HIZBULLAH IN LEBANESE DOMESTIC POLITICS:
ISLAMISM, NATIONALISM, AND PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION

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By

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an analysis of Hizbullah’s Islamic-Lebanese identity and its behavior as a Lebanese political party. In an effort to understand the party’s political behavior, the paper begins with a theory section in which Shi’i conceptions of the relationship between Islamism and nationalism as political identities are discussed. What emerges from a close reading of the works of Shi’i scholars affiliated with Hizbullah’s ideological background is a reconciliation between Islamism and nationalism. This is possible through a redefinition of the nation-state and nationalism, regarded in most literature on the subject as commanding ultimate loyalty and affiliation. In reconciling nationalism with Islamism, the nation is defined as having its interests correlate with the interests of the umma, and nationalism is thus a form of affiliation and loyalty with Islamism existing as an ultimate form of allegiance and guidance for behavior.

After reconciling Islamism and nationalism, and thus reconciling the ability of the party to work within national structures for the benefit of the Lebanese nation-state while maintaining an allegiance to the Islamic umma, the paper will analyze Hizbullah’s parliamentary behavior through its parliamentary bloc, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc. This section will focus analysis on the bloc’s behavior in the eleven votes of confidence that took place between 1992 and 2009. The votes of confidence will be divided up into three sections to demonstrate the progression of the bloc’s behavior: 1992-1996, during which period bloc members voted against confidence in the government; 1998-2004, during which period bloc members abstained from
voting for or against confidence in the government; and 2005 to 2009, during which period the bloc accepted cabinet positions and voted for confidence in the government.

The paper concludes that based on the conception of the relationship between Islamism and nationalism in Hizbullah’s ideological background, there is no contradiction in the party’s ability to behave as both an Islamic movement and a Lebanese nationalist political party. From a close analysis of the party’s voting behavior since its inception into Lebanese parliamentary politics in 1992, it becomes clear that Hizbullah has played the role of an opposition party increasingly engrained in the political system in order to protect its armed Islamic Resistance and to influence the course of Lebanese politics towards agreement with Hizbullah’s Islamic-influenced conceptions of Lebanon’s interests.
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INTRODUCTION

Hizbullah emerged as a Lebanese political and military organization in 1985. The party was and continues to be influenced by both Lebanon’s political particularities as well as by a specific strand of Shi’i Islamic political ideology. Since entering Lebanon’s first post-civil war parliamentary elections in 1992, Hizbullah has increasingly presented itself and behaved as a Lebanese nationalist party, both in its efforts as a Resistance movement and a parliamentary opposition party. However, the combination of the party’s self-described allegiance to Iran’s *wilayat al-faqih* doctrine, its commitment to preserving the welfare of the Islamic *umma*, its political and military strategic relationships with Syria and Iran, and the behavior of its armed Resistance wing has sometimes led Hizbullah’s domestic and international critics to accuse the party of putting non-national interests above Lebanese interests. These accusations assume that a conflict of interest arises from the party’s Lebanese and Islamic identities in that they create contradicting loyalties, that of loyalty to the Lebanese nation-state in the form of nationalism and that of loyalty to the Islamic *umma* in the form of Islamism. However, in the party’s ideological framework, no such contradiction exists. Shi’i scholars influencing Hizbullah’s political ideology have refashioned nationalism, from its conception as an ultimate form of loyalty to one of many levels of loyalty whose ultimate allegiance is the *umma*, thus reconciling the two forms of loyalty.

This paper provides an analysis of Hizbullah’s Islamic-Lebanese identity and its behavior as a Lebanese political party through an ideological and programmatic analysis. In an effort to understand the party’s political behavior, the paper begins with a theory section that first explores western scholars’ conceptions of the sovereignty of the nation, nationalism, and nation-state, in order to understand the apparent contradiction between Islamism and nationalism. Then,
Shi’i conceptions of the relationship between Islamism and nationalism are discussed in an effort to understand the conception of the relationship between different types of affiliation, identity and loyalty to which Hizbullah ascribes. The theory section focuses exclusively on the work and interpretations of Shi’i scholars who have directly influenced the ideological development of the party, in an effort to understand Hizbullah’s unique ideological background. What emerges from a close reading of these scholars is a possible reconciliation of Islamism and nationalism as non-contradictory levels of loyalty. This section includes a number of definitions of complicated terms important to discussions of nationalisms and identity in the region.

After reconciling Islamism and nationalism, and thus the ability of the party to work within national structures for the benefit of the nation while maintain an ultimate loyalty to the Islamic *umma*, the paper will analyze Hizbullah’s parliamentary behavior. Hizbullah participates in the Lebanese parliament through the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc. This section will discuss the bloc’s behavior in the parliament from 1992 to 2009, focusing analysis on the bloc’s behavior in the eleven votes of confidence that have taken place during this time period. The votes of confidence will be divided up into three sections to demonstrate the progression of the bloc’s behavior: 1992-1996, during which period bloc members voted against confidence in the government; 1998-2004, during which period bloc members abstained from voting for or against confidence in the government; and 2005 to 2009, when Hizbullah was increasingly under attack for not prioritizing Lebanese interests, the bloc accepted cabinet positions and voted for confidence in the government in which they participated.

The paper concludes that Hizbullah sees no contradiction in the Lebanese and Islamic parts of its identity based on the definitions and relationships between levels of identity and allegiance present in the party’s ideology. As evident in an analysis of the votes of confidence
between 1992 and 2009, Hizbullah has played and continues to play the role of an opposition party. However, it has become increasingly ingrained in the political system in order to protect its armed Islamic Resistance and to influence the course of Lebanon’s politics towards agreement with Hizbullah’s Islamic-influenced conceptions of Lebanon’s interests since the party’s inception into Lebanese parliamentary politics in 1992.
CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS AND THEORIES OF NATIONALISMS

The literature on nationalism is abundant and, while heavily centered on the history of the rise of nation-states and nationalisms in Europe, it provides clarification on a number of important terms necessary to a discussion on nationalism in any context. The authors cited throughout this chapter elaborate on the following definitions from the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. The nation is defined as “a group whose members place loyalty to the group as a whole over any conflicting loyalties.”¹ The nation-state has come to be assumed in international relations as the natural political expression of the nation, meaning that each nation should have its own self-government. Meanwhile, nationalism “centers the supreme loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the people in the nation-state, either existing or desired.”² Using these definitions as a basis, scholars on nationalism expand the definitions to include a number of characteristics important to the foundation, evolution, and either failure or success of nationalisms as a mobilizing and unifying principle.

The literature on nationalism presents a number of important defining characteristics of the nation and nationalism. Benedict Anderson’s work focuses on the importance of language in the formation of the nation, looking at the role of print media (the novel and the newspaper), the importance of capitalism in printing, and the devolution of vernacular languages in creating linguistic-based communities that imagined themselves as homogenous groups, or nations. These nations in turn demanded native nation-states (meaning, governed by members of the nation) to rule themselves. Anderson provides a number of key concepts regarding the nation. He emphasizes the importance of language in the nation and defines the nation as imagined,

meaning that even in the smallest nation each member cannot know each other. Anderson further specifies that the nation is imagined as limited, has finite boundaries and does not include the whole of humanity. Anderson also defines the nation as being imagined as sovereign, commanding ultimate loyalty and possessing ultimate power in the global nation-state system. Finally, the nation is imagined as a community because the nation is imagined as deep, horizontal comradeship, and remains imagined as such regardless of the actual behavior in the nation.

In contrast to Anderson, Anthony Smith approaches nationalism as an unifying identity centered on ethnicity and shared historical experience rather than on language. He looks to *ethnie*, or the ethnic community, and the symbolism it employs throughout history to discuss the continuance of collective loyalties and identities despite changes in the myths, memories, values, and symbols used to define and shape these loyalties. He is unable to find a suitable translation in English to define *ethnie* and so he uses the French word to emphasize both the cultural differences and the historical community aspect of a group of people, writing that the features of *ethnie* are “meanings conferred by a number of men and women over some generations on certain cultural, spatial and temporal properties and their interaction and shared experiences.”

This again speaks to Anderson’s definition of the nation as constructed, but uses an ethnic and historical basis for said construction.

Later works by Smith develop his discussion of the role of religion and the sacred in nationalism. Smith acknowledges that while other linguistic, ethnic, or socio-economic factors

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3 Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 6-7. Anderson describes the process by which this sovereignty was achieved during the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution periods, when the nation challenged the legitimacy and sovereignty of divinely-ordained, hierarchical religio-political structures.

4 Anderson, 6-7.

may contribute to the formation of nationalisms, religion plays a major role in the strength, 
continuation and persistence of nationalism as a binding identity. Using examples of nationalism 
formed on Christian-Judeo religious ideology (namely, Christian European countries and Israel), 
he turns his focus to the religious sources of nationalism, meaning those traditional religious 
beliefs, motifs, symbols, and practices that influence the composition and rhetoric of 
nationalisms. Smith sees nationalism as a separate belief system from religion that employed 
politicized versions of religious ideas, sentiments, symbols, and beliefs. Smith finds religious 
symbols and rhetoric are employed in four main areas in order to provide religious legitimacy for 
secular nationalism: community (a chosen people), territory (a holy land), history (a glorified 
history), and destiny (a discourse on the earthly reward for unity and a culture of heroic stories of 
those who have sacrifice or died for country). These four aspects are important to the ability of 
nationalism to unify and continue as an ultimate form of loyalty. When couched in religious 
language, the nation, when defined as chosen people in a holy land, with a history and future of 
greatness, is given a divine quality though it exists on earth. While in Smith’s analysis the sacred 
undoubtedly plays a role in the rhetoric, conception, and legitimacy of nationalisms, the state 
remains the unit towards which the ultimate loyalty of the nation-state is directed rather than the 
divine.²

One of the most significant observations common to literature on nationalism is the 
notion that nationalism is a modern concept. In discussing significant historical influences on the 
conceptualization of nationalism, the nation, and the nation-state as modern, Eric Hobsbawm 
marks the end of World War I as an important date for the development of modern nationalisms 
and nation-states due to the end to a number of empires and the establishment of nation-states at 

² Anthony D. Smith. *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 
2003).
the Versailles peace conference. Hobsbawm writes that the conference attempted to match borders to Europe’s linguistic and ethnic geography. He argues that “no equally systematic attempt has been made before or since, in Europe or anywhere else, to redraw the political map on national lines”\(^7\) but that ironically the attempt failed miserably: the smaller nation-states that replaced empires expelled or exterminated its linguistic and ethnic minorities in order to create the national homogeneity necessary for unity and stability.\(^8\) Hobsbawm explains that he focuses his exploration of nationalism on European examples because a discussion of nationalisms is inherently European-centric as a result of where historical events occurred, and again emphasizes the modern nature of nationalisms in writing that nationalism is a twentieth century concept.

Elie Kedourie also frames nationalism as a modern concept, invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. He documents developments following the Enlightenment period when nations came to be seen as self-evident and the natural expression of order, finding that by the twentieth century, the nation-based division of humanity was accepted as universal. Kedourie writes that the theory maintains “that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government.”\(^9\) Kedourie then explores different definitions of nations to ascertain whether there exists a universal truth regarding the division of people into nations, but finds that the definitions of a nation, as linguistic, ethnic or other homogeneity, are too weak to justify the division of humanity into nations and nation-states as natural. However, despite his dissatisfaction with the definitions of nation, Kedourie maintains that nationalism is a

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\(^8\) Despite the failure of nation-states to match the complicated reality of self-identification, Hobsbawm remarks with irony that the borders imposed by Versailles have stayed in place with little change.

European-created and European-centered ideology, created within the last two centuries yet accepted as a universal truth.

Ernest Gellner’s approach to the development of nations and national governments expands on Kedourie’s observation on the requirement of self-government. Gellner offers a rational definition of nationalism as a political ideology which holds that the political (the nation-state) and national unit (the nation) should be congruent, again emphasizing the naturalness of the division of humanity into nation-states governed by national governments. Gellner’s argument focuses on industrialization and modernization. He argues that the state becomes a necessity as work becomes technical and people must be educated and constantly re-educated en masse as industrialization progresses and technology improves. The state thus becomes a natural necessity as industrialization creates the need for cultural homogeneity, centralized loyalty, and generic training and education. Gellner’s arguments about the importance of industrialization and modernization point to the modern nature of nations, nation-states and nationalisms, and links the nation-state with modernization.

Smith disagreed somewhat with the modern nature of nationalism, viewing it as one in a long line of group identities. He emphasizes the importance of the history of group affiliation in understanding modern nationalisms. In this sense, Smith differs both with a group of scholars he calls perennialists, who claim that that nationalisms are ancient and a part of a constant history of group affiliation, and with modernists, who claim that nationalisms are a phenomenon dating from the late eighteenth century. Smith emphasizes both the continued and new elements of contemporary nationalisms and group affiliations without categorizing nationalisms as either traditional or modern, acknowledging that nationalism and nation-states were only recently created but draw on a rich history of sovereign political entities and loyalties towards these
political entities. However, regardless of the traditional or modern characteristics of nationalism, his work does acknowledge the modern context (i.e. that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) in which the nation, the nation-state, and nationalisms received a level of unprecedented importance.

What emerges from the above discussion are five main conclusions about nationalism. First, the nation, and its corresponding nation-state and nationalism, coalesces around a common feature (linguistic homogeneity, ethnic homogeneity, or economic homogeneity) which defines the groups from others. Second, the nation-state has come to be assumed as the natural political expression of the nation in both literature and in international practice. Third, the nation-state as the natural political expression of the nation is considered sovereign and garners ultimate allegiance from its citizens. Fourth, the nation is secular and religion’s only role in nationalism is to provide a discourse of legitimacy. Finally, the nation, the nation-state, and nationalism are assumed to be modern concepts, created in the nineteenth century in a European context. Religion is assumed to be a pre-modern, traditional form of affiliation replaced by nationalism.

**Non-European Nationalisms**

The above European-centered definitions of the nation, nation-state, and nationalism remain relevant to any consideration of post-colonial contexts, as these terms were brought with colonization and imperialism to be imposed and applied to the Middle East, and influenced the development of nationalisms in the region. These definitions also continue to govern the international community, in which nation-states are considered sovereign and nationalism an important form of political affiliation. The above mentioned literature focuses almost exclusively on western and European examples of nationalism, with only passing references to

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nations and nationalisms in non-European and post-colonial states. While some scholars point to examples in as India, Israel, and other Asian and Latin American countries, they fail to observe the important differences in the development of nations, nation-states, and nationalisms in non-European contexts.

What the above discussions of nationalism assume is a natural formation of nationalism as group identity and the nation-state as a political governing body for those encompassed in the nation. These discussions do not take into account what happens when nation-states are imposed, in a manner consistent with the above definitions of nations (linguistic communities, ethnic communities, economic communities) but inconsistent with facts on the ground. In these situations, nationalism develops later, after the formation of the nation-state, or not at all. Some scholars, namely post-colonialists, are beginning to contribute to expanding studies of nationalism to include Middle Eastern and other post-colonial nation-states, analysing the effect of the colonial experience on the subsequent nation-states and nationalisms formed in its wake. The literature focuses on the derivative discourse of post-colonial nationalisms and the ultimate failure of western European-based models of affiliation.

Kedourie begins to explore nationalism in the colonial context when he writes that nationalism was originally a progressive movement in the colonial world, “when it embodied the struggle of a national bourgeoisie against imperialism,” and was a source of unity against a foreign other rather than an organic unity. Similar to his observations about the development of nationalisms in Europe, Kedourie sees the turn of the masses to nationalism as a breakdown of traditional, namely religious, beliefs and habits as a result of new learning and philosophies introduced by the western-educated bourgeoisie. Kedourie concludes his discussion of nationalism with an interesting analysis of mandates and post-colonial governments, which

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12 Kedourie, 85.
emerged in the period following World War I. Kedourie problematizes the mandate system created by the League of Nations in 1919, which he describes as a barely disguised colonial system in which those nation-states deemed undeveloped by international standards were put under an exploitative trusteeship in which the articulated ultimate goal was nationhood. In these Mandate systems, many of which were erected in the Middle East, nations and nationalisms were not formed in a traditional way. The nation-state, with its accompanying nation and nationalism, was a foreign constructed institution, often serving to perpetuate colonial political and economic structures after the official end of colonial or mandate agreements and not a natural expression of a nation or true unity.\(^\text{13}\)

Hobsbawm also makes important observations about the non-European example of India’s nationalist independence movement. He writes that given the post-Versailles political environment of nation-states and the predominance of the Wilsonian version of nationalism as self-determination, any representative of an oppressed, unrecognized, or independence-seeking people during that period framed his demands for independent nation-state in the terms of nationalism and self-determination. Hobsbawm is critical of those who led India’s nationalist movement because they used western nationalisms in order to gain independence on European terms, employing concepts that were not appropriate in a colonial context: “the leaders and ideologues of colonial and semi-colonial liberation movements sincerely spoke the language of European nationalism, which they had so often learned in or from the west, even when it did not suit their situation.”\(^\text{14}\) While these nationalist independence movements achieved a formal independence from European colonialism, Hobsbawm finds that they did not create a nationalism to follow the independence period, able to unite colonists in resentment against

\(^{13}\) Kedourie describes the purpose of the nation-state in the post-colonial state as being to disguise (with appropriate rhetoric and representative structures) the tyranny of a certain group over others.

\(^{14}\) Hobsbawm, 136.
foreign conquerors rather than create a lasting sense of national identity and group affiliation. In addition, the territorial units for which these so-called national movements sought independence were, in Hobsbawm’s words, “overwhelmingly the actual creations of imperial conquest, often no older than a few decades,”\(^ \text{15}\) instead of being formed as a territorial unity matched to a pre-existing national unity.

Also writing on nationalism in India, Partha Chatterjee makes arguments similar to Hobsbawm about nationalist discourse. Chatterjee writes that ‘eastern’ nationalisms, meaning those that occur in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, depend on the acceptance of a common set of standards by which a nation is defined and measured, and these measurements were based on a set of ideas about man, morals, and society which were West European in origin. Chatterjee argues that the attempt to adopt nationalisms by eastern civilizations is “deeply contradictory,” as the civilization attempts to find something culturally unique to unite and distinguish itself while imitating a model alien to its concepts of group identity and adopting the measurements set by a foreign culture. Chatterjee argues that since the conceptions on which nationalism as a western construct is formulated are not universal but specific to western Europe, the application of these conceptions through nationalism is imitative and does not create a new political system post-independence. Anshuman Mondal also uses the example of Indian nationalism and the Indian independence movement, pairing it with an analysis of Egyptian nationalism and the Egyptian independence movement to discuss the anti-colonial nature of post-colonial nationalisms and their derivative rhetoric. He finds that despite Egyptian and Indian nationalism being successful in mobilizing populations and achieving legal independence, and their seemingly novel anti-colonial rhetoric, these nationalisms are nonetheless derivative of

\(^{15}\) Hobsbawm, 137.
European models defined by imagining, creating, and sustaining a nation represented by a native government, playing on the same key themes of nation, ethnicity, and self-determination.\textsuperscript{16}

Mahmood Mamdani echoes the derivative form of postcolonial nationalism described by Chatterjee and Mondal. While his work is focused more on the influence of institutions in Uganda and South Africa on independence movements and the postcolonial nation, he makes an number of important points about the relationship between the postcolonial nation-state, nation and nationalism. In Europe, the nation-state arose from the nation and thus was created to reflect the peculiarities and specific needs of a population. In Africa, however, where the colonial legacy of the nation-state was already in place, the nation-state was created first and influenced how the national movements and the subsequent nation defined themselves. In discussing British colonialism, Mamdani illustrates how indirect British rule reinforced institutions of control based on ethnic divisions. A combination of this heightened sense of ethnicity, a term in which Mamdani includes tribalism, with religious and other divisions “came to be simultaneously the form of colonial control over natives and the form of revolt against it.”\textsuperscript{17} This is a reiteration of the derivative nature of postcolonial nationalisms, arguing that the reversed relationship of the creation of nations and nation-states in Africa shapes both revolt (independence movements) and subsequent national identities.\textsuperscript{18}

The above scholars are united in their view of nationalism in post-colonial areas like the Middle East as a derivative discourse, using western models of nationalism in a context in which

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{17} Mahmood Mamdani. \textit{Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism} (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24.
\item \textsuperscript{18} In \textit{Citizen and Subject} and later \textit{When Killers Become Victims}, Mamdani discusses how the deliberate racial policies of colonial powers created postcolonial systems with racial tensions. These racial tensions, he argues, set the stage for the genocides and ethnic cleansing that occurred in Africa. This argument is applicable to non-African contexts where colonial powers’ colonial policy and the subsequent postcolonial state were framed in racial terms. In Lebanon, this accounts for the confessional system post-independence that mirrored the religious divisions highlighted and institutionalized by French colonial policy.
\end{itemize}
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they are not organic, which was initially anti-colonial in their rhetoric. In addition, these nationalisms were constructed upon artificially created nations and thus, these models of nationalism, adopted and foreign, eventually failed to create a sense of camaraderie post-independence. This led to the rise of other types of identity and affiliation in the Middle East. The failure of European-based nationalisms led to two ideologies that attempted to create a different form of nationalism and identity, Arab Nationalism and Islamism.

**Arab Nationalism**

Arab nationalism arrived on the contemporary international political scene during negotiations on independence following the first World War, when Sharif Hussein negotiated an independent Arab state. There are two aspects to Arab nationalism, first the idea that “Arabs are a people linked by special bonds of language and history, and, many would add, religion” and second, the idea that Arabs’ “political organization should reflect this reality.” Arab nationalism’s unity was based on an anti-imperial spirit in addition to a linguistic, historical and cultural homogeneity. This sense of kinship and perception of the Arabs as one united Arab nation was employed by Sharif Hussein who demanded a nation-state for the Arab nation, using a discourse derivative of European nationalisms and playing off of the international mood set by Wilson’s self-determination post World War I. While Arab nationalism was undoubtedly reactionary against anti-European imperialism, C. Ernest Dawn’s and Rashid Khalidi’s work has illuminated a second source of Arab nationalism in the Ottoman empire. Dawn’s work discusses the extent to which Arab nationalism was a response to a combination of Turkish nationalism and late Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)-inspired centralization of Ottoman politics in

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the early 1900s. Khalidi’s exploration of the role of Damascus in the development of Arab nationalism find that Arabism as an affiliation did not mean Arab political separatism from the Ottoman Empire prior to the end of World War I, and many Arab nationalists made appeals in the interest of the Ottoman nation, bound to it by Islamic loyalty. An era in which Arab nationalism played a prominent role as an important form of loyalty and identification began with the ultimate defeat of Ottomanism with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Egypt’s Gamal Abdul Nasser was one of the most popular and successful Arab nationalists, and it was during his presidency beginning in 1952 that Arab nationalism reached its peak in popularity and practice in the region. Arab nationalism was reflected both in political agreements, such as the 1958 United Arab Republic which united Syria and Egypt until 1961, and as a sense of camaraderie through symbolic and strategic unity in foreign policy behavior. However, despite this loose cooperation, there was rarely an agreement about how Arab nationalism should be combined with local loyalties that existed de facto, and local and regional loyalties existed seemingly side by side. Although Arabism and Arab nationalism is often described as secular in nature, it was not devoid of references to Islam. For example, Sharif Hussein gained legitimacy for being both a Pan-Arabist as well as being a descendant from the bloodline of the Prophet, and cited Islam as one of the elements of homogeneity in the Arab nation. In addition, Arab nationalists Arabicized Islam, defining the religion by its Arab language and its Arab patrons.

23 Owen, 59. Owen uses the interesting example of Iraq, which was first eastern Arab state to achieve its official independence and a seat in the League of Nations in 1932. He writes that in Iraq, “efforts to create a sense of Iraqi patriotism were deliberately introduced by the very same kind and set of politicians who were busy with schemes for wider Arab cooperation and unity” with no apparent contradiction. He references similar examples in Egypt and Syria.
Arab nationalism as a mobilizing, unifying, and strengthening ideology experienced two main defeats, a military failure against the Israelis in the Six Day War of 1967 and the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty of 1979. The 1967 military defeat at Israeli hands was perceived as a blow to the Arab world, represented by the Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian military alliance, and Arab nationalist ideology. In 1979, after a shift under Nasser’s successor, Anwar al-Sadat, to economic liberalization (infitah) and a subsequent pro-West stance, Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel. This both a blow to Nasser’s legacy, as Egypt, once the beacon of Arab leadership, had defected, and to Arab nationalism, in that Egypt took a ‘go-it-alone’ approach to relations with Israel on a state-to-state basis rather than unified Arab approach. In addition to two clear defeats to Arab nationalism, there was also the constant tension between Arab regimes that were only willing to unite when they were weak or under threat. Even the initial 1945 charter of the League of Arab States, intended to create collaboration and coordination, focused more on the sovereignty of the individual Arab states rather than on unity, and as an executive body has arguably achieved very little in the region. A final blow was delivered in 1991, when an Arab state (Iraq) very publicly and aggressively undermined the sovereignty of another Arab state (Kuwait), and was seen as both a sign of disunity and division as well as the impetus that brought American troops to the Arabian Gulf, further evidence of the failure of Arabism to unite against imperialism. While Arab nationalism as a sense of kinship among those who speak Arabic in the region is not, as Fouad Ajami wrote, ‘dead’, it has become of secondary or perhaps only rhetorical importance. Its creation and popularity in the mid-twentieth century was an important development in Middle Eastern nationalisms and identities.

The Lebanese Experience with Nationalism

24 Owen, 62.
The above discussion of the foreign nature and ultimate failure of European-imposed nationalisms as well as the appeal of Arab nationalism played out on the micro-level in Lebanon. Lebanon as a nation-state was cobbled together through a number of post World War II agreements dictated by France. On September 1, 1920, French General Henri Gouraud declared the creation of Greater Lebanon under a French mandate, drawing on the above mentioned conceptions of self-determination as well as the mandate system as a tool to help underdeveloped nations mature. In 1926, France separated the Lebanese Republic from Syria, but it remained under the administration of the French republic.

On November 8, 1943, Lebanon unilaterally abolished the French Mandate and declared its independence. The confessional, parliamentary government created by the Lebanese in order to gain independence was based on agreements reached between leading Maronite Christian and Muslim leaders, called the National Pact. It was designed to be representative of Christian and Muslim communities based on the demographic distribution of the 1932 census and neutral in its foreign policy, meaning it was neither pro-Western (as the ruling Maronites wanted) nor Pan-Arab (as the Sunni Muslims wanted). It was influenced both by the results of the same year’s parliamentary results, which reflected a growing popularity of Arabism in the region, as well as by France’s desire for the independent country to remain pro-France as the country’s influence waned in the region.25 The National Pact also established that the Christian-Muslim ratio in Parliament would be 6:5, ensuring a Christian majority in government. As a result of the political customs designed to ensure power-sharing that had developed during the 1930s, the Pact established that the President would be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni, and the President of the National Assembly (Speaker of the Parliament) a Shi‘i. The National Pact developed as the

consequence of converging local, regional, and international variables that permitted and encouraged the emergence of a power-sharing agreement at that time, a necessary compromise to achieve independence.26

The National Pact was, in fact, more than a power sharing agreement. It was a precarious compromise between competing conceptions of Lebanon held by the major sects in the country.27 The Maronite Christian definition of Lebanon came closest to the European and colonial definition of the Lebanese nation-state, focused on territorial sovereignty and a shared history (characterized as being Phoenician), and was western-oriented. The Sunni Muslim definition of Lebanon relied on a Pan-Arabism in which Lebanon’s interests were connected to and congruent with the larger Arab world’s interests, emphasizing the Arab nature of Lebanon’s identity and sympathizing with the Palestinians during the civil war. During the civil war, the Druze were most sympathetic with Sunni-Arab national versions of Lebanon. The Shi’i Muslims version of Lebanon emerged after the National Pact, as the Shi’a community grew demographically and mobilized and Shi’i parties Amal and Hizbullah became more involved in Lebanese politics, and conceptualizes Lebanon’s interests as being part of and congruent with the larger Islamic community. These conflicting conceptualizations of Lebanon are constantly in tension, influencing the behavior of political actors who will often side with outsiders in order to preserve their vision of Lebanon. This is nowhere more evident than the behavior of Lebanon’s sects during the civil war.

27 My characterization of different versions of Lebanese nationalism draws on the rhetoric of different sects surrounding definitions of Lebanon’s interests and identity. Some of these concepts are discussed in Sulh’s *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation* and Walid Phares’ *Lebanese Christian Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of Ethnic Resistance* (1995). These are, of course, traditional forms of these nationalisms, which continue to adapt and evolve over time. For example, the Pan-Arab Sunni Muslim definition of Lebanon has changed since 2005, when fellow Arab country Syria was allegedly involved in Rafik Hariri’s assassination.
The nation-state that emerged in Lebanon in 1943 was not the political articulation of a nation but rather an agreement by peoples with different identities, affiliations, and conceptions of Lebanese interests, to live within the territory of Lebanon as created by colonialism. As the above conceptualizations of Lebanon show, the National Pact and subsequent independent state of Lebanon did not create a sovereign loyalty in the form of nationalism. Rather, the government formed post-independence as a result of a compromise reflected the sectarian nature of the society, creating a consociational government. Within a few decades of independence, the sovereignty of the Lebanese nation-state was compromised in the events leading to the civil war. After being expelled from Jordan, the Palestinian Liberation Organization relocated to Lebanon. As the armed Palestinian presence grew in strength and number, it clashed first with Maronite Christian militias and later with both Israel and Shi’i Muslim militias. In 1975, a civil war erupted. The sovereignty of the Lebanese nation-state was similarly compromised by the presence of Syrian troops beginning in 1976 as a result of the instability created by the civil war. Lebanese sects acting in accordance with their conceptualization of Lebanon’s interests sided with these international actors. Thus, the civil war was both a breakdown in the sovereignty of the state as well as a breakdown in the compromise of competing conceptions of Lebanon from the National Pact.

The Ta’if Agreement of 1989, which ended civil war hostilities, did not reconcile Lebanon’s nationalism issue by creating an overarching sense of Lebanese nationalism or commitment to the state. The agreement did slightly rebalance power, splitting parliament seats between Muslims and Christians in a ratio of 50:50 to better reflect demographics, but also unofficially gave Syria full control of Lebanon’s reconstruction in a deal brokered with the United States. In a comparative study of consociational governments in Northern Ireland and
Lebanon, Michael Kerr discusses the consequences of imposed power-sharing agreements, focusing his analysis on the necessity of strong and benevolent outsider actors for successful consociational government. Kerr finds that agreements based on power-sharing or consociationalism can be effective in ending ethnic conflict and restoring stability and peace, but should be viewed as impermanent solutions and temporary governing agreements. In Lebanon, he observes a lack of heartfelt post-civil war national reconciliation under Syrian power after the conclusion of the Ta’if Accord and writes that “imposing consociation in the absence of national reconciliation of broad-based public support [as both the National Pact and the Ta’if Accord did] creates serious problems for the success of consociation in the long term.”

Without true national or interethnic reconciliation, a power-sharing government cannot succeed in either creating a sovereign nation-state or a supreme nationalist loyalty to the state. While Ta’if slightly altered the sectarian distribution of power, it failed to create important aspects of nationalism. Kerr observes that the only unifying feeling at Ta’if was a shared fatigue with civil war and a common experience of violence from the infighting.

What is notable about the Lebanese political system is that while Lebanese nationalism has been and continues to be problematic, political actors in Lebanon continue to participate in the political system and identify themselves as Lebanese, working within the state context and participating in parliamentary politics. However, the non-reconciliation between Maronite Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Shi’i Muslim conceptualizations of Lebanon’s identity and its interests continues to exist and creates a tense environment in which these versions of Lebanon compete for political dominance.

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28 Kerr, 192. Kerr also cites malevolent Syrian involvement in Lebanese affairs as exacerbating tensions created by the consociational system.
CHAPTER II

ISLAMISM AND NATIONALISMS

While post-colonialist scholars’ discussion of nationalisms in post-colonial and Middle Eastern contexts have begun to address the lacunae of literature on the subject, a constant theme in the literature on nationalism is the dismissal of religious and tribal affiliations as pre-modern and pre-nationalist. Scholars mention the Islamic umma as something that existed as a unit of affiliation before the advent of the modern nation-state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Similarly, religion is only addressed in most nationalism literature as a legitimizing myth for nations and nationalisms. In addition, in arguing that nationalist independence movements adopted western models of nationalism, post-colonialists provide evidence for the continuation of European notions of nationalism in from which religious affiliation is excluded. However, religious affiliation continues to play an important role particularly in Lebanon and the broader Middle East. As secular Arabist parties and movements failed to unite or mobilize in the Middle East, Islamism saw a revival in the international political scene and influences the rhetoric and nature of contemporary nationalisms in the Muslim world. As such, Islamism will be addressed in this paper as a form of affiliation in contemporary use, rejecting the categorization of an affiliation based on religious homogeneity as pre-modern.

Before discussing Islamism as a form of political identity, a number of terms must be defined. Islamism can be defined in a number of ways. Islamism, Islāmiyya in Arabic, is an interpretation of Islam in which the religion is viewed as being inherently political due to its tenets governing social behavior and human interaction. First, Islamism can be defined as a political program, applying the belief that Islam includes guidance for a political system and employing an interpretation of Islamic tenets to govern political behavior in a given political
system or political party. Second, Islamism can be defined as loyalty to and affiliation with the umma, the Muslim community, in a way that prioritizes this affiliation and shapes behavior to benefit the welfare of the umma. This paper will employ the second definition of Islamism, the placing of ultimate loyalty and affiliation with the umma.

Tamim Al-Barghouti provides a number of important definitions central to Islamism as a political ideology. His book as a whole discusses the concepts of nation and nation-state as being inversely related to the concepts of umma and dawla in analyzing the failure of territorial and Arab nationalisms in the Middle East. A dawla is defined as any temporary, authoritative political arrangement whose allegiance lies with the larger umma. A dawla is affiliated and behaves in a manner consistent with preserving the welfare of the umma. This differs from the definitions of the nation-state in terms of its allegiance. The Islamic umma is defined as the body of Muslims that follow the imam (literally, that which is followed) either the Qur’an or a human representative of the prophet Muhammad according to the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence. In a manner similar to nationalisms, Al-Barghouti discusses the feelings of solidarity created by the concept of the umma. He stresses that “a physical existence of individuals is called an umma when these individuals have an image of themselves as a collective and when this image is guiding them to do things in certain ways distinct from others.”

This definition is not unlike that of the nation, in that it is a constructed sense of unification in action and identification. However, a further clarification differentiates between Islamism and nationalisms, in that “a group of people are to be called an umma if they demanded each government that rules over any portion of them to be accountable to the whole group, not

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only to that portion of the group under its jurisdiction.” This implies that legitimacy of any government or dawla that exists within an umma is derived from the whole umma rather than just from those under a certain government’s rule. Conversely, if legitimacy must be derived from whole umma, a government or authority that does so is no less legitimate if it does not govern over all Muslims but rather just that which is located within its boundaries. This differentiation between a nation-state and the dawla is important to keep in mind when discussing the umma. While the dawla is considered authoritative, the issue is where its ultimate allegiance lies and how this shapes the interests of that dawla in line with the larger umma.

Islamism and Nationalism: A Shi’i Perspective

The intersection of Islam and contemporary politics does not have one common history, and thus this section will focus on those ideologies and theories which are relevant to Hizbullah as a Shi’i Lebanese party. Even within movements of Sunni Islamists or Shi’i Islamists, there is some shared content but no universality in the experience or ideas of individuals, groups, and movements that work towards combining Islam and politics and employing Islam in specific national and international political contexts. Islamism as a political movement was galvanized with the 1979 Islamic revolution and subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, viewed by many as the establishment first modern Islamic state. As the Iranian revolution established an Islamic state based on tenets of Shi’i ideology, it had a particular effect on Shi’i Islamist movements.

30 Al-Barghouti, 64.
31 In the example of Lebanon, this would mean that Lebanon behaves as if it were responsible to all Muslims while only governing a sub-set of the world’s Muslim population.
The use of Islamism as a unifying identity predated the Iranian revolution. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani first made a call for Pan-Islamism as a method of confronting western imperialism in the late nineteen century. Al-Afghani refers to the advent of Islam as having introduced a system of laws and morals by which both rulers and subjects should abide, and also repeatedly referenced a corruption or turning away from true Islam as the reason for weakness in and western imperialism’s ability to penetrate Islamic countries. Thus, for al-Afghani, Islam is a source for unity and sovereignty in the face of western imperialism. Al-Afghani also discusses the relationship between Islamism as a type of identity or affiliation, and nationalism. He finds a difference between the union of nationality (‘asabat al-jins), a negative unity that promotes division from and intolerance against other nationalities, and the union of religion (‘asabat al-din), which he viewed as a true unity without discrimination. Al-Afghani writes that “there is no nationality for Muslims except for their religion.”

Al-Afghani’s distinction between these two types of unity speak to his criticism of nationalisms as dividing people in a way that Islam did not intend, and he again lists the prioritization of local affiliations as the reason for the problems and weaknesses of the Muslim world. He writes that the problem for Muslims,

is the expression of their nationalities and their rejection of any type of affiliation resting on Islamic unity. For the believer in Islam, when does the believe rooted in him turn his attention from his nationality and his people and direct his attention from a specific bond to a general connection, the connection of faith.

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32 It has been documented by scholars like Nikki Keddie that al-Afghani’s changed his name (from Sayyid Muhammad ibn Šafdar Husaynī) to present himself as a Sunni Muslim although he was born in Iran and raised as a Shi‘i. Regardless of his identity, al-Afghani’s ideas about anti-imperial Islamic unity resonated with Shi‘i scholars and can be considered part of Hizbullah’s unique Shi‘i ideological background.
34 Al-Afghani, 313.
35 Al-Afghani, 342.
36 Al-Afghani, 349.
Al-Afghani’s call was made in a specific colonial context in which he was arguing for unity as a defense mechanism against foreign imperialism. Yet his call to turn towards a larger Islamic unity does not anywhere specifically reject nationalisms as existing differences between peoples. Rather, he condemns nationalisms where they order the needs of specific people over the needs of the umma, which in Al-Afghani’s context is unity and strength, at the expense of the umma. Al-Afghani never calls for an actual political unification, accepting the ability for nations and nationalism to exist and calling for coordination through guidance from Islam rather than unification. Indeed, his use of nationalist terms while emphasizing that the ultimate beneficiary of unity is the Islamic community shows his ability “to switch back and forth from appeals to a single nation to appeals to the entire Islamic community without feeling any apparent contradiction.”

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s conception of an Islamic government combines Islamist principles and a national framework. His reasoning for the necessity for establishing an Islamic government included the belief that Islam contains provisions dealing with everything from marital relations to international relations and as such should govern modern society and politics. Where Khomeini’s conception of an Islamic government is unique from other scholars is his interpretation that the executor of the government should be the jurist, of the faqih, as the intellectual heirs in the absence of an Imam from the prophets family. In explaining the necessity of Islamic unity, Khomeini employs al-Afghani’s anti-imperialist rhetoric to explain that without an Islamic government, Muslims do not have the ability to unite and liberate their lands.

37 Al-Afghani, 345.
blames “agent governments,” a not so subtle reference to the Shah’s regime, for representing imperialism and spreading corruption and oppression.\textsuperscript{39}

Khomeini situates his argument for Islamic government within the specific context of the Iranian state. His stated goal is the establishment of a constitutional government based on and enforcing the tenets of Islam.\textsuperscript{40} However, he writes that this Islamic government is unlike any constitutional or parliamentary government that has existed before, in which accountability lies with the people, as the constitution will be written in accordance with the Qur’an and the Sunna. Thus the government, in acting in accordance with the constitution, will be accountable to the entire population of Muslims who consider the Qur’an and the Sunna sacred texts. Khomeini does not argue against the form of the nation-state or its governance institutions,\textsuperscript{41} but rather on the issue of the nation and the nation-state’s loyalty and allegiance. His call must be to the entire umma for his political authority to be legitimate in accordance with Twelver Shi’ite doctrine,\textsuperscript{42} but while speaking to the umma, Khomeini uses the term vatan (the Persian pronunciation for watan) numerous times, most often to refer to the sons of Iran, their homeland, their general needs as well as their specific need for Islamic government. Khomeini specifically cites developments in Tehran and Iran that are favorable or point to the need for the establishment of an Islamic government. While Khomeini calls his plan an Islamic revolution, there is no call for overthrowing the state or reestablishing territorial borders. What occurred after the revolution was both a reforming of state institutions against the former monarchy and towards being in line with the Qur’an and Islam, as well as a refashioning of where Iran’s allegiance and affiliation lie.

\textsuperscript{39} Ruhollah Khomeini. \textit{Al-Hukūmah al-Islāmīyah} (Cairo, Egypt: 1979), 35.
\textsuperscript{40} Khomeini, 41.
\textsuperscript{41} What was unique to the government institutions of Iran is that the role of the highest state authority is a joint political and religious authority and has been held by two Ayatollahs. In addition, Iran has an Assembly of Experts, composed of 86 Islamic scholars who are charged with supervising government activities.
\textsuperscript{42} Al-Barghouti, 46.
Khomeini essentially transformed Iran into a *dawla*, an authoritative political arrangement whose legitimacy rested with the whole of the *umma* while governing the Iranian portion of the world’s Muslims. Through his rhetoric during the formation of the Islamic Republic, it is evident that Khomeini views the nation-state as the platform from which to work on behalf of the *umma*.

Khomeini’s rhetoric increasingly focused on themes of nationalism after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and blended themes of Iranian nationalism and Islamism during the Iran-Iraq war. A line from an often misinterpreted 1980 speech further explains Khomeini’s position on the relationship between Islamism and nationalism. Khomeini stated, “We do not worship Iran, we worship Allah. For patriotism is another name for paganism. I say let [Iran] burn. I say let this land go up in smoke, provided Islam emerges triumphant in the rest of the world.” Many interpret this as Khomeini being a Pan-Islamist at the expense of the Iranian nation and misread this as Khomeini despising Iranian nationalism. However, in reality this is critical of nationalism only when it is prioritized above an affiliation with the *umma*. It may have also been a commentary on Persian nationalism under the Shah, in which it was considered an ultimate affiliation and was devoid of concern for the interests of the *umma*. What this quote actually implies is that Khomeini would sacrifice the nation of Iran if the *umma* would benefit, as the *umma* is where Khomeini’s ultimate concern and affiliation lie.

Within Lebanon, Shi’i clerics also discussed the relationship between Islamism and nationalism within the specific context of the Lebanese state. Imam Musa al-Sadr was an Iranian-born cleric who worked to mobilize the Shi’a in Lebanon and also directly influenced Hizbullah’s ideology and behavior as a Lebanese Shi’i organization. Al-Sadr was able to mobilize and politicize the Shi’a by using use Shi’i religious symbols and heritage and

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reinterpreting them as representing activism rather than political quietism. His introduction of Shi’i faith into politics was based on his interpretation of Islam, as a religion is more focused on social concerns than on ritual. Al-Sadr used the term *imam al-jama’ a* (community) in a way that attributed an activist role to the Imam, writing

> The responsibility of an Imam of the Community knows no limits. An Imam has to protect the interest of his flock. He has to be generous. He has to serve his community with advice and persistence… No leader can claim Islam who ignores the daily affairs of the Community.\(^{44}\)

This quote implies that the Imam as an activist has political obligations. Interestingly, this concept does not specify the community as the entire Muslim population but rather a specific, limited group or people. As he articulated in his public speeches, al-Sadr saw his community as the South, but conceptualized the advancement and protection of the Shi’a community as being in the interests of both the larger state of Lebanon and the *umma*.\(^ {45}\)

Echoing al-Afghani and foreshadowing Khomeini, al-Sadr understood the ability for specific interest groups to exist as long as their interests were in line with the *umma*’s interests and under its ultimate authority. Al-Sadr emphasized both the importance of the Shi’a in Lebanon and the connection between the Shi’a in Lebanon with the larger Muslim community.

One of al-Sadr’s lasting accomplishments was establishing the Higher Shi’a Council, which served as both his and the Shi’a community’s first platform in Lebanon. The Council was an independent sectarian body composed of Shi’i parliamentarians, business men, and clerics. The charter of the Council read,


\(^{45}\) Fouad Ajami. *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon.* (London: Tauris, 1986), 116. Al-Sadr is described by Ajami as having repeatedly referred to Lebanon as *al-watan al-niha’i*, or the final homeland of the Shi’a. Playing off of Maronite usage of the same term, al-Sadr used this term in the meaning that finally, the Shi’a had a homeland and country to which they belong.
The Islamic Shi’a sect is independent in its religious affairs and endowments and institutions. It has its sons who speak in its name according to the rules of the Shariah and to Shi’a jurisprudence as set by the openings of the Grand Marja of the Shi’a in the world.

In this statement, the Lebanese Shi’i were linked the larger global Muslim community by implying “a jury and a community beyond Lebanon.” A second interesting example of al-Sadr situating his particular struggle and mobilization of the Shi’a is a change in name for his community. Previously, the Shi’a in Lebanon had often been referred to within Lebanon as matāwila, part of a Shi’i sect in Syria. In a 1974 speech, Sadr refused this name and instead referred to the Shi’a community as Shiat Lubnān. The former name had been a product of old patterns of dispossession and disenfranchisement. Al-Sadr viewed the new name as both marking the community in a new, positively distinctive way within Lebanese society, while at the same time linking the community through time and space with other Shi’a in other realms of the world by defining the sect’s territory. Al-Sadr reiterated this link between the Shi’a in Lebanon and the larger community in other speeches. In remarking how Shi’ism is inherently political and at its core a movement of reform, he said that “a man in pursuit of knowledge looking into the teachings of the twelve Imams is unable to come away with an impression of sectarianism, of any distance from the umma.” The politicization of the Shi’a both involved them in Lebanese politics and linked them with a larger community which influenced their behavior and interests. Al-Sadr worked specifically for Shi’i rights in Lebanon, placing Lebanese Shi’a in a specific context with specific challenges, while at the same time linking their struggle with a larger community.

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46 Ajami, 116.
47 Al-Nahar, February 18, 1974, 4.
As one of Lebanon’s most influential contemporary Shi’i clerics and one who continued much of the above discussion about Islamism and nationalism, Muhammad Hussein Fadallah’s thoughts on Islamism and nationalisms are pertinent to a discussion on Hizbullah in a Lebanese context.\footnote{By referencing Fadlallah’s works, I do not make the assumption that Fadlallah is in any official way connected with Hizbullah. Many analysts have erroneously written that Fadlallah is a marja’ of the party, while in reality no such relationship exists. I reference Fadlallah as an important Shi‘i cleric with ideas relevant to Hizbullah’s conceptions of the relationship between Islamism, Islamic unity, nationalism, and modern nation-states.} Writing in 1977 prior to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Fadlallah was similarly reinterpreting Islam politically as both “a state and a call” \textit{(dawla wa din)},\footnote{Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. \textit{Al-Islam wa Mantiq al-Qūwa} (Beirut, Lebanon: 1977). 12.} offering both political and personal guidance. Fadlallah’s conception of the \emph{umma} echoes al-Afghani in that it is firstly anti-imperial, as he references western imperialism as the cause for the division and downfall of the region, calling for Islamic unity as a defense tactic against said imperialism. In line with a theme throughout his writings calling for inter-Muslim dialogue, Fadlallah specifically defines the \emph{umma} as being composed of all Muslims regardless of sect.\footnote{Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. \textit{Al-Harakah Al-Islāmīyah : mā lahā wa-mā ‘alayhā} (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Malak, 2004). 108.}

Fadlallah discusses the relationship between levels of loyalty and behavior, repeating concepts articulated by al-Afghani, Khomeini, and al-Sadr in which Islamism and Islamic unity are a spiritual unity guiding individual nations’ and peoples’ actions. He is critical of local forms of affiliation (he references these as ‘\textit{asabīyya}, which in his contexts is used to mean nationalism, or \textit{ta’assub}, clannishness), writing that Islam prohibits Muslims from following local affiliations as the ultimate form of political, social, economic, or security loyalty, thus influencing their behavior towards a specific community instead of the \emph{umma}.\footnote{Fadlallah even goes so far as to say ignorance creates clannishness. Fadlallah, \textit{Al-Harakah Al-Islāmīyah}, 159.} In a commentary on Arabism as a form of affiliation competing with Islamism, Fadlallah makes an interesting critique of both Arabism as well as nationalisms (\textit{wataniyyāt}) and their use of Islam in their ideologies. He writes that both Arabism and nationalisms have always had to reconcile
themselves and be in harmony with Islamic thinking in order to have popularity in the region. Fadlallah describes how Arabism Arabicized Islam, emphasizing and claiming the Arab background of Muhammad and the Arabic language of the Qur’an, and criticizes both Arabism and nationalisms for exploiting Islam because they are “devoid of spirit.” He also criticizes the way in which nationalisms emphasize geographic and racial differentiations, distinctions which Islam as a religion does not recognize. However, at the same time, Fadlallah recognizes nationalism and local affiliations as “one of many colors of emotional feelings” that Islam needs to resound with humanity. This shows an acceptance both of the different existing forums in which Muslims live and work for the benefit of the umma, as well as an acceptance of the specific contexts Islam to which Islam has to adapt in order to be applicable in modern society. He condemns local affiliations when they are incongruent with Islamism and the welfare of the umma.

Fadlallah repeats the notion in many of his speeches and writings that individual Muslims should feel, and thus behave both socially and politically, as if they are part of the umma. Again, he draws on previous Shi’i scholars but specifically states that this feeling of Islamism should directly influence both individual and group behavior. Fadlallah’s use of the metaphor describing the umma as a human body is an apt one for understanding the relationship between the individual nation-state and the umma. He links the entire Muslim community by describing contemporary politics as if they were a body. He writes that when one part of the Muslim world is struck, like a human body, the entire Muslim world feels it and becomes weaker, thus linking the umma in both its strengths and weaknesses. Fadlallah likens the countries that compose the umma to body parts, and says that while Muslims have the right to be concerned with the country

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53 Fadlallah, Al-Harakah Al-Islāmiyyah, 74-6.
54 Fadlallah, Al-Harakah Al-Islāmiyyah, 167.
in which they live and its people, “it is the right of our Muslim brothers in the world that we be
concerned with them, just as we request that they be concerned with us.”\(^55\) Like the sentiment
first articulated by al-Afghani, this Islamism is tangible in action but remains a spiritual unity;
throughout Fadlallah’s discussion of the subject of Islamism, Islam in politics, and Islamic unity,
there is no call for a Pan-Islamic government or Caliphate, as individual governments can exist
and work for the benefit of the umma. He is able to distinguish between cultural and linguistic
differences that exist de facto within certain countries as part of “one of the bases of human
existence” while also calling for the intellectual unity provided by Islam which nationalisms,
sects, parties, and Arabism have failed to provide. Fadlallah appears to accept the nation-state
system as is, saying Islamists “find ourselves within the national framework.”\(^56\) He writes both
on developments and prescriptions for the political future in Lebanon and in the Islamic umma
without contradiction, and attributes the return of Islam to global politics as a result of specific
developments within the context of the state of Iran.

A discussion of one final concept related to Fadlallah’s discussion of Islamism and
nationalisms is necessary, as Hizbullah has employed this term as defined by Fadlallah in many
of their speeches and documents. Fadlallah uses maslaha (plural masālih) to mean interests while
describing varying levels of responsibility, loyalty and behavior. In his writings and sermons, he
explores many types of maslaha – personal, national, international, human, imperial, religious,
etc. – that represents the interests of a certain group of people. In contemporary politics, these are
often in competition with each other. For example, Fadlallah defines American maslaha as being
congruent with Israeli maslaha, meaning a continuation and defense of Zionist and western
imperialism at the expense of the umma, while he defines personal maslaha as someone looking

\(^{56}\) Fadlallah, *Al-Harakah Al-Islāmiyyah : mā lahā wa-mā ʻalayhā*, 167
out for himself or his family at the expense of other people of the umma. In addition to differentiating between levels of responsibility, loyalty and behavior, Fadlallah also links these levels of activities as being related to the umma’s maslaha. In writing on the first Palestinian intifadah, Fadlallah defines the uprising as “the will of the umma,” describing the Palestinian behavior in protesting the conditions in a specific nation-state context as being an expression of the umma’s struggle against imperialism and oppression. Here, he links local behaviors and maslaha with the umma’s maslaha. Conversely, he later writes that the umma collectively must work to free Palestine and protect the region. In this instance, he links the umma’s maslaha with local concerns.

What emerges from the above discussion of a number of influential Shi’i clerics is a slightly different reading of Islamism which allows it to be reconciled with other forms of affiliation and identity. Although these scholars write in different time periods and different political and national contexts, there is a continuity in their ideas that points to a specific Shi’i interpretation of the relationship between modern nationalism and Islamism as well as the role of Islam in contemporary politics. As Fadlallah’s writings most clearly show, clannism, tribalism, and nationalism are only condemned when they take priority over loyalty to the Islamic umma or are constructed in a manner that is incongruent with the umma’s interests. Thus, as long as Islamism is prioritized as the level of responsibility with which national behavior and decisions must be reconciled, it can exist simultaneously with nationalism. The scholars also advocate working through national levels for the benefit of the umma. This requires a reconceptualization of nationalism from its definition in most literature as a sovereign form of affiliation to one of many levels of affiliation and one in which the interests of the nation are constructed in

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57 Fadlallah, Mafrū‘āt Islāmīyah ‘āmmah : min muḥādarāt al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍl Allāh, 133.
58 Fadlallah, Mafrū‘āt Islāmīyah ‘āmmah : min muḥādarāt al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍl Allāh, 150.

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agreement with the interests of the umma. This definition does allow for two seemingly competing forms of affiliation to coexist. Indeed, the clerics imply that nationalism should not be in contradiction with Islamism if the interests of the nation are constructed to be in line with the interests of the umma.

**Hizbullah: Islamism and Nationalism**

In discussing theories of Islamism and nationalisms within the context of Hizbullah’s behavior, the question becomes what role ideology plays in the party’s political behavior. To begin, it is important to analyze what the party says. What the party does will be discussed in the following section that analyzes votes of confidence in the Lebanese parliament to discover what role ideology plays in Hizbullah’s parliamentary politics. There exists a small body of literature that explores the relationship between Hizbullah’s ideology and its behavior. Eitan Azani analyzes Hizbullah’s development as a party using social movement theory. He views the party’s Islamic discourse, which he defines as its use of Islamic motifs of unity in purpose and action as well as its use of Islamic symbols, as an initial means of mobilization during the party’s formation period. While the party continues to use this rhetoric, Azani argues that it has recently focused its rhetoric on convincing the public of its legitimacy as a Lebanese organization since its entrance into politics in 1992 in order to “blur its pan-Islamic terrorist image,” increasingly doing so as the party has become institutionalized in the government.59 Joseph Alagha similarly characterizes Hizbullah’s development into three stages, one in which Hizbullah’s religious ideology was established (1978-1985), one in which Hizbullah’s political ideology was established (1985-1990), and one in which the party’s political program was formulated (1991-2005), concluding that the dual influences of the party’s political ideology and events in Lebanon

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and the region solidified the party’s positions. Alagha’s analysis of the party’s political platforms and statements shows a consistency on key principles of identity in the party’s rhetoric from 1992 on. In discussing his interviews with Hizbullah’s leading cadres and their explanation of Hizbullah’s Lebanonization, he observes,

There is no contradiction between caring for the causes of the Islamic world and the plight of the oppressed (regional and global dimension) on the one hand, and being concerned with national-patriotic issues (domestic dimension) that are bound to reject tyranny and occupation, as well as working towards the achievement of social justice and taking care of domestic priorities and interests.\(^{60}\)

To support this, Alagha observes points of Hizbullah’s emphasis of its Lebanese identity before its loyalty came under attack after the assassination of Rafik Hariri, including the 2000 changing of the party’s logo from “the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon” to the “Islamic Resistance in Lebanon” (a change in the target of the party’s efforts), the removal by the party of all religious symbols during the 1998 municipal elections, and 2004 protests in which Hizbullah supporters carried Lebanese flags rather than their own.

Judith Palmer Harik disagrees with this assessment, arguing that Hizbullah has strayed from its core tenets by creating “ideological flexibility”\(^{61}\) in order to both combat the terrorism charges from the international community over the past decade, as well as to maintain the party’s initial core constituents, who were attracted by the Islamic discourse and behavior, while expanding the party’s identity to attract new and diverse supporters. However, the previous section shows that the ability to reconcile Islamism and nationalism does exist and has a rich history in Shi’i conceptions of identity. The party’s rhetoric during its political integration process does not deviate from its ability to exist simultaneously as an Islamic, Arab, and Lebanese entity. Both Alagha and Azani suggest a more accurate consistency to the party’s

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rhetoric since its inception into politics that permits both the Lebanese and Islamic aspects of its identity to be reconciled to each other and to the party’s behavior. While Azani sees the party’s shift in rhetoric as more pragmatic, Alagha recognizes the fluidity between the two parts of their identity, accepted as part of their ideological background.

Hizbullah’s nationalist-Islamist rhetoric began with its declaration of its existence with the 1985 Open Letter, which drew from themes articulated by Shi’i clerics in the above action. The letter generally outlined the party’s goals while suggesting multiple layers of identity. The document, addressed to both the downtrodden in Lebanon and around the world, emphasized both an Islamic and Lebanese aspect to the organization. Hizbullah is described as an Islamic umma (in this context, translated as nation or community) that is “tied to the Muslims in every part of the world by a strong ideological-doctrinal and political bond,” Islam. While emphasizing the connection between Hizbullah in Lebanon and atrocities committed against Muslims elsewhere, the letter listed the party’s specific goals to be achieved within the Lebanese nation-state. These goals largely focused on the activities of the Resistance, including militarily ending American hegemony over Lebanese soil and resisting the Israeli occupation, and a plan of working towards the adoption of a regime freely wanted by the Lebanese. The letter included a section in which Hizbullah explained that it viewed opposition parties participating within the government as ultimately benefiting the system, thus rejecting any participation in the government as essentially legitimizing a corrupt system.62 This remark appears to be anti-state.

However, Deputy Secretary General Naim Qasim later remarked that there was no state in which to participate during this period, and thus any non-participation was blamed on the nonexistence

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of a functioning state system during the civil war period. Despite this position, Hizbullah’s first public statement did emphasize the specific Lebanese forum in which they sought their goals and demands.

Hizbullah’s nationalist rhetoric strengthened during Lebanon’s return to a functioning political system at the end of the civil war. Hizbullah began its entrance into Lebanese parliamentary elections of 1992. Alagha describes Hizbullah as being faced with a dilemma when in March 1991, the Lebanese government moved to implement the Ta’if agreement and called for the dissolution of all militias which included Hizbullah’s Resistance forces. He argues that Hizbullah’s immediate entry into politics following the implementation of the Ta’if agreement was a strategic move. Hizbullah launched a public relations campaign, issuing political declarations and a political program in which it convincingly (the Lebanese government tacitly granted the party permission to keep its arms in defense against Israel) categorized its militia as a resistance movement.

In discussing the party’s entry into politics, Hizbullah’s public leaders emphasize the inherent nationalistic aspects of the party while admitting the strategic benefit of political participation. The nationalist rhetoric is representative of later justifications provided by the party in support of its dual Lebanese-Islamist identity. Hizbullah’s deputy Security General, Sheikh Naim Qasim, discussed in detail the party’s internal debates and ultimate reasoning for participating in elections for the Lebanese parliament. There was very much a practical, pragmatic logic behind the party’s decision to participate. Qasim explained that participation in the government did not represent a commitment to preserving government structures as is and offered the possibility of influencing legislation, while operating an opposition outside of the

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64 Alagha, 150.
political system would be ineffective. It was also deemed important for Hizbullah to represent their unique Islamic point of view in the parliament in order for the parliament to be representative of all Lebanese, and parliamentary representation was seen as strengthening the Resistance’s abilities and operations. On the issue of the legitimacy of participating in a parliament that does not represent the party’s ideal, Islamic system, the party turned to Khomeini for guidance, who granted permission to participate in elections. Qasim makes an interesting comment about the effect of the decision to participate in elections on the party’s Islamic identity. He writes that parliament was viewed by the party as “a form of representation where the banner of absolute allegiance to the system is not applicable.” Thus, the party saw itself as being able to commit itself to Lebanese national institutions without reprioritizing its ultimately Islamic identity or Islamism loyalty. Nasrallah announced the party’s decision to participate in the August 23 and September 6 Lebanese parliamentary elections on July 3, 1992.

Hizbullah won 12 seats in the 1992 elections. Qasim later observed that the bloc’s 12 successful parliament members, which included two Sunnis, a Roman Catholic, and a Maronite Christian, was a new model of an Islamic movement: a coalition of parliamentarians pertaining to a variety of sects, an exuberant interrelation of powers whose visions coincide with Hizbullah’s to a certain extent but who do not comply with the religious and behavioral modes of conduct requires of HB members, all while conforming to the political guidance of the party.

The common political vision which this ‘new Islamism’ coalesced was a national issue, that of the continuation of and support for the Resistance in defending Lebanon and the Lebanese against Israeli aggression. In an interview given after the elections, the party’s Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, similarly emphasized both the importance of the Resistance as a political

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65 Qasim, 189.
66 See Appendixes A, B, C, D, and E for information on the party’s parliament members.
67 Qasim, 193.
motivation as well as the Resistance’s Lebanese and national nature. When asked why the party decided to get involved in local politics, Nasrallah answered that “we were, and will always be, the party of the resistance that operates from Lebanon in reaction to occupation and daily aggression” and that the party will “work to turn the whole of Lebanon into a country of Resistance, and the state into a state of Resistance.” The interviewer also asked if the party was an extension of Iran, “a tool in Tehran’s hands.” Nasrallah answered, emphasizing the specificity of the Lebanese situation: “Be assured that every Islamic entity is part of the particular milieu in which it exists.” Nasrallah essentially says that while there is a commonality to Islamists, movements that operate and exist within specific contexts or nation-states will be influenced by and will adopt local identity, history, and culture. For Hizbullah, the unique identity added to the party’s Islamism is a Lebanese nationalism. These questions about the nature of the relationship between Hizbullah and Iran point to an area in which Hizbullah has received the most criticism of being an Iranian proxy, namely in its adherence to wilayat al-faqih. One of the party’s main religious tenets is wilayat al-faqih, in which Hizbullah considers Khomeini to be the legitimate leader succeeding the Prophet in the absence of the twelfth Imam and pledge him absolute allegiance and loyalty. However, the party has increasingly emphasized its adherence to wilāyat al-faqīh as a religious issue, characterizing their relationship with Khomeini and his successor Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as a spiritual guidance to an individual rather than a political allegiance to Iran.

Hizbullah’s public leaders have continuously explained the dual Lebanese-Islamic nature of the group, often emphasizing the Lebanese leadership and membership of the group as evidence of its Lebanese identity despite its Islamic ideology. Nasrallah once described Hizbullah as “an Islamic, Lebanese jihadist movement that has its own independent and local decision-making process, and its own independent leadership and cadres.” In many interviews, Nasrallah has clarified the party’s relations with Syria and Iran as being ones of strategic unity of purpose in opposing western and Israeli aggression, and, particularly with Iran, ideological affinity as Arab and Islamic countries.

Ali Fayyad, a member of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc elected to parliament in 2009 and who previously served as Director of the Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation, Hizbullah’s think tank, discussed the continued dual role of the party, additionally emphasizing the Arab identity of both the party and Lebanon, explaining,

we believe in this homeland, this country, this watan. At the same time, we belong to a whole nation which is the Arabic and Muslim nation. The Lebanese constitution says that Lebanon has an Arabic identity and belongs to the Arab world. That means we don’t find any contradiction between our Lebanese identity and our Arab and Muslim identity. They are complemented by each other.

Fayyad observed that in other Islamist movements, there is a division between the local identity and the Islamic identity. However, echoing Qasim’s remarks, Fayyad said there was no division between the local and Islamic identity of the party, stating, “we have three dimensions to our identity. We are Lebanese, Arabs, and Muslims.” Fayyad also discussed participation in local politics in a way that connects it to the larger Islamic community. While action is performed locally, it can have results at both the local (Lebanese) and regional (Arab or Muslim) levels. There is thus solidarity between local actors in different locations, who work towards the same

goals. Fayyad referenced specifically the Resistance against Israel as an example of this behavior; while the Resistance defends Lebanese sovereignty, it similarly works towards ending Israeli aggression towards the whole *umma*. He summarized this approach as, “I have to do locally and I have to think regionally.” 72

Finally, Hizbullah’s 2009 political manifesto serves as an interesting overview for the party’s general political goals as well as its current positions after 17 years of political experience. 73 The document is divided into a number of sections concerning the party’s political program and, typical of party rhetoric, critical of Israel, the United States, and Europe on a number of levels. In a section titled “Our Region and the United States Project,” the document articulates American interests in the region as creating disunity among the Arab and Islamic states, and that it works to foment “all kinds of seditions and divisions, particularly sectarian seditions among Muslims, to create endless internal civil conflict.” There are numerous references to the aggression of foreign powers who works to create chaos and disunity in the region. The document also discusses Hizbullah’s vision for Lebanon, stating that the party “want[s] this homeland to be a land for all Lebanese” and “to be one and unified land, people, state, and institution.” A section titled “The State and the Political System” includes Hizbullah’s vision for Lebanon’s political system and echoes earlier statements by the party in the need for a modern, decentralized, efficient political system that is free of political sectarianism and appoints those with the most ability to appropriate positions of power.

The document includes important references to the party’s two part identity. A section is dedicated to the Resistance, in which the party describes the Resistance as a Lebanese institution that has preserved national sovereignty and dignity and “restored [Lebanon’s] prestige as a

73 The Manifesto was read aloud by Nasrallah on Al-Manar, 30 November 2009.
country.” However, at the same time, the Resistance is tied to a larger community, the umma: the Resistance’s success is described as being caused by both a reliance on God as well as joint commitment to the umma and Lebanese national interests. Two sections, titled “Lebanon and Arab Relations” and “Lebanon and Muslim Relations,” not only explain the party’s foreign policy goals for Lebanon but also describe the relationship between the party’s Lebanese, Arab, and Islamic identities. First, Lebanon’s Arab identity is referred to in the document as being part of the definition of being Lebanese, in accordance with the Ta’if Accord definition of Lebanon’s character. This “makes it incumbent on Lebanon to be committed to just Arab causes,” the most important of which are the Palestine cause and resisting Israel. Second, the document discusses Lebanon’s Muslim relations in the following manner:

Hizbullah stresses the importance of cooperation between Muslim states in all fields, as it gives them the power of solidarity in the face of the scheme of arrogant powers and societal protection from cultural and media invasion. Hizbullah urges those states to make use of their wealth and exchange various benefits between them.

This characterization of Hizbullah’s concept of Islamic relations echoes al-Afghani’s call for Muslim unity in the face of western imperialism. It also echoes Fadlallah’s acceptance of the existence of separate nation-states while maintaining the concept that Muslims within a specific nation-state context should think and behave as if they are part of a larger umma. It takes this idea and applies it to the behavior of nation-states, calling for unity in the form of foreign policy initiatives against collective attacks while remaining individual, sovereign states. Hizbullah’s conception of Lebanon’s interests are compatible with those of the umma, and thus if Lebanon were to be guided by the needs of the umma, it would maintain a defense against western interference and an alliance with the region’s Arab and Muslim countries. This again allows for nationalism to exist as long as ultimate decisions and affiliation take into account and are directed towards the umma’s interests.
Finally, the reconciliation between Islamism and nationalism allows Hizbullah to work within the Lebanese parliamentary system for both national and Islamic interests and goals. It is logical that Hizbullah would frame its discourse in national terms while discussing national politics. However, as the following section will show, Hizbullah’s parliament members frame their national concerns within the interests of the umma, linking their initiatives and concerns in Lebanon with Lebanon’s interests, as defined by the party as being consistent with the umma’s interests.
In January of 1991, Hizbullah entered into Lebanese politics, which resumed with all sects involved after the ending of the civil war and the Ta’if Agreement. The party issued a political declaration that set the tone for its following political platforms. In the declaration, Hizbullah called on the Lebanese government to safeguard political, intellectual, ideological, and media freedoms, framing the demands as the basic duties of a state towards its citizens. The document called for the government to differentiate between the role of the militias in Lebanon and the party’s Islamic Resistance and for governmental support for the latter. This was followed by Sayyid Abbas’ four-point political program of the same year, which was addressed to all Lebanese irrespective of sect and included program for the politicization of the party. First, it called for the party’s continuation and reinvigoration of the Resistance against Israeli occupation. Second, it called for the end to repercussions of internal discords that were prevalent in parts of Lebanon and to constructively deal with these consequences through serious public political and social debate with both allies and enemies. Third, and most important to the party’s entrance into politics, the program included a call for the party to embark on a “Lebanonization” process of infitah (opening up) aimed specifically at Christians by launching a public and political relations campaign directed at minimizing existing ideological differences and fostering ties with other political parties. Fourth, the program called for allocating greater importance towards alleviating socio-economic and communal issues, especially for those inhabiting the most deprived areas.

**Hizbullah’s Political Programs**

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74 Both of these documents are available in the appendixes of Alagha’s *The shifts in Hizbullah’s ideology: religious ideology, political ideology, and political program* (2006) and in *Hizbullah: Al-Ta’rikh Al-Aydīyālīyī wa Al-Šiyāsī 1978-2008* (Beirut, Lebanon: Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008).
After much internal debate and Iranian mediation, Hizbullah decided to participate in the 1992 elections, which were held on 23 August and 6 September, and were successful in the Lebanon’s first post-civil war parliamentary elections. The party fielded ten candidates, eight of which were successful,\(^{75}\) and the final bloc consisted of twelve parliament members (the party’s 8 Shi’is, 2 Sunnis, 1 Greek Catholic and 1 Maronite). In the 1996 elections held on August 18, Hizbullah returned a bloc of 10 members to parliament (7 Shi’i, 2 Sunni, and 1 Maronite). After the 2000 elections held on August 27 and September 3, the bloc consisted of 11 parliament members (8 Shi’is, 2 Sunnis, and 1 Maronite). In 2005, the bloc reached a peak of 14 members (11 Shi’i, 2 Sunnis, and 1 Maronite) and in 2009 the bloc consisted of 12 members (10 Shi’is, 2 Sunnis).

In each of Lebanon’s parliamentary elections since 1992, Hizbullah has issued a parliamentary program, presenting a common platform on which the party’s members run for parliament. These programs most clearly outline the party’s priorities in Lebanese domestic and parliamentary politics, and the programs’ themes and issues are repeated and reiterated in the party’s parliament member’s speeches as well as in their discourse in parliament sessions. The projects and programs announced by Hizbullah appear to frame Lebanon’s interests in a unique way. An analysis of the platforms shows a consistency in the party’s priorities from 1992 to 2009 and clearly outlines the party’s political priorities and conception of their role as a Lebanese political party.\(^{76}\)

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\(^{75}\) According to Al-Safir, a Haj Ahmad Qamr was nominated by the party in the western Beqaa and an Ahmed al-Madbouh was nominated in Zahle. 24 August 1992.8.

\(^{76}\) These documents are included in the appendixes of Alagha’s *The shifts in Hizbullah’s ideology: religious ideology, political ideology, and political program* (2006) and in *Hizbullah: Al-Ta’rīkh Al-Aydīyālūgī wa Al-Siyāsī 1978-2008* (Beirut, Lebanon: Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008). In 2005, no official program was released but a speech by bloc head Muhammad Raad iterated the party’s electoral platform.
The platforms list a number of important political reforms important to Hizbullah, both in its role in representing Lebanon’s Shi’a as well as its general role as a Lebanese opposition party. The topics listed in the platforms are numerous and nuanced, but for organizational purposes can be grouped into the following categories: political reform; general (economic, educational, healthcare, and environmental) reform, which is inherently linked to political reform; and defending the Resistance, also defined in the platforms as reform to the relationship between the Resistance and the Lebanese government.

Nasrallah announced the party’s first political platform on August 5, 1992, during a press conference in which he categorized the party’s priorities as three types of reform: political and administrative, social, and education.\textsuperscript{77} One of the main political demands of Hizbullah’s programs is the abolition of political sectarianism. The 1992 platform finds sectarianism “responsible for the corrupt nature of Lebanon’s current regime and for all the pains and political, cultural, social, security, and developmental misfortunes that have plagued the country.” Subsequent platforms use similarly strong language. Closely related to the abolition of sectarianism is Hizbullah’s proposed reform to the electoral law, which was based on the sectarianism system. Beginning with the 1992 program, the party’s platforms all call for what it considers to be a more representative system, in which Lebanon is considered one electoral district and in which sectarian parties are unable to control the small districts that currently define Lebanese electoral politics. The 1996 platform argues that the “approbation of Lebanon as one constituency with a proportional representation system” will create real representation. This is a clear attack on the current system in the Lebanese parliament, which is based on quotas of parliament members from specific sects and, arguably, limits Hizbullah’s power despite its growing popularity. Similarly, the party calls for lowering the voting age to 18 in an attempt to

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Al-Safir}, 6 August 1992, 3.
be more representative of the Lebanese population. The platforms also call for an administrative
decentralization in order to grant expanded administrative powers to smaller units like
municipalities, districts, and governorates with the aim of facilitating political development.
Each of the platforms also includes references to the necessity of establishing a number of basic
freedoms (such as freedoms of speech, religion, and the press through standardized practices and
institutions) and clearly link the guarantee of these freedoms with political reform.

The party’s platforms also include items pertaining to other reform – economics,
education, healthcare, and the environment – linked to the need for political reform. The 1996
platform calls for economic reform by framing it as a position in opposition to imperial
economic policies. Hizbullah pledges to work towards having the state adopt economic policies
that give priority to “achieving integral human development instead of being confined to
imported economic policies” that do not take into account the particular economic and social
issues of Lebanon. The 2000 platform adds to this request, calling for a more just distribution of
taxes to alleviate the country’s financial burdens. The 2009 election platform further calls for
explicit five- and ten-year plans by relevant ministries to determine progress on economic
development in order to show a true commitment from the government to fighting poverty and
social marginalization.

In the realm of educational reform, the party’s platforms call for general improvement in
the state of public education at all levels of education. The 1992 platform specifically calls for
“the rewriting of the national history curriculum based on an objective syllabus, and taking into
account the standards of Lebanon’s cultural affiliation with its Islamic and Arab surroundings.”
In many ways, this is a self-serving request, as it is essentially a call for Shi’i historical
perspectives to be included in Lebanon’s history, but more largely asks for a writing and
teaching of Lebanese history including all perspectives. The 1996 platform similarly address education, calling again for reform to national curricula. In this instance, the platform proposed the modernization of curricula “in harmony” with the current needs of the Lebanese market demands.

In the realm of healthcare reform, the 1992 platform calls for the enactment of laws regarding the guarantee of health and social-security benefits. This section also notably stipulates that the law must cover all Lebanese individuals, “including the needs of free professionals, day laborers, and the old-aged.” The party is speaking on behalf of all Lebanese, but specifically Hizbullah’s constituency. In particular, day laborers and their families are an important part of Hizbullah’s support base in the south. The 1996 platform further specifies the need for building and updating hospitals in the southern Bekka region, both a Hizbullah stronghold and a place that suffers a disproportionate amount of Lebanon’s poverty and destruction caused by Israeli aggression. The 2009 platform delineates Hizbullah’s areas of concerns in the healthcare industry as increasing “preventative medicine, putting an end to monopolization in the drug market, and unifying hospitalization funds.”

The platforms also deal with the subject of Lebanon’s environment and national resources, and warn against their exploitation by foreign and domestic imperial forces. The 2000 platform calls for a comprehensive plan for dealing with the issue of deforestation, establishing national parks, and conserving natural resources. The platform also calls for a plan dealing with increasing pollution and its environmental effect. Hizbullah’s focus on the environment is not only a call for conserving national resources but also a call for their equal distribution, similar to the party’s presentation of economic reforms.
The sections of the platforms pertaining to the Resistance are important in illustrating the point that while Hizbullah sometimes uses Islamic terms to describe the Resistance, in its domestic politics the party ultimately portrays the Resistance as a Lebanese defense movement. In Hizbullah’s 1997 Views and Concepts document, the party even linked the right of the Resistance to defend its territories to the “sacred right” once exercised by the French and American Revolutions as a national resistance and liberation movement. The platforms all detail the importance of the Resistance as well as the importance of increasing the means for maintaining and supporting it. The 1992 and 1996 platforms will be dealt with first and together, since the terms of the Resistance changed with the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The 1992 and 1996 platforms contain a number of clauses defining the Resistance as beneficial for Lebanon specifically. The 1992 platform calls for the putting into place of programs both to recruit fighters and to better defend Lebanon, specifically referring to the region in which the Resistance occurs as “especially in South Lebanon and Western Bekaa.” The 1996 platform, first defining the Resistance as Islamic, then proceeds to calls for the continuance of the Resistance until “our occupied land is completely liberated and restored to the national sovereignty,” placing Resistance efforts into the realm of national concerns; in this context, “our land” refers to Lebanese land. In addition, the 1992 and 1996 platforms contain clauses that call for Lebanese unity in the face of Zionism as well as providing monetary and healthcare assistance to Lebanese victims and detainees. The Resistance is ultimately framed as a national movement and a national benefit.

The 2000 platform again contains a section devoted exclusively to the Resistance, titled “Al-Muqawima wa al-Tahrir” (“The Resistance and Liberation”). The 2000 elections came a few months after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon, and the first section

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78 Alagha, 240.
praises the continued efforts of the Resistance and its progress. While the withdrawal was
deemed complete by the United Nations on May 25, 2000, Hizbullah leadership claimed that the
withdrawal was incomplete as long as Israeli forces remained in the Shebaa Farms area. The
dispute is over whether or not the area was located within Syrian or Lebanese territory, with
Syria and Lebanon saying the area is located within Lebanese boundaries while Israel claiming it
is Syrian. Some analysts have argued that the Shebaa Farms issue as a Lebanese issue “has been
used as a pretext by Hizbullah for the cultivation of the armed struggle versus Israel.”79
However, the section reflects the continuance of the resistance due to the continued occupation
of the Shebaa Farms, defined by the party as Lebanese land. What is particularly interesting
about the language in this electoral platform is its use of the term watan, or homeland. The
section includes references to the importance of “tasta’ed ard al-watan” (reclaiming the land of
the homeland), “ann al-watan wa al-muwataneen” (the security of the homeland and the
citizens), and “difaa’ an al-watan” (the defense of the homeland). Again, the struggle is set in
national terms, focusing on the liberation of Lebanese land from Israeli occupation. The 2005
platform as delivered in a speech by Loyalty to the Resistance bloc head Muhammad Raad also
contains language about the Resistance, although much less than previous platforms. Raad stated
that the resistance is “determined to complete the liberation of the remaining occupied lands, and
particularly the Shebaa Farms and the hills of Kfar Shuba.” While continuing to reference the
Shebaa Farms area as Lebanese land occupied by Israeli forces, the speech also refers to Kfar
Shuba, a village located 70 miles south of the northern United Nations-recognized Israel border
but originally claimed to be a Lebanese village. The previous political platforms did not include
explicit references to Kfar Shuba, grouping it in with southern Lebanese land under occupation.

Like previous electoral platforms, the platform of 2009 again references the importance of liberating Lebanese land from Israeli occupation in order to preserve Lebanese sovereignty.

What emerges from a review of Hizbullah’s political programs is the party’s conception of Lebanon and its interests (*masālih*) in a way that reconciles working at the nation-state level with the party’s ultimate loyalties to the *umma*. Hizbullah argues that sectarianism weakens the state, exposing it to exploitative foreign influences and allowing others to interfere in Lebanese domestic affairs. A strong, united Lebanon is seen as being better than a weaker one, both for the Lebanese and the *umma*, as it protects its citizens’ rights while promoting stability, peace, and defense against foreign interference. The non-political reforms the party suggests do not harm the *umma*’s interest, as they simply work to create greater equality in economic and social issues and provide for the needs of their constituency. Finally, while the Resistance is a Lebanese movement, it is generally defending the oppressed against the oppressors, and defending against Zionist encroachment in Lebanon that is perceived as Zionist encroachment on the entire Arab and Muslim World. The Resistance is composed of Lebanese and defending Lebanese territory and can easily be viewed as serving both the Lebanese state or the larger Islamic *umma* against the same threats, but in the political platforms is phrased in domestic terms.

It is important to link the party’s political programs with a larger worldview of Lebanon and the *umma* in order to understand Hizbullah’s behavior in the Lebanese parliament, as Hizbullah’s conception of Lebanon’s interests is at odds with other parties’ and sects’ conception of Lebanon’s interests. From a reading of the party’s platforms, it is clear that Hizbullah conceives of itself as a party of multiple levels. It represents the Shi’a and the southern constituency in the south, working towards aligning the interests of Lebanon with the interests of their constituency. It is also a Lebanese party, in that it emphasizes the national characteristics
and goals. Finally, it is a party of the *umma*, towards which Hizbullah works to align Lebanon’s interests. The same guiding principles govern the party’s behavior on its three levels of representation, loyalty and action.

**Votes of Confidence**

Hizbullah applies its rhetoric in both its electoral campaigns and within the parliament. This section will discuss the seven votes of confidence between 1992 and 2004 as a representative example of Hizbullah’s and the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s behavior and position in the Lebanese parliament. Due to their frequency and repetitive occurrence, it is useful to analyze the votes of confidence over the thirteen year period which additionally serve as an interesting comparison with the party’s behavior in votes of confidence post-2005.

In the Lebanese parliamentary system, the Prime Minister is charged with forming the Cabinet, or Council of Ministers, when asked by the President to do so. In accordance with article 64 of the Lebanese constitution, the Prime Minister must receive a vote of confidence from the Parliament within thirty days of forming a new government. From 1992 to 2004, Hizbullah was successful in elections and served as an opposition party small in number but quite vocal in criticism of the government. During this period, seven new governments were formed on the following dates, with votes of confidence occurring shortly after: 31 October 1992, 25 May 1995, 14 November 1996, 4 December 1998, 26 October 2000, 17 April 2003, and 26 October 2004. Of these seven governments, five were headed by Hariri and only two were non-Hariri governments, Salim Hoss’ government formed in 1998 and Omar Karami’s government formed in 2004. In each vote during this period, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc

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80 Article 37 of the Lebanese constitution additionally gives each parliament member the right to raise a vote of no-confidence in the government during ordinary or extraordinary sessions of parliament. However, this section will only deal with the votes and discussions pertaining to votes of confidence conducted at the beginning of each new government’s term.
either voted against confidence in the government or abstained from voting. From parliamentary and newspaper records of the votes of confidence, the bloc’s programmatic priorities, points of both agreement and opposition with the governments, and position as an opposition party are clearly articulated. While many of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s positions on the issues discussed below are succinctly articulated in the party’s parliamentary programs issued during each election cycle, the discussions in parliament allow the bloc members to expand on the exact meaning of these positions. This section will be divided up into two smaller sections, dealing first with the 1992, 1995, and 1996 votes of confidence, during which Hariri presided as Prime Minister. The Loyalty to the Resistance bloc voted against confidence in these three governments. The second section will deal with the 1998, 2000, 2003, and 2004 votes of confidence, in which the bloc abstained from voting for or against confidence in the al-Hoss, Hariri, and Karami governments. The difference between voting against confidence in a government and abstaining from voting may be seemingly unimportant. However, the difference between the two types of voting behavior is significant in understanding the bloc’s stance towards respective governments and will be further examined in this section.

**Votes of Confidence, 1992-1996**

On November 9, 1992, the first post-war vote of confidence was held and the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc enthusiastically participated in the parliamentary discussion preceding the vote. The Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s opposition rested on a number of main points of difference between the bloc and the government, including a demand for governmental support and acknowledgement of Hezbollah’s armed Resistance, the government’s inability to address issues pertaining to the bloc’s main constituencies in southern Lebanon, an end to the continuing sectarian nature of the government, and general disagreement over the government’s reforms and
proposed projects. In this and the subsequent 1995 and 1996 parliaments, the bloc took an aggressive opposition role to a number of Hariri’s post-war reconstruction and development plans. This opposition position was nowhere more evident than in the discussions during the vote of confidence proceedings. The party used a number of interesting metaphors as well as a mixture of nationalist and Islamic vocabulary to discuss its criticisms and goals during the votes of confidence. The criticisms levied at the government during the 1995 and 1996 are somewhat repetitive of what the bloc iterated in 1992. This is due to a general opposition position of the bloc against Hariri’s first government and its opinion that the subsequent governments repeated the same mistakes and made the same non-progress. Through the following discourse analysis, it is clear that the main source of tension was the disagreement between Hizbullah’s conception of Lebanon’s interests (masāliḥ) and that of the Hariri governments.

Support for the Resistance

In the 1992 vote of confidence, Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid spoke first for the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc, beginning with an acknowledgement of the hardships experienced by the Lebanese people during the civil war and the responsibility of the new government to move forward with progress on a number of issues. The first issue al-Sayyid discusses is the Resistance. After labeling the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon “the most important threat” facing Lebanon, al-Sayyid characterizes the Resistance as “the only effective means on which the Lebanese people fundamentally rely in the resistance against the Zionist occupation.” Al-Sayyid even goes so far as to describe the Resistance as “the will of all the Lebanese people” (irādat al-sha‘b al-lubnāni kulu). He later lambasts the government for its non-prioritization of

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81 Al-Safir, 16 November 1992, 4. Newspaper coverage leading up to the vote of confidence described a brutal campaign of criticism and attacks from Hariri’s critics, including the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc.
the Resistance as this position will affect the government’s ability to achieve its main goals of reforming and rebuilding Lebanon after the civil war.  

During the same vote of confidence, other bloc members also criticized the government on its position regarding the Resistance. Ali Ammar used interesting vocabulary during his remarks on the responsibilities of parliament members. He uses the term umma to refer to Lebanon, which he clarified when he referred to the Lebanese in reminding parliament members that representing Lebanon requires them to abide by “all the requirements of the constitution” (jam‘ā’a bi-muqṭada al-dustūr). He finishes his discussion of the Resistance by describing the Resistance as “an action of faith in God and in humanity and in the nation” (fi‘l īmān bi-āl-lāh wa bil-insan wa al-watan). Here, he uses watan to refer to Lebanon, switching between different terms to describe the country as the focus of his words. Ibrahim Bayan similarly refers to the Resistance as “the glory (sharf) of the umma”, and sentences later how the south suffers “for all of our sakes” (min ajilna jamī‘an), not specifying it this refers to all of Lebanon or all of the Islamic community. The distinction between the Resistance efforts being for the benefit of Lebanon or for the umma as a whole is unclear.

The 1995 vote of confidence proceedings similarly included praise and support for the Resistance. According to parliamentary records, Ibrahim Bayan was the sole representative who spoke on behalf of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc. Bayan goes beyond exalting the Resistance as a Lebanese or Islamic movement, describing it as representing “the most superior and most pure… of cultural values in this era.” After describing the Resistance as the “only

83 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 9 November 1992, 529.
84 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 9 November 1992, 533.
85 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 9 November 1992, 575.
86 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 9 November 1992, 575.
87 It is unclear whether this means that Bayan was the only bloc member who spoke, or if the records published were incomplete. A call to the publisher of Jarīda Rasmīyya could not clarify this issue.
choice” in confronting Israel, Bayan uses a mix of nationalistic and Islamic rhetoric to discuss the role the Resistance’s soldiers, and their bodies, in the Resistance. He describes the Resistance as being made up of men “with confident, assured, believing hearts [who] sow their bodies, and the faith of the umma grows with them.” He also talks about how the sacrifice of their bodies will result in the creation of a better nation (watan), a nation “with justice and without sectarianism.” In addition, the Resistance “builds from the cleansing of [the soldiers’] bodies a nation (watan) of Moses without the Pharaoh, of Jesus without the Jews, of Muhammad without the polytheists (mushrikīn) of Mecca,” meaning a peaceful nation internally free from foreign threats. Bayan draws on both nationalistic vocabulary, referring to the nation and sectarianism, as well as Islamic and biblical vocabulary, referring to the larger umma and using religious references, in describing the sacrifices and achievements of the Resistance.

Related to Bayan’s discussion of the Resistance’s soldiers is a section of his speech titled “Families and Prisoners,” in which Bayan criticizes the ministerial address for leaving out any mention of these two groups. Here, his argument comes full circle. Previously, he had praised the achievements of the individual soldiers and the Resistance as a whole for acting on behalf of the nation and the umma. However, in the section on families and prisoners Bayan characterizes the Resistance as a Lebanese movement, insofar as the Lebanese government is charged with taking care of the families left behind by soldiers and those imprisoned by Israel during the Resistance. The government is being called to support those who defend Lebanon. In the 1996 vote of confidence proceeding, al-Sayyid echoed the bloc’s position of 1992 and 1995, criticizing the ministerial address for not mentioning any plans for supporting the Resistance or its soldiers.90

Speaking on behalf of Hizbullah’s Constituency

90 Al-Safir, 26 November 1996, 5.
Following his description of the Resistance as a national cause during the 1992 vote of confidence discussion, al-Sayyid links the government’s responsibility in supporting the Resistance to its responsibility in correcting the abysmal state of services for the bloc’s constituencies living in the south. After criticizing the absence of any mention in the ministerial address about government support for those in the south, he then calls for the development of a ministry specifically concerned with the affairs of the families of the Resistance’s soldiers and the martyrs, who bear the “enormous sacrifices” of fighting the Israeli occupation. However, al-Sayyid’s rhetoric is not simply about the physical needs of his southern constituencies or about support for the Resistance. Rather, he discusses the need for “strengthening the links between the occupied regions and the nation (watan)” so both the normalization with Israel and annexation can be avoided, and so that both the region and the country can be defended and strengthened. In this way, he links the south’s interests with greater Lebanon’s interests. This defines the beneficiaries of strengthening civil society in the south not only as those Lebanese citizens directly affected by the occupation, but also the Lebanese homeland (watan) whose foreign policy integrity (as defined by the bloc) and territorial sovereignty will be preserved. This connection between local issues in Hermel and Baalbek and the interests of the state were echoed in Na’im Qasim’s discussion of the 1996 vote of confidence. Qasim remarked that the lack of services provided to the south reflects the prevailing mentality in the government, viewing its “policy of deprivation” (hirmān) in the South as a punishment for Hizbullah rather than as a punishment to the people of the south and as weakening the strength of the nation. He essentially called on the government to regard Hermel-Baalbek’s interests are being part of the national

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91 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 9 November 1992, 529.
interests and to reject punishing the region because of political disagreements between the party and the government.\textsuperscript{92}

In a follow-up to al-Sayyid’s 1992 speech, bloc member Ali Taha goes so far as to link his vote against confidence in the government with the loss of confidence in the government of citizens living in the south, whom he described as having experienced the difference between the government’s promises and realities. Bayan’s speech in 1995 similarly focused on the bloc’s southern constituencies, calling for the government to “direct its gaze”\textsuperscript{93} to the issues the bloc had raised for programs and development in Baalbek and Hermel. The party is vocal in describing the needs and the lack of interest of the government in their constituency, linking the government’s lack of support and disdain for the Resistance to its position towards the south and linking local issues to national issues.

\textbf{Anti-Sectarianism}

One of Hizbullah’s – and consequently, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s – main criticisms of the Lebanese system is its sectarian nature, and since 1992 the party has continued to call for an abolishment of the sectarian system with little change in its rhetoric on the issue. During the 1992 vote of confidence, a mere three years after the Ta’if Accord reaffirmed the sectarian nature of Lebanese politics and society, al-Sayyid criticized sectarianism as the underlying reason for Lebanon’s numerous political and social problems. He calls for both political unity and a “modern state,”\textsuperscript{94} insinuating that the sectarian system for assigning political positions and employment opportunities is outdated and backward. Ali Ammar echoed al-Sayyid, calling the sectarianism the cause of weaknesses that allow for “international and

\textsuperscript{92} Al-Safir, 16 November 1996, 4.
\textsuperscript{93} Jarîda Rasmîyya, 5-6 June 1995, 581.
\textsuperscript{94} Jarîda Rasmîyya, 9 November 1992, 529-530.
domestic dangers” to undermine the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. The bloc also linked other issues affected by sectarianism with their calls for the abolishment of sectarianism. For example, in the 1992 discussions, Sa’oud Rufayil mentioned the effect of sectarianism (mainly, in reserving certain positions for certain sects) on the efficacy of the Lebanese army. After discussing the lack of commitment from the Lebanese people to the army, Rufayil asks “how can this army be an example for us when in it capabilities and qualifications collide with the wall of sectarianism?” Other issues like the sectarian and unequal nature of access to employment and education were often linked to these discussions.

In the 1995 discussion preceding the vote of confidence in Hariri’s government, Ibrahim Bayan echoed al-Sayyid’s calls for a modern nation, defining a modern state as one free from a sectarian system. Among other defining characteristics, Bayan characterizes a modern nation as one with humanitarian values (qimatihi insaniyya), not sectarian (la ta’ifiyya) or denominational (la mathhabiyya).

**Criticism of Hariri Policies**

An issue on which Hizbullah and the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc vehemently disagreed with the Hariri government was the government’s post-civil war borrowing, investment, and rebuilding strategies. In his 1992 response to the official speech delivered at the beginning of the session, al-Sayyid said that taking loans to rebuild post-war Lebanon was an “additional burden” to a people already burdened by the threat of Israeli aggression and years of sectarian strife, and that the Prime Minister’s plans included a number of unnecessary expenditures at a time of economic crisis. He did not elaborate on what these unnecessary expenditures were, but mentioned electricity, health, and education as being areas in which the

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95 *Jarīda Rasmīyya*, 9 November 1992, 532.
96 *Jarīda Rasmīyya*, 9 November 1992, 543.
97 *Jarīda Rasmīyya*, 5-6 June 1995, 580.
government should be investing and was not. Al-Sayyid also expressed the bloc’s opposition to the government’s plan for privatization of the Lebanese economy on behalf of the poor and the middle class Lebanese who would be negatively affected by the change.

The bloc thoroughly debated the government on its economic policies and other economic issues in both the votes of confidence as well as each year’s budget discussions under the Hariri government, elaborating on its central basic points of criticism. Ammar expanded on the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s criticism of the Hariri government’s financial policies by discussing “the large variation between regions” both in levels of development and money committed for development by the government. In 1992, he stressed the importance of raising the development levels of regions afflicted with disaster with more developed regions. Rufayil added that developing Baalbek and Hermel through equal distribution of resources was in the interests of the nation (watan), linking the weakness of one area to the weakness of the nation. Similar to discussions of lacking programs offered to the south, the bloc linked the south to the rest of Lebanon as a national issue and interest. In 1996, al-Sayyid criticized the government’s tax policies, arguing that they most negatively affect the south and Lebanon’s middle class, those who can least afford to carry any other financial burdens.

The themes in the bloc’s criticism of the government’s budget and spending continued in later votes. In 1995, Bayan again expressed concern over the government increasing Lebanon’s debt and distributing funds unequally throughout the country, again calling for more resources to be allocated for developing southern Lebanon and for developing lagging sectors (namely, electricity, water, and schools). Linked with the criticism of the Hariri governments’ financial policies was a criticism of the government’s foreign policy. In 1996, Ibrahim Bayan criticized

the government’s foreign relations, saying that the government takes into account “economic and financial considerations” when making foreign policy instead of “giving any importance to the issue of Lebanon in foreign policy priorities.”

The bloc criticized Hariri for being beholden to countries and companies who did not have Lebanon’s best interest in mind.

**Voting**

During the period from 1992 to 1996, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc voted against confidence in the government. In the 1992 vote of confidence, al-Sayyid stated that the bloc would withhold its confidence (*hajb al-thiqa*) in the government because of above fundamental points of disagreement. However, he was quick to add that this did not imply the bloc’s “aversion from alleviating the suffering of our people, solving their economic and social problems, or supporting their resistance against occupation forces.”

The bloc voted against confidence in the government, and the final vote was 104 votes for confidence, 12 against, and 3 abstentions. In the 1995 vote of confidence, Ibrahim Bayan similarly articulated that the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc would vote against confidence in the Hariri government. Bayan said that the bloc wanted to “prevent [the government from] making our nation (*watan*) an open arena for international epidemics.”

He then expressed the hope of the bloc for more cooperation from the government and that the bloc is prepared to offer the same. The final vote was 76 votes in favor of confidence in the government, 18 against, and 5 abstentions. The 1996 vote echoed general voting patterns in the 1992 and 1995 vote of confidence. The final vote was 102 votes in favor of confidence in the government, 19 against, and 0 abstentions.

**Votes of Confidence, 1998-2004**

**1998 Vote of Confidence**

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100 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 5-6 June 1995, 580.
102 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 5-6 June 1995, 582.
A shift in the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s voting and manner of criticism of the
government began in the 1998 vote of confidence. Salim al-Hoss was charged by President
Emile Lahoud in late November with forming a government, which he did on December 4,
1998. A vote of confidence occurred shortly thereafter on December 17. Early in discussion on
the vote of confidence, it was predicted by many commentators that Hizbullah would completely
reverse its position during the previous Hariri governments and vote in favor of the al-Hoss
government. 103 These speculations were based on the fact that the bloc had nominated al-Hoss
for the position of prime minister. Al-Hoss’ ministerial address focused on ten national goals
which were much in line with Hizbullah’s and the bloc’s position on a number of issues, both
foreign policy issues like maintaining a strong relationship with Syria and supporting the
Resistance against Israeli occupation, as well as domestic issues including the necessity of
administrative reform, educational reform, the abolishment of sectarianism, and prioritizing the
reduction of the national debt. 104

A central point of agreement between al-Hoss and the bloc was their common position on
the Resistance. While al-Hoss was a Sunni representative of Beirut, he was described by the bloc
as understanding both the importance of supporting the Resistance and the protection and
reinvigoration of the South as part of Lebanon’s greater interests. During the discussions
preceding the 2000 vote of confidence, as al-Hoss’ term was about to end, Ibrahim Bayan
praised him as

the man that violated protocol, who embraced the Resistance, defended it and protected
it. The man that stopped with protesters crying “We are all the Resistance!” I say to him,
Your Excellency, we are proud of you and the Resistance is grateful for your
commanding position. You are a treasure for Lebanon whether or not you are in the
government. 105

103 Al-Safir, 2 December 1998, 2.
105 Jarīda Rasmīyya: Mahādhir Majlis al-Nuwwāb  2-6 November 2000, 1467.
In what was called a surprise turn of events based on speculations of the bloc’s nomination of al-Hoss, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc abstained from voting. The bloc explained its vote by saying that it wanted to see the behavior of the government once in power before it gave its confidence, and thus would refrain from voting for or against confidence in al-Hoss’ government. Al-Sayyid clarified this as a new position as different from the bloc’s position during the previous government in describing his bloc as one that was in opposition in the Hariri governments although it was always willing to work with other blocs and politicians in the interests of the country. A summary of the parliament session in which the al-Hoss government received the parliament’s confidence noted that the opposition presented a much more cordial attitude towards the new government than towards the previous al-Hariri government. The final vote was 85 votes in favor of confidence in the government and 31 abstentions, including eight of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc members’ votes. Bloc members Ismail Sukkarieh voted in favor of confidence in the government while Hussein al-Hajj Hassan was absent from the session.

**2000 Vote of Confidence**

The bloc continued abstaining in voting for confidence in the government in the 2000 vote of confident, but the political context in which the vote occurred was somewhat different and marked a change in tactics for Hizbullah and the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc. Rafik Hariri had returned as Prime Minister and formed a government on October 26, 2000. Mohammad Raad, who spoke on behalf of the bloc, elucidated a number of points on which the bloc disagreed with the government typical of the bloc’s previous criticism. These points of

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disagreement included the government’s non-prioritization of education reform, the abolishment of sectarianism, and legally securing basic freedoms political and otherwise.

However, the most important issue for the bloc at the time was continued support for the Resistance. The 2000 elections and vote of confidence occurred in the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May of the same year, an accomplishment for which Hizbullah and its Resistance took credit. The Israeli withdrawal caused two developments. It first garnered support for the party, both within Lebanon and in the Arab world, for accomplishing what the Lebanese state could not and expelling the Israeli army from Lebanese soil. The party was praised by many for its ‘victory’ in southern Lebanon, including its cordial behavior as the Israelis withdrew. Second, the withdrawal created an issues regarding the necessity of the armed Resistance. The United Nations declared the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon complete on May 25, 2000. One of Hizbullah’s main reasons for political participation, as articulated in their electoral programs, speeches, and parliamentary discourse, was to increase governmental support and continue the party’s own support for the Resistance as a Lebanese movement to liberate Lebanese land, and by international standards this had been achieved.

While many did call for Hizbullah to disarm before the withdrawal, the party’s arms and militia status were justified while the Israeli occupation continued according to the party’s own logic. However, with the end of internally-recognized Israeli occupation of Lebanese land, the Resistance became a more problematic issue, and Hizbullah adjusted its political behavior accordingly. While explicitly refusing to participate in the government, Hizbullah began to move its bloc closer to mainstream politics in a number of ways and focused its rhetoric on

108 In 2004, Hizbullah published copies of congratulatory letters and telegraphs received from President Emile Lahoud, Speaker Nabih Berri, and Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, as well as a number of ministers, parliamentarians, and clerics, both from within Lebanon and throughout the Arab world.

domestic issues. Preceding the 2000 elections in August and September, Nasrallah and Shi’i Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri of Amal announced a partnership, focusing much of its efforts on joining together to win seats in the Baalbek-Hermel district.\footnote{Al-Safir, 4 September 2000, 7.} The bloc also continued to fervently support Syrian presence in its parliamentary discourse, loosely aligning itself in this position with Amal as well as other pro-Syrian blocs. Finally, the bloc also continued its trend of abstaining from voting against confidence in the government, antagonizing the Hariri government less and moving itself more mainstream by continuing to oppose many of the government’s positions while not voting against it. The subtle shift in tactics and position, and the party’s need for this shift in the wake of the change in nature of the Resistance, was noted by a number of journalists and other political analysts in the weeks leading up to and after the elections.\footnote{Al-Safir, 4 September 2000, 2.}

The party’s rhetoric during the 2000 vote of confidence reflected many of these tactics. The discussion preceding the vote was laden with praise and calls for continued support for the Resistance both because of and despite its victory. Hariri’s ministerial statement did not include any praise for the Resistance’s role in expelling Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, and as a result much of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s speeches spent a significant amount of time praising the Resistance. Raad spoke of the “heroes” in the South. He said, “the sons of this nation (watan) are celebrating their confidence in themselves and they are certain in the abilities of the Lebanese in confronting enemies.”\footnote{Jarīda Rasmīyya, 2-6 November 2000, 1474.}

Raad continued,

To all the faithful and their sacrificing and tyrannized families: we renew our promise to you, in the name of the Resistance, in the name of our great Lebanese people, that we will continue your sacred path. We will complete the liberation and we will preserve your
victory. We will reclaim the Shebaa Farms and every gain of earth from our occupied land, and we will set free every prisoner.\textsuperscript{113}

Raad characterizes the Resistance as a Lebanese movement, calling it “a national treasure” (\textit{thirwa watan\textimath{iyaa}}), and those participating in the Resistance as having “a national commitment” (\textit{iltiz\textashamed{am watan}}). Ali Ammar used rhetoric that mixed national and Islamic terms to praise the Resistance. He praised the Resistance for “raising both the level of the umma and the nation (\textit{watan}).”\textsuperscript{114} The two members also criticized the government for reaping all the gains of the Resistance without formally supporting it.\textsuperscript{115} Tied to this praise of the Resistance’s achievements was, again, a focus on the bloc’s main constituencies in southern Lebanon and calls to rebuild the south. Ibrahim Bayan reminded the parliament, “Do not forget the martyrs… their families, their children, their people, their women. Do not forget our families and our wounded, especially the disabled among them.”\textsuperscript{116} The bloc articulated its continued support for the Resistance and its calls for rebuilding the South in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal as being representative of its support for Lebanese sovereignty.

The bloc similarly phrased its support for a continued Syrian presence in Lebanon as being in the interests of Lebanon as a sovereign nation. Discussion about the continued presence of Syria in Lebanon dominated this vote of confidence session and was a main point of contention between those who supported the government and those who did not. Hariri’s position had increasingly become anti-continued Syrian presence. Bayan spoke on behalf of the bloc in favor of a continued Syrian presence emphasizing Lebanese strength, saying that “[Lebanon’s] relationship with Syria with not allow anyone to undermine it, for Lebanon is stronger with

\textsuperscript{113} Jar\textashamed{ida} Rasm\textashamed{yya}, 2-6 November 2000, 1475.
\textsuperscript{114} Jar\textashamed{ida} Rasm\textashamed{yya}, 2-6 November 2000, 1576.
\textsuperscript{115} Jar\textashamed{ida} Rasm\textashamed{yya}, 2-6 November 2000, 1475.
\textsuperscript{116} Jar\textashamed{ida} Rasm\textashamed{yya}, 2-6 November 2000, 1467.
Syria, and Syria is stronger with Lebanon, and whatever victory we have achieved is a result of this strength.”

What is perhaps the most interesting in this discussion is Raad’s words regarding Lebanese foreign policy. He speaks both about Lebanon’s Arab relations and Islamic relations, distinguishing between the two. Raad first points to a section of the ministerial address in which Hariri discusses plans for the strengthening “Arab solidarity” (at-tadhummun al-arabî). Raad says the bloc agrees with the strengthening foreign relations in order to challenge Zionist hegemony particularly Arab relations within the “circle of friends” (da’irat al-asdiqa). However, he warns Lebanon “not to bet” on any international sympathy or help despite the strengthening of any relations. Raad later returns to Lebanese international relations in criticizing the address for the absence of any mention of strengthening ties with the Islamic world, a logical space for strengthening foreign policy since Lebanon is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In contrast to Arab countries, Raad sees Islamic countries’ support for Lebanon as much more reliable, citing “a large number of countries that support Lebanese positions in international forums and provide important aid to the Lebanese people, increasing our resilience” against Israel. This speaks to the party’s concept of the strength of the united umma.

Changing its position from the 1992, 1995, and 1996 votes against confidence in the Hariri government, the bloc abstained from voting for or against confidence in Hariri’s 2000 government. Ahead of the vote, Qasim said that as an opposition party, the bloc knew it only had two choices, either abstaining from voting or voting against confidence in the government. Raad articulated that the bloc would be abstaining from voting “on the basis of the Resistance’s victory, which formed the most important of our national (wataniyya) achievements,” in order to

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117 Al-Safir, 4 November 2000, 3.
118 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 2-6 November 2000, 1476.
119 Al-Safir, 28 December, 2000, 16.
“maintain and develop” that victory.\textsuperscript{120} This statement supports the conclusion that Hizbullah became less antagonistic in parliamentary politics post-Israeli withdrawal. The final vote was 95 votes for confidence in the government, 5 against, and 17 abstentions including 11 votes from the bloc (Muhammad Birjawi was absent).

2003 Vote of Confidence

Hariri was charged with forming another government under President Emile Lahoud in April 2003 and the government faced a vote of confidence on April 20. Muhammad Raad was the sole recorded speaker for the bloc. He begins by saying that while the bloc was happy that “confronting present dangers and fateful threats is in the priorities of this government,” the bloc wanted to ensure that this so-called confrontation “did not translate into statements” instead of real action. Raad then discussed the Lebanese people’s confidence in the government. He said that the people’s confidence in the government “has not stopped fading” as government policies have failed. Raad explained that confidence in government means confidence in its institutions rather than confidence in its representatives, meaning that the Lebanese are discontent with ineffective government.\textsuperscript{121}

Beginning in 2000, the issues of the continuation of the Resistance after the Israeli withdrawal and Lebanon’s relationship with Syria came to the forefront as divisive and controversial issues as Hariri and the international community became vocally critical of both. With these international factors in mind, Raad continues with the following discussion defending the Resistance and the bloc’s support of a special relationship with Syria. He first says that Lebanon is signatory to a number of international charters that preserve human rights and self-determination, meaning that Lebanon can choose its destiny regardless of the international mood.

\textsuperscript{120} Jarīda Rasmīyya, 2-6 November 2000, 1479.
\textsuperscript{121} Jarīda Rasmīyya, 29-30 April 2003, 663.
towards Syria. These are the strongest nationalistic terms that the bloc had used thus far to describe the Resistance. Raad then defends Lebanon’s right to self-determination in choosing a policy of “cohesion” (talahhum) with Syria for strategic reasons.\textsuperscript{122} Raad iterated the need for a strong relationship between Syria and Lebanon, citing it as a source of strength for both countries. In his speech, Raad mentions the continued importance of a strong Syria as being in the interests of Lebanon as a strong, sovereign state, in line with Hizbullah’s conception of Lebanon’s interests. He then defends the Resistance as “defending [Lebanon’s] independence, sovereignty, and unity,” similar to its relationship with Syria.\textsuperscript{123}

Raad finishes his speech with a dig at the government, saying its biggest challenge will be its sympathizing with enemy goals that seek to “rob Lebanon… and to harm the unity of its sons,”\textsuperscript{124} echoing the bloc’s criticism of Hariri’s economic policies in the 1990s. In order to work towards preserving national unity, Raad says that the bloc will be abstaining from voting in confidence of the government. This again reflects the party’s decision in 2000 to not antagonize the government and remain a critical, but mainstream, opposition party. In contrast to the pre-1996 votes of confidence in Hariri governments, Raad stated the bloc’s desire to cooperate with the government. The final vote was 85 votes in favor of confidence in the government, 12 against, and 14 abstentions.

\textbf{2004 Vote of Confidence}

As tensions escalated around the continued Syrian presence in Lebanon, Omar Karami was asked by President Emile Lahoud to form a government and did so on October 26, 2004. In the November 4 vote of confidence proceedings, Mohammad Raad again spoke on behalf of the bloc, beginning his speech discussing the current period of “the seriousness of American-Zionist

\textsuperscript{122} Jarīda Rasmīyya, 29-30 April 2003, 665.
\textsuperscript{123} Jarīda Rasmīyya, 29-30 April 2003, 665.
\textsuperscript{124} Jarīda Rasmīyya, 29-30 April 2003, 665.
targeting of Lebanon” and trying to “fragment (tajki)k) the strong and powerful network” working towards the liberation of Lebanese land. Like 2003, Raad’s discussion of the Resistance was filled with nationalist vocabulary. The 2004 vote of confidence came in the aftermath of UN Resolution 1559, passed on September 2, calling for among other issues the disarmament of Hizbullah. Raad praises the Resistance for “the courage of its heroes as well as its patriotism and its roots in the people”, describing it as a Lebanese national movement ingrained in Lebanese society. Most importantly, Raad praises the Resistance for its “strengthened coordination with the state,” saying that “perhaps this has contributed to consolidating national unity.” Raad adds a further linkage between resistance activities and the bloc’s political behavior, saying “we practice our political work and always stand with the protectors of the nation/homeland (watan), its people, and its land.” In the remainder of his speech, Raad emphasizes the national priorities and Lebanese nature of the bloc. He reminds the parliament that the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc was among the blocs that nominated Karami to form a government and are “convinced of the firmness (salaba) of [Karami’s] national position and his keenness on preserving national unity.” Raad also very positively speaks of the cabinet formed and lists a number of issues the bloc would like to work with the government on, including “maintaining national unity,” solving important energy issues (like the supply and price of certain commodities), “transparent… administrative reform,” “the adoption of a clear approach to economic revisions”, and “clarifying the election law.” Raad finishes his speech explaining the bloc’s abstention from voting for or against confidence in the government as “we will give the government a chance to gain the confidence

126 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 4 November 2004, 1504.
of the people through its actions.”128 The final vote was 59 votes in favor of confidence in the government, 24 against, and 35 abstentions.

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128 Jarīda Rasmīyya, 4 November 2004, 1506.
CHAPTER IV

2005-2009: CHALLENGES TO HIZBULLAH’S NATIONALISM

Beginning in 2000, Hizbullah’s continued status as an armed militia by international standards as well as the Syrian presence in Lebanon became issues at the forefront of Lebanese domestic and parliamentary politics, with tensions rising as Lebanon’s political parties clashed over their conflicting positions on the two issues. Indeed, the two issues were closely related. It was well known in post-Ta’if Lebanon that any politician seeking the government’s five most important positions (President, Speaker of the House, Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of the Interior) would not be appointed without total commitment to all aspects of the joint Lebanese-Syrian foreign policy, as defined mostly by Syria’s interests. Part of this policy was a continuation of Hizbullah’s armed status.\(^{129}\) However, the combination of new international pressures (much of these a result of pressures directly related to the United States’ war on terror which sought to demonize Syria, Iran, and its ‘proxies’) and an increasing reluctance by some Lebanese parties to bend to Syria’s will changed the implicit acceptance of Syrian dominance in Lebanese politics.

Developments in 2005 brought opposing viewpoints on the relationship with Syria and Hizbullah’s armed status into open conflict. On 14 February 2005, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated in a car bomb that killed an additional 19 other people. The day proved to be a pivotal point in the history of Lebanese politics and the country’s relations with Syria, and was the peak of a period of chaos, assassinations, and turmoil. Initial rumors following the assassination laid blame on Syria, of whom Hariri had become increasingly critical since 2000.

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\(^{129}\) Harik, 46. Harik argues that this was part of a deal Syria brokered between Hizbullah and other Lebanese parliamentarians. Hizbullah was granted official authorization to continue the armed Islamic Resistance as a national resistance, while at the same time it was forced to abandon its aspirations for an Islamic republic and work within state institutions.
Hariri had especially taken issue with the attempt by Syria through its pro-Syrian parliament members to extend President (and pro-Syrian) Emile Lahoud’s term beyond the constitutional limits. Hariri and Lahoud had often disagreed, with Lahoud successfully blocking a number of Hariri’s initiatives during his presidency. Hariri, along with others opposed to the extension of Lahoud’s term and its implications about Syrian control in Lebanon, had cited the illegality of the extension in accordance with Lebanon’s constitution.

The United Nations dispatched a fact-finding mission on 25 February 2005. On March 25, the mission announced that based on its findings, the Syrian Military Intelligence and Lebanese security services bore joint responsibility for failing to provide security, law and order in Lebanon, and that Syria bore primary responsibility for the political tension that preceded Hariri’s death. On 2 September 2004, the United Nations had issued Resolution 1559 which called for the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon, an attack aimed at the continued Syrian military presence and interference in Lebanese affairs. In the wake of the Hariri assassination, the same issues that had begun to divide Lebanese politics became more politically charged both on the Lebanese and the international scene. It was only after Hariri’s assassination that a true international effort was made to force Syria’s redeployment from Lebanon. After an official reminder from the United Nations of the terms of Resolution 1559, Syria evacuated its troops in April 2005. However, Syria’s unofficial presence was still evident; following the official Syrian withdrawal, a number of anti-Syrian journalists and politicians were killed in a series of assassinations lasting through 2008. Additionally, a number of politicians who had

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130 Walid Jumblatt later recounted that Bashar al-Asad had once told Hariri that “Lahoud is me” and that if he wanted Lahoud, and therefore Syria, out of Lebanon, al-Asad would “break” Lebanon.” Quoted in Neil MacFarquhar. ‘Behind Lebanon Upheaval, 2 Men’s Fateful Clash.” New York Times, 20 March 2005.
131 Among those assassinated and assumed to be targeted by Syria were Samir Qasir, George Hawi, Pierre Gemayel, Walid Eido, and Antoine Ghanim.
been outspokenly critical of Syria took refuge outside of Lebanon or under self-imposed house arrest.

In addition to attacking Syria, UN Resolution 1559 was also a thinly veiled attack at Hizbullah’s weapons, as the resolution expressed the Security Council’s concern at the continued presence of armed militias in Lebanon despite the conditions of the Ta’if Accord. The attempts by the international community to disarm Hizbullah were initially met by the Lebanese government’s continued support of Hizbullah’s Resistance. When the United States put pressure on the Lebanese government to freeze Hizbullah’s assets in 2001, Hariri had refused based on Hizbullah’s status as a resistance rather than a terrorist organization. At the Organization of the Islamic Countries meeting in Doha later the same year, Hariri succeeded in crafting a final resolution both deploiring the terrorist attacks on the United States while also maintaining that “any attempt to link Islam with terrorism, and any confusion of terrorism with the right of peoples, notably the Palestinians and Lebanese, to legitimate defense and resistance to Israeli occupation is totally rejected.”132 Lahoud similarly called for solidarity against international attempts to fragment Lebanon on the issue of Hizbullah’s arms, which he again categorized as resistance rather than terrorism. The Lebanese government agreed on the need to combat terrorism but did not find Hizbullah’s military activities to fall within this category. Thus, the Lebanese government defended Hizbullah’s arms as a national Resistance working legally against Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon.133

After this initial period of support, Hizbullah’s weapons soon became an even more controversial issue on the international scene as the party used its arms on two different occasions. On July 12, 2006, Hizbullah captured two Israeli soldiers in the Shebaa Farms area,

132 Al-Safir, 6 October 2001, 2.
133 Palmer outlines the attempts by the United States to distance the Lebanese government from the party in Chapter 12 of Hezbollah: Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism.
and the next day Israel launched air and sea attacks at targets in Lebanon in retaliation. By the
time a ceasefire was called between Hizbullah and Israel on August 14, 1,191 Lebanese (mostly
civilian) and 159 Israeli (mostly soldier) deaths had occurred. UN Security Council Resolution
1701 called for the full cessation of hostilities and enhance UNIFIL’s mandate on Lebanon’s
southern border, raising its presence from 2,000 troops to 15,000 military personnel. While the
summer war ended in a ceasefire, it was perceived by many in the Arab world as being a victory
for Hizbullah, since it had gone to battle and not lost against the most powerful military in the
region. Some politicians praised the accomplishments of the Resistance, its defense of Lebanon
and its national achievements. However, criticism was also levied at Hizbullah for provoking
Israel, causing the destruction of countless homes and lives of Lebanese citizens, and working on
the behalf of Syria and Iran while Lebanon bore the brunt of the war.134

In addition to setting the terms for a ceasefire, UNSCR 1701 included a provision
reaffirming the sections of the Ta’if Accord and UNSCR 1559 which demand the disarmament
of Lebanese militias, namely Hizbullah. After heavy damages inflicted on Lebanese civilian
populations during the 2006 war, many politicians opposed to Syrian influence and to
Hizbullah’s military and political control of southern Lebanon began calling for Hizbullah’s
disarmament in line with the international resolutions. Walid Jumblatt’s remarks in December
2006 were emblematic of accusations aimed at Hizbullah during this period. Speaking after the
assassination Gibran Tueini, a journalist critical of Syria’s interference in Lebanon, Jumblatt
stated that “there is a political, security, and intelligence linkage between Hizbullah and the
Syrian regime.” He accused Hizbullah of fearing the extension of the UN investigation into
Hariri’s assassination and what the investigation would discover about Hizbullah’s true role in
Lebanon, and thus withdrawing from the government in retreat. Jumblatt also said that Nasrallah

134 Al-Safir, 23 July 2006, 2.
“is not a Lebanese leader” and acts on instructions from Iran and Syria. At this point, much of the international criticism of Hizbullah’s behavior began to be echoed in the rhetoric of anti-Syrian politicians and journalists.

A second event occurred in 2008 that increased domestic criticism of Hizbullah’s weapons. In early May, the government attempted to disable Hizbullah’s communication network, which the party considers vital in its Resistance efforts against Israel, on the accusation that the party was collecting intelligence at the airport. Similarly, Beirut Airport security Chief, Wafic Shkeir, was dismissed based on accusations that he had ties to Hizbullah. On May 8, Nasrallah announced that the recent government actions were considered by the party to be “a declaration of open war.” Hizbullah-led fighters then seized control of a number of West Beirut neighborhoods. Hizbullah ceded control of the areas which they had taken over to the Lebanese army on May 11, but 81 people died in the clashes between Hizbullah’s fighters and militiamen from Future Movement loyal to the government. This was the first time that Hizbullah had used weapons against other Lebanese since the civil war in Lebanon. The conflict, which began with Hariri’s assassination and culminated in the May 2008 infighting, was ended as part of the political agreement reached in the Doha Agreement, signed on May 21, 2008.

The two above incidents brought tension over the differing opinions about Hizbullah’s arms to a head. The government initially appeared to be supportive of Hizbullah’s armed status as a defensive and national entity, both an Islamic and Lebanese Resistance movement. However, when Hizbullah participated in armed clashes with other Lebanese militias in 2008, and the disagreements between pro- and anti-Syrian politicians became more heated, domestic criticism escalated about Hizbullah’s armed status within the state context.

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135 Interview with Al-Arabiyya Television, 28 December 2006.
Parliamentary Developments and Votes of Confidence, 2005-2009

In the midst of violence and protests, Lebanon’s parliament faced a number of crises beginning in 2005, with developments largely reflecting the pro- and anti-Syrian polarization of Lebanese politics following Hariri’s death. During this period, bolstered by parliamentary and military success, and perhaps partly in defense against international attacks against the party, Hizbullah’s bloc became less of a small opposition party and more of a small party leading a bigger opposition coalition, often characterized as being a pro-Syrian coalition against Hariri’s anti-Syrian coalition.

In the immediate aftermath of Hariri’s assassination, Prime Minister Omar Karami, known to be pro-Syrian, resigned in February. Days after his resignation, Karami was asked by President Lahoud to form a new government. However by April, when Lebanese parliamentary politics had seemingly reached a deadlock, Karami resigned after failing to form a government and was succeeded by pro-Syrian Najib Mikati, who was able to successfully form a government on April 19. The Mikati government ran a new round of elections beginning May 29, 2005. Saad Hariri, son of the late Hariri, won control of parliament with the anti-Syrian alliance March 14, named after the day on which pro-government rallies occurred in Beirut after the elder Hariri’s death. March 14 won 72 seats while Hizbullah’s March 8 coalition, similarly named for the day of the pro-Syrian rallies and including Amal and General Michel Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement, won 57 seats. The new March 14-dominated parliament chose Fouad Siniora, a Hariri ally, as prime minister.

Two votes of confidence occurred in 2005, one for Mikati’s government and a second one for Siniora’s government. The first vote of confidence for Mikati’s government occurred on April 27, 2005, and passed with 109 votes in favor of confidence in the government, one vote
against, and two abstentions. The Loyalty to the Resistance bloc voted in favor of confidence in the government for the first time in its history as a parliamentary bloc. In the second 2005 vote of confidence, the bloc similarly changed its position on accepting a position in the cabinet during the formation of Siniora’s government and accepted two ministerial positions. Muhammad Fneish was appointed Energy and Water Minister, while Trad Hamadeh, who was not part of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc but closely aligned with Hizbullah on many of its positions, was appointed Labor Minister. Additionally, Fawzi Salloukh, who became Foreign Affairs Minister, was an independent Shi’ite but was endorsed by Hizbullah. The Siniora government, complete with Hizbullah-affiliated cabinet members, received a vote of confidence on July 30, with 92 votes in favor of confidence in the government, 14 votes against, and two abstentions. The Loyalty to the Resistance bloc again supported the government, logically voting for confidence in the government in which they had agreed to participate.

This change in position regarding both voting for confidence in the government and participating in the government can be attributed to a number of reasons. Na’im Qasim listed the party’s goals in supporting and joining the government in the following manner:

Safeguard the Islamic Resistance; facilitate the mission of the UN team investigating Hariri’s assassination; maintain a special relationship between Lebanon and Syria; reject foreign interference in Lebanese affairs; work hard to attract the broadest possible popular support; affirm the value of national dialogue; and stress the need for a comprehensive socio-economic program in the country.

The party’s focus was once again on national issues and goals. In addition, the international and local attacks on the party’s Resistance and the recently completed Syrian withdrawal were both unspoken factors for Hizbullah through the bloc to align itself more closely with the government.

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137 The number of votes is low due to the absence of a number of parliament members and ministers, including Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt, on account of the volatile security situation. Al-Nahar, 28 April 2005, 1.
139 Al-Intiqad, 26 April 2005, 2.
The period of Hizbullah cooperation with the government was not to last much more than a year. Beginning shortly after the ceasefire of the 2006 war with Israel, Nasrallah began calling for the formation of a national unity government under Siniora in order to prevent foreign interference in Lebanon. Nasrallah was not referring to Syrian influence, but rather talking about the relationship between the ruling majority (namely, the Future Movement) and the United States. He accused unnamed members of the ruling majority of asking Washington to let Israel launch the 2006 war in order to crush Hizbullah.\footnote{Al-Manar, 12 August 2006. <http://www.almanar.com.lb/newsSite/NewsDetails.aspx?id=7770&language=en>}. The accusations between Hizbullah and the ruling majority escalated throughout the fall. On November 11, 2006, the government’s Shi‘i ministers, including the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s Fniesh, Hamadeh, and Salloukh, as well as Amal’s ministers, Mohamad Jawad Khalifeh and Talal Sahili, resigned from the cabinet. The resignations came after weeks of failed talks to form a national unity government, during which the opposition demanded a third of the cabinet positions in order have veto power over government initiatives. When it became apparent that General Michel Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement would only receive three instead of four ministers, leaving the opposition one position short of a third of the cabinet, the Shi‘i ministers resigned.

The resignations occurred on the eve of the cabinet approving draft UN plans for a special tribunal to try suspects in the Hariri assassination, and the parliamentary majority accused Hizbullah of trying to block the formation of the tribunal. However, Raad stressed that the withdrawal from the cabinet was a warning to the ruling majority to distribute power appropriately and not related to the tribunal.\footnote{Al-Manar, 12 November 2006. <http://www.almanar.com.lb/newsSite/NewsDetails.aspx?id=6253&language=en>}. After resigning, Hizbullah then began calling for the resignation of the government, as the government was technically unconstitutional without the representation of one of Lebanon’s major sects. Nasrallah’s statements during this time
focused on the national achievements of the party (mainly those of the Resistance) and the right of the opposition, headed by Hizbullah, to be given veto power in the cabinet. A few days after the Shi’i ministers resigned, Nasrallah stated, “this country is ours. We have sacrificed tens of thousands of martyrs, wounded, prisoners, and disabled [soldiers] for the sake of safeguarding Lebanon as well as protecting its dignity and glory. We will not give up these sacrifices.” The party was drawing on the perception of its actions and achievements through the Resistance as being in the nation’s best interests, and demanding political power based on its nationalist behavior.

Shi’ite ministers were not to rejoin the government until after the 2008 Doha Agreement. During this 18-month period, Hizbullah and the other Shi’i ministers remained outside of the government. Hizbullah successfully affected politics from outside the parliament, staging a massive sit-in in downtown Beirut protesting government action that began in December 2006 and lasted for 100 days. In September 2007, following a boycott of parliament by the pro-Syrian bloc, the parliament adjourned on the basis that it would reconvene on October 23 to elect a new president. When this failed to occur, President Emile Lahoud stepped down in November of 2007 after parliament could not agree to elect his successor. Siniora then declared Lahoud’s resignation unconstitutional, and his cabinet assumed the powers of the presidency in order to keep the government functioning without a president. This political crisis erupted into the May fighting in West Beirut mentioned earlier between Future movement militiamen and Hizbullah. Nasrallah angered many when he declared May 8, the date of the deadly clashes, as a “glorious day” for the Resistance, citing this event as a victory because it proved that both the opposition

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142 Al-Nahar, 14 November 2006, 5.
and Resistance were strong and capable of running the country’s affairs. Nasrallah’s words were perceived as being anti-national, as the party had used weapons against other Lebanese.

In an attempt to quell both the physical violence and the political stalemate, Lebanon’s political leaders traveled to Doha, Qatar, to participate in the Lebanese National Dialogue Conference held between May 16 and May 21, 2008. The Doha Agreement reached at the conclusion of the Lebanese National Dialogue Conference and signed on May 21 included five provisions. The first was an agreement on electing consensus candidate General Michel Suleiman within 24 hours of the signing of the Doha Agreement. The second was the formation of a national unity government composed of 30 ministers, distributing 16 to the majority, 11 to the opposition, and 3 to be assigned by the president, and the commitment of the ministers not to resign or obstruct the government’s actions. The third provision was the imposition of a new election law, in which Marjayoun-Hasbaya, Baalbek-Hermel, and West-Bekaa Rashaya remained as single electoral constituencies while Beirut was divided into three electoral districts. The fourth provision prohibited the internal use of weapons or violence under any circumstances. The fifth and final provision reasserted the commitment of Lebanese political leaders to abstain from resorting to the rhetoric of treason, political, or sectarian instigation.

On May 25, the anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Nasrallah gave a speech in which he expressed the party’s support of the Doha Accord and President Suleiman. Nasrallah addressed the clause of the agreement which dealt with weapons, a direct reference to the May 8 events. He said,

I reaffirm the Doha agreement clause that prevents the use of weapons to achieve political gains. The resistance weapons are to be used in fighting the enemy, liberate lands and prisoners, and defend Lebanon and nothing else. State weapons should defend

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143 Al-Safir, 16 May 2008. 2. In August 2007, Nasrallah had also declared that the party “will not raise our arms in the face of anyone in Lebanon.”
the nation, the people and their rights, but cannot be used to settle accounts with a political opponent.

In addition, he explicitly criticized the use of force by the ruling party, saying that “state arms cannot be used to target the Resistance and its arms.” Nasrallah continued that the “victory” Lebanon achieved in the Doha Agreement was the formation of a national unity government, which upheld the sovereignty of the nation while allowing the opposition a prominent role in the government. Having 11 members of the cabinet was an important gain for Hizbullah, as it gave the party, through its leading role in the opposition, veto power over government decisions, providing a solution for the issue that prompted the resignation of Shi‘i ministers in November of 2006.

On May 25, Michel Suleiman was elected as president, ending the political deadlock as well as many of the oppositions’ protests, including the Hizbullah-led sit-in in downtown Beirut. Suleiman reappointed Siniora prime minister three days later, entrusting him to form a new unity government. On July 11, political leaders reached an agreement on the make-up of the national unity government. Hizbullah’s Fneish was appointed Labor minister, while Hizbullah-affiliated Shi’a parliament member Salloukh returned as Foreign Affairs minister. Following the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between Hizbullah and General Michael Aoun, the opposition cabinet ministers included a number of Free Patriotic Movement ministers in addition to Amal-affiliated Shi’a ministers and Druze parliament member Talal Arslan. The national unity government faced a vote of confidence on August 12 and received 100 votes for confidence in the government, including the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc’s fourteen votes. The final vote included two abstentions and five votes against confidence in the government.

In June 2009, Saad Hariri’s March 14 alliance won 71 of 128 seats in the parliamentary election while Hizbullah-led pro-Syrian March 8 alliance secured 57. Saad Hariri was nominated to be prime minister. Negotiations surrounding the makeup of the cabinet and the issue of Hizbullah’s weapons delayed formation of the government. The main debate that held up cabinet negotiations was the issue of Michel Aoun’s son-in-law Jibran Bassil staying in his position as head of the coveted Communications Ministry. Aoun wanted both 4 of the 7 cabinet positions given to the Maronite sect in Lebanon and for Bassil to remain in the cabinet. A solution was finally reached on November 11, five months after the elections were concluded. Cabinet seats were divided up by giving 15 seats to the majority, 10 seats to the opposition, and five seats to be appointed by President Suleiman. In the opposition’s 10 seats, Hizbullah’s Hussein Hajj Hassan was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Mohammad Fneish was appointed the State Minister for Administrative Development. Other members of the opposition included members of the Free Patriotic Movement, the Tashnaq Party, the Marada Movement, and Amal. The government faced a vote of confidence on December 10. Saad Hariri’s government received a resounding vote of confidence, with 122 votes in favor of confidence in the government, one vote against confidence in the government, and one abstention. Similar to its behavior in supporting previous governments in which it had participated, Hizbullah’s Loyalty to the Resistance bloc voted in favor of confidence in the government.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to show both the ideological justification for Hizbullah behaving as an Islamist party within the Lebanese national system, as well as the party’s actual behavior in this national system. Since the party’s entrance into politics in 1992, Hizbullah has played the part of the loyal opposition, working within the Lebanese political system in a critical, opposition role while increasingly becoming engrained in government through accepting cabinet positions and voting for confidence in the government. The three distinct periods of the bloc’s voting behavior shows this progression, while the concerns and objections the bloc raises in these discussions are emblematic of their general positions on a number of issues.

The context of Hizbullah’s 2005 decision to accept a position in the cabinet suggests it was a defense mechanism, as two important aspects of the party’s conception of Lebanon’s interests, the party’s armed Resistance and a special relationship with Syria, were under attack by both the international and Lebanese community. However, this decision did not inherently contradict its Islamic identity as shown in the above analysis of the party’s conceptualization and ideological successors with regards to the relationship between Islamism and nationalism. Hizbullah conceptualizes Lebanon’s interests as being in line with the umma’s interests, particularly with regard to the Resistance, and so working within the Lebanese parliament is one level of working on behalf of the umma. Accepting ministerial positions means becoming a part of Lebanon’s decision-making apparatus charged with identifying and preserving Lebanon’s interests, thus granting the party the ability to better preserve the interests of the umma through a position which allows it increased influence the country’s foreign and domestic policy processes.
What can be drawn from the above theory and analysis of Hizbullah’s ideology and behavior is twofold. First, based on the parliamentary behavior analysis, this paper suggests that Hizbullah will have a long future in the Lebanese parliament. Hizbullah is an organization that is composed of a political wing, a military wing, and a social service wing. The military aspect of the party is its most controversial characteristic, and has garnered Hizbullah attention internationally as a terrorist organization. Defense against the question of the party’s armed status is central to its political participation, but the party has expanded its platform to include concrete reform programs to address Lebanon’s most challenging issues. The party is also working to expand its support in the Lebanese political system by introducing younger and better educated candidates while reaching out in dialogue and partnership with other members of Lebanon’s society and political scene. From the above analysis it would appear that Hizbullah has both prepared for continued political participation should they be disarmed while at the same time working to ensure the continuation of their Resistance.

Second, and perhaps more important, the theory section challenges assumptions about nationalism and Islamism, and in revisiting these theories calls for a deeper analysis of post-colonial and current forms of identity and affiliation within specific case studies. Lebanon’s unique history makes it a special case study of the relationship between nationalism and Islamism, and a discussion of Lebanese nationalism raises a number of issues pertaining to group affiliation and identity in post-colonial, consociational societies. In addition, this paper challenges the nature of the growing literature on Islamists, which often focuses exclusively on violent Islamists or on Islamists’ success in elections, by discussing the more interesting aspects of the ideology motivating Islamist parties and its actual influence on their behavior and voting patterns. More case studies focusing on specific examples of both post-colonial nationalism and

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Islamist participation in governments and elections is necessary to better understand developments in Middle Eastern politics.
# Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Members, 1992

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# APPENDIX B

## Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Members, 1996

Total: 10

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## APPENDIX C

**Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Members, 2000**

**Total: 11**

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<td>Mohammad Yaghi</td>
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<td>- National, Internal, and Municipal Defense&lt;br&gt;- Youth and Sports</td>
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# APPENDIX D

## Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Members, 2005

### Total: 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Confession</th>
<th>Committees</th>
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</table>
| Ali Ammar         | Shi’i      | - Foreign Affairs and Immigrants  
                      - Defense, Interior and Municipalities                                    |
| Amine Cherri      | Shi’i      | - Economy, Trade, Industry, and Oil                                        |
| Hassan Fadlallah  | Shi’i      | - Media and Telecommunications  
                      - Education, Higher Studies and Culture                                    |
| Mohammad Fniesh   | Shi’i      | None: Served as Minister of Energy and Water in Cabinet                     |
| Hussein Al-Hajj Hassan | Shi’i | - Finance and Budget  
                      - Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Water                          |
| Mohammad Haidar   | Shi’i      | - Finance and Budget  
                      - Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Water                          |
| Hassan Hobballah  | Shi’i      | - Defense, Interior and Municipalities  
                      - Agriculture and Tourism                                                   |
| Ali Miqdad        | Shi’i      | - Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs  
                      - Environment                                                               |
| Mohammad Raad     | Shi’i      | - Administration and Justice  
                      - Displaced Affairs                                                          |
| Kamel Rifai       | Sunni      | - Education, Higher Studies, and Culture  
                      - Media and Telecommunications                                                |
| Naouar Sahili     | Shi’i      | - Youth and Sports  
                      - Information Technology                                                     |
| Pierre Serhal     | Maronite   | - Foreign Affairs and Immigrants  
                      - Women and Children                                                          |
| Ismail Sukkarieh  | Sunni      | - Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs  
                      - Human Rights                                                              |
| Jamal Taqsh       | Shi’i      | - Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Water  
                      - Youth and Sports                                                           |
### APPENDIX E

**Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Members, 2009**

**Total: 12**

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hassan Fadlallah</td>
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<td>- Budget and Finance</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ali Fayyad</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- National Education, Higher Education and Culture - Budget and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohammad Fneish</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>None: Served as Minister of Administrative Reform in Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hussein al-Hajj Hassan</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>None: Served as Minister of Agriculture in Cabinet</td>
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<td>Ali Miqdad</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>Hussein al-Mousawi</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- Environment - National Education, Higher Education and Culture</td>
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<td>Nawaf al-Mousawi</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- Human Rights - Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohammad Raad</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- Foreign Affairs and Emigrants - Administration and Justice</td>
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<td>Kamel Rifai</td>
<td>Sunni</td>
<td>- National Economy, Trade, Industry and Planning - Media and Communications</td>
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<td>Naouar Sahili</td>
<td>Shi‘i</td>
<td>- Human Rights - Immigration Issues</td>
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<td>Walid Sukkarieh</td>
<td>Sunni</td>
<td>- National, Internal, and Municipal Defense - Agriculture and Tourism</td>
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## APPENDIX F

### Votes of Confidence in the Lebanese Parliament, 1992-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Government Formation</th>
<th>10/31/92</th>
<th>5/25/95</th>
<th>11/14/96</th>
<th>12/4/98</th>
<th>10/26/00</th>
<th>4/17/03</th>
<th>10/26/04</th>
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<tr>
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<td>11/9/92</td>
<td>6/6/95</td>
<td>11/25/96</td>
<td>12/7/98</td>
<td>11/6/00</td>
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<td>Votes in Favor</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<td>Elias Hrawi</td>
<td>Elias Hrawi</td>
<td>Emile Lahoud</td>
<td>Emile Lahoud</td>
<td>Emile Lahoud</td>
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<td>Prime Minister</td>
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<td>Rafik Hariri</td>
<td>Rafik Hariri</td>
<td>Salim al-Hoss</td>
<td>Rafik Hariri</td>
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<td>Rafik Hariri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker of Parliament</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
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## Votes of Confidence in the Lebanese Parliament, 1992-2009

Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Government Formation</th>
<th>4/19/05</th>
<th>7/19/05</th>
<th>7/11/08</th>
<th>11/11/09</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Vote of Confidence</td>
<td>4/27/05</td>
<td>7/30/05</td>
<td>8/12/08</td>
<td>12/10/09</td>
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<td>Votes in Favor</td>
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<tr>
<td># of Ministers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Emile Lahoud</td>
<td>Emile Lahoud</td>
<td>Michel Suleiman</td>
<td>Michel Suleiman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Omar Karami</td>
<td>Najib Mikati</td>
<td>Fouad Siniora</td>
<td>Saad Hariri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker of Parliament</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
<td>Nabih Berri</td>
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Newspaper and Television Archives
Al-Manar
Al-Nahar
Al-Safir
Al-Intiqad

Editions of the Lebanese Official Gazette
Jarīda Rasmīyya: Mahādhir Majlis al-Nuwwāb 2-6 November 2000.