Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah continued to pursue its resistance agenda by contesting the disputed Shebaa Farms area occupied by Israel and demanding the release of remaining Lebanese prisoners. During this time, Hezbollah carried out mostly symbolic attacks such as cross-border raids and mortar attacks against Israel, primarily in the disputed Shebaa Farms area.²⁸⁵ However, many

²⁸² Wehrey, 56-57.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁸⁵ In speeches made directly after the withdrawal, Nasrallah continued with Hezbollah's resistance agenda by contesting the disputed Shebaa Farms area occupied by Israel, demanding the release of remaining Lebanese prisoners, and by encouraging or sometimes even helping Palestinians carry out military operations. These issues, which were a priority in Nasrallah's rhetoric, later were referred to as the "bleeding wounds." Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

outside the organization began to question whether the group needed to maintain its weapons after Israel official withdrew from Lebanon.²⁸⁶ Consequently, Hezbollah's second objective during this time period was maintaining its armed status. The group pursued this goal by continuing with political participation, operating its social service network within Lebanon, and an aggressive psychological warfare campaign directed primarily towards its domestic audience.

The group also began to pursue its ultimate objective—to destroy Israel and to liberate Palestine—by encouraging or sometimes even helping Palestinians carry out their military operations.²⁸⁷ Support to the Palestinians came in the form of advice, training, equipping, and funding to groups such as Hamas, Al-Aqsa Brigade and Islamic Jihad.²⁸⁸ For example, Sheikh Hassan Izz al-Din, the group's director for media relations, admitted that they supported the Palestinian cause “politically, financially, ethically and morally. We provide the Palestinians with weapons, training, and whatever they need. We are there to stand by their side.”²⁸⁹ Encouragement was done by extending “propaganda assistance” through Hezbollah's media apparatus.²⁹⁰

2. Psychological Warfare Strategy

This section discusses Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. In May that same year, al-Manar launched its satellite which allowed the station to disseminate its message to the rest of the region and international community.²⁹¹ The focal point of Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy became the Palestinian Intifada which erupted in September 2000.²⁹² According to analysts, al-Manar's new purpose was “less the demoralization of an Israeli audience

²⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, “Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis.”

²⁸⁷ Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

²⁸⁸ Harb and Leenders, 176.

²⁸⁹ Jorisch, 34.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37-40.

²⁹¹ Conway, “Terror,” 13.

²⁹² Jorisch, 28-29.

and more the assistance of the Palestinians in their struggle, along with raising the awareness in Lebanon of the need to support the Palestinians against the Israeli government.”²⁹³

a. *Enemy Audience*

As stated earlier, the Israeli public and military continued to represent Hezbollah’s enemy audience. By 2000, Hezbollah’s radio station al-Nur was able to broadcast in Hebrew into Israel’s central cities.²⁹⁴ Also, al-Manar invested in hi-end antennas after the withdrawal allowing the station to broadcast into Israel. The group continued to harass the Israeli public by broadcasting videos on al-Manar, with Hebrew subtitles, calling on them to leave Israel and return to Europe and the United States.²⁹⁵ According to Schleifer, beyond these verbal messages, the intent of these broadcasts was to send a frightening message to the Israeli public that if Hezbollah could target their televisions, they also could target their homes with rockets and mortars.²⁹⁶ Al-Manar also began targeting Israeli soldiers serving in the Shebaa Farms area.²⁹⁷ However, according to Conway, Hezbollah exerted less effort during this time toward demoralizing the Israeli public and instead focused on helping the Palestinians with their own resistance.²⁹⁸

b. *Domestic Audience*

Even after Israel’s withdrawal, Hezbollah continued to embrace its resistance frame.²⁹⁹ Framing is defined as “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate

²⁹³ Several analysts quoted by Conway, “Terror,” 8.

²⁹⁴ Wehrey, 67-68.

²⁹⁵ Schleifer, 14-15.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 14-15.

²⁹⁷ Jorisch, 29.

²⁹⁸ Conway, “Terror,” 8-9.

²⁹⁹ Blanford, *Voice*, 5.

and motivate collective action.”³⁰⁰ However, Hezbollah expanded its domestic audience to include not just the Lebanese population, but also the Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank. According to Jorisch, Hezbollah through al-Manar “sustained this culture of resistance by legitimizing and inciting suicide bombing and other forms of terrorism; by justifying continued Hezbollah attacks in places such as Shebaa Farms; by glorifying Hezbollah’s past military successes; by lionizing Hezbollah leaders; by canonizing Palestinian and other Arab ‘martyrs’; and by recruiting young people to its militant cause.”³⁰¹

Within the Lebanese population, Hezbollah attempted to strengthen its resistance agenda by promoting the organization. According to Jorisch, this was done by justifying and glorifying the group’s military actions along the Israel-Lebanon border, Shebaa Farms in particular.³⁰² For example, al-Manar broadcasted videos entitled, “It is My Right to Recover Shebaa” which included the following lyrics:

It is my right to defend my land and kick out occupiers; it is my right to declare my freedom and raise a flag for the oppressed; it is my right to recover Shebaa and all the captured fighters . . . We would not leave you with the rapist, even if many years pass.³⁰³

Hezbollah also attempted to discredit Israel in an effort to justify its actions. For example, al-Manar incited anger against the Israeli state by repeatedly showing footage of young martyrs killed by Israeli military action and also by blaming Jews for the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Hezbollah based the latter claim on an unsubstantiated report by al-Manar that 4,000 Jews were absent from work at the World Trade Center on the day of the terrorist attacks.³⁰⁴ It also aired many videos comparing Israel to Nazi Germany by depicting the Star of David as a swastika.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 6.

³⁰¹ Jorisch, 80.

³⁰² Ibid., 84.

³⁰³ Ibid., 84.

³⁰⁴ Jorisch, 38-39.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 38-39.

The group also justified suicide bombings by citing Islamic tradition. For example, al-Manar regularly broadcasted clips of clerics and fatwas that defended this tactic. Nasrallah also persuaded clerics to issue fatwas that called on individuals to carry out suicide operations.³⁰⁶ The importance of promoting this culture of martyrdom is reflected in a comment made by Nasrallah in reference to the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, “the culture of martyrdom is the strongest weapon . . . here lies our strength.”³⁰⁷ Furthermore, he believes that Israel withdrew from Lebanon because:

those who love death [followers of Hezbollah] defeated those who fear death [Israelis] . . . Those who see death and martyrdom as a way to immortal life defeated those who see death as destruction and loss . . . The weapon of loving martyrdom, sacrifices, and readiness for death is one that nobody can take away . . . Yes, we make life through death.³⁰⁸

Hezbollah glorified its organization by having al-Manar broadcast clips honoring its leaders and fighters. Most of the attention was given to Nasrallah by airing his speeches, showing him in a variety of complimentary poses, and even highlighting his name which means “God’s victory.”³⁰⁹ Hezbollah fighters were portrayed as larger than life figures by al-Manar. For example, videos showed Hezbollah guerrillas waving their weapons in victory, attacking and capturing Israeli posts, firing weapons and throwing grenades, and attacking Israeli convoys with rockets. In extreme contrast, Israeli soldiers were shown as defeated by Hezbollah, oftentimes on stretchers or with destroyed equipment.³¹⁰ Similarly, videos were shown that “exposed” Israel’s fear of suicide bombers and its military defeat in Lebanon (i.e. their unilateral withdrawal from

³⁰⁶ Jorisch, 81.

³⁰⁷ Hassan Nasrallah quoted by Jorisch, 80-81.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁰⁹ Jorisch, 86.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

Lebanon).³¹¹ In short, Hezbollah was portrayed as the protector of Lebanon and Israel as unwilling to invade again for fear of the group's military might.³¹²

In addition to justifying and glorifying the group's military activities, Hezbollah also attempted to continue recruiting potential members through al-Manar. They did this conveying the message that "every resistance fighter ends up a winner, whether he lives or dies."³¹³ For example, al-Manar broadcasted two shows honoring former guerrillas, *In Spite of the Wounds* and *My Blood and the Rifle*. The first show was designed to air biographies of former guerrillas that were wounded in the line of battle. The emphasis was on how Hezbollah took care of the fighters afterwards by providing them with medical care and financial assistance to continue with a life of resistance. The second show was similar, but it highlighted the biographies of deceased fighters and had family and friends explain the virtues of martyrdom. Even al-Manar officials admitted that these shows were intended to promote recruitment among the domestic audience and encourage a culture of resistance.³¹⁴

Recruitment also was done by teaching that resistance was a family affair; therefore al-Manar openly encouraged parents to teach their children this way of life, including suicide bombing. Hezbollah even disseminated a videogame, *Special Forces*, which encouraged children to join the resistance and fight against the Jewish state.³¹⁵ According to Jorisch:

Relatives of potential martyrs were urged to support those engaging in resistance and to embrace the prospect of sacrificing their loved ones for the sake of a greater goal. Such programming was meant to convince ordinary members of Arab society to subscribe to the culture of resistance.³¹⁶

³¹¹ Jorisch, 38.

³¹² Ibid., 86.

³¹³ Ibid., 89.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 87-88.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 85.

As mentioned earlier, Palestinians living in the Gaza and West Bank became part of Hezbollah's domestic audience. Al-Manar, al-Nur radio, al-Intiqad newspaper, and several websites started to offer their services to the Palestinian cause. Hezbollah's objective, particularly through al-Manar, was to "justify, foster, and perpetuate violence" among this target audience against Hezbollah's enemies—Israel and the United States.³¹⁷ The desired effect of the group's psychological campaign was to "incite Palestinians to violence, encouraging them to refuse negotiations for a comprehensive settlement with Israel and to work toward the obliteration of the Jewish state."³¹⁸

During this time, al-Manar expanded its programming to focus on the Intifada at the expense of covering events inside Lebanon. Immediately following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, al-Manar broadcasted only 4 hours per day. Just a few months later after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, the station began broadcasting almost 18 hours per day.³¹⁹ Examples of programming included interviews with leaders of Palestinian rejectionist and terrorist groups, regular news flashes on Israeli military and Palestinian operations, and music videos combining clips of Hezbollah attacks against Israeli military installations and battles between Palestinians and the IDF. The intent with the music videos was to send a message that both struggles—Hezbollah versus Israel and Palestinians versus the Jewish state—were one in the same. The deeper message was that what worked for Hezbollah in liberating southern Lebanon could also work for the Palestinians in liberating 1948 Palestine.³²⁰

D. 34-DAY WAR

This section discusses Hezbollah response to Israel during the 34-day war in 2006. First, it briefly discusses how the group waged guerilla warfare to survive Israel's attacks. Second, it examines the group's psychological warfare strategy against three

³¹⁷ Jorisch, 80.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

³¹⁹ Conway, "Terror," 9.

³²⁰ Jorisch, 37-38.

target audiences: 1) the enemy which once again consisted of the Israeli public, 2) the domestic audience which consisted of the Lebanese population, and 3) the neutral audience which this time proved to be a key factor during the conflict. In short, Hezbollah exploited Israel's aversion to civilian casualties in order to pressure the Jewish state into a ceasefire agreement. The group also emphasized collateral damage caused by Israel's attacks in order to demonize the Jewish state to the domestic and neutral target audience while portraying itself as the protector of the Lebanese.

1. Overall Objectives and Strategy

Hezbollah's immediate objective during the 34-Day war was merely to survive Israel's military attacks.³²¹ The group pursued survival by employing a guerrilla warfare strategy of concealment that involved hiding its fighters and weapons within the civilian population.³²² For example, the group hid weapons caches and leaders inside mosques and child-care centers.³²³ They also rushed into schools and private homes to launch rockets and then quickly rushed out.³²⁴ This strategy made it difficult for Israel to strike targets from the air without causing significant collateral damage.³²⁵

Hezbollah's ultimate objective was to gain a symbolic victory in the eyes of its domestic, neutral, and even enemy audience through psychological warfare.³²⁶ The group realized that it could not defeat the Jewish state militarily; therefore, the primary weapons used by the group included al-Manar television, al-Nur radio, and several websites.³²⁷ Hezbollah used its media to exploit collateral damage in order to portray Israel's attacks as egregious and inhumane.³²⁸ It also launched around 4,000 rockets into

³²¹ Waxman, 32.

³²² Fayutkin, 213.

³²³ Kreps, 79.

³²⁴ Cordesman, 10.

³²⁵ Kreps, 79.

³²⁶ Schleifer 17.

³²⁷ Conway, "Cybercortical," 18.

³²⁸ Kreps, 80.

Israel against civilian targets in order to exploit the government's sensitivity to casualties.³²⁹ Hezbollah understood that sustained rocket attacks against Israeli civilian targets would pressure the Jewish state into a ceasefire.³³⁰

2. Psychological Warfare Strategy

Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was the opposite of Israel's in that it emphasized promoting its own image with its domestic and neutral audience, rather than merely arousing fear through the threat of military force against its enemy audience.³³¹ It also worked to discredit Israel by exploiting collateral damage through its media apparatus. During the war, al-Manar played a key role in Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy. For example, it was the first to announce the capture of Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, the event which instigated the conflict. It also was the first to broadcast Nasrallah's victory speech at the close of the war.³³² In response to Israel's cyber attacks, Hezbollah used hijacked websites to post recruitment videos, air al-Manar online, and solicit donations from supporters.³³³

a. Enemy Audience

Once again, Hezbollah's enemy audience was the Israeli public. The group sought to send a message that further military action by Israel would result in retaliation by Hezbollah against civilian targets. The group used al-Manar in addition to several websites to intimidate the Israeli public by posting photographs showing the death and destruction caused by Hezbollah's rocket attacks against Israeli towns.³³⁴ During the conflict, Nasrallah was at the heart of Hezbollah's propaganda efforts. He participated in numerous television interviews and made several online statements and threats promising

³²⁹ Waxman, 31.

³³⁰ Fayutkin, 214.

³³¹ Schleifer, 18.

³³² *Ibid.*, 18.

³³³ Conway, "Cybercortical," 18.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

to strike Tel Aviv if Israel did not cease its air strikes against Beirut. The goal was to pressure the Israeli government into a ceasefire agreement by exploiting its sensitivity to civilian casualties.³³⁵

b. Domestic Audience

Hezbollah's domestic audience consisted of all Lebanese citizens. As mentioned above, the group went through great lengths to send the message that it was the protector and benefactor of the Lebanese population.³³⁶ For example, Nasrallah declared to the media that "anyone who has lost their home will receive free furnished housing from Hezbollah for one year, starting today."³³⁷ The group also attempted to send the message that Israel was responsible for the death and destruction, not Hezbollah. For example, Nasrallah reversed the blame during every one of his speeches, "portraying Hezbollah as the defender of Lebanon against Israeli aggression."³³⁸ The group also emphasized the collateral damage caused by Israel's airstrikes through its media apparatus. For example, Hezbollah's websites showcased gruesome photographs of death and destruction caused by Israel against the Lebanese population, such as images of torn bodies, destroyed homes, and corpses of innocent children.³³⁹ Also, during speeches televised on al-Manar and foreign press, Nasrallah emphasized Israel's killing of innocent Lebanese children during its strikes.³⁴⁰

c. Neutral Audience

The neutral audience, consisting of the international community, proved to be an important factor during the 34-Day War. As with its domestic audience, Hezbollah attempted to send the message that it was the protector of Lebanon and that Israel was

³³⁵ Fayutkin, 214.

³³⁶ Conway, "Cybercortical," 9.

³³⁷ Nasrallah quoted by Schleifer, 18.

³³⁸ Conway, "Cybercortical," 9.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

guilty of egregious atrocities against the Lebanese population. By exalting itself and demonizing Israel, Hezbollah hoped to create an international backlash against Israel, pressuring them into a ceasefire agreement. The group used all of its media capabilities for this effort, al-Manar and its numerous websites in particular.

Of note, Hezbollah proved itself adept at controlling the flow of information from inside Lebanon to the rest of the world. For example, the group escorted photographers to conflict areas, which often appeared staged with noisy ambulances leaving the scene. They also censored and discouraged most reporters from recording and broadcasting the launching of Katyusha rockets. These accusations were made by BBC, CNN, and even Al-Arabyia. Further, the reporters were prohibited from filming Hezbollah bunkers or human shields.³⁴¹ There are accusations that Hezbollah even falsified Reuters' clips and provided inaccurate counts of victims from the bombing incidents in Tyre and Cana.³⁴² The group also was less aggressive when appealing to non-Arab audiences. For example, the English, German, and French websites were less militant than the Arabic versions which oftentimes referred to Israelis as Nazis.³⁴³

According to Sarah Kreps, Israel later acknowledged that international support eventually eroded after images of IDF attacks and civilian casualties in Beirut began to be broadcasted throughout the media.³⁴⁴ For example, international criticism peaked during attacks against Qana that resulted in significant collateral damage—mostly because Hezbollah was fighting within a heavily populated area. International reactions to these attacks even caused Israel to halt further airstrikes for 48 hours. Even the United States reacted in horror to the images of destruction in Qana resulting from Israel's attacks. According to Kreps, these images severely constrained Israel's strategic options by shortening the timeline it had to meet its war objectives.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Schleifer, 19.

³⁴² Ibid., 19.

³⁴³ Conway, "Cybercortical," 9.

³⁴⁴ Kreps, 81.

³⁴⁵ Kreps, 81.

E. CONCLUSION

This Chapter examines Hezbollah's overall objectives and strategy against Israel from 1990 until the completion of the 34-day war in 2006. Particular attention is given to the group's psychological warfare strategy. The findings from this Chapter are compared with Chapter III in order to determine the extent to which Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy thwarted Israel's objectives and strategies in Lebanon. Chapter V provides the results from this comparison which is: Hezbollah's psychological warfare strategy was not the deciding factor in preventing Israel from achieving its objectives.

From 1990 to 2000, Hezbollah's objective was to resist Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon. The group sought to demoralize the enemy through guerilla and psychological warfare in order to pressure Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon. It also attempted to strengthen domestic support for its resistance agenda through political participation, an extensive social service network, and psychological warfare. Hezbollah succeeded in achieving its objective through this comprehensive strategy—Israel unilaterally withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 because the government eventually lost its will to fight.

Subsequent to Israel's withdrawal, the group continued resistance against Israel's occupation of the disputed Shebaa Farms area through guerrilla and psychological warfare. It also pursued its ultimate objective—destroying the Jewish state—by providing advice, training, equipment, funding, and psychological warfare support to the Palestinians.³⁴⁶ Hezbollah was not able to destroy Israel, but it likely contributed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict thereby distracting attention away from Lebanon. Nonetheless, the group eventually miscalculated when it captured two Israeli soldiers in 2006, events which instigated the 34-day war.

During the 2006 conflict, Hezbollah's objective was to survive Israel's military attacks by waging guerrilla and psychological warfare. First, the group sought to exploit Israel's aversion to civilian casualties in order to pressure the government into a ceasefire. Hezbollah did this by launching thousands of rockets into Israel. Second, the group ensured that Israel's military attacks inevitably would result in significant

³⁴⁶ Harb and Leenders, 176.

collateral damage by employing guerrilla warfare tactics. The deaths and destruction subsequently was emphasized by Hezbollah's media in order to demonize the Jewish state to the domestic and neutral target audience, while portraying the group as the protector of the Lebanese. Negative "press coverage" shortened the timeline in which Israel could pursue its objectives, thus allowing Hezbollah to survive.

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IV. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that although Hezbollah waged an ambitious and effective psychological warfare campaign against Israel between 1990 and 2006, it was not the deciding factor for why the Jewish state failed in Lebanon. Other major factors contributing to Israel's failure include: the Jewish state incorrectly assessed its enemy which resulted in the development of overly ambitious objectives and inappropriate strategies; its severe aversion to casualties inhibited military options; and Hezbollah's guerrilla warfare strategy ensured that Israel's attacks would result in severe collateral damage and succeeded in terrorizing the Jewish civilian population. The group's psychological warfare strategy played a pivotal role in exploiting Israel's sensitivity to casualties, emphasizing Israel's mistakes, and exaggerating the group's own accomplishments.

B. 1990 TO 2000 WITHDRAWAL

Between 1990 and 2000, Israel's objective was to deter Hezbollah from carrying out attacks within southern Lebanon and into northern Israel. During this time period, however, Israel made numerous mistakes which were quickly exploited by Hezbollah's guerrilla and psychological warfare strategy. First, rather than seek to win the "hearts and minds" of the Lebanese population, Israel attempted to turn them against Hezbollah through an indirect-deterrence-by-punishment strategy consisting of mass bombardments against civilian targets.³⁴⁷ This strategy did not work because it violated all three principles of successful counterinsurgency operations related to the proper use of force.³⁴⁸ Consequently, rather than gain cooperation from the Lebanese population, this strategy only succeeded in alienating Israel from the victims and observers.

³⁴⁷ Jones, 86; and Schow, 22-23.

³⁴⁸ The three principles of successful counterinsurgency operations are: "soldiers should avoid misbehavior towards property or persons; misuse of firepower which when perceived as indiscriminate or disproportionate to the threat serves only to alienate populations; and misapplication of military force . . . which warns against excesses identified within the first two categories," Jones, 87.

Israel's second mistake was attempting to eliminate an asymmetric threat through overwhelming conventional forces of artillery and airstrikes.³⁴⁹ Much of this strategy was dictated by the Jewish state's sensitivity to casualties which restricted the use of ground forces.³⁵⁰ This strategy, however, was ineffective against Hezbollah's guerrilla and psychological warfare strategy which significantly improved during this time period. In response to guerrilla style attacks from Hezbollah, Israel would respond with high-intensity attacks that usually resulted in significant collateral damage among the civilian population. Hezbollah then would exploit this damage through its media outlets in order to justify resistance against Israeli aggression.³⁵¹

In addition to Israel's failures, Hezbollah had many successes. First, it was able to render the SLA useless through a campaign of intimidation and assassinations. The group maintained records of all SLA members and threatened them with death unless they deserted or served as informants. This resulted in considerable desertions and defections; the latter increased Hezbollah's collection capabilities against the IDF.³⁵² Not surprisingly, this caused severe distrust between the IDF and SLA.³⁵³ These accomplishments were significant because part of Israel's strategy during the occupation was to rely on the SLA to maintain a buffer zone between northern Israel and anti-Israel forces in southern Lebanon.³⁵⁴

Second, the group also was able to win support from the Lebanese population for its resistance agenda, which is critical for an insurgency to succeed. This partly was done through political participation starting in 1992 and by becoming the sole provider of reconstruction and social services in southern Lebanon.³⁵⁵ In addition to these methods, Hezbollah used psychological warfare to strengthen Lebanese support for the resistance

³⁴⁹ Bar, 479.

³⁵⁰ Schow, "Falcons against the Jihad: Israeli Airpower and Coercive Diplomacy in Southern Lebanon."

³⁵¹ Helmer, 55-56.

³⁵² Wehrey, 63-64.

³⁵³ Helmer, 58.

³⁵⁴ Eisenberg, 5.

³⁵⁵ Helmer, 70.

by framing it as a national rather than sectarian struggle.³⁵⁶ Part of this strategy involved broadcasting messages that demonized Israel, portrayed the IDF as weak, and exalted Hezbollah by exaggerating its military accomplishments.

Third, Hezbollah was successful in intimidating and demoralizing the IDF and Israeli public through its guerrilla and psychological warfare tactics. By 1997, the Hezbollah to IDF deaths ratio dropped from 5:1 to about 2:1, according to UN sources.³⁵⁷ Videos of dead IDF soldiers or attacks against IDF outposts repeatedly were broadcasted on television and the internet in order to strengthen the perception that Israel was losing its war against Hezbollah. The group also repeatedly launched rockets into northern Israel, which undermined the Jewish state's justification for maintaining a southern security zone which was to protect northern Israel from guerrilla attacks.³⁵⁸ Eventually, it became apparent that Israel's military strategy would not deter Hezbollah.³⁵⁹

C. POST-2000 WITHDRAWAL TO 34-DAY WAR

After the 2000 unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Israel's objectives were to deter and contain Hezbollah through the use of minimal force and diplomacy.³⁶⁰ According to Waxman, the Jewish state committed a series of fatal errors that actually emboldened rather than deterred Hezbollah.³⁶¹ First, Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 was credited as a strategic loss for Israel and a victory for Hezbollah. Next, Israel's deterrence steadily deteriorated as it consistently responded to Hezbollah's attacks over the next six years with only mild responses. Finally, the August 2005, unilateral withdrawal from Gaza further bruised Israel's deterrence and boosted the credibility of armed resistance. Consequently, both withdrawals and consistent military

³⁵⁶ Conway, "Terror,"19; and Wehrey, 58.

³⁵⁷ UN sources reported by Wehrey, 63.

³⁵⁸ Helmer, 55 and 70.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁶⁰ Waxman, 28; Inbar, 1; and Bar, 471-472.

³⁶¹ Waxman, 28.

restraint demonstrated to Israel's adversaries that they were unwilling or unable to fight.³⁶² Israel's actions effectively achieved the opposite of deterrence.

According to author Shmuel Bar, Israel's deterrence strategy failed because the government never clearly defined its red lines. Instead, Hezbollah construed what was appropriate based on previous clashes with Israel which did not elicit a harsh response.³⁶³ Although the group expected a reaction from Israel, it did not anticipate a large-scale military retaliation because Israel consistently responded to past attacks with restrained military force.³⁶⁴ In fact, all skirmishes that occurred before and after the Israeli withdrawal—including the incident which sparked the 34-day war—fell within these parameters, demonstrating that Hezbollah did not disregard these perceived rules.³⁶⁵ This argument is further supported by the fact that Nasrallah admitted following the 34-day war during an interview that he was surprised by Israel's response.³⁶⁶

Diplomacy did little to contain Hezbollah as the group actually was allowed to significantly expand as a military threat, through the acquiescence of Lebanon and with active support from Iran and Syria. The lack of a strong central government and military within Lebanon meant that there was nothing or no one to stand in the way of Hezbollah's growth. Israel could not deter Hezbollah through Iran because of a lack of diplomatic ties, concern over Iran's missiles and nuclear program, and fear of retaliation by Iran through terrorist attacks abroad. Lastly, Israel was unable to successfully deter Hezbollah through Damascus because Syria's influence over the group diminished after the election of president Bashar al-Asad, and their withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005.³⁶⁷

³⁶² Waxman, 28.

³⁶³ Bar, 472.

³⁶⁴ Waxman, 28.

³⁶⁵ According to Bar, Hezbollah construed red lines in terms of territory, weapons, and types of attacks. In terms of territory, Hezbollah believed that attacks within south Lebanon, Shebaa farms, and the Ghajar village would be tolerated, rocket attacks against Israel's civilian population would be used only as a deterrent to prevent Israeli attacks against Hezbollah headquarters or strategic sites deep within Lebanon, and, "small arms and light artillery fire across the border, local incursions, and even attempts to kidnap Israeli soldiers" would be permissible. Bar, 487.

³⁶⁶ Blanford, *Voice*, 378.

³⁶⁷ Bar, 471-472.

Instead, it seems that Israel at best, monitored the group's entrenchment within southern Lebanon and overall growth rather than take successful action to actually contain them.

While Israel attempted to avoid confrontation with Hezbollah, the group was successful in continuing its resistance against the Jewish state by carrying out guerrilla attacks primarily in the disputed Shebaa Farms area.³⁶⁸ More importantly, the group continued to rally domestic support for its resistance agenda through political participation, operating its social service network, and psychological warfare. Al-Manar played a central role in the latter method to justify the group's actions, promote the organization and its leaders, discredit Israel, and recruit potential members.³⁶⁹ In short, the television station was successful in helping Hezbollah sustain a culture of resistance throughout Lebanon despite Israel's official withdrawal in 2000.³⁷⁰

The group also was able to expand its resistance against Israel by actively supporting the Palestinians during the Second Intifada which started in September 2000.³⁷¹ Support came in the form of advice, training, equipping, and funding to various Palestinian militant groups.³⁷² Also, Hezbollah focused its psychological warfare efforts to encourage Palestinian aggression against Israel and raise awareness in Lebanon of the need to support the Palestinians in their struggle.³⁷³ It is unclear to what extent Hezbollah's actions contributed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza. However, it is obvious that while Israel was distracted by this crisis, the group as mentioned above was able to grow in strength and capabilities through the acquiescence of Lebanon and active support from Iran and Syria.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

³⁶⁹ Jorisch, 80-88.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁷¹ Blanford, *Voice*, 232-233.

³⁷² Harb and Leenders, 176.

³⁷³ Conway, "Terror," 8.

³⁷⁴ Blanford, *Voice*, 9; STRATFOR; Waxman, 30; and Bar-Joseph, 586-590.

D. 34-DAY WAR

Several factors played into why Israel was unable to achieve its political and military objectives during the 34-day war. First, the Jewish state's objectives were overly ambitious. These objectives included reestablishing deterrence, eliminating Hezbollah's "state within a state" status, eliminating the threat posed by the group's rocket arsenal, creating a security zone along the southern Lebanese border, and obtaining the release of two captured Israeli soldiers.³⁷⁵ To put it into perspective, Israel was attempting to quickly accomplish through this campaign what it had been unable to achieve during its 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon.³⁷⁶

As with "Operation Accountability" and "Operation Grapes of Wrath," Israel was hoping to pressure the Lebanese government into controlling Hezbollah by making the civilian population suffer for the group's actions.³⁷⁷ The Jewish state, however, underestimated the loyal following that Hezbollah cultivated within Lebanon over the previous decades. As mentioned above, the group was aggressive in providing social services, protection, and political representation to not only the Shi'a, but also to Sunnis and Christians. The group also consistently employed psychological warfare since the 1990s in order to promote the group, justify resistance, demonize Israel, and recruit new members.³⁷⁸

Second, Israel's strategy was inappropriate. Deterrence-by-punishment primarily through airpower was not optimal for the asymmetric threat that Hezbollah represented.³⁷⁹ For example, the group does not have many high-value targets such as bases and complex command and control nodes. Also, the targets that they normally do have, such as weapons caches, leader hideouts, and launch sites, are intentionally embedded within the civilian population making them difficult to attack without

³⁷⁵ Fayutkin, 213-214; Waxman, 29-30; and Cordesman, introduction.

³⁷⁶ Pahlavi, 15.

³⁷⁷ Waxman, 29.

³⁷⁸ Jorisch, 80-88.

³⁷⁹ Kreps, 82.

causing significant collateral damage.³⁸⁰ Hezbollah recognized this, as evidenced by a public statement made by Nasrallah in May 2006:

Hezbollah fighters live in their houses, in their schools, in their churches, in their fields, in their farms and in their factories. You can't destroy them in the same way you would destroy an army.³⁸¹

Consequently, Hezbollah's guerilla warfare strategy partly explains why Israel was unable to destroy the group's rocket and missile arsenal. It also made collateral damage inevitable, contributing to the perception that Israel's attacks were egregious and disproportional when broadcasted by the media.³⁸²

Nonetheless, Israel also miscalculated when it intentionally bombed civilian infrastructure as a part of their deterrence-by-punishment strategy.³⁸³ This approach violated all three principles of successful counterinsurgency operations and was easily exploited by Hezbollah's media.³⁸⁴ Consequently, Israel was unable to win support from the Lebanese civilian population and international community. For example, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan ceased initial criticism against Hezbollah after their populations witnessed through the media the death and destruction caused by Israel's attacks and began protesting them instead.³⁸⁵ This about-face is significant because no Arab state has ever publicly condemned an attack against Israel.³⁸⁶

The Jewish state may not have considered how its actions would be perceived by Hezbollah, Lebanon, and the international community. According to Cordesman, Israel historically has been more concerned with internal politics and perceptions rather than the perceptions of the outside world when it comes to executing war.³⁸⁷ This would explain

³⁸⁰ Kreps, 79.

³⁸¹ Nasrallah quoted by Friedman.

³⁸² Kreps, 79.

³⁸³ Waxman, 29.

³⁸⁴ Helmer, 2; and Kreps, 82.

³⁸⁵ Kreps, 80.

³⁸⁶ Waxman, 39.

³⁸⁷ Cordesman, 12.

why Israel's strategy was limited to methods that would minimize IDF casualties and preserve economic stability. It also partly explains why they miscalculated the effect that their deterrence-by-punishment and psychological warfare strategy would have on Hezbollah, the Lebanese and neighboring Arab states, and the rest of the world.

Third and alluded above, Israel was unwilling to do militarily what was necessary to achieve its objectives out of fear that it would incur casualties and disrupt economic development in Israel.³⁸⁸ Hezbollah recognized and exploited this fear through guerrilla and psychological warfare tactics. For example, the group launched approximately 4,000 rockets into Israel displacing at least half a million Jewish civilians.³⁸⁹ Also, it repeatedly disseminated messages to Israel through its various media outlets that further military actions would instigate retaliation by Hezbollah against civilian targets.³⁹⁰ The goal was to pressure the Israeli government into a ceasefire.³⁹¹

Finally, although UNSCR 1701 called for the rapid deployment of UNIFIL forces and the Lebanese army to southern Lebanon, both were incapable of evicting or disarming Hezbollah. The Lebanese government already had made it clear that it would not forcibly disarm Hezbollah because the army, about 35 percent Shi'a, could not be counted on to confront a group with whom they have various ties—religious, local or family.³⁹² Also, according to Waxman, UNIFIL forces likely would not have risked instigating a confrontation with Hezbollah by trying to disarm it.³⁹³

E. CONCLUSION

This thesis concludes that Israel failed to achieve its military and political objectives in Lebanon for several reasons. Hezbollah's successful psychological warfare strategy was one of them. First, Israel failed to assess correctly the enemy which resulted

³⁸⁸ Kreps, 76

³⁸⁹ Waxman, 31.

³⁹⁰ Conway, "Cybercortical," 15.

³⁹¹ Fayutkin, 214.

³⁹² Waxman, 34.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 34.

in overly ambitious objectives and inappropriate military strategies. For example, Israel underestimated the support that Hezbollah had carefully cultivated among the Lebanese population through years of political participation and by providing protection and critical economic and social services to those in need. Consequently, Israel miscalculated and repeatedly attempted to use an indirect-deterrence-by-punishment strategy against an asymmetric threat that enjoyed tremendous popular support.

Second, Israel's military options were severely constrained because of its aversion to casualties. Any military response to an asymmetric threat requires the use of forces on the ground. However, the Jewish state over time began to use fewer ground forces and relied more on airpower in response to the Israeli public's sensitivity to IDF casualties.

Third, Hezbollah waged effective guerilla warfare thereby making itself a difficult target for Israel to destroy through conventional military methods. Because the group intentionally embedded its fighters and weapons within the civilian population, any attempt by Israel to target Hezbollah resulted in significant collateral damage. The group also was easily able to terrorize the Jewish public by launching rockets into Israel. Damage in both Lebanon and Israel was easily exaggerated by media coverage.

Fourth, Hezbollah also waged an effective psychological warfare campaign that sought to demonize Israel, degrade the enemy's will to continue fighting by exploiting the Israeli public's sensitivity to casualties, and win support of the domestic and neutral audience. Israel's inappropriate military strategies made it easier for Hezbollah to achieve the latter psychological warfare objective.

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