

## Iran and Hizbullah: A Very Special Relationship

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the Iranian influence in the Lebanese Shi'i movement Hizbullah. The main reason behind this decision was the fact that Iran is Hizbullah's ideological and religious mentor. This movement's political program derives from the Iranian Revolution, whose cadres provided the financial, political, and logistical support for the establishment of Hizbullah.

Hizbullah emerged in 1982 as a Shiite organization and an ideological Shiite proxy for Iran. During the next ten years, Hezbollah evolved into a complex institution; Hizbullah became a major political force in Lebanon and emerged as a powerful non-state military force in the region. Yet Hizbullah could not have reached its current level of significance without the support of Iran.

For the past 30 years, Hizbullah's strategic partnership with Iran has proven to be a mutually beneficial relationship. From Iran, Hizbullah gets tens of thousands of rockets, hundreds of millions of dollars a year, training and operational logistical support from Iran. From Hizbullah, Iran gets an extended reach -- to the Mediterranean and beyond -- and a means of targeting its enemies from afar with reasonable deniability.

Furthermore, Lebanese Shiite Hizbullah is part of an Iranian geostrategic scheme to establish a "Shiite arc of influence" from Iran across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. With Hizbullah deeply involved in supporting the Assad-Alawite regime in its bloody internal war, there are negative political, material, and social consequences to the Lebanese-Shia organization for the intervention in the Syrian War. These problems will create a potentially existential crisis for Hizbullah in Lebanon.

**Keywords:** *Iran, Hizbullah, Lebanon.*

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## إيران وحزب الله: علاقة خاصة جدا

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### ملخص

تركز هذه الورقة على محاولة فهم حجم التأثير الإيراني على حركة "حزب الله" الشيعية اللبنانية. وقد كان الدافع الرئيس خلف هذا الاهتمام هو وضوح الدور الأبوي لإيران تجاه الحركة أيديولوجيا ودينيا. كما أن البرنامج السياسي للحركة مستمد من أطروحات الثورة الإيرانية، التي قدمت نخبها الدعم المالي والسياسي واللوجستي من أجل قيام حزب الله.

لقد قام حزب الله في العام ١٩٨٢ كتنظيم شيعي وممثل أيديولوجي لإيران. وخلال الأعوام العشر التالية، تطور حزب الله ليصبح مؤسسة معقدة؛ فقد أصبح قوة سياسية رئيسية في لبنان، وبرز في الوقت نفسه في المنطقة كقوة عسكرية ثقيلة الوزن وخارج نطاق سلطة الدولة، وما كان لحزب الله أن يحقق ما حققه لولا الدعم الإيراني.

وعلى مدار الثلاثين عاما الماضية، أثبتت الشراكة الاستراتيجية بين حزب الله وإيران كونها علاقة نفع متبادلة. فمن إيران، يحصل حزب الله على عشرات الآلاف من الصواريخ، ومئات الملايين من الدولارات سنويا، فضلا عن الدعم التدريبي واللوجستي العملياتي. بينما تتمثل استفادة إيران من حزب الله في حصولها على نافذة ممتدة على البحر الأبيض المتوسط وما وراءه - ووسيلة لاستهداف أعدائها عن بعد مع قدرة معقولة على الإنكار.

ومن ناحية أخرى، فإن حزب الله الشيعي اللبناني هو جزء من مخطط جيواستراتيجي إيراني لتأسيس "قوس نفوذ شيعي" يمتد من إيران عبر العراق وسوريا ولبنان. ومع تورط حزب الله على نحو دراماتيكي في دعم نظام بشار الأسد العلوي في حربه الداخلية الدامية، فقد لحق بالتنظيم الشيعي اللبناني خسارات سياسية ومادية واجتماعية فادحة جراء تدخله في الحرب الأهلية السورية. وقد تخلق هذه الخسائر أزمة وجودية محتملة لحزب الله في لبنان.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** إيران - حزب الله - لبنان

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*From the first moment, we saw ourselves as committed to the principle of the rule of the cleric (wilayat al-faqih), and we saw Imam Khomeini, may God have mercy on him, as the leader and the ruler wali al-imam; after Khomeini's death, we see Imam Khamenei as such a leader. For twenty-three years we have been committed to this principle of wilayat al-faqih, and we also implement it. Hassan Nasrallah's interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper al-Ray al-A'am, August 27, 2005*

### **The Roots of Iranian Involvement in Lebanon**

From the dawn of history the state entity that stretched over the Iranian highlands – today's Iran – eyed the expanses to its west as a possible region of influence and a security zone. The Persian Gulf area was a potential Iranian zone of influence; Iraq was a frontier and border region and from many points of view the gateway to the heart of Iran; and the Mediterranean coast was a likely security zone against future provocation.<sup>1</sup>

In the 16th century, the Safavid dynasty recruited Shiite clerics from Jabal Amel, a region of south Lebanon, to help spread Shiism as a state religion. Clerical and family exchanges flourished as a consequence. Later, the growth of Beirut as a major Middle East commercial and cultural center attracted Iranian elites.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, it was only in the mid 1950s that Iran once again set its sights on the Mediterranean coastal area. This was a direct result of the stabilization of the shah's rule in Iran and the establishment of the Iranian nation state, two developments that helped consolidate a new Iranian interest on the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, and in this context, an interest in influence in Lebanon as well. In addition to a longstanding geopolitical interest, the Iranians were troubled by the threat of Arab nationalism and sought to turn Lebanon – and not only Lebanon – into a frontline base in the struggle against the Nasserist advance, which Iran perceived as a real threat. As was explained in the late 1950s by a senior official of the SAVAK (the National Intelligence and Security Organization under the shah), Iran must stop Nasser's threat on the Mediterranean coastal states; otherwise Iran will have to shed its own blood on Iranian soil in order to repulse it. In Lebanon, it was actually powerful Christian elements that shared the Iranian view

and not the Shiite community, which was basically backward and lacking in sophistication, and more importantly, not well organized and even too religious for the shah. Nevertheless, as part of the efforts to strengthen their standing in Lebanon, the Iranians invested significant resources in Shiite religious institutions.<sup>3</sup>

### **Anti Mohammad Reza Opposition Activities in Lebanon**

In 1970, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) moved into Lebanon from Jordan and used Lebanon as a base for attacks on Israel.<sup>4</sup>

During Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, the PLO had close ties with the Iranian opposition. Many Iranian dissidents trained at PLO camps in Lebanon in the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> During the time in Lebanon, Iranian fighters developed local connections which, once they gained power in Iran, would become useful to export their revolutionary ideals back to Lebanon.

### **The Shiite Community in Lebanon: An Overview**

Like the Sunnis and the Druze, the Shiites were not a party to the establishment of Greater Lebanon by the French colonialism in 1920. Through the annexation of their territory to Lebanon, Shiites became citizens of a new state that they identified with Maronite hegemony and Western imperialism. In principle, the French mandatory authorities did not deviate from their predecessors' tradition of ignoring and excluding the Shiites. Still, in 1926 they became the first to confer on Lebanese Shiites the status of a recognized religious community with its own autonomous juridical system. Lebanon's independence and the establishment of the 1943 National Pact between the Maronite and Sunni elites did not halt the discrimination against and exclusion of the Shiite community (though it was awarded the speakership of the parliament within the confessional system); the Shiite experience within independent Lebanon remained largely one of alienation and impoverishment. In addition to suffering from continued political marginalization, Shiites had long been the most underprivileged community in Lebanon, by any definition. The vast majority of Shiites belonged to disadvantaged social groups—the peasants and the working class—and lived in underdeveloped rural areas and poor suburbs.

### **The Rise of Shiite Militancy**

The Palestinian guerillas and leftist parties were attractive to many young Shiites, who identified with their revolutionary and antiestablishment stance. The affinity between the underclass Shiites and the Palestinian-leftist forces in fact dates as far back as the Shiite mass immigration from the periphery to Beirut in the 1960s. Detached from their social settings and making up what Michael Johnson calls a “belt of misery,” peasant and sub-proletarian Shiite immigrants in Beirut fell outside the established patronage systems of the city after having being excluded from those in their native periphery. Accordingly, they sought not only to overcome their socioeconomic misery but to topple the political status quo—and those goals inclined them toward the left. Many young Shiites joined various Palestinian organizations and other leftist militias.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Arrival of Musa al-Sadr**

By 1959, the living conditions and infrastructure in the Shi'a areas were centuries behind the rest of Lebanon. Basic services like schools, hospitals, and utilities were in disrepair or nonexistent. The lack of concern by the Maronite-dominated government prevented any serious representation in government, and corruption within the Shi'a leadership crippled efforts to improve infrastructure in the communities. In addition, the Shi'a political and religious voice was fractured and disjointed, making improvements to the infrastructure or quality of life difficult. Hussein Husseini, a Shi'a member of the Lebanese Parliament in 1959, describes it as politics of polarity and feudalism on one side and extremism on the other. The Lebanese Shi'a religious leadership was not much better; they were stagnant and unable to break away from centuries of tradition, which prevented them from understanding the current needs of the population and limited their influence in all areas of life.<sup>7</sup> The year 1959 would mark the beginning of a Shi'a religious revival with the arrival of Shi'ite cleric Musa al-Sadr from Iran.<sup>8</sup>

Musa al-Sadr was born in Qom, Iran, on 4 June 1928. His father was Ayatollah Sadr al-Din Sadr, originally from Tyre and a marja-i taqlid in Iran.

Musa al-Sadr attended primary school in his hometown and then moved to Tehran where he received a degree in Islamic

jurisprudence (Fiqh) and political sciences from Tehran University. Then he moved back to Qom to study Theology and Islamic philosophy. He then edited a magazine called *Maktab-e Eslām* in Qom.

In 1959, however, Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, the most senior Shi'ite leader in the Iraqi city of Najaf, sent Musa al-Sadr to unite and lead the Shi'ite community in Lebanon.<sup>9</sup> Presumably the shah's regime sought to make use of Sadr for its purposes, and even assisted him from time to time. Thus, for example, Sadr had an Iranian diplomatic passport and maintained a close connection with the Iranian embassy in Beirut.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Rise of Amal Movement**

Musa al-Sadr began to challenge the leftist parties for the loyalty of Shi'i youth. Al-Sadr offered instead the "Movement of the Deprived" (*Harakat al-Mahrumin*), dedicated to attaining political rights for the dispossessed within the Lebanese polity. On January 20, 1975, the Lebanese Resistance Detachments (also referred to in English as "The Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance") were formed as a military wing of *Harakat al-Mahrumin* under the leadership of al-Sadr, and came to be popularly known as Amal (from the acronym *Afwaj al-Mouqawma Al-Lubnaniyya*). However, Musa al-Sadr disappeared during an official visit to Libya in 1978.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1978 and 1982 a number of events propelled the nascent Shi'i mobilisation forward and further divorced it from the leftist parties: two Israeli invasions of Lebanon, the unexplained disappearance of Musa al-Sadr and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. In 1978, as noted above, al-Sadr mysteriously vanished, and his popularity surged thereafter. That same year, to push back Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) fighters then based in Lebanon, Israel invaded the south, displacing 250,000 people. The initial consequence of these two events was Amal's revitalisation.<sup>12</sup> There were increasing Shi'i perceptions that the Lebanese left had failed, both in securing greater rights for the poor and in protecting the south from the fighting between the PLO and Israel. The following year, the Islamic Revolution in Iran set a new sort of example for Shi'is around the world, and provided an alternative worldview to Western liberal capitalism different from that espoused by the left.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Shiite Community's Iranian Patronage**

The Islamic Revolution constituted a turning point in the development of the Lebanese Shiite community's external relations. The affinity of the Lebanese Shiites with Iran has actually increased since 1979, and has been legitimized in the name of Islamic anti-Western revolutionary ideology.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately following the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Iran made a strategic decision to export the Islamic Revolution to the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>15</sup> For this purpose, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini appointed Ayatollah Ali Montazeri to create the "second revolution." In Iran a special apparatus was formed, staffed by Montazeri's men, that was tasked with setting up and supporting Islamic movements throughout the Arab and Islamic world that were prepared to adopt Iran's model of Islamic rule.<sup>16</sup> Lebanon was the first target selected, given its unsettled political condition and its large Shiite population that had maintained links with Iran for many years. During the 1970s, Lebanon had become the crucible for the senior Iranian revolutionary leadership, who took refuge there and underwent military training. Khomeini's tape-recorded messages were also produced in Lebanon and then disseminated throughout Iran to spread the imam's doctrine.

Even as Iran was bogged down in a bloody war against Iraq, Iran's most ideologically committed forces, the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) were tasked with establishing a foothold for Iran in Lebanon by organizing the Shi'a community and creating an Shi'i counterpoint to the country's other armed factions. As early as 1979, Iranian emissaries started making their way back to Lebanon—a place Iranian revolutionaries had come to know in their days in exile during the 1970s.

### **Iraqi Embassy Bombing**

On December 15, 1981, apparently against the backdrop of the Iran-Iraq war, a member of the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite group, Al-Dawa al-Islamiyya, or the Islamic Call, which played a key role in Iran's creation of Hizbullah in Lebanon in 1982, drove a white Mercedes packed with 220 pounds of high explosives into the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut.

The blast killed 61 people, including Ambassador Abdul Razzak Lafta, and ushered in the era of the suicide strategy Hizbullah adopted.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Deterioration in Amal's Relationship with Iran**

After the 1978-1979 revolution in Iran, Amal enjoyed some support from the Iranian revolutionary government. The subsequent victory of an Islamic revolution in Shi'i Iran also bolstered the confidence of Lebanon's Shi'a and their support for Amal. Amal's relationship with Iran's revolutionary government was initially friendly but deteriorated rapidly. With the disappearance of Musa Sadr during a visit to Libya in August 1978, Amal's leadership had passed into the hands of more secular nationalistic Shi'i politicians who had less sympathy for the ideal of creating an Islamic state in Lebanon. Iran's diplomatic overtures to Libya also antagonized Amal members who believed that the Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi was responsible for Musa Sadr's disappearance. The falling out between the Iranian government and Amal as well as the defection from Amal of more members led Iran to sponsor the creation of the Hizbullah, which absorbed much of the strength of Amal's following.<sup>18</sup>

Under the increasingly secular leadership of Nabih Berri, Amal refused to embrace the doctrine of *Wilayat al Faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurist).<sup>19</sup> Seeing its initial efforts frustrated, in early 1982 Iran decided to create its own organization, and tasked the Iranian ambassador to Damascus, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pour, with coordinating the effort.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, Mohtashemi-Pour managed to gather all the Shi'a factions outside Amal and bring them together under a new umbrella.<sup>21</sup> By the summer of 1982, as Israel entered into a war with Lebanon, an embryonic Hizbullah was born,<sup>22</sup> and IRGC instructors began training its fighters in Ba'albek.<sup>23</sup> Since then, the Revolutionary Guards have been the principal channel connecting the Iranian revolutionary regime with Hizbullah.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Crucible of Invasion**

The final, and doubtless the most important, ingredient in this cauldron of events was the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in



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June 1982. This time Israeli troops, aiming to expel the PLO from Lebanon entirely, marched north and laid siege to West Beirut. Tens of thousands of Lebanese were killed and injured during the invasion, and another 450,000 people were displaced. Between 16-18 September 1982, under the protection and direction of the Israeli military and then Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, a Lebanese Phalangist militia unit entered the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, and raped, killed and maimed thousands of civilian refugees. Approximately one-quarter of those refugees were Shi'i Lebanese who had fled the violence in the south. The importance of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon to the formation of Hizbullah cannot be underestimated.<sup>25</sup>

The spontaneous and individual decisions of some Shiites to fight against invading Israeli forces laid the basis for the emergence of some form of insurgency. However, both the scope and strategy of the movement would likely have been far different in the absence of Iran's support.

Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, mid-way through Lebanon's civil war, provided the final impetus needed for the creation of a new, more militant Shiite movement—Hizbullah. When Berri ordered Amal's militia not to resist Israel's advance, many of his combatants spontaneously disobeyed his orders and joined Palestinian and Syrian forces in resisting the Israeli army as it approached Beirut. Meanwhile, Israel's lightning advance through South Lebanon left the Shiite fighters formerly employed by Palestinian groups both unemployed and footloose, yet willing to carry on fighting Israel. At a higher level, Amal's chief military commander, Husayn al-Musawi, broke overtly with Berri and called for Shiites to resist the invasion in the name of Islam.<sup>26</sup>

At the time of the Israeli invasion, many leading Shia Lebanese clerics were in Tehran, attending the annual Islamic Conference. Iran immediately let the clerics know that it would assist them and volunteer in consolidating and strengthening the organized Shiite resistance in Lebanon.<sup>27</sup> The speaker of the Iranian parliament at that time, Hashemi Rafsanjani, said that the road to Jerusalem passes through Karbala' and Lebanon.<sup>28</sup> However, it is interesting that Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli and Sheikh Ragheb Harb had both

attended the conference and were to be central figures in realizing Iran's initiative: Tufeili became the first leader of the new Islamic movement and Harb was to die fighting for its cause.

When a group of Amal revolutionaries came to Tehran for help in the wake of the Israeli invasion— including Abbas al Musawi, Hassan Nasrallah, and Naim Qassem—Khomeini and his inner circle responded enthusiastically to this request and began plotting to supply the nascent anti-Israeli resistance with a range of different types of support. First, in exchange for an annual subsidy of 9 million barrels of Iranian oil, Iran convinced Syria to allow it to use Lebanon's Syrian-occupied Beqa'a Valley as a safe haven where the anti-Israeli resistance could organize itself. Once this has been negotiated, Iran initially deployed 5,000 members (soon thereafter to be reduced to 1,500 and later 300) of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) to establish training camps and begin managing the influx of financial assistance that followed.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Iran provided, in short order, Hizbullah with sanctuary, financial assistance and political support.<sup>30</sup> Even though Khomeini stopped further dispatch of IRGC forces because of logistical problems amidst the war with Iraq, Iran's financial and military aid continued to flow into Lebanon.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Early Days: Arrival of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards**

However, it was decided early on in both Teheran and Damascus that any direct IRGC engagement alongside Syrian military forces was politically unwise and logistically impractical, as the relatively small size of the IRGC units would be too small for a direct combat role against the technologically superior and rapidly advancing Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Instead the IRGC focused on ensuring the survival and growth of Husayn al-Musawi's newly created militia, the Islamic Amal, basing itself at the Sheikh Abdallah barracks at the heart of the Beqa'a Valley town of Ba'albek (under Syrian military control). Alongside its support and patronage of Islamic Amal, the IRGC units, spearheaded by religious and military instructors, were deployed in late 1982 to smaller villages along the eastern Beqa'a Valley to recruit and indoctrinate potential members into the newly formed Hizbullah movement.<sup>32</sup> Iran actively

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supervised this solidifying process by merging together the Lebanese chapter of (Iraqi) al-Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party (Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya),<sup>33</sup> the Association of Muslim Students, defectors from the Amal movement, and other Shiite resistance groups—all of which had a commonality of having leaders who received clerical training in Najaf, Iraq, by senior Iranian clerics.<sup>34</sup> There they hammered out a common platform that nine delegates signed—including three former Amal cadres, three leaders of small religious groups, and three clerics connected with the Da'wa. The negotiations that led to the adoption of this platform, which is known as the 'Manifesto of the Nine' and has been referred to as Hizbullah's founding act, were influenced by Khomeini's representative in Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, and bore an Iranian imprimatur.<sup>35</sup>

### **Iran's Centrality in Hizbullah Ideology**

The final document was submitted to the leader of Iran's revolution, Khomeini. Khomeini approved the document, thereby enshrining the theocratic concept of Guardianship of the Supreme Jurisconsult (*Wilayat al Faqih*) for the Lebanese Shi'a.

This document helped create the committee that would serve as Hizbullah's first decision-making council (this would eventually become the Majlis al-Shura). The Shura Council is composed of between 7-9 members and plays a leadership role in guiding Hizbullah.<sup>36</sup> Also during this period was the creation of the position of Secretary-General; the Secretary-General is a member of the Shura Council but, as the leader, he represents Hizbullah when communicating between the Council and Iran. The power in this role is real, but it is at the discretion of Iran.

The group's symbols and emblems were strongly influenced by the Iranian movement, too. Not only were forms of parading and dress codes practically identical to their Iranian counterparts, but posters depicting Khomeini and the Iranian flag were also omnipresent at the group's gatherings. Thereby, Hizbullah considered itself "part of the Shi'i nation in the world" and adopted elements of Khomeini's pan-Shi'i vision which explicitly rejected nationalist notions of orienting oneself towards one particular country or people, referring instead to a worldwide community of believers.<sup>37</sup>

So, Hizbullah saw itself as part of a transnational Shi'i movement, adhering to Khomeini's leadership and adopting his pan-Shi'i vision, as well as the movement's broad agenda of Iranian revolution and struggling against the Shi'i nation's oppression. When Hizbullah emerged in Lebanon, the notion of "Iranian revolution" seemed ever-present. Hizbullah's flag bore the programmatic slogan "Hizbullah – The Islamic revolution in Lebanon", and leaders mentioned it in their speeches and proclaimed the goal of creating an Shi'i Islamic state in Lebanon.

In its early years, Hizbullah rallies would include the party's flag as well as the flag of Iran, which it viewed as the flag of Shi'ism and not just of the country of a sovereign state. Yet the Lebanese flag was conspicuously missing. In fact, Hizbullah rally participants frequently partook in the burning of the Lebanese flag, until this practice was ended by Sheikh Fadlallah,<sup>38</sup> who believed that it was needlessly confrontational. Although Iranian flags do not fly as prominently as they once did in Hizbullah-controlled zones such as south Lebanon, one can still find pictures of Iranian ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei in many Shiite homes and Hizbullah offices.<sup>39</sup>

Hizbullah was extremely secretive from its earliest stages. Even though its militiamen were quite visible, not much was known about the Party's hierarchy and the actual foundation. Also, given that in 1982 the Lebanese Civil War anarchy was at its maximum, the formation of the new current could be neither immediately noticed nor successfully covered by intelligence agencies. If it is true that Hizbullah owes its existence to Iran, this clandestine atmosphere might have been favorable for establishing and consolidating hardly visible vectors of control of the Iranian Republic over the newly established Party.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, it was logical that, Members of Hizbullah fought side by side with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in the Iran-Iraq war; this provided unique experience for Hizbullah members to fight in the Lebanese Civil War.<sup>41</sup>

Through support for Hizbullah's military operations against Israel, Iran attempted to inject its voice into the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; an issue central to the Arab world that has enabled Iran to

garner a degree of popularity otherwise unobtainable by a state that is both religiously Shiite and ethnically Persian.

### **The Western Hostage Crisis**

The Lebanese hostage crisis of 1982 to 1992 provide one example of Iran directly intervening in Hizbullah's decision-making. Indeed, the event that triggered the Shiite kidnappings of foreigners was the disappearance of four Iranian embassy personnel travelling in a Christian Maronite-controlled region in Northern Lebanon. To compel the United State to help locate its missing diplomats, Iranian agents kidnapped David Dodge, the acting president of American University in Beirut, and smuggled him into Iran via Syria. However, Iran's direct involvement in this hostage-taking backfired because the United States was able to quickly ascertain Dodge's whereabouts and lobby Syria into pressuring Iran for Dodge's release. Faced with the shortcomings of using Iranian agents to abduct Westerners, Iran's decision-makers chose to use local proxies to continue pursuing the same strategy.

However, strong evidence suggests that two prominent Hizbullah military commanders—Imad Mughniyah and Husayn al-Musawi—masterminded the kidnapping of at least 87 of the 110 Westerners abducted. Moreover, most of the hostages were reportedly held in Hizbullah- or IRGC-controlled facilities in Beirut's southern suburbs and the Beka'a Valley.

However, what is clear is that Iranian demands largely set the tone of the hostage negotiations and that these demands and the pace of kidnapping grew in keeping with Iranian perceptions of the hostages' value. For example, French hostages were progressively released as France acquiesced to Iranian demands to expel the Mujahedin-e Khalq's leadership and resolved the dispute over the Shah's \$1 billion loan to France's state-owned Eurodif Corporation. Likewise, Iran used its American hostages to bargain for clandestine arms sales. However, the Reagan Administration's extreme eagerness to trade arms for hostages (the so-called "Iran-Contra Affair") paradoxically led Iran to retard hostages' release. According to former Hizbullah Secretary General Tufayli, Hizbullah reached an agreement with the hostage takers to release all foreign detainees in May 1986, but former National Security Advisor Robert

McFarlane's trip to Tehran led the Iranian government to demand the deal's cancellation because "They [Iranian leaders] wanted to sell the hostages piece for piece [in exchange for weaponry]."<sup>42</sup>

### **Sacrifice and Self-Martyrdom**

On November 11, 1982, five months after the Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrived on Lebanese soil, Ahmad Qasir, Hizbullah's first suicide bomber ("martyr"), detonated himself in the Israeli headquarters in Tyre, in southern Lebanon, killing around 76 military officers and wounding 20 others. On April 13, 1983, Hizbullah conducted its second "martyrdom operation" when 'Ali Safiyyeddine detonated his car into an Israeli convey in Dayr Qanun al-Nahr killing six soldiers and wounding four others. On October 14, 1983, Hizbullah conducted its third "martyrdom operation" when Ja'far Al-Tayyar blew himself in an UNRWA building in Tyre housing Israeli soldiers, killing 29 soldiers by the concessions of the Israelis themselves. It is worth mentioning that in the same year (1983), Hizbullah put a lid on an aborted double suicidal operation when the car of the two suicide bombers got blown prematurely on its way to Tyre.<sup>43</sup>

### **Targeting U.S. and French Interests**

In Beirut, three spectacular attacks by Hizbullah directed against U.S. interests over an 18-month period defined the group's relationship with the United States for years to come. The U.S. embassy was bombed on April 18, 1983, killing 63, including 17 Americans. Among the dead were the top American intelligence officials stationed in Lebanon, including the CIA's chief Middle East analyst, Robert C. Ames.

Then came the nearly simultaneous attacks of October 23, 1983, targeting the U.S. Marines and French army barracks, both compounds under the aegis of the Beirut-based Multinational Force sent to Lebanon as peacekeepers to oversee the evacuation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from Beirut. Those attacks left 241 Americans and 58 French dead.<sup>44</sup> Less than a year later, on September 20, 1984, the U.S. embassy annex was bombed, killing 24.<sup>45</sup>

### **Hizbullah Emerges**

While the formation of Hizbullah began in 1982, it would be two more years before it came into shape as a coherent organisation.<sup>46</sup> For Iran, the creation of Hizbullah represented the realisation of the revolutionary state's zealous campaign to spread the message of the self-styled "revolution."<sup>47</sup>

Within this context, the IRGC and its surrogates turned the sanctuary of the Beqa'a Valley into "a no-man's-land, cut off from the rest of the country. It... turned into a miniature Iranian republic, where the doctrine of the Guards, Khomeini and Shiite clerics reigned."<sup>48</sup>

In the early days of Islamic Amal and Hizbullah, the IRGC units played an all-service role in the recruitment of new members and in the provision of logistical assistance and military training. This recruitment drive was aided by financial inducements in the form of a monthly salary, and fighters were offered special privileges, including cost-free education and medical treatment for themselves and their families. The IRGC was supported by large Iranian funds to finance arms shipments, training, and infrastructure, and in July 1984 it had established six military centers in the Ba'albek region to train Hizbullah and Islamic Amal fighters. The most notorious of these was the Sheikh Abdallah barracks in Ba'albek, made famous as the operational nerve center for Hizbullah's kidnappings and later as a known storage facility for some of the Western hostages. It had also an important role to play in the planning of the October 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks outside Beirut airport.<sup>49</sup>

Hizbullah remained loosely organized and largely clandestine until February 16, 1985,<sup>50</sup> when it officially announced its existence in an "Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World."<sup>51</sup> For the purposes of this paper, what is most noteworthy is the leadership role assigned to Iran. According to the Open Letter: We, the sons of Hizbullah's nation, whose vanguard God has given victory in Iran and which has established the nucleus of the world's central Islamic state, abide by the orders of a single wise and just command currently embodied in the supreme Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Musavi al-Khomeini.

The letter bore a “distinctive made-in-Tehran coloration and, in fact, is reliably reported to have been written by Iran's ambassador to Syria from 1982 to 1986, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi.<sup>52</sup> The inextricable bond between the Wilayat al-Faqih and the Iranian state on the one hand, and the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian state on the other, serves to consecrate the relationship between Iran and Hizbullah.<sup>53</sup>

### **Hizbullah's violent operations outside of Lebanon**

On December 12, 1983, Hizbullah and operatives of the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite group Da'wa carried out a series of seven coordinated bombings in Kuwait, killing six people and wounding nearly ninety more. The targets included the American and French embassies, the Kuwait airport, the grounds of the Raytheon Corporation, a Kuwait National Petroleum Company oil rig, and a government-owned power station. An attack outside a post office was thwarted.<sup>54</sup>

The bombings were the work of Iran in cooperation with Shia allies from Iraq and Lebanon. Kuwait had given considerable support to Iraq in the 1980-1988 Iran–Iraq War. Between 1983-4 Kuwait provided \$7 billion in financial assistance and was second to Saudi Arabia in aiding Iraq, Massive destruction and loss of life in Kuwait would also have provided an example to the other oil-rich, population-poor, Arab monarchies of the Gulf who were also helping Iraq against its larger, non-Arab, anti-monarchist revolutionary neighbor. In 1985, Persian Gulf states altogether provided Iraq with financial contributions in the range of US\$40–50 billion.<sup>55</sup> Hizbullah's operations included the hijacking of an American airliner on June 14, 1985 to secure the freedom of Lebanese Shi'ites held by Israel, and two hijackings of Kuwaiti airliners in 1984 and 1988 to win freedom for Lebanese Shi'ites held by Kuwait for the bombings there.

In December 1985, Hizbullah launched a series of carbombings in Kuwait, including one directed at the U.S. Embassy. And perhaps most seriously, On 25 May 1985, the Islamic Jihad: one of the covert names used more frequently by Hizbullah, claimed responsibility for attempted assassination on the Kuwaiti Amir, Jaber Al-Ahmad.



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Between December 1985 and September 1986, Hizbullah operatives using a variety of cover names bombed fifteen targets in Paris. Hizbullah's goal was apparently to punish France for selling chemical weapons to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Over the next few years, Hizbullah operatives and Iranian hit men assassinated Iranian dissidents in a series of murders across Europe.<sup>56</sup>

### **Involvement in Killing Iranian Dissidents**

In fact, immediately following the founding of the Islamic Republic, the Iranian leadership embarked on an assassination campaign targeting individuals deemed to be working against the regime's interests.<sup>57</sup> Between 1979 and 1994, the CIA reported, Iran "murdered Iranian defectors and dissidents in West Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Turkey." Overall, more than sixty individuals were targeted in assassination attempts. In many cases Hizbullah members functioned as the logistics experts or gunmen in these plots.

On 18 July 1980 Anis Naccache, a young Lebanese member of Force 17, Fatah's elite security unit, who was a close friend of Ahmad Khomeini, Ruhollah Khomeini's son, Mohsen Rafiqdust, the IRGC commander in Lebanon, and Imad Mughniyeh—who was among the founders of Hizbullah, tried to kill the last pre-revolutionary prime minister, Beirut-educated Shapur Bakhtiar, in Paris. It appears that some in the Iranian leadership had contracted Naccache and his accomplices (another Lebanese, two Palestinians and an Iranian) to eliminate Bakhtiar after his sponsorship of the Nozheh coup attempt to overthrow the newly established Republic of Iran, an amateurish undertaking that had failed miserably a few weeks earlier. In the event, Bakhtiar survived, but a neighbour and policeman were killed and another policeman was gravely injured. Naccache was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Iranian authorities denied all involvement, but his release later became a condition for freeing French hostages in Lebanon.<sup>58</sup>

On February 7, 1984, General Gholam-Ali Oveissi, a hard-line army commander and military governor of Tehran under the Shah, and his brother Gholam-Hosseini, were assassinated in Paris.<sup>59</sup> Hizbullah's IJO and another group, the Revolutionary Organization for Liberation and Reform, claimed responsibility for the killings.<sup>60</sup>

On July 18, 1987, Amir Hossain Amir-Parviz, former agriculture and development minister under the Shah and head of the London office of the former prime minister, Shahpour Bakhtiar's Paris-based Iranian National Movement, was severely injured in a car bomb attack.<sup>61</sup> Several months later, on October 2, 1987, Mohammed Ali Tavakoli-Nabavi, founder of a small group of dissidents opposed to Iranian leader Ruhollah Khomeini called the Javanan Nationalist Party, and his youngest son, Nouredin, were found shot to death in their two-story apartment in a rundown housing complex in the northwestern suburb of Wembley, Great Britain. Both attacks were claimed by the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, which is believed to be closely linked to Hizbullah, but all its London-based members are Iranian.<sup>62</sup>

On September 17, 1992, Sadegh Sharafkandi, Secretary General of the PDKI, was shot to death in Berlin with Fattah Abdollahi, representative of the PDKI in Europe; so were Homayoun Ardalan, representative of the PDKI in Germany, and Nouri Dehkordi, an Iranian political activist. In its findings, a Berlin court ruled that the attack was carried out by a Hizbullah cell by order of the Iranian government.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Conflict Between Pro-Iranian Hizbullah and Syrian-Backed Amal**

Lebanon, porous to outside influence and militarily weak, had long been the site for proxy wars, and this was especially the case in the 1980s. Among the contestants for power, Syria and Iran played key roles, though not always in cooperation with each other. Although Damascus and Tehran shared an interest in thwarting U.S. influence in Lebanon and defeating Israel's occupation of the country, throughout the decade Syria revealed great suspicion of Iran and its protégé, Hizbullah. Early in the 1980s Hizbullah existed less as a concrete organization than as a cat's paw of Iran. As Hizbullah's strength grew over the course of the decade, Syria periodically tried to contain it, most dramatically when the al-Asad regime killed twenty-three Hizbullah members on February 24, 1987. Syria also provided support to Amal in that rival Shi'a organization's ferocious battles with Hizbullah, in 1988 and 1989. Four years earlier, in 1985, Syria also provided material support for Amal's "war of the camps,"

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a three-year campaign to eliminate the power base of Palestinian militants in the refugee camps surrounding Beirut. Although Amal imposed great suffering on Palestinians in the camps, the armed Palestinian militants were never fully subdued, largely because Hizbullah gave them extensive support. Whereas many Amal members were hostile to the Palestinian guerrillas in southern Lebanon, Hizbullah supported them on principle. The revered Shi'a religious authority Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah backed Hizbullah's position and condemned the Amal campaign.<sup>64</sup> Because of this crucial clerical approval, and despite Syrian opposition, Hizbullah won increasing support among the local Shi'a. By 1990 the organization had largely supplanted Amal in the environs of Beirut.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Taif Agreement**

In the wake of the 1990-91 war against Iraq, international consensus and local weariness brought the Lebanese civil war to an end with the implementation of the November 1989 Taif Agreement.<sup>66</sup>

However, both Hizbullah and Iran rejected the Taif Agreement, which Iranian foreign minister at the time, Ali Akbar Velayati described as "the conspiracy of Taif."<sup>67</sup>

### **Hizbullah and the United Nations**

United Nations forces exercised a peacekeeping role in the South, between Lebanon and Israel. Hizbullah, on the other hand, was in need of a divided and unsettled terrain on which to conduct its fight against "evil", that is, Israel and the United States. It was therefore not surprising that it rejected the UN mission, which was described as the "Forces of the Devil United", or that Hizbullah's spokesman at the time, Ibrahim Amin warned the UN that its troops would be treated as occupiers, since they did not act as peacekeepers but gave protection to Israeli aggression. Iran also expressed its views through Muhtashami, who declared that southern Lebanon should always be a strong base from which Muslims could confront "international evil". Fadlallah, Nasrallah and Amin accused the United Nations of protecting Israel, and Hizbullah launched an organized campaign against Resolution 425. Such attitudes

continued until 1991, when Hizbullah reviewed its policies.

### **Changing discourse**

Following the invasion of Kuwait, the Syrians were given a green light to put an end to the Lebanese Civil War, and this time they were determined to suppress any faction that stood in their way. The major factions opposed to the Taif Agreement were Hizbullah and the forces of General Michel 'Aoun. The Syrians swiftly ended 'Aoun's rebellion, and to avoid a similar crushing of Hizbullah the Iranians sent a number of missions to Damascus to seek an agreement. However, the crisis subsided only when Presidents Assad and Rafsanjani exchanged visits to consolidate their relations.

Iran's recognition of the Security Council resolution ending its war with Iraq, the death of Khomeini and the severe weakening of its economy forced the regime in Tehran to carry out reforms at all levels. The Iranian Republic was compelled to recognize Syria's special interests in Lebanon and Hizbullah had to adjust its policy to that new framework. The Syrians, for their part, managed to limit Iran's ambitions in Lebanon as they had limited those of others in the past. Hizbullah could have shared the same fate if it had remained opposed to Taif, but for the first time it accepted the Syrian security plan for Greater Beirut. "Each period has its own strategy" was the explanation given. Since then, Hizbullah has begun to follow a more moderate line that accords better with the overall interests of Lebanese society. Its tone has been one of dialogue and cooperation. What it used to reject it has gradually come to accept.<sup>68</sup>

### **Hizbullah's "Lebanonization in the 1990s**

Hizbullah, from 1991 on, gradually approached a political role that was, if not integrated, at least involved in the political process, initiating what came to be known as Hizbullah's "Lebanonization". This process of political and strategic re-orientation was facilitated by a new, more pragmatic leadership in Iran after Khomeini's death in 1989, and expressed itself in a change in Hizbullah's leadership. The group chose the more pragmatic Abbas al-Musawi to replace the controversial and more hard-line Subhi al-Tufayli as secretary general in 1991; Al-Mussawi was assassinated in February 1992, succeeded by Hassan Nasrallah.

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Shortly after Nasrallah became secretary general, the leadership decided to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections, which was preceded, as one of the party's candidates said, by "a wide and deep debate about the justifications of participation," with a faction led by Tufeili opposing participation on the grounds that Hizbullah would then "cease to be a revolutionary movement."<sup>69</sup>

### **Assassination of Rafiq Hariri**

On 14 February 2005, Rafiq Hariri, the Sunni former Prime Minister of Lebanon, was killed, along with 21 others, when explosives were detonated as his motorcade was driving through downtown Beirut.<sup>70</sup>

Hariri's relationship was confrontational with the Syrian leadership and Hizbullah.<sup>71</sup>

Evidence implicating Hizbullah as a primary suspect in the Sunni leader's assassination first appeared in May 2009. A story in *Der Spiegel* reported on blatantly suspicious cell phone activity, including one Hizbullah operative who called his girlfriend from a handset used in the operation. It only happened once, but it was enough to identify the man. He is believed to be Abd al-Majid Ghamlush, from the town of Rumin, a Hizbullah member who had completed a training course in Iran. Ghamlush was also identified as the buyer of the mobile phones. He has since disappeared, and perhaps is no longer alive. And both *Le Monde* and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have detailed Hizbullah's role in the assassination and its efforts to undermine the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL)'s investigation.<sup>72</sup>

Ghamlush's recklessness led investigators to the suspected mastermind behind the attack: Hajj Salim, 45. A southern Lebanese from Nabatiyah, Salim is considered to be the commander of the "military" wing of Hizbullah and lives in South Beirut, a Shiite stronghold. Salim's secret "Special Operational Unit" reports directly to Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah.

Imad Mughniyah, one of the world's most wanted men, ran the unit until Feb. 12, 2008, when he was killed in an attack in Damascus by Israeli intelligence. Since then, Salim has largely assumed the duties of his predecessor, with Mughniyah's brother-in-law, Mustafa Badr al-Din, serving as his deputy. The two men report

only to their superior, and to General Kassim Sulaimani, their contact in Tehran.<sup>73</sup>

On January 14, 2014, Der Spiegel reported that Western intelligence agencies believe that the two prime suspects in Hariri's assassination are in Iran.

The same source added that other suspects could have been victims of “preventative liquidation.”

Der Spiegel explained that Iran's President Hassan Rouhani might know the whereabouts of the two wanted men that are allegedly hiding in the country, but it doubted that he will cooperate, despite the newly found openness to the West and his predilection for reform.<sup>74</sup>

### **The 2006 Israel–Hizbullah War**

Israeli officials argued on several occasions that Iran had pushed Hizbullah to start the war because it wanted to distract attention away from the Iranian nuclear program, which was due to be discussed at the G8 Summit in Russia from 15–17 July 2006.<sup>75</sup> The prime objective of the Bush administration was to attack Iran. However, reluctant to involve itself militarily in the Middle East, the US provided Israel with the diplomatic cover it required to fight Hizbullah.<sup>76</sup>

The Iranians may not have been physically present on the frontlines in Lebanon, but they were active there nonetheless. A number of Revolutionary Guard members were killed in the Israeli incursion into the town of Baalbek (close to the Syrian border) on August 1, and Israeli intelligence claims that Iranians helped Hizbullah fire the land-to-sea missile that almost destroyed an Israeli warship in mid-July. Most of Hizbullah's arms -- including modern antitank weapons and the thousands of rockets that rained down on Israel -- came from Iran (as well as Syria).<sup>77</sup>

Hizbullah fired Iranian- supplied rockets on Israel's northern towns during the fighting. Reported Iranian shipments to Hizbullah prior to the conflict included the “Fajr” (dawn) and Khaybar series of rockets that were fired at the Israeli city of Haifa (30 miles from the border), and over 10,000 Katyusha rockets that were fired at cities within 20 miles of the Lebanese border. Iran also supplied Hizbullah with an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the Mirsad, that Hizbullah

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briefly flew over the Israel-Lebanon border on November 7, 2004, and April 11, 2005; at least three were shot down by Israel during the conflict.<sup>78</sup>

More than 3,000 Hizbullah members have undergone training in Iran, which included guerilla warfare, firing missiles and artillery, operating unmanned drones, marine warfare and conventional war operations, and 50 pilots have been trained in Iran in the last two years before the war.<sup>79</sup>

### **Funding of Hizbullah**

The major source of Hizbullah's funding is Iran, a fact that Hizbullah's leaders are not afraid of admitting publicly. "Iran's financial involvement in the bulk of our development and social service services is not a secret," said Hasan Nasrallah. " While no specific figures are made available by the party on Iran's funding of Hizbullah's projects, it is estimated that the annual fund stands at one billion dollars. Reportedly, this amount does not include Iran's spending on Hizbullah's military apparatus and the Islamic Resistance activities. Such spending is believed to be higher than spending on developmental and social programs. Although it was said that under Rafsanjani's and Khatami's presidencies Iran cut its financial support to Hizbullah by almost 70 percent, Iran's funds and support have never been effectively cut off. It is to be noted that Iran's funding of Hizbullah's social and military activities need not be approved by Iran's president or government. Most of the funds come from foundations and charitable organizations under the direct control of the wali al-faqih, Ali Khamenei, and those funds fall outside the books of Iran's Ministry of Finance and the power of Iran's president. Additional funds come from Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Iran's intelligence services, which are under the authority of Ali Khamenei, not Iran's president. Thus, an effective cut of Iran's support to Hizbullah has never taken place.<sup>80</sup>

### **Hizbullah's Range of Media Products**

With the help of Iranian funds, Hizbullah gradually established a wide-ranging propaganda machine: The group's weekly newspaper, *Al-Ahed* (The Pledge),<sup>81</sup> was launched on 13 June, 1984, and was followed by the weeklies *Al Bilad*, *Al-Wahda*

*Al-Islamiyya*, and the monthly *Al Sabil*. Hizbullah's radio station, *Al-Nour* (The Light), was founded during the Amal-Hizbullah conflict in 1988, when a group of young Hizbullah fighters spontaneously began broadcasting news of the clashes. In terms of Hizbullah's Internet presence, they first went online in early 1996. The Central Press Office site, or Hizbollah.org, is the group's official homepage, and is available in both English and Arabic. Hizbullah maintains three other major websites (all of which are available in both English and Arabic versions): <http://www.moqawama.net>, known as the "Islamic Resistance Support Association" and which describes the group's attacks on Israeli targets; <http://www.nasrollah.net>, the official homepage of the group's leader Hassan Nasrallah; and <http://www.manartv.com.lb>, the news and information site that is essentially the homepage of al-Manar Television. There is no question, however, that the "jewel in Hizbullah's media crown" is the al-Manar television station itself. Live footage of Hizbullah operations appeared for the first time in 1986, with coverage of the invasion of the Israeli-occupied Sujud fort at the top of Jabal Safi hill in south Lebanon, and was distributed to those Lebanese television stations in operation at that time. According to Naim Qassem, Hizbullah's deputy Secretary General, "following the first television broadcast of this operation, the camera became an essential element in all resistance operations." The establishment of al-Manar followed shortly thereafter: its first broadcast was Khomeini's funeral in June 1989.<sup>82</sup>

At the time of al-Manar's founding, the station reportedly received seed money from Iran and had a running budget of \$1 million.<sup>83</sup> According to station officials, al-Manar's annual budget had grown to approximately \$15 million by 2002. Middle East analysts and journalists alike have reported that most of this funding comes from Iran.<sup>84</sup> Al-Manar officials vociferously deny this charge. Nayef Krayem, al-Manar's previous general manager and chairman of its board, maintained that the station receives no money from any government, claiming that al-Manar is in full compliance with Lebanese laws prohibiting stations from receiving foreign government funding.

Technically, Krayem may be speaking the truth. Over the



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years, many reports have placed Iranian subsidies to Hizbullah at somewhere between \$100 and \$200 million a year. Some of that money-by this time, it is "Lebanese"-goes to al-Manar. Both station officials and researchers corroborate this. Nasir al-Akhdar, al-Manar's former program director, asserts in the Jordanian daily *ar-Ra'y* that al-Manar receives a good portion of its budget as "subsidies offered by the party [i.e. Hizbullah]." Radwan al-Hamrouni and Adel al-Sahbani, Tunisian students who wrote a short study on al-Manar, maintain that al-Manar depends on "monthly assistance from Hizbullah." In other words, al-Manar uses a loophole to get around the law prohibiting foreign subsidies of Lebanese television stations. It receives its subsidies from Hizbullah-which gets its stipend from its patron, Iran.<sup>85</sup>

### **Involvement in suppression of the public protests in Iran**

During the unrest in Ahwaz in 2005-2006, the Iranian opposition asserted that the Teheran regime has used Lebanese Hizbullah to quell Arab unrest near the Iraqi border. The Ahwaz Human Rights Organization reported that Iranian authorities brought scores of Hizbullah operatives to southeastern Iran to quell Arab riots that began on April 2005. The organization said Arabic-speaking Hizbullah fighters attacked protesters in the Khuzestan province in late April.<sup>86</sup>

In 2009, the manipulated election of Mahmud Ahmadinejad led to a vast uprising across the country. The members of the Basij brutally oppressed the peaceful demonstration of millions of Iranians gathered in Tehran's Azadi Square, chanting, "where is my vote?" According to both Voice of America and the German daily, *Der Spiegel*,<sup>87</sup> there were even 5,000 Hizbullah militia members in the streets of Tehran participating in the IRGC's oppressive operation and returning a favor for the support they receive in Lebanon from the Iranian regime.<sup>88</sup>

Hizbullah's Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, expressed his full support of in Ahmadinejad and promised that "no winds of change will be blowing from Iran."

According to many media reports and Online chatter, Iran's volunteer paramilitary forces known as 'Basij', seem to have added some Arabic-speaking members -- suspected of being Hizbullah

fighters.

These reports also indicated that non-Farsi speakers were riding motor scooters and patrolling the streets of Tehran, tracking demonstrators and monitoring their movement.<sup>89</sup>

In the period of the 2011-2012 protests, Iranian exiles reported that Lebanese Hezbollah has joined the security forces in suppressing the protests. Opposition groups claimed that as many as 1,500 Hezbollah operatives were taking part in clashes. On 14 February 2011, members of Hezbollah assisted the authorities to disperse the demonstration in Tehran's Azadi Square.<sup>90</sup>

### **Regional activities**

Lebanese Hezbollah, long considered one of the world's most dangerous militant organizations. Iranian force projection around the world depends on Hezbollah operatives and networks, from the front lines in Syria to safe havens in West Africa.<sup>91</sup> The following pages will focus specifically on Hezbollah's activities in the Arab world.

Iran viewed Hezbollah as a vehicle and model to export the revolution to the Levant and ultimately to the rest of the Arab world. In this context, Hezbollah assists Iran by serving as liaison between Iran and other Arab Shi'ite militant groups. Based on Iran's strategic goals, Hezbollah appears to be the perfect agent for supporting Iranian interests.<sup>92</sup>

### **Hezbollah al-Hijaz**

From its inception in 1987, Hezbollah al-Hijaz was a cleric-based group aligned with Iran, modeling itself on Lebanese Hezbollah. It advocated violence against the Saudi regime and carried out several terrorist attacks in the late 1980s. Due to an improvement in Saudi-Iranian relations, it shifted its activities more towards non-violent opposition. Although opposed to negotiations with the Saudi leadership, it benefited from a general amnesty in 1993. After Hezbollah al-Hijaz was blamed for the Khobar bombings in 1996, most of its members were arrested. The crackdown and the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement following the accession of Muhammad Khatami in 1997 led to the disappearance of the organization, although its clerical leaders continue to be popular in parts of the Eastern Province.<sup>93</sup>

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In March 1988, the Sadaf petrochemical plant in Jubayl was bombed, an incident for which Hizbullah al-Hijaz claimed responsibility. A Hizbullah cell with four members from Tarut had carried out the attack. One of them, Ali Abdallah Khatim, had fought with Hizbullah in Lebanon and had received military training. Several bombs also detonated at the Ra's Tanura refinery and one allegedly failed to explode in Ra's al-Ju'ayma. Widespread arrests occurred, and when the security forces confronted three members of Hizbullah al-Hijaz, several Saudi policemen were killed and injured. These three and another member of the cell were later publicly executed.<sup>94</sup> The bombings were a response to Saudi assistance to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Meanwhile, Ayatollah Montazeri condemned the execution while the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement denying any links to the executed.<sup>95</sup>

Two groups, the Soldiers of Justice (Jund al-Haqq) and the Holy War Organization in the Hijaz (Munadhama al-Jihad al-Islami), claimed responsibility from Beirut for an assassination in Bangkok in January 1989. The Holy War Organization in the Hijaz claimed that the killing was revenge for the execution of four of its members in Saudi Arabia. Some sources assert that this was a new front organization made up of Lebanese and Saudi Shi'ites with links to Palestinian groups and factions inside Iran that were opposed to an Iranian rapprochement with Saudi Arabia.<sup>96</sup> These two groups, probably related to the military wing of Hizbullah al-Hijaz, claimed responsibility — or were blamed — for the assassination of a Saudi diplomat in Ankara in October 1988 and in 1989, of wounding a Saudi diplomat in Karachi in December 1988 in addition to several bomb attacks in Riyadh in 1985 and in 1989.<sup>97</sup>

From the late 1980s onwards, several members of Hizbullah al-Hijaz travelled to Iran and Lebanon, where they likely received military training. They used Sayyida Zaynab in Syria as a hub for their travels to Saudi Arabia and for the recruitment of new members, who visited the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab on pilgrimage.<sup>98</sup> Some Saudi Shi'a also fought with Lebanese Hizbullah against Israel in southern Lebanon.

### **Ideology and Propaganda: Risalat al-Haramayn**

Although Saudi-Iranian relations gradually improved after

the end of the Iran-Iraq War in August 1988, the death of Khomeini in June 1989, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iran had, however, an interest in continuing to promote anti-Saudi propaganda and establishing a hegemonic claim over Mecca and Medina as well as portraying itself as the patron of Saudi Shi'a.<sup>99</sup> This caused Hizbullah al-Hijaz to focus more on political and propaganda activities, such as the publication of a journal, *Risalat al-Haramayn* (The Letter of the Two Holy Places [Mecca and Medina]), at the expense of assassinations and attacks.<sup>100</sup> It was published by the al-Haramayn Islamic Information Center and Hizbullah al-Hijaz's clerical wing, the *Tajamu' Ulama' al-Hijaz* from 1989 to 1995 in Beirut, although from 1991 it also had an office in London. The journal focused on the legacy of Ayatollah Khomeini, and published statements by Hizbullah al-Hijaz and *Tajamu' Ulama' al-Hijaz*. In addition, members of Iraqi and Lebanese Hizbullah wrote in the journal.

In autumn 1989, members from the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (SCIRI) and Lebanese Hizbullah gave speeches praising the four 1988 executed of Hizbullah al-Hijaz in Sayyida Zaynab outside of Damascus while Hasan Nasrallah delivered a similar speech in Qom. In Baalbek, one member of *Tajamu'*, Muhammad al-Mubarak, denounced the Saudi regime in the presence of a representative of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus. *Risalat al-Haramayn* also reported meetings between delegations of *Tajamu'* with Lebanese Hizbullah and Khamene'i. This made clear that Hizbullah al-Hijaz was very well connected to and supported by Iran and Lebanese Hizbullah, among others.

A cleric of Hizbullah al-Hijaz argued that there is no difference between the Hizbullah groups "in Hijaz, Kuwait, Lebanon or any other place."

### **The Khobar Bombings**

On June 25, 1996, a tanker truck filled with several tons of TNT exploded near the Khobar Towers housing compound for the US Air Force in Dhahran, killing 19 US soldiers and injuring hundreds of others. Shortly afterwards, the Saudi government started to blame Hizbullah al-Hijaz for the attack. Nearly everyone who was loosely affiliated with Hizbullah al-Hijaz was arrested. Many were

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tortured and remained imprisoned for years. Sympathizers with the movement were arrested for the possession of books by Khomeini or Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah or because they had attended mosques where Hizbullah clerics preached.

Given the close relations with Lebanese Hizbullah, it seems plausible that, if Hizbullah al-Hijaz was behind the Khobar bombings, it would have needed Lebanese technical assistance. The connection to Iran is impossible to assess through an analysis of open source material, but a faction inside Iran opposed to the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement could have masterminded the attack. It is also possible that the military wing of Hizbullah al-Hijaz acted with Iranian or Lebanese support but without the knowledge of the clerics of Tajamu' 'Ulama' al- Hijaz.

### **After The Khobar Bombings: Online Propaganda**

By Spring 2008, a new weekly news survey — al-Rasid al-Sahafi — concerning Saudi Shi'a issues was published on the website. It also focuses on, for example, Saudi involvement in Lebanon, praising Hizbullah's activities there, while reproducing statements by Khamene'i and Fadlallah.<sup>101</sup>

### **Bahrain**

Iran often leveraged Lebanese Hizbullah's expertise to train Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Bahraini recruits. By the late 1980s, several Hizbullah branches -- which "were inspired, supported, and directed by elements of the Iranian government" -- operated around the Gulf. Bahraini Shi'ites have a long history of protesting, both nonviolently and violently, against various issues on the Bahraini and regional agenda. Iran, with Hizbullah support, intensively incites Bahrain's Shi'ite population to overthrow the monarchy. The Arab Spring's revolutionary wave escalated both the Shi'ite protests and the Iranian efforts to destabilize the Bahraini regime.

In Bahrain, Tehran has long backed branches of militant Shiite organizations such as Hizbullah and the Dawa Party.<sup>102</sup> Hizbullah-Bahrain was a group of Bahraini Shi'a created in 1993,<sup>103</sup> apparently following Iran's aspirations to repeat the success of Hizbullah in Lebanon. The Bahraini Hizbullah operatives were trained in Iran (by the Revolutionary Guards) and in Lebanon (by the

Lebanese Hizbullah), and were trained to prepare and detonate IEDs and use weapons. In 1994 the Bahraini authorities seized weapons smuggled by sea by Hizbullah in Lebanon to Hizbullah Bahrain, directed by Iranian intelligence.

During 1996 the Bahraini security forces arrested 44 Hizbullah Bahrain operatives, accusing them of plotting to establish a regime in Bahrain like the one in Iran. An investigation revealed that they had been trained by the Revolutionary Guards at camps in Iran, and by Lebanese Hizbullah at camps in Lebanon. They admitted that in 1993 Iran had been behind an attempt to overthrow the Bahraini regime by means of Hizbullah Bahrain.<sup>104</sup>

Despite effectively disabling Bahraini Hizbullah by 1997, intelligence officials in Manama remained concerned at the time that "several key leaders" of Bahraini Hizbullah, including "three military council members," had avoided capture and were perhaps "attempting to regroup and conduct Hizbullah-related activities." Muhammad Habib Mansur Saffaf, "one of the group's top leaders," reportedly ran a safe house in Kuwait that served as a "key transit point between Bahrain and Lebanon"; also he had "engaged in weapons smuggling and may still be involved in terrorist-related activities." In addition, Bahraini Hizbullah military council member Adil Shuala, who had fled the island, might also have been affiliated with the Saudi Hizbullah group behind the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing. Thirty-seven other known members of the group likely fled to Iran or Lebanon. Their possible ties to Iran, along with the "Hizbullah Gulf" name adopted by the Kuwait cell, led CIA analysts to suggest in a May 1997 report that "Tehran may be working to create a new Hizbullah cell to oppose the Bahraini Government."<sup>105</sup>

Since the Arab Spring revolutions started, there have been protests in Bahrain by its Shi'ite majority. The Shi'ites are supported by Iran, which exploits them to further its efforts to overthrow the Bahraini regime. The regime has acted to contain the protests but the Shi'ites have become more daring and confrontations between Shi'ite demonstrators and the Bahraini security forces have become routine. This explosive situation provides fertile ground for the continuation and intensification of Iran's activities within the Bahraini Shi'ite population. The Iranians do that either directly or by using proxies

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such as Lebanese Hizbullah and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq as subcontractors (the Iranian *modus operandi* in other Shi'ite communities throughout the Arab-Muslim world).

On February 16 and 19, 2013, the Bahraini authorities announced they had exposed a cell run by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The cell's operatives had been involved in shooting policemen and were planning to assassinate public figures and carry out attacks on various sensitive targets, among them the King Fahd Bridge (which links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia), Bahrain International Airport and the ministry of the interior. Two affairs preceded the exposure: in November 2012 five suspects were detained on suspicion of placing IEDs which exploded in various locations in Manama, and at the beginning of November 2011 a cell was captured who members had been planning to carry out showcase attacks in Bahrain and attack important facilities. One of their targets was the King Fahd Bridge.

Bahrain officials said that the cell exposed had been recruited by two men living in Iran. Its operatives were handled and funded by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and trained by Guards proxies in Iraq and Lebanon.<sup>106</sup>

Iranian and pro-Iranian television channels broadcast propaganda against the Bahraini regime and call for its overthrow. Prominent among them are Al-Alam, PressTV, Sahar, Al-Kawthar, and QodsTV. In addition there are Hizbullah in Lebanon's Al-Manar TV, which serves Iranian interests, and Ahlul Bayt, the television channel of the Ayatollah Modarresi in Iraq.<sup>107</sup>

### **The Houthis**

The Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah, or Partisans of God) are a Zaidi Shia insurgent group operating in Yemen. The group takes its name from Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, their former commander, who was reportedly killed by Yemeni army forces in September 2004.<sup>108</sup>

### **Historical Context**

The Houthis participated in the 2011 Yemeni Revolution as well as the ensuing National Dialogue Conference (NDC).<sup>109</sup> By May 2012, it was reported that Houthis controlled a majority of

Saada, Al Jawf and Hajjah governorates, had gained access to the Red Sea and had started erecting barricades north of the capital Sana'a in preparation for new conflict.<sup>110</sup>

By 21 September 2014, Houthis were said to control parts of the Yemen capital Sanaa including government buildings and a radio station.<sup>111</sup>

Iran has expressed support for the Houthis. Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, said on October 18, 2014 he hoped that the Houthis play the same role in Yemen as Hizbullah does in Lebanon.<sup>112</sup>

### **Iranian Support for the Houthi Rebellion**

A large amount of circumstantial evidence indicates that the Houthi rebels receive military support from Iran. Spokesmen for the Yemeni administration (with support from American sources) have repeatedly accused Iran of supporting the Houthi rebellion. Their statements indicate that the support comes from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and includes training (including the involvement of Lebanese Hizbullah operatives), funds and weapons for the rebels.

### **Righteous Fight**

In areas of Yemen controlled by the Houthis, the words "Death to America, Death to Israel" can be seen painted on buildings or cars. It's a slogan used in Iran and by Lebanese Hizbullah.

Former Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh, interviewed by Al-Jazeera TV on September 11, 2009, accused Iran of supporting the rebels. He said that Iran and extremist elements in Iraq close to leader Moqtada Sadr (an Iraqi Shi'ite leader who has close relations with Iran), were aiding the Houthi rebels in northern Yemen. He also said that the Yemeni security forces had detained two squads whose members admitted to having received \$100,000 from sources in Iran. On another occasion he claimed that Hizbullah in Lebanon was training Houthi rebels in the use of land mines, hand grenades and other weapons. Another possible indication of Iran's funneling funds to the Houthi rebels was the Yemeni authorities' closing of the Iranian hospital in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, in November 2009. The Yemeni administration claimed that Iranian intelligence was



using the hospital as a pipeline for delivering funds to Shi'ite rebels.

### **Yemeni Seizure of an Iranian Ship Carrying Weapons for the Houthi Rebels**

On October 15, 2009, Yemeni sources reported that three Lebanese demolitions experts had been killed in the area under Houthi control and that in their assessment the three were Hizbullah operatives.<sup>113</sup> On October 26, Sana announced it had seized an Iranian ship transporting anti-tank weapons to the Houthis.

The Yemen Observer quoted the Iraqi newspaper Al-Ahali, which claimed that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards trained the Houthi rebels in Eritrea and even transferred arms from the Eritrean port of Assab to the port of Maydi, Yemen (where the intercepted Iranian ship was supposed to unload its cargo). The Yemen Observer added that Abdallah Madhoun, a Houthi leader who had surrendered, said during interrogation that the Shi'ite rebels received unlimited support from the Revolutionary Guards as well as from Hizbullah experts coming from Lebanon.

### **Saudi Incursion**

In November 2009, the Houthis crossed the border and seized a parcel of Saudi territory, prompting a swift military reply. Since then, the Saudis have skirmished with the Houthis on both sides of the border and have suffered significant losses. As a result, more than 110 Saudi soldiers have been killed and six captured by Houthi forces. It has also been widely reported that a Saudi Apache helicopter was shot down by the rebels. Perhaps not surprisingly, Riyadh has blamed Tehran for Houthi military prowess.

The accusations have played out mainly in the Saudi press. In December 2009, the Saudi-owned London-based daily Asharq al-Awsat reported that "high ranking officials" from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps along with Lebanese Hizbullah met with Houthi rebels to coordinate military operations against Saudi Arabia. Later, the Saudi assistant defense minister hinted at Iranian involvement in the fighting, noting, "it is not possible that [the Houthis] obtained the weapons deployed against us themselves."

### **Iranian Involvement in Yemen**

^ In January 2010, while visiting the United States, Yemen's

foreign minister told the pan-Arab daily Al-Hayat that the rebels were receiving financial support "from Shiite authorities in and outside of Iran."

Tehran has not denied the Saudi and Yemeni accusations so much as gone on the offensive against Saudi Arabia. During a televised speech on January 13, 2010, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned Riyadh for "enter[ing] the war and us[ing] bombs...and machine guns against Muslims."

That Ahmadinejad would defend the Houthis comes as no surprise. The Houthis call their philosophy "pure Shia" and openly declare allegiance to Tehran. When asked in 2009 about the bond between Iran and the rebels, leading Houthi cleric Issam al Imad compared the group's leader, Hussein al Houthi, to Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah, a vassal of Tehran.<sup>114</sup>

An unnamed U.S. official reportedly said in 2012 that Iranian smugglers backed by the Quds Force (an elite unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps) used small boats to ship AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenades and other arms to replace older weapons used by Houthi rebels in the north. In the south, Ali Salim al Beidh, the leader of the secessionist Southern Mobility Movement, has boasted publicly of his movement's willingness to accept assistance "from any regional actor"—a formulation widely interpreted to refer to Iran. Moreover, Hizbullah has reportedly provided financial aid and media training to southern Yemeni leaders in exile in Beirut, Lebanon.<sup>115</sup>

The Houthis are trying to take advantage of Hizbullah's experience, and the Houthi-affiliated Al-Maseera Channel broadcasts from Beirut's southern suburbs with technical support from the Lebanese Shiite party. Recently, relations between the two sides have grown deeper. This comes amid repeated accusations from the Yemeni state that Iran is supporting the Houthis, and after the United States put in place new sanctions in August 2013 against some Lebanese who were accused of providing funds to the Houthis in Yemen. The Houthis usually do not deny this strong link with Hizbullah, which is reinforced by common factors between the two sides, such as their presence in the same regional alliance with Iran at the political level.<sup>116</sup>

### **Houthis fighting for Assad in Syria**

On May 30, 2013, the daily Asharq al-Awsat reported that Houthi rebels have sent some of their fighters to Syria to fight alongside the Assad regime's forces. They first travel to Hizbullah camps in Lebanon and then cross the border into Syria, a Yemeni official told the paper.

The Houthis have a relationship with the Assad regime extending back before the Syrian civil war, as they would use the country as "a way-station through which they traveled to Tehran and south Lebanon for combat training," the official said. They "would use Iranian documents to travel from Damascus so that Yemeni authorities would not know where they had been when they returned home."<sup>117</sup>

### **Syrian Civil War**

Iran sees the survival of the Syrian government as being crucial to its longevity of its own regime.

### **Background**

It's only consistent ally since the 1979 Iranian revolution, Syria provides a crucial thoroughfare to Hizbullah in Lebanon. Iranian leaders have cited Syria as being Iran's "35th province", with President Bashar al-Assad's Alawite minority led regime being a crucial buffer against the influence of Saudi Arabia and the United States.<sup>118</sup>

### **Hizbullah's Ideological Crisis**

By siding with the Assad regime, the regime's Alawite supporters, and Iran, and taking up arms against Sunni rebels, Hizbullah has placed itself at the epicenter of a sectarian conflict that has nothing to do with the group's purported *raison d'être*: "resistance" to Israeli occupation.<sup>119</sup>

### **Hizbullah Joins the Fray**

Hizbullah's destabilizing activities in Syria date almost to the beginning of the country's uprising in 2011. Within weeks of the uprising, Nasrallah himself called on all Syrians to stand by the regime. As reports emerged in May 2011 that Iran's Qods Force was helping the Syrian regime crack down on anti-government

demonstrators, Hizbullah denied playing “any military role in Arab countries.” But by the following month, Syrian protesters were heard chanting not only for Assad’s downfall, but also against Iran and Hizbullah. Video footage showed protesters burning posters of Nasrallah. According to a senior Syrian defense official who defected from the regime, Syrian security services were unable to handle the uprising on their own. “They didn’t have decent snipers or equipment,” he explained. “They needed qualified snipers from Hizbullah and Iran.”<sup>120</sup>

Most funerals for Hizbullah members killed in the fighting were quiet affairs, as Hizbullah tried to conceal the extent of its activities in Syria; however, news of its involvement began to emerge. In August 2012, Hizbullah parliamentarians reportedly attended the funeral of military commander Musa Ali Shehimi who “died while performing his jihadi duty.” A few weeks later, another Hizbullah military commander, Ali Hussein Nassif, was killed in Syria, along with two bodyguards, also “while performing his jihadi duties,” according to a Hizbullah newspaper.

Amid increasing concern that the struggle in Syria would engulf the region in conflict, Hizbullah established training camps near Syrian chemical weapons depots in November 2012.<sup>121</sup>

### **Hizbullah’s Spring Offensive**

In the Spring of 2013, Hizbullah took on a more public presence in the fight against the Syrian rebels when martyrdom notices for fallen Hizbullah fighters began to appear on the group’s official and unofficial websites, forums, and Facebook pages. Based on Hizbullah’s organization structure and disciplined messaging, it is likely these notices were sanctioned by the leadership in the organization despite the fact that they did not publicly admit to being involved in Syria until late May. Determining the number of fighters Hizbullah has sent to Syria is difficult to ascertain, but according to French intelligence sources its believed that 3,000-4,000 individuals have made the trip to assist the Assad regime. The numbers may be slightly higher according to other sources, in the range of 4,000-5,000 fighters on the ground in Syria at a time and rotating in and out of the country on thirty day deployments.

Hizbullah has proven to be an invaluable fighting force for

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Iran and the Assad regime. Within a few weeks of Nasrallah's public proclamation that Hizbullah had entered the conflict, Hizbullah retook the strategic city of Qusayr for the regime, a significant defeat for Syrian rebels. Hizbullah is believed to have suffered significant losses in that battle, losing as many as a few hundred men. Since then, Hizbullah has moved from securing al- Qusayr in an all-out lighting attack, to a slower less dramatic pace of taking one village at a time in the mountainous Qalamoun region between Damascus and Lebanon. The region is strategically important, not only commanding the key road from Damascus to the Alawite areas around Latakia to the north, but also as a key rebel smuggling route across which rebel elements move weapons and supplies from supporters in nearby Lebanon into Syria.<sup>122</sup>

### **Battles in Aleppo and on Its Outskirts**

On 2 June 2013, a senior commander in Hizbullah, said that Assad's forces had called thousands of Hizbullah fighters deeper into Northern Syria, in and around Aleppo, to shore up Assad's overstretched forces and potentially break the stalemate there. It was estimated that around 4,000 Hizbullah fighters responded.

### **Battle of Qalamoun**

On 27 November 2013, four Hizbullah fighters were killed in fighting in the Qalamoun region, one of them the nephew of the Lebanese Caretaker Agriculture Minister Hussein Hajj Hassan, a top Hizbullah official.

### **Combat Operations in 2014 During the Battle of Aleppo**

On 27 January 2014, fighting was renewed in the area of the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo's Old City, as the rebels claimed of destroying a Hizbullah base at Mount Hoihna and capturing most of the buildings in the town Maarath Al-Artik, on Aleppo's northwest outskirts.

### **Daraa Offensive**

On 23 May, rebels captured an Army checkpoint west of Tell Umm Hawran. Four days later, it was reported that Fauzi Ayub, a senior Hizbullah commander on the FBI Most Wanted list, was killed during fighting in the city of Nawa in the western countryside

of Daraa.

### **Battle of Al-Shaykh Maskin**

On 26 November, a Hizbullah military leader was killed in the town of al-Shaykh Maskin, near Daraa. By 3 December, the Army, backed by Hizbullah and Iraqi volunteers, was gaining ground in Shaykh Maskin and controlled the northeast neighborhoods and the area east of the town on the road to Izraa. Later that day, rebels reportedly advanced in the military housing area. Seven rebels, including a brigade commander, were killed.

### **Assessing the Consequences**

Whether al-Assad maintains or loses power will have a different set of consequences for Hizbullah. If al-Assad succeeds, Hizbullah is unlikely to enjoy the sympathy of the majority Sunni Arab world; it will be isolated and more reliant than before on Iran and the al-Assad regime. Hizbullah will face delicate sectarian issues and consequences at home in Lebanon as the Sunni population is not likely to accept an emboldened Hizbullah. On the other hand, if Hizbullah fails and the Syrian regime falls, they will still be despised by the majority of the Sunni Arab world but will also lose a strategic ally and route for obtaining weapons from Iran.<sup>123</sup>

### **Iraq**

Beginning in 2003, Iran's Qods Force requested Hizbullah's services to help increase Tehran's influence in Iraq. To this end, Hizbullah created Unit 3800, whose sole purpose was to support Iraqi Shiite militant groups targeting multinational forces there. According to U.S. intelligence, Unit 3800 sent a small number of personnel to Iraq to train hundreds of fighters in-country, while others were brought to Lebanon for more advanced training. Hizbullah also provided funds and weapons to Iraqi militias, but its most dangerous contribution was in the realm of special operations. According to a 2010 Pentagon report, the group gave these militias "the training, tactics and technology to conduct kidnappings and small unit tactical operations," and to "employ sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), incorporating lessons learned from operations in Southern Lebanon."

### **Past Activity in Iraq**

The most prominent example of how this training helped the militias was probably the January 20, 2007, attack on the Joint Coordination Center in Karbala, which resulted in the deaths of four American soldiers. That well-executed operation was thoroughly planned with the help of the Qods Force and Hizbullah, as determined later through the capture of one of Hizbullah's best trainers in Iraq, Ali Musa Daqduq. Daqduq was heavily involved in training tactical units of Iraqi Shiites and even took part in some of the operations they conducted. He was also responsible for planning other operations such as the aborted kidnapping of a British soldier, and gave specific instructions to those he trained about the use of IEDs. Moreover, while operating in Iraq, he dealt directly with the Qods Force on certain occasions -- further evidence of the high level of coordination between Hizbullah and the Iranians on Iraq.

### **Intentions and Capabilities**

In June 2014, Hizbullah reportedly set-up a dedicated command center in Lebanon to monitor developments in Iraq. Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah later said that the party was "ready to sacrifice martyrs in Iraq five times more than what we sacrificed in Syria in order to protect shrines." noting that Iraqi holy sites "are much more important" than Shiite shrines in Syria.<sup>124</sup>

### **Involvement in Iranian-led Intervention in Iraq**

In July, Hizbullah sent an undisclosed number of technical advisers and intelligence analysts to Baghdad in support of the Iranian deployment in Iraq. Shortly thereafter, Hizbullah commander Ibrahim al-Hajj was reported killed in action near Mosul. The news was followed by an August Reuters story which reported there were "dozens" of Hizbullah "battle-hardened veterans" in Iraq, while the Christian Science Monitor reported the party had deployed a 250-man unit "responsible for advising, training, and coordinating the Iraqi Shiite militias."<sup>125</sup>

Between August 31 and September 1 the Iranian-equipped and Hizbullah-trained Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and the Iranian-backed Kata'ib Hizbullah joined an Iraqi army assault to break the ISIL siege of Amerli. The attack was supported by the U.S. Air Force at the request of the Iraqi army, according to a statement by the U.S. Central Command. (As of early 2014, reports characterized Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq as "controlled by Iran" and operating under the patronage of Qods Force commander Qasem Suleimani.)<sup>126</sup>

### Conclusion

Clearly, Hizbullah still remains heavily dependent on Teheran, which points towards an influential legacy of the Iranian involvement in its founding and initial realization. This paper presents arguments in support of the assumption that Hizbullah being a predominantly Iranian geopolitical project, via which Iran can exert pressure on both religious and political developments outside its immediate domain—in this case the Levantine Middle East.

When observing Hizbullah's original goals: the Liberation of Palestine; establishment of the Iran-like Islamic state in Lebanon; the spreading of the Islamic Revolution as advocated by Khomeini—can all be viewed as nothing else but the elements of the Iranian foreign policy. Besides the inspiration provided by the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the once marginalized and somewhat backward Shiite society would have hardly been able to survive the chaos of the Lebanese Civil War, challenge the Israelis, and become one of the key players in the region had it not been for the actual “physical” and organizational support coming from Teheran. From the very beginning, Hizbullah was supplied, funded, and trained by Iran, and it continues to be up to this date. Therefore, in order to be able to analyze Hizbullah's activities in the future, One must not neglect the actual interests and the extent of the Iranian involvement in the Party's existence, functioning, and operations. When Hizbullah is analyzed on military, socioeconomic, or political grounds, the Iran-factor shall be set as one of the crucial points of analysis.

In order to understand the reasons and dynamics behind the Iranian support for Hizbullah, as well as the behavior of Iran itself, this relationship should be put into the realist context, in order to be able to identify the manner in which Iran is fighting a double war: keeping regional supremacy through its proxies like Hizbullah, and trying to make it as difficult as possible for the Iranian regime to fall by showing itself as ready to deploy these same proxies for its own security.<sup>127</sup>

Arguably, the involvement of Hizbullah in the Syrian Civil War has dealt a critical blow to their political popularity within Lebanon. This is due to the orders from Iran, Hizbullah entered into a war of fitna (Sunni vs. Shiite), which upsets both Sunni and Shiite Lebanese. Internal conflicts within Hizbullah regarding their primary purpose of fighting Israel is not being upheld. In addition, the loss of



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life in the Syrian conflict contributes to low morale. It is questionable whether Hizbullah will be able to recover their political strength within Lebanon; already there have been several bombings in Hizbullah strongholds that indicate an opposition force is amassing against Hizbullah.

If there is a reversal of current fortunes and the Assad-Alawite regime loses, Syria will most likely find itself governed by its Sunni majority. In any case, a non-Assad government will be an enemy to Iran and would not facilitate the transfer of money, weaponry and other materials to Hizbullah. These problems will create a potentially existential crisis for Hizbullah in Lebanon.<sup>128</sup>

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> Emile Hokayem, "Iran and Lebanon" In Robin Wright (ed.), *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010), p. 178; See also:  
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- <sup>3</sup> Eyal Zisser, op. cit., p. 5-6.
- <sup>4</sup> After challenging the regime in Jordan in 1970, the PLO lost its footing in that country and established itself as the dominant militia force in southern Lebanon where it found ready support, especially in the Palestinian refugee camps that stemmed from the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49. Rex Brynen's *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990) provides rich and informed detail on the PLO's role in Lebanon.
- <sup>5</sup> Rachel Brandenburg, "Iran and the Palestinians" In Robin Wright (ed.), op. cit., p. 171.
- <sup>6</sup> Yusri Hazran, "The Shiite Community in Lebanon: From Marginalization to Ascendancy," Middle East Brief, No. 37. Brandeis University: Crown Center for Middle East Studies, June 2009, pp. 2-4.
- <sup>7</sup> James B. Love, *Hezbollah: Social Services as a Source of Power* (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2010), p. 23.
- <sup>8</sup> In 1966, another influential cleric, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah moved to Lebanon; See:  
هادی خسروشاهی، امام موسی صدر مصلح بزرگ اجتماعی، انتشارات ادیان و مذاهب، چاپ اول 1393.
- <sup>9</sup> Ahmad K. Majidiyar, "Is Deepening Shi'ite-Sunni Tension Plunging Lebanon into a New Civil War?" American Enterprise Institute, March 6, 2014, p. 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Eyal Zisser, op. cit., p. 6; See also  
هادی خسروشاهی، "قضیه ارتباط امام موسی صدر با شاه" در اندیشه ی ربنوده شده، به کوشش مهدی فرخیان، موسسه فرهنگی تحقیقاتی امام موسی صدر 1385، صص 164 - 176.  
<sup>11</sup> محمدرضا طیرانی، نقش امام موسی صدر در لبنان و ارتقاء جایگاه شیعیان، فصلنامه ره آورد سیاسی، شماره 28-29، تابستان و پاییز 1389، صص 3-26.

<sup>12</sup> In the late 1970s, many young Lebanese Shi'ite clerics and future Hizbullah leaders, such as Subhi al Tufayli and Abbas al-Musawi, escaped former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's crackdown and returned to Lebanon with a revolutionary goal of changing their societies. Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, who became the most influential Shi'ite leader in Lebanon after al-Sadr's mysterious disappearance in Libya in 1978, urged the returnee revolutionaries to join Amal and change the party from secularism to Islamism. Ahmad K. Majidiyar, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Lara Deeb, "Hizballah: A Primer," Middle East Report Online (MERO), July 31, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Yusri Hazran, op. cit., p. 6; See also:

پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی ایران نقطه عطفی در تاریخ شیعیان لبنان بود، ایرنا، 27 سپتامبر 2014 - 5 مهر 1393.

<sup>15</sup> مرتضی شیروودی، انقلاب اسلامی و جنبش‌های اسلامی، فصلنامه رواق اندیشه، خرداد 1383، شماره 30، صص 4 - 7.

<sup>16</sup> صدور انقلاب/ بخش سوم، جنبش عدالت خواه دانشجویی، 7 اسفند 1387 - 25 فوریه 2009. <sup>17</sup> چه کسی سفارت عراق را منفجر کرد؟، ماهنامه امتداد، شماره 65، مهر 1390.

<sup>18</sup> Sean K. Anderson and Stephen Sloan, *Historical Dictionary of Terrorism* (Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, 2002), p. 18; See also:

شفیقه رأفت، تأثیرات انقلاب اسلامی ایران بر جنبش اسلامی لبنان، جامعه المصطفی (حسنيه)، افغانستان، پاییز 1390، ص 11.

<sup>19</sup> عبدالوهاب فراتی، انقلاب اسلامی و بازتاب آن (قم: زلال کوثر، 1381)، ص 46.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pour, Iran's ambassador to Damascus, had himself been pursuing theological studies in Najaf under the supervision of Khomeini, alongside future Hizbullah leaders. He had also established extensive contacts with Lebanese and Palestinian elements engaged in "anti-Zionist" armed activity during the 1970s, and, in fact, in 1971 he had graduated from a military training course supervised by Palestinian groups. See Magnus Ranstorp, "The Hizballah Training Camps of Lebanon," In James J.F. Forest (ed.), *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes* (Vol. 2) (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2005), p. 249.

<sup>21</sup> Two Iranians in particular were instrumental in both facilitating the birth and overseeing the maturation of the Hizbullah organization: Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-Pour, who is credited with the idea of forming Hizbullah from the Shiite elements of AMAL and Mohammad Hassan Akhtari, who organized both materials and manpower to ensure Hizbullah's growth. (Asharq al-Awsat, 2008) Each served as the Iranian Ambassador to

Damascus; through this role, these two men cultivated a strong and stable relationship with Syria to ensure that they remained an ally of Iran (especially during the 1980-88 war with Iraq) and to help facilitate the transport of weapons, materials and military officials to Hizbullah in Lebanon.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Alagha's book, "*Hizbullah's DNA and the Arab Spring*" argues that Hizbullah was founded in 1978, based on the unknown whereabouts of Hasan Nasrallah during this time. The argument, while argued, cannot be heralded as definitive based on the evidence Alagha presented; See also:

سردار احمدی مقدم: حزب الله لبنان برای مبارزه با رژیم صهیونیستی شکل گرفت، ایرنا، 1 بهمن 1393 - 21 ژانویه 2015.

<sup>23</sup> John Simpson in his book *Inside Iran* (1988), argues that Hizbullah, as we know it, had come out as a branch of the Iranian Hizbullah, which had been permanently stationed in Iran. This original Iranian Hizbullah, as he argues, was founded in 1979 upon Khomeini's revolutionary return to Iran, and has ever since been used as a symbol of patriotism and Shiite religiosity, as well as the tool for ideological and organizational strengthening of the official ruling Islamic Republican Party (IRP). Hizbullah initially attacked demonstrations and offices of newspapers that were critical of Ruhollah Khomeini. They played an important role on the street at crucial moments in the early days of the revolution by confronting those the regime regarded as counter-revolutionaries. Hizbullah was instrumental in the Cultural Revolution against secularists and modernists at Iran's universities. The name Hizbullah, or party of Allah, is generic, coming from the rallying cry used by its "members": "Only one party - of Allah; only one leader - Ruhollah." The phrase *party of Allah* came from a verse in the Quran [5:56]: And whoever takes Allah and His apostle and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant. According to scholar Moojan Momen, the association of toughs and clerics became common during the era of weak government of the Qajar period, when "it became normal for the prominent" members of the ulama in any town "to surround themselves with a band of the town's ruffians, known as *lutis*, to their mutual benefit". The ulama had "a ready band" to take to the street to oppose what the ulama opposed, while "the *lutis* in turn had a protector with whom they could take refuge if the government moved against them." The Hizbullah which appeared after the Islamic revolution, according to Momen, were "in

fact only an new name for the street roughs who had always had a close relationship with the ulama."

<sup>24</sup> "ورود سپاه پاسداران انقلاب اسلامی ایران به صحنه لبنان" در تاریخچه حزب الله لبنان، پایگاه جامع عاشورا، 1390 - 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Lara Deeb, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Marc R. DeVore, "Exploring the Iran-Hezbollah Relationship: A Case Study of How State Sponsorship Affects Terrorist Group Decision-Making," Perspectives on Terrorism Vol. 6, No. 4-5 (2012), p. 91.

<sup>27</sup> Ante Lucic, "Hezbollah: An Iranian Project?," National Security and the Future, Vol.10 No.1; September 2009, p. 83; See also:

نصرالله: از ایران حمایت معنوی، سیاسی و تجهیزات دریافت کرده‌ایم، آفتاب، ۲۰ بهمن ۱۳۹۰ - ۲۰ فوریه ۲۰۱۲.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Elie Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program* (Leiden, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Mohsen Rafiqdoost, who had pre-revolutionary experience in Lebanon, led the first IRGC contingent. Rafiqdoost would go on to head the short-lived IRGC Ministry, but he continued to visit Lebanon frequently because he was responsible for supplying the IRGC contingent. He later headed the Oppressed and Disabled Foundation and now heads the Noor Foundation. One of Rafiqdoost's successors is 'Ali-Reza Asgari, who disappeared during a February 2007 trip to Turkey amidst allegations that he defected or was kidnapped. Another one, Hussein Dehghan, served in the administration of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad as Vice-President for Martyrs and War Veterans Affairs. From 2005 to July 2009, he headed the Martyrs Foundation, which funds Hizbullah, and he was designated as defense minister by President Hassan Rouhani on 4 August 2013. See Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to the military training of the IRGC, imported Iranian clerics went door to door within Hizbullah's controlled areas proselytizing about Shi'i tenets and the teachings and doctrines of Khomeini to local villagers. The clerics utilized their propaganda to build legitimacy and gain recruits for Hizbullah. See Matthew D. Coburn, *Irregular Techniques for Controlling Under-Governed Space*. Monterey, CA, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2007, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad K. Majidyar, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Utilizing the sanctuary of the under-governed space of the Beqa'a Valley, Hizbullah and their Iranian trainers and advisors spent a minimum of a year teaching new recruits Hizbullah's ideology and culture. During this initial, year long "reinforcement" period, Hizbullah assessed their recruits, and then selected those fighters who displayed appropriate discipline to be party members. These fighters were then trained for an additional year in martial arts, medical support, and weapons. Depending upon their performance during this two year training period, new members were selected for martyrdom operations, "commando or special forces" operations, simpler harassment guerrilla operations, or support operations such as surveillance, logistics, and medical support. Matthew D. Coburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>33</sup> Subhi al-Tufayli (Hizbullah's former Secretary General) points out that "Hezbollah is in essence the Da'wa party from which [they] removed the title of Da'wa and entered it into military rounds in order for it to start the resistance." See Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-249.

<sup>35</sup> Marc R. DeVore, *op. cit.*, p. 92; See also:

مسعود اسداللهي، *از مقاومت تا پیروزی: تاریخچه حزب الله لبنان 1379 - 1361*، (تهران : موسسه مطالعات و تحقیقات اندیشه سازان نور، 1379)، ص ص 67 – 68.

<sup>36</sup> Hizbullah's Majlis al-Shura, which was created by Iran's Ayatollah Fazlollah Mahallati — a top figure in the IRGC contingent — and which did not hold regular meetings until May 1986, included "one or two" IRGC representatives or officials from the Iranian embassies in Beirut or Damascus. The Majlis al-Shura continues to include at least one IRGC official. Moreover, the council's membership included Hizbullah figures with close ties to the Iranian clergy. Nasrallah and Subhi al-Tufayli, both of whom would serve later as Hizbullah's Secretary-General, were close to Mohtashemi-Pour, the Iranian Ambassador in Damascus, whereas the Iranian rubbed Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah the wrong way. See Abbas William Samii, "A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria Relationship," *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (2008), p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Stefan Malthaner, *Mobilizing the Faithful: Militant Islamist Groups and Their Constituencies* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2011), p. 84; See also:

مقصود رنجبر، حزب الله لبنان، تصویری دیگر از انقلاب اسلامی، پگاه حوزه، هجدهم بهمن 1382، شماره 121، ص 5.

<sup>38</sup> In 1966, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah (died 4 July 2010) moved to Lebanon. Fadlallah was born in the Iraqi Shi'a shrine city of Najaf on 16 November 1935. His parents had migrated there from the village of 'Aynata in south Lebanon in 1928 to learn theology. By the time of his birth, his father was already a Muslim scholar. Fadlallah preached, and also established schools and orphanages, throughout Lebanon. Fadlallah was involved with the development of Hizbullah's ideology and his views continued to be similar to those of the organization, but he consistently denied formal involvement with the organization. Abbas William Samii, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua L. Gleis and Benedetta Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas: A Comparative Study* (Johns Hopkins University Press, September 2012), pp. 40-41.

<sup>40</sup> Ante Lucic, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>41</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, *The Making of Hezbollah*, Sunday, 18 May, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Marc R. DeVore, op. cit., pp. 90-98; See also:

ماجرای مک فارلین چه بود؟، عصر ایران، 21 مهر 1387 - 12 اکتبر 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Elie Alagha, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> According to the most detailed accounts yet available, Iran's ambassador in Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, initiated preparations for the attack by contacting the Iranian IRGC commander in the Beka'a Valley to request that Hizbullah attack the MNF. The IRGC commander, Ahmad Kan'ani, convened a meeting with key Hizbullah decision-makers, including future general secretaries Abbas al- Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah. The fact that the impetus for the attack came from Iran's Damascus Embassy suggests that Syria may have requested Iranian aid in countering MNF activities it considered prejudicial to its interests in Lebanon.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew Levitt, *The Origins of Hezbollah; 30 years ago, deadly bombings in Beirut forged a powerful new militant group*, The Atlantic, Oct 23 2013.

<sup>46</sup> According to Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 34, "Although its leading members refer to 1982 as the year the group was founded, Hezbollah did not exist as a coherent organization until the mid-1980s. From 1982 through the mid-1980s it was less an organization than a cabal." Nevertheless, Islamic Amal and similar or affiliated groups

received military training and organizational support from Iran during this formative period and are credited with a series of armed attacks and guerrilla operations, including the 1983 bombing of the United States Marine barracks. See also Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard, *Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2011), p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, "The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Domestic Politics," *International Spectator*, Vol. 42, No 4, December 2007, p. 477; See also:

ادبیات سیاسی حزب الله لبنان از کدام مدل انقلابی سرچشمه می‌گیرد؟، سراج 24، 29 آبان 1393 - 20 نوامبر 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Matthew D. Coburn, op. cit., p 41; See also:

انقلاب اسلامی و جنبش حزب الله لبنان/ امام خمینی یگانه مصدر حاکمیت قانونی در حزب الله لبنان، سراج 24، 30 آبان 1393 - 21 نوامبر 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, "The Hizballah Training Camps of Lebanon," op. cit., p 249.

<sup>50</sup> Hizbullah wisely chose to patiently execute a protracted struggle against their Western enemies. Hizbullah and the IRGC spent three years covertly developing their guerrillas and supporting auxiliary. From 1982-1985, Hizbullah remained covert; content to operate in the shadows while they trained and built their organization.

<sup>51</sup> This document was read by spokesman Ibrahim al-Amin at the al-Ouzai Mosque in west Beirut and simultaneously published in al-Safir, and a separate pamphlet that was first published in full in English in 1987. See the appendix in Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, "Hizbullah and the Israeli Withdrawal From Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Autumn 2000), p. 26; See also:

حمید ابوالقاسم زاده، تاثیر انقلاب اسلامی در شکل گیری و مبارزات حزب الله لبنان، دستاوردهای انقلاب اسلامی، شماره 41977، 6 شهریور 1388 - 28 اوت 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> ---, 29 Years Later, Echoes of 'Kuwait 17', *Weekly Standard*, Dec 13, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> George Joffe and Keith McLachlan, *Iran and Iraq: The Next Five Years* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1987), p.20.



<sup>56</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Matthew Levitt: Hezbollah's European enablers," *National Post*, 11 March, 2013.

<sup>57</sup> شهاب نیکزاد، *بازخوانی پرونده قتل های زنجیره ای، بی‌بی‌سی فارسی، دوشنبه ۲۳ نوامبر ۲۰۰۹ - ۲ آذر ۱۳۸۸*.

<sup>58</sup> H.E. Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," In H. E. Chehabi (ed.), *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B.Tauris, 2006), p. 208; See also:

*انیس نقاش: از تهران گفتند که بختیار باید هرچه زودتر کشته شود، بی‌بی‌سی فارسی، 4 اوت 2011 - 13 مرداد 1390*.

<sup>59</sup> Muhammad Sahimi, "The Chain Murders: Killing Dissidents and Intellectuals 1988-1998," Tehran Bureau, PBS, January 5, 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), p. 64; See also:

*اعدام انقلابی اویسی در پاریس / موافقت امام با مقابله به مثل با صدام، خاطرات هاشمی رفسنجانی؛ خاطره روز 17 بهمن سال 1362 (6 فوریه 1984)*.

<sup>61</sup> Yonah Alexander and Milton Hoenig, *The New Iranian Leadership: Ahmadinejad, Terrorism, Nuclear Ambition, and the Middle East* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2008), p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God*, op. cit., p 64.

<sup>63</sup> See Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, "Murder at Mykonos: Anatomy of a Political Assassination," (New Haven, Connecticut, March 7, 2007);

*سید حسین موسویان، جزئیات خواندنی ماجرای میکونوس بعد از 14 سال، عصر ایران، 26 مرداد 1385 - 17 اوت 2006*.

<sup>64</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the 'Western Hostage Crisis* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), p. 79. There were occasional rumors of a rift between Fadlallah (16 November 1935 – 4 July 2010) and Tehran. For example, in early 2003 Fadlallah said that his leadership position among the Shi'a community is causing discomfort in Iran, and he complained of character assassination in which he is accused of hostility to the Shi'a faith and the line of the Prophet Muhammad's family; "Fadlallah: Hizbullah Decided to Follow Iranian Authority, Oppose My Authority with Various Means," *Al-Hayah*, January 25, 2003. Three-and-a-half years later a Lebanese newspaper described "untraditional warmth, which is unprecedented in almost ten years" between Fadlallah,

Hizbullah, and Tehran, suggesting an earlier cold spell; Qasim Qasir, "In the Hope of Reinforcing the Moderate Trends to Protect Islamic Unity, Untraditional Warmth Emerges in the Relationship between Fadlallah and Each of Hizbullah and Iran," *Al-Mustaqbal*, June 10, 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Picard, "Managing Identities among Expatriate Businessmen across the Syrian Lebanese Boundary", In Inga Brandell (ed.), *State Frontiers: Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 91.

<sup>67</sup> Hussein Gharbieh "Hizbullah and the Legacy of Imam Musa al-Sadr," In Alessandro Monsutti, Silvia Naef and Farian Sabahi (ed.), *The Other Shiites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia* (Berne, Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 76.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78; See also:

قرارداد طائف ضامن حاکمیت و امنیت لبنان است، خبرگزاری فارس، 16 اسفند 1383 - 6 مارس 2005.

<sup>69</sup> Stefan Malthaner, *Mobilizing the Faithful: Militant Islamist Groups and Their Constituencies* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2010), p. 89.

<sup>70</sup> See Scott Stewart, "Lebanon: Lessons from Two Assassinations," Stratfor: Global Intelligence, November 15, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> See David B. Ottaway, *The king's messenger: Prince Bandar bin Sultan and America's tangled relationship with Saudi Arabia* (New York: Walker, 2008), p. 257; Lina Malers, *Rafiq Hariri, the 'Mr. Lebanon' who dominated political scene*, Al Arabiya, January 16, 2014;

ادعای نقش سوریه در ترور رفیق حریری، فردا، 19 آبان 1389 - 10 نوامبر 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah's Syrian Quagmire," PRISM, Vol 5, No. 1 (2014), p. 111.

<sup>73</sup> Erich Follath, "Breakthrough in Tribunal Investigation: New Evidence Points to Hezbollah in Hariri Murder," Der Spiegel, May 23, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> ---, "Justice or Peace? Hariri Trial Could Spark Further Unrest in Lebanon," Der Spiegel, January 14, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Henrietta Wilkins, *The Making of Lebanese Foreign Policy: Understanding the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War* (London: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>76</sup> Sawsan Khanafer, *Foreign Policy Battles In Post-Syria Lebanon: The Case Of The 2006 War*, Masters thesis, Lebanese American University, 2013, p. 60.

## Iran and Hizbullah: A Very Special Relationship

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<sup>77</sup> Ze'ev Schiff, "Israel's War With Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6 (Nov.-Dec.2006), p. 23; See also:

نوذر شفیعی و احمد مرادی، تاثیر جنگ 33 روزه لبنان بر موقعیت منطقه ای ایران، تحقیقات سیاسی و بین المللی، بهار 1388، دوره 1، شماره 1، ص ص 48-49.

<sup>78</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses," Congressional Research Service, July 23, 2010, p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> Ali Nouri Zadeh, "Iran Provider of Hezbollah's Weaponry: Source," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* English edition, July 16, 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In The Path Of Hizbullah* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 63; See also:

دبیر کل حزب الله لبنان: ما از ایران تجهیزات دریافت کردیم، صراط نیوز، 19 بهمن 1390 - 8 فوریه 2012.

<sup>81</sup> David Sousa, *Three Phases of Resistance: How Hezbollah Pushed Israel Out of Lebanon*, E-International Relations, Apr 28 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Maura Conway, "Terror TV? An Exploration Of Hezbollah's Al-Manar Television," In James J. F. Forest (ed.), *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), p. 402.

<sup>83</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah Finances: Funding the Party of God," In Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas (ed.), *Terrorism Financing and State Responses* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 139.

<sup>84</sup> For example, Robert Fisk, one of England's premier journalists, "suspects that Iran provides much of the cash" for al-Manar (Fisk, "Television News Is Secret Weapon of the Intifada," *Independent* (London), December 2, 2000). When station officials are asked directly about their sources of funding, they often answer by raising their hands toward heaven and "invoking the generosity of God." See Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hezbollah's al-Manar Television* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004), p. 46.

<sup>85</sup> Avi Jorisch, "Al Manar: Hizbullah TV, 24/7," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2004, Vol. 11, No. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Middle East Newsline, "Iran uses Hizbullah to quell unrest," May 08, 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Ulrike Putz. "Aufstand in Teheran: "Betet für uns!"" , In *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, June 15, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Eliot Assoudeh, "The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps: Power and Violence in Iran, Syria and Beyond," *National Security Forum*, Oct 7, 2013.

<sup>89</sup> Saad Abedine, "Arab Neighbors Watch Iran's Troubles," *CNN*, June 19, 2009.

<sup>90</sup> Dudi Cohen, "Report: Hezbollah fighting Iran protestors; 2 killed," *Israel News*, February 20, 2011; "Iran police fire tear gas at opposition rally in Tehran", *BBC News*, February 14 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Scott Modell, "Iran's Destabilizing Role in the Middle East," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), July 16, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>92</sup> James B. Love, "Hezbollah: A Charitable Revolution," Army Command and General Staff College (2008), pp. 6-7; See also:

ولایتی: ایران از یمن تا لبنان نفوذ اساسی دارد، فارس، 24 آذر 1393 - 15 دسامبر 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Toby Matthiesen, "Hizbullah al-Hijaz: A History of the Most Radical Saudi Shi'a Opposition Group," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Spring 2010), p. 179; See also:

نگاهی به حزب الله حجاز، بیم آل سعود از فعالیت این جنبش و سقوط حکومت، شیعه نیوز، 17 اسفند 1392 - 8 مارس 2014.

<sup>94</sup> Toby Matthiesen, *The Other Saudis: Shiism, Dissent and Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 135.

<sup>95</sup> **Christin Marschall, Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 38.**

<sup>96</sup> "Pro-Iranian Terror Groups targeting Saudi Envoys," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1989.

<sup>97</sup> Joshua Teitelbaum, "Saudi Arabia's Shi'i Opposition: Background and Analysis," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy Policywatch*, No. 225, November 14, 1996, p. 1.

<sup>98</sup> Toby C. Jones, "Embattled in Arabia: Shi'is and the Politics of Confrontation in Saudi Arabia," Occasional Paper Series, Shi'a Militancy Program, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, June 3, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>99</sup> See Saleh al-Mani', "The Ideological Dimension in Saudi-Iranian Relations," In Jamal S. al-Suwaidi (ed.), *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996), pp. 158-174.

<sup>100</sup> Frederic Wehrey et al., "Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy" (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2009), p. 19.

<sup>101</sup> See Toby Matthiesen, "Hizbullah al-Hijaz: A History of the Most Radical Saudi Shi'a Opposition Group," pp. 188-197;

جزئیاتی در باره حزب الله سعودی و فعالیت های "تروریستی" آن، خبرهای العربیه، 17 اسفند 1392 - 6 جمادی الاول 1435 - 8 مارس 2014.

<sup>102</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Iran and Bahrain: Crying Wolf, or Wolf at the Door?," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 16, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004); See also:

اشرف حیدری بزنجانی، تاریخچه جنبش های اسلامی در بحرین، وبلاگ درس سمینار جنبش 1390 - 24 مه 2011. های اسلامی معاصر، 3 خرداد

<sup>104</sup> "Bahrain as a Target Preferred by Iran for Terrorism and Subversion" (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Israeli Intelligence & Heritage Commemoration Center, February 27, 2013), pp. 14-15.

<sup>105</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Iran and Bahrain: Crying Wolf, or Wolf at the Door?,"

<sup>106</sup> "Bahrain as a Target Preferred by Iran for Terrorism and Subversion," pp. 1-2; See also:

وزیر کشور بحرین مدعی در هم شکستن یک گروه تروریستی شد، بی بی سی فارسی، 17 فوریه 2013 - 29 بهمن 1391.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>108</sup> Stuart Casey-Maslen, *The War Report: 2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 191.

<sup>109</sup> International Crisis Group, "The Huthis: From Saada to Sanaa," Middle East Report No. 154, June 10, 2014, Executive Summary; See also:

ولی الله صاحبکاری، تفکرات گروه الحوثی در یمن/رهبر گروه الحوثی کیست، نیتر 1، 1 شهریور 1393 - 23 اوت 2014.

<sup>110</sup> Elena White, "New war with al-Houthis is looming," Yemen Observer, May 12, 2012.

<sup>111</sup> "Houthis seize government buildings in Sanaa," Al Jazeera, Sep 21, 2014

<sup>112</sup> Glen Carey and Mohammed Hatem, "Gulf Arabs See Specter of Iran in Gains by Yemen's Houthis," Bloomberg, November 3, 2014; See also:

علی اکبر ولایتی: "جماعت انصار الله در یمن همان نقش حزب الله در لبنان را ایفا می کنند"، بهار ایران، 27 مهر 1393 - 19 اکتبر 2014.

<sup>113</sup> "Iranian subversion in Yemen," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, February 11, 2013, p. 7-10.

<sup>114</sup> David Schenker, "Who's Behind the Houthis?," *The Weekly Standard* Vol. 15, No. 22, February 22, 2010.

<sup>115</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and US. Relations," Congressional Research Service, February 6, 2014.

<sup>116</sup> Farea al-Muslimi, "Yemen's Houthis proxy, not ally for Iran," *Al-Monitor*, November 19, 2014; See also:

حوثی ها از حزب الله لبنان الگو گرفته‌اند، *فردا نیوز*، 25 آبان 1388، 16 نوامبر 2009.

<sup>117</sup> See Mohammed Jumei, "Yemeni official says some Houthis fighting for Assad," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, May 30, 2013.

<sup>118</sup> Ruth Sherlock, "Iran Boosts Support to Syria," *The Daily Telegraph*, February 22, 2014; See also:

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<sup>119</sup> Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah's Ideological Crisis* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 6, 2014).

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<sup>123</sup> Matthew Levitt and Aaron Y. Zelin, "Hizb Allah's Gambit in Syria,"

<sup>124</sup> Matthew Levitt and Nadav Pollak, "Hezbollah in Iraq: A Little Help Can Go a Long Way," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, June 25, 2014.

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