

SEND LAWYERS, GUNS, AND MONEY: THE POLITICS OF
MILITIA SURVIVAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Abstract

This dissertation considers the sources of variation in the ability of nonstate military actors to both resist and recover from – in short, to survive – confrontations with much stronger conventional militaries. While much of the existing literature on civil war focuses on structural variables, such as initial material or social endowments, this dissertation argues that these resources are less important in determining a non-state actor's resilience than the relationships it builds in order to acquire them and the means it uses to do so.

“Resources” may be either material, (e.g., money and arms) or non-material (e.g., legitimacy and influence) and are acquired (from the civilian population and/or a foreign sponsor) through three possible strategies: coercion, service-provision, and marketing. I argue that the first is least effective, as coercion tends to provide only short-term access to material resources, while marketing is the most effective, as it produces the most durable access to both material and non-material resources. Service provision produces a mid-range outcome. Moreover, all three can have significant unintended consequences. I test the argument by comparing the performances of the PLO, Hizbullah and Hamas in their confrontations with Israel over the past four decades. I conclude by considering the implications of my conclusions both for the study of nonstate actors more broadly, and for the dynamics of 21st century Iraq and Afghanistan.

Résumé

Cette thèse considère les facteurs de variation de l'habileté des acteurs militaires non-étatiques à résister à et à se remettre- en bref, à survivre à- des confrontations avec des militaires conventionnels comparativement beaucoup plus forts. Alors que la plus grande partie de la littérature sur les guerres civiles se concentre sur les variables structurelles telles que le matériel initial ou les atouts sociaux, cette thèse soutient que ces ressources sont moins importantes pour déterminer la résilience d'un acteur non-étatique que les relations qu'elles construisent afin de les acquérir ainsi que les moyens qu'elle utilise pour le faire.

Les « ressources » peuvent être soit matérielles (par exemple, de l'argent et des armes) ou non-matérielles (par exemple, la légitimité et l'influence) et sont acquises (de la population civile et/ou d'un soutien étranger) à travers trois stratégies possibles : la coercition, la prestation de services, et le marketing. Nous soutenons que le premier est le moyen le moins efficace, puisque la coercition tend à donner seulement un accès à court terme aux ressources matérielles, alors que le marketing est le moyen plus efficace, puisqu'il donne l'accès le plus durable à la fois aux ressources matérielles et non-matérielles. La prestation de service aboutit à un résultat intermédiaire. Qui plus est, les trois peuvent avoir des conséquences inattendues. Nous testons ces arguments en comparant la performance de l'OLP, du Hezbollah et du Hamas dans leur confrontation avec Israël au cours des quatre dernières décennies. Nous concluons en considérant la portée de nos conclusions pour l'étude des acteurs non-étatiques en général, ainsi que pour les dynamiques du 21^{ième} siècle en Iraq et en Afghanistan.

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Acronyms and Initializations

ALF: Arab Liberation Front (*Iraqi-sponsored Palestinian militia*)
DFLP: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
IAF: Islamic Action Front (*Political party of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan*)
IAF: Israeli Air Force
IDF: Israel Defense Forces
LAA: Lebanese Arab Army (*pro-LNM faction of the Lebanese army that split in 1976*)
LAF: Lebanese Armed Forces (*Lebanese state military*)
LF: Lebanese Forces (*Christian militia during the Lebanese civil war*)
LNM: Lebanese National Movement (*leftist coalition during the Lebanese civil war*)
MNF: Multi-National Force (*stabilization force sent to Lebanon after Israeli invasion*)
PA: Palestinian Authority (*post-Oslo Palestinian governing entity in West Bank and Gaza*)
PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command
PLA: Palestine Liberation Army (*the PLO's official armed force*)
PLC: Palestinian Legislative Council (*the PA legislative body*)
PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC: Palestinian National Council (*the PLO legislative body*)
PPSF: Palestinian Popular Struggle Front
PSP: Progressive Socialist Party (*leftist Lebanese party, mainly Druze*)
SLA: South Lebanon Army (*Israeli military proxy in South Lebanon*)
SSNP: Syrian Social Nationalist Party
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon*)
UNRWA: United Nations Relief Works Agency (*UN agency responsible for Palestine refugees*)

Chapter One: Introduction

On the morning of July 12th, 2006, the Lebanese militia Hizbullah captured two Israeli soldiers patrolling the border between Lebanon and Israel. In response, the Israel Defense Forces launched a 34 day war against Hizbullah and Lebanon itself. Its stated aim was not only the return of the two soldiers, but also the removal of Hizbullah's capacity to operate against Israeli targets from southern Lebanon, and, according to some, even the removal of Hizbullah itself. But after 34 days, these goals remained unmet, and the war, which sparked massive self-criticism in Israel, was widely perceived in the Arab world as a victory for Hizbullah.

This episode stands in sharp contrast to the record of the Palestine Liberation Organization against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). On June 6th, 1982, in response to the PLO's repeated shelling of northern Israel from southern Lebanon, the IDF invaded Lebanon with the stated intention of pushing the PLO north of the river Litani to, as above, remove its capacity to operate against Israeli targets from southern Lebanon, or even remove it from Lebanon entirely. Within weeks, the IDF had surrounded Beirut. By September, it had successfully expelled the PLO from Lebanon. While Hizbullah emerged from its conflict with Israel if anything stronger, the PLO was significantly crippled. This presents a puzzle: what accounts for the disparity between these two groups? In both cases, the IDF was far stronger than its nonstate adversary, so why was Hizbullah able to survive this attempt by the IDF to eradicate them in South Lebanon, while the PLO not?

This particular puzzle is reflective of a much larger question concerning the outcomes of asymmetric conflict, and the behavior and overall effectiveness of nonstate military actors. Why is it that some nonstate actors are better able to survive attempts by far stronger conventional adversaries to eradicate them in a given territory than other seemingly similar groups? The existing scholarship on the topic tends to attribute the greater resilience of some groups – that is, their ability to survive an attack by a far more powerful force and to prosper afterward – either implicitly or explicitly to either their material assets or their social endowments. But this project will argue that the answer lies instead in the strategies they employed in order to acquire these assets in the first place, the relationships they built (or failed to build) in the process, and the unintended consequences of these resource acquisition strategies. Rather than relying on purely structural factors, I will explore the agency that nonstate actors hold in shaping their own chances of survival.

The Conventional Wisdom: Material and Social Endowments

Existing explanations for the success or failure of militant movements – or indeed, for a wide range of militant group behaviors – tend to focus on structural factors, that is, factors which are either present or not in the environment surrounding the nonstate actor when it first gets off the ground. Though these include both material assets (resources and wealth) and non-material assets (legitimacy, influence and prestige), in both cases, the structural logic assumes that possession of these assets is an inherent feature of the militant group in question.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this thinking appears frequently in media reporting on insurgency, which often relies on descriptions of how well armed a given group is in explaining its success or failures; a brief survey of the coverage

in the New York Times of the July War and its aftermath finds that weapons were mentioned as an explanation for Hizbullah's success more than any other factor.¹ But this assumption also appears frequently in the scholarly literature on the subject. Much of the work on natural resources and war explores the role of natural resource wealth in prompting the onset of armed conflict and the emergence of armed groups.²

The opposite logic is present in the social movement literature, and in particular the work on resource mobilization. This scholarship acknowledges that material assets must be acquired, and indeed posits that access to material resources is the main determinant of which groups mobilize and when. But, it also assumes that mobilization is based on constant and unchanging identity-traits.³ Political opportunity theorists make similar claims, though their primary explanatory variable is political opportunity rather than access to resources.⁴

These literatures seek to explain the emergence of movements rather than their behavior after emergence, but the assumptions they reflect underpin work on the behavior and effectiveness of non-state military actors. One notable example is Weinstein's influential 2006 work on violence against civilians in civil wars. Weinstein postulates that militant groups with access to strong initial material endowments will use those endowments to recruit mercenary fighters, who are more likely to brutalize civilians, whereas poorer groups will be forced to turn to

¹This is based on a Factiva search of 186 New York Times articles containing the search phrase "Leban* AND (Hizbullah OR Hezbollah OR Hizballah) AND Israel*" from July 12th through October 14th, 2006. The nature of guerilla warfare was a close second. I do not mention this as an explanation, since it is clearly a constant and therefore stands little chance of explaining variation.

² Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000): 839-853.; Marc Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from 13 Cases," *International Organization*, no. 58 (2004): 35-67.; David Keen and International Institute for Strategic Studies., *The economic functions of violence in civil wars* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998).

³ See for instance John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212-41.

⁴ Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (University of Chicago Press, 1982).; David Meyer, "Protest and Political Opportunities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 125-145.

social assets in order to recruit, and ultimately find themselves with more committed fighters. For Weinstein, agency is explicitly overshadowed by structure, and access to resources is logically and ontologically prior to strategic decision-making.⁵ Similarly, Schlichte explicitly locates the origins of the character of an organization's leadership, internal structure, and ultimate chances for survival, in the state and social structures present at its formation.⁶

There are a number of flaws with this line of reasoning. To begin with, it is heavily deterministic. It is not in fact a foregone conclusion that any movement endowed with material wealth at the outset will use that wealth to hire mercenary fighters; there are multiple cases of organizations who have instead used that wealth to develop recruitment campaigns based on identity or invested it in social service networks as a form of non-violent recruitment – in other words, there is no reason a militia that is wealthy cannot also attract committed fighters. Hizbullah is only one example of this phenomenon. (There are also plenty of cases of socially-mobilized groups behaving abusively to civilians.)

Secondly, this logic has trouble accounting for variation among groups with similar endowments; why is it that two groups, fighting on the same territory, with similar access to that territory's resources, or perhaps with access to similar amounts of funding from other sources, nonetheless behave very differently and exhibit different rates of success? And perhaps more puzzlingly, why is it that two militant groups made up of people from the same local population, both claiming to represent the same ethnic group, fighting on the same territory and surrounded by the same community, exhibit similar variation in their behavior and ultimate success? If access to social assets is contingent on pre-

⁵ Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21.

⁶ Klaus Schlichte, *In the Shadow of Violence: The Politics of Armed Groups* (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 2009).

determined identity traits, then all groups fighting on behalf of “their” ethnicity should perform similarly, which of course they do not.

The third, and to my mind most significant, problem with the structural logic is that it takes a very static view of identity. While both the greed-versus-grievance literature on natural resources and war and the resource-mobilization literature on social movements do ask where material resources come from, they, and much of the other literature on civil war, fail to ask the same question with regard to non-material assets which Weinstein refers to as “social endowments.” This is unsatisfying both because it broadly posits ethnicity as primordial and essentially static, and because it fails to recognize one of the most significant contributions of the ethnic conflict literature: the very real role of militant movements in framing, shaping and assigning identities for their own purposes.⁷ We cannot treat communal identities as assets which exist entirely independently from the organizations who make use of them, as “things” which militias either “have” or not.

Rather than starting from the assumption that some groups are blessed with useful social endowments while others are not, it is more appropriate to treat identity formation as a process engaged in strategically. The historical narratives and identity traits that groups subscribe to in terms of how they perceive themselves, their constituency, and their place in the world, shape both which people the nonstate actor is able to imagine as members of its constituency, and which people are able to imagine the nonstate actor as an organization to whom they might give their support. A group which creates a narrow ascriptive definition for itself has a smaller potential constituency than a group with a broader ascriptive definition, and groups that are able to change the way they

⁷ See Brass, Paul. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, (London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 121-127, Gagnon 1994, and Kuran 1998.

imagine themselves have a wider choice in terms of which strategies are imaginable, and therefore available, to them.

In other words, the problem with structural arguments such as those above is that they begin the causal chain too late, taking as fixed the existence of identities that must in reality be produced and acquired, just as material resources must be. The resources that militias have, be they material or non-material, are important, but I am interested in taking a step backwards in the causal process to understand how militias come to possess these resources to begin with.⁸

The Theory

“Taking a step backwards along the causal chain” means that that while I concur with the structural arguments outlined above that all nonstate actors require certain resources, both material and non-material, I argue that these resources are acquired from sources external to the nonstate actor itself. That is, because they are exogenous to the nonstate actor, it must exert some agency in obtaining them. Specifically, resources, both material and intangible, are obtained from the local civilian population and/or an external sponsor state or states.

In either case, and for either type of resource, there are three possible strategies which a militia may employ: coercion (the use of force to obtain resources); service provision (the exchange of a service for resources) or marketing (using persuasion to obtain resources). The use of coercion lowers a militia’s chances of surviving an attempt to eradicate the organization in a particular area, while the use of service provision improves these chances somewhat, and the use of marketing improves them significantly. In this section I

⁸A recent exception to the above structural trend is recent work by Metelits in which she also rejects the structuralist narrative, arguing that violence against civilians is a response to threat, rather than predetermined by resource endowment. Claire Metelits, “The Logic of Change: Pushing the Boundaries of Insurgent Behavior Theory,” *Defense and Security Analysis* 25, no. 2 (2009): 105-118.

will work backwards through my model, beginning with my dependent variable of militia survival, working through the intervening variables, the resources nonstate actors require, and then discussing the independent variable of resource acquisition strategy choice.

The Dependent Variable: Nonstate Actor Survival

This project seeks to explain the variation in the ability of a nonstate military actor to weather an attempt by a much stronger conventional military to wipe them out in a particular geographic area. I use the term “nonstate military actor” because it serves as a catch-all for many types of similar – but not identical – groups referred to in the civil war literature, including “rebels”, “guerrillas”, “insurgents”, “militias” and sometimes “terrorists.”⁹ But there are nevertheless boundaries around the term. First, though the groups under consideration may be sponsored by a state or aspire to become a state, they are not the same as a state military (as the term “nonstate actor” obviously implies.) Secondly, nonstate military actors are not non-violent; though these organizations (even those who use terrorism) are often complex movements with multiple branches that can include affiliated political parties and NGOs, one of those components is always military. Finally, along similar lines, the groups under examination are not mafias. Their projects are at first and foremost political, and the use of violence is intended to do more than simply enrich the leaders of the group, although that may be a part of its purpose as well.¹⁰ Therefore “nonstate actors” in the context

⁹ There is some overlap between these labels, and not all of them describe comparable categories. “Terrorist” and “guerrilla” refer to groups who use particular tactics. “Rebel” and “insurgent”, on the other hand, define the group by its enemy rather than its choice of tactic. “Militia” is the broadest of the above categories, though it does carry very specific connotations in both the American and Lebanese contexts. Nonstate military actors as a whole can and do use conventional, guerrilla, and/or terrorist tactics, and their primary opponents can be both internal and external.

¹⁰ That is not to say that there are not any number of organizations masquerading as militias who are in reality merely organized crime syndicates. By the same token, groups which have sincere political grievances are often dismissed as criminals as a means of delegitimizing their grievances. For more on this see David Keen, “The Economic Function of Violence in Civil Wars (Adelphi Paper series)” (Oxford, 1998) Keen and

of this project are defined therefore as *armed, politicized, non-state organizations who use violent (and sometimes non-violent) means to advance a particular political program.*

The second half of my dependent variable is “survival”, that is, “retaining the capacity to operate against enemy forces from or in the territory from or in which the militant movement wishes to operate.” This definition sets the bar high enough for the militant group that it allows for a fair comparison between different nonstate actors; it is not enough for the group to simply continue to exist, somewhere, in some form. It is also clearer and more measurable than permanent “victory,” which is much harder to identify with any great certainty because the nature of insurgency and guerrilla warfare is such that it is often unclear when hostilities are finally over.¹¹

Practically speaking, survival has two components: resistance and recovery. *Resistance* refers to the group’s ability to defend itself militarily during the conflict itself. But in order to survive – to retain the capacity to operate against the adversary in the area from which it wishes to operate -- the militant group also needs to be able to *recover* from the conflict both militarily and politically. That is, it needs to be able to retain its access to the territory in question as well as weapons and fighters, as well as maintaining its local political position.

International Institute for Strategic Studies., *The economic functions of violence in civil wars*. and Stathis Kalyvas, “‘New’ and ‘Old’ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?,” *World Politics* 54, no. 1 (2001): 99-118.

¹¹ I have chosen “survival” as a variable rather than “victory” because I believe it constitutes a more intellectually honest measure of militia capabilities. Although there are major exceptions, history indicates that because their goals are often much more elastic and/or limited than those of their counterinsurgent state enemies, insurgencies tend to “win” far more often than their opponents – they are playing with a much wider set of goal-posts. This, I think, could produce misleading conclusions. Moreover, because “victory” for the militia can refer to a wide variety of outcomes, it is less analytically specific or theoretically productive than “survival,” which is more specific and allows for more precise measurement.

The Intervening Variable: Resources

All militias, in all contexts, require certain resources to survive.¹² A wide variety of these are listed in the literature on civil war, as well as the theory and practice of guerrilla and counterinsurgent warfare.¹³ Resource mobilization theory¹⁴ argues specifically that it is entirely access to resources that determines the emergence of social movements at all.¹⁵ While material resources alone are not sufficient to produce the emergence of a militia – and in any event, it is not emergence which this project addresses, but survival after emergence – they are certainly necessary for militia movements to operate.

The utility of some resources may seem self-evident; weapons are obviously important, as is funding. Materiel and provisions are also clearly necessary, as well as a base of operations. But in addition to these material resources, there are also important non-material resources which are equally necessary; while it is quite difficult to wage a guerrilla campaign without guns, or money, it is likewise quite difficult to do so without access to intelligence,

¹²See C. Metelits, “The Logic of Change: Pushing the Boundaries of Insurgent Behavior Theory 1,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 25, no. 2 (2009): 105–118.

¹³For a more theoretical treatment, see J. Bowyer Bell, *The Myth of the Guerrilla: Revolutionary Theory and Practice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971); Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004); Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Washington, DC: Office of Transnational Issues, National Security Research Division, RAND Corporation, 2001); Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. The United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) offers an excellent counterinsurgent perspective. Zedong Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1961); Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, vol. Trans. by J.P. Morray, with an introduction by I.F. Stone (New York: Vintage Books, 1961); and T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1935).

¹⁴See McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.”; David A. Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (1986): 464–481. Chad Alan Goldberg, “Haunted by the Specter of Communism: Collective Identity and Resource Mobilization in the Demise of the Workers Alliance of America,” *Theory and Society* 32, no. 5/6 (2003): 725–773.

¹⁵This theory is somewhat problematic in that it assumes that both communal identity and grievance associated therewith are constants, seeing variation only in the availability of resources to potential social movements. This strips the agency out of both identity construction and the articulation of collective grievances, leaving little space for the individual negotiation of cross-cutting cleavages and the different packages of interests they may bring with them.

political cover, basic training or local knowledge. This is particularly true given the nature of guerilla warfare; because non-state military actors rarely possess superior force of arms, they tend to rely heavily on stealth, superior local knowledge, and the possession of greater resolve than their conventional military opponent. These non-material assets can also be conceived of as resources.

Work by both academics and practitioners acknowledges the relevance of both types of resources. Che Guevara and Mao in particular emphasize the significance of non-material resources, such as familiarity with the land, information and mobility, as well as material resources such as food, transportation, ammunition and reliable shoes.¹⁶ Metz and Millen argue that insurgencies require manpower, funding, materiel, sanctuary and intelligence to operate.¹⁷ Bell, in tracing the evolution of Mao's strategy into the "myth" of guerrilla revolution, cites public support, room to maneuver, and a secure base as the basis for the success of the Chinese revolution; he also implies that an understanding of guerrilla strategy, and access to the above "myth," generally through Soviet or Chinese sponsorship, constitutes an important asset in its own right.¹⁸ In exploring how nonstate actors win sympathy abroad, Clifford Bob explores the role of transnational activist networks in branding certain nonstate actors as worthy of support, demonstrating the importance of what I would call "the hip factor."¹⁹ The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (which sorts resources into active and passive forms of support) lists safe havens, medical support, financing, assistance with logistics and training,

¹⁶ Many of the militia fighters and officers interviewed for this project inadvertently emphasized the importance of non-material resources. One of my standard interview questions was "what does it take to make a revolution?" and the answers were frequently focused on non-material assets.

¹⁷ Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*.

¹⁸ Bell, *The Myth of the Guerrilla: Revolutionary Theory and Practice*.

¹⁹ Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

provisions, the recognition of its legitimacy (or the refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the counterinsurgent government), intelligence, transportation, active participation in ‘actions on behalf of insurgents’, and refraining from giving information to COIN forces.²⁰ And finally, in a RAND corporation report, Byman et al²¹ list safe haven, safe transit, financial resources, ‘political support,’ actual military participation (although this is rare), training, weapons, fighters, intelligence, organizational competence, and ideological inspiration.²²

Taken together, the above discussions generate the following list of resources: Material resources include *financial resources; fighters; weapons; supplies, including food and clothing; safe havens, both inside and outside the country; safe transport of supplies and fighters*. Non-material resources include *intelligence and local knowledge; mobility; political support; international, regional and local legitimacy; the ability to produce propaganda and access to media and appropriate technologies; ideological inspiration; organizational competence; training, including discipline and cohesion; and the ability to recruit new members*.

Potential critiques

A few caveats are in order regarding the above. First, this list is neither exhaustive nor perfectly applicable to all insurgencies at all times or in all places, and there is certainly some overlap between the various resources listed. Despite the temptation to offer some sort of hierarchy among these resources, I will refrain from doing so, because the value of each varies significantly from place to place and across history.

²⁰ United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*, 104-105.

²¹ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.

²² This list of resources is presented in the context of resources that may be provided by outside sponsors, but it also provides a substantive summary of the resources needed by insurgents in general.

Secondly, there is the question of necessity versus sufficiency. Although each of the above resources is likely to improve the militia's chances, none is in and of itself sufficient to guarantee militia effectiveness – if nothing else, there is always the possibility that once acquired, resources may be misused. Likewise, while the above resources are necessary in that a militia that has none of them will find it impossible to be effective, not all resources may be equally necessary in every conflict, although each is valuable. Moreover, some resources, (such as money) may provide access to others (supplies and weapons). I believe it is fair to say that access to at least a majority of the above resources, either separately, or though access to other resources, is necessary for effectiveness, but that they cannot be considered sufficient.

This raises a third potential critique: that some militias will not need the above resources because they already possess them. Under this logic, some of what I have described above as resources are framed instead as inherent characteristics of a militia. However, I find this argument problematic for two reasons. The first is the issue of the time frame. If a militia is said to “be well armed” and therefore not in need of weapons, it seems reasonable to ask, did it come into existence in possession of its full complement of weapons and ammunition? And if not, how and at what point did it acquire them? What appear to be traits of a militia at the midpoint of their evolution can be more accurately characterized as resources if the analysis is begun earlier in the story.

The likely response to this argument is that while something as tangible as weaponry may well be a thing to be acquired, the same cannot be said of less tangible resources such as organizational capacity. This is sometimes true: under certain circumstances, organizational capacity, discipline, tactical training and other non-material resources may indeed inherent characteristics of the militia itself, either because they were attributes of its founders and early recruits and

therefore became norms within the organization, or because the leadership was able to produce these outcomes without any outside help. Yet is a rare group of fighters that requires no training or indoctrination whatsoever, and both ‘training’ and ‘indoctrination’ can be conceived of as resources. In some cases, no outside help may be required to procure them, but in most, either civilian or external aid will be required for the militia to develop these attributes.

Moreover, as will be discussed below, the relationships that a militant group forms with its state sponsors and civilian constituents can shape the group in unexpected ways (as will be discussed further below.) While “cohesion” and “fragmentation” are often viewed as being traits inherent in the militant group, they are often in fact unintended byproducts of its relationships with its state sponsors and local constituents, relationships which it formed while in search of different resources altogether.

Sources of Resources

If these resources are not endogenous to the militia, then where do they come from? The literature suggests that they are primarily acquired from the *domestic civilian population*, and/or an *external patron state*. Historically, writing on counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare by both insurgent and counterinsurgent fighters has emphasized the significance of civilian support, from the military theory of General Louis-Lazare Hoche in the 18th century, to C.E. Callwell’s *Small Wars Manual* (1896) to the US Army’s 1940 *Small Wars Manual* to General Petraeus’ more recent *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2007), as well as work by guerilla fighters such as Che Guevara and Mao Tze Tung, who wrote that “...guerrilla warfare basically

derives from the masses and is supported by them. It can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation”.²³

Within the academic literature, as Kalyvas notes, “Almost all writers converge in asserting that no insurgent movement can survive without civilian support.”²⁴ This certainly seems accurate: Weinstein suggests that civilian support is a crucial threshold that militia groups must pass early on in their campaign,²⁵ while Chaliand finds that success depends upon the “underground political infrastructure,” based in the civilian population.²⁶ Johnson argues that “civilian loyalty” is necessary for guerillas to have any hope of holding territory,²⁷ and Salehyan and Gledich note the importance of civilians in camouflaging militia members, finding that refugee flows can facilitate the spread of arms and militants, and refugee camps can become recruiting centers.²⁸

Where there is less agreement is with regard to the question of how civilian support should be measured; Kalyvas suggests that support for one particular group may be endogenous to the war itself, as civilians may wait to see which side appears likely to come out on top of a struggle before throwing their weight behind either group, while Ford notes that ‘support’ need not be explicit, as even civilian neutrality can benefit the insurgent group.²⁹ Kalyvas raises a further distinction, arguing that “popular support” should be disaggregated into

²³ Jonathan North, “General Hoche and Counterinsurgency,” *The Journal of Military History* 27, no. 2 (2003): 531. Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars: A Tactical Textbook for Imperial Soldiers* (London: Greenhill Books, 1896). United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Trans. by J.P. Morray, with an introduction by I.F. Stone: Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 44.

²⁴ Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 91-92.

²⁵ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

²⁶ Gérard Chaliand, *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan* (University of California Press, 1982), 12.

²⁷ Chalmers Johnson, “Civilian Loyalties and Guerilla Conflict,” *World Politics* 14, no. 4 (1962): 649.

²⁸ Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Refugees and the Spread of Civil War,” *International Organization* 60, no. 2 (2006): 342.

²⁹ Christopher M. Ford, “Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population’s Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency,” *Parameters*, no. Summer (2005): 51-66.

“attitudes” and “behaviors,” and that we ought to concentrate on the latter, as the former are quite difficult to measure accurately in the context of war,³⁰ (a critique also raised by Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay.)³¹ I would suggest, though, that the attitudes informing civilian behavior are in fact quite significant when it comes to the acquisition of non-material resources, such as political legitimacy and the willingness of the local population to risk hiding guerrillas in their basements.

The second major source of resources for militias is external sponsorship. Byman et al find that of 74 insurgencies conducted during the 1990s, state support had a considerable impact on 44,³² and Harbom and Wallensteen find that it was a factor in 80 out of 111 civil wars fought between the end of the cold war and 2004.³³ Moreover, they find that in conflicts in which one party has international support, that party almost always wins.³⁴ But, not all external support necessarily goes to the insurgent side; Harbom and Wallensteen find that in 56 out of 80 cases it was received by the government and in 57 by the insurgent group. That external support flows to both insurgents and counterinsurgents suggests that external support is often a matter of funding a proxy against a mutual enemy.³⁵

Militias seek external sponsorship from a variety of sponsors. During the cold war, both the United States and the Soviet Union were vigorous supporters of both insurgent militias and counterinsurgent states, as were regional powers such as Libya and Saudi Arabia.³⁶ Finally, militant groups may seek support from a

³⁰ Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.

³¹ Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, “‘Draining the Sea’: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare,” *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (2004): 375-407.

³² Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 9.

³³ Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, “Armed Conflict and Its International Dimensions, 1946-2004,” *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 5 (2005): 623-635.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 629.

³⁵ Harbom and Wallensteen, “Armed Conflict and Its International Dimensions, 1946-2004.”; Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.; Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).; Salehyan, Idean, “No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict,” *Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 54-66.

³⁶ Harbom and Wallensteen, “Armed Conflict and Its International Dimensions, 1946-2004.”

neighboring state which, while not particularly powerful, has a historical grudge against the government the group is seeking to overthrow.

The Independent Variable: Strategy Choice

This brings us to the independent variable: the strategies militias use to obtain resources. Support, whether in the form of material or non-material resources, is not automatic from either civilian populations (Mao's references to guerilla fish swimming in civilian rivers notwithstanding) or external sponsor states; militias must somehow go about obtaining it. This exercise of agency is what distinguishes the narrative presented here from that present in the structural literature. I argue that militant groups have three broad categories of strategies from which to choose in acquiring resources (material or non-material) from civilians and foreign sponsors: *coercion, service-provision, or marketing*. These strategies determine *which sorts of resources the militant group is likely to obtain* (primarily material or non-material), as well as the *durability of its access to these resources*. They also determine *how the group is able to use these resources once it has them*, based both on the mix of resources it is able to obtain (absence of some assets will make it harder to use others) and on the way the use of these strategies shapes the militant group itself. While coercion may be easiest in the short term, it is marketing which will produce the most durable relationships and therefore the most reliable support.

Coercion

I will begin with the strategy of coercion, first exploring the forms it takes when used against states, and then moving on to a discussion of the coercion of civilians. Although a great deal of policy and media attention is devoted to "state sponsors of terrorism", not all state aid to non-state actors is voluntary; both

Byman and the US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual distinguish between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ support for insurgency, and Byman and Salehyan argue that ‘passive’ support can also be taken one step further, to ‘involuntary’ support, or coercion.³⁷ There are a number of ways in which states can be coerced into supporting a non-state actor. These may include theft of money or aid supplies, threats of direct violence or assassination, or threats to tarnish the state’s reputation. (In this sense, coercion may overlap with the ‘ethnic sympathy’ strategy, or strategies predicated on the offer of intangible goods such as legitimacy or prestige.)

The majority of involuntary support, however, tends to come in the form of sanctuary, when a weak state finds itself unable to prevent a militia from using its territory as a base of operations.³⁸ Having a safe haven from which to operate is crucial for the conduct of successful insurgency,³⁹ particularly in the early phases of mobilization, when the group is most vulnerable.⁴⁰ Byman suggests that sanctuary is the most important form of support an external sponsor can provide because it makes the acquisition of all other forms of support possible.⁴¹ This is echoed by Salehyan, who notes that having an international base facilitates fundraising, as well as perhaps causing counterinsurgent forces to think twice before pursuing rebels across an international border.⁴² It is therefore unsurprising that nonstate actors occasionally set up shop in territory in which they are not entirely welcome.

³⁷ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*.; United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*.; Idean Salehyan, “No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict,” *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 54-66.

³⁸ See Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*. Stathis Kalyvas, “The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War,” *Journal of Ethics* 8, no. 1 (2004): 97-138.

³⁹ Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon* (Boulder; London: Westview Press; Pinter Publishers, 1990). Salehyan, “No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict.”

⁴⁰ Idean Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁴¹ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*.

⁴² Salehyan, “No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict.”

Part of the appeal of this strategy is that it can be accomplished in a relatively short time. Coercion requires far less planning than either marketing or service provision, making it an appealing choice for nonstate actors who feel themselves under increasing pressure. A nonstate actor may also turn to coercion if it finds that it needs a specific form of aid from a specific state, and the state in question is refusing to provide it. This is particularly true of sanctuary; while money and guns are essentially fungible and likely to be available from multiple sources, not all states make equally appealing safe havens. A militia may have a strong preference for a particular area as a base of operations because of proximity to the border with the enemy state⁴³ or because of a feeling of ethno-communal kinship with refugees living in said territory⁴⁴ or because it is geographically conducive to training, or simply because it is difficult to reach and easily defensible through guerrilla tactics. If the government of the state in which this territory is located refuses access, this can make coercive tactics remarkably tempting.

Yet coercing a state has significant drawbacks. For one thing, it has limited utility - while a territorial base may be obtainable through coercion, short of open war, other material resources (such as weaponry and financial support) may be harder, although not impossible, to obtain in this fashion. Still more problematically, non-material resources are nearly impossible to obtain in this way. (Declarations of support by the leadership of a state that is being forced to host a militia group against its will tend to ring somewhat hollow.) Coercion may be useful if the militia is receiving all other necessary resources from other sources, and merely requires a conveniently located safe haven, but this can

⁴³ Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*.

⁴⁴ Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990). Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*.

extract a heavy price down the road when the militia finds itself in need of non-material support.

Coercion can also be used as a strategy to acquire resources from the civilian population. As with the coercion of states, it can take different forms. It may involve appropriating land, homes, farms, businesses, natural resources or vehicles, stealing food, clothing or other equipment, or levying ‘taxes’ on civilians at checkpoints, businesses, or simply going door to door to “fundraise”. In its more extreme forms, coercion can also involve kidnapping civilians for ransom, or torturing, murdering and raping some people to instill fear in others.⁴⁵ It can also include the abduction of children to use as child soldiers, or women (and girls) to serve as sex workers.

True, looting, extortion and rape can at times be ends in and of themselves, rather than means to fund a larger mission.⁴⁶ Collier finds that resource-seeking may be a factor in either the onset of conflict or to its continuation and Ross suggests that both may be true.⁴⁷ While the relationship between conflict-duration and resource extraction seems to speak to the utility of coercion, I admit that this logic is muddled by their role in conflict onset. However, this does not mean that we should not take coercion seriously as a means as well as an ends. Moreover, there is some evidence that coercive extraction has become more common since the end of the cold war, as superpower funding has become less readily available indicating that coercion is being used to replace other sources of funding.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Indeed, Kalyvas notes that civilian fear of militias is one reason why it is inaccurate to conceptualize the choice to support or not support a given militia as an election. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*..

⁴⁶ Keen, “The Economic Function of Violence in Civil Wars (Adelphi Paper series).”

⁴⁷ Collier, “Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity.” and Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from 13 Cases.”

⁴⁸ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars* (London: Zed Books, 2001).

Coercion can be a useful short-term strategy in that it requires little time for preparation, and often little effort, if local civilians are unarmed. But, as in the use of coercion against sponsor states, it can have negative consequences, in that it is likely to damage a group's long-term chances of acquiring non-material resources.⁴⁹ While intelligence can perhaps be obtained by force, its accuracy may be suspect, and other non-material assets, particularly political resources like legitimacy, votes, and political access, cannot be obtained in this fashion.

Coercion carries with it more immediate dangers as well. Humphreys and Weinstein point out that coercion can backfire: while they find that fear is the most powerful incentive for people to join militias, it may also motivate them to join the militia's opponents. Moreover, this form of access to resources is in some sense unsustainable; if the militant group uses extreme measures (massacring villages, or even just running people off their land) at a certain point, there will be no more crops to steal, and no more villagers to steal from.⁵⁰ Even Che Guevara cautions strongly against antagonizing the local civilian population by stealing from them.⁵¹ In sum, while coercion may be useful for acquiring some forms of material support from civilians, this is true only in the short term.

Service Provision

The second means by which militias obtain resources is through service provision. While the forms of service offered to sponsor states and civilians may differ, the basic dynamic remains the same: in both cases, the militant group is

⁴⁹ United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*. Johnson, "Civilian Loyalties and Guerilla Conflict," 652.

⁵⁰ Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (April 2008): 436-455.

⁵¹ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Trans. by J.P. Morray, with an introduction by I.F. Stone:75. That being said, he also differentiates between the treatment to be accorded to supporters of the guerrilla movement and its opponents, which can perhaps be construed as offering oblique approval of a coercive strategy against hostile or non-supportive civilians (Guevara 1961: 78.)

offering something that it has in exchange for something that it needs. Usually, it also involves the militant group taking over, or being delegated, the functions of the state. But whether these functions are being performed for the state, or in lieu of it, the movement hopes to acquire resources in exchange for doing so.

When directed at states, service provision most commonly involves service as a military proxy against a common enemy, allowing the state to avoid many of the costs of entering into war itself, while simultaneously extending its reach.⁵² Proxy relationships can range from a straightforward attack on a mutual enemy to sponsorship of internal rebellion to destabilization an enemy regime which stops short of overthrowing the government.⁵³ A militia may be more appealing as a potential proxy if it is able to demonstrate at least a minimal level of competence (such as a record of successful attacks) and commitment (that is, a reliable antipathy to the shared enemy), but sponsors can also offer training or indoctrination to make up for any shortfalls in this area. Historically, there are certainly cases of states sponsoring militias who had little prior experience at the outset,⁵⁴ or even creating their own proxies out of whole cloth (though this does raise the costs for the sponsor, negating one of the advantages of sponsorship.) What is noteworthy here is that service provision is available as a strategy under a range of prior structural conditions, and so the choice to use this strategy is not structurally predetermined.

Service provision provides access to a wider range of resources than does coercion. States sponsoring a military proxy are particularly likely to offer military aid in the form of funding, weapons, supplies and training, although not

⁵² Salehyan, "No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict," 56. Salehyan further hypothesizes that this means we should see a decrease in interstate war between states that were already members of a rival dyad.

⁵³ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*.

⁵⁴ American sponsorship of various paramilitary movements in Latin America during the cold war provides a number of examples in this area, the Bay of Pigs invasion being among the most noteworthy.

necessarily sanctuary on their territory. They may sometimes, though not always, also offer non-material support such as political advocacy and propaganda, although this is less true of supporters who have acquired a military proxy because of a desire for plausible deniability or a need to avoid a direct conflict, and so may actively avoid an obvious public link between themselves and their client.

There can be significant drawbacks to this strategy, however, in terms of its durability, potential loss of autonomy, and a heightened risk of fragmentation. To address the issue of durability first, proxy relationships can prove unreliable in the long term; support is not so much bought as rented, and support that is contingent on the state's need for a proxy may be withdrawn if the need for a proxy is diminished. Moreover, military proxies are basically fungible - one nonstate actor can frequently set off bombs in an enemy capital just as well as another, and if a more efficient or cost-effective client (or a client using a more effective strategy to woo the sponsor state) appears, the patron may abandon its original client in favor of the new one.

Secondly, proxyhood forces a militia to give up a portion of its autonomy. However much the interests of the sponsor state may overlap with those of its proxy, there will almost certainly be some difference between them, and in a proxy relationship, the state will almost certainly put its interests ahead of its client's. In addition to distracting the movement from its goals and inducing a degree of mission creep, this also has the potential to delegitimize the movement in the eyes of its civilian constituency by making it appear less genuinely committed to the community's political project, whatever it might be.⁵⁵ At times, the interests of the state may even be in direct contradiction to the interests of the

⁵⁵ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.

militia, forcing its leadership to face a tradeoff between focusing on the organization's own goals and those of the patron whose sponsorship may be necessary to achieve them.

This leads to a third pitfall of state sponsorship. The tension between the interests of the sponsor and the goals of the militant movement have the potential to produce deeply dangerous rifts within the organization, as some factions advocate greater autonomy while others remain loyal to the sponsor. The danger of factionalization is compounded if the militia is sponsored by more than one state, in which case it may find itself torn between the demands placed on it by its various sponsors. This can be a particular problem for movements with bases and training camps in multiple states, the commanders of which may become particularly reliant on or genuinely loyal to the government of the host country. The danger of schism is less acute if the movement's various sponsors are allied with one another, or at least have similar foreign policy preferences. However, if the sponsor states are rivals, their rivalry may be acted out by the individuals or factions most loyal to each state within the client organization, to its detriment. In this sense, sponsorship has the very real potential to warp, divide and fragment the same militant group it is meant to benefit.

Militias also use service provision to secure resources from the civilian population. Though the form it takes is quite different from that described above – service provision directed at civilians tends to take the form of social and charitable services -- the dynamic remains the same; in both cases, the militant group is trading something it has for something it needs. Many nonstate military actors are complex organizations, including not only fighters but also political parties, news outlets and social service networks. The latter can provide services such as child care, medical care, education, and even infrastructural maintenance, all of which can be useful in improving the militia's general reputation amongst

civilians,⁵⁶ recruiting new members, and providing “day jobs” for fighters and for the families of those killed in combat.⁵⁷

This is not to imply, however, that nonstate actors who provide social services simply use them instrumentally as a way of “trapping” constituents into supporting them. Berman argues that groups which operate social services are more effective at terrorism because through these services they isolate adherents, rendering them dependent on the movement, and thereby create a pool of poorly educated potential recruits who will join the organization because their reliance on its substandard educational facilities has left them with no other career options.⁵⁸ While this may perhaps be true in some cases, the fact that so many members of (and fighters for) Hamas, Hizbullah and the various PLO factions, including many of the fighters and politicians interviewed for this project, are highly educated, in some cases holding PhDs or medical degrees from Europe and the United States, suggests that the role of social services in movement recruitment is not nearly so simple. These services can also hold a non-material appeal: for people who feel marginalized or abandoned by their government, the experience of being treated with respect and recognized as deserving of services at all can be quite powerful, and may well outlast the schools and clinics themselves. But perhaps more importantly, the provision of social services can serve as a kind of incidental marketing, as a way of demonstrating the movement’s commitment to the community and even its fitness govern should it ever take power.

However, as with the provision of services to states, the provision of services to civilians has its own pitfalls. The most significant of these is that it

⁵⁶ Shawn Teresa Flanigan, “Charity as Resistance: Connections between Charity, Contentious Politics, and Terror,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 7 (2006): 641-655.

⁵⁷ Humphreys and Weinstein, “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War.”

⁵⁸ Eli Berman, *Religious, Radical and Violent: The new economics of terrorism* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

doesn't necessarily work. Unless the organization in question actively denies services to those it does not consider constituents, some people will likely use the services for their own sake, without significantly changing their view of the organization providing them, as far as its political goals are concerned.⁵⁹ Further muddying the issue, anecdotal evidence suggests that in some cases, people choose to use services provided by one group or another, particularly educational services, because they already sympathize with the group and prefer to associate with fellow supporters, in which case, support for the group produces patronage of its services, not the other way around.

Nevertheless, it is safe to say that service provision is probably a more reliable means than coercion of securing resources from civilians. However, for practical reasons, the support it generates is, for the most part, non-material. This is for purely practical reasons. If the civilian population is significantly poorer than the militia in question, while they may be able to offer food, shelter, or small amounts of money, a movement which is well funded enough to build hospitals may not need these things, and a population that is poor enough to need those hospitals probably does not have access to the tanks, artillery and rocket launchers that the movement does need. True, they may have other, wealthier, civilian patrons, who were once impoverished and made use of the militias services and so donate out of loyalty, but generally speaking, the constituency served by charitable institutions is probably not the same constituency funding them.⁶⁰ That insurgents still attempt to win over the civilian population, even when they need little from them in terms of material contributions, seems to indicate that there are forms of support they need from them beyond material resources.

⁵⁹ Janine Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism: Middle Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). Claude Berrebi, "Evidence about the Link Between Education, Poverty and Terrorism among Palestinians," *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 13, no. 1 (2007), <http://www.bepress.com/peps/vol13/iss1/2/>.

⁶⁰ David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux," *Survival* 48, no. 4 (2006): 111-130.

The one significant material asset that civilians who are poor enough to need social services can provide, of course, is sanctuary. Maintaining the good will of the local population can greatly facilitate a guerrilla organization's ability to use their land as a base of operations, sometimes quite literally – having a farmer's permission to put rocket launchers in her orchards, for instance, makes it less likely that she will tell the counterinsurgent military that they're there. Social services are also helpful in inducing civilians to remain in a conflict zone rather than fleeing, allowing all combatants (but most commonly the nonstate actor) to use them as human shields or as camouflage. But for the most part, while service provision directed at states tends to produce material resources, the provision of services to civilians tends to produce non-material resources, and in neither case is access assured.

Marketing

The third strategic choice available to militias is to market themselves to potential state sponsors and civilian constituents. "Marketing" means convincing civilians or sponsor states to support the organization because of what it stands for, not because of what it promises (or threatens) to do for (or to) the people or states in question. But more crucially, it involves shaping the way the states and constituents see themselves in relation to the organization, and the organization in relation to themselves, and to the wider political landscape.⁶¹ Although Bob offers a convincing portrait of the way in which nonstate actors market themselves to international audiences,⁶² at the local level, this behavior receives

⁶¹ Wickham posits that there is a dichotomy in the literature on Islamist movements between recruiting between interests and ideas. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "Interests, Ideas and Islamist Outreach in Egypt," in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁶² Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism*.

far more attention in the social movement literature⁶³ than it does in the literature on civil war. While I am not suggesting that nonstate military actors should be considered “social movements” in the sense in which this term is commonly used by sociologists,⁶⁴ this literature does offer insights into some aspects of political organizational behavior.

Marketing strategies, whether directed at civilians or potential sponsor states, rely heavily on the process identified in the above literature as ‘frame alignment.’ Polletta and Jasper define frames as “the interpretive packages that activists develop to mobilize potential adherents and constituents.”⁶⁵ Frame alignment refers to those processes by which the leadership of a movement attempts to construct the movement’s meaning in such a way that it resonates with the ways in which potential constituents or patrons construct their own identities.⁶⁶ Snow et al describe frame alignment as consisting of four processes: bridging (connecting like-minded groups); amplification (explaining why people should care about the cause being advocated); extension (expanding the importance of the issue); and transformation (changing other peoples’ frames such that they are moved to join.) These processes succeed or fail based not only on the appropriateness of the tactic but also on how the frame of reference resonates with the intended audience. Each of these processes both hinges upon and is a means

⁶³ Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (January 1, 2001): 283-305. and Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation.”

⁶⁴ While this argument could perhaps be made, I will not do so here. (see Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Indiana University Press, 2004).) Much of the literature on social movements is heavily based on the experiences of diffuse, primarily non-violent, movements in the developed world which were formed around demands made of a responsive and usually democratic state. These theories do not always apply well to heavily armed, highly organized military organizations which seek instead to overthrow the state itself by force.

⁶⁵ Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements.”

⁶⁶ See Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation.”; David A. Snow, Jr. Zurcher, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, “Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment,” *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 5 (1980): 787-801. and Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639.

of group identity construction, what Jasper and Polletta refer to as “distinguishing “us” from “them”.”⁶⁷ Of course these processes do not exist in a vacuum; they must compete with other, contradictory, frames and identities, produced both locally and, increasingly, internationally, each with their own set of claims on collective action.⁶⁸

Within the political science literature, these processes are most commonly grouped together as “elite manipulation,”⁶⁹ sometimes in the context of an ethnic security dilemma, in which case fear of “them”, rather than positive identification with “we” is claimed as the primary driving force.⁷⁰ Moreover, these constructed identities are often directed outwards as much as inwards; the discourse the organizations in question are attempting to shape takes place at the regional as well as domestic level.

Marketing, then, is *the attempted manipulation by movement leaders, through a variety of media, of the way potential constituents or patrons see themselves in relation to the movement, and the movement in relation to the broader political landscape*. It involves shaping not only their own image, but also the surrounding political discourse such that their own goals and behavior are seen as relevant to and worthy of support and sympathy from the largest pool of constituents and the widest range of possible sponsors. When it is done with intention and care, in recognition that the resonance of the organization’s mission with the identities and preferences of the target audience is not a foregone

⁶⁷ Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” 291.

⁶⁸ Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶⁹ Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974). Keen, “The Economic Function of Violence in Civil Wars (Adelphi Paper series).” Timur Kuran, “Ethnic Dissimilation and Its International Diffusion,” in *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion and Escalation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

⁷⁰ Stephen M. Saideman and Marie-Joëlle Zahar, *Intra-State Conflict, Governments and Security: Dilemmas of Deterrence and Assurance* (Psychology Press, 2008). VP Gagnon, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 130-166. Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis, “Civil War and the Security Dilemma,” *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention* (1999): 15-37.

conclusion, in order to maximize a potential constituency, then it can be reasonably referred to as a “strategy.” I will now address first those marketing strategies directed at potential sponsor states, and then those directed at civilian constituents.

Marketing strategies aimed at sponsor states tend to make use of three closely related (and even overlapping) approaches: appeals to ethno-communal ties, appeals to common political orientation, and appeals based on the legitimacy which support for the group can confer.

Regarding the first, Gleditsch finds that transnational ethnic linkages do increase the probability of external support for insurgency.⁷¹ In its more extreme form, irredentism, such sympathy can lead to sponsorship of the militia as a proxy for the state’s own ethno-political territorial ambitions.⁷² However, appeals to ethno-communal sympathy, will likely be most successful if the militia can frame itself as the ethno-communal kin of the sponsor state, and this is not always simple; while I view ethnicity as a category that is constructed, rather than fixed, this construction is based on a menu of traits (such as language, religion, or geography) which, while sizeable, is not infinite.⁷³ The IRA, for example could construct itself as being Irish, Catholic, Gaelic-speaking, or even European, but would be hard pressed to construct itself as Korean, Ukrainian-speaking, or Hindu.

⁷¹ Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Transnational Dimensions of Civil War,” *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 3 (2007): 293-309.

⁷² Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Will H. Moore and David R. Davis, “Transnational Ethnic Ties and Foreign Policy,” in *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1998).; Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁷³ See David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998). Stephen M. Saideman, Beth K. Dougherty, and Erin K. Jenne, “Dilemmas of Divorce: How Secessionist Identities Cut Both Ways,” *Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (2005): 607-636. Daniel N. Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Ideological appeals, on the other hand, are somewhat more flexible, because ideological frames are available to a wider range of organizations. They appear in the literature for the most part in the context of the cold war, when being (or claiming to be) communist⁷⁴ or anti-communist was often enough to produce lucrative super-power sponsorship. With the end of the cold war, many of these militias have rebranded in an effort to find other sources of funding and ideological legitimacy.⁷⁵

A third approach is to appeal to a state's desire for ethnic or ideological legitimacy and prestige. While more instrumentalist than the previous two approaches, I consider this approach a marketing strategy as well because it is rooted in the group's ability to market itself both to civilians in the target state and to the leaders of other states as a sort of litmus test for legitimacy – that is, it relies on a strong normative preference both for the cause it espouses and for its own status as representative of that cause. (In this sense, marketing approaches directed at states can be seen as linked to those directed at civilians.) McAllister argues that realist explanations for external support may be more useful in explaining why states might begin to sponsor an insurgent group, but that ideational factors (such as support for co-religionists or prestige) are more useful in explaining why they continue to do so.⁷⁶ If such a norm exists, via a domestic or regional marketing campaign (discussed further below), the militia can leverage the fact that sponsorship of a successful and ideologically driven client militia allows the state to shore up its political credentials with its own public, while simultaneously justifying the suppression of dissent at home. Similarly,

⁷⁴ Byman et al use the term “leftist ideology” but I would argue that “political orientation” is a more accurate variable since both the US and USSR sponsored client militias during the cold war.

⁷⁵ Kalyvas, “‘New’ and ‘Old’ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?”. Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2007).

⁷⁶ Brad McAllister, “Extra-Systemic Conflict as a System Steering Solution: A Habermasian Analysis of State Sponsorship for Insurgency Movements,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17, no. 1 (2006): 79-94.

militias may be able to attract sponsorship by appealing to a state's desire for increased regional prestige, particularly if other states in the region have client militias fighting in the same conflict.⁷⁷ Deft exploitation of the pressure states experience as a result of regional ideological norms and political orthodoxies can be most lucrative for the militia which is clever enough to do so.

Overall, marketing strategies are more likely to produce durable material and non-material support than either coercion or service provision. A sponsor state that is invested in the militia's success, whether out of genuine sympathy or because it relies on it for domestic or regional legitimacy, will be more likely to provide material aid such as weapons and training, while also being motivated to advance the group's cause internationally, as this will, in turn, boost the state's own ideological prestige and domestic legitimacy. This is one significant distinction between marketing based on the offer of legitimacy and the provision of material services or goods - military power and natural resources are essentially fungible, while legitimacy is more closely tied to a particular militia.

Of course, there is a great deal of overlap between the above types of marketing; given the difficulty in discerning sincere sympathy versus a desire for reflected glory, the distinction might even be considered academic. The point at which sincerity becomes relevant is in determining durability of resource access. Over time, a regime offering support for self-interested reasons may conclude that what it really needs is to be *seen* to be supporting its client, rather than to provide actual support. On the other hand, if the regime becomes sufficiently dependent on the legitimacy conferred on it by its sponsorship of the militia, such support does have the potential to be very durable indeed.

⁷⁷ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.

Marketing appeals aimed at the civilian population are somewhat similar to those directed at potential state sponsors.⁷⁸ They also fall into three (as above, often overlapping) categories: Ethnic appeals, ideological appeals, and performance-based appeals. The first two are quite similar to those outlined above. Ethno-communal affinity is an oft-cited source of civilian sympathy with and support for militias.⁷⁹ Weinstein argues that this has the advantage of providing more committed recruits, and it seems reasonable that this logic would also apply to forms of support short of actually joining the militia.⁸⁰ Militias who are able to frame themselves in a particular way may gain access to community networks that allow them to build trust and credibility more quickly. Jasper and Polletta see “collective identity” (as conceptualized by social movement scholars) as instrumental not only in the creation of collective claims and recruitment into movements, via the imagining of a collective identity as a basis for claims making, but also in “strategic and tactical decision making, and movement outcomes.”⁸¹

Civilians may also offer their support to a particular militia, not because of who they are, but because of what they believe.⁸² That is, they may support them

⁷⁸ The importance of “winning hearts and minds” is recognized throughout the literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency, although the nuts and bolts of the process are not always thoroughly explored. See Dennis M. Murphy and James F. White, “Propaganda: Can a Word Decide a War?,” *Parameters*, no. Aug. (2007): 15-27. Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism*, 79. Ford, “Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population’s Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency.”; Bruce Hoffman, “The ‘Cult of the Insurgent’: Its Tactical and Strategic Implications,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 3 (2007): 312-329. Elisabeth Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Johnson, “Civilian Loyalties and Guerilla Conflict.” and especially United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*.

⁷⁹ Ted Robert Gurr, “Minorities and Nationalists: Managing Ethnopolitical Conflict in a New Century,” in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenge of Managing International Conflict* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2001). Daniel Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

⁸⁰ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

⁸¹ Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” 286. In some ways, this process echoes the narrative of identity formation articulated by Anderson (1983.)

⁸² I have consciously avoided the much wider question here of why militias fight in the first place; are they engaged in a genuine attempt at remaking the order based on what Arendt calls the “social question”? Are they echoing and re-echoing earlier revolutions in France and Russia and the United States? (See Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).) Or are they thugs merely out to enrich themselves,

due to ideological commitment, rather than because they personally stand to benefit from the movement's goals,⁸³ a distinction which McCarthy and Zald refer to as "conscience adherents" versus "beneficiary adherents."⁸⁴ Ideological marketing is less restricted in its particular audience, and can hinge on broad domestic political goals that are shared by many who might be less sympathetic to other aspects of the organization's platform or even hostile to its stated ethnic identity; Bayat points out, I think quite rightly, that movement participants can have "partly shared interests", even if they disagree on other matters.⁸⁵

Finally, militias may attempt to market themselves simply as being very likely to win. (It should be noted that this is not the same as a militia actually *being* very likely to win.) By publicizing successes and 'spinning' operations in a favorable way, regardless of their empirical success, some militias are able to bolster their reputations significantly.⁸⁶ If civilians are convinced that a militia is likely to take control of the state, they may conclude that the wisest course is to offer it support early on.

A word here on propaganda: An important component of ideological (and ethnic) marketing strategies is educating (or propagandizing to) the public regarding the militia's goals through both print and broadcast media and face-to-

as some of the "greed versus grievance" literature (e.g. John Mueller, "The Banality of Ethnic War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 42-70., and Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford University Press, 1999). seems to suggest? For the purposes of this project, because it is what civilians believe about militias that matters rather than what militias privately believe about themselves, I assume that militia's stated motives are as believable as civilians find them to be.

⁸³ Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.

⁸⁴ McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory."

⁸⁵ Bayat also uses Hizbullah as an example of this phenomenon, though, as noted above, I do not consider them a "social movement" in the meaning of the term as used by most of the sociological literature on the subject. The accuracy of Bayat's assessment has more recently been borne out by the extraordinary events of January and February, 2011, in Egypt. During the occupation of Tahrir Square, a wide array of civil society and political movements who normally distrust each other, including the Muslim Brotherhood, made common cause in the interests of overthrowing the Mubarak regime. Asef Bayat, "Islamism and Social Movement Theory," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 6 (2005): 891-908.

⁸⁶ Hoffman, "The 'Cult of the Insurgent': Its Tactical and Strategic Implications," 312.

face interaction, a process social movement theorists refer to as frame extension.⁸⁷ The literature on guerilla warfare from the era of the wars of decolonization (e.g., Guevara, Mao,) emphasizes the importance of access to printing presses, radio, and face to face contact. McCarthy and Zald categorize recruitment efforts into public (on the sidewalk) versus private (a knock on the front door of a home) and mediated (via television or telephone) versus face-to-face.⁸⁸ In the last ten years, particularly in the Middle East, the advent of new media such as the internet and satellite television has helped non-state military actors spread their message far beyond their local spheres of influence,⁸⁹ and many, including Hamas and Hizbullah, have their own satellite television stations.⁹⁰ (It is telling that these are often early targets of Israeli bombing raids.) Yet older techniques, such as graffiti, remain a powerful means by which militias can signal their presence in a given territory, even when forced to work underground.

Protest activities themselves, particularly in their most ritualized form (those repeated performances of certain behaviors that Tilly refers to as “repertoires of performance”), can be a powerful and public means by which the militia expresses its message. Indeed, while Tilly characterizes these performances as directed towards (that is, seeking a response from) the state, I would argue that potential civilian supporters are at least as important an audience.⁹¹ When young people throw rocks at tanks, they do not expect the tanks to be damaged or the authority behind them to surrender; rather, they expect other

⁸⁷ Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation.” See also United States Army and Marine Corps, *United States Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*, 103-109.

⁸⁸ McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.”

⁸⁹ Hoffman, “The ‘Cult of the Insurgent’: Its Tactical and Strategic Implications.”; Kilcullen, “Counterinsurgency Redux.”; Kenneth Payne, “The Media as an Instrument of War,” *Parameters*, no. 2005 (2005): 81-93. Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Adam Lockyer, “The Relationship between the Media and Terrorism” (Australian National University, 2003).

⁹⁰ Al Aqsa and Al Manar, respectively.

⁹¹ Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

young people to pick up rocks too, the soldiers to fire tear gas canisters, and the television cameras to record and broadcast the exchange. This is marketing.

Successful marketing ultimately produces a norm of support within the civilian population; when it becomes un-thinkable (in the literal sense of ‘extremely difficult to conceptualize’) for a person to publically criticize the group which considers her a member of its constituency, then its marketing campaign has been successful. If successful, it produces genuine sympathy, granting militias durable access to non-material resources such as intelligence and local knowledge, legitimacy, and political support, as well as whatever material resources the civilian population has available. As such, it may prove more effective in the long run, and lead to greater overall effectiveness. Of course, not all marketing strategies are equally practical for all nonstate military actors; for reasons of credibility, flexibility, and so on, some frames may be very difficult for some militant groups to credibly adopt, although the following chapters will, I think, illustrate that nonstate actors have a surprising degree of flexibility in this regard.

These strategies do not constitute a typology in the sense of being mutually exclusive and logically exhaustive; rather, they constitute general forms of behavior which may on occasion overlap. Service provision, as noted above, can look very much like marketing, particularly if it is billed as reflecting the organization’s general competence and good will towards the community. In a related vein, some people may also come to support the organization’s ambitions to govern if, after using the services it provides (or hearing about them) they come to respect its general competence at managing things, even if they do not support its specific political program. Conversely, social service provision can veer towards the coercive if there is an implied threat that services may be withdrawn,

while poverty certainly increases vulnerability to recruitment.⁹² Ethnic or ideological marketing directed at one audience can be deeply threatening to members of another group (e.g., the racist propaganda of the Nazis, or Rwandan genocidaires' use of Radio Mille Collines), and coercive behavior directed towards those civilians can also serve as a form of proxy warfare for a sponsor state. In turn, proxy service based on a common enemy can closely overlap with marketing based on a shared ideology – witness American sponsorship of the mujahideen in Afghanistan against the USSR, and the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, the ideological descendants of those same mujahideen.

Moreover, there is also an interaction effect between these strategies. The use of coercion early on can make it harder, though certainly not impossible, to shift to a marketing strategy later on, while those who use coercion simultaneously with other strategies may find that it renders civilians less receptive to their message, and alarms potential patron states. On the other hand, the use of marketing in conjunction with the provision social services can help to amplify the positive effect of those services on the movement's reputation locally, and vice versa.

Clearly there is also an interaction effect between state support, civilian support, and survival. While the causal arrows primarily flow in one direction – that is, state support and civilian support produce resources which make survival more likely – these two factors also have some impact on each other. State support, for instance, makes it easier to create social service networks to woo civilian support. Popularity among civilians makes a militia that much more appealing as a potential proxy, particularly if the state it is wooing hopes to gain popular legitimacy through its support of the militia in question.

⁹² Flanigan, "Charity as Resistance: Connections between Charity, Contentious Politics, and Terror." and Humphreys and Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War."

It is also possible that there is a feedback effect between the group's ability to survive direct confrontation with a stronger and its ability to attract foreign sponsorship and popular support. A group which is seen as "standing up" to a stronger power can use this to appeal to civilians, and a strong military record can make a militia much more attractive as a potential proxy. I do not see this as an endogeneity problem, but simply as evidence that these processes reinforce each other over time. A militia with a long lifespan will often face multiple attempts to exterminate them, by one or more enemies. It is only natural that past interactions influence the organization's future trajectory.

Finally, no nonstate actor uses only a single strategy to obtain foreign and domestic support; rather, they employ a mixture of strategies which may overlap to a greater or lesser degree. However, at most points there is a dominant strategy which is used more than the others and therefore has the greatest impact on the movement's ability to acquire and use resources, and on its chances of survival as defined above.

Hypotheses

To summarize my argument thus far, the dependent variable, survival, is tied to the nonstate actor's ability to obtain certain material and non-material resources. But access to these resources is not automatic: they must be provided by the group's domestic civilian constituency and its foreign state sponsor(s); a nonstate actor's ability to gain domestic and/or external support determines its resource access, its ability to use those resources, and therefore its chances of survival. The strategies militias employ to acquire these resources determine whether they are able to obtain material resources, non-material resources, or both, how durable access to those resources will be over the long term, and how

well it will be able to use those resources. This produces the following hypotheses:

H1: If nonstate actors use coercion against states and/or civilians, then they will receive only short term material resources and few if any non-material resources.

H2: If nonstate actors provide services to states and/or civilians in exchange for support, then they will receive some material and non-material resources.

H3: If nonstate actors market themselves to prospective sponsor states and/or local civilian constituents, then they will receive durable access to material and non-material assets.

There are further questions that follow logically from these hypotheses:

How do these strategies interact with one another and what effect does their interaction have on the nonstate actor employing them? How does the use of these strategies shape the character of the movement over the long term? How important are structural factors like initial material and social endowments in shaping outcomes, and can these factors be properly considered “structural” at all? And how does the specific content of strategies matter? How significant is the type of marketing chosen, the character of the state sponsor, or the nature of the coercive behavior in which the militant group engages? In short, what kinds of unforeseen consequences follow a militant group’s use of a particular strategy for seeking resources from state sponsors and local civilian constituencies?

Methodology

Research Design and Case Selection

In this section, I will discuss research design and data collection.⁹³

Regarding the former, because this project is concerned not only with discovering

⁹³ With regard to my epistemological preferences, I find that inductive and deductive reasoning often interact in a cycle; what started as an inductively derived puzzle generated a broader theory which I think can be

how often militias survive under particular circumstances but with the nuts and bolts of this process, I am interested in establishing particular causal mechanisms, rather than just broad correlation. For this reason, I chose a small-N comparative case study methodology. Specifically, I use cross-case comparison of three cases which vary on the dependent variable, and (in two out of the three) within-case comparison to test for other potentially relevant independent variables.

I selected my cases with a number of considerations in mind. The first was the need for variation on the dependent, as well as independent, variable, to deal with what Geddes argues is a major source of bias in comparative analyses.⁹⁴ Mahoney and Eckstein both argue that one of the great strengths of qualitative research is that it allows for the possibility that a researcher may be ambushed by a previously unimagined but deeply important variable; the investigation of causal mechanisms allows for the possibility that we may find things we do not expect to find, as I certainly have over the course of this project.⁹⁵ Aside from the importance of theoretical rigor in testing my variables, variation along the dependent as well as independent variable maximizes the chances of this occurring.

Ensuring variation on my dependent variable, survival, was made easier by the fact that it is not purely dichotomous; while absolute survival or non-

expanded and tested deductively. There are of course concerns raised by proponents of large-N statistical research regarding the testing of theory on the cases used to generate them; this will be addressed below.

⁹⁴ There is a great deal of debate within the methods literature regarding selection on the dependent variable. This practice is widely condemned by quantitative scholars under the logic that if one tests only cases with a positive outcome, one might miss cases in which the independent variable was present but the dependent variable was not. Scholars such as Dion and Mahoney note that selection on the dependent variable is actually only problematic if one is testing for sufficiency, and that in testing for necessity, it is in fact preferable to select on the dependent variable. However, at the beginning of this project, I did not yet know whether I would find a variable which was necessary, sufficient, both, or neither, a position in which I suspect many researchers find themselves. Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis* 2, no. 1 (1990): 131-150. Douglas Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 2 (1998): 127-145. James Mahoney, "Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 2 (2007): 122-144.

⁹⁵ Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in *Handbook of Political Science* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

survival is of course possible, there is also quite a bit of grey territory in between, and I therefore include cases across this spectrum. Specifically, I chose three different non-state military actors, Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Each faced attempts by a much more powerful conventional military to remove their capacity to operate in a particular territory, and each experienced quite different results at different times, ranging from full survival to complete defeat. This within-case variation, particularly in the Hizbullah case, allows me to include variation on the independent variable, and demonstrate that even the same movement, fighting in the same territory, against the same adversary, will experience a different outcome when it changes its resource acquisition strategy.

Group	Case	Dominant Strategy	Military Advantage?	Outcome
PLO	Black September (1970)	Coercion	Jordanian Army	Failure
PLO	Israeli Invasion (1982)	Coercion	IDF	Failure
Hizbullah	Civil War (1982-1990)	Coercion	IDF	Mixed
Hizbullah	July War (2006)	Service Provision, Marketing	IDF	Success
Hamas	Gaza War (2009)	Service Provision	IDF	Mixed

Table 1

I also constructed my case selection in such a way as to test for the relevance of a second potential independent variable: the role of the adversary (in this case, the Israeli military). It is possible that the most important factor in determining whether a given militia survives is simply the army facing it. My case selection addresses this in two ways: first, by including pairs of cases which occur during similar time frames (the 1982 Israeli invasion and the 1985-1990 fighting in South Lebanon, and the 2006 July war and 2009 Gaza War), I demonstrate that there is variation even among the outcomes of confrontation

against what is effectively the same enemy. The Israeli army which fought the PLO in 1982 was the same Israeli army fighting Hizbullah in 1985, and the Israeli army bombing Beirut in 2006 was the same Israeli army bombing Gaza in 2009. However, it is quite possible that in fact the PLO has done badly against the IDF because the IDF is actually better at fighting nationalist Palestinians than it is at fighting Islamist Palestinians or Shi'ites. I test this by including one episode in which the PLO faced a non-Israeli adversary, specifically, the Jordanian army during Black September, without discernibly different results for the PLO.

One potential critique of this design is that it does not adequately test for the role of “home turf advantage”, the idea that some militant groups were more successful because they were fighting on “their” turf. There are two possible responses to this; the first is to, for the moment, accept the premise of the criticism, that there is such a thing as “home turf”, and point out that Hizbullah was also quite successful when fighting in Christian areas, that the Hamas leadership has spent many years in exile in Syria, and that the PLO was not particularly effective even when fighting in a majority-Palestinian context, in Jordan, where even many officers in the Jordanian army were of Palestinian origin. But a more honest answer to this objection is this project does not, fundamentally, accept the premise that a “home turf advantage” is something that a militant group has from the outset, but rather a narrative which it constructs (or fails to construct) for itself.

Data Collection

The primary data for this project were gathered for the most part through interviews and participant observation conducted between January and June of 2009 in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Territories. In selecting interview subjects, I used a snowball sampling approach. This meant that I

worked through an existing network of friends, acquaintances, and former colleagues in the NGO, government and media sectors (including professional “fixers”), using my existing contacts to make new ones. This approach allowed me to interview people who might not have otherwise agreed to speak with a researcher, and to establish a greater level of trust with my interview subjects than might otherwise have been possible. I did, however, cold-call several high-ranking interview subjects who my existing contacts could not help me reach, including the Palestinian Minister of the Interior in Ramallah (Abdel Razzak al Yehya) and the Secretary General (Zaki bin Rsheid) of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood’s political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), in Amman. I spoke with former and current fighters from Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, Fatah al Intifada, and other PLO factions in Amman, Beirut, Ramallah and Damascus, at levels ranging from neighborhood fighters to the former head of the PLO in Lebanon, from political officers who had likely never seen combat, to at least one man involved in attacking Israeli civilian aircraft. In Ramallah, Nablus and Beirut, I interviewed Hamas political officers and members of the Palestine Legislative Council elected on the Hamas-allied Change and Reform slate,⁹⁶ though for safety reasons (mine and my interview subjects’) I did not interview anyone currently carrying arms for Hamas. I attended Hizbullah campaign events in Beirut and spoke with supporters at rallies. Though I was unable to obtain clearance from the central Hizbullah media office in Beirut to conduct formal interviews (after a good deal of time spent in their offices), I did conduct interviews with both their political allies (the Tayyar al Watani al Hurr)

⁹⁶ Open membership in Hamas is dangerous in the West Bank, and so Islamic Movement parliamentarians prefer to affiliate publicly with the Change and Reform list.

and adversaries (the Kataeb.) I interviewed Israeli veterans of Operation Peace for Galilee and Operation Litani, current and former members of the Jordanian military and government (including retired foreign minister Marwan Qassem), as well as journalists, diplomats, UN and NGO staffers, and analysts from Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Iran. While the approach I took to my research was not particularly systematic, by drawing on my own network of contacts I was able to gain access to information that might have been less readily shared through a more formal process, while maintaining my safety and that of my interview subjects. To complement this approach, I also made extensive use of print and broadcast media sources, websites and literature produced by the relevant factions, and US government documents released both formally and via the recent Wikileaks document dumps. In the end, my approach yielded a broad range of perspectives and experiences, and has provided a wealth of information.

Next Steps

In the remaining six chapters, I will trace the dynamics outlined in this chapter through five cases. Chapter Two covers the brief Jordanian civil war of 1970 known as Black September, which resulted in the PLO's expulsion from Jordan and its relocation to Lebanon. Chapter Three details the PLO's experience in Lebanon and its failure to build effective relationships there, concluding with the Israeli invasion in 1982 and the PLO's subsequent exile. Chapter Four chronicles the emergence of Hizbullah in south Lebanon in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion, and the organization's fumbling attempts to establish itself in the south and in Beirut, which ended at best in a draw, but is more realistically described as a failure. Chapter Five describes the sea change which Hizbullah underwent with regard to its domestic and foreign relations following the end of the civil war in 1990, and its triumph in the 2006 July war. Chapter Six deals with

Hamas, which in some ways tried to replicate Hizbullah's postwar reinvention of itself, and the IDF's attack on Gaza in 2009. Finally, in Chapter Seven I will conclude by evaluating possible alternate explanations and exploring the implications of my theory for the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and for the ongoing uprisings in the Middle East referred to as the Arab Spring. Chapter Seven also summarizes my specific findings with regard to the way the contrasting outcomes of these five interconnected episodes demonstrate the (sometimes surprising) effects of the resource acquisition strategies pursued by the PLO, Hizbullah and Hamas.

Chapter Two: Black September

Introduction

Between September 17th and September 27th, 1970, the PLO and the Jordanian military engaged in a brief but brutal conflict known as Black September (sometimes referred to as the Jordanian civil war.) Despite the Jordanian army's greater numbers and superior arms, the PLO had the support of neighboring Syria, Iraq and Egypt, putting King Hussein in a difficult position. Moreover, a large percentage (as great as 55% by some estimates, though this is perhaps a bit high,⁹⁷) of the Jordanian military was of Palestinian descent, meaning that the PLO had a reasonable hope of splitting the army along Jordanian-Palestinian lines. Indeed, by the time fighting broke out in mid-September 1970, the British were convinced that Hussein would lose his throne, as were many at the US State Department.⁹⁸ In the end, however, the conflict resulted in the PLO's surrender and evacuation from Jordan, making Black September a case of non-survival; the PLO was able to offer only minimal military resistance, and has never recovered the ability to operate in Jordan.

This outcome was not, however, predetermined; indeed, the PLO had a number of advantages that it might have more effectively exploited. Rather, its defeat in Jordan was largely a result of the relationships it constructed (or failed to construct) both locally and regionally. While the PLO used a combination of strategies (primarily service provision and legitimacy-based marketing) to acquire resources from the other Arab regimes, its approach to the Jordanian state (including the army) was more coercive. Likewise, with regard to the civilian

⁹⁷ "329. Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts" (US Dept. of State, 1941Z 1970).

⁹⁸ Avi Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

population, it began with a legitimacy based marketing approach, but later on, particularly after the battle of Karameh, it became increasingly coercive, creating a high degree of resentment, particularly on the part of the military. Ultimately, the PLO failed to create the sort of solid norm of support within the wider Jordanian public that would have been necessary to prevent the state from moving openly against the organization, or even to credibly threaten a schism in the military along Palestinian/Jordanian lines. Indeed, although Black September in many ways cemented the East Banker/West Banker communal cleavage in Jordan, paradoxically, the PLO's behavior prior to the conflict prevented it from being able to take advantage of this division. The support that the organization did have within the refugee camps was nowhere near sufficient to produce the sort of resources it would have needed in order to survive an attempt to wipe it out by the Jordanian army.

Black September is in some ways quite different from the cases addressed in subsequent chapters. Yes, the PLO used a particular strategy (coercion) against one state (Jordan) in an attempt to acquire the resources (sanctuary) that it needed to combat a second state (Israel.) However, unlike the cases explored in later chapters, in which the principal adversary was the IDF, the PLO in Jordan found itself in combat with the very government from whom it had been coercing resources, rather than with the IDF. Nevertheless, this episode is included for several reasons. The first is that the dynamics of this case are still more or less the same, with regard to the strategies the PLO used in order to acquire resources from civilians and external sponsor states. Secondly, I thought it important to see if these dynamics hold in at least one case in which the counterinsurgent army was *not* the IDF; it could be that the IDF is unusually good at fighting the PLO in particular, so it therefore seemed prudent to test its performance against a different adversary, particularly one that had once been, at least formally, an ally.

Finally, the PLO's experience in Jordan marked the beginning of armed insurgency against Israel in the Middle East in general; the events of this period were to prove crucial in shaping the later evolution not only of the PLO, but also of Hamas and even Hizbullah.

Background: the Origins of the PLO

At the end of WWI, Britain was mandated by the League of Nations to govern the territory which now comprises Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories. The territory to the east of the Jordan River (the "East Bank") became the Emirate of Transjordan. Though it remained under British mandate, it was given to Abdullah, (Emir Abdullah I) son of the Sharif of Mecca, who with his brother Faisal (later Faisal I of Iraq) had fought alongside T.E. Lawrence against the Ottoman Empire during the Arab Revolt. The territory to the west of the Jordan formed the Palestine Mandate, the focus of both Zionist Jewish national aspirations and those of the native Palestinian Arab population. By the end of WWII, sporadic violence had already broken out between the two sides.

With the Arab rejection of a UN plan to partition the territory, open war erupted between the Jews and Arab Palestinians in November of 1947. On May 15th, 1948, the Jewish government unilaterally declared a State of Israel. The following day, the conflict was internationalized when the combined Arab armies (most significantly Egypt, Syria and Jordan) attacked. Though the war was certainly a defeat for the Palestinians, Jordan took control of the territory now known as the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza. The war also created 750,000 Palestinian refugees, who fled to Jordan⁹⁹, Lebanon, Syria and other Arab states. In Jordan, they received citizenship in 1952 as part of Abdullah I's effort

⁹⁹ In Jordan, 100,000 crossed the Jordan River, while the majority remained in the West Bank. See UNRWA's website, "Jordan Camp Profiles10/16/16 2:59:00 PM10/16/16 2:59:00 PM", <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=100>.

to cement Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank, but elsewhere, notably in Lebanon, they remained (and remain) disenfranchised and stateless.

By the early 1960s, there was growing nationalist sentiment among young diaspora Palestinians, and the Arab League was eager to find a vehicle for these aspirations which would not threaten their own regimes. Accordingly, the Palestine Liberation Organization was established at the 1964 Cairo Summit under the patronage of Nasser's Egypt, within a firmly Arab-nationalist framework. Its first chairman was Ahmed Shuqairy, a noted diplomat and lawyer. Shafiq al Hout, a founder of the PLO and its representative in Beirut for three decades, described the decision as follows:

“The resolution at the Arab league was almost two lines, very humble, two lines asking Mr. Shuqairy, as I said, to find a way out for these Palestinian people, for representation. These two lines, by the will of the Palestinian people...and the good leadership of Shuqairy...we established this PLO that became a very well-known political body... We managed to make the maximum of the Arab Summit Conference resolution.”¹⁰⁰

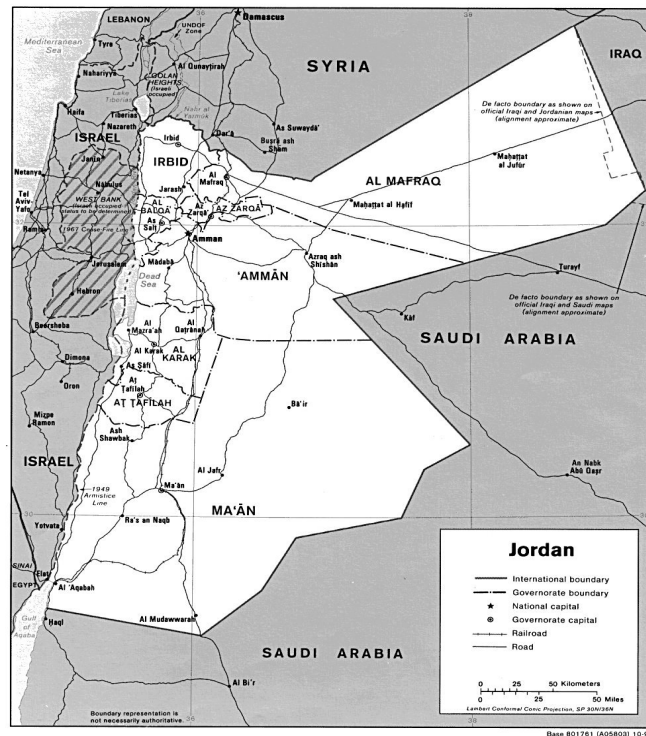
In the aftermath of the Arab defeat in the June War of 1967, the PLO assumed a more significant and independent role. Its headquarters were moved to Amman, where it soon came into conflict with the Jordanian state. But despite this early tension, there was nothing predetermined about the outcome of the conflict with the Jordanian state; indeed, the PLO had many advantages there, including an existing Palestinian nationalist movement in Jordan, a majority Palestinian population, and a large number of Palestinians in the Jordanian armed forces. The outcome of Black September was rather the result of the PLO's own actions, in particular its poor decision-making in constructing both its relationships with its state sponsors (including Jordan) and the local civilian population.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Shafiq al Hout, (former) PLO Representative in Lebanon and Palestinian Representative to the UN.

Regional relationships

Jordan

The PLO's relations with Jordan proved far less productive than those it enjoyed with the other Arab states; this is somewhat surprising, given the significance of this relationship. The PLO failed to retain the goodwill of either the Jordanian government (that is, the king and his closest circle) or the military. Instead, not only did the PLO's behavior provoke a backlash from the Jordanian state, it also alienated the army to the point that it squandered any advantage the presence of Palestinian soldiers in the army might have given it.



Map 1: Jordan.

Courtesy of Perry Castaneda Map Library, UT Austin

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>

Based as it is outside of historical Palestine, one of the PLO's priorities in its early years was to establish a base of operations from which it could launch attacks against Israeli targets; with its long border with Israel and predominantly

Palestinian population, Jordan was the obvious choice. Though not enthusiastic about hosting the PLO, Hussein agreed to do so under pressure from the other Arab states, on two conditions: that it coordinate with the Jordanian government, and that its military activities be regulated by the United Arab Command to avoid an unintended escalation with Israel. (Violation of these conditions can be considered the baseline for coercive behavior towards the Jordanian state.) That the other Arab states were willing to exert this pressure on Jordan at all speaks to normative power of the Palestinian cause, and the ideological leverage wielded by the PLO, even in its early years.

The Jordanian government under the ruling Hashemite dynasty has always had a complex relationship with its Palestinian citizens. King Abdullah I,¹⁰¹ considered a collaborator with Israel by many Palestinians, or at the very least in possession of Palestinian land in the form of the West Bank,¹⁰² was assassinated by a Palestinian in 1952 at the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Two years later, after his father Talal's abdication¹⁰³, King Hussein inherited the challenge of consolidating the regime's sovereignty over the East and West Banks of the Jordan River. While he did make some gestures towards Palestinian national aspirations, such as establishing a National Guard in which West Bank Palestinians could serve,¹⁰⁴ the assertion of Jordanian sovereignty over the territory remained his overarching political project. This, of course, directly conflicted with the ambitions of the PLO.

Almost immediately, the PLO leadership began to make requests which pushed against the boundaries King Hussein had laid down. These included

¹⁰¹ Emir Abdullah became King Abdullah with Jordan's independence from Britain in 1946.

¹⁰² Martin Sicker, *Between Hashemites and Zionists: The Struggle for Palestine, 1908-1980* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1989), 126.

¹⁰³ Talal suffered from schizophrenia. Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 40.

¹⁰⁴ Interview Abdel Razzak al Yehya, Palestinian Minister of the Interior, (Ramallah.)

Shuqairy's request that King Hussein establish a PLO-led Palestinian force under the command of Muhammad Al Sha'er, a Palestinian officer,¹⁰⁵ the right to tax Palestinian citizens of Jordan, and to hand out weapons in West Bank towns bordering Israel, all of which Hussein rejected. For its part, the PLO believed that the Jordanian government lacked commitment to the Palestinian cause, and the relationship further soured in 1966, when the IDF attacked the West Bank village of Samua, and the Jordanian government was blamed for failing to protect its inhabitants.¹⁰⁶

However, it was the 1967 June War that was to prove the most significant, not only for the PLO but for the Middle East as a whole. The war was a disaster for the Arab forces.¹⁰⁷ On the morning of June 5th, at 7:45 am, after weeks of mutual escalation, the Israeli air force launched a surprise attack against Egypt, destroying most of its air force on the runway. Within six days, the IDF had seized the West Bank (and Jerusalem) from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt. The Jordanian military was left weakened and its reputation, like those of the other Arab armies, badly damaged.¹⁰⁸

The Battle of Karameh

It is common knowledge that the Six Day War generated a seismic shift in regional alliances and the distribution of power in the Middle East; but it was not until the Battle of Karameh in 1968 that the full impact of the war on the reputations, prestige, and political power of the various regional actors became apparent. By 1968, the Jordan Valley had become the preferred launching point

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*. (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt were the principle Arab combatants, but most of the other Arab league states declared war in solidarity.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Maher, formerly of the PFLP.

for attacks by the PLA (the Palestine Liberation Army, the military wing of the PLO), Fatah, and the other Palestinian factions. These raids generated punishing Israeli reprisals, which killed many civilians. On March 21st, 1968, Israeli troops launched a raid against the Jordan Valley, crossing the border in three places, with the main thrust of the attack directed at the village of Karameh (which means “honor” in Arabic.) The IDF forces consisted of close to 9,000 armored troops in M-48 Patton tanks, 1,200 infantry, supported by additional paratroopers who attempted to take the hills leading up out of the valley. The Palestinian fighters present included 80 PLA fighters, 200-250 Fatah fighters and the PFLP had 30 guerillas present, although these withdrew, charging Fatah and the PLA with “adventurism.”¹⁰⁹ The Palestinian forces were joined by the Jordanian 1st Infantry Division as well as tank and artillery battalions. The assault was met by a coordinated response by Jordanian artillery and fedayeen reinforcements brought in by helicopter, as well as defensive efforts by some of the refugees who had remained in the Karameh refugee camp despite Arafat’s orders to leave two days previously. By the time the IDF withdrew, taking with them 100 captives, three Israeli tanks had been captured. According to the fedayeen, 300 IDF soldiers had been killed, while the IDF puts its casualties at 21 (which is likely more accurate.)¹¹⁰ Nearly half the Palestinian fighters and 61 Jordanian soldiers were killed.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, because the IDF was forced to withdraw, this was framed as a victory.

The success at Karameh, particularly in contrast to the Arab defeat in the June War, had three immediate effects: First, framed as it was by Arafat and the

¹⁰⁹ Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1997), 178.

¹¹⁰ John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs* (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1973), 100-101.

¹¹¹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 179.

other Palestinian leaders as a Palestinian operation (in a very deliberate attempt to market itself as the new standard bearer of Arab honor), the victory produced an immediate spike in the PLO's prestige. It also produced thousands of new volunteers, most of whom Fatah did not have time to properly train and indoctrinate.¹¹² Second, despite the cooperation that occurred during the battle itself, in the aftermath, it created additional tensions between the Jordanian army and the fedayeen. The Jordanian army resented the praise heaped on the Fatah fighters, and believed that they deserved at least some, if not most, of the credit for the victory. (This was the flip side of the marketing referred to above, and can perhaps even be viewed as veering into coercion.)¹¹³ Soon afterwards, Israeli shelling of fedayeen installations near the border led the PLO to relocate most of its bases to the refugee camps in and around Amman. The camps, which the fedayeen soon controlled, were the site of skirmishes between the fedayeen and the army throughout the rest of the year.¹¹⁴

Finally, in combination with the June War's discrediting of the Arab governments, the victory at Karamah led to the emergence of the PLO as a powerful actor independent of the Arab League and Nasser's Egypt. Not only did the war lead to a general waning of the influence of Nasser's pan-Arab program, under which the Palestinian issue was subsumed within the broader Arab Nationalist project, it also led to changes in the organization's leadership. While under the auspices of the Arab League, the PLO had generally been scorned by the more radical, activist Palestinian factions. These included George Habash's Arab National Movement (which would eventually morph in to the PFLP) and

¹¹² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*.

¹¹³ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 231.

¹¹⁴ Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*, 104.

Fatah, which was founded in 1959 in Kuwait by Yasser Arafat (Abu Ammar)¹¹⁵ and Khalid Al Wazir (Abu Jihad.) Fatah distinguished itself early on from the Arab nationalist organizations such as the Arab National Movement¹¹⁶ in that it was relatively an-ideological, and explicitly prioritized the liberation of Palestine over Arab unity.¹¹⁷ Initially, Fatah, which had been launching attacks on its own since 1965, wanted nothing to do with the PLO, and was not even present at its inaugural meeting. But in 1968 both Fatah and the ANM joined the PLO, becoming the PLO's largest and second largest factions respectively, and in 1969, Arafat was elected the organization's chairman.

Arafat's election initially seemed to bring with it an improvement in relations between the PLO and the Jordanian government; for instance, PLO fighters were allowed to set up positions near the Jordan River.¹¹⁸ However, the two parties soon became distrustful of one another. In October, the king made a number of requests of the fedayeen, asking that prisoners be tried in Jordanian, rather than feda'i courts, and that they abstain from recruiting young men of military age (who would otherwise, presumably, go into the Jordanian army.) These were agreed to in principle, but in practice widely ignored.¹¹⁹ Conversely, the fedayeen remained deeply suspicious of the government, and its offers of military support were believed to be wholly insincere.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Arafat's given name was Muhammad Abdul-Rauf Al-Qudwa Al-Husseini. Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 215.

¹¹⁶ The PFLP was formed in 1967 as a combination of a number of different Palestinian leftist groups, including the ANM. The union was not a happy one, and the organization eventually split back into three groups: Ahmed Jibril's PFLP-General Command split off in August of 1968, and Nayef Hawatmeh's DFLP split off in February of 1969. Interviews, Salah Salah, former PLFP officer and head of AJIAL NGO in Beirut, and Oraib Rantawi, former Palestinian activist and journalist, and head of the Al Quds Center in Amman.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Edward Kattoura, Fatah.

¹¹⁸ Interview Abdel Razzak al Yehya.

¹¹⁹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 184.

¹²⁰ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 229. As it turned out, they were right.

Moreover, Arafat's pragmatic approach to relations with the Jordanian government was not shared by all of the various factions within the PLO. By beginning of 1970, the radical People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine were calling openly for the overthrow of the Hashemite regime.¹²¹ There were incidents of theft of and assault on Jordanian government property; at one point a group of fedayeen made off with 42 cars belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture,¹²² and in another episode, fedayeen launched an attack on the central post office in downtown Amman.¹²³ Jordanian army officers and their families were subject to harassment, and many began going to work in civilian clothes rather than their army uniforms.¹²⁴ Zaid Rifai, then Chief of the Royal Court, recounted an incident in which a soldier was captured and beheaded by a group of fedayeen who then played football with his head, in the neighborhood where he used to live.¹²⁵ Such episodes, or even rumors thereof, led to an enormous amount of hostility in the military towards the fedayeen.

In February of 1970, after a trip to Cairo to secure Nasser's political backing, King Hussein issued a series of proclamations regulating the conduct of the fedayeen, including requirements that they license their cars, carry IDs, and that they not carry guns or store ammunition in urban areas.¹²⁶ With Arafat away in Moscow, his lieutenants reacted angrily, resulting in tank and artillery clashes. The king was forced to rescind the proclamations and dismiss his minister of the interior, Maj. General Muhammad Rasul al-Kilani.¹²⁷ Two months later, clashes

¹²¹ Ibid., 232.

¹²² Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

¹²³ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*., 235.

¹²⁴ Interview, Patricia Salti.

¹²⁵ Andrew Gowers and Tony Walker, *Behind the Myth: Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Revolution* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1991), 76.

¹²⁶ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 313.

¹²⁷ Clinton Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), 47-48.

broke out between the PLO and the government when the fedayeen rioted against the impending visit of Joseph Sisco, the US undersecretary of state for the Middle East. Sisco canceled his visit, effectively excluding Hussein from negotiations with Israel which he had hoped would return the West Bank to Jordanian control. While Hussein was publicly conciliatory, expelling the US ambassador and making a number of pro-Palestinian proclamations, in private, he quietly began to arm and train elite Bedouin army units in preparation for a confrontation with the fedayeen.¹²⁸ The anti-Sisco riots marked the point at which the coercive tactics used by the PLO to acquire safe haven in Jordan began to backfire.

As the situation continued to escalate throughout the spring and summer of 1970, Hussein remained publicly conciliatory. May and early June saw intense clashes between the fedayeen and the Jordanian army, and on June 9th, in response to an attempt on King Hussein's life, (probably without prior authorization from the king himself,) army units shelled the Wehdat and Jabal Hussein refugee camps, inflicting heavy civilian casualties. To stop the fighting, the king again backed down, this time firing two military leaders, Sharif Nasser bin Jamil (his uncle), and Sharif Zaid bin Shaker (his cousin). He also put in place a Chief of Staff, Mansoor Haditha, who was sympathetic to Arafat and favored coordination with the fedayeen against Israel. But under no circumstances would he agree to disband his specially trained Bedouin army units.¹²⁹ Instead, he raised the salaries of the military and placed loyalist generals in key positions in the military and security services.

Meanwhile, Arafat found himself pulled towards a more extreme stance by the actions of the more radical factions, especially the PFLP. The fedayeen attacked civilians in Amman, and the PFLP took foreign hostages at the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 51.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 53-54.

Intercontinental Hotel. To secure their release, Hussein agreed to a series of demands including the dismissal of two of his ministers. The PFLP's September 6th hijacking of three international aircraft, two of which were forced to land at Dawson's field outside of Amman.¹³⁰ By September, the PFLP and DFLP were calling openly for the overthrow of the Hashemite regime and the establishment of a "combat state" in Jordan.¹³¹

All of the above can, I think, be reasonably considered evidence of coercive behavior by the PLO towards the Jordanian state with the aim of acquiring further leeway to use Jordan as a base of operations. This included the Jordanian army, which found the orders to refrain from openly confronting the fedayeen intensely humiliating.¹³² It was an approach that would prove devastatingly ineffective for the Palestinians.

This, of course, raises a question: why would the PLO allow its forces to behave in such a counterproductive fashion with regard to the Jordanian government and military? Despite his flaws, Arafat was nothing if not a survivor, and was clearly aware that this strategy was problematic. The answer lies, at least partially, in the divisions within the organization. While "leadership" is sometimes posited as the most important variable in understanding insurgent success,¹³³ the internal divisions within the PLO were in many ways beyond Arafat's control, or even the control of the various faction leaders. Those interviewed for this project expressed awareness that the movement's factionalization was a problem¹³⁴, and were perhaps aware of it even then, but the problem seemed insurmountable. While these divisions were in part the result of

¹³⁰ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 236.

¹³¹ Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983*, 55-56.

¹³² Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 315-316.

¹³³ See for instance Mark Moyer, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹³⁴ For instance, interview with Abu Jihad, PFLP-GC, Damascus.

the fact that the PLO was itself an umbrella group encompassing many different groups, it was also partly the result of its relationships with its various external sponsors, who pulled the movement in many different directions. While this was certainly less a problem in Jordan in 1970 than it would be in Lebanon ten years later, the beginnings of this dynamic were clearly present even then.

The Rest: The PLO's approach to the other Arab states

The PLO's relationships with other Arab states at this stage were less combative than its relationship with Jordan. This is because the strategies it used for seeking support from the "leftist" regimes, particularly from Syria, involved marketing itself based on a shared ideology and the post-Karameh regional prestige of the PLO, and (at least at this stage) to a lesser extent service provision as a military proxy against both Israel and Jordan. I will address each of these strategic choices in turn.

During the period from 1964 to 1967, while the PLO was effectively under the control of the Arab league, although it received support from the "progressive" states (particularly Egypt, Syria and Iraq,) it was also heavily constrained by the policy preferences of Egypt, given Nasser's role as the primary leader of and decision-maker in the confrontation with Israel. However, the combination of the loss of credibility of the Arab armies after the June War and the increased prestige of the Palestinian fighters following what was framed as their victory at the Battle of Karameh placed the PLO in a much stronger position. It was now able to confer legitimacy and prestige on those states with which it chose to affiliate itself, leading many Arab leaders to attempt to position themselves, at least publicly, as being supporters of the fedayeen.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power, and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 47.

Soon after Karameh, PLO leaders Salah Khalaf (also known as Abu Iyad) and Farouk Qaddoumi embarked on a tour of the Arab states, intending to capitalize on this improved state of affairs. In Cairo, they established a relationship with Muhammad Hussein Haykal, Nasser's closest advisor, who became an advocate for the PLO there. In Saudi Arabia, they met with King Faisal, who offered to help "as discreetly as possible," telling the Palestinian leaders "we don't expect either praise or criticism from you." In Sudan, they received promises of support for the PLO in general (rather than for Fatah in particular).¹³⁶ Yet not all the Arab leaders were entirely sanguine about the PLO's new level of prestige, power and independence, or the new outlook which accompanied Fatah's ascendance within the organization. Fatah's ideology, if it can be said to have one at all, prioritized the liberation of Palestine over either the pan-Arab project or the interests of the other Arab states.¹³⁷ The onus for assuaging these fears was placed on the PLO, and it was not always successful in doing so.

Common orientation in terms of broader regional ideological currents also played a role in the PLO's relationship with its external sponsors, particularly with regard to what is sometimes called the Arab Cold War. This refers to the rivalry between the Soviet-oriented "progressive republics" of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Algeria and Libya (most of which were progressive only in the loosest sense of the term and were certainly not republics,) and the Western allied monarchies, including Jordan. In addition to a shared leftist ideology, then, common antipathy to the Jordanian monarchy formed a second (though closely overlapping) basis for the PLO's relationships with the "progressive" Arab states. Many of the leftist factions (particularly the PFLP and DFLP), were ideologically opposed to the

¹³⁶ Abu Iyad and Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle* (New York: Times Books, 1981), 63.

¹³⁷ As expressed, for instance, by Edward Kattoura.

Jordanian monarchy itself, quite aside from their need to use Jordan as a base against Israel, an antagonism was heartily shared by at least some factions in the regimes in command of Iraq and Syria in the late 1960s. As early as 1966, even before the Israeli attack on Samua that mobilized West Banker anger against the Jordanian government, Syria was openly calling for overthrow of King Hussein, and both openly and covertly shipping arms into the country.¹³⁸ In other words, some of the “progressive” state patrons deliberately encouraged their client factions’ hostility towards the monarchy, sometimes in direct contradiction of Arafat’s own preferences, widening the rifts both between the PLO and the Jordanian government and between different factions within the PLO.

Syria

The PLO’s relationship with Syria bears particular discussion. Though Syria, particularly under the rule of Salah Jadid and Nureddin Atassi, might have appeared to be a natural ideological ally, the relationship was not automatic. Abdel Razzak al Yehya, now Minister of the Interior for the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, recalled how in the early 1960s the Syrian government declined a request to host a meeting of Palestinian leaders to discuss the establishment of a Palestinian national movement.¹³⁹ But, despite this early recalcitrance, once the PLO had actually been established, the Syrian government was initially sympathetic and supportive. The relationship soon became complicated, however; Shuqairy was banned from Syria altogether (in what would be a recurring theme, the subject of the dispute was the degree of policy independence accorded to the PLO) and Arafat was arrested in 1966, on suspicion of involvement in the murder of rival Fatah leader Yusef al Arabi, and imprisoned

¹³⁸ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 229-230.

¹³⁹ Interview, Abdel Razzak al Yehya.

for nearly a year.¹⁴⁰ At this stage, the PLO's relationship with Syria became characterized by a mixture of ideological marketing and proxy service, both of which strategies hinged on the strong divisions which were beginning to appear in the Syrian regime.

Syrian politics in the 1960s was characterized by deep internal rivalries and frequent coups. In February 1966, a group of radical military officers (the neo-Baathists) overthrew the civilian old guard, after which two major factions emerged. The first centered around Salah Jadid, Assistant Secretary General for the Syrian General Command (for whom President Nureddin Atassi was essentially a puppet,) who was strongly committed to both socialist economic reform and a "people's war of liberation" against Israel,¹⁴¹ while the second was led by Minister of Defense Hafez al Asad, who took a more pragmatic approach to both foreign policy and economic development.¹⁴² The defeat of 1967 led to increasing political infighting between the two factions,¹⁴³ as Jadid continued to push for deeper Syrian involvement in the fight for Palestine. After the Battle of Karameh, seeking to capitalize on the new prestige of the fedayeen, Jadid sponsored the establishment of Al Saiqa, (or "thunderbolt", an acronym in Arabic for "Vanguard of the War of Liberation"), a Syrian-controlled Palestinian militia. Al Saiqa was answerable to Jadid rather than to the Syrian military, which remained loyal to Asad.¹⁴⁴

Jadid's support of the PLO can be read in two ways: first as a reaction to Arafat's situating of the PLO as the new standard bearers of Arab honor after

¹⁴⁰ Ghada Hashem Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 87.

¹⁴¹ Moshe Efrat and Jacob Bercovitch, *Superpowers and Client States in the Middle East: The Imbalance of Influence* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 210.

¹⁴² Valerie Yorke, *Domestic Politics and Regional Security: Jordan, Syria, and Israel -- The End of an Era?* (Aldershot, UK: Gower Publishing Co. for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1988), 103.

¹⁴³ Hafez al Asad engineered the removal of two successive prime ministers in the hard-core socialist camp, Yousef al Zu'ayyin in 1968 and Abdul Karim al Jundi in 1969.

¹⁴⁴ Efrat and Bercovitch, *Superpowers and Client States in the Middle East: The Imbalance of Influence*, 211.

Karameh, and second as a product of Jadid's need for a military force of his own to balance that of the Asad-loyalist military.¹⁴⁵ In either case, both the PLO's ideologically-based marketing and service as proxies were directed primarily at Jadid's faction, rather than at Asad's. Asad strongly believed in a pan-Arab military solution. He stated in his address to the Baath congress in March of 1969:

“I have repeatedly stressed the importance of Arab military coordination – notably among the Arab states which border Israel – regardless of the differences and the contradictions in their political positions, as long as it would serve the armed struggle... Therefore, the escalation and continuation of the fidai action is largely tied with the defensive capability of the Arab fronts.”¹⁴⁶

Asad was also naturally cautious by nature, and increasingly alarmed by Jadid's advocacy of confrontation with Israel in meetings with Egypt and the USSR, a war for which Asad was certain that neither Syria nor Egypt was in any way militarily prepared.¹⁴⁷

In sum, on the eve of Black September the Syrian government was deeply divided and lacked a coherent foreign policy with regard to the Palestinian question. Asad was opposed to any intervention; there is some evidence that he may even have made a non-intervention agreement in regards to Jordan with Iraq's new dictator, Saddam Hussein.¹⁴⁸ In contrast, Jadid, for reasons both ideological and practical, had at least partially linked his political survival to the fate of the fedayeen. At the same time, the fate of the fedayeen, or at least the

¹⁴⁵ This latter motivation is perhaps most evident in the resistance from the Syrian government to an attempt by one PLA faction in 1968 to incorporate all armed groups, including Sa'iqa, under the PLO leadership; while this might well have benefited the PLO, it would have cost Jadid domestically Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 186.

¹⁴⁶ Moshe Ma'oz, *Asad: The Sphinx of Damascus: A Political Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 38.

¹⁴⁷ Mustafa Tlas, later chief of staff of the Syrian armed forces, said later: “What dragged Syrian into a war for which it was ill-prepared (Black September) was Saleh Jadid's policy of indulging in verbal violence and challenges to Egypt concerning the Palestinian issue Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms*, 88-89.

¹⁴⁸ Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: people, power, and politics* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 53.

likelihood of their receiving substantive military support from Syria, was heavily dependent on the outcome of the internal Syrian power struggle.

Costs and Benefits of the PLO's Foreign Relations

The different approaches the PLO took to relations with Jordan versus the other Arab states produced results that differed accordingly. The PLO's use of coercion against the Jordanian state did, at least initially, help the organization acquire a base of operations in Jordan. It was able to establish bases for training in various locations around Jordan, including the Jordan Valley, on the border with Israel, which, while they lasted, were tremendously useful. Coercion was also useful in procuring small amounts of other material assets from the state, such as vehicles.

Yet at the same time, this strategy prevented the PLO from accessing important non-material assets, like political backing, from the Jordanian government itself, or, perhaps more importantly, from the Jordanian military. To the contrary, the army, enraged at both the treatment of their families (discussed below) and the humiliation of their government was soon champing at the bit to retaliate, and Hussein found himself facing intense resistance to his continued orders to stand down; by the spring of 1970, some army commanders had begun to take matters into their own hands. In one episode, following an incident in Amman, a tank battalion, with no orders to do so, set off for Amman from the Jordan Valley. Hussein and Sharif Zaid bin Shaker, commander of the Third Armored Division and a close advisor of the king, intercepted the tanks. After Shaker himself tried unsuccessfully to turn the tanks back three times, the king

himself got out of the car to give the order, which the commander obeyed only reluctantly.¹⁴⁹ King Hussein himself recalled:

“We had thousands of incidents of breaking the law, of attacking people. It was a very unruly state of affairs in the country and I continued to try. I went to Egypt. I called in the Arabs to help in any way they could – particularly as some of them were sponsoring some of these movements in one form or another – but without much success, and towards the end I felt I was losing control. In the last six months leading up to the crisis the army began to rebel. I had to spend most of my time running to those units that had left their positions and were going to the capital, or to some other part of Jordan, to sort out people who were attacking their families or attacking soldiers on leave. I think that the gamble was probably the army would fracture along Palestinian-Jordanian lines. That never happened, thank God.”¹⁵⁰

This last observation of Hussein’s touches on a key point. For the PLO to have foiled the king’s attempt to expel them from Jordan (leaving aside the dubious wisdom of provoking him to such a decision to begin with,) it would have needed to neutralize the superior numbers of the Jordanian army by provoking widespread defections amongst Palestinian officers and soldiers, of whom there were many. Given the good will they had acquired following the defeat of 1967 and the coordination between the two forces at Karameh, this might not have been beyond the realm of possibility, and indeed was what the PLO leadership expected. Had the PLO found a more inclusive way of framing itself, perhaps focusing on common Arab interests and acknowledging the role of the Jordanian army at Karameh, emphasizing the ties between the two forces, it might have been able to break the unity of the Jordanian military and successfully topple the monarchy. However, given the behavior of the fedayeen, there was never much chance of such an outcome, and while some officers did defect, these were not sufficient to turn the tide in its favor.

¹⁴⁹ Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 315-316.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 316.

In contrast, the less coercive approach engaged in by the PLO towards the progressive Arab states produced both material and non-material support, though the former was more limited at this stage than it would become in the years after the oil boom and the 1973 October War. Many of the Arab regimes sponsored their own particular factions – the Syrians had Saiqa, Iraq the Arab Liberation Force, and so on - though they also provided money and weaponry to independent factions and to the PLO itself. During the visit of the Palestinian delegation to Saudi Arabia in 1968, for instance, King Faisal agreed to set up popular committees to collect donations for the Palestinian cause (particularly to Fatah), which donations the government would then match, and to deduct an additional 7% of the wages of Palestinian workers in Saudi Arabia.¹⁵¹

The Arab states also provided training, an important asset given the surge of utterly inexperienced volunteers who joined the organization after Karameh; the need for training assistance was compounded by the depletion of Fatah's officer corps, many of whom died in the battle. To rebuild it, Fatah attempted to set up its own cadre training school in 1968, and though this was ultimately unsuccessful, one class of officers was trained at its camp in Hama, Syria in 1968, and many went on to a second training course in Algeria.¹⁵²¹⁵³ Fatah also sent soldiers to be trained in Egypt as "rocket gunners, frogmen, commando instructors and intelligence officers."¹⁵⁴ External support was clearly important to the training process.

¹⁵¹ Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 63.

¹⁵² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 183.

¹⁵³ Arafat also visited China in 1964 and 1966, and by 1968 some soldiers had been sent there for training, but at this stage, the relationship remained limited Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 67.

¹⁵⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 180.

In a related vein, the lack of trained officers could be partially bypassed by recruiting experienced Palestinian soldiers who had fought in other Arab militaries; the PFLP in particular drew on disillusioned Syrian Nasserites. However, many of the experienced officers required time to adapt themselves to the very different institutional culture of the fedayeen, and this was still no substitute for the training process itself, given the mass of new recruits.¹⁵⁵

Not all Arab support was military. The Arab states also provided significant political support in the form of pressure on Jordan to allow the PLO to operate from its territory. It was Nasser who pressured Jordan to allow the fedayeen increasing leeway in operating on Jordanian territory, though this was tempered by his desire to prevent the PLO from becoming too independent. Libya, Syria, and Iraq could be counted upon to provide regular rhetorical support in the Arab media for the fedayeen and the PLO, sometimes at the expense of the Jordanian regime. More subtly, the ideological power wielded by the fedayeen also bought the silence of regimes or individuals who might otherwise have been somewhat sympathetic to the Jordanian government's position.

Of course, the most direct assistance to the PLO came from Syria, in the form of actual military intervention during Black September. This was the result of the PLO's relationship with Jadid's faction, though the PLO's failure to establish a rapport with Asad ultimately rendered Jadid's gesture futile. Still, though this was not enough to save the PLO in Jordan, it was, at least initially, enough to make King Hussein and his government very nervous, as will be discussed at greater length below. In sum, if the PLO's relationship with Jordan was based on ham-fisted coercion, its relationship with the Arab states at least provided it with money, training, weapons, political backing and at least an

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 181-182.

attempt at military assistance. Yet the movement's poor resource strategic choices with regard to the Jordanian regime prevented it from effectively using the resources it had acquired from the Arab states.

The PLO and Civilians in Jordan: A failure of public relations

Although, given the outcome of the war, it is tempting to see the PLO in hindsight as essentially outsiders in Jordan, this is far too simplistic a view both of the Jordanian political landscape in the late 1960s. In truth, the sympathies of the Jordanian public, of both Palestinian and Jordanian origin, were very much “up for grabs” by both sides in the years leading up to Black September. There was, of course, broad public sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians in general, among both East and West Bankers,¹⁵⁶ but support for the fedayeen themselves was subject to change over time and variation across communities. What tipped the scales was the behavior of the fedayeen themselves. Early on, the fedayeen made use of a broad marketing strategy based on their victory at the Battle of Karameh. This was particularly true in the refugee camps, where Palestinian identity itself was tied to the idea of “resistance.” They also engaged in service provision in the camps, and, to a much more limited extent, in the south. However, as they became surer of themselves, their attempts to control Jordanian territory and acquire other material resources became increasingly coercive, to the organization's great detriment.

Understanding the PLO's relationship with civilians in Jordan first requires some discussion of the domestic Jordanian political context. Despite the historical divisions within the kingdom dating to the events of 1948, neither the Palestinian-Jordanian nor Jordanian-Jordanian community can be considered

¹⁵⁶ Interview, Hamad M, former PLA officer, author and researcher, Damascus.

economically or politically homogenous. To begin with, Palestinians of different classes had very different relationships with the Jordanian state. As noted above, in an effort to solidify his control over the West Bank, Jordan's King Abdullah I engaged in a campaign to incorporate the West Bank population into the new Jordanian polity. In addition to the 1949 law granting Jordanian citizenship to West Bank residents, the king also moved to incorporate the Palestinian middle class, with their valuable civil and commercial expertise, into the economic and social life of the country.¹⁵⁷ By the middle of the 1960s, much of the Palestinian middle and upper class was integrated into Jordanian society and there were many Jordanians of Palestinian descent serving in the military. Many (though certainly not all) remained very loyal to Hashemites, even on the eve of Black September, or at least unsympathetic to the PLO.¹⁵⁸ Others within the Palestinian political leadership genuinely believed that Hussein's plans to negotiate with Israel for the West Bank were the best chance to regain the lost territory, and so quietly supported him for purely instrumental reasons.¹⁵⁹ Many saw no conflict between holding Jordanian citizenship and maintaining a Palestinian identity and commitment to the liberation of Palestine.¹⁶⁰ Hamad M., a former PLA officer and now a researcher on Middle Eastern politics, explained this as follows: "King Hussein believed that in a way or another, he could regain the West Bank through negotiations with Israel, whether Gamal Abdel Nasser agreed or not. There were some persons, some guys in the Palestinian leadership who really believed that the interests of the Palestinians are with King Hussein's attempts and they have to be his allies, in public or in secrecy."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 42.

¹⁵⁸ Interviews, Patricia Salti and Marwan Qassem, Jordanian Foreign Minister 1980-1984, 1988-1991.

¹⁵⁹ Interview, Hamad M.

¹⁶⁰ Interview, Marwan Qassem.

¹⁶¹ Interview, Hamad M.

On the other hand, Palestinians still faced considerable political discrimination. Representation in the Majlis al Nawab (the parliament) was weighted in favor of East Bankers, and as only landowners had suffrage in the early days of the kingdom, refugees were disproportionately disenfranchised. Even prior to 1967, the West Bank lagged behind the East Bank in terms of economic development, and the situation was only exacerbated by the arrival of over 300,000 new Palestinian refugees (many of whom had previously been displaced in 1948) from the West Bank and Gaza.¹⁶² Most found themselves in the already crowded refugee camps. Although upper class Palestinian intellectuals and businessmen who had prospered in the last 20 years were involved in the national post-war recovery effort,¹⁶³ poorer Palestinians, particularly those in the refugee camps, remained alienated and disenfranchised.¹⁶⁴

Nor was the “Jordanian-Jordanian” population entirely homogenous. The most obvious division was between the urban “East Banker” families from the northern towns of Irbid, Jerash and Salt, and the rural and semi-nomadic Bedouin tribes of the southern and eastern deserts. While these groups are often referred to collectively as “Bedouin”, meaning “non-Palestinian”, this dichotomy misses a great deal. The settled Jordanian-Jordanian urban elites had more in common culturally (and even linguistically) with the northern Palestinian cities of Nablus, Haifa and Jaffa than they did with southern Jordanian Bedouin, who themselves share tribal ties with the Bedouin of the Negev and southern West Bank.

There were also political divisions amongst the East Bankers themselves. Loyalty to the Hashemites was not universal; there were also Jordanian

¹⁶² UNRWA describes the 1967 exodus as “140,000 people, already registered refugees with UNRWA, together with about 240,000 citizens of the West Bank.” UNRWA Website, “Jordan Camp Profiles.” <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=100>

¹⁶³ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*., 225 One notable example was the founding of the Royal Scientific Society in 1968 by Crown Prince Hassan and a cadre of Palestinian academics.

¹⁶⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 42-43.

Jordanians on the political left who supported the fedayeen for political and ideological reasons. The most notable of these was Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the DFLP, who was himself Jordanian-Jordanian, from the city of Salt, but there were other examples as well. In 1957 and 1963, King Hussein had suspended a wide range of political freedoms and banned several opposition parties. In April of 1968, members of several of the banned parties, all of them leftists, seized the moment in the aftermath of Karamah and formed a coalition which publically declared sympathy with the fedayeen.¹⁶⁵ By March 1970, the fedayeen had convinced some leftist political and community leaders, of both Palestinian and Jordanian origin, to organize as the “National Front”, against the king and his supporters.¹⁶⁶

In other words, the PLO’s alienation from many sectors of the Jordanian public was not predetermined by a set of existing identity endowments; there were a number of significant communal, economic and geographic cleavages which could have been exploited through careful framing to improve the movement’s position vis a vis the Jordanian public. But for the most part, the PLO failed to do so. While it did engage in some marketing and service provision, its dominant strategy was coercion.

Marketing

The PLO’s (and other factions’) attempts at marketing themselves to civilians in Jordan were based on two interwoven narratives. The first was centered on the fedayeen as the standard bearers of Arab honor and as the best chance for the realization of Palestinian national aspirations in the aftermath of

¹⁶⁵ This was led by Suleiman Nabulsi, a member of the senate from the city of Salt. Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*, 229-230.

¹⁶⁶ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 175.

the defeat in 1967. This was strengthened enormously by what was framed as a victory for the PLO at the Battle of Karameh: “The military defeat was a humiliation, a personal and collective humiliation for the peoples of the area. Believing that governments are incapable of restoring their dignity, they look for something else.”¹⁶⁷ The narrative of the fedayeen as the restorers of Arab honor resonated with many Jordanian-Jordanians, at least at first. (Though, ironically, it was the relocation of fedayeen units to Amman in the aftermath of Karameh which led many to change their opinion.) It is important to realize however, that, as noted above, the account of Karameh as a victory of the *fedayeen* over the IDF, in explicit contrast with the defeats and failures of the Arab regimes, is a particular framing of those events intended to bolster the image of the Palestinian militants. In reality, the fedayeen probably took heavier casualties than the IDF, and the Jordanian military was enormously important in securing the victory. While Karameh was indeed a significant military achievement for which the fedayeen deserve credit, the strategic framing of the event should be separated from the facts of the event itself.

A second narrative related to the reframing of Palestinian identity itself. From being associated with victimhood and refugee status, Palestinian-ness was reframed as a source of pride (in the exploits of the fedayeen, and in general) and inspiration for resistance, characterized by a connection to the land and aspirations to return.¹⁶⁸¹⁶⁹ The period after 1967 saw a revival of interest across the refugee community in folk art such as traditional Palestinian embroidery, Palestinian folk tales and songs, and the emergence of Palestinian art focused on themes of connection to the land, resistance, and return. It was during this period

¹⁶⁷ Interview, Hamad M.

¹⁶⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 195.

¹⁶⁹ This is not dissimilar to the role Zionist ideology played in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe in the early 20th century and particularly after the Holocaust.

that the black and white kuffiyeh was adopted as a symbol of Palestinian resistance.¹⁷⁰

The fedayeen organizations encouraged this revival, particularly the identification of Palestinian-ness with resistance, rather than victimhood; within this narrative, the fedayeen themselves were the distinction between the two. Fatah Radio was particularly important, playing martial songs that glorified armed resistance, the guerilla and the Kalashnikov. It was also around this time that the practice of creating posters of pictures of recent martyrs became common, as a means of promoting the group's prowess and competing with other factions for glory and recruits.¹⁷¹

Service provision

The above narrative is closely tied to the second approach used by the PLO towards civilians: service provision. This was employed mainly in the Palestinian refugee camps, where the alienation of the camp residents facilitated the efforts of the different Palestinian factions, especially after 1967, to lay the groundwork there for its "state within a state."¹⁷² Though the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was (and is) charged with the protection of and provision for all Palestine refugees,¹⁷³ there remained space for services to be provided or augmented by the various factions (particularly Fatah) which did indeed win them some support within the camp.¹⁷⁴ George Habash, founder of the PLFP, was himself a doctor, and ran a free clinic in the early 1950s, though by

¹⁷⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 196.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² There are ten refugee camps in Jordan, the largest of which, "the New Camp", (known locally as Wehdat) is in Amman.

¹⁷³ The term "Palestine refugees" is intentional, as it also includes the 17,000 Jewish refugees who were also initially cared for by UNRWA, until they were able to settle in Israel.

¹⁷⁴ Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*, 103 .

1957 he was involved in politics full time (Cooley 134.) The PLO operated somewhat more extensive services (though still on a small scale)¹⁷⁵ including schools, clinics, orphanages for the children of fallen fedayeen, vocational training centers, and a Palestinian Red Crescent was established alongside the Jordanian Red Crescent.¹⁷⁶

Several of the PLO factions also engaged in very limited service provision southern Jordan as a means of gaining the trust of the local Bedouin leadership. After Karameh, Fatah established a small southern command in addition to the larger central and northern commands. While the Bedouin were initially distrustful, Fatah's leadership reached out to some of the clans who were looking for backing in their disputes with other clans. It also offered free medical services, which improved its image. The PLA even went so far as to install a Bedouin sheikh as "political leader" of the southern sector. But overall, this policy was limited, and directed at the weaker, smaller tribes rather than the large powerful families which made up the backbone of the armed forces.¹⁷⁷ Although the provision of services in conjunction with the PLO's marketing of itself may have resonated with Palestinians in the camps, it was not sufficient to change the views of many of the other sectors of society who the PLO would have needed to win over. This was particularly true given that the PLO's dominant strategy with regard to the civilian public was coercion.

¹⁷⁵ Interview, Oraib Rantawi. As Dr. Rantawi put it, in the Jordanian years, there was "no luxury lifestyle, no five-star hotels" for the leadership. That would come later.

¹⁷⁶ Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 174.

¹⁷⁷ Yazid. Sayigh and D.C.) Institute for Palestine Studies (Washington, *Armed struggle and the search for state : the Palestinian national movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1997), 181-182.

Coercion:

As the fedayeen became more confident in their position in Jordan, they behaved increasingly coercively towards the civilian population, especially outside the refugee camps. As the now Deputy Secretary General of the PFLP-GC recounted:

“I can say now that it was bad, because a lot of Palestinian organizations arrest people, steal from people. Jordanian security, Jordanian army, Jordanian forces push people to be angry [with the] Palestinian movement. We feel at that time that we are the real authority in Jordan. Everywhere, in Amman, Irbid, the [Jordan] valley, everywhere the Palestinian movement was the authority, not the Jordanian authority.”¹⁷⁸

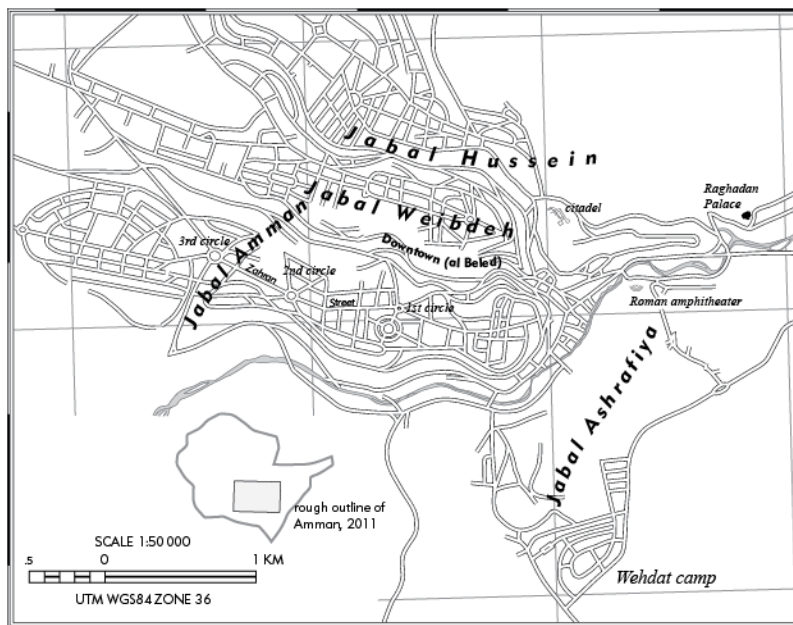
Control over Amman itself was indeed divided. The city is laid out across multiple hills, with neighborhoods west of the downtown core (the *beled*) identified by their proximity to a series of roundabouts along the main east-west artery, Zahran street (see map.) 1st circle is closest to the city center, with the numbers increasing to the west. The areas east of the beled, such as Hai Nazal, Jabal Nasser, Ashrafiyeh, and Jabal Hussein, were heavily Palestinian, and were certainly controlled by, and likely sympathetic to, the PLO. The area between the beled and 2nd circle, (a historically Christian area known as Jabal Amman) was controlled by the fedayeen, with checkpoints at 1st and 2nd circle; it is unclear where the sympathies of the inhabitants lay.¹⁷⁹ The downtown commercial center was also controlled by the fedayeen, though, again, it is unclear what the business community in downtown thought. From the 3rd circle westward remained under the control of the Jordanian security forces.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Interview, Abu Jihad.

¹⁷⁹ Informal conversations with Ammanis who lived through Black September suggest that there was little support for the fedayeen in Jabal Amman by the time the fighting broke out. It remains difficult to find Jordanians, whether Palestinian Jordanian or Jordanian Jordanian, who are willing to talk about Black September, so much of my primary information comes from the Palestinian militant side.

¹⁸⁰ Though heavily built up now, in the 1970s, this neighborhood was on the edge of the city.

As their control over the city expanded, the behavior of the fedayeen towards civilians became more coercive. The fedayeen (many of whom were teenage boys) engaged in a variety of threatening behaviors, including manning the aforementioned checkpoints, often wearing balaclavas to disguise themselves, as well as driving around the city with guns pointing out of the car windows and otherwise flashing weaponry in public. They were also widely accused of casual extortion, walking armed into hotel bars or restaurants and demanding that the patrons “donate” to the cause.¹⁸¹ The attacks on “official” targets, like the downtown post office, must also have alienated the large swath of the Jordanian-Jordanian population who had friends or relatives who worked for the government, the largest employer in the country.¹⁸²



Map 2: Amman, 1971 (after *Jordan Tourism Authority*, 1971.)

¹⁸¹ Interview, Patricia Salti.

¹⁸² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 243.

More serious charges against the fedayeen included kidnapping, torture and execution of suspected collaborators.¹⁸³ A study published by the Jordanian ministry of defense in 1970 attributed 43,397 crimes to fedayeen, including rape, illegal arrest, theft, illegal entry into homes, murder, kidnapping assault on civilians and forgery. Given its source, this figure is almost certainly exaggerated, but even half that number would likely have provoked resentment and anger from Ammanis.¹⁸⁴ Former fedayeen interviewed acknowledged that there was some bad behavior on the part of the Palestinian fighters, in Amman as well as other cities like Zarqa and Irbid, such as “using arms, [undisciplined] behavior, blaspheming, not paying tribute to the people’s beliefs, especially in Ramadan...for example, if you [were] smoking in Ramadan in the street, people would not accept it, you are defying their beliefs, or if you drink liquor, arak. There were many things like that.”¹⁸⁵

Several former fighters interviewed argued that while some fedayeen engaged in bad behavior, the worst abuses were in fact the work of *mukhaberat* (secret police) infiltrators, designed to create a gulf between the fedayeen and the civilian population and to discredit them in the eyes of the citizens of other Arab states.¹⁸⁶ This is certainly possible; the Kataeb al Nasir (the Victory Battalions), a group responsible for many clashes between the security forces and the Palestinian factions, were probably in reality a government-sponsored group of provocateurs.¹⁸⁷ But even if the mukhaberat was responsible for some of the abuses, the Palestinian factions themselves were certainly not blameless, as acknowledged by many of those interviewed.

¹⁸³ Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*, 109.

¹⁸⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 244.

¹⁸⁵ Interview, Hamad M.

¹⁸⁶ Interviews with Salah Salah, Maher, and Oraib Rantawi.

¹⁸⁷ Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: people, power, and politics*, 47.

This behavior was not merely abusive but also resource-seeking; indeed, this was at least in part the purpose behind the violence. The primary resource that the fedayeen needed in Jordan was territory from which to launch raids against Israeli targets. Despite the various agreements made with the government, because of the influence of the leftist factions, the PLO in practice approached this as a matter of “control over,” rather than merely “access to.” The major means of asserting this control was through the imposition of checkpoints, but generally threatening behavior (e.g., groups of young fedayeen driving recklessly around the city while hanging out of car windows and brandishing guns) also had the effect of asserting authority over particular areas. Of course, the fedayeen also sought to acquire money from civilians through forcible collection of “donations” or the other forms of extortion and theft discussed above. While these resources were secured more or less voluntarily in the refugee camps and those neighborhoods heavily inhabited by the poorer, disenfranchised Palestinian population, elsewhere in the city, these were obtained by coercion, as Abu Iyad acknowledges:

“Our own behavior wasn’t terribly consistent either. Although we tried to appeal to the entire population without regard to national origin, we tended to neglect the Jordanians in favor of the Palestinians. Proud of their force and exploits, the fedayeen often displayed a sense of superiority, sometimes even arrogance, without taking into consideration the sensibilities or interests of the native Jordanians.”¹⁸⁸

Costs and Benefits: The Jordanians circle the wagons

The above strategies with regard to the civilian population did allow the PLO access to some important resources between 1967 and 1970. The framing of the fedayeen as the bearers of Arab and Palestinian pride after Karamah was initially very productive, generating substantial non-material support in the form

¹⁸⁸ Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 75.

of legitimacy and political influence, and even small amounts of (largely symbolic) material support. Oraib Rantawi recalls:

“I remember I was a kid, when some people came to the camps, collecting half JD, 15 piaster, something like that...some rich people also support from the Palestinian people, and women even donate their jewelry. At that time it was a very, very inspiring movement, very, very strong relationship between the organization and the people.”¹⁸⁹

Perhaps more significantly, this also helped them gain new recruits. After the Battle of Karamah, the Palestinian factions across the board experienced a surge of volunteers. The majority (roughly two thirds) joined up with Fatah, followed by the PFLP (whose main camp could train at most a quarter of its volunteers.) Even though two thirds of the trainees dropped out in the first weeks of training, by June the number of fighters under arms with the various factions had reached 3000, an increase of 300%.¹⁹⁰ However, this was in some ways a mixed blessing; most of the new fighters had little or no military experience, and the sudden influx was well beyond the absorptive capacity of the various factions.

The PLO's largest problem, though, was the coercive behavior of its fighters (which may not be entirely unrelated to the sudden influx of untrained recruits in 1968.) Despite broad sympathy in Jordan for the organization's goals and for the Palestinian people (a majority of Jordanians being of Palestinian origin), the PLO's coercive tactics in Amman and elsewhere alienated the population. This ultimately proved costly. Adnan Abu Odeh, a Jordanian politician and historian (who despite having been in his youth a member of the communist party grew to be an ardent supporter of King Hussein), suggests that by February 1970, much of the population, including the Palestinian middle class, had grown very tired of the conduct of some of the fedayeen, and that many were

¹⁸⁹ Interview, Oraib Rantawi

¹⁹⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 181.

disappointed in the King's decision to rescind the proclamations he had issued upon his return from Egypt.¹⁹¹

The alienation of the public had the effect of denying the PLO the legitimacy and political support that might in turn have led to important non-material resources. These might have included, for instance, advance warning of the king's plans. Some PLO leaders described the King's prior conciliatory behavior as a deceptive strategy intended to lull them into a false sense of complacency:

“We didn't expect such aggression. We insist before the war at King Hussein that he dismiss his uncle, Sharif Nasser bin Jamil and you know the director of security... we insist to dismiss him, and he dismiss him, therefore we feel we are strong. But it seems to me now that it was a plan from the king.”¹⁹²

Likewise, overwhelming support from the civilian community might have helped to tip the opinion of the army sufficiently that a split might have been provoked. But as noted above, this did not occur. Rather, as King Hussein had hoped, the coercive approach of the fedayeen was ultimately what gave the King and his army domestic political cover to crack down.

An Overview of PLO Resources

In sum, on the eve of Black September, the PLO's relations with the Jordanian state, public, and other Arab states (particularly Syria) can be characterized as follows: Its initial marketing of itself based on the legitimacy and prestige it accrued at the Battle of Karameh (and relative to the failure of the Arab states in 1967) had produced some initial sympathy within the Jordanian public, including many (but not all) Palestinians and some (but far from all) Jordanian Jordanians. This helped the movement recruit fighters, particularly after

¹⁹¹ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, 175.

¹⁹² Interview, Abu Jihad. Similar sentiments were voiced by Salah Salah.

the Battle of Karamah. By the time the fighting commenced, the PLO's total troop strength may have been as high as 20,000 fighters, though the majority of these were green and untrained recent recruits; only 9,000 were well trained and experienced fighters.¹⁹³ However, its coercive acquisition of material resources from these communities alienated them and prevented them from acquiring important non-material resources such as accurate intelligence about the King's plans or the support of civilians outside of the refugee camps – this was to prove especially damaging in the North. Its coercive behavior towards the state alienated most members of the government, depriving it of local political support, and, perhaps more crucially, alienated the military, including many Palestinians serving in the army who might otherwise have proved sympathetic. While its legitimacy-based and ethno-communal marketing directed at the leftist Arab states proved somewhat successful, this strategy was ultimately weakened by the PLO's failure to acquire the support of the *whole* of the Syrian government; while Jadid's support would prove useful, without the acquiescence of Asad, it would ultimately prove insufficient to save the fedayeen. And, ultimately, its coercive acquisition of safe haven from the Jordanian government produced a massive backlash.

Outcome: Black September

The unfolding of Black September itself illustrates the way in which the PLO was weakened by the flawed relationships it had created with the Jordanian state and public. It also illustrates the benefits of its relationships with the other Arab states, particularly Syria, as well as the limits of those relationships. If survival in a given piece of territory means retaining the capacity to operate

¹⁹³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 263.

against enemy targets from that territory, characterized by initial resistance and eventual recovery, then what I have just described can clearly be considered a failure to survive in Jordan on the part of the PLO. Though the organization demonstrated some ability to resist the initial military onslaught, this resistance was short-lived, and ended in a rout. As far as recovery is concerned, while the PLO was able to relocate to Lebanon, it has been able to operate politically in Jordan since 1971, indicating that it also failed at the “recovery” component of survival. Understanding this failure requires some examination of how the PLO’s previously discussed relationships, with the Jordanian army and state, foreign sponsor states and civilians in Jordan, shaped the behavior of these parties during the conflict. Ultimately, the benefits it was able to accrue from the latter were rendered unusable because of its failure to establish a relationship with the former, and its successful wooing of one half of the Syrian regime was useless given its failure to build a relationship with the other.

By mid-September, the king had decided to respond militarily to the challenge the PLO posed to his authority. On September 15th (the date on which Black September can be said to have begun) the fedayeen declared the establishment of a “liberated zone” in Irbid. That evening, King Hussein secretly informed the United States that he intended to take steps to “establish law and order.” The following day, he dismissed his civilian cabinet and appointed a military cabinet charged with establishing order and civil security, with Brigadier General Muhammad Daoud (himself a Palestinian) as Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the PLO central committee held an emergency session to discuss the organization’s next step. Arafat called for the unification of all Palestinian forces, presumably under his command, put fedayeen forces throughout the kingdom on

full combat alert, and sent a message to the Arab heads of state requesting immediate intervention.¹⁹⁴

On September 17th, the conflict began in earnest. The Jordanian army deployed in “armored cars, tanks and at least one company of infantry”, encircling the fedayeen in what Deputy National Security Advisor Alexander Haig described as “a picture book pincer movement.” Fighting expanded around the city, particularly in and around the refugee camps, Jabal Amman, and Jabal Weibdeh, where the US embassy was located.¹⁹⁵ By early afternoon the army had taken Amman’s western and southern suburbs.¹⁹⁶ Once Hussein gave the orders for the army to engage the fedayeen, it became clear that the army was much larger and better armed than the PLO. In comparison with the PLO’s 20,000 fighters, less than half of whom were well trained and equipped, King Hussein had quietly built the army up to 65,000 men, with 10,000 additional police and security forces.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the Jordanian military was far better armed and trained, with heavy artillery that the PLO could not match.

The army subjected the refugee camps to heavy artillery bombardment. Fatah’s offices were in an area of Jabal Hussein vulnerable to the army’s artillery fire, and Arafat himself was forced to relocate to the offices of the PFLP-GC, in a relatively secure cul de sac. A PFLP-GC official known as Abu Jihad, at the time a very junior officer, remembers waking Arafat at four in the morning to inform him that the Jordanian army had begun attacking PLO positions in the city of Zarqa. The leaders of the other factions gathered at the PFLP-GC offices, and

¹⁹⁴ “248. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon: SUBJECT Jordan/Hijacking Situation” (US Dept. of State, 1970).

¹⁹⁵ “253. Memorandum From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)” (US Dept. of State, 30 a.m 1970).

¹⁹⁶ “256. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)” (US Dept. of State, a.m 1970).

¹⁹⁷ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 263.

began coordinating their own response.¹⁹⁸ The next day, Abu Jihad collected Arafat and the two escaped to Jabal Weibdeh where they were met by President Jafer Numeiri of Sudan and Prince Saad Abdullah Sabah of Kuwait, who escorted them (Arafat disguised as a Kuwaiti Sheikh) to Cairo where an Arab summit had been convened.¹⁹⁹ The rest of the PLO command remained holed up in Jabal Hussein. Orders and messages were sent out by radio, though coordination was hindered by the fact that each faction had its own, distinct, cipher. Moreover, many of the messages were deliberately false, intended to raise morale. Abu Jihad recalled an example:

“From Ahmed to Khaled, salaam aleykum.” I ask[ed] him [Arafat] “what [does] that mean, please?” He said “one battalion from Jordanian army will be with us.” Ok! We are very happy. The second, one battalion! The third, one battalion! I in the end, I told Abu Ammar [Arafat], “Abu Ammar – I collect all the battalions. It is the Jordanian army twice!”

This is also indicative, of course, of the degree to which the PLO appeared to be counting on the defection of Jordanian army units as a path to eventual victory.

The Jordanian army’s assault was unrelenting. They shelled PLO positions and leveled multi-story buildings in which fedayeen had set up sniper’s nests. Reports began circulating that the army was taking no prisoners,²⁰⁰ and then that it had taken thousands. By the morning of the 18th, the army had begun to reassert its control over Amman and the city of Zarqa.²⁰¹ Though Hussein offered the first of what would be several ceasefires,²⁰² this was rejected by the

¹⁹⁸ He laughingly said “we start the war in my office, and you can say, end the war in my office” and indeed, the PLO leadership was able to hold its position there for four days, until the office itself was destroyed by the Jordanian army. Interview, Abu Jihad, PFLP-GC.

¹⁹⁹ The more common version of this story is that Arafat was dressed as a woman, but Abu Jihad assured me he was in fact dressed as a Kuwaiti.

²⁰⁰ “264. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting” (US Dept. of State, 35–9:05 a.m 1970).

²⁰¹ For instance, see John Hess, “Battles Go On in Jordan, Army Claims Some Gains; U.S. Stressing Diplomacy,” *The New York Times*, 1970, For instance, see Hess, John. “Battles Go On in Jordan, Army Claims Some Gains; U.S. Stressing Diplomacy.” *New York Times* Sep 23, 1970; pg. 1.

²⁰² “260. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting” (US Dept. of State, 20–3:45 p.m 1970).

PLO, who continued to mount strong resistance in some areas of Amman and parts of the north.²⁰³

But this level of resistance could not be sustained for long. Throughout the 19th and the 20th, the army continued to extend its control over Amman, and by the 21st, it controlled most of city, including some parts of the refugee camps. Though the fedayeen remained active in other parts of the city, including Jabal Weibdeh, the city center, and those areas of the refugee camps not yet taken by the military,²⁰⁴ ultimately they were no match for the Jordanian army, which remained remarkably unified.

Indeed, the PLO's best hope, as noted by King Hussein (see above), had always been to split the Jordanian military and inspire mass defections among the Palestinian officers. In this, they failed. The rate of defection was insufficient to change the outcome of the war.²⁰⁵ Some Palestinian army officers did defect to the PLO, and these were later reorganized as the Yarmouk Brigades of the Palestinian Liberation Army.²⁰⁶ Abu Iyad, Arafat's second in command, put their number at close to 5,000, but Jordanian government sources placed it at only a few hundred who were mostly young, Palestinian, draftees.²⁰⁷ It is also unclear to what degree the defections that did occur were motivated by sympathy for the PLO itself, sympathy with the Palestinian struggle in general, or objection to a specific order. Refusal to shell a refugee camp full of unarmed civilians, after all, is not the same as sympathy for the PLO's political project. Whatever the motives of those who did defect, ultimately the chain of command remained

²⁰³ "263. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" (US Dept. of State, 1970).

²⁰⁴ Jonathan Randal, "Guerrillas Still Reject Cease-Fire," *The Washington Post*, 1970, A1.

²⁰⁵ That the PLO had insisted for a time that fighting with the PLO be considered an alternate form of military service could perhaps have had the effect of weeding out at least some enlisted soldiers who might have defected had they been in the army.

²⁰⁶ Sicker, *Between Hashemites and Zionists: The Struggle for Palestine, 1908-1980*, 135.

²⁰⁷ Eric Pace, "Jordanians Accuse Syria on Deserters," *The New York Times*, January 20, 1971, 10.

intact, and the vast majority of the army remained loyal to the King,²⁰⁸ effectively sealing the PLO's fate. This outcome can be clearly traced to the PLO's open hostility towards the army in the years leading up to the confrontation and likely to their behavior towards civilians as well.

The PLO's international political assets proved more reliable. Throughout the crisis, Arafat relied heavily on the Arab League (particularly the "progressive" states) to put pressure on the Jordanian regime to, if not accede to the PLO's demands, at least show restraint in its military response. Even before the onset of the conflict, on September 9th, the PLO central committee had sent a telegram pleading for intervention to the emergency summit meeting in Cairo convened by the Arab heads of state (minus Syria, Algeria and Yemen, who were ironically boycotting in support of the PLO) to discuss the Jordan crisis.²⁰⁹ Once fighting had begun in earnest, on the 18th, the Arab League called for a ceasefire and mediation by the newly formed "four nation" committee, composed of Sudan, Egypt, Libya and Algeria. (Given that all four of these states were sympathetic to the fedayeen, it is perhaps unsurprising that Hussein rejected this request.²¹⁰)

There were two states in particular to which the PLO turned for aid in the first hours of the crisis: Iraq and Syria.²¹¹ Initially, the responses of the two states were quite similar: the Iraqi leadership convened a meeting to decide whether to involve their own client Palestinian militia, the Saladin units, while Damascus Radio exhorted the Jordanian military to revolt. The leadership of both states

²⁰⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 295.

²⁰⁹ Morocco also boycotted, in support of Jordan.

²¹⁰ "263. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon."

²¹¹ "256. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)" Though Libya and Kuwait also threatened to withhold aid to Jordan, (see 312. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting1 Washington, September 22, 1970, 8:30–9:05 a.m.) and Libya also stated that it would support the fedayeen, Nasser apparently warned Qaddafi against actually airlifting Libyan troops into Jordan, (280. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon1 Washington, September 20, 1970, 6:30 p.m.) and Kuwait never made good on its threat.

issued warnings that they would not stand by while the fedayeen were “massacred.”²¹² Indeed, the American government believed, at least initially, that Iraqi intervention was more likely than Syrian,²¹³ due in part to the belief on the part of Jordanian intelligence that involved at some level in the Dawson’s field hijackings.²¹⁴ Yet while the Iraqi forces stationed in Jordan as part of the United Arab Command were put on high alert and moved to consolidate in the area around Mafrq, they did not involve themselves in the fighting at any point,²¹⁵ and Abu Iyad himself later claimed to have heard a recording of a phone call in which the Iraqi Defense Minister Hardan al Tikriti made reference to an agreement with King Hussein not to intervene.²¹⁶

King Hussein, on the other hand, was more concerned about the potential for an invasion by Syria. Indeed, the PLO’s relationship with Syria offered it perhaps its best chance of survival during the course of the conflict, but it was ultimately ineffective, due to Arafat’s failure to win the support of both factions in the Syrian regime, rather than just Jadid’s. Syria’s behavior as the conflict unfolded was shaped heavily by the regime’s internal power struggle. Once fighting broke out in Jordan, Jadid’s faction expressed immediate support for the PLO,²¹⁷ while Asad, concerned lest the regime lose control over the escalating protests and over Al Saiqa itself, began moving to bring the latter under the

²¹² “253. Memorandum From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger).”

²¹³ “252. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan (152449. Ref: Amman 4845.2)” (US Dept. of State, 0523Z 1970). Footnote 2 to this telegram states that “In telegram 4845 from Amman, September 16, 2315Z, Brown suggested that Hussein was overly concerned about possible Syrian intervention. .

²¹⁴ “229. Intelligence Information Cable TDCS 314/09358–70: COUNTRY Jordan/Iraq” (US Dept. of State, 1970).

²¹⁵ “303. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting” (US Dept. of State, n.d.).

²¹⁶ Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 85. It is also worth noting that the Iraqi forces in the area observed the fighting between the Syrian and Jordanian forces from the 18th to the 20th, but did intervene, instead remaining in Mafrq, while the headquarters in Zarqa began withdrawing to Iraq. This decision was likely at least partly the result of the antipathy between the Iraqi and Syrian regimes “272. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” (US Dept. of State, 1970).

²¹⁷ Fred Haley Lawson, *Why Syria Goes to War: Thirty Years of Confrontation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 69.

military's control.²¹⁸ At first, the pro-intervention faction appeared to have the upper hand, and Syrian support seemed likely to turn the tide in favor of the fedayeen. On September 18th, 30 "volunteer" Al Saiqa fighters and 300 Syrian tanks painted with the insignia of the PLO (probably to limit Syrian culpability)²¹⁹ crossed the border and shelled Jordanian positions,²²⁰ while Asad monitored the invasion from the border town of Deraa.²²¹

The Syrian invasion posed a real threat to the Jordanian regime, and was a significant asset for the PLO. Though the two forces were in some ways evenly matched, (the Jordanian military had 500 British Centurion tanks and the Syrians 700 Soviet T-54 and T-55s), the border area was closer to Syrian staging areas than to Jordanian bases, making it far easier for the Syrian forces to resupply,²²² and of course, Syria vastly outstripped Jordan in both strategic depth and the overall size of its military. Tank battles on the border and the road to Irbid produced heavy losses on both sides. By the evening of the 20th, Syrian forces had captured Irbid and the Jordanian army faced 100 Syrian tanks in the north, with another 60 waiting to cross the border.²²³

King Hussein was sufficiently alarmed that he appealed for help at least once to the British²²⁴ and to the United States ambassador Dean Brown three times over the course of the day on September 20th.²²⁵ He went so far as to

²¹⁸ Ibid., 68-69.

²¹⁹ Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Soviet-Syrian Relationship since 1955: A Troubled Alliance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 56.

²²⁰ 272. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon 1 Washington, September 19, 1970.

²²¹ Lawson, *Why Syria Goes to War: Thirty Years of Confrontation*, 74.

²²² "281. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting" (US Dept. of State, 10-9:15 p.m 1970).

²²³ "282. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State" (US Dept. of State, 2355Z 1970) This stands in marked contrast to the situation in the in Amman, which at this point in the conflict was mostly controlled by the Jordanian army. This is perhaps because in Amman, the army was fighting only the fedayeen, who, as discussed above, posed far less of a challenge to the Jordanian army than did the Syrian incursion. This demonstrates the degree to which Syrian intervention improved the position of the PLO vis a vis the Jordanian army.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ "275. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" (US Dept. of State, 30 p.m 1970).

indicate that he would welcome American or even Israeli air support, and asked to see the results of Israeli reconnaissance flights over the area.²²⁶ The next day, he made a desperate phone call to the US Ambassador which was related to President Nixon and Henry Kissinger:

“Situation deteriorating dangerously following Syrian massive invasion. Northern forces disjointed. Irbid occupied. This having disastrous effect on tired troops in the capital and surroundings. After continuous action and shortage supplies Military Governor and Commander in Chief advise I request immediate physical intervention both air and land as per the authorization of government to safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Jordan. Immediate air strikes on invading forces from any quarter plus air cover are imperative. Wish earliest word on length of time it may require your forces to land when requested which might be very soon.”²²⁷

The seriousness with which Hussein viewed this threat is a good indicator of the significance of the Syrian intervention as an asset for the PLO. But ultimately, it proved short-lived, both because of internal Syrian politics and international involvement. The latter was certainly an important factor. The prevailing American perspective is probably best summed up by Secretary of State Rogers: “My view is that we should favor [intervention] because if the King goes down the drain then the GD thing is a total mess. This way it will be a mess, but if they can save the King there is some advantage.”²²⁸ In response to Hussein’s requests for help, Kissinger contacted Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin to inquire as to whether Israel might be willing to intervene to save the Jordanian monarchy. Rabin agreed in principal, though he said he would have to consult with Prime

²²⁶ “280. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” (US Dept. of State, 30 p.m 1970).

²²⁷ “284. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State (4988)” (US Dept. of State, 0124Z 1970).

²²⁸ “285. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Secretary of State Rogers, and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)” (US Dept. of State, 10 p.m 1970).

Minister Meir.²²⁹ Overnight, Israeli reserves were mobilized, and two mechanized infantry brigades deployed to the Golan Heights.²³⁰

More significant, though, was the role of internal Syrian politics. While the PLO could not have controlled the role of external forces, it had somewhat more influence on its relationship with the Syrian government. Though its relationship with Salah Jadid was strong at this stage, its relationship with Asad, both because of Asad's disapproval of the intemperate behavior and rhetoric of many of the PLO factions, the PLO's relationship with his rival, was not.

From the beginning, then, Asad was opposed to the intervention in Jordan, which would prove deeply problematic for the PLO. While Jadid had adequate control over the Syrian military to order the invasion of Jordan, the ultimate military decision-making rested with Asad, who refused to authorize air cover for the Syrian tank columns.²³¹ This left them vulnerable to Jordanian air strikes, and the tide began to turn in favor the Jordanian military; perhaps buoyed by assurances of American support, the Jordanian military decided to make use of its small air force, comprised of 18 British Hawker Hunter fighter jets,²³² and moved an additional 80 tanks to the area to reinforce the 90 already present, strafing the

²²⁹ "289. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)" (US Dept. of State, 30 p.m 1970).

²³⁰ "303. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting."

²³¹ Alasdair Drysdale and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria and the Middle East Peace Process* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), 178; Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms*, 96; Efrat and Bercovitch, *Superpowers and Client States in the Middle East: The Imbalance of Influence*, 210-211; There are multiple explanations for this decision: Drysdale and Hinnebusch argue that Asad was deterred from providing air cover by the threat of Israeli and US intervention, of which he may have been apprised by the Soviets. Talhami suggests that Asad was also concerned about being the "odd man out" if the issue were later settled through mediation, while Efrat and Bercovitch argue that this was a calculated attempt on Asad's part to humiliate Jadid. Asad himself later claimed that he had felt that it was important for Syria to maintain good relations with Jordan to preserve Jordan's military for later confrontation with Israel, the actual enemy. This explanation is supported by claims from some sources that Syria had no interest in occupying Jordanian territory, and had treated captured Jordanian troops as a "brotherly force" releasing them immediately. This lends credence to Asad's later claim that he declined to deploy the air force out of a desire to minimize conflict with Jordan. See also Seale, 1988. However, there is little doubt that the ultimate failure of the mission in Jordan weakened Jadid and Atassi significantly, and facilitated the successful coup launched by Asad three months later. Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

²³² "303. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting."

Syrian tank columns.²³³ The Syrians had lost a total of 120 tanks, between 30 and 60 of them to mechanical failure.²³⁴ (The Jordanians also suffered far fewer losses overall, losing between 75 and 90 tanks.)²³⁵ By the evening of the 23rd, in the absence of any defense against the Jordanian air assault, the Syrian tank columns began withdrawing back to Syria.²³⁶ Had the Syrian air force become involved, things might have gone differently.²³⁷

With the Syrian withdrawal and the clear military superiority of the Jordanian military, the end of the confrontation was, in hindsight, imminent, though Arafat himself seemed to believe otherwise. On the 24th, an Arab League delegation consisting of the prime ministers of Tunisia and Sudan, the Egyptian chief of staff and the Kuwaiti defense minister arrived in Amman. Under pressure from this delegation (and Nasser) Hussein announced a ceasefire negotiated with one of Arafat's lieutenants.²³⁸ Although Arafat himself was on his way to Cairo with Numeiri, and calling for continued resistance against the army, the fighting did stop long enough for civilians to go out and buy food,²³⁹ and many of the militants who had remained trapped in the refugee camps were able to escape from the city.²⁴⁰

²³³ "304. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting" (US Dept. of State, 25-5 p.m 1970).

²³⁴ "313. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting" (US Dept. of State, noon 1970).

²³⁵ "326. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting" (US Dept. of State, 10-3:45 p.m 1970).

²³⁶ Hess, "Battles Go On in Jordan, Army Claims Some Gains; U.S. Stressing Diplomacy," 1.

²³⁷ "Israel Analyzes Air War in Jordan," *The New York Times*, 1970, 17; Lawson, *Why Syria Goes to War: Thirty Years of Confrontation*; Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* New York Times. "Israel Analyzes Air War in Jordan." Sep 23, 1970, pg. 17. Some accounts of the crisis, notably those offered by Lawson (1996) and Shlaim (2007) credit Israeli intervention more directly for the Syrian withdrawal; Shlaim states that Israeli phantom jets flew low and fast enough over the Syrian columns to generate sonic booms, as a warning against further involvement in Jordan (Shlaim 2007: 333.) Shlaim also suggests that this intervention was at least partly the result of Hussein's personal friendship with Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon. However, this episode is absent from news accounts at the time, and from transcripts of discussions within the American administration; given Kissinger's closeness with both Prime Minister Meir and President Nixon, it is unlikely that he would not have been informed of such an incident by the former and in turn shared this information with the latter.

²³⁸ Previous ceasefires called on the 18th and 21st had been more or less ignored by all parties.

²³⁹ "316. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" (US Dept. of State, 1970).

²⁴⁰ Interview, Abu Jihad.

For the next two days, the two sides were stalemated. The army controlled most of Amman, with the exception of some parts of the refugee camps and adjacent neighborhoods. Though the fedayeen held the towns of Ajloun, Ramtha and Jerash, they were surrounded by the army. The American read on the situation (which seems plausible) was that the king was holding out for the full capitulation of the PLO to the authority of the Jordanian state, but that he faced pressure from the Arab league mediating committee, particularly Numeiri and Nasser, to allow the Palestinian resistance to survive in Jordan, as well as severe criticism from Iraq and Syria.²⁴¹ In this sense, the PLO continued to benefit from the patronage of some of the Arab states, and the leverage it had over others; however sympathetic Nasser may have been to Hussein's situation, as Hussein believed him to be, he could not openly endorse the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan.²⁴²

Perhaps in response to the above pressure, Hussein travelled to Cairo on the 27th to sign a permanent ceasefire agreement with Arafat at the Cairo Hilton. Initially, the terms seemed moderately favorable to, or at least not catastrophic for, the PLO. These included the withdrawal of both sides' forces from Amman; the release of prisoners; the return of military and civilian conditions in other towns their pre-conflict state; the return of authority over security to the police; and an end to the military government. It did not call for the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan or for its disarmament. At 9:25pm, Arafat passed the order to the fedayeen to cease all operations. The next day, Gamal Abdel Nasser died of a heart attack.²⁴³

²⁴¹ "328. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to President Nixon: SUBJECT: The Situation in Jordan" (US Dept. of State, a.m 1970).

²⁴² Shlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*, 336.

²⁴³ Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983*, 59.

That the fedayeen found themselves so badly outmatched by the Jordanian military raises the question of why the King had not acted sooner. One answer, suggested both by American decision-makers and Avi Shlaim, was that the king waited as long as he did out of a fear of alienating the “silent majority” of Palestinian civilians; once the fedayeen had lost public support, he felt free to act.²⁴⁴

And indeed, the fedayeen did retain a good deal of public support in the refugee camps, even during the war. Abu Jihad recounted spending six days hiding in various back gardens in Jabal Hussein, during which the civilians in the camp were guardedly sympathetic: “Sometimes they open a small window, give us some bread, sometimes some *batikh*, [watermelon], sometimes eggs.” At another point, he and his associate were hidden overnight in the home of Sheikh Abdel Hamid al-Sayigh, a former minister in the Jordanian government and later a speaker of the PNC, who was also harboring four wounded PFLP fighters. Such risky actions certainly demonstrate sympathy for the fedayeen, but while they likely saved the lives of some fighters, they were not enough to save the PLO in Jordan as a whole. Between the 17th and 27th of September, 3,400 Palestinians, civilians and fighters, were killed.

Moreover, although the agreement in Cairo on the 27th marked the end of major hostilities, skirmishes continued between the army and the fedayeen much as they had before the war. The major difference was that the odds had now tipped strongly in favor of the Jordanian military, due to the weakening of the PLO’s forces and the increased leeway given the army by the government. On October 13th, Arafat was forced to sign a second treaty, the Amman Agreement, which substantially restricted fedayeen activity, and eroded the benefits which the

²⁴⁴ “272. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon.”

organization had been able to retain in Cairo.²⁴⁵ The PLO's position was not helped by Arafat's inability to control the PLO's leftist factions, which remained addicted to political grandstanding. At the Palestinian National Congress in Cairo in February of 1971, George Habash once again called for the overthrow of the Hashemites and the incorporation of Jordan into a greater Palestine.²⁴⁶

By that spring, Hussein was clearly determined to remove the PLO from Jordan. In March the army expelled the PLO from Irbid, and in early April, they were removed from Amman to the hills around Ajloun, where, on July 13th, the army launched a final offensive against them. By July 19th, the last of the fedayeen were expelled from Jordanian territory. It is probably a sign of the level of animosity between the two sides that the last Palestinian fighters to surrender chose to cross the border and surrender to the Israelis instead.²⁴⁷ Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tal, widely considered to be the driving force behind the Jordanian attack on the PLO was said to have commented simply, "They violated our hospitality."²⁴⁸ That November, in Cairo, Tal was assassinated by the newly formed Black September organization.

Conclusion

To summarize the argument laid out in this chapter, the PLO's defeat in Jordan can be directly traced to its coercive behavior towards the Jordanian state and public, which was in and of itself at least partly the result of the internal fragmentation produced by its relationships with its sponsors (though this effect was far less pronounced in 1970 than it would be later, as will be seen in Chapter Three.) The nature of these relationships meant that despite the material assets

²⁴⁵ Among other things, it specifically enjoined them to obey Jordanian traffic laws. The fedayeen were notorious for their reckless driving.

²⁴⁶ Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan*., 240.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 241.

²⁴⁸ Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983*, 62.

they helped the PLO procure, they were ultimately insufficient to save the movement in Jordan.

After the defeat of the Arab militaries in the 1967 June War, the PLO began the process of reinventing itself as an independent movement, headed by Arafat and dominated by Fatah, but nevertheless comprised of all the various Palestinian guerrilla factions. The Battle of Karameh, which was deliberately framed as a victory for the fedayeen (despite a number of factors rendering this description problematic) increased the prestige of the PLO factions and proved a powerful source of public support in Jordan. This also translated into both material support, such as weapons and funding, and political support in the form of pressure on the Jordanian regime from many Arab states, particularly the “progressive republics.” However, although in its relations with most of the Arab governments the PLO’s dominant strategy was provision of service as a military proxy, the PLO behaved coercively towards the Jordanian state, especially the army. Its approach towards Jordanian civilians became increasingly coercive as well. This resulted in a backlash on the part of the government and military, which was itself made possible by a loss of public sympathy; had the public remained strongly behind the fedayeen, it would have been harder for Hussein to order the army to move against them, but this was not the case. True, the PLO’s relationship with at least part of the Syrian regime was strong enough to produce concrete Syrian intervention on behalf of the fedayeen, but because the PLO failed to gain the support of the *entire* Syrian government, this intervention was ultimately limited, harmful to the Syrian army, and certainly insufficient to rescue the PLO.

Although the PLO was able to mount some resistance in the north, particularly around Irbid and the refugee camps, ultimately, it was no match for the Jordanian army. Moreover, because it was not only expelled from the country,

but also left many Jordanians with bad memories of its behavior, it was never able to recover a base of operations there. If survival is composed of both resistance and recovery, the PLO clearly failed on both accounts.

A structuralist explanation for this outcome would suggest that the PLO was defeated because the Jordanian army was stronger militarily, or that the PLO was a “foreign” militia fighting outside their own country. But these explanations are ultimately too static to provide a full explanation for the outcome of the conflict. It is undeniable, of course, that the Jordanian army was larger and better armed than the PLO, but historically, a favorable military balance has hardly been sufficient for a counterinsurgent victory. This is demonstrated by examples ranging from the British during the American Revolution, to the United States in Vietnam, as well as the military performance of Hizbullah, discussed in Chapter Five.

It is of course true that the PLO was badly outgunned, although, as noted above, it is not clear that all of its members, or even all of its leaders, realized this. Many seemed to believe that the army’s restraint indicated it was afraid it would lose a confrontation with the PLO. In reality, though, King Hussein was restrained not by military factors but political ones. Because of the normative power of the Palestinian cause, and the influence which Arafat in particular therefore wielded, Hussein was constrained by pressure from the other Arab leaders, in particular Nasser, not to act openly against the fedayeen. That Arafat has the ability to pull this particular political lever was the result of his efforts at both marketing the PLO’s wider mission (and legitimacy as the movement charged with the pursuit of that mission) and the PLO’s status as a military proxy for the “progressive” states.

Nevertheless, because of the military gap between the two sides, if the PLO were going to decisively win in Jordan by toppling the monarchy, in the

absence of a successful Syrian (or Iraqi) intervention, it would have needed to provoke a schism in the Jordanian military (as they were in fact able to do in Lebanon in 1976.) But this did not occur, due in large part to the PLO's alienation of the army and the civilian population from which it was drawn.

In reality, this outcome was far from predetermined. In Jordan, while the distinction between Jordanian-Jordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians was (and is) deeply salient politically, it was (and is) not the only important division within the country. Divisions of class, between north and south, and between urban, rural and Bedouin, were also significant in shaping political preferences, loyalties and actions. If the division between Jordanians of East Bank descent and West Bank descent was intrinsically deterministic with regard to individual loyalties, then there should have been wide-scale defections within the military and civil service. The economy should have ground to a halt as Palestinian workers went on strike in support of the PLO. Palestinian students should have poured into the streets in protest. This is certainly what the PLO expected to happen.

But in fact, no individual's reactions to political events are determined solely by one facet of their identity, and the salience of those identities is itself deeply contingent upon and shaped by ongoing events. The PLO did not do nearly enough to convince Jordanians, whether of Palestinian or East Banker origin, that they should support them and their political project, and in fact, their behavior led many who might otherwise have been sympathetic to the opposite conclusion. Though they did garner support in the refugee camps, this was not enough to affect the outcome of the war. By the spring of 1971, the PLO's political leadership and military apparatus had been more or less entirely relocated to the last available Arab state bordering Israel; Lebanon. Their experience there, which bears a number of similarities to their experience in Jordan, will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Three: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

Introduction

On the morning of June 6th, 1982, Israel Defense Forces units crossed Israel's northern border into Lebanon. Although the mission, dubbed Operation Peace for Galilee, had only been authorized to push as far north as the Litani River, Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon eventually ordered the army to continue all the way to Beirut, with the goal of destroying the PLO's presence in Lebanon altogether.²⁴⁹ Over the next three months, Israel effectively pushed the PLO first out of South Lebanon, and then out of Beirut. In the midst of a punishing bombardment of the capital, at the request of its allies on the Lebanese left, the PLO agreed to leave Lebanon, and in September, the PLO leadership was evacuated from Beirut to Tunis. Although some Fatah units remained in the north into 1983 and other factions were able to reestablish themselves to a limited degree in Beirut in later years, the evacuation to Tunis was a major loss for the PLO. It never again recovered the full scope of action it once had in Lebanon, and it had lost its last major military and political staging ground in a country bordering Israel. In short, the PLO was ultimately unable to mount effective resistance to the IDF assault, and was unable to recover its position in Lebanon after the war. Therefore, I consider this a case of failure to survive.

But, as in Jordan, neither the PLO's expulsion from Lebanon nor the speed with which it was accomplished was in any way predetermined. While the IDF greatly outnumbered and outgunned the Palestinian forces, guerrilla conditions do

²⁴⁹ Abba Eban describes the goals laid out by IDF Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan as the destruction of PLO in Beirut leading to the end of raids on northern Israel. Israel: Va'adat ha-hakirah la-hakirat ha-eru'im be-mahanot ha-pelitim be-Berut., *The Beirut massacre: the complete Kahan Commission report* (Princeton: Karz-Cohl, 1983), IX.

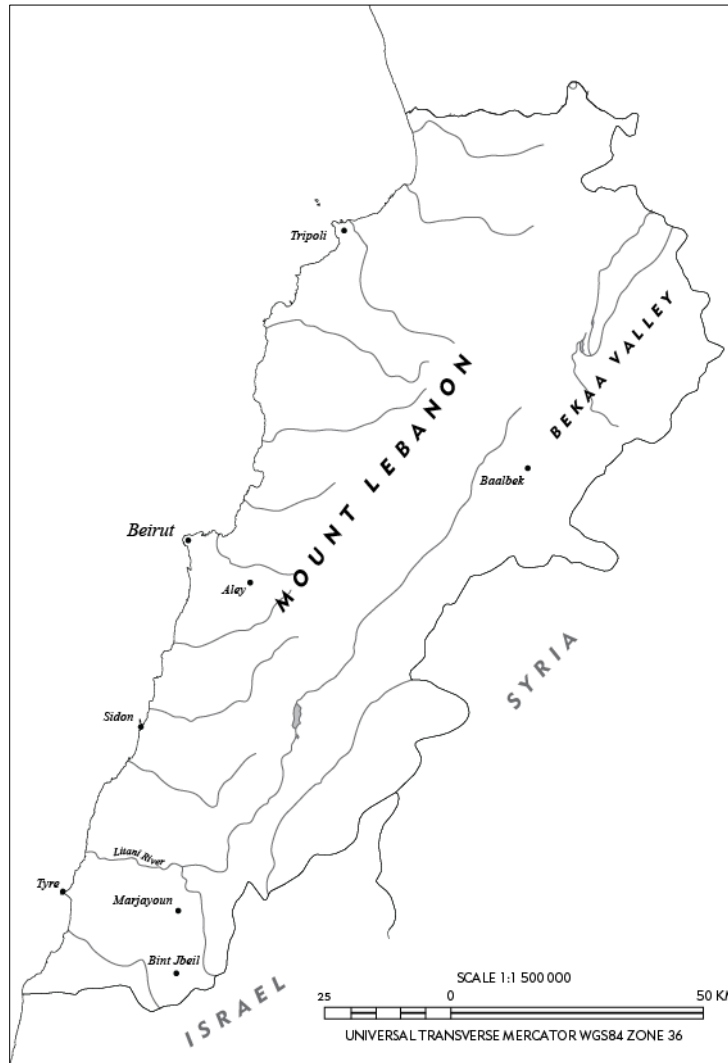
not always favor the strong, a point clearly understood by some, if not all, of the PLO's military leaders.²⁵⁰ The difference in numbers between the PLO and the IDF in 1982 (40,000 versus 85,000, if we include the PLO's Syrian allies and its Lebanese adversaries) is still smaller than that between the IDF and Hizbullah in 2006 (30,000 versus 10,000, including all Hizbullah reservists.) Rather, the roots of this outcome lie in the strategies the PLO pursued to acquire resources from the Lebanese state and civilians in South Lebanon, and in its relationships with its various Arab sponsors. As it had in Jordan, the PLO behaved coercively towards Lebanese civilians, particularly in the south. It also behaved coercively towards most (but not all) segments of the Lebanese state.

At the same time, the PLO (and its various factions) became increasingly bound to the various Arab states for whom it served as a military proxy. While these relationships were highly lucrative during this period, they also had a distorting effect on the organization's structure and cohesion; the damage that this caused easily outweighed whatever material advantages it might have generated. Through it may be tempting to assume that the PLO's defeat in Lebanon was because they were "strangers in a strange land," or badly organized, or because they were badly outgunned by the IDF, these realities were not predetermined, but rather of the PLO's own making. As in Jordan, the PLO's alienation and isolation in Lebanon at both the political and local levels, as well as its lack of cohesion, can be traced to the strategies the PLO pursued with regard to the local civilian population in Lebanon, Lebanese state and the governments in the region. These failed to generate the material and non-material assets the organization would have required to survive Operation Peace for Galilee.

²⁵⁰Interview, Hamad M.

Some Background on the PLO in Lebanon

In order to understand the PLO's experience in Lebanon, some discussion of the Lebanese political context is necessary. Of the over 750,000 Palestinian refugees created in 1948, close to 100,000 fled to Lebanon.²⁵¹ As in Jordan, policy towards the new arrivals was derived from domestic political necessity, but the outcome was quite different.



Map 3: Lebanon

²⁵¹ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 19.

Political power in Lebanon is divided based on sectarian identity. Under the unwritten 1943 agreement known as the National Pact (*al meythaq al watani*), the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian, the Prime Ministry for a Sunni Muslim, the position of Speaker of the Parliament for a Shi'ite Muslim, and the position of Chief of Staff of the armed forces for a Druze, with the ratio of seats in the parliament fixed at 6:5, favoring the Christian community. With the arrival of the Palestinian refugees in 1948, many Christian politicians feared that extending citizenship to the predominantly Sunni Muslim Palestinian refugees would shift the country's delicate demographic balance with regard to the (theoretically proportionate) distribution of political power along sectarian lines.²⁵² Therefore, while Palestinians in Jordan received citizenship in the context of Abdullah I's attempt to solidify control of the West Bank, in Lebanon, Palestinians were denied citizenship and systematically excluded from Lebanon's political and economic life, through restrictions on where they could live, work and travel.²⁵³

By the 1960s, the Sunni, Shi'ite and Druze communities were increasingly resentful of what was perceived as unfair Christian political privilege enshrined under the National Pact.²⁵⁴ At the same time, the rise of Nasserism and pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s was deeply alarming to a Christian community that wished to avoid finding itself a minority in a Muslim super-state.²⁵⁵ In this context, the arrival of the PLO had a powerful and polarizing effect on Lebanese politics. The political left, loosely allied under the leadership of the Druze leader

²⁵² Farid. El-Khazen, *The breakdown of the state in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 132.

²⁵³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 39.

²⁵⁴ This was exacerbated by the fact that the division of power under the National Pact was based on the 1932 census, taken when the Christian community still held a clear demographic majority; by the 1960s this was no longer the case. There still has not been a new census since 1932.

²⁵⁵ Itamar Rabinovich and Itamar Rabinovich, *The war for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 34.

Kamal Jumblatt and his Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), saw the fedayeen as political fellow travelers, while some Shi'ite and Sunni notables saw them as a source of political leverage, though the latter were also uneasy about the challenge the PLO posed to their traditional authority.²⁵⁶

Although Lebanon's decision, expressed at the 1964 Cairo Summit, not to participate in active warfare against Israel, was at least formally respected by the other Arab states,²⁵⁷ in practice, Palestinian militant groups were already politically and militarily active in Lebanon by the early 1960s. At this stage, Lebanese territory was used for transit of fighters and weapons from Syria or for launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, after which the fighters would retreat back into Syria, but this activity nevertheless brought the fedayeen into conflict with the Lebanese government. In 1964, the first fedayeen were arrested for attempting to cross into Israel and in 1965, the first Palestinian fighter died in a Lebanese prison, sparking protests in support of the PLO. Later that year, Arafat himself was arrested for attempting to provoke a confrontation with Israel.²⁵⁸

With the regional earthquake of the 1967 June war, as noted in the previous chapter, the PLO underwent a profound transformation, and Lebanon was drawn increasingly into the PLO's conflict with Israel. With the loss of the West Bank and the collapse of resistance inside historical Palestine, the PLO established more permanent bases along the Israeli-Lebanese border (in an area that became known as Fatahland,) and a permanent trail was established for bringing weapons and fighters across the mountains from Syria.²⁵⁹ Fatah began

²⁵⁶ Charles Winslow, *Lebanon: war and politics in a fragmented society* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 178; Rabinovich and Rabinovich, *The war for Lebanon, 1970-1985*, 35; Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 66.

²⁵⁷ At the 1967 Khartoum Conference following the June war, a decision was made to launch attacks against Israel from Egypt, Syria and Jordan, but not from Lebanon.

²⁵⁸ Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 162-163.

²⁵⁹ This was nicknamed the "Arafat trail" in reference to the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" in Vietnam.

launching attacks against Israel from positions in Lebanon, for which Israel retaliated with artillery raids. In December of 1968, two PFLP fighters attacked an El Al plane in Athens, Greece, and in retaliation, Israeli commandos blew up 13 Middle East Airlines planes and an oil tanker at Beirut's airport. This produced a surge in Lebanese public opinion in favor of the fedayeen; Jumblatt organized massive demonstrations in support of the Palestinians in Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre. Attempts by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to break them up only led to clashes in Beirut and the Bekaa.²⁶⁰

In 1969, the Lebanese Army moved to rein in the fedayeen, but the arrival of Saiqa troops from Syria and increased PLO pressure in other areas of the country, followed by Syrian forces on the border and pressure from other Arab states forced the army to back down. Moreover, LAF commander Emile Boustani was forced to sign the Cairo Agreement, under which the PLO was allowed to establish units in the camps (over which it had effective sovereignty) and along the border. The Lebanese authorities also agreed to guarantee supply lines from Syria and to facilitate the movement of troops to the border. In exchange, Arafat affirmed Lebanese sovereignty, agreed to maintain discipline among the PLO's troops, and promised to refrain from interference in Lebanese affairs. In effect, the PLO now had license to use Lebanon as a base against Israel.²⁶¹ Division within the government between the Maronite politicians (some of whose paramilitary groups had stepped up their acquisition of weapons) and the Sunni politicians (who faced massive support for the PLO from their constituencies) left the government paralyzed.²⁶² In March of 1970, the first serious clashes between the Maronite militias and the PLO broke out.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 164.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

²⁶² El-Khazen, *The breakdown of the state in Lebanon, 1967-1976*, 150-151.

In the two years following the PLO's defeat in Jordan, 15,000 to 30,000 Palestinians, including thousands of armed fedayeen, flooded into Lebanon.²⁶⁴ The organization became increasingly involved in Lebanese politics; the radical Palestinian factions allied with the Lebanese left, while Fatah (particularly Arafat) was less interested in the specific ideology of its Lebanese allies than in their willingness to form a partnership.²⁶⁵ Because of the structure of the Lebanese political system, these alliances effectively granted the Palestinian organizations veto power, rendering it difficult for the state to move against them, or even to decide whether or not it wanted to.²⁶⁶ Because the PLO strengthened the left's position vis-à-vis the Maronite right, the PLO's presence also had the effect of amplifying internal political divisions,²⁶⁷ which were further exacerbated by escalating Israeli reprisal attacks. The 1973 "Rent-A-Car" raid in which Israeli agents came ashore in boats and then rented cars in order to assassinate three prominent Fatah leaders sparked massive protests by those who believed the government was not doing enough to defend the PLO, culminating in a firefight between the army and the PFLP. Again, the Lebanese left rallied around its Palestinian ally, and Asad dispatched Saiqa and PLA units from Syria to make it clear that his government would not tolerate a crackdown on the PLO in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, at the international level, the PLO's stock continued to rise. It received a substantial boost in its prestige in the Arab world when, at the 1974 Arab Summit in Rabat it was voted the "sole legitimate representative of the

²⁶³ Including the kidnapping of future president Bashir Gemayel, the son of Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Phalange; he was released only after the intercession of both Jumblatt and Arafat. Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 167-168.

²⁶⁴ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 65.

²⁶⁵ Khalidi, 81 and Brynen, 57. The expulsion from Jordan also produced a split between the radical organizations and the mainstream PLO leadership: The PFLP and the DFLP believed that the major mistake in Jordan had been the failure to directly attack the Jordanian regime, while Arafat's faction believed that major error in Jordan had been antagonizing Hussein in the first place. Cobban, 53.

²⁶⁶ El-Khazen, *The breakdown of the state in Lebanon, 1967-1976*, 297-299.

²⁶⁷ As Charles Winslow puts it "[w]hereas the Cairo Agreement had left many Lebanese Christians feeling nervous, with Jumblatt's help, soon they would be scared out of their wits." Winslow, *Lebanon: war and politics in a fragmented society*, 163.

Palestinian people.” Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly shortly thereafter (introduced by President Franjiyeh himself,) where the PLO was granted the status of “observer.”

By 1975, Lebanon had reached the boiling point. The shooting death of Deputy Maarouf Sa’ad at a protest in Saida provoked clashes between the (largely leftist and Palestinian) protesters and the army. This in turn further solidified the leftist/Palestinian versus rightist/Christian narrative,²⁶⁸ although in reality, the political landscape in Lebanon was not (and is not) nearly so simple.

On April 13th, Maronite militiamen massacred 27 Palestinian civilians on a bus in the Ayn Rummaneh neighborhood of Beirut, after which the violence escalated rapidly, as both sides traded reprisal attacks. The leftist parties and their associated militias allied under an umbrella movement led by Jumblatt (and allied with the PLO) known as the Lebanese National Movement, and as the LNM wrangled with Franjiyeh’s government over the National Pact, militias on both sides committed massacres of civilians. Lebanon’s 15-year civil war had begun.

Over the following months, the Joint Forces (as the LNM-PLO alliance was known) expanded their control over the country. Backed into a corner, Franjiyeh turned to an unlikely quarter for help: Syria. Syria’s interests in Lebanon have generally been threefold: to maintain a stable balance between the various parties; to prevent any from growing strong enough to pose a serious threat to its influence; and to avoid the eruption of sufficient chaos to trigger an Israeli intervention.²⁶⁹ All three of these interests were threatened by the prospect of an LNM victory, and so, on June 1st 1976, Asad dispatched 15,000 Syrian

²⁶⁸ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 173-174.

²⁶⁹ Asad’s biographer Patrick Seale writes that Asad feared that Jumblatt’s ambition was to turn (at least parts of) Lebanon into “a sort of Mediterranean Cuba” in which the PLO would have free rein, provoking retaliation from Israel. Patrick. Seale, *Asad of Syria: the struggle for the Middle East* (London: Taurus, 1990), 280.

troops to Lebanon.²⁷⁰ Palestinian areas of East Beirut were besieged, most notably Tel al Zaatar, which underwent a siege culminating in the massacre of most of the men in the camp.²⁷¹

Meanwhile, the PLO relocated many of its troops to the south, expanding its control of the area as well as the frequency and severity of its operations against Israel. In response, in 1978, Israel launched an invasion of Lebanon code named Operation Litani. Its goal was to push the PLO north of the Litani River, but it managed to do so only temporarily. A more significant result was the arrival of two new military forces in South Lebanon: the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a peacekeeping mission stationed along the border, and the South Lebanon Army (SLA), an Israel-allied Lebanese militia based around a splinter faction of the LAF led by Major Sa'ad Haddad (see below.) But despite UNIFIL's presence (and partly because of the SLA's) South Lebanon continued to be wracked by constant, low level conflict. In July of 1981, this erupted into open warfare including an Israeli attack on Beirut that left hundreds dead.²⁷² Although the "Fourteen Days War" ended in a ceasefire, hawkish decision-makers in Israel believed this would not last (in part because the PLO continued to shell northern Israel), and that the PLO must be eliminated as a military threat to Israel's northern border.²⁷³ And indeed, the ceasefire proved only temporary; in June of 1982, the IDF launched Operation Peace for Galilee. In seeking to understand this conflict's disastrous outcome for the PLO, I will begin by looking at its relationships with the Lebanese state, then discuss its relationships with its Arab sponsors, and finally, with the Lebanese public.

²⁷⁰ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2007), 199.

²⁷¹ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 224.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 252.

²⁷³ For further analysis see Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 156-157.

State Sponsorship

The Lebanese State

Even by Lebanese standards, with the onset of the civil war, the Lebanese state became increasingly fragmented and the lines between state and non-state actors less and less clear. This renders it somewhat difficult to talk about PLO policy towards “the Lebanese state.” Almost all of the various Lebanese militias were connected to political parties and many politicians, most of whom were members of powerful families known as *zu’ama*, were also the leaders of militias. The Franjiyeh family controlled the Marada, which drew from the Christian population around Zghorta in the north, the Chamoun family led the Tigers, and the largest of the Christian parties, the Kataeb, was founded and led by the Gemayels. Through a great deal of bloody intra-Christian fighting, these groups were eventually more or less united under the banner of the Lebanese Forces, dominated by the Kataeb.²⁷⁴ The Shi’ite militia and political party known as Amal grew out of the Movement of the Dispossessed, a semi-leftist social-cum-political movement in the south. The Druze had the leftist Progressive Socialist Party (the PSP) led first Kamal Jumblatt and then his son Walid. Other quasi-leftist parties included the communists, the Nasserites, and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.²⁷⁵

Even in the years before the outbreak of the war, when the mechanisms of the state were in better working order, state policy towards the PLO benefitted some political factions while making others very nervous indeed. The Cairo Agreement, which contradicted Lebanese government policy as laid out at the

²⁷⁴ There is still significant bad blood between the Franjiyehs and the Gemayels, due largely to the massacre of Tony Franjiyeh and his family by Kataeb fighters in 1978, as well as very different views on the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

²⁷⁵ The Syrian Social Nationalist Party, founded by Anton Saadeh in 1932 in Beirut, takes a Syrian ethno-nationalist approach, and advocates the establishment of a greater Syrian state from Palestine to Iraq and even parts of Turkey.

summits of 1964 and 1967, is the most obvious of these, but the Melkart Protocols, a secondary agreement signed in 1973 which slightly modified the Cairo agreement, qualify as well. The PLO was able to gain these concessions due to the pressure placed on Lebanon by its outside allies, but also through the support of some actors within the Lebanese state. Therefore, while I believe one can speak of the PLO as behaving coercively towards the Lebanese state in aggregate, it is probably more accurate to examine its relationships with the major political factions – the conservative Maronite parties, the Druze and Sunni left, and the emerging Shi'ite movement.²⁷⁶

The Maronite Right

The PLO's approach to the Christian political leadership is probably the clearest of the three; it was almost uniformly coercive, and the relationship between the parties veered between veiled distrust and overt hostility. The leaders of the major Christian parties were routinely referred to as "isolationist" and "defeatist" in speeches by Palestinian leaders and on Palestinian radio, and at times as actually being in league with "imperialists."²⁷⁷ For their part, the Maronite political leadership's attitude was strongly shaped by domestic political concerns. In addition to the demographic threat to Maronite dominance posed by the mostly Sunni Palestinian refugees, the Maronite leadership saw the PLO as a threat to Lebanon's very sovereignty. After 1967 and particularly after 1970, Fatah's increasing control of the south became a sore point for many Christian

²⁷⁶ This is a gross oversimplification of the Lebanese political landscape; there were many Christian members of leftist parties, and many conservative Sunnis who were very uncomfortable with left wing politics. However, the above is a generally accurate sketch of the political alliances present in Lebanon in the 1970 and 1980s.

²⁷⁷ "'Arafat's Statement," *Beirut Domestic Service*, April 2, 1976; "Palestinian Describes Fighting." (Lebanon: Voice of Palestine [Clandestine], January 20, 1976).

politicians. Accordingly, the Christian political establishment tended to support the LAF in its confrontations with the PLO, most notably in 1969 and 1973.

For all of these reasons, most of the Christian leadership cannot be reasonably described as “willing hosts” of the PLO. The PLO’s presence in Lebanon was, from the point of view of this segment of the government, the result of coercion.²⁷⁸ Indeed, the early phase of the war was essentially a contest between the two parties, characterized by massacres and atrocities on both sides (although the Palestinian refugees of Beirut suffered particularly brutal attacks at the hands of the rightist militias.) An Israeli veteran who served with some of the Christian militiamen (who some of the IDF soldiers called “aftershave soldiers” because of their habit of dousing themselves in Aquavella and dressing quite nattily even in combat) recalled a joke told to him by one of the Phalangists: “‘Do you know what’s the difference between one Palestinian dead and all Palestinians dead?’ I didn’t know and he said like this: ‘One Palestinian dead is pollution, and all Palestinians dead is a solution.’”²⁷⁹

The Left

As noted above, the PLO was closely aligned with the Lebanese left. For some, this relationship was a matter of ideological commitment to the broadly leftist aims of most PLO factions. For others, it was a matter of sympathy with the plight of the Palestinians, both as fellow Arabs and on general humanitarian grounds.²⁸⁰ After 1948, support for the Palestinian cause became a fundamental component of what it meant to be an Arab leftist and/or an Arab nationalist; after 1967, this came to mean support for the PLO. Therefore it was difficult for left-

²⁷⁸ Interview, Michel Metni, Achrafiyeh office director, Tayyar al Watani al Hurr. In some ways this echoes the position of much of the East Banker and Bedouin elite in Jordan.

²⁷⁹ Interview, anonymous IDF reservist and OPfG veteran.

²⁸⁰ Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and violence in Lebanon: confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1979).

identified and Muslim politicians not to ally with the Palestinian movement. In this sense, the PLO's framing of itself as the representative not only of the Palestinian people (as recognized at the Rabat summit in 1974) but also as the standard bearers of the authentic Arab left was very successful. That the PLO was able to command support across the spectrum of the Lebanese left is a testament both to the diversity of the Palestinian factions and to the organization's ability to frame itself in such a way as to appeal to a varied constituency.

As noted above, there was also an instrumental component to this relationship. Many (though not all) of the Lebanese leftist parties were dominated by Sunni, Druze, and in some cases Shi'ite membership (though some, notably the communists, included high numbers of Christians as well). Objection to the status quo under the National Pact, at any rate, tended to be higher among those groups who felt disadvantaged by an allocation of political power to the Maronite community which was increasingly viewed as disproportionate to their population. Therefore, for both ideological and communal reasons, many of the leaders of the Lebanese left saw in the arrival of a predominantly Muslim, leftist, armed force a source of leverage with which to push for reform of the National Pact.²⁸¹ Not all Muslim community leaders were wholeheartedly enthusiastic - the traditional Sunni and Shi'ite religious leadership was suspicious of the PLO's secularism and felt that it threatened their influence - but even the Mufti of Beirut is supposed to have once said "Al filistiniun al jaysh al sunna", or "The Palestinians are the army of the Sunnis."²⁸²

²⁸¹Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*. For some members of the left, reform of the National Pact was itself a matter of principle; the Druze leaders Kamal Jumblatt, and later his son, Walid, despite a multitude of alliance and policy shifts, both consistently called for the abolition of the consociational system of government, despite the fact that under this system the Druze are guaranteed a seat at the political table disproportionate to their numbers (about 7% of the population.)

²⁸² Interview, Michel Metni.

The New Shi'ite Leadership

The PLO's relationship with the Shi'ite components of the Lebanese state underwent a far more drastic change over time than its relationships with either the left or the right. Although the traditional Shi'ite *zu'ama* tended to be quite conservative, during the 1960s, a new Shi'ite leadership emerged in the form of the Amal movement. But though Amal and the PLO initially had a positive relationship based on shared political goals, by 1982 the two were at loggerheads.

Like their Christian and Muslim compatriots, during the late 1960s, Lebanon's Shi'ites began mobilizing politically. However, they were not for the most part mobilizing *as Shi'ites*, but rather joining groups organized around ideologies of class or regional grievance, such as the communists or the SSNP.²⁸³ In an effort to combat this increasing secularization, Imam Musa Sadr founded the Movement of the Dispossessed in South Lebanon in 1967.²⁸⁴ The movement provided a variety of social services in the south, the Bekaa and the southern suburbs of Beirut (known as the Dahiyeh). It advocated a broad political agenda, including the communal grievances of the Shi'ites regarding the National Pact, their dissatisfaction with the wealthy Shi'ite landowning elite, as well as a range of economic and political concerns affecting lower income Lebanese in general.

It was the latter focus that brought them closer to Fatah. Despite its concern over a loss of market share to the left, Sadr's new Shi'ite leadership felt some affinity for the PLO due to the latter's professed commitment to social justice. Like the left, it saw in the PLO a potential ally who might help reshape a political and economic status quo that disadvantaged the Shi'ites above all others. The PLO built on these commonalities to develop a cordial, even close

²⁸³ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 106.

²⁸⁴ In Arabic, *Harakat al Mahrumin*, also translated "Movement of the Deprived." I use the term "Dispossessed" because the theme of having of disinheritance and dispossession is a constant in Shi'ite theology.

relationship with the leaders of the Movement of the Dispossessed. When Sadr created an armed wing for the movement known as Amal, Fatah helped to train its early cadres. In the earliest stages of the war, Amal even fought alongside the LNM and PLO against the Christian militias.²⁸⁵

Eventually, though, as the interests of the two parties diverged, the relationship soured. As Amal grew into a more mature political movement, the PLO's control over the south and the southern suburbs of Beirut (to which many Shi'ites fled to escape Israeli reprisal attacks), began to seem more and more coercive. In 1976, despite the Shi'ite Council's initial criticism of the Syrian intervention against the PLO and LNM,²⁸⁶ Amal eventually sided with the Syrians. In June, Palestinian forces went so far as to shell both the Higher Shi'ite Council offices and the home of Imam Musa Sadr himself,²⁸⁷ and in August, Palestinian and communist fighters occupied Amal's offices in Beirut and the south.²⁸⁸ Sadr openly criticized the Palestinian resistance's role in provoking Operation Litani,²⁸⁹ and voiced candid opposition to the PLO's power in the south: "The Cairo agreement did not give the south to the Palestinians... The Cairo agreement gave them the right of military presence and of infiltration through the south deep into the occupied territories in order to carry out fedayeen operations, but not the right to fire rockets."²⁹⁰ Moreover, Sadr's public support of the Lebanese army and his requests that it, rather than the Lebanese Forces or the PLO, be the dominant military power in Lebanon did little to endear Amal to either the Christian militias or the Palestinians, although it did improve the

²⁸⁵ Augustus R. Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: struggle for the soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987) Particularly Chapter Three.

²⁸⁶ "Shi'ite Council Statement" (Voice of Lebanon, April 14, 1982).

²⁸⁷ "Radio Reports Shi'ite Council Premises Shelled," *Beirut Domestic Service*, June 28, 1976.

²⁸⁸ "Shi'ite Leader on Lebanese-Palestinian Relations," *Amman Ad-Dustur*, April 25, 1978.

²⁸⁹ *Ad-Dustour* (Amman), April 25th 1978. "Shi'ite Leader on Lebanese-Palestinian Relations." Via FBIS.

²⁹⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*; Ibid., 403 Sayigh argues convincingly that this policy preference stemmed in part from a fear that if Lebanon were to fragment, the Shi'ite areas would in the end be given to the Palestinians.

movement's relationship with the army.²⁹¹ Despite efforts to bring it into the National Movement, Amal became increasingly antagonistic towards the PLO.²⁹² At the same time, Amal found itself with new and powerful regional patrons in the form of Syria and the government which took power in Iran in 1979. When the Iran-Iraq war broke out, the PLO factions allied with Iraq (notably the Arab Liberation Front) clashed with the Iranian-allied Amal.²⁹³

By 1982, the two parties were openly hostile. Nabih Berri called repeatedly for the deployment of the Lebanese Army in the south (a step vigorously opposed by the PLO). While refraining from criticizing Palestinian resistance in principal – particularly as the end of resistance would have meant the acceptance of permanent settlement of Palestinians in South Lebanon – he did openly criticize the consequences of its military activity in the south:

“The launching of Palestinian operations from the south villages leads to Israeli reactions against those villages, which leads to resentment of the Palestinian resistance among the villagers, which leads to various developments on the ground, including clashes between the Amal movement and other parties....The launching of operations from the villages or the presence of bases in the villages frightens the villagers. It is natural for them to be afraid that Israel will someday retaliate and bomb their villages. Instead of being in the center of the village, a base should be far from the village, and not easily visible.”²⁹⁴

By this stage, then, it is fair to say that the PLO's policy towards what was now the dominant force in the Shi'ite community had shifted towards coercion.

In sum, the fragmentation of the Lebanese state produced a corresponding variation in PLO policy towards its different components. Broadly speaking, it was hostile and coercive towards the Maronite right, enjoyed a close relationship

²⁹¹ Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: struggle for the soul of Lebanon*, 61.

²⁹² Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 134-136.

²⁹³ “Party Leaders Discuss Amal, Fatah Clashes,” *Beirut Domestic Service*, March 14, 1980. Also discussed in interview, Maher, (former) PFLP.

²⁹⁴ “Amal Leader Discusses Other Parties in Interview,” *Beirut Monday Morning*, February 1, 1982.

with the left, and swung between the two in regard to the Shi'ites.²⁹⁵ Even the army, which historically had been somewhat less fragmented than other components of the state, fractured under the protracted sectarian pressure of the war. The main body of the military stayed out of the fighting for the most part, although it sometimes acted to keep the combatants apart, and was subject to occasional attack by the Joint Forces.²⁹⁶

There were, however, two important schisms which occurred towards the beginning of the war. The first came in January of 1976, when Ahmed Khatib, a Sunni officer, mutinied, taking with him several thousand predominantly Sunni troops and much of the army's heavy weaponry. Khatib declared the forces under his command to be the "Lebanese Arab Army" and allied with the LNM and PLO.²⁹⁷ This schism led to the second major split; after LAA troops took control of Marjayoun, Major Sa'ad Haddad, a Christian from Marjayoun, was ordered to retake the garrison there. But having done so, he found his forces cut off from Beirut. In the face of escalating hostilities between his troops and the PLO, he, along with some of the villages in the south, turned to the IDF as a source of arms. Haddad's forces eventually reformed into a separate command, the South Lebanon Army, which served as a proxy for the IDF in South Lebanon.²⁹⁸ There was also variation, then, in the PLO's relationship with the army, along ideological and sectarian lines.

²⁹⁵ This was also broadly true of their relationship with the Sunni elite, though, as noted above, these were in some ways constrained by the pro-PLO sentiments of their constituents.

²⁹⁶ "PLO's Abu Iyad Expresses Regret at Attack on Barracks," (*Clandestine*) *Voice of Lebanon*, February 14, 1980.

²⁹⁷ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 214-215.

²⁹⁸ Beate. Hamizrach, *The emergence of the south Lebanon security belt: Major Saad Haddad and the ties with Israel, 1975-1978* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 50-73.

Costs and Benefits: Sanctuary and conflict

So what, then, was the result for the PLO of this split policy towards the various components of the Lebanese state? What were the outcomes, intended and otherwise, of the strategies it pursued in this area? Its coercive approach to the Christian political leadership was for a short while successful. Against the will of many Christian rightist politicians and their constituents, the PLO was able to maintain a base of operations against Israel from Lebanese territory. However, in doing so, the PLO also earned this faction's enmity, perhaps even pushing some who might otherwise have objected towards the alliance with Israel (the members of the SLA, for instance.) While useful for acquiring a critical asset in the short term, in the long term, this strategy was to prove costly, as will be discussed further below.

In contrast, the PLO's approach to the leftist leadership, a combination of marketing along multiple axes and the provision of military backing, was far more successful, allowing the two to forge a strong alliance that provided the PLO with a range of both material and non-material resources. To begin with, the military alliance with the LNM was valuable in and of itself. Although the PLO did much of the heavy lifting, the LNM fought alongside it against the Lebanese Forces and other antagonists.²⁹⁹ Moreover, this relationship also facilitated the PLO's use of West Beirut as a political headquarters, and other areas as military bases.

The alliance also gave the PLO access to important intangible assets. Most significant was the influence on the Lebanese parliament that the PLO gained through its LNM allies. At times, this even extended to the level of the prime ministry; Christian politicians frequently complained that Prime Minister Saeb Salam seemed more interested in protecting the interests of the PLO than the

²⁹⁹ Jumblatt was always careful, however, to keep the fighting out of the Druze territories on Mount Lebanon.

interests of Lebanon.³⁰⁰ While this is likely an exaggeration, the PLO did find a sympathetic ear in some members of the Muslim and/or left-wing parties. In practice, this state of affairs meant that the government was often deadlocked, unable to come to any decision regarding policy towards the PLO, which was ultimately to the latter's advantage.

But this relationship was not without its costs. One of the significant dangers of serving as a military proxy is that the proxy will become focused on the goals of its sponsor to the detriment of its own (as will be discussed further below). Though the Lebanese left did not “sponsor” the PLO in the classical sense, the costs of the relationship were similar, in that involvement in Lebanese politics proved a dangerous distraction. Hamzeh al Bishtawi, a veteran member of the PLFP-GC in Bourj al Barajneh, said frankly that “as a revolutionary organization, we should have stayed on the border to face the enemy, rather than coming into the cities.”³⁰¹ Hamad M., an independent Palestinian scholar in Damascus and former PLA officer, explained the situation as follows: “One of the greatest mistakes was we had interfered a lot in internal life. I’m sorry to say interfered – we were made to interfere, because we were employed to interfere.” When asked by whom they were “employed”, Mr. M replied

“By local leaders, by ethnic leaders, by group leaders...by fighting leaders, by contesting leaders, and by the end of the game, we were the only persons to lose. It was one of the most bitter issues about the role of the Palestinians in Lebanon...Why do we have to fight with the Druze against the Maronites? Why? Why do we have to fight with some party against the other?”

The PLO, said Mr. M, learned to adapt itself to both domestic and foreign pressures, “but the price sometimes was too heavy to bear. We lost Tel el Zaatar, Qarantina, Hat al Ghrawameh, Jisr al Basha, because of this.”³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 171-172.

³⁰¹ Interview, Hamzeh al Bishtawi, PFLP-GC, Beirut.

³⁰² Interview, Hamad M.

Finally, if the PLO's policy towards the new Shi'ite leadership was based on a combination of strategies (service provision and marketing at first, coercion later on), the outcome of this relationship was similarly mixed. Early on, Amal's (and particularly Sadr's) political blessing gave the PLO a legitimacy that greatly facilitated its operations in the south. Amal's leaders were also in an excellent position to provide local intelligence, and some southerners even fought with the Palestinians against Israel (notably Imad Mughniyeh, later one of the founders of Hizbullah.) As Amal's influence grew (and the influence of the old landholding Shi'ite families waned) the alliance with Amal became increasingly beneficial at the national level, in much the same way as the alliance with the Druze/Sunni left.

However, the relationship ultimately collapsed. The PLO never succeeded in connecting the popular legitimacy of the Shi'ite leadership to support for the PLO in the way that it had with the left (partly a result of the PLO's own behavior towards civilians in the south, as will be discussed below) and in fact had thoroughly alienated the Amal leadership by 1982. The PLO became increasingly coercive, but as Amal grew stronger towards the end of the 1970s, it was difficult for the PLO to maintain its access either to the political support it needed from the new Shi'ite political elite, or to the southern territory over which Amal exercised growing control. And of course, the open hostility that eventually developed between the two parties proved extraordinarily costly to the PLO in 1982, as will be discussed below.

The Arab States

The PLO's relationships with the Arab states were of course also very important. Rooted in a combination of marketing and the provision of service as a military proxy, these relationships were highly productive for the PLO in terms of the intangible and material resources they provided, but also carried significant

drawbacks. The PLO was, in general, more successful in marketing itself abroad than in Lebanon. As it had during its years in Jordan, the movement (both at the level of the PLO itself and at the level of its various factions) relied heavily on both its ability to frame itself as the representative of the Palestinian cause and of support for the cause as a yardstick for Arab credibility to solicit support from the Arab governments. In other words, it played both on the regimes' genuine sympathy and their need to be seen being sympathetic. Shafiq al Hout recalled:

“At a certain time, when we were at the top of our struggle, in the 60s and 70s, believe me, each Arab leader used to feel that Arafat shares half of his authority in his country, because the people were really very supportive and sympathetic in their expressions of their solidarity, so, I mean, the Arab regimes didn't have much of a choice but to like us or to pretend that they like us, to support us or to pretend that they support us.”³⁰³

At times, this approach appeared to veer into coercion. In his autobiography, Abu Iyad recounts an incident in 1976 when the PLO was having difficulty in raising its usual annual funds from the Gulf States. He gave a public speech in Kuwait castigating both Kuwait itself and its wealthy expatriate Palestinians, stating “Whether they like it or not, they will pay!” (This statement probably appeared particularly coercive to the Kuwaiti government given its fears of becoming a second Beirut should the PLO ever relocate there from Lebanon.³⁰⁴)

In the case of Syria, however, this approach was far less successful in the mid-1970s than it had been a decade earlier. One of the immediate effects of the failed Syrian intervention during Black September was a bloodless coup in which Hafez al Asad replaced Salah Jadid. Though the PLO continued to use the

³⁰³ Interview, Shafiq al Hout.

³⁰⁴ Particularly telling are the conversations Abu Iyad recounts with various Gulf leaders who told him quite frankly that they sympathized with the position of the Phalange Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 172-174.

rhetoric of Arab unity in its approach to Syria,³⁰⁵ in practice, given Asad's essential pragmatism, the prevailing dynamic was one of Syria's pursuit of its own objectives in Lebanon, in concert with the PLO when possible, but in opposition to it if necessary.

The second pillar of the PLO's relationship with the Arab states was its role as a military proxy, primarily against Israel. Syria in particular valued the PLO's role in maintaining pressure on Israel through its attacks against civilian targets in the north, in the hopes that this might push the Israelis towards negotiations for the return of the territory lost in 1967 (including the Golan).³⁰⁶ This became even more important after the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1978, which effectively ended any prospects that this territory might be regained by conventional warfare.

But the PLO's factions also functioned as proxies in the context of the various inter-Arab rivalries and conflicts which were ongoing in the 1970s and 1980s. In this sense, sponsorship of a particular faction, and the actions expected of that faction, tended to reflect the regional and ideological preferences of the sponsor state. The leftist states (particularly Algeria and Libya) tended to offer support to the leftist organizations such as the PLFP, PLFP-GC and DFLP, while the Gulf States supported the comparatively conservative Fatah.³⁰⁷ There were also groups which had effectively been created out of whole cloth by their sponsor governments from the Palestinian refugee communities in those countries, including the Syrian-sponsored Al Saiqa, and the Iraqi-sponsored Arab Liberation Front. But even those factions that emerged independently and acquired sponsorship later (such as the PFLP-GC) tended to take on the agendas

³⁰⁵ Even on the eve of the Syrian invasion in 1976, Arafat released a statement praising "Brotherly Syria" and calling in the name of Arabism for the preservation of the strategic relationship between the PLO, the LNM and the government of Syria "Arafat's Statement."

³⁰⁶ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 173-175.

³⁰⁷ Interviews with Oraib Rantawi and Mohamed B., researcher, Damascus.

of their sponsor to one degree or another. This was less true of Fatah, though, which was large enough to maintain a higher degree of independence. It was also far less picky in terms of which countries it would associate with, the main standard by which it judged a given state being its support (or otherwise) for the Palestinian movement.³⁰⁸

Resources Gained, Resources Lost: Weapons, funding and fragmentation

The importance of the support of the Arab states in helping the PLO acquire the non-material and material resources it needed to secure its base in Lebanon cannot be overstated. To begin with, Arab backing was instrumental in helping the PLO acquire political influence in Lebanon, through the pressure it exerted on the Lebanese government to sign the Cairo Agreement and the Melkart Protocols. Arab support also helped the PLO gain international legitimacy; the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in Rabat in 1974 helped to secure the backing of the non-aligned states for the vote granting the PLO its coveted observer status in the UN General Assembly.

In addition, the Arab states provided important material resources to their client factions, though these varied from state to state. The Syrians provided the most by way of direct military assistance, intervening in 1969 and 1973 to prevent the defeat of the PLO by the Lebanese military. They also provided training for PLO fighters, as did some of the other progressive states.³⁰⁹ The Gulf States, which supported Fatah for the most part, tended to provide funding rather than weaponry.³¹⁰ As noted in Chapter Two, in 1968 Abu Iyad secured an agreement

³⁰⁸ Interview with Abu Khalil, PFLP, Damascus; Edward Kattoura, Salah Salah; Oraib Rantawi, and many others. Rantawi noted that the larger organizations, particularly Fatah, were better able to remain independent.

³⁰⁹ Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms*, 100.

³¹⁰ Interviews with Abu Jihad; Oraib al Rantawi, and Hamad M.

from Saudi Arabia to garnish 7% of the wages of Palestinian workers in the kingdom, as a form of taxation on behalf of the PLO, and the oil boom of the mid-1970s translated into a massive inflow of cash for the PLO. (As will be discussed below, this would have a profound impact on the PLO's relationship with its constituents.) The "progressive" states provided weapons more directly; Libya in particular provided not only training and small arms, but also Soviet-made tanks, mounted artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, RPGs, and land mines.³¹¹ At least one Israeli soldier who served in both Operation Litani and Operation Peace for Galilee reported that the PLO seemed better armed in 1982 than they had four years earlier.³¹²

But these relationships were also in some ways deeply problematic. To begin with, there were certain resources they were unwilling to provide; under no circumstances would the Arab states provide one of the resources the PLO most needed: a base of operations. This was particularly relevant in the cases of Syria and Egypt, major Arab military powers bordering Israel (though Syria was better situated for military purposes). As early as 1969, Hafez al Asad asked the Syrian Chief of Staff, Mustafa Tlas, to "coordinate" with the PLO to ensure that no attacks were launched from Syrian territory.³¹³ After the 1973 October War, Syria and Egypt ceased even to be bases of Arab military action against Israel when they signed disengagement agreements with Israel,³¹⁴ and Egypt was removed from the equation altogether when it signed the Camp David accords in 1978.

But a more profound problem was the way in which these relationships subtly shaped and weakened the organization over time, a dynamic which constitutes a significant (and understudied) side effect of state sponsorship. As

³¹¹ Interview, Abu Jihad.

³¹² Interview, anonymous IDF reservist and OPfG veteran.

³¹³ Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms*, 100.

³¹⁴ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 172-173.

noted above, prolonged sponsorship can shift the client organization's focus away from its own goals and towards those of the sponsor, as well as creating substantial rifts within the organization. Both dynamics, which were in this case strongly interrelated, were a problem for the PLO.

A frequent complaint by the PLO members interviewed for this project was that their Arab allies seemed more interested in using the PLO as a tool to further their own interests than in helping it pursue its own objectives.³¹⁵

True, sponsor state interests sometimes overlapped with those of the PLO. Syria's pressure on the Lebanese government to allow the PLO to launch raids against Israel from its territory was in part designed to allow Syria to maintain pressure on Israel, but was welcomed by the PLO all the same.

Where these interests aligned less conveniently was in the context of the various inter-Arab rivalries. With the war in Lebanon serving as a theatre in which the regional rivalries of the Middle East could be safely played out without the risk of direct war for the states involved, this at times resulted in infighting between the various PLO factions. The resulting internal conflict certainly weakened the PLO in 1982, in that it hampered both coordinated preparation before and decision-making during the invasion.³¹⁶ Syria's intervention in Lebanon in 1976 pitted its client factions, such as Saiqa and the PLFP-GC (whose soldiers, one PLFP commander scathingly noted, actually rode into Beirut in 1976 on Syrian tanks),³¹⁷ against "loyalist" factions like Fatah and the PFLP.³¹⁸ This created deep rifts within the organization which remain even today; one Fatah official interviewed for this project, when asked whether the PLO had made any mistakes, opined that not assassinating Ahmed Jibril, head of the PFLP-GC, was

³¹⁵ Interviews with Salah Salah; Abu Khalil; Oraib Rantawi, and others.

³¹⁶ For further analysis see Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*; Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*.

³¹⁷ Interview, Salah Salah.

³¹⁸ Khalidi, *Conflict and violence in Lebanon: confrontation in the Middle East*; Ibid.

one of them. Perhaps even more harmful was the virulent intra-Baath rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi regimes, which deepened towards the end of the 1970s. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 produced a new strategic alignment that saw Iran and Syria allied against Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.³¹⁹ When the PLO backed Iraq, this had a chilling effect on its relationship with Iran and severely complicated the organization's relationship with Amal.

Finally, between the various regional rivalries at work, the conflicting priorities of the regimes themselves, and the fact that many states had multiple clients, sponsor support was not always entirely reliable. In 1976, despite the dispatch of a Libyan-Iraqi-Algerian delegation to address Syria's involvement in Lebanon,³²⁰ ultimately none of the Arab states, even those who had military officers stationed in Beirut, moved to prevent the Syrian intervention or halt the atrocities against Palestinian civilians in Tel Zaatar perpetrated by the Phalange after their position was restored by the Syrians.³²¹ By 1982, though a rapprochement had been reached between the PLO-LNM alliance and the Syrian government, (despite Syria's assassination of Kamal Jumblatt), Syria's relationship with the PLO was still shaped first and foremost by Syria's interests. Ultimately, though the PLO's relationships with its sponsors produced important material and non-material resources, access to these was often unreliable (as was the case in 1982), and came at a high cost in terms of the PLO's organizational cohesion.

³¹⁹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 325.

³²⁰ "Junblatt Told Libya-Algeria-Iraq Group to Visit Syria," *Beirut Domestic Service*, June 5, 1976.

³²¹ Interview, Hamad M. Abu Iyad wrote "The Tel Zaatar tragedy was but another proof that we could rely on no one but ourselves. . . In the Arab world where no government, friendly to the Palestinians or otherwise, lifted a finger to save the 35,000 "brothers" in Tel Zaatar. I refuse to believe that 100,000,000 Arabs were incapable of breaking a siege imposed by a few hundred men, that they couldn't so much as raise their voices to exert pressure if not on the Christians militias, then at least on Syria which was protecting them Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*, 92.

The Communist States

There is a final set of external sponsors who bear some discussion – the communist states, particularly the USSR and China. China offered direct diplomatic recognition of the PLO, complete with an embassy, and negotiated with the organization directly, rather than through an intermediary. The USSR was slightly more reserved in the early 1970s; though it referred glowingly to the fedayeen as “partisans,” it tended to provide the PLO with weapons through other Arab states, particularly Nasser’s Egypt.³²² But the relationship warmed somewhat after the Rabat summit of 1974, and in 1976, it provided the PLO with a mission in Moscow (later upgraded to an embassy). The USSR and eastern bloc states were also an important source of training for PLO officers, and of post-secondary education for tens of thousands of young Palestinians.³²³

The USSR also provided enormously important political resources. In addition to the backing provided by the Arab League and non-aligned movement, the support of the Soviet bloc states was instrumental in granting the PLO its prized observer status in the UN General Assembly.³²⁴ Moreover, support from the USSR provided an important counterweight to American support for Israel.³²⁵ In the end, however, as with the support from the Arab states, the USSR’s relationship with the PLO was ultimately constrained by its own interests; these were, above all else, regional stability. Shafiq al Hout, PLO representative in Lebanon from 1965 to 2004 and PLO representative to the UN General Assembly, recalled a meeting at the UN with Soviet foreign minister Andre

³²² Interview, Shafiq al Hout, former PLO Representative in Lebanon, and Palestinian representative to the UN. See also Ginat, Rami and Uri Bar-Noi, “Tacit Support for Terrorism: The Rapprochement between the USSR and Palestinian Guerrilla Organizations Following the 1967 War.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*. Vol. 30, No. 2, 255 – 284, April 2007

³²³ Interview, Mohamed, (who received his BA, MA and PhD in the USSR and speaks English with a slight Russian accent.)

³²⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 244.

³²⁵ Interview, Shafiq al Hout.

Gromyko during which, in Hout's words, Gromyko said plainly "look, guys, we are ready to support you to an extent, to a great extent, but we will not go on to a third world war because of you."³²⁶

Civilians in Lebanon

The second important set of relationships the PLO had in Lebanon was with Palestinian and Lebanese civilians.³²⁷ While its relations with the former were characterized by strong marketing and service provision, which produced a more or less positive relationship with the PLO, its policies towards the latter, particularly in the south, were very coercive, and ultimately alienated many.

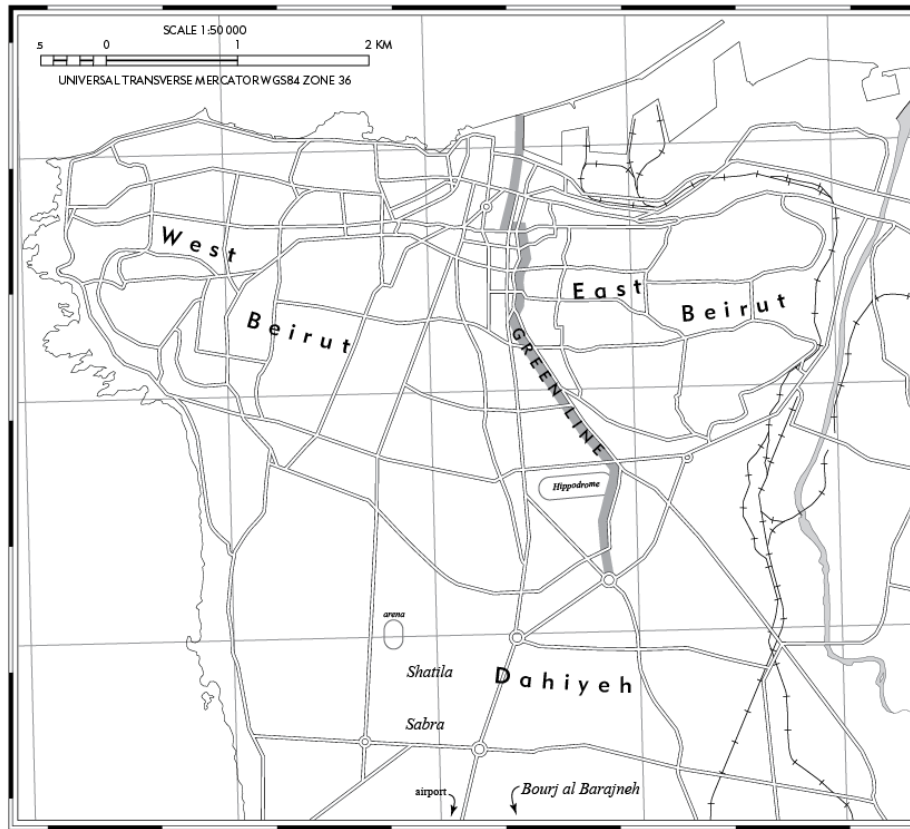
Palestinian Civilians

The PLO's various sub-factions engaged in an active process of marketing to the Palestinian civilian community. Even now, the refugee camps in Lebanon are plastered with posters of the various factions, some decades old. In the 1970s, most of the larger factions had their own newspapers, and regularly produced pamphlets and manifestos detailing their political programs and military exploits.³²⁸ They also held (and hold) parades, anniversary celebrations, lectures and discussion groups as a means of sharing their message with the wider public, and many have youth groups as well.

³²⁶ Interview, Shafiq al Hout.

³²⁷ In Lebanon, these communities were far more distinct than in Jordan, which is why I address them separately in this chapter.

³²⁸ For many groups, these have now been replaced by websites, although some of the more venerable newspapers, such as the DFLP's *al Hurriyeh*, continue to publish and, at least anecdotally, enjoy a continuing readership. This is especially true in Syria, where internet access is limited.



Map 4: Beirut

Even so, the question of why a person would choose to support or join a given faction seemed to take many of the mid-level PLO officers interviewed for this project by surprise. This is probably a reflection of the (basically accurate) assumption that a Palestinian living in Lebanon has to choose at least one of the many Palestinian factions to support, because such political engagement is “part of being Palestinian” or at least part of being a Palestinian in Lebanon. In this sense, the PLO has been highly successful at creating an internalized norm of support for the organization within the community. Young men in particular experienced a degree of pressure to join an armed PLO faction, which though

only briefly codified into law (see below), remained strong. In this sense, the PLO also made use of coercion, if mostly indirectly.

Certainly, resentment at the position of the Palestinian people generally and in Lebanon in particular played some part in motivating participation in and support for the PLO. But generalized resentment does not explain why an individual would choose one faction over another. Some (notably the DFLP) said that their supporters followed them because they have excellent social service programs (discussed below).³²⁹ Others (such as Fatah al Intifada) cited their records of adamant resistance against Israel, or pragmatic nationalism (Fatah and Fatah al Intifada). The affiliations of friends and family also play a role, although it is noteworthy that different political affiliations within the same family are more common in Palestinian families than Lebanese.³³⁰ Others said that it came down to simple personal conviction, although the highly specific doctrinal content of the different factions appears to have played a smaller role; the ideological hair-splitting between the different streams of Maoism and Leninism engaged in by many movement leaders was likely well beyond even most mid-level cadres, let alone the broader public.

This was sharply illustrated by a conversation with Maher, a highly committed PFLP member responsible for the 1968 attack on an El Al plane in Athens. He recounted that when he joined the PFLP, he was 17, and didn't know much about Marxism, and only a few quotes from Mao. He was essentially a Palestinian nationalist, generally opposed to communism because of the USSR's early support for Israel, but he chose to join the PLFP anyway because trusted and admired its leaders. He was impressed with George Habash because of the free clinic he ran in the Jabal Hussein neighborhood of Amman, and respected the

³²⁹ Interview, Ahmed Mustafa, DFLP, Bourj al Barajneh.

³³⁰ Interview, Khaled Abd El-Majed, PPSF, Damascus. This echoes my own experiences in the Middle East.

Palestinian Marxists in general because of their efforts against the government in Jordan. For Yamani, the actions and leadership of the faction were far more important than its political doctrine, which he believed the majority of the recruits did not fully understand, in any case.

The second major outreach strategy engaged in by the PLO in the refugee camps was the provision of financial support and social services. To be sure, some of the work the PLO did on behalf of Palestinians in Lebanon was political, rather than material. At the most basic level, when control of the camps shifted from the Deuxième Bureau (Lebanon's secret police) to the PLO after the Cairo Accords, the lot of those inside improved significantly.³³¹ Later on, the PLO did a great deal to improve the conditions of Palestinian workers in Lebanon, improving Palestinian access to health care and access to education for Palestinian students (in Lebanon and abroad) and increasing the ability of Palestinians to move freely around the country.

Other services were more concrete. The PLO began to diversify its financial holdings in the mid-1970s, investing widely in industries from banking to mining in Africa to tourism. The profit this produced, combined with the effects of the oil boom of the mid-1970s (see above) profoundly changed the PLO's relationship with its civilian constituency, shifting it from a recipient of civilian donations to a major provider of aid.³³² (The effects of this are discussed further below.) Throughout the 1970s, the PLO increasingly assumed the functions of a welfare state for Palestinians in Lebanon (though UNRWA also played a highly significant role that is often downplayed by all parties to the conflict.) In 1969, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (an organ of the PLO) opened its first clinic in Lebanon. By 1982, the PRCS was operating 10 hospitals

³³¹ Interview, Hamad M.

³³² Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

and 30 clinics in the refugee camps, 2 physiotherapy centers, a residential rehabilitation center, an orthopedic workshop, a nursing school and many pharmacies. An additional 47 clinics were run by other Palestinian factions,³³³ who also ran youth centers, sports leagues and kindergartens in the refugee camps. The PLO provided financial support for medical care for the needy, and SAMED (the Palestinian Martyrs Works Society), an organ of the PLO, was established to provide vocational training to the children of those killed in action.³³⁴ Finally, the PLO was a (if not the) major employer of Palestinians in Lebanon, largely because Palestinians were barred from most other forms of employment under Lebanese law. The PLO bureaucracy expanded enormously in the 1970s, employing 8000 people and managing a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars. SAMED operated 46 factories and workshops in Lebanon, employing 5,000 people, with earnings reported at 40 million.³³⁵ Surprisingly, even those who were somehow able to work in well-paid professions such as medicine and engineering still received, rather than contributed money to, the PLO.

Costs and Benefits: A new kind of recruit

The above tactics shaped both the assets the PLO was able to acquire from civilians and, in the long run, the movement itself. The resource the PLO most needed from the Palestinian community was recruits, and it was able to acquire them, in a variety of ways.

Interestingly, the service provision engaged in by the PLO seems to have had both positive and negative effects. While it did certainly draw Palestinian refugees into the movement's orbit, some Palestinian officers who were familiar with the revolutionary doctrines of Che and Mao were disquieted by the change

³³³ Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*, 140.

³³⁴ Interviews, Ahmed, Chief of Fatah in Bourj al Barajneh, and Edward Kattoura.

³³⁵ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 140.

the influx of oil wealth created in their relationship with civilians, feeling that this was a reversal from the model of popular support prescribed by the guerrilla tacticians.³³⁶ They viewed those who were receiving regular support or employment from the PLO in Beirut as *less* committed than supporters from the early, poorer days: “You have to differentiate between those who are willing to give everything, and those who are waiting, really, [for] some benefits. Therefore, the issue of corruption within the PLO start[ed] to become a major issue, affect[ing] every part of the life of the Palestinians there.”³³⁷ In other words, employees are not necessarily true believers, and may be less beneficial for the organization. The creation of patronage networks within the PLO meant that loyalty to one’s superiors was rewarded over competence and commitment, to the movement’s detriment.³³⁸ This can perhaps be read as a variation on Weinstein’s argument; rather than attracting more brutal combatants, the influx of cash instead meant that the PLO attracted lazier fighters, less effective bureaucrats, and less committed civilian supporters.

And yet, when compared with Hizbullah (see Chapters Four and Five), the PLO was spending comparatively little on its civilian constituency. This suggests that if the money being spent changed the relationship between the PLO and its civilian supporters in terms of the kind of recruits it was getting, the precise nature of that change is perhaps traceable less to the money itself, and more to the perceptions of the organization on the part of those receiving it.

Though the PLO was receiving little financial support from the Palestinian population at this stage, it still needed one very important material resource from them: recruits. Some joined for reasons discussed above, while others were drawn to the prospects of a regular salary, or in some cases, the chance to loot,

³³⁶ Interview, Abu Jihad.

³³⁷ Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

³³⁸ Thanks are due to Rex Brynen for this framing.

characteristics that may partly explain the poor performance of some units in 1982. Others saw in the PLO (and its war with the Maronite militias) a chance to regain some of the dignity lost due to the position of Palestinians in Lebanon.³³⁹ However, to provide some balance to the above account, it must also be said that the officers interviewed for this project all demonstrated (at least to me) a genuine commitment to the cause the PLO purported to represent, and to the betterment of their fellow Palestinians.

Finally, not all recruits joined of their own free will. In 1976, following the siege of Tel Zaatar, in addition to providing funds to its commanders and those of the LNM to engage in a recruiting drive, the PLO instituted a policy of conscription for all Palestinian men between 18 and 30. The PLA was to provide training, and receive 25-30% of the new recruits, while the rest could fight with whomever they chose. However, the policy was widely unpopular, and very loosely enforced, though the DFLP detained hundreds of young men at roadblocks around the camps before desisting under pressure from Fatah, the PFLP, and the public.³⁴⁰

In sum, the PLO's relationship with Palestinian civilians, while it included small amounts of coercion, was primarily based on a combination of marketing to produce norms of support for the Palestinian cause in general and (less successfully) particular factions in specific. It also involved the provision of services which, intentionally or not, generated a strong dependency on the PLO. Yet while it did receive genuine sympathy and support from Palestinian civilians, the amount of outside money flowing into the organization seems not to have increased levels of popular commitment to the PLO. Moreover, this relationship did not readily translate into the assets the PLO most needed: political influence

³³⁹ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 167.

³⁴⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 402-403.

and a base of operations against Israel. The Palestinian refugees were too disenfranchised to carry much political weight, and did not for the most part live in the areas the PLO needed to use as bases for direct military action against Israel. Those areas, notably South Lebanon, were inhabited instead by Lebanese civilians.

Relations with Lebanese Civilians

As in Jordan, in the late 1960s, the Lebanese population was broadly sympathetic to the Palestinian national project; a 1969 poll by al-Nahar put popular sympathy at 80%.³⁴¹ However, there was also a widespread sense that Lebanese sovereignty had to be preserved. When President Charles Helou stated that Lebanon must “recognize our obligations toward the Palestinian struggle and support it, but only within the limits of our capabilities, which we alone are entitled to determine in light of the imperatives of our national sovereignty and security,”³⁴² Al-Nahar found that “49.5% fully supported Helou’s message, 20.5% were supportive, but with reservations, 19.8% were against, and 10.3% had no opinion.”³⁴³ Civilians in different parts of the country had different experiences of the PLO’s presence. In some areas, it engaged in limited service provision, and at times actively sought to win the support of the public. But these policies were themselves often in response to what were euphemistically referred to in Arabic as *tajawazat*, meaning “transgressions” or “excesses,” which did a great deal to alienate civilians in PLO areas of operation.³⁴⁴

Though the PLO did not control territory in East Beirut, its relationship with the Christian community there and on Mount Lebanon was overtly hostile.

³⁴¹ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 56-57.

³⁴² El-Khazen, *The breakdown of the state in Lebanon, 1967-1976*, 150.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁴⁴ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 138.

The fighting between the LF and the LNM/PLO alliance was characterized by massacres of civilians by militias on both sides. As for the rest of Mount Lebanon, despite the PSP's close alliance with the PLO, the Jumblatts made certain that the PLO did not establish a military presence in the Druze heartland of the Shouf; rather, the PLO used LNM-controlled West Beirut as a political base of operations, maintaining offices for the various factions there, and fighting against the Christian militias across the Green Line.

The PLO's behavior in West Beirut was largely characterized by low-level coercion, combined with small amounts of service provision and marketing. The latter occurred mostly by way of its LNM allies, who viewed Sunni interests in Lebanon through a leftist, pan-Arabist lens, although the conservative Islamic leadership provided a powerful counterweight.³⁴⁵ Though the PLO provided the occasional public service to West Beirut, such as connecting the area to the power station at Jiye after it was cut off from the East in the summer of 1976,³⁴⁶ the area was mostly looked after either by the Beirut municipality or by residents themselves (though there were complaints from residents that West Beirut was neglected by the central authorities while East Beirut received the bulk of city services.)³⁴⁷

Certainly by the early 1980s the residents of West Beirut were suffering from the escalation of fighting within the city. There were frequent clashes between the factions of the LNM, such as the Nasserites and the SSNP, as well as between Palestinian factions, some inside the PLO, and some outside. The

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 142.

³⁴⁶ See Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 402 For its trouble, the PLO was accused by Camille Chamoun of interfering in the administration of Lebanese public utilities, though Jumblatt denied these "wicked rumors," stating that the state remained in control of services in the areas under the National Movement's control. "Junblatt Denies PLO Interference in Utilities," *Beirut Domestic Service*, July 10, 1976.

³⁴⁷ "Al-Wazzan on Opposition, PLO Arms, Arab Help," *Beirut Monday Morning*

resulting casualties included many civilians,³⁴⁸ one particularly egregious example occurred in 1978 when the PFLP-GC drove a truck packed with explosives into a seven story apartment building, one floor of which contained the offices of a rival faction producing 200 civilian casualties.³⁴⁹

Looting and extortion were also serious problems; with the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt in 1977 the LNM (at least temporarily) lost its center of gravity, and the PLO took over much of the supervision and arming of the various Lebanese militias in West Beirut. Given Fatah's relatively free hand in arming these groups, neighborhood militias (in some cases essentially street gangs) proliferated, manning their own checkpoints and exploiting the breakdown of authority to engage in "theft, extortion and smuggling,"³⁵⁰ although others took charge of maintaining the infrastructure in their areas as best they could. While many in the PLO itself avoided this behavior, others did not. Even Jumblatt, a great supporter of the Palestinians, stated regretfully to his biographer:

"We had reason to regret the chaos created by the Palestinians and nearly all the other parties, the tendency to unbridled self-indulgence and looting... as far as public and private property was concerned, they often behaved like migrating nomads or Bohemians. They had been perverted by ideology and the poor education they must have received from their families and schools. Stealing a car was known as "pulling a car." Stealing a house or a carpet was called "requisitioning." The problem with poorly understood left ideologies is that they can provide an excuse for just about every one of man's cardinal sins."³⁵¹

Of particular relevance were the PLO's relationships with civilians in the south. If Beirut provided valuable office space, the south provided crucial territory from which to launch attacks against Israeli targets on the other side of the border. While the PLO did engage in very limited marketing and service

³⁴⁸ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 137.

³⁴⁹ Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

³⁵⁰ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 128-136.

³⁵¹ Kamal Junblat and Philippe. Lapousterle, *I speak for Lebanon* (London; Westport, Conn.: Zed Press; U.S. distributor, L. Hill, 1982), 111.

provision with regards to Shi'ite civilians in the south, this was undercut by its later coercive behavior.

Early on, the relationship was fairly positive; as noted above, early Shi'ite political mobilization tended to occur within a generally progressive framework, which lent itself both to sympathy with the PLO's generally leftist ideology as well as the broader goal of fighting against Israel. Moreover, the domestic Lebanese political project espoused by the LNM – reform of the National Pact – likely resonated with many southern Shi'ites (though this was less relevant to southern Christians, whose interests the PLO did little to address.)

What the PLO did not do, however, was produce the sort of normative shift whereby support for the PLO's (or LNM's) political project became a component of group identity for Shi'ites in South Lebanon. This was not outside the realm of possibility; there is no inherent reason why Shi'ite, rather than Arab, or pan-Muslim, identity, should have been prioritized as a basis for political mobilization because, after all, in earlier decades, it was not. Moreover, identity politics did not prevent a PLO alliance with the Druze dominated PSP, despite the fact that Druze citizens of Israel serve in the IDF. In other words, contrary to primordialist narratives that assume that certain identities are permanently and inherently salient, meaning those who hold those identities could not hold any political loyalties other than the ones they have now, the political implications of ethnic identity are highly contingent. There was certainly space in South Lebanon for the PLO to form the sort of relationship with the Shi'ites of the south that they formed with Sunnis and Druze in Beirut and the Mountain.

That this failed to happen is a result of the coercive behavior of the PLO itself. Even those most positive about their organization's actions in the south acknowledged that there were serious problems with the fedayeen's treatment of local people (even if the fighters from their particular faction were innocent of

any bad behavior.) By some accounts, the Fatah/PLO leadership (including Arafat) used force to dispel any objections to its behavior in Tyre, Saida, Nabatiyeh and other cities.³⁵² Troops were forcibly billeted with local families,³⁵³ and news reports filed after the PLO had departed (in which those interviewed were no doubt more critical of the PLO than they might have been had the IDF not been occupying the area) included accounts of PLO fighters seizing private homes and farms for use as bases. Others recount the theft of jewelry and electronics during household searches “for American spies.” The theft of cars was also common; one woman explained “If you pay 7,000 pounds, you will get your car back. If you pay 14,000, you will get somebody else’s.”³⁵⁴ And of course, the PLO’s de facto status as a state within a state was in and of itself alienating to local officials and police officers; feda’i behavior such as driving a tank into a small village in order to buy a pack of cigarettes was a constant reminder that they had lost the ability to enforce the law.³⁵⁵

Moreover, as in Jordan, the PLO’s attacks against Israeli targets produced punishing retaliatory strikes which forced many residents of the south to flee northwards for safety. Those who stayed behind were unable to cultivate their land because of the crossfire. Operation Litani, which produced 220,000 refugees, destroyed six villages and damaged 82, further soured public opinion regarding the PLO, which was blamed by many for the invasion. By the spring of 1982, fighting had broken out between Amal and the PLO, and PLO activities resulted in the depopulation and eventual seizure of several villages by members of the Joint Forces. The Higher Shi’ite Council viewed these actions as deliberate:

³⁵² Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

³⁵³ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 244.

³⁵⁴ David K. Shipler, “Lebanese Tell of Anguish of Living Under the PLO,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1982, 1.

³⁵⁵ Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

The Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council...urgently asks all responsible for this grave aggression in the Palestinian resistance and the Nationalist Movement to stop the shelling of the villages immediately to pull the gunmen out of them and to withdraw the weapons directed at them...The people of southern Lebanon, who have been mobilizing themselves to confront Israeli aggression and who have been preparing themselves to receive Israeli bullets, are now facing Arab bullets, which are supposed to be directed at Israel, and are being displaced from their homes not by Israelis but by fellow Arabs.³⁵⁶

The PLO leadership was not unaware of the bad behavior of its fighters, or the effect it was having on its relationship with the Lebanese public. At times, it did take steps to try to curb these abuses. As early as 1976, the Palestinian Revolution Command and the LNM issued a joint statement outlining measures intended to end “all acts of looting, chaos and kidnapping and to punish everyone who violates the cease-fire decisions or commits any act of disorder or sabotage.” These included the withdrawal of all “armed civilians” from the streets, a ban on attacks on Lebanese army positions as well as “private and public establishments,” the handing over of all stolen property to the PLO-LNM higher military committee, and the establishment of a field court to try violators. Security in West Beirut was declared the responsibility of the Palestine Liberation Army.³⁵⁷ To make the point that the new anti-looting policy was serious, four days later, 38 carloads of stolen goods were confiscated and the cars carrying them burned.³⁵⁸ Similar measures were suggested following clashes in Saida in 1979.³⁵⁹

The full elimination of abusive practices by PLO (and LNM) fighters proved very difficult to enforce, however, as most factions wished to preserve their autonomy, and the PLO leadership was unwilling to risk alienating them

³⁵⁶ “Shi'ite Council Statement.”

³⁵⁷ “Palestinian-Nationalist Meeting,” *Voice of Palestine [Clandestine]*, January 23, 1976.

³⁵⁸ “Cars Burned,” *Voice of Palestine [Clandestine]*, January 23, 1976.

³⁵⁹ “VOP Reports ‘Regretful’ Clashes in Sidon, 25, 26 Aug.,” (*Clandestine*) *Voice of Palestine*, 1979.

over this issue. If the use of coercion was not a clearly articulated strategy on the part of the leadership in Beirut, it was certainly an accepted practice at lower command levels, and the upper echelons were reluctant to intervene. Even when disciplinary action was taken, prison terms were usually very short, given the lack of a fully functioning security or judicial apparatus in wartime Lebanon, and Arafat himself was reluctant to enforce death sentences.³⁶⁰

True, the PLO did provide some services in the south and other areas under its control; some Palestinian leaders described how the fighters from their factions would help villagers bring in their crops and harvest their olives.³⁶¹ Others recounted that the PLO simply attempted to buy the acquiescence of the inhabitants of the south.³⁶² It actively engaged in what Brynen refers to as a hearts and minds campaign, purchasing the harvests of some farmers in the south whose crops were destroyed or who couldn't get them to market and paid compensation to people whose homes had been destroyed in IDF retaliatory raids,³⁶³ while the PLO "Social Affairs Institution" paid a stipend to Lebanese and Palestinian families who lost family members due to "hostile action".³⁶⁴ (These policies were not very different from those later put in place by Hizbullah.) Finally, the PRCS offered free treatment to tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians who had been injured in Phalangist or IDF attacks in the areas under its control and free treatment to all Lebanese civilians in the border zone (in direct competition with the Israeli policy of doing the same).³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 139-142 See also interview with Edward Kattour.

³⁶¹ Interview, Abu Khalil, PFLP, Damascus.

³⁶² Interview, Oraib Rantawi.

³⁶³ LL2000 to those whose homes were destroyed in the Israeli attacks during the summer of 1981, and LL1000 to people whose houses were damaged. This was on top of LL19 million in previous compensation payments. Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 140.

³⁶⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 409.

³⁶⁵ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 141.

Most of these services, however, would not have been necessary absent the havoc wrecked by the PLO's military activity. There is a difference between pro-active provision of services before the outbreak of a conflict, and those which are reactive and only provided in the context of that conflict. The provision of the second is not a substitute for the first.

Resources Gained, Resources Lost: Coercion backfires

The PLO's use of coercion against Lebanese civilians did allow them to acquire certain material resources; the forcible billeting of fighters in civilian homes provided housing for soldiers, and they were certainly able to obtain space for bases even without the consent of the area's civilians. While many of the goods secured through theft (carpets, jewelry and so forth) cannot be considered resources for the organization as a whole, the procurement or promise of loot is one way both non-state actors and militaries go about recruiting soldiers.³⁶⁶

Ultimately, though, this approach proved problematic for two reasons: first, coercion did not provide the PLO with the non-material resources it needed from civilians, and second, the access it did provide to material resources proved less than durable. The PLO was able to acquire little by way of political support or legitimacy from civilians in the south given its behavior there, and even before the arrival of the IDF, fedayeen were frequently asked to leave their bases in villages or homes they had taken over. Local resentment also made it harder for the PLO to retain access to territory; after Operation Litani, some villages went so far as to create local militias to prevent the reestablishment of PLO positions on their land.³⁶⁷ While the PLO was able to acquire some material resources by coercion, its access to others was temporary at best.

³⁶⁶ Humphreys and Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War."; Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Brynen, *Sanctuary and survival: the PLO in Lebanon*, 133.

In sum, by June of 1982, the PLO's ideological marketing of itself had been far more successful outside of Lebanon than within it. The organization had been able to generate support from many of the Arab regimes because of the normative sway the Palestinian cause held, but this support had come at a cost; conflicting loyalties had exacerbated internal rivalries and left the various PLO factions fragmented and unfocused. Moreover, nearly all militant groups (even those fighting on their own territory) need to acquire arms externally, and the PLO was no exception - the PLO's position as a military proxy, particularly for Syria, had left it highly dependent on its patrons' goodwill for the acquisition of arms and funding.

Within Lebanon, while the organization had managed to build a strong relationship with one faction of what remained of the Lebanese state - that is, with the leftist politicians - the influence it derived from this relationship was countered by its conflict with the Christian and Shi'ite leaderships. Finally, its relations with civilians outside of the Palestinian community were far from cordial, which not only exacerbated tensions at the political level but also complicated the PLO's ability to operate in South Lebanon.

Outcome: The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

By the spring of 1982, all parties knew that an Israeli invasion was imminent, needing only a spark to set it off. In the end, this came in the form of the attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom by the Abu Nidal Organization. Abu Nidal was actively at war with most of the other PLO factions (particularly Fatah), but the Reagan administration nonetheless gave Israel the "green light" to invade. The invasion would prove to be a disaster for the PLO. The problems it faced as the operation unfolded can be traced directly to the ways in which the relationships outlined above shaped the

organization, as well as to the resources these relationships both provided and failed to provide. The PLO's isolation in Lebanon, as a result of its coercive behavior towards the state and civilians, became all too clear in the context of the invasion, and though the PLO had received substantial arms from its foreign sponsors, in the end, the utility of these assets was limited by the other problems inherent in these relationships.

At 11am on June 6th, over 75,000 IDF troops with 1,240 tanks and 1,520 APCs crossed the border into South Lebanon.³⁶⁸ Their Christian allies numbered around 6,000, with a further 10,000 available reservists.³⁶⁹ For its part, the PLO's forces included 15,000 full-time fighters, some 6,000 of which were stationed in the south, and 4,500 of whom were well trained regular fighters. The PLO had only around 60 tanks in the area, many of which were no longer mobile.³⁷⁰ In and around Beirut, the PLO fielded around 8,000 fighters, equipped with only 24 T-34 tanks, 100 anti-tank guns, guided missile launchers, and between 150 and 200 mortars, artillery, howitzers and rocket launchers, as well as some SAM-7s, four ZSU-23-4 anti-aircraft vehicles, and hundreds of machine guns.³⁷¹ In addition, the well-equipped Syrian military presence throughout Lebanon numbered around 25,000.³⁷²

Multiple plans for an invasion had been in the making since the previous fall, codenamed "Big Pines" and "Little Pines" based on the scope of their respective objectives.³⁷³ On paper, Operation Peace for Galilee was ambitious, but essentially limited; its stated objective at the outset was to push the PLO back 40

³⁶⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 524.

³⁶⁹ Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 248.

³⁷⁰ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 524.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 528-9.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 409.

³⁷³ Zeev Schiff and Ehud. Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon war* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 43.

kilometers north of the border. The invasion took the form of a multi-pronged attack, with units advancing through the south, up the coast, over the mountain and through the Bekaa. By the afternoon of June 6th, Nabatiyeh had fallen, and by the next day, Tyre.

As the invasion progressed, Sharon, without proper cabinet authorization and likely without the informed consent of Prime Minister Begin, gradually expanded its scope.³⁷⁴ On the 9th, the PLO experienced a severe shock when the IDF took Damour. For the first time, it was clear that Beirut had become the target of the invasion. On the 20th, in violation of at least the spirit of the guidelines laid out by the cabinet, Sharon ordered the army to take Aley, a Druze town on Mount Lebanon slightly southeast of Beirut.³⁷⁵ By the 24th, IDF units held positions on the mountain and in East Beirut, and had established a naval blockade as well; West Beirut was encircled and besieged.³⁷⁶ In the last days of July and the first days of August, Sharon attempted to smash the PLO once and for all through a massive air and artillery bombard of West Beirut, killing hundreds of PLO fighters, and Lebanese and Palestinian civilians.³⁷⁷

PLO fighters did resist the advance, particularly in areas where they were able to hole up in more defensible rough terrain, though some were reluctant to fight.³⁷⁸ Overall, though, the response to the invasion was not well planned, and, paradoxically, the months of waiting for it to occur had taken their toll. Moreover, (as in Amman,) the ability of the PLO command in Beirut to communicate with the field was hampered by imperfect radio communication.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁴ Schiff and Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon war*.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 530-537. Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation.*, 260-262.

³⁷⁷ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 536.

³⁷⁸ Khalidi, *Conflict and violence in Lebanon: confrontation in the Middle East*, 60-61.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 70.

On the other hand, Richard Gabriel (who is otherwise quite sympathetic to the IDF) notes that two thirds of the PLO fighters in the south, and nearly all of the PLO leadership, evaded death or capture, which, though an achievement in its own right, probably also reflects the propensity of some PLO units to retreat.³⁸⁰

Though many of the PLO leaders frankly expected to die in Beirut,³⁸¹ ultimately, the siege ended with the organization's evacuation from Lebanon to yet another Arab country. On August 21st, the PLO leadership departed for the Syrian coastal town of Tartus. Arafat refused out of principal to exit via any of the Arab states and instead went to Athens via Cyprus, and then eventually to Tunis. By September 1st, the evacuation was complete. Though in later years some PLO factions were able to return to Lebanon and to this day many have offices in the various refugee camps, their carte blanche to operate openly in the south had been revoked. This outcome is directly traceable to the relationships that the PLO developed (or failed to develop) with Lebanese civilians, the Lebanese state (or the factions which had once comprised it), and its external Arab sponsors. This is true both in terms of the resources these relationships helped it to acquire, and ways in which these relationships shaped the organization.

The negative impact of the PLO's coercive approach to civilians in South Lebanon was evident almost immediately. When the Israeli army arrived, they received an apparently warm welcome from some residents of the south. One Israeli intelligence officer recounted:

“The people of South Lebanon accept us, with flowers...and they support us, they share with us the fight against the Fatah because the Palestinians were their enemy...I remember that I said “it reminds me of the movies, when the allied forces arrive to Paris in

³⁸⁰ Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation peace for Galilee: the Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 116.

³⁸¹ One officer interviewed recounted how he had literally called his brother in Damascus to ask him to take care of his family when he was gone.

the second world war, when all the people are going in the streets, and throwing flowers, and shout, and everything. ... People came with lists of names of people that were working with the Palestinians, and they show us where the Palestinian fighters are.”³⁸²

While this is only one possible reading of the events surrounding the invasion, it is reflective of what was described to me by veterans of Operation Peace for Galilee as a widespread belief within the army, that local Lebanese (both Shi’ite and Christian) were resentful of the PLO, and, more broadly, that the invasion was intended to rescue Lebanon from an occupying force. This was certainly echoed in Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin’s rhetoric about preventing “genocide” against the Christian Lebanese.³⁸³

In hindsight, some attributed the public’s initially favorable response to a “Middle Eastern” habit of praising the conqueror,³⁸⁴ while others cited the Lebanese entrepreneurial spirit. Within days of the invasion, merchants in South Lebanon were accepting shekels, and a thriving black market trade soon grew up in Marlboro cigarettes, whiskey, perfume, and cheap consumer goods. Car stereos were particularly prized, as was hashish.³⁸⁵

It is also unclear to what degree the broader attitudes of the public towards the Palestinians affected the IDF’s ability to acquire reliable intelligence. Nissim Levy, author of *A Year Without Birds*, and a former intelligence officer and recruiter of informants in South Lebanon, stated that the ability to recruit informants, at least within the organizations themselves, had nothing to do with

³⁸² Interview, Nissim Levy, author *A Year Without Birds*, and former IDF Intelligence officer in South Lebanon.

³⁸³ Anecdotal evidence suggests that a second (perhaps less conscious) influence on the perceptions of Israeli soldiers was what they saw as the cultural similarity of Lebanon to Israel. One soldier recounted his surprise and delight at tuning in to a Beirut radio station to find that it was playing Earth, Wind and Fire, just like the radio stations in Tel Aviv.

³⁸⁴ Interviews with David Zangen, IDF medical reservist and veteran of OPfG, and an anonymous IDF reservist and OPfG veteran.

³⁸⁵ Interview, Yuval Shaul, veteran of OPfG. He also noted that they regularly purchased meat, tea, coffee and vegetables from local merchants, which were far better than the food served in the army.

the level of local support for Fatah or any other faction.³⁸⁶ This may be more a reflection of the methods the IDF used to recruit informants than anything else, though others suggested that the willingness of locals to cooperate was similar to what it had been in 1978, before the open warfare between Fatah and Amal.³⁸⁷

That being said, none recalled the civilian population mounting much by way of resistance in defense of the PLO.³⁸⁸ Dr. Rantawi confirmed this:

“I remember a year before the invasion, in 1981, they [the PLO] bombed Saida with heavy artillery...and for very stupid reasons, a clash between some of the security people from Abu Iyad group and some of the Lebanese in Saida, and things developed in a very bad way, and they use heavy weapons, in order to keep control in Saida at that time. And when the Israeli invasion happened we expected Saida to fight, defending the Palestinians – why? Why they should fight when that happened?”³⁸⁹

The reaction of Amal itself was in many ways similar; the PLO's feud with the Shi'ite militia meant that when the IDF invaded in 1982, the most significant guerilla force in the south had no interest in fighting alongside the Palestinians (Berri's statements in May that if Israel were to invade, “all Amal members and southerners had orders to stay in the south and fight” notwithstanding.)³⁹⁰ There is some evidence that in certain places, Amal units did fight in conjunction with Syrian units,³⁹¹ but others have attested that as the IDF advanced, they actually handed positions over to Amal, implying neutrality at the very least.³⁹²

For their part, the Christian militias, long in open conflict with the PLO, actively cooperated with the IDF. Israel had sent intelligence delegations to

³⁸⁶ Interview, Nissim Levy, author of *A Year Without Birds* and former IDF Intelligence Officer responsible for recruiting informants in South Lebanon.

³⁸⁷ Interview, anonymous IDF reservist and OPfG veteran.

³⁸⁸ Interviews with Nissim Levy, David Zangen, Yuval Shaul, and an anonymous reserve colonel.

³⁸⁹ E.g., Oraib Rantawi

³⁹⁰ Claude Khoury, “Amal Leader Discusses Relations with PLO, Syria.” *Beirut Monday Morning*, May 10th-16th, 1982. Via FBIS.

³⁹¹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 526, 528.

³⁹² Interview, Maher.

Beirut as early as 1976, and had been coordinating with the Christian militias since then, in both the north and the south.³⁹³ During the invasion, the Lebanese Forces and other Christian militias fought alongside the IDF, coordinated with them, and provided the IDF with information, although many IDF soldiers felt that the Christian militias simply wanted the IDF to do their work for them against the PLO.³⁹⁴

Even the PLO's alliance with the left proved insufficient to save it. The LNM fought with the PLO against the IDF advance, and participated vigorously in the defense of Beirut. Individual members of many factions later engaged in acts of resistance to the Israeli occupation of the city.³⁹⁵ But ultimately, in the face of the Israeli bombardment of Beirut, the LNM's leaders reluctantly asked the PLO to leave:

The Lebanese leaders ask us and beg us, and said "Please, you must leave Beirut"...all of them, they [were] crying...Abu Ammar [was] crying also. Because they tell us "please, please, please we give you Lebanon, we give you all Lebanon, give us Beirut...save Beirut." We told [them] that "ok, we are ready to go to our camps,"...We ask them that, "ok we are ready to go there and to announce that - to ask Israel, please, all Palestinian leadership now in al Fakani and Shatila and Sabra and Bourj al Barajneh, and all Palestinian people now in these places. Please if you want to bomb, bomb us, not Beirut." Therefore they cried."³⁹⁶

Finally, there is the question of how the PLO's relations with the Arab states shaped the outcome of the invasion. As noted above, while these relationships had resulted in substantial material aid, they also had unintended consequences for the organization's focus and internal cohesion. The rivalries between these states often translated into a lack of cohesion amongst the various

³⁹³ Hamizrachi, *The emergence of the south Lebanon security belt: Major Saad Haddad and the ties with Israel, 1975-1978*, 63.

³⁹⁴ Interviews with former Israeli reservists.

³⁹⁵ There is a still a plaque commemorating the spot where an SSNP fighter shot an Israeli soldier who was ordering a hamburger at the Wimpy Burger on Rue Hamra in West Beirut.

³⁹⁶ Interview with Abu Jihad. This was echoed by Khaled Abdel Majed, Secretary General, PPSF, Damascus.

Palestinian factions. This probably accounts in part for the frequency with which PLO forces tended to retreat, and the poor communication between the different factions in the face of the advance.

Moreover, during the invasion itself, when the PLO arguably needed its sponsors' support the most, this proved to be unreliable. None of the Arab states (other than Syria) engaged in direct military action, though Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as well as China, the USSR and several Eastern Bloc states sent shipments of weapons and supplies. However, these arms did not reach the PLO, which badly needed them, due to Syrian intervention. Syria's primary interest was in ending the conflict as quickly as possible, whatever the result for the PLO.³⁹⁷ Unlike the intervention into Jordan in 1970, which Salah Jadid initiated both out of ideological support for the PLO and for domestic political reasons, in 1982, Syria found itself in the path of a conflict it had not sought.

Accordingly, though Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon participated in the defense against the Israeli advance early in the war, Asad agreed with alacrity to an American- and Soviet-brokered ceasefire on June 11th. Syrian soldiers were ordered back to their barracks, although Syrian-allied PLA units and other associated militias continued to fight under PLO command, paid, armed and fed by the PLO.³⁹⁸ Arafat reflected later that perhaps the lack of support from the Arab states was because, given their own dismal military record against Israel, they preferred to see the PLO fail.³⁹⁹

Syria also declined to use its political influence on behalf of the embattled Palestinians; once it had become clear to Arafat and his closest advisors that the PLO would likely need to leave Beirut, they began to try to secure more favorable

³⁹⁷ Sayigh attributes this to the relatively embarrassing Syrian withdrawal as the IDF advanced on the Shouf in early June. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 528.

³⁹⁹ Khalidi, *Conflict and violence in Lebanon: confrontation in the Middle East*, 98.

terms of withdrawal. Senior Fatah leaders Salah Khalaf and Nimr Salih drafted a letter appealing directly to Asad for support on July 21st; they received no reply. In addition to its confiscation of the above-mentioned supplies, the government also confiscated Fatah arms stored in Damascus, including thousands of pistols and assault rifles, mortars, missiles, anti-tank weapons, and ammunition, and discouraged guerilla attacks by Fatah from within its area of control in the Bekaa.⁴⁰⁰ While access to these weapons might not have turned the tide against the vastly superior Israeli forces, they might well have extended the length of time the PLO was able to resist the IDF's advance, and perhaps helped to secure more favorable terms of evacuation. As it was, the PLO was unable to either defend itself militarily or to recover its position afterward.

Conclusion

Ultimately, then, the PLO was able neither to resist the IDF assault, nor to recover from it, at least not in Lebanon. A structural approach can only partly explain this outcome. An explanation focusing solely on the PLO's material endowments, without any exploration of how it had acquired them, would cite the fact that the PLO was badly outnumbered and outgunned by the IDF, which it was, as the sole reason for its defeat. But this reasoning is not entirely convincing in light of the fact that, as will be explored in the coming chapters, the PLO's position in this regard was not so different from Hizbullah's in 2006.

A variation on this argument, focusing on non-material endowments, would argue that because it was fighting outside of historical Palestine, the PLO lacked the social endowments it needed to recruit committed fighters and attract

⁴⁰⁰ The vulnerability of the LNM and the PLO to a cutoff in the flow of arms from allied Arab states was foreshadowed in the lead-up to the Syrian intervention in 1976, when Jumblatt futilely warned the Arab states against supporting such an embargo. "Junblatt Comments on Syrian Actions, Pressure on the PLO," *Beirut Domestic Service*, March 31, 1976; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 533.

political support. Yet the details of the PLO's experience in Lebanon suggest that this may be too simplistic; the PLO was able to forge an alliance with non-Palestinian leftist Sunnis, and non-Sunni, non-Palestinian Druze (despite the fact that the Druze in Israel have a relatively positive relationship with the state, and serve in the military). This suggests that "social endowments" are very much what an organization makes of them. Moreover, as noted in the previous chapter, in Jordan, a Palestinian-majority (if not Palestinian-governed) country, the PLO did little better than it did in Lebanon.

In some ways, the case of the PLO in Lebanon does resemble the model laid out by Weinstein, in which wealthy militias use their wealth to recruit, leaving them with mercenary fighters who are more likely to brutalize civilians. And indeed, the wealth the PLO acquired in the 1970s did change its relationship with the Palestinian public. It is also true that its fighters' record was decidedly mixed.⁴⁰¹ But these two things are not necessarily related. Weinstein's argument would predict that the predatory behavior produced by the recruitment of loot-seeking, rather than committed, fighters would also apply to Palestinian civilians, and this did not, for the most part, happen. And again, as noted in the previous chapter, there were instances of coercive behavior towards civilians in Jordan even when the organization was far less wealthy and still recruiting committed fighters based on the surge of popular support it enjoyed after the battle of Karamah. And, finally, as will be seen in Chapters Five and Six, influxes of wealth can also be used to recruit and train highly committed professional fighters. It seems that in the case of the PLO, the problem was not just that its fighters were employees, but that the organization by which they had been employed was so divided by factionalism that it had a negative impact on morale.

⁴⁰¹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for the Palestinian State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, 534.

The strongest factor shaping the outcome of the war was not the raw resources the PLO possessed, but rather the steps it took to acquire them, because these in turn shaped its ability to use them. The PLO's alliances in Lebanon were not pre-determined, but rather shaped by the strategies the PLO used in approaching the Arab states, the different components of the Lebanese state, and Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. Though it enjoyed positive relationships with some of these parties, its alienation of others meant that the PLO found itself all but abandoned in the face of the Israeli advance, with its ability to coordinate damaged by the aftereffects of a tangled web of proxy relationships with the various Arab states, and its access to weapons from those states all but cut off.

The initial welcome the IDF received from Shi'ite villages in South Lebanon did not last; within a few weeks, distrust and resentment were beginning to set in. As one soldier succinctly put it "You know, in the Middle East, in the beginning, everybody's throwing rice and everything, but after a while, they don't like you."⁴⁰² Operation Peace for Galilee, the PLO's departure and the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon set the stage for the emergence of a new actor in the region: Hizbullah.

⁴⁰² Interview, anonymous IDF Colonel.

Chapter Four: Hizbullah, the Civil War Years

Introduction

Today, Hizbullah (whose name means *Party of God* in Arabic) is a complex social, political and military movement with operations ranging from kindergartens to a sophisticated military intelligence network. It also functions as a political party whose coalition is now dominant in Lebanese politics, and maintains an independent foreign policy characterized by close alliances with Syria and Iran. It is the object of sincere admiration and political loyalty as well as deep distrust and hostility among Lebanese politicians and civilians, and is unquestionably the dominant Shi'ite party in Lebanon. Hizbullah claimed both the withdrawal of the IDF from South Lebanon in 2000 and the outcome of the July War in 2006 (the subject of the next chapter) as military victories, and showed in 2008 that it could, and would, use force to impose its will on the Lebanese government.

But this was not always the case. In the first phase of its existence, Hizbullah was a very different kind of organization, and exhibited very different behavior with regard to its relationships both with the Lebanese public and with the states which would become its external sponsors, Syria and Iran. The contrast between its behavior and effectiveness during this period versus the period from 2000 to 2006 demonstrates that organizations which change their strategic approach to civilians and sponsor states can improve their effectiveness.

During the years of the civil war, Hizbullah was far less effective at achieving its objectives, one of the most important of which was the ability to

maintain a military presence in the south in order to attack Israeli targets there.⁴⁰³ This it proved unable to do, for reasons that had as much (or more) to do with domestic political conflicts as with its conflict with the IDF. In contrast with the powerful and influential political movement it has become, Hizbullah in 1989 was politically isolated and heavily criticized even by other Shi'ites for its extremist tactics and ideology. By the summer of 1989, Hizbullah been pushed out of the south – not because of Israel's actions, but through a series of confrontations with Amal, backed by Syria. Though the organization maintained a strong base in the southern suburbs of Beirut (known as the Dahiyeh) and near absolute dominance of the town of Baalbek, its base in the Bekaa, it was unable to reach its primary adversary, the IDF. For this reason, I consider this period to be a mixed outcome, veering heavily towards failure for Hizbullah. Neither Hizbullah nor Israel was able to dislodge the other, providing a significant contrast with Hizbullah's later performance.

This outcome was, as in the case of the PLO, strongly shaped by the strategies through which it approached its foreign sponsors and civilian constituents, and the resources these strategies helped the movement procure. Hizbullah's approach to civilians in Lebanon during this period is best described as "severe" – though it did engage in a degree of service provision, its marketing of itself was so narrow that the movement was either unappealing or outright alarming to many Lebanese, and its behavior in some of the areas where it operated, particularly West Beirut, was highly coercive. With regard to its

⁴⁰³ Hizbullah's goals during this period can be summarized as 1) the expulsion of all foreigners from Lebanon, 2) the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon, and 3) the liberation of Jerusalem through the destruction of Israel. (This assessment is based on statements made by Hassan Nasrullah in 1984 (see) in which he said "We declare here that we follow the path of the Islamic Revolution and do not accept any other government in Lebanon." This was reiterated in a later official press release, which referred to the "trial of the Phalangists and the overthrow of their regime." "Hezbollah Vows To Expel U.S., Eradicate Israel" (Beirut: Voice of Lebanon, March 13, 1985).. Similarly, in 1985, Abbas Musawi stated at a press conference that Hezbollah's goal was to "boot colonialism out of Lebanon, repulse Israel (from southern Lebanon) and set up an Islamic republic." "Hezbollah Leader Interviewed on Ties to Iran," *Paris AFP*, July 10, 1985.

foreign sponsors, its relationship with Iran during this period was intensely close, and deeply lucrative, but its relationship with Syria, while at times congenial, was often quite hostile. Moreover, while the movement's strength increased during this period, it was limited in its ability to harm the IDF, and was certainly less effective than it would become in later years. Overall, Hizbullah's coercive approach to both civilians and the Syrian military presence in Lebanon ultimately outweighed any benefit it derived from its chief sponsor, Iran. After giving some historical context regarding Hizbullah's emergence and its experience during the civil war, I will discuss its relationships with its external sponsors and civilian constituency in greater depth, to better understand the outcome of the civil war for Hizbullah.

Historical background: The Lebanese Context

The emergence of Hizbullah in South Lebanon in the early 1980s was the result of a particular confluence of events in Lebanon and throughout the region. These can be broadly categorized as 1) the politicization of Lebanon's Shi'ites, 2) the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, 3) the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (and the expulsion of the PLO) in 1982, and 4) the schisms which developed within Amal in the early 1980s.

As discussed in Chapter Three, in the decades leading up to the civil war, in comparison with the Lebanon's other sectarian groups, the Shi'ites were both politically and economically marginalized. Though by 1980 they constituted the largest single community in Lebanon, they were endowed with the least amount of political power under the National Pact, with disproportionately few seats in the parliament or positions reserved for Shi'ites within the government. The Shi'ite *zu'ama* (elites), who were heavily co-opted by the state and corrupt even by Lebanese standards, did little to improve the circumstances of their

constituents; Ajami contends that they deliberately kept the majority of the Shi'ite populace poorly educated and impoverished to guarantee their own continued authority.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, the Shi'ite majority regions, the Bekaa valley and the south, were physically isolated from the country's commercial centers in Beirut and along the coast, placing them at a disadvantage economically. This latter disparity was partially addressed by President Fuad Shihab's state-building reforms of the 1960s, which both improved the infrastructure in Shi'ite areas and increased the community's access to education.⁴⁰⁵ But Shihab's program was only partially successful, and ultimately failed to produce a corresponding increase in jobs. Particularly in the Shi'ite community, many young people became increasingly frustrated, and increasingly politicized, when their new aspirations could not be met.⁴⁰⁶ This led to the first major wave of Shi'ite political mobilization in the late 1960s. It was not, at this stage, explicitly religious; that is, though mobilization was occurring around Shi'ite communal grievances, the ideological content of this mobilization was loosely leftist, rather than Islamic.⁴⁰⁷

Central to this first wave of Shi'ite mobilization was an Iranian-born cleric of Arab-Lebanese background named Imam Musa Sadr. In 1967, Sadr founded the Movement of the Dispossessed, a loosely leftist initiative aimed at the advancement of the Shi'ite community through both social service work and political advocacy.⁴⁰⁸ Despite Sadr's religious credentials, it should be noted that the Movement of the Dispossessed was communal, not Islamic-fundamentalist in

⁴⁰⁴ Fouad. Ajami, *The vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 67-68.

⁴⁰⁵ Ajami, *The vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 95-97. A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1993): 14.

⁴⁰⁷ Amal. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: politics and religion* (London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2002), 9.

⁴⁰⁸ Sadr also founded the Higher Shi'ite Council, which would later prove to be a powerful but less partisan voice in the Shi'ite community. Ajami, *The vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*, 114.

character, and in some ways quite similar to some of the other progressive Lebanese parties. Rather than challenging the basic structure of the Lebanese state, Sadr preferred to advocate for an improvement in the status of the Shi'ite community within Lebanon's existing, multi-confessional, quasi-democratic system.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, as noted in the previous chapter, it enjoyed at least initially good relations with the secular PLO. When Sadr established the Amal militia in response to the increasing violence in Lebanon in the mid-1970s, Fatah helped to train its fighters, and in fact, a number of Hizbullah's own founders served in Fatah during those days. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Imad Mughniyeh, the mastermind behind many of the organization's largest bombings and kidnappings, who served as a lieutenant in Fatah's Force 17 until 1982.⁴¹⁰ But this warm relationship was not to last.

When the war broke out in 1975, it was cataclysmic for the predominantly Shi'ite population of South Lebanon.⁴¹¹ In the first year of the war, Shi'ites suffered the highest number of casualties of any Lebanese community, despite the fact that the fighting was primarily between the Palestinian/Druze/Sunni Joint Forces and the Christian militias - Musa Sadr once said that Jumblatt was willing to fight the Christians "to the last Shi'ite" to achieve his goals.⁴¹² Israeli reprisals for PLO raids also took their toll on the Shi'ite population, and produced first resentment of the PLO and later all-out conflict between Amal and the Palestinians (see chapter 3.) The fighting also produced large numbers of refugees who fled to Beirut, creating large, overcrowded slums to the south that became known as the "belt of misery"; in 1976 alone, 100,000 people were forced to flee

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 88-89.

⁴¹⁰ Magnus Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision-Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 309.

⁴¹¹ Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," 14.

⁴¹² Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 10.

their homes in the Naba'a area.⁴¹³ These upheavals further politicized the Shi'ite community, while simultaneously distancing it from the left.

The second major event which laid the groundwork for Hizbullah's emergence was the Islamic revolution in Iran.⁴¹⁴ In 1979, the Shah's regime was overthrown and replaced with a theocracy under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Many of the men who became leaders in the new regime had spent years in exile from the Shah's regime in Jabal 'Amil, as South Lebanon is sometimes called. (One of the most notable of these was Mustafa Chamran, who went on to become Iranian Minister of Defense, and whose wife was Lebanese.) Others had studied alongside Lebanese clerics in *hawzats* (networks of scholars and seminaries) in Najaf, in Iraq, where some had become members of the Hizb al Dawa party, a radical religious movement holding a deep antipathy for Israel.⁴¹⁵ It was in Najaf that the radicalized political Shi'ite ideology which would later inspire both the Iranian revolution and the foundation of Hizbullah was developed and refined. The close personal relationships produced during these years greatly facilitated Hizbullah's ties with the new Iranian regime, which actively funded, trained and sought to encourage the growth and development of the new organization.⁴¹⁶

The third "ingredient" facilitating Hizbullah's emergence in 1982 was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that June. The removal of the PLO from the south created a power vacuum which Amal alone proved insufficient to fill,⁴¹⁷ particularly as it was oriented politically and militarily towards Lebanon, not explicitly toward anti-Israeli resistance. But far more significant than the

⁴¹³ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: politics and religion*, 9.

⁴¹⁴ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (London: Saqi, 2005), 17-19.

⁴¹⁵ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 34.

⁴¹⁶ After the Iranian revolution, the center of Shi'ite learning shifted from Najaf to Qom, in Iran, but the bonds between the Iraqi, Iranian and Lebanese scholars remained.

⁴¹⁷ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: politics and religion*, 1-10.

expulsion of the PLO alone was the Israeli decision to remain in Lebanon; by remaining in the south rather than withdrawing as it had in 1978, it created a source of resentment among many southern Lebanese (particularly Shi'ites), which contributed to the radicalization of the community, and a target for resistance activity. As Ehud Barak noted in an interview in 2006, "When we entered Lebanon ... there was no Hizbullah. We were accepted with perfumed rice and flowers by the Shia in the south. It was our presence there that created Hizbullah."⁴¹⁸ The Israeli invasion also led, eventually, to the establishment of the MNF, or Multinational Force, tasked with stabilizing and rebuilding the Lebanese state; this force, particularly its American and French components, was also considered an enemy by Hizbullah, though this was a secondary, rather than primary, effect of the invasion.⁴¹⁹

Finally, Hizbullah's appearance as a separate movement was facilitated by the deep schisms within Amal that developed in the early 1980s. In 1978, Musa Sadr disappeared while on a visit to Libya. His fate remains unknown. Sadr was the object of deep devotion by the Shi'ites of south Lebanon, and his disappearance energized and politicized the Shi'ite community. It also threw the movement into a state of flux, as the mid-level leadership began to jockey for position. By 1980, Nabih Berri had emerged as the leader of Amal, but many of the more radically religious members were dissatisfied with his leadership. Some had become followers of Ayatollah Mohammed Fadlullah, who advocated a pan-Shi'ite, rather than pan-Lebanese, political ideology,⁴²⁰ while those who had

⁴¹⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 33.

⁴¹⁹ Hizbullah also opposed the presence of UNIFIL peacekeepers in south Lebanon, which were deployed in 1978, following Operation Litani. This hostility was linked to its general disapproval of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council vote in favor of a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war, which led Tufayli to call for a "jihad" against the UN in 1987.

⁴²⁰ Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," 15-20.

studied in Najaf wanted to see a more radical movement, more closely allied with Iran (rather than Syria, Amal's chief patron).

While it is difficult to pinpoint a precise date when Hizbullah was "founded", the summer of 1982 is probably the most accurate starting point. In June, Hussein Mousawi, a member of the Amal command council, broke away and founded a splinter group called Islamic Amal, based in Baalbek. This group was given a boost when, in August, a contingent from Amal's more radical faction (including Subhi Tufayli, Hizbullah's first secretary general, Sheikh Raghib Harb, one of its first military commanders in the south and one of its most celebrated martyrs, and Ayatollah Fadlullah) attended a conference in Tehran at which Khomeini himself encouraged them to form an Islamic resistance against the Israeli presence in south Lebanon. They eventually joined Mousawi in Baalbek, along with members of the Islamic wing of Fatah (such as Imad Mughniyeh), members of the Iraqi Hizb al Dawa and others who had studied in Najaf and Qom, those members of the Lebanese Muslim Student Union who were part of the communist party and oriented towards Fadlullah, and unemployed militia members who were simply looking for a new group to join following the PLO's departure from Lebanon.⁴²¹ They were joined by 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards (or *pasdaran*) as well as clerics dispatched from Iran to facilitate the foundation of the movement and spread the religious and political doctrines of Khomeini.⁴²² After a great deal of debate as to what the new organization should be called, and consultation with Khomeini, they settled on

⁴²¹ Ibid., 23-25. Eitan. Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 61-63.

⁴²² Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," *Middle East J. Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (2008): 35. Hala. Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*. Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation."

Hizb Allah, or Party of God, based on a Qu'ranic verse which reads, "The *party of God*, they are victorious."⁴²³

1983 was a period of extraordinary violence and upheaval throughout the country, including the Shi'ite areas.⁴²⁴ In this context, Nabih Berri's decision to join the National Salvation Committee, convened by President Sarkis to deal with the Israeli invasion and broker an agreement between Israel and Lebanon, proved too much for many Shi'ites to take. Posters of Khomeini began to appear in south Lebanon, and with Hizbullah's encouragement, many Amal members began defecting to the new movement, including high ranking members like Mustafa Diranim, Amal's chief of security and head of its resistance wing.⁴²⁵

Hizbullah's objectives during this period, as well as the central tenets of its ideology, are perhaps most clearly articulated in a document issued on February 16th, 1985, called "the Open Letter." (Indeed, it is arguable that the issuing of this document marks the point at which Hizbullah emerged as a movement separate from Amal).⁴²⁶ The central principals articulated in the Open Letter are adherence to the authority of the Wali al Faqih (that is Khomeini), and a pan-Islamic (rather than Lebanese) political orientation. The letter also expresses firm opposition (and indeed, overt hostility) to the United States, its "Atlantic Pact allies" and the "Zionist entity", though the USSR and communism are also condemned.

Based on these principles, the letter lays out four objectives: the expulsion of "the Americans, the French and their allies" from Lebanon (a reference to the MNF); to "bring to justice" the Phalange; the voluntary establishment of an

⁴²³ Ibid., 25.

⁴²⁴ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 66.

⁴²⁵ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 50. Joseph Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 33. Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 63.

⁴²⁶ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 305.

Islamic government in Lebanon;⁴²⁷ and, though it is expressed separately from the previous three objectives, the destruction of Israel (and the “liberation” of Jerusalem, which appears frequently elsewhere in its discourse.) Ideologically, these objectives were interrelated, in that all three constituted components of jihad. Hassan Nasrullah described this relationship as follows: “The defensive jihad constitutes armed and unarmed struggle. An armed struggle means fighting the enemy with blood and involves martyrdom. An unarmed struggle involves political, economic, and cultural means. Our defensive jihad in Lebanon involves both forms.”⁴²⁸

And indeed, during the latter years of the civil war, Hizbullah (in some cases through an affiliate group, Islamic Jihad) began to engage in ever more spectacular attacks against Israeli and Western targets. The latter included diplomatic missions and personnel as well as targets affiliated with the Multinational Force, the American, French, Italian and British stabilization troops deployed to Lebanon to oversee the PLO evacuation and subsequent elections. Among these attacks were the bombings of the US marine barracks and embassy in Beirut, which killed hundreds of people, both foreign and Lebanese.⁴²⁹ They also engaged in smaller missions, becoming known for their use of suicide tactics and kidnappings, primarily of foreigners, many of whom were held for years. As the war continued in the south and in Beirut, Hizbullah forces skirmished with Amal and other militias, as well as Syrian troops in Beirut and the Bekaa.

In short, although the years of the civil war witnessed the beginnings of what would become Hizbullah’s network social service and media networks

⁴²⁷ This is phrased as follows: “to permit all the sons of our people to determine their future and to choose in all the liberty the form of government they desire. We call upon all of them to pick the option of Islamic government which, alone, is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. Only an Islamic regime can stop any further tentative attempts of imperialistic infiltration into our country.”

⁴²⁸ Hamzeh, “Lebanon’s Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation,” 38-39.

⁴²⁹ A Lexis-Nexis search first turns up the name “Hezbollah” in the international press in relation to this episode.

(particularly towards the end of the decade) overall, this period was far less successful for Hizbullah, both militarily and politically, than later phases would be. This can be traced directly to its relationships with both its foreign sponsors, Syria and Iran, and with its civilian constituency.

Foreign Sponsorship

Hizbullah's external relationships were limited to Iran and Syria. This was due in part to the Iran-Iraq war, in which the Arab states (with the exception of Syria) closed ranks and sided with Iraq, leaving Hizbullah, as Iran's client, bereft of Arab backing. Its status as a Shi'ite movement also rendered it somewhat suspect in the eyes of the Sunni monarchies of the Gulf. Moreover, unlike the PLO, Hizbullah never enjoyed much in the way of superpower sponsorship. Not only was it openly antagonistic to the United States, it also rejected any alliance with the USSR or any other communist state. As articulated in the Open Letter, the movement adhered to Khomeini's principle of "neither East nor West, only Islam."⁴³⁰ Though it denied involvement in the kidnapping of four Soviet diplomats in 1985,⁴³¹ it did publicly "blacklist" the Soviet Union a year later, due to the latter's support for the UNIFIL deployment in the south under UN resolution 425. The Soviet embassy apparently took this threat seriously enough that it moved to increase security at its embassy in Beirut.⁴³² (Hizbullah also opposed communism on ideological grounds, brutally attacking communist party members in south Lebanon).⁴³³ Though the movement did have access to Soviet weapons, these were supplied by Syria, not the USSR.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ "Lebanese Shi'ites Urge Islamic Revolution," *Tehran Domestic Service*, February 13, 1984.

⁴³¹ "Hizballah Denies Link With Soviet Kidnapping," *Paris AFP*, October 9, 1985.

⁴³² "Hizballah Threat Prompts Tighter Soviet Security," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, 1986.

⁴³³ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 36-37.

⁴³⁴ "More Missiles Brought to Beirut Suburbs," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, December 1, 1983.

Even given its relative isolation, Hizbullah's relationships with its sponsors were each quite different. While its relationship with Iran was rooted in a shared communal and ideological identity, both of which were in turn the result of a shared process of political evolution, its relationship with Syria was far more pragmatic, based on their common friendship with Iran and on Syria's pragmatic approach to Lebanese and regional politics.

Iran

Iran's relationship with Hizbullah was from the beginning based on the deep ideological affinities and in some cases personal connections between its members and members of the Iranian regime. The Iran's Islamic revolutionary regime and Lebanon's Hizbullah have their roots in the shared experiences and ideologies of their respective founders. As noted above, as young men, many of them studied together in Najaf and Qom, and in many cases, also spent time together in South Lebanon while the Iranians were in exile from the Shah's government in the 1970s. But just as important as the shared personal history of the founders of both movements is the fact that the theological and political ideologies that would produce the Iranian revolution also led, in parallel, to the emergence of Hizbullah.

A central component of this ideology was acceptance of the authority of the person known as the *wali al faqih*, or the "jurist theologian." This role was filled by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini until his death in 1989, when it was assumed by his successor, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. According to Shi'ite theology, after the death of the prophet Muhammad, religious authority devolved upon a line of twelve imams. The twelve imams, while not prophets, were nevertheless morally infallible and capable of perfect understanding of the Qur'an

and Sunnah.⁴³⁵ They therefore possessed a divine mandate to rule. With the passing of the last imam into “occultation”⁴³⁶ in 941, the imams’ religious, but not political, authority passed to the *mujtahids*, or jurists. These jurists are considered worthy of imitation by other Muslims, and one who becomes a source of imitation is known as a *marja’*.⁴³⁷ Though by tradition, *mujtahids* are not considered divinely mandated to rule, Ayatollah Khomeini argued that if a *mujtahid* should set up an Islamic state, then the authority of the imams to rule and adjudicate, though not their divine investiture, would pass to that *mujtahid*. It is this authority, currently invested in the Iranian state, which is referred to as the *wilayat al faqih*.⁴³⁸

Acceptance of the authority of the jurist-theologian (and the necessity of this authority for the construction of an Islamic order on earth) is a central component of Hizbullah’s ideology. This is not theologically synonymous with the government of Iran in particular; the nationality of the government constituting the *wilayat al faqih* or the person of the *wali al faqih* is doctrinally significant, and could, in theory, exist in any state which established a (Shi’ite) Islamic government.⁴³⁹ However, in practice, because the Iranian revolution and the resulting state are inseparable from the *wilayat al faqih*, at least in the early and more doctrinaire days of the movement, this gave the government of Iran a deep degree of control over Hizbullah. Abbas Musawi stated quite bluntly in an interview in 1985 “Hezbollah’s supreme leader is Imam Khomeini...He spells out the movement’s line and issues directives of the Party of God because he is the

⁴³⁵ The words and actions of the prophet Muhammad.

⁴³⁶ In occultation, the Imam remains in the world, but hidden from the world. According to Shi’ite theology, he will return with Jesus to establish peace and justice on earth.

⁴³⁷ This is not dissimilar to the role of the Rebbe in Hasidic Judaism or the Pope in Catholicism, although there are theological differences.

⁴³⁸ Hamzeh, “Lebanon’s Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation,” 30-36.

⁴³⁹ Samii A.W., “A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship,” 35-36.

only spiritual chief capable of reflecting on any subject.”⁴⁴⁰ Accordingly, the majority of Hizbullah’s followers, and most of its leadership, chose Khomeini as their marja’ while he was alive.

The new movement also provided valuable assets to Iran. Although the close relationship between the parties meant that proxyhood was, at least at this stage, less an arrangement based on quid-pro-quo than an expression of common interest, it still played a role in the relationship. The new regime in Iran was actively seeking a proxy in Lebanon. In the days immediately after the revolution it had sought to work through Amal,⁴⁴¹ but Amal’s mostly secular, Lebanese orientation, which manifested itself in a willingness to work with the Maronite parties, did not mesh with the totalizing ideology then dominant in Iran.⁴⁴² The nascent movement which would evolve into Hizbullah proved a far better fit.

While having a proxy in Lebanon was useful for its own sake, in that it allowed the new regime to influence Lebanese Shi’ite politics, it also proved an important proxy against Israel and the west, for whom Iran and Hizbullah shared a deep antipathy. Hostility to Israel was central to Khomeini’s ideology, even before the invasion of 1982, or indeed before the revolution. In a speech in February of 1978, he complained that Israel had been created by the United States and United Kingdom as a means to harm the Shi’a, and had reduced Lebanon to “its present miserable state,” and in September of 1979 he referred to Israel as a “cancerous tumor” in the Middle East which was “battering and slaughtering our dear Palestinian and Lebanese brothers.” Samii even characterizes Iran’s support of Hizbullah as explicitly rooted in a desire to strike at Israel.⁴⁴³ Similarly doctrinally important was (and is) hostility to the West, particularly the United

⁴⁴⁰ “Hezbollah Leader Interviewed on Ties to Iran.”

⁴⁴¹ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: politics and religion*.

⁴⁴² Samii A.W., “A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship.”

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

States, referred to as the Great Satan. France was also considered an enemy; at least one news broadcast by Radio Lebanon referred directly to the training of Hizbullah fighters in the Bekaa (by Syrians) for attacks on French forces and “French interests,” to pressure France to cease the flow of arms to Iraq.⁴⁴⁴

Through Hizbullah and its subsidiary organizations, Iran was able to strike at these enemies within Lebanon, through actions such as the bombings of the United States embassy in Beirut in April of 1983, and of the US marine barracks and French paratrooper barracks in October, both of which were present as part of the multinational force deployed to stabilize the country in the wake of the Israeli invasion.⁴⁴⁵

Iran also encouraged and aided in kidnappings of foreign nationals throughout the decade. Its embassy in Beirut and the contingent of pasdaran stationed there were actively involved both in supplying Hizbullah and in its hostage taking operations, including interrogations⁴⁴⁶ though these were often carried out by groups affiliated with Hizbullah rather than the organization itself.⁴⁴⁷ The lists of demands from kidnappers often included the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Kuwait or Israel, but also the unfreezing of Iranian funds in the United States.⁴⁴⁸

Costs and Benefits of the Iranian Relationship

The close relationship between Iran and Hizbullah provided the latter with substantial material and non-material resources throughout the 1980s. Beginning with the dispatch of 1,500 revolutionary guards to the Bekaa in 1982, Iran

⁴⁴⁴ “VOL: Syrians Training Iranians for ‘Terrorism’,” *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, 1983.

⁴⁴⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 72-73.

⁴⁴⁶ Ranstorp, “Hizbullah’s Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions,” 310.

⁴⁴⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*. Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 181.

⁴⁴⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 43-44.

provided training to Hizbullah's fighters. Training camps were established in the Bekaa (with the blessing of the Syrian forces controlling the area) and Hizbullah fighters were also trained in Iran. Some even fought for Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.⁴⁴⁹ Iran also supplied weapons, including small arms and more substantial arms; these latter included the Soviet surface-to-surface missiles which were deployed in the southern suburbs of Beirut to be used against the multinational forces,⁴⁵⁰ as well as Soviet shoulder-mounted SAM-7s.⁴⁵¹ Iranian funding was also used to support Hizbullah's less conventional tactics, including bombings, abductions, and airplane hijackings, which Musawi bluntly acknowledged were financed by Iran.⁴⁵²

This brings the discussion to the most substantial asset with which Iran provided Hizbullah during this period: funding. In the years immediately following the Iranian revolution, this was at times as high as five to ten million dollars a month.⁴⁵³ While neither Hizbullah's social service network nor its media and public relations machine were as well developed during the 1980s as they would become after the civil war, the seeds of both sets of institutions were planted during this period, particularly towards the end of the decade, aided by Iranian funding. Funding for the Martyrs Foundation and the Foundation for the Oppressed (major Iranian-funded charities in Lebanon) alone averaged 60 million dollars a year throughout the 1980s.⁴⁵⁴ Iranian funding also contributed to the operation of Hizbullah's newspaper, *Al Ahd* and its two radio stations.⁴⁵⁵ By the

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

⁴⁵⁰ "Iranians to Install Missiles in Beirut Suburbs" (Voice of Lebanon, November 30, 1983).

⁴⁵¹ "More Missiles Brought to Beirut Suburbs."

⁴⁵² "Hezbollah Leader Interviewed on Ties to Iran."

⁴⁵³ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 150.

⁴⁵⁴ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 321.

⁴⁵⁵ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions." Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 181. Hizbullah's television station, *Al Manar*, did not go on air until 1991.

middle of the decade, Iran had established offices in Beirut explicitly for the payment of Hizbullah staff salaries.⁴⁵⁶

Finally, Iranian guidance also proved important for ideological reasons, particularly early on in the movement's evolution. Beginning with the dissemination of Khomeini's doctrine by the first pasdaran and Iranian clerics who arrived in the Bekaa in 1982, the existence of a more or less fully formed, coherent and totalizing political doctrine proved useful both in setting up the organization and in recruiting new members, particularly from amongst those who had become disaffected with Amal's pragmatism.⁴⁵⁷ Given the emphasis in the doctrine itself on hierarchy and obedience⁴⁵⁸ it also facilitated and streamlined decision-making in the movement's early days.

Of course, this relationship was not without its difficulties. The most significant was arguably the limits the relationship with Iran placed on Hizbullah's ability to participate in Lebanese politics. Because of the nature of the Khomeniist ideology, particularly as it was expressed in the early 1980s, there was little room for compromise or negotiation with other parties, particularly the Maronites. Conversely, the group's connection to the radical regime in Tehran made it difficult for other parties in Lebanon to trust it, and arguably impeded it from developing a sense of its own, Lebanese, identity or interests, which, as will be discussed below, hindered its effectiveness in the Lebanese context. If one potential cost of state sponsorship is a focus on the sponsor state's mission to the detriment of the nonstate actors own interests, Hizbullah's relationship with Iran in the 1980s certainly illustrates this dynamic.

A second problem in the relationship was generated from within the Iranian regime itself. Though Hizbullah as a whole was, in theory, unswervingly

⁴⁵⁶ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 150.

⁴⁵⁷ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: politics and religion*.

⁴⁵⁸ Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation."

loyal to the authority of the wilayat al faqih, in practice, because of the personal history shared by the Iranians and Lebanese involved and the varying levels of radicalism in both contexts, particular factions within Hizbullah became allied with particular factions in the Iranian regime. Sometimes this was to the advantage of the more radical factions within Hizbullah (represented by Tufayli and Nasrullah); when Mohtashemi, who represented the most radical faction in Iran, was attempting to defend his position against the moderating influence of Rafsanjani in the late 1980s, he backed Hizbullah as a means of doing so, leading to an increase in support for the movement.⁴⁵⁹ But what was given for political reasons was also sometimes withdrawn for political reasons. The Office of Islamic Liberation Movements was one of the offices within the Iranian state linking the hardline factions to their clients in Hizbullah; when Hizbullah activists pushed too hard for the reformers' liking by kidnapping the Charge d'Affaires of the Syrian Embassy to Iran in 1986, Rafsanjani moved to take it over in 1987 as a means of both reigning in Hizbullah and countering his domestic rivals.⁴⁶⁰ Even the institutions providing funding for social services were occasionally subject to factional maneuvering. In 1989, Rafsanjani replaced the head of the Martyr's Foundation with his politically moderate nephew and shortly thereafter, support for Hizbullah was reduced by as much as 90%.⁴⁶¹

Syria

In contrast to its strong religious and ideological bonds with Iran, Hizbullah's relationship with Syria was almost entirely pragmatic, based on a common enemy, in the form of Israel, and a common friend, in the form of Iran.

⁴⁵⁹ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 317.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 319.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 321.

Indeed, Hizbullah's radical political agenda and ideological rigidity, as well as its extreme tactics, were at times alarming to the Syrian government, which in its dealings with Lebanon prized stability above all things. As a secular state (which had had its share of conflict with its own domestic Islamic movement,) Syria had far more in common with the communally oriented but essentially secular Amal than it did with the fundamentalist Hizbullah. Therefore, while the relationship between Hizbullah and Syria was sometimes congenial and mutually beneficial, at other times it was conflicted, and sometimes openly hostile.

From the Syrian perspective, there were reasons both to support and oppose Hizbullah. Probably the most significant argument in favor of support was Hizbullah's role as a military proxy against Israel. Judith Harik contends that after the PLO's departure.⁴⁶² Syria found itself in need of another means by which to exert pressure on Israel's northern border, a role which Hizbullah fit perfectly.⁴⁶³ This would certainly be supported by her contention that, while it was Iran which provided the training, weapons and salaries for Hizbullah fighters, it was Syria which controlled the timing and targeting of attacks on IDF and SLA positions, as well as providing security and logistics assistance.⁴⁶⁴

Hizbullah's relationship with Syria was also shaped by their shared relationship with Iran. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, Syria alone among the Arab states supported Iran against Arab Iraq. This may in part have been a matter of principle; Patrick Seale, Asad's biographer, suggests that Asad had some personal sympathy, as a member of a Shi'ite-derived religious minority, for the

⁴⁶² True, by the mid-1980s, most of the major PLO factions had managed to reestablish some presence in Beirut, including some of Syria's clients. However, they were unable to return to their previous bases in South Lebanon, and as such, could not maintain the sort of pressure on Israel which would be beneficial to Syria's interests.

⁴⁶³ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 38.

⁴⁶⁴ J. P. Harik, "Hizbollah and Today's Battle for Beirut," *The Fletcher forum of world affairs*. 31, no. 2 (2007): 111-132.

struggles of the Shi'ites, particularly in Lebanon.⁴⁶⁵ But Seale also suggests a pragmatic motivation, namely that Asad saw in the Iranian revolution a counterweight to Syria's Gulf-supported Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, and that he had welcomed the overthrow of the Israeli-allied Shah Reza Pahlavi for regional political reasons.⁴⁶⁶ Syria and Iran shared other regional interests as well; both were engaged in rivalries of one kind or another with the Gulf states, and both shared a deep enmity for Saddam Hussein's Iraq, as the Syrian Ba'ath party and Iraqi Ba'ath party had been rivals since the 1960s.⁴⁶⁷ In short, the alliance was deeply important for both states, and at times led Syria to look favorably on Iran's client in Lebanon.

However, during this period, Hizbullah's goals were often fundamentally at odds with Syria's, and at times, its approach to the Syrian military presence in Lebanon veered into open hostility. While Syria's priorities in Lebanon were to maintain pressure on Israel in the south and stability elsewhere in the country, Hizbullah's goals (and tactics) were considerably more extreme. The establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon was a political project which Syria could not condone,⁴⁶⁸ and though it might in principle have agreed with Hizbullah regarding the desirability of expelling all western and Israeli troops from Lebanon, its tactics in pursuing this goal were deeply worrying to the stability-seeking Syrian government. The kidnappings of foreigners and hijackings of airplanes orchestrated by Iran via Hizbullah, with which Syria denied any connection, threatened not only internal Lebanese stability, but also Syria's reputation, as they usually occurred in territory under its control (particularly West Beirut, Lebanon's last bastion of multi-sectarianism). Particularly

⁴⁶⁵ Seale, *Asad of Syria: the struggle for the Middle East*, 351.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 352-353.

⁴⁶⁷ Albert Habib. Hourani, *A history of the Arab peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 432-433.

⁴⁶⁸ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*.

embarrassing were the kidnappings in 1987 of an American journalist and the son of the Lebanese defense minister from an area under Syrian control in West Beirut⁴⁶⁹ and the abduction in February of 1988 (and eventual murder) of Colonel William Higgins of the US Marine Corps. Moreover, despite its general acquiescence to Hizbullah's presence in its zones of influence in Lebanon (especially the Bekaa) Syria was not entirely sanguine about the movement's increasing control of these regions. In this sense, Hizbullah's approach towards Syria can almost be seen as coercive, although this is perhaps the wrong term, given the greater strength of the Syrian forces.

Costs and Benefits of the Syrian Relationship

During those times when Syria was inclined to look more favorably on the organization, because of its control over large swathes of Lebanese territory, its favor brought with it substantial benefits. These included permission to use the town of Baalbek in the Bekaa as a base of operations, as well as more pro-active support in providing it with facilities for training and political cover to do so.⁴⁷⁰ In a sense, even though the Bekaa Valley is Lebanese territory, and primarily populated by Shi'ites, Syria can be said to have provided safe haven there to Hizbullah.

Moreover, because of its control over Lebanon's borders, Syrian cooperation was important in facilitating the flow of arms, fighters, and communication between Iran and Hizbullah. Much of the coordination between

⁴⁶⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 181-182.

⁴⁷⁰ Nasrullah stated years later that through Syria was not involved in the founding of the group, it had provided "political coverage, moral support and facilities" early on. Ibid., 179. This statement should, however, be viewed with a certain skepticism as it was made in 1996, during that period when Syria exercised almost total control over Lebanon. Some media reports from the early 1980s also suggest that Syria was involved in obtaining cars for Hizbullah to use in constructing car bombs, and directly provided other arms, though these reports come mainly from a Kataeb-aligned radio station and so may not be entirely reliable given the Kataeb's hostility towards Syria at that point.

the two was actually conducted through the Iranian embassy in Damascus. The Iranian ambassador worked closely with the head of Syrian Military Intelligence in Lebanon, Ghazi Kanaan, who in turn worked closely with Hizbullah⁴⁷¹ including its Special Security Apparatus, the division responsible for security and intelligence matters.⁴⁷² The embassy in Damascus also handled coordination between the *pasdaran* stationed in the Bekaa and the operational base the Syrians had allowed Iran to set up in the border village of Zebdani.⁴⁷³

On the other hand, Hizbullah's violations of what Syria saw as its authority in Lebanon ultimately led to conflict between the two parties. Hizbullah's expanding sovereignty in the Bekaa led to incidents between Syrian forces and Hizbullah fighters as early as May 1984,⁴⁷⁴ when the Syrians clashed with Hizbullah fighters, confiscated their weapons and moved heavy artillery into the Bekaa.⁴⁷⁵ The Syrian government even went so far as to request the departure to Iran of the Revolutionary Guards stationed there.⁴⁷⁶ In response, Hizbullah members demonstrated against Syria and tore up pictures of Hafez al Asad in Baalbek's main square.⁴⁷⁷ Though the confrontations eventually subsided, tensions remained.⁴⁷⁸

In 1985, and 1986, Syria began moving to contain Hizbullah both by requesting that Iran rein in its proxy and by expanding its own military presence in West Beirut. The latter, however, served only to increase tension between Hizbullah and the Syrian military, culminating in the massacre of 18 Hizbullah fighters in their West Beirut barracks by Syrian soldiers as the Syrian army

⁴⁷¹ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 38-39.

⁴⁷² Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision-Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 311.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 310.

⁴⁷⁴ "Syrians, Hezbollah Members Clash in Al-Biqa'," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, May 7, 1984.

⁴⁷⁵ "Syrians Bringing Heavy Artillery Into Al-Biqa'," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, May 14, 1984.

⁴⁷⁶ "Iranians Begin Departure at Request of Syria," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, May 12, 1984.

⁴⁷⁷ "VOL: Syrians Encircle Hezbollah Gunmen in Ba'labakk," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, 1984.

⁴⁷⁸ "Tension Follows Hezbollah-Syrian Forces Clash," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, 1984.

moved to take over the neighborhood.⁴⁷⁹ This event, called the Al Basta massacre, had a chilling effect on Syrian-Iranian relations.⁴⁸⁰ In 1986, clashes erupted again when Syrian forces attempted to rescue hostages being held at Hizbullah's Sheikh Abdullah barracks in Baalbek, resulting in casualties on both sides and the kidnapping of two Syrian officers. Finally, to end the escalating violence between the two sides, Syria took the unusual step of blocking all roads in and out of Baalbek⁴⁸¹ demonstrating that what it had given in terms of access to territory and freedom of movement, it could also take away.

Hizbullah's increasingly radical tactics and Syria's frustration with its inability to control the movement's behavior also led to tensions between Amal and Hizbullah. These were compounded by the two movements' rivalry over control of the southern suburbs in Beirut and territory in southern Lebanon. Since 1985, this rivalry had been marked by mutual accusations and recriminations. Tensions occasionally escalated to direct confrontations, such as the seizure of Hizbullah weapons by Amal fighters,⁴⁸² and even exchanges of fire.⁴⁸³ With Higgins' kidnapping in 1988, it erupted into open warfare. Amal members (presumably acting with Syria's blessing) conducted house-to-house searches in an unsuccessful bid to locate and rescue the missing colonel, and in the process detained a large number of Hizbullah members. Serious fighting erupted between the two parties, and Syria backed Amal against the Hizbullah. Though Iran attempted to mediate in the spring of 1988, it was itself in a difficult position, as both it and Syria wished to see their respective client militias in control of the south.⁴⁸⁴ By April, though Hizbullah was able to establish a presence in the

⁴⁷⁹ Nora Boustany, "Syrian Troops Said to Kill 18 In Hezbollah's Beirut Militia," *Washington Post*, February 25, 1987.

⁴⁸⁰ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 180-181.

⁴⁸¹ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 39.

⁴⁸² "Amal Seizes 'Hundreds' of Hezbollah's Rifles," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, June 30, 1985.

⁴⁸³ "Fighting Resumes," *Paris AFP*, April 28, 1980.

⁴⁸⁴ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 40.

southern suburbs of Beirut, Amal had managed to expel both Hizbullah and many of the revolutionary guards from the south.⁴⁸⁵

Clearly, then, Hizbullah's relationship with Syria was not an unmitigated success for the organization. Its militancy during this period threatened not only the interests of Syria's client, Amal, but Syria's own preferences in Lebanon. Hizbullah's narrow framing of itself during this period as a revolutionary Shi'ite organization meant that for all the support Syria was willing to provide early on, based on Hizbullah's potential as a military proxy, these services were ultimately not valuable enough to prevent Syria moving to contain Hizbullah when it deemed this necessary.

Relations with the Lebanese Public

If Hizbullah's narrow self-definition was detrimental to its early relationship with Syria, it was equally problematic for its relationship with many Lebanese. Hizbullah's civilian audience can be divided into two categories: Shi'ites and non-Shi'ites. The organization's approach to the former consisted of a mixture of service provision and marketing, and to the latter by coercion, though it also began to develop its social services for (mostly Shi'ite) civilians towards the end of the 1980s. Though Hizbullah did make some effort during this period to market itself to other communities, because of the narrow and radical nature of its ideology, and particularly its rejection of the Lebanese state, this was not very successful. While the support it was able to build amongst civilians in Beirut helped it to establish a base there, it was far less successful in the south. In sum, in its first decade, though the movement did begin the process of building its constituency in the Shi'ite community, it also alienated many other Lebanese,

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 39.

which would prove problematic at the political level. Its strategic approach to civilians in its early years was far less successful for acquiring either material or non-material resources than the strategy it would use later on.

The Shi'ite Community

Hizbullah's early policy towards the Shi'ite community in the 1980s was in some ways a less developed version of the approach it would take in later years, including both service provision and the marketing of its ideology in the Shi'ite areas of the Bekaa, Beirut's Dahiyeh neighborhood and the south. Of the two strategies, the former, service provision, was the more fully developed and arguably the more successful in drawing Shi'ites into Hizbullah's orbit.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, as discussed above, ongoing Israeli-PLO violence produced a migration of tens of thousands of primarily Shi'ite refugees from the south to the southern suburbs of Beirut, the "Belt of Misery." This migration, in combination with the poor leadership of the traditional Shi'ite elites and the near total neglect of these areas by the weakened Lebanese state, produced a large, impoverished population badly in need of services. Backed by massive Iranian funding (as well as charitable donations from Shi'ites in Lebanon and abroad), Hizbullah stepped in to fill this vacuum,⁴⁸⁶ both through direct charitable donations and later through the establishment of social service institutions. Funding was primarily distributed through the Martyrs Foundation and the Foundation of the Oppressed, both based in Iran and funded by the Iranian government, and through the Assistance Council of the Imam Khomeini, managed directly by Ayatollah Fadlullah. By 1987, seven branches of the Martyrs Committee had been set up around Lebanon, providing charitable aid and

⁴⁸⁶ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 150.

vocational training, particularly to the families of dead fighters.⁴⁸⁷ Between 1982 and 1986, Hizbullah's Financial Aid Committee, which was affiliated with the Martyrs Foundation, distributed over \$90 million to those whose family members had been killed or wounded.

In addition to its financial contributions, in the latter half of the decade Hizbullah expanded its efforts to include the development of durable social service institutions. In 1986, the Islamic Health Committee was established, which opened two major hospitals in the Bekaa and the Dahiye, as well as medical centers and pharmacies around the country.⁴⁸⁸ In 1987, it established the Al Emdad organization, intended to support those harmed by the Israeli occupation of the south. In 1988, it established Jihad al Binaa, or "Struggle through Construction", a non-profit construction company tasked with repairing the damage done to Lebanese homes and businesses by IDF actions against Hizbullah. It also became increasingly involved in the construction and administration of schools, from kindergartens through secondary schools and seminaries.⁴⁸⁹ These schools, not surprisingly, adhered to Hizbullah's religious ideology (as religious schools run by other religious-communal institutions did to their own.) The movement also sponsored youth activities, such as the Islamic Scouts. Given the absence of any government services in the south and Dahiye, this approach was certainly effective in bringing Shi'ite civilians into Hizbullah's orbit, particularly in latter area.

While these services were not nearly as extensive or well developed as they would become in later years, they were still a significant step in Hizbullah's construction of its relationship with the Shi'ite community. The decision to invest

⁴⁸⁷ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 70-72.

⁴⁸⁸ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 320.

⁴⁸⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 72.

in social services is significant for a second reason: it clearly defies the prediction made by Weinstein that when a militant group acquires great wealth, it will automatically use it to recruit mercenary fighters who will prove predatory towards civilians. Hizbullah's decision to use this money to develop social services suggests a very different dynamic.

Hizbullah also approached the Shi'ite community via a marketing approach. As Norton notes, Shi'ite support for Hizbullah was far from pre-determined. Even before the emergence of Amal or Hizbullah, Shi'ites in Lebanon had a variety of political groups from which to choose. Though Nasserite Arab nationalism had never been particularly popular, the SSNP and Baath parties both had large numbers of Shi'ite members. The same was true of the various leftist groups, although by the late 1970s, the PLO and LNM had both fallen into disfavor because both were seen as exploiting the Shi'ite community for their own purposes.⁴⁹⁰ During this period, there was a great deal of good feeling towards the Lebanese military itself, however, which Sadr repeatedly requested replace the PLO in guaranteeing security for south Lebanon.⁴⁹¹ In short, there were a number of alternative political orientations available to Shi'ites in south Lebanon and the suburbs of Beirut, ranging from leftist politics to Arab nationalism to an orientation towards the Lebanese state itself.

By the 1980s, of course, Hizbullah's main rival for the loyalties of the Shi'ite community was Amal. In its bid to increase its market share, Hizbullah was sometimes aided by Amal's own actions. Nabih Berri's decision to participate in the National Salvation Committee was, as noted above, deeply unpopular; not only did it lead many Amal cadres to defect to Hizbullah, it also weakened Amal's standing in the eyes of many Shi'ite civilians. Amal's

⁴⁹⁰ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 13-18.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

involvement in the War of the Camps against the PLO in 1985 was also unpopular with many Shi'ites, weakening its appeal relative to Hizbullah, which stayed out of the fighting.⁴⁹²

Hizbullah was also aided by the increasing brutality of the Israeli occupation. Even after the IDF's withdrawal south of the Litani in 1985, its "iron fist" policy of curfews and free-fire zones alienated the public considerably. The Israeli-sponsored South Lebanon Army's treatment of civilians, particularly the practice of press-ganging Shi'ites into service, further helped Hizbullah's case,⁴⁹³ and due to increasing public resentment against the IDF's tactics and behavior, attacks on Israeli targets served as a form of marketing in and of themselves. Azani suggests that they helped to recruit new fighters, reinforced the narrative of the Israelis as vulnerable and weak, and also improved the organization's image more broadly in the south.⁴⁹⁴ But of course, as would be seen later, they also had the potential to alienate the public, as such attacks, like those launched by the PLO in earlier years, produced Israeli reprisals that were devastating to the civilian population.

But though disaffection with Amal and anger at the IDF were helpful, Hizbullah still had to actively make a case for its own program. It did so by emphasizing not only its record against the IDF, but also its religious message, making use of motifs such as self-sacrifice, piety and resolve which have particular resonance within the Shi'ite narrative of dispossession and oppression. It also made use of communal narratives, publicizing its work to improve the conditions of Lebanese Shi'ites and struggle as at least partially to resolve the injustices leveraged against them.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 64.

⁴⁹³ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 26.

⁴⁹⁴ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 67.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

Practically speaking, Hizbullah made use of a number of avenues in disseminating its message. These included its network of mosques and husseiniyehs (Shi'ite religious-cum-community-cum-educational centers), in which imams loyal to the organization preached a pro-Hizbullah message, as well as its social services, particularly its schools and youth groups. But the movement also used more conventional means of spreading its message; in a sign that even in the 1980s Hizbullah was perhaps more similar to the other Lebanese political parties than it might admit, it also had its own newspaper, *al Ahd*, founded in 1984 and two radio stations, the Voice of the Oppressed and the Voice of Islam.⁴⁹⁶ Between these media and the services it provided in Beirut and the south, Hizbullah had made sizeable inroads into Amal's constituency by the middle of the decade, particularly in Beirut's southern suburbs.

It should also be noted that Hizbullah's behavior in some Shi'ite areas was quite coercive, particularly with regard to its enforcement of Islamic standards of dress and behavior. After establishing itself in Baalbek, the movement established roadblocks⁴⁹⁷ (much as all other Lebanese militias did), banned alcohol, the wearing of makeup and jewelry in public, loud music, and singing and dancing in mixed groups.⁴⁹⁸ The degree of local resistance to these policies is difficult to gauge, as the Bekaa in general and Baalbek in particular were already somewhat religiously conservative, but these reforms were certainly not subject to a public referendum, and any objection to them would not likely have met with a favorable response.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁹⁷ "Hezbollah Gunmen Set Up Roadblock in Ba'albak," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, June 25, 1985.

⁴⁹⁸ Donna Abu Nasr, "Shi'ites Bring Islamic Fundamentalism to Lebanon's Ancient Baalbek," *Associated Press*, December 13, 1998.

⁴⁹⁹ Interestingly, in at least one southern city the local Amal commander elected to enforce more moderate versions of similar rules in a bid to sap Hizbullah's influence. He also banned all public gunfire and even dynamite fishing because "people's nerves just can't take it anymore." Ed Blanche, "Shi'ites Ban Alcohol, Mixed Beaches in Ancient City," *Associated Press*, July 8, 1985.

Costs and Benefits: Into the Dahiye, out of the South

Its growing influence in the Shi'ite public sphere did provide Hizbullah with some significant assets. Though it needed little by way of financial or military support (which it already received from Iran), and still declared disinterest in formal participation in Lebanon's government, what Hizbullah needed most was the acquiescence of the public to its military and political activity in Shi'ite areas. In this, it was far more successful in Beirut than in the south; by 1986, it was sufficiently secure in the Dahiye that the area had become the movement's base of operations.⁵⁰⁰

A corollary benefit was an increased ability to recruit. This represented a definite shift in public opinion; even Mousawi (perhaps inadvertently) acknowledged that Hizbullah's reputation had not always been so positive among Lebanese Shi'ites, stating proudly in an interview in 1987 that the movement's membership had expanded. Parents were no longer so resistant to their children joining Hizbullah, and civilians in the south had become less afraid of Israeli reprisals.⁵⁰¹

On the other hand, even towards the end of the decade, the group still faced some reservations from the Shi'ite public. Hizbullah's radical approach remained suspect for some, particularly those who were already supporters of Amal's more secular, Lebanese-centric political program, and its use of kidnapping harmed the group's reputation in some circles.⁵⁰² Moreover, its enforcement of Islamic behavioral standards was not universally popular. But perhaps most significantly, Israeli reprisals for the movement's attacks on the security zone continued to bring further suffering on the already battered south.

⁵⁰⁰ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 64.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 71.

In that part of the country, the movement failed to win the level of support it acquired in Beirut, laying the groundwork for the difficulties it would face against Amal later in the decade.⁵⁰³

The Non-Shi'ite public

Hizbullah's approach to Lebanese outside the Shi'ite community during this period differed sharply from the behavior outlined above. It was characterized far more heavily by coercion, and though it did attempt to market its program more broadly, this was hampered by its narrow framing of itself as a Shi'ite Islamic movement, with an explicitly Shi'ite political and religious orientation. After all, one of its stated goals at this stage was the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. Its overtures to other communities were colored by this project, and as such, were not particularly well received. The moderates in the party (notably Fadlallah, though he cannot rightly be considered a party member per se) stated repeatedly that they wished to see the Lebanese public choose an Islamic system *voluntarily*, and emphasized that Hizbullah needed to work to win the trust of the rest of the population so that they would do so. More surprisingly, Tufayli, despite his later position as a radical within the movement, took a more moderate line in the mid-1980s, calling for a referendum and saying that if an Islamic system was rejected Hizbullah would abide by the vote. However, the militant (and, in the 1980s, dominant) wing of the organization, represented by Abbas Musawi, took a more radical line. Some of Musawi's public statements on this subject must have been more than a little alienating to Christian Lebanese. For instance, in August 1987 he said "As Muslims, we don't believe in the existence of a separate country called Lebanon, we relate to the

⁵⁰³ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 29-30.

entire Islamic world as our homeland” and “We are ready to overthrow the regime in Lebanon in order to establish a just regime. Whoever rules over Lebanon must adhere to the laws of Islam.”⁵⁰⁴ Statements such as this can be (and often were) read as an attempt to prioritize Muslim over Lebanese identity, providing a stark contrast to their later rhetoric (see Chapter Five.)

Hizbullah’s stated position on Lebanon’s Christians in particular must not have been terribly reassuring to members of those communities. Under a strict interpretation of Islamic law, Christians (and Jews) fall under the heading of *ahl el kitab*, or “people of the book,” other monotheists who had also received divine revelation. They are accorded the status of *dhimmis*, protected minorities in an Islamic state who are allowed to practice their religion freely but not to rule over Muslims. Citing this principle, Hizbullah’s hardliners objected to the governance of Lebanon by Christians, calling repeatedly for the overthrow of “the Phalangist regime”, meaning the Christian-dominated political system.⁵⁰⁵ Even the Open Letter, with which Hizbullah announced its existence to the world, includes a condemnation of the Phalange (and the Gemayel family) for its coordination of Israel in 1982. It also includes an appeal to Christians to convert to Islam, though it offers reassurances that they will not be forced to do so, as long as they do not attempt to rule over Muslims. In particular, Hizbullah’s more radical ideologues voiced an objection to what Muhammad Z’aytir termed “political Maronism”, that is, the idea that Lebanon was a state for Maronites, to be governed by Maronites,⁵⁰⁶ seen as a sort of Christian analogue to Zionism.

Where Hizbullah did make some effort to find common political ground with other Lebanese, (and other Arabs, Shi’ite, Sunni and Christian alike,) was in

⁵⁰⁴ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 143-144.

⁵⁰⁵ “Lebanese Shi’ites Urge Islamic Revolution.”

⁵⁰⁶ Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 122-128.

its focus on the goal of liberating Jerusalem.⁵⁰⁷ As a religious issue, Jerusalem provided a link to the Sunni community, and as an Arab issue, a potential bridge to Arab Christians. Shortly after the Iranian revolution, Khomeini declared the last Friday of Ramadan to be the International Day of Jerusalem, urging the holding of demonstrations across the Arab world, in which many Sunni Islamist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have since participated.⁵⁰⁸

Overall, though, during this period Hizbullah was not successful in marketing itself to groups outside the Shi'ite community. Its rigidity and outright rejection of the Lebanese political system meant that other communities viewed it with deep suspicion. Naim Qassem, one of Hizbullah's founders, explains the organization's refusal to involve itself in Lebanese party politics in the 1980s as being the result of its military focus during its early years, as well as a need to build itself up in secret, for reasons of self-preservation, while clarifying its mission, identity, ideology and objectives.⁵⁰⁹ While this may be true, there were also strong objections from many in the Shura council to participating in a non-Islamic government, which were not overcome until the end of the civil war. This self-imposed isolation prevented the movement from making alliances with other parties that might have stood it in good stead during its feuding with Amal later on.⁵¹⁰

More damaging still was Hizbullah's use of sometimes violent coercion. Because of the financial and material support it received from Iran, Hizbullah had little reason to engage in coercive behavior with regard to the extraction of

⁵⁰⁷ This "liberation" can only come about through the destruction of Israel. Taking the position that Jerusalem is holy ground belonging to all Muslims, Hizbullah rejects any and all negotiations with Israel over the city. Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," 40..

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁰⁹ Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, 79-80.

⁵¹⁰ One exception was the PLO, which skirmished against Amal alongside Hizbullah on several occasions in the late 1980s. This, however, was mostly a result of the PLO's deep antipathy towards Amal after the War of the Camps.

material resources from the civilian population. It did, however, behave coercively while extending its control over the Bekaa, the south, and parts of Beirut, as a means of enforcing its Hizbullah's political and moral authority over particular areas, behavior which likely convinced many Christians and Sunnis that claims by Hizbullah moderates that the organization would not impose an Islamic state by force should not be trusted. In both Shi'ite areas, such as Baalbek, and mixed areas, such as West Beirut, Hizbullah enforced standards of behavior it considered Islamically appropriate, with regard to the clothing worn by women in public, and standards of public behavior for both sexes. There was also at least one report of Hizbullah gunmen seizing Christian houses in Baalbek to be used as party offices.⁵¹¹

But more alarming to non-Shi'ite Lebanese, particularly Sunnis, was Hizbullah's enforcement of these standards in historically multi-confessional, but predominantly Sunni, West Beirut. In the winter of 1984, leaflets distributed by Hizbullah begin to appear in the Hamra and Ras Beirut neighborhoods warning residents not to keep alcohol in their houses, or buy American cars, and demanding that women begin wearing chadors. The leaflets also "warned against the consequences" of ignoring these suggestions.⁵¹² These were not idle warnings; during the 1984 festival of Ashura,⁵¹³ "about a dozen" bars and nightclubs were bombed or otherwise destroyed. In a single evening, a group of over 100 women wearing chadors attacked bars and bingo parlors on the stylish Phoenicia street, destroying furniture and smashing bottles of alcohol.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹¹ "Hezbollah Gunmen Occupy Houses," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, January 22, 1984.

⁵¹² "Hezbollah Leaflets in Beirut," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, January 28, 1984.

⁵¹³ the Shi'ite festival mourning the martyrdom of the prophet Muhammad's grandsons,

⁵¹⁴ Bradley Graham, "Islamic Fundamentalism Rises; West Beirut Dons the Chador," *Washington Post*, n.d.

Resources Gained, and Lost: “We don’t like anyone giving us orders”

Ultimately, this behavior was not beneficial for Hizbullah. Both its extremist rhetoric and its use of coercion tarnished the movement’s reputation, making it seem less reasonable even than the other Lebanese militias. While its rhetoric about ending Christian leadership in Lebanon alienated the Christian leadership, its behavior in West Beirut caused a major breach with the Sunni population (a breach which remains even today.) Its actions there were denounced by both the Sunni political leadership and ordinary residents; one man interviewed by the Washington Post said plainly “We had a free life before...now the Shi’ites are here and they think differently. They give orders, especially Hezbollah, about drinking and dressing and other things. We’re Moslem too, but we don’t like anyone giving us orders.”⁵¹⁵

Ultimately, Hizbullah sought and received little by way of legitimation or alliance with other Lebanese communities. It had little influence on the decision-making of the Lebanese state, and little legitimacy as a serious party in the Lebanese context. While the use of coercion helped the movement maintain a base in West Beirut, this approach clearly alienated the civilian population of the area. Although Hizbullah was, in some cases, eventually able to overcome the hostility its earlier behavior produced, this was not universal, and left the movement with a great deal of work to do to repair the damage done to its reputation by its behavior in its early years. Many parties remain suspicious of Hizbullah’s intentions with regard to the Christian population and the eventual establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

Outcome: Thwarted Ambitions in the South

In sum, as the Lebanese civil war wound to an exhausted close at the end of the 1980s, Hizbullah was an organization of many contradictions. In some ways, it was well equipped to meet the challenges faced by nonstate actors in the Lebanese context. By virtue of its relationship with Iran, particularly the deep ideological and religious convictions its leaders shared with the Iranian regime, it had a strong, coherent ideology, which had the added benefit of already being familiar to the more religious of Lebanon's Shi'ites. Its relationship with Iran also ensured that it was extraordinarily well funded and well-armed.

And indeed, Hizbullah did accomplish some significant achievements during this period. The first of these was, as noted above, the expansion of the territory under its control throughout Lebanon. Hizbullah's first base was in the Bekaa, in the ancient town of Baalbek. By 1989, it controlled most of the town's social, economic and political institutions, from its currency exchange to clothing and grocery stores to gas stations and pharmacies.⁵¹⁶ The movement also increased its presence in the Dahiyeh during this period, and by the middle of the decade was able to use the neighborhood as a base of operations. This expansion was not uncontested, however, as it came at the expense of the Amal movement, leading to bitter clashes between the two parties in 1988 and 1989 (see below).⁵¹⁷

The movement's second set of accomplishments during this period was with regard to its military operations against both Israel and the multinational forces. In the south, Hizbullah launched regular attacks against IDF soldiers. By 1984, these attacks were so frequent that Norton estimates that an Israeli soldier

⁵¹⁶ "Hizballah Strengthens Hold," *Paris AFP*, April 22, 1989.

⁵¹⁷ John Kifner, "The Warrens of Shiite Shantytowns: A Most Likely Place for the Captives," *New York Times*, June 19, 1985.

was being killed every three days.⁵¹⁸ Hizbullah's more spectacular operations during this period frequently took the form of suicide attacks; it launched close to thirty between 1982 and 1985. Among the largest were the bombings of the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre in November of 1982 and 1983 for which Hizbullah claimed full responsibility.⁵¹⁹ Naim Qassem explicitly describes "martyrdom" tactics as being a means of "compensation for military imbalance and infliction of painful losses on enemy ranks."⁵²⁰ (This resonates with Robert Pape's work on suicide bombing as a military tactic.⁵²¹) Qassem further argues that these tactics were successful, crediting them with the IDF's withdrawal in 1985 to what was known as the "security zone", a strip of territory occupied by the IDF as a buffer zone along the border, and patrolled by the South Lebanon Army.⁵²² After 1985, Hizbullah focused its military operations against the security zone, but the IDF did not withdraw from Lebanon entirely until the summer of 2000.

The Israelis were not Hizbullah's only targets. It also launched attacks against the Multinational Forces (MNF), the joint deployment of American, French and Italian troops dispatched to Lebanon in 1982 to oversee the PLO evacuation and the establishment of a new Lebanese government.⁵²³ These were viewed by Hizbullah as being foreign occupiers allied, for all intents and purposes, with Israel. (The MNF's support of the Israeli-backed Gemayel government and American military intervention on the side of the Lebanese Army lent some credence to this belief.) The Multinational Forces were the targets of several major attacks, including the bombings of the US Embassy, US Marine

⁵¹⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 81.

⁵¹⁹ J. P. Harik, "Hizbollah and Today's Battle for Beirut," *The Fletcher forum of world affairs*. 31, no. 2 (2007): 37. Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 76.

⁵²⁰ Qassem, *Hezbollah: The Story from Within*, 49.

⁵²¹ See Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to win: the strategic logic of suicide terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

⁵²² Qassem, *Hezbollah: The Story from Within*, 49. While Hizbullah perhaps deserves some of the credit, this is undoubtedly an action the IDF would have taken anyway.

⁵²³ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 77.

barracks and French paratrooper barracks. Though Hizbullah denied responsibility for the bombings, they were almost certainly carried out by its allies, if not by the organization itself.⁵²⁴

Through these tactics, the movement was able to acquire some political leverage in the 1980s. The bombings of the embassy and Marine barracks arguably encouraged Reagan's withdrawal of the US Marines from Beirut, and its role in fomenting further internal mayhem in Lebanon contributed to the failure of the Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty of 1983. Hizbullah was also able, as discussed above, to exercise some political leverage against the west through its frequent taking of foreign hostages during this period.⁵²⁵ A third benefit was the disruption of the intelligence networks of many western states both directly, by murdering the CIA Beirut station chief, William Buckley, and indirectly, by curtailing the mobility of Western men in the city.⁵²⁶

But despite these large-scale attacks on Israeli and Western targets, Hizbullah was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving what was (given its self-proclaimed status as the Islamic resistance in Lebanon) arguably its most central goal: maintaining a base of operations in South Lebanon against Israel. By 1989, it had, at least temporarily, lost the ability to do so. But this outcome owes more to its deteriorating relations with Syria and its client, Amal, than to any particular success on the part of the IDF. Fighting had erupted between Amal and Hizbullah as early as 1984, much of it in Beirut. Some occurred as a result of Hizbullah's increasing presence in the western area of the city⁵²⁷ (for which reason Amal was sometimes aided by other Lebanese militias in West Beirut, including Jumblatt's PSP)⁵²⁸ and some of it in Dahiyeh, which was similarly motivated by Amal's

⁵²⁴ Harik, "Hizbollah and Today's Battle for Beirut," 38. Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 80.

⁵²⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 41.

⁵²⁶ Harik, "Hizbollah and Today's Battle for Beirut," 37.

⁵²⁷ "Amal, Hezbollah Clash in Southern Beirut," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, July 31, 1984.

⁵²⁸ "Junblatti, Amal Gunmen Plan Action Against Hezbollah," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, May 19, 1984.

alarm at Hizbullah's encroachment on what had been its exclusive territory.⁵²⁹

The intra-Shi'ite tension was exacerbated by the "War of the Camps" fought between Amal and the Palestinian militant groups which had begun to reappear in the refugee camps of Beirut, Sidon and Tyre beginning in 1985. This particularly bloody phase of the civil war produced civilian suffering unusual even by Lebanese standards. Hizbullah refrained from involving itself, and indeed leaned somewhat towards the Palestinian side, leading to tensions with Amal.

By 1987, tensions were increasing in the south as well. That summer, Amal members broke up a pro-Iranian demonstration in Tyre by Hizbullah members.⁵³⁰ In the spring of 1988, open fighting broke out between the two, and Hizbullah, aided by the PLO, took up military positions in Sidon. As the fighting spread, Syria moved against Hizbullah strongholds in Beirut, and provided Amal with logistical assistance in the south⁵³¹ (despite Ayatollah Fadlullah's calls for restraint and appeals to Syria to rein in Amal.)⁵³² The conflict continued into 1989, with fighting in Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and other southern towns and cities. In January of 1989, an Amal spokesman in the south stated that the movement would continue until it had "purged" the area of Hizbullah fighters, who he referred to as "renegades."⁵³³ And indeed, by the end of the month, Hizbullah forces had been driven from most of their positions in the south by Amal. In January 1989, their remaining forces came under attack in village of Iqlim al-Tuffah, in some of the worst intra-Shi'ite fighting of the war.⁵³⁴ By the time a ceasefire was signed, Hizbullah had been forced from most of its positions the south. To regain access to the border with Israel, it was forced to recognize Amal's authority in the area,

⁵²⁹ "RFL on Amal-Hezbollah Clashes in Beirut," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, October 4, 1984.

⁵³⁰ "Amal Reportedly Confronts Hizballah Demonstration," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, July 29, 1987.

⁵³¹ "Syrians Assist Amal," *Beirut Voice of Lebanon*, April 7, 1988.

⁵³² "Fadlallah Urges End to Clashes," *Tehran Domestic Service*, December 30, 1989.

⁵³³ "Amal To 'Wipe Out' Hizballah," (*Clandestine*) *Radio Free Lebanon*, January 10, 1989.

⁵³⁴ "'Critical' Situation in Southern Lebanon Noted," *Tehran*, January 9, 1989.

and to seek its permission to gain access the territory it needed for confrontation with Israeli forces.⁵³⁵ By the end of the civil war, Hizbullah had lost the ability to pursue its primary goal: the expulsion of IDF troops from Lebanese territory.

Conclusion

In sum, Hizbullah's record against the IDF at this stage can best be characterized as a draw. During this period the movement was far less effective or resilient than it would become over the next two decades. Though neither Hizbullah nor the IDF was able to expel the other from South Lebanon, Hizbullah was ultimately pushed out of the area as a result of internal Lebanese conflict.

Purely structural explanations would have predicted a much more successful outcome for Hizbullah during this period. A model focusing entirely on the significance of material assets in determining success would suggest that Hizbullah should have been very successful during this period, because of the on the funding and military assets it received from Iran. Explanations focusing on social endowments would also predict the movement's success, based on its status as a Shi'ite party operating in a Shi'ite area, against a non-Shi'ite enemy. It should, at the least, have been able to best Amal in a contest of ethnic-outbidding within the Shi'ite community.

Instead, this period in Hizbullah's history demonstrates the limitations of these theories. Though Hizbullah was better funded in the 1980s than it would be in later years – when Rafsanjani came to power in 1989, he almost immediately curbed the amount of money flowing to the movement from Iran – it was actually less successful during this period than it would be later on. Likewise, despite its objective status as a party founded by Lebanese, operating in Lebanon, and

⁵³⁵ "Hizbullah Official on Recognizing Amal Authority," *Paris AFP*, January 27, 1989.

appealing to Lebanese Shi'ites, the movement was met with a lukewarm response, at least in the south and in multi-sectarian West Beirut. Its ideological rigidity, use of coercive violence and extremist tactics alienated many Lebanese, including some Shi'ites, and created deep divisions with Amal, robbing them of important non-material assets such as political legitimacy and public support. For similar reasons (particularly its habit of kidnapping foreigners) its relations with Syria were also at their nadir, leaving the organization open to a severe crackdown by the Syrian military.

This period in Hizbullah's history also demonstrates that not all marketing campaigns are equally effective. Part of the problem for Hizbullah during this period was that, like the PLO in Lebanon in the 1970s, it chose a frame that did not resonate well with the constituency it was addressing. While in the PLO's case, this was because it failed to address the concerns of Lebanon's Shi'ites, in the case of Hizbullah, it was because they chose a narrow, fundamentalist frame that clashed significantly with the way other Lebanese saw the world, and was frankly alarming to many of them. This was particularly true in the case of the Christian community, who perhaps found a rhetoric which essentially came down to "don't worry, we won't force you to convert as long as you cede all political power to us" somewhat less than encouraging. Even within the Shi'ite community, for some, the narrowness of Hizbullah's marketing approach struck a false note. While some were drawn to the pan-Shi'ite political vision articulated by Hizbullah, for those with a more secularist or Lebanese nationalist orientation, this rhetoric was less convincing. In this sense, Hizbullah's close relationship with Iran, which clearly had a strong role in shaping both its ideology and the vehemence with which it expressed and pursued it, had a negative impact on its domestic relationships in Lebanon. While on the one hand the resources this relationship provided were useful to the movement, on the other, Iran's influence

on Hizbullah's character shaped it into an organization that did not have a great deal of popular appeal.

Moreover, Hizbullah's experience during this period also demonstrates how the use of one strategy can make another less effective. The utility of Hizbullah's attempts at marketing was lessened by its simultaneous use of coercion, particularly against non-Shi'ites; attempts by moderates in the movement to reassure the public that it would not impose its views on them rang somewhat hollow in the face of fire-bombings of bars and liquor stores in West Beirut.

One might reasonably ask why this outcome should be considered any different from the PLO's expulsion from Jordan in 1970; after all, in both cases, the movement in question was forced from territory it was using for raiding against Israeli targets by local, rather than Israeli, adversaries. But while the Jordanian military was the PLO's primary adversary during Black September, as is evident in the rhetoric engaged in by both sides, its conflict with Amal was on a smaller scale and was recognized as being secondary to its primary conflict with the IDF. The major difference, though, lies in the permanence of the expulsion. The PLO's removal from Jordan in 1970 was both bloody and permanent; by 1971, not a single PLO unit remained anywhere in the kingdom, and the country has never since been used as a base of military operations against Israel. In contrast, Amal merely prevented Hizbullah from using the south as a base, though admittedly for a period of several years.

If survival is defined as the ability to resist and recover, the outcome of the Lebanese Civil War is mixed for Hizbullah. The organization clearly failed on the first measure, at least in South Lebanon. While it did mount some resistance to both the IDF and the Amal-Syrian alliance, ultimately, this resistance was insufficient and it was pushed out of the south. Where it was more successful,

however, was in terms of recovery, although to do so, the movement had to undergo a profound transformation which will be the subject of the next chapter.

That it was able to recover at all is all the more remarkable considering how grim its position was at the end of the decade. In August of 1988, when a Hizbullah cleric was shot dead at an Amal checkpoint in the south, only a small crowd of mourners attended his funeral, evidence both of the degree of control Amal exercised and the lack of support for Hizbullah in the area. One Amal sheikh expressed Amal's perspective quite bluntly when he stated "They want me to love Iran by force...but I will love Iran only for the good it does Lebanon."⁵³⁶ This was a lesson that Hizbullah would learn well over the following decade.

⁵³⁶ Julie Flin, "Lebanon Shi'ites Celebrate as Divisions Deepen," *The Guardian* (1988 August 23, n.d.).

Chapter Five: The July War

Introduction

At nine in the morning on July 12th 2006, Hizbullah fighters captured two Israeli soldiers on patrol near the Israeli-Lebanese border. At first, the incident seemed likely to prove a repeat of the semi-regular limited exchanges between Hizbullah and the IDF in which combatants were captured, or missiles fired, by either party. At the offices of UNRWA, where I was working that summer, although there was a great deal of speculation about the likely Israeli response, work continued as normal through the afternoon. One of my Palestinian co-workers rolled her eyes in exasperation and said “stupid Hizbullah.” The consensus seemed to be that Israel would likely bomb a power plant or two, and that would probably be that.

It wasn't. By the next morning, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) had bombed Rafiq Hariri international airport. The next night, we watched the bombs fall from the Israeli F-16s circling the sky over Beirut. It quickly became apparent that this would not be the limited exchange we had anticipated. Lebanese friends from a range of backgrounds opined that Hizbullah had bitten off a great deal more than it could chew, and that the IDF might seriously cripple or even destroy the organization.

This certainly seems to have been the objective of at least some members of the Israeli defense establishment. Though the immediate goal of the first Israeli sortie across the border was the recovery of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, the two captured soldiers, Defense Minister Amir Peretz stated in the Jerusalem Post on the 14th of July that the goal of the operation was to remove

Hizbullah's capacity to launch attacks against northern Israel,⁵³⁷ and Major General Benny Gantz stated that the aim of the war was to remove Hizbullah from Lebanon entirely.⁵³⁸ Others have argued that Israel hoped not only to disarm Hizbullah, but also to prove through victory in a two-front war that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza had not been a mistake.⁵³⁹ Still others have suggested that Israel simply hoped to constrain Hizbullah by turning the other Lebanese communities against it through collective punishment.⁵⁴⁰

Yet, after 34 days, when a ceasefire was finally negotiated, not only had Regev and Goldwasser not been recovered, but Hizbullah had hit civilian targets inside Israel (including Haifa, Israel's third largest city), it had badly damaged one of the Israeli ships in the blockade of Beirut, and Hizbullah fighters had even managed to repel IDF forces from the village of Bint Jbeil. It maintains a military presence in south Lebanon, and is if anything more powerful politically than it was before the war, as the events of the spring of 2008 indicated. If "survival" is defined as the ability to both resist the initial military onslaught by a more powerful conventional adversary and to recover politically afterwards, Hizbullah can certainly be said to have successfully survived the July War.

This outcome can be explained by the relationships the movement built with both civilians in Lebanon and with its foreign sponsors. Its approach to building these relationships stands in stark contrast to its behavior as outlined in Chapter Four; whereas in the first decade of its existence, Hizbullah behaved coercively towards civilians in the south and alienated the Syrians, over the next

⁵³⁷ As stated by Defense Minister Amir Peretz. Sheera Frenkel, "Peretz: Aim is to See Off Hizbullah," *Jerusalem Post*, July 14, 2006.

⁵³⁸ As stated by Major General Benny Gantz. David Horovitz, "IDF Has a Lot Left to Achieve," *Jerusalem Post*, July 14, 2006.

⁵³⁹ Robert Blecher, "Will We Win? Convergence and Israel's Latest Lebanon War," *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 6 (Summer 2006): 28-33.

⁵⁴⁰ An anonymous US official. Cited in Alastair Crooke and Mark Perry, "How Hezbollah Defeated Israel Part 1: Winning the intelligence war," *Asia Times Online*, October 12, 2006, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HJ12Ak01.html.

fifteen years, it behaved very differently. This contrast demonstrates that neither Hizbullah's position in Lebanon nor its relationships with neighboring states were inherently predetermined. Rather, it was the movement's shift after the civil war to an approach based more heavily on marketing and service provision and its reframing of itself based on a more inclusive political discourse which led to its increased effectiveness.

Background: Lebanon's Postwar Transformation

In the years between the end of the civil war and the outbreak of the July War, both Lebanon and Hizbullah underwent fundamental transformations; understanding the changes experienced by the former is crucial to understanding those undergone by the latter. The first of these was, of course, the end of the war in 1990, which prompted Hizbullah to begin a process known as "Lebanonization." The second was the ongoing conflict between Hizbullah and the Israeli forces remaining in the "security zone" along Lebanon's southern border. Finally, the end of the war saw the rise of Syrian dominion over Lebanon, a status quo that was overturned in 2005 when mass demonstrations following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri forced the Syrians to withdraw from Lebanon.

In October of 1989, in the Saudi Arabian city of Taif, the surviving members of Lebanon's pre-war parliament met to negotiate an end to the war. The resulting Taif Agreement provided a blueprint for the redistribution of sectarian political power while retaining the framework of the National Pact. Parliamentary seats were divided equally between Muslims and Christians, mixed electoral districts were created to provide an incentive for cross-sectarian political alliances, and the office of the presidency, while still reserved for a Maronite, was

weakened.⁵⁴¹ After Taif, Hizbullah faced a choice: they could continue to focus solely on resistance activities, eschewing participation in the reconstituted government, or they could initiate a radical shift by choosing to participate in the elections, thereby acknowledging the legitimacy of a multi-sectarian, non-Islamic political system.⁵⁴²

Both positions had passionate adherents within the party. The former was championed primarily by Subhi Al-Tufayli, the party's first secretary general. Under his leadership, the movement's initial postwar position was that while the movement would not reject participation in *any* Lebanese political system, it rejected the sectarianism preserved under Taif, which it opposed in any case because the agreement called for all parties but the army to disarm.⁵⁴³ In contrast, electoral participation was advocated early on by Sheikh Mohammed Fadlullah, often referred to as Hizbullah's spiritual leader, though he denied ever holding any such position. It was also cautiously supported by Abbas Mousawi, who replaced Tufayli as secretary general in May of 1991.⁵⁴⁴ Mousawi produced a four-point political program, which included continued resistance against the IDF, the end of inter-communal strife, a process of Lebanonization and "infatih" (opening up), and increased emphasis on charitable work.⁵⁴⁵ This program ultimately moved the organization towards a less confrontational relationship with the Lebanese government. Hoping to regain access to the positions in the south it had lost in its fighting with Amal, Hizbullah also began handing over military control of Beirut's southern suburbs to the army. This improved relationship with the state had the secondary effect of undermining Amal's frequent criticisms that

⁵⁴¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*, 96-98.

⁵⁴² That there were strong divisions in the party over these issues is demonstrated by the fact that the movement claimed repeatedly in the media that no such divisions existed (Azani 88).

⁵⁴³ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 86.

⁵⁴⁴ See *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁴⁵ Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 153-154.

Hizbullah acted primarily in its own interests and against Lebanon's.⁵⁴⁶ When Hassan Nasrallah succeeded Mousawi as secretary general in 1992 (following the latter's assassination by the IDF) he continued the movement's reformist trajectory.

Ultimately, the decision to participate in the electoral process was made in 1992 by a 12-man committee selected from within the Shura council, which voted 10-2 in favor of electoral participation (though the decision was then submitted to Ayatollah Khamenei for approval.)⁵⁴⁷ A number of regional factors facilitated this significant change in policy. Syrian participation in the Gulf War and the Madrid negotiations with Israel brought Syria (temporarily) into the American orbit, signaling to Hizbullah that a hardline strategy might be even less tolerated by the Syrians than it had been previously. In addition, Khomeini's death in 1989 signaled that a more moderate Iranian leadership might be less willing to support a radical and adventure-prone Hizbullah.⁵⁴⁸ There was also a pragmatic domestic logic to participation. Naim Qassem, now deputy secretary general, believed that it would bring the party official recognition and a podium from which to spread its ideas, as well as more prosaic assets like influence over the budget and Lebanon's unfolding political dialogue, and a chance to head off potential problems early on.⁵⁴⁹ Ultimately, though the decision remained unpopular with Tufayli's faction, it was welcomed by most members of the organization.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁶ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 85-91. Mousawi's public assurances that a change in leadership would not produce a change in the movement's orientation were an early indicator that this was precisely what it would produce.

⁵⁴⁷ Though this was done in Khomeini's capacity as the marja' (or "source of spiritual emulation and guidance"), there were clearly also political overtones to the movement's desire to seek Khomeini's blessing. (See Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*. This was echoed by Albert Kostanian, coordinator of the Kataeb's 2009 electoral campaign and member of its politburo, in an interview.) Norton notes that at this stage, Khamenei was not the marja' followed by most Lebanese Shi'ites, who tended to prefer either Lebanon's Fadlullah or the Iraqi Sistani.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, 267-269.

⁵⁵⁰ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 99-100.

In any case, electoral participation proved to be a successful strategy. The move was popular with Shi'ites, and Hizbullah performed well, capturing eight seats. Their allies in Amal and the PSP won another four, giving them the single largest bloc in parliament,⁵⁵¹ though Hizbullah's partnership with these groups was not an enthusiastic one.⁵⁵² The movement also did well in the municipal elections of 1998, which were not subject to Syrian interference, suggesting that without the "Syrian ceiling" in the national elections, the movement might have done better against Amal in the Shi'ite districts.⁵⁵³

Despite these successes, Tufayli's radical faction was increasingly dissatisfied. In 1997, Tufayli launched the Revolution of the Hungry, an attempted general strike based in the Bekaa valley, which he accused Hizbullah's leadership of ignoring at the expense of the south. This criticism resonated with many in the region, encouraging Tufayli sufficiently that he ran against Hizbullah in the Bekaa in 1998. This ultimately backfired, however; Tufayli was expelled from the movement that year and the moderating program begun by Mousawi and pursued by Nasrallah became further entrenched.⁵⁵⁴

Hizbullah's military policy changed in conjunction with its political evolution. Despite the end of the civil war, the conflict between Hizbullah and the IDF (and its proxy, the South Lebanon Army) continued in the south. In 1992, Hizbullah announced an official policy of retaliation, meaning that if the IDF hit Lebanese civilian targets, it would respond with strikes against targets in northern Israel. This established the pattern that would characterize the next

⁵⁵¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*, 28.

⁵⁵² Samii A. W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 42. In fact, in the 1996 legislative elections, Hizbullah actually lost seats when the Syrians forced them to run on a joint list with Amal Samii A. W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship."

⁵⁵³ Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*.

⁵⁵⁴ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 133-135.

decade: simmering levels of semi-regular attacks and reprisals, punctuated by major confrontations.

The two most significant conflicts between the IDF and Hizbullah in the 1990s were Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath. The former was launched by the IDF in July of 1993, in response to Hizbullah (and PFLP-GC) activity near and across the Israeli-Lebanese border. The conflict lasted a week, producing 300,000 Lebanese refugees.⁵⁵⁵ It also produced a US-brokered agreement between the IDF and Hizbullah, known as the July Understanding, that neither would attack the other's civilian targets (or Syrian forces). However, in the spring of 1996, repeated, mutual violations resulted in the escalation of hostilities culminating in Operation Grapes of Wrath, which killed 150 Lebanese civilians and displaced more than 400,000.⁵⁵⁶ The IDF shelled South Lebanon heavily, including a UNIFIL base in the village of Qana which was sheltering unarmed civilians, killing 106. This incident, known as the Qana Massacre, provoked massive outrage against the IDF that would prove to be a political windfall for Hizbullah. Nevertheless, following Grapes of Wrath, the two parties reached a second agreement similar to the July Understanding (the April Understanding).

These confrontations notwithstanding, during the 1990s, Hizbullah's forces exhibited increasing levels of professionalism and restraint, evolving from a somewhat ineffective extremist movement that relied on kidnapping and suicide terrorism into an increasingly proficient military force which employed sophisticated weaponry such as remote detonated IEDs to limit the IDF's mobility

⁵⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch argues was an intentional component of the IDF's war plan, to put pressure on the Lebanese government.) This is confirmed by public statements by a number of Israeli politicians. See "Human Rights Watch (Organization), *Civilian pawns: laws of war violations and the use of weapons on the Israel-Lebanon border* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996), <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1996/Israel.htm>.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

in the south and, after 2000, wire-guided TOW missiles. Between 1995 and 2000, the ratio of Hizbullah casualties to IDF/SLA casualties decreased from 5:1 to 2:1.⁵⁵⁷ In February of 2000, when the IDF targeted three Lebanese power stations in response to Hizbullah attacks against the IDF and SLA in the security zone,⁵⁵⁸ both the IDF and Hizbullah stood down after the initial tit-for-tat exchange, to avoid further escalating the conflict.

The movement's greatest military achievement came in June of 2000, when, after 18 years, Israel withdrew from South Lebanon. This was a tremendously significant event, and one which Hizbullah was quick to claim as a victory for the organization. Nicholas Blanford describes the withdrawal as "the first time Israel had been forced to concede captured territory through the force of Arab arms."⁵⁵⁹ It is certainly arguable that the costs it inflicted on the IDF played a large role in producing domestic Israeli pressure for the withdrawal, though there were also other political considerations on the Israeli side, such as the desire to put pressure on Syria to withdraw.

And indeed, the Israeli withdrawal was followed five years later by the withdrawal of the Syrians. Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, who had become critical of the increasingly ham-fisted way the new Syrian president, Bashar al Asad, and his Lebanese proxy, President Emil Lahoud, were handling the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, was assassinated by a car bomb on the corniche in Beirut on February 14th, 2005. Massive anti-Syrian protests erupted (countered by pro-Syrian protests led by Hizbullah) and under strong international pressure, the

⁵⁵⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 1 (2000): 30. Ironically, these were American, provided to Iran during the Iran-Contra arms deal.

⁵⁵⁸ See Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement.

"Three Israeli soldiers killed in Hizbullah attack" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 1, 2000), http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2000/2/Three%20Israeli%20soldiers%20killed%20in%20Hizbullah%20attack.

⁵⁵⁹ Nicholas Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 73.

Syrian army finally withdrew from Lebanon that April, having occupied much of the country nearly continuously since 1976. The largest of the pro-Syrian rallies was held on March 8th, 2005, lending the name “March 8th” to the coalition comprised of Hizbullah and Michel Aoun’s Tayyar al Watani al Hurr (the Free Patriotic Movement). The of the largest anti-Syrian rallies (estimated at over a million people, or a quarter of Lebanon’s population) was held on March 14th, which has since become the name of the coalition led by Hariri’s Sunni Future Movement.⁵⁶⁰

This progression of events set the stage for Hizbullah’s eventual success in the July War in 2006. However, to fully understand how this outcome was achieved, we must first look more closely at the organization’s policy choices regarding its relationships with both the (Shi’ite and non-Shi’ite) Lebanese public and with its external state sponsors, Syria and Iran.

Foreign Relations

Syria

Hizbullah’s relationship with Syria shifted dramatically with the end of the civil war. As discussed in Chapter Four, during the organization’s early years the relationship between the two was at best tense and at times openly hostile, due in part to Hizbullah’s choice of tactics and its conflict with Syria’s favored Shi’ite client, Amal. However, the process of moderation and political engagement which Hizbullah underwent between 1990 and 1992 proved reassuring to Syria. Ultimately, the two parties were able to build a strong and at times mutually beneficial relationship, based primarily on service provision. Syria provided Hizbullah with some important benefits, including Syrian sanction of its activities,

⁵⁶⁰ This naming convention has produced some highly innovative campaign materials, including a series of billboards reading “*I think, there 14 I am.*”

weapons, and the transit of fighters and materiel between Iran and Lebanon.

However, at times, the relationship proved constraining to Hizbullah when its interests diverged from Syria's.

When the civil war ended in 1990, Lebanon remained occupied by 15,000 Syrian troops. The Syrian military intelligence headquarters served as a sort of shadow government, and little occurred in the country without Syria's acquiescence. The Syrian regime extracted a great deal of wealth from the Lebanon as well (particularly from the Casino du Liban), impeding the government's postwar reconstruction efforts.⁵⁶¹ Anti-Syrian political parties were banned, and their leaders arrested or exiled. Emile Lahoud, who was elected president in 1998 (and whose term was extended in 2004 through the amendment of the Lebanese constitution), was effectively a Syrian puppet. Until the spring of 2005, Beirut featured as many billboards of the Syrian president as of Lebanese politicians.

Syria's interests in Lebanon after the war were in many ways the same as they had been in earlier decades: stability and a guarantee of Syrian hegemony in Lebanon. At the same time, it sought to maintain pressure on Israel across Lebanon's southern border (rather than across the Syrian-Israeli border itself.) Therefore, for Hizbullah, while establishing a relationship with Syria required that it demonstrate that it did not threaten either Lebanese stability or Syrian influence therein, Syria was also strongly supportive of Hizbullah's military activities against Israeli forces in South Lebanon. Hizbullah needed to both reassure its potential sponsor that it had moderated and to demonstrate that it would make an effective military proxy against Israel, imperatives which occasionally collided: 1993's Operation Accountability, for instance produced potentially destabilizing

⁵⁶¹ Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*.

flows of IDPs and in the early 1990s, Syria moved to restrain Hizbullah out of fear that it would jeopardize both Taif and Syrian negotiations with Israel, even appealing (unsuccessfully) to Iran to rein in the movement.⁵⁶²

For the most part, however, Hizbullah was able to successfully pursue a dual marketing and service-provision strategy, using its reformed image (see below) to convince Syria that it would be a useful proxy both against Israel and against Syria's enemies inside Lebanon. In the early 1990s, after the failure of the Madrid negotiations and the Palestinian pursuit of a separate peace with Israel through the Oslo process, Syria became concerned that Israel now had less incentive than ever to open negotiations leading to the return of the Golan Heights. Hizbullah's operations therefore constituted an important source of pressure on Israel, and to this end, Hizbullah coordinated much of its military activity in southern Lebanon with the Syrians. This also likely explains Syria's position regarding the Shebaa Farms issue. The Shebaa Farms are an eight square mile piece of territory currently occupied by Israel. While Israel (and the UN) claim that the territory is/was Syrian, Syria and Lebanon claim that it is Lebanese, meaning that the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory remains incomplete. This interpretation provides Syria with a) a basis for maintaining joint Lebanese-Syrian negotiation with Israel, and b) a justification for Hizbullah's retention of its arms.⁵⁶³

Hizbullah also acted as a proxy for Syrian interests in Lebanon. Nicholas Blanford describes the postwar Syrian policy in Lebanon as "we hold Lebanon or there will be chaos"⁵⁶⁴ and therefore argues (I think correctly) that Rafiq Hariri's massive reconstruction project was threatening to Syrian hegemony in Lebanon.

⁵⁶² Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 190-191.

⁵⁶³ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 44-45.

⁵⁶⁴ Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*, 92.

Hizbullah provided a powerful political balance to Hariri's political clout in Lebanon. When anti-Syrian sentiment seemed to be increasing after 2000, Syria used Hizbullah as a wedge to generate inter-confessional tension as a reminder of the circumstances under which Syria had come to occupy Lebanon to begin with.⁵⁶⁵ It was logical, then, that in the aftermath of Hariri's assassination it was Hizbullah which led the pro-Syrian demonstrations in an (unsuccessful) attempt to counter massive protests calling for Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon.⁵⁶⁶

Costs and Benefits of the New Relationship with Syria

This relationship proved beneficial to Hizbullah in many ways. In exchange for coordinating militarily and politically with Syria, the Syrians (and their puppet, President Lahoud) gave Hizbullah carte blanche to operate in Lebanon. Furthermore, the Syrian regime brokered an agreement between Hizbullah and Lahoud's government under which, in exchange for Hizbullah's behaving as a "loyal opposition" which ceased to call for the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon, the Lebanese state would sanction the movement's activities against Israel in the south.⁵⁶⁷ Indeed, Hizbullah's leadership spoke glowingly of both Lahoud and Al-Asad, sometimes closely linking the two: in his speech celebrating the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Nasrallah thanked Lahoud by name, followed immediately by "the Islamic Republic of Iran, Assad's Syria; the leader Khomeini, and the great Arab leader, President Hafez al Asad."⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 83-85.

⁵⁶⁶ Hizbullah was accused by March 14th activists of bussing in Syrians to attend the protest, and effectively press-ganging Shi'ite civilians into showing up, though it is unclear how much truth there is to the latter allegation. Ibid., 160-161.

⁵⁶⁷ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2004), 47.

⁵⁶⁸ Hassan Nasrullah, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah*, ed. Nicholas Noe (London: Verso Books, 2008), 234.

Syria also provided material aid to its increasingly important client. It had long acted as the crucial geographic link between Iran and Lebanon, through which flowed fighters, financial support, and weapons. With the death of Hafez al Asad in 2000 and the ascendance of his son Bashar as President of Syria, the relationship improved further and Syria began supplying Hizbullah with improved weaponry, including 220mm and 302mm rockets and anti-tank missiles.⁵⁶⁹ More dramatically, in a cable released through Wikileaks, an official at the US embassy in Damascus asserts that not only was Syria *a* source of weapons during the July war, it was Hizbullah's *most important* source of weapons during the conflict: "There is overwhelming evidence that shows Syria provided not just logistical and other support in moving the weapons, but was the main source of the weapons." While this was strongly denied by Syrian officials, they also defended in principle Hizbullah's right to arm itself.⁵⁷⁰ While it is difficult to assess this assertion without access to the "overwhelming evidence" in question, it certainly suggests that at the very least, Hizbullah received significant military support from Syria.

On the other hand, the relationship also carried costs. Though Syria allowed, and even encouraged, Hizbullah's military activities in Lebanon, it constrained its operations in many ways. The most serious of these constraints was the so-called "Syrian Ceiling", the unofficial limit the Syrians placed on the number of seats any one party could hold in parliament at any time, in a bid to prevent any from growing too powerful or upsetting the postwar sectarian balance of power. Hizbullah did benefit from Syrian patronage in the 1992 elections, when Syria packed the Lebanese parliament with pro-Syrian candidates - not a

⁵⁶⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 233.

⁵⁷⁰ Charles Hunter, "Is Now the Time to Raise Hizballah With Syria?" (US Embassy, Damascus, Via Wikileaks, n.d.), <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/11/09DAMASCUS804.html>.

difficult task, as few anti-Syrian candidates were allowed to run and most Christians boycotted the election.⁵⁷¹

But at other times, Syrian interference worked against Hizbullah's interests. In the 2000 parliamentary elections, at a time when Hizbullah was immensely popular due to the recent Israeli withdrawal, Syria forced it to share a ticket with Amal, lessening the total number of seats Hizbullah took (though Hizbullah did support Hariri as a candidate for Prime Minister against Syria's preferred candidate, Salim al Huss.) Moreover, when Hizbullah did too well electorally, as it did in the 2004 municipal elections, the Syrians were likely to interfere. In 2004, riots which were very likely instigated by Syrian intelligence broke out over what was theoretically an increase in gas prices; the police opened fire on the largely pro-Hizbullah crowd, creating a political crisis for both Hariri's government and for Hizbullah.⁵⁷²

Syrian preferences also sometimes forced Hizbullah to take positions it might have preferred to avoid. One example is the vote which Syria forced through the Lebanese parliament in 2004 to extend Lahoud's term as president beyond its constitutional limits, through the sometimes overt threat of personal violence against any MP who did not vote as instructed.⁵⁷³ The decision was opposed by Lebanese across the political and religious spectrum, including many Shi'ites, and a joint statement against the move was issued by Sheikh Abdel-Amir Qabalan, president of the Higher Shi'ite council, and Sheikh Mohammed Qabbani, the Sunni Mufti.⁵⁷⁴ Nevertheless, because of its relationship with Syria, Hizbullah supported the decision, suggesting that perhaps the question of a

⁵⁷¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*.

⁵⁷² Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*, 96.

⁵⁷³ Druze MP Marwan Hamade resigned in protest and was nearly killed by a car bomb soon afterwards.

⁵⁷⁴ Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*, 99. This assessment is also based on conversations I had with a number of people while in Beirut the weekend the vote was taken.

continued Syrian presence in Lebanon should be resolved instead through a referendum (an oblique reference to Shi'ite demographic dominance.)⁵⁷⁵

Surprisingly, there are some indications that Hariri was seeking a rapprochement with Hizbullah, and may even have privately achieved one with Nasrallah.⁵⁷⁶ Yet the potential for an alliance was limited by Hizbullah's dependence on Syria. In sum, in exchange for its services as a proxy, Syria allowed Hizbullah to operate freely within Lebanon and provided access to important material resources, but sometimes at a steep political price.

Iran

Hizbullah's close relationship with Iran also underwent an adjustment with the end of the war, albeit a far less dramatic one. There were two (interrelated) catalysts for this change: the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, and Hizbullah's new policy of "Lebanonization." But through the changes in both the Iranian regime and the party, the relationship held. Though Hizbullah's funding was decreased, it was not otherwise strongly affected by the factional jockeying in Iran, and largely avoided the schisms which plagued other movements (like the PLO) whose relationships with their sponsors were purely proxy-based.

With Khomeini's death in 1989, the revolution in Iran began to enter a moderating phase under the pragmatic President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani. This had an immediate impact on Hizbullah. Under Rafsanjani's leadership, funding to the movement was cut significantly from the five to ten million a month it had been receiving under Khomeini's leadership, in the case of some agencies by as

⁵⁷⁵ Scott Scott Wilson, "Lebanese Wary of a Rising Hezbollah: Fears of militia's broader ambitions reignite debate over its populist agenda," *The Washington Post*, December 20, 2004.A17.

⁵⁷⁶ Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*, 97-99.

much as 90%, as the movement's funding bodies in Iran became contested territory in the power struggle following Khomeini's death.⁵⁷⁷

During this stage, to a degree, the divisions in the Iranian government mirrored those within Hizbullah itself. In October of 1989, an "extraordinary conclave" of Hizbullah's leadership was held in Tehran to debate the question of electoral participation. President Rafsanjani supported the decision to participate, while the rival Iranian faction led by Ali Akbar Mohtashemi opposed it.⁵⁷⁸ Abbas Mousawi and Hassan Nasrallah aligned more or less with Rafsanjani, while the hardliners, led by Tufeyli, sided with Mohtashemi.

Ultimately, the moderates in both contexts came out on top,⁵⁷⁹ and by the mid-1990s, the relationship had stabilized. In 1997, when the relatively moderate Mohammed Khatami was elected president, his government supported Nasrallah against Tufayli's attempted coup and continued to encourage its rapprochement with the Lebanese government and its participation in Lebanese politics.⁵⁸⁰ In January of 1998, Iranian envoys arrived in Lebanon to meet with Nasrallah and other Hizbullah leaders, and offer assurances that the party still had the full backing of the Iranian government.⁵⁸¹ Similarly, in August of 2005, Hizbullah welcomed the election of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad (who represented a vastly

⁵⁷⁷ Ranstorp, "Hizbullah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision- Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions," 321.

⁵⁷⁸ Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," *Middle East J. Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (2008): 41.

⁵⁷⁹ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 57.

⁵⁸⁰ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 194. This is unsurprising given that the Lebanese government was at that stage under the control of Iran's closest ally, Syria. The Iranian-Syrian strategic alliance is in some ways an important third actor in the movement's relationship with both states; for instance, after Bashar al Asad took power in Syria, Iran was able to push forward their more radical agenda vis a vis Hizbullah military action, over the objections of the (newer, less experienced) Syrian regime. Samii A.W., "A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship," 44-45.

⁵⁸¹ "Iranian Envoy Conveys Backing for Hezbollah, Resistance Source," *Radio Islam – Voice of the Oppressed* via *BBC Monitoring International Reports* (Baalbek, January 30, 1998).

different Iranian political strain), referring to it as a “slap in the face” for the United States.⁵⁸²

In sum, despite changes in the elected Iranian leadership, in the postwar period, Hizbullah’s relationship with Iran continued to be based on what was at its core a shared ideology, despite changes in the leadership on both sides. This was partly due to the fact that Hizbullah’s primary allegiance is to the Wali al Faqih, rather than to Iran’s elected leadership. This provides a certain continuity, though Khomeini is not revered as a source of religious authority to the degree that Khomeini was. Still, Hizbullah’s entrenched relationship with the state itself, rather than any one faction, ensured that the relationship remained strong, while at the same time allowing it sufficient independence to thrive in the Lebanese context in way it could not during the 1980s.

Costs and Benefits of the Relationship with Iran

Despite the sharp decrease in funding from Iran in 1990, the movement still received a great deal of financial, military and political support from its primary patron. Although Hizbullah, like the PLO before it, began to invest in businesses that it hoped would eventually fund its social programs,⁵⁸³ it still relied heavily on Iran for funds to operate its aid network, through Iranian funding bodies like the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, which distributed \$95 million to Hizbullah between 1988 and 2002, and the Martyr’s Foundation. Jihad al Binaa, Hizbullah’s construction company, was financed directly through Iran’s Bank Saderat.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² “Hezbollah in Iran talks after joining Lebanon cabinet” (Agence France Presse, 2005).

⁵⁸³ Though by all accounts these businesses are run far more cleanly than the PLO’s were.

⁵⁸⁴ Samii A.W., “A stable structure on shifting sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria relationship,” 41-42. Bank Saderat describes itself on its website as “the largest bank in Iran.” It was nationalized after the revolution, and now does the bulk of its foreign business with Dubai. <http://in.bsi.ir/default.aspx>

Of course, for its military funding and supplies Hizbullah continued to depend on Iran.⁵⁸⁵ It is difficult to know precisely which assets were provided in what quantities in which year because Hizbullah is highly secretive regarding its armaments, but it is possible to assess the arms it had during the July War itself. In addition to small arms and its battery of Katyusha rockets, Hizbullah also fielded anti-tank and anti-ship missiles (C-802s), UAVs, as well as long-range rockets capable of hitting Israeli cities, including Tiberius and Haifa. Cordesman contends that Iran has also provided Hizbullah with a missile with a range of 120 kilometers, but these did not appear to be in use during the war, nor did it appear to have substantial anti-aircraft capabilities.⁵⁸⁶

As noted above, in one respect, Hizbullah's relationship with Iran provides an interesting source of contrast with the PLO, in that the latter's relationships with its various sponsor states contributed to its factionalization, internal conflict and military inefficiency, while Hizbullah's relationships with its sponsors, particularly Iran, did not produce the same dynamics. This can partly be attributed to the different basis of their respective relationships; whereas the various PLO factions often found themselves fighting their sponsors battles out amongst themselves, by the time Hizbullah faced its first major internal challenge – Tufayli's defection in 1997 – it had become strongly institutionalized in its own right, and Iran's sponsorship had become less about providing Iran with greater regional leverage (through hostage taking, for instance), and more about the advancement of a shared political project, though this had always been a major factor in the relationship. Iran, therefore, had an interest in seeing the schism healed as quickly as possible. Though there was some skirmishing between Tufayli and the army, and between his forces and Hizbullah's, Iran supported the

⁵⁸⁵ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 152.

⁵⁸⁶ Anthony Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons' of the Israeli-Hezbollah War," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2006): 5-8, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/060817_isr_hez_lessons.pdf.

main body of the movement, rather than Tufayli's more radical offshoot. (Hizbullah also benefitted from the support of both the Lebanese government and its Syrian masters.)⁵⁸⁷ Ultimately, Tufayli and his supporters were isolated and constituted no real threat to the cohesion or effectiveness of Hizbullah itself. If the PLO's sponsors had a centrifugal effect on the organization's cohesion, Iran had a centripetal effect on Hizbullah's.⁵⁸⁸ This also goes a long way towards explaining the feuding between Amal and Hizbullah in the late 1980s; because Amal served as a direct proxy for Syria in many ways, it was forced into confrontation with Hizbullah when the latter challenged its sponsor's interests.

Overall, then, the major change in Hizbullah's relationship with its sponsors during this period was that it became somewhat more autonomous.⁵⁸⁹ Interestingly, though it received a lower amount of funding, it was ultimately more successful, particularly after 2000, than it was during the first decade of its existence when it was receiving significantly more money from Iran. This strongly suggests that it is not merely *having* material resources that makes the difference in a group's chances of survival, but also how they are acquired and used.

Domestic Relations

The Shi'ites

Hizbullah's relationship with its Shi'ite base has evolved substantially since the end of the civil war, due to two major changes in its strategic approach:

⁵⁸⁷ As indicated by state radio coverage of the events. "President says Shi'i leader Tufayli was dealt with according to law." (Beirut: Radio Lebanon, February 18, 1998).

⁵⁸⁸ Thanks are due to Rex Brynen for this characterization.

⁵⁸⁹ In fact, General John Abizaid argued that the action which sparked the 2006 war was not likely initiated at the behest of Iran and Syria, but rather was Hizbullah's initiative, supported by Syria and Iran. Because it did not likely realize what the outcome would be, it probably did not ask Iran's permission before kidnapping the two Israeli soldiers. Cited in Jeremy Sharp, *Lebanon: The Israel-Hamas-Hezbollah Conflict* (Congressional Research Service, 2006), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33566.pdf>.

it changed the way it framed itself in relation to the Shi'ite public, and it expanded its social service offerings. In the late 1980s, though some Shi'ite civilians welcomed the alternative Hizbullah offered to the more secular Amal, others were unimpressed both with the movement's radical tactics and its anti-state ideology. But if the message in the 1980s was that Hizbullah was intent on overthrowing the Lebanese state for the social and spiritual benefit of the Shi'ites, whether they wanted it to or not, the postwar message was that Hizbullah was the most effective and most authentic representative of Shi'ite communal interests in the existing Lebanese political context. In addition, Hizbullah also greatly developed and expanded its provision of social services to the Shi'ite community. I will begin with a discussion of the latter factor, before returning to the subject of the shift in Hizbullah's marketing approach.

Service provision

The framework within which Hizbullah provides social services to its constituents was established in Lebanon well before the organization itself. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Lebanon's relatively liberal association laws led to the establishment of a large number of NGOs, which, with the onset of the civil war, began to assume the functions abandoned by the Lebanese state.⁵⁹⁰ At the same time, as the war hardened sectarian boundaries, charities were increasingly oriented towards particular communities.⁵⁹¹ In Hizbullah's case, this dynamic was magnified by the desperate state of affairs in many Shi'ite areas; decades of government neglect combined with a corrupt Shi'ite political elite and the arrival of tens of thousands of Shi'ite IDPs (internally displaced persons) in Beirut created a void which Hizbullah was more than willing to fill. In 1984, the first

⁵⁹⁰ Shawn T Flanigan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World* (West Hartford Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 2009), 22-23.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

seeds of the movement's social service network were planted, with the establishment of rudimentary, early versions of the Islamic Health Committee and Jihad al Binaa, Hizbullah's construction company, though neither was registered with the government until 1988.⁵⁹² In 1987, impoverished Shi'ites began receiving charity directly through the (Iranian, Hizbullah affiliated) Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini; by the mid-1990s, it had branches in the Bekaa Valley, Tripoli and Hermel in the North, and Saida, Tyre, Nabatiyeh and Jebaa in the south.⁵⁹³

The services Hizbullah offers its constituents can be loosely sorted into those which fill a conventional need, and those which address a need generated by Hizbullah's own military activities. The first set of services, in particular, underwent a massive expansion during the transition period following the end of the civil war. Hizbullah began providing direct financial support to needy families who had lost their primary breadwinners, or had members with serious health problems, or who needed occasional assistance, or even permanent support, and offered interest free loans for housing, business, and education.⁵⁹⁴ During this period, Hizbullah also expanded its health and educational services. It built 24 heavily subsidized (though not free) schools between 1988 and 1993 in the south and the Bekaa and began the construction of a sizeable health services network. Two major hospitals (Bir al Abed Hospital in Beirut and the Imam Khomeini Hospital in the Bekaa) were built in the mid-1990s, as well as a range of clinics and pharmacies providing subsidized prescriptions, funded by Iran.⁵⁹⁵ It also constructed and staffed a number of mosques and religious centers. Finally, because of the breakdown of the state during last years of the civil war, the

⁵⁹² Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 156.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 159-164.

movement also increasingly took responsibility for infrastructure maintenance within its sphere of influence. Jihad al Binaa built 25 power stations between 1988 and 1993, dug a number of wells, provided drinking water and repaired sewer lines.⁵⁹⁶

These services have expanded substantially in the last decade. Today, Hizbullah's social service network is solidly institutionalized within the party's bureaucracy, falling under the purview of the Health Unit, the Social Unit and the Education Unit, which in turn report to the Executive Council. The Social Unit oversees Jihad al Binaa, the Foundation for the Wounded (which cares for wounded fighters), the Martyrs Foundation and the Khomeini Support Committee (see previous chapter.) The Education Unit oversees both the provision of scholarship funds and the administration of a large number of schools. The Health Unit oversees three hospitals, twelve smaller health centers, twenty infirmaries, twenty dental clinics, twenty "civil defense departments," as well as a number of "social health programs."⁵⁹⁷ The organization has a virtual monopoly on the provision of social services in the areas under its control, and has assumed, for all intents and purposes, the role of the state. Even the UN coordinates with Hizbullah before engaging in development activities in the Dahiye and the south.⁵⁹⁸

As noted, in addition to its broader social service programs, some of Hizbullah's services specifically address the consequences of its own military activities.⁵⁹⁹ The movement had a vested interest in encouraging the civilian population to remain in the south during the Israeli occupation of the Security Zone, as well as retaining its goodwill. To this end, it provided services such as

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 155-156.

⁵⁹⁷ Flanagan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World*, 125.

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with unnamed official, UNDP.

⁵⁹⁹ Of course, the opportunity for (relatively well paying) employment as a Hizbullah fighter is also an economic incentive, but this is probably stretching the definition of "social service."

mobile medical clinics for those who were unable to travel to receive medical care because of the fighting⁶⁰⁰ and worked with farmers in the south to prevent their agricultural calendar from being too disrupted by “resistance activities.”⁶⁰¹

Through Jihad al Binaa, which had teams permanently stationed in some areas, it guaranteed the reconstruction of any house destroyed in its fighting with Israel; after Operation Accountability in 1993, Jihad al Binaa repaired all 6000 homes destroyed in the fighting, at a cost of 8.7 million dollars (provided by Iran).⁶⁰²

The motivations for Hizbullah’s provision of social services to its Shi’ite constituency are the subject of some debate. There are those who characterize these services as a deliberate and utilitarian attempt to bring civilians closer to the organization for ideological and political reasons (see for instance Matthew Levitt’s 2005 Senate testimony.⁶⁰³) In contrast, Hizbullah NGO workers interviewed by Flanigan state that their work is a matter of religious conviction, and has no strings attached, political or otherwise. In reality, both motives are probably operating. Jaber notes that Hizbullah does encourage “Islamically correct” behavior on the part of aid recipients,⁶⁰⁴ but that participation in the movement and adherence to its principles are not prerequisites for the receipt of its services. (And indeed, I have met non-Shi’ites and even non-Muslims who use the services Hizbullah administers.) Hizbullah denies, for instance, that it pays women to wear the chador, an indicator of adherence to Iranian-style Shi’ism,⁶⁰⁵ and in fact, even many of the women working in Hizbullah’s media relations

⁶⁰⁰ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 158.

⁶⁰¹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 117.

⁶⁰² Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 156.

⁶⁰³ Levitt also argues that Hizbullah’s charities are used to launder funds for their military activities. Matthew Levitt, “Hezbollah: Financing Terror Through Criminal Enterprise.” Testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, May 25th 2005. Available at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=238>

⁶⁰⁴ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 160.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

office, for example, wear a headscarf and abaya or jilbab instead.⁶⁰⁶ Similarly, in Hizbullah's schools, boys and girls are separated after age seven, and girls are encouraged, but not required, to wear hijab.⁶⁰⁷ It is also worth noting that the causal relationship between support for a militant group and use of its social services can go both ways – movement adherents may make use of certain services (particularly schools) because they *already* support the movement and its values, and therefore prefer to affiliate with its institutions.

On the other hand, Hizbullah is not in the business of anonymous charity provision. Hizbullah's logo is liberally splashed across its projects around the country, and in the Dahiyeh one is surrounded almost constantly with Hizbullah banners, posters and billboards. Even during the civil war, water tanks funded by Iran and installed by Hizbullah featured portraits of the Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khomeini.

None of this necessarily means that the movement is not sincere in its contention that the provision of these services is a pious end in and of itself. But, a distinction should probably be drawn between those services provided on a regular basis, and those provided explicitly in response to the damage caused by Hizbullah's own activities. The latter are probably less ambiguous in their motivation, and can be read both as a very deliberate form of damage control, and, as noted, an attempt to maintain the civilian population of contested areas, both to provide camouflage and other resources for fighters and to make it more difficult for enemy forces to seize territory.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ The abaya is a long black robe, which may be worn open over a long dress, or tied shut. The jilbab is a long semi-fitted coat, which comes in a wide range of colors and styles. Both may be worn with any number of styles of headscarf, and are common across the Arab Muslim world.

⁶⁰⁷ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 164.

⁶⁰⁸ One byproduct of the 1948 war which produced both the state of Israel and 750,000 Palestinian refugees has been a profound fear of the loss of Arab land, and a narrative of land-sanctity which is not dissimilar to the central Zionist narrative of Eretz Yisrael. In a documentary by filmmaker Dalia Kury titled "Smile, You're in South Lebanon", southern Lebanese residents express the sentiment that, having seen what happened to the Palestinians when they evacuated their land, they themselves would not be going anywhere. Dalia Kury, *Smile! You're in South Lebanon*, 2009.

Marketing

The second major change in Hizbullah's approach to its Shi'ite constituency in the postwar period was in the way it chose to market its political project and its military operations. (There was, of course, a great deal of overlap between the two, particularly as the actions of the IDF at times proved to be Hizbullah's most effective advertising.) Because its main rival for Shi'ite support was another Shi'ite party (Amal), it needed to reach past arguments centered simply on communal identity and instead focus on what made it a better representative of Shi'ite interests than its rival. Hizbullah had two specific tasks in this regard: to demonstrate that it could competently represent Shi'ite interests in a peacetime context, and to balance the preferences of those Shi'ites who were interested in a purely Islamic political project (that is, Hizbullah's traditional base) with those who preferred a secular democratic state.⁶⁰⁹

Ultimately, Hizbullah was able to accomplish both. Even prior to the elections, its "openness policy" towards the central government was reassuring to those who supported the existing political system, and the shift to the more conventional political project signaled by Hizbullah's participation in the elections of 1992 was intensely popular across the Shi'ite community. After the elections, Hizbullah's vocal opposition to confessionalism from within the government further reassured those who had worried that the movement might be co-opted and corrupted.⁶¹⁰

Similarly, Hizbullah's leaders took pains to express a willingness to work with Amal, both politically and militarily, and to put the feuding of the late 1980s in the past. Yet though this was welcomed by many Shi'ites in the long term,⁶¹¹ one of Hizbullah's major tasks was still to supplant Amal as the preeminent

⁶⁰⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 108.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

Shi'ite political party, and to establish a strong social norm of support for Hizbullah within the Shi'ite community. This was partly accomplished through the social services described above, and partially through the above political reforms, but equally significant was the way in which it explained, and played on, its military actions against the Israeli forces (and their Lebanese allies) in South Lebanon.

This required a careful balance. Hizbullah's raids against Israeli targets continued to bring about frequent reprisal attacks, causing enormous civilian suffering in the south. Though their military actions ultimately proved to be a significant source of legitimacy for the movement, popular sentiment could quite easily have gone the other way, as it did during the civil war. What changed during this period was not only Hizbullah's choice of tactics, but also the way in which the movement framed these activities.

There were three specific narratives articulated by Hizbullah which seem to have shifted public opinion: "Hizbullah's exercise of restraint"; "the brutality of the Israeli military"; and "Hizbullah's extraordinary military effectiveness." While none of these was manufactured out of whole cloth, and there was in some cases a great deal of accuracy to each claim, these narratives became reified over time and certainly took on a life of their own. For instance, Hizbullah's level of restraint in its dealings with the Israelis did indeed increase in the early 1990s, particularly after the "understandings" arrived at with the Israeli army in 1993 and 1996, under which both sides agreed to refrain from striking the other's civilians, and this does seem to have been a strong legitimizing factor.⁶¹² However, Hizbullah's show of restraint would have been far less powerful in garnering public support, and could perhaps have been seen as a sign of

⁶¹² Ibid., 115. One indicator of support for Hizbullah discussed by Azani is the extraordinarily large turnout at the funeral of Hassan Nasrallah's 18 year old son Hadi, who was killed in 1997 while fighting against the IDF.

weakness, had it not been articulated to the public as being a decision intentionally made for the public good.⁶¹³ Of course, it was less necessary for Hizbullah itself to publicize the actions of the Israeli military, since Lebanese living in the south had firsthand knowledge of Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath; the latter, particularly the attack on Qana, did a great deal to bolster Hizbullah's popularity and to lend justification to its military activities.

But arguably the greatest boost to Hizbullah's prestige came with the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000, which provided the strongest support for the narrative centering on "Hizbullah's military prowess." Hizbullah has framed this outcome as a victory for the movement (its contention that the Shebaa farms remain occupied by the IDF notwithstanding) born of self-sacrifice against nearly overwhelming odds, which is celebrated every spring with a massive commemorative ceremony in Beirut. The truth is probably somewhat more nuanced; while Israel's withdrawal was indeed largely driven by domestic opposition, the desire to put the Syrians in a difficult position was probably also important. Moreover, just as Hizbullah's emergence was a result of the Israeli invasion in 1982, the continued Israeli presence in South Lebanon was itself linked to Hizbullah's attacks on Israeli targets; if Israel was at least partly responsible for Hizbullah's appearance in South Lebanon, then Hizbullah was at least partly responsible for the IDF's continued presence there.⁶¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 provided a great deal of prestige to Hizbullah,

⁶¹³ See, for example, Nasrallah's lengthy interview with Al Safir in April of 1996 in which he explains the logic behind and contents of the July and April understandings in great detail. Nasrallah, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah*, 151-155..

⁶¹⁴ For a strong articulation of an Israeli perspective on this issue, see Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz, "The Israeli—Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007): 43-66. This view was also communicated to me by the Israeli veterans interviewed for this project.

which it leveraged to improve its standing with Shi'ite civilians in the years leading up to the July War.

Practically speaking, Hizbullah has proved increasingly skillful at communicating the above narratives to its domestic constituency. Its posters and banners are sleek and modern, its slogans politically adroit and its billboards eye-catching, much like those of the other Lebanese parties. In another similarity, Hizbullah has also developed its own print and broadcast news media. Its first newspaper, *Al Ahd*, was founded in 1984 and renamed *Al Intiqad (the Critique)* in 2001. It also operates Radio Nur, and in the 1990s, Radio Islam, the Voice of the Oppressed.

Perhaps most importantly, in 1991, its satellite television station, *Al Manar (the Beacon)* was officially licensed by the Lebanese government. In Lebanon, each major ethno-political party has its own television news station; LBC is affiliated with the Kataeb, OTV with the Tayyar, Future TV with the Hariri family's Future movement, and NBN with Amal.⁶¹⁵ Like these stations, *Al Manar* has been an important platform for Hizbullah to express its domestic political program, though it also hosts members of other political factions on round-table programs, and holds political debates during election season.⁶¹⁶ However, *Al Manar* has achieved a degree of prominence outside Lebanon that is unmatched by most of these (with the possible exception of LBC.)⁶¹⁷ Anne Marie Baylouny reports that interview subjects in both Jordan and Lebanon indicated high levels of trust in the station's accuracy, particularly with regard to issues involving Israel and Palestine, which it covers in great depth.⁶¹⁸ And of course, it

⁶¹⁵ The latter is sometimes jokingly referred to as "the Nabih Berri Network."

⁶¹⁶ I attended one of these electoral debates in Beirut in 2009.

⁶¹⁷ Anne Marie Baylouny, *Al-Manar and Alhurra: Competing Satellite Stations and Ideologies* (George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies, October 2006), 18, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA478865&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>. My impression is that LBC's popularity owes a great deal to the reality shows and singing contests it broadcasts.

⁶¹⁸ Baylouny, *Al-Manar and Alhurra: Competing Satellite Stations and Ideologies*.

also provides regular coverage of Hizbullah's military operations, particularly before the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, occasionally in the form of montages set to martial background music.⁶¹⁹ Some of this footage included shots of dead Israeli soldiers, and because Al Manar is viewable in Israel, the station was blamed by some Israeli policymakers for helping to turn the public against the mission in Lebanon.⁶²⁰

At the local level, Hizbullah-affiliated mosques and husseiniyehs are a powerful means of spreading the movement's message and recruiting new members. In addition, since the 1990s, Hizbullah has been operating youth groups, Islamic schools, and a scouting movement of 60,000 scouts and leaders called the Mahdi Scouts. All of these act both as feeders into Hizbullah's political (and military) activities, and as powerful socialization experiences for the youth involved.⁶²¹

This dynamic extends into community life more broadly as well; the movement holds rallies and other large scale public events which are attended by entire families, which feature highly sophisticated production values, including full stage sets, a choir and band (all male,) speakers, fireworks, and flags for the crowd to wave. What I found particularly telling, though, were the groups of teenagers outside the rallies, boys on one side of the parking lot, and girls on the other, sending text messages back and forth and giggling, while a couple of adults kept a discrete eye on things. It is a scene that would be instantly familiar to anyone who has ever been a member of a church youth group in the United States. These events are not just political events for Hizbullah, but also social events for

⁶¹⁹ It also broadcasts a variety of historical, political and cultural programming, some of which is quite slanted (and sometimes appallingly anti-Jewish), and some of which is of excellent quality.

⁶²⁰ Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 1-19.

⁶²¹ See Robert Worth, "Generation Faithful: Hezbollah Seeks to Marshal the Piety of the Young," *New York Times*, November 20, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/21/world/middleeast/21lebanon.html?pagewanted=1>.

the community, indicating just how deeply embedded a role Hizbullah plays in Shi'ite Beirut, and elsewhere.



The Hizbullah choir performs at an event commemorating Imad Mughniyeh's death. Beirut, February 2009. Photo by the author.

Outcome of the New Strategy: Hizbullah's domestic position improves

By changing its approach to its base, Hizbullah experienced an increase in both the material and non-material resources, (though predominantly the latter), it was able to obtain. These included increased political power both in general and relative to Amal, the ability operate against Israel without fear of a public backlash, and overall, a strong norm of support in the Shi'ite community. This last in turn allowed the movement to acquire important material assets like recruits and a base of operations in the south. It also limited the ability of the Lebanese government and armed forces to rein in the movement's activity.

The first of these assets, political influence both in the Shi'ite community and in Lebanon more broadly, was a direct result of Hizbullah's decision to participate in the electoral process. As late as 1990, Hizbullah faced criticism from the Higher Shi'ite Council over the conflict between the two Shi'ite movements, and refusal to engage with the Lebanese political system further

weakened its position in the eyes of many Shi'ites.⁶²² But electoral participation signaled to the Shi'ite public that the movement had become a different kind of organization, and helped improve its market share relative to Amal, eroding the latter's support among the Shi'ite middle class (a process helped by Amal's own reputation for corruption.) By the time the 2004 municipal elections were held, the results indicated that they had become by far the more popular Shi'ite party.⁶²³

More practically speaking, running for office eventually gave the Hizbullah a seat at the political table, which was in and of itself an important asset. Though its share of seats in the parliament fluctuated slightly, it consistently did about as well in the Lebanese national elections as was possible under the limits imposed by the Syrians, and did quite well in the freer and fairer municipal elections.⁶²⁴

Hizbullah's leadership was inclined to attribute its success to popular support for its "resistance" (that is, military) activities, and indeed, it based some of its campaign materials on this narrative: one election poster from the 1996 election read "They resist with their blood; resist with your vote." Nasrallah said plainly in an interview "We hold the opinion that the people who voted for us in 1992 did not do so due to the services we gave... but due to support of the resistance."⁶²⁵ This viewpoint was based partly on Hizbullah's own polling, which it conducted before each election, but was shared by other Lebanese politicians. Rafiq Hariri, for instance, felt that Operation Grapes of Wrath had done a great deal to increase Hizbullah's popularity.⁶²⁶

⁶²² Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 84-85.

⁶²³ For further analysis see Rodger Shanahan, "Hizballah Rising: The Political Battle for the Loyalty of the Shi'a of Lebanon," *MERIA* 9, no. 1 (2005).

⁶²⁴ The movement did quite poorly in the Bekaa, but this was largely because of Tufayli's defection. Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 125-126.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

While this may well be true, that such activity had become a source of prestige for the movement was in and itself an important change, brought about by the reinforcement of the narratives explored above. Though this change in sentiment was probably partially the result of increasing frustration at the IDF presence in South Lebanon, as well as the growing consensus that no other party was capable of pushing them out⁶²⁷ the fact remains that in the 1990s, behavior which a decade earlier had produced a transfer of Shi'ite support from Hizbullah to Amal had the opposite effect.⁶²⁸ Hizbullah had managed to turn what had once been a potential liability into an enormous asset, reinforcing its position in the Shi'ite community and giving the group greater leeway in its military operations at the same time.

By 2003, the movement had clearly managed to generate a solid norm of support for itself within the Shi'ite community. Polling of Lebanese Shi'ites by Simon Haddad found that 80% of respondents supported Hezbollah retaining its arms indefinitely and supported its military activities. 70% wanted to see the party grow, and 62% endorsed its activities "in general," 54% said that the party had the right to use violence against the state and 75% said they would side with it in a confrontation with the government. On the other hand, 67% generally disapproved of the use of violence to achieve the party's objectives, suggesting that it is the strong communal norm of support for the movement that produces acquiescence to violence against the state, not admiration for violence that produces support for the movement.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 50.

⁶²⁸ Further suggesting that perhaps Hizbullah had become more sensitive to its constituents' preferences, after the IDF withdrawal in 2000, Hizbullah dialed back its liberation-of-Jerusalem rhetoric somewhat, perhaps recognizing that the population of the South was tired of war. Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," 34.

⁶²⁹ Simon Haddad, "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 31-32.

One attendee at a Hizbullah rally in Beirut in May of 2009 who I spoke with informally listed five specific reasons he supports Hizbullah: he comes from an environment in which “everyone loves Hizbullah”; his parents and everyone he knows love Hizbullah; Hizbullah “protects me against any enemy”; he “doesn’t see anything bad in them”; and “religion.” When asked about Amal, he said that while the first five reasons also applied there, the fifth, religion, was specific to Hizbullah. He thought that this probably applied to most other people in attendance as well, and that most probably had *shaheed* (martyrs, those who had died fighting the IDF) in their families.

The nonmaterial assets described above were instrumental in helping Hizbullah acquire significant material assets as well, both financial and strategic. With regard to the former, wealthy Shi’ites both abroad and in Lebanon gave zakat (charitable donations) to fund Hizbullah’s social services.⁶³⁰ The latter assets, however, are more extensive. The movement’s popularity has virtually guaranteed it the acquiescence of civilians to the presence of Hizbullah fighters in their villages and on their farmland in the south. While it is true that this is a resource which Hizbullah could have gained by coercion, as the PLO had in the 1970s, the advantage the former had over the latter was that it is likely that the provision of social services and the establishment of public support for the movement’s political and military project convinced many Lebanese to remain on their land in the south, providing not only camouflage for Hizbullah’s fighters, but also an important source of local intelligence.⁶³¹

Secondly, the strong norm of support for Hizbullah in the Shi’ite community has greatly facilitated the movement’s ability to recruit fighters domestically. This has meant that it has not had to rely on foreign fighters (that is,

⁶³⁰ Norton, *Hezbollah: A short history*, 108-109.

⁶³¹ Though it is difficult to find statistics on internal migration in Lebanon, and therefore to tell how many people stayed in the south that would have left without Hizbullah’s intervention.

Iranians) and therefore has maintained its status as an indigenous resistance movement. Moreover, Hizbullah's fighters, while well paid, by all accounts also sincerely believe in the movement's goals, which has likely contributed to their effectiveness.⁶³² Indeed, because of its prestige, Hizbullah is able to recruit and promote based on skill (rather than mere willingness) producing what is arguably the most meritocratic of the militant groups in Lebanon.⁶³³

This dynamic provides an interesting counterpoint to the argument made by Weinstein that wealthy movements (including those with external sponsorship) will likely end up using their wealth to recruit mercenary fighters, rather than committed ones. Despite its wealth, Hizbullah's recruits are by all accounts deeply committed, and not at all prone to victimization of Lebanese civilians.

Moreover, Hizbullah's widespread public support had the secondary effect of making it difficult for their primary Lebanese adversary in the south, the SLA, to recruit Shi'ites, and lowering morale leading to increasingly high levels of defection in the SLA's ranks. Given that in the later years of the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon the IDF relied heavily on the SLA, this was a significant advantage for Hizbullah (see below).⁶³⁴

Finally, one of the most important outcomes of Hizbullah's relationship with its base was an event which did *not* happen. It was at least in part because of the powerful norm of support for the movement in the Shi'ite community that Hizbullah was able to avoid a confrontation with the Lebanese military (and by extension, the state) over its arms in the years leading up to the July War. Hizbullah was (for the most part)⁶³⁵ the only faction to remain armed after the

⁶³² Norton, "Hizbullah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," 27.

⁶³³ Thanks are due to Rex Brynen for this insight.

⁶³⁴ Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel."

⁶³⁵ Its main Palestinian ally, the PFLP-GC also retains its arms. Their office in Bourj al Barajneh features a large mural outside with the faces of leading members of Hamas, Hizbullah, and the PFLP-GC over the slogan "min filustin ila lubnan, al muqawamah wahidun," or "From Palestine to Lebanon, the resistance is one."

civil war. After the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, Hizbullah's arms and its effective control of the south became increasing sources of political tension. Yet the army was reluctant to confront Hizbullah with regard to either issue. This was partially due to Hizbullah's greater military power, but its popularity in the Shi'ite community, which comprises roughly one third of military, was also significant; the LAF experienced a series of schisms during the civil war and fears of a similar split may have had a restraining effect on the army's willingness to confront Hizbullah directly.⁶³⁶ In sum, Hizbullah's improved relationship with its Shi'ite base provided it with invaluable material and non-material assets to which it had not had access in its earlier years.

The Non-Shi'ite Public: A new approach

Hizbullah's principal challenge with regard to the non-Shi'ite community after the civil war was to recast itself in a less threatening light, changing its image from that of a narrowly oriented, radical Shi'ite organization, to that of a pragmatic Lebanese nationalist group using violence in defense of, rather than against, the state. The starting point for this process was the decision to participate in the 1992 elections, signaling an acceptance of the Lebanese political system, or at least a willingness to work for change from within. But this was only the first step; the movement also reframed its public message, moving away from its previous advocacy of a Sharia-based Islamic state in Lebanon, instead emphasizing its status as a Lebanese national movement and its resistance credentials, while making a range of gestures towards multi-sectarian cooperation

⁶³⁶ For further analysis of this issue as well as the general position of the LAF with regard to Hizbullah, see Aram Nerguizian and Anthony Cordesman, "The Lebanese Armed Forces: Challenges and Opportunities in Post-Syria Lebanon" (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/090210_lafsecurity12.pdf.

and dialogue. This change in rhetoric was also accompanied by subtle (and not so subtle) political signals which were also highly significant.

Crucial to reassuring non-Shi'ite Lebanese was to convince this audience that Hizbullah was not attempting to replicate the Iranian revolution in Lebanon, a theme which its leaders began to emphasize in interviews and speeches.⁶³⁷ It began instead began to frame itself primarily as a Lebanese “national resistance”. The narrative of Hizbullah-as-resistance is particularly important because it distinguishes the movement from the other armed movements which participated in the civil war and were forced (unlike Hizbullah) to disarm under the terms of Taif. As recently as 2009, signs were present at at least one large, multi-sectarian Hizbullah rally which read “The Resistance is not a Militia.” In an interview with Al Safir, a center-left newspaper with a multi-sectarian readership, Nasrallah said:

“When Hezbollah was established in the wake of the invasion and started its resistance against the occupation, it did not fight and give martyrs for Iran’s sake in the strict regional sense, it fought for Lebanese territory, defended Lebanese citizens, and confronted an enemy behaving aggressively against the Lebanese people. I would like to ask, if we want to judge whether or not a given party is genuinely Lebanese: Is there a greater or more important yardstick than ones defense of the land and its people?”⁶³⁸

He then went on to reiterate what had become Hizbullah’s official position on the establishment of a Sharia-based system of government in Lebanon, namely that while Hizbullah of course believed that this was the best option for Lebanon, such an outcome must be the will of the majority of the Lebanese, meaning not merely 51% of the population, but a majority of both Muslims and Christians.

⁶³⁷ See, for instance, a 1992 interview with Al Watan Al Arabi, in which Nasrallah says point blank “We do not want to impose an Islamic government by force.” Nasrallah, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 69.

Both Fadlullah and Nasrallah stated repeatedly that Hizbullah had no interest in attempting to overthrow the current system of government by force.⁶³⁹

When the movement did criticize the Lebanese political system, it couched these criticisms as condemnation of sectarianism, as an overture to other sectarian-political groups who opposed the National Pact. Some of this was out of political necessity; because of the redistricting which occurred under Taif, Hizbullah (like all other political factions in Lebanon) found itself forced to appeal to those outside the Shi'ite community and to include non-Shi'ites (and therefore non-Hizbullah members) on its party lists, though for the most part this "electoral cooperation" was in reality merely a new variant of Lebanon's time-honored tradition of political horse trading.

But other gestures appear to have been real attempts at outreach; in 1997, for instance, Hizbullah's Central Information Unit issued a booklet (in both Arabic and English) titled "A reading in Papal Guidance: Hizbullah's Perspective", which was an analysis of the papal guidance communicated to Lebanese Christians by Pope John Paul II, and which included an open letter to the pope by the movement, praising him for his encouragement of coexistence, sentiments echoed in a speech by Muhammad Ra'd, head of Hizbullah's political council.⁶⁴⁰ The anti-confessional message was also directed towards Sunnis; a Hizbullah candidate in Beirut said at a rally "If I am elected as the Hezbollah representative for the Beirut electoral region, I will work to revoke the community policy. We will cooperate with the young generation of Muslims so that they can attain influence in the state without suffering from discrimination and community hegemony."⁶⁴¹ In appealing to both Christians and Sunnis, it emphasized pan-

⁶³⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 128. Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 156.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 158-159.

⁶⁴¹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 101.

Lebanese nationalist issues such as the freeing of prisoners being held in Israel and the return of IDPs to their homes.⁶⁴² It is of course impossible to tell to what degree this is simple lip service to the idea of inter-communal coexistence and to what degree it constitutes a genuine commitment. There is probably a good deal of variation even within the organization itself. But even those most suspicious of Hizbullah's motives would acknowledge that Hizbullah stands to gain greatly from the end of the sectarian political system.

The party also engaged in less explicit signaling. An early sign that the movement was positioning itself as a Lebanese patriotic movement was Radio Nur's playing of the Lebanese National Anthem rather than one of Hizbullah's own martial hymns following a moment of silence for the victims of the Qana massacre in 1996.⁶⁴³ Another example is the movement's flag; prior to 1998, the slogan at the bottom of the flag read *al thawra al Islami fi Lubnan*, "the Islamic revolution in Lebanon." After 1998, however, the word *thawra*, revolution, was replaced with the word *muqawama*, or "resistance," a sign of the changing emphasis discussed above. Similarly, in 2001, Hizbullah's newspaper, *Al Ahd*, changed its name to the less religious *Al Intiqad*, "the Critique", and redesigned its front page to more closely resemble those of other Lebanese newspapers, though its website still features memorials to dead Hizbullah fighters. Hizbullah also changed the aesthetic of its campaign materials in mixed areas, removing all religious paraphernalia from polling stations in Christian and mixed areas in 1998.⁶⁴⁴

It also attempted to change the visual message of its large scale demonstrations; after 1995, these featured an increased proportion of Lebanese

⁶⁴² Ibid., 102.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁴⁴ Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 171. Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 129.

flags and banners relative to those of the party, though these were still prominently represented. By 1997, this was official policy.⁶⁴⁵ Even today, Hizbullah's skill at subtly shaping its message to suit its audience remains striking. At an invitation-only rally in February of 2009 to commemorate the "martyrdom" of Imad Mughniyeh attended almost exclusively by core Hizbullah supporters, Hizbullah flags and banners were the overwhelming motif, and officials handed out yellow Hizbullah scarves bearing the faces of Hizbullah leaders assassinated by the IDF. In contrast, at a rally held two months later to commemorate the 2000 withdrawal of the IDF from South Lebanon, a far more public event attended by supporters of Hizbullah's various allied political parties (including the Christian Tayyar), officials handed out Lebanese flags only.⁶⁴⁶ The organization exerts strict control over its image in the press, with a well-run media relations office through which all requests for interviews or other contacts are processed.

As in its relations with the Shi'ite community, Hizbullah also benefitted from public outrage regarding the IDF's military operations. The high civilian death toll accompanying Operation Grapes of Wrath, in particular the Qana massacre, as well as the damage to Lebanon's infrastructure, galvanized public opinion against the IDF and in favor of Hizbullah. Norton writes:

"Israel calculated that by punishing the Lebanese in general and destroying national infrastructure, the government (or the Syrian government) would be motivated to trim the sails of the resistance. Israel consistently miscalculated. Israeli attacks had the opposite effect. Every time Beirut was blacked out as a result of Israeli bombing, support for the resistance surged among non-Shi'i Lebanese, especially for its steadfast response to punitive Israeli attack."⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 171.

⁶⁴⁶ I attended both events.

⁶⁴⁷ Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," 27.

In the south, prior to the Israeli withdrawal, Hizbullah also benefitted from the SLA's coercive treatment of the civilian population. It was therefore able to recruit spies within the SLA from among those who had been press-ganged into joining, and publicized the names of SLA officers along with threats as to what would happen to them following what Hizbullah believed to be an inevitable Israeli withdrawal, leading to desertion not only by Shi'ites, as noted above, but also by Christians.⁶⁴⁸

Moreover, its behavior following the withdrawal offered a flattering contrast with the SLA. While the SLA had held captured enemy fighters in the notoriously brutal Khiam prison, SLA members who were captured in 2000 were mostly handed over to the Lebanese justice system, receiving on average between six and eighteen months of jail time, along with a prohibition on returning to their villages for two years (which they would likely have been unable to do in any case.) Men who had travelled to Israel itself were sentenced to two years, while all women were acquitted. Leaders (tried mostly in absentia) received longer sentences of around fifteen years. (Many SLA members remain in exile in Israel to this day.) For the most part, while there was some looting, Hizbullah forces refrained from reprisals against Christians in the formerly Israeli occupied zone, even holding meetings with Christian leaders to reassure them that their communities had nothing to fear⁶⁴⁹ earning them the respect (albeit in some cases grudging) of many Christians.⁶⁵⁰

Interestingly, Hizbullah also engages in a limited degree of service provision to these communities. While Hizbullah's social service network primarily benefits Shi'ites, it also serves those from other communities,

⁶⁴⁸ Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel."

⁶⁴⁹ Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," 32-33. Nasrullah, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah*, 65.

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Michel Metni.

particularly in areas with mixed populations,⁶⁵¹ though they are careful not to step on the toes of the NGOs affiliated with other parties. As one Hizbullah NGO worker interviewed by Flanigan explained:

“Mostly our services target the areas where mostly Shiites live. The people who benefit are not always Shiites; they might be Shiites, but if the areas they live in are mixed, you might have Christians, you might have Sunnis, and you have Shiites who benefit from the services. Because we are considered part of Hezbollah and the resistance, it is not easy for us to provide services in an area that is dominated by another sect, because this might be seen as infringing on the other sect, and they would not be happy. So even if we wanted to, we are not trying.”⁶⁵²

The competent management and sheer scale of Hizbullah’s charitable works have won them admiration from some surprising quarters. Palestinians, particularly in Beirut, have historically had a deeply adversarial relationship with the Shi’ite militias because of the fighting between Amal and the PLO in the mid-1980s during the War of the Camps, which included a punishing siege and eventual attack on Beirut’s refugee camps by Shi’ite fighters. And yet in Bourj al Barajneh I heard admiration expressed for Hizbullah. This is partly because of Hizbullah’s strong stance against Israel, but also because of the services it provides in the area.

Of course, Hizbullah still used a degree of coercion against non-Shi’ite civilians in Lebanon as well, principally through its relationship with the Lebanese state. As a client of Syria, it aided and abetted Syrian hegemony in Lebanon until 2005, a state of affairs strongly opposed by many Lebanese, particularly Christians, though Hizbullah was not alone in this; there were political leaders and parties allied with the Syrians from every ethno-communal

⁶⁵¹ Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, 167-169.

⁶⁵² Flanigan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World*, 38.

group in Lebanon. Hizbullah has also used the threat of force to maintain a monopoly over the provision of security and use of force in the areas under its control, including Palestinian refugee camps in and around southern Beirut, which could certainly be viewed as coercive. Moreover, that Hizbullah retains its weapons when no other militant group does so does add an implicit threat to its dealings with its political opponents.⁶⁵³ However, when compared to their behavior between 1982 and 1990, and the PLO's between 1970 and 1982, Hizbullah's behavior does appear less coercive, at least on a day to day basis.⁶⁵⁴

Costs and Benefits of the New Approach to the Non-Shi'ite public

The above changes garnered Hizbullah some important non-material assets in the years leading up to the 2006 July War. Broadly speaking, Hizbullah was able to generate an increase in, if not actual support, at least respect from many Christians and some Sunnis, though far from all. In 1996, polling by the American University of Beirut found that 62% of respondents (which included a representative sampling of Lebanese from all confessions) would vote for a "member of the resistance" suggesting that the organization had in fact gained a measure of respect outside its base. (Interestingly, only 19% said they would vote for a "militia leader" indicating that Hizbullah's bid to frame themselves as separate from the other Lebanese militant groups was successful.)⁶⁵⁵

More recently, Hizbullah has formed a political alliance, known as the March 8th coalition, with a major Christian political party, the Tayyar al Watani al

⁶⁵³ Cab drivers from the Christian neighborhoods of Beirut will sometimes take a substantial detour when taking fares to Dahiyeh, to ensure they drive through as little of the area as possible, or sometimes deliberately misunderstand a passenger's request entirely. This does denote a degree of discomfort with entering Hizbullah controlled territory, although it is unclear to me whether this is related to Hizbullah in specific or Shi'ites in general.

⁶⁵⁴ Hizbullah's actions during the takeover of West Beirut in 2008 are discussed in greater depth in the conclusion.

⁶⁵⁵ Harik, "Hizbollah and Today's Battle for Beirut," 50. The fact remains, however, that the leaders of every major Lebanese political party in the 1990s (and in some cases today) were former militia leaders.

Hurr (the Free Patriotic Movement). This alliance has allowed them a much more powerful voice in Lebanese politics, particularly at the parliamentary level. While it is in many ways an arranged marriage of political expediency, even a purely pragmatic alliance between the two would not have been possible in the absence of a moderation in the way the movement was perceived by Christian Lebanese. Polling of Christians in Metn (one of the most divided Christian electoral districts) in 2007 by Information International, a Beirut polling firm, found that 46.5% of Maronites, 58% of Orthodox, and 49% of Catholics were in favor of the memorandum between the Tayyar and Hizbullah, while about a third of each community was opposed, and the remainder uncertain.⁶⁵⁶ Michel Metni, director the Tayyar's district office in Achrafiyeh, explained what he saw as the positive attitude among Christians to the Tayyar's alliance with Hizbullah as stemming from a variety of factors. He cited Hizbullah's exceptionalism, noting that they "never killed or touched any Christian" and that when the IDF withdrew from the south, they refrained from reprisals against Christians in the area. He also noted that in a similar situation, the Lebanese Forces, the Tayyar's main political rival in the Christian community, would have behaved very differently (a contention which has substantial historical basis.) He even went so far as to compare Hizbullah's men to Buddhist monks, in that they exhibit a high degree of calmness, piety and self-control, though he also acknowledged that this trust had a great deal to do with the trust that the Tayyar's membership has in the decisions made by its own leader, General Michel Aoun. Whatever its basis, this alliance would prove instrumental in the movement's ability to recover politically following the July War.

⁶⁵⁶ "Opinion Poll: Memorandum of Accord between Free Patriotic Movement and Hizbullah" (Information International, 2007), http://information-international.com/pdf/iipolls/2007/Pages%20from%20TheMonthly_issue62-SEP07-en.pdf.

While this increase in public acceptance – or at least decline in outright panic – yielded mostly non-material benefits, in a few instances, non-Shi'ite Lebanese voluntarily donated important material resources. During Operation Grapes of Wrath, Hizbullah experienced an increase in support across the Lebanese communal and political spectrum. This was largely non-material, but remarkable nonetheless; Hizbullah officials recount being greeted warmly on the street in the staunchly Maronite neighborhood of Achrafiyeh, joint Muslim and Christian demonstrations were held in support of Hizbullah along the former green line, and the government rallied behind Hizbullah by refusing to agree to an international condemnation of the organization in exchange for an international condemnation of Israel.⁶⁵⁷ Even more surprising were the material benefits accruing to the organization from this swing in public opinion; Christians from the north and east of the country were among the many callers to Radio Nur inquiring as to where they could donate money to the resistance, or even find recruiting centers. In response, Hizbullah placed advertisements in a number of papers, outlining a variety of donation options, including the cost of a bullet, a rocket or even outfitting a single fighter, as well as telephone and fax numbers through which would-be donors could contact the organization. A few Christian donors even donated thousands of dollars with the explicit request that the money be spent on Katyushas.⁶⁵⁸

But, this approach has not always been entirely successful. Despite the movement's efforts at message control, more conservative members of the organization do occasionally make statements which contradict its conciliatory line, as when Ibrahim al Amin, the head of Hizbullah's parliamentary delegation, said, in the context of the 1996 elections, "Hezbollah's entry to parliament does

⁶⁵⁷ Jaber, *Hezbollah: born with a vengeance*, 189.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

not symbolize a change in the organization's plan, working towards the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon.”⁶⁵⁹

Moreover, there are still those who distrust Hizbullah and feel that it has not changed its views as much as its leaders claim. Albert Kostanian, the Kataeb's campaign manager for the 2009 elections and a member of its politburo, told me bluntly that the Kataeb remains concerned about Hizbullah's intentions and loyalties because of its religious ties to Iran:

“Naim Qassem himself stated ... all strategic decisions of Hizbullah are taken by the Wali al Faqih, and Hassan Nasrallah reasserted that principle in a public speech, saying that he is proud of being a follower of the Wali al Faqih and that the latter takes all strategic decisions. So here we have a problem, because what happens if Israel or the USA attacks Iran? Will Hizbullah retaliate from Lebanon or no? From who is Hizbullah getting orders? ... So here we have a clear problem with Hizbullah, because we don't know what is Hizbullah's agenda, who is controlling Hizbullah's agenda, who is dictating Hizbullah's behavior, and for whom they are working. ... We clearly accept Hizbullah in Lebanon, because despite its foreign links, it is a legitimate Lebanese party, we cannot deny Hizbullah any legitimacy, it has its supporters, it's not really a foreign implant in Lebanon ... they are legitimate because they talk on behalf of the majority of Shi'ites so we are not saying abolish Hizbullah or we must ban Hizbullah, we are saying that we have a problem with its loyalty and we must define what is loyalty and talk about it so we could avoid maybe further clashes between us and them.”⁶⁶⁰

In this sense, it is not only Hizbullah's previous coercive behavior which leads to continuing suspicion of the movement and its motives, but also its relationships with Syria and Iran. For many members of Christian parties which were banned and whose members were arrested or “disappeared” during the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, Hizbullah's relationship with Syria will always remain suspect, and Iran's influence remains cause for concern. To the degree that this is a problem

⁶⁵⁹ Azani, *Hezbollah: the story of the party of God: from Revolution to institutionalization*, 126.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Albert Kostanian.

for Hizbullah, however, it stems more from its foreign relations than its domestic policy.

Nevertheless, this has remained a bone of contention between the Christian parties of the March 14th bloc (the Kataeb and Ouet) and those of the March 8th movement (the Tayyar and Marada.) A public debate between members of the two blocs, hosted and broadcast by Al Manar during the 2009 electoral campaign frequently devolved into arguments over whether Hizbullah could be trusted and whether Syria or Israel posed the greatest danger to Lebanon. (On the other hand, at a smaller, more private event at which undecided voters in the Christian Achrafiyeh neighborhood were invited to meet the incumbent Tayyar candidate, the conversation focused mostly on issues like the repair of the country's electrical grid and responsiveness to voter concerns.)⁶⁶¹ What is significant is that, at least among Christians, the question of Hizbullah's role in Lebanon is now a subject for debate, rather than a foregone conclusion.

An Overview of Hizbullah's Resources in 2006

In sum, by 2006, Hizbullah had managed to acquire a wide range of assets from its foreign sponsors and domestic constituents. While it retained access to funding, training and weaponry from Iran, it had a greater degree of autonomy and a greater freedom to maneuver politically within Lebanon than it had in the past. While it remained somewhat constrained by its proxy relationship with Syria, this relationship also provided valuable political leverage, allowed them to conduct their military operations in the south more or less without interference, and may have provided weaponry as well. In short, from its sponsors, Hizbullah

⁶⁶¹ I attended both events.

gained arms, funding, and a base of operations, as well as military training and political influence.

From its civilian constituents, apart from some financial support from wealthy Shi'ite (and non-Shi'ite supporters), Hizbullah's strategy of combining marketing with the provision of services (as well as judicious coercion) helped them acquire primarily non-material goods. Their improved reputation among some segments of the non-Shi'ite population helped them acquire a valuable alliance with the Tayyar, although many Christians remain somewhat distrustful. The powerful norm of support it was able to generate within the Shi'ite community not only ensured access to non-material assets like political power (particularly relative to Amal), essentially guaranteeing it a permanent political position within the country, it also helped the organization to acquire a number of concrete military advantages, including the presence of sympathetic civilians in the areas it needed to use as a military staging area, access to intelligence, a ready pool of recruits, and a check on the ability of the Lebanese army to intervene against them.

Outcome: The July War

In 2006, all of these assets combined to ensure that Hizbullah was able to both resist militarily during the July War and to recover politically afterwards. Although the July War devastated Lebanon, Hizbullah itself survived.

Resistance:

The war began on the morning of July 12th, 2006, with the abduction of two Israeli soldiers near the Israeli-Lebanese border. That night, the IAF bombed Rafiq Hariri International Airport. On the 14th, Israel bombed the home of Hassan Nasrallah, and issued the conditions under which it would end the war: an end to

rocket attacks, the disarmament of Hizbullah under UN Resolution 1559, and the release of its soldiers. In response, Hizbullah launched an anti-ship missile at the INS Hanit, a Saar-5 corvette ten kilometers off the coast of Beirut, killing four sailors.⁶⁶² For added effect, Nasrullah's announcement of the attack was broadcast virtually simultaneously on television.⁶⁶³

Over the next week, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) continued the bombardment of targets in south Lebanon and the Dahiye, and civilian casualties (primarily Lebanese) continued to mount. By the end of the first week of the war, the IAF had bombed targets in the predominantly Christian suburb of Jounieh and even East Beirut, when Israeli surveillance mistook a water pump on the back of a flatbed truck parked outside of a bar for artillery and shelled the street. These strikes, as well as the increasing severity of the IDF assault, began to solidify public opinion increasingly against the Israelis, and in favor of Hizbullah. The strike on Qana on July 30th that killed approximately thirty civilians was particularly powerful symbolically⁶⁶⁴

Also of particular significance was the fighting in and around the border village of Bint Jbeil. On July 25th, as the IDF began its land invasion of Lebanon, Israeli soldiers took control of the village, although the Hizbullah fighters stationed there apparently put up a well-coordinated defensive effort.⁶⁶⁵ On July 30th, after five days of heavy fighting, the IDF pulled out of Bint Jbail. While

⁶⁶² Harel Amos and News Agencies, "Soldier killed, 3 missing after Navy vessel hit off Beirut coast," *Haaretz*, July 15, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/soldier-killed-3-missing-after-navy-vessel-hit-off-beirut-coast-1.193112>.

⁶⁶³ The blast from the blockade could be heard in the Gemayze neighborhood of Beirut, where I was at the time, just as Nasrallah announced the attack on Al Manar, though the announcement itself was not necessarily live.

⁶⁶⁴ "Israel/Lebanon: Qana Death Toll at 28: International Inquiry Needed into Israeli Air Strike" (Human Rights Watch, 2006), <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/08/01/israellebanon-qana-death-toll-28>.

⁶⁶⁵ Yaakov Katz, "8 soldiers killed in Battle of Bint Jbail," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 2006, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=29515>.

Israeli soldiers argued that they had taken fewer casualties than Hizbullah⁶⁶⁶, IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz admitted that the withdrawal was a blow to morale.

Hizbullah's third major achievement during the war was its ability to strike civilian targets inside Israel with both long-range and Katyusha rockets. In addition to the northern towns which were usually targeted with Katyushas, it also launched long-range missiles at Haifa, Israel's third largest city, as well as the cities of Tiberias, Afula and Nazareth, killing 43 civilians in total. That it was able to threaten Israeli civilians so far from the border was a powerful statement. Hizbullah's anti-tank and anti-ship missiles were also, as mentioned above, effective in ground confrontations, although the organization had little surface-to-air capacity.

The fighting ultimately continued until the end of July, featuring heavy bombardment of South Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut, as well as increasing numbers of Israeli troops on the ground; by the end of the war, Israel had deployed almost 10,000. On August 8th, the IDF occupied the town of Marjayoun, which it had evacuated six years previous. The war was finally ended by a UN negotiated ceasefire on the 14th of August. Israeli troops gradually withdrew, and a UN peacekeeping force was put in place.

One possible explanation for the outcome of the war is that Hizbullah's success is due entirely to these weapons in combination with its willingness to fight from within the civilian population.⁶⁶⁷ But although the weaponry the organization acquired from Iran and Syria was certainly significant, the outcome of the July war cannot be attributed to force of arms alone. The military gap between Hizbullah and the IDF was still enormous, arguably larger than that between the IDF and the PLO in 1982. The IDF initially deployed 10,000 soldiers

⁶⁶⁶ See for example the Guardian's coverage. Ian Black, Inigo Gilmore, and Mitchell Prothero, "The day Israel realised that this was a real war," *Guardian*, July 30, 2006.

⁶⁶⁷ See Sharp, *Lebanon: The Israel-Hamas-Hezbollah Conflict*.

to Hizbullah's 2,000-3,000; by the end of the war, the IDF's numbers had risen to 30,000.⁶⁶⁸ Unlike the PLO, Hizbullah had no foreign allies in Lebanon (though those allies ultimately did the PLO little good.) While Hizbullah's long range missiles were useful for strikes against targets in Israel, they were not ideal for waging a ground war. Though it did have a stockpile of anti-tank and anti-ship missiles, as well as artillery, light weapons, and several Iranian-made unmanned aerial drones, it did not have access to even the small number of tanks fielded by the PLO in 1982, and had nothing in its possession to rival (or thwart) the Israeli air force. If sheer force of arms were entirely responsible for a militant group's survival or otherwise, the outcomes of the wars in 1982 and 2006 should have been similar.⁶⁶⁹

That these results were so different is attributable to the higher levels of organization cohesion exhibited by Hizbullah, itself an artifact of its very different relationship with its sponsor states. It is also partly understandable through their actions during the conflict itself. Despite numerous public statements of support by the Arab League and individual Arab states for the Lebanese government and people, and an (unfulfilled) threat by Syria to "respond" if Israel invaded Lebanon,⁶⁷⁰ Hizbullah fought the July War essentially on its own. At no point did Iranian or Syrian troops intervene. However, neither did Syria move to rein in or otherwise impede Hizbullah's war effort, a sharp contrast from its seizure the PLO's weapons in Damascus to ensure a quick end to the fighting in 1982. Not

⁶⁶⁸ Dan Halutz, quoted in "Israeli army chief says Israel has tripled number of troops in Lebanon," *Associated Press*, August 12, 2006.

⁶⁶⁹ An argument could be made here that the outcomes of these cases are different because the intent of the two invasions was different. I find this unconvincing, however, because in both 1982 and 2006, decision-making on the Israeli side was distorted by information asymmetries between the military and civilian branches. In both cases it was unclear, even within Israel, what the ultimate goal of the war would be. This is evident in both the contradictory statements made to the Israeli press regarding the aims of the 2006 war (see above) and the postwar revelations regarding Ariel Sharon's move to proceed to Beirut in violation of the Cabinet's decisions regarding the war's objectives (see Chapter Three.)

⁶⁷⁰ Syria did, however, allow Lebanese refugees to flee into Syria, despite the lack of diplomatic relations between the two states at the time. Rest stops in Syria responded to the crisis by increasing their prices and charging 1000 Lebanese lira (about 75 cents) per sheet of toilet paper.

only did Hizbullah benefit from the material assets it had already gained – access to weapons, bases in south Lebanon – it was able to maintain its relationships with both sponsors throughout the conflict.

Hizbullah has also managed to retain a great deal of its military capacity following the war; cables from the US embassy in Beirut released by Wikileaks indicate concern on the part of the Israeli government regarding Hizbullah's capacity to “destabilize” south Lebanon, and in particular with the possibility of Hizbullah acquiring anti-aircraft capabilities.⁶⁷¹ American officials privately admitted that “public estimates put Hizballah's stockpile as high as 40,000 rockets and missiles, reinforcing assessments by some experts that this build-up may portend a shift in the military balance between Israel and its northern nemesis.”⁶⁷²

Recovery:

The second component of “survival” is the ability to recover politically in the aftermath of the military campaign itself. This, Hizbullah was also able to do. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Hizbullah certainly faced criticism, as well as doubts from the public and particularly the leadership of the March 14th bloc regarding its judgment and intentions. But if Israel had hoped to isolate Hizbullah and weaken it politically by turning the population of Lebanon against it, the war ultimately had the opposite effect, given the widespread damage to the country's infrastructure, the strikes on Christian areas, and of course the high civilian death toll, including the emotionally resonant strike on Qana. Polling by Information International in August of 2006 found that 97% of those polled considered Israel to be an enemy during the recent conflict; even among Maronites, this number was close to 94%. Meanwhile, Hassan Nasrullah's rating as “the first leader in

⁶⁷¹ Beirut US Embassy, “UNSCOL Williams on UNIFIL Incident, Ghajar” (Wikileaks, January 29, 2010), <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2010/01/10BEIRUT96.html>.

⁶⁷² Hunter, “Is Now the Time to Raise Hizballah With Syria?”.

Lebanon” shot up to 31% in August from 20% in May. Though a third said that they opposed Hizbullah’s abduction of the two soldiers, and a similar percentage favored a discussion of the mechanism by which Hizbullah would lay down its arms, a majority supported its actions and wished to see it retain its weapons, though this was somewhat weighted by sect, with the Druze most heavily in favor of forceful disarmament. A separate poll in August by the French language newspaper *L’Orient-le Jour* found that 51% of respondents, primarily Christians and Druze, wanted to see Hizbullah disarmed, a substantially higher percentage.⁶⁷³ In the aggregate, though, Hizbullah’s political position after the war remained strong.

Moreover, Hizbullah’s ability to survive politically in the immediate aftermath of the war did not rely on coercion. Rather, in addition to tapping into massive public outrage at Israel (and a surprising degree of pan-Lebanese unity),⁶⁷⁴ they relied heavily on their existing support base, and their status as a resistance movement, to justify their actions. More practically, however, Hizbullah also poured an enormous amount of (mostly Iranian) money into reconstruction efforts, offering each family whose house was destroyed \$40,000 or reconstruction services, whichever they preferred. (Hizbullah also covered the difference in cost if the latter option proved to be more expensive.) To implement this plan, they established a construction company called *Wa’ad*, which, unlike *Jihad al Binaa*, is a fully independent company which is nevertheless run by Hizbullah; a total of 92% of those affected chose to take *Wa’ad*’s services, in part

⁶⁷³ Yaliban, “Lebanon: Poll shows 51% want Hizbullah disarmed”, August 2006, http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2006/08/post_18.php.

⁶⁷⁴ In one of the more unusual displays of solidarity, the coordination of relief efforts for the IDPs flooding into Beirut, which included religious Shi’ite NGOs, were headquartered in the offices of Helem, the Lebanese LGBT rights organization. Alexandra Sandels, “Talking To: Helem Coordinator Georges Azzi” (Now Lebanon, May 17, 2009), <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=93725>. The Tayyar in particular played a role in coordinating home stays in (relatively safe, Christian) East Beirut for IDPs from the south and the Dahiyeh.

because of the slowness and inefficiency of the Lebanese government's response.⁶⁷⁵

One incident is particularly illustrative of the role Hizbullah's reconstruction efforts played in shoring up its standing the aftermath of the war. In the neighborhood of Bir al Abed, in the Dahiyeh, Mohammed Fadlullah's house stands (or stood) across from a large church, which was badly damaged when Fadlullah's home was bombed during the war. The priest at the church asked both the Maronite patriarchate of Beirut and the Lebanese government for help in rebuilding, but received no immediate aid. But as he was waiting for a response from either source, men from Hizbullah came to the church, and offered, unsolicited, to rebuild the church and replace its enormous stained glass windows; the church gratefully accepted. Rather than using the war as an opportunity to push Christians out of the neighborhood, Hizbullah instead recognized the chance for a significant public relations coup.

In recent years, Hizbullah has at times used coercive tactics to maintain its position; in 2008, when Hariri's government moved to dismantle their independent surveillance network at the airport, Hizbullah responded by occupying West Beirut. When it appeared increasingly likely that members of Hizbullah would be among those indicted by the international tribunal investigating Rafiq Hariri's assassination, the movement attempted to use its political and military clout to force the government to repudiate the expected results, walking out of the unity government (causing it to fall), and staging an unarmed deployment of Hizbullah personnel in Sunni West Beirut. (Indeed, in the aftermath of the July War and Hariri's assassination, the most significant sectarian cleavage in Lebanon has been between the Sunni and Shi'ite political leadership,

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with unnamed official, UNDP.

while the Christian community remains divided.) But while it seems likely were Hezbollah to revert to the coercive tactics of the 1980s, this would probably backfire, their ability to do so at all indicates that they were not, as the IDF had hoped, crippled by the war.⁶⁷⁶ In the 2009 elections, the March 8th bloc did about as well as it had in 2009, and it ultimately became part of a national unity government with veto power in the cabinet.

Conclusion

By any measure, Hezbollah successfully survived the July war. After using its military assets to effectively resist the Israeli military onslaught during the war, it was able to equally effectively employ the non-material resources it had gathered locally (as well as its funding from Iran) to recover politically.

This suggests some interesting comparisons, both with the PLO and with the earlier version of itself. The PLO's use of coercion alienated Shi'ite civilians, making it harder for them to maintain a grip on territory in the south. Moreover, their relationships with their sponsors were so heavily based on proxy military service that they produced divisions within the movement between those allied with Syria and those who were not. In contrast, Hezbollah's relationship with Iran, based on a shared political project, did not produce the same internal conflicts.

Hezbollah's own history also demonstrates that material resources alone are not sufficient; despite the fact that the organization was receiving far more money in the 1980s than it would after Khomeini's death in 1989, Hezbollah was far less effective during that period than it would become later on, when it changed its strategy. As a narrow, militant movement with a radical political platform and limited constituency, Hezbollah was unable to acquire much political

⁶⁷⁶ See Chapter Seven for further detail on the period between 2006 and 2011.

clout, either relative to Amal or in the broader Lebanese political context. Moreover, its revolutionary project and its choice of tactics alarmed the Syrians, making it an enemy of the most powerful military force north of the Litani. But in the 1990s, when Hizbullah moderated its message and reframed itself as a broader, more nationalist group, it was able to repair its relationship with the Syrians and ultimately build a powerful political coalition, ensuring its ability to withstand both domestic and regional political and military shocks. This is not to suggest that Hizbullah avoided coercion entirely; indeed, in both 2008 and perhaps in the coming months, Hizbullah has used and may again use the threat of force to ensure its position. But should it make good on these threats, it may find that it weathers the next war far less successfully.

In the documentary “Smile, You’re in South Lebanon,” Jordanian filmmaker Dalia Kury visits south Lebanon to try to understand how people have coped with yet another conflict. She and her cousin go to visit some friends who have a picture of Hassan Nasrallah hanging in their living room. Kury asks about the picture, and her host tells her it is because they support the resistance. Later, in the car, she observes to her cousin that there is no such picture hanging in his house. He replies dryly that while he also supports the resistance, there was resistance in the south before Hizbullah. But though this line received riotous applause from the (mostly middle class, Sunni, probably Palestinian) audience at the screening in Amman where I first saw the documentary, the fact is that if that earlier resistance (which was certainly sincere and committed) had resulted in pictures of Arafat hanging in living rooms in South Lebanese villages, those had likely been taken down by 1982.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁷ Kury, *Smile! You’re in South Lebanon*.

But Hizbullah's position in Lebanon, and in the Shi'ite community, was not pre-ordained, either by virtue of their Shi'ite identity, or their relationship with Iran. To assume that Hizbullah automatically had an easier time of it than the PLO because the former was fighting "among its own people" does not account for either change over time or variation among the Shi'ite parties. It means ignoring the serious conflicts between and within different Lebanese communal groups, including among the Shi'ites, as well as the successes Hizbullah enjoyed when fighting in predominantly Christian areas. It also means ignoring the fact that in its early years, Hizbullah was far less successful even when fighting in the same context, while Amal, which also claims to represent the Shi'ites, has lost market share to Hizbullah in recent decades. In the early days of the war, Shi'ite mobilization tended to occur around leftist, rather than religious themes; it was Hizbullah's own deliberate reshaping of this communal narrative, rather than an inherent identity-endowment which allowed them the access to popular support which they later enjoyed. If there is one lesson to be drawn from the outcome of the July War, it is that through the choices they make in constructing relationships with both their domestic constituents and their foreign allies, militant groups ultimately exercise a great deal of agency in determining their own chances of survival.

Chapter Six: The Gaza War

Introduction

My final case, that of Hamas and the Gaza War, falls somewhere in between the experiences of the PLO and Hizbullah. Dubbed Operation Cast Lead by the IDF, the Gaza War began on December 28th, 2008, with the aerial bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli Air Force (IAF) followed by a ground invasion. It lasted three weeks and took approximately 1,300 lives, 13 of them



Map 5: Israel and the Palestinian Territories
Map Courtesy of the Perry Castañeda Map Library, UT
Austin. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>

Israeli, the rest Palestinian. By the end of the war, much of Gaza's economy and infrastructure were in ruins, and though Hamas remains in power in Gaza, and certainly retains the capacity to continue rocket attacks against Israel, it has been constrained from further action. How should such an intermediate outcome be classified? It is probably most accurate to count it

as a success, but a weak one. If survival is defined as the ability to

both resist and recover, Hamas clearly failed at the first, but has succeeded somewhat at the second.

This outcome is traceable to Hamas' decisions regarding its foreign and domestic relationships. Its relationships with its state sponsors, Iran and Syria,

have been based heavily on its status as a military proxy, but also its ideological appeal as *Palestinian* military proxy, even if neither state is particularly comfortable with Hamas' specific identity-based (Palestinian nationalist/Islamic revivalist) political project. In its relations with the public, Hamas has tried to market itself based on this same logic, but it is the movement's provision of social services which seems to have been more effective advertising, not for the services themselves, but for the competence with which Hamas provides them. In other words, Hamas owes its domestic success not to the way it deliberately frames itself, but the way in which it has become viewed domestically as a result of its provision of services.

Background: The Origins of Hamas

In Hamas' earliest days, its founders, like those of the PLO and Hizbullah, faced both the necessity of looking outside its immediate surroundings for material assets and the freedom to shape its own identity narrative. Hamas' roots lie in the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, a religious and political organization dating to the 1920s that exists in various forms throughout the region. When Muslim Brotherhood representatives from Cairo arrived in Gaza in the 1940s, they were able to build on a tradition of Islamic political activism dating to the opposition to British rule and Zionist immigration in the 1920s led by Izzedine al Qassem, and the Arab revolt of 1936-1939, which was led by Qassem's followers after his death.⁶⁷⁸ By 1948, the Muslim Brotherhood had 38 branches across Palestine, but despite its activist roots, it was only slightly involved in the war of 1948, and its influence and membership were much

⁶⁷⁸ Beverley. Milton-Edwards and Stephen. Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 24-27.

diminished by the ensuing refugee crisis.⁶⁷⁹ While the organization continued to exist, it had no armed wing and remained largely apolitical. In the West Bank, which was under Jordanian sovereignty, the Brotherhood more or less served as a loyal opposition, and in Egyptian-ruled Gaza, it was forced underground and many members arrested and executed after the attempt on Nasser's life in 1954.⁶⁸⁰

During the 1950s and 1960s, Nasser's pan-Arabism constituted the major challenge to political Islam. Particularly after 1967, tensions began to emerge between the secular supporters of new movements like Fatah and the Muslim Brothers,⁶⁸¹ and so in the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza began to mobilize in response to these challenges. In 1973, Ahmed Yassin, a paraplegic preacher and high school teacher founded an Islamic community center in Gaza known as the Mujamma which engaged in charity, ran youth sports leagues, and built mosques throughout Gaza.⁶⁸²

Unlike its Arab nationalist rivals, it received official recognition from the Israeli government in 1978, and by the middle of the decade, the Mujamma controlled most of the charitable and professional associations in Gaza with the tacit approval of the Israeli government, which hoped it would counterbalance the power of the PLO.⁶⁸³ In 1988, senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar went so far as to meet with Shimon Peres to discuss the movement's goals, and apparently stated that Hamas would accept Israeli withdrawal from the territories seized in 1967 and Palestinian self-rule as a possible outcome. But behind the scenes, in the early 1980s, many younger members of the Islamic movement were spoiling for a fight with Israel, particularly as the PFLP and Islamic Jihad were both

⁶⁷⁹ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 14-15.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 16-17 This crackdown also resulted in the execution of the movement's founder, Sayyed Qutb.

⁶⁸¹ Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: a history from within* (Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2007), 31-33.

⁶⁸² Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 20-21.

⁶⁸³ For an excellent summary of the Mujamma's early years, see Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 41-49.

launching regular attacks against the IDF. In 1985, after some false starts, Yassin established a security force called the Majd (“Glory” in Arabic), which formed the seeds of what would become Hamas.⁶⁸⁴

The Palestinian Islamic movement’s growing influence was facilitated by a number of regional factors as well, including its ties to the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. A recession in Israel combined with plunging oil prices reduced the demand for Palestinian labor, creating a state of economic hardship conducive to Mujamma recruitment. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, despite being carried out by Shi’ites, demonstrated the feasibility of an Islamic political model, and the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut in 1982 created a power vacuum in Gaza which the Mujamma was happy to fill.⁶⁸⁵

It was in this context that the first intifada (which means “uprising” in Arabic) erupted suddenly in Gaza’s Jabalia refugee camp in December, 1987. Though sparked by the death of four Palestinian laborers when their car was hit by an Israeli-driven truck, its roots lay in the increasingly desperate economic and political situation in the West Bank and particularly Gaza. The funerals of the dead men served as focal points for popular anger, and though they were attended by preachers from the Mujamma, these early protests were basically grassroots in nature, forcing both the secular and Islamic parties to play catch-up. The PLO leadership in exile, taken completely by surprise, tried with mixed success to direct the UNLU (United National Leadership of the Uprising) from Tunis. For its part, the Muslim Brotherhood knew it needed to create a vehicle for violent resistance or lose its younger members to Islamic Jihad, and so responded by

⁶⁸⁴ Tamimi, *Hamas: a history from within*, 48.

⁶⁸⁵ For a further discussion of the international factors supporting the emergence of Hamas, see Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*.

creating, from within the existing framework of the Mujamma and Majd, a new organization called Hamas.⁶⁸⁶

“Hamas,” which was formally adopted as the new movement’s name in February of 1988, is an acronym in Arabic for *Harekat al Muqawama al Islamiyah*, or the Islamic Resistance Movement.⁶⁸⁷ Its early organizational structure was heavily influenced by the necessities of the intifada itself: the youth wing coordinated strikes and distributed aid, the communications wing was responsible for slogans, graffiti and leaflets, and the intifada wing handled military action.⁶⁸⁸ In August of 1988, it released its charter, which codified the group’s status as an entity separate from both the Muslim Brotherhood and the other Palestinian factions.

Even early on, Hamas’ emphasis on Palestinian nationalism through Islamic activism distinguished it from the secular PLO, and produced friction between the two; as one PLO leader put it, “They may call themselves a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, but this is Palestine and this is about ending the occupation.”⁶⁸⁹ Tensions were worsened by the PLO’s declaration of statehood in 1988,⁶⁹⁰ and as the intifada escalated, developed into an open rivalry. After Hamas began kidnapping Israeli soldiers, Israel finally outlawed the organization in 1989 and arrested hundreds of Hamas members (including Yassin and Zahar), leading to further conflicts between the two camps in Israeli prisons. Tensions between them were exacerbated by their different stances on both the Gulf war (in which the PLO backed Saddam Hussein while Hamas remained neutral), and the

⁶⁸⁶ Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 35; Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 53.

⁶⁸⁷ Tamimi sets founding of the movement to Dec 14th, with the release of a communiqué by Rantisi announcing Islamic resistance in the context of the intifada.

⁶⁸⁸ Zaki. Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement* (New York, NY: Nations Books, 2007), 30-31.

⁶⁸⁹ Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 55.

⁶⁹⁰ Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 54-55.

Madrid peace talks.⁶⁹¹ Fatah's attempts at inducing Hamas to join the PLO were fruitless, as the terms Hamas requested (40% of the seats in the Palestine National Council, control over important posts and an end to the peace process) were, as Hamas had known they would be, entirely impossible for Arafat to accept.⁶⁹²

Yassin's arrest in 1989 led to two major changes in the movement. The first was the establishment of Hamas' military wing, the Izzedine al Qassem brigades. Their early operations in Gaza targeted real or suspected collaborators with Israel, but in 1992, they began launching attacks against Israeli civilians, primarily through car bombs, and eventually expanded into the West Bank. By the mid-1990s, though they had 10,000 men under arms (a similar number to their troop strength during Operation Cast Lead), they continued to rely on asymmetric tactics.⁶⁹³

The second major change produced by Yassin's arrest was the shift in Hamas' leadership from Gaza to Jordan. Activists from the United States led by Musa Abu Marzuq arrived in Amman, where a political office had been set up in 1987, and in consultation with the Muslim Brotherhood there, took over the leadership of Hamas.⁶⁹⁴

The shift in power from Gaza to Amman also placed Hamas in a position of dependence on its Jordanian hosts. Initially, King Hussein welcomed Hamas' presence (though only as a political force, as he refused to allow military activity in Jordan) because it provided a welcome alternative to the PLO and a source of

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 56-62.

⁶⁹² Ibid., 87-91; Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 63.

⁶⁹³ Though the group tends to "deliberately understate their numbers." See Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 112-118; The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the Al Qassem brigades total strength at 10,000 in 2007, and 15,000 if internal Gazan security forces are included in the total, although there is some overlap between them and the Qassem brigades. See Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Hamas Terror Organization -- 2007" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Update, June 5, 2008).

⁶⁹⁴ Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 62 This led to the creation of a new structure, under which Hamas was divided into five administrative regions and four policy committees dealing with security, da'wa (proselytizing), political activity, and coordination respectively.

legitimacy for the king in the eyes of Palestinian Jordanians.⁶⁹⁵ However, the discovery in 1990 and 1995 of plans by Hamas to launch missions from (and stockpile weapons in) Amman angered the Jordanian government.⁶⁹⁶ For their part, Hamas' leaders feared that Jordan's "disengagement" from the West Bank in 1988 would cost the movement in Gaza access to Jordan-based sources of funding.⁶⁹⁷ Relations improved in 1997 when two Mossad agents carrying forged Canadian passports attempted to assassinate Khalid Meshal with a poison dart in Amman, and a furious King Hussein forced the Israeli government to provide the antidote in exchange for the agents.⁶⁹⁸ But the rapprochement was not to last.

A second major shift in Hamas' foreign relations in the 1990s came with the advent of the Oslo process. Jordan had signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, and in 1999 the government closed Hamas' offices in Amman, forcing the organization to relocate its headquarters to Damascus. The Oslo process also represented Hamas' first major domestic Palestinian political challenge. Despite the fact that many residents of the West Bank and Gaza were supportive of the peace process, Hamas opposed Oslo, not only because it opposed negotiation with Israel in general (and negotiations that excluded Hamas in particular,) but also because they felt the gains from Oslo did not justify the sacrifices Palestinians were asked to make. As Musa Abu Marzuq put it, for Hamas "the problem is that [Oslo has] reduced the issue from one of sacred liberation to merely a dream of independence, a dream that a Palestinian policeman will organize traffic."⁶⁹⁹

Hamas was also angered by the degree of power that Oslo granted to its rival, Fatah, which essentially took over the institutions of the new Palestinian Authority. The new PA security forces were recruited almost entirely from

⁶⁹⁵ Tamimi, *Hamas: a history from within*, 77.

⁶⁹⁶ Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement*, 132.

⁶⁹⁷ Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 42.

⁶⁹⁸ Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement*, 118.

⁶⁹⁹ Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 71.

amongst the PLA fighters returning to Gaza and the West Bank from Tunis and elsewhere, nearly all government posts were filled with Fatah party loyalists⁷⁰⁰ and Arafat won the 1996 election (which Hamas boycotted) with 88% of the vote.

But since the 1990s, Hamas' position in both the region and the Occupied Territories has changed significantly. With the onset of the second intifada in 2000 and the failure of the Oslo process, Fatah's image was tarnished and Hamas' position improved.⁷⁰¹ In 2005, in a bid to avoid the "demographic time bomb" of a growing Palestinian population, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza under a plan spearheaded by Ariel Sharon, evacuating its settlers and troops, though it maintained total control over Gaza's borders. Of equal if not greater significance, though, were the January 2006 elections (discussed extensively below), which put Hamas in office. This had two immediate effects: the first was the creation of a counterweight to the power of Meshal's leadership in Damascus, in the form of Ismail Haniyeh's newly elected government. The second was the outbreak of rapidly escalating clashes in Gaza between Fatah and Hamas. Despite an accord brokered in Saudi Arabia in February of 2007 (the Mecca Agreement) and a national unity government in established in March, open warfare between the two sides erupted in June. Both sides committed atrocities against enemy fighters and engaged in revenge killings. When the dust settled, Hamas was in control of Gaza, and Fatah of the West Bank. With Fatah security forces no longer in control of Gaza, Israel and Egypt (which had never trusted Hamas, given its own suppression of the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) imposed an economic blockade on Gaza. This was enforced by the Israeli navy, though a series of tunnels under the border to Rafah in Egypt allowed both consumer

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁰¹ See Figure 1.

goods, which were tacitly permitted by the Israelis, and weapons, which were not, into the territory.

Throughout these developments, Hamas has managed to build relationships with both its civilian constituency and its state sponsors. In both cases, it used a mixture of marketing and service provision (and some domestic coercion). In both cases, the latter has been far more effective than the former, and in fact has shifted into a kind of marketing in its own right, while Hamas' actual attempts at marketing have fallen somewhat flat. This left it in some ways poorly equipped to face the Gaza War of 2009, but still able to maintain its position in the war's aftermath. I will begin to unpack the outcome of this conflict by looking first at its relationships with its sponsors, and then move on to its relationships with the civilian community in the West Bank and Gaza.

Foreign Relations

Like Hizbullah, Hamas' primary patrons are Syria and Iran.⁷⁰² Both states are in some ways odd sponsors for Hamas. Syria has brutally suppressed its own branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Iran's Islamic revolution was explicitly Shi'ite, resting heavily on narratives of Shi'ite victimization by Sunnis. Nevertheless, both have been consistent patrons of the organization. Both relationships have been based heavily on Hamas' service as a military proxy, although Hamas has also leveraged its increased prestige (relative to Fatah and the PLO) as the new standard bearer of armed Palestinian resistance in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords. For the most part, however, these relationships have been marriages of convenience, rather than expressions of a shared ideological project.

⁷⁰² The movement is not particularly forthcoming about its foreign relationships; one Hamas legislator interviewed for this project would say only that "there are those with whom the relations are good – they are clear and I don't have to name them." The movement's branch in Lebanon is also circumspect about its foreign sponsors, though it is open about its close relationship with Iran and Syria's other clients in Lebanon.

Syria

Syria's sponsorship of Hamas is first and foremost a pragmatic arrangement. Despite what is perhaps genuine Syrian sympathy for the Palestinian cause, Hamas, as a Sunni Islamist movement, has little in common ideologically or communally with the secular Baathist state or its Alawite⁷⁰³ ruling family. Indeed, the Baathist regime has demonstrated open hostility to the Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, bombing their stronghold in the city of Hama in 1982 and killing between 10,000 and 30,000 people.⁷⁰⁴ The Muslim Brotherhood remains outlawed in Syria, and its leadership in exile. But Asad's regime nevertheless had two very good reasons to adopt Hamas as a military proxy: The first was that Hamas was well positioned to launch painful attacks against Israel, exerting pressure on the state that was very much in Syria's interest. The second was that sponsorship of Hamas gave Syria a powerful client in the domestic Palestinian political arena.

In 1993, in response to the Oslo process, Syria formed an organization composed of those factions who rejected negotiation with Israel called the Alliance of Palestinian Forces, meant to serve as a counterweight to the PLO. Earlier coalitions set up by the Syrians (the Rejection Front in 1974 and the Palestinian National Salvation Front in 1984) had been strictly secular-nationalist, much like the Syrian regime itself.⁷⁰⁵ But this time, perhaps in recognition of the influence of Hamas and its status as the most significant armed force opposed to Oslo still operating inside historical Palestine, the Islamist parties were included.

⁷⁰³ The Al Asads are members of the Alawi sect, a sub-sect of Shi'ite Islam.

⁷⁰⁴ There is no memorial of any kind in Hama; a state run hotel has been built on the paved-over remains of the old city.

⁷⁰⁵ There was significant tension between the leftists (e.g. the PFLP) and the Islamists from the outset, reflecting the clashes between the two which occurred inside the West Bank and Gaza, but these were perhaps muted by the internal tensions which existed, particularly for the leftists, between their branches inside and outside historical Palestine. Anders Strindberg, "The Damascus-Based Alliance of Palestinian Forces: A Primer," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 61.

In comparison with the other, smaller factions, most of which were Damascus-based splinter factions of larger groups whose branches in Palestine remained within the PLO, Hamas added an aura of legitimacy to the new organization.⁷⁰⁶ Veiled comments praising Hamas began to appear in the press, by figures as prominent as vice president Abdel Halim Khaddam⁷⁰⁷ and even Hafez al Asad himself.⁷⁰⁸

Though Syria and Hamas had little in common ideologically, they did share certain regional interests. Hamas' public rejection of both Madrid and Oslo, as well as its stated neutrality during the Gulf War when the PLO sided with Syria's enemy, Iraq, made it a plausible proxy in a way other factions were not. Moreover, Hamas' actions had already served to further Syria's regional agenda. Hamas' opposition had served to block a full Palestinian consensus behind the peace process or Arafat's leadership of the PA (which Hamas also rejected, at least initially), and though Hamas' use of violence was intended to advance Hamas' policy preferences, it also served Syria's.

Hamas launched 52 violent attacks against Israel between 1992 and 2000, (the vast majority in 1993 and 1994). After the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000, its attacks on civilian targets inside Israel ultimately helped to torpedo the peace process altogether, an outcome which Syria enthusiastically supported, as it hoped to prevent a Palestinian-Israeli treaty that would leave Syria the last to negotiate with Israel. Indeed, Hamas' status as the group which had launched the largest number of and most deadly attacks against Israeli targets made it arguably the most useful of Syria's clients.⁷⁰⁹ The number of suicide bombings peaked in

⁷⁰⁶ Interview with Mohamed B.. Strindberg cites Hamas' representative in Damascus as saying more or less the same, prior to the outbreak of the second intifada. Ibid., 73.

⁷⁰⁷ "Khaddam: Arafat Has 'Lost Most of His Brain'," *Il Giornale* (Milan, December 14, 1992).

⁷⁰⁸ "Al-Asad Discusses Peace, Health, Domestic Issues," *Al-Wasat* (London, May 12, 1993).

⁷⁰⁹ Out of 303 attacks launched against Israeli targets between 2000 and 2006, 83 were launched by Hamas, and the organization carried out 35 of 98 were suicide attacks. The next two most prolific organizations were the Fatah-affiliated Al Aqsa Martyrs brigade and Islamic Jihad, each with approximately 50 attacks, about

2002 (with attacks in general peaking in 2003), but then declined sharply the following year.⁷¹⁰

The move away from suicide bombing did not represent a renunciation of violence, but rather a shift in tactics. Rocket attacks from Gaza (which numbered 3,500 in 2008, employing either mortars or, increasingly, homemade Qassem rockets) allowed Hamas to maintain pressure on Israel and put Palestinian moderates in a difficult position, objectives that served Syria's aims as well. Hamas also served as a useful political proxy; after its electoral victory in 2006, it was able to offer Syria far more significant political access in the Palestinian political arena than it had since the 1970s. While advancing Syrian interests was not Hamas' main motivation, the result was still that Syria had a strong motivation to continue providing Hamas with resources.⁷¹¹

Iran

Hamas' relationship with Iran is similarly based on service provision. If Syria wanted to see the Oslo process derailed, Iran not only concurred, it was also pleased at Hamas' ability to distract the IDF from its conflict with Hizbullah in South Lebanon. But Hamas also benefitted from the fact that the need for a Palestinian proxy against Israel is in and of itself a component of Iran's self-image as a state. Iranian support for the Palestinians dates to the days immediately

half of which were suicide attacks. Statistics taken from "Global Terrorism Database" (University of Maryland, n.d.), <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/?back=1&search=islamic%20jihad&count=100>; Partly because of the deterrent effect of the separation wall around the West Bank Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement* partly because of the decline in the intensity of the intifada, and partly due to Hamas' changing role in Gaza after the 2006 election.

⁷¹⁰ Partly because of the deterrent effect of the separation wall around the West Bank (see Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 131.), partly because of the decline in the intensity of the intifada, and partly due to Hamas' changing role in Gaza after the 2006 election.

⁷¹¹ Statistics taken from "2010 Statistics: Rocket and Mortar Fire from the Gaza Strip as of October 7th, 7 Oct 2010" (Israel Defense Forces, October 7, 2010), <http://idfspokesperson.com/2010/10/07/2010-statistics-rocket-and-mortar-fire-from-the-gaza-strip-as-of-october-7th-7-oct-2010/> It would be a mistake to assume that all rocket fire at all times was the result of Hamas operations, but it is safe to say that it was responsible for most of the fire, most of the time.

following the 1979 revolution, when Khomeini offered immediate and enthusiastic support to the PLO, giving it the former Israeli embassy as its diplomatic mission in Tehran. Khomeini was said to have smiled only once in public, upon meeting Arafat in 1979.⁷¹² Opposition to Israel was a key feature of the new Islamic Republic's doctrine, both because the Shah had been Israel's ally, and because support for the oppressed, particularly any oppressed who happened to be living in Jerusalem, was an important feature of Iranian revolutionary theology.

Soon after the revolution, however, the relationship soured when Arafat made the decision to support Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the Iran-Iraq. When Hamas emerged as a powerful force in the late 1980s, it was a natural (and enthusiastic) replacement for the PLO as an Iranian client. Its rejection of Oslo and its neutrality during the Gulf War further facilitated its membership in the Syrian-Iranian axis. As early as 1990, Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, after criticizing Arafat as "not a person who favors the liberation of Palestine," said in an interview:

"Now if the Palestinians see that an Islamic country like Iran has started to help them practically, and Iran has converted its slogans into action, then the Palestinian masses will follow the Islamic Republic of Iran's model and regardless of what the non-Islamic groups dictate to them, they will follow Iran."⁷¹³

That December, when Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati received the leaders of the rejectionist Palestinian groups (Fatah-Intifada, the PFLP-GC, the communists, Saiqa and several others), he singled Hamas out for special praise in the Iranian press and tacitly identified its struggle with Iran's, stating that the "anti-Zionist struggle will not reach any conclusion without Islam" and that Iran's "efforts toward the Palestinian issue stem from its commitment and its feeling of

⁷¹² Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement*, 137.

⁷¹³ "Mohtashemi Interviewed on Aiding Palestinians," *Kayhan International* (Tehran, December 15, 1990).

responsibility.”⁷¹⁴ Other statements praised Hamas and Islamic Jihad,⁷¹⁵ and Interior Minister Mohtashemi even framed the intifada as being explicitly Islamic in motivation.⁷¹⁶ By 1992, Musa Abu Marzuq had travelled personally to Tehran to brief the government on the situation in the Palestinian Territories,⁷¹⁷ Iran’s state media had announced that Iran was providing Hamas with “political backing,”⁷¹⁸ Hamas had been granted a permanent office in Tehran,⁷¹⁹ and the Iranian foreign ministry was publicly encouraging the formation of a new Palestinian “rejection front” aimed at isolating the PLO and strengthening Hamas.⁷²⁰ In 1995, Hamas’ announcement that it would hold celebrations of the Iranian-sponsored “Jerusalem Day” inside Palestine was warmly welcomed by the Iranian government.⁷²¹

This rhetoric indicates an effort to frame Hamas as reflecting the Islamic Republic’s own political values, and sponsorship of Hamas as furthering those values; doctrinal differences between Sunni Hamas and the Shi’ite Islamic Republic are papered over or ignored. It is impossible to know to what degree these statements were sincere and to what degree they represent a cynical appeal to a pan-Islamism which the regime has not, as a rule, embraced, in the interests of acquiring a client with an impressive record of attacks on Israeli targets, but it seems likely that Hamas appealed to both motivations.

⁷¹⁴ “Velayati Receives Palestinian Leaders, Sha’aban” (Tehran Domestic Service, December 5, 1990).

⁷¹⁵ “Velayati on Middle East, Gulf, U.S. Policy” (Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network, October 3, 1991).

⁷¹⁶ “Mohtashemi Discusses Israeli-PLO Accord,” *Jahan-E-Eslam* (Tehran, October 17, 1993).

⁷¹⁷ “Khamene’i Meets With Hamas Leaders,” *IRNA* (Tehran, October 5, 1992).

⁷¹⁸ “Hamas Said to Gain Iran’s Backing,” *IRNA* (Tehran, November 17, 1992).

⁷¹⁹ “Palestinian Hamas to Open Office in Tehran,” *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, October 17, 1992.

⁷²⁰ “Tehran Seeking New Palestinian ‘Rejection Front,” *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (London, November 22, 1992).

⁷²¹ “Shekholeslam Views Jerusalem Day” (1995 24 February: Voice of the Islamic Republic, n.d.).

Costs and Benefits of Foreign Sponsorship

Hamas' relationships with its sponsors have provided it with a wide range of resources. To begin with, it received (and receives) funding from both. In 1992, unnamed sources inside the Iranian government acknowledged that Hamas was receiving \$20 million in donations from Iran, five times what it had received in 1989 (prior to the cooling of Iran's relationship with the PLO over the Gulf War).⁷²² Mishal and Sela estimate that though its early funding was mostly internal, by 1995, at least half was coming from Iran.⁷²³

Secondly, these relationships have given Hamas "office space" outside of historical Palestine. This is invaluable given the limitations which the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank place on the leadership's operations inside the territories, particularly after the major crackdown in 1989 and the movement's expulsion from Jordan in 1999. What had been an important but secondary office in Damascus became the group's new headquarters, where its leadership could strategize, meet with foreign parties, and engage with the media without interference from the IDF.⁷²⁴

There are also resources which Syria and Iran have collaborated in providing for Hamas. To begin with, inclusion in the Syrian-Iranian political axis has granted the movement some regional political influence. For instance, this relationship has helped it to gain a foothold in the refugee camps of Lebanon, where it previously had little presence, because, by virtue of their shared

⁷²² "Hizballah, Hamas Delegations Hold Talks in Tehran," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, (London, October 6, 1992).

⁷²³ For more on the evolution of this relationship, see Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 87-90.

⁷²⁴ As of this writing, it there are rumors that Hamas may be relocating its offices out of Syria due to the Asad regime's crackdown on domestic dissent. See for instance Ethan Bronner, "Tensions Rise as Hamas Refuses to Take Sides in Syria," *New York Times*, May 2, 2011.

relationship with Iran and Syria, it falls under Hizbullah's umbrella in the Lebanese political context.⁷²⁵

Perhaps the most important jointly provided resource, though, is training. As early as 1992, reports appeared suggesting that Iran was offering training to Hamas fighters.⁷²⁶ In a 2008 interview with the Times of London, an anonymous commander of Hamas' Izzedine al Qassem brigades explained that in early 2006, Hamas began sending its elite fighters (its "best brains") to Iran to receive training from the Revolutionary Guards; at that point, 300 Al Qassem brigade fighters had been trained in Iran, and over 700 in Syria (where the trainers themselves had been trained in Iran). According to the commander, after between 45 days and 6 months of intense training "They come home with more abilities that we need ... such as high-tech capabilities, knowledge about land mines and rockets, sniping, and fighting tactics." Much of the training is focused on making the best out of what's locally available, such as building better mines and Qassem rockets from locally available materials. The Shawas 4 mine, for instance, was developed with Iranian help.⁷²⁷ This is corroborated by Israeli sources. Yuval Diskin, director of the Shin Bet said frankly:

"What we see that is more dangerous than any weapons is the training that Iran has promised Hamas. We know that Hamas has started to dispatch people to Iran, tens with the promise of hundreds, for months and maybe years of training. I see this as the strategic challenge more than any smuggled weapons. You need expertise to use weapons, and in the long run the Iranian training is what is dangerous."⁷²⁸

Of course, training in how to make weapons is not the same thing as the provision of actual weapons. Although Iran and Syria have provided Hamas with

⁷²⁵ The spokesman for the PFLP-GC in Bourj al Barajneh, for instance, was openly sympathetic to Hamas, going to so far as to refrain from shaking my hand, indicating a stricter level of religious observance than that demonstrated by most secular party members, including members of the PFLP-GC in Syria and elsewhere.

⁷²⁶ "Palestinian Hamas to Open Office in Tehran."

⁷²⁷ Marie Colvin, "Hamas wages Iran's proxy war on Israel," *The Times* (Gaza City, March 9, 2008).

⁷²⁸ Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 132.

some arms, for the most part it still uses relatively unsophisticated (and inaccurate)⁷²⁹ home-made Qassem rockets.⁷³⁰ These have improved somewhat over the years: the earliest generation had a range of less than five kilometers, while the current (third) generation has a range of 10 kilometers, and a payload of twenty kilograms.⁷³¹ They also use crude mortars (unguided munitions fired from a tripod), some of which are homemade and some of which (those with longer ranges) are smuggled into the territory; the latter could be provided, directly or indirectly, by Hamas' sponsors.⁷³²

There is evidence, though, that Hamas has received better weapons in recent years. Since 2008 they have launched several Russian Grads, which have a range of 20k but can go as far as 40. The IDF has also found exploded Chinese 122mm WeiShie-1e rockets as far from Gaza as Beer Sheba.⁷³³ During operation cast lead, Hamas used anti-tank weapons, RPGs, and hand grenades, in addition to personal small arms (AK-47s, handguns, etc.) whose provenance is harder to trace. Israeli officials certainly believed, immediately after Cast Lead, that Iran had been actively arming Hamas, according to American diplomatic correspondence leaked via Wikileaks:

“In response to a query on the sophistication of Hamas weapons, [Deputy Chief of Staff] Harel stated that Hamas had Chinese and Iranian made 122mm rockets with a range out to 30 kilometers. The Iranian version of the 122mm was designed specifically for Hamas, as it came in four pieces that could fit through narrow tunnels and be reassembled in Gaza.”⁷³⁴ Harel also stated that

⁷²⁹ Despite launching 1,750 rockets in 2008 alone, Hamas was able to kill only five people, two of whom were Gazan Palestinians killed by accident.

⁷³⁰ The rocket itself is a length of metal pipe, the fuel is made up of potassium nitrate and sugar, the fuse is a machine gun cartridge, and the warhead is a mixture of fertilizer and TNT.

⁷³¹ “Rockets from Gaza,” *Human Rights Watch* (2009), <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/84867/section/2>.

⁷³² Palestinian Weapons Deployed Against Israeli During Operation Cast Lead, 197.

⁷³³ “Rockets from Gaza.”

⁷³⁴ In place since the outbreak of the second intifada, until 2005 the tunnel network was overwhelmingly used for bringing weapons and ammunition into Gaza, at a tidy profit for the tunnel operators. (The going price for one bullet prior to that point was \$5.) The tunnels range in size from small and narrow to large enough to drive a truck through. Hamas allows tunnels run by other factions to operate as long as they don't bring in weapons or drugs. Stephen Farrell, “Fierce Focus on Tunnels, a Lifeline for Gazans,” *New York Times*, January 11, 2009.

sophisticated anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) were found in Gaza, to include the Russian made KONKOURS system. Hamas also had SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and sophisticated improvised explosive devices of all varieties. Lastly, Harel said that Israel has sensitive intelligence that Iran is constructing an additional Hamas-specific missile, based on the Fajr, that will have a range beyond 40 kilometers.”⁷³⁵

What Hamas’ state sponsors have been unable to provide has been open and effective political advocacy at the international level. This lack has been keenly felt by Hamas since 2006, when the foreign aid upon which the Palestinian Authority has historically relied was cut off and Gaza blockaded by Israel, creating a painful economic and humanitarian situation. Lifting the blockade would immeasurably improve both Hamas’ standing domestically and the quality of life in Gazan, but Syria and Iran do not have the leverage to advocate on Hamas’ behalf because of their political isolation. (Ironically, part of the reason for their lack of legitimacy is rooted in their sponsorship of Hamas.)

Of course, Hamas’ relationship with its sponsors carries pitfalls as well. The above discussion suggests that Hamas’ sponsors have provided them with what they want Hamas to have – that is, with the assets which would be most useful for the organization in pursuing their shared goals. As with the PLO before it, Syria has not allowed Hamas to launch attacks against Israel from Syrian territory. Moreover, the weapons it has provided have been mostly offensive, aimed at putting pressure on Israel and deterring it from certain actions, rather than defensive, aimed at preventing further harm to Gaza.

True, Hamas seems to have been able to avoid any serious loss of autonomy, and the fact that Iran and Syria have fairly similar foreign policy goals has for the most part protected the movement from the internal tug of war which did such damage to the PLO. But the relationship has nevertheless at times

⁷³⁵ Tel Aviv United States Embassy, “Cable 09TELAVIV422, IDF DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF DISCUSSES GAZA OPERATION” (Wikileaks, n.d.).

nevertheless seemed to increase tensions within the organization, between the Gaza leadership and the headquarters in Damascus (as will be discussed further below.) Moreover, Hamas has been criticized by other Palestinian factions (notably, and unsurprisingly, Fatah,) for acting as a proxy for Syria and Iran at the expense of Palestinian interests. In a criticism also levied at other Syrian clients, a senior Fatah official in Lebanon said bluntly “when I talk about Hamas, I cannot say they are Palestinians, because they are implementing a mandate for Iran, or Syria.”⁷³⁶ Moreover, as noted above, proxy relationships tend to be most useful in providing material (or militarily oriented non-material) resources, rather than international political advocacy or influence, assets which would perhaps have been helpful during and after the Gaza War.

Domestic Relationships

Before looking at how Hamas’ relationships with its foreign sponsors shaped its performance during Operation Cast Lead, I will turn to a discussion of Hamas’ relations with its domestic civilian constituency. Hamas’ approach to the civilian population in the Palestinian Territories is based on a combination of marketing and service provision, as well as some coercion, mostly of members of rival factions. Hamas presents an interesting contrast to the movements discussed in previous chapters because neither its attempts at marketing nor its provision of services worked precisely as intended. The Islamic movement politicians interviewed for this project often referred to Hamas’ Islamic identity as being a major basis for their support, but in fact what seems to have been more convincing for many voters was its reputation for honesty, and its status as the

⁷³⁶Interview, Edward Kattoura.

principal alternative to Fatah, though for some voters, these factors may have been connected.⁷³⁷

Marketing

Hamas markets itself project to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as a religious and nationalist political movement. In the Palestinian context, the former characteristic is its defining trait, in that it is what distinguishes Hamas from most of the other parties. When asked why they believed their party was supported by Palestinians, all of the Change and Reform members of the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC), the Palestinian parliament, interviewed for this project cited the movement's Islamic character as being of paramount importance, and most contended that the majority of Palestinians are religious.⁷³⁸ One anonymous Change and Reform member of the PLC referred bluntly to religion as "part of our heritage," and suggested that even the formerly secular leftist parties like the DFLP, PFLP and the communists were becoming more religious (though my own conversations with members of the PFLP and other leftist parties suggest this is not universally true.)

There is also a subtle contradiction in the way those interviewed characterized Palestinian society's relationship with Hamas. On the one hand, all of those interviewed contended that Hamas' Islamic orientation reflected the existing and somehow essential nature of Palestinian society, and that in this sense, support for Hamas is a natural result of the Palestinian national character. On the other hand, though, most of those interviewed also expressed reformist

⁷³⁷ Hamas membership is illegal in the West Bank. Those politicians who are sympathetic to its goals run on the Change and Reform slate. The parliamentarians cited in this chapter are Change and Reform politicians, some of whom also refer to themselves as members of the "Islamic Movement." Most have spent time in Israeli prisons on charges of membership in Hamas.

⁷³⁸ Interviews with Mahmoud Ramahi, Mariam Saleh, Ahmad Ali Ahmad, Change and Reform Members of the Palestine Legislative Council.

sentiments. Ahmad Ali Ahmad, a Change and Reform legislator from Nablus, told me “The first reason we established the Islamic movement here [in Palestine] is because it is an Islamic society, but people don’t use the same values that are found in the Sunna and Qur’an, and the Islamic history, and we think it’s our obligation to bring these values back.” When pressed, his description of those values sounded more politically reformist than religiously revivalist, including goals like freedom of belief, protection of life, protection of the mind, property and health, and keeping the “human being as a human.”

Those interviewed saw religion and politics – or rather, Hamas’ religious and political projects- as inherently linked.⁷³⁹ One parliamentarian explained that the struggle against the occupation is rooted in Muslim doctrine (and Hamas’ political origins in the Muslim Brotherhood) though both are based in Palestinian national aspirations. He told me bluntly, “Palestinians cannot talk about religion only – politics is part of our lives – we eat politics, we drink politics, we breathe politics – because we live under occupation.”⁷⁴⁰

This linkage was echoed in the narratives of how these highly ranked members of the party came to join themselves. All of those interviewed explained that they chose to join the Islamic Movement rather than another Palestinian party, because they themselves were already religious, and in some cases, came from a religious family. One noted to me that she had been living in Saudi Arabia for many years and there become far more religious, so that when she returned to Palestine during the outbreak of the first intifada, joining the Islamic Movement seemed a natural fit.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁹ Perhaps this was something they felt particularly obliged to explain to me, as an American; I frequently encountered criticism from members of Islamic parties, either oblique or explicit, of what is perceived as excessive American secularism.

⁷⁴⁰ Interview, unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

⁷⁴¹ Interview with Mariam Saleh.

The emphasis on Hamas' Islamic character, and the claims made by its legislators regarding the inherently Muslim character of Palestinian society of course raise some questions as to how secularists and non-Muslims view the movement, and are viewed by it. Change and Reform politicians were quick to state that the movement has no ambitions to force Islam on anyone who is unwilling to convert. Several pointed out that the party has a Christian representative in Gaza,⁷⁴² and that when it comes to Christian Palestinians, it is willing to separate its religious and political programs.⁷⁴³ And yet, the role of Islam in shaping public life as envisioned by Hamas might not be entirely comforting to many Christians. Mahmoud Ramahi, the Secretary General of the PLC after the 2006 election and a leading member of the Change and Reform slate, told me that he once went to meet a reporter in a restaurant that served alcohol, and had enjoyed the man's surprise at his open-mindedness.⁷⁴⁴ And yet, he clearly felt strongly regarding the Muslim majority's right to legislate certain issues:

“Yes, they [the majority] have to understand that there is minority and they have a right and so and so but the second thing, this minority have to respect the general ... figure of the society. I don't want to tell to the person to not take alcohol – he's free to do that in his house ...but I don't want this to be part of the general life of the people, to be in the restaurants and so and so, but if he want to personally practice his freedom he can do that, respecting the result of the democracy and the others what they want...if they are a majority they can do anything they want.”

While this is somewhat more tolerant rhetoric than one would expect from, say, a conservative politician in the United States on the subject of marijuana legalization, the underlying theme is still that “the minority must abide by the will of the majority”.

⁷⁴² Interviews with Mahmoud Ramahi and one unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

⁷⁴³ Interview, anonymous Change and Reform member of the PLC.

⁷⁴⁴ When we met for an interview, Ramahi even shook my hand, which is unusual among in conservative circles in the Middle East, and particularly among male members of the Islamic Movement.

More broadly, the heavily religious themes infusing Hamas' political ideology have in and of themselves drawn criticism from its rivals. A Fatah official interviewed spoke disparagingly of the motivations of Hamas fighters:

"We started the military action to achieve political goals, not because we like to fight or we like to die. This is one big difference between Fatah or PLO and Hamas. The second important point is there is two kinds of people who are ready to die: one of them says I am going to die because I want to go to heaven, and there is about 77 nice women waiting for me... But I say, I want to die to achieve a better life to my daughters, to my family, to my community ... The first choice is a selfish choice."⁷⁴⁵

Even members of left-wing factions that had themselves used suicide tactics or launched attacks on civilians (such as the PFLP) expressed distaste for Hamas' tactics in interviews.⁷⁴⁶

Moreover, polling on the question of which factors determine Palestinian voter preferences suggests that while Islamic values matter, they are not the determining factor. Polling in 2001, at the height of the second intifada, placed Islamic values at a distant third, behind two other issues which seem to have more resonance for the Palestinian public: the continuation of armed resistance against Israel, and the fight against corruption in the Palestinian government.⁷⁴⁷ Similarly, in polling immediately prior to the 2005 municipal elections, respondents cited the religiosity of candidates as of comparable importance to "level of education", and rated it not nearly as important as "integrity and incorruptibility of the candidate", by far the most important consideration for most.⁷⁴⁸ In a separate poll, voters viewed Hamas as the "most able to fight corruption (receiving 46% vs. 37% to Fateh) and to ensure the continuation of the

⁷⁴⁵ Interview, Edward Kattoura.

⁷⁴⁶ I found this particularly interesting in the case of a former PFLP member who in the same conversation had calmly described his own attack on an El Al passenger jet.

⁷⁴⁷ "CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 2" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, July 9, 2001), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p2a.html>.

⁷⁴⁸ "CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 16" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, June 22, 2005), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p16a.html>.

intifada (receiving 62% vs. 24% to Fateh).” Fatah was viewed as more able to improve the economy, pursue the peace process, protect national unity and refugee rights, and enforce law and order⁷⁴⁹. In polling after the 2006 elections, when asked why they thought Fatah had lost the elections, 52% of respondents said it was because voters wanted to punish it for the “spread of corruption in the PA”, and two thirds believed that corruption would now decrease.⁷⁵⁰

But despite the fact that these two issues – religiosity and honesty – are apparently viewed differently by poll respondents, might there be a practical link between them? Might voters support Islamic parties because they believe that honesty derives, perhaps exclusively, from Islamic values? The fact that Hamas enjoys far greater support than the other major Islamic party, Islamic Jihad – and that Islamic Jihad does not share Hamas’ reputation – suggests that this is not the case, a conclusion echoed by much of the work on the impact of Islamic movements on democratization. Much of the scholarship on this subject finds that a major barrier to the emergence of democratic change in the Arab world has been the divisions in the opposition between the Islamic parties and the progressives. The latter are generally so alarmed by the prospect of an Islamic government that they prefer to endure the existing authoritarian, yet secular, regime.⁷⁵¹ Overcoming this “suspicion-hurdle” requires not only that the progressives believe that the Islamists will respect the rights of others once in power (and respect election results even when they lose), but also that the status quo has become bad enough that a change of regime is worth the risk. Therefore, while there are of course those who support these parties wholeheartedly, for many, even tacit support is often more a matter of voting for “change” than voting

⁷⁴⁹ PCPSR Poll # 17, 7-9 September, 2005.

⁷⁵⁰ “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #19: Armed Attacks, Palestinian-Jordanian Relations, Negotiations, Elections and Other Issues of Concern”, August 1995, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll19a.html>.

⁷⁵¹ Ellen Lust-Okar, “Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition,” *Comparative politics*. 36, no. 2 (2004): 159.

for Islamic parties' actual platforms. Through broad survey research, Mark Tessler demonstrated this to be the case in Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco,⁷⁵² and a similar dynamic was arguably at work in the opposition coalition that overthrew the Mubarak regime in Egypt.

And, while the election of 2006 was not a revolution and Fatah was not an entrenched authoritarian system, a similar dynamic was at work there as well. Hamas was able to convince enough people that they represented a preferable alternative to Fatah to win the election. For some, this was because they were an Islamic party, but for others (and if the above polling is accurate, for a majority) it was in spite of it. In the West Bank, I heard stories of women at Bir Zeit University wearing tight, short-sleeved Hamas t-shirts in the run-up to the election. While this is hardly a reflection (or endorsement) of Hamas' socially conservative Islamic project it is perhaps a sign of enthusiasm for the alternative that Hamas represented, of a rejection of Fatah's performance in government, and perhaps of Oslo too.

Hamas politicians clearly realize that the fight against corruption is a message that resonates. In the run-up to the elections in 2006, Hamas explicitly marketed itself to the young, a major "undecided" electoral demographic, based on the theme that Hamas, as an alternative to the corrupt incumbent, Fatah, represented "change and reform".⁷⁵³ Several of the Change and Reform politicians interviewed stated that people support them in part because they believed Islamic Movement members to be "decent and honest people" who participate in the life of the community,⁷⁵⁴ perhaps in a veiled comparison with

⁷⁵² Mark Tessler, "Do Islamic Orientations Influence Attitudes Toward Democracy in the Arab World? Evidence from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria," *International journal of comparative sociology*. 43, no. 3 (2002): 229.

⁷⁵³ Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement*, 5-6.

⁷⁵⁴ Interviews with Ahmad Ali Ahmad, Mariam Saleh, and one unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

the Fatah elite who returned from exile in Tunis in 1993 and are noted for their lavish lifestyles. Ramahi delicately noted that millions of dollars in donor aid to the Fatah-dominated PA were not accounted for with sufficient transparency.

Hamas also exploits the theme of armed resistance (similarly to Hizbullah.) Hamid Bitawi, a senior jurist and Change and Reform legislator⁷⁵⁵ cited Hamas' "resistance" during the first and second intifadas as being a major source of its popularity, as did Mahmoud Ramahi.⁷⁵⁶ Early on, Israel's crackdown on Hamas in 1989 and 1990 clearly helped to legitimize the organization and turn it into a credible alternative to the PLO.⁷⁵⁷ It received a further boost to its credibility in 1992 when, at a time when the PLO and other parties, including Syria, were moving towards negotiations with Israel, 415 senior Hamas members were deported by Israel to South Lebanon. Rather than disappearing into the refugee camps of Beirut, they settled near the border and set up an encampment (including an impromptu university) where they received visitors, offers of training, and even forged an alliance with Hizbullah.⁷⁵⁸ Their presence in Lebanon as exiles attracted a great deal of attention, and helped to raise Hamas' profile outside of Gaza and attract interest among Palestinians in Lebanon.⁷⁵⁹

More explicitly, Hamas makes ample use of the narrative of "martyrdom". Milton-Edwards and Farrell note that Hamas seeks to frame its use of violence as part of an unbroken chain of resistance against a series of occupiers, extending from the Tatars to the Crusades to the present Israeli occupation, even going so

⁷⁵⁵ Hamid Bitawi arrived at our interview walking with a cane because he had been shot in the leg by PA security forces two days previously.

⁷⁵⁶ This is also a theme which clearly resonates with refugees outside of historical Palestine; Hamas' political officer in the Bourj al Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut told me that "the relationship is getting stronger with the people because we're still fixed on our opinion and we didn't abandon any of the movement's principles." My fixer in Bourj al Barajneh, who does not specifically support any of the Palestinian factions and could certainly not be described as an Islamist, greeted this statement with enthusiasm.

⁷⁵⁷ Tamimi, *Hamas: a history from within*, 61.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 64-70.

⁷⁵⁹ Interviews with Hamid Bitawi (judge and Change and Reform member of the PLC) and Ahmad Ali Ahmad, both of whom were among the deportees, and Abu Al Abed, who cited this episode as being what attracted him to Hamas in the first place.

far as to invoke Salah al Din in its charter.⁷⁶⁰ This discourse has become pervasive in Palestinian public life. Milton-Edwards and Farrell write:

“The cult of sacrifice was encouraged: theatre performances, student groups, pop chants and rap songs, films, poems, art, and impromptu memorials, websites and posters, flags, postcards, necklaces – even slush puppies dubbed suicide reds.”⁷⁶¹

The Al Qassem Brigades’ website has a section dedicated to memorials for fallen fighters, including pictures and videos. Most of these feature young men in uniform, frequently heavily bearded, reading statements explaining their martyrdom. Older videos, especially from the 1990s, sometimes feature news footage of the carnage accompanying the attack.⁷⁶² Today, even YouTube contains no shortage of videos celebrating Hamas’ operations.⁷⁶³

Interestingly, there is a significant contrast between the rhetorical themes outlined above and the tone taken in Hamas’ internal documents. Policy briefs from the summer of 1992 coolly evaluate Hamas’ strategic options regarding the elections which would follow the Oslo process, with little of the movement’s usual fiery rhetoric.⁷⁶⁴ Instead, the memo provides a straightforward pro and con analysis of different courses of action. “Increases in popularity” is an important argument in favor of electoral participation, and “decreases in popularity” appears to be enough to induce the authors to reject the path of disrupting the elections by

⁷⁶⁰ Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 138.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁷⁶² In at least one video, the soon-to-be martyr reading his statement was clearly having a hard time not laughing; his glances off camera suggest that a friend may have been making faces at him, providing a strange counterpoint to brutality of the intended attack. See the Izzedine Al Qassem Brigades website: <http://www.alqassam.ps/arabic/video1.php?cat=3&id=456>

⁷⁶³ For an example produced by Hamas’ information office, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRkpcXWIIJM> (available as of May 10th 2011; these are often taken down, as they are technically illegal under US law.) The families of martyrs are, by all accounts, well taken care of financially; both Iraq (prior to 2003) and Saudi Arabia donated sizeable sums to Hamas for this purpose, although Iraq’s donations (though smaller) were earmarked specifically for the families of suicide bombers, while Saudi Arabia’s went to Hamas more broadly. In 2002, the Iraqis were purportedly offering \$25,000 for a successful suicide attack. Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*; To ensure that families of successful bombers present the appropriate reaction in public (pride rather than grief), Hamas sends representatives to speak with them. Chehab, *Inside Hamas: the untold story of the militant Islamic movement*.

⁷⁶⁴ Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence*, 21-22.

violence, even though this would serve one of the organization's major objectives, that is, stalling or ending the Oslo process.⁷⁶⁵ Not only is Hamas aware of the importance of popular support, its pragmatic tone suggests that its public rhetorical persona is to a degree deliberately constructed.⁷⁶⁶

In disseminating the above narratives, Hamas uses both personal contact and a variety of media. During the first intifada, both Hamas and the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) used leaflets to coordinate general strikes, boycotts, protests and to spread political messages. Hamas' in particular emphasized religious themes, though they also urged the boycott of Israeli goods, increases in industrial output, and asked those who were well off to provide for those in need.⁷⁶⁷ Hamas also publishes books, pamphlets and weekly or monthly magazines,⁷⁶⁸ as well as a variety of posters, banners and billboards. While these are displayed publicly in some parts of the West Bank – in Nablus, for instance – in most of the territory, the only posters are for Fatah and the leftist parties, though there is no shortage of Hamas graffiti. In recent years, television has become more important, specifically Hamas' satellite station, Al Aqsa. Modeled on Hizbullah's Al Manar (though not of the same quality), Al Aqsa TV is an important means of sharing Hamas' analysis of ongoing events, particularly in Gaza,⁷⁶⁹ though it also helps Hamas reach out to the Palestinian diaspora.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁷⁶⁶ In addition to the ways in which Hamas pitches its political project to potential supporters, since they have taken office, Hamas also engages in the same sort of political rhetoric that all embattled political parties do, with regard to laying blame for the desperate situation in Gaza on the Israeli siege, Fatah mismanagement, and so on. I do not consider this marketing, per se, because it is less about trying to gather support than it is about crisis management, a process engaged in by all of the groups discussed in this project, and probably all politicians everywhere.

⁷⁶⁷ See for instance Leaflet no. 8, March 13th 1988 Shaul Mishal and Reuven Aharoni, *Speaking stones: communiqués from the Intifada underground* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

⁷⁶⁸ When I visited Hamas' office in Bourj al Barajneh, I was given a copy of their magazine and a 2009 commemorative calendar.

⁷⁶⁹ In a poll taken by PCPSR in December of 2008, shortly before Operation Cast Lead, 22% of Gazan respondents listed Al Aqsa TV as the station they watched most frequently, putting it in second place behind Al Jazeera, which was listed as the primary news source of 38% of viewers in Gaza. The picture in the West Bank was somewhat different, where only 8% listed Al Aqsa as their preferred station (comparable to Palestine TV, which received 17% of viewers in Gaza) as compared with 57% who preferred Al Jazeera.

But face-to-face interactions are also an important vehicle for Hamas' message. Mahmoud Ramahi noted that the Islamic Movement's leadership are educated people who participate actively in the life of the community: "We can send our program through these people, one on one, personally, meet the people, and they understand ... what is my project for the future. This is the first step. To have a contact with a person, personal contact, is the most important." These interactions occur in a range of contexts. Mariam Saleh, Minister for Women's Affairs and member of the Change and Reform parliamentary bloc, cited the importance of Hamas' various social services (see below) as an opportunity for the public to meet its members, whose impressive personal qualities in turn draw in new members. Educational institutions, from the kindergartens and primary schools run by Hamas to the Palestinian universities in which Hamas (like all the other Palestinian parties) has established student blocs are also important: "These blocs make conferences, meetings and events. This gives you a chance to meet other people and tell them about your ideas." Educated members of Hamas engage in informal community mediation. But perhaps most important are the mosques; through classes and discussion groups on the Qur'an (for both men and women) the Islamic Movement is able to promote their message, objectives and values. Though the goal is not overtly political, but rather to teach the Qur'an for its own sake, in the context of Hamas' political discourse, that *is* a political act.⁷⁷¹

Service Provision

This leads me to the second strategy through which Hamas engages the Palestinian public: service provision. Hamas' social service network has a long

"CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 30" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, December 22, 2008), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2008/p30e.html>.

⁷⁷⁰ Interview, Abu Al Abed.

⁷⁷¹ Interviews with Mariam Saleh, and Ahmad Ali Ahmad.

history in Gaza, beginning with the Mujamma in the 1970s.⁷⁷² Today, Hamas provides educational services ranging from kindergartens and childcare up through secondary education, and, in Gaza, university education through the Islamic University of Gaza, as well as a range of social clubs, summer camps and youth activities. Hamas offers (though in the West Bank, the past tense is perhaps now more appropriate) medical care through a network of health care centers and clinics. It also provides food aid, some of which is produced by Hamas-affiliated non-profits, including a dairy in Nablus and a bakery in Ramallah, and under the mandate of the PA, Hamas (or its members) assumed control of the Zakat committees in both the West Bank and Gaza. In total, Hamas' charitable organizations before 2006 amounted to the majority of their \$70 million annual budget.⁷⁷³

The funding for Hamas' social services comes at least in part from civilian donors, both inside and especially outside the Palestinian territories. Hamas' charities receive significant financial backing from wealthy individuals in Saudi Arabia. This support has at times amounted to \$50 million, mostly in donations to Hamas' Islamic charities.⁷⁷⁴ Ramahi explained that Hamas provides an important link between the needy and those who wish to help them.⁷⁷⁵ This was echoed both by Hamas' political officer in Bourj al Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut and by Zaki bin Rsheid, the then-head of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front (the Muslim Brotherhood's political arm) who noted that they work with Hamas to

⁷⁷² Since Hamas' victory in the elections of 2006, the picture has become murkier both because it is difficult to disaggregate Hamas' own services from the PA's in Gaza, and because its NGOs were closed down in the West Bank. Outside the Palestinian Territories, Hamas' service provision is somewhat limited. In Lebanon, for instance, they provide aid to orphans, and particularly help for poor families during the holidays (that is, Ramadan, Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha.) Interview with Abu al Abed, Hamas political office, Bourj al Barajneh.

⁷⁷³ Arnon Regular, an Israeli analyst and journalist, cited a much higher figure, but \$70 million is the commonly held figure for Hamas' annual budget. See for instance Gene Robinson, "Hamas as a Social Movement", p. 16.

⁷⁷⁴ "HAMAS Funding" (GlobalSecurity.org, June 21, 2007), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hamas-funds.htm>.

⁷⁷⁵ Ramahi framed this within the context of the Muslim obligation to give zakat, or charity.

distribute donations collected in Jordan to needy Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.⁷⁷⁶

In some ways, prior to the election, Hamas had an advantage with regard to its social service network, because all of its services functioned as “value added” on top of what was already being provided by either the Palestinian Authority or UNRWA.⁷⁷⁷ One Change and Reform MP from Tulkarem suggested that Hamas’s services acted as a complement to UNRWA’s, not as a replacement, serving those (especially in Gaza) who were either not registered with the agency as refugees, or lived in areas where UNRWA could not operate. And indeed, statistics compiled by UNDP suggest that Hamas represented only a very small share of the total social service sector before its victory in the elections in 2006. In 2004 and 2005, the total share of all assistance received by Palestinians originating from “Islamic charities” (of which Hamas’ represented only a part) hovered between 3% and 6%. This number is perhaps skewed by the ability of larger agencies like UNRWA and the PA to provide large scale assistance such as employment programs, but Islamic charities still accounted for only 13% of food aid being provided in July of 2005, while UNRWA accounted for 25% and the PA 19%. (Approximately 15% of Palestinians received food aid in 2005, with a higher proportion in Gaza than in the West Bank.) Moreover, there was little difference in the distribution of aid (to refugees versus non refugees, in the West Bank versus Gaza, and in the poverty level of those receiving aid) between the PA and the Islamic Charities.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁶ Interview, Zaki bin Rshaid, Secretary General, Islamic Action Front, Jordan (since retired.)

⁷⁷⁷ In this sense, its experience was quite different from Hizbullah’s; in South Lebanon and the Dahiye, Hizbullah really was operating in a vacuum as far as the provision of public services was concerned, though Hizbullah managed to turn this state of affairs to its advantage (see Chapter Seven for further discussion.)

⁷⁷⁸ UNRWA, because of its mandate, directed nearly all of its aid to registered refugees. Statistics taken from Ricardo Bocco et al., “Palestinian Public Perceptions Report 9”, April 2006, <http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/PPPReportIX.pdf>.

This suggests, then, that if Hamas is receiving a bump in public opinion because of its provision of social services, it is not because people are solely reliant on those services to survive, but rather because Hamas' services stand out as being of particularly high quality or because it is particularly good at publicizing its charitable activities. (This finding stands in contradiction to assumptions elsewhere in the literature on Islamic political movements.)⁷⁷⁹ All of the Change and Reform parliamentarians interviewed were adamant that Hamas does not make access to services conditional on membership; its social service work is not about recruitment, but rather because their "heritage as Muslims" mandates the provision of charity to the poor.⁷⁸⁰ Saleh expressed this as follows:

We don't want to recruit people and we don't register their names to become members in the Islamic movement, this is not what we're doing. The main point for us as the Islamic Movement is to educate people and to raise awareness and to improve the situation of people, economic, culture, everything, especially for women...our main goal is not to recruit more people or more members, it's to empower the society, and by empowering the society in our vision- because it's based on Islam, and religion - by empowering society, our vision is that we will reach the main goal, liberation."

Where the provision of social services does serve as a selling point for Hamas, at least in the eyes of its political leadership, is on the basis of the quality of those services, especially as compared with those provided by the Palestinian Authority. One anonymous Change and Reform member of the PLC argued that people who use Hamas' services see that they are "clean, decent, transparent and organized" whereas those run by Fatah leave much to be desired. Moreover, the rhetoric surrounding the way Hamas runs its services serves to reinforce the

⁷⁷⁹ See, for instance Eli Berman, *Religious, Radical and Violent: The new economics of terrorism*, which argues that movements like Hamas benefit from providing social services because they facilitate in-group cohesion by fostering dependence on recipients. One exception is Janine Clark's work on Islamic charities in Yemen, Jordan and Egypt, in which she finds that it is often the middle class, not the poor, who use the services provided by organizations such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

⁷⁸⁰ Interviews with Hamid Bitawi and one unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

narrative of Hamas' lack of corruption as compared with other parties. Mahmoud Ramahi suggested that "others" (meaning other factions) spent donor money in ways that "didn't serve the people," whereas Hamas' spending was more transparent.⁷⁸¹ He suggested that this difference became particularly obvious when one looked at the fate of the various social services once run by Hamas in the West Bank once they came under PA management following Fatah's takeover of the West Bank. Charities which were successful for 18 years failed in one year under Palestinian Authority management; Hamas' eleven West Bank medical centers came under the management of the Ministry of Health, and within a year, nine had closed. Ramahi contended that this was because "donors of the money didn't trust the people who managing these societies."⁷⁸² Another example was given by Hamid Bitawi and Ahmad Ali Ahmad, who recounted an orphanage in Hebron which was closed by the PA. Ahmad Ali Ahmad believed these closures would ultimately benefit Hamas more than the PA:

"It's our trademark, that we provide good service, while other factions don't provide anything, they have nothing at all. And we saw the reactions of the people after they close these organizations, because people know that the state or the Authority can't provide anything, and now they close organizations that can."⁷⁸³

Hamas' services are useful for attracting members not because they foster a total immersion in the organization (as Hizbullah's services do), but because they serve to set the movement apart from its domestic rivals and serve as an advertisement for its managerial competence. In other words, they serve as a demonstration, though perhaps on a deceptively small scale, of Hamas' qualifications to govern.

⁷⁸¹ Whether this is true or not is probably less important in terms of how Palestinians respond to Hamas than the perception that it is true. I was struck by the degree to which Hamas members, along with many other Palestinian parties, have adopted the language of transparency and accountability used by international NGOs. In fact, I interviewed Mahmoud Ramahi in a Ramallah hotel lobby, at a conference on transparency and good governance at which Hanan Ashrawi was the keynote speaker.

⁷⁸² Interview, Mahmoud Ramahi. An alternative explanation, suggested by Rex Brynen, is that these clinics were duplicating services provided by PA clinics.

⁷⁸³ Interview, Ahmad Ali Ahmad.

Costs and Benefits of Hamas' Domestic Policy

In the balance, then, neither of Hamas' approaches to the public worked the way they were supposed to. Hamas' deliberate attempts at marketing its political project were probably less effective in gaining it the resources it needed than its indirect marketing based on both the "honest alternative"⁷⁸⁴ its politicians offered to Fatah and the competence with which its social services were run. Because the segment of the population relying on Hamas' services was actually quite small, the improved reputation that Hamas acquired as a result of *its competence* at providing those services, a reputation which extended well beyond the immediate recipients of Hamas charity, was likely a more important factor in attracting support for the movement than either dependence on the services it provided or commitment to the movement's narrow political goals. In other words, Hamas attracted support not because people were looking for an Islamic state or a free lunch (which were in fact what Hamas was offering,) but because Hamas appeared to be competent administrators who did not have their hands in the cookie jar. While some Palestinians may have held this belief about Hamas explicitly because they are an Islamic party, it seems likely that their actual behavior and their efforts to publicize their social service network are more important factors. After all, if trust in Hamas was based solely on their status as an Islamic party, we should expect to see far higher levels of support for Islamic Jihad and other Islamic parties than we do.

This was echoed, perhaps inadvertently, by Hamas politicians themselves. Ahmad Ali Ahmad attributed the Change and Reform list's electoral performance in general and his own in specific, to the personal reputations of its candidates.

⁷⁸⁴ Or indeed, their status as the most robust available alternative to Fatah at all, which may explain why their polling numbers have gone down since they themselves have taken office. (See Figure 1.)

Despite being in prison during the election, he received the highest number of votes of any candidate in the Nablus electoral district. When I asked why he thought this was, he said “Because people trust me – they know that when I talk to them, I am defending my ideology and my principles. I don’t say one thing and do another.” And Mahmoud Ramahi stated bluntly that beneficiaries of Hamas charities do not amount to more than 20% of the population –the UNDP statistics above suggest that this number is far smaller – but the movement received a far larger share of the vote, meaning that most of those who voted for Hamas were not direct beneficiaries of their social services.

Through this strategy, Hamas was able to steadily increase its political market share in the Palestinian territories and so acquire a range of other important non-material assets, both formally, through elections, and less formally, through the recruitment and deployment of militia forces in and around Gaza. In the decades between the first intifada and the Gaza war, Hamas saw its popularity increase steadily inside the Palestinian territories, particularly relative to the other Palestinian factions, including its chief rival, Fatah (see Figure 1.)⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁵ Based on data from the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research: “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #2 Palestinian Elections”, October 10, 1993, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll2a.html>; “CPRS Opinion Poll #11: Elections and Palestinian-Jordanian Relations”, 1994; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #19: Armed Attacks, Palestinian-Jordanian Relations, Negotiations, Elections and Other Issues of Concern.”; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #24: The Peace Process, Performance of the PNA, Performance of the PLC”, 1996, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll24a.html>; *CPRS Public Opinion Poll #29 Performance of the PNA, the Peace Process, the Status of Democracy in Palestine, and Corruption*, 1997, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/97/poll29a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #35: The Peace Process, Domestic Situation, Economic Situation, Ability to Confront Threats, Presidential Elections and Political Affiliation”, July 1, 1998, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/98/poll35a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #44 The Peace Process, PA Performance, Status of Democracy and Human Rights, Corruption, Reform, Elections for the Presidency and Vice-presidency, and Political Affiliation”, October 16, 1999, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/99/poll44a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #5 Palestinian Political Attitudes Towards Elections and Other Issues of Concern”, January 16, 1994, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll5a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #9 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement, the Palestinian National Authority, and Elections”, May 31, 1994; “Public Opinion Poll #1 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement: ‘Gaza-Jericho First’”, 1993, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll1.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #13 Unemployment, Jordanian-Israeli Treaty, Armed Operations, Elections, and Other Issues”, November 19, 1994, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll13a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #17 Elections, Negotiations, Strike, Refugee Camps, Criticism of the PNA”, May 20, 1995, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll17a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #25 Armed Attacks, PNA Performance, The Palestinian Legislative Council, Corruption”, December 1996, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll25a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #21 Elections,

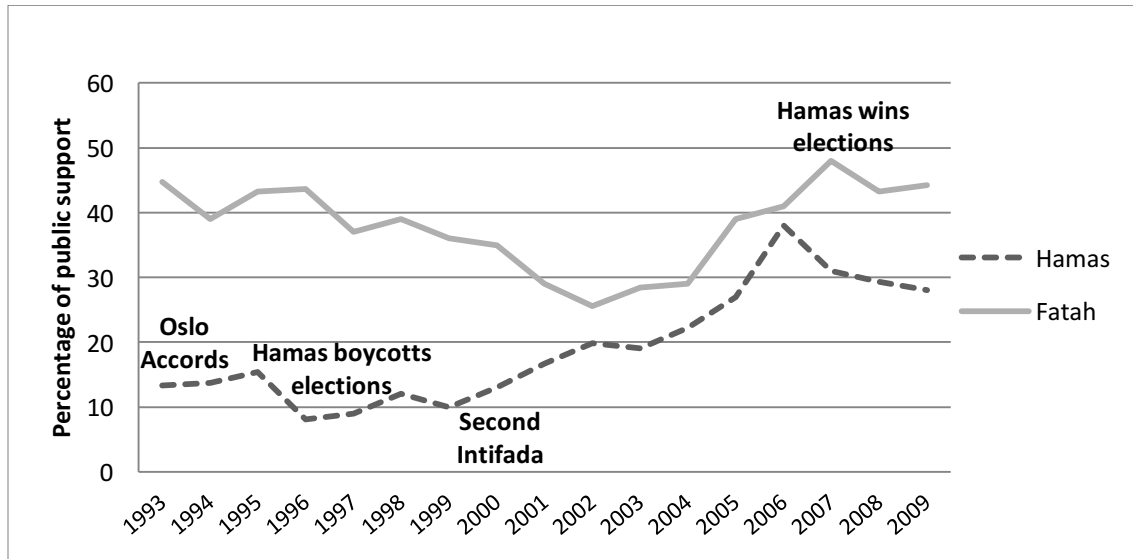


Figure 1: Hamas' popularity over time. Based on PCPSR polling, 1993-2009.

Polling conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey

Research indicates that support for Hamas ranged between 10% and 15% from 1993 to 2000. “Unaffiliated” Palestinians hovered around 35% during those years, meaning that Hamas commanded a solid percentage of the support of those who supported a political party at all. Moreover, Hamas consistently received the second highest level of support, after Fatah, beating out Islamic Jihad, which does no better than 5%, and the PFLP, which hovers around 3%. That Hamas was able to quickly outpace more established parties, including other Islamists, indicates that its strategy was at least somewhat effective.⁷⁸⁶ By fall 2001, after the second

Redeployment, Peace Process after Assassination of Rabin”, December 10, 1995, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll21a.html>; “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #33 Evaluation of the Performance of PLC and PNA, Corruption, Attitudes Regarding new Legislative Elections, Local Elections, and Oslo Peace Agreement”, June 6, 1998, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/98/poll33a.html> All available via <http://www.pcpsr.org>.

⁷⁸⁶ That year, for the first time, polling results from Gaza and the West Bank differed sharply; in 2004, while Fatah and Hamas did comparably in the West Bank (where more people tend to support independent parties), but in Gaza, 18% supported Fatah versus a sizeable 30% who supported Hamas. “CPRS Public Opinion Poll #13 Unemployment, Jordanian-Israeli Treaty, Armed Operations, Elections, and Other Issues.”; The gap eventually closed, however. Nine months before Operation Cast Lead, in March of 2008, Hamas’ profile in terms of public support was described in a summary of polling results by PSR as follows: “Hamas is more popular in the Gaza Strip reaching 40% compared to 31% in the West Bank. Fatah’s popularity is slightly greater in the Gaza Strip, reaching 43% compared to 41% in the West Bank. Hamas is also popular among women (37%) compared to men (33%), in refugee camps (43%) and cities (36%) compared to towns and villages (30%), among the religious (42%) compared to the ‘somewhat religious’ (29%), among those opposed to the peace process (72%) compared to those supportive of the peace process (25%), among ... the most traditional, (55%) compared to ... the most untraditional, (12%), and among those between the ages of

intifada had been raging for almost a year, Hamas' support had begun to rise steadily and by 2004, it had begun to close the gap with Fatah.

This increase in popular support provided a number of concrete benefits, but, paradoxically, all come with limitations resulting directly from the basis of Hamas' public support. One benefit may have been an increase in Hamas' ability to recruit fighters. Though it strikes me as unlikely that admiration for Hamas' managerial skills was a powerful motivator for young men in signing on for "martyrdom operations" (and Hamas does not, obviously, publish data on the number and motivations of its recruits), its commitment to maintaining the armed struggle against Israel after the Oslo Accords may have made it an appealing choice for young men interested in violent resistance.

Perhaps the most obvious asset produced by Hamas' increasing prestige was its victory in the January 2006 PLC elections, which gave Hamas a clear majority of seats in the Palestine Legislative Council. However, these results cannot be interpreted as a full-throated mandate for Hamas' political project. The PLC is composed of 132 seats, half of which are chosen based on a closed list proportional representation system similar to Israel's, and half of which are directly elected through multi-member constituency bloc voting (that is, voters vote for a set number of candidates in that district directly). Hamas took 29 of the proportional seats, and Fatah 28, while it took 45 of the directly elected district seats to Fatah's 17. In other words, when Palestinians were voting for the candidate, they rejected Fatah in favor of Hamas, but when they were voting for the party, they were far more ambivalent. This suggests that while Palestinians may well be fed up with the corruption of individual Fatah politicians, and

38 and 47 years (42%) compared to the young, 18-27 years of age, (31%).”“CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Poll No. 31 - Press Release” (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, March 7, 2009), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2009/p31epressrelease.html>.

impressed with the behavior and credentials of Hamas candidates, they are far less enthusiastic about Hamas' political platform.⁷⁸⁷

The second reason to be cautious about treating the election results as a clear mandate for Hamas is that Fatah's own electoral strategy is at least partly to blame for its poor performance. While Hamas exercised close discipline over who was and was not a candidate, many Fatah members who were not included ran anyway as independents, splitting the Fatah vote and handing districts to Hamas which it might not otherwise have won.⁷⁸⁸

However it was accomplished, the electoral victory was clearly an important asset in and of itself, in addition to being an indicator of public sentiment. True, despite winning the election, Hamas did not assume control of the PA government. Clashes broke out between Hamas and Fatah forces in Gaza in March, and by the end of the year, the territory was embroiled in what was effectively a civil war between the two factions. By June of 2007, Hamas was victorious in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank. The PLC has not been able to govern since the elections, not least because Israeli security forces (aided by the PA) almost immediately arrested most of the Change and Reform MPs in the West Bank (including those interviewed for this project, some of whom had been released from prison only weeks or days prior to being interviewed.) But the paralysis of the Palestinian government notwithstanding, winning the election accorded Hamas a new degree of international legitimacy.⁷⁸⁹

On the other hand, it also placed new burdens on Hamas. The organization was forced to transition rapidly, without sufficient preparation, from

⁷⁸⁷ This dynamic was pointed out to me by Edward Kattoura, and is supported by the numbers.

⁷⁸⁸ Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*.

⁷⁸⁹ The electoral results (which surprised many international observers) put the American and European governments in the difficult position of either dealing with Hamas, considered a terrorist organization by most of them, or rejecting the results of an election considered free and fair by most observers; ultimately, the US, and to a lesser degree Europe, chose the second option.

administering an NGO-like social service network to a full-fledged welfare state responsible for 5 million people. The situation was further complicated by the Israeli-imposed blockade of Gaza and the rapid decrease in donor funding when the EU and US cut off their funding to the Gaza PA government following Hamas' election victory.⁷⁹⁰ This put Hamas in a nearly impossible position; not only was it unprepared for the realities of governing, but it was forced to do so in the absence of the major resources relied on by its predecessors. Its attempts to use its skills from the pre-election period to operate employment programs which resemble in some ways the depression-era WPA in the United States (hiring people for short-term public works projects) have employed about 50,000 people, but cannot provide a permanent solution. While the aid which Hamas provides to the families of *shaheed* (fallen Hamas fighters, literally "martyrs") and to the sick had a powerful PR effect before the election, it was insufficient to remedy the desperate situation created by the blockade of Gaza afterwards.⁷⁹¹

Moreover, it is not clear that Hamas has been able to produce the kind of durable norm of support that Hizbullah, for example, has been able to generate in the Shi'ite community. Pragmatic appreciation for Hamas' managerial competence and admiration for their lack of corruption relative to Fatah is not the same as commitment to, or even acceptance of, Hamas' political project. It is questionable, therefore, how durable this support will prove to be in the long term; already (as discussed in Chapter Seven) there are indications that it is waning.)

⁷⁹⁰ This was not an insignificant amount of funding; American aid to Palestine in 2004 amounted to 84,786,000. See Clyde Mark, "United States Aid to the Palestinians", Congressional Research Service, March 5th 2005. Between 2000 and 2005, the EU contributed on average €250 million. European Commission, EuropeAid, "Occupied Palestinian Territory."

⁷⁹¹ Interview, Arnon Regular.

Coercion

Of course, any discussion of Hamas' domestic politics must address the coercive tactics it has used against both its political opponents and ordinary Palestinians, beginning with the tactics used by Mujamma followers in exerting their influence over political life and civil society in Gaza in the early 1980s; Mujamma members eventually went as far as attacking liquor stores, billiard halls, cinemas and bars. When Mujamma candidates failed to take control of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society board of directors in the 1980 elections, they burned down its offices. After the Islamic University in Gaza was founded in 1978, both its board of regents and its student body were soon dominated by Mujamma members who took to shouting down faculty teaching evolution and harassing those who were members of leftist organizations, or simply not dressed sufficiently "Islamically".⁷⁹²

When Hamas emerged into the open, it became bolder in using force to assert itself, as the UNLU and Hamas jostled for authority over the direction of the intifada. For instance, strikes called by one group were not always recognized by the other, and at times leaflets were issued exhorting (or threatening) the population to ignore strikes called by rival factions.⁷⁹³ It also began behaving in a more coercive fashion towards ordinary Palestinians, often using the language of resistance. Hamas forces engaged in widespread violence against collaborators and suspected collaborators, drug dealers or suspected drug dealers, and also began arresting people on morals charges, again, under the guise of resistance and the defense of Palestinian values. For example, Hamas alleged that Israeli agents were using a number of hair salons (which it viewed as vaguely un-Islamic to begin with) to drug Palestinian women and put them in compromising positions

⁷⁹² Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 41-49.

⁷⁹³ See Leaflet no. 11, April 1st, 1988. These leaflets and others are available in Mishal and Aharoni, *Speaking stones: communiqués from the Intifada underground*.

so they could later be blackmailed for information. Hamas' vice squads were a source of fear for many Palestinians during the first intifada.⁷⁹⁴

More recently, Hamas' most overt use of coercive violence has been directed at its political rivals, rather than at the public at large, though in Gaza "political rivals" is in some ways a gray category, somewhere between civilian and combatant. In the case of the PFLP for instance, the party itself does not pose a serious threat to Hamas in Gaza, and yet various forms of coercion have been directed both at its militant apparatus and at student groups at the university. More clear-cut were the clashes in Gaza following the elections in 2006, in which both sides were accused of atrocities by Human Rights Watch.⁷⁹⁵ While I would not count clashes with Fatah as "coercion of civilians" (not least because Fatah's forces are no more civilians than are Hamas') the use of violence was key in its seizure of power in Gaza. Moreover, it has since used force to maintain its position; most other factions have been driven underground or marginalized, and many of their members arrested. However, while coercion was useful against its political rivals, Hamas has not relied on coercion alone, or even coercion primarily, either in its approach to gaining power in the first place through the electoral process, or in its outreach to the Palestinian public. Moreover, its use of coercion hardly sets it apart from other Palestinian armed factions.

Overview of Hamas' Resources in 2009

Altogether, by the time the Gaza War broke out, Hamas had at its disposal a range of both material and non-material resources that allowed it to weather the Israeli assault, but perhaps less successfully than Hizbullah had three years previously. By serving as a proxy and playing on both Syria and Iran's need for

⁷⁹⁴ Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement*, 119-120.

⁷⁹⁵ "Gaza: Armed Palestinian Groups Commit Grave Crimes" (Human Rights Watch, June 12, 2007), <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/06/12/gaza-armed-palestinian-groups-commit-grave-crimes>.

association with a Palestinian militant group, Hamas received important financial backing beginning in the 1990s. Its fighters also received weapons and training in Syria and Iran, its political wing was granted a base from which to conduct its political and media operations in Damascus, and its inclusion in the Syrian-Iranian political axis helped it to expand its sphere of influence, not least in Lebanon.

Domestically, Hamas approached its civilian constituency through a mixture of marketing and service provision, with the use of coercion against its political rivals. In the end, though, its attempts at service provision served as a more useful form of marketing than its actual attempts at marketing. Hamas was able to steadily improve its public image, allowing it to recruit members and win the PA election in 2006, and seize control of Gaza in 2007, though Fatah's own mistakes are also at least partially responsible for these latter outcomes.

However, Hamas' approaches to its external sponsors and domestic constituents also had certain disadvantages. Hamas' external sponsors were primarily interested in how its military actions could further their own interests (though this may have been truer of Syria than of Iran) and so offered the group little by way of international political support, an asset which in any case neither was in much position to offer. Given Hamas' political and physical isolation even after winning the election in 2006, this was a lack it felt keenly. While they did provide the movement with some weaponry, it was not as extensive as what was offered to Hizbullah, and less useful for defense than for offense. Moreover, when push came to shove, Hamas' sponsors were ultimately more interested in pursuing their own agendas than those of Ismail Haniyeh's (elected) government in Gaza. During the Gaza War, this put the Damascus-based leadership under Meshal, with its close relationship with the Syrian regime, somewhat at odds with the Gaza based leadership, as will be seen below.

Hamas' approach at the domestic level has also met with mixed success. Both the election results and other polling suggest that Hamas' popularity is based less on the political project it advocates and more on its perceived competence and status as the main challenger to Fatah. Hamas has not managed to do what Hizbullah has done, and create a durable and unshakable norm of support within its target constituency. While the type of support Hamas has managed to garner may in fact be more compatible with the construction of a functioning democracy – systems in which people will continue to vote for their party no matter what it does tend to be less functional than those in which people vote based on factors such as honesty and competence – for Hamas itself, this sort of contingent relationship with its constituents is clearly less desirable, as is evident from its performance both during and after the Gaza War.

Outcome: The Gaza War

Throughout 2008, Hamas launched more than 1,750 rockets across the border (though the total number of civilians killed was no more than 15 between 2001 and 2009) (Human Rights Watch 2009.) Although a temporary truce was agreed between Israel and Hamas lasting from June to December, it was frequently violated by both sides; Israel complained that Hamas was using the truce to rearm by smuggling weapons into Gaza through the tunnels linking Gaza with the Egyptian town of Rafah, while Hamas considered Israel's continued siege of Gaza to be a violation in and of itself.⁷⁹⁶ Hamas declared the truce over on December 19th and fired four rockets from Gaza into southern Israel.⁷⁹⁷ By

⁷⁹⁶ The Associated Press, "World Briefing: Middle East; Israel: Hamas Formally Ends Truce," *New York Times*, December 19, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/20/world/middleeast/20briefs-HAMASFORMALL_BRF.html Because of the variation in the way the operation was reported in the press around the world, I have elected to rely on the New York Times, because of the quality and objectivity of its reporting, for the following summary of the events of the conflict. .

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

Christmas, rocket fire had intensified against the towns of Sderot and Netivot in the Negev and the coastal city of Ashkelon.⁷⁹⁸ On the 28th, Israel launched the operation it code named Operation Cast Lead. The death toll in Gaza on the first day of the war alone was 225.

From the beginning, Israeli officials cautioned that the operation could take weeks or even months. IDF reservists were called up and troops, tanks, APCs, and armored bulldozers gathered at the Gaza border, ready for a ground operation.⁷⁹⁹ Within days, civilian casualties were mounting steadily and military and non-military installations and institutions belonging to Hamas had been destroyed, including the main governmental building in the center of Gaza City (the Saraya), the Islamic University, and the Interior Ministry.⁸⁰⁰

Still, the goals of Operation Cast Lead as expressed by the IDF were far more limited than those of its operation against Hizbullah, perhaps reflecting a desire on the part of IDF decision-makers to avoid another over-ambitious conflict which could be framed as a defeat. Publicly, an Israeli official described the purpose of the operation as “making Hamas lose their will or lose their weapons.” Conditions for a truce would include “a complete cessation of rocket fire and mortar fire from Gaza, a ban on armed men approaching the border with Israel, full Israeli control over the border crossings and a mechanism to ensure that Hamas is meeting its commitments.”⁸⁰¹ But privately, there was some dissent regarding these goals. According to a cable from the US Embassy in Tel Aviv released via Wikileaks:

⁷⁹⁸ Isabel Kirshner and Taghreed El-Khodary, “Gaza Rocket Fire Intensifies,” *New York Times*, December 25, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/20/world/middleeast/20briefs-HAMASFORMALL_BR.html.

⁷⁹⁹ Isabel Kirshner and Taghreed El-Khodary, “Israeli Troops Mass Along Border; Arab Anger Rises,” *New York Times*, December 28, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/29/world/middleeast/29mideast.html>.

⁸⁰⁰ Ethan Bronner and Taghreed El-Khodary, “No Early End Seen to ‘All-Out War’ on Hamas in Gaza,” *New York Times*, December 29, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/30/world/middleeast/30mideast.html>.

⁸⁰¹ Ethan Bronner, “Israel Rejects Cease-Fire, but Offers Gaza Aid,” *New York Times*, December 31, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/01/world/middleeast/01mideast.html>.

“[IDF Deputy Chief of Staff] Harel stated there were three options briefed to the national leadership: 1) a limited operation to achieve a better cease fire agreement, 2) the seizure of Rafah and the Philadelphi Strip, and 3) retaking Gaza and destroying Hamas. Harel said that while the decision was made to go with the first option, there was pressure to finish off Hamas while the IDF had the chance.”⁸⁰²

The message expressed in IDF auto-calls to homes across Gaza was even less measured, stating bluntly that “We’re getting rid of Hamas.”⁸⁰³

On the morning of January 3rd, Israel launched the second phase of the operation: the ground invasion of Gaza. Though the military said that they had no plans to reoccupy, they did say that the “key objective” was to “take control” of rocket launching sites.⁸⁰⁴ Despite fighting on its own turf, Hamas was unable to stop the Israeli tank advance which quickly split the territory in two.⁸⁰⁵ Civilian casualties continued to mount, and several buildings sheltering civilians were hit. An UNRWA school sheltering 270 families was shelled, killing forty,⁸⁰⁶ and in another incident, thirty members of the same family died when their building was hit.⁸⁰⁷

Under the pressure of the Israeli assault, cracks began to appear between Hamas’ Gaza leadership and the headquarters in Damascus, as well as within the leadership inside Gaza. By the middle of the month, according to Egyptian and Israeli officials (neither of whom should be considered unbiased,) those in Gaza were ready for a ceasefire. This stand was not matched, however, by Khalid Meshal’s leadership in Damascus, who one Egyptian official stated were “ready

⁸⁰² United States Embassy, “Cable 09TELAVIV422, IDF DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF DISCUSSES GAZA OPERATION.”

⁸⁰³ Ethan Bronner, “Israel Deepens Gaza Incursion as Toll Mounts,” *New York Times*, January 5, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/06/world/middleeast/06mideast.html>.

⁸⁰⁴ Isabel Kershner and Taghreed El-Khodary, “Israeli Troops Launch Attack on Gaza,” *New York Times*, January 3, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/04/world/middleeast/04mideast.html>.

⁸⁰⁵ Ethan Bronner, “Israeli Attack Splits Gaza; Truce Calls Are Rebuffed,” *New York Times*, January 4, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/05/world/middleeast/05mideast.html>.

⁸⁰⁶ Taghreed El-Khodary, “Grief and Rage at Stricken Gaza School,” *New York Times*, January 7, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/08/world/middleeast/08scene.html>.

⁸⁰⁷ Alan Cowell, “30 Confirmed Dead in Shelling of Gaza Family,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/10/world/middleeast/10zeitoun.html>.

to fight to the last Palestinian,” or at the very least, wanted to see more substantial Israeli concessions.⁸⁰⁸ Even as Egypt attempted to negotiate a ceasefire, Meshal met with representatives from Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Algeria and other states in Qatar, and adopted a hardline stance in media interviews.⁸⁰⁹

While no permanent agreement was reached, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire on the night of the 17th, warning that if rocket fire resumed, the IDF would return. This allowed it to withdraw without offering concessions to Hamas. Though some of Hamas’ leaders outside Gaza denounced this outcome and vowed to fight on, by the end of the day, they had agreed.⁸¹⁰

The question of what sort of outcome this constitutes for Hamas – a success or a failure – is less clear than the outcomes explored in the previous four chapters. It is certainly a more successful result than those accomplished by the PLO, but is not nearly as strong a performance as Hizbullah’s in 2006. In part, assessing Hamas’ performance is dependent on an understanding of Israeli objectives; if the goal had been to wipe Hamas out entirely, we would have to judge them as having been far more effective at resisting than if Israel was merely to deter them. Israel rhetoric seems to suggest, though, that the goal was somewhere in between - to cripple or remove its ability to launch rockets at Israel, and in this, it seems to have had moderate success. To further evaluate Hamas’ position after the war, though, we need to look not just at its military performance, but also its political position afterward.

⁸⁰⁸ Steven Erlanger and Ethan Bronner, “As Troops Enter Gaza City, Israel Sees an Opening,” *New York Times*, January 11, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/12/world/middleeast/12mideast.html>; Steven Erlanger and Michael Slackman, “Israel Says Hamas Is Damaged, Not Destroyed,” *N*, January 13, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/14/world/middleeast/14mideast.html>.

⁸⁰⁹ Ethan Bronner and Mark Landler, “Israeli Cabinet Appears ready to Declare a Gaza Ceasefire,” *New York Times*, January 16, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/17/world/middleeast/17mideast.html>.

⁸¹⁰ Nidal al Mughrabi, “Israel Plans Ceasefire, Hamas Vows to Fight On,” *Reuters*, January 18, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/01/17/idUSLG514136_CH_2400.

Resistance

Hamas was not able to offer much by way of resistance to the Israeli assault. Throughout the fighting, it continued to launch missiles at Israeli targets, sometimes as many as 20 to 30 a day, some with ranges of up to 20 kilometers. While this represents a reduction of about two thirds from their capacity before the war, it is still significant.⁸¹¹ However, despite their offensive capabilities, Hamas clearly had little defensive capacity, and was entirely unable to prevent or significantly slow either the air assault or the Israeli ground advance. The total casualties for the war were between 1,200 and 1,400 Palestinians,⁸¹² about half of whom were likely civilians, and 13 Israelis, 3 of whom were civilians. Four of the Israeli military casualties were the result of friendly fire, indicating the ineffectiveness of Hamas' military efforts, though the low number of civilian casualties in Israel is largely due to Israeli precautions rather than any restraint on Hamas' part.⁸¹³ To put it more plainly, while there is no question that Hamas tried its best during the conflict, it was clearly overwhelmed militarily, and cannot be said to have successfully resisted the initial attack.⁸¹⁴

Hamas' political assets were only slightly more useful. Hassan Nasrullah issued statements in support of Hamas, the Arab League condemned Operation Cast Lead, and Saudi Arabia addressed the Security Council calling for an immediate ceasefire, lifting of the blockade, and opening of the land borders, but

⁸¹¹ Erlanger and Slackman, "Israel Says Hamas Is Damaged, Not Destroyed."

⁸¹² The numbers of casualties are disputed, with Israel claiming the lower number. The IDF also claims that a minority of the casualties were civilians. "Israel's Gaza toll far lower than Palestinian tally," *Reuters*, March 26, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/03/26/idUSLQ977827>; *Human Rights In Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict**, 2009, , http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC_Report.PDF.

⁸¹³ *Human Rights In Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict**.

⁸¹⁴ Indeed, they arguably performed no better in a purely military sense than did the PLO in 1982. The IDF lost 10 soldiers, four of whom were killed by friendly fire. Three Israeli civilians were also killed B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, *B'Tselem's investigation of fatalities in Operation Cast Lead*, 2009, http://www.btselem.org/Download/20090909_Cast_Lead_Fatalities_Eng.pdf.

none of these demands was met.⁸¹⁵ More usefully, the war put Egypt and Jordan, the two Arab states which have peace treaties with Israel,⁸¹⁶ in a difficult position. Syria and Hizbullah moved quickly to criticize Egypt, which had sealed its border with Gaza and traded fire with Hamas fighters, accusing it of complicity with Israel.⁸¹⁷ Jordan, with its large Palestinian-origin population, faced domestic protest, including grassroots activism of the kind rarely seen in Jordan, such as a tent-city set up by young people near the Israeli embassy, and joint demonstrations by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian left calling for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador.⁸¹⁸ None of this protest, however, was sufficient to halt the Israeli attack, and in any case, had far less to do with Hamas itself than with sympathy for the people of Gaza.

Recovery

But success is not only a matter of initial resistance, but also of longer-term recovery. At this, Hamas has been far more successful. At the regional level, the war did generate increased public sympathy for Hamas, at least in the short term. In Jordan, the Islamic Action Front's spokesman, Jamil Abubaker, told me bluntly, "the truth is, Hamas gained a lot of popularity and sympathy in the Gaza battle, not just here, but in the Arab and Muslim world."⁸¹⁹ But while Arab public opinion matters for Hamas, it is ultimately less important than domestic public opinion inside Palestine, and in this area, the outcome of the war was decidedly mixed. On one hand, it had the immediate effect of producing a

⁸¹⁵ For text of the statement, see "Prince Saud Al-Faisal's statement to the UN Security Council regarding Gaza" (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, January 6, 2009), <http://www.saudiembassy.net/announcement/announcement01060901.aspx>.

⁸¹⁶ And still do as of this writing, but hey, wait six months.

⁸¹⁷ Steven Erlanger, "Egypt Pressed on Gaza From Without and Within," *New York Times*, January 2, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/03/world/middleeast/03egypt.html>.

⁸¹⁸ Admittedly, at least at the demonstration I attended, the solidarity between the Muslim Brotherhood and the leftists quickly dissolved, as both sides attempted to drown the other out with rival chants.

⁸¹⁹ Interview, Jamil Abubaker, Spokesman, Islamic Action Front.

swell of support for Hamas in the West Bank. In the first week of January, PA security forces broke up large solidarity rallies in Hebron and Ramallah, confiscating Hamas flags, ripping up pro-Hamas protest signs, and even using tear gas against Palestinian protesters, and confronted several hundred students gathered to march on the Atarot checkpoint with the intent of confronting Israeli soldiers, putting the Fatah government in a very difficult position.⁸²⁰

In Gaza, though, reactions were mixed. In addition to the high cost in human life, the war was economically disastrous and worsened the already difficult humanitarian situation in the territory with the destruction not only of police stations and government buildings, but also water and sewage infrastructure, farms, greenhouses, and Gaza's only flour mill.⁸²¹ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that 14% of all the buildings in Gaza were damaged, and estimated the total Palestinian economic losses at \$1.9 billion.⁸²²

Fatah, unsurprisingly, was highly critical of Hamas' behavior before, during and after the war. One of its officials in Lebanon accused them of sacrificing the good of Palestinian civilians for their own interests, saying "I fight to protect my people – I don't put the people in front of me to protect me."⁸²³ If the war gave Hamas ammunition with which to criticize the PA for its cooperation with Israel, it also gave Fatah grounds to criticize Hamas for its recklessness.

The response from the Palestinian civilian public was also mixed. While Operation Cast Lead has not created a massive backlash against Hamas, there is

⁸²⁰ Steven Erlanger, "In Fatah-Governed West Bank, Solidarity With Hamas," *New York Times*, January 5, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/06/world/middleeast/06westbank.html>.

⁸²¹ *Human Rights In Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict**, 18-25.

⁸²² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "PCBS release preliminary estimated for the Economic Losses in Gaza Strip caused by Israeli Aggression:" (European Parliament, n.d.), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/200/200902/20090204PCBS_EN.pdf cited by the European Parliament.

⁸²³ Interview, Edward Kattoura.

still widespread unhappiness about the war and some discontent with Hamas' handling of its aftermath. Immediately following the war, Hamas received a slight public opinion bump, but not an enormous one; its "market share" increased from 28% of the population to 33% between December of 2008 and March of 2009, and positive perceptions of Haniyeh's government improved from 36% to 43%.⁸²⁴ But three months after the war, many Palestinians, especially in Gaza, remained dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the territory. 71% said that they were worse off than they were before the war, half were dissatisfied with Hamas' efforts at reconstruction,⁸²⁵ 80% described conditions in Gaza as "very bad" or "bad," and 63% believed that another electoral victory for Hamas would only worsen the siege. (Those in the West Bank were only marginally more optimistic on all counts.)⁸²⁶ A year after the war, in December of 2009, Hamas and Fatah had more or less returned to their pre-war popularity levels, with 43% of respondents supporting Fatah and 27% Hamas. Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that the situation in Gaza was poor, with only 9% of Gazans describing conditions as at all positive.⁸²⁷ In polling from 2010, Gazans remain unconvinced by Hamas' political message, with only 14% citing the establishment of a pious Islamic society as a priority (as compared with half who prioritize the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the lines laid out during Oslo.)⁸²⁸

That being said, Hamas remains in control of Gaza. Its security forces have driven other political factions underground and begun enforcing public

⁸²⁴ At least some of this increase can be attributed to a drop in support for Mahmoud Abbas personally; when asked who they would vote for between Haniyeh and Abbas, Haniyeh beat Abbas 47% to 45% and Abbas' popularity declined from 46% to 40%, but Marwan Barghouti (a jailed Fatah leader) beat Haniyeh 61% to 34%.

⁸²⁵ 35% reported that they were dissatisfied, and 15% certainly dissatisfied with Hamas' reconstruction efforts.

⁸²⁶ "CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Poll No. 31 - Press Release."

⁸²⁷ At 42% bad and 31% very bad.

⁸²⁸ "CPRS - Survey Research Unit: Poll No. 38 - Full Analysis" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, December 29, 2010), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2010/p38e.html>.

morality laws through a “Yes to Virtue” campaign, which include a ban on women smoking water pipes in public and the requirement that female lawyers wear headscarves in court. These measures have prompted public outcry, though, and Haniyeh’s government has itself denounced them, blaming their enforcement on rumor and a few overzealous individuals. (Khalid Meshal, too, has been critical of attempts to enforce Islamic values.)⁸²⁹ In short, while Hamas has not benefitted politically from the war, neither has it been driven from power by an outraged Palestinian public. Its hold on power is based partly on coercion, but given the number of armed factions in Gaza, it is difficult to imagine that Hamas could maintain its authority without some degree of public acceptance.⁸³⁰ It is unclear, however, what would happen were elections held tomorrow.

Moreover, though it has rarely exercised it, Hamas has retained the *capacity* to continue its rocket attacks against southern Israeli targets. However, there has been a massive decrease in rocket fire from Gaza since the war; from a high of 1553 Qassemis and 1685 mortars in 2008, the number was reduced to 100 Qassemis and 50 mortars in 2010.⁸³¹ Hamas itself is likely not responsible for much of the rocket fire in the last year; indeed, it has worked to enforce the ceasefire by restraining other factions, prompting bitter complaints from Islamic Jihad, Jaysh al Islam and other Salafist groups.⁸³² Ironically, then, the reduction in rocket fire is itself an indication of the control Hamas still exercises over Gaza. As it certainly retains access to weapons through the tunnel network, the most

⁸²⁹ International Crisis Group, *Radical Islam in Gaza* (Middle East Report, March 29, 2011), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/104---Radical%20Islam%20in%20Gaza.ashx> The current situation in Gaza is addressed in greater depth in Chapter Seven.

⁸³⁰ Ibid.

⁸³¹ Statistics taken from IDF. “2010 Statistics: Rocket and Mortar Fire from the Gaza Strip as of October 7th, 7 Oct 2010.”

⁸³² See for instance Nidal al-Mughrabi, Nidal al-Mughrabi, “Gaza militants say Hamas stops their rocket fire,” *Reuters*, October 10, 2009, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2009/10/10/idINIndia-43064720091010>; See also International Crisis Group, *Radical Islam in Gaza*.

logical interpretation of this outcome is that while Hamas' capacity to wage war against Israel has not been destroyed, it has been deterred from doing so.

Conclusion

In the balance, Hamas' performance falls somewhere in between that of the PLO and that of Hizbullah. While this can be considered a case of survival, it is a less successful and robust survival than Hizbullah's in 2006. Militarily, Hamas did not mount the impressive defensive operation that Hizbullah did in 2006 - it was unable to force an Israeli retreat as Hizbullah did at Bint Jbail, or damage any of its major hardware. But neither was it forced to entirely retreat (by, for instance, permanently evacuating the Gaza leadership to Damascus or resigning from the government of Gaza,) and politically, it was also able to avoid the public backlash that Hizbullah suffered in south Lebanon in 1988.

Like the previous cases explored, Hamas' performance cannot be entirely explained either by some advantage resulting from its "innate" identity characteristics, or by its military capacity. Yes, Hamas was fighting among "its own people", that is, inside historical Palestine, surrounded by Palestinians. But Hizbullah in 1988 was also on "its own turf" and the PLO in heavily Palestinian Amman was also "surrounded by its own people," and both of these cases demonstrate decidedly less successful outcomes.

Moreover, in no way did Hamas' status as a Palestinian movement guarantee it the support of the Palestinian public. True, Hamas was (and is) fighting in a context within which national identity – that is, Palestinian-ness – had already been established as the most salient political characteristic for most of their potential constituents, but Hamas is obviously not the only organization with a claim to Palestinian identity in the territory. During the first intifada, it had to compete directly with the UNLU, and its rivalry with Fatah remains the strongest

dividing line in Palestinian politics. In choosing to mobilize based on a pan-Islamic identity meshed with a Palestinian nationalist narrative, Hamas attempted to set itself apart from its nationalist and leftist rivals, but this ultimately proved to be less successful than the argument that Hamas represented freedom from corruption. While the Hamas politicians interviewed clearly believed, or felt they needed to appear to believe, that the movement's Islamic character is its major draw (using language that sounded remarkably similar to claims by PLO officials that Palestinian support for the PLO is a natural feature of Palestinian identity) public opinion polling tells a very different story. It was not Hamas' "innate" identity characteristics which helped it to obtain public support, or even the identity it constructed for itself based on an alternative narrative of Palestinian nationalism as rooted in Islam, but rather, characteristics which it laid claim to almost by accident based on its actions.

Moreover, even if their status as an Islamic party did help them attract some support domestically, it was in some ways problematic for them internationally. The Jordanian monarchy and the Mubarak regime in Egypt both view(ed) their own domestic Islamist movements as threats to their authority (although in Egypt, it was not the Muslim Brotherhood that eventually brought down the Mubarak regime), leading them to view Hamas with distrust. Surprisingly, this was not true of Syria, but Syrian support for Hamas is provided in spite of, not because of, the latter's Islamic political project. (And, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, this may soon change.)

Clearly, Hamas did not enjoy any particular advantages when it was founded in comparison with either the PLO or Hizbullah. Gaza has little by way of natural resources and, like the other organizations under comparison, it was forced to look outside for financial and military assets. In acquiring these, Hamas was less successful than Hizbullah, but Hamas' military performance cannot be

attributed solely to its (lack of) weapons, either. Like Hizbullah, their offensive capacity was greater than their defensive capacity, though Hizbullah's was clearly stronger. On the other hand, Hamas had larger numbers of fighters under arms than did Hizbullah, and had the advantage of fighting in urban areas, which favor guerrilla over conventional tactics. And, they experienced far lower rates of desertion than the PLO had, though given the size of Gaza, there were admittedly fewer options available to any fighters who might have wanted to do so. Ultimately, despite the terrible cost to Gaza, Hamas was able to recover from the Gaza War and maintain its position in the territory.

But as of this writing, due to the ongoing changes in the region, Hamas' position both domestically and regionally is in flux. Hamas' status in Gaza remains secure for the time being, but its rapprochement with Fatah may have unpredictable electoral consequences, as this development has the potential to improve both parties' reputations. It also stands to goad the Israeli government into a new offensive against the Palestinian territories. More surprisingly, ongoing popular protests in Syria (and in particular the brutal suppression of those protests) may have produced a rift between the Asad regime and Hamas, and the leadership is said to be actively seeking a new headquarters outside of Damascus. A break with Syria would have profound consequences for the movement in terms of both its access to resources from Syria itself and its relationship with Iran, Syria's close ally. And in the context of the ongoing political uprising challenging the dominance of authoritarian regimes across the Middle East, Hamas' future is anything but certain. To survive another confrontation with Israel, it will need to cultivate new relationships to replace old ones, both at home and abroad.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

At its core, this project is about the question of structure versus agency. Whereas much of the existing scholarship on civil war, insurgency, and nonstate military actors tends to focus on the structural factors shaping both nonstate actor behavior and the outcomes of their campaigns, the theory I have presented focuses instead on the agency nonstate actors hold in shaping these outcomes.

I began this project with three hypotheses: that nonstate actors who use coercion against civilians and/or potential sponsors will receive access only to material assets; that those who offer the provision of services in exchange for resources from the same sources will have access to some material and non-material assets; and that those who actively market themselves will have durable access to many material and nonmaterial assets. These hypotheses are, I think, supported by the five case studies presented here, which generate a number of important, and in some cases surprising, findings, which will also be discussed in this chapter. In brief, these are as follows: first, the use of coercion often makes militant groups less effective; second, service as a military proxy can carry hidden long-term costs because of its effects on the client movement; third, the link between social service provision and popular support may be quite different than it is sometimes assumed to be; fourth, though identity politics are very important, they are important in different ways than are often assumed; and fifth, material assets alone are insufficient to explain variation in militant group performance. After a comparison of the five cases presented in the previous chapters in the context of my hypotheses (and some analysis as to how well my conclusions have held up in the intervening years,) I discuss the overlap and interaction between the

strategies militias use to acquire resources. I will then move on to a more detailed analysis of the above findings, which constitute the major theoretical contribution of this project, and then conclude with a discussion of the applicability of my theory in other contexts, specifically Iraq and Afghanistan.

Cross-case comparison

I began this dissertation with three hypotheses:

H1: If nonstate actors use coercion against states and/or civilians, then they will receive only short term material resources and few if any non-material resources.

H2: If nonstate actors provide services to states and/or civilians in exchange for support, then they will receive some material and non-material resources.

H3: If nonstate actors market themselves to prospective sponsor states and/or local civilian constituents, then they will receive durable access to material and non-material assets.

The five case studies presented in this project have provided solid evidence that not only do resources matter, how militant groups go about acquiring these resources in the first place is also of enormous importance, demonstrating that nonstate actors do possess agency in determining their own fates.

In the late 1960s, the Palestine Liberation Organization used coercion against the Jordanian state and civilians to maintain a base of operations in its less-than-willing host country. It was aided in doing so by pressure from the Arab states, which it approached through a combination of marketing based on the normative power of the Palestinian cause, and service as a military proxy against Israel. Though these states (particularly Salah Jadid's faction in Syria) provided valuable support, it was not enough to save them in Jordan. The PLO had been counting on the Jordanian-Jordanian versus Palestinian-Jordanian political

cleavage to produce defections by Palestinian officers and split the Jordanian army. However, no such split occurred, due largely to anger on the part of the military towards the PLO's coercive behavior. This demonstrates that identity endowments are only as powerful as a nonstate actor's ability to frame them effectively (discussed further below.) After seven days of fighting, the PLO surrendered to King Hussein in Cairo. By the spring of 1971, the PLO had been expelled from Jordan and relocated its headquarters to Beirut and its primary base of operations to South Lebanon.

There, the organization repeated many of the mistakes it had made in Jordan. Indeed, when I asked various PLO officers whether they had learned anything in Jordan that helped them avoid making mistakes in Lebanon, the most common answer was a rueful "no." The PLO maintained different policies towards the factions that composed the increasingly fragile Lebanese state. It was coercive and hostile towards the Christian political leadership (as the latter was towards Palestinian civilians and the PLO.) On the other hand, it engaged in marketing towards the (Sunni/Druze majority) left based on common political preferences as well as providing military backing for these politicians' own communal ambitions relative to the National Pact. The PLO initially enjoyed a close relationship with Musa Sadr's Amal movement based on what were framed as common political goals, but the relationship soon became coercive as Amal grew unwilling to tolerate the PLO's activities in Shi'ite areas of the south. At the civilian level, the PLO's relationships with different sectors of Lebanese society more or less mirrored those at the political level. While the PLO engaged in service provision in the Palestinian refugee camps, and to a much lesser degree in Sunni areas of West Beirut, it eventually became deeply coercive towards the Shi'ite and Christian villagers in the south.

Moreover, because of the sponsorship the various PLO factions received from the Arab states during this period, the organization as a whole became increasingly drawn into the rivalries that characterized intra-Arab politics. This led, in turn, to increased factionalization and reduced cohesion within the organization and ultimately a high rate of retreat and desertion during the Israeli invasion.

When the IDF invaded in 1982, the Christian militias sided openly with the PLO. Amal, which had been openly fighting with the PLO for several years and was in any case tired of watching its constituents endure Israeli reprisals for the PLO's actions, remained ostensibly neutral, but did hold positions handed over by the IDF as they advanced. The Arab states did little other than send aid, which the Syrians, wanting a swift end to the war, prevented from even reaching Lebanon, going so far as to confiscate the PLO's own weapons stocks in Damascus. The conflict ended with the PLO agreeing, at the request of its allies on the Lebanese left (and because of its hopeless military position) to evacuate from Beirut altogether. The following chart demonstrates the similarities between the two PLO cases:

	PLO – 1970	PLO - 1982
Military Strength	10-20,000, small arms, grenades, heavy artillery, RPGs	15,000 soldiers, 85 tanks, 100 anti-tank guns, 150 - 200 artillery, anti-aircraft, + 25,000 Syrian forces
Adversary	Jordanian Military: 65,000 troops, ~500 tanks, artillery, (small) air force.	IDF, 75,000 soldiers, 1,240 tanks and 1,520 APCs, plus air power + LF Allies
Context	Jordan: Majority Palestinian, economic and communal fragmentation	Lebanon: Majority Lebanese, sectarian fragmentation
Strategy-civilians	Marketing/ service provision inside camps, coercion elsewhere	Marketing/service provision inside camps, coercion elsewhere
Strategy-sponsors	Marketing/service to Arab states, coercion to Jordan	Marketing/service to Arab states, coercion to most of Lebanese state
Outcome	Failure to survive	Failure to survive

Table 2

The parallels between these cases demonstrate that, as stated in hypothesis 1 above, the use of coercion cannot generate all of the resources that a nonstate actor needs to be successful.

But if the PLO cases demonstrate that parallel strategies produce parallel outcomes, the two cases involving Hizbullah demonstrate the converse: that a change in strategy will produce a change in outcome. More specifically, Hizbullah moved from a primarily coercive strategy to a mixture of marketing and service provision, and saw its fortunes improve accordingly. In Hizbullah's early years, between its foundation in 1982 and the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, Hizbullah was a very different organization than it was in 2006. Although it engaged in small amounts of service provision, its main approach towards the non-Shi'ite population was coercive. Furthermore, its narrow and extremist framing of itself as a movement and of its goals for Lebanon proved alienating even to many Shi'ites. At the same time, its radical rhetoric and tactics, particularly the kidnapping of foreigners in West Beirut, alarmed the Syrians, as did its rivalry with Syria's primary Shi'ite client, Amal, leading to clashes between the two. True, Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran provided Hizbullah with enormous amounts of money, training, and other resources. But, because of its behavior towards both the Syrians and the Lebanese public, Hizbullah was unable to acquire important political assets inside Lebanon and was therefore unable to make effective use of the material resources it was receiving from Iran. This meant that not only was Hizbullah prevented from making significant headway in its attempt to push Israel out of South Lebanon during this period, but that it was *itself* pushed out of South Lebanon, not by Israel, but by Amal. Although it was able to recover later, it was unable to resist Amal's assault in the short term, for reasons which had as much to do with local politics as with military power. I

therefore consider this an intermediate outcome, but it could easily be considered a failure.

This stands in marked contrast to Hizbullah's performance in the 2006 July War. After the civil war ended in 1990, Hizbullah's leadership made a conscious decision to reinvent itself. It expanded its social service network (including the provision of services to some non-Shi'ites), participated in elections, and began framing itself as a "Lebanese resistance" rather than "Shi'ite revolutionary" organization. All of this not only helped it to improve its reputation in some segments of the non-Shi'ite public (making possible an alliance with Michel Aoun's Tayyar al Watani in 2005), but also created a nearly unbreakable norm of support for the movement in the Shi'ite community. Regionally, it repaired its relationship with Syria, which was far more comfortable with this new, more moderate version of Hizbullah and was now willing to adopt it as a military and political proxy both within Lebanon and against Israel.

At the same time, however, after Khomeini's death in 1989, Hizbullah began to receive somewhat less funding from Iran, although the relationship remained very close. Yet even given this reduction in funding, Hizbullah's military performance improved significantly during this period. In 2006, during the July War, it was able to both resist the Israeli military assault, thanks to its material assets, and recover politically afterwards, due to its political resources, both in the Shi'ite community and nationally. Notably, the Israeli attack in 2006 did not produce the sort of backlash against the movement among Shi'ites that IDF shelling of South Lebanon did during the 1980s.

	Hizbullah: The Civil War Years	Hizbullah: July War
Military Strength	Unknown number of soldiers; Small arms, RPGs, surface-to-surface missiles, suicide attacks, car bombs	~3,000 “Katyusha” rockets, wire guided missiles, anti-tank and anti-ship missiles, small arms.
Adversary	IDF; 1,000-2000, + SLA fighters, tanks, APCs, artillery, air power	10,000-30,000; tanks, F-16 fighter jets, naval blockade.
Context	South Lebanon	South Lebanon
Strategy-civilians	Coercion, minimal service provision/marketing	Marketing and service provision, some coercion
Strategy-Sponsors	Iran: Service provision and marketing, Syria: Coercion	Iran and Syria: Service provision and marketing
Outcome	Draw/Failure	Survive

Table 3

A comparison of the two Hizbullah cases, then, not only offers support for hypothesis 1, but also for hypotheses 2 and 3. It was by shifting to a service provision and marketing strategy that Hizbullah was able to acquire the important non-material resources that it needed in order to not only resist the initial Israeli attack during the July war, but also to recover afterwards.

The final case, that of Hamas and the Gaza War, falls somewhere in between the experiences of Hizbullah and the PLO. Hamas has successfully constructed relationships with Iran and Syria based on its status as a proxy against Israel, relationships that have provided the movement with funding, training and weapons, although perhaps not in the quantities enjoyed by Hizbullah. These resources allowed Hamas to recover from the Israeli attack on Gaza in January 2009, known as Operation Cast Lead, although it was not able to offer much by way of resistance during the war.

More intriguing are Hamas’ domestic relationships, which while in some ways successful, seem not to have unfolded precisely as intended. Hamas has attempted to market itself to potential constituents based on its Islamic character, but polling indicates that this is not a message which resonates with many Palestinians’ priorities. What does seem to have generated support is admiration for the movement’s competence (especially as compared with Fatah) in the administration of its various social services, despite the fact that these are actually

used only by a small minority of Palestinians. It is Hamas' appeal as competent managers and honest bureaucrats, rather than its ideological or political project, which helped its candidates to win the 2006 election and maintain control of Gaza in the aftermath of the Gaza War. I consider the Gaza War an intermediate outcome, although it leans heavily towards success, because the IDF was careful, after the July War, to define its goals more narrowly, as the deterrence, rather than destruction, of Hamas. But though Hamas has perhaps been deterred, it also retains the capacity to attack Israeli targets should it so choose. At the same time, based on more recent polling (as discussed further below), its support is shakier in Gaza than it was. This lends some support to hypotheses 2 and 3, although it also suggests some additional implications which are discussed in greater depth below.

Hamas, Hizbullah, and the PLO in the Recent Past

A fully objective assessment of the above hypotheses also requires some assessment as to how well they have held up in the years since the episodes discussed in the previous chapters. While the aim of this project has not been to assess any of these groups' prospects for permanent "victory", the passage of time has served to clarify the extent of Hamas and Hizbullah's abilities to recover from their encounters with the IDF, and provided a more hopeful postscript in the case of the PLO. Moreover, it is worth examining whether any of these movements have changed their resource acquisition strategies in recent years, to see what effect, if any, these changes have had on their regional and domestic positions.

The PLO

The PLO has undergone a dramatic transformation since the events described in Chapter Three, demonstrating again that reinvention is indeed possible, if difficult. With the end of the Cold War, like Hizbullah, the PLO

leadership clearly realized that it needed a different strategy at the regional level.⁸³³ The outbreak of the intifada in 1987 and Jordan's "disengagement" from the West Bank in 1988 paved the way first for the Madrid negotiations in 1991 and then the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in 1993. Despite the PLO's exile in Tunisia, it retained its status as "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," and it was in this capacity that Arafat signed the Oslo Agreement, beginning what was to have been a phased transition to an independent Palestinian state, as well as the PLO's own transition from a guerrilla movement to a de facto government. In this context, at least within the territories, the organizational framework of the PLO faded increasingly into the background, as the Palestinian Authority (PA) increasingly assumed the role of the primary institution representing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In a parallel transformation (not dissimilar to that undergone by Hizbullah) Fatah itself began the task of remaking itself from an international guerrilla movement to a local political party, and began to engage in more direct attempts at marketing itself and its state-building project in Palestine.

But in 2000, the Oslo process collapsed, as the second intifada erupted out of Palestinian frustration with what was perceived as Israeli foot-dragging. Disillusionment with Oslo translated into disillusionment with the PA in general and Arafat in particular, who were perceived as working too closely with Israel. At the same time, Fatah's political dominance and perceived corruption caused friction with Hamas. This was only exacerbated by the fact that the PLO cadres returning from exile in Tunisia and elsewhere in 1993 were perceived as

⁸³³ None of the armed PLO factions has ever been able to reestablish a presence in Jordan, although some have unarmed, relatively toothless, political arms there. The PLO did manage to reestablish itself in Beirut to a limited extent, sparking the bloody fighting against Amal known as the War of the Camps in Beirut in 1985, though it never regained the unfettered access to the Israeli border area it had enjoyed until 1982.

privileged outsiders by many of those who had remained in the West Bank and especially Gaza, particularly members of Hamas.

The fighting between the two parties since the elections of 2006 appears to have produced an overwhelming sentiment of “a pox on both your houses” in the Palestinian public; 62% of those polled in March of 2001 believed that both sides are responsible for the continuing split, with 15% blaming Hamas and 15% blaming Fatah.⁸³⁴ Nevertheless, due in part to its ability to transform itself in the early 1990s and in part to its historical stature, the PLO has remained an important institution, albeit in a somewhat altered form. Fatah, its dominant faction, retains control over the West Bank, and membership in the PLO (and representation in the PNC, its legislative body) clearly remains a powerful political commodity, as indicated by the fact that inclusion of Hamas in the PLO has been a key issue in recent negotiations between the two.

Hizbullah

Whatever hopes Israel might have had that the July War would weaken and contain Hizbullah domestically, in its aftermath, Hizbullah actually appeared to be politically stronger than ever, particularly among Shi'ites. Polling by the Beirut Center for Research and Information after the second week of the July War found overwhelming support for Hizbullah across all confessions, a sharp increase from the period prior to the war.⁸³⁵ Given the quality of polling in Lebanon, this should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt, but anecdotal evidence (in the form of my own conversations in Beirut with friends and colleagues during

⁸³⁴ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, “Public Opinion Poll #39”, March 17, 2011, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2011/p39e.pdf>.

⁸³⁵ Beirut Center for Research and Information, “Poll Finds Support for Hizbullah’s retaliation”, July 29, 2006, <http://www.beirutcenter.info/default.asp?contentid=692&MenuID=46>.

the July War) does suggest that the Israeli bombardment created far more anger at Israel than it did at Hizbullah.

But what Israel could not do to Hizbullah, Hizbullah nearly managed to do to itself, by reverting to the use of coercion to get what it wanted domestically. In the fall of 2006, angered at the March 8th opposition's exclusion from decision-making, Nasrullah called for a unity government and a power-sharing agreement which would give the March 8th bloc (and therefore Hizbullah) a veto in the cabinet. (As was frequently pointed out by the March 14th bloc, this objection happened to coincide with the vote on the formation of an international tribunal to investigate the assassination of PM Rafiq Hariri, for which many blame Syria and its Lebanese allies.)⁸³⁶ Tensions were further exacerbated by the assassination in November of MP Pierre Gemayel, heir apparent to the Kataeb party leadership, whose death was widely blamed on pro-Syrian forces interested in blocking an investigation into Rafiq Hariri's assassination.⁸³⁷

As negotiations with the March 14th leadership (headed by Rafiq Hariri's son, Sa'ad) stalled, in late November Nasrullah called for a massive sit-in in Beirut's Martyr's Square.⁸³⁸ His call was answered by tens of thousands of March 8th supporters. A tent-city sprang up outside of parliament, but despite calls for PM Seniora's resignation, for the most part the situation remained tense but calm, punctuated by only sporadic violence in January and April. However, in May of 2008, the situation came to a head when the Lebanese army attempted to shut down Hizbullah's telecommunications network and removed the Hizbullah-affiliated chief of security at Beirut Airport. On May 7th, militiamen from the

⁸³⁶ "US Issues Lebanon 'Plot Warning,'" *BBC News*, November 1, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6107224.stm>.

⁸³⁷ "Lebanon Mourns Gemayel," *Al Jazeera*, November 22, 2006, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2006/11/200852512443436675.html>.

⁸³⁸ "Speech by Hassan Nasrullah," Hizbullah's Website, *Moqawama.org*, November 30, 2006, <http://www.english.moqawama.org/essaydetailsf.php?eid=715&fid=11&st=sit-in>.

March 8th coalition parties, led by Hizbullah's forces, occupied West Beirut. They attacked and shut down the Al Mustaqbal television station and newspaper (both affiliated with Hariri's Future Movement), and launched an RPG at Hariri's residence (though he was not present at the time). Clashes broke out in Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Aley and the Bekaa, and scores were killed.⁸³⁹ In the end, the government backed down, and Hizbullah retained its telecommunications network and its surveillance of the airport. On May 21st, the two sides signed the Doha Accord, creating a power sharing agreement at the parliamentary and cabinet levels and preparing the way for new presidential elections.⁸⁴⁰

The events of May 2008 marked the first time since the clashes with Amal during the civil war that Hizbullah had turned its weapons on other Lebanese. In addition to its overt use of force in taking control of West Beirut, its insistence on retaining independent surveillance and intelligence capabilities over the government's objections can certainly be construed as coercive, and has perhaps weakened the movement's image in Lebanon. However, Hizbullah remains a potent political force. The results of the 2009 elections left it in a similar position to that it had enjoyed prior to the July War, and the realignment of Jumblatt's PSP in 2010 brought down the previous government, presenting the March 8th camp, and therefore Hizbullah, with an unprecedented degree of political influence.

Hamas

In Hamas' case, given how recent the events of the Gaza War are, it is somewhat more difficult to assess its long term trajectory, but the evidence of the past two years (and particularly the events of the spring of 2011) do suggest that

⁸³⁹ "Beirut Streets 'Calm' After Fighting," *Al Jazeera*, May 11, 2008, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/05/200861423359476122.html>.

⁸⁴⁰ Abdullah, Hussein., "Lebanese Rivals Set to Elect President After Historical Accord.," *Daily Star*, May 22, 2008, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/May/22/Lebanese-rivals-set-to-elect-president-after-historic-accord.ashx#axzz1KaJZJzgL>.

its continuing reliance on service provision as a basis for its local and regional relationships has rendered these somewhat tenuous. There is clearly some dissatisfaction in Gaza with Hamas' rule, and it is now unclear who would prevail if elections were held immediately. 55% of respondents to a March 2011 poll by PCPSR would vote for Mahmoud Abbas for president, despite his negative reputation, versus 38% who would vote for Ismail Haniyeh. In parliamentary elections, Hamas would receive only 26% of the vote to Fatah's 40%. Moreover, there appears to be widespread dissatisfaction with Hamas' governance of Gaza; 67% of Gaza residents polled supported the idea of holding demonstrations to "change the regime" similar to those in Egypt and Tunisia, as compared with 36% of West Bankers. Hamas still fares somewhat better than Fatah in polling on corruption; 59% of those surveyed believed that there was corruption in the Hamas government in Gaza, as compared with 70% who believed the same of the Fatah government in the West Bank, although this is hardly a ringing endorsement. In other areas, it fares far worse; while a third of West Bankers believed that they could criticize their government without fear, only 19% of Gazans felt similarly. This last number has steadily declined in Gaza since 2007, when it stood at 52%.⁸⁴¹

So, though Hamas survived its confrontation with Israel, and remains in control of Gaza, its position appears shakier now than it did immediately after the conflict. The recent announcement of a move towards reunification with Fatah suggests that perhaps Hamas is cognizant of this reality, as well as potential changes in the regional alignment. In seeking to repair its relationship with Fatah, it may also be seeking to improve its image in the eyes of the Palestinian public.

⁸⁴¹ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Public Opinion Poll #39."

Moreover, as noted in Chapter Six, the recent (and as of this writing, ongoing) protests in Syria appear to have created a rift between the Syrian regime and the Hamas leadership, apparently because Hamas itself disapproves of its sponsor's violent response to these protests. Hamas has found itself in a position where its sponsor and host is attacking a domestic opposition to which Hamas itself is at least partly sympathetic, making the relationship an uncomfortable one. This development reflects the weakness of sponsor relationships that are based on a utilitarian exchange of goods (weaponry, funding and training) for services (attacks on a shared enemy, Israel) rather than a genuine commitment to shared principles and a common political project. Khaled Mishal is now said to be seeking to relocate the movement's external leadership to a new host country (possibly Qatar) although it remains to be seen whether this will occur.⁸⁴² Should Hamas' relations with Syria become further damaged, or even severed entirely, this could also affect its relationship with Iran, and its ability to acquire important material assets. However, Hamas may well decide that its domestic credibility (and perhaps its relationship with the new government in Egypt, which has just opened the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza) is worth the risk. However events unfold, the current tension in the Syrian-Hamas relationship seems to support my second hypothesis.

Major findings

The above hypotheses generate a number of additional findings which have emerged over the course of this project. All speak to the fact that the strategies that nonstate actors use to acquire resources have inherent but

⁸⁴² Ethan, "Tensions Rise as Hamas Refuses to Take Sides in Syria."

sometimes unintended consequences. These can shape both the nonstate actors themselves, and their societies more broadly.

Coercion is Dangerous

I will begin with what is probably the most obvious: coercion tends to cause a backlash in the long run. That the use of coercion stands to alienate local civilian populations is a constant theme in the classic literature on guerrilla warfare, from General Hoche to T.E. Lawrence to Mao to Che Guevara.⁸⁴³ Indeed, for this reason, the costs of coercion should probably come as less of a shock than they often do to the nonstate actors who employ it as a tactic.

But the use of coercion can also have a ripple effect, leading to further negative outcomes for the nonstate actor which engages in this behavior. For one thing, if the position of the military with regard to the nonstate actor is not yet certain at the outset of the conflict – if for instance, the militant group has hopes of provoking military defection or reducing morale – attacks on civilians can prevent these outcomes by hardening the positions of individual soldiers and officers against the militia. This was what happened to the PLO in Jordan, when the behavior of the fedayeen alienated Palestinians in the army and government who might conceivably have otherwise have been sympathetic to their cause. Similarly, extremist behavior can alienate other militant groups, even those purporting to represent the same constituency. This was Hizbullah's experience in the 1980s in Lebanon, when its attacks on foreign and Lebanese civilian targets embarrassed the Syrians and alienated Amal, leading to intra-Shi'ite clashes that further tarnished both movements' reputations. In other words, not only is

⁸⁴³ North, "General Hoche and Counterinsurgency.", Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Trans. by J.P. Morray, with an introduction by I.F. Stone.; Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*., T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1935).

coercion, by its very nature, a poor way of acquiring nonmaterial resources like legitimacy and political influence, it can actively *prevent* the militant group from being able to acquire them, even from other domestic sources, because of its impact on local attitudes. This suggests that extremist splinter groups like the salafists who have recently appeared in Gaza, and who were apparently responsible for the murder of an Italian peace activist in May of 2011, are not likely to find widespread support.

In Jordan, the PLO's coercive behavior towards civilians and the state, particularly military officers, had the effect of eliminating any chance of mass defection in the army, a development the movement's leadership was very much hoping for. In Lebanon, the PLO's behavior towards civilians in the south was enough to alienate and provoke clashes with Amal, despite the fact that in Amal's early years, it was trained by Fatah cadres. And during the civil war, Hizbullah's coercive behavior in both West Beirut and South Lebanon in many ways cancelled out attempts by its more moderate members (e.g., Ayatollah Fadlullah) to reassure Lebanon's other political factions. All three of these groups alienated communities and institutions who might otherwise have been potential allies through their use of coercion to obtain other resources.

The Hidden Risks of Proxyhood

More subtle and less predictable are the effects of state sponsorship on the client organization. State sponsorship can provide a crucial boost to a nonstate military actor, particularly in its early years, and the funding and armaments that sponsorship provides can be very useful.⁸⁴⁴ However, these resources can carry risks; not only is there the chance that a state sponsor will abandon or turn on its

⁸⁴⁴ Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*.; Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*.; Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.; Salehyan, "No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict."

client, but, depending on the character of the sponsor state, sponsorship can have a pernicious effect on organizational cohesion in the long term. Having multiple sponsors whose interests collide with one another, a single sponsor whose regime is highly factionalized, or even a sponsor whose preferences differ from those of some within the client organization, can create divisions that prove harmful in the long term.

It is perhaps unsurprising that sponsorship by multiple regimes which are at odds with one another can create rifts within the client organization, particularly if the two sponsor states use their clients as proxies to settle their dispute. This dynamic was responsible for some of the divisions in the PLO in the 1980s, when the hostility between Iraq and Syria translated to their respective clients within the PLO, creating tensions within the organization. Of course, this dynamic can also go the other way. The conflict between Amal and Hizbullah put a strain on the relationship between Syria and Iran in 1988 and 1989.

Divisions within a single sponsor regime can also sometimes be reproduced in the leadership of the client organization. After Khomeini's death in 1989, the power struggle in Iran between hardliners and pragmatists was replicated within Hizbullah, as the reformist faction led by first Musavi and then Nasrullah came into conflict with Tufayli's hardline faction. As in Iran, where Rafsanjani's faction ultimately prevailed, the moderates in Hizbullah (that is, those who favored electoral participation) were successful, but at a cost. Tufayli was ultimately expelled from the movement and in the late 1990s went so far as to raise an armed challenge in the Bekaa. Although the main body of Hizbullah was able to weather this conflict without permanent division, the episode could have been deeply damaging.

But even sponsorship by one, highly cohesive state can be sufficient to trigger schisms in its client. The Syrian intervention in Lebanon in 1976 forced the Syrian-sponsored factions to stand either with the rest of the PLO, or with their Syrian patron, creating divisions which have been reproduced in one form or another for decades. One could perhaps argue that these divisions were already present in the movement, and that the rivalries between the PLO's various factions preceded foreign sponsorship, but even if this were the case, foreign sponsorship clearly made these divisions worse, and contributed to the eventual open warfare that broke out within the PLO in the 1980s. In addition, in the case of the factions such as al Saiqa (at one point the second largest faction in the PLO) which were created in the first place by their foreign sponsors, sponsorship and the ideological alignment it entailed clearly preceded later divisions.

It is also worth noting that state sponsorship has the potential to create divisions even within organizations which were not previously factionalized. Hamas has historically made an effort to prevent factionalization within the movement. It avoids cults of personality and the accretion of influence around particular leaders, the vaguely hagiographic treatment of Ahmad Yassin since his death notwithstanding, and major decisions (such as the move to Amman in 1989 or the choice of whether to participate in elections of 1996 and 2006) tend to be made through discussion and consensus. But even given this history, the existence of a separate headquarters in Damascus has led to some differences between that branch and the Gaza branch. While Mishal and the Damascus branch are more moderate on some issues (such as the enforcement of conservative social and gender norms in Gaza,) on others, such as negotiation with Israel, the Damascus leadership's position is more hardline, and perhaps more in line with Syrian foreign policy objectives. This was the case during the Gaza War, when

the two factions clearly had different preferences regarding the conditions for an end to the conflict (see Chapter Six.)

The warping effect of sponsorship on client organizations is an area which is not sufficiently addressed in the existing literature on state sponsorship. Although Salehyan⁸⁴⁵ does note that state sponsorship can put rebel movements at risk of losing touch with their constituency and losing their autonomy, and Byman and Kreps⁸⁴⁶ address some of the drawbacks of sponsorship to the sponsor state, this project provides new insight into the long-term shaping effects of state sponsorship on the client organization itself.

The Link between Service Provision and Public Support

A third contribution made by this project is the insight that while social service provision is indeed important in generating public support for the nonstate actor providing the services, the causal relationship between these phenomena is somewhat different than that described in much of the literature on the subject. As Clark notes, much of the scholarship on what she calls Islamic Social Institutions (and what I would term social services) has historically assumed that these institutions primarily function as tools for recruiting new members.⁸⁴⁷ While recent work by Flanigan provides a more nuanced version of this argument, suggesting that these services can help move constituents along a continuum of acceptance of the movement,⁸⁴⁸ Berman's work offers a more extreme articulation of this thesis. He argues that terrorist groups use social services

⁸⁴⁵ Idean Salehyan, "The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 3 (2010): 493-515.

⁸⁴⁶ Daniel Byman and Sarah Kreps, "(2010) Agents of Destruction? Applying Principal-Agent Analysis to State-Sponsored Terrorism," *International Studies Perspectives* 11, no. 1 (2010): 1-18.

⁸⁴⁷ Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism: Middle Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen*.

⁸⁴⁸ Flanigan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World*.

essentially as a way of trapping potential recruits,⁸⁴⁹ by providing them with an education that renders them unfit for employment outside the militant movement (a sacrifice that adherents make willingly, says Berman, to demonstrate commitment to the group), and rendering them dependent on the movement's other services. In this way, the organization insulates itself against defection by its fighters.

In fact, this characterization bears little resemblance to the behavior of the movements examined in this dissertation. Hamas and Hizbullah's fighters, and even their suicide bombers, tend to be well educated young people who have a whole range other options available to them. And the provision of social services by these groups is not simply a means of securing the dependence of those who make use of them. Indeed, Clark suggests quite the opposite, that rather than fostering vertical ties between members of different social classes (the elites running these radical organizations and the lower classes who make use of the services they provide,) these institutions tend to instead foster horizontal ties, across the urban middle class. This occurs because, rather than drawing in clients from across the socio-economic spectrum, these services tend to be used by those who are already within the organization's orbit (and are often major donors); offering services like education and health care is a way of keeping them engaged with the organization's social and political goals. Clark goes so far as to argue that "service to the poor" is ultimately more rhetoric than reality.⁸⁵⁰

My findings are slightly different, although in some ways related. The evidence presented in this project suggests that while social services do improve

⁸⁴⁹ Eli Berman, *Religious, Radical and Violent: The new economics of terrorism*, 139-140.

⁸⁵⁰ Clark also suggests that the movements providing these services are in general not fanatical, and frequently non-violent, seeking to establish an alternative system of institutions to that provided by the state, rather than to overthrow it by force. While this echoes my own sense that service provision is often about assuming the responsibilities of the state, this does not, in my view, inherently mean that groups providing services cannot also be radical and fundamentalist, as Hamas' early years clearly demonstrate.

the movement's reputation, they do so in an unexpected fashion. While Hizbullah enjoys a near monopoly over the provision of certain services in the Shi'ite community in Lebanon, in contrast, the percentage of Palestinians using Hamas' social services is actually quite small, by some estimates lower than 10%. This is far less than the proportion of the public who voted for them in the 2006 elections (see Chapter Six). Both movements' provision of social services is credited with garnering support from the public, and yet, if the dynamic was one of a straight exchange of support for votes, we should see far fewer people voting for Hamas, and far more Lebanese from outside the Shi'ite community supporting Hizbullah than we actually do.

What this project suggests, based on interviews with Hamas leaders, public opinion polling, and statistics on social service usage, is that a person does not have to use social services to admire a particular group for providing them. Moreover, quality can be more important than quantity -- the degree and breadth of support that social provision elicits is often more about the quality of those services and the competence with which they are managed than how many people they reach. While for some constituents, Hamas' social services may constitute a quid-pro-quo exchange of goods for support, if this were the only way in which they mattered, Hamas' vote share would be much smaller than it is. Service provision as a strategy, as noted in Hypothesis 2, provides only limited access to certain resources, because of the nature of the socio-economic sector most likely to need free social services in the first place. For service provision to be truly beneficial for the organization, it must have a much broader effect on public opinion, and reach beyond those who are actually accepting charitable donations or free medical help. Hamas' provision of social services has been beneficial not because those who use them therefore vote for Hamas, although they may well do so, but because it has helped Hamas present itself as being a more competent and

less corrupt party than its political rivals, and therefore more qualified to govern. Similarly, Hizbullah has benefited widely from the perception that it does a better job of caring for the Shi'ite community than the Lebanese state ever has, but it also from the widespread perception that its institutions, some of which are used by those outside the Shi'ite community, are competently managed. In other words, when social services are effective it is not because they are being traded for votes, which provides a much more limited level of support, but because they are functioning as a kind of marketing: they allow the movement to showcase its ability to perform the functions of the state, and therefore its qualification to govern.

Identity as a Dependent Variable

The last two findings I will discuss, regarding the origins of “social endowments” and the role of material endowments respectively, are in some ways related. Both directly challenge the notion that structural variables, that is, those factors present in the nonstate actor’s environment over which it has no control, are what most directly shape the organization’s chances of success.

With regard to the role of identity, while I do not contest that these variables matter, I do challenge the idea that their presence or absence are beyond the group’s control. In much of the literature on social movements, “identity” is positioned as an independent variable, as something which is a) fixed and b) causes other things to happen. This is also true of some of the civil war literature, including Weinstein’s work⁸⁵¹ and some of the literature on state sponsorship (see above), in that “shared ethnicity” is sometimes cited as a factor increasing the likelihood of sponsorship.⁸⁵²

⁸⁵¹ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

⁸⁵² Moore and Davis, “Transnational Ethnic Ties and Foreign Policy.”

But one of the substantial contributions of the scholarship on ethnic conflict⁸⁵³ and to a lesser extent the related literature on nationalism,⁸⁵⁴ is that identity can also be a *dependent* variable. It is itself produced by social mobilization, the machinations and aspirations of political elites, and the behavior of nonstate military actors. This dissertation demonstrates that through assiduous marketing, nonstate actors can shape the boundaries around communities and help to determine which identity facets (religion or language, geography or tribe) will prove most salient politically. Indeed, this is the very purpose of marketing as conceived in this project; not only can nonstate actors choose to emphasize those facets of their movement's identity that will allow them to access the largest potential constituency, they also have the ability to shape the public discourse around identity in such a way that they shape potential constituents' perceptions of what it means to be "us" and what it means to be "them." Nonstate actors do not just use political identity, they help to create it.

The deft (or less than deft) wielding of identity-based discourse as a means of mobilization has played a powerful role in the success (or otherwise) of all of these groups at various times, and yet, it has not served to predetermine any of their fates. There are certainly commonalities among Hizbullah, Hamas and the PLO (particularly Fatah) in this area. All three groups have bases in a disenfranchised refugee population. All of them had the choice to appeal to their potential constituents using a broader, regional identity (as Arabs,) or a particular national identity (as Lebanese or Palestinians); as members of a disenfranchised socio-political class (as refugees or aggrieved indigenes); or as members of a

⁸⁵³ Gagnon, "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia."; Saideman, Dougherty, and Jenne, "Dilemmas of Divorce: How Secessionist Identities Cut Both Ways."; Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad.*; Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa.*

⁸⁵⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983). Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Second. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

transnational religious group (as Muslims, or Sunnis, or Shi'ites) which simultaneously constituted an intra-national cleavage (between Muslims and Christians, Sunnis and Shi'ites.) Each group ultimately made different choices as to which of identity-narrative (religious, nationalist, regional, economic, nativist, or communal) it would emphasize to which constituency (or even, in the case of some factions, as to whether it would bother trying to explain itself to anyone at all.) Because of the nature of identity framing, which often takes the form of a rhetoric of "we-are-thus-and-always-have-been", the identities assumed and narratives espoused by each of these groups may seem in retrospect to be inherent and primordial. But in reality, each movement had a range of options from which to choose.

The early history of the PLO is particularly reflective of the regional debate over whether the Palestine issue should be framed as a Palestinian nationalist struggle, a pan-Arab problem, a reflection of the broader class struggle as articulated by Marxist and leftist ideology, or as a religious struggle animated by an Islamic narrative. Ultimately, the PLO became dominated by the first narrative, that of Palestinian nationalism, whose principal standard-bearer was Fatah (see Chapter Two.) In Lebanon, despite broad sympathy for the Palestinian cause and the suffering of the Palestinian people, this ultimately left them with a smaller constituency than they needed. At the same time, their attempts at creating a common ideological narrative with the Shi'ite community were belied by their behavior in South Lebanon. Even in Jordan, while Palestinian-ness was perhaps the most salient identity trait for many people, it was not apparently sufficient to dictate the behavior of those Palestinians in the army and government who elected not to defect to the PLO during Black September.

Where the PLO's identity framing was far more effective was with regard to the other Arab states. While paying lip service to the ideals of pan-Arabism

(particularly while Nasser was still alive), the PLO managed to simultaneously leverage the salience of the Palestinian issue to extract support from the Arab states, while individual factions were able to maintain separate relations with their various sponsors based on their own ideological preferences (a pattern which, as noted above, ultimately proved deeply damaging to the organization's cohesion and effectiveness.)

Perhaps the most important dividing line drawn by the PLO's early leadership, though – and in this, I would include not only Ahmed Shuqairy, Yasser Arafat, Abu Jihad and Abu Iyad, but also George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh – is a line which now seems so obvious that it goes almost unacknowledged: it is the line around the idea of “Palestinian.” This is not to say that Palestinian-ness is somehow “not real” or that it did not exist before 1964; Palestinian history clearly demonstrates otherwise.⁸⁵⁵ But the role of the PLO in maintaining a claim to nationhood and statehood based on that identity - rather than on a pan-Arab identity, or, in the case of the SSNP, a pan-Syrian identity - should not be underestimated. Shafiq al Hout expressed this as follows:

“In the catastrophe of 1948, all our national institutions and political institutions were really destroyed. We lost our ‘POB’ – our ‘post office box’ – we have no address. It took us 16 years, until May of 1964, when we managed to market the necessity of establishing a political body that represents the Palestinians as such, to be their political reference, to be their POB.”⁸⁵⁶

Despite its later failings, this was a major achievement for the PLO, and one to which all of the later Palestinian parties, including Hamas, arguably owe a great deal. That being said, the primacy of an independent Palestinian nationalism over a pan-Islamic or pan-Arab identity has also proved difficult for Hamas to negotiate. If the alternative to Fatah's Palestinian nationalism in the

⁸⁵⁵ For perhaps the best treatment of this subject, see Rosemary Sayigh, *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, Second. (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007).

⁸⁵⁶ Interview, Shafiq al Hout.

1970s was a pan-Arab nationalism that viewed the Palestinian struggle as an Arab issue, the dominant alternative in the last two decades has been a pan-Islamic nationalism that sees the Palestinian national struggle in a religious context. This has also meant, for some, that the liberation of Palestine is part of a wider struggle to establish a new Islamic order (although this last is not necessarily a goal of all Islamic movements, or necessarily of Hamas itself.) However, as the polling discussed in Chapter Six indicates, most Palestinians still view the Palestinian struggle as a national issue, and not a problem to be subsumed within either a pan-Arab or pan-Islamic context. The Hamas politicians interviewed were clearly aware of this conundrum, as all of them, when asked whether they saw themselves as an Islamic or Palestinian movement first, refused to give preference to one over the other. Moreover, my impression was that for all of them, the liberation of Palestine was indeed an end in and of itself, and a matter of patriotic, not just religious, duty. But, this pan-Islamic component of Hamas' identity remains somewhat problematic in the Palestinian political context. Though they have managed to save themselves in large part by framing themselves as a more honest alternative to Fatah and by emphasizing their competence as evidenced by their skill in administering their social service network, Hamas has proved less adept at balancing its conflicting identity narratives than has Hizbullah.

Of the three movements, Hizbullah has proved most adept at reinventing itself in response to changing circumstances. The movement clearly realized that it needed to find another way of framing itself after the civil war if it wanted to be successful in the new Lebanese political context. It therefore moved with purpose and deliberation to reframe itself in a way that would allow it to access greater

political influence. Its earlier framing as a primarily Shi'ite, rather than Lebanese, movement (a charge still leveled by its opponents) limited Hizbullah's potential constituency even within the Shi'ite community, and opened it to charges (not without some basis) that it was essentially a tool of Iranian foreign policy. Hizbullah's shift away from this approach and towards a narrative focused on resistance in the defense of Lebanon itself allowed it to expand its influence, and demonstrates that it is indeed possible for a militant group to reorient itself in response to a shifting political landscape, or even simply because its old approach wasn't working very well.

Although the frames chosen by these three groups have not been equally successful in all contexts, what is common across all cases is that for each, there was a choice available as to which characteristics and cleavages they would emphasize in defining their goals and constituencies, as well as in determining which people and narratives were excluded. It is for this reason that I find the idea of "home turf advantage" essentially unconvincing. A group's "home turf" is very much tied to how that group defines its own identity and constituency, and is therefore a contested designation. It could be argued that Hizbullah has an advantage as compared with the PLO because it was fighting on its "home turf", in Lebanon, but designating Lebanon itself as "home" for Hizbullah would privilege Lebanese identity over other divisions (religion, class, urban vs. rural) in a way that clearly does not match the high levels of intra-Lebanese violence which took place during (and after) the civil war. At the same time, however, it has performed well when fighting in both Shi'ite and Christian areas of the south

(and for that matter, was able to take over Sunni West Beirut fairly handily in 2008.)

Perhaps Hamas had a certain advantage by virtue of the fact that it was fighting inside of Gaza, surrounded by other Palestinians. But, quite aside from the fact that this would not explain why its record in Gaza was not as good as Hizbullah's record in Christian areas of South Lebanon, it also ignores Hamas' history in Gaza. Hamas' has a base in Gaza not because it was automatically granted one by virtue of being a Palestinian organization surrounded by Palestinians, but because it built one. Moreover, in building this base, it has had to compete directly with other Palestinian organizations, and other Islamic organizations, with which it was at times directly in conflict.

Finally, the PLO did not perform any more impressively when fighting in Jordan, surrounded by Palestinians, than it did in Lebanon. Because of the PLO's approaches towards the different sectors of the public in Jordan, its popular base was ultimately located in the refugee camps, rather than in other segments of society (the middle and upper middle classes) where it might have done them more good. Moreover, even when fighting in Gaza in the late 1960s, the PLO and its various factions were ultimately crushed in terms of their ability to continue armed resistance against the Israeli occupation of the territory. In sum, in response to the idea that inherent identity traits give some groups an advantage that others do not have because of who they are and where they are fighting, I would argue that while that advantage may well exist, it exists because groups *create it for themselves*, not because it is inherent, fixed, or predetermined. The

identities and attendant preferences around which groups mobilize their constituents are often themselves a product of their own marketing.

And indeed, this leads me to a final side-effect to the marketing process. In shifting the way that these identity boundaries are drawn, nonstate actors can have a lasting impact on the domestic and regional political landscape. Hizbullah's move in the 1990s towards a Lebanese nationalist rather than Shi'ite fundamentalist organization had the added effect of opening up a debate as to whether there was a place for a group like Hizbullah in the definition of what it meant to be a Lebanese nationalist, or indeed, in the definition of what it meant to be Lebanese. One implication of the narrative of Hizbullah-as-authentically-Lebanese-movement is that the Dahiye, with its shops selling fashionable, office-appropriate hijab, and its restaurants with separate "family sections," is as much the real Beirut as the student-filled cafes on Rue Hamra in West Beirut or the nightclubs of Gemayze in East Beirut. This is not a claim that has gone uncontested, and in some ways, lies at the heart of the continuing tensions between the March 8th and March 14th blocs (see above.) Whether or not provoking this wider debate was Hizbullah's intent all along or merely an unavoidable byproduct of their self-reinvention in the 1990s, it has still had a powerful effect on the Lebanese political landscape.

Initial Material Endowments are Not Deterministic

The more conventional structural explanation for the variation in resilience and overall effectiveness of nonstate actors focuses on their relative military capacities. This project demonstrates that these are perhaps less

significant than previously thought, or at least that they are far from deterministic. As table 4 indicates, there is not sufficient variation in military power as an independent variable to account for the variation we see in the dependent variable. In all five cases under discussion, the counterinsurgent force was far stronger than the insurgent force, and even had the advantage of air power. If raw military power were the most important variable, then we should expect to see similar results in all five cases, which we do not.

Conflict		Party	Fighters	Arms	Outcome
PLO	Black September	PLO	15,000	Small arms, grenades, heavy artillery, RPGs.	Defeat
		Jord. Army	65,000	~500 tanks, artillery, (small) air force	
	1982	PLO	15,000	85 tanks, 100 anti-tank guns, 150 - 200 artillery, anti-aircraft.	Defeat
		IDF	75,000	1,240 tanks and 1,520 APCs, air force	
Hizbullah	Civil War Years	Hizbullah	Unknown	Small arms, RPGs, surface-to-surface missiles, suicide attacks, car bombs	Draw/Defeat
		IDF	1,000-2,000	Tanks, APCs, artillery, air force.	
	July War	Hizbullah	3,000	"Katyusha" rockets, long- and medium-range missiles, anti-tank and anti-ship missiles, small arms.	Survival
		IDF	10,000-30,000	Tanks and APCs, air force, naval blockade.	
Hamas	Gaza War	Hamas	20,000	Small arms, RPGs, hand grenades, IEDs, Qassem rockets, suicide attackers	Draw/Survival
		IDF	10,000	Tanks, air force, naval blockade, APCs, bulldozers, heavy artillery	

Table 4

Moreover, this project also demonstrates that financial assets are not a determining factor either. To begin with, none of the groups in question had in its possession significant natural resource wealth at the time it was founded, nor did any have independently wealthy founders. Furthermore, the relationship between wealth acquired elsewhere and the movement's success is somewhat unclear. Hizbullah was actually more effective in the 1990s after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, when Rafsanjani's administration drastically cut financial support to

the movement. This suggests that wealth is not necessarily always directly correlated with success.

But neither does the opposite appear to be true. As noted, Hizbullah and the PLO experienced very different outcomes against the IDF, but both received enormous amounts of funding from their foreign sponsors. The PLO, at least, had significant foreign investment income, as well as receiving donations and “taxes” from Palestinians working in the Gulf. Similarly, Hizbullah operates a large network of businesses inside Lebanon, and receives donations from wealthy Shi’ites abroad. And yet, the organizations behaved very differently. While the massive influx of cash that the PLO received after the oil boom of the 1970s seems to have created a sort of malaise within the organization and left it with fighters who were more employees than anything else, a similar influx of funds has not had the same effect on Hizbullah, which instead used its wealth to recruit and train highly committed fighters. Since the 1990s, and particularly since 2000, even when the organization’s policies as a whole have clashed with the wishes of other factions, individual Hizbullah fighters have acquired a reputation for behaving courteously and politely towards civilians. That is not to say that Hizbullah as an organization does not impose its will on others, but in terms of their day-to-day conduct, Hizbullah fighters do not have a reputation for stealing jewelry from old ladies or otherwise bullying their neighbors. This, in contradiction to the argument made by Weinstein,⁸⁵⁷ suggests that wealth in and of itself cannot explain variations in performance and behavior any more than raw military power.

Where we do see variation is in the means used to acquire these resources. Material assets, be they financial or military, need to be acquired. The process by

⁸⁵⁷ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

which this occurs shapes the relationships a militant group enjoys with its foreign sponsors and domestic constituents, and it is these relationships which determine how effectively a militant group is able to use the material resources it has. The PLO was unable to make effective use of its financial and military assets not because these assets were less useful in and of themselves than those possessed by Hizbullah (or, for that matter, Hamas, which was certainly less well armed in 2009 than the PLO was in 1982) but because of the unexpected side effects of the methods used to obtain them had on their relationships with other parties, their access to important non-material resources, and on the shape of the organization as a whole.

Overlap, Interaction, and Path-Dependence

There is, of course, a degree of overlap between these strategies, and given that most groups employ some combination of all three (even though one is usually dominant) the use of one tends to shape the effectiveness of the others. In addition, there is a degree of path-dependence in the choices militias make over time, in that early use of one strategy can make it harder, though certainly not impossible, to shift to a different strategy later on.

All of these strategies have the potential to overlap with one another. A militant group may use coercion of one group of civilians (Jordanian army officers' families, or Christian Lebanese) as a form of marketing to another (Palestinian refugees) or even as a basis for recruitment (an opportunity for revenge against these groups.) This was certainly the case for many of the right-wing militias in Lebanon, who employed a virulently nativist/anti-Palestinian rhetoric and extraordinary violence against Palestinian civilians as a form of marketing to potential recruits and a means of demonstrating their commitment to their cause. Similarly, coercion of one group of civilians (or even of a host state,

if that coercion is sufficiently destabilizing,) can be a form of proxy service for a foreign sponsor. Service provision can certainly serve as powerful form of marketing. Indeed, as is evident in Hamas' case, it can sometimes be more powerful than the marketing the movement is actually *trying* to engage in. Hamas' rhetoric based on its Islamic credentials seems to have been less significant than its reputation for competence and incorruptibility (see above). Conversely, though this does not appear to have been the case in the movements under study in this project, the provision of services to civilians has the potential to veer into coercion, if there is an implied threat that those services might be withdrawn.

In addition to the blurriness between these concepts, practically speaking, the use of one strategy tends to have an effect on the effectiveness of other strategies. The use of service provision is likely to produce more lasting loyalty in the civilian context if it is accompanied by marketing to explain *why* the group is providing services, and how the group-character implied by those services makes it a better choice than a rival group. On the other hand, a group which behaves coercively towards its constituency while attempting to convince them that it has the community's best interests at heart may find that their message falls on deaf ears. Likewise, while the provision of services to repair the harm done by the militia's own activities (such as Hizbullah's policy of rebuilding homes damaged by the IDF during the July War) may improve its reputation, damage control is not quite the same as the provision of services for their own sake, although it can insulate the movement from some of the consequences of its actions.

Finally, there is also a degree of path-dependency between the use of coercion and the ability to use other strategies later on. While using coercion early on does not make it impossible to shift to a more successful strategy later, it

does make it more difficult. There are many Sunnis and Christians in Lebanon who will never trust Hizbullah, no matter what the movement does, because of its actions during the civil war (and its more recent behavior.) Hizbullah has been able to change its image in the eyes of some Lebanese, including some outside the Shi'ite community, but it took effort. The PLO's coercive behavior in South Lebanon was enough to outweigh the earlier positive relationship it had had with the local Shi'ite community. And Hamas' more radical behavior in its early years, particularly with regard to its rival during the intifada, the UNLU, laid the groundwork for its bitter rivalry with Fatah and other PLO factions later on. This is not to suggest that a militant movement cannot change its strategy, or even its character, it is merely to suggest that its behavior early on can have an effect on how easy or difficult it is to use a different strategy later.

Implications for Other Contexts: Iraq and Afghanistan

Practically speaking, the argument put forward in this dissertation stands to further our understanding of counterinsurgency, particularly as it applies in the context of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like all militias, the various armed factions in Iraq and Afghanistan have had to seek both political and material assets from local populations and external sponsors. As with militias elsewhere, their performance has been shaped by the ways in which they have done so.

Iraq

The behavior of and outcomes experienced by many of the principle players in the war in Iraq aligns closely with the predictions of this dissertation. Al Qaeda in Iraq has relied almost exclusively on coercive violence, and this behavior ultimately led to a backlash against them. In contrast, although the movement led by the dynastic Shi'ite leader Muqtada Sadr has engaged in

coercive violence through its Mahdi Army militia, it has also used service provision to build up its base and marketing to shape the narrative of identity within Iraq. As a result, the Sadrists' position is now far more secure than is Al Qaeda's.

In the Iraqi context, the conclusions generated by this project suggest that groups who have relied on coercive tactics to hold territory and prevent civilians from working with American and Iraqi government forces are likely to see those tactics backfire. And the tactics used by Al Qaeda in Iraq are nothing if not coercive. The following is an account by an Iraqi woman in Al Anbar describing Al Qaeda's use of threats and violence to force the population of Ramadi to conform to the social and political norms expected by Al Qaeda and to refrain from working with the Americans or the central government:

"They killed three young men... They tortured, killed and mutilated them and then left their bodies on the street for three days. They told everyone not to touch them. But their families recognized them. They were former policemen. They weren't Shi'as, they were our men. They killed doctors and leaders. They killed doctors and said it was because they treated Americans. The doctors fled the country. They killed mullahs and said that it was because they liked Americans. Soon there were no men left to kill, so they started killing women and children. They killed women and said that it was because their husbands were policemen. They killed children and said it was because their fathers were policemen. I can't describe the horrors we lived in."⁸⁵⁸

Ultimately, these atrocities produced the backlash known as the Al Anbar Awakening. In 2006, the Sunni tribes of Al Anbar, tired of being harassed, terrorized and pushed off of their territory by Al Qaeda, agreed to form a US-trained, -armed and -funded militia. This provided an alternative avenue for Sunni mobilization in the face of increasing Shi'ite political dominance and a means of

⁸⁵⁸ Gary W. Montgomery and Timothy S. McWilliams, eds., *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II: Iraqi Perspectives From Insurgency to Counterinsurgency in Iraq 2004-2009* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/anbarawakening2.pdf>.

protecting their communities from Al Qaeda. The Awakening was a major blow to Al Qaeda, and one for which they themselves bear a good deal of responsibility; it is unlikely the Sunni tribes in that area would have voluntarily signed on with the Americans had Al Qaeda engaged in widespread service provision and made an effort to articulate and promote their political project in a way that resonated with local values.

That the Sunnis, a formerly dominant minority in a newly Shi'ite majority-dominated state who should have been a logical constituency for Al Qaeda in Iraq, turned so sharply against Al Qaeda provides further evidence that identity politics are far from deterministic. Nonstate actors must make an effort to ensure that these narratives are relevant to those they view as potential constituents. In Iraq, sectarian identity – that is, the division between Sunnis and Shi'ites - was not particularly powerful politically before the American invasion. There were high rates of intermarriage, and there are to this day clans in Al Anbar province which have both Sunni and Shi'ite branches. There were organizations, however, who moved immediately to exacerbate and exploit these cleavages for their own advantage. In a dynamic reminiscent of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia,⁸⁵⁹ movements like the Sadrists and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)⁸⁶⁰ seized on this division as a means of building domestic constituencies, setting off a spiraling ethnic security dilemma, particularly in Baghdad. Sadr's Mahdi Army engaged in massive violence against Sunni civilians. But, his organization also provided charitable services to its constituency among poor Shi'ite migrants from the south in Najaf and in the impoverished suburb of Baghdad once known as Sadr City, as well as engaging in

⁸⁵⁹ See Gagnon, 1994.

⁸⁶⁰ SCIRI has been renamed the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq, having, like Hizbullah, dropped the word "revolution" when they decided that political engagement might be the most productive path to power.

communal and legitimacy-based marketing based on the status of the Sadr family dynasty.⁸⁶¹

Because of the popular base it was able to build, despite the Mahdi Army's ultimate ineffectiveness against the American military in 2006 and 2007, Sadr's organization has been able to maintain a powerful political presence in Iraq. Distancing himself from the Mahdi Army's past behavior, Sadr has sought to rebrand his movement, now dubbed the Munasirun, as a legitimate political force (though the threat to revive the Mahdi Army is cause for serious concern in the Sunni community.) It is already attracting followers across the country, including some non-Shi'ite Iraqis. Sadr's movement has even taken to conducting public opinion polling, as a means of signaling its responsiveness to public concerns.⁸⁶² While many Sunnis will likely never trust the Sadrist, this does demonstrate that the provision of social services and an effort at marketing one's larger mission can pay off in the long term and enable a movement to weather military setbacks and recover politically.

Finally, on a more cautionary note, this project suggests that external sponsorship, though lucrative, can also carry hidden long-term costs. This appears to be the case in Iraq, although it is still early to make any permanent diagnoses. Sadr's forces and other Iraqi Shi'ite militias have long received financial and military support from the Iranian government (though they have needed to exercise care not to appear to be Iranian lackeys, given the mixed feelings about Iran, even among Iraqi Shi'ites.)⁸⁶³ Documents released by Wikileaks as part of

⁸⁶¹ Al-Amin, Hazem, "Moqtada Al-Sadr: Leader of Orphans," *Al Ahram*, June 27, 2004, Issue No. 692 edition.

⁸⁶² "Muqtada al-Sadr, back in business," *The Economist*, May 5, 2011, http://www.economist.com/node/18652167?story_id=18652167&fsrc=rss.

⁸⁶³ Mike Kukis, "Is Iran Aiding Iraq's Militias?," *Time*, August 15, 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1653385,00.html>.

the Iraq War Logs reveal this support to be considerable, and it has clearly contributed to the military capacity of the militias in question.⁸⁶⁴

But these documents also suggest a dynamic that may ultimately prove problematic for Sadr's followers (and other Iraqi Shi'ite parties) to negotiate. The leaked memos contend that this support is more about "weakening and shaping" the Iraqi government than it is about strengthening the client organizations as independent actors,⁸⁶⁵ which mirrors the dynamics of state sponsorship as outlined elsewhere in this paper. This suggests, then, that a long term relationship between these parties will either become strained, if the local Shi'ite client movement seeks further independence, or, more likely, that it will produce schisms within the organization between those who are more focused on the Iraqi political context and those who are most focused on pursuing Iran's agenda. The movements that will be best able to avoid this trap will be the ones who find a way of maintaining their independence and retaining a focus on their organization's own priorities and mission.

Afghanistan

The dynamics of the Taliban's relationship with civilians in Afghanistan and the outcome of its relationship with the Pakistani government also offer support for the conclusions reached in this dissertation. The Taliban have historically relied heavily on coercion to maintain their position, but in recent years, they have shifted to a broader marketing approach coupled with increased provision of services. Meanwhile, though their relationship with Pakistan has

⁸⁶⁴ Michael R. Gordon and Andrew W. Lehren, "Iraq War Logs Detail Iran's Aid for Iraqi Militias", October 22, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/23/world/middleeast/23iran.html?scp=1&sq=iran%20iraq%20support%20wikileaks&st=cse>.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

been lucrative in some ways, it has also had some unforeseen, and negative, side effects.

In recent years, the Taliban leadership has clearly become aware that they need to improve their public reputation. Historically, the Taliban have been perceived by the public as corrupt, and they have taken pains to change this perception in recent years, through a combination of service provision and deliberate marketing of that service provision. The Taliban operate a country-wide “shadow government,” which they refer to as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Every province of Afghanistan contains a Taliban administration which runs parallel to the official provincial government, including a governor who is physically present in the province. In some areas, they do in fact demonstrate greater efficiency and competence than the central government, but the Taliban have also actively worked to publicize the services provided by the shadow government, and to make the case that it is less corrupt than the central government in Kabul. This has involved, among other things, publicly firing those who are known to be corrupt, whereas in the central government, corrupt officials tend to be simply shuffled elsewhere in the bureaucracy.⁸⁶⁶ In some ways, this runs parallel to the strategy pursued (almost by accident) by Hamas, as outlined in Chapter Six. In publicizing the activities of the Taliban “government” (and spreading condemnation of their opponents’ activities) they rely heavily on the local rumor mill. They also distribute promotional videos, though these are mostly directed at potential recruits living in Peshawar, Pakistan.⁸⁶⁷

Though Taliban fighters still engage in violence against civilian targets, they have also engaged in a campaign to improve their image with regard to their treatment of civilians, in an effort to blunt the negative effects of their reputation

⁸⁶⁶ As explained by Aisha Ahmad, McGill University.

⁸⁶⁷ In Pakistan, the local branch of the Taliban has also provided post-disaster relief for those affected by the flooding in 2010. Government aid has been essentially non-existent.

for coercive and violent behavior. In the summer of 2009, Mullah Omar issued a thirteen-chapter code of conduct for Taliban fighters outlining stringent standards of behavior, stating that Taliban must avoid harming civilians, eschew discrimination based on language or tribal background, and use suicide attacks rarely.⁸⁶⁸ If these tactics are successful in building a more reliable base of public support, the Taliban may find themselves better able to recover from attacks by enemy forces.

The experiences of the Taliban in Afghanistan also illustrate another phenomenon discussed in this project: the sometimes unexpected costs of foreign sponsorship, in this case, the division and increasing hostility between the Afghan and Pakistani branches of the Taliban. At this stage, the two branches have become essentially separate organizations. The Afghan Taliban attack only US and Afghan government targets inside Afghanistan, and have a good relationship with the Pakistani government. The Pakistani branch (known as the Tehrik-i-Taliban, or TTP) hit only Pakistani targets, inside Pakistan. Though there is now tension between the two groups, this was not always the case.

Initially, the Taliban on both sides of the border (which was not necessarily recognized by the fighters on either side of it) constituted a single organization, and received support from the Pakistani government, particularly from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The relationship between the Taliban and ISI dates to the period when the Taliban were in power in Afghanistan, during which both in turn provided support to Al Qaeda, which received sanctuary in Afghanistan from the Taliban government.⁸⁶⁹ The ties between the Taliban and Al Qaeda are based in their shared history and common ideological orientation, in

⁸⁶⁸ Mail Foreign Service, "Taliban issued code of conduct that tells fighters to limit suicide attacks and avoid civilian deaths", Daily Mail, July 30, 2009.

⁸⁶⁹ Department of State ARA/NEA REARCS, "[Excised]/Pakistan Interservice Intelligence/ Pakistan (PK) Directorate Supplying the Taliban Forces" (National Security Archive, October 22, 1966), <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB227/index.htm#15>.

that both movements' roots lie in the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, and both espouse the same narrow, extremist and exclusionist ideology. The relationship between the two proved surprisingly durable, even in the face of American demands that the Taliban expel or hand over the Al Qaeda leadership following the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington in 2001.

Once the Taliban itself had become a non-state actor, following the overthrow of its government via the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, it relied increasingly on its own external sponsors within the government of Pakistan, the ISI. However, the pressure exerted on Pakistan by the United States in the context of the War on Terror created fractures inside the Pakistani government, or at least exacerbated existing divisions. On the one hand, the United States was pushing the Pakistanis to force the Taliban out of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Swat Valley; on the other, certain factions in the Pakistani government quietly offered the Taliban protection. This meant that some factions within the Taliban became hostile to the Pakistani government, while others simultaneously became loyal to those factions in the Pakistani government that were protecting them. This ultimately created a schism between the Taliban who were placed in the position of fighting the Pakistanis in Pakistan, and those in Afghanistan who were still receiving Pakistani support.⁸⁷⁰ This outcome demonstrates that while external support can be crucial at times, it can also be damaging to the recipient.

⁸⁷⁰ As explained by Aisha Ahmad and Christopher Anzalone, McGill University.

Implications of, and for, the “Arab Spring”

As of this writing, the Middle East is undergoing an unprecedented wave of popular upheaval and protest against the region’s authoritarian regimes. It is therefore difficult to predict what the future holds for the movements discussed in this project, some of whose formerly reliable sponsor states are now suddenly, violently, in flux. Moreover, a major source of leverage against their patrons – the legitimacy conveyed by sponsorship of a popular nonstate actor – seems to be at least temporarily irrelevant. However, the conclusions generated by this project do stand to clarify our understanding of these events, and perhaps offer some insight into the process of democratization more broadly.

The most immediate impact of the Arab Spring on the militant movements discussed in this dissertation probably comes in the form of the destabilization of regimes whose continued presence (and in some cases, support) once seemed assured. Qadhafi’s regime in Libya, which was hailed by some of the militants I interviewed as a once-reliable source of both training and weapons, is as of this moment the target of a grassroots rebel uprising backed by NATO airstrikes. Even more surprisingly (and for the purposes of this project, more significantly,) Bashar al Asad’s authoritarian regime is also facing a popular challenge to its authority. Demonstrations have been held in Latakia, Homs, Hama, some of the smaller coastal cities and suburbs of Damascus, and especially in Dera’a. The Asad regime has responded with mass arrests of both dissidents and ordinary citizens, and employed deadly force against unarmed protesters, resulting in, as of this writing, over 800 civilian casualties. This has, as noted, placed Hamas in a difficult position, given that some of the regime’s targets are domestic Syrian Islamists, creating tension in the relationship. It has also placed Hizbullah in an awkward position, given its vociferous support for pro-democracy uprisings. In a speech on March 19th, 2011, Nasrullah offered praise for the uprisings in Tunis,

Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen, singling out the Bahraini government's response as a particular outrage, but made no mention of the uprisings in Syria or Iran.⁸⁷¹ If the Asad regime should fall – an outcome which remains unlikely, but was not even a topic of conversation in December of 2010 – this will constitute a seismic shift in the regional alignment. Whatever the outcome, be it post-revolutionary chaos, a new authoritarian regime drawn from the army, or even a democracy, such a transition would certainly open the door for Saudi Arabia to pry Syria from its Iranian alliance, particularly if the Asad dynasty were to be replaced by a regime drawn from the Sunni majority. The severing of this relationship would be a disaster for Hizbullah in particular, as Syria forms the geographic link between Iran and Lebanon, although it might actually prove beneficial to Hamas.

On the other hand, the upheavals have also created new opportunities. The overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt, relied upon by Israel and the United States both to serve as a bulwark against Islamic political movements in Egypt and to uphold the blockade of Hamas and Gaza, has been a boon to Hamas. As of this writing, the Egyptian military government has permanently opened the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt.

More broadly, the uprisings also suggest that a major component of the bargain struck between the sponsor and its client – sponsorship in exchange for legitimization of the patron state based on the normative power of the cause the militant movement represents – may now be less relevant than it once was. For decades, the Syrian regime has relied on its status as the “beating heart of Arabism,” the last bastion of steadfast opposition to Israel and the staunchest supporter of the Palestinian cause, to bolster its domestic and regional credibility. In the past, it has done so with some success; I have heard any number of young,

⁸⁷¹ Hassan Nasrallah, “Sayyed Nasrallah Full Speech on the Ceremony for Consolidation with the Arab Peoples on March, 19 2011,” Hizbullah's Website, *Moqawama.org*, n.d., <http://www.english.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=13713&cid=231>.

progressive Arabs speak positively of the Syrian regime's refusal to negotiate with Israel and its steadfast support of the Palestinians. But the rhetoric that has characterized the uprisings of the Arab Spring has had little to do with Israel and Palestine, and has in fact been strikingly similar in both the western-oriented regimes (Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and to a lesser extent, Jordan) and those on the opposite side of the spectrum (Algeria, Syria and Libya.) In none of these cases has orientation towards Israel, Palestine or even the United States appeared to be a primary concern for protesters (although since the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, this has become one of many issues being addressed in Egypt.) This suggests that the legitimizing power of sponsorship of groups like Hamas and Hizbullah may be beginning to weaken, or that at the very least these issues are lower on the list than those closer to home.

Finally, the conclusions reached in this project also stand to clarify our understanding of the events of the Arab Spring, and can perhaps be applied to processes of domestic political claims-making and mobilization more broadly. It may be that what applies to nonstate actors, with regard to their strategic options in their relations with their domestic constituents also applies to their state sponsors. For decades, the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East have ruled through a combination of marketing (through communal or ideological rhetoric, and sometimes through the secondhand legitimacy afforded by their sponsorship of popular militant groups), service provision (through welfare states funded by foreign aid from the superpowers and the Gulf,) and especially coercion. There are of course vast and obvious structural differences between a state and a nonstate actor. States often have greater access to natural resources and other sources of wealth, not to mention greater access to weapons (sometimes left over from precursor regimes or colonial powers, and simply by virtue of being "the state," they possess a legitimacy that nonstate actors often have to acquire

externally. Nevertheless, the strategic options available to them in this regard are remarkably similar to those of their nonstate clients.

This has implications for both the utility and consequences of that behavior. This project suggests that coercion is ultimately unsustainable, though this may be less true of authoritarian states than of militant groups. It also suggests that a straight trade of goods for services may not provide the best basis for a lasting relationship. And finally, it suggests that while marketing is crucial in helping a movement to survive, the content of that marketing matters. Marketing isn't only about publicizing a political project and mission; it's also about framing that project in such a way that it resonates with the way potential or current constituents see themselves. It also means presenting oneself (whether one is a government or a militia hoping to become one) as responsive to the needs of constituents.

This goes beyond the simple distribution of patronage to a demonstration of actual competence. The protests that began in Tunisia in January of 2011 were not about democracy, at least not at first. Nor were they about regional political alignment. They were driven instead by the economic frustration of unemployed or underemployed university graduates and resentment of the corrupt and brutal kleptocracy governing their country. In Egypt, protests were driven by rage at what was perceived as the wholesale looting of the country's economy by Mubarak and the NDP apparatus, the corruption present at every level of the state, and the unchecked brutality of the security services. These regimes find themselves on shaky ground because, despite decades of state propaganda, they have made very little effort to indicate that they care about the concerns of their citizens, beyond using force to keep those concerns quiet. The means that these regimes used to obtain financial resources, the loyalty of the armed forces, and other assets, ultimately proved ineffective and, eventually, fatal.

Looking to the Future

Hamas, Hizbullah and the PLO

The ongoing upheavals of the Arab Spring raise an interesting question: Will either Hizbullah or Hamas be able to withstand another Israeli attack if suddenly left bereft of Iranian or Syrian sponsorship? This project suggests that at least in the short term, in the case of Hizbullah, the answer is yes, both because of the kind of organization its external relationships have shaped it into, and because of its domestic political relationships. While Hizbullah's state of the art weapons systems and much of the money for running their social service network comes from Iran and Syria, their reputation in Lebanon is, for better or for worse, of their own making; this is particularly true of their standing in the Shi'ite community. (Although a break with Syria would arguably improve its image in the eyes of many Christians.) The greater danger for Hizbullah is that Asad's regime will (as Lawson notes has been its habit in the past)⁸⁷² attempt to save itself by externalizing domestic unrest into the Lebanese context, forcing Hizbullah to test its hard-won domestic political alliances by acting on Syria's behalf.

In the case of Hamas, this answer is "probably." Its domestic position is somewhat shakier than is Hizbullah's, but it has successfully established itself as a significant political player in the Palestinian context. A Fatah official in Beirut expressed the view that one of Fatah's major weaknesses was that it had not been particularly effective at transitioning from a military structure to a civilian political structure; it seems to me that Hamas has been more successful in this regard. Although an outright attack on Fatah and the Palestinian Authority by the

⁸⁷² Lawson, *Why Syria Goes to War: Thirty Years of Confrontation*.

IDF seems unlikely in the near future, if Mahmoud Abbas does move to declare a Palestinian State in September of 2011, this will place both the institution of the Palestinian Authority and Fatah as a party under a great deal of pressure, which it will have to draw on all of its domestic and regional allies to withstand.

The relationships each of these movements has built with its domestic constituents are similarly in flux, although perhaps less dramatically so. Although the regional uprisings seem to have left Lebanon largely unaffected – probably because Lebanon has historically had no shortage of political protest, and so the Arab Spring does not represent the window of opportunity there that it does elsewhere – in the Palestinian Territories, it has produced protests calling for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah.

Further Research

There are a number of questions raised by this dissertation that constitute potential avenues for future inquiry, three of which I will discuss here. To begin with, I have not addressed the question of why a movement would choose one strategy rather than another for obtaining the resources it needs. This is a much larger question which lies beyond the scope of this project and so requires a separate study in its own right, but it does constitute a logical next step. Tentatively, I suspect that the answer lies in the bureaucratic politics of the movements in question, and, at least at the domestic level, may be strongly shaped by their relationships with their sponsor states.

Secondly, this dissertation has for the most part treated the militant movements' state adversary as a constant. While this was methodologically appropriate to the question at hand, there is also, of course, variation in how states respond to the behavior of their nonstate opponents. What explains the variation in the timing and intensity of counterinsurgent military campaigns? That is, why

do states involved in protracted conflicts with a nonstate adversary sometimes choose to use force, as Israel did in 1982 and 2006, and at other time refrain from doing so, as it did when Hizbullah launched a cross-border raid in 2000 that resulted in the death and abduction of three Israeli soldiers? I suspect that this is less related to the behavior of the nonstate actor in question than it is to the relative balance of power between the executive and the military in the counterinsurgent state.

Finally, this project suggests that in some cases, nonstate actors may face a conflict between the demands of their constituents and those of their sponsor states. How do militant movements negotiate those conflicts, and what are the effects of their choices in this area? While it might seem obvious that, given their dependence on external sponsorship for funding and arms, a nonstate actor in this position would choose to behave in accordance with the preferences of its foreign patron, this is not always the case. For instance, the PLO chose to back Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, despite the fact that Iraq was almost certain to lose and that this alienated not only Iran and Syria but the Gulf states as well. This is an example of a decision made based on domestic political dynamics, against the preferences of the organization's various state sponsors. What are the factors, then, which determine which relationship – with civilians or state sponsors – a nonstate actor will prioritize when forced to choose between them? And how can the resources the militant movement receives from each source help us predict how they will choose? I believe that a principal agent model, in which the nonstate actor is the agent, the sponsor state a single principal, and the civilian population a collective principal, may shed some light on this question. While the above questions are not the only ones that this dissertation raises, they do strike me as some of the most interesting possible avenues for further research.

Conclusion

In trying to articulate what it is about some militant movements that produces trust and commitment from their constituents, what quality it is that is lacking in other, similar organizations, I frequently come back in my mind to a conversation I had during the early days of the second intifada, in a taxi in Amman. It was shortly after mass protests had broken out in Amman, and also not long after the death of Muhammad Durra, a Palestinian child whose shooting was caught on video and broadcast across the Arab world, and the mood in the city was tense. So when my driver asked me what I thought of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, I offered cautious condemnation. To my sincere surprise, he responded by vehemently defending him. Sharon, he declared, was willing to go to any lengths to defend Israel, and to defend his people, no matter the consequences. What Arab leader, he asked, could we say the same about? They appeared to be far more interested in enriching themselves and hanging on to power. We Arabs should be so lucky, he told me, to have a leader like Sharon.

I have heard variations on this particular lament many times (though I believe that was the only occasion on which I've heard a Palestinian, which my driver was, speak so admiringly about Ariel Sharon.) The question of why Lebanese politics remains dominated by feudal lords and Palestinian politics by aging militia leaders is not a new one, nor is it strictly within the scope of this dissertation. But I think the desire for a political leadership that demonstrates a genuine commitment to its constituency goes a long way towards explaining the profound admiration directed towards Hassan Nasrullah, for instance.⁸⁷³ The communities I have described in this project, refugees in Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon, Shi'ites and Palestinians, and even the disaffected middle class and the

⁸⁷³ For instance: during his live video address to a rally of the party faithful in Beirut, Hassan Nasrullah coughed slightly. In unison, two thousand people warmly responded "saha", or "bless you."

dispirited post-1982 Arab left, do not really respond to their political figures any differently than any other political constituency. A movement which takes the time to convince its constituents that it has their best interests at heart, that its political project is likely to be effective, and that it is competent to manage the affairs of the government, is likely to receive more durable loyalty and all the benefits, material and otherwise, that this brings with it, than a group which either treats its constituency as a source of loot or tries to engage in a quid-pro-quo neo-patrimonial exchange.

But the new political movements appearing in the Middle East also pose a challenge to the narratives espoused by all three of the nonstate actors under study here; the overthrow of the Egyptian and Tunisian governments through peaceful mass protest does call into question the utility of the armed resistance as a means of national liberation. Militant movements that attack civilians and serve as mercenary proxies for outside forces will, ultimately, be weakened by these behaviors, and prove less successful both militarily and politically. Those that take their constituents seriously, that articulate a coherent political project are not only likely to command more popular support, they also stand a better chance of both political and military survival.

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