EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF HEZBOLLAH: 1985-2000

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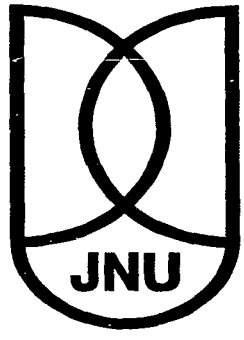

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Emergence and Evolution of Hezbollah: 1985-2000**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

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West Asia has seen the emergence of many Islamist groups within the Muslim world since early 1980s. Hezbollah is one of the most prominent groups which has had a great impact on the regional and international affairs. Hezbollah emerged as a resistance force to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Its articulation of political Islam, its call for the destruction of Israel and its role in the Israeli withdrawal from most of the Lebanese territories in 2000 has accorded it a unique status as an influential non-state actor in West Asia. Many domestic and regional factors have influenced the emergence and growth of Hezbollah. Lebanon's divided society and the failure of the sectarian system to solve the disparities led to the birth of radical ideologies. Unlike the other Arab-dominated West Asian countries, Lebanon is a complex of various religious and ethnic groups with only a very short tradition attached to present boundaries. The historic basis of Lebanese identity is the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon, which for centuries had a separate regime under the Ottoman Empire. The creation of distinct Lebanon by the French after the First World War was based on this concept of Christian dominance. However, the country has also had different communities such as Shiites, Sunnis and Druzes. The Shiite community was demographically dominant over others The essence of the new political system was confessional representation not only in the House of Deputies (parliament) but also in distribution of key political offices. This confessional system in which the Maronite Christian groups had political supremacy at the expense of the other communities worked for several decades but proved to be a failure to address the unique features of the Lebanese society.

The distribution of resources and political goods was based on the 1932 census, whose validity was questioned by many. According to many critics, the system was overly rigid and did not allow for demographic change, because the communities' leaders at that time of the National Pact could only agree on a system for 1943, not on one for the future. Moreover, the Sunnis were not ready to reject the possibility that Lebanon and Syria would eventually unite. The Christian community leaders were not prepared to establish a system that might eventually undermine their supremacy in the communally divided country. One of the major impacts of the confessional system

was that it perpetuated the salience of sectarian differences at the heart of the society. Since the distribution of goods was based on confession, religion remained the essence of one's identity. The unintended effect was to confessionalise all problems that otherwise might be administrative, economic or political in nature.

Though the confessional system at least generated hopes about the survival of a pluralist political culture, its base in the uneven distribution of the resources sparked communal tensions in the country. Furthermore, the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war involved Lebanon also even if briefly and unimportantly from a military point of view. Following the fist war, Lebanon witnessed the sudden influx of large numbers of Palestinian refugees, most of them Muslims. The refugee problem was a major challenge before the sectarian system, which was a total failure in addressing it. The potential total collapse of the confessional order in Lebanon prevented any serious consideration of the absorption of Palestinians by proffering nationality.

The war of June 1967 further complicated the problem of Palestinians in Lebanon by adding to their number and by breathing a new life into the Palestinian movement. After 1967, and especially after 1970 as a result of the influx of Palestinian refugees of the civil war in Jordan, the Palestinians' arming in Lebanon gathered great momentum. As the Palestinians started military mobilisation in the country, some Christian militias which were formed as early as 1930s and nurtured by Lebanon's quasi-feudal social structure, regrouped and challenged the other communities. Moreover, Syria was also a dominant player in Lebanon from late 1960s. These all factors led to the further weakening of the Lebanese political system and widened the communal problems of the country. Such long-simmering communal problems led to the outbreak of civil war in 1975 which had far-reaching implications in Lebanese society. Moreover, the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982 brought immense catastrophe upon the society

During the years of large-scale internal conflicts, there were six major actors in Lebanon: the government, the Lebanese Forces, the Christian community, the Shiite community, the Sunnis and the Druzes. The religious communities in Lebanon tend to live in relatively identifiable geographic areas. That means, each community has areas of predominance and areas shared with other sects. For example, Mount Lebanon was

historically a Christian area. The Biqa Valley and the South are inhabited principally by the Shiites, while the Shuf is a predominantly Druze area. Northern Lebanon is a complex amalgam of Christian, Sunni and Shiites, without any clear-cut dominant group. The Sunnis are traditionally the majority in the three coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut and Sidon. This geographic connection of the communities was the base of the future socio-political movements of Lebanon.

Almost all the historians of Lebanon have agreed on one point; the Shiite community was traditionally left out of the process of development and modernisation, left out of the essence of the Lebanese economy, and kept outside the corridors of social and political power as well. The political isolation and the inability of the confessional system to address the grievances of the community led the Shiites to resort to radical ideologies rather than accepting the Lebanese system. The community underwent a rapid process of mobilisation under the leadership of Imam Musa al-Sadr just before and especially during the conflict period. It was this social and political mobilisation that acted as the base of the future political movements of the community. In the wake of the 1982 war, the Lebanese Shiite clerics, drawing inspiration from the Iranian revolution, founded Hezbollah as a revolutionary resistance organisation. Having understood Israel's military strength in the conventional warfare, Hezbollah unleashed guerrilla attacks against the occupying army, which was later proved to be a success.

The movement rose to notoriety in the early 1980s itself because of its alleged involvement in the bombing of the US and French military barracks and the kidnapping of foreign nationals. However, it was undisputable that the formation of Hezbollah unified the scattered voices of resistance against Israel and legitimised ideological resistance against the occupation in Southern Lebanon. Another significance of Hezbollah's formation was that it opened a new political platform for the under-represented Lebanese Shiites. Hezbollah helped construct a self-identity of the Shiites and bring the community to national political mainstream.

The organisation also attained regional importance as it closely allied with two prominent regional actors, Iran and Syria. For Iran, supporting Hezbollah was part of the Islamic regime's ideological commitment to exporting Islamic revolution beyond its borders. Iran provided political, military and financial assistance to Hezbollah

which was crucial in the early years of the party. Syria saw an opportunity in Hezbollah to preserve its regional interests. This triangular alliance was a dominant factor in Hezbollah's evolution as a dominant non-state actor in West Asia. The party has a composite character, which is not easy to comprehend for a researcher. It emerged as a resistance force but with a revolutionary ideology. In the 'Open Letter', which is perceived to be the ideological text of the party, Hezbollah denied any co-existence with the Lebanese political system and called for a total overhaul of the sectarian system. However, one can see this ideological programme undergoing a transformation in the post-Taif political order. Leaving its earlier ideological position on Lebanese democratic system behind, Hezbollah decided to participate in the parliamentary elections in 1992. Though it marked a major change in the party's political outlook, the organisation maintained its military wing. Apart from the military and the parliamentary wings, the organisation is also running a social welfare unit aimed at uplifting the backward communities of Lebanon where the state plays a minimum role in the social service sector. Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon vindicated Hezbollah's policies and also increased the scope of the activist brand of Islam in the other conflicts in the region. All these factors provide a unique picture about Hezbollah's organisational structure and its political mission.

Given the significance of the growth of Islamist politics in Lebanon, this study tries to comprehend the political mission and ideology of Hezbollah and its viability in the region. Most of the literature on Hezbollah was either focused on its "terrorist" nature or its role as a nationalist resistance force. This study tries to understand Hezbollah's different organs and their activities based on a common belief and ideology. It also focuses on the movement's importance as a significant player in the West Asian politics.

CHAPTER 1

ORIGIN OF HEZBOLLAH

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The emergence of Hezbollah (Party of God) was a turning point in the history of the Shiite community of Lebanon. Going by historical facts, the formation of Hezbollah was the manifestation of the long-standing political mobilisation process of the Shiites, who were the underprivileged community in Lebanon. Ever since the time of their early settlements in Lebanon, the community has been isolated both politically and socially by the other dominant sections. In modern times, even after Lebanon became an independent country, the discrimination against Shiites and their under-representation in the government remained intact. Moreover, the regional issues such as the Palestinian refugee problem and Israel's wars have also brought immense catastrophe upon the Shiites in Lebanon. Such internal and regional developments have led to the formation of a community consciousness among Shiites which finally became the base of their political mobilisation. Israel's invasions of 1978 and 1982 set the stage for the Shiites to come out with the resistance force both for countering the occupation and resisting the discrimination meted out to the community by the dominant sects of the Lebanese society. The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini's ideological interpretation of political Islam also gave a new breath of life to the scattered Shiite groups. These groups, who were thus far divided on different ideological lines, came together under a single banner and with common ideological goals. Inspired by Khomeini's radical interpretation of Islam, Hezbollah adopted a different strategy to address the miseries of the community. Espousing political Islam as its ideology, the party mobilised people in large numbers by addressing the long-forgotten concerns of the Shiite proletariat. Hezbollah's guerrilla resistance together with its pan-Islamic philosophy and anti-Western preaching helped the party make inroads in Lebanese system. Later, one can see that Hezbollah has acted many roles in the Lebanese society such as a resistance force, a political actor and also a social organisation, which eventually helped the Shiites become a dominant community in Lebanon.

From Isolation to Identity Crisis

The social isolation and political oppression of Lebanese Shiites are believed to have begun from time of their early settlements in the Biqa Valley and today's Southern Lebanon.[1] In the early 11th century, the Shiites settled in the lower parts of the Mount Lebanon, especially in the coastal cities. However, the military expeditions of the Malmuks - Turkish warlords- drove the Shiites out of these areas in the 12th century. The Sunni Ottoman rule which began in 1516 further exacerbated the social isolation of the Shiites. During the Ottoman rule, the Shiites lost their land and authorities and were pushed south from northern part of Lebanon by the expanding Maronite and Druze communities (Polk, 1963, 81). The relationship between the Ottoman rulers and the Shiites further deteriorated in the early 16th century as the Safavid dynasty of Iran established Shiism as the official religion of the kingdom. The Ottomans became suspicious of the loyalty of the Shiites living in Jabal Amil which led to the persecution of the community by the Ottoman appointed Fakhr al-Din (Polk, 1963, 81). Apart from the persecution, a long-standing policy of discrimination was awaiting the Shiites during the Ottoman rule. While the Sunnis, Maronites and Druze were allowed to have their personal law status and courts, the Shiites were placed under the Sunni jurisdiction (Meo, 1965, 60)

The Christians, particularly the Maronites emerged as the dominant community in Lebanon in the 18th century. It was not until the reign of Shihab ruler Basher II (1788-1840) that Lebanon's Christian character was finally determined and Mount Lebanon began to be regarded as a homeland for Christians.[2] This shift in the balance of power from the Druze to the Maronites set the stage for the establishment of an independent Greater Lebanon after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. The Christians in Lebanon stepped up their demand to create a Christian state in the country immediately after the end of the First World War in 1918. The political aspirations of the Lebanese Christians during the first two decades of the 20th century were summed up in a formula: an independent Lebanon within its historical and

[1] According to many historians, the Shiites found refuge in the area of Jabal Amil, today's Southern Lebanon and Biqa Valley. For details on the Shiite settlements, see, Salibi (1988), 3-14. Also see Hitti (1967).

[2] For a detailed analysis of the emergence of the Maronites in Lebanon, see Zamir (1985), 1-37. For further details on the rule of Basher II, see http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cstdy:./temp/~frd_ZwSY::

mutual boundaries under French protection. As the modern state of Lebanon was established under the auspices of France in 1920, it obviously invited the resentment of the Muslims of the country (Zamir 1985, 3). The French wanted to incorporate the Shiites into the Greater Lebanon led by the Maronites. However, the Shiites, who supported Arab leader Faisal, were suspicious of a French-assisted Maronite state. Moreover, the assistance of French forces to the Maronites to suppress the Shiite militias during the clashes between the two communities in 1919, led the Shiites into further isolation in the Greater Lebanon.

The oppression of the Shiites continued even after Lebanon became independent on 22 November 1943. The political and economic imbalances in the Lebanese society and also the oppression of Shiites throughout their history led the community to acute alienation in the independent Lebanon. As Lebanon experienced economic growth in 1950s, the Shiites who were living in the long-neglected peripheries of the South and the Biqa Valley started migrating to Beirut around which they settled in slums. The other Shiites continued their lives in the least developed geographical regions of Southern Lebanon and Baalbek-Hermil district of the Biqa. The state, dominated by the Maronites and the Sunnis provided little help for the development of the rural areas. The economic backwardness of the Shiites, whether the agriculture workers in the South or the migrated slum-dwellers in and around Beirut, compared to the affluent and westernised Sunni and Christian communities, gave rise to an "identity crisis" among the Shiites (Khashan, 1992, 44). Besides, Lebanon's modernisation efforts after the 1958 civil war failed to produce the expected results. The modernisation policies of President Faouad Shihab, which spread education and urbanisation, laid the cornerstone of the social mobilisation of the disfranchised Shiites. The urbanisation only fuelled the community consciousness of the Shiites which later forced them into political action a decade later.

The Influence of Musa al-Sadr

The politicisation of the Lebanese Shiites had also been influenced by the Arab and leftist movements of that time. Majed Halawi argues that the "loss of Palestine" in 1948 signalled the inception of Shiite "political consciousness" (Halawi, 1992, 101). The Arab nationalist movement of Egyptian leader Gamal Abd al-Nasser in 1950s,

the emergence of the Baathists to power in Syria in 1963 and also the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1964 influenced the Shiite community who had started participating in political action. However, the decline of Arab nationalism, particularly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, disheartened the community and paved the way for their tilt towards the leftist organisations such as the Organisation of Communist Action and the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP). This shift of political faith from Arab nationalist movement to leftist organisations eventually created a void in the socio-political consciousness of the Shiites. This crisis period produced a charismatic leader like Imam Musa al-Sadr, who in the early 1970s made it his chief cause to activate the frustrated Shiites in Lebanon.

Imam Musa al-Sadr, who was born in the Iranian city of Qom in 1928 and educated in Shiite religious city of Najaf in Iraq, arrived in Lebanon in 1960 (Ajami, 1986, 33-35). Having understood the socio-political conditions of the Shiite community in Lebanon, Musa al-Sadr, unlike his contemporary Islamic scholars, embraced a more reformist ideology aimed at organising the backward Shiites. He also recognised that unlike the Shiite majority, the Sunnis were both politically and socially organised under an officially recognised institutional structure led by the grand mufti of the Lebanese Republic (Hamzeh and Dekmejian, 1993, 25-42). Musa al-Sadr's efforts to bring the Shiites under an institutional structure became a reality in 1969 as the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council was established (Hamzeh and Dekmejian, 1993, 27-28). It was the first organisation in the history of Lebanon which exclusively represented the identity of the Shiites. With the formation of the Council and election of Musa al-Sadr as its first president, the cleric became the leader of a new politically conscious Shiite population in the communally divided Lebanon. Invoking the Shiite religious experiences such as martyrdom, which has been part of Shiism since its early years, al-Sadr launched efforts to organise a political movement of the Shiites. Challenging the concepts of political quietism and submission, al-Sadr emphasised political activism saying it was not only necessary for preserving Shiite identity in Lebanon but equally important in keeping with authentic Shiism. He used the traditional tales, myths and icons as symbols of revolt for new forms of solidarity. He addressed the concerns of the working class of Lebanon but not in a way the Lebanese left did. As the left talked of "class" and the "injuries of the class", the ordinary Lebanese men and women did not respond with great zeal. However, al-Sadr, who

used the familiar Shiite symbols and icons, won where the left failed in mobilising the economically and socially backward Shiites. Though his political movement was largely non-violent before the outbreak of the 1975 civil war, political conditions during the civil war and also the threat of Israel in the South forced al-Sadr to embrace the idea of a violent revolution for the creation of a just and equitable public order (Ajami, 1986, 168).

The Civil War

Musa al-Sadr's major political move after the establishment of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council was the creation of the Movement of the Deprived (Harakat al-Mahrumin) in 1974 (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 8-9). However, the organisation was sidelined by the beginning of the civil war a year later. The full-scale civil war was the culmination of the long-standing communal problems of the Lebanese society. Both the domestic imbalances and the Palestinian factor fuelled the communal tensions in early 1970s. The influx of the Palestinian refugees to Lebanon after the Cairo Agreement of 1969 created a strong anti-Palestinian sentiment in Lebanon, particularly among the Christians.[3] The Lebanese army attempted to break Palestinians' power and bring them under its control in combination with Israel's military raids on Palestinian refugee camps. As a result, the Palestinians formed an alliance with the Lebanese opposition forces to challenge the hostilities of the Maronite establishment. The assassination of Marouf Sad, former Member of Parliament and local Sunni leader in Sidon on February 25, 1975 was only an indication to the imminent civil war. The full-scale war erupted in April with a fight between the Maronite Phalanges and the Palestinians in the Beirut suburb of Ayn al-Rumaneh. Twenty-one Palestinians were killed by the Maronite Phalanges while the former were travelling on a bus through Ayn al-Rumaneh (Ajami, 1986, 164-165). With the outbreak of the war, the Lebanese society divided into two organisations: the anti-Palestine 'Lebanese Front' (LF) dominated by the Maronites and the pro-Palestine 'Lebanese National Movement' (LNM). Thereby, the long-disputed domestic disputes over Lebanon's identity and foreign policy erupted into open. The socio-economic imbalances, regional disparities, sectarian rivalries and ideological

[3] For further details about the Palestinians in Lebanon, see, Brynen (1994), 83-96. Also see, Sayigh (1994), 97-108.

conflicts that had been simmering for a long time only fuelled the growing hostilities within the Lebanese society. Both the LNM and LF also sought the help of the external powers to preserve their interests in the civil war and thereby opened the Lebanese domestic arena before the external players (Faris, 1994, 17-30).

At the beginning of the civil war, al-Sadr did not lose any time to condemn violence. He took sanctuary in a Beirut mosque and declared indefinite fast against the spreading violence in the country. Launching the fast, he said, "Violence had defiled the country; I have come to the house of God, and my sustenance is the book of God (The Quran) and a few drops of water. I will stay here until death or until the country is saved. I have bid farewell to my family, to my wife and children and have come here to ask God to save this country." (Ajami, 1986, 165). Imam al-Sadr decided to end his fast on the fifth day after the formation of a national unity government was announced. The government under a new prime minister promised to act to ensure lasting peace and also appealed to the Imam to break his fast. The Imam continued denouncing violence and urged his supporters not to participate in the violent struggle. He further stated:

> "We all believe in struggle; but weapons today are in the hands of merciless beast....Weapons are available to the few, also to the rulers. We could resort to force if we really wanted to. Our brothers in Biqa Valley and elsewhere wanted to come to Beirut with their weapons. We refused. Enough destruction and enough ruin have befallen this country ...All I want is Allah's blessings and I know that His blessings come from serving you." (Ajami, 1986, 167).

However, a change in Imam's outright criticism against violence was visible in the later years. Fouad Ajami has quoted him as saying "arms were the adornment of men" and violence was at times permissible to rectify injustice (Ajami, 1986, 168). Musa al-Sadr's Movement of Deprived developed into a military movement in 1975 known as Amal (Afwaj al-Muqawamah al-Lubnaniyyah, or Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance) (ICG Middle East Report, 18 November 2002). The Amal party was caught up in a bid between the LF and LNM.

The LNM was a broad-based alliance formed by Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt and comprising chiefly Muslim leftists and Arab nationalists. The Amal militia joined the LNM to challenge the Maronite ascendancy. The LNM drew most of its soldiers from

the Amal. As a result, the civil war brought heavy casualties on the Shiites. It also magnified the political and economic discontent of the community. The vulnerability of the state to prevent violence took a tremendous toll on the Shiite community, producing another cycle of demographic, social and economic dislocation. Shiites suffered the highest number of fatalities during the civil war, especially in the first year at the hands of the Maronite militias. The eviction of around 100,000 Shiites from Naba in August 1976 and their resettlement in the overpopulated suburbs of the Southern Lebanon further fuelled the radicalisation of the community (Cobban, 1996, 143). As the casualties of the Shiites mounted, al-Sadr broke with the LNM. However, the political mobilisation of the Maronites and also the disastrous fallout of the civil war forced the Shiites for counter-mobilisation. Taking a diametrically opposite stance from his earlier position, al-Sadr supported the Syrian intervention against the LNM and the Palestinians in June 1978. With that decision, he effectively aligned the Lebanese Shiites with the government forces. And, Israel's 1978 war on Lebanon further worsened the relationship between the Amal party and the Palestinians in the country. The Shiite houses and villages in the Southern Lebanon were totally destroyed in Israel's invasion. However, the catastrophe of the wars and also the long-simmering socio-political marginalisation stepped up the radicalisation of the Amal party in the late 1970s. Besides, the mysterious disappearance of Imam al-Sadr witnessed a considerable upsurge in the popularity of the Amal party. The Imam vanished in August 1978 on a visit to Libya. With the disappearance, al-Sadr became a national hero and a symbol of martyrdom for the Lebanese Shiites. The Imam's disappearance, together with the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Israeli wars staged the set for the militant mobilisation of the Lebanese Shiites, which culminated in the emergence of the Hezbollah.

The Israeli Invasions

The identity crisis of Lebanese Shiites and the imbalances in the society was further reinforced by Israel's invasions of 1978 and 1982. Though the politicisation of the Shiites began almost a decade earlier, the military interventions of Israel and the catastrophe it brought upon the Shiite community in South Lebanon seemed to have provided an impetus for the radicalisation of the community. The mass destruction wreaked by Israeli interventions and the subsequent occupation of Southern Lebanon

gave birth to various Shiite Islamic groups that set the stage for the emergence of Hezbollah.

Israel's hostility to Lebanon goes back to late 1960s when the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) started establishing bases in the South. The Cairo Agreement of 1969 had allowed the Palestinians to carry out resistance against the Israeli forces from the Arqoub areas in Southern Lebanon. The 1970-71 civil war in Jordan led to the exodus of tens of thousands of Palestinians to Lebanon. The Palestinian leadership, challenging the Lebanese government, established a "state within the state" encompassing South Lebanon, much of the Biqa and West Beirut (Norton, 1987, 6). Initially, the Shiites had expressed solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Many Shiite students had even joined along with Sunnis a guerrilla organisation formed by Sayyid Abdul Husayn Sharaf al-Din from al-Ja fariyyah. These guerrilla groups carried out many attacks against the Israeli troops on the Lebanese-Israeli border area. As the PLO grew in strength in Southern Lebanon, where the Shiites were the dominant community, and established a state within the state, the Shiites feared that the PLO would take control of the area and transform it into a Palestinian homeland. On the other hand, Israel perceived the presence of the PLO in the adjacent Southern Lebanon as a potential threat to its northern settlements. Therefore, Israel launched its so-called 'Operation Litani' military action in 1978 in Southern Lebanon aimed at driving the Palestinians north of the Litani River. The Israeli troops occupied areas as far north as the Litani River for the purpose of creating a "security zone" that, according to them, would stop the attacks by the Palestinians (Gordon, 1983, 119-123). Most of the Shiites in the South welcomed the Israeli invasion thinking that the attack would end the hegemony of Palestinians in Southern Lebanon. However, the war failed to destroy the PLO as a coherent political and military force. Besides, it resulted in the death of 2,000 and the displacement of 250,000, many of whom were Shiites (McDowel, 1983, 3). The UN Security Council Resolution 425 called for an unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the South and also the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) along the Lebanese-Israeli border. With the UN resolution, the PLO agreed to stop its military activity and Israel partially withdrew after handing over the control of the South to its ally, mainly a Maronite proxy militia, the South Lebanese Army (SLA) (Norton, 2000, 23).

The heavy casualties suffered by the Shiites, though they were not part of the resistance against the Israeli occupation, led to the creation an impression among them that Israel was targeting them as a community. The increased miseries suffered by the Shiites finally turned out to be a catalyst which reinforced radicalisation among the Shiites. Further, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a major thrust to the Islamic movements across the world. The Iranian revolution expanded the scope of the Islamic resistance, particularly in the crisis-ridden West Asia. Lebanon, where the Shiites enjoy traditional religious ties with the Iranian Shiites, was not an exception for the demonstration effect of the Iranian revolution. However, the extent of demonstration effect depends on many factors such as the success of the initial revolution, cross-cultural and ideological similarities and also the effectiveness of communication networks. Although Lebanon was not geographically adjacent to Iran, the cultural proximity between the Shiites in Iran and Lebanon provided the Lebanese Shiite leadership a new hope of Islamic movement both for the empowerment of the community inside the country and for resisting the external threat.

The Lebanese Shiite leadership has traditionally enjoyed good relationship with their Iranian counterparts. The Shiite religious schools in Qom in Iran and Najaf in Iraq acted as meeting places for the Shiite religious leaders from Iran, Lebanon and Iraq. Later, Shiite leader Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's school in Najaf became the epicentre of Shiite activism. The revolutionary ideology evolved through such learning circles where Shiite leaders from different countries actively participated. These ideological views and the network of kinship and personal friendship later contributed to the ascendancy of Shiite activism in Lebanon. Baqir al-Sadr's school also became the home base of the Party of Islamic Call (Hizb al-Dawah al-Islamiyya) which was founded to propagate revolutionary messages throughout the Shiite communities in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and the Gulf countries.[4] Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who was expelled from Iran by Shah in 1964 joined the Najaf school and later became a great inspiration to the Shiite scholars in Najaf. Following the ascendancy of the Baath party to power in Iraq, hundreds of Lebanese Shiite scholars were expelled from Iraq. These students established the Lebanese Muslim Students

[4] The Dawah ideology represented an activist brand of religio-political revivalism inspired by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. For details, see Mallat (1968), 6-7. Also see, Kramer (1990), 131-151.

Union in the early 1970s. The deportation policy of the Baathists reached its peak in 1977 when over 100 clerics were forced to return to Lebanon. Ayatollah Khomeini was also expelled from Iraq in 1978 because of his anti-Shah activities. However, the Iranian revolution and the heroic return of Khomeini to Iran made him an undisputable leader of the Shiites inside and outside of Iran.[5] Driven by the revolutionary fervour, Khomeini called upon the Shiites all over the world to establish Islamic theocratic states in their respective countries. As Baqir al-Sadr declared absolute support for the Iranian revolution, fearing an upsurge of the majority Shiites, the Baathist administration of Iraq executed him along with his sister in April 1980. The Iraqi government also shut down the Shiite schools in Najaf and deported many clerics. At this point of time, the epicentre of Shiite activism shifted from Iraqi city of Najaf to Iranian city of Qom.

The Qom connection of many Lebanese Shiites and their close ties with the religious and military establishment of Iran helped the Lebanese Shiites create an effective network to facilitate Iranian revolution's demonstration effect. Many Shiite leaders such as Imam Musa al-Sadr, Ayatollah Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din and Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadallah were part of the Najaf-Qom network. With the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr and the ascendancy of Iranian clergy to power, a new group of radical Lebanese Shiite leaders emerged under the tutelage of Imam Khomeini. Leaders such as Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi, Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayil, Shaykh Muhammad Yazbakh, Shaykh Naim Qasim, Sayyid Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, and Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, who kept good political and religious ties with the Iranian theocratic establishment, emerged into the Lebanese political arena in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic revolution (Hamzeh and Dekmejian, 1993, 36-37). Drawing inspiration from the revolution and Imam Khomeini's ideological worldview, these clerics started mobilising people on religious lines but for political goals. It was at this juncture that Israel started its second invasion of Lebanon in 1982 aimed at destroying the resistance of the Palestinians. The Shiites in Southern Lebanon, who were inspired by the Iranian revolution and led by a new group of radical clergy, found the war as a great opportunity for launching a political

[5] For details on Iranian revolution, see Hussain (1985). Also see Heikal (1983).

movement both for gaining strength at domestic level and also to defeat the external aggressor.

Apart from uprooting the PLO from Lebanon, another major goal of Israel's so-called 'Operation Peace for Galilee' was to curtail the Syrian influence in Lebanon. The Syrian influence and control over Lebanon were building up since it sent troops to Lebanon following the outbreak of the civil war (Abukhalil, 1994 (1), 123-136). The two-month operation of Israel from 3 June to 12 August succeeded in driving the PLO out of Lebanon[6] and pushing Syrian forces back to the Lebanese-Syrian border. However, unlike the 1978 war, Israel had to deal with an effective and strong resistance during the second invasion. The war and its casualties in the Southern Lebanon resulted in a high level of radicalisation of the Shiites. The war led to the killing of 18,000 individuals and the wounding of 30,000. The invasion also caused damage to 80% of the southern villages and the near destruction of seven of them. It also inflicted heavy loss on the Syrian troops as the surface-to-air missile system of Syria was destroyed and they lost 102 aircraft and 61 pilots (Agha and Khalidi, 1995, 14-17).

The destruction of the villages and the livelihood led to the exodus of the tens of thousands of Shiites from the South. The Palestinian refugee camps in and around Beirut had provided shelter to the Shiite refugees. Some scholars argue that many Shiites were also killed in the Sabra and Chatila massacres of 1982.[7] Another radicalising outcome of the invasion was Israel's desecration of an 'Ashura' ceremonial procession in Nabatiyyeh in 1983 which inflamed the Shiite wrath against Israel.[8] Many Shiite scholars, including Imam Musa al-Sadr, have interpreted the martyrdom of Imam Husayn as a symbol of the brave resistance and sacrifice of the Shiites throughout their history. At this juncture, Israeli troops' desecration of the

[6] Following the war, the PLO was forced to evacuate Lebanon in September 1983 under the supervision of the Multinational Forces, mostly American Marines and French troops. The PLO leadership found refuge in Tunis and carried out its struggle against Israel. For a detailed analysis on the emergence and activities of PLO, see Frangi (1982); Also see Cobban (1984).

[7] Over 2,000 refugees in Sabra and Chatila camps were massacred by Christian militiamen in September 1982 with the tacit approval of the Israeli troops. For details see, Jones and Murphy (2002), 107. Also see, Colie (1986), 118.

[8] The Ashura ceremonial procession is annually held by the Shiite communities to commemorate the martyrdom of the third Imam, Husayn. According to the Shiite theology, Imam Husayn and his 72 companions were slaughtered while going to the town of Kufa to assume leadership by forces loyal to Ummayad ruler Yazid. See, Saad-Ghorayeb (2002) 11. Also see, Sachedina (1981).

Ashura procession had far-reaching implications among the Shiites. The Israeli act was viewed as an onslaught against the religious practices of the Shiite community, and this perception fuelled the radicalisation tendency among Shiites and also strengthened the rising resistance against the Israeli troops.

Emergence of Hezbollah

Following the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr, the long-simmering ideological conflicts within the Amal party started coming out. Under the leadership of Nabih Berri, the Amal was gradually dominated by a largely secular-middle class elite more interested in the Beirut power struggles. However, the emergence of Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadallah as an influential religious figure among the Lebanese Shiites put the Amal under enormous pressure to address the changing socio-political scenario of the country. Drawing inspiration from the political movements of the Iranian Shiites, Fadallah started a reform movement within the Amal Party prior to the revolution. Fadallah, who was a product of the al-Ilmiyyah hawzat (centre of learning) of Najaf, along with a group of Shiite clerics, who also had the Najaf experience, recreated the Iraqi-based Dawa Party in Lebanon. The Dawa party, which espoused the revolutionary brand of Islam, established a number of hawzats and self-help organisations to propagate its ideology. Besides, Fadallah also established two hawzats of his own – Jamiyyat Usrat al-Takhi (Society of Brethren Family) and Jamiyyat al-Mabarat al-Khiriyyah (Charitable Philanthropic Society). Fadallah's movement asserted the political activist brand of Islam. He also made it clear in his writings that there were certain circumstances under which force could be used against the enemies of Islam. This was largely against the early non-violent preaching of Imam Musa al-Sadr and the increasing secular identity of the Amal party. However, instead of establishing another political movement, Fadallah preferred to reform the Amal from within. On the other hand, both the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council and Amal, sans Imam al Sadr, were incapable of addressing the emerging realities within the Shiite community. The Amal, under the leadership of Husayn al-Husayni and Nabih Berri failed to retain the party's strength at the grass root level as the revolutionary ideology started gaining ground. In the run-up to the Iranian revolution, a cultural organisation called as Committee Supportive of Iranian Revolution was formed in Lebanon under the leadership of Fadallah. The Committee

also staged a number of mass demonstrations in support of revolution prior to the final triumph of Iranian movement (Saad Ghorayeb, 2002, 13-14).

The Iranian revolution further fuelled factionalism and militancy within the Amal. With the revolutionary ideology bringing the Iranian clergy into power, the radicals within the Amal gained momentum and started counter-mobilisation against the liberal elites. These internal conflicts burst into open in the early days of Israeli invasion of June 1982. When Nabhi Berri decided to take part in the National Salvation Committee set up by Lebanese President Elias Sarkis, a group of Amal activists under the leadership of the party's deputy leader and official spokesman Hussayn al-Mussawi split from Amal in June 1982. Mussawi said that Berri's decision to take part in the Salvation Committee, which was set up to supervise the removal of the PLO forces from Beirut, was a deviation from the views of Imam Musa al-Sadr. He also viewed that Berri capitulated to the broader plans of the US-Israeli alliance.[9] Aimed at channelling the radical sentiments among the Shiites, Mussawi founded Islamic Amal with the blessings of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The socio-political atmosphere of Lebanon in 1982 which was stormed by another Israeli invasion and charged by the teachings of radical spiritual leaders such as Ayatollah Fadallah, Shaykh al-Tufayil and Shaykh Raghib Harb was favourable for a politico-religious organisation such as Islamic Amal. Apart from Musawi, Subhi al-Tufayil, Abbas al-Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah, who later became the top leaders of Hezbollah, also broke with Amal over ideological differences (ICG Middle East Report, 18 November 2002). Some disgruntled Amal members, who did not participate in the activities of the Islamic Amal, joined smaller groupings, including Islamic Jihad (Not the Palestinian Islamic Jihad).[10]

[9] The Salvation Committee contained members of the various political forces on the ground, including Bashir al-Gemayel, the leader of the Lebanese forces which were allied with Israel. For details see, ICG Middle East Report, (18 November 2002).

[10] The Islamic Jihad which also enjoyed the support of the Iranian government is believed to have carried out many violent attacks, including the bombings of the U.S. embassy and US marine and French military barracks in Beirut in 1983 and the US embassy's annex in 1984. The organisation has also been widely held responsible for the kidnapping and murder of several US and western citizens. However, many western governments see Hezbollah responsible for the attacks, though connections between Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad remain murky. For details see, Harb and Leenders (2005), 175-176.

The formation of Islamic Amal and the threat to the secular ideology of Amal party was an opportunity to Iran to intensify its efforts to export the Islamic revolution. In August 1982, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini met with a number of Lebanese Shiite leaders including Muhammad Husayn Fadallah, Subhi al-Tufayil and Shaykh Raghib Harb. The Lebanese leaders were in Tehran to attend the Islamic Movements Conference (First Conference for the Downtrodden). During the meeting, Imam Khomeini urged the Lebanese leaders to mobilise people to fight the Israeli invasion. The leaders won in mobilising people back in Lebanon against the "enemies of Islam"- Israel, the United States and their Lebanese supporters. Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayil, who later became the first Secretary-General of Hezbollah, said that this early stage of mobilisation and resistance were "extremely complex". He said, "The situation was extremely complex as religion, politics and opportunism were mixed. Even some of the shaykhs were political traders. However the instructions of the leader - Imam Khomeini - were to create a movement that springs from pure Islamic fundamentals; a movement that shakes the current situation." (Hamzeh, 2004, 24). The Shiite resistance against the Israeli invasion, which touched off in the Biqa Valley drew many young clerics and activists from different religious and political organisations. Leaders such as Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi and Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayil from the Dawa Party, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, Shaykh Naim Qasim, Shaykh Muhammad Yazbak from Amal and Abd al-Hadi Hamadih from the Lebanese Communist Party joined the resistance movement Hamzeh, 2004, 24). Moreover, Iran's dispatch of 1,500 Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) in the Biqa stepped up resistance. These revolutionary guards, stationed in Brital, Nabisheet and Baalbek, provided training to the Shiites. At the forefront of this resistance movement was the Association of the Ulama of Jabal Amil. In the first major military operation, the Shiites who were trained under the Revolutionary Guards and the militant clerics seized a Lebanese military barrack in Janta, 40 kilometres from Baalbek and transformed it into the military headquarters of the resistance. The new resistance group vowed to establish "Islamic Lebanon" and liberate Jerusalem from the "enemies of Islam". Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi has said, "We are ready fight to Israel, we are martyrdom seeking (shahadah), and we will fight them even from the graves." (Hamzeh, 2004, 25). Although there was coordination among the various resistance groups, they were hardly bound by organisational links.

The formation of the 'Committee of Nine' between August and September 1982, was a joint effort by the leaders of the different resistance groups to bring the people who were fighting the Israelis together under an umbrella. This is considered to be the final stage of the emergence of Hezbollah as a resistance organisation fighting for the liberation of Southern Lebanon. The Committee of Nine which later became the Majlis al-Shura or the Consultative Council of Hezbollah was founded with the support of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The Committee incorporated three former Amal members, three clerics and three members of the Committee Supportive of the Islamic Revolution. In effect, the new organisation won in attracting the disgruntled activists from various streams, such as Amal, Islamic Amal, Lebanese Dawa, the Association of Muslim Ulama in Lebanon, the Association of Muslim Students and also individual clerics with their followers (Shapira, 1988, 115). The leaders of the Committee, including Shaykh al-Tufayil and Sayyid al-Musawi had travelled to Tehran for the advise of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The Iranian Shiite leader is believed to have told the Committee leaders to adopt a new name for the movement which would unite all the Islamists in the country. The new entity later took the name of Hezbollah after a verse in the Quran (Hamzeh, 2004, 25).

Iranian and Syrian Role

Hezbollah soon developed into Lebanon's most disciplined and best organised group fighting against the Israeli occupation of the Southern Lebanon. The influence of the Committee Supportive of the Islamic Revolution contributed to the radicalisation of the movement. Moreover, the Islamic revolutionary government in Tehran offered financial, military and ideological support to the new movement. The political and economic isolation of the Shiites both under foreign rule and the Maronite-dominated Lebanese government led a large number of people to rally behind the organisation. According to Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, "What originated as a religious current in the early 1990s, metamorphosed into a relatively disorganised resistance movement, which in turn transformed itself into a structured political party" (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 15).

The support of the Islamic Republic of Iran was very crucial in Hezbollah's development as a major resistance force in Lebanon. Iran, which was pursuing an

ideological foreign policy during that time, saw an opportunity in Lebanon to export Islamic revolution. Syria was another regional actor, who has historic ties with Lebanon, supported the growth of Hezbollah. The US claimed that Iran provided Hezbollah with roughly USD 100 million per year (ICG Middle East Report, 18 November 2002). The creation of Hezbollah was part of Iran's campaign to spread the message of the Islamic revolution, whereas for Syria the new group was a crucial instrument for preserving its interests in Lebanon. (Norton, 2000, 24). Hezbollah's formation also helped Iran have direct contact with a major Shiite community in the Arab land. With its small but crucial presence in the Arab land, Iran could also grab an influential role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iran used its ties with the Lebanese Shiites to reach out to the Arab communities in the region and boost the bilateral relations with them. Iran's hostility towards the US and its support for the anti-Israeli resistance groups in Lebanon helped the Islamic country reach out to the wider constituency of the Arab world though it was in war with Iraq. Iran had also taken a firm stance against the western presence in Lebanon. "Anti-Americanism" is one of the major slogans of the Iranian revolution. Therefore, these ideological similarities and its support for the anti-Israeli resistance in Lebanon gave Iran a new opportunity for mending ties with the Arab world.

Iran had the support of Syria for its operations in the war-hit Lebanon. It was only with the Syrian consent that Iran was able to enter the Lebanese political arena, which had been under Syrian control since 1976 (Abukhalil, 1994 (1), 123-136). Syria, which feared that the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and the presence of western forces in the country would adversely affect its traditional interests in Lebanon, was ready to accept help from any country to drive Israelis out of Lebanon. Its suspicions got strengthened as the Lebanese political class entered into an agreement with Israel, under the tutelage of the US.[11] Syria and some Lebanese leaders said that the agreement was lopsided and it virtually ceded Southern Lebanon to Israel. Moreover, Syria calculated that a hostile Lebanon dominated by Israel and the West could trigger internal problems in its domestic politics. As a counter strategy to the mounting influence of Israel and the US in Lebanese politics, Syria supported the entry of

[11] The agreement was signed on 17 May 1983 and called for mutual recognition between Lebanon and Israel and an end to the violence. It was backed by Lebanese President Amin Gemayel but rejected by Syria. After the agreement, Israel had ordered partial withdrawal from Lebanon. See ICG Middle East Report (18 November 2002).

Iranian guards into Lebanon and gave them direct access to its borders with the region (Faksh, 1991, 48). Syria also found a way out for its isolation in the emerging alliance with the Islamic Iran. Syria leaned towards Iran for economic assistance and for political support for its ideologically-driven foreign policy, while it remained at the sufficient distance to avoid becoming too dependent on Iran. Thus, the alliance of Iran and Syria in effect turned out to be helpful for the development of Hezbollah. However, the party leaders waited until 1985 to declare the birth of its organisation publicly. The party issued a communiqué called al-Risalah al-Maftuha (The Open Letter) which declared the birth and the political ideology of Hezbollah. The leaders chose the date of the first anniversary of the assassination of Shaykh Raghib Harb and the second anniversary of the Sabra and Chattila massacres. The emergence of Hezbollah helped the anti-invasion forces come together under a specific ideology and with a common goal of ending the occupation.

The Shiite community saw Hezbollah as a platform to carry out the resistance as well as a political movement for the upliftment of the deprived community. Being aware of this dual identity, Hezbollah kept its social and military missions separate. The party apparatus were active in the post-war reconstruction of Lebanon along with carrying out the resistance activities in the South. These missions, which were separated in its character within the larger political agenda of Hezbollah, helped the party entrench itself into the Lebanese society and later become a major political force in the country.

The Political Ideology

The 'Open Letter' which was read out at a general meeting held by Hezbollah in March 1985 was widely conceived as the declaration of the political ideology of the party. The senior party leaders supported this perception by their statements made afterwards. The ideology of Hezbollah was mainly based on the Islamic Revolution of 1979. For Hezbollah, Jihad is perceived as a legitimate defensive war for carrying out political activism. Many analysts have pointed out that Hezbollah's ideology revolved around two main convictions. First, it is aimed at emulating Iran's notion of the Velayat-e-Faqih (rule of the Islamic jurist). Second, it calls for the ultimate destruction of Israel. Hezbollah has ruled out the possibility of any reconciliation with

Israel and also vowed to "liberate" Jerusalem (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 134-167). "According to the 'Open Letter', the major goals of the Hezbollah are:

1. The establishment of a revolutionary Islamic republic in Lebanon based on the Iranian model (as a strategic goal and as a stage in the establishment of a global Islamic republic);
2. Fighting Western imperialism in Lebanon, reducing its influence and forcing western entities to leave the region;
3. Fighting the Israeli presence in a way that will not be restricted to its banishment from Lebanon, but also concentrating efforts on its annihilation in order to impose Islam upon Jerusalem;
4. Establishing and consolidating the organisation's status as the leading Islamic organisation in Lebanon." (Shay, 2005, 64).

This radical Shiite ideology, which has offered an attractive and active alternative to the Shiite community's political and religious establishment, helped the organisation draw support from the deprived sections of the society. Like the Iranian model, Hezbollah also believes in the establishment of an Islamic order. According to the organisation, the primary vision of a Muslim is not only worshiping the God but also establishing an Islamic order as the expression of God's just society. Hezbollah's current Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah has said, "Divine justice demands that God does what is best for humanity, and divine truthfulness has generated such a faith. God's promise will be fulfilled, if humanity keeps its covenant of working for God's just society." (Hamzeh, 2004, 28). According to Hezbollah's theology, the sources of God's Law are al-Quran, the traditions (al-Sunnah) of Prophet Muhammad, the imams and the interpretation (ijtihad) of the ulama. The party believes that the Islamic order, which is according to the wishes of Allah, would restore cultural, political and religious unity of any society.

Hezbollah also subscribes to the doctrine of clerical supremacy in which the clergy would have the supreme authority. Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini's theory of Velayat-e-Faqih is closely linked with the Shiite belief. Shiism generally holds the opinion that the common man does not have the capacity to interpret the real meaning of Quran, Prophet's Sunnah or the traditions of the Imams. The Imams, who

were largely believed as morally infallible to reveal the truth, constituted the divine guides for the community. After the 12th Imam, the clergy were appointed as the "general deputies" of the Imam or the "functional Imams" (Hamzeh, 2004, 28). As far as Hezbollah is concerned, the doctrine of Velayat-e-Faqih is an integral part of the intellectual foundations of the party Hezbollah also follows Khomeini's interpretation of the Quranic verses. The organisation identifies three levels of obedience: God (Allah), Prophets (Muhammad) and then Godly Persons (Twelve Imams). The fourth level, according to the Khomeini doctrine, is the Men of Religion, who are represented by the Velayat-e-Faqih (Arjomand, 1984, 238). It acknowledges the Wali-e-Faqih as the designated deputy of the 12th Imam during his occultation. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb has quoted Hezbollah leader Nasrallah as saying, "He who rejects the authority of the Velayat-e-Faqih rejects God and Ahlul-Bayt (this refers to the descendants of Imam Ali and his wife Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter) and is almost a polytheist" (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 64). Hezbollah believes a just Islamic order could not be established without Velayat-e-Faqih. According to the party, the Faqih who will guide the Shiites under any circumstances could unite the Ummah, Shiites and Sunnis alike.

The theory of Velayat-e-Faqih gave powerful influence to the clergy in Hezbollah's ideology and practices. The party obliged to comply with the political and religious authority of Khomeini in the post revolutionary era. The Iranian supreme leader's path and preaching were highly respected among the Hezbollah ranks and also considered as the "jurisprudential givens" (Abukhalil, 1994 (2), 690). However, even after the era of Khomeini, Hezbollah has pledged its loyalty to the Iranian establishment. This shows the party's ideological commitment to the Faqih and its proclivity for the pan Islamic brotherhood. In the words of Nasrallah, Velayat-e-Faqih is the "spinal cord" of Hezbollah. He continues saying, "Take out Velayat-e-Faqih and Hezbollah becomes a dead body, even a divided one. An ummah without Ali is an ummah without spirit, an ummah without Husayn is an ummah without soul, and an ummah without Wali-e-Faqih, who must be obeyed, is a dead torn ummah" (Hamzeh, 2004, 36). Therefore, Hezbollah's ideology is essentially juristical, where the clergy, particularly the Wali-e-Faqih enjoy supreme authority. The clergy has the authority to make changes in the ideology which is based on faith, unity, social justice and jihad according to the circumstances.

Conclusion

The emergence of Hezbollah is considered to be the manifestation of the Shiite community's political will to end its own long story of oppression and segregation and also its readiness to fight the occupation. The community consciousness, the Lebanese Shiites attained under the leadership of dynamic clerics such as Imam Musa al-Sadr and Shaykh Fadallah, acted as the base of the political mobilisation of the community. This politicisation process led to the formation of Shiite movements such as Amal party and Hezbollah, and it went further with such movements gaining momentum in the volatile political atmosphere of Lebanon in 1970s and 1980s. As Hezbollah emerged as the major resistance force against the Israeli occupation, it was also an opportunity for the majority of the Shiites to challenge the post-colonial political order which was in favour of the minority Maronite Christians. These two factors, anger against the occupation and quest for political representation defined the politics of Hezbollah at the beginning. This dual-faced resistance, which was against the external occupation as well as a sectarian domestic political order gained momentum with the Iranian clergy capturing power in Tehran in 1979. It was a largely accepted fact that the revolution in Iran had it most influential ripples in Lebanon as Hezbollah, drawing inspiration from the radical Islamist ideology, emerged as a potential threat to Israel. The external help, mainly from Iran and Syria was crucial in the growth of the party. The survival of Hezbollah as a radical movement based on political Shiism was one of the imperatives of the revolutionary foreign policy Iran pursued in the aftermath of the revolution. Therefore, Iran's support to Hezbollah was the manifestation of its commitment to Khomeini's idea of spreading revolution to other countries while Syria offered help to Hezbollah mainly based on pragmatic calculations. Syria thought that an active resistance force would keep Israel engaged in Lebanon so long as it continues occupation. As a result, Hezbollah could win the backing of Iran as well as Syria. This unique triangular relationship, between two states and an organisation, was powerful enough to influence even the regional political equations. The three parties shared an anti-Zionist and anti-western view and kept open the possibility of resistance against the expansive policies of Israel and its western supporters. Moreover, this alliance has

brought Hezbollah to the regional limelight from its battle fields in the Southern Lebanon.

These all domestic and regional factors helped the organisation overcome the challenges it faced in the early years of its formation. The Islamic juristical ideology, which it borrowed from Ayatollah Khomeini's interpretation of political Shiism, is the glue that keeps the party leaders and its followers together in a struggle for a common goal. Furthermore, many researchers argue that the revolutionary character of Hezbollah's ideology, its call for total overhaul of the system and also the cadre structure of the party resembles a Leninist organisation. However, Hezbollah's core belief lies in its faith in Islamic order and the supreme authority of the God and his representatives, the Wali-e-Faqih. The juristical nature of the ideology also provides the privilege to the clerical elite to make alterations in the ideological component. This feature makes Hezbollah different from other revolutionary/Islamist organisations. Neither the Sunni radical movements, which strictly follow the verses of Prophet Mohammad nor the Marxist –Leninist organisations based on the dialectical interpretation of history, has the ideological flexibility which Hezbollah claims. This flexibility was on display many times following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and it was the corner stone of the party's metamorphosis from an active revolutionary-resistance force to a pragmatic resistance force in 1990s.

CHAPTER 2

HEZBOLLAH AS A RESISTANCE FORCE

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The political ideology of Hezbollah emphasises Islamic identity of the organisation and calls on its followers to be ready to meet any challenge against the faith. The concept of resistance is the very backbone of the party which emerged against the backdrop of the Israeli war. For attaining its ideological and political goals, the Hezbollah leadership urged it followers to resort into armed resistance against the occupiers. According to the leadership, the armed resistance is a means for defeating the enemy as well as for establishing an Islamic order. The 1982 war provided an atmosphere to the different groups, who represent the under-privileged Shiite community in Lebanon, to come under one broader umbrella of resistance. The circumstances in Lebanon in the early 1980s were helpful for the radical ideologies to win the people's support. The Shiite community, which was going through different phases of politicisation under Islamic leaders such as Imam Musa al-Sadr and Shaykh Fadallah, saw the emergence of Hezbollah as an opportunity to enter the divided polity of Lebanon. Frustrated by the secular promises given by the national politicians time and again, the Shiites hoped for a new beginning in Lebanese politics with the emergence of Hezbollah. Hezbollah's rejection of the secular politics, its open embracing of the Iranian model of revolution, and its commitment for the establishment of an "Islamic order" or a theocratic system in Lebanon were seen by the community as the right way to end the years-long suppression by the Maronite-Sunni rulers. As a result, Hezbollah emerged as a major political and resistance force in 1980s itself.

Even before the official announcement of the birth of the party in 1985, the Hezbollah leaders had rejected the idea of Imam Musa al-Sadr's non-violent resistance, and categorically declared that they would carry out armed resistance against the occupiers. In fact, the Hezbollah cadres and other Shiite groups such as Islamic Jihad and Amal did not face any potential threat in the early 1980s as the fragile Lebanese government was busy tackling the civil war. Moreover, the triumph of radical Islamist ideology in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini's theory of spreading revolution to the outside world set a context in favour of the growth of Islamist groups across the

region. Syria, another regional power, also welcomed the emergence of a resistance group in Lebanon against the occupation. Syria had exercised state-like authority over major parts of Lebanon before the outbreak of the 1982 war. However, the Syrians were forced out of most Lebanese territory by the Israeli invasion. Wary of the increasing influence of the western powers and the consequences of the continuing occupation, Syria was willing to help Iran to engage in Lebanon. These all circumstances and the open support of the Iranian government helped the resistance groups cause major blows to the occupying army as well as the multinational forces in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Emergence Of Islamic Resistance

The liberation of the Lebanese territories from Israel was the paramount objective of the resistance and also the political and organisational concern. The Hezbollah leaders had mentioned that liberating the territories of the country was the major concern for the party. The party leaders, from its inception, have denied its alleged sectarian character and have been conscious to pursue a clear policy towards the state and society of Lebanon. From early 1980s, the party has insisted that capturing political power in Lebanon and establishing an Islamic order, which is mentioned in its manifesto, was secondary to the main goal of driving the Israeli army out of the country. The then senior party leader Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi has made this stand clear saying, "The resistance to Israel is the priority of all priorities." He further depicted the resistance as the "redline which cannot be crossed". (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 112).

Emphasising the concept of resistance against the occupation, the Hezbollah-linked groups launched martyrdom operations and guerrilla warfare against the Israeli troops in 1982 itself. Before the Hezbollah-groups started active participation in resistance, it was a fragile cooperative structure, called as the Lebanese National Resistance (LNR), which was fighting the Israeli army. The LNR was an umbrella group consisting of a certain section within Amal, components of the Lebanese national movement, and certain groups of the Palestinian military presence, mainly anti-Arafat (Agha and Khalidi, 1995, 19). They challenged the invasion with the help of Syria but were largely weak either to win the support of the people or to pose any potential

threat against the Israeli army. It was at this crucial juncture that Hezbollah carried out its first martyrdom operation in November 1982 destroying the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre (Jaber, 1997, 115-116). The 1983 Israeli-Lebanese accord, signed with an aim of neutralising the results of the invasion, only worsened the situation. The resistance groups launched their second major attack on Israeli military headquarters in Tyre in October 1983 in which 29 people were killed and 30 injured.

The martyrdom operations, which signalled a switch from the traditional warfare, caused major psychological blows to the Israeli army. Such operations also attracted more youths to Hezbollah who were ready to challenge Israel's military might under the command of the party leadership. However, the Israeli soldiers were not the only targets of the suicide fighters. The underground groups such as Islamic Jihad (al-Jihad al-Islami), which were not directly controlled by Hezbollah, carried out suicide attacks against the so-called Multinational Forces in 1983. The first such action was the bombing of the United States Embassy building in Beirut in April. The attack destroyed the Embassy totally killing 80 people, including US agents in charge of the region (Byman, 2003, 57-58). Six months later, in October 1983, a car bomb struck at the American marine headquarters at the airport killing 241 men. On the same day, a French contingent of the Multinational Forces was also attacked killing 56 soldiers.[12] Soon after the attacks, the Islamic Jihad claimed the responsibility of the bombings.

The martyrdom operations against the Multinational Forces were generally supported by the Islamic community in Lebanon. According to Hezbollah, the continuing presence of the American and French troops under the banner of the Multinational Forces was not to ensure peace in the war-hit country, but to support Israel's occupation and the election of Amin Gemayel to the presidency. Hezbollah considered the victory of Gemayel to be a victory of the West and the hegemonic Maronite groups. Because, it was one of the stated objectives of the 1982 war that to install a pro-Western government in Lebanon following the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, Amin's brother. (Norton, 2000, 23). Therefore, Hezbollah reiterated its pledge to continue attacks on the foreign troops as long as they remain in Lebanon. As a result of the suicide attacks, the American and French troops were pulled out from

[12] Some scholars later argued that the Islamic Jihad carried out the attacks with the direct support of Iran and the knowledge of Hezbollah leadership. For details, see Bulloch and Harvey (1988), 222.

Lebanon in 1984. The withdrawal of the Multinational Forces gave confidence to comparatively weaker militant groups vis-à-vis their enemies.

Following the withdrawal of the Multinational Forces, the Hezbollah-linked groups intensified their military operations against the Israeli troops and the foreign nationals living in the country. The civil war, which weakened the Lebanese government as well as the army, provided the Islamist groups with an opportunity to build up strong organisational base for carrying out resistance operation. After the Multinational Forces' pull-out, the Islamists carried out a series of kidnappings and hijacking operations against western citizens. The Islamic Jihad was in the forefront of these operations. They claimed the responsibility for dozens of kidnappings of Americans, French and British in March 1984 (Hamzeh, 2000, 751). Other major Islamist organisations such as the Revolutionary Justice Organisation (Munazzamat al-Adalah al-Thawriyya) and the Oppressed of the Earth Organisation (Munazzamat al-Mustadafin fil-Ard) were also implicated in the hostage-taking.[13] Many reports at this point of time claimed that Hezbollah was either directly or indirectly linked with the attacks against the foreign nationals. However, the party has neither claimed the responsibility of such acts nor deplored them. For Hezbollah, the liberation of the Southern Lebanon from the occupying forces was the ultimate aim of the resistance.

The party's political clout increased following the withdrawal of the Multinational Forces. Although the secular parties in the country opposed the violent attacks by the religious groups, the Islamic Resistance (al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah) led by Hezbollah attracted large number of youths. On the other hand, Israel's losses continued to mount and its attempts to create village militias in Southern Lebanon failed to find success. Although the occupying forces stepped up arrests and other repressive measures against the Shiite youths, the momentum of the resistance was increasing. The killing of more and more Israeli soldiers also exerted much pressure on the Israeli government, particularly as large section of the opposition and the

[13] According to many analysts, both the Revolutionary Justice Organisation and the Oppressed of the Earth Organisation took part in the hostage-taking under the commands of the Hezbollah leadership. The former has claimed the responsibility of kidnapping four university professors as the latter claimed responsibility for taking two Americans and four French as hostages. However, both the organisations have not been functioning since 1988. For details see, (Hamzeh, 2000, p. 751).

public opinion were growing against the occupation (Wright , 1995, 69). The continuing attacks on the troops and the foreign citizens eventually forced the Israeli army to pull back from Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The Israeli troops, moved south into a self-established 'security zone' to join the strengthened South Lebanese Army (SLA). The pro-Israeli SLA, together with the Israeli troops, patrolled the 850-square-kilometre 'security zone', which extended beyond the border to include the regions of Jezzine and Hasbaya. (Norton, 2000, 26). However, the 'security zone' later became the magnet for more resistance.

Table (1)

Major Suicide Attacks By Hezbollah and Other Resistance Groups 1982-1999

Target	*Place*	*Causalities*	*Year*
Israeli Military headquarters	Tyre	90 dead	November 1982
Israeli Military headquarters	Tyre	29 dead, 30 injured	October 1983.
US Embassy	Beirut	80 dead	April 1983
US Military	Beirut	241 dead	October 1983
Barrack	Beirut	80 dead	October 1983
French Military Barrack	Khiam	12 dead, 14 injured	March 1985
Military Command Post	Tal-Nhas	25 dead, 11 injured	August 1988
Military Motorcade	Qliya	25 dead	August 1989
Motorcade	Al-Jarmaq	9 dead	April 1995
Infantry Patrol	Rab-Thalathin	----	March 1996
Command Post Military Camp	Marjayoun	-----	December 1999

Source: Data cited in Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, In the Path of Hizbullah (Syracuse University Press: New York, 2004), p.82-84.

The redeployment of Israeli forces only accentuated the logic of Hezbollah's resistance. The partial withdrawal helped Hezbollah counter the criticism that the resistance, which was weaker compared to the military strength of Israel, could only incur Israel's wrath. After the redeployment of the Israeli troops, Hezbollah fighters were wary of not letting the Israelis expand occupation from the newly created

occupied zone to other parts. As Hezbollah's direct military operations were mainly targeted at the Israeli troops, the other Islamist groups, continued hostage operations and attacking foreign citizens even after the redeployment of Israeli forces. The Islamic Movement (al-Harakat al-Islamiyyah), which is largely believed as an independent Islamist group based in Biqa valley and led by Sayyid Saddi al-Musawi, launched many attacks against Saudi diplomats in revenge for suppression of the Shiites in the Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia by the monarchy. (Hamzeh, 2000, 751). Unlike the attacks against the Saudi diplomats, the hijacking of a TWA plane in 1985 and Kuwaiti planes in 1984 and 1988 were widely seen as Hezbollah's operations. According to some analysts, Hezbollah cadres carried out the massive hijacking operations in order to secure the freedom of hundreds of Shiite prisoners held in Israel. However, the Hezbollah leaders vehemently denied any role in the hijacking operations. In this regard, Hezbollah leader Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah said, "The truth of the matter is that there was something other than Hezbollah, called the Islamic Jihad who kidnapped the hostages. There exists videocassettes, the communiqués that bear the signature of the Islamic Jihad. It is independent from the party. It is absolutely incorrect that the Islamic Jihad is a cover name for Hezbollah." (Hamzeh, 2004, 86). However the kidnappings of the foreign citizens, particularly the Americans and the French continued. In the years of 1984-1989, 96 foreign citizens were abducted (Shay, 2005, 71). According to many analysts, Hezbollah and its linked groups were directly or indirectly involved in the attacks (Ranstorp, 1998, pp.86-88). At the heart of the attacks against the western citizens, stood the ideological hostility towards the US and Israel. Shaul Shay, who perceives these operations as "terror acts" instigated by Iran, cites some objectives behind the kidnappings, such as:

- Obtaining a bargaining card for the release of imprisoned Shiites worldwide. The most prominent targets of attacks for this purpose were the US, Kuwait, France, Britain and Germany. Among the leading activists in this type of terror attack were relatives of the imprisoned Shiites abroad.
- The implementation of the Iranian terror policy, which believes in activating terror to achieve political goals (including as a means of placing pressure on countries that supported Iraq during the Iranian-Iraqi war) (Shay, 2005, 71).

Hezbollah-Amal Clashes

The late 1980s also witnessed an increase in the conflict between Hezbollah and the Amal party. Following the redeployment of the Israeli troops in 1985, the Amal took a pragmatic turn in its positions towards occupation as well as the Palestinian question. The Amal leadership was even willing to accept the status-quo while Hezbollah vowed to continue resistance against the occupation. The Amal, supported by Syria, took an open stand against the returning of the pre-1982 status-quo regarding the presence of the Palestinians. However, Hezbollah opposed Amal's position on its ideological and political grounds. Hezbollah even accused Amal's war camps of tarnishing the achievements of the Islamic Resistance which always supported the Palestinian movement (Agha and Khalidi, 1995, 21-22). Both Amal and Hezbollah also had different opinions on the deployments of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Hezbollah considered the deployment of the UN troops to be a means to protect the interests of the occupying forces while Amal opted cooperative working strategy with the UNIFIL. Hezbollah's staunch ideological position led to clashes with Amal whom it characterised as prepared to make an agreement with Israel. Meanwhile, heavily fortified Shiite power domains had begun to develop within the paralysed Lebanese state with Hezbollah holding sway in the Biqa and Amal exercising control in the South.

The strife between Hezbollah and Amal posed serious challenges to Syria and Iran. On the one side, Syria supported Hezbollah as a militant organisation which was fighting against the occupation. And on the other hand, Amal was a traditional ally of Damascus (Abukhalil, 1990, 9-13). In the initial stage of the conflicts, Syria, which was wary of the radical politics that Hezbollah represented, had directly intervened in favour of the Amal party. According to many analysts, there were reasons for Syria to be alarmed about the emergence and operations of Hezbollah. Hezbollah's Islamic revolutionary ideology stands against the ideological foundations of the Syrian Baathist regime. Furthermore, the Baathist administration of the then President Hafez al-Azad feared that Hezbollah's resistance activities, including suicide operations and hostage-taking, might contribute to the worsening image of the Syrian government, which was in desperate need of economic aid from the western world. Equally important, if Syria was too closely identified with Hezbollah, a radical Shiite group

gaining assistance from the Iranian establishment, its isolation in the Arab world would increase. These all factors initially led the Baathist administration in Damascus to continue its support to the Amal party under the leadership of Nabih Berri (Abukhalil, 1990, 15).

The Syrian troops had clashed with the Hezbollah activists in February 1987 and killed 20 fighters. Syria's military action against the Hezbollah invited the wrath of the Iranian leadership. However, after that incident Syria opted a diplomatic stand along with Iran aimed at bringing an end to the strife. Despite the diplomatic efforts, the conflicts led to a full-scale war in May 1988. The fighting spread across the southern suburbs of Beirut in three months. Amal suffered a total defeat in the battles and its fighters had to retreat to the Shiite enclaves in the capital city. In late 1988, another fighting touched off between the two forces in which Hezbollah succeeded in destroying Amal in its strongholds such Iqlim al-Tufah, where many displaced Shiites had taken refuge after Israeli attacks. The suburb's estimated half-million residence was then faced with catastrophic conditions as a result of bombardments by Christian forces backed by part of the Lebanese army. The tightly organised and well-funded social and public service apparatus of Hezbollah demonstrated a "programmatic approach" to Shiite politics at this time which was not seen from Amal (Harik, 1996, 45). The fighting decreased in 1989 with the signing of the Taif agreement which brought an end to the 15-year-old civil war in Lebanon. However, intense factionalism and divisiveness within the body of the Amal movement has weakened its military and political effectiveness. Subsequently, the total obedience of Nabih Berri to the Syrian regime has rendered his movement a mere tool in the hands of the operatives of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon (Abukhalil, 1991, 400).

Taif Agreement

The Taif agreement was reached in October 1989 with a goal of ending the 15-year long civil war in the country. The Lebanese parliament members gathered in a Saudi resort of Taif to sign the Document of National Reconciliation under the tutelage of the Arab League.

The war officially ended in 1990 with Michel Aoun who initially objected the agreement saying it did not address Syria's preponderant role in Lebanon, was forced

to end his so-called uprising by the pressure of Syrian arms.[14] The agreement had brought major changes to the Lebanese political system and the politics of resistance. The Accord consolidated Syria's influence over Lebanon's internal politics. It granted the Syrian Baathist government substantial leverage to ensure that the Lebanese authorities would not go for a unilateral agreement with Israel on the occupied South (Norton, 1991, 471-73). According to the Taif Agreement, any deal between Lebanon and Israel should not be comprehensive without Syrian participation. The deal should also address the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. The Taif also called for the liberation of the Southern Lebanon pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolution 425. The pro-Syrian groups in Lebanon considered that the call for the liberation of the South made the armed resistance, mainly led by Hezbollah, legitimate and in accordance with the international law. The main impact of the Taif was that it called for the dismantling of all the private militias, except Hezbollah. Under the Syrian pressure, Hezbollah became in effect exempted from having to surrender their weapons. Together these factors formed the joint Syrian-Lebanese approach to the occupied South. As long as Israel continues occupation of the South and Syria was in a state of war with Israel, Hezbollah was free to carry out armed attacks on the Israeli occupied forces.

The Taif Accord and Syria's predominance also began the normalisation of Lebanon's political order and Hezbollah's integration within it. Hezbollah, being an Islamist revolutionary party, was totally opposed to the pre-Taif political order in Lebanon. The opposition to the pre-Taif political system rendered the organisation not only an anti-system party, which sought to change the very system of government, but a revolutionary one, which sought to change it from outside the system. According to Hezbollah, the Gemayel

Government, which was founded the on the Maronite community's political supremacy, was oppressive, hypocritical and blasphemous. This perception that the sectarian political system of Lebanon was a "rotten political system" was the manifestation of the party's ideological animosity towards political sectarianism and the sectarian privileges of the Maronite community (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 26). The party perceived that it could not reconcile itself to a system which was not only unjust

[14] For the text of the Taif Accord see, http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm.

by its sectarian essence, but also it apportioned its sectarian shares in an entirely inequitable basis. Such a system could not offer any possibility for political reform but needs a total overhaul or revolution. Rather, the party at this stage was fully committed to the idea of establishing an Islamic Republic in Lebanon. However, with the signing of the Taif Agreement and the formulation of a new constitution, Hezbollah's revolutionary stance towards the Lebanese political system underwent a significant transformation. Correspondingly, the party transformed from a revolutionary total refusal anti-system party into a protest anti-system party.

Initially Hezbollah responded cautiously to the Taif Accord. The main reason was that the party leadership was suspicious to the real intentions of Syria, which had joined the Amal to suppress the organisation during the 1987-89 conflict. According to Hezbollah, the Taif Agreement not only failed to bring in revolutionary changes in the sectarian political system of Lebanon but also reinstated the hegemonic role of the Maronite community. On the other hand, Hezbollah did not view the Taif Agreement as completely evil. The party leadership has pointed out certain positive sides of the agreement such as its termination of the civil war and its stipulation of the necessity of abolishing political sectarianism in the future (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 27). It is on this accord that the party's ideological stance towards the Lebanese government underwent transformation. Though the abolition of the sectarianism remained unfeasible even in the post-Taif political order, the more equitable distribution of power among the country's different sects differentiated the system from its pre-Taif state. The new constitution also ensured that much of the power wielded by the Maronite president has in fact been transferred to the multi-sectarian cabinet. Furthermore, the Taif accord, which reserved the post of the speaker of the House for the Shiite community, expanded the scope Shiites' political representation. Equally important, the Taif agreement, which called on Syria to help the Lebanese government, helped the Baathist country spread its authority over Lebanese territory. This move made Syria a major player in Lebanese politics. The support of the Muslim religious establishment and Syria for the country's re-emerging confessional system represented an anti-thesis to the ideological goals of political Islam- the establishment of an Islamic order. Therefore Hezbollah viewed the Taif agreement as a provisional arrangement which was open to modification rather than a conclusive formula. However, the large Christian presence both in the government and in the parliament

made it actually impossible to abolish sectarianism. Though Hezbollah continued its position against the sectarian politics, in practice, it appeared to be willing to co-exist with the system without according its legitimacy (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 28-29).

The Taif Agreement and the subsequent changes in the policies of Hezbollah were viewed as the first phase of the pragmatic shift happened within the party in the early 1990s. The party, which once called for the total destruction of the "un-Islamic", unjust political system of Lebanon, transformed into a pragmatic political group which accommodates the government. However, the beginning of this pragmatic shift did not make any fundamental change in the party's basic conceptions regarding armed resistance against the occupation in the South. Even after the signing of the Taif Agreement, the Hezbollah leadership repeatedly said that the resistance against the Israeli forces would continue. Moreover, the framework of the Taif Accord, which forced the Lebanese government to allow Hezbollah the status of the sole militia organisation in the country, helped the party strengthen its military power in the post-Taif political order. While the other militia groups were disarmed, the Syrians helped Hezbollah exploit its strength for military and civil conquest of South Lebanon and several areas in the Lebanon Valley. Correspondingly, Hezbollah became a major political and military organisation in the South where the control of the Lebanese government was shaky. The party established extensive military operational infrastructure in the South numbering hundreds of activists skilled in various types of combat (in addition to the thousands of fighters that the organisation can mobilise in emergencies). According to Shaul Shay, "the Hezbollah fighters have various types of weapons, including a large amount of sabotage means, light weapons, anti-aircraft missiles (including Taw and Sager anti-missiles) as well as artillery including mortars, canons and rockets." (Shay, 2005, 67).

Towards Gradualist Pragmatism

The early years of resistance and the active participation in the reconstruction work enabled Hezbollah to win the support of a large number of the Shiite constituency. With the Amal was fading away from the fighting scene after its reconciliatory politics and the battle with Hezbollah, the party emerged as the major group that represents the political and social interests of Shiite community. Although it was

largely isolated at the international level, the radical polices and the uncompromised military resistance helped Hezbollah expand the scope of Shiite's politics in Lebanon's sectarian system. However, the party opted to be more pragmatic in the changed political circumstances of the late 1980s. Hezbollah leadership realised that the changed political spectrum in the country in the late 1980s was not favourable for the party to carry forward its resistance as it was doing in the pre-Taif period. The party leadership was also equally conscious not to make any compromise on the basic principles upon which the organisation was established.

The academics have cited a number of reasons to explain the shift in Hezbollah's politics from Islamic radicalism to gradualist pragmatism. According to some of them, the political goals of Islamic Resistance led by Hezbollah were different from Iran's Islamist movement. The Iranian revolution was solely a national movement against an "un-Islamic and unjust system" whereas Hezbollah emerged as a resistance force against the Israeli occupation. Therefore, as Amal Saad Ghorayeb puts it, Hezbollah is first and foremost a "jihadi movement" or a party of the resistance (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, 112-113). This prioritisation stands in sharp contrast to the Sunni Islamist perspective which considers the struggle against Israel to be secondary to the deposition of indigenous secular governments and the establishment of Islamic government in their place. Muslim Brotherhood leader Abd al-Salam Faraj was quoted as saying, "To fight an enemy who is near is more important than to fight an enemy who is far... We have to establish the rule of God's religion in our own country first, and to make the word of God supreme." (Rapoport, 1990, 111).[15] However, Hezbollah leadership rejected the logic of this Sunni perception about the Islamist movements. According to the party, "If we want to give people the right to choose the political system it wants, it must first be free from occupation and only then can it choose." (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, p.115). The message was clear; the external enemy must first be defeated before going for any revolutionary overhaul of the political system.[16] Therefore, the post-Taif metamorphosis of the party has brought changes only in its secondary goal while the first priority of driving the

[15] For details on the Sunni perception on Islamist movements see, Sivan (1990), 76.

[16] Some studies have also argued that Hezbollah's primary goal was the establishment of a revolutionary Islamic order in Lebanon and the party was using the resistance against the occupation as a tool for achieving that goal. However the post-Taif political circumstances have proved this conception to be wrong as Hezbollah embraced a pragmatic shift in its policies. See, Ranstorp (1997), 57.

occupied forces out of Lebanon remained intact. The changed regional circumstances and also a new constitution which ensured equitable distribution of power among the various sects in Lebanon provided a context for a pragmatic shift in Hezbollah's dealing with the Lebanese system.[17]

The shift in Hezbollah's political outlook was tied largely to the shifts within Iran's leadership. Iran, who enjoyed great authority over the functions of Hezbollah during that time, had begun charting a more pragmatic course in politics after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. The ascendance of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as Wali-e-Faqih and Hashemi Rafsanjani to the presidency in 1989 had brought many changes in the revolutionary foreign policy of Iran. The new pragmatic approach avoided direct confrontation with the West and adopted reconciliatory policies towards the Arab states, without abandoning the Islamic revolutionary posture. The pragmatic shift in the policies of its mentor, financier and adviser reflected the policy formulations of Hezbollah in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In an extra ordinary conclave of 1989, held in Tehran to discuss the future of Hezbollah, around 200 delegates participated. There were two factions that engaged in the discussions to decide the future course of action of Hezbollah in the wake of the change of guard in Iran. The first section led by Secretary-General Subhi al-Tufayil supported perpetual jihad against all those who opposed the vision of establishing an Islamic order in Lebanon. They stood for stricter party discipline and opposed having contacts with the outside groups. The Tufayil faction had the support of Ali Akbar Muhtashami and Shayk Hasan Kharoubi, the two Iranian leaders who opposed the pragmatic shift in the revolutionary political outlook of the Islamic Republic (Hamzeh and Dekmejian, 1993, 38). On the other hand, the second faction led by Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi favoured, in addition to the militant mode, a gradualist-pragmatic mode. This faction also set their ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic order ruled by the Sharia in Lebanon, but supported President Rafsanjani's practical policies. They favoured rapprochement with other groups in Lebanon and supported the joining of the movement in the mainstream politics (Hamzeh, 1993, 323-324). For them, the pragmatic mode would be parallel to the

[17] For a detailed analysis of the external regional strategic factors that influenced Hezbollah's decision making in late 1980s and early 1990s, see Harik (2004), 47.

militant mode and the future decisions on the operation of the organisation should be taken according to the changing circumstances. The al-Musawi faction had the support of Khamenei, the Wali-e-Faqih, who can legitimately elaborate or alter the party's guiding ideology according to the changing circumstances. Khamenei urged Hezbollah to adopt a new policy outlook towards the Lebanese system. He also allowed Tufayil to continue as the Secretary-General of the organisation though his proposal was rejected in the conclave, in order to avoid factional feud within the party.

Apart from the support of the Wali-e-Faqih, the al-Musawi faction had the blessings of Shaykh Fadallah also, who was the spiritual head of the party. Fadallah reportedly called for the "Lebanonisation of Hezbollah". This Lebanonisation process, labelled "the phase of political jihad" substituted the notion of Islamic revolution with that of political accommodation. (Harb and Leenders, 2005, 183). As Rafsanjani consolidated power in Tehran and handed out a rapprochement policy towards the West and the Arab world, Fadallah urged Hezbollah to seek a foothold in Lebanese political system and reach out to the other political groups outside the organisation. Understanding the political realities in Lebanon, where other communities such as Maronites and Sunnis also represent dominant constituencies, Fadallah called for constructive dialogue between Hezbollah and other community leaders on the values shared between the Muslims and Christians. Hezbollah's ideal concepts on the Vilaet-e-Faqih remained within the party rank and file, however, the leadership backed off from its earlier claims that the establishment of the Islamic order in the country was an immediate goal. The concept of Islamic republic was viewed with suspicion by the wealthy Sunnis while the Druze and the politically powerful Maronite communities totally rejected it. However, both Fadallah and the emerging leadership of Hezbollah were wary of not making compromises on the party's primary goal of resistance against the occupation and an alternative world vision based on political Islam. In any case, the Lebanonisation move has greatly undermined the position of the extremists within the party.

The differences within the organisation over the pragmatic shift burst out into open in the early 1990s with the ascendancy of Abbas al-Musawi as the Secretary-General. Hezbollah's Central Council elected him at its second enclave in Beirut when al-

Tufayil's term came to an end in 1991. Although Tufayil protested the move at the beginning, he finally accepted the decision of the party's supreme decision making body under the pressure of Khamenei. However, the assassination of al-Musawi in 1992 by Israel made the factional problem worse. Tufayil expected that the Iranian leadership would restore him at the helm of the party. However, the clerical leadership once again snubbed Tufayil by selecting Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, a young cleric and the disciple of al-Musawi, to lead the party. Tufayil found it extremely difficult to accept the takeover of Nasrallah, who was not only young but a follower of Musawi with whom he had clashed since 1983. He felt that his "sacrifices" and "devotion" to the party's cause had been ignored by the Wali-e-Faqih (Hamzeh, 2004, 110-11). Subsequently, Tufayil publicly came out against Khamenei's idea that jihad was in fact a two-way process of armed and unarmed struggle. On the other hand, Sayyid Nasrallah as the Secretary-General continued the rapprochement policy and kept good relations with the Iranian leadership. The victory of Rafsanjani's supporters in the 1992 elections to Iran's Shura Council had strengthened the pragmatic politics of the Iranian establishment as well as Hezbollah. A key indicator of Rafsanjani's strength and Fadallah's influence was the complete release of the western hostages in 1992. This shift resulted in the party's decision to participate in the 1992 parliamentary election in Lebanon, which was the first since the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. Nasrallah's stand in favour of participating in the elections was vindicated as the majority members of the Shura Council supported him. However, a minority led by al-Tufayil staunchly opposed the participation arguing the decision was against the nature and aim of Hezbollah. It was reported that Tufayil called on his supporters to burn the voting centres during the elections (Hamzeh, 1993, 324-25). However, the entire party stood behind the decision of the leadership and participated in the election vehemently.

The political participation was a major move which introduced a distinction between the armed activities of the party and its social and political mission. With the decision that could have far-reaching implications in its operations in the country, Hezbollah moved to work within the confines of Lebanon's confessional system without abandoning its military organ. The party leaders were also conscious to proclaim that the political participation was not a deviation from the fundamental principles and ideas of the organisation. Rather, according to them, it was a strategy which the

circumstance necessitates. One of the party's top leaders, Sheikh Naim Qasim, was quoted as saying, "We distinguish between participation in the legislative elections and our vision of actual political system that we consider to be the basis of confessional, economic administrative and political problems because it is built on the basis of muhassana (allotment) that hinders development and impedes people's rights" (Harb and Leenders, 2005, 185). He has further emphasised that Hezbollah was committed in carrying forward its resistance against the Israeli occupation. "We are still in our armed jihad against Israel and its designs in the region. However, when the Taif Agreement took place, we entered the political life because every effort carried out by committed Muslims is jihad that is within the general jihad" (Hamzeh, 2004, 112). Although, the political participation was largely backed by its supporters, Hezbollah maintained a certain distance from Lebanese politics in general –thereby allowing its deunification of the government's practices while ensuring its role as an opposition party.

Political Participation

Ideologically, the party did not support the western-style democracy though it decided to enter parliamentary politics (Sivan, 1998, 17-22). According to Hezbollah, the "God-given" Sharia cannot be replaced with liberal democratic concepts. However, Hezbollah participated in the 1992 parliamentary election with extensive preparations. Without stepping back from its ideological stance about western-style democracy and the party's Islamic world view, the party leadership pursued pragmatic strategies including coalitions with Sunni and Maronite politicians. On the basis of the cost-benefit analysis of the various alternatives from running independently to forming coalitions, the party leadership decided to form complete lists in some districts, run as independents in others and find coalition partners in yet other districts. This strategy proved successful as Hezbollah captured eight of the 27 seats allocated to the Shiites in the Lebanese parliament, which is made up of 128 seats. (See table 2). The Amal party and the Shiite Zuama families performed better than Hezbollah, but the party's unexpected strong-showing in the electoral politics sent a strong message to both the Shiite and other parties in the country (Hamzeh,1993, 329-335).

Table 2
The Performance of Hezbollah's candidates and its allies in 1992 Election

Name of candidate	Electoral district	Percentage of votes
1 Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid (Shiite)	Baalbek-Hermil	75.1
2 Ali Taha (Shiite)	Baalbek-Hermil	62.4
3 Nuhammad Hasan (Shiite)	Baalbek-Hermil	58.6
4 Khodr Tlays (Shiite)	Baalbek-Hermil	56.9
5 Ibrahim Bayan (Sunni)	Baalbek-Hermil	59.3
6 Munir al-Hujayri (Sunni)	Baalbek-Hermil	58.4
7 Rabiha Kayrouz (Maronite)	Baalbek-Hermil	54.5
8 Saoud Rufayil (Greek Orthodox)	Baalbek-Hermil	62.5
9 Muhammad Finaysh (Shiite)	The South	63.0
10 Muhammad Raad (Shiite)	The South	62.4
11 Muhammad Ahmad (Berjawi (Shiite)	Beirut	28.4
12 Ali Fadl Ammar (Shiites)	Baabda	96.3

Source: Data cited in Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", *Third World Quarterly*, 14(2) (1993), p.30.

Several factors had been pointed out as reasons for Hezbollah's triumph in the parliamentary politics. Apart from its extensive preparation and coalition strategy, a number of other factors also helped Hezbollah win the support of a major part of the Shiite constituency. The social services and the active participation in the reconstruction activities had helped the party earn a reputation among the poor of the country. Equally important, a religious fatwa was issued by the Shura Council distributed to all members and supporters calling on them to vote for the party candidates. The fatwa says:

> "Everyman will be asked about his vote on judgement day- any adherent to the supreme Islamic interest should hold the list high and drop it as in the voting box- and it is illicit to elect anybody else who is not on the list" (Hamzeh,1993, 333).

As the ideologically committed constituency voted en masse for Hezbollah candidates, many Christians, especially in Mount Lebanon, Beirut and the occupied zone mainly boycotted the parliamentary election demanding that elections be held after the withdrawal of the foreign troops. The boycotting elections had left Hezbollah and its Shiite allies with a slight edge in the party strongholds. The Islamic Resistance also helped the party earn the image of a brave nationalist organisation that makes no compromise on basic ideas. Hezbollah's role in the resistance was properly perceived as being sincere and honest in the fight against Israel. This perception also contributed to the party's popularity. Another major factor which helped Hezbollah win the parliamentary seats was its intense political campaign supported by the party's organisational structure. Several sections of the party skilfully mobilised people and spread the achievements Hezbollah made a short span of time since its inception to lead the party into electoral triumph.

Since the 1992 elections, the party has participated in all the legislative and municipal elections in the country and also won a considerable number of seats. (See Table 3). Hezbollah's representation amounted to seven seats in the 1996 parliamentary elections. The party moved ahead with its pragmatic politics in the 1998 municipal elections, which were held for the first time in 35 years. The election results showed that Hezbollah was able to win several important municipalities. Hezbollah showed its strength in the municipalities of Mount Lebanon's districts and the provinces of Nabatiyyeh, South and Biqa (Hamzeh 2000, 743-751). In a broader analysis, one can see that Hezbollah's entry into the parliament was helpful for the party in the long-run. The political accommodation legitimised the party, which was considered as a terrorist outfit in the West and added more protection to its constituency and the resistance movement.

Table 3
Parliamentary Seats Won by Hezbollah, Amal and Shiite Zuama Families

Year	Hezbollah	Amal	Families	Total
1992	8	9	10	27
1996	7	8	13	27
2000	9	6	12	27

Source: Data cited in Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, p. 113

Resistance In 1990s

Though the political participation marked the beginning of the pragmatic shift in Hezbollah's policies, the party did not make any change in its basic perceptions on the occupation and resistance. After the 1992 elections, parliament members from the Hezbollah demanded that the government abolish the confessional system. However, this was, obviously, not acceptable for the other major political groups. Hezbollah further urged the government to legitimise the Islamic Resistance in the South, but it was also shot down by the dominant Maronite groups in the government. As majority of the Lebanese parties supported Prime Minister Rafik Hariri as he took office in October 1992 with promises on reconstructing the war-torn country, Hezbollah proclaimed its opposition to the Hariri government. Moreover, during the vote of confidence on the Hariri government, the Hezbollah representatives voted against the government's political programme. Hezbollah further opposed Hariri's project for reconstruction of Lebanon, which would be financed by his own companies. The party leadership accused Prime Minister Hariri of trying to build up resort areas and gambling casinos for the purpose of accumulation of personal profit in the name of reconstruction (Hamzeh, 1993, 334-35).

Prime Minster Hariri, who enjoyed the support of the Saudi Kingdom and also the western corporate lobby, did not share with the idea of Hezbollah's Islamic resistance. Hariri's stern stand on the controversial matters such as the abolition of the c nfessional system and the legitimisation of the Islamic Resistance caused rift between the government and Hezbollah. With domestic political discontents between the parliamentary faction of Hezbollah and the Hariri government coming to the fray, the organisation intensified its military operations against the Israeli troops in the South.

One of the major debates about the resistance was the difference between the civilians and the soldiers. Hezbollah largely reduced targeting the Israeli civilians since the signing of the Taif Agreement. However, following the assassination of Secretary-General Abbas al-Musawi, his successor Hassan Nasrallah warned Israel that if they target Lebanese civilians, Hezbollah would hit back in the same coin (Norton, 2000, 29). The action-reaction generally started with an Israeli attack on a civilian target.

The militant operations carried out by the Islamic Resistance steadily increased since early 1990s. (See table 3). With fighting in the Southern Lebanon increasing, Israel's 'security zone' proved a failure. However, the violence was mainly costly for the Lebanese civilians as Hezbollah used civilian areas as the staging ground. Israel's retaliation often targeted Lebanese villages in which Hezbollah fighters took refuge, setting off another round of Hezbollah attacks, this time into Israel. On several occasions, the fighting led to full-scale war between Hezbollah and Israel.

Table 4

Militant Operations By Islamic Resistance 1985-2000

Year	Number of operations
1985-1989	100
1990-1995	1,030
1996-2000	4,928

Source : Cited in Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah, p.89.*

In July 1993, the Israeli army launched the 'Operation Accountability', a major military campaign against the Hezbollah fighters in southern villages. The operation was launched after the killing of seven Israeli soldiers in Southern Lebanon. According to the reports of Human Rights Watch, the Israeli armed operations resulted in the deaths of about 120 civilian Lebanese and forced thousands of villagers and Palestine refugees to leave the South (Human Rights Watch, 1996). The warring groups reached a cease-fire on July 31 under the tutelage of the United States. According to the unwritten understanding, both Hezbollah and Israel agreed to refrain from civilian targets. However, the cease-fire did not survive as Hezbollah and the Israeli troops re-launched military operations against each other. In March 1996, Hezbollah fired more than 600 Katyusha rockets into northern Israel in retaliation against the latter's military offensive against the villagers in the 'security zone' (International Herald Tribune, 29 April 1996). Several Israeli citizens were injured in the operations. In return, the Israeli army started off its another major military

campaign against Hezbollah, the 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' (Human Rights Watch, 1997). Israel fired an estimated 25,000 shells at Lebanese targets and flew about 600 combat air sorties. The campaign killed more than hundred civilians at the UN monitoring site in Qana, but failed to prevent Hezbollah's further attacks (Norton, 2000, 29). The 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' lasted 17 days and triggered another civilian exodus northwards. The military operations temporarily ended with Israel and Syria accepting a written but unsigned understanding for cease-fire under the auspices of the United States and France. The unsigned understanding, which Hezbollah also accepted, states:

- Armed groups in Lebanon will not carry out attacks by Katyusha rockets or by any kind of weapon into Israel
- Israel and those co-operating with it will not fire any kind of weapon at civilians or civilian targets in Lebanon.
- Beyond this, the two parties commit to ensuring that under no circumstances will civilians be the targets and that civilian populated areas and industrial and electoral installations will not be used as launching grounds for attacks.
- Without violating this understanding nothing herein shall preclude any party from exercising the right of self defence.[18]

The April understanding also set up a monitoring commission based in the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqura with American, Lebanese, French Syrian and Israeli participation. The Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG), which did not have any enforcement mechanism, operated on the basis of unanimity and helped preserve peace at least for a short span of time. Though there were many violations of the understandings by both parties, Hezbollah and the Israeli authorities were conscious about the existence of the rules of the understandings. Attacks on civilians were drastically reduced and the fight was directly between the Hezbollah activists and the Israeli forces.

Though Hezbollah completely stopped targeting the Israeli civilians following the April understandings, the Islamic Resistance stepped up its operations against the

[18] See "Israel-Lebanon Cease-fire Understanding", April 26, 1996. http://www.usembassy-israel.org.il/publish/peace/documents/ceasefire_understanding.html

Israeli army in the second half of the 1990s. In the 'Operation Insariyyah', Hezbollah hit the Israeli forces heavily killing 12 naval commandos from the elite flotilla Shayyit. The Israeli commandos were killed in an ambush outside Insariyyah village in South Lebanon. Hezbollah handed over the remains of the soldiers to the Israeli army in exchange of the bodies of the Islamic Resistance fighters and the Shiite prisoners from the Khiam detention centre. Insariyyah was a turning point in the resistance as the organisation, fully aware of the fact that the frustrated Israeli troops were not able to prevent the guerrilla attacks, stepped up its military operations in 1999. The Islamic Resistance launched two major operations in the 1999. In February, the resistance fighters ambushed 35 Israeli soldiers from the elite paratroop unit that raided Birkat al-Jabour in the western Biqa. The commander of the Israeli unit and two of his lieutenants were killed in the Hezbollah operation. Days after the February operation, a Hezbollah fighter detonated a powerful explosive device to kill Brigadier General Erez Gerstein, the head of the Israeli army's liaison unit in Southern Lebanon. The General and three others were killed in the blast (The Jerusalem Post, 1 March 1999). The incident was a major setback to the occupying forces as the killing of the top army leader strengthened the anti-occupation public opinion in Israel. Furthermore, the incident supplied the firepower to resistance forces to carry out more attacks against the Israeli troops.

As the Israeli army was struggling to tackle the challenges posed by the Islamic Resistance, the pro-Israeli Maronite militia, the Southern Lebanese Army, was also planning a shift in its direct confrontation with Hezbollah. When Israeli troops were withdrawn from the Jezzini region, a stronghold of the SLA, in January 1999, the top SLA leaders decided to pull-out from 36 villages of the region (The Jerusalem Post, 15 February, 2000). Over 200 fighters surrendered before the Lebanese authorities, and by the end of June the government regained full control of Jezzine. The partial withdrawal triggered new fighting with the Islamic Resistance attacking the retreating SLA and firing rockets into Israel. In the operation, Aql Hashim, the SLA's second in command after General Antoine Lahad, was assassinated (Hamzeh, 2004, 92-93). The killing of Hashim was a major blow to the future plans of the SLA as Israel had plans to replace Lahad with Hashim. The Israeli army hit back Hezbollah launching a fresh air force raids which destroyed power stations, phone installations and bridges throughout Lebanon.

The Israeli Withdrawal

By the end of the 1990s the Israeli public opinion largely turned against the occupation of the southern Lebanon. Though Hezbollah suffered heavy causalities in the resistance, its losses were almost similar to the overall ratio of the causalities of the Israeli forces and the SLA. According to Hezbollah's own records, 1,248 resistance fighters were killed in the operations during 1982-1999 while 1050 SLA soldiers and 200 Israeli forces were also killed. The increasing human toll and the inability of the army to tackle Hezbollah in the Southern Lebanon led many Israelis to question the logic of the occupation. During the electoral campaign of 1999, Israeli Prime Minster Ehud Barak made the promise that he would call back the troops from Lebanon. Barak had reportedly said that he would "get the boys out of Lebanon within a year of being elected Prime Minister" (The Jerusalem Post 3 March 1999). After the elections, Barak reiterated his promise saying, "By July 2000 the army will withdraw to the international border and it is from the international border that we will defend the north of the country. I don't advise anyone to test us when we draw back and are sitting on the border." (Norton, 2000, 31). Barak further said that he preferred an agreement with Syria and Lebanon before withdrawing troops from the South. According to him, by reaching an agreement with those countries, Israel could leave Lebanon in an orderly manner and secure its borders. He was quoted as saying,

> "We will remove the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) within the framework of an agreement. This obligation is valid. The government that I head is determined to put an end to the tragedy that has continued for 17 years in Lebanon...For obvious reasons I will not discuss today...the question of what will happen if we get close to the month of July 2000 and we still don't have an agreement with the Syrians." (Jerusalem Post, 1 October 1999).

This was a warning of Prime Minister Barak to the Syrian government that even if he failed to reach an agreement with the Syrians, Israel had plans to pull-out troops unilaterally.

Following Barak's declaration, Israel and Syria launched a fresh diplomatic initiative aimed at reaching an agreement on Lebanon and the Golan Heights. In January 2000,

Prime Minister Barak, US President Bill Clinton and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq as-Shara met in Shepherdstown, Maryland for the initial round of negotiations, but failed to come up with any agreement. However, even after the Shepherdstown talks, both Israel and Syria kept open the possibility of further talks. The official negotiations restarted in Geneva in March 2000. President Clinton, after holding lengthy talks with Barak, met with Syrian President Hafez al-Asad. However, Israel's proposal was rejected by the Syrian side (ICG Middle East Report, 16 July 2002, 4-5). The idea that Israel would pull-out troops unilaterally was met with scepticism in Lebanese and Syrian governments. However, Barak, as warned earlier, announced his government's intention to withdraw troops unilaterally and unconditionally from Southern Lebanon by July.

Following the government's decision, the Israeli army accelerated its withdrawal timetable. The army withdrawal was completed on 27 May 2000. Israel's departure led to the total collapse of the SLA. About 6,500 SLA members and their families crossed into Israel while the others surrendered either to the Lebanese authorities or to Hezbollah. The Lebanese prisoners detained in the Khiam prison, run by the SLA, were released. Though large-scale clashes were expected between the SLA and the Hezbollah fighters in the wake of the latter's triumph against the occupation, the fears did not materialise. The Hezbollah leadership was careful not to turn the victory into bloodshed between the local communities. The senior Hezbollah leaders, including Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah and the head of the Islamic Resustance, Shaykh Nabil Qaouk, held extensive meetings with Christian clerics to reassure them that Israel's withdrawal was a national victory rather than a victory of Hezbollah (Norton 2000, 32). The party also captured several thousands of men and women who collaborated with the Israeli forces. This issue was subject of intense discussion both inside and outside the party. Finally, the Politburo of Hezbollah decided that the judicial system was the only mechanism in dealing with the collaborators. The party has also handed over the collaborators to the Lebanese authorities.

Conclusion

The withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the South was undisputedly a major achievement of the Islamic Resistance. The withdrawal justified the very rationale of

the Islamic Resistance, which emerged with a single objective of defeating the occupying forces. Hezbollah gathered praise throughout the country for the resistance, its corruption-free politics and also its social services. However, at the same time, the Israeli withdrawal set off a bunch of questions about the strong military wing of Hezbollah. The world powers as well as the different communities in Lebanon raised doubts over Hezbollah's military power and called on the party to disarm its military organ and integrate itself into the national political mainstream. On the other hand, Hezbollah dismissed the proposals for disarmament saying it would continue resistance till achieving complete liberation from the occupiers.

The party declined to accept the United Nations' declaration that occupation in Lebanon was over. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Special Envoy to the region Terje Rod Lardon had ruled on June 2000 that Israel had withdrawn from Southern Lebanon. Confirming that Israel had fully complied with Resolution 425 of 19 March 1979, Annan urged Lebanon to respect the Southern border, which later came to be known as the Blue Line. The UN also stated that the Resolution 425 does not apply to the Sheba Farms- an uninhabited area of 25 square kilometres in the Southeast tri-border region. The UN argued that the Farms, which has been occupied by Israel during the 1967 war, was a Syrian territory and it should be resolved according to the Security Council Resolution 242 (governing the Israeli-Syrian conflict). However, both the Lebanese government and Hezbollah claimed that the Sheba was Lebanon's integral part and therefore the former informed the UN that it considered Israel's withdrawal incomplete as long as its troops remain in the Farms. Furthermore, the Lebanese government refused to deploy army along the Blue Line (ICG Middle East Report 18 November 2002).

Referring Israel's continuing military presence in the Sheba Farms, Nasralla said in his victory speech that Israel could expect additional defeats and disappointments as the resistance planned to "complete the liberation" (ICG Middle East Report, 18 November 2002). This stand was taken along with the party's decision to participate actively in the Lebanese political process. It was also a clear indication that Hezbollah would not disarm its military wing as long as Israel continues its military presence in the Sheba. Many analysts have pointed out that the military wing of Hezbollah prevents its complete integration into the Lebanese political order as a normal

political party. This situation, retained the possibility of further clashes between Israel and Hezbollah, which vowed to fight till the liberation of the entire occupied land.

CHAPTER 3

HEZBOLLAH AS A SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTOR

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One of the major features that differentiates Hezbollah from its contemporary Islamist groups is its multiple identities. Many analysts questioned Hezbollah's right to continue its military wing at the same time the party participate in the parliamentary process. The critics, banking on the western style democratic parties, argued that Hezbollah's parliamentary participation would be meaningful only if it disbanded its military wing. However, unlike the other pro-system political parties, Hezbollah, from its very inception, has differentiated its identity by declaring its multiple missions. Hezbollah is mainly a revolutionary organisation which participates in parliamentary politics and also engages in different welfare activities. According to the political Shiism, the clerical elite have legitimacy to interpret ideology according to the circumstances. Even participation in Lebanon's parliamentary politics was dubbed as "politics jihad" by the supreme leaders of Hezbollah. Though it could be seen as a great-leap-forward from the revolutionary past to a pragmatic future, it should also be noted that Hezbollah has not compromised on its primary goal, resistance against the occupation, even in the post-participation period. While the political participation was a major move to ensure the representation of the oppressed Shiite majority of Lebanon and also to counter the Maronite supremacy in the confessional political system, the welfare missions underscored Hezbollah's commitment to the economically and socially backward community. Unlike the other elitist radical Islamist movement, Hezbollah formulated a pro-proletarian social view based on social justice and the emancipation of the oppressed. This was the main rationale behind the social missions of the party.

The welfare programmes were directly conducted by the political wing of the party. The quality, accessibility and low cost of Hezbollah's social and economic services helped the party win the support of different sections of the Lebanese society despite its Islamist structure and radical theocratic ideology. Its programme of creating diverse and populist non-governmental community venues emerged in 1984 with the

establishment of Jihad al-Bina infrastructure development, the Islamic Health Committee, and the Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini, as well as the creation of a viable Shiite business sector. Furthermore, Hezbollah vowed that it would remain as an extra-ordinary actor in Lebanon through its contribution of a modern education system with religious, disciplined classes, the incorporation of women into the workforce and school system, and the employment of women as non-combatant military officials (Jaber 1997, 58). The welfare programmes of Hezbollah were mainly targeted at the isolated section of the population such as the poverty-ridden peasants, the growing petit bourgeoisie who were excluded from the fast-developing mainstream sections (Nasr, 1997, 355-369). For the better fulfilment of its different social missions Hezbollah started religious schools, clinics, and hospitals, and also provided cash subsidies to Shiite families below the poverty line. These all activities were crucial for the party to build a strong popular base challenging not only the Maronite supremacy but also the Amal party, which abandoned the concept of resistance and ended up as a common political party.

Organisational Structure

The organisational structure of Hezbollah, which was not public until recently, was shaped up in accordance with the party's multiple identities and missions. Based on the western style Leninist cadre structure, Hezbollah has developed an organisational order that revolved mainly around the clerical leadership, whose members are considered to be closer to Islam than average Muslims. The unchallenged authority of Allah and his representatives is a major feature of Hezbollah's organisational hierarchy. After the emergence of the party, Shaykh Hussein Fadallah was largely considered to be the 'al-Murshid al-Ruhi', the spiritual guide of Hezbollah. However, at least in theory, the party is led by a collective leadership. This is one of the major organisational differences Hezbollah has had from its parent organisation, the Amal party, which was led by the charismatic leadership of Imam Musa al-Sadr. The power is heavily concentrated in the hands of the seven-member Shura Council (Majlis al-Shura or Consultative Council) (Marius, 1986, 7-8). The Shura Council members are elected by the Central Council (Majlis al-Markazi) for a period of three years. The Central Council is a larger assembly consisting of almost two hundred party founders and cadres. (See figure 1)

The Shura Council is presided over by the Secretary-General, but his authority is not absolute. Keeping the nature of a revolutionary structure, power is distributed among other Council members. According to some analysts, this centralism of power in the hands of the Ulama resembles the concept of 'democratic centralism' of Leninism (Abukhalil, 1991, 394). However, the emphasis on the role of the Ulama in the society is a fundamental feature of Shiite Islam and is a central feature of Hezbollah's structure (Marius, 1986, 7-8). According to Hezbollah leaders, the collective leadership of the Council is helpful for the party to overcome any lose of leaders even if that of the Secretary-General. The Council consists mostly of clerics along with a few lay members. The ratio of clerics to the lay members in the Shura council is vary in nature, however it has always been in favour of the clerics. Until, 1989, there were six clergy and one laity in the Council. Although, the end of the civil war in 1989 and Hezbollah's turn towards gradualist pragmatism brought some changes, the number of non-Ulama men did not go up more than three. Generally, the decisions are reached by consensus in the Council and occasionally through formal voting. The decisions of the Shura Council are binding on all of the party's constituent bodies. If there is any conflict of opinion within the supreme decision making body, the issue would be referred to the Wali-e-Faqih the highest religio-legal authority of the party. The party leadership has made it clear that the decisions of the Wali-e-Faqih would be legitimate, final and binding.

The election process to the Consultative Council has three different stages. In the first stage the Central Council members, the top cadres and the founders of the party, would check whether the candidates are qualified to stand in the elections. Only the qualified people could go for the second stage in which the elections would take place. According to Deputy Secretary-General Shaykh Naim Qasim, "Although 70 or 80 members might qualify for election, only 10 members are nominated, those who are most seconded by their colleagues in the Central Council" (Hamzeh, 2004, 47). The seven members to the Shura Council would be selected from this actual nominated list. The Shura Council members then elect the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and the heads of the party's five different bodies of the political and administrative apparatus. The actual operation of the party is entrusted to Secretary-General and his deputy. The Secretary- General has special authority to run the day-today affairs of the party including the right to give call for meetings when

necessary. The Secretary-General also acts as the head of the political and administrative apparatus which has five different councils. Such councils are directly linked with the regional units which are divided on the basis of districts. Each district has a council called the Regional Shura Council, and it is directly linked to the Supreme Shura Council through one of its members.

Although, the entire party mechanism was based on the collective leadership of the Shura Council, the post of the Secretary-General got more prominence under the leadership of Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah. Nasrallah's powers were also limited within the bureaucratic structures of the party apparatus. But Hezbollah's victory over Israeli occupation under his leadership and also his political and religious skills made him a charismatic leader. The faith of the Shiite clergy on comparatively younger Nasrallah was evident as he was re-elected as the Secretary-General in 1995 for another three-year term. Normally the party's electoral rules prohibit a third term for the Secretary-General. However, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is also the Wali-e-Faqih of Hezbollah bent the rules and allowed Nasrallah to seek more terms in 1998. This shows not only Nasrallah's popularity and leadership qualities, but also his loyalty to the Iranian regime. With the support and blessings of Ali Khamenei, Nasrallah became the central actor in almost all of Hezbollah's political and military decision making.

Executive Council

The Executive council (Majlis al-Tanfiz also known as Shura Tanfiz) is the major organisational body which oversees the day-to-day functioning of Hezbollah. It is one of the five councils of political and administrative apparatus (Shura Tanfiz). The other units are, Judicial Council, Parliamentary Council, Politburo and Jihad Council. Each council is headed by a member of the Shura Council and varies in membership size. The Executive Council supervises eight separate units, which are the main organs of Hezbollah through which the party is reaching out to the masses. They are: Social Unit, Islamic Health Unit, Education Unit, Information Unit, Syndicate Unit, Finance Unit, External Unit and Engagement and Co-ordination Unit.

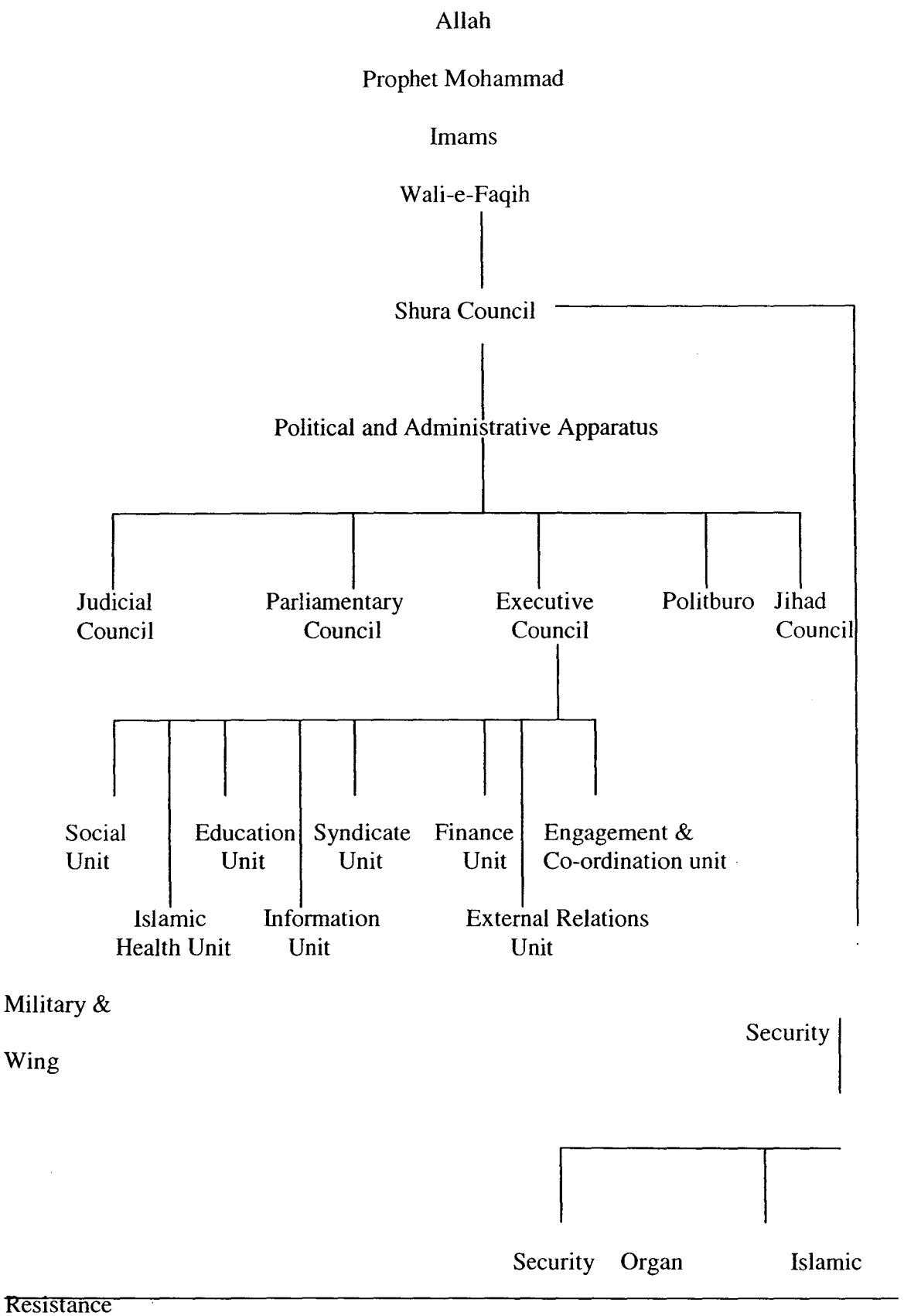

Figure 1. Organisational Structure of Hezbollah. Cited in Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hezbollah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 46.

While the first three units are meant for carrying out Hezbollah's social welfare activities, the rest of the sections were designed to deal with the different functions of the party. Though the executive Council's composition and functions provide it closer relations with the rank-and file, the Shura Council is widely believed to have final word on all key matters vis-à-vis both the Executive Council and the Politburo (ICG Middle East Briefing Paper 30 July 2003).

The Information Unit is in charge of the broad media wing of Hezbollah which oversees the organisation's propaganda policies. Unlike any other political parties in Lebanon, Hezbollah has established a network of media outlets in the country. The party controls one television station, four radio stations, and five newspapers and journals. This media network, particularly the al-Minar (lighthouse) television station, has helped Hezbollah a lot propagate its policies and ideology. Furthermore, the al-Minar television, which was established in 1991, has played a major role in countering the information given by the western and Israeli media about the resistance in Southern Lebanon. According to Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, "For the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1948, Arabs and Muslims have seen Israeli soldiers inflicted with death and injuries at the hands of Hezbollah's Islamic Resistance" (Hamzeh, 2004, 59). This well-planned media propaganda has also influenced the Israeli public opinion which at the final days of the occupation exerted great pressure on the Israeli government to pull-out troops from Southern Lebanon. After the withdrawal, one can see the changing focus of al-Minar, from its greater concentration on resistance to issues relating the Arabs and Muslims in general.

The Syndicate Unit is comparatively a new one which is believed to have set up in 1996 with an aim of penetrating into the civil society to serve the party's cause. The unit is guiding the party's number of representatives working in various syndicates and associations of professionals such as doctors, lawyers, doctors, engineers, workers, businessmen, faculty and students. However, the party leadership has not revealed the actual number of Hezbollah activists working in Lebanon's syndicates and associations. The External Relations Unit is also a new addition to the Executive Council. The Unit does not have major stake in the decision making process, but acts as a public relations office that helps the head of the Executive Council. The major

defined function of the External Relations Unit is to engage with the day-to-day foreign relations of the party.

The Finance Unit is entitled to oversee the entire financial operations of Hezbollah. The Unit is the successor of the Financial Committee which was in charge of keeping the records till early 1990s. The functions of the Finance Unit are very important as Hezbollah is an organisation which receives huge funds, both foreign and domestic, through various channels. The Finance Committee had also played major role in the welfare programmes of the party in the early years. It had extended generous loans intended for marriages, school expenses, and small business ventures in 1980s itself (Norton, 1998, 88). According to many analysts, Hezbollah is getting funds from four major sources. The first and foremost source is its mentor, the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the earlier stage, Hezbollah's dependence on Iranian financial support was visible as many reports claimed that the Iranian clergy pumped billions of dollars for the party's military and social missions in Lebanon. Most of these funds came from foundations and charitable institutions under the direct control of the Wali-e-Faqih. Besides direct financial aid, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards provided other military-related equipment and resources to Hezbollah. According to some authors, the Iranian aid to Hezbollah steadily increased from $ 30 million in 1985 to over $ 64 million in 1988 (John, 1992, 20). However, some reports claimed that the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the ascendancy of Hashemi Rafsanjani into presidency resulted in a reduction of Iranian aid to Hezbollah (Hamzeh, 1, 1997, 48) Although Iran has faced financial constraints since the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, Hezbollah's expansion of its social services and financial assistance to the Lebanese Shiites indicate that the organisation was still getting funds from its sponsors. In fact, some evidences suggested that Iran's annual financial contribution to the Hezbollah in the early 1990s remained around $ 100 million in order to sustain the party's vast non-military activities as well as to renew its weapons arsenal.

The second source of income is the annual contribution of the Shiites. According to Shiite faith, the believers should give one-fifth of their annual income to the Ulama. The third source of funds is donations from individuals, groups, shops, companies, banks as well as their counterparts in foreign countries. The last source is Hezbollah's commercial networks in Lebanon. Though official figures about Hezbollah's

investment in Lebanese market was not made public, many reports have given details about the party's commercial networks that includes supermarkets, gas stations, restaurants, travel agencies etc. The last unit under the leadership of the Executive Council is the Engagement and Co-ordination Unit (Wahdat al-Irtibat wal-Tansiq). This unit is dealing with the normal security matters of the party (Hamzeh, 2, 1997, 103).

Politburo & Security Organ

The Politburo is another important administrative apparatus, but it is not a decision-making body. It appears to enjoy little independent power and plays an advisory role to help the Secretary-General and the Consultative Council. Normally, the Politburo will have 11 to 14 members (Ranstorp, 1994, 307). Functionally, the Politburo is in charge of overseeing the day-today political functions of the party. The Politburo members are entitled to draw up the election programmes and set up the campaign committees and alliances, but with the support of the top leadership. In effect, the Politburo promotes the political interests of the party through several committees operating under its jurisdiction. The Cultural Committee and the Palestinian Affairs Committee are the two major committees still actively functioning under the authority of the Politburo. While the former is a vital tool for Hezbollah to approach the different segments of the Lebanese society through various programmes, the Palestinians Affairs Committee stands for strengthened ties with Palestinian resistance groups. The importance of this committee increased in the post-withdrawal period as Hezbollah started focussing more on the Palestinian issue. The Security Zone Committee was another major one operating under the Politburo. However, it ceased to exist after Israel's withdrawal from the South.

The Security Organ is also playing a key role in the decision making process. Since the military wing is one of the chief units of Hezbollah, the Security Organ still remains as the most discreet and covert unit. According to many reports, the Security Organ is divided into two units: the Party Security Unit (Amn al-Hizb) and the Counter Intelligence Unit (Amn al-Muddad). Reportedly, the Party Security Unit is in charge of protecting the party leaders and maintaining law and order in various Hezbollah strongholds. The so-called liaison committees (lijan iribat) help the unit in monitoring the activities of the party officials including the top leadership (ICG

Middle East Briefing Paper, 30 July 2003). Some studies have claimed that the Party Security has the authority to even restrict party official's contacts with the outside world and impose disciplinary action ((ICG Middle East Briefing Paper, 30 July 2003). The second unit, the Counter Intelligence was set up in 2000, possibly after the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the South. The primary function of this unit is to counter intelligence operations of the party's internal and external enemies.[19]

The Organisational structure underscores one thing, Hezbollah's commitment to the Shiite ideology and the Islamic decision-making process. According to Hala Jaber, the party's loyalty to the Islamic decision-making structure was a "necessary requirement for [it] to function in Lebanon's multi-confessional society" (Jaber, 1997, 58). The unique structure based on Islamic ideology also connects the different organs with the central clerical leadership. In that way, the organisation's actions would always be re-assessed by the leadership or the central decisions would be discussed among the ordinary members. The hierarchical chain of command further fosters this constant communication, unity and pyramid-like structure. The hierarchy begins with the ideological and logistic decisions made by the ruling clerics who send them to regional councils and local Imams or alim (scholar). These active community leaders then communicate instructions via sermon or lessons in the mosque using coded phrases known only to the ground level activists (Frisk, 1990, 578).

Social Mission

The wide-spread welfare programmes of Hezbollah have played a major role in achieving popularity among all the segments of the Lebanese society. Right from its inception, Hezbollah has launched its social activities. The Social Unit, Islamic Unit and Education Unit are the three major units under the authority of the Executive Council which are entitled to carry out the welfare social programmes of Hezbollah. The functions of the Social Unit are divided into different foundations such as the Muassasat Jihad al-Bina (Holy Struggle Construction Foundation), the Martyr's

[19] The western countries, particularly the U.S. and Britain, accuse the Counter Intelligence Unit of providing shelter to people who were formerly associated with "terror" attacks. The unit was also accused of carrying out special operations, including kidnappings for Hezbollah. For details see, ICG Middle East Briefing Paper, 30 July 2003.

Foundation (Muassasat al-Shahid), the Foundation for the Wounded (Muassasat al-Jahra) and the Khomeini Support Committee (Lujnat Imdad al-Khomeini).

The Jihad al-Bina was established in 1988, a few years after the existence of Hezbollah was officially declared. The foundation provides support services to members, new recruits, and supporters of Hezbollah. The paramount objective of the foundation is to "alleviate the hardships" of the backward families in the country (Hanf, 1993, 28). The services range from reconstruction activities to medical care to financial aid. For example, Hezbollah's Islamic Health Committee, with Iranian financial aid, established two hospitals and a number of medical and civil defence centres and pharmacies in the various regions of the Biqa', the suburbs of Beirut and Southern Lebanon. These three regions were the most-suffered areas from Israeli occupation and underdevelopment. The lower middle class and the poverty-ridden communities in these regions responded with great zeal to Hezbollah's social welfare programmes. In the hospitals of Beirut for women and children, over 59,255 women and 10,490 children are examined and treated every year. The Jihad al-Bina's active participation in the reconstruction activities following Israel's invasion, led the foundation to earn even the United Nation's appreciation.[20] The foundation has implemented a number of projects in the post-war Lebanon including reconstruction of schools, houses, mosques... etc. (See table 1)

The Jihad al-Bina has also established a network of facilities that provides potable water and electricity in the southern suburbs of Beirut where the government's water supply system failed to meet the primary requirements of the people. According to some reports, Jihad al-Bina provides around 45 percent of southern suburbs' water requirements. Moreover, the electricity department of the party has installed more than 20 big power generators in Southern Lebanon and the Biqa (Hamzeh, 2004, 51). The other committees also participated in the social programmes aimed at the community upliftment. The Reconstruction Committee repaired and maintained between 1988 and 1991, over 1,000 homes damaged by Israel and other attacks. The Water and Power Resources Committees fixed over 100 water and power stations from the Biqa to the South. The Environmental Committee has been active in

[20] The UN report on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia praised Jihad al-Bina's activities calling it "one of the best equipped organisations" in Lebanon. Cited in Hanf, (1993, 28).

studying and surveying polluted areas, while the Agricultural Committee has established agricultural cooperatives selling insecticides, seeds, and fertilisers to farmers at prices lower than the market price.

Table 1: Projects Implemented By Construction Foundation

Type/ Region	Construction
Schools	
South Lebanon	6
Biqa	2
Beirut	3
Homes	
South Lebanon	2
Biqa	1
Hospitals	
South Lebanon	1
Biqa	1
Beirut	1
Mosques	15
South Lebanon	19
Biqa	4
Beirut	6
Jabeil	
Cultural Centres	
South Lebanon	1
Biqa	1
Beirut	3
Agricultural Centre Co-operatives	
South	3
Biqa	4

Source: Data collected from Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hezbollah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 50-51.

The Agricultural Committees also provide technical assistance to farmers in land reclamation and cultivation. They provide credit facilities to farmers aimed at boosting agricultural production. The work of all committees is supervised by a technical and administrative committee which is part of Jihad al Bina whose purpose

mainly is to study and provide help for impoverished regions of Lebanon. These services have had an important impact in a country where the government had long ceased to offer many basic social services

The Martyrs Foundation is another important body operating under the authority of the Social Unit. The foundation was established in the immediate aftermath of the 1982 invasion with an aim of helping the families of the martyrs and resistance fighters. The Iranian Martyrs Foundation directly helped the functions of the Lebanese faction, particularly through huge funding. Reportedly, the Iranian organisations spent nearly $ 90 million during the four-year period from 1982 to 1986 for the functions of the Martyrs Foundation. The funds were distributed through the erstwhile Financial Aid Committee, which was working closely with Muasassat al-Shaheed (Kramer, 1987, 167-167). The foundation also provides housing work opportunities and support to widowed women and runs an employment office for the youth (UN-ESCWA, 21 May 1999).

The Khomeini Support Committee was also established soon after the Israeli invasion. The primary function of this committee is to provide general welfare services to poor needy families, particularly those who suffered from the occupation. The Khomeini committee is believed to be operating through a number of specialised teams which would determine the cases of needy families. The Foundation for the Wounded is another important organ through which the Social Unit functions. This foundation was established in 1990 with a goal of serving the wounded and disabled fighters in the resistance. The activities of the Foundation for the Wounded have been divided into seven sub-committees dealing with health, social, educational, information, cultural and entertainment activities, and developmental projects.

Health & Education Units

The Islamic Health Unit (al-Haya al-Suhhiyyah) is another important organ of Hezbollah for carrying out its welfare missions. The major goal of the Health Unit is to ensure better health facilities to Hezbollah's regional constituency and also to the people in the deprived areas (See table 2). According to some reports, an average number of four lacks people living in Beirut and the South are receiving benefits from Hezbollah's Health Unit a year. The cost of Hezbollah's health services is

comparatively cheaper, particularly in contrast with the Lebanese government's health programmes. Hezbollah had even taken over hospitals in the South and Jbeil region which were under Lebanon's Ministry of Health (Hamzeh, 2004, 55).

As the financially and technologically weak Lebanese government stepped back from the social service sector, particularly after the civil war, Hezbollah occupied the space of major social actor through its different organs and missions. Apart from the Islamic Health Unit, the party is also running an Education Unit which operates under the supervision of the Educational Enforcement Office (al-Tabia al-Tarbawiyya). The unit provides financial assistance and scholarships to needy students from poor backgrounds. The party has spent extensively to ensure educational facilities to the needy students as the state stopped investing in the sector. The Rafik Harriri government, which came to power after the end of the civil war, concentrated more on liberalising Lebanon's economy and sought the private investment. As the Hariri government downsized the state's responsibility in the social service sector, Hezbollah provided an alternative through its welfare missions. Its activities in the education sector were one of the major factors behind Hezbollah's surging popularity. Besides the financial aid to the students, the Education Unit also offers specialised higher education in applied sciences as well as religious studies. Technical Institute of the Great Prophet, the Technical Institute of Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi, the Institute of Sayydat al-Zahra, the Institute of Shaykh Raghib Harb and the Islamic Shariah Institute are the major educational institutions run by Hezbollah.

Table 2
Institutions of Hezbollah's Islamic Health Committee

Type/Name	*Location/area of services*	*Establishment Date*
Hospitals		
1. Khomeini Hospital	Ba'albek-Biqa	1986
2. Dar al-Hawra' for women and children	Beirut-southern suburbs	1986
Infirmaries (Mustawsaf)	*Beirut-Southern Suburbs*	
1. al-Imam al-Rida	Madi str.	1983
2. al-Imam al-Hasan	Farhat str.	1985

3. al-Imam al-Husayn	al-Karamah str.	1985
4. al-Imam al-Sadik	Beir Hasan	1985
5. Sayyid al-Shuhada</TD	Burj al-Barajnah	1985
6. al-Imam Ali	Laylaki str.	1986
7. al-Imam al-Khui	Khaldah Blvd.	1986
8. al-Sayyida Zaynab	al-Jinah	1987
Infirmaries (Mustawsaf)	*South Lebanon*	
1. al-Imam Hasan Bin Ali	Tayrdabbah	1985
2. al-Imam Husayn Bin Ali	Ayteet	1985
3. al-Imam al-Mahdi	al-Ghaziyyah	1986
4. al-Imam al-Hadi	Khurbat Sulum	1986
5. al-Imam al-Rida	Ayn Buswar	1986
6. Mobile Infirmaries	Services 12 villages next to the Israeli security belt zone	1986
Infirmaries (Mustawsaf)	*Biqa*	
1. Mustawsaf Mashghara	Mashghara	1985
2. Mustawsaf Suhmur	Suhmur	1985
3. Mustawsaf Ayn al-Tinah	Ayn al-Tinah	1986
Dental Clinics	*Beirut-Southern Suburbs*	
1. al-Ghubairi Clinic	Al-Ghubairi Main str.	1987
2. Harat Hurayk Clinic	Harat Hurayk Main str.	1987
Pharmacies		
1. al-Shaheed (the Martyr) 1	Beirut-Burj Abu Haydar	1985
2. al-Shaheed 2	Southern Suburbs	1987
3. al-Shaheed 3	Southern Suburbs	1987
Civil Defence Centres		
1. Main Headquarters	Soutehrn Suburbs--Beir al-Abed	1985
2. Branch 1	Southern Suburbs--al-Sheyah	1986
3. Branch 2	Beirut--Burj Abu Haydar	1985
4. Branch 3	South Lebanon--Ayn Buswar	1986
5. Branch 4	South Lebanon--Khurbat Sulum	1986
6. Branch 5	South Lebanon--al-Ghaziyyah	1987

Source: Cited in Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh "Lebanon's Hizbullah: from Islamic revolution to parliamentary accommodation" *Third World Quarterly*, 14 (2), (1993) p. 29.

The political ideology, revolutionary outlook and also the social policies of Hezbollah point towards one major factor: the party's commitment to the under-privileged Shiites in the country. Many have argued that the adherents of Hezbollah are from the alienated and backward sections of the society (Wright 1985, 27). However,

Hezbollah's much-touted pro-proletariat stand was also subjected to scrutiny and criticisms. Many observers have challenged Hezbollah's pro-poor "rhetoric" citing the representation of middle class sections in the party apparatus. Hamzeh recognises that many of the Shiite group's activists and members are arts and sciences graduates rather than students of religion (Hamzeh, 1998, 249-273). The critics argue that Hezbollah's social base is not a monopoly of the poor, and that some of the party's operatives are middle class or even affluent sections (Norton, 1998, 88). Judith Harik, after conducting an investigation of the political attitudes of Lebanese Shiites in the early 1990s, reaches a conclusion that the party, despite its rhetoric, was not in fact the representative of the lower class; rather, the bulk of its support came from the middle class. In similar terms, increased levels of religiosity and alienation were shown to be the reasons for the poor sections allegiance to the party (Harik 1996, 41-67). However, the history of Hezbollah's resistance, its innumerable social missions in the backward areas of Lebanon and also the surging popularity of the party in all the sections of the society effectively contradict the criticisms on Hezbollah's alleged pro-middle class character. Even after the withdrawal of Israeli forces, Hezbollah remained as one of the most popular political groups in Lebanon. It could even resist the western demands and the so-called international pressure to disband its military wing in the post-withdrawal period (Simon and Stevenson, 2001, 31-42). All these factors point towards the party's high stature in Lebanon's complex social order, which it achieved through its revolutionary and pro-poor politics.

Conclusion

The social activities of Hezbollah are basically part of its wider ideological commitment to political Shiism. For Hezbollah, social service is a fundamental tenet of faith. After all, one can see that the welfare programmes, the Islamic organisational structure of the social units and also the mission's close association with the Islamic ideology, helped the party spread its politics and policies across Lebanon and also penetrate into Lebanese civil society. Naturally, the social services of Hezbollah increased the popularity of the party, at the expense of both the Lebanese state and Amal movement. This was visible in the 1992 parliamentary elections in which Hezbollah secured eight seats. The subsequent elections, both parliamentary and

municipal, underscored Hezbollah's surging popularity and its policy of gradualist pragmatism.

The social service policies could also be seen as a major factor which strengthened the voices of pragmatism within the party. The social units of Hezbollah have stepped up their activities in the Lebanese society ever since the party's participation in the parliamentary politics. The Hezbollah leadership is believed to have understood that the social welfare programmes would help the party win the support of the masses. In that way, one can see that the logic of Hezbollah's social services is closely linked with the party's tilt towards pragmatic politics. Hezbollah's social service institutions such as hospitals, aid committees and educational institutions, also show the party's intention to find pragmatic solution to the miseries of the alienated Lebanese sections within the structures of the liberal democratic polity of Lebanon. This stand, however, contradicts Hezbollah's earlier embracing of Iranian model of revolution and establishment of a theocratic system in the country. This argument gets more clarity as we analyse the fact that Hezbollah has made deliberate attempts to switch from its pro-Shiite identity to a pro-poor nationalist party of Lebanon in the post-withdrawal period. The party leadership made it clear during the withdrawal that the end of 18-year old occupation was not a victory of a particular organisation, but of the Lebanese people. This pragmatic turn was further bolstered as Hezbollah stepped up its social services and opened it for all the sections of the society in the post-withdrawal period. However, the social welfare programmes were carried out not at the expense of the party's commitment to the armed resistance. Though the party leadership increased the welfare programmes after the withdrawal, it has also made it clear that it would resist any attempt to disband the armed wing until the liberation completes. This gives enough evidence that the party is still able to keep its multiple identities even after Israel's withdrawal from the South.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This dissertation is an effort to explore the politics of Islamic resistance in Lebanon which emerged in the wake of the Israeli invasions. The study is mainly about the emergence and politics of Hezbollah, its resistance against the Israeli invasion and also its Islamic ideology. Lebanon is a country which had long been under the colonial rule. Even after Lebanon's independence, the colonial powers continued their influence in the West Asian country. The post-colonial political system of Lebanon was framed under the tutelage of the French colonialists and it ensured the supremacy of the Maronite Christian community in the country where Muslims were in majority. The failure of Lebanon's sectarian political system and its governments to address the grievances of the backward communities led to the assertion of religio-social movements in the country.

Although Shiites are the majority community in Lebanon, they were the most oppressed people under the French as well as the Maronite rule. Many historical studies on Lebanon have pointed out that the isolation and political oppression of the Lebanese Shiites began right from the time of their early settlements in the Biqa Valley and today's Southern Lebanon. This discrimination continued during the Ottoman rule and the French colonialism. As Lebanon got political freedom from the French, the Maronite Christians emerged as the dominant political class, obviously under the auspices of the colonialists. This is major point many historians highlight in their studies about the socio-political movements of the Shiite community in Lebanon. Though the political isolation was not a new factor, the continuation of status-quo in the social conditions of the Shiites in a politically-independent Lebanon, forced the community to think about new methods for their progress. The Shiite movements in the 1970s were broadly based on this concept of freedom from their social backwardness.

The rise of radical Islamist politics could also be seen as a failure of the post-colonial Lebanese government to find solutions to the problems of its different sects. The post-war period has witnessed the emergence and growth of several Islamist organisations across West Asia. As some authors argue, the "loss of Palestine" gave birth to a new

religio-political consciousness among Muslims in the region. The ideologies and politics of the Islamist groups were more or less based on this community consciousness. The emergence of the Arab nationalists to power in Egypt and the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation had eventually bolstered the Islamic identity politics, though such movements were largely secular in nature. However, the decline of Arab nationalism and the unending miseries of the Palestinians led the Islamists to resort to radical ideologies. It was at this time, Musa al-Sadr started mobilising the Lebanese Shiites. The era of al-Sadr is considered to be the first phase of the political mobilisation of the Shiites. Having understood the real problems of the community, the Imam established an organisational platform for the Shiites, which later became the foundation of a revolutionary organisation like Hezbollah. Imam's leadership and his political vision were widely accepted among the Shiite youths who were largely disgruntled by the failure of the sectarian political order of the country to address the grievances of the majority community.

The failure of Lebanese system was further on display as the civil war broke-out in 1975. The civil war actually had many dimensions. It posed serious challenges to the legitimacy and authenticity of the Lebanese government. It made the Palestinian issue an important factor in Lebanon's future political development. It also legitimised the role of Syria as an important actor in Lebanese politics. As Israel launched its 1978 military operation in Lebanon, it brought immense catastrophe to the South, where the Shiites were living in large numbers. Furthermore, the occupation of Southern Lebanon and the inability of the Lebanese state to fight the Israeli army fuelled the radicalisation of the Shiites whose morale was very high following the Iranian revolution. These all factors, both nationalist and identity issues, led the Shiites to come up with a revolutionary movement to find solutions for the Shiites' long-simmering problems. The Iranian revolution based on Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary interpretation of political Islam was a rejuvenating factor for the defunct Islamist movements across the region. The revolution provided a new vision and hope for those who lost their belief in the secular nationalist movements as well as the radical leftist ideology. Imam Khomeini's call for exporting revolution further helped the radicals regain ground in the other Muslim dominated countries. It had its most influential impacts in Lebanon as the Lebanese Shiites embraced the radical Islamist

ideology. The radical clerics in Lebanon, with the direct help of the Iranian revolutionary leadership formed Hezbollah.

Drawing inspiration from the Iranian experience, Hezbollah accepted the concept of emancipation as the central idea of the party's political ideology. The movement formulated a revolutionary ideology based on two concepts: liberation from Israeli occupation and liberation from an oppressive system. While the primary goal underscores the party's nationalist identity, the secondary objective revolves around its revolutionary commitment to the oppressed communities of Lebanon. The armed resistance against the Israeli Defence Forces was depicted as brave nationalist struggle for the liberation of the Lebanese territories. At the same time, the party rejected the sectarian political system and vowed to overthrow the same and establish a "just Islamic order". These features appear to be ironical. And this complex character is the major factor that differentiates the Hezbollah from other other Islamist/non-Islamist radical organisations.

Hezbollah emerged as a resistance organisation with a revolutionary outlook and a social mission. Unlike its contemporary Sunni Islamist organisations, which perceived that revolution was the primary goal, Hezbollah gave prominence to resistance. The social welfare activities of the party were initially based on two convictions: to help the resistance fighters and their families and to give support to the community in general. The party's commitment to military resistance and the social welfare programmes remained unchanged whereas its policy towards Islamic revolution underwent a transformation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Historians have given a number of reasons to explain the shift in Hezbollah's radical outlook and its tilt towards political participation. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the Taif Agreement, the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the changing regional dynamics were the major factors that influenced this pragmatic turn.

Hezbollah's decision to cooperate with the post-Taif political order is considered to be the first phase of the party's pragmatic turn. According to the party leadership, the political participation was not a major change in its revolutionary outlook; rather it was dubbed as "political jihad" to carry forward its radical agenda. However, the political participation was a visible turn from the party's earlier stance regarding the

Lebanese society and revolutionary action. The movement limited its military activities to Southern Lebanon in the late 1980s which was a clear demonstration of the party's changing outlook. This policy further helped Hezbollah strengthen its nationalist image vis-à-vis the image of a "terrorist" organisation that targets its ideological enemies across the world. Though Hezbollah was alleged to have carried out "terrorist attacks" against the American and French troops in early 1980s and involved in many hostage-taking operations, the party's name has not been implicated in such cases since 1990s. Hezbollah leadership categorically declared that it was fighting against the Israeli forces for the liberation of the Lebanese territories. This nationalist image or the process of Lebanonisation was further bolstered as Hezbollah decided to take part in the 1992 parliamentary elections. The decision was taken after intense debate about the gradualist pragmatic mode, proposed by Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi and Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah. When the pragmatic mode was officially accepted at the top level, obviously with the blessings of the Iranian leadership, another faction led by the then Secretary-General Subhi al-Tufayil revolted against the decision. However, Hezbollah leadership could win the support of its followers for the new decision and sideline the Tufayil faction.

Apart from the external and regional factors, the perceptional change is also related to Lebanese domestic politics which are not in favour of a revolution even among the Shiite ranks. The Lebanonisation move was basically driven by political considerations related to the consolidation of Hezbollah's existence. This also highlights Hezbollah's identity as an effective and efficient political party. The Lebanonisation helped Hezbollah in two ways. First, it ensured political representation for the Shiites who had been historically disregarded by the Lebanese state. Second, it urged a revision of the party's labelling as a terrorist group. This was a major result of the political participation. Analysing the post-participation politics of Hezbollah, one can see that the Lebanonisation move legitimised its broader socio-political mission rather than undermining its influence in Lebanon. Through the participation, Hezbollah could address a larger constituency and negotiate its position within the complex arena of Lebanese politics. At the same time the successful operations as a political party helped Hezbollah counter the criticisms, mostly from the radical corners. Although the party repeated its claims that it would not compromise in its radical agenda, it was evident that the ideological ambitions of

Hezbollah were rechannelled into or somehow neutralised by domestic politics. In a broader understanding one can see that Hezbollah was not only gradually absorbed by the political system of Lebanon, it has also jettisoned its commitment to establishing a system of Islamic rule in the country. Here, the basic question is that whether the gradualist pragmatic mode of Hezbollah indicates the decline of radical Islamism in the region. Given Hezbollah's policies even in the post-participation period, it's hard to reach such a conclusion.

Ever since the inception of the party, the leadership has made it clear that resistance against the occupation was the primary goal of the party. Unlike the Iranian Islamist movement, which was rooted in the very concepts of revolution against an oppressive un-Islamic domestic political system, Hezbollah emerged as a resistance organisation with multiple goals. Even while the Tehran conclave of the party decided in favour of political participation, the leadership had made it clear that it would not make any compromise on its primary goal, resistance against occupation. The party's commitment to establishing a Shiite theocratic system underwent transformation, but its concept of armed resistance against an external enemy remained intact. This, in effect, adds to the complex character of Hezbollah. However, the party succeeded in distinguishing between the different sorts of activities of the party. It also succeeded to acknowledge or explain the interactions between them on an ideological level.

While the political participation helped Hezbollah construct a Shiite self-identity in Lebanon's sectarian system, the successful resistance against the occupation retained the party's revolutionary identity. Through this complicated two-way process, Hezbollah reinvented its socio-political role without compromising its ideological position towards occupation. Some authors have argued that the political participation resulted in the loss of Hezbollah's radical political program. However, so long as the concept of Islamic resistance remains as the crux of the party's political outlook, it was hard to subscribe that argument. Rather, the resistance and the party's animosity towards Israel underline the ideological character of Hezbollah, though it abandoned the revolutionary programme.

The electoral triumph of Hezbollah in the 1992 elections was seen as the recognition of the masses for its armed resistance. Hezbollah stepped up its military activities

against the Israeli troops when the Rafik Hariri government refused to acknowledge its suggestions. The 1990s saw major military clashes between Hezbollah and Israel. This period also witnessed Hezbollah's organisational, military and political organs operating in accordance with the primary function of the party. While the Islamic Resistance took on the Israeli military, the socio-political organs engaged with the Lebanese civil society to win the mass support for the resistance. The parliamentary wing of the party, which was part of Lebanon's liberal democratic polity, helped Hezbollah counter the western accusation of being a "terrorist" organisation. The social welfare unit has also played its role successfully in the party's positive engagement with the Lebanese masses. One of the major objectives of the social welfare programs was to assist the fighters and their families. The media outlets of the organisations basically concentrated on the resistance and launched a number of programmes aimed at countering the information given by the Israeli and western media. The al-Minar television channel released the photographs of the dead and wounded Israeli soldiers which played a major role in turning the Israeli public opinion against the occupation. This indicates two major things: the successful separation of Hezbollah's multiple missions and such missions' commitment to the resistance cause. The success of this policy was further on display when Israel withdrew troops from the South in 2000. The withdrawal was not only the victory of Islamic Resistance but of Hezbollah's well planned political, social and military missions.

The liberation of Southern Lebanon seemed to have placed Hezbollah in a dilemma. With the Israeli pull-out, many western governments and international players urged the Lebanese government to take action to disband Hezbollah's military wing. Though Israel's military presence in the Shaba Farms was perceived as the continuing occupation by both Hezbollah and the Lebanese government, the withdrawal from the South has set off a number of questions about Hezbollah's future policies. However, the party sustained its legitimacy as the bearer of resistance. The party leadership has made it clear that it would not disband its armed wing until and unless the liberation completes.

According to many analysts, Hezbollah's reluctance to disband military wing was an antithesis to the party's Lebanonisation policy. In what could be seen as an answer to

such critical questions, the Hezbollah leadership has said that the basis of the party's objective was related to two ideas; the theory of prevention or defence and the theory of liberation. Therefore, the calling for the demilitarisation of the party is equivalent to calling for the removal of all security measures from the country (Harb and Leenders, 2005, 186). The existence of a hostile power at the borders, the continuing occupation in the Shaba Farms and also the vulnerability of the Lebanese state to counter any military challenge from Israel are the important factors which could influence Hezbollah's military policy in the post-withdrawal period.

The withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon, after the occupation of 18-years, has more significant implications than a group of questions about Hezbollah's future strategies. The triumph of Hezbollah's guerrilla warfare over Israel's powerful army reinforced the concept of Islamist resistance vis-à-vis secular nationalist movements in the region. Israel's defeat was another major victory of the Islamists after the Iranian revolution. It expanded the scope of ideological resistance against Israel that could have far-reaching implications even in the Arab-Israeli conflict in the future. However, the resurgence and the triumph of the Islamist groups also raise some questions about the identity of the liberal political parties. Hezbollah's parliamentary wing, like any other pro-system political group, participates in day-to-day debates and its parliamentary duties. It could also win the support of the Lebanese masses for their corruption-free politics and commitment to their respective constituencies. However, the military wing and the revolutionary ideology differentiate the party from conventional political organisations. This is a major difference that, perhaps, is going to define the emerging Islamist radical groups in the region.

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