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**RADICAL ISLAMIST GROUPS IN THE MODERN AGE:  
A CASE STUDY OF HIZBULLAH**

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## Abstract

The emergence of *al-Qa'ida* has focused the attention of the West on the threat caused by radical Islamist groups. *Hizbullah*, or the Party of God, represents another radical Islamist group that has demonstrated the ability to organise itself in a manner that allows it to operate effectively on both the military and socio-political level. Its military success was instrumental in forcing an Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000. Unlike many other radical Islamist groups however, *Hizbullah* plays a significant role in the formal political institutions of Lebanon. This paper examines the environment in which the party operates, the structure and ideological basis of the organisation, as well as the reasons for its success and the limitations it faces within Lebanon. It demonstrates that, despite its colourful rhetoric, the party is a largely pragmatic organisation and that, while it has been a very successful Islamist movement, it faces significant practical limitations in advancing its cause further.

# Radical Islamist Groups in the Modern Age: A Case Study of Hizbullah

*Lieutenant-Colonel Rodger Shanahan<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

The Iranian revolution of 1979 for the first time alerted the West to the political power that could be generated by proponents of a radical interpretation of Islam. The toppling of a corrupt, Western-backed government and its replacement with the first Islamic theocracy of the modern era gave cause for alarm. The subsequent invasion of the United States embassy and the seizing of its staff as hostages also demonstrated that, in this case, the revolution sought to directly target Western institutions as much as it sought to achieve regime change domestically. Since that time, the emergence of radical Islamist groups from both sides of the Sunni-Shi'a divide has illustrated the increasing popularity of religion as a defensive mechanism in addressing the real and perceived injustices of Muslims in many countries. At the same time, radical Islam has been a movement poorly understood in the West. The seizure of Western hostages in Lebanon during the 1980s and the emergence of Palestinian and Lebanese suicide bombers during the 1980s and 1990s are both actions that highlight the gulf between the Judeo-Christian concepts of armed resistance and that of some radical Islamist groups.

Whilst these groups were of general interest to Western security agencies, their offensive activities were normally regarded as being limited in either their scope or the geographical area of operation. Seizure of Western hostages and the bombing of the Multinational Force was limited to Lebanon, whilst the suicide bombings were seen as constituting part of either Palestinian or Lebanese nationalist responses to Israeli military action. As such, these actions were not seen as a serious threat to Western security *per se*. Rather, it was the emergence and spread of the Sunni *mujahideen* veterans from the anti-Soviet Afghan war and their subsequent emergence within *al-Qa'ida* that went largely unnoticed during the 1990s. Unlike other radical Islamist groups, *al-Qa'ida's* well-documented actions against Western targets have posed a very real security threat against Western countries. For the first time, asymmetric threat groups motivated by religious, rather than political or ethno-nationalist ideology, have emerged as the main threat to Western security at the start of the new millennium.

The high profile attacks conducted by *al-Qa'ida* against the United States have highlighted the technical ability of these groups, as much as the commitment to the cause of the individuals who carried out these attacks. At the same time, the suicide attacks against Westerners in East Africa, Bali and New York have all focused people's attention on the threat to so-called 'soft', non-military targets from an illusory enemy who seldom concentrates in numbers sufficient for Western military technology to target. The military success of the United States against *al-Qa'ida*/Taliban forces in Afghanistan, however, illustrated that there were occasions when such forces could be confronted by regular, first-world military forces in the field. There are some parallels to be drawn between the current conflict against *al-Qa'ida* and an even more complex, but older, radical Islamist group - Hizbullah. Whilst differing in their particular Islamist ideology, *al-Qa'ida* and Hizbullah are both multi-faceted organisations and have made extensive use of suicide bombers as part of their military operations. However, unlike *al-Qa'ida*, Hizbullah has opposed a first world military force in the field and, as the withdrawal of Israeli troops from South Lebanon in 2000 demonstrates, were able to defeat them.

The organisation remains extremely relevant to the continuing conflict in the Middle East. Postured on the Israeli border, Hizbullah is an important complicating factor within the region. Concerned that the party may have taken the opportunity to place military pressure on Israel following United States military action against Iraq, the Israelis threatened large-scale retaliation if this occurred. Other reports at the time circulated that the IDF even considered using United States action as a cover for offensive action against the group.<sup>2</sup> Although Hizbullah is pragmatic enough to know that restraint would be the most appropriate tactic for the present, the fact that Israeli defence planners have considered pre-emptive action against them indicates the degree to which Hizbullah has remained an active and militarily proficient organisation.

An examination of Hizbullah as an organisation is worthwhile for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides a further insight into the complexity of some Islamist groups, in particular the dynamic tension between ideological and practical operational requirements. Secondly, by examining the workings of a Lebanese Shi'a, rather than Sunni, radical Islamist group, the ideological disparity between the two can be highlighted, along with the organisational peculiarities and the practical limitations that its nationality imposes. It should be understood, however, that any examination of a group such as Hizbullah has significant practical limitations, given the secretive nature of elements of the organisation. Notwithstanding this,

whilst discussion of organisational structures or sources of financial or political support must be gleaned from secondary sources, enough primary-source material exists for an examination of Hizbullah's ideological and political motivation.

## Historical Background

### *Shi'a in Lebanon*

It is impossible to understand the motivation behind the creation of Hizbullah, or the influence on its present-day development, without first understanding some of the history of the Shi'a within Lebanon, and of the contemporary Lebanese political system itself. Shi'a Muslims differ from the mainstream Sunni Muslims<sup>3</sup> in their designation of the rightful successors (*caliph*) to the prophet Muhammad. The Shi'a believe that leadership of the nascent Muslim community should have been passed on along bloodlines to Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law 'Ali, and on through his closest relatives. The term Shi'a is actually a derivative of the term *Shi'ah* 'Ali (Partisans of 'Ali). As it was, the community elected one of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions, Abu Bakr, as the first *caliph*. 'Umar and 'Uthman were the next *caliphs* until 'Ali, who became the fourth *caliph*. Whilst the Shi'a acknowledge the existence of the first four *caliphs* (generally referred to as the 'rightly guided' *caliphs*), they similarly believe that 'Ali was the first real leader of the Muslim community and hence the first Imam.

The death of 'Ali brought the issue of succession into sharp focus and the two opposing camps were largely divided along tribal lines. 'Ali was of the clan (*banu*) Hashim, whilst 'Uthman was of the *banu* 'Umayya.<sup>4</sup> 'Ali's sons Hassan and Husayn were the next rightful successors by birth, however there were other claimants to the leadership of the *umma*. The issue of succession was brought to a bloody conclusion at the battle of Karbala, where Husayn and his supporters were defeated and killed by vastly superior forces under the command of Yazid, a rival claimant to the position of *caliph*.<sup>5</sup> Mainstream Shi'a followers<sup>6</sup> hence acknowledge a line of succession from the Prophet of twelve Imams (spiritual community leaders), commencing with 'Ali and ending with Muhammad al-Hassan al-Askari (al-Mahdi) who went into occultation<sup>7</sup> and will re-appear at God's will. The twelve Imams are regarded as infallible and, in their absence, learned clerics who have mastered Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and are sources of emulation (*maraji' al-taqlid*) are able to exercise a great degree of temporal authority over their followers based on their interpretation of Islamic texts.<sup>8</sup>

The events described above are mentioned because they provide the contextual framework for two elements that are essential to understanding the *modus operandi* of Hizbullah: the veneration of martyrdom (arising from Husayn's defeat at Karbala), and the key role played by clerics in the Shi'a community in providing not only spiritual but temporal guidance, a role replicated both in Iran and within the Party. The Shi'a in general have suffered persecution at the hands of the majority Sunni. The 'Abassid caliph al-Muttawakil formally prescribed the elements of orthodox Islam in 832 AD. The 'orthodox' followers became known as Sunnites, from the Arabic term *sunnah* (the traditions of the Prophet), condemning the Shi'a to the role of 'heterodox' dissenters (*rafidun*). The relegation of Shi'a to the position of *rafidun* was to have severe impacts, and a tradition of persecution from their 'orthodox' Muslim rulers ensued.

Shi'a had been present in modern-day Lebanon from the earliest years of Islam, although they suffered periodically at the hands of Sunni rulers. The Shi'a were largely cleared from Kisrawan in Mount Lebanon in 1305 AD by the Mamluks to accommodate both Sunni and Maronite settlers<sup>9</sup>, and those in Jabal 'Amil (present-day South Lebanon) suffered terribly at the hands of the Ottoman governor (*wali*) Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar in the late eighteenth century. One outcome of the persecution suffered by Shi'a under the control of Sunni rulers was the development of a form of political and religious quietism that was known as *taqiyya*. It sought to '... shield the true intent of the faithful community from non-believers and outsiders ...'.<sup>10</sup> In its most extreme form, it allowed Shi'a to hide their religion to ensure the survival of the community in a hostile environment. History, then, had imbued the Shi'a with a predilection towards political quietism in the face of persecution.

### *Lebanese Political Background*

As a semi-autonomous region during the course of various *caliphates* over the centuries, and as host to a variety of heterodox and orthodox religious groups, the area of modern-day Lebanon developed its own unique method of governance. For centuries, the Shi'a were dominated by the heads of large landowning families (known as *zu'ama*), with loyalty rewarded by the feudal families. This patron-client relationship meant that the ordinary Shi'a maintained to a large degree their political quietism, as the *zu'ama* dominated the formal and informal political representation of the Shi'a. Economically, politically and socially however, such a system ensured that Shi'a generally lagged well behind their Sunni and Christian co-inhabitants.



The French formalised the borders of modern-day Lebanon in 1920 under their mandatory powers, incorporating the Shi'a strongholds of Jabal 'Amil and the Biqa' Valley into the new Christian-dominated Lebanon. The Shi'a largely supported the creation of Lebanon as the French, eager to split the Muslim bloc, allowed the Shi'a to operate separate religious courts under the Shi'a Ja'fari school of law, and to openly conduct their religious observances. Neither of these had been allowed under Sunni Ottoman rule. French mandatory rule was maintained until 1943. Just prior to the granting of independence, the National Pact, a unique element of the Lebanese political structure, was established. The National Pact was a verbal agreement between the Maronite Christian president and the Sunni Muslim prime minister that set the course for the 'confessionalism' of Lebanese politics that still exists to this day.<sup>11</sup> It sought to ensure that the parliamentary, cabinet and bureaucratic positions were reflective of the sectarian makeup of the country. That makeup was to be based on the results of the 1932 census, the last census ever taken. The census showed that Christians outnumbered Muslims by a ratio of six to five, and this formula was used for the next 47 years to determine the political makeup of the country. The President was always to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the relatively minor post of Speaker of Parliament was reserved for the third most numerous sect in 1932, the Shi'a.

By the time of the Lebanese civil war in 1974, the Shi'a were becoming more politically active, and the inequities of the National Pact had become more apparent. Increasing birth rates and low emigration rates amongst the Shi'a had long since rendered the 1932 census results invalid, and by the early 1970s it is estimated that the Shi'a population constituted the largest group within Lebanon. The inequity of the distribution of political power, and the desire to change it, had led many Shi'a to join leftist political parties during the 1960s, as these were the only groups advocating the type of political change desired by many Shi'a. It was not until 1974 that the first discernable Shi'a political organisation (Amal) emerged. During the civil war, many Shi'a fought as members of leftist militias, particularly the Lebanese Communist Party. The Syrian-brokered Ta'if Accord of 1989, which formed the basis of the civil war settlement, continued the confessional nature of Lebanese politics, although it ensured that Christian and Muslim sects each possessed half the 128 parliamentary seats. The Shi'a were assisted by the strengthening of the role of the Speaker, however the community's allocation of 27 parliamentary seats (22% of the total) ensured the continued under-representation of its population (currently estimated as constituting more than 40% of the population).

## Formation of Hizbullah

### *The Emergence of Hizbullah*

The success of the Iranian revolution in 1979 provided an immediate fillip for Lebanese Shi'a. The revolution provided an example for co-religionists elsewhere that a Shi'a Islamic government was possible. In the case of Lebanon, this resonated with many Shi'a who had been unhappy with the participation of Shi'a within the secular parties, as well as what some saw as the increasing secularisation of the Amal movement. The Iranian revolution however, coming as it did during the civil war, was not enough on its own to generate an organisation such as Hizbullah. The Israeli invasion of 1982 gave a focus to the many disaffected Shi'a radicalised by the success of the revolution. The invasion also provided sufficient reason for Syria to allow over a thousand Iranian revolutionary guards (*Pasdaran*) to enter the Bīqa' to train the Lebanese Shi'a Islamists.

Hizbullah began as an umbrella organisation for a range of smaller radical Shi'a groups such as Islamic Amal (a breakaway group from the increasingly secular Amal movement), the Da'wa party and the Islamic Students' Union. Indeed, the present Secretary-General of Hizbullah Hassan Nasrallah recalls that the founding committee consisted of three delegates each from Amal, the *Da'wa* and independent '*ulama*.<sup>12</sup> The group did not publicly announce its existence until 16 February 1985. Its manifesto stated that it was '... convinced of Islam as an ideology and a system and (we) call on everyone ... to adopt it as a religion and to abide by its teachings whether on the personal, political or community level'.<sup>13</sup> This has led many to accuse it of seeking to transform Lebanon into an Islamic state, although Hizbullah continues to deny that it would do so forcibly.

### *Political Ideology*

Hizbullah's ideology largely reflects the teachings of the late Ayatollah Khomeini and is demonstrated by its continuing close links with Iran, and loyalty to the current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamenei. Khomeini postulated the theory of governance of the religious jurist (*wilayat al-faqih*) in his work *Khomeini and the Islamic State (al-Khomeini wa ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya)*. The theory holds that the authority of the Prophet Muhammad in all matters may be passed down to a jurist<sup>14</sup> (*faqih*) in the absence of the twelfth imam. The result of this ideological construct is that '... the spiritual and political authority of the righteous *faqih* cannot be challenged and obedience is obligatory'.<sup>15</sup> Ayatollah Khomeini was regarded as the first such *faqih*, and post-revolutionary Iran the first legitimate Islamic Republic.

That is not to say that a *faqih* would replace a normal legislature, only that he would be the supreme theological authority on all religious matters and would provide guidance to the government in issues of concern to the Shi'a Muslims. Such a position was, of course, anathema to all Christian and most Sunni Lebanese, and was likely to confine Hizbullah to the peripheries of the Lebanese political system. Similarly, Hizbullah's rejection of the Lebanese confessional political system and refusal to become part of it, further limited its ability to be an agent for change.

Added to this view regarding the primacy of clerical leadership has been the Party's stance regarding its position with the West, as well as its views on the state of Israel in general and of Jews in particular. Hizbullah sees itself in dispute with the West in general, and the United States in particular, over two issues – support for the state of Israel and what it sees as the relentless imposition of Western cultural norms into Islamic society. The belief in the requirement to protect Islam from the inroads of Western culture is common to most Islamist movements, although Hizbullah is not entirely rejectionist of Western cultural norms. For instance, the Deputy Secretary-General, Shaykh Na'im Qassim has acknowledged that even American culture has '...positive, as well as negative, elements'.<sup>16</sup> These elements invariably refer to principles such as political equality and freedom of speech that are lacking in Lebanon, yet desired for Hizbullah's advancement.

The issue of United States' support for Israel is one that presents a more durable challenge for the organisation, and one which is far more likely to prevent any type of *rapprochement* between Hizbullah and the United States in the immediate future. The enmity that Hizbullah has for Israel is well documented. That antipathy is translated to the United States due to the fact that, as Shaykh Muhammad Fadlallah has asserted, "...the US does not have an American policy in the Middle East, but an Israeli policy."<sup>17</sup> On the question of Israel, Zionism and the Jewish people, Hizbullah has consistently maintained a hard line. The state of Israel is based on occupied Palestinian territory, and hence can never be recognised as sovereign territory. At the same time, the present state of Israel is seen as an initial stage of the Zionist scheme for the establishment of *Eretz* (Greater) Israel, stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates and north to the Litani River. Proof of this geographical truth is believed to be the decision by Israel to remain in South Lebanon following the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut in 1982. The illegitimacy of the state of Israel provides Hizbullah with a rigid ideological framework within which it views many regional political initiatives. The Party's continued references to Israel as the 'Zionist entity' serves to paint Israel as

an expansionist state, and those within it as expansionists themselves. Similarly, those countries pursuing a negotiated peace settlement with Israel are, by association, providing an illegitimate entity with legitimacy and are condemned for doing so.

Whilst condemning the Zionists for their expansionist plans within the Muslim heartland, the position of Hizbullah regarding Jews is less clear-cut. There are grounds for being suspicious and untrustworthy of Jews in general, as Hizbullah often quotes from a *Qu'ranic* verse asserting that 'Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt though find the Jews and Pagans...' (5:82). In this way, the notion of Judaism is separated from the concept of Zionism, and both can be addressed separately towards the same end. Zionism is a political program that places an expansionist Jewish state within the midst of the Arab world, and usurped the original Arab inhabitants to do so. At the same time, on an ideological level, the Jewish people are basically untrustworthy by nature, a fact attested to in no less an authority than the *Qu'ran*.

### *Modification of Aims*

Hizbullah's political aims have been modified as the organisation has matured. This is reflective of the fact that it was set up as a sectarian resistance group in the midst of a civil war, and has had to adapt itself to the political reality of post-conflict society within a multi-confessional state. Hassan Nasrallah acknowledged the initial political immaturity of the organisation when he noted of the movement's beginnings that "There was no plan ... other than to resist the occupation ... we were thinking at first: Let us restore the homeland and then we will think of the political system."<sup>18</sup> Debate within Iran and Hizbullah as to the future of the party within Lebanon resulted from the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Just as Iranian moderates came to power under the new President Hashemi Rafsanjani and sought a *rapprochement* with the West, Hizbullah met in Tehran in October 1989 to determine its future direction. Those who advocated bringing the party into mainstream Lebanese politics and beginning a dialogue with Christian, secular and other Islamist movements won the day.

Recognising that, as long as it rejected the idea of a Lebanese state, it was unlikely to play as significant a role in Lebanese politics as it desired, Hizbullah participated in the 1992 elections and won eight of the 27 parliamentary seats on offer to the Shi'a. Once in parliament, the Hizbullah deputies demonstrated a willingness to follow the procedures of legislative politics, and have since proven adept at performing the role of a

parliamentary opposition. They participated in both the 1996 and 2000 elections and have maintained their parliamentary representation, albeit constrained by the fact that they run on joint electoral tickets with Amal, thus diluting the Shi'a vote and avoiding a direct choice between the two Shi'a parties.

The modification to Hizbullah's purely military approach to the situation facing the Shi'a in Lebanon has broadened their appeal domestically and made them less susceptible to being marginalised as a result of domestic or foreign pressures. Parliamentary participation has also served to send a message to other Lebanese communal groups, as well as Western powers, that Hizbullah is capable of operating as a political party as effectively as it carries out its resistance activities. By acting within the secular political system, the Party has developed a good understanding of the time at which it is prudent to modify previously hard line ideological viewpoints; hence its willingness to participate within the political process without muzzling itself through participation in government. Hizbullah has been careful to cultivate this image of responsible political behaviour without compromising its core goal. As the Secretary-General, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah noted "Hizbullah believes that an Islamic regime is the best and the most able to solve the problems of society. Islam does not ask or accept from us to impose this choice by force on our people."<sup>19</sup>

### **Organisational Structure**

Hizbullah's organisational structure is not considered to be a matter of public record, although it is possible to piece together a picture of it from a range of sources. At its head is the Supreme Shura (Consultative) Council, many of whom are clerics.<sup>20</sup> The council is sub-divided into the decision-making and executive councils, with the decision-making council being the more senior. A Secretary-General, who must come from the decision-making council, is elected by a secret committee of prominent clerics and devout senior Muslims to head the party.<sup>21</sup> Decisions of the council are made by majority vote, as Hizbullah is careful to ensure that its activities do not rely too heavily on the rule of the Secretary-General.<sup>22</sup> There are six key organs within Hizbullah: the politburo<sup>23</sup>, the military and security wings, the social welfare committee, and the financing and propaganda wings.

### *Islamic Resistance*

Certainly the best known element of Hizbullah is its military wing, generally referred to as the Islamic Resistance (*Al-Muqawwamah al-Islamiyya*). The Islamic Resistance was designed to undertake military operations

against the IDF and their proxy militia, the South Lebanese Army (SLA). These military actions generally won the organisation great plaudits within wider Lebanese society, and have been a key element in achieving greater popular legitimacy for the party.<sup>24</sup> The importance of the Islamic Resistance to Hizbullah is underlined by the fact that it takes its directions directly from the Shura Council.<sup>25</sup>

The professionalism of, and tactics employed by, the Islamic Resistance improved markedly over the years it operated against the IDF. The *Pasdaran* were instrumental in providing much of the initial training and logistics support for members of the Islamic Resistance.<sup>26</sup> Under their tutelage, and emboldened by recent memories of the revolution, the organisation scored some spectacular successes in its early years. Many of these successes were the result of the use of 'human bombs' in martyrdom operations, a tactic pioneered by Hizbullah. Whilst the organisation has always publicly denied it, the attacks on the headquarters of the US and French elements of the Multi-National Force in Beirut<sup>27</sup> and the bombing of the IDF headquarters in Tyre twice in 1983 have generally been attributed to the organisation, and illustrate the effectiveness of the suicide bomber against military targets.

The notion of 'human bombs' not only fitted in with the Shi'a tradition of martyrdom exemplified by the death of Husayn at Karbala; it was more pragmatically an effective method of inflicting significant casualties on the opposition at minimal cost to the organisation. The mid-1980s represented the high point of this tactic, although Hizbullah was still dispatching personnel on these tasks against IDF convoys in South Lebanon until as late as December 1999. Part of the reason for the decline in its use (aside from the decreasing availability of targets) was the increasingly high standard of conventional military operations able to be mounted by the Islamic Resistance.

The Islamic Resistance used its increasing professionalism, access to indirect fire weapons, and the relatively static defensive posture adopted by the IDF and SLA to inflict constant casualties in an effort to sap the political will of the Israeli government. As a Hizbullah spokesman noted at the time, "Our military strategy of keeping pressure on and inflicting casualties here and there, without incurring losses ourselves, instead of mounting costly spectacular operations is working. Some of our supporters demand more front page type of attacks, but we won't let our emotions take over."<sup>28</sup> The effectiveness of this tactic was demonstrated by the fact that the ratio of Hizbullah:IDF/SLA deaths reduced from 5.2:1 to 1.7:1 between 1990 and 1992, even though the number of operations increased from 20 to 310 in the same period.<sup>29</sup>

### *Security Organ*

This is a numerically small organisation that has a largely internal security focus. It is composed of three sections: the Party Security, Central Security, and Operational Security sections. The Party Security section provides close personal protection to key party members, the Central Security section carries out all domestic and overseas intelligence gathering operations, and the Operational Security section is in charge of executing decisions made by the Security Organ against those deemed enemies of Hizbullah.<sup>30</sup>

The organisation consistently denies knowledge of, or participation in, overseas operations. The nature of the targets selected, and the timing of the attacks, provide strong circumstantial evidence that Hizbullah is able to successfully engage Israeli targets overseas. Its intelligence-gathering capacity against Israel is also sophisticated, and is particularly targeted against Israeli Arabs. In October 2002, an IDF lieutenant-colonel, Omar al-Heib, and ten bedouin were indicted on charges of passing information to Hizbullah in exchange for money and drugs, whilst another group of both Arab and Jewish Israelis were arrested in February 2003 for the same crime.<sup>31</sup>

### *Social Services Committee*

This is perhaps the most strategically significant element of Hizbullah's organisational makeup. This committee provides a wide range of social service functions to the depressed Shi'a areas that have not been provided by the government. In this way, Hizbullah demonstrates its capabilities as a champion of its Shi'a constituents, and attracts the support of not only the Shi'a, but of other sects that may benefit from the services that it provides. The Social Services Committee is made up of a number of sub-committees that are discussed below.

The Islamic Health Committee was established in 1984 and registered by the Lebanese Interior Ministry in 1988. They have established three hospitals, and multiple infirmaries, pharmacies and dental centres in the Biq'a' Valley, Beirut's southern suburbs (*dahiyya*) and in South Lebanon. These medical services are open to all sects, and it has been claimed by outside observers that the medical facilities are far better than those available in government hospitals.<sup>32</sup> The Emdad Committee for Islamic Charity<sup>33</sup> provides general philanthropic support to both orphans and poorer Shi'a families. This may be in the form of cash payments, food and clothing, housing or items of furniture. Its role is similar to that performed by the St Vincent de Paul Society in many Western countries. The Emdad Committee has been particularly effective in assisting large numbers of Shi'a families

in depressed areas of the South and the southern suburbs of Beirut. A separate organisation, the Martyr's Foundation (*Muasassat ash-Shaheed*), provides similar services to the families of those killed in action whilst members of the Islamic Resistance.

The Education Committee has opened facilities in villages long deprived of government schools. Much in the way that religious schools operate in the West, Hizbullah schools teach a curriculum approved by the Lebanese Ministry of Education. Religious education does play a significant role in the life of these schools although, to make them more attractive to a broader range of Shi'a, English is one of the subjects taught. Given the fact that the Shi'a had traditionally been the least urbanised of the Lebanese sects, Hizbullah has expended some effort in addressing the agricultural concerns of Shi'a farmers. An Agricultural Committee exists to provide support to the Shi'a farming community. This is done through the establishment of agricultural cooperatives that sell essentials such as insecticides, seeds and fertilisers at below market prices.<sup>34</sup> In the Biqa' Valley, Hizbullah runs a free taxi service for farm hands to ferry them to remote fields and villages.<sup>35</sup>

There are four other sub-elements of the Social Services Committee. The Reconstruction Committee has traditionally been most active in the south, and developed the role of effecting repairs to homes and village infrastructures damaged by Israeli offensive action. Given that much of this IDF retaliation was in response to Hizbullah's military action, the role of the Reconstruction Committee has been essential in maintaining the support of villagers most affected by Hizbullah's actions. Other more minor functions are conducted through the Power Resources, Water Resources and Environmental Committees.

### *Financing*

The Iranian government has long been the most generous donor towards Hizbullah. Some estimates place the assistance at between five and ten million dollars per month during the late 1980s.<sup>36</sup> Elements such as the Martyr's Foundation are funded directly from its equivalent in Iran, as is a large proportion of the Islamic Health Committee's budget. This funding has decreased as the organisation becomes more self-sufficient, although the Islamic Resistance has continued to rely on Iranian support for its military operations.

Three sources: fees, donations and investments are sustaining the drive towards financial self-sufficiency. Government legislation dictates that neither health care nor education may be offered free of charge and, as a result, hospital and school fees are charged, although they are normally a



quarter of what government agencies charge. Individual donations remain a very important part of the financial viability of Hizbullah. As part of their religious obligations, Muslims are expected to pay religious taxes to assist the less privileged.<sup>37</sup> These are paid to the senior clerics, who, in turn, channel the funds into Hizbullah's social service programs or allocate them to specific projects. This system is also used by sympathetic clerics in Iran to transfer funds to Hizbullah independently of the Iranian government.

Hizbullah has also created a diversified investment portfolio with which to generate income. It runs a number of cooperative supermarkets (particularly in Beirut's southern suburbs), and operates bookshops, stationers, farms, fisheries, factories and bakeries, as well as manufacturing Islamic clothing for export.<sup>38</sup> Hizbullah has developed low-cost housing projects for the poor within Beirut, with the units sold on long term lease at no interest. Sympathetic Lebanese Shi'a businessmen in Europe have established investment companies from which Hizbullah buys stocks and shares.<sup>39</sup>

Hizbullah's investments must conform to the *Qu'ranic* injunction that forbids the accrual of interest. The ability to make profits from non-interest bearing investments has further highlighted the ideological rigour that characterises Hizbullah's operations.<sup>40</sup> There is also a keen sense of strategic planning in such financial arrangements, as the party has always understood the ramifications of being totally reliant on the one source of funding. As has been noted of its arrangements, 'Hizbollah's aim is to become self-sufficient and to reach a stage when its business enterprises and investments can sustain it independently of outside support.'<sup>41</sup>

### *Enforcement, Recruitment and Propaganda (ERP) Organ*

As with all of its other activities, Hizbullah has shown a willingness to combine its centuries-old religious ideology with modern technology to achieve its ends. At the same time it has been, and continues to be, an extremely skilled proponent of information operations. The ERP functions are the practical manifestation of this. At the most basic level, mosque preachers and religious schools are used as key elements in the recruitment process of young Hizbullah operatives. In this way, their religious commitment to Hizbullah's ideology can be gauged and their loyalty assured. Hizbullah also operates a sophisticated media network that includes the *al-Nour* radio station, the television station *al-Manar* (The Beacon), the weekly newspaper *al-Intiqad* and the Baqiatollah magazine. *Al Manar* broadcasts a wide range of programs and is currently the third most watched station in

Lebanon. This media network has allowed the party to spread its message to a wider audience than would be reached simply through religious institutions.

## **Reasons for Success**

### *Political Credibility*

In a society that has developed with the notion of the patron-client relationship as the central element of the political process, Hizbullah has demonstrated a commendable degree of distance from this traditional method of Lebanese politicking. It has taken seriously its role as a parliamentary opposition, and has consistently gone on public record as being critical of government programs that fail to deliver benefits to its constituents. Unlike many other politicians at the local or national level, its representatives have never been accused of involvement in the systemic corruption within Lebanese politics.

Hizbullah has been particularly outspoken regarding the nature of the Lebanese political system. By establishing its opposition to traditional methods of political advancement, the party reinforces its reputation as a champion of the 'oppressed' which, in the Lebanese case, means those without access to political influence. At the same time, such actions are commensurate with Hizbullah's strategic aim of achieving equal access to government positions and power, which will ultimately favour the party. A good example of the responsible opposition stance that the party has adopted in parliament is illustrated in Hizbullah MP Khodr Tlass's parliamentary speech where he attacked the government, asserting that "... the last nominations (for public service positions) were dictated by *istizlam* (allegiance to the chief) and *mahsubiyya* (importance of the client networks of the individual) ... they don't illustrate the behaviour of a State governing through its institutions, but rather tribes thinking of their relatives."<sup>42</sup> Such public positions have been rare in parliamentary procedure in the past, and are popular amongst the Lebanese public.

### *External Assistance*

The actions of Syria and Iran in using Hizbullah as a means of exerting political pressure on Israel have been instrumental in allowing the organisation to prosper. Whilst the Ta'if Accord of 1989 required the disarming of all militia forces within six months and the integration of the militia members into the Lebanese Army, the Syrian government waived this requirement for Hizbullah.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the Islamic Resistance became the only group capable of mounting operations against the Israelis, a fact

that contributed enormously to Hizbullah's popularity within Lebanon. It is noteworthy that Amal also began to re-activate its armed wing and mount operations against the IDF in the last few years of Israeli occupation, in order to validate its subsequent claims of contributing to the Israeli withdrawal.

The Lebanese government refuses to either use its troops to secure the south of the country or make any attempt at disarming Hizbullah. This has provided the Islamic Resistance with tactical freedom of action on the border with Israel. Lebanon's public justification for its inaction regarding Hizbullah is based on its unwillingness to secure the border without negotiating its makeup (a reference to the Shiba' farms dispute), and its assertion that the obligations of the Ta'if Accord only applied to militias engaged in the civil war.<sup>44</sup> Hizbullah would be disarmed when the political process they were engaged in was resolved.

### *Social Work*

To some extent, Hizbullah's charitable works should be seen in the same light as those carried out by religious organisations in the West; a genuine desire to alleviate the suffering of the poor, and to educate people in the ways of the faith. Whilst the community has developed a significant middle class, the Shi'a remain the most underprivileged of the communal groups in Lebanon. As a result, the services provided by the party are badly needed in the areas in which they operate. At the same time, there is also a political/military dimension to the charitable works carried out by the group.

The philanthropic, health and educational elements of Hizbullah's social services have provided great practical benefits to the Shi'a community. Indeed, the health facilities are open to Lebanese of all faiths, winning kudos for the party from the wider community. The Martyr's Foundation has been a key element for the organisation in ensuring a steady flow of recruits to the Islamic Resistance. In Lebanese society, where males must provide for their families, the knowledge that their death or injury will not impoverish their families removes a potential barrier to those seeking to become Hizbullah fighters. Such largesse also served a tactical military purpose. By providing services to the impoverished southern regions during the Israeli occupation, the organisation ensured that villagers remained to provide human cover for the launching of its attacks against the IDF.

The support for the organisation created by its work is readily demonstrated in the success that the party has enjoyed at the polling booth. Indeed, it is fundamental to the wider political aims of the party. Some observers of Lebanese politics have noted that, rather than seeing Hizbullah's

electoral success as a reflection of a move towards acceptance of a fundamentalist party, or appreciation for its armed resistance to the Israeli occupation, it should be seen ‘... as having less to do with the resistance or Hizbullah’s Islamist ideology than with its prowess in establishing a network of social services for the Shi’a poor’.<sup>45</sup>

### *Flexibility and Pragmatism*

The impassioned rhetoric that marks many of the speeches given by Hizbullah leaders, its pioneering of suicide attacks and the organisation’s ability to mobilise large crowds of supporters in military-style parades serves to inculcate in casual observers a view of Hizbullah as fanatical doctrinaires. Contrary to popular expectations, Hizbullah has demonstrated a flexibility not seen in many Islamist groups. The organisation has shown an ability to make tactical compromises whilst maintaining its rhetoric concerning what are practically unattainable strategic goals. This has been necessary given the nature of the environment in which it operates. Heavily influenced ideologically by its co-religionists in Iran, and practically by the Syrian powerbrokers, it operates within an environment where its support from these countries is dependent on geopolitical factors largely outside of its control. At the same time, it must function within a secular political system and present itself as an advocate of Lebanese nationalism. To do so requires an astute balancing act of aggressively pursuing its external aims against the state of Israel, whilst at the same time performing as a responsible Lebanese political party and social welfare organisation.

It has done this through its ability to make tactical decisions based on *realpolitik*, rather than maintaining a rigid reliance on strategic endstates based on religious doctrine that may have condemned it to the margins, if not complete irrelevance. As a Shi’a Islamic party with an inherent deference to religious authority outside the party’s national boundaries, it has demonstrated a willingness to be pragmatic in achieving its long-term goals. The most obvious example of this was in its decision to contest the Lebanese general elections of 1992, thereby acknowledging the legitimacy of the state. Doing this cost it the support of some elements of the organisation,<sup>46</sup> but has ultimately made it a more relevant political player. Similarly, its willingness to join its Shi’a political rival Amal on joint electoral tickets was designed to avoid intra-communal conflict, thus providing the Islamic Resistance with tactical freedom of action in the south.

Hizbullah is acutely aware of the suspicion in which it is held by some parts of the Lebanese community. In a state that plays host to 18 different religious communities, Hizbullah’s early radicalism and public advocacy

of an Islamic state in Lebanon has created long-term suspicions about the party's intentions. The party is acutely aware of this, and has worked hard to disavow non-Shi'a Lebanese of this notion. At a practical level, Hizbullah has been careful to ensure its public face is not one that draws attention to its more radical past. Of particular note is the fact that, despite its clerical leadership, none of its MPs is a cleric, thereby demonstrating its ability to attract and promote non-clerics into substantial public roles. Whilst Shaykh Ibrahim Amin as-Sayyid, one of the founders of the organisation, successfully ran for elections in 1992 and 1996, his place was taken by a non-cleric in the 2000 elections. Hizbullah deny that this signifies any deliberate attempt to provide a less religious public face for the organisation.<sup>47</sup>

### **Limitations**

Whilst Hizbullah has developed significantly in the twenty years of its existence, and proven adept at prospering in the complex Lebanese political environment, it faces continual challenges in the future to further its aims and, in some cases, to maintain its position. The undoubted popularity of Hizbullah amongst the Lebanese Shi'a population, as well as the success of the Islamic Resistance in forcing an Israeli withdrawal, may serve to disguise a number of elements that serve as limiting factors in their bid for greater political power. Some of these factors even contributed to their success to date, but may prove to be a brake on any future development. The main limiting factors in Hizbullah's future can be considered to be the systemic limitations inherent in the Lebanese electoral system, the Islamist nature of the group, its vulnerability to external influences and the existence of a rival, secular political alternative for the Shi'a community. These factors all conspire to some degree to limit Hizbullah from becoming the major national political player within Lebanon.

The current allocation of 27 parliamentary seats to the Shi'a community means that Hizbullah cannot form a parliamentary majority. Additionally, even within electoral districts, seats are divided along sectarian lines, meaning that compromise is necessary to form 'electoral tickets'<sup>48</sup> that are likely to succeed. For example, the district of Beirut is allocated two Shi'a, six Sunni, one Druze and eleven Christian seats. For Hizbullah to win the Shi'a seats in this district, it must strike an understanding with some Christian or Sunni notables to be sure of attracting enough votes from the other sects. This may mean the need to compromise their stand on particular issues in order to gain a place on a winnable electoral ticket. Hizbullah's limited attraction outside of its areas of support in the Biqa', the southern suburbs of Beirut (*dahiyya*) and parts of the south means that, unless the

electoral boundaries are changed, or a national, proportional electoral system is introduced, Hizbullah will continue to remain a minority party within parliament.

Whilst the sectarian orientation of the organisation has been a key element of its attraction to the Shi'a population, the continued clerical leadership, and the inability to formally repudiate its desire to work towards the creation of an Islamic state limits its popularity amongst the wider Lebanese population. This provides the party with a profound challenge. As one commentator has noted of its dilemma, "... if it loses its identity it will become like other Lebanese parties and thus lose its credibility. But if it retains its identity then people will remain suspicious of its ultimate goals."<sup>49</sup> Part of its identity is strongly attached to the reputation of the Islamic Resistance. Lebanese were united in their desire to be rid of the Israelis occupying the south, and the Islamic Resistance was the means by which this was carried out. Whilst their efforts were universally applauded within Lebanon, in a society still desiring a return to Lebanese state control after a 15-year civil war, the logic for the retention of the party's armed wing is not so clear-cut amongst non-Hizbullah supporters.

The issue of external influence, whilst one of the most significant reasons for the organisation's success, is another factor placing limits on the party. This is particularly the case concerning Hizbullah's freedom of action. Whilst there are indications that Iran's military and financial inputs are decreasing, the influence that spiritual leaders such as Ayatollah Khamenei wield over, and the loyalty they receive from, the party members remain significant. Syria's hegemonic role within Lebanon, backed by the presence of some 30,000 troops, has meant that it is in a position to dictate the political direction of Lebanese parties when it is in its interests to do so. Although some (mainly Israeli) commentators believe that Syria post-Hafiz As'ad has been less capable of maintaining control over the party<sup>50</sup>, there is scant evidence to support this claim. Syria sees the Shi'a as useful regional allies<sup>51</sup>, but ensures that no single Shi'a party retains overwhelming popularity. This was well illustrated in the 1996 elections when the leaders of Amal and Hizbullah were called to Damascus and advised to run on a joint electoral ticket. Despite having publicly repudiated this possibility previously, both leaders acquiesced under Syrian pressure.

The final limiting factor in the ability of Hizbullah to become the major force in Lebanese politics is the dilution of its core support base by other political parties. The party is by no means the only organisation vying for the support of the Lebanese Shi'a population. Prior to the formation of dedicated Shi'a political parties, many in the community joined secular

leftist parties whose calls for the end to political confessionalism struck a chord with many of the Shi'a community. Some Shi'a have stayed loyal to these parties, although most have transferred allegiances to the two main parties, Amal<sup>52</sup> and Hizbullah. It is interesting to note that the Lebanese Communist Party had a majority Shi'a membership during its heyday in the 1960s, and still retains support amongst the community. Amal was formed in 1979 by Imam Musa Sadr, a charismatic cleric who advocated the political activism of the Shi'a. After his disappearance in 1979, a secular lawyer, Nabih Berri, took his place as the president of Amal. Berri has been the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament since 1992, and has become an extremely powerful figure in Lebanese politics. Its secular Islamic orientation, the political power wielded by Nabih Berri (as well as his close connections to Syria) and its calls for an end to political sectarianism, give Amal scope for a broader popular appeal than that of Hizbullah.

However, Hizbullah has cleverly used Amal's powerful place in the formal political structure to differentiate itself from an organisation increasingly seen as part of the bureaucratic process. Amal's harshest critics assert that what was "... a dynamic, populist movement with extensive communal support became a full-blown patronage system with all of the corruption, inefficiency, and inequity that Amal had long ascribed to the traditional *zu'ama*."<sup>53</sup> Whilst Hizbullah may hold some moral advantage over Amal, Nabih Berri's position as Speaker and President of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the South gave him access to all government funds and contracts for development work. Thus, Hizbullah's rival Shi'a political party is able to maintain a degree of loyalty unavailable to Hizbullah, based solely on their ability to distribute government largesse.

## **The Future**

Hizbullah faces a number of challenges to its continuing survival in the short and medium term. Domestically, the Islamic Resistance, for so long the vanguard of the organisation, has faced something of a crisis of relevance after the withdrawal of the IDF. The Lebanese and Syrian claims that the Shiba' Farms area is Lebanese rather than Syrian territory has provided the Islamic Resistance with a small area within which it may still undertake sporadic operations against the IDF, by claiming that the Israelis have not fulfilled the requirements of UNSCR 425. The United Nations has refuted the Syrian and Lebanese claims, however Syria, Israel and Lebanon appear happy in the short term to allow this area to serve as a zone for military action, rather than the populated areas of northern Israel. Hizbullah must use this facility sparingly however, as Israeli retaliation against wider

Lebanese infrastructure targets in response to action against Israel will serve to dilute the popular support enjoyed by the Islamic Resistance in much of the south.

The Shiba' farms area does not provide Hizbullah's only justification for the continued operation of the Islamic Resistance. Israel's holding of 19 Lebanese prisoners is another issue that Hizbullah claims justifies the continued resistance operations. Israel's rationale for holding the prisoners is that it awaits confirmation of the fate of Ron Arad, the Air Force navigator missing since 1982. Hizbullah's capture of three IDF soldiers and a reserve officer in 2000 is a further part of the tit-for-tat hostage taking engaged in by the two organisations. At some stage in the future however, most likely as part of a far wider regional peace initiative, Hizbullah will be required to disband the Islamic Resistance in favour of the Lebanese national army. This in itself will present some difficulties, although the precedence of absorbing some civil war militia members into the national army may be able to be replicated when this time comes.

The major challenge for the party will be its ability to navigate itself through the current international climate regarding radical Islamist groups. Whilst the party consistently denies involvement in overseas attacks against Jewish targets, there is substantial circumstantial evidence to support the case against them. The 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires is largely attributed to Hizbullah, both because of the party's sympathisers amongst the large concentration of Lebanese Shi'a *émigrés* in the tri-border area of South America, and the proximity of the attack to the death of Ammar Musawwi, the Hizbullah Secretary-General, in an IDF missile attack. There have also been claims of Hizbullah support for, and training of, Palestinian groups during the *intifada*. The ability of Palestinian groups to successfully execute multiple roadside bomb attacks against Israeli targets (including tanks) replicates Hizbullah's *modus operandi* in South Lebanon. Hassan Nasrallah's vocal support for the Palestinian cause provides further circumstantial evidence of such links.

More difficult to determine, but certainly more dangerous for Hizbullah's long-term existence, are links between the party and *al-Qa'ida*. Rohan Gunaratna cites significant long-term links between the two organisations, with the *imprimatur* of Iran, and claims that Usama bin Laden has been able to successfully broach the Sunni-Shi'a ideological divide.<sup>54</sup> The same claims regarding training and logistical cooperation between the groups was made by *The Washington Post* in July 2002. Hizbullah has consistently and strongly denied such links, citing the differences in the spheres of operation between the two. Of particular importance though has been Hassan Nasrallah's



repudiation of the belief that the juristic differences between the Shi'a and Sunni would negate any possibility of cooperation between the two sects. Nasrallah has said that "The reason (that there are no Hizbullah/al-Qa'ida links) was not of course the sectional differentiation ... there are good relations between Hizbullah and Hamas, Hizbullah and Islamic Jihad. The differences in the religious sections, thoughts and teachings do not forbid having relations between two groups or organisations."<sup>55</sup> Hizbullah's condemnation of *al-Qa'ida's* attack against the United States and its concentration on Israeli targets would tend to support the view that any support provided to *al-Qa'ida* may be limited to that which allowed it to target Israeli interests. Certainly, Hizbullah is conscious of the danger it faces in aligning itself with an organisation that the Western community is dedicated to eradicating.

The more central issue that confronts Hizbullah outside of Lebanon is that regarding the state of Israel and any future negotiations for a peaceful settlement. Its ideological opposition to the state of Israel would appear to make the organisation hostage to a continued negation of any moves towards peace between Israel and Palestine. This has been reflected in the party's significant rhetorical and practical assistance to Palestinian groups involved in the *intifada*. Hassan Nasrallah has been forthright in acknowledging the party's support for the *intifada* when he stated that "The *intifada* in Palestine today is our front line, so that our support is not only an obligation but also a necessity, and we have, therefore, taken it upon ourselves to aid the *intifada*, not only in words but in deeds."<sup>56</sup> The nub of the issue remains the belief by Hizbullah in the liberation of Palestine and the expulsion of all Jews who did not belong to the land at the time of the creation of the Jewish state. The party is pragmatic enough to realise that such an event is unlikely to be achieved for several lifetimes, but that the requirement to do so is not negotiable. In response to a journalist's query regarding whether the destruction of Israel and the liberation of Palestine were the goals of Hizbullah Nasrallah advised that they were "... the principal objective of Hizbullah, and it is no less sacred than our (ultimate) goal."<sup>57</sup>

This aid for the *intifada* adds to the general unease regarding Hizbullah's wider motives, and will continue to hamper the party's efforts to achieve recognition or approval outside its immediate region. In the current political climate, Hizbullah needs to tread warily lest it mark itself as being worthy of military attention from the United States, which has already listed it as a terrorist organisation. Regionally, its absolute renunciation of the state of Israel would appear to make it nearly impossible to achieve a temporary tactical policy readjustment without compromising its core philosophy. It

is difficult to see how the party could maintain such a stance forever, particularly if it was in the interest of its sponsors for such a process to proceed. In contrast to many other issues it makes pronouncements on, Hizbullah has left itself little room to manoeuvre in the future without modifying its anti-Zionist rhetoric.

The ability of Hizbullah to remain an active participant in the long-term political process within Lebanon lies in both its political wing and its charitable works. The party fully understands that its financial and military support is dependent to a large degree on international political considerations largely out of its control, and that there remains widespread suspicion of its long-term motives amongst the non-Shi'a community. To ensure its longevity, it has remained an active parliamentary advocate of propriety and has won plaudits as a result. The longer it is able to demonstrate its probity in parliament, and the efficacy of its welfare institutions, the better its chances for survival. In the long term, both Hizbullah and Amal understand that the demographic realities of Lebanon will eventually dictate that Shi'a access to political power must at some stage reflect the numerical strength of their community.

## **Conclusion**

Hizbullah serves as an excellent example of a radical Islamist movement that has managed to undertake the transition from simply armed struggle to a multi-faceted organisation that is a force at both the national and regional level. It has managed to accomplish this within an environment that historically has neither been conducive to change nor accepting of Shi'a Muslims. The party's ability to do this has rested on an understanding of the wants and needs of the Lebanese Shi'a, and a good understanding of the external influences that serve both to assist and to limit its freedom of manoeuvre.

It has demonstrated a pragmatism that is often foreign to most religiously motivated groupings, and has sought to use its moral authority stemming from a commitment to the Party's religious principles as a means of furthering its political goals. This is apparent from the public veneration of its resistance 'martyrs' in the struggle against the IDF and the SLA, through the high quality social services it provides within economically depressed areas, to the responsible role it demonstrates as a parliamentary opposition. In the Byzantine world of Lebanese politics and society, Hizbullah has demonstrated an astuteness not found in many other organisations. It has sought to take a long-term view to the achievement of its goals, rather than the short-term view of most other political groupings. It has built up cross-

sectarian acceptance of its worth through its social services and resistance activities. At the same time, it has sought to become financially independent of external benefactors, and has entered the political system to try to effect change from within rather than without. Whilst the electoral limitations to increasing its political power are significant, and the international political climate is decidedly anti-Islamist, the advances Hizbullah has made in its two decades of existence indicate that its ability to become a more significant national Lebanese political player should not be underestimated.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This working paper is authored by Lieutenant-Colonel Rodger Shanahan, who has also written an article focusing on the Iraqi Shi'a for the June/July 2003 edition of *The Diplomat*.
- <sup>2</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 5 March 2003.
- <sup>3</sup> Sunnis represent approximately 80% of all Muslims.
- <sup>4</sup> Hence the designation of the 'Umayyid caliphate.
- <sup>5</sup> This event is celebrated by Shi'a as 'Ashura, a day of mourning.
- <sup>6</sup> Other smaller Shi'a sects believe that the Imamate branches off at certain imams.
- <sup>7</sup> Temporary disappearance (usually in reference to celestial bodies).
- <sup>8</sup> Graham E. Fuller & Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a: the Forgotten Muslims*, St Martin's Press, NY, 1999, p.13.
- <sup>9</sup> Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, Wiedenfield and Nicholson, London, 1965, p.xviii.
- <sup>10</sup> Abdulaziz A. Sachedina 'Activist Shi'ism in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon', in Marty & Appleby (eds) *The Fundamentalism Project*, University of Chicago Press, vol I, 1991, p.423.
- <sup>11</sup> Abdo Baaklini et al, *Legislative Politics in the Arab World*, Lynne Reiner, 1999, p.85.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *Middle East Insight*, May-August 1996, p.38.
- <sup>13</sup> Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, Columbia University Press, NY, 1997, p.61.
- <sup>14</sup> This jurist would, naturally, need to be held in the highest esteem and accepted by his peers as such an eminent person.
- <sup>15</sup> A. Nizar Hamzeh & R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The Islamic Spectrum of Lebanese Politics', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol XVI, no 3, Spring 1993, p.37.
- <sup>16</sup> Amal Saad-Ghorayab, *Hizbullah: Politics & Religion*, Pluto Press, London, 2002, p.109.

- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.91.
- <sup>18</sup> Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *Middle East Insight*, 1996, pp.38-9.
- <sup>19</sup> Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *TIME*, 3 April 2000.
- <sup>20</sup> A. Nizar Hamzeh, 'Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation', *Third World Quarterly*, vol 14, no 2, 1993, p.325.
- <sup>21</sup> Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, Columbia University Press, NY, 1997, p.66. These rules have been periodically altered, and Hassan Nasrallah is currently serving for unlimited successive terms.
- <sup>22</sup> Hizbullah wishes to avoid placing too much power in the hands of an individual lest they become reliant for direction on one person. The utility of this approach was demonstrated in 1992 after the Secretary-General, Sheikh Abbas al-Musawi was assassinated. His successor, Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah was appointed almost immediately.
- <sup>23</sup> The Politbureau is made up of the Hizbullah members of parliament. Its organisation does not warrant a discrete discussion, although its activities are referred to throughout this essay.
- <sup>24</sup> The slogan 'Faithfulness to the Islamic Resistance' was a key element of Hizbullah's campaign for the 1992 elections.
- <sup>25</sup> There is widespread belief that the military activities of Hizbullah are also closely coordinated with Syria.
- <sup>26</sup> It is alleged that the last of the Pasdaran were withdrawn in 1997.
- <sup>27</sup> Although not claimed by Hizbullah, it is widely believed that they were responsible for these events.
- <sup>28</sup> *Middle East International*, 3 November 1995, p.19.
- <sup>29</sup> The ratio stood at approximately 2:1 at the time of the Israeli withdrawal.
- <sup>30</sup> A. Nizar Hamzeh, 'Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation', *Third World Quarterly*, vol 14, no 2, 1993, p.328.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 Feb 2003.
- <sup>32</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Hizbullah of Lebanon: Extremist Ideals vs Mundane Politics*, Council on Foreign Relations, NY, 1999, p.2.
- <sup>33</sup> It was originally known as the Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini when it was established in 1987.
- <sup>34</sup> A. Nizar Hamzeh, 'Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation', *Third World Quarterly*, vol 14, no 2, 1993, p.328.
- <sup>35</sup> Hilal Khashan, 'The Development Programs of Islamic Fundamentalist Groups in Lebanon as a Source of Popular Legitimation', *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol 25, no 2, 1994, p.133.
- <sup>36</sup> Carl Anthony Wege, 'Hizbollah Organisation', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol 17, 1994, p.158.
- <sup>37</sup> These consist of a tax on assets (*zakat*), and a tax on net income (*khoms*).
- <sup>38</sup> Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, Columbia University Press, NY, 1997, p.152.

- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Islamic finance is a complex topic. Suffice to say that investments must generate profits from other than interest accruing cash deposits. There is general consensus amongst clerics that, where this cannot be avoided, that element of profit resulting from interest must be siphoned off direct to charity.
- <sup>41</sup> Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, Columbia University Press, NY, 1997, p.151.
- <sup>42</sup> Khodr Tlass, Minutes of the Council of Deputies, 20 March 1993, quoted in Dalal Al-Bizri, *Islamistes, Parliementaires et Libanaise*, Centre d'études et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain (CERMOC), Beirut, 1999.
- <sup>43</sup> This moved fulfilled Syrian foreign policy objectives of ensuring military pressure was maintained on Israel in order to force them into talks over the handing back of the Golan Heights.
- <sup>44</sup> Speech by HE Dr. Farid Abboud, Lebanese Ambassador to the United States at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC, February 20, 2001.
- <sup>45</sup> Graham Usher, 'Hizballah, Syria and the Lebanese Elections', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol XXVI, no 2, Winter 1997, p.64.
- <sup>46</sup> Most notably Sheikh Subhi Tufeili (a former Secretary-General of the party), who has started his own rival Islamist movement in the Bija'.
- <sup>47</sup> Author's interview with Shaykh Hassan Ezzedine, Director of Hizbullaha's Media Relations Department, 30 May 2002.
- <sup>48</sup> Similar to sectarian 'how to vote' cards.
- <sup>49</sup> *Daily Star*, 22 June, 1998.
- <sup>50</sup> Eyal Zisser, 'The Return of Hizbullaha', *The Middle East Quarterly*, vol IX, no 4, Fall 2002, p.3.
- <sup>51</sup> In the late 1970s and the 1980s, the Assad regime was forced to suppress the fundamentalist Sunni Muslim Brotherhood within Syria. The Assad clan are Alawites, regarded by the Sunnis as a heterodox sect, but whom Imam Musa Sadr declared to be fellow Shi'a in 1981.
- <sup>52</sup> *Amal* is Arabic for hope, and is also the acronym for Afwaj al-Muqawwama al-Lubnaniyya (Lebanese Resistance Groups).
- <sup>53</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Hizballaha of Lebanon: Extremist Ideals vs Mundane Politics*, Council on Foreign Relations, NY, 1999, p.9.
- <sup>54</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda*, Scribe Publications, Australia, 2002, p.146.
- <sup>55</sup> Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *al-Watan*, 19 March 2002.
- <sup>56</sup> Interview with Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, *al-Manar Television*, 1 February 2002.
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