THE DAIYEH DOCTRINE: THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH STATES CAN ESTABLISH ASYMMETRIC DETERRENCE

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By

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ABSTRACT

For the last decade, a growing body of research has sought to understand how classical deterrence methods could be adapted by states to establish asymmetric deterrence against non-state militant groups. Various strategies were suggested, but the research undertaken to date focused nearly exclusively on the actions of the defending state. This research project is the first formal effort to discover under what conditions deterrence against such groups can be established by focusing on important attributes of the non-state groups themselves. The result is the development of the Asymmetric Deterrence Matrix (ADM), which in eight temporally-bound case studies involving Hamas and Hezbollah successfully predicts the level of deterrence Israel should have been able to achieve against those groups at given periods of time. This research demonstrates that there are four main causal factors related to a non-state group’s characteristics that constrain and encourage the success of asymmetric deterrence strategies by states: elements of statehood (territorial control, political authority, and responsibility for a dependent population), organizational structure, ideology, and inter-factional rivalries. A fifth variable, external support, is strongly correlated but complex. In addition to breaking new theoretical ground, the ADM also leads to highly relevant policy recommendations regarding how states can devise tailor-made asymmetric deterrence strategies that correlate to the type of non-state militant group they are defending against.
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Victory most definitely has a thousand fathers (and mothers). The writing of this dissertation is the culmination not only of six years of combined work at Georgetown (M.S.F.S. and Ph.D.), but really, a lifetime of professional and academic experience. At each point along the journey, amazing people lent me a hand in furthering my personal, academic, and professional development. Someone always believed in me; many times multiple people. And that made all the difference. That said, I will focus here on those without whose help this particular project would not have come to fruition.

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--Rafael D. Frankel

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I – ISSUE BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

War between states, with uniformed combatants, standing armies, and official sanction from government authorities is increasingly rare. However that downward trend is paralleled by the rise of asymmetric conflict, which typically involves states and non-state militant groups. Despite the asymmetries of power between them, non-state groups such as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Irish Republican Army, Tamil Tigers, the FARC, and others have well demonstrated their ability to inflict significant pain on states large and small. And devising strategies to defend against those non-state threats has proven vexing to policy makers.

Among the more popular solutions attempted by states was military occupation. In the best-case scenarios, such as the American War in Afghanistan (2001-present), occupation produced temporary relief for a state’s civilians from the threat of non-state groups, but at an extraordinarily high cost. In the worst case scenarios, such as the Israel’s First Lebanon War (1982-2000), occupation produced far more dangerous threats than the state experienced before embarking on the occupation. Non-violent strategies were also employed by states in an attempt to appease non-state militant groups, but those strategies too, such as Colombia’s appeasement of the FARC, often failed. The fact is that many non-state militant groups simply have ideologies that are too bent on militancy, or goals that are too maximalist to allow for peaceful resolutions to conflict.
It is therefore clear that states require a relatively low-cost tool for defending against non-state threats. In the 20th Century, and long before, deterrence proved itself highly useful in that regard. To be sure, deterrence is not a panacea. It is not a strategy for resolving conflict. Rather it is a strategy for managing conflict, for keeping conflict at low boil—low enough that the state is not drained of blood and treasure in an effort to mitigate every threat it experiences around the world.

With the rise of non-state militant groups, many of which espoused extremist, violent, even nihilistic ideologies, many policy makers turned away from regarding deterrence as a useful strategy to defend states. This was likely due to erroneous logic that assumed deterrence only worked against states and/or only against a small set of ideologies. This research project was therefore undertaken with the express purpose of examining where deterrence was still relevant and where it would ultimately fail in the world of asymmetric conflict. And it was undertaken in the hopes of both adding to the academic field of international relations security studies and providing policy makers the tool of “asymmetric deterrence” to employ in defending states from non-state militant groups.  

1 This point will be expounded upon later in the chapter. 
2 The contemporary usage of the term “asymmetric deterrence” seems to originate with Amos Malka in 2008, though to be precise, Malka calls it “asymmetrical deterrence.” This term comports with current the current usage of the term “asymmetric conflict,” generally denoting conflict between states and non-state groups. See: “Israel and Asymmetrical Deterrence,” Comparative Strategy, 27 (2008). It is important to note that the term “asymmetric deterrence” was previously used with a different meaning by Patrick M. Morgan (1977) to denote a situation between two states where “one side is seriously considering an attack while the other is mounting a threat to prevent it.” See: Patrick M. Morgan, Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis, (Beverley Hills: Sage Publications, 1977, pp. 28). Morgan’s meaning of “asymmetric deterrence” was expounded upon as a game theory model by Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour, “Asymmetric Deterrence,” International Studies Quarterly, 1993, Vol. 37, pp. 1-27. Thus, I am proposing a new definition for “asymmetric deterrence” that comports with current the current usage of the term “asymmetric conflict,” generally denoting conflict between states and non-state groups.
The fact is that non-state threats are numerous and potentially growing. States need low-cost strategies for dealing with these threats in the coming decades, as continuing to engage in military occupation and all-out warfare drains states of blood and treasure at unsustainable levels, and is most likely politically counterproductive to boot. Understanding whether asymmetric deterrence can be that alternative is the main objective of this research.

_Deterrence in the Cold War Period_

During the Cold War, when classical deterrence theory was developed, there was one overarching threat that scholars and practitioners necessarily took into account when developing their theories and methods: the Soviet Union. The USSR was a powerful, nuclear-armed state, and as such, the assumptions generally built into deterrence theory were constructed around deterring that type of actor. With the rise of non-state militant groups, the nature of threats to national security has changed. So too has deterrence theory changed in order to remain relevant in the 21st Century.

There are many definitions of deterrence that are all variations on the same theme. For the purposes of this research, I will use George and Smoke (1974) who define deterrence as “the persuasion of one’s opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he might take outweigh its benefits.”

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Classically, deterrence was all about power; the power to coerce one’s enemy using violence or the threat of violence into a certain behavior that a state preferred (Schelling 1966). Deterrence and compellence constituted two forms of coercion, not all that different from one another. While the latter focused on forcing a challenging state to take a certain action preferred by a defending state, the former focused on forcing a challenging state to stop or refrain from a certain action considered damaging to a defending state. Though compellence was generally viewed as more difficult an endeavor than deterrence, both were based on the belief that material ability to punish a challenger was the power to drive a better bargain for the defender. This is known as deterrence by punishment. The other widely acknowledged form of deterrence, deterrence by denial, was based on the defender denying the challenger the ability to harm it (Snyder 1959). In both cases, the actions taken by a defender were meant to alter the strategic calculations of a challenger so that the challenger would no longer perceive a benefit to attacking the defender. This would either be due to fear of the consequences in the case of deterrence by punishment, or fear of failure in the case of deterrence by denial.

Schelling, for example, defines deterrence similarly as “persuading a potential enemy that he should in his own interest avoid certain courses of activity.” Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 9.
5 Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence by Denial and Punishment (Princeton University Center of International Studies, Research Monograph No. 1, 1959)
An important aspect of deterrence was the art of making one’s commitments credible (Schelling 1966). All the power in the world might win war for a state, but if a challenger did not believe a defender would use that power, then the challenger might feel free to attack the defender nonetheless. As a result, leaders had to convince their enemies of their resolve or put into place mechanisms that would not depend on perceptions of their resolve. Throughout the Cold War, perhaps the most effective deterrent to both the USSR and the US was the principle of mutually assured destruction. Though proxy wars were fought from time to time, and instances of brinkmanship, like the Cuban Missile Crisis, occurred, American and Soviet forces never engaged each other on the battlefield because of the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation. As Waltz (1990) wrote, “deterrence depends on what one can do, not on what one will do. What deters is the fact that we can do as much damage to them as we choose.”

For MAD to be successful, it was long assumed that each side must be a rational actor; that is the leaders of each state would rationally calculate that it was not in their interests to attack the other because doing so would bring about their own destruction. As defined by Kydd (2008),

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6 Schelling1966, pp. 36-43.
7 For example, the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis was one instance where leaders of the respective superpowers tested each other’s resolve and credibility of commitments in a way that greatly affected theories and applications of deterrence.
9 As Paul Pillar points out, even though MAD theory stated that the actors should be rational, there was, however, the vexing question of whether it would be rational for the deterring state to carry out a threat that would mean catastrophe for his own side as well.
“methodological individualism and rational choice strive to explain international events by positing [that] individuals, states, or sub-state actors, [have] fixed preferences and identities, [and] rationally adjust their beliefs and strategies in response to the information they receive and the strategies pursued by other actors.”

Accordingly, MAD did not depend on each state being democratic. It only depended on the leaders of the respective countries valuing their own lives and the continued existence of their countries. (Later, the necessity of mutual rationality in deterrence would be largely debunked. See the discussion in the next section.) The trouble was, not all international conflicts involved such clean-cut scenarios. In particular where deterrence was concerned, the Vietnam war proved that a preponderance of military power did not by any means guarantee the ability to coerce; and by extension to deter.

_Deterrence and Non-State Groups_

Thirty-eight years following the American withdrawal from Vietnam, the threat to states from a host of non-state militant groups in the international system is largely presumed by academics and practitioners alike to be among the prime security threats powerful states currently face and will confront in the foreseeable future. Over the last decade, states, led by the US, have expended extraordinary resources combating these groups in numerous theaters around the globe, often with limited success. Since 9/11, much attention has been devoted to how to combat non-state militant groups, as

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evidenced by the emphasis on counter-insurgency warfare in US military doctrine. But in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington, far less attention was paid to the deterrence of such actors despite the rich literature and foreign policy history based on that strategy.

The lack of attention paid to deterrence post-9/11 was explained at first by the assumption that non-state groups, in particular the militant variety, are not deterrable in the classic sense. This belief was based on the assumption that such groups inherently did not possess three of the characteristics of states that allowed them to be deterred (Trager and Zagorcheva 2006; Kroenig 2010, Wilner 2011). 11 First, non-state militant groups are not “rational actors.” Since deterrence theory depends on the leadership of a challenging actor (previously a state) performing a series of cost-benefit calculations and weighing its decisions based on a prior set of objectives, actors that did not employ such rational decision making would not be susceptible to classical deterrent methods (Abrahms 2004; National Security Strategy of the United States 2002). 12 As President George W. Bush said, when introducing the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States:

“Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and targeting of innocents; whose so-called


soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.”

Second, the use of suicide terrorism was a tactic so extreme that it indicated that a group which employed it had nothing to lose, or, at least, that its preference for action was far, far greater than its preference for non-action (Dutter and Seliktar 2006). As Gearson (2002) posited (just one year following the 9/11 attacks), the goals of modern terrorists had “changed from achieving ends to simply punishment.” This presented a problem for deterrence in the sense that as deterrence theory had developed since Schelling (1966), it depended on the power to hurt an adversary or, put in other terms, to hold at risk assets that the challenging actor valued above attacking the defending state. If a group valued violence for violence sake, then it was highly doubtful such assets existed.

Third, many such actors lacked a clear “return address” to which punishment could be dolled out or at least signals could be credibly communicated (Trager and Zagorcheva, Wilner). This phenomenon takes on two forms. For example, one problem Israel faced in attempting to deter Palestinian terrorism that originated in Lebanon prior to its 1982 invasion (and since) was the weakness of the Lebanese state (Shimshoni

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1988). Even if the Lebanese government had correctly received the signals from Israel, it was simply not strong enough to confront the Palestinian militant groups operating from its soil. A related problem, as Byman and Waxman (2002) wrote, is that the leadership structure of non-state groups is often diffuse, making it difficult to know whom to target or with whom to bargain. From a deterrence theory standpoint, this creates the problem of the defender being unable to credibly signal the challenger what its red lines are and what actions would constitute the challenger crossing those lines. The second return address problem is that such groups often lack obvious military and economic infrastructure that states hold at risk when deterring other states (Byman and Waxman; Pillar, 2003).

More recent work has moved in a different direction, countering, in particular, the assumption that non-state groups are not rational actors. This presumption has been attacked from three different directions. First, scholars have pointed out that the ability to deter a state does not necessarily rest on its leaders acting rationally (Morgan 2003; Jervis 1989). According to Jervis, “deductive theorizing need not assume rationality on the part of actors… By contrast, prevalent irrationalities can produce strong and simple patterns… It is quite possible that threats would have been challenged much more

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20 Please note that the authors listed above do not necessarily fall into the camp of scholars who believed that non-state militant groups were not deterrable. In the previous paragraphs, I am simply citing particular arguments which in aggregate were used by proponents of that assumption.

21 Byman and Waxman, pp. 19, 190-193.


frequently were statesman fully rational.”

Israel, for example, could be viewed as having established deterrence against Hezbollah since 2006 for the reason that it may now be perceived to react irrationally violent when attacked. As a Brig. Gen. (Res.) Shalom Harari, who spent 32 years in Israeli Military Intelligence, said following that war: “We are a sane state, but from time to time it’s good that in the jungle of the Middle East we behave like a crazy state.”

Second, a wave of research and theorizing has suggested that while the operational logics of non-state militant groups may indeed be different than states, their leaders nevertheless do perform cost-benefit analyses in consideration of their actions toward the attainment of predetermined goals. For example, rather than operating by political logic, which would dictate actions that are calculated to achieve predetermined strategic goals, many such groups seemed to be operating by organizational and psychological logics (McCormick 2003), or according to the “Natural Systems Model” (Abrahms 2008). Operating under organizational logic meant that groups would engage in terrorist activities, such as suicide bombings, in order to compete for status with other terrorist groups; to demonstrate continued relevance; and as a recruiting mechanism. Psychological logics explain the actions of non-state militant groups according to individual and group psychology and focus on acts of redemptive destruction; in-group/out-group dynamics; family and social status; and self-sanctioned behavior. The

23 Jervis, pp. 186.
Natural Systems Model, similar to psychological logics, explains behavior of both individual terrorists and terrorist organizations in terms of social dynamics. In all these cases, the cost-benefit calculations of group leaders are still theoretically susceptible to manipulation by states that can alter the value sets of the expected payoffs, thus making such groups deterrable.

The third leg to be undercut from the theory that non-state groups were not rational comes from scholarship on suicide terrorism. Previous focus on the rationality of suicide terrorists themselves led scholars to theorize incorrectly that groups which employed suicide terrorism could not be rational. More recently, however, the focus has correctly shifted to studying leaders of such groups—those that send out the suicide terrorists. From that perspective, the practice is seen as an entirely rational enterprise for groups that possess maximalist political demands (Crenshaw 1998).\textsuperscript{26} Suicide terrorism is a high-cost, high-reward tactic, but also functions as a form of extremely costly signaling that relates to the state that it likely suffers from an asymmetry of relative will or relative interests vis-à-vis a non-state militant group.

Arreguin-Toft (2001) hypothesizes that such asymmetry is the main causal explanation for why weaker actors defeat stronger actors in war.\textsuperscript{27} But this factor is also identified as a problem for stronger states during studies of conventional deterrence.

\textsuperscript{26}Martha Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Choice,” \textit{Terrorism and Counter Terrorism}, 2 (1998): 54-64.

That said, suicide bombing can be a rational decision on the individual level of the bomber as well for any number of reasons, including religious, social, and psychological.


Byman and Waxman also discuss the problem of asymmetry of will between state and non-state actors, pp. 18-19 and 190.
Indeed, Shimshoni attributes much of Israel’s deterrence failures against Egypt during the War of Attrition to its weaker relative interests in controlling the Suez Canal. Weaker interest, he writes, arose, in part, from differing expectations about quality of life: “The Egyptians could suffer over time without being driven either to escalate or capitulate.”

A similar dynamic, where the people are perceived as willing to suffer for prolonged periods, would come into play in Lebanon (Cambanis 2010) and the Palestinian territories by Hezbollah and Palestinian militant groups respectively.

A further demonstration of the rationality of suicide terrorism is that it works well against liberal states in particular. Liberal states confronting such threats in the contemporary international system are often not prepared to engage in the extremely bloody actions, entailing significant civilian casualties, that would be required in order to subdue or deter the perpetrators (Pape 2003; Shimshoni) due to normative shifts that now privilege the rights of civilians in combat zones. Moreover, even if liberal states were to overcome their moral aversion to using brute force and incurring “collateral damage,” their international reputations and their relationships with other states of the international community still constrain them to a greater degree than non-liberal states (Bar 2008).

All told, this leads to restrictive rules of engagement that make fighting such groups

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28 Shimshoni, pp. 225.
30 Robert A. Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” American Political Science Review 97 (2003): 349-350. There are significant problems with Pape’s study, including his methodology which selects on the dependent variable, but I use it as an example of theories that argue that terrorism, including suicide terrorism, is based on rational strategic calculation by the groups that use it. Indeed, his entire premise was challenged by Abrahms (2006) whose own research demonstrated that terrorists rarely succeeded in their goals when challenging democracies, especially when they pursued maximalist objectives. See: Max Abrahms, “Why Terrorism Does Not Work,” International Security, Fall 2006, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 42-78. Shimshoni, pp. 221 and 224.
exceedingly challenging (Byman and Waxman).\textsuperscript{32}

It therefore appears that scholars, in making the assumption that non-state militant groups do not act rationally, were making the mistake of conceiving of rationality according to a period- or culturally-bound construct. They projected what was rational for leaders of states during a certain time period and geopolitical context, i.e. the Cold War, onto leaders of different types of actors during a changed temporal context. According to Morgan:

\begin{quote}
“People often fail to distinguish between the notion that what is rational depends on the initial preferences of the actor and the fact that someone can look rational but not be rational. Rationality is not simply acting out one’s preferences or objectives—it is arriving at that action by choosing in a specified way. Otherwise, a seemingly rational act could come from drawing straws.”\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

Upon further review, it would seem that even if a group is not acting rationally according to previously conceived notions of rationality, or even within the deterrent relationship, it is still almost always operating rationally according to some set of exigencies that it experiences. Rare, if non-existent, would be the case where rationality did not figure into any of a group’s actions. Even if the objective for some contemporary enemies is violence and chaos in and of themselves, and, for example, they are religiously motivated, then they may still operate with a rationality toward those ends and can thus have their strategic calculations manipulated. “Even zealous operatives exercise caution when their capture or death will hinder the successful completion of an important

\textsuperscript{32} Byman and Waxman, pp. 19-20, 183-190, 232-233.
\textsuperscript{33} Morgan, pp. 65
mission. To the extent, then, that terrorists act furtively, meticulously plan attacks, they convey and/or create susceptibility to costs that create opportunities for deterrence,” wrote Lebovic (2007). 34 Or, as Morgan puts it:

“Many irrational or nonrational creatures, including human beings, can be readily dissuaded by threats—deterrence can be quite effective with little or no rationality to target. Creatures like this can still readily respond to pain and threats of more and be deterred. This is true of children, animals, the mentally ill. Even extreme irrationality does not necessarily place someone beyond deterring.”35

In this way, the rational actor debate as it relates to deterrence has undergone a similar transformation as with how it relates to constructivism. Where once scholars drew a fine line between rationalism and constructivism, many now see that once the assumption of endogenous preferences is discarded in favor of preferences that are exogenous and discoverable on a case-by-case basis, then actors are almost always seen as acting rationally based on their preferences and operating logics (Byers 2008). 36 This is very likely the case with non-state militant groups. Even if their preferences and operating logics are different than states, they still have their own preferences and logics that they use to calculate their actions and weigh the best possible course.

Asymmetric Deterrence: Strategies for Non-State Groups

35 Morgan, first quote, pp. 65; second quote, pp. 58.
As a result of the aforementioned research, studies on deterrence of non-state groups (asymmetric deterrence) have shifted more toward the conclusion that, despite important differences in the characteristics between states and non-state groups, deterrence strategies can be developed to target such actors. In studies of Israel’s attempted deterrence of Hezbollah and Hamas, Bar (2007 and 2008, respectively) proposes that the characteristics of those groups have allowed Israel to achieve at least “tactical deterrence” during certain time periods. 37 These characteristics include: a hierarchical chain of command, material interests that can be held at risk, a strong affinity to local constituencies, and the leverage of patron states. (“Tactical deterrence,” the achievement of which constitutes my dependent variable, is defined more explicitly in Chapter II. However, it is best thought of relative to “strategic deterrence,” a concept that originated in the Cold War which refers to a condition of total deterrence between two nuclear-armed states. By contrast, tactical deterrence, as defined by Bar, is not total and depicts the type of deterrence states might expect to be able to achieve against non-state militant groups.)

Trager and Zagorcheva additionally propose that what can also be held at risk by states are groups’ political goals instead of the life and liberty of individual members, which they may not value to the same degree. 38 Trager and Zagorcheva, as well as Pillar, also theorize that while some elements (such as suicide bombers) of terrorist networks may not be susceptible to punishment strategies, there are essential nodes in the system

On the subject of tactical deterrence, see: Bar 2008, pp. 37-38
38 Trager and Zagorcheva, pp. 88-89, 95, 109-110.
that value their life, liberty, and economic standing, among other material and non-material assets—at least enough to be influenced by punishment or the threat of punishment. These nodes may include the top leadership of such organizations or their state and financial sponsors.

In terms of deterring non-state militant groups indirectly by coercing their state sponsors, there is some agreement among Trager and Zagorcheva, Bar, Gray (2003) and Byman (2005), that it is an avenue that can theoretically bear fruit. Some regimes may prefer “death to dishonor,” as Gray writes, but, all things considered, opportunities for coercion do exist. However, the consensus is also that such indirect deterrence is an extremely difficult endeavor. As Byman notes, state sponsors of terrorism generally anticipate the punishment they may receive for such actions and are prepared for it; are highly motivated to continue such sponsorship; believe it is the best means for achieving their ambitions; and are ideologically driven. Indeed, in studying Israeli attempts to coerce Hezbollah via Syria, Bar concludes that such efforts can only be successful if there is near total international agreement on the coercion of the state in question—a rare situation.

Assuming then that non-state militant groups can be deterred, the research program has examined a number of asymmetric deterrence strategies that might fit such

39 Trager and Zagorcheva, pp. 96-98.
41 Gray, pp. 453.
groups. Bar has suggested the following mix of strategies: direct military deterrence
toward group leadership; threatening the assets of a host country; pressuring a host
population; and pressuring terrorist organizations’ patron entities. Kroenig suggests a
slightly different matrix: direct response against state sponsors, safe havens, finance
networks, leaders and preachers; indirect response against families of terrorists or
religious holy sites; direct denial against important targets; and indirect denial by limiting
media coverage, cleaning up attack sites quickly, working with imams to preach against
terrorism, and refusing terrorist demands. Indeed, deterrence by denial has been
suggested by Kroenig, Pillar, Wilner, Trager and Zagorcheva, and others as a promising
strategy against non-state terrorist groups with the highest levels of motivation because,
even if they possess little regard for life, liberty, or material assets, their strategic
calculations can be manipulated if they believe an attack—suicide or otherwise—will not
succeed.

Even if asymmetric deterrence can be achieved, it is important to remember and
explicitly identify the differences between states and non-state groups that lead to
different challenges when considering how to deter each respectively. In addition to
characteristics mentioned above, the following points, identified by Byman and Waxman,
are important to consider:

1. The tools needed are different; nuclear weapons and tanks, for example, can be
inhaefectual.

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44 Bar 2008.
45 Byman and Waxman 2002, pp. 18-20, 190-198.
2. Non-state actors have the ability to sow domestic unrest.

3. Non-state groups are often adept at manipulating public opinion against more powerful states.

It is helpful in this context to remember that deterring non-state groups is not entirely new under the sun, and there are many relevant lessons to be learned from past attempts. For example, the European response to urban terrorists, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, illuminated that governments were able to deny at least the following material and non-material assets to non-state militant groups: “popular sympathy/indirect support, the ability to remain at large; communications while in custody, financial resources, cross-border support, and recruitment of new members.”\(^{46}\) As Garrity (2007) contends, holding at risk assets an adversary values is still the most effective deterrent strategy— even against non-state or quasi-state actors:

“In many cases, NSAs/QSAs do not have tangible assets that can be held at risk, or at least these assets are fewer and more difficult to identify than those of nation-states. The United States might therefore focus on less tangible centers of gravity, such as the NSA/QSA’s sense of prestige or international standing, and develop approaches to challenge that sense of status.”\(^{47}\)

Centuries before that, the United States was able to achieve a measure of deterrence against the Barbary Pirates by, among other tactics, holding at risk Tripolitan leader Yusuf Pasha’s ambition of rising to “the first rank among the rulers and regencies of


Barbary. This appears to be evidence of Trager and Zagoreva’s hypothesis that holding at risk political goals may deter non-state groups.

State of Research Program

Key to understanding when and how asymmetric deterrence strategies might succeed would therefore be identifying what characteristics of non-state groups lead them to have material or non-material assets or aspirations that can be held at risk. These are, after all, groups whose ideologies, operating logics, organizational structures, and logistical circumstances vary greatly. For example, in his 2008 work, Bar suggests that the degree to which non-state groups resemble states will correlate with how susceptible they are to deterrence strategies.

As an additional example, many of the above scholars believe that terrorist groups predominantly motivated by religion will probably be harder to deter than terrorist groups predominantly motivated by nationalism for multiple reasons. (To be sure, many groups, including the two studied in this research, are both religious and nationalist in nature. Therefore one should think in terms of how much each of the motivations weighs on the group’s objectives and actions.) First, groups that are predominantly motivated by nationalism are forced to be more pragmatic since they have the welfare of their people to consider. Second, groups that are predominantly motivated by religion are often transnational in nature and, if so, it is more likely (though not a certainty) that they are

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48 Garrity, pp. 429.
diffuse groups both in terms of their command and control structure and their assets. Finally more religious groups, if they preach a messianic or apocalyptic ideology, may value violence and/or instability in and of itself, which is extremely difficult to deter (Shimshoni).  

50

Despite the differences between non-state groups and states, my assumption remains that, at its core, whether a non-state group can be deterred and the type of deterrence strategies that can be used against it effectively, will be based on similar premises to those Schelling suggested. Deterrence remains the art of altering the calculations of an adversary so that it prefers not attacking to attacking. This can be accomplished by the power to hurt—a defending state being able to hold at risk assets valuable enough to a challenging group that the group refrains from taking harmful actions against that state. While those material or non-material assets may not be the same as they are to states (i.e. territory, military and economic infrastructure, etc.), they will still exist in most cases and therefore present an opportunity for state deterrence of non-state groups. Deterrence may also be accomplished by denying the ability of a non-state militant group to inflict the harm it would wish on a state. Indirectly, deterrence may be achieved by altering similar calculations for any state or non-state actor that works to support militant non-state groups or holds significant leverage over them.

In the aggregate, the state of the research program on deterrence of non-state militant groups has come a long way since it was assumed that such groups were not deterrable. Scholars have identified a host of characteristics that are manifest in many

50 Shimshoni, pp. 218-219.
non-state militant groups that would suggest they are susceptible to deterrence and they have also hypothesized numerous deterrent strategies that could be used against such groups. What remains lacking is a comprehensive effort to test whether many of these assumptions and hypotheses are in fact determinant of the ability to deter such groups; which group characteristics are sufficient and/or necessary in order for the group to be deterred; and which deterrent strategies match up to which type of groups. That will be the focus of this research.
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II – THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Research Question, Hypotheses and Mechanisms

This dissertation asks the question: under what conditions can deterrence against non-state militant groups can be established? As it is subsumed within this question, I will also answer whether there is evidence that the non-state militant groups that are the subject of this research have been deterred. Unlike most research conducted on this topic, however, my focus is on the attributes of the non-state groups themselves, rather than the deterrence strategies states use, as I make an effort to determine what particular characteristics lead such groups to be more or less susceptible to asymmetric deterrence. My hypotheses argue that there are five main types of group attributes and circumstances that affect the degree to which a non-state militant group is susceptible to deterrence strategies: the elements of statehood it possess, its organizational structure, competition with other factions in its domestic political sphere, its ideology, and the support it receives from a state or other non-state groups.

First, elements of statehood include territory and political power, as well as an affinity with and a responsibility for a local population. I argue that, similar to states, non-state groups that possess assets they value highly such as territory and political power are more deterrable because those assets can be held at risk. Also, the greater the degree of a group’s affinity with and responsibility for a local population, the more it will
be susceptible to deterrence as the group’s decisions and cost-benefit calculations will be significantly influenced by public opinion.

Second, the degree to which non-state militant groups have clear leadership structures that possess strong command and control over their organizations will make them more susceptible to deterrence. This is due to the fact that groups that are diffuse will have members that “freelance” policy and therefore a decision to cease fire taken by the group leadership will be more difficult to implement. Having a clear command structure also allows a state to target certain individuals in the command chain for coercion. In essence, such groups possess a “return address.”

Third, competition with other militant factions will likely shape the calculations of a group’s leadership. This is based off of McCormick’s (2003) organizational theory of terrorist decision making. Such a scenario as it relates to deterrence will be particularly true if the other groups in question claim to be pursuing the same cause; whether that cause is religious, nationalist, political, or otherwise. Competition in this sense will drive groups to prove themselves worthy of public support, often manifesting in pressure to act violently. Thus, more inter-factional competition should make a group less susceptible to deterrence strategies.

Fourth, the degree to which a group’s ideology is more constructive as opposed to destructive will also make it more deterrable. This is due to the fact that a group whose

objectives can themselves be defined in destructive terms will possess very few incentives for it to cease fire. On the other hand, groups that have medium and long-term goals, such as but not limited to, gaining political power and territory, can be presented with situations where violence does not suit their purposes.

Fifth, the greater amount of material and non-material external support a group receives, be it from state sponsors or other non-state groups, the less susceptible the group will be to deterrence strategies. This is due to the fact that there will, in general, be fewer negative consequences for a non-state group if it chooses to attack a state, i.e. it will be able to rearm and rebuild with greater ease and/or it will be able to better withstand any political consequences of engaging in violence.

**H1a:** Holding territory will lead a non-state militant group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H1b:** Holding political power will lead a non-state militant group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H1c:** The existence of a population with which the non-state group has an affinity, and whose welfare is dependent on a non-state militant group, will lead that group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.
**H2a:** Groups that are ruled by leadership structures with unambiguous and functional decision-making capabilities will be more susceptible to deterrent threats. Groups that have diffuse leadership structures will be less susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H2b:** Groups whose leadership possess a firm command and control over its armed militiamen will be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H3:** Increased competition with other factions in the domestic political sphere, particularly if those factions also practice violent methods, will lead a non-state militant group to be less susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H4:** To the extent that a group’s ideology is more constructive as opposed to destructive, it will be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

**H5:** The greater the amount of external material and non-material support a group receives from a state or non-state sponsor, the less it will be susceptible to deterrent threats.

The following are key definitions for the hypotheses and independent variables:
**Militant Non-State Group** – An organization that is not a state that controls and/or possesses an armed militia (or men under arms) external to a state structure, and possess an ideology that preaches violent confrontation.

**Territorial Holdings** – A group holds territory by virtue of the fact that it is the dominant military force within that given territory.

**Political Power** – A group controls political institutions within a state or territory using the classic definitions of political-legal authority, or it exerts enough power within a state or territorial government that it can effectively block government policies it does not approve of by virtue of legal and/or political action.

**Unambiguous and Functional Leadership Structure** – If it is clear who makes the decisions for the organization, whether a group of people or a single person, and if those decisions are carried out by subordinates, then the group possesses an unambiguous and functional leadership structure.

**Command and Control** – If the military wing, militia, or men under arms associated with the group are organized in military hierarchy; and if, in a group in which a military wing is nominally subordinate to another branch of the organization, the military wing follows orders given by the designated decision maker(s), then command and control does exist within the organization.
**Welfare Of/Affinity For a Population** – A group is responsible for the welfare of a population if it controls the territory the population resides in, or if the population must interact with that group in order to access the job market, local economy or essential services, inter alia but not limited to: medical care, education, or security. A group has an affinity with a population if it demonstrates through rhetoric and action, such as maintaining a social services network, that it cares about the welfare of that population, and/or takes into consideration the public sentiments of that population during its decision-making processes.

**Constructive v. Destructive Ideology** – A constructively based ideology will possess tangible long-term goals that seek to build social and/or civil institutions, social structures, political authority, and/or a state/nation, among other items. Such an ideology will view violence mainly as a means toward the end of achieving such goals. A destructively based ideology will possess goals that emphasize violence against others and destruction of systems of government, social and economic institutions, and property. Such an ideology will often treat the use of violence as an end unto itself.

**External Support** – External material support may include but is not limited to: the transfer of weapons and military gear, military training, money for military or civilian purposes, military support, and logistical support, among other items. Non-material support may include but is not limited to political, diplomatic, and
ideological support. External support may come from state sponsors or other non-state groups.

Dependent Variable

Proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that deterrence has succeeded was always difficult, even when challenging states were the object of study. To do so requires demonstrating that had the defending state not taken certain actions then the challenging state would have embarked on a damaging act against the defender. Put another way, deterrence can be thought of as the difference between a challenger’s capabilities multiplied by its intentions, and its actions:

\[
Deterrence (Y) = [\text{Capabilities} (X_1) \cdot \text{Intentions} (X_2)] - \text{Actions} (X_3)
\]

Referring to the formal equation above, where \([X_1, X_2]\) and \(X_3\) both have ranges between 0 and 1, then where \(Y = 0\) deterrence is non-existent and where \(Y = 1\) deterrence is strategic (or total).

While it may not be possible in all instances to prove what is often a counterfactual, what my research will aim for is to show that based on all other alternative explanations for the lack of a damaging action taken by the non-state group, deterrence by a state is the most reasonable one to conclude (George and Smoke 1989,
are proponents of this methodology, as is Shimshoni). This would be demonstrated by evidence suggesting a non-state group did not attack because it concluded that punishment from the state would negatively affect either its personnel, its material or non-material assets, its political goals, or its support network, or because it feared that denial strategies employed by the state would deny a successful attack. It will also be necessary to establish a history of attacks against that state and a desire to continue such attacks in the future, in order to assure that the research is not misclassifying as a deterrent success a lack of action that arises for different reasons.

As Bar’s research indicates, achieving strategic deterrence against non-state militant groups may be exceedingly difficult for a state. Particularly when groups’ organizational and ideological logics revolve around violence, moving toward a situation where they do not perform any damaging actions against a state for many years may not be realistic. But what is likely possible is the achievement of tactical deterrence—a paradigm that can be defined along dimensions of time, target, and method of attack. Similar metrics are implemented and suggested by Shimshoni, who suggests that deterrence, as it is conceived of in the conventional deterrence context, should be studied and measured in relative terms. (In other words, the expectation is that conventional deterrence will be imperfect and thus any singular damaging act against a defender should not be deemed to constitute a failure of the strategy. This is opposed to nuclear deterrence which is studied in absolute, binary terms.)

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For example, when a group that is predisposed toward taking damaging actions against a state refrains from doing so for a period of time because it was deterred by the state, that is an example of tactical deterrence. This period of time may be months or even years, but in any case, must be long enough that it cannot be explained by simple operational pauses. The same is true of a group that shifts its aggression by engaging in attacks that are not as damaging as it would otherwise prefer. For example, the decision by Hamas to refrain from suicide bombings since 2006 could be a sign of Israel establishing tactical deterrence if the reason for the shift was Hamas’s fear of the consequences of continuing that form of attack. Therefore, the dependent variable will be whether a state achieves at least a tactical level of deterrence against a non-state militant group. I define tactical deterrence along the following three levels which specify the behavior one should expect to observe:\(^5^4\)

**Weak:** Tactical deterrence is achieved as a group refrains from attacking for short periods of time (months) or when there is an appreciable decline in attacks from a previous period. However, any deterrent success will likely be fleeting and punishment actions by states will be required with frequency in order to maintain and/or update deterrence.

**Fair:** Tactical deterrence can be achieved as a group refrains from attacking for intermediate periods of time (months/years). Ambiguous “rules of the game” may

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\(^5^4\) The original term and concept of “tactical deterrence” was suggested to the author in an interview with Prof. Shmuel Bar on 5 July 2011 in Herzeliyah. The detailed framework here was developed and refined by the author.
be established which set boundaries on the targets and methods of attack utilized by the challenging group and the according response by the defending state. A group in territorial and/or political control may also restrain other militant groups from attacking. Punishment actions by states must be undertaken periodically in order to maintain and/or update deterrence.

**Strong:** Tactical deterrence can be achieved for long periods of time (years) as a group requests a ceasefire, declares one unilaterally, or engages in a cease fire de facto if not de jure. Clear “rules of the game” can be established on potential targets and methods of attack. A group in territorial and/or political control will restrain other groups from attacking. Punishment actions by states may not be required for long periods of time in order to maintain and/or update deterrence.

In order to demonstrate that tactical deterrence was achieved, the research must show that alternative explanations do not predominantly explain the decision by the non-state group to refrain from damaging actions. One alternative explanation would be that a group is simply engaged in a strategic pause where it is consolidating military or political power (though there is a debate among practitioners, which will be addressed in the case studies, over whether this itself constitutes a form of deterrence). Another alternative explanation would be that, as a result of an internal decision-making process, the leadership has decided to refrain from damaging actions because it feels that it has nothing to gain from them at the present time. In this case, however, it must be shown that the calculations that led to the belief that there was nothing to gain did not arise from
deterrence. A third alternative explanation is that a group’s ideology or strategic objectives changed and attacking the state no longer made sense given those changes. Fourth, if a group was militarily or otherwise damaged to a point that it no longer has the ability to attack a state, this also does not constitute deterrence.

**Independent Variables**

**IV1a:** Whether the non-state group holds territory and/or political power, or other material and non-material assets that it values highly.

**IV1b:** If IV1a exists, whether the state is perceived by the non-state group to possess the ability and will to hold at risk those material or non-material assets.

**IV1c:** Whether a non-state militant group is responsible for the welfare of a population within its territory and/or within its political authority, and/or whether it has an affinity with a particular population.

**IV2a:** Regarding the organizational structure of the group, is the leadership strictly organized or diffuse? This should be evidenced by, among other factors, whether there is a clear decision-making process, regardless of whether decisions are made by an individual, a group, or dictated externally.
IV2b: Does the group leadership exert firm command and control over group militiamen and/or other armed combatants affiliated with the group?

IV3a: Whether the non-state militant group is engaged in a competition with other factions in its domestic political sphere for leadership of a particular population.

IV3b: If other such factions exist, whether those factions themselves practice violence as a method to achieve their goals.

IV4: The group’s ideology as it stands on a spectrum from building to destroying.

IV5: The amount of material and non-material external support a group receives from a state sponsor or other non-state group.
Table 2.1: Theoretical Expectations of Possible Asymmetric Deterrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
<td>Clear Leadership Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Points</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores range on a scale from 1 to 5 points for each category of statehood, organizational structure, external support and inter-factional competition. Scores range on a scale from 1-10 points for group ideology. In both cases, the scale is intended to be interval.

1 = very low for elements of statehood and organizational structure and very high for inter-factional competition and external support
5 = very high for elements of statehood and organizational structure and very low for inter-factional competition and external support

1 = destructively based ideology
10 = constructively based ideology

There is a total possible score per observation of 8 to 45 points.

8-17 = No possibility of deterrence
18-26 = Possibility of Weak tactical deterrence
27-36 = Possibility of Fair tactical deterrence
37-45 = Possibility of Strong tactical deterrence

*Note that the expectation is of deterrent possibility and not of deterrent outcome. This is due to the fact that the outcome is also dependent on the actions of the defending state.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Leadership Structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command &amp; Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Factional Competition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Possible Points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Note: Theoretically, the further northeast a group lies on the diagram, the more it is susceptible to deterrence strategies.**
Figure 2.4 – Theoretical Susceptibility to Deterrence: Based on Organizational Structure and Ideology

**Note:** Theoretically, the further northeast a group lies on the diagram, the more it is susceptible to deterrence strategies.
Qualitative Methodology

Studying deterrence leads to difficult methodological choices. On the one hand, if research on deterrence is conducted without a quantitative element, there will be questions as to what the findings predict beyond the individual cases that were studied. However, quantitative studies of deterrence, mainly as a necessity of parsimony, rely on certain assumptions that produce errors that are difficult to overcome. The worst of these errors arise from the need to build in assumptions regarding the decision-making process of actors in question. As research that blends cognitive psychology and international relations suggests, there are any number of psychological errors that statesman make on a regular basis (Goldgieger and Tetlock 2001; Ostrom 2000). As a result of this, and the simple fact that states and leaders react differently to different stimuli for any number of reasons, “black boxing” these decision-making processes therefore leads to the development of auxiliary assumptions regarding the type of rationality exhibited by the actors in question. These assumptions, if not built on meticulous research, akin to what would be found in a full case study, lead to the production of misleading conclusions (Lebow and Stein 1989). As Downs (1989) writes:

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55 George and Smoke 1989, pp. 36.
58 The term “black box” comes from George and Smoke, pp. 176.
59 For example, if one were to perform quantitative work, how would one code the dependent variable of whether tactical deterrence was achieved? As previously detailed, evidence of a cessation of attacks is not enough because there could be many alternative explanations which account for such behavior. Moreover, if the study is examining tactical deterrence, rather than strategic deterrence, attacks might actually continue in a less damaging form. This would be evidenced by shifts in the aggression, such as attacking different targets and/or locations, or using different attack strategies. Only with detailed examination, the type of which is performed in case studies, can such determinations be made. Performing that level of
“What should our time frame be? Has deterrence failed (or succeeded) if war comes in three years, but not in two? Is every day without a war a success? The difficulty of finding defensible answers to these sorts of questions explains why most political scientists would rather do formal modeling (or case studies).”

In that regard, the goal for this research is that based on two meta-case studies including eight full observations, it will be able to determine variables that are highly suggestive of the ability to deter non-state militant groups. Even if the findings are not as generalizable as one might hope to achieve in other topics of research, the results will at be accurate to a high degree of probability. And such findings will still be of importance both to academic and policy communities. For many scholars (Bar, Trager and Zagorcheva; Wilner; Geipel 2007; Garrity 2007; among others) studying deterrence of non-state groups, this is the preferred methodology and I will continue along this path. (Even when states were the objects of deterrence strategies, qualitative studies were still the preferred methodology most of the time.)

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analysis on each individual observation is simply unrealistic in a quantitative study. And without that type of analysis, a statistical study of deterrence would amount to little more than guess work. Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter,” *World Politics* 41 (1989), pp. 211, 215, 224.


The case studies in this project were selected primarily based on variation in the independent variables as explicated below. Each meta-study provides excellent “studies within the study” insofar as each has experienced variation in the independent variables over time. Indeed, the delineation of each observation was determined according to shifts in the independent variables. At the same time, the fact that the organization itself remains the same allows for the ability to hold many variables constant that could otherwise factor into the interpretation of results. It also has the effect of increasing the number of observations from which some generalization can be determined and the model can be tested.

Secondarily, the two meta-cases below hold relatively constant what I believe is an important variable that I am not focusing on in my research: the governmental structure of the deterring state. Based on the exhaustive research program focused on state-based explanations for international behavior, there is ample reason to believe that the type of political structure in the deterring state may have much to say about how well a particular state can deter non-state militant groups. As mentioned in the literature review section, Bar, Shimshoni, Byman and Waxman, and Pape all believe that democracies, like that of Israel, will be faced with a greater set of challenges than other types of governments where deterring non-state militant groups is concerned. This is due to the fact that some, potentially effective tactics used to deter such groups, may violate liberal norms and/or international law. Such states will therefore be constrained in their deterrence strategies and the militant groups will recognize this, affecting their
calculations of whether to engage in damaging actions. By contrast, Schultz (2001) theorizes that democracies will be better at deterrence in general for a host of reasons, mostly based on higher credibility and better signaling mechanisms. (Schultz, however, was theorizing about deterring states as opposed to non-state actors.) Though I tend to believe that the former hypothesis is more accurate where deterrence of non-state groups is concerned, I feel it is important to leave that question up to other researchers. Since the focus of this research is to determine the attributes of the non-state groups themselves that make them more or less susceptible to deterrence strategies, holding state-level variables relatively constant is important in the research design.

| Table 2.5 – Current Goals of Hamas and Hezbollah (As Pertains to Ideology)* |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Group                             | Hamas           | Hezbollah       |
| Long-Term Goal(s)                 | Muslim Palestinian state on all of historic Palestine | Destroy Israel |
| Medium-Term Goal(s)               | Seize control of West Bank, Palestinian Authority, and PLO | Maintain Control of Lebanon |
| Short-Term Goal(s)                | Maintain control of Gaza, improve living conditions in Gaza for population | Control Lebanon (Succeeded) |

*Based on public statements and interviews with organization members, Israeli security officials and academic experts.

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Table 2.6 – Theoretical Expectations of Possible Deterrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Year)</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
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<th>Total Possible Points</th>
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<td>Hamas 1987-1997</td>
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<td>Hamas 1997-2005</td>
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<td>Hamas 2005-2007</td>
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<td>Hamas 2007-2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hezbollah 1982-1985</td>
<td>Political Authority 1</td>
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<td>Hezbollah 1985-1992</td>
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<td>Hezbollah 1992-2000</td>
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<td>Hezbollah 2000-2012</td>
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Case Studies

**Case One: Hamas.** In this case, there is broad variation in all the independent variables over time, excepting ideology. Since its founding in 1987, Hamas has gained increasing amounts of territory and political authority. Moreover, operating on the Islamist social model developed by the Muslim Brotherhood, it has expanded its social services over the years so that the Palestinian population, particularly in Gaza, has become increasingly dependent on Hamas for its welfare. Since it assumed total control of Gaza in 2007 following its military takeover, this is absolutely the case.

In terms of its organizational structure, that has also shifted over time as a result of the killings and imprisonment of Hamas leaders by Israel and subsequent internal reorganizations of the movement. For most of its history, however, Hamas has operated as a consensus-based organization. No one person is able to exert his will over the entire group and decisions are reached only after consultation within and between multiple layers of consultative councils that represent the different arms and geographic areas of the movement.

Throughout its history, and even during its days as the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, Hamas was engaged in a competition with numerous other Palestinian factions for leadership of the Palestinian national movement. This competition waxed and waned over the course of time as Hamas grew both in stature and in number of supporters and operatives and as the Palestinian Authority was created and contested over. The
competition reached its climax—at least for now—when Hamas overran PA forces in the Gaza Strip in June 2007 after winning the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in January 2006. To date, Hamas and Fatah remain locked in a struggle for leadership of the Palestinian national movement.

External support for Hamas has also changed over time, as it has found its patrons shifting to and from different countries in the Arab world. Hezbollah also proved a valuable supporter to Hamas during long stretches of time. In terms of its ideology, though Hamas is an Islamist organization like Hezbollah, its origins are found in the aforementioned Muslim Brotherhood. As such, it has a particular set of Sunni Muslim ideals that distinguish it from Hezbollah, including along the spectrum of constructive versus destructive ideology that this research examines. This case also provides numerous Israeli punishment actions as points after which we can examine whether coercive action deterred future hostile behavior against Israel.

**Time periods of study for Hamas:**

1. **Founding → Release of Sheik Yassin (1987-1997)**
4. **Palestinian Civil War → End of Study (2007-2011)**

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62 Describing the ideology of the groups under study is extremely complex and not easily achieved in the context of this chapter; especially along the spectrum of constructive vs. destructive. Significant work, however, is devoted to this topic in the individual case studies that will illuminate the important aspects of this variable where each group is concerned.
**Case Two: Hezbollah.** In this case, there is broad variation in all independent variables over time. Since its founding in 1982, Hezbollah has steadily gained control of more and more territory in Lebanon. Its political power within the Lebanese state structure has also increased dramatically, to the point where it is now, by most measures, the most powerful political faction in the state. Like Hamas, its social services have reached an increasing portion of its target population over time, in this case Lebanese Shiites, to the point where much of that community is dependent upon Hezbollah for its welfare.

Organizationally, however, Hezbollah is quite different from Hamas. Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah commands the obedience of all subordinates in the organization and, according to most analyses of the group, his word is final. In this way, Hezbollah is run as a rigid hierarchy akin to a military structure, creating a solid contrast with Hamas where organizational dynamics are concerned. As a Shiite organization, Hezbollah’s ideology also comes from a different foundation than Hamas, namely Iran. Nevertheless, it too has long-term goals that moderate its destructive tendencies.

Variance is also present in the degree and type of state sponsorship. Since its founding, Hezbollah was strongly supported by Iran. Indeed, many analysts refer to the Hezbollah military as a division of the Iranian army, given the close strategic and military coordination and the financial support and weapons transfers Hezbollah receives from the Islamic Republic. Hezbollah also currently enjoys strong support from Syria; but that was not always the case. Particularly in the days of Hafez al-Assad, Hezbollah was often
constrained by Syria, even as it was supported by it. As with Hamas, various Israeli punishment actions exist from which to deduce whether attempts at deterrence have succeeded at various times.

*Time periods of study for Hezbollah:*

1. **Founding → Israeli Withdrawal to Security Zone (1982-1985)**
4. **Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon → End of Study (2000-2012)**

*Ethical Dimensions of this Research*

As a final note, much of the material discussed in these pages involves death, destruction, and other uncomfortable realities. This research examines those issues only from a scientific level, not from an ethical level. In the midst of the case studies and the conclusions, there is no discussion of morality and what constitutes ethical conduct in asymmetric warfare. This is done deliberately in order to state without bias what the results of certain actions were and why some strategies worked from a deterrence point of view while others did not.

As such, I wish to make it totally clear that I am not condoning or condemning any particular action where deterrence is concerned. I am simply stating facts and depicting realities as best I can discern. In the final pages of this project, there is a
discussion of the dilemmas of deterrent actions that does involve ethics. But even there I simply raise the issue rather than make a judgment, as it is my firm belief that discussing the ethics of deterrence is best undertaken in a different forum.
On 9 December 1987, Sheik Ahmed Yassin convened a meeting of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leadership in the Gaza Strip. The quadriplegic teacher and community organizer, and his top lieutenants of the MB-affiliated religious, educational, security, and charity organizations in Gaza were compelled to decide how to respond to recent events. The streets of Gaza were alight. On 6 December, an Israeli who was shopping in Gaza City was stabbed to death. Two days later, a driver in Israel had struck and killed three Palestinian day-laborers from the Jabaliyah Refugee Camp in Gaza on their way back home. Specifically in response to rumors that the traffic accident was deliberate, and more generally to 20 years of pent-up frustration, Jabaliyah broke out into massive demonstrations on the morning of 9 December and protests quickly spread to the rest of the Gaza Strip. The first Palestinian intifada (uprising) had begun.

Along with Abdel Aziz Rantisi, Saleh Shehadeh, Muhammad Sham’ah, Isa al-Nashshar, Abdel Fattah Dukhan, and Ibrahim al-Yazuri, Sheik Yassin founded on that night Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyah, the Islamic Resistance movement. Its

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Khaled Hroub, Hamas: Political Thought and Practice, Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000, pp. 36, writes that Hamas was formed on 8 December, though that seems less believable due to the circumstances of the outbreak of the intifada and the fact that Hamas’s first communiqué was not released until several days later.
Though some accounts of this meeting differ in the exact date, and the particular people that were present, scholars generally agree that it was at this meeting that Hamas was formed. It should be noted that a differing account is provided by Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of Hassan Yousef, a preeminent leader of Hamas in the West Bank. According to Mosab, Hamas was actually formed in Hebron in 1986 by Sheik
Arabic acronym spelled Hamas (zeal) and its name, both the long and short versions, conveyed much about the organization.

The first communiqué of Hamas, distributed in Gaza on 11 and 12 December and in the West Bank on 14 and 15 December, claimed: “our people know the right path—the path of sacrifice and martyrdom.” For years, clerics and teachers associated with the MB in Gaza had preached about the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to all of Palestine—not just the West Bank and Gaza, but internationally recognized Israeli territory as well. This was their right both as Muslims and as Palestinians, they claimed. But since the 1948 war fought in the aftermath of the United Nations decision to partition what had been British Mandatory Palestine, the MB, with only rare exception, had not engaged in violence against the Jewish state. That was about to change.

History of The Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine and Israel

To begin to understand Hamas, one must first understand al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brotherhood). Hamas, according to its own charter, is but a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. And the history of the MB, in both Egypt and in Palestine, is pertinent to all the variables under study in this research—group ideology, organizational structure, inter-factional competition, external support and elements of


64 Hamas Communiqué No. 1. See Hroub, Appendix 1, pp. 265.
65 According Article 2 of its own charter, Hamas is “a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood chapter in Palestine.”
statehood. Where the latter variable is concerned, quite important in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood is the aspect of it dealing with an affinity with a population and the dependency of a population on the organization for its welfare.

The MB was founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1929 as a response to what he viewed as the degradation of Muslim society by modern, foreign influences. Al-Banna was dedicated to bringing Islam back into the lives of the Egyptian people, and this idea is most embodied by the defining premise of the MB which is, quite simply: “Islam is the answer.” According to this ideology, the MB, which is also called “The Society of Muslim Brothers,” developed a holistic approach to bringing Muslims back into the religious fold. Gearing its programs mostly toward the poor and working class of Egypt, the MB model saw its members dedicate themselves to their community by providing educational, medical, and social services; and being involved in zakat foundations (Muslim charities), orphanages, and other socially oriented activities. The charitable nature of society members, their dedication, and reputation for integrity and honesty, earned the MB enormous respect in both the demographic circles and geographic locations the MB operated in. After beginning operations in Islamiya with a modest four branches in 1929, the MB expanded to 300 branches around Egypt in 1938 and to more than 2,000 by 1949 when it was outlawed by the monarchy. At its peak between 1946 and 1949, between 300,000 and 600,000 Egyptians counted themselves as members of the Society and another half-million as sympathizers.

While the MB focused most of its attention on social reform through Islam in the first two decades of its existence, it did form small groups that were focused on violent resistance against the Egyptian monarchy. This “secret apparatus” and the initial stages of a resort to extra-legal action by the MB began during World War II with its first clandestine contact with Egyptian army officers. Indeed, the MB aided Gen. Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers movement in the 1952 coup d’état which brought them to power, only to fall out of favor with Nasser and again be outlawed as an organization just two years later. Among the violence attributed to the secret apparatus was the terror directed at the Egyptian Jewish community in the summer and autumn of 1948, while the first Arab-Israeli war was being fought. Materials found on arrested members at that time included training manuals on military organization, guerilla warfare, and the use of arms and munitions.67

The first documented contact of the MB with Arabs in Palestine came in 1935, when al-Banna’s brother, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Banna, met with Haj Amin al-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem and perhaps the foremost Arab and Muslim leader in Palestine of the period. One year later, the MB lent its formal support to Palestine’s Muslims during the 1936-37 Arab Revolt. It dispatched supplies and equipment the MB had purchased beginning in 1935, when al-Banna appealed to his Egyptian followers to help the Arab cause in Palestine at the MB’s Third Conference.68 In 1943, the MB opened its first formal branch in Palestine, the “Makarem Society of Jerusalem.”69

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67 Mitchell, pp. 75
68 Mitchell, pp. 55
69 Hroub pp. 15
Five years later, the entire Arab World had roused itself to support Palestinian Arabs in their fight against Zionism, an ideology Palestinian Arabs found to be at odds with their own aspirations for self-determination on their homeland. More broadly, Arabs in general felt Jewish sovereignty was being imposed upon them by the imperialist Western powers due to Europe’s historical mistreatment of Jews, most recently at the hands of the Nazis. When the Jewish Agency declared the birth of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, on the portion of Palestine allocated to it by the United Nations partition plan of November 1947, Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Yemen declared war against it and sent troops to the theater to fight alongside Palestinian Arab irregular forces.

In anticipation of that war, al-Banna ordered branches of the secret apparatus to prepare for jihad against the Jews as early as October 1947 and even put an MB battalion on display in Egypt that month. At a 1947 MB convention in Haifa, Palestine, the MB declared “its determination to defend the country by all means and its willingness to cooperate with all nationalistic bodies to that end… the Muslim Brotherhood will bear its full share of the cost of resistance.” When the war finally broke out, MB fighters from around the Arab world, but particularly from Egypt, were active in the southern front (mostly around al-Arish) of what Israelis refer to as the War of Independence and Palestinians call “al-Nakba” (The Disaster). The Egyptian branch also sent $70,000 to the Gaza MB branch to procure weapons for the war. Despite the fact that the MB was outlawed by the Egyptian monarchy during the war, many fighters from its battalion,

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70 Mitchell, pp. 57
71 Hroub, pp 17, citing: Al-Hout, Al-qiyadat wal-mo’assasat, pg. 794
72 Tamimi, pp. 28.
with the approval of al-Banna, remained in the fight against Israel until the 1949 ceasefire ended that round of Arab-Israeli hostilities with an Israeli victory.

Due to the establishment of Israel, the MB influence in most of what was formerly British Mandatory Palestine began to wane. With Jordan capturing the West Bank of the Jordan River in that war, local MB activities there were subsumed within the Jordanian branch. Meanwhile, the Arabs that remained in what was now Israel were kept under tight observation and mostly under military rule until 1966. Under those conditions, the MB did not flourish.

The exception was the Gaza Strip, which fell under Egyptian control. Despite being outlawed by the Free Officers, and seeing the fortunes of the larger organization in Egypt fall precipitously following Nasser’s purge of its leadership, underground MB elements in Gaza remained active following the 1948 War. In the early 1950s, two secret military organizations associated with the MB formed—Shabab al-Tha’ir (Youth for Vengeance) and Katibat al-Haq (The Battalion of Justice)—many of whose members would later become key figures in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its dominant party, Fatah. By 1954, the MB in Gaza had 11 branches and over 1,000 members, gaining traction first, like it did in Egypt, among the poor and working class segments of society. In Gaza, this mostly meant the 190,000 Palestinians who were

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made refugees in the 1948 War and were marginalized in the territory by the landed, upper class whose families had lived in Gaza for centuries.

By the mid-1950s, a hard truth began to settle into the consciousness of the Palestinian refugees and their growing families, now numbering over 933,000 people (according to the UN, there were 726,000 who fled Palestine/Israel between 1947 and 1949) and scattered mainly among refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Gaza. The Arab states, contrary to their rhetoric, were not going to ride to the Palestinians’ rescue, liberate their lands from Israel, and assist them in establishing a Palestinian state in its stead. Refusing to consign themselves to resettling outside their homeland (and in any case, not permitted to do so by their Arab hosts, with the exception of Jordan), a large portion of the refugees began agitating to take matters into their own hands. Between 1958 and 1959, these younger firebrands formed Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini (The Palestinian National Liberation Movement). The movement was colloquially called al-Fatah (the victory), its reverse Arabic acronym for short. Many of Fatah’s members had roots in the MB and had already participated in terrorist activities against Israel in the loosely affiliated fedayeen militant groups. This new movement was dedicated to fighting Israel and regaining Palestine by force, and found backing in the form of financing, small arms supplies, basing opportunities, and some training from the Arab governments. However in a decision that reverberates in Palestinian society to this day, the majority of the MB leadership in Gaza refused to join some of its members in Fatah in violence against Israel and two years later adopted an official position against it.

For refugee figures and associated information as recorded at the time, see: Don Peretz, *Israel and the Palestine Arabs*, Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1958, pp. 30-31.
At the time, Gaza’s MB leaders argued that Fatah’s violent methods were both impractical and alien to the long-term, all-encompassing, reformative strategy of the Brotherhood.\(^7\)\(^6\) It was the first rift in a still unresolved rivalry between the MB and Fatah that would grow increasingly bitter over the following decades, climaxing in a five-day civil war fought in Gaza between Fatah and Hamas in June 2007.

In 1967, Fatah joined *Munazzamat at-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyyah* (the Palestinian Liberation Organization) which already included other Palestinian nationalist factions. Over the years, it would gain much international notoriety for the attacks it inflicted on Israeli targets, both inside and outside Israel. The MB, on the other hand, remaining steadfast to its ideology of gradual social reform, continued to fly under the radar in Gaza along its slower and steady path. It was only in 1967, after the Six Day War, and ironically thanks to Israel, that the MB’s message would find revival in the region at large.

Israel’s trouncing of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in that war not only resulted in a tripling of the territory under Israeli control, it also consigned to the dustbins of history the Pan-Arabism ideology espoused by Nasser and many of his contemporary Arab heads of state. That belief system, which was secular in nature, called for the Arab nation to unite under a single banner and defeat Israel and other imperialist ventures in the Arab world. The ideology grew so prominent that it resulted in the technical unification of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic from 1958 to 1961. But constant rivalries

\(^{76}\) Hroub, pp. 27.
between Arab heads of state in the 1950s and 60s, along with continual military defeats at the hands of Israel, ultimately doomed the enterprise.

Searching for a new direction, a generation of Arabs turned to Islamist groups like the MB as an answer to the failures of the corrupt, secularist regimes that had lost three wars to Israel and failed for 20 years to liberate Palestine for Arabs and Muslims. Even if most of the Arab governments did not embrace the Islamist way, the Arab people began to view Islamism as a legitimate alternative paradigm. Logistically, Israel’s territorial conquest in the 1967 War also had the unintended consequence of once again uniting a Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel that for 19 years had been broken up into three separate polities.

Following Israel’s 1967 victory, Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian refugee from the village of al-Jurah, near Ashqelon, begun the full reconstitution of the MB in Gaza, where he grew up following the 1948 war. Explaining his decision to focus on social welfare and Islam at that time instead of violence, Yassin emphasized that, as in 1948, the Palestinian people were in shock over Israel’s military triumph and the expansion of Israeli hegemony and were ill-equipped to mount any effective resistance.

“The people had no food. Day after day they started accepting reality and decided to go back to their jobs. If only we had a good organization then we would have organized ourselves and
boycotted the occupation. But we had no organization, there were no guarantees for the protection of the people, and the people did not know what to do.”

According to Hamas’s own history, 1967-1980 marked its Preparation Phase, during which the MB established an “organizational infrastructure for a jihadi project against both the Zionist occupation in Palestine in particular and against the Zionist project in general.” (Some Hamas leaders would break up this period into two phases, the 1967-1976 mosque building phase and the 1976-1981 institution building phase.)

With Nasser’s security forces now obstacles of the past, Yassin, a teacher who trained in Egypt, started al-Jam’iyah al-Islamiyah (the Islamic Society) in order to conduct education, sports, and recreation for youth. Among his first activities was to collect money in Gaza to distribute 2,000 copies of In the Shade of the Quran, a seminal interpretation of the Quran by Sayyid Qtub, an Islamic scholar who is often called the father of the modern Islamist movement. According to Khalil al-Qawa, an early leader of Hamas who was expelled by Israel during the initial months of the first intifada, the mosque-building campaign was undertaken in order to “mobilize, unite, reorient, and consolidate the faith of a new generation so as to prepare it for the confrontation with Zionism.” Buoyed by money from the Gulf, from 1967 to 1975, the Islamists tripled the number of mosques in Gaza from 200 to 600 and nearly doubled those in the West Bank.

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77 Tamimi, pp. 19, citing an interview Yassin gave to al-Jazeera which was broadcast in eight parts between 17 April and 5 June 1999.
78 This information is taken from a Hamas Political Bureau Memo prepared in 2000 before the outbreak of the second intifada and from this point forward will be referred to as “2000 Hamas internal memo.” See Tamimi, Appendix 2, pp. 271-283.
79 This slightly alternative history is cited by Hroub and Matthew Levitt, Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006 pp. 22.
80 Tamimi, pp. 36.
81 Ibid.
Indeed, mosque building was the most essential component of the MB’s resurrection in the Palestinian Territories, according to long-time Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mishal. In the 1970s, “the movement spread among young men and women students, in mosques, which are the essential pillars of educating the society and treating the defections the occupation caused. People were attracted to the mosques where they were religiously and nationally mobilized,” he said.⁸⁴

The Institution Building Phase was marked at first by the MB spreading its influence by participating in, and soon gaining leadership of, many professional and student associations throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Soon thereafter, the MB began to develop its own institutions which still form the backbone of its support in Gaza and, until many of them were shuttered by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the West Bank as well. Among the most important of these institutions is the Islamic University in Gaza, which the MB helped found in 1978. It quickly became a center of Islamist activity and student organization in the strip. This was well in-line with the attitude of the MB in the early 1970s, when it was determined “to make a human resources base in order for the whole society to acknowledge [its] presence,” said Sheik Mahmoud Musleh, a co-founder of Hamas in the West Bank. “There was a need to have a relationship with the Palestinian public and this manifested itself in the formation of institutions.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Roy, pp. 23.
⁸⁵ Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
The most important of the institutions founded during this period was *al-Mujama al-Islamiyah* (The Islamic Society), which was established by refugee members of the MB in 1976 in the southern part of Gaza City with permission from Israeli authorities. The *Mujama* established kindergartens, schools, medical clinics, *zakat* associations, and additional mosques, around which most of its activities were centered. It soon became so popular that a second branch was opened in Khan Yunis in the southern part of the strip.\(^\text{86}\) The *Mujama* controlled welfare allocations to thousands of families, granted loans, scholarships, book allowances, and clothing coupons. Its physicians and pharmacists helped poor families *pro bono*. Its lawyers handled cases of Palestinians detained in Israeli jails. And its *zakat* organizations provided compensation for families who had their fields or homes bulldozed by Israeli Defense Forces and/or family members thrown into Israeli jails.\(^\text{87}\) By 1979, it is estimated that the *Mujama* welfare apparatus surpassed that of the much more renowned PLO.

Based on their tremendous success, *al-Mujama* spun-off its services into additional institutions that became influential in their own right, all the while being affiliated with the MB. These included: *al-Jam’iyya al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic association) in 1976; *Jam’iyyat al-Salah al-Islamiyya* (The Association of Islamic prayer) in 1978; *Jam’iyyat al-Shabbat al-Muslimat* (Young Women’s Muslim Society) for training women in sewing, computer use, religion and literacy in 1981; and the aforementioned Islamic University of Gaza in 1978, in the administration of which the

\(^{86}\) Hroub, pp. 6.
Mujama played a central role. Through the Mujama, writes Sara Roy, who spent 20 years in Gaza studying the Islamist social welfare apparatus,

“The Muslim Brotherhood was able to establish an infrastructure of social institutions based on personal friendships, trusts, and group solidarity, cementing its presence and influence at the grassroots level in a manner other political groups found difficult to match, let alone surpass… [The Mujama] became the base for development, administration, and control of religious and educational Islamic institutions in the Gaza Strip under Yassin’s supervision.”

But the Mujama was not just about social welfare and attracting Gazans to an Islamist life. It was also, at times, about imposing that way of life. During the 1980s, Mujama activists set fire to libraries, newspaper offices, billiard halls, bars, cinemas and cafes throughout Gaza, and closed liquor stores as well. On the Islamic University campus, Mujama student groups ran intimidation campaigns in an attempt to coerce women into wearing the hijab (head scarf) or the thobe (full coat). Violence against secular students was not uncommon. In a January 1980 incident still widely recalled in Gaza, the Mujama attacked the Palestinian Red Crescent Society after being unable to gain control of it through elections. A minority and somewhat opposing view on the extent of coercion by the MB at the time is held by Hamas scholar Khaled Hroub. He maintains that such charges lack solid evidence and are based on “the exaggeration of a few, rare incidents committed by marginal extremists in Palestine… What can be said, however, is that Hamas created a ‘deterrent’

88 Roy, pp. 74-76.
89 Roy, pp. 73-75.
environment particularly in the Gaza Strip, where religious norms of behavior prevailed and conduct that violated these norms, especially during the intifada, were exceptions to the rule and brought public condemnation upon the perpetrators.”

One controversy surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood and mujama in the 20 years between the Six Day War and the outbreak of the first Palestinian intifada is the degree to which Israel aided the Islamists. As rivals of the PLO and the leftist, nationalist Palestinian factions which were engaging in a brutal terrorist campaign against Israel at the time, some claim that the IDF purposely “turned a blind eye to all the harmful activities that the mujama undertook against the people.” As noted, Israel did officially allow the expansion of the mosques and many MB-affiliated organizations to flourish up until the point where Islamist activities turned violent. This created space for the Islamists to operate—space that was not abided the other Palestinian factions. Most Israeli officials who dealt with the MB at the time, reject the notion that the Jewish state purposefully aided the Islamists. But those with first-hand knowledge on the matter, like Dr. Matti Steinberg, a former adviser to the Shin Bet (Israel’s General Security Service), and Barak Ben Zur, a former division head for the Shin Bet who was an assistant to the director during the second intifada, do maintain that Israeli officials’ passivity and general naivety

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91 Hroub, pp. 237.
92 Quote from Dr. Riad al-Agha, a former president of the Islamic University in Gaza as cited by: Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 41.
(there were a few exceptions) to the threat the Islamists represented, bolstered the MB’s cause and popularity, if unintentionally.\textsuperscript{93}

What Hamas refers to as “The Founding Phase” took place from 1980 to 1987 and was characterized by “the construction of appropriate organs to provide for the needs of resistance against occupation.”\textsuperscript{94} It was during this period that the MB began organizing militarily for the first time since 1968-1970, when small numbers of MB fighters participated in a few armed operations under the umbrella of the Fatah movement that dominated the PLO. In 1983, \textit{al-Munazzammat al-Jihad wa al-Da’wah} (The Organization for Jihad and the Calling) or \textit{al-Majd} (The Glory) for short, was formed at the behest of Sheik Yassin as the original militant arm of the MB in Gaza. It was headed by Yahya al-Sinwar and was charged with liquidating Palestinian collaborators, procuring weapons, and fabricating explosives.\textsuperscript{95} This activity led to Yassin’s first arrest by Israel in 1983, along with other top MB activists who were involved in \textit{al-Majd}.

Yassin, however, was released in 1985 as part of a prisoner exchange between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Israel. Once out of jail, he commissioned Hamas co-founder Salah Shehadah to form \textit{al-Mujahidum al-Filastiniyum} (The Palestinian Holy Warriors), which was nominally responsible for attacking Israeli targets.\textsuperscript{96} Also in 1985, Yassin set up \textit{al-Jihaz Filastin} (The Palestinian Apparatus) to

\textsuperscript{94} 2000 Hamas internal memo.
\textsuperscript{95} Hroub, pp. 40.
\textsuperscript{96} Tamimi, pp. 50. According to Tamimi, it was at this time, and not in 1983, that Yassin also commissioned al-Sinwar to form \textit{al-Majd}. 

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coordinate the activities of the various MB-affiliated institutions around the world founded by the Palestinian MB branch. *Al-Jihaz* included current Hamas leaders Khaled Maashal and Mousa Abu Marzouk, and would later form the “nucleus” of the Hamas global network and leadership structure.\(^97\)

What changed in the early 1980s that finally sent the MB in the direction of violent confrontation with Israel? According to Hamas leaders themselves, it was always their intention to eventually undertake violent *jihad*, but they were waiting until the movement was sufficiently prepared to undertake the battle. “I had a personal desire, and I was motivated to launch the battle as early as 1967,” Sheik Yassin told *al-Jazeera* in 1999. “However, whenever we studied the circumstances and assessed the resources we found them insufficient and had to postpone. Then we would study the case once more then postpone again.”\(^98\) It was only in 1987 that the MB leadership finally determined that the movement was strong enough from an institutional and military perspective, and that Palestinian society was sufficiently supportive, to launch armed resistance.

By the time the riots of December 1987 struck, the MB was also keenly aware that continuing to sit on the sidelines could cause a precipitous depreciation of its popular support and legitimacy from a public screaming for action. The MB “did not want to be distant from the aspirations of the Palestinian people,” said Abduljaber M. Fuqahaa, who

\(^{97}\) Tamimi, pp. 49 and 59.
\(^{98}\) Tamimi, pp. 35, citing Yassin’s al-Jazeera interview.
won a seat on Hamas’s Change and Reform list in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. “It did not want to lose the support of the Palestinian people.”

Internal Palestinian politics also played a role in drawing the MB into the fight. The Islamists had already endured scathing criticism from the PLO for nearly 30 years for not joining in the battle. Then, in the early 1980s, *al-Jihad al-Islami* (Islamic Jihad) was formed by Fathi al-Shiqi and other members of the MB who were no longer willing to wait to fight Israel. The existence of Islamic Jihad, an Islamist organization that was actively combating Israel, put an extraordinary amount of pressure on the MB leadership to wage violence lest it be seen as taking “the safest route home where they stayed indoors like the harem,” as former Beitzeit University Student Leader Mu’in Shabib said.

Indeed, according to Fadel S. Hamdan, another PLC member of the Change and Reform list, when the first *intifada* broke out, all the Palestinian factions at the time were “trying to do better than the other in resisting the occupation, to score more” against Israel. Even from the beginning of the movement, he said, violence “was not absent of their mind. It was in their mind to resist the occupation, but they were trying to find the right way, the right time to do it… You can’t just call people to come and to resist, to come and protest, they were trying to build a faction. And when this faction was formed and it was in a good situation, it means that it has the capacity to [be] involved. This was the idea in the ’70s

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99 Author interview in Ramallah 6 September 2011. For the purposes of speaking on the record without inviting arrest, those interviewed for this project in the West Bank did not refer to themselves specifically as members of Hamas. Thus, they are cited here and in other places, as members of the Hamas parliamentary list, or in some other fashion that indicates their affiliation with the organization without indicting them.

100 Tamimi, pp. 47-48.
and '60s and the '80s. They were trying to build the faction to serve the needs of the Palestinians.”

By the time Yassin, who until his 2004 killing by Israel was regarded as the spiritual leader of Hamas, and his co-founders met in December 1987, 20 years of preparation by the MB had already laid the groundwork for The Islamic Resistance Movement that was born. A number of official and unofficial, legal and illegal, MB-affiliated organizations were in existence both inside Gaza and the West Bank, and in international locales. A significant percentage of the population of Gaza in particular was worshipping, learning, eating, and obtaining health care at MB-run institutions. And Gazan culture, both due to inducement and coercion, was firmly on the path toward a more Islamist way of life. Repeatedly over the course of those 20 years, Yassin had refused to engage the MB in direct military operations—not because he was against violence in principle (quite the contrary), but because he did not believe the Palestinian people were prepared to take on the Israel. Now, his organization was ready and conditions in Palestinian politics and society were such that the MB was under serious popular and inter-factional pressure to enter into the domain of violent struggle against Israel. Once the intifada had begun, the Muslim Brotherhood took a bold and transformative step forward. Hamas quickly emerged as a leading Palestinian faction in violently resisting the Jewish State, and the Arab-Israeli conflict was forever changed as a result.

101 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
Since Hamas defines itself as “one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine,” and since ideology is one of the key variables in this study, it is essential to understand the ideology of the MB as well as its history. Like other modern, Sunni Islamist movements, the MB emerged in the early 20th Century as a reaction to the perception that the Islamic umma (nation) was in shambles. Defeated and humiliated by the West, the umma also confronted leadership in its own Muslim countries that was co-opted by the socially corrupting forces of Western modernity. Perhaps the first Islamic thinker credited with these views was Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905). In his view, “archaic scholastic religiosity and popular Islam marked by magic and saint worship had led to weakness of Islamic politics and societies… The revival of true Islamic heritage, which had been corrupted for centuries, was the only way to end the crisis.”

There emerged two main branches of Islamist thought regarding this crisis among those who agreed with the problem articulated by Abduh. The radical branch, led by men like Sayyid Qutb, who would later become the spiritual force behind al-Qaeda and other salafi (fundamentalist) groups, believed that society was irredeemable. They preached separation from society and violence against all those—including other Muslims—who

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did not conform to their stringent brand of Islam. Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a leader of the reformist movement. He believed that the preeminent Islamic authorities in Egypt had allowed the country to “fall into religious, cultural, political, economic, social, legal, and moral decadence and impotence.” Particularly debasing was the materialist nature of the West (which in al-Banna’s mind included the Soviet Union), “resulting in a deadening of human sentiments and sympathies, and in the extinction of Godly endeavors and spiritual values.”

Believing that the solution to the catastrophes that were befalling the umma still lay within, al-Banna took a much different tack than the salafis. For him, and others of the reformist branch, the advent of an Islamic state (they also believed in implementing sharia) would come about through a “long-term continuous, incremental process, achieved primarily through education and social action from the bottom up.” As opposed to the radicals, al-Banna did not seek to violently threaten or confront society as a whole. “The essential step in the renaissance, and more important than the ‘practical reform,’” al-Banna wrote, is a “spiritual awakening… The noble Quran is an inclusive book in which God has gathered the fundamentals of faith, the foundations of social virtues and all worldly legislation... Our mission is to return—ourselves and whoever will follow—to the true path.”

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104 Mitchell, pp. 211-212.
105 Mitchell, pp. 226.
107 Mitchell, pp. 234.
While the salafis, led by Qutb, judged those other than themselves as kufr (infidel) or ridda (apostate), the MB did not feel comfortable as the arbiters of who were pure of faith.

“It was not given to man, who does not see the heart, to judge the veracity of another Muslim’s faith, nor to declare him to be an apostate unless he had openly reneged on the credo. Judgment as to whether major sins committed exclude a Muslim from the umma,” Hassan al-Hudaybi, the MB’s second general guide after al-Banna, wrote, “should be left to God alone. Collective judgment over the whole of the umma is even more contrary to the tenets of Islam.”

And while the salafis demanded that Muslim society and states return to a sharia-based life immediately and on the salafis’ terms, the MB believed that “when the people have been Islamized, a truly Muslim nation will naturally evolve.” So the MB set about Islamizing society one person at a time through religion and education, the latter accorded even greater emphasis after al-Banna’s assassination in 1949 and his succession by Hassan al-Hudaybi.

These beliefs manifested themselves in al-dawa (the calling) social and religious programs that the MB undertook first in Egypt and then throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds over subsequent decades. Always, Islam as a total way of life—a life that must be returned to—was emphasized. And it was epitomized by the credo of the MB, which is also that of Hamas: “Allah is its goal, the Prophet is the model, the Quran is its constitution, jihad is its path, and death for the sake of Allah is its most sublime belief.”

109 Mitchell, pp. 308.
110 On Hudaybi’s emphasis on education, see Mitchell pp. 308.
The MB became “part and parcel of society,” according to Dr. Steinberg, the former adviser to the Israeli Shin Bet who is also an expert on Islamist groups. “The MB [understood] the tension between absolute values, sharia, and society as a whole. So they are trying to capture the center of society whereas” the radicals believed in forming “a counter-society.”

As previously noted, al-Banna did not look upon violence in the same manner as the salafis. But he did preach his own form of militancy, in practice and in ideology. His lectures and writings were frequently laced with violent metaphors and the secret apparatus he founded during WWII was created with violence in mind. He also emphasized jihad not just as the internal struggle to be a better Muslim, but as qital (fighting). “Jihad is an obligation on every Muslim,” he said. Those who minimize “the importance of qital and the preparation for it” are not true to the faith. God grants a “noble life” to the nation alone which “knows how to die a noble death.”

Following al-Banna’s death, however, the MB generally reverted to the traditional Sunni line that using violence against other Muslims was not permissible. This was due to three factors: a genuine ideological commitment against fitna; a belief that the long-term, bottom-up approach was the most effective means of reforming society; and a pragmatic calculation that violence, rather than accelerate the realization of their goals, would endanger the enterprise.

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111 Author interview 27 August 2011 in Jerusalem.
112 Mitchell, pp. 207.
113 As an example, Sivan, pp. 93, cites the Syrian MB responding to Qutb in a manner that rejects the radical branch’s justification for violently attempting to overthrow the government.
The MB’s long-term outlook and this reluctance to engage in violence against other Muslims thus meant that wherever it branched out, it adapted itself to the particular sociopolitical exigencies of the time and place. After its experience with Nasser, this generally manifested itself in the MB not mounting direct challenges against the governments of its respective host states. In part, this was also due to the MB’s view that controlling states in and of themselves, and imposing sharia within that nationalist structure, was not truly the goal. One exception to this was Syria, where the MB mounted a challenge to the Assad regime in the 1980s. However, that is generally viewed by contemporary MB leaders as having been a mistake that setback the MB cause in Syria by a number of years. As Mitchell notes, the MB believed that “Islam teaches wataniyya [nationalism] but one which is contingent on religion rather than geographical boundaries; its goal is not only as in Europe, the promotion of a country’s material well-being, but also, and primarily, the spread of the word of God across the face of the earth.”

And so it was among the Palestinian branch of the MB, as well. From time to time, as with the creation of Fatah (1959) and Islamic Jihad (1981), those members of the Brotherhood that sought to use violence against Israel would break off and form or join other groups. As in the case of the Mujama in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there would also be instances of violent coercion by the MB within Gaza. The movement did not shy away from extolling Palestinian and Muslim sovereign rights to their homeland. But for the most part, the Islamists remained out of the violent arena, preaching a form of jihad

114 Mitchell, pp. 265.
that did not include taking up arms against the enemy. Until 1987, the Palestinian MB remained committed to the reformist concept of a long-term social transformation through Islam and education.

*Summary of Independent Variables, The Muslim Brotherhood in the Palestinian Territories, Pre-1987*

*Attributes of Statehood.* The MB at this time did not control any territory, nor did it exercise political authority on a legal level. However, it was organized into a variety of legal and extra-legal institutions and organizations that obtained some power in the educational, professional, and religious civil-society sectors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—particularly the latter. Moreover, the MB’s *dawa* (social welfare) and *zakat* (charity) institutions, both inextricably linked to its religious mandate, provided social services for an increasing number of Palestinians as the years went by. Being “part and parcel” of Palestinian society and the Islamic *umma*, the MB in the West Bank and Gaza absolutely had an affinity with the Palestinian people, even before it became Hamas.

*Organizational Structure.* This variable is not entirely pertinent as the organizational structure of Hamas is not based off of a prior MB structure. However, the concept of consensus and consultation, by which Hamas would come to make most of its decisions, is based on the original MB process put into place in the group’s early history in Egypt.
Inter-Factional Competition. For the first twenty years of its existence in the occupied territories, the MB was engaged in competition with many other Palestinian factions, most notably Fatah, the PLO, and Islamic Jihad. This competition was often fierce and manifested itself in violent activities at points in time. But that coercion was directed against the other Palestinian factions and even Palestinian civilians who maintained a secular lifestyle, rather than at Israel. Despite pressure from the other factions, the MB did not begin to organize a violent branch in the Palestinian Territories until around 1983. Finally, when the intifada broke out in December 1987, inter-factional competition was one of the chief reasons that it decided to form Hamas, as it feared being permanently delegitimized on the Palestinian street for failure to violently confront Israel.

Ideology. The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Hamas is a branch, is one that adheres to the reformist stream of Sunni Islam. As such, the MB believes that in order to establish a Muslim state, it must first sufficiently Islamize the umma, wherever it is found. That process of Islamization is viewed as a long-term one that is achieved through al-dawa—servicing the local population in a host of areas while connecting that service to the tenets of sharia and Islamic custom. Muslims should be co-opted, not coerced, according to those values. Though in practice, limited coercion (that does not reach all-out violence) also takes place. The violent form of jihad, according to the MB, is permissible against non-Muslims. But violence is a method, not a goal. The remains the long-term establishment of a Muslim state. In the case of the Palestinian branch of the MB, that goal is a Muslim state in all of historic Palestine.
External Support. The Muslim Brotherhood received significant funding from the Gulf nations to build many of the mosques in the West Bank and Gaza during its “mosque building phase.” It also received indirect support from Israel in terms of being permitted to operate a variety of official MB-affiliated institutions in the Palestinian territories while the IDF suppressed similar activity sponsored by the other Palestinian factions.
HAMAS CASE STUDY

CHAPTER IV – HAMAS, 1987-1997

The first Palestinian intifada (uprising) erupted spontaneously. But soon, a cycle of violence was triggered where Palestinian protests elicited a harsh Israeli response, which in turn fed Palestinian resentment and frustration with 40 years of occupation (the first 19 years of which was under the Jordanians and Egyptians) and led to larger and more violent protests which led to even harsher repressive tactics. At the beginning, the intifada was largely characterized by Palestinian youths throwing stones and general strikes by the population. But it soon included waves of knife attacks against Israeli security personnel and civilians. The Israelis responded with arrest campaigns and beatings; the use of rubber bullets and tear gas against protestors in which fatalities did occur; and general curfews.

As noted in Chapter II, each case studies is broken down into mini case studies that isolate periods in time in the history of the groups in question. This is due to the fact that the independent variables which drive the main hypotheses are not static. Given that there are a host of independent variables, it would be possible to isolate dozens of time periods for each organization. But to make the case studies more meaningful (and manageable), I am choosing to break the time periods down based on major changes in the variables, not subtle ones. How these decisions are made is based on some subjective judgment on my part and I accept that different decisions could be made. But I believe that for the purposes of this particular research, these time periods are the most logical and most instructive. Each of the mini-case studies follows the same three-part structure. First, the independent variables of study are examined via a historical narrative. Second, those variables are summarized. Finally, the dependent variable, i.e. the degree to which deterrence was achieved, is examined in a manner that also accounts for Israeli strategy at that time.

As a reminder to the reader, the theory developed in Chapter II states that elements of statehood (political authority, territorial control, and the dependency of a population on a group for its welfare), organizational structure (the clarity of the decision-making process and the degree of command and control exercised by group leaders), inter-factional competition, external support and/or influence, and ideology are predictive of the degree to which non-state militant groups can be deterred. The actual deterrence achieved is a function of those variables and the actions of the defending state.
Born in this inferno, Hamas wrote a charter, released to the world in August 1988, that was an uncompromising manifesto filled with anti-Semitic rhetoric, brutal imagery, frightening metaphors and Quranic verses that ostensibly provide divine justification for it all. It is a document that has done no favors to Hamas in most quarters of the world, and the organization’s critics regularly point to the charter as evidence of the fanatical nature of the Islamic Resistance Movement. But along with early statements and communiqués of the organization, the charter is the defining document of the early ideology of Hamas and thus for the period under question.

Examining the Hamas ideology of the time, the destructive elements of the charter are emphasized to a far greater degree than the constructive ones. Though there is one reference toward the end of the charter (Article 30) to jihad including “the good word, the excellent article, the useful book, support and aid,” the emphasis throughout the document is on violent confrontation with Jews and Zionists and the destruction of Israel. Here is a selection of those references:

“Our battle with the Jews is very long and dangerous, requiring the dedication of all of us. It is a phase that must be followed by succeeding phases, a battalion that must be supported by battalion after battalion of the divided Arab and Islamic world until the enemy is vanquished and the victory of Allah is sure.” (Introduction)

“There is no solution to the Palestinian question except by jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors.” (Article 13)
Violent *jihad* “is the only way to liberation. There is no doubt about the testimony of history. It is one of the rules of the universe and one of the laws of existence. Only iron can break iron, only the true faith of Islam can defeat their falsified and corrupt belief. Faith can be fought only by faith. Ultimately, victory rests with the truth, for truth is certainly victorious.” (Article 34)

One Quranic verse cited by the charter in terms of stating the type of *jihad* practiced by Hamas is particularly violent toward Jews: “The Last Hour would not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them, and until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or a tree would say: Muslim or Servant of Allah[!] there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him” (Article 7). The commitment to violence was also made clear in an introductory memorandum that closely followed the charter. “Confronting and resisting the enemy in Palestine must be continuous until victory and liberation. Holy struggle in the name of God is our guide, and fighting and inflicting harm on enemy troops and their instruments rank at the top of our means of resistance.”

That is not to say that constructive elements do not play a role in the original ideology of Hamas. True to its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, the charter emphasizes the importance of educating the current generation of Palestinians.

“The process of education must involve the ‘Ulama’ as well as educators, teachers, and publicity and media men as well as the educated people and especially the youth of the Islamic movements and their scholars. Introducing fundamental change into the educational curricula is necessary to cleanse them of the traces of the ideological invasion by Orientalists and missionaries… We must

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116 Hamas Introductory Memorandum as cited by Hroub, pp. 23.
instill in the minds of the generations of Muslims that the Palestinian cause is a religious one and should be dealt with on this basis.” (Article 15)

Education of Muslim women and girls is also specifically addressed “so that they will become righteous mothers [who are] aware of their role in the war of liberation” (Article 17). “Support for the deprived and a defense for all the oppressed” (Article 10), depending on interpretation, could also be viewed as a constructive endeavor. So too could striving to “raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine” (Article 6).

But in most instances, where constructive goals can be found, they are coupled with destructive methods to achieve them—or goals that are destructive in and of themselves. Article 9 lists the organizations objectives as: “fighting evil, crushing it, and vanquishing it so that truth may prevail; homelands will revert [to their rightful owners]; and calls for prayer will be heard from their mosques, proclaiming the institution of the Islamic state.” In Article 12, nationalism is characterized as “part and parcel of [Hamas’s] religious creed.” But the article then goes on to say: “nothing is loftier or deeper in nationalism than [waging] jihad against the enemy and confronting him when he sets foot on the land of the Muslims. This becomes the individual obligation of every Muslim man and woman.” Even attaining a Palestinian state was not acceptable to Hamas if the realization of that goal left a sovereign Israel intact on any piece of historic Palestine because:

“the land of Palestine is an Islamic waqf [endowed] to all Muslim generations until the day of resurrection. It is not right to give up it or any part of it. Neither a single Arab state nor all the
Arab states, neither king nor a president, not all the kinds or presidents, not any organization or all of them—be they Palestinian or Arab—have such authority, because the land of Palestine is an Islamic waqf to all Muslim generations until the day of resurrection…. Any action taken on behalf in this regard to Palestine in violation of this law of Islam, is null and void and will be taken back by its claimants.” (Article 11)

The move toward a strategy with violence as one of its fundamental precepts was a departure from the established modus operandi of the Muslim Brotherhood, both inside and outside of Gaza, since the death of al-Banna. It is probable that the shift was easier in the context of resisting Israel because in fighting Zionism Hamas was not targeting fellow Muslims, and violent jihad was clearly permissible according to Sunni Muslim jurisprudence and tradition if it was against non-Muslims. Violence also made sense given the maximalist nature of Hamas’s ideology. A special leaflet distributed on 10 November 1988, just a few months after the publishing of the charter declared: “our struggle with the Zionists is not a dispute for the partition of borders, and it is not a dispute over the division of the land, it is a campaign over existence and destiny.”

Another leaflet declared:

“The Muslims have had a full—not partial—right to Palestine for generations, in the past, present, and future… No Palestinian generation has the right to concede land, steeped in martyrs’ blood… You must continue the uprising and stand up against the usurers wherever they may be, until the complete liberation of every grain of soil of… Palestine, all Palestine, with God’s help.”

118 Hamas Leaflet #28, “Islamic Palestine from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River,” released 18 August 1988, as cited in Mishal and Sella, pp. 51
Still another leaflet called the *intifada* “a holy war for the sake of Allah unto victory or death.”  

However, as the years of the first *intifada* ground on and Hamas and the Palestinian population sustained serious organizational blows (this will be discussed later in this section) and prolonged general hardship respectively, the tone of Hamas’s leaders shifted somewhat. In particular, the movement’s stated attitude toward Jews became more nuanced. The charter referred to Jews and Zionists interchangeably and as “merchants of war” (Article 32) and “Nazis” (Articles 20, 31, 32). It also talked about a “world Zionist” conspiracy to exert sovereignty over the Middle East until the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and cited the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as source material (Article 32). By 1990, officials of Hamas and its media organs began clarifying differences. “The non-Zionist Jew is one who belongs to the Jewish faith, whether as a believer or due to accident of birth, but does not relate to the [Zionist] ideas and takes no part in the aggressive actions against our land and our umma,” an article in the Hamas publication *Filastin al-Muslima* attributed to the Hamas leadership stated.  

“The Zionist, on the other hand, is one who embraces the aggressive Jewish ideology and becomes an instrument for the realization of those ideas on our land and against our umma. On this basis, Hamas will not adopt a hostile position in practice against anyone because of his ideas or his creed but will adopt such a position if those ideas and creed are translated into hostile or damaging actions against our umma and our nation.”

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119 Hamas Leaflet #22, released 2 June 1988, as cited by Mishal and Sella pp. 51.  
Both Sheik Yassin and Hamas co-founder Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahar went so far as to make allowances for Jews to live in a future Palestinian state.\textsuperscript{121} According to Islamic jurisprudence, as “people of the book,” Jews had that right so long as they lived according to the rules set down in the sharia governing the conduct of minority groups in Muslim lands.\textsuperscript{122} Some may consider these differences subtle, but practicing an ideology that preaches violent confrontation with Jews in general is not as destructive as fighting Israel and/or Zionism (a difference that is very much appreciated by the scores of Jewish journalists and aid workers who continue to travel to Gaza). It is also important to note that until 1993, even in confronting Israel, Hamas limited its targets to Israeli soldiers and police—a fact, Yassin noted in 1990, that stemmed from the classical rules of jihad laid down in the Quran and sharia that Hamas considered binding during the first intifada.\textsuperscript{123}

The fact of Hamas’s focus on attacking military targets, if not its rationale, was confirmed by Gen. Shlomo Gazit, the former head of the IDF’s military intelligence unit who said in August 1993 that Israel had been facing operations from Hamas that “seem to be based on a policy of concentrating more and more on soldiers and security forces.”\textsuperscript{124}

The intifada not only helped to shape the ideology of Hamas, but also the organizational structure of the group in its early years. When Hamas began to carry out its stated intentions of killing Israeli soldiers, the IDF struck back. Two major waves of

\textsuperscript{123} Nusse, pp. 73.
arrests in September 1988 and May 1989, which netted Yassin and most of Hamas’s leadership structure, left Hamas without direction and capabilities. Toward the end of 1989, Mussa Abu Marzouk, who was living in the United States at the time, came to Gaza in order to reorganize the movement and save it from what could have been a very quick death. The new organizational structure was more hierarchical and divided Hamas into seven West Bank and five Gaza districts while the two territories each had separate headquarters. Each district leadership and each headquarters had representation from the military, dawa (social, welfare, and religious services), political, and coordination wings of the movement while the West Bank and Gaza were linked by a coordinating committee of the political, military, and dawa leaderships of each territory.

As a result of Israel’s tight control over the West Bank and Gaza, it was also decided at the time to form external committees that could maintain leadership and operational capabilities when Israel’s security services would inevitably find and arrest (or kill) the internal Hamas leaders and operatives. Two main external groups were formed: the majlis shura (advisory committee) and the political bureau. The former, comprised of a secret leadership of around 10-20 members that until this day is not entirely known even by the Shin Bet, sets general ideology and religious doctrine for Hamas and probably includes Palestinian and non-Palestinian members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The political bureau, meanwhile, assumed responsibility for foreign affairs, finances, propaganda, internal security and military affairs and began forming foreign relations mostly, though not exclusively, with Arab states and financiers.

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125 Abu Marzouk’s mission to Gaza is recounted by many sources.
126 The following information on the Hamas structural reorganization of 1989 draws heavily on Mishal and Sela, pp. xix, xxv, and 58-59.
Up until his 1989 arrest, Sheik Yassin was both the guiding spiritual and operational force within Hamas. But with the restructuring, Hamas moved toward a decision-making process based on shura (consultation) and consensus at all levels. In each sub-district, right up to the political bureau and majlis shura, no one man was in control and decisions were reached “in a democratic and consultative manner,” as Jamal Taweel, the mayor of al-Bireh who spent 12 years in jail on suspicion of involvement with Hamas, said.\textsuperscript{127}

Another effect of the 1988 and 1989 arrests on Hamas’s organizational structure was the diminution of the influence of the inside (i.e., Gaza and West Bank) leadership relative to the outside leadership. Based in Springfield, Virginia, where Abu-Marzouk lived, and in Amman, the outside now controlled the majority of the movement’s finances and maintained a cohesion and tenure that the inside, pressured by Israel, could not. Indeed, following the opening of the outside bureaus, Hamas began to receive its first large scale infusions of funds from other states. Between 1990 and 1993, the organization received $30 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and $13 million from Iran.\textsuperscript{128} As a result, the outside “played the principle role in decision-making and activation of military units” while the inside controlled the zakat (charity) and dawa arms.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{127} Author interview 6 September 2011 in al-Bireh, West Bank. Despite not admitting to membership in Hamas, probably because it would lead to his re-arrest, al-Bireh said he knows about the movement from his time in prison and seeing how it operated there. In addition to himself, al-Bireh’s wife and daughter have also spent time in Israeli prison on suspicion of Hamas involvement.


\textsuperscript{129} Mishal and Sela, pp. 59.
One downside to Hamas, however, was that the lack of proximity of the outside leadership to the militants on the ground meant that while orders could be given, the same degree of control exerted while Yassin was still in power could not be achieved. “Most attacks in those days (the first intifada) were personal, not organizational,” wrote Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of West Bank Hamas Chief Sheik Hassan Yousef. Mosab, who acted as a Shin Bet agent against Hamas, has since fled to the United States. “Hamas leaders had no control over members who had their own agendas.”

The outside leadership’s control over the military wing did not necessarily improve in 1991 when the militants of Hamas who had not been arrested by Israel formed Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, which until today is the military wing of Hamas. The military structure of the Qassam Brigades had a chain of command which was lead by Salah Shehadeh and allowed for better training and capabilities development. But its individualized cell structure, designed to protect against Israeli intelligence infiltration, meant an even more decentralized command that was difficult for the central leadership, inside and outside, to control.

The formation of al-Qassam Brigades was itself part of Hamas’s response to far-reaching regional political changes following the Gulf War. Having defeated Sadam Hussein with a broad coalition of states from around the Middle East and the world, the

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United States convened the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. In Madrid, Israeli officials sat together for the first time with many of their historic Arab enemies, including Palestinian representatives that sat with the Jordanian delegation even though it was understood they were taking their orders from the PLO. While round after round of official peace talks produced little progress, secret talks between the PLO and Israel produced the Oslo Accords in September 1993. In that Declaration of Principles, and in an exchange of letters between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (elected in 1992) and PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat, Israel and the PLO mutually recognized each other’s right to self-determination and statehood. Beginning in 1994, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established to govern over areas vacated by Israel in stages. This complex arrangement, where Israel and the PA shared and divided sovereignty over parts of the West Bank and Gaza was meant to last only until 1999 when a state of Palestine became independent.

The Oslo Accords left Hamas in a bind. On the one hand, it viewed the agreement as capitulation to Israel and the West and could not support a process that would ultimately acknowledge Jewish sovereignty over any inch of historic Palestine. But believing in the immorality of *fitna*, it would not actively combat the PLO and Fatah officials who were assuming control over the newly created PA.\(^{132}\) The Islamists’ response to the dilemma illuminated the largely destructive elements of its ideology.

\(^{132}\) The degree to which Hamas abhorred *fitna* was not just a credo it preached publicly, but something it practiced. During a 1998 raid in the West Bank, Israel uncovered messages from Hamas commanders Imad and Adil Awadallah. In those messages, the brothers ask Sheik Yassin what to do when confronted by the
To begin with, Hamas would not modify its hard core principles. “The language between us and the occupying enemy forever shall remain a language of resistance and struggle and not one of negotiations, concessions, or capitulations,” a February 1994 Hamas leaflet stated, responding to the Oslo Accords.\(^{133}\) Another leaflet in April, made clear that “the movement still believes that the Palestinian people have a right to Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan; that \textit{jihad} is the path to liberation; and that negotiating with the enemy is totally unacceptable.”\(^{134}\)

Hamas also passed up the opportunity to participate in Palestinian institution building by refusing to take part in the 1996 elections for the Palestinian Authority presidency and Palestinian Legislative Council. The decision was not cut and dry, and apparently elicited much debate from within the movement, highlighting the spectrum of opinion with Hamas (a spectrum of opinion much like that of most political organizations).\(^{135}\) From prison, Sheik Yassin opined that Hamas could stand in elections given that there was religious precedent for a \textit{hudna} (long-term ceasefire) with Israel. In this case, Hamas could act as the “opposition from within” the PA to Fatah and the PLO.\(^{136}\) Ismail Haniyeh, who ten years later would become the PA prime minister after leading Hamas to a victory in the second round of PLC elections, had even decided with other presumed “moderates” in the movement to stand on an Islamist ticket. But he was

\(^{133}\) Hamas Leaflet published 20 February 1994 titled: “Resistance and struggle will be the sole language of dialogue.” Cited in Hroub, pp. 207.

\(^{134}\) Leaflet published 21 April 1994 called “An important statement issued by Hamas’s political bureau about the latest developments,” Hroub, pp. 70.

\(^{135}\) Hamas 1994 internal memo, attached as Appendix 5.

\(^{136}\) Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 82.
persuaded to back out by more “hardline” elements within the resistance who won the internal debate that led to Hamas boycotting the elections.\footnote{Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 83.}

Most significantly during this period, Hamas’s ideology incorporated the premise that attacking civilians was a legitimate act. The ideological shift manifested itself in the practice that Hamas would come to be associated with more than any other Palestinian militant group: suicide bombings. This decision was rationalized mainly in five different ways. First was revenge—plain and simple. In February 1994, religious Jewish Settler Baruch Goldstein, who was a reservist in the IDF, shot and killed 29 Palestinians as they worshiped in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, in what came to be known as the “Hebron Massacre.” According to Hamas Spokesman Ahmed Youssuf:

“This was the turning point in Palestinian thinking in terms of thinking of how to militarize the struggle. Using suicide bombing and martyrdom operation to get revenge and make the Israelis realize that if we are bleeding, you are going to bleed, you are going to bleed the same way we are going to bleed. There is a kind of price… we are suffering, you are suffering. You escalate and use your belligerent approach, we will also escalate the situation to get revenge.”\footnote{Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.}

The second explanation was that Palestinians had few other means to strike back at Israel. “If we had weapons like F-16s and Apaches, we would use them,” Hamas-Co-Founder Abdel Aziz Rantisi said.\footnote{Byman, pp. 100.} The third argument was an entirely ideological line put forward at the time by Yusuf al-Qardawi, an Egyptian intellectual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood based in Qatar. According to him, attacking any Israeli was justified because
of Israel’s compulsory military service for most Jewish citizens. “Israeli society is a military society,” he said. “Its men and women are soldiers in its army and can be summoned up for service at any moment.”

A fourth theory states that Hamas used suicide bombings as a means of reasserting its prominence as a movement to be dealt with in the aftermath of it being sidelined by the end of the intifada and the PLO’s partnership in the Oslo Accords. Suicide bombings were “a very powerful way to declare their existence,” said Ahmed Isa, who served in the PA’s preventative security services from 1994-2006.

The fifth and final generally accepted explanation was that there really was no ideological change on targeting civilians. Rather, the move to suicide bombings coincided with the time that Hamas obtained the technical knowhow from Hezbollah, which became a model to Hamas for how to operate as a resistance organization.

Indeed, this technical sophistication, as well as much other guidance—including spiritual justification for suicide terrorism—and coordination in fighting Israel, was a result of a decision by the Rabin government in December 1992 to expel over 400 Hamas and Islamic Jihad members to Lebanon following Hamas’s killing of an Israeli border guard. Released outdoors in Marj-el-Zhour (The Valley of Flowers) during the middle of the winter, the Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives were taken in by Hezbollah, the

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140 Byman, pp. 100.
141 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
142 That Hamas began to model itself after Hezbollah at the time comes from a number of sources and interviews. See: Michael C. Horowitz, “Non-State Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism,” International Organization, 64, Winter 2010, pp. 37. Horowitz calls the case of Hezbollah training Hamas in the tactic of suicide bombing as one of “direct diffusion.” Interviews also confirmed the Hezbollah connection. Among them was one with Reuven Paz, who spent 23 years in the Shin Bet and served as the head of its department of research. Author interview 28 August 2011 in Herzeliyah.
143 In terms of the spiritual justification for suicide terrorism, see: Horowitz, pp. 39.
Lebanese group formed in 1982 after Israel’s invasion of its northern neighbor during the Lebanese Civil War. Despite religious differences (Hezbollah is a Shiia organization), the two began a coordination that significantly upgraded Hamas’s military proficiency as well as its external support.\(^\text{144}\) Hezbollah leaders also facilitated meetings between Hamas and Iranian officials, beginning a patron-sponsor relationship that aided Hamas immensely for years to come. Exile in Lebanon also afforded Hamas inside leaders the opportunity to meet face-to-face with their outside counterparts for the first time in years and led to better coordination between the two once the Israeli government caved into both international and domestic pressure and allowed those expelled to return to Gaza and the West Bank less than one year later.

It was, then, a combination of factors during the Oslo period that led Hamas to take on the role of spoiler while attempting to remain relevant despite political circumstances working against its extreme political goals. It squared the circle of resisting Oslo but refraining from fitna by employing a three-track strategy. First, using its arsenal of suicide bombers against Israeli civilian targets, it soured the Israeli public on reconciliation with the Palestinians and significantly slowed down the process of power transfer in the Palestinian Territories that was supposed to take place from Israel to the PA. Content to use Hamas attacks a means to garner increased concessions from Israel, Arafat made only token moves against the Islamic Resistance Movement from 1993 to 1996, despite Israeli demands that as president of the PA he clamp down on

terrorism. Second, Hamas continued to make political arguments against the PA and Oslo without challenging its authority within the West Bank and Gaza.

The third track of Hamas’s strategy during Oslo was to build up the dawa elements of the movement. By 1995, Islamists were spending between $2,772,000 and $3,960,000 on orphan support (including on children of collaborators with Israel who they wished to reincorporate back into Palestinian society) and children of at least 5,000 families that were very poor, including families of martyrs and prisoners.\(^{145}\) The services included clothes, basic school supplies, and, when needed, food rations.

But Hamas’s key area of focus remained education. Already by 1993, MB-affiliated organizations had penetrated all eight refugee camps in Gaza, where 35 percent of the Strip’s population lived. For example, in Nuseirat camp (40,000 people), the MB had kindergartens for 1,200 boys and girls, perhaps a majority of which were housed in mosques. Annual tuition was $40, or $57 with transportation. Meanwhile, kindergartens run by secular factions in Nuseirat were shut down due to low enrollment and the only other kindergarten available was government run. Free after school tutoring by the MB was available. Programs existed for blood donation, free medical and dental care for widows and orphans, and similar services at low costs for others. Volunteers would regularly visit prisoners and martyrs’ families. One Islamist organization would arrange for children with injuries to be treated in Europe. As of March 1995, there were 300 women volunteers working on women’s committees. Likely the Islamists were reaching a majority of the camps inhabitants, “a pattern that could be found in other camps as well,”\(^{145}\)

\(^{145}\) Roy, pp. 80. The following information regarding dawa activities is also drawn from Roy, pp. 80-83.
Roy writes.\textsuperscript{146} There was often mandatory programming in Islamic culture, philosophy, law, and religion.

While Hamas’s \textit{dawa} wing was busy burnishing its social credentials in Gaza and the West Bank during the early days of the PA, al-Qassam was busy killing. Between 1993 and 1996, suicide bombings perpetrated by Hamas killed 116 people in Israel, mostly civilians. A particularly bloody wave of four such bombings in the run-up to the 1996 Israeli elections (called after the assassination of Rabin by a extreme right-wing, religious Jew) swung the election to the hawkish Likud party headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. While publicly Hamas claimed that the bombings were in response to Israel’s January assassination of Hamas’s chief “engineer” for suicide bombs, Yahya Ayyash, a recruiter for Hamas jailed by Israel told a different story. The military wing, said Mohammaed Abu Warda, had purposely attempted to derail the candidacy of Shimon Peres who had replaced Rabin as prime minister and chief of Israel’s Labor Party. “They thought that the military operations would work to the benefit of the Likud and against the left,” he said. “They wanted to destroy the political process, and they thought that, if the [Israeli] right [wing] succeeded, the political process would stop.”\textsuperscript{147} The charge was responded to by Abu Marzouk, one of the Hamas outside political chiefs, despite the fact that he was in detention in the US at the time. But as opposed to issuing an outright

\textsuperscript{146} Roy, pp. 83.
\textsuperscript{147} Serge Schmemann, “Target was Israeli government, says Arab linked to 3 bombings,” \textit{New York Times}, 7 March 1996.
denial, Abu Marzouk said that Hamas’s military and political wings were separate and that Hamas could not tie its future to either Israeli political party.\footnote{148 Yousef M. Ibrahim, “Hamas political chief says group can’t curb terrorists,” \textit{New York Times}, 9 March 1996.}

If it is true that the Islamic Resistance Movement intended to swing the Israeli elections, then it got what it was looking for. But it came at a high price. The combination of the Likud in power, the anger on the Israeli street at how many people were killed in terrorist attacks, and international outrage at acts that were derailing the peace process meant that pressure now fell squarely on Arafat to act against Hamas. In a coordinated effort with Israel, he did just that.

\textit{Summary of Independent Variables, 1987-1997}

\textit{Attributes of Statehood.} During this time period, Hamas did not control any territory, nor did it exercise any political authority. However, it was significantly active in providing for the welfare of Palestinians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, during the first \textit{intifada} and continuing into the initial years of the Oslo Process. Hamas also backed down from its calls for a total economic break with Israel during the \textit{intifada} because of the burden it realized such a course of action would place on the Palestinian people. In these ways Hamas demonstrated its affinity for them and a degree of responsibility for their welfare.
**Organizational Structure.** After the arrest of Sheik Yassin in May 1989, Hamas became an organization whose decision-making process was quite complex. There was no single leader who commanded obedience but rather a number of committees, some of them overlapping, that made decisions for the movement based on consultation and consensus. Though the re-organization of the movement by Abu Marzouk left it with a nominal structure, the separation of its leadership between inside and outside made that structure difficult to observe and made decisions difficult to implement. In terms of the military component (which is most pertinent to this particular study), in theory, al-Qassam Brigades fell under the direction of the political leadership. In practice, however, the political wing did not exert firm command and control over its military operatives. This was due both to the inside-outside separation and also the individualized cell structure of al-Qassam Brigades that decentralized command within the military wing even though it had a designated leader in Saleh Shehadeh.

**Inter-factional Competition.** Competition between Hamas and the PLO and later the PA was intense during this time period. As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the main factors that compelled the Muslim Brotherhood to form Hamas and engage in violence against Israel was its fear that it would be delegitimized among the Palestinian population if it did not join in the violent struggle. During the first intifada, the competition between Hamas and the PLO for popular leadership of that struggle fueled much of Hamas’s actions. Once the Oslo Accords were signed and the leaders of the PLO became leaders in the PA, Hamas continued to press its case against the secularists. One of the ways it distinguished itself was by continuing and intensifying the armed struggle
against Israel that Fatah and the other factions of the PLO had nominally renounced in 1993.

_Ideology._ Hamas’s ideology of this time period contained both destructive and constructive elements. Its charter, leaflets and statements by the leadership all point to a group whose goals are more destructive than constructive, even though its stated long-term goal was the establishment of a Muslim Palestinian state. Additionally, Hamas turned toward suicide bombing in 1994 and refused to take part in the Palestinian elections in 1996. That said, in 1988, Mahmoud al-Zahar presented Shimon Peres with terms of a long-term ceasefire that Hamas could abide by with Israel. And in 1994, Sheik Yassin, from prison, offered to end suicide bombings and remove civilians from the field of battle if the Rabin government would also cease its attacks on Palestinian civilians.\(^{149}\) Moreover, by the early 1990s, Hamas had also begun distinguishing between Jews and Israelis/Zionists when it spoke about who its enemies were and all along it expanded the social-religious services it provided the Palestinian people.

_External Support._ Hamas began its existence very much on its own, but in its first decade the resistance movement picked up significant external support both in terms of quantity and quality. In 1990, after the first crackdown by Israel, Hamas’s external leadership was based in the United States and Jordan. While the Jordanians offered Hamas official support to base activities in Amman, the United States simply was not paying close attention to the activities of Abu Marzouk in Springfield, VA. After the Gulf

\(^{149}\) Azzam Tamimi, _Hamas: A History from Within_, Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2007, pp. 102., according to Sheik Yassin’s interview with _al-Jazeera_.

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War, when Hamas, unlike Arafat, did not side with Sadam Hussein, it was rewarded with tens of millions of dollars in Gulf money. And then in 1992, as a result of the expulsion of hundreds of its activists to Lebanon, Hamas began coordinating and receiving support from Hezbollah and Iran.
Table 4.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hamas (1987-1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
<td>Clear Leadership Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theoretical Predictions. Based on the theoretical indicators, the best Israel could hope to achieve against Hamas during this time period would be weak tactical deterrence.
The use of violence by Hamas during its first decade can be described as escalatory but inconsistent. During the first *intifada*, its attacks began against Palestinian collaborators and, despite plenty of anti-Zionist rhetoric, Hamas and Israel maintained relations as each sought to gain ground against the PLO. Indeed, the highest level engagement ever to have occurred between Israel and Hamas came four months into the *intifada* when Mahmoud al-Zahar met with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Al-Zahar claims to have put a deal on the table for a long-term ceasefire with Israel in exchange for a withdrawal from the occupied territories.\(^\text{150}\) Whether true or not, no agreement was reached.

The relationship between Israel and Hamas changed dramatically when Hamas kidnapped and killed Israeli soldiers Avi Sasportas and Ilan Saadon in February and May 1989, respectively. By the end of that year, Israel had broken off ties with Hamas, embarked on two major arrest campaigns that netted the Hamas leadership and at least 300 operatives, and made membership in Hamas illegal.\(^\text{151}\) However, while Sheik Yassin remained in prison, Israel released a number of other Hamas leaders and operatives in the hopes that they would continue to act against the PLO.

The second major Israeli action against Hamas was its expulsion of more than 400 members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad to Lebanon in December 1992. That came after

\(^\text{151}\) Milton-Edwards, pp. 61
Hamas kidnapped an Israeli border guard in between rounds of peace negotiations during the Madrid Process and demanded that Israel release Sheik Yassin from prison as ransom. When Israel did not accede to those terms, Hamas killed the officer and Israel embarked on the mass round up. Despite the deportation, there was a wave of Hamas attacks, mainly against soldiers and civilians in the Spring of 1993.¹⁵² And as was the case two years before, Israel eventually relented, allowing the repatriation of the expelled Islamists in 1993 under heavy international pressure.

Terrorism statistics from the early years of Hamas are murky due to the fact that it was not as clear as it is today what attacks came from what factions. It was only after the Oslo Accords in September 1993 that data which identifies attacks against Israel according to Palestinian factions becomes more detailed and consistent. As a result, extrapolating whether Hamas attacks decreased in quantity as a result of Israeli strategy until 1993 is difficult due to missing data. Anecdotally, it does not appear that this was the case. However, it is easy to say that Hamas attacks in terms of target and method only became more destructive as it moved first from targeting Palestinian collaborators to targeting Israelis and then from inflicting injuries to kidnapping and murder.

Following the Oslo Accords, Hamas escalated even further when it began to attack civilians and employed the method of suicide bombing, which was considerably more lethal than stabbings and shootings. The Rabin government’s strategy was “to fight terror as if there were no negotiations, and conduct the negotiations as if there was no

¹⁵² Milton-Edwards, pp. 65.
terror,” as the prime minister said. In addition to arrests, this meant that Israel would employ “general closures” on the West Bank and Gaza Strip after attacks; in instances where intelligence indicated an imminent attack; or during particularly sensitive times like Jewish holidays and elections. But after Hamas’s initial suicide bombing attempt in 1993 failed, 1994 saw five suicide bombings attributed to the movement in which 38 people were killed; 1995 saw three bombings with 18 killed; 1996 saw four bombings with 59 killed, and 1997 saw three bombings with 24 killed. An arrest campaign in January 1995 conducted by Israel and the PA seems not to have deterred the group from continuing its attacks. As mentioned previously, however, Yassin did later claim that he offered from prison to try to persuade his comrades in Hamas to remove civilians from the field of battle if Israel would do the same. This could be interpreted as a reduction in aggression due to the target of attacks, which is one of the criteria for tactical deterrence. Either the offer was not made seriously, or Israel rejected it, but in any case, it was not implemented.

Breaking it down further by months, there was a six-month lull in bombings between August 1995 and February 1996 and a twelve-month lull between March 1996 and March 1997. Why the pause? First, Hamas claimed to have encountered technical difficulties during this time period. But equally, if not more important, it was then that Hamas and the PA reached an understanding in the lead-up to a major Israeli redeployment from the West Bank and Palestinian elections in January 1996. While the PA promised to release some Hamas prisoners, Hamas promised not to encourage a

154 Tamimi, pp. 105.
general boycott of the elections or to “place the [Palestinian] Authority in an embarrassing position,” which was interpreted as attacking Israel from within territory controlled by the PA.\textsuperscript{155} Hamas did indeed hold its fire against Israel during that time period. But afterward, in the Spring of 1996, it unleashed a barrage of attacks. Whether the attacks would have happened anyways, or whether they were in retaliation for Israel’s killing of “The Engineer” is up to interpretation.

Those bombings, which swung the Israeli elections to Likud, precipitated an international anti-terrorism summit in Sharm al-Sheik, Egypt. Huge pressure was brought to bear on Arafat and he translated that into a wide PA crackdown on Hamas where over 900 of its members were arrested, including some of its top political leadership and commanders of al-Qassam Brigades.\textsuperscript{156} During the same campaign, much of the Hamas dawa network was closed and its social welfare and charity activities were restricted. The PA also assumed control of all Hamas affiliated mosques, which was a particularly harsh blow to the movement.\textsuperscript{157} As Hamas had previously noted,

“our steadfast mosques are the castles which always have been the fortresses of rebellions against all forms of occupation since the turn of the century. They are one of the most important pillars of the independence of Palestinian civil society from any occupation or tyrannical rule. Maintaining the free and independent status of the mosques is a red line which our people will observe strictly.”\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{155} Tamimi, pp. 106.
\textsuperscript{156} Tamimi, pp. 106 and 109.
\textsuperscript{157} Hroub.
\textsuperscript{158} Hamas leaflet called “The independence of mosques is the buttress of our civil society; it is a red line about which our people will not be lenient,” 7 June 1994.
But at the end of the day, when that red line was crossed by the PA, Hamas did not fire back. It should also be noted that the PA likely felt it did not have much to lose by going after Hamas during this time period, as the popularity of the Islamic Resistance Movement plunged to historic lows. In addition to being viewed as responsible for delaying Israeli withdrawals from Palestinian territories, the hardship inflicted on the population due to the closures on the West Bank and Gaza after an attack on Israel won Hamas no friends.  

In their own words, Hamas members admit that those pauses in violence were precipitated by its clashes with the PA. The mass arrests and closures of Hamas institutions inhibited Hamas capabilities. On the one hand, “there was security coordination between Fatah and the Israelis. However we cannot say that that was the main reason—the shared cooperation between them to push us to do this,” said Abduljaber M. Fuqahaa, a PLC member with Hamas’s Change and Reform party. “The main objective [of the lull in violence] was to calm down the situation in the internal Palestinian political context.” Indeed, it appears as though the PA used Hamas’s aversion to fitna against the Islamists, successfully deterring the group for this short period of time. The PA placed Hamas in a no-win situation where it either had to engage in fitna, or cease its violent activities. It chose the latter.

As noted, in Mach 1997, after twelve months, Hamas resumed its suicide bombing campaign against Israel. By September, in three bombings, it had killed 24 Israelis in a café in Tel Aviv, and a market and main thoroughfare in Jerusalem. And

159 Hroub, pp. 250
then, in a final twist of the time period in question, a secret message was sent to Jerusalem from King Hussein of Jordan on 23 September, less than three weeks after the last bombing. Abu Marzok, the King communicated, was ready to talk about “the establishment of a dialogue between Hamas and [Israel] for stopping the cycle of violence and instead discuss all the subjects that certainly need discussion.” According to various source material, the dialogue offered would focus on a long-term ceasefire between Hamas and the Jewish State and about the heretofore resistance movement’s incorporation into the political process defined by the Oslo Accords.  

Hamas leaders had proposed ceasefires in the media since 1995. But the details of the offers fluctuated depending on who in Hamas was talking about them and in any case they were always for terms that were understood to be non-starters for Israel (i.e. an evacuation of all Jewish settlers from Gaza and the West Bank as a precursor to any formal agreement). These terms related by King Hussein were more serious, according to Matti Steinberg, a former adviser to the Shin Bet. And, as Paul McGeough points out, they came “with the imprimatur of the king of Jordan,” Israel’s best ally in the Arab world. On the other hand, Hamas co-founder Abdel Aziz Rantisi said in the days that followed that “we have checked with our brothers in Jordan, and there was no such [ceasefire] initiative.” Moreover, when Yassin was released from prison in the


161 The terms of the initial discussions proposed via King Hussein come from: Paul McGeough, Kill Khalid: The Failed Mossad Assassination of Khalid Mishal and the Rise of Hamas, New York: The New Press, 2009, Chapter 11 (I used a digital copy of the book, therefore page numbers would not be helpful); AND Mishal and Sella, pp. 72; and author interview with Matti Steinberg in Jerusalem on 27 August 2011 (Steinberg worked at the time as adviser to the Shin Bet).

162 Mishal and Sella pp. 72.

aftermath of the events that followed, his offers of a *hudna* returned to terms that no Israeli leader, left or right, would entertain.\(^{164}\)

The details of the Hamas offer, and perhaps whether it was even actually offered to Israel may never be agreed upon by those who participated in the drama. But from whatever vantage point one looks at it, the events of the next few days changed the course of the Israel-Hamas relationship and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for years to come; perhaps even forever.

The following is the text of an exchange between the author and Ahmed Youssuf, a long-time political adviser and spokesman for Hamas in Gaza. In it, he elaborates on the points illuminated by Fuqahaa in explaining Hamas’s decision-making process during 1996 and 1997 that lead to the 12-month cessation of attacks and later the offer of a *hudna*.

*Q: In 1996 and 1997, why did Hamas stop violence for a little while?*

**A:** “Well, you are talking about then, we have the Palestinian authority, we have Yassir Arafat and [the] Oslo agreement, and this is a new political landscape and you have to see how you are going to deal with the PA and it’s not going to be an easy thing to do when the PA is going to be the guardian of protecting the Israelis from the Palestinians doing any military operations … There was another front open, which was the PA, how do you accommodate your relation with this new authority and actors in the game? So you have to deal with him before having your strategy with how to continue your struggle against the Israelis.”

*Q: So it was a decision based on relations with the PA? To avoid fitna?*

\(^{164}\) These details will discussed in the examination of the next time period.
A: “Yeah, you know, in 1996 there is a big crackdown on Hamas, arresting their leaders. Also [the PA] tried to sabotage what all these military groups do against Israel, at that time there is security coordination between the PA and Israel. And you have the Palestinian intelligence groups who start collecting information and telling the Israelis about all the Islamist activities here in Gaza.”

Q: So basically the tahadiyeh (short-term ceasefire) was a reaction to a lot of pressure from the PA?
A: “Of course.”

Q: Was it also because it was a time when the public was focused on the peace process and there was less public support?
A: “Yeah maybe some people thought once we have the PA here and we start negotiations with the Israelis and we have the Oslo Agreement there is some kind of glimmer of hope that we might achieve a Palestinian state… until the second intifada, the al-Aqsa intifada, when the Palestinians realized it was all the time just a mirage. “

So Hamas was also responding to popular sentiment at the time?
“Of course.”

Ahmed Isa, who served in the PA’s preventative security services from 1994-2006, generally corroborates Youssuf’s narrative of the ceasefires and the offer to Israel. Fear of reaching a gaping division within the Palestinian community led to “internal calculations” by Hamas that a pause in violence was in their interests, he said. Moreover, Hamas had delivered the “message” to the world that it has “this weapon (suicide bombings), and they have a big arsenal of it, and you cannot stop it. And the strongest point is that ‘we are the ones who decide to use it when and where… We are under pressure now, but we will stop according to our own decision. But you are not the one to defeat

165 Author interview in Gaza City, 13 September 2011.
us.’ And its absolutely correct, because two or three years later they reinitiated it. They switched the key and the line of production started to produce because they were ready.”

Q: Were they afraid at the time that if they kept going they would actually be defeated?
A: “No, they never feared that.”

The last point in particular—that Hamas was determined to act on its own terms—would seem to explain the resumption of violence for six months before the September offer of a hudna was made by Abu Marzouk. Isa also states that public opinion turning against Hamas at the time had a significant effect on the movement.

Q: Did the Palestinian public start to turn against them at that point?
A: “There were some symptoms. And there was a very strong discussion among the Palestinians about whether [suicide bombing] was useful or not, and there was a public division… [Hamas] reached the point that there was not enough support from the Palestinians for that, so they decided to stop.”

Q: So they are very sensitive to public opinion?
A: “Yes, this is one of the elements that has its own influence on their decisions.”

Findings. During the period in question, Hamas steadily escalated its attacks against Israel both in terms of type and method. In terms of quantity, prior to 1993 we lack data to make a determinate judgment but anecdotal evidence suggests attacks did not decrease despite Israeli actions against the organization. After 1993, there were two lulls in violence. The first was likely due to a short-term political calculation in the lead-up to the 1996 elections. The second lull was due to a combination of pressure by the PA and Israel that limited Hamas’s operational capabilities, as well as Hamas’s desire to prevent
internal Palestinian fighting. Since it was still capable of launching attacks during that time period, as 1997 proved, it seems the latter explanation is the most conclusive. The final offer of a long-term ceasefire by Hamas at the end of September 1997 is difficult to take seriously given its terms.

Hamas, for a period of months, was deterred. The deterrence was achieved less by Israel and more by the PA, which played off of its knowledge that Hamas wished to avoid fitna even at a heavy cost. Given that Hamas was deterred for around 12 months during this time period; that no rules of the game were established; that the type and method of attacks were escalated; and that frequent punishment actions against Hamas were required in order to establish and maintain the deterrence, it is prudent to classify the deterrence that was achieved as weak tactical deterrence. This confirms the theoretical expectations.
Table 4.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hamas (1987-1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In September 1997, after the third Hamas suicide bombing in six months brought the total number of Israelis killed by Hamas that year to 24, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to make a bold move. In a decision that would reverberate for years to come, the prime minister gave the go-ahead for a covert Mossad operation to kill Khaled Mishal, who, along with Musa Abu Marzouk, ran the Hamas political bureau in Amman.\textsuperscript{166} The operation was conducted on the morning of 25 September, just two days after King Hussein of Jordan had passed a secret message to Mossad Chief Danny Yatom that outlined a proposed dialogue by Hamas—a message Netanyahu claimed later not to have received by the time he ordered Mishal’s assassination.\textsuperscript{167} In one of the lowest moments in the Mossad’s history, two agents bungled the assassination when they were chased down and apprehended by Mishal’s personal body guard after injecting the Hamas leader’s left ear with poison on the streets of Amman in broad daylight.

As Mishal lay dying in the hospital, an irate King Hussein, who signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, threatened to tear up the agreement if Israel did not provide the antidote to cure the Hamas leader. Despite an uneasy relationship with Hamas and the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hussein also demanded that Israel release

\textsuperscript{166} There is some disagreement on who exactly was the political bureau chief of Hamas at the time—Abu Marzouk or Mishal. For a source that cites Mishal, see: Matthew Levitt, \textit{Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad}, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 44. On the leadership struggle between Marzouk and Mishal at the time, see: Michael Arnold, “For Hamas, joy and a power struggle Sheik Yassin still inspires the destitute residents of Gaza, but his eight-year absence may have dampened his political clout,” \textit{The Globe and Mail (Canada)}, 9 October 1997.

Hamas Founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin from prison if it wished to see its two disgraced intelligence agents returned alive. Under heavy pressure from Amman, but also from Washington where President Bill Clinton weighed in strongly on the matter, Netanyahu agreed to the terms dictated by Hussein.

On 30 September, Sheik Yassin walked out of Israeli prison and flew directly to Amman in a Royal Jordanian Army helicopter where he was welcomed by King Hussein. Shortly after, the Sheik made his triumphant return to Gaza, eight years following his imprisonment. After a five-month stay in Gaza, Yassin embarked on a foreign relations tour that would catapult Hamas’s international support to new heights. Following medical treatment in Cairo, he traveled to Saudi Arabia for the hajj, followed by, Qatar, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Yemen, Syria, and Sudan. During those four months, he was treated as a guest of honor by kings and accorded treatment most often reserved for heads of states. The broader Arab and Muslim populations feted him for his steadfastness in resisting Israel and “the glory of the Arabs” shining in his eyes, as Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah said. Though he was refused entry into Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and South Africa, and permitted only to visit the hospital in Egypt, Sheik Yassin’s return to the arena up-ended the geopolitical paradigm that had emerged in the wake of the Sharm-el-Sheik anti-terrorism conference only one year before, where most of the very same countries who received him now had pledged to fight terrorism. The Sheik’s tour had the added benefit of securing “a torrent of financial support for Hamas.”

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169 Tamimi, pp. 116. No exact figures are given as to how much money he received.
Yassin’s release also immediately changed the operational dynamics of Hamas. In both Saudi Arabia and Sudan, Yassin held organizational meetings with the Hamas outside leadership based in Amman, providing him the first opportunity to coordinate with members of the political bureau and majlis shura since his arrest in 1989 prompted their creation. As the founder of the movement and its undisputed spiritual guide, Yassin was always the only member of Hamas whose opinion was unequaled, even though he was the one who originally insisted on the consultative format for making group decisions. After an eight-year absence, Yassin’s presence shifted “Hamas’s center of gravity back to the Palestinian territories” and away from Amman.

The inside’s influence grew further still one year later when King Abdullah, who succeeded his deceased father, expelled the Hamas political bureau from Amman, prompting the movement to set up its external headquarters in Damascus. From both a chain of command and a command and control standpoint, Yassin’s presence in Gaza and the diminution of the political bureau’s influence following its uprooting, streamlined and disciplined Hamas’s military operations. According to a 2003 U.S. Treasury Report, Yassin maintained

“a direct line of communication with other Hamas leaders on coordination of Hamas’s military activities and openly admits that there is no distinguishing the political and military wings of Hamas. Yassin also conveys messages about operational planning to other Palestinian terrorist organizations. Surrounding Yassin is an entourage of personal ‘bodyguards,’ including many

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170 Tamimi, pp. 112 and 115.
implicated in providing information and supplies to fugitives, recruiting personnel to undertake military operations, planning terrorist cells, attacking settlements, and manufacturing weapons and explosives.”

As the founder of Hamas, and indeed the leader of the MB in Gaza since at least 1967, Yassin also had an outsized influence on the ideology of Hamas. After his release, he restated his offer of a *hudna* to Israel on numerous occasions even while always stopping short of offering outright recognition of the Jewish State. Though he likely knew, again, that the terms of his offer would not meet even the minimal demands of the most left-wing of Israeli leaders, the mere fact that he offered it suggested a more moderate stance than the hard core of the organization that would not speak of anything but violent *jihad*. Indeed, Yassin emphasized that “Hamas’s policy is one of realizing the goals of the Palestinian people. If these goals are achieved by peaceful means, then there would be no need for other sorts of action.”

Zvi Sela, who was the chief intelligence officer for Israel’s Prison Services agency while Yassin was in jail, recounted the following conversation he had with the Sheik:

“I always told him, ‘stop blowing up buses, stop murdering women and children.’ He replied:

‘Tzvika, listen, we had good teachers. You established a state thanks to your military power. The dead I take from you are for the sake of establishing a state, but you are killing women and children for the sake of occupation. You already have a state. You are dirty and hypocritical. I have no interest in destroying you—all I want is a state…’ He was smart and brave. Cruel but

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creditable. He gave his life in the war for freedom of his people. I tend to think that if we had tried for an agreement with him, we would have succeeded.”

Having absorbed the blow of seeing much of its dawa network shuttered by Israel, but even more so by the PA, Hamas, again under Yassin’s direction, busied itself with the reconstruction of that network which it viewed as supremely important to its cause. By 1998, 62 zakat committees were again functioning in the West Bank and Gaza. By 1999, Islamic institutions accounted for between 10 and 40 percent of all social institutions in Gaza. By 2000, when the second intifada began, around 65 percent of all schools in Gaza below the secondary level were Islamic. As Mahmoud al-Zahar said of Hamas’s efforts at the time:

“we are reconstructing the poorer classes—raising their living standards and improving their quality of life to the extent possible; [the PA] created a new rich class, that’s all. A room in a mosque, that’s all we need… In this era, we will sacrifice ourselves, but we must leave a legacy through our children and use the present situation as a field, planting our ideological seeds for the future.”

With most of the Hamas military operatives languishing in PA jails; the moderating influence of Yassin; his firmer control of the movement; a focus on rebuilding dawa institutions; and a distaste for violence from the Palestinian public; Hamas entered its most dormant period of violence. From the release of Yassin in

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174 Kobi Ben-Simhon, “Israel could have made peace with Hamas under Yassin,” Ha’aretz, 16 April 2009.
September 1997 until the beginning of the second *intifada* three years later, Hamas attempted a total of three suicide bombings and killed only one Israeli. “Hamas—once the ascendant power among Palestinians—was in shambles,” writes Mossab Hassan Yousef. “Through intrigue and deal making, the Palestinian Authority had accomplished what Israel had been unable to do through sheer might. It had destroyed the military wing of Hamas and thrown its leadership and fighters into prison.”

It was the quiet before the storm.

The combination of Netanyahu and Arafat was not a good one for the peace process. Despite the 1997 Hebron Protocols and the 1998 Wye River Memorandum, Israeli redeployments were delayed as both sides fell short of their obligations. When the Labor party returned to power in Israel with Ehud Barak as prime minister in 1999, it temporarily reinvigorated the peace negotiations. But the May 1999 date for Palestinian statehood came and went with no final status agreement reached and frustration began to mount on the ground in the Palestinian Territories as the Israeli occupation dragged on into its 33rd year. With Clinton’s term in office set to expire in January 2001, and his legacy as peacemaker still up in the air, the White House called a last ditch peace conference to convene at Camp David in July 2000. For two weeks the sides negotiated, but in the end could not reach a final status agreement. The reasons for the collapse of the Oslo Process are multitude, highly controversial, and not so material to this study. But the ramifications are.

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On 28 September, Israeli Opposition Leader Ariel Sharon visited what Jews refer to as the Temple Mount and what Muslims call *al-haram al-sharif* (The Noble Sanctuary). It is the location where the first and second ancient Jewish temples stood and where the al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, and the Dome of the Rock stand today. Palestinian worshipers rioted to protest Sharon’s presence. They rioted again the following day producing the first major clashes of the second *intifada*, or what Palestinians call *al-Aqsa intifada*.

Once the violence began, the peace process came crashing down swiftly as attack and counter-attack were executed in rapid succession. Within the first few months, Arafat ordered the Hamas military leaders released from prison and the violence the Islamic Resistance Movement inflicted on Israelis took a dramatic turn upwards. Beginning in October 2000, wave after wave of shootings and bombings killed dozens, then hundreds, and eventually over 1,000 Israelis, mostly civilians. In total, 148 suicide bombings were perpetrated against Israel from 2000 to 2006, the majority by Hamas.\(^\text{178}\) At its peak between 2001 and 2003, Palestinian terrorist actions, which Hamas was responsible for more than any other armed faction, were occurring every day.

Among those interviewed for this project, there is general agreement on at least two factors which explain why Hamas reengaged so vigorously in violence in the second *intifada*. First was encouragement from Arafat, who “gave orders to his officials to start the second *intifada,*” said Fadel Hamdan, a parliamentarian of the Hamas-affiliated

Change and Reform party. He added, like others interviewed, that Hamas waited a couple months before reinitiating the bombings in order to make sure Arafat was serious about fighting Israel. “When [Hamas] found it is really intifada and popular, everyone was involved.”

Second, the sources cited strong popular support for the bombings. “Public opinion was in need, they were waiting to watch casualties on the TV,” said Ahmed Isa, who worked in the PA’s preventative security apparatus at the time. “And they realized that their work had a reaction from the Palestinian community in general… So they were the role model for all the Palestinians.”

Third, Isa also suggested that Hamas was trying to “push things out of control of the lead of Yasser Arafat” in order so that it might regain its stature with the Palestinian people and erode the PLO’s power. A consequence of that strategy was that it produced a chaotic environment where it was difficult—particularly in the West Bank since it was removed from the base in Gaza—for Hamas military leaders to control their units.

Fourth, in addition to having perfected the suicide belt, many more weapons were available during the second intifada as a result of the legal purchase of them by the PA, said Ahmed Youssuf. Hamas could “buy the guns easily and make it available for the resistance. And that’s why the intifada escalated and we had a very serious battle between the Israelis and the Palestinians.”

As the intifada wore on and the body count mounted, the increasingly repressive Israeli tactics took a dramatic toll on Palestinian living conditions in Gaza and the West

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179 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
180 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
181 Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
Bank. At the end of the Oslo Process in mid-2000, 21 percent of Palestinians lived in poverty, according to the World Bank. By the end of that year, the rate was 33 percent; the end of 2001, 46 percent; the end of 2002, 60 percent; the end of 2003, 75 percent of Gazans and 50 percent of West Bankers. By January 2003, it was estimated by Christian Aid that nearly 75 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were living below the official UN poverty line of $2 per day.

In this climate, Hamas once again gained street credibility by providing enormous amounts of aid to the community. According to the International Crisis Group, Islamic NGOs were the largest food donor in the Palestinian Territories after the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The four largest of these NGOs alone helped feed 581,800 people while a host of zakat committees provided direct cash aids to at least 7,000 families. In total, Islamic NGOs were providing 25 percent of food and cash assistance in the West Bank and some form of assistance to one in six Palestinians within the territories. In Gaza, Islamist organizations accounted for 87 percent of all cash

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184 It should be noted that determining whether any particular Islamic NGO is “officially” affiliated with Hamas is difficult. Roy spends much time in her book on this subject, and it is addressed in the ICG report as well. They both conclude that whether the Islamic NGOs are officially backed by Hamas is largely immaterial as they are a part of the same basic community structure. The ICG report states on page 27: “It is probably an accurate assessment that the Palestinian Islamic social welfare sector as a whole is today affiliated with Hamas to one degree or another. It is moreover a matter of absolute certainty that Hamas is engaged in social welfare activism for more than altruistic purposes. It consciously seeks to derive organizational benefit from serving the basic needs of its people—and friend and foe alike share the view that it does this particularly well. In this respect, ICG’s findings corroborate the impressions of virtually every observer who has studied Hamas; the leaders of the movement themselves ascribe a significant if not primary role to Islamic social welfare activism in explaining the growth and enduring popularity of the Islamist movement.”

185 ICG Report, pp. 15.
contributions, according to the UN. Meanwhile, official PA services were reaching just six percent of the people. The ICG report concluded that due to the PA’s effective bankruptcy, “UNRWA’s chronic funding shortages and the extremely limited excess capacity of secular NGOs, the role of Islamic organizations [was] vital and, in some instances, irreplaceable” to the welfare of the Palestinian people. One activist the report quoted as being “strongly opposed to Hamas” conceded that “today, and particularly in Gaza, Hamas and its charitable networks have de facto assumed the essential social functions.”

The violence of the second intifada was beyond brutal. It was personal, gory, and inescapable for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Yassin’s moderation in the late ’90s gave way to a hard turn toward the glorification of “martyrdom” that pervaded the Palestinian street in the early 2000s. At the peak of the intifada, over 90 percent of Palestinian supported all attacks against Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli soldiers. And 58 percent supported the suicide bombings within pre-1967 Israel that were incinerating and maiming civilians in buses, cafes, and restaurant. Popular among Hamas and the other militant Palestinian factions at the time were “martyr videos” that men (and women) who blew themselves up would record before going on their missions. Even more ubiquitous in Palestinian cities across the West Bank and Gaza were “martyr

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186 ICG Report, pp. 17.
“We are mandated by Islam—in a war situation—to do unto others as they have done unto us,” said Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the second-most powerful inside leader behind Yassin at the time. “If I saw a rocket coming I would jump and hug it,” the quadriplegic Yassin boasted. “Our desire is martyrdom: the day we become martyrs is a wedding day for us. We are not afraid of [Israeli] threats, and when we get killed it is the happiest day of our lives.” Perhaps the best-known Hamas quote from the time—best-know because of how shockingly flippant it was—came from Rantisi in June 2002. “You have to understand that [Jews] value their life more than Muslims or Christians. They don’t like to die. Their best wish to each other is to live 120 years,” Rantisi said.

Hamas made every effort to include women in the ideology of violent jihad, as well. Speaking after Rantisi’s killing by Israel in April 2004, his wife, Umm Mohammed, explained that she viewed her role in the home as “very direct work and contribution to the movement, backing up my husband. This was part of my jihad—within the home, backing him up while he engaged in the bigger jihad.” But including women in jihad meant more than just supporting men. Though it was not the first Palestinian faction to employ female suicide bombers, Hamas did so on at least two occasions.

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189 I write this from personal experience.
When the second *intifada* began, the use of female suicide bombers was a tactic Yassin was reluctant to utilize, saying that women bombers should only be employed when the struggle entered its “decisive phase.” Others within Hamas, such as West Bank Chief Sheik Hassan Yousef, expressed no reservations. “We believe in the right of women to resist the occupation, side by side with men. We have no reservations,” he said. Apparently, when al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and Islamic Jihad began to employ women bombers, Yassin felt pressured to do the same. By the time 22-year-old mother of two Reem al-Riyashi blew herself up on 14 January 2004, killing four people, the Sheik professed his full backing for her operation, indicating that the increasing “obstacles” male bombers faced in reaching their targets influenced his decision. “The holy war is an imperative for all Muslim men and women,” he said.

Hamas took advantage of al-Riyashi’s suicide bombing to teach Palestinian children an ideological lesson as well. The following is the transcript of an interview broadcast on Hamas Television with al-Riyashi’s two young children.

*Interviewer:* "We are now going to the two children of Reem Riyashi, the Martyrdom-seeker, and Jihad fighter [mother of] Duha and Muhammad. Duha, do you love Mommy? Where did Mommy go?"

*Duha:* “To paradise.”

*Interviewer:* “What did mommy do?"

*Duha:* “Became a shahida [Martyr].”

*Interviewer:* “She killed Jews, right? How many did she kill, Muhammad?"

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Muhammad: “What?”

Interviewer: “How many Jews did she kill?”

Muhammad: “Five (sic).”196

Not all voices in Hamas followed the company line in glorifying death. An anonymous fighter in Jenin, the city which in many ways was the center of the resistance during the second intifada, said that “nobody wants to die. There is no other way to achieve our goal. Suicide bombs are our apache helicopters. They are all we have.”197 But such sentiments represented the most liberal viewpoints of the time period. And it was according to the martyrdom ideology that Hamas executed its suicide bombing campaign even as the death toll on the Palestinian side mounted at a rate five times that of Israel.

In perhaps the best encapsulation of the tilt toward the destructive that the Hamas ideology at the time took, Hamas executed its deadliest suicide bombing on the very day that Arab League representatives had gathered in Beirut to announce their support for the Saudi Peace Initiative. Penned by then Prince Abdullah, the initiative offered Israel full peace and normalization with the Arab states in return for a resolution of Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians, Syria and Lebanon. After killing 30 Israelis in a suicide bombing who gathered to celebrate Passover that night in a Netanya hotel, Hamas issued a communiqué not only aimed at Israel, but as a shot across the bow of any Arab leader who would seek to limit the Islamists maximalist goals or violent tactics. “This operation comes as a response to the crimes of the Zionist enemy, the assassination of innocents

and as a message to the summit convening in Lebanon that our Palestinian people’s option is resistance and resistance only,” the statement read.\textsuperscript{198}

\textit{Summary of Independent Variables, 1997-2005}

\textit{Attributes of Statehood.} During the time period in question, Hamas exercised no political authority and it did not control territory in the sense that it exercised a monopoly on the use of force within any delineated borders. However, the first vestiges of the challenge it would mount to Fatah and the PA for physical control of Gaza began to emerge in late 2001. On a few occasions, efforts by Arafat’s security forces to arrest members of al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza were fended off by a combination of al-Qassam members and the public at large that turned out to defend the Hamas operatives in their neighborhoods. Additionally, Hamas spent the last few years of the 1990s rebuilding its\textit{ dawa} apparatus that was hit hard by the PA and Israel in 1996. This reaped enormous gains for Hamas after the outbreak of the second \textit{intifada} when the social welfare apparatus was so ubiquitous, particularly in Gaza, that the ICG found the Palestinian people to be dependent on it for their welfare during those years. In this way, Hamas demonstrated an affinity for the Palestinian people and the people were dependent on it for their welfare.

\textit{Inter-Factional Competition.} Hamas started the time period having been routed by the PA and the clear hierarchy between the two led to a lull in the inter-factional competition between 1997 and 2000. But the onset of the second \textit{intifada} changed that,\textsuperscript{198} Hamas communiqué on 27 March 2002, as quoted in Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 102.
and like it did during the first uprising, Hamas engaged in a competition with other factions to lead the Palestinian resistance against Israel. The competition during the second intifada included multiple factions that now possessed the technical knowhow and a requisite number of highly motivated foot soldiers to engage in suicide bombing. The second intifada thus produced a dynamic whereby each faction was trying to outdo the competition in terms of violently attacking Israel. Hamas was determined to emerge stronger as a result of the struggle and led all the militant factions in suicide bombings and number of Israelis killed.

**Organizational Structure.** The release of Yassin swung power within Hamas back in the direction of the inside leadership. The founder, spiritual guide, and operational leader, the Sheik was always the only leader of the organization whose opinions counted more than others. When he spoke, it was clear he was speaking for the organization and not just for himself, and when he gave orders, they were followed. His visits to Saudi Arabia and Sudan in 1998 gave him a chance to coordinate with the external leadership that was formed since his imprisonment, enhancing the ability of Hamas took make group decisions. From a military standpoint, Yassin’s location inside Gaza also enhanced the command and control of the Qassam Brigades, though the military wing remained in cell structures that negatively effected command and control. As well, the chaotic nature of the second intifada and the distance from Gaza meant that West Bank Hamas cells were very difficult to control.
Ideology. Yassin is viewed by many as a moderating influence on the ideology of Hamas, and in the initial years following his release from prison, he renewed his offer of a ceasefire with Israel. Even though the terms of that ceasefire were ones he probably knew no Israeli leader could accept, this can still be viewed as ideologically constructive. However his rhetoric and actions, and that of the organization took a dramatic turn during the course of the second intifada toward a destructive world view. The glorification of martyrdom, the frequent employment of suicide bombing, the use of women as combatants, and the manipulation (many would call it brainwashing) of children to hate Jews and celebrate their killing were all heavily ideologically destructive. However, in March 2005, when Hamas finally enacted a unilateral ceasefire, it also announced its intentions to participate in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, thus adding a constructive twist.

External Support. Following his release from prison, Yassin embarked on a four-month trip around the Middle East where he gained political support from Qatar, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Yemen, Syria, and Sudan, upending the regional political structure that had mostly shunned Hamas in his absence. He also raised a significant amount of money for Hamas during that trip, although no exact figures are given. Until he was ousted from power in 2003 by the American invasion, Saddam Hussein also paid the families of suicide bombers first $10,000 and then $25,000 each. 199 Although this funding did not go exclusively to Hamas, Hussein paid $35 million to families of fighters

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in the Palestinian Territories, most of whom were Hamas.\textsuperscript{200} Though Hamas was expelled from Jordan in 1999, resulting in a loss of its external headquarters in Amman, it was welcomed into Syria where the political bureau and the external leadership remained until 2011.

\url{http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/03/14/world/main543981.shtml}
Table 5.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hamas (1997-2005)

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Theoretical Predictions. Based on the theoretical indicators, the best Israel could hope to achieve against Hamas during this time period would be weak tactical deterrence.
After having Hamas bottled up during the last years of the 1990s, thanks mainly to Yassir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, the violence of the second *intifada* came as a shock to the Israeli defense systems. During the first five days of the *intifada* alone, the IDF killed 50 Palestinians and wounded more than 1,000, and in the first month, 109 Palestinians died compared with 10 Israelis. But the response only instigated outrage in the Palestinian street leading not to deterrence, but more violence.

During the first year-and-a-half of the uprising, despite the fact that so much of the violence was perpetrated by Hamas, the IDF and the Shin Bet mostly targeted the PA security forces and official apparatuses in retaliation for the attacks perpetrated against Israel. This reflected both the fact that Fatah, and its new militant branch al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, was heavily involved in the attacks against Israel and that the Israeli strategy at the time was still to pressure Arafat into putting a stop to the violence as he proved he could from 1996-2000. It was not until Hamas executed the infamous Passover suicide bombing in Netanya on 27 March 2002, killing 30 Israelis and wounding 140 at a traditional *seder*, that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided to embark on an extensive military operation in the West Bank. Codenamed “Defensive Shield,” the operation lasted three weeks in March and April 2002 and was aimed at taking out the terrorist

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infrastructure that had developed to the point where, in 2002 alone, Israel suffered 53 suicide attacks.²⁰²

Defensive Shield began a strategy of “routing out the terrorists one by one,” according to Avi Dichter, the chief of the Shin Bet at the time, and as such, a main architect of Israel’s counter-terrorism strategy.²⁰³ “The barrel of terrorists has a bottom,” he said, “and after a few years we should route out thousands of terrorists and we should dry the problem for the while. You cannot destroy ideology, but you can frustrate people.” Killing terrorists was certainly a part of the “draining,” and in the three weeks of Defensive Shield almost 500 Palestinians were killed.²⁰⁴ But more importantly, according to Dichter, were the arrests and interrogations that not only provided Israel with reams of information, but served to instill paranoia among the militants about how much Israel knew and where their agents were placed. Exercising increased caution meant that orders inside militant cells, including those of Hamas, were now passed through go-betweens, increasing the number of people that knew details of the terror operations. “The deterrence was created step by step when they saw that cell after cell was getting arrested. They knew that once your leader was arrested, so probably the whole information about you is transparent to the Israelis. So you have to move from being a hidden terrorist to become a fugitive. And a fugitive, always, his behavior” is much more cautious,” Dichter said.

²⁰² On the number of suicide attacks, see Byman, pp. 142.
²⁰³ Quotes and information from Dichter come from Author interview 14 September 2011 in Tel Aviv.
²⁰⁴ On the number of Palestinians killed, see Byman, pp. 144.
Slowly but surely, the arrests and killings took their toll on the terror groups, including Hamas. According to Dichter, at the beginning of the intifada there was a “waiting list” of 400 Palestinians who volunteered to be suicide bombers. But after years of operations in which some were killed, some were arrested, and some were driven deep into hiding, groups like Hamas became desperate for recruits. Rather than the well-trained, ideologically rigid volunteers that blew themselves up from 2001 to 2003, by 2004 the bombers were last-minute recruits who were less experienced and were often too scared to do their job correctly.

Reconstituting its intelligence network, which had mostly been lost since the IDF’s redeployments from the West Bank during the Oslo period, also allowed Israel to go after the Hamas dawa network in the West Bank. (Penetrating Gaza for such operations was considered too risky by the IDF, which is also why Defensive Shield was limited to the West Bank in its scope.) Though the military aspect of Israeli counter-terrorism strategy at the time gets most of the attention, Israel’s security services embarked on a “comprehensive operation, targeting the dawa and the leadership” of Hamas, according Barak Ben Tzur, who headed a division of the Shin Bet and was a special assistant to the director during the second intifada. Hitting the dawa was “part of the whole package.”

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205 For many years, the IDF has operated according to the dictum that “Gaza is easy to contain and hard to penetrate while the West Bank is easy to penetrate and hard to contain,” according to Hillel Frisch, a professor of Palestinian and Islamic politics, institutions, and military strategies at Hebrew University. Author interview in Ma’aleh Adumim on 27 August 2011.

206 Author interview in Rosh A’ayin on 18 August 2011.
It was in the summer of 2002 that Israel began another element of its counter-terrorism strategy: assassinating the military and political leaders of the militant groups. On 22 July, Saleh Shehadeh, who founded al-Qassam Brigades and led the military wing at the time, was killed when a one-ton bomb dropped from an F-16 hit a Gaza City building in which he was hiding. His wife, nine children, and five others were also killed and 50 more were injured in the attack. Shehadeh’s killing was followed by an attempted assassination of his successor, Mohammed Deif, two months later; the assassination of military leader Ibrahim al-Maqadmeh in March 2003; the assassination of Ismail Abu Shanab in August 2003; and the attempted assassination of Mahmoud al-Zahar in September 2003 (Zahar’s son was killed in the bombing). Then, in its penultimate attacks on the Hamas leadership, Israel killed Founder and Chief Sheik Ahmed Yassin by firing missiles from a helicopter gunship directly at the quadriplegic as he was being wheeled out of a Gaza mosque in March 2004. Three weeks later, the IDF killed his co-founder and successor as leader of Hamas, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, in another bombing.

The final killings of Yassin and Rantisi also came at a time when Palestinian society was beginning to buckle under the weight of years of harsh Israeli repression. When Arafat died in November 2004 and was succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas, who had mostly argued during the intifada that violence was counterproductive to the Palestinian cause, a window of opportunity opened. After Abbas’s election in January, Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in March 2005 in order to allow Israel to withdraw from Gaza according to Ariel Sharon’s “disengagement” plan announced the previous year, and to participate in Palestinian Legislative Council elections called for January 2006. The ceasefire brought
an unofficial end of sorts to the second *intifada*, a four-and-a-half-year orgy of violence that saw more than 5,000 Palestinians and more than 1,000 Israelis killed.

The decision to declare a ceasefire by Hamas has multiple dimensions to it. According to Ben Tzur, the *tahadiyeh* (short-term ceasefire, or “period of calm”) came from “the bottom up” and started with the West Bank Hamas operatives who asked their compatriots in Gaza to stop because they realized that Hamas would soon be “totally crushed” by Israel. “We started to deal very seriously with the charity organizations. This brought them close to destruction,” Ben Tzur said. “It was a disaster for them… They realized how deep and how hard we were into the Hamas organization in the West Bank; how close we were to understanding their ‘MO’ and their operations mechanisms.” As a result, the Gaza leadership wound up pressuring the external leadership in Damascus. Though Khaled Mishal “wanted to keep pushing the action a little further,” Ben Tzur said, the political bureau which he headed eventually conceded to end the violence temporarily.207

These sentiments were echoed by Dichter, who said that in 2005, Hamas in the West Bank was “on the slope to crash while in the Gaza strip they were in a very good situation” having gained the support of the population and smuggled in a lot of weaponry from the Sinai Peninsula. With the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza staring Hamas in the face, it therefore made sense for the movement to consolidate its power and support in Gaza. He also said that it was politically logical for Hamas to reconcile for the time being with Abbas in order to allow the 2006 elections to proceed, and to keep Abbas from

207 Author interview 18 August 2011 in Rosh A’yin.
cracking down on Hamas mosques and *dawa* institutions which would have “really dried them.”

Most Israeli security officials and experts believe that the relentless arrests of Hamas leaders in the West Bank and the assassination campaign in Gaza were also effective. “It’s both deterrence and destruction of capabilities, said Itzik Ben Israel, who headed the Israeli Air Force Analysis and Division. “In small groups, if you… neutralize 25 percent of them, the whole organization is paralyzed. It’s not like fighting a big organization like the USSR.” Despite death wish rhetoric to the contrary, “even religious people want to live and even fundamentalists can understand if you explain it to them the right way,” said Lt. Colonel Anat Burkow, who interviewed and profiled more than 150 would-be suicide bombers. “Targeted killing is deterrence. When they have to hide, it’s difficult to operate. They are scared. They have to find every day another place to sleep.” Even the ones that were not scared for themselves, said Ben Tzur, had to take their family’s safety into account since Israel had shown that civilians in the area were not necessarily a deterrent to large bombs.

That the assassination campaign figured into Hamas’s decision to call a ceasefire was corroborated by Ahmed Isa of the PA security services, as well as Fadel S. Hamdan, a member of Hamas’s political party in the Palestinian Legislative Council. He said that the number of Hamas leaders killed in Gaza “of course” affected the group. “I will not say that Hamas is a hero movement and it will not suffer from killing the leadership. No

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208 Author interview 14 September 2011 in Tel Aviv.

209 Author telephone interview on 1 August 2011.
no, this is normal. This is the right situation, when you kill the leadership, any movement will suffer.”

There are dissenters, however, including Ahmed Youseff and Abduljaber Fuqaha, who denied that the Israeli assassination campaign was responsible for the *tahadiyeh*.

“The party accepts this and takes it as a matter of fact and does not change its strategy because of assassinations,” the latter said. Interestingly, Reuven Paz, who spent 23 years in the Shin Bet and rose to head its department of research, also disputed the notion that the assassinations had any significant effect on Hamas’s decision-making in regards to the ceasefire. “Since 1987 we killed the entire leadership of Hamas, generation after generation,” he said. “Did we succeed to deter them? Not so much.” Dichter, the former Shin Bet chief, somewhat agreed, saying that “targeted killings create some deterrence” but not as much as imprisonment or expulsion. “Being taken as prisoners to them is a problem and a shame together. To be killed is a problem, but it makes them martyrs, it’s not a shame. And amongst those people, terrorists, the main reason that they are terrorists is that they put their own honor and pride above everything else. Mainly in Islam it is stronger than in other religions.” Assassination, he said, was more about degrading the organization’s capabilities than about establishing deterrence.

For their part, Hamas sources cite three main rationales for the 2005 *tahadiyeh*. First, when Hamas realized that the suicide bombing campaign was doing irreparable damage to the image of Hamas and undermining the Palestinian cause by alienating them

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210 Author interview in Ramallah on 6 September 2011.
211 Author interview in Ramallah on 6 September 2011.
from the international community, it stopped, according to Sheik Mahmoud Musleh, a co-founder of Hamas in the West Bank. When “the international atmosphere, when the regional atmosphere, and when the reality on the ground is not providing for any results in terms of achieving your national goals,” it is prudent to call a ceasefire, Fuqaha said.

That rationale was generally agreed upon by Hamas sources, as was the fact that the “tahadiyeh gave a chance for the [Palestinian] people to breathe,” as Sheik Musleh said. “Of course” the people needed a break,” Hamdan agreed, they “suffered a lot a lot over four years.” Only Ahmed Youssef, the long-time spokesman and political aid to the Hamas leadership in Gaza insisted otherwise. In fact, he insisted on the contrary, that the Palestinian public even as late as 2005 was “actually giving all kinds of support to Hamas” to continue to fight Israel.

Youssef, instead, maintained that in addition to the international political dimension mentioned above, the election of Abbas and the calling of elections in 2006 motivated Hamas to turn its attention to domestic Palestinian politics and allow Abbas the time to work out a deal with Israel to relinquish control of Gaza. It was time, he said, to give Abbas a chance “to reestablish relations with the rest of the Palestinian political factions, Islamists or nationalists, and that’s why [Hamas] decided to have the unilateral ceasefire.” Hamas’s internal Palestinian political motivation was backed up by the other Hamas sources and corroborated by Ahmed Isa, who served in the PA’s preventative security services at the time. But he also insisted that the resistance movement was seeking to alleviate some of the burden on the Palestinian population. “It was time to
harvest the things that they have rooted, politically wise,” Isa said. “During the [Abbas] period this was the time for reforming and get out from the pressure because the people had paid the price.”

Findings. The period in question started with Hamas having been deterred by the Palestinian Authority, but that reversed itself dramatically during the second intifada. Hamas took the lead among all the Palestinian militant groups in killing Israelis and executed dozens of suicide bombings over the course of four-and-a-half years. Eventually, Hamas called a unilateral ceasefire, but that did not happen until three years after Israel mounted a harsh campaign against the organization. Part of the reason that Israeli deterrence failed vis-à-vis Hamas in the initial years of the intifada was that “there were no threats” against it, but rather they were against the PA, said Itzik Ben Israel, who headed the Israeli Air Force Analysis and Division. “Once the targeted killings started, they were deterred.”

Indeed, according to Israeli security sources, and by the admission of one Hamas source and one source from the PA security services, the decision to call the ceasefire in March 2005 was motivated in part by the arrest and assassination campaign undertaken against the Hamas leadership by Israel. Additional Hamas sources admit that the pressure Israel exerted upon the Palestinian population also factored significantly into Hamas’s decision to call a tahadiyeh. Israeli sources also say that the actions against the Hamas dawa network in the West Bank were particularly causal in the request for the tahadiyeh that began in the West Bank before being sent to Gaza and approved in Damascus. All

212 Author interview 15 August 2011 in Tel Aviv.
sources acknowledge that the political dynamics of the time, with Abbas taking over from Arafat; Israel withdrawing from Gaza; and PLC elections called for January 2006, also figured heavily into the ceasefire.

In terms of the ceasefire itself, though not perfect, it mostly held until Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005. At that time, Hamas quickly returned to attacking Israel. Though it renounced suicide bombings, the Islamic Resistance Movement began firing rockets from Gaza only days after the last Israeli forces left. It is also again important to note that though Israel did eventually achieve this six-month deterrence against Hamas, it took three years of continuous action (counted from the beginning of Operation Defensive Shield) to achieve it.
Table 5.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hamas (1997-2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak/Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings.** Israel’s deterrence was fleeting; it took years of punishment actions to establish that deterrence; and there were other factors involved in Hamas’s decision to hold its fire. These factors all indicate that Israel did no better during this time period than achieve **weak tactical deterrence** against Hamas. However, Hamas’s decision to abandon suicide bombings should count as establishing ambiguous rules of the game which circumscribe certain modes of attack, and thus indicate the achievement of **fair tactical deterrence**. The evidence is therefore mixed, indicating the establishment of **weak-to-fair tactical deterrence**, a slightly better result than was theoretically predicted.
HAMAS CASE STUDY

CHAPTER VI – HAMAS, 2005-2007

At 7:02 a.m. on 12 September 2005, I watched the last Israeli tank roll out of the Gaza Strip at the Kissufim Crossing that was a gateway to Gaza for Israelis since 1967. The military exit was preceded by the forceful removal of the 7,500 Israeli settlers in the Strip in August. After armored bulldozers heaved large concrete slabs across the road, an IDF officer closed the gate and locked it shut, ending Israel’s 38-year presence in the coastal territory. Immediately afterward, Palestinians swarmed the streets in a massive, days-long celebration, many of them waving the green banner of The Islamic Resistance Movement. Israel’s withdrawal was a victory that Hamas justifiably took credit for. “Sharon cannot evade the truth,” Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh said. “The Qassam [rocket] is what forced the enemy out.” Indeed, Sharon, for decades the symbol of Israeli military conquest, defense by offense strategy, and settlement building, came to believe that controlling Gaza was more a liability to the Jewish state than an asset. Violent resistance, led by the Islamists, had won the day.

Flush from its success in driving Israel from Gaza, Hamas sought to gain control of the Strip outright. In the days that followed the IDF’s withdrawal, a scramble ensued between the Palestinian factions for control of the vacated territory. The PA security forces were unable to stop Hamas and Islamic Jihad from setting up training camps in

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some of the abandoned Jewish settlements, nor were they able to hold the streets of Gaza’s cities as neighborhood after neighborhood in the territory became contested ground between the factions. In this environment, political murder and street crime flourished and by the end of the year, Gaza had descended into veritable anarchy.

“Armed militias roam the streets freely, foreigners are kidnapped with regularity, and the measure of a man in this coastal territory is not his political title, or even the size of his house, but the number of AK-47-wielding bodyguards he employs,” I wrote at the time.215 “All throughout the days here gun shots ring out. From time to time, explosions from homemade bombs, rockets, and the countering Israeli artillery fire echo through the graffiti-ridden streets.” Only the Palestinian Legislative Council elections at the end of January, locals hoped, could prevent a Palestinian Civil War.

The elections themselves were forced upon both Israel and the Palestinian Authority by Washington. Now in its second term, the George W. Bush Administration was pursuing its “freedom agenda” in the Middle East. Though most political analysts saw Hamas gaining a significant foothold in the PLC, few predicted the outright victory the Islamic Resistance Movement achieved in a ballot that international election observers agreed at the time was the most free and fair contest ever held in the Arab world.

In the shock of the day after, PA President Mahmoud Abbas sought—with American and Israeli encouragement—to maintain control over the PA security

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services. That authority had mostly been transferred to the prime minister’s office, which Hamas would now control, as a means of divesting Yassir Arafat of power during the second intifada at the behest of the United States and Israel. Even as Abbas seated the government formed by Hamas in March 2006, the internal Palestinian schism deepened with physical control of Gaza as its focal point. (The IDF’s presence in the West Bank meant that Hamas could not physically assume control there.) Rather than solve fraternal violence afflicting Gaza as many had hoped, the elections augmented it by virtue of Fatah’s refusal to cede power. In May, Hamas deployed what it called the “Executive Force” of 6,000 men under arms whose duty was ostensibly to restore law and order on the streets of Gaza. At times, the Executive Force stood on opposite corners of PA security forces loyal to Abbas’s Fatah faction while at other times the two militias engaged in sporadic gun battles.

Hamas’s victory in the PLC elections coupled with the Israeli pull-out provided a boost to the influence of the inside leadership of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Nevertheless, lacking actual control of Gaza, the outside leadership, which had been calling most of the shots since Yassin’s and then Rantissi’s assassinations in 2004, remained more dominant for Hamas during the period. The election also complicated matters for Hamas, as people like Ismail Haniyeh and Mahmoud al-Zahar were now not just leaders in the movement, but the prime minister and foreign minister, respectively, of

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216 David Rose, “The Gaza Bombshell,” Vanity Fair, April 2008. According to the article, not only did the US encourage Abbas to maintain control over the PA security forces, it actively financed and transferred arms to the PA for the express purposes of overthrowing Hamas rule in Gaza. Whether this is true or not, the smaller fact of the US and Israel encouraging Abbas to maintain authority over the security forces is well established.


218 Byman, pp. 178.
the Palestinian Authority. As a result, some claim that a prior agreement between the inside and outside leadership was reached that would divest any elected PLC members of their leadership positions within the Hamas movement.\textsuperscript{219} This was done in order to avoid mistakes that Hamas perceived Fatah made when it assumed control of the PA and created situations where its personnel had conflicts of interest due to their dual rolls.

Others, however, speculate that the political bureau in Damascus stripped such inside leaders of some power within the movement, either as a means of keeping the movement separate from the political party, or to prevent the inside leadership from gaining too much power, or both. “The outside leadership was quite afraid of the new emerging focal point inside (the Palestinian Territories),” an Israeli government analyst said at the time. “The Hamas leadership inside was tending to get closer to Mahmoud Abbas. I suspect the outside leadership was afraid the Hamas government would leave the main road of Hamas and have its own independent policy.”\textsuperscript{220}

Israel’s absence from Gaza also allowed the Hamas military wing there to do away with the cell structure that had kept it alive since 1990 but had also impeded its effectiveness and the ability of the military and political leadership to exert command and control over its units. Though it did not hold a monopoly of power in Gaza, for the first time Hamas was now operating more like an overt military than a covert terrorist group. With Salah Shehadeh dead and Mohamed Deif (his successor) seriously injured in the

Israeli attempt on his life, leadership of Hamas’s military was assumed by men like Ahmed Jaabari and Nizar Rayan. But without Yassin in command of Hamas, cracks appeared in the decision-making apparatus of the movement and the military leadership sometimes took decisions into their own hands. On some occasions, it even explicitly ignored directives from the inside political leadership about when to hold its fire.²²¹

Part of this was indicative of an ideological divergence that began in Hamas at the time, likely owning in no small part to its decision to stand in the PLC elections. That decision, which was taken after extensive consultation with the grassroots shura councils, indicated a break from its previous path and an ascension of inside leadership political operatives like Haniyeh.²²² Running under a party named “Change and Reform,” Hamas’s political platform included the hudna (long-term ceasefire) offered by Yassin in 1997 after his release from prison. But the political wing’s veer toward constructiveness was accompanied by a turn in the military wing in the other direction. “I am a fighter for God. You will find me anywhere, any place, fighting the enemies of Islam,” Ahmed Jababari told al-Jazeera in July 2006. “We don’t seek positions in the government or leadership; our aim is to fight the enemies of Islam.”²²³ Rayan, for his part, seemed to adhere more closely to the salafi brand of Islam than most Muslim Brothers, using terms like kufr (infidel) to describe the secularists in the PA. When Deif finally returned to Gaza, write academic expert Berverley Milton-Edwards and long-time Middle East correspondent Stephen Farrell, “it became apparent that most of the senior leadership of

the Qassam Brigades had embarked on a much more radical and salafi Islamic fundamentalist orientation than either he or many in the senior ranks of the political leadership desired."

Though Hamas was mostly occupied with Palestinian politics, it resumed its attacks against Israel only days after the last Israeli soldier left Gaza—this time, in the form of rockets. From 2005-2006, over 2,100 Qassam rockets were launched from Gaza into Israel. Crude and inaccurate, the Qassam rocket nonetheless killed seven Israelis and injured more than 200 over those two years and daily struck terror into the hearts of Israeli citizens living on the border regions with Gaza, who were constantly forced to flee into bomb shelters. Hamas also took to attacking the remaining crossings into Gaza, including Kerem Shalom and Karni, where the goods Israel shipped into Gaza to sustain its population made their way through. As a response, Israel frequently shut down the crossings due to security concerns. And as a counter-response, Hamas accelerated the tunnel-digging under the Egyptian border to smuggle in both every-day goods like food, clothes, and petrol, as well as illicit arms.

When Hamas took control of the PLC in March, Israel suspended the transfer of customs receipts to the Palestinian Authority while most of the Western states of the world that had funded the PA until that point suspended their budgetary aid. Together,

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226 Rafael D. Frankel, “Karni closure is a catastrophe for Gaza greenhouse growers,” The Jerusalem Post, 28 February 2006.
Israel and the international community set down three conditions on Hamas for a resumption of that aid and legitimate diplomatic engagement: lay down its arms, accept Israel’s right to exist, and adhere to all previously signed agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Hamas refused to relent. “We will make do with eating olives and salt, but our resolve will not falter because we are loyal to the principles of our people,” Hamas leader and then PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said in April 2006 in Gaza.227 “We will not relinquish our borders” and “we will not go back on our principles.” And in those sentiments, according to both polls and to interviews I conducted in Gaza at the time, Hamas had the broad support of the Palestinian people.228 Even those who did not vote for Hamas in January saw the Islamist group as being treated unfairly by the international community and not being given a genuine chance to govern.

In terms of the demands made on Hamas to cease violence, al-Qassam Brigades sent a special message to Israel in June. Working with two other factions, it captured Israeli Soldier Gilad Shalit from across the Gaza border by digging a tunnel underground and detonating a bomb underneath his post. Just who within Hamas knew about the operation to capture an Israeli soldier, and who ordered it, is not entirely clear. In the aftermath of the raid, Hamas Government Spokesman Ghazi Hamad said that “if it is true” that an Israeli soldier had been captured, then the Hamas government “call[s] on the factions to protect the soldier.”229 Some speculate that even Hamas government leaders,

228 Rafael D. Frankel, “Where to turn?” The Jerusalem Post, 26 May 2006.
229 Tamimi, pp. 243.
including al-Zahar and Haniyeh, were unaware of the raid while the political leaders based in Damascus approved the operation in coordination with al-Qassam based in Gaza. That operation, together with the relentless rocket and artillery fire directed at Israel’s border communities, finally drew the IDF back into Gaza less than a year after it left. But almost as soon as Israel began Operation Summer Rain, it was overshadowed by a conflict sparked by another kidnapping on Israel’s northern border by Hezbollah.

Hezbollah lost hundreds of fighters in the Second Lebanon War. Large portions of Shia towns in the southern part of the country were bombed out. The Dahiyeh section of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold, was leveled. And as a result of the increased UN presence in Lebanon following the ceasefire, the military arm of Hezbollah could no longer operate overtly along the Israeli border. Yet simply by surviving the Israeli onslaught and by firing hundreds of Ketusha rockets into Israel even in the final days of the war, Hezbollah claimed “divine victory”—and many around the region believed it. As a result, Hamas once again sought to emulate its older and more advanced counterpart, and Hezbollah and its patron Iran were only too happy to oblige. “Many of the Arab regimes and international leaders were living under the illusion that the Israeli army was unbeatable,” senior Hamas official Abu Bakr Nofal said after the Lebanon fighting had ended. “This war has had a huge negative effect on the Israeli street, and it has sent a

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230 It is a plausible scenario, though there is no way to know for sure. In an interview I conducted with al-Zahar in Gaza City in 2008, he totally denied that he or anyone else from the political leadership inside Gaza knew the location of where Shalit was being held by al-Qassam. And I believe he was telling the truth.

message that the occupation can never stand against the resistance if you have a really
good resistance.”

Support from the Islamic Republic to Hamas in both cash and arms “rose exponentially” in the aftermath of the PLC election victory and the subsequent international funding cut-off. Though no solid figures are available, Iran, and Qatar as well, each pledged at least $50 million in funding to the Hamas government in April 2006. Teheran, Damascus, and Hezbollah also accommodated an increased number of fighters Hamas sent outside Gaza to train with Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and the latter increased its presence in the Gaza Strip. A commander from al-Qassam openly stated at the time that he had sent seven “courses” of fighters to Iran where they trained for between 45 days and six months. In Syria, the commander said, al-Qassam members learned “high-tech capabilities, knowledge about land mines and rockets, sniping, and fighting tactics like the ones used by Hezbollah.”

By the end of 2006, meanwhile, the situation between Hamas and Fatah deteriorated badly. From September to December, Gaza was engulfed in low-level inter-factional conflict that also involved rival clans and families gunning after each other. A power-sharing agreement sponsored by Saudi Arabia in February 2007 was supposed to put an end to the fighting and pave the way for the PA to be governed in a bi-partisan

233 Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 225. Again, as one would expect, exact numbers are not available.
234 “Qatar says to give $50mln funding to Hamas government,” Reuters, 17 April 2006.
236 Byman, pp. 191.
fashion with Fatah controlling the presidency and Hamas controlling the government. But the Mecca Accords did no such thing.

In June, Hamas finally launched an outright offensive against Fatah in Gaza. The five-day Palestinian Civil War was characterized by brutality. Hamas fighters threw Fatah members off of rooftops to their deaths, tortured them, and ransacked their homes and offices. In part, those particular actions were a measure of revenge that was sought for the treatment many Hamas operatives felt at the hand of PA security forces in the 1990s. In a bizarre twist that would be repeated during smaller clashes in the next year, hundreds of Fatah militants, many of whom had fought Israel during the second intifada, were permitted entry and rescued by Israel as they fled Gaza for the Israeli border.

In general however, Hamas felt like Fatah had left it little choice but to go on the offensive after mostly holding back against the secular nationalist movement for so many years. “We didn’t want it to end like this. There was no political agenda in Gaza for that to happen,” said Hamas MP Ismail al-Ashqar. “But when your back is against the wall you don’t have any choice. When people are being killed and houses being burned you are afraid that your own grass roots will turn against you and call you soft.” But the PA had pushed Hamas to the brink before during its harsh campaign against the resistance movement in the late 1990s. At that time, Hamas chose not to fight in order to avoid fitna (internal Muslim strife). Why did it choose differently this time? Likely the decision

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reflected the fact that both Arafat and Yassin were gone from the political map. Their
deaths left the Palestinians without their two most respected leaders—people who
engaged in harsh political rhetoric but who, out of respect and a stringent belief in the
necessity for Palestinian unity, always stopped short of inflicting a mortal wound on the
other.

Despite being outgunned nearly five-to-one in the battle for Gaza, Hamas forces,
acting like a well-organized, well-trained, and dedicated army, took the territory with
relative ease from Fatah fighters who mostly abandoned their posts, put up a weak fight,
or changed sides if they could. When the dust cleared on 15 June 2007, over 100
Palestinians were dead and the Palestinian territories were now *de facto* under separate
political control. Exactly 40 years after the Muslim Brotherhood began its long-term
project of reclaiming Palestine, Hamas was the undisputed ruler of Gaza.

*Summary of Independent Variables, 2005-2007*

*Elements of Statehood.* Israel’s withdrawal left a power vacuum in Gaza that
Hamas, Fatah and other Palestinian factions sought to fill. Though PA forces were
numerically superior to those of Hamas, the Islamist movement continued to gain power
and control over certain neighborhoods until it finally assumed full control of Gaza after
its June 2007 offensive. But for the most part, this period was characterized by a more
anarchic situation in Gaza where no Palestinian faction held an monopoly or even an
advantage on the legitimate use of force. In the West Bank, the post-second *intifada*
status quo remained intact, whereby the territory was mainly controlled by the IDF with a
token presence of PA security forces in some Palestinian cities.

In terms of political authority, only four months following Israel’s Gaza
disengagement, Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative Council elections with an outright
majority and formed a government two months later. With Abbas still holding the
presidency, political power in the PA was split between Fatah in control of the executive
branch and Hamas in control of the legislative branch. This was the first formal-legal
political authority ever held by Hamas.

The *dawa* elements of Hamas remained strong in Gaza during this time, but were
again targeted by Israel in the West Bank after the Islamists’ PLC election victory. Some
incidents, however, demonstrated a callousness for the well-being of the Palestinian
population that was unusual for Hamas. In particular, its decision to attack the Gaza-
Israel border crossings following Israel’s withdrawal demonstrated a lack of concern for
the people of Gaza. As a result of those attacks, Israel suspended and drastically curtailed
imports and exports from and to Gaza, resulting in a dramatic decrease in living
conditions over the subsequent years.

*Inter-Factional Competition.* There was intense inter-factional competition during
this period. Again, the main protagonists were Hamas and Fatah, but in the chaos of
Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, all the Palestinian factions were trying to gain some form
of physical and material foothold in that territory. The difference in this time period was
that the competition between the factions was not being fought based upon who could claim more Israeli lives. Rather, it was actually being fought against each other for territorial and political control of Gaza, and the West Bank to a much lesser degree. Therefore, of the factors driving the violence Hamas directed against Israel from 2005-2007, this was probably not chief among them.

*Organizational Structure.* The 2004 killing of Sheik Yassin left Hamas without an undisputed leader. Most evidence indicates that a power struggle emerged between the inside and outside leadership, particularly in the aftermath of the electoral victory in January 2006. This left the organization without a totally clear hierarchical structure. With Yassin out of the picture, Hamas also returned to a decision-making process that was more consensus-based. Moreover, its military leaders did not always follow directives set down by the political leaders—at least not the inside political leaders—indicating that some command and control was lacking. On the other hand, Israel’s withdrawal allowed Hamas’s military wing to function for the first time in a more overt fashion and with a more military-like structure that allowed al-Qassam commanders to easily communicate orders to Hamas fighters.

*Ideology.* The turn toward participating in the PLC elections was a move toward the constructive end of the ideological spectrum for Hamas. At the same time, however, leadership of the military branch fell into the hands of more ideologically destructive people. That said, since the former was a collective decision by the movement, greater weight should be placed upon it than the latter when coding Hamas’s. Just as important
was Hamas’s abandonment, in the end, of its long-standing promise not to engage in *fitna* with the PA, even if the PA left it little choice.

In terms of its position vis-à-vis Israel, Hamas still believed that violent resistance was the best strategy to achieve its goals. Though it no longer employed suicide bombers, it shot thousands of rockets and several dozen mortars into Israel beginning as soon as Israel completed its Gaza withdrawal. There was a reasonable chance, following the Israeli withdrawal, to draw a new, constructive course in Israeli-Palestinian relations. But from almost Day One, Hamas indicated it would have nothing of it. Hamas also attacked the Israeli-Gaza border crossings where goods, including food and other general living staples, were transferred into Gaza from Israel. Those attacks came at significant cost to the people of Gaza who suffered when Israel halted the shipments—a very destructive enterprise.

*External Support.* When Hamas refused the three conditions of the international community, a large source of funding was closed off to the government it was elected to head. But in response, long-time allies like Iran, Syria, Qatar, and Hezbollah stepped up their support. Since the Islamists never enjoyed the backing of the international community to begin with, it can be said that its external support continued to increase during this period over the previous one. That was especially true of Hezbollah following the Second Lebanon War, after which Hamas actively sought more coordination with and training from its Shiia counterpart in the Axis of Resistance.
Table 6.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hamas (2005-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
<td>Total Possible Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theoretical Predictions. Based on the independent variables, the expectation would be that Israel could hope to achieve no better than weak tactical deterrence against Hamas during this time period.
Having withdrawn from Gaza after determining that too many resources were being sunk into it to justify a continued presence in the territory, the last action Israel wanted to take was to re-enter the territory. So despite heavy rocket fire, mortar fire, and regular attacks against the border crossings, Israel refrained from any heavy incursions into Gaza in the months following its disengagement. As an alternative means of deterrence, it continued to use its air force to attack Hamas and other militant cells that were on their way to attacks or planning them. The IDF also fired artillery shells into Gaza, drawing condemnation from the international community due to their less-than-discriminate nature. One particular artillery volley on 8 November 2006, killed 23 civilians in Gaza and led to a temporary suspension of the tactic. 240 Israel also continued to assassinate operatives of the separate militant groups, though in general Israel did not target the top levels of Hamas leadership following its attacks on Yassin and Rantisi in 2004.

After the Shalit kidnapping in June 2006, however, Israel’s counter-terrorism strategy changed. Operation Summer Rains, which was followed by Operation Autumn Clouds, lasted from June to November and included a number of components. First, Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Jerusalem, including those who were elected to the PLC in January, were rounded up and arrested. This included several cabinet ministers,

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PLC Speaker Aziz Dweik, and other top Hamas leaders.\textsuperscript{241} Israel also acted once again against what was left of the Hamas \textit{dawa} network in the West Bank. But the majority of the action took place in Gaza.

In the first day of fighting, Israeli forces bombed several bridges in Gaza as well as the main power plant, knocking out power to the strip. The IDF sent its forces into Gaza in the first major incursion since Israel’s disengagement nearly one year before. In general, the IDF targeted the infrastructure of Hamas and the other militant groups in Gaza, with the IAF, ground troops, and even the navy participating in the operations. The operations hit arms warehouses, militant training sites, and targeted the militants themselves with arrest or killing. Also targeted were political offices including the prime minister’s compound and the Ministry of National Economy, and the smuggling tunnels dug under the border with Egypt. By 29 July, as the Second Lebanon War raged and Summer Rain flew under the radar, it was estimated that the IDF killed 159 Palestinians, almost all in Gaza. And yet Hamas did not relent.

“Had Hamas surrendered to the oppressive siege, it would have weakened itself as a party,” said Abdeljaber Fuqahaa. “Hamas sees the interests of the party as the same as the interests of the people. And therefore it did not opt for such a situation. It protected its national project, and in so doing it protected the rights and the well-being of its

\textsuperscript{241} Much of the information about Operation Summer Rains comes from: “Operation Summer Rains,” \textit{GlobalSecurity.org}, \url{http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/intifada2_summer-rains.htm}
people.”

He added that Hamas also felt at the time as though it were resisting on behalf of “Arab and Muslim people” everywhere.

According to those calculations, Hamas, and the other Gaza-based militant groups, stepped up their attacks on Israel, firing even more rockets at the southern Israeli cities and border communities than before the Shalit operation. Using an RPG, Hamas blew a hole in the border fence with Egypt, setting off a days-long scramble of people across the Gaza-Egypt border that eventually ceased only when Egypt threatened to shoot Palestinian trespassers. The continued fire against Israel produced the follow-up action, Operation Autumn Clouds. IDF targets inside Gaza were similar to those of Summer Rain, but were heavily directed at the Qassam Rocket infrastructure that built, transported, and fired the weapons. Like the fighting in Summer Rain, the action in Autumn Clouds took place in densely populated areas, and after the two operations, significant parts of Jabaliya, Beit Hanoun, Rafah, and Khan Younis had been damaged by the IDF. By the time the two operations were complete, and a ceasefire was called by Hamas and some of the other militant groups, at least 416 Palestinians were killed and thousands injured.

That November 2006 ceasefire, called in coordination by the separate militant groups, quickly broke down. In 2007, at least 1,151 mortars and 1,263 rockets were fired

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242 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
244 Ronen Bergman, “Gilad Shalit and the rising price of an Israeli life,” The New York Times Magazine, 9 November 2011. The Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem also reports that between August and December 2006, the IDF killed 522 Palestinians who were not taking part in hostilities.
http://www.btselem.org/gaza_strip
into Israel from Gaza, killing two people and injuring more than 300.\textsuperscript{245} It must be noted, however, that only one suicide bombing was perpetrated against Israel that year, and even then it did not come from a Hamas cell.\textsuperscript{246} Indeed, while the Shin Bet claims to have stopped two potential suicide bombers emanating from Hamas cells in the West Bank in 2007, in both cases the circumstances were such that it is not entirely clear that it was actually suicide bombing that was intended.\textsuperscript{247} Hamas cells in the West Bank did, however, continue to participate in shooting incidents directed at Israelis, as they had in the previous years.\textsuperscript{248}

\textit{Findings.} In the aftermath of Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas quickly ended the ceasefire that it observed from March to September 2005. The Islamic Resistance Movement turned its attention to attacking Israel from the air in Gaza and via shootings and a couple potential bombings from West Bank cells. In response, Israel launched Operations Summer Rain and Autumn Clouds from June to November 2006. That year, 1,772 rockets and 55 mortars were fired from Gaza into Israel and in 2007, after those operations, there were 1,263 rockets and 1,511 mortars fired from Gaza. In December 2006, Hamas and some of the other militant groups did call a ceasefire after the punishment actions by Israel, but the ceasefire quickly broke down and rocket fire

\textsuperscript{245} Unfortunately, the numbers are not disaggregated by month. So there is no data on how much of the rocket and mortar fire occurred before the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June and how much occurred after. The report does state, however, that in May, Hamas launched “massive Kassam rocket fire at Israel in an attempt to divert attention from the internal struggle.” See: Palestinian Terrorism in 2007, Statistics and Trends, \textit{The Israeli Security Agency}, \texttt{http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/Terrorism2007report-ENGLISH.pdf}
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid. The circumstances include an explosive-laden car that was found outside an apartment in Tel Aviv and a suicide belt that was found in Nablus. Under interrogation, both the potential bomber and his handler admitted that the intention was to perpetrate a suicide attack.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
resumed. Continuing its trend since the 2005 ceasefire, Hamas did not execute any suicide bombings, though it is possible that West Bank affiliated cells made two such attempts.

While the lack of suicide bombings is also due to better Israeli prevention mechanisms, i.e. better intelligence and the construction of the security fence in the West Bank, it seems clear that Hamas largely abandoned that tactic during this period. That can be classified as a change in tactic that would be found under the definition of fair tactical deterrence. However, rocket fire increased dramatically during this period from before Israel’s Gaza disengagement. Despite Israeli punishment actions, including arrests and military operations, that led to a ceasefire in November 2006, that ceasefire quickly broke down and rocket fire continued at a pace in 2007 that was diminished from 2006 yet still very high. Indeed, this time period is characterized by the announcement and subsequent quick collapse of numerous ceasefires. Given the aggregate data, it seems that Israel achieved none-to-weak tactical deterrence at best against Hamas during this period while the theoretical predictions stated weak tactical deterrence would be the most it could hope to establish.
## Table 6.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hamas (2005-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
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<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
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<td>Score</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>None/Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HAMAS CASE STUDY

CHAPTER VII – HAMAS, 2007-2011

As of June 2007, Hamas was now in total control of the Gaza Strip, both in terms of territory and political authority. While sporadic clashes erupted with Fatah loyalists and other militant groups, no real challenge was mounted to Hamas hegemony there. Its security and military forces, including al-Qassam, the Executive Force, and Hamas police, were the only recognized powers in the Strip. For the first time since Israel’s withdrawal, calm prevailed on the streets of Gaza and order was restored to what had become a lawless place.

What was left of Hamas in the West Bank was not so lucky. In the aftermath of the Palestinian Civil War, Fatah assumed control there and its security forces together with the IDF mounted increasing pressure against Hamas’s West Bank operations. Leaders of the movement were constantly being arrested and imprisoned. Even when released, they were usually arrested again within weeks or months. The Palestinian Authority also acted strongly against Hamas’s remaining dawa network in the West Bank, shutting down almost all of what was left of it.²⁴⁹

The final conquest of Gaza did not alter much the decision-making process of Hamas, in terms of the process of consultation and consensus, but it did allow a degree of freedom to the inside leadership to decide certain issues themselves. The current process,

according to Hamas political advisor and former spokesman Ahmed Yousef, is that local issues are decided in Gaza by the Hamas government leaders.\textsuperscript{250} When larger issues are at stake, councils representing each geographic and each functional area will meet, and then representatives will “meet somewhere to discuss it because it has [a] world-wide dimension.”

\textit{Q: But there is no single person that sets the agenda?}

\textit{A:} “No no no, Hamas is not Fatah… We have consultation council and everybody has to present his opinions and attitudes and once we have all agreed by majority on the issue everyone should abide by it.”

\textit{Q: And are there ever problems with people abiding by decisions?}

\textit{A:} “No no no. We [are] disciplined in that… The military wing is represented one way or another, but they are all the time listening to the political level and what the people will decide.”

With Hamas now the undisputed ruler of the Gaza Strip, Israel sought to isolate the territory even further. Jerusalem declared Gaza a “hostile entity” and it steadily tightened its blockade of Gaza, severely limiting the goods that entered the Strip; all but banning exports and, in coordination with Cairo, shutting down the border crossings to all but the most important of Palestinian “VIPs”.\textsuperscript{251} Even students awarded Fullbright Scholarships and vetted by the US Consulate in Jerusalem were not allowed to exit.\textsuperscript{252} Though some voices within the international community opposed the total crackdown on Gaza, calling the policies “collective punishment” and accusing Israel of turning Gaza

\textsuperscript{250} Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
\textsuperscript{251} On the prohibition on exports from Gaza, see: Rafael D. Frankel, “In Gaza, Palestinians see fruits of labor die,” \textit{The Boston Globe}, 24 May 2006.
\textsuperscript{252} Rafael D. Frankel, “Scholars accepted to grad school but stuck in Gaza,” \textit{The Christian Science Monitor}, 12 June 2008.
into the world’s largest prison, no serious Western opposition was made to Israeli policy. As a result, living conditions in Gaza plummeted even further.

By mid-2008, petrol and cooking oil prices rose to $50 and $8 per gallon respectively, forcing Gazans to rely on donkey carts for transportation and burning wood and rubbish to cook over open fires. Hospitals lacked medicine and millions of gallons of raw sewage streamed into the Mediterranean Sea daily. According to the UN, 80 percent of Gazans were reliant on some form of food aid; 96 percent of all industrial output was halted; and over 31,000 people had lost work in the garment and furniture manufacturing industries alone since Hamas assumed full control of Gaza.

In order to alleviate the people’s suffering, and also to continue the massive arms build-up it began after Israel’s withdrawal, Hamas encouraged the digging of hundreds more tunnels under the border with Egypt. In the border town of Rafah, this black market flourished, making millionaires of Hamas affiliated tunnel diggers and those who invested in the enterprise. The tunnels also provided the movement with a revenue stream based off of the taxes Hamas charged the tunnel operators on all the black market goods that came through. In addition to the dawa organizations and zakat committees that continued to provide social welfare and charity for the people of Gaza, Hamas now controlled all the official welfare organs and the tunnels as well, making the population

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254 For example, when I visited Rafah at the time, the two most popular items coming through the tunnels were cigarettes and women’s underwear.
there totally dependent on Hamas (both as a government and as a movement) for its welfare.

In these difficult conditions, Hamas also made a concerted effort to build its governmental capacity in Gaza. Not just in terms of security, its members fully began to staff the government offices and institutions in Gaza, including the courts, government ministries, sanitation services, schools, and all elements of normal governance. But Hamas also took advantage of the free reign it had in Gaza to spread its ideology of resistance and violence like never before. Hamas summer camps for children were particularly popular. From a young age, children were schooled in paramilitary training, the path of jihad and martyrdom, hatred of Jews and Zionists, Islam, and the maximalist political rights of Palestinians inherent to Hamas political thought. By the summer of 2010, over 100,000 children participated in the camps. In June 2007, Hamas TV aired a children’s program where Farfur, its man-sized puppet version of Mickey Mouse, became a martyr. Similar bumble bee and rabbit puppets also became martyrs over the next two years on children’s television shows, while a fourth, a bear named Nassur, promised to join al-Qassam in jihad to fight the Zionists.

Despite their hardship, the people of Gaza defiantly remained supportive of Hamas, blaming Israel, the US, the Arab states, Fatah, and everyone else for their plight. “The closure and the occupation are responsible for the situation,” said Oman Marough, a

255 Yaakov Katz, “100,000 children attend radical Hamas summer camps,” The Jerusalem Post, 14 September 2010.

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Palestinian from the poor northern town of Jabaliyah. “With all kind of difficulties, I'm still supporting Hamas and supporting them in the government. We should carry with them the responsibility of suffering.”

His sentiments were predominant at the time, and they gave license to Hamas leaders to remain steadfast in their refusal to meet the three conditions imposed upon them by most of the international community. “The people of Gaza are suffering not because of our policy,” Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar said. “It's because of Israeli occupation, it's because of the previous corruption [of Fatah], it's because of the sanctions implemented on the Palestinian side. So we have to differentiate between the people who are doing their utmost effort in order to minimize the suffering and the people who are inflicting the suffering by force.” Capitulating to Israel and the West was “not worth it,” according to Ahmed Yousef, a chief political adviser to the Hamas leadership. “We are not going to give any concessions to the Israelis regarding our high national interests or the principal inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.” Indeed, Hamas officials argued that being in government allowed the movement to resist Israel with even more weight behind it than before. “The international community’s plan was, ‘if we get Hamas involved in politics they will become more involved, and then it will become harder for them to do resistance,’” said Hamas Member of Parliament Jamila al-

257 Author interview June 2008 in Jabaliyah.
258 Author interview June 2008 in Gaza City.
259 Author interview June 2008 in Gaza City.
Shanti. “But it was clear from Day One that we came with the purpose of protecting the resistance.”

And resist Hamas continued to do—to a point. Picking up the pace from 2007, when a record number of projectiles were launched from Gaza at Israel, 1,437 rockets and 1,154 mortars were launched from January to June 2008. Israel continued to respond with helicopter and fighter jet attacks on Hamas and other militant group operatives, training facilities, and weapons laboratories and caches. The tunnel infrastructure into Egypt was also targeted as Israel continuously intensified its blockade. Then, in the middle of June, with the populations of both Gaza and southern Israel suffering from the unremitting hostilities, the two sides agreed to a six-month, Egyptian-brokered ceasefire.

It was Hamas’s expectation that the arrangement would lead to a loosening of the entry and exit restrictions placed on Gaza, both in terms of goods and people. Israel expected that rocket fire would cease entirely and progress would be made on negotiations to free the captive soldier, Gilad Shalit. Neither sides expectations were realized. Though rocket and mortar launchings decreased from hundreds per month to single digits by the late summer, they did not stop entirely. And every time a rocket or mortar was fired from Gaza, Israel would again suspend or seriously decrease the shipments of goods into the territories. Then, on 4 November, the IDF launched an

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incursion into Gaza to destroy what it said was a tunnel Hamas was digging underneath the Israeli border in preparation for another kidnapping attempt. A firefight erupted sparking an exchange of fire that killed six Hamas fighters, as well as a barrage of rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israel. From November until late December, rocket and mortar fire, and Israeli reprisals, again reached the pre-ceasefire levels.

When the ceasefire officially ended in late December, Hamas chose not to renew it and went on a violent spree, launching hundreds of rockets at Israel in the first few days. On 27 December 2008, Israel responded with Operation Cast Lead, a thorough offensive into Gaza that Defense Minister Ehud Barak had been planning during the duration of the ceasefire.²⁶² Over three weeks, the IDF relentlessly pounded Gaza, first from the air, and then with ground troops as well. In the first day alone, over 200 Hamas police officers were killed. Over the course of the conflict, over 1,100 Palestinians were killed and 7,000 were injured; $1.9 billion worth of material damage was exacted upon Gaza; and 50,000 homes damaged or destroyed.²⁶³ Hamas said between 600 to 700 of the dead were its men (250 police officers, 200-300 al-Qassam members, and 150 other security personnel), while Israel places the number of Hamas dead at 709.²⁶⁴ In total, the

²⁶⁴ In terms of the disputed casualty numbers, the IDF figures come from: Yaakov Lappin, “IDF releases Cast Lead casualty numbers,” The Jerusalem Post, 26 March 2009. The Hamas figures come from: “Hamas admits 600-700 of its men were killed in Cast Lead,” Ha’aretz, 9 November 2010. In the aftermath of the war, Hamas had only admitted to around 30 or 40 killed.
UN estimates that over 250,000 Gazans were materially impacted by the war. Thirteen Israelis were killed, 10 soldiers and three civilians, and 518 total were wounded.

Operating under the “Georgia Rules,” named after Russia’s tactics in its 2008 conflict with Georgia, the IDF intentionally observed less margin for error than it did in its 2006 conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon. In addition to the collateral damage, the result was a massive blow to Hamas’s military and social infrastructure. If arms were being stored in mosques, they were bombed. If Hamas fighters were firing at the IDF from UN installations, the IDF fired back. If rocket launching crews were operating from densely populated areas, the IDF tried to take them out regardless. Hamas government and movement offices were targeted, as was the Islamic University of Gaza—no installation even remotely associated with Hamas was immune from attack. These tactics in particular took a heavy toll on the Hamas leadership. Both Said Siam, the powerful interior minister who founded and led the Hamas executive force, and Nizar Rayan, the Gaza commander of al-Qassam Brigades, were killed when the IAF bombed their hideouts. Police Chief Tawfiq Jabber was also killed.

The war ended on 17 and 18 January when Israel and Hamas respectively called unilateral ceasefires. Though defiant and victorious in rhetoric, Hamas paid an extremely

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268 It is a possibility that the killing of Rayan was a “lucky” mistake by the IAF. See: Byman, pp. 195.
high price in the war. In addition to the deaths of around 700 fighters and the loss of two of its top military commanders, the people of Gaza turned against their Islamist leaders in significant numbers with support in the Palestinian Territories in aggregate slipping to 18.8 percent. In the West Bank, where Palestinians could only watch the destruction being leveled on their countrymen, 53.3 percent of people thought Hamas won the war, while only 35.2 percent of Gazans agreed. “Gaza’s place is in the dark,” said Mamoun Khozendar, whose family roots in Gaza extend back 700 years. “It is a jail where no prisoner knows the length of his sentence.” Even Hamas leaders recognized they had “disappointed our people,” said Ahmed Yousef.

According to Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Shalom Harari, who served in IDF intelligence for more than 20 years, the disappointment from the people of Gaza with Hamas stemmed not only from the destruction that was brought to bear upon them—destruction most still blamed on Israel—but for failing to deliver on any of the promises of the war. Indeed, Hamas Political Chief Khaled Mishal called for a third intifada that would be “peaceful for Palestinians but lethal for the Zionist enemy” and would “rescue Gaza and protect the West Bank.” Other Hamas leaders boasted of kidnapping additional soldiers; battalions of suicide bombers that would kill IDF invaders; and causing serious damage to Israeli civilian infrastructure in the southern part of the country. “Just let them try to invade

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273 Author interview July 2009 in Gaza City.
274 Amos Harel and Barak Ravid, “IAF strike kills at least 230 in Gaza, Hamas chief vows third intifada has come,” Ha’aretz, 26 December 2008.
Gaza. Gaza will be their new Lebanon,” Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar warned just before the war.”

“Take every section of the fight, not only did they not succeed, it was a total failure. They did not succeed to neutralize one Israeli tank; not one Israeli helicopter; did not succeed to operate one suicide bomber,” Harari said. “They did very bad calculations. They tried to mimic Hezbollah but they discovered they were not Hezbollah.” This assessment was shared by Stephen Farrell, a long-term journalist in the region and co-author of Hamas who spent much time on the ground in Gaza after the war. “The Mishal speech on the third day of Cast Lead was totally out of touch with the situation on the ground,” he said. Hamas “totally [messed] up Cast Lead for what Hamas promised and what it didn’t deliver.”

Once the dust had settled on the Gaza War, Hamas fired most of its brigade commanders who were made the fall men for its military failures, according to multiple Israeli security officials. Then it set about rebuilding its military force. But use that force Hamas has not done since—not nearly to the degree as before Cast Lead. With so much of Gaza devastated, Hamas turned its attention to rebuilding Gaza and regaining the support it had lost amongst its people.

A sharp change in its ideology began to take hold. “The priority of Hamas following the war was to the people to relax and have better life and to build the

276 Author telephone interview 3 August 2011.
277 Author interview 27 August 2011 in Jerusalem.
infrastructure. But the idea of the struggle is still there, we are still giving the resistance
time to rebuild themselves after the war,” Ahmed Yousef said.  

As West Bank Hamas co-founder Sheik Mohmoud Muslieh said: “The tahadiyeh gives a chance for the people
to breath and for the party to strengthen itself.”  
As it had so many times before, Hamas demonstrated the affinity it holds for the Palestinian people by focusing on their plight.

Following the war, Hamas felt the sting of its isolation even more deeply. During the conflict, and after it, the Mubarak regime worked closely with Israel to keep Gaza sealed off and maintain pressure on its Islamist rulers. Despite the international opprobrium that was leveled at Israel regarding the civilian casualties it inflicted in Gaza, and the UN-sponsored Goldstone Report which held both Israel and Hamas as possibly responsible for war crimes, Hamas won no allies in the West nor any other place in the world. Turkey and Qatar, in particular, did aid in the rebuilding and revitalization of Gaza after the war, and offered heavily moderated political support. Qatar, and Saudi Arabia to a lesser extent, continued in their role as mediators between Hamas and Fatah. But in general, the international boycott of the Hamas government held throughout 2011. The Palestinian Authority, for its part, condemned Israel publicly during the war. But anonymous sources insisted that, sitting comfortably in Ramallah, it privately cheered the IDF on and was only sorry that Israel did not finish the job and depose Hamas altogether from Gaza. And one State Department cable released by Wikileaks outlining Ehud

278 Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
279 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
Barak’s consultations with the PA before the war, seems to indicate at least some PA complicity.\textsuperscript{280}

From the end of the Gaza War until the end of 2011, Hamas continued to govern Gaza under blockade and isolation. It won little victories against Israel here and there. After the flotilla incident in May 2010, Israel significantly loosened its blockade on Gaza, allowing in many more materials than before. And in October 2011, Hamas won the release of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, around half of whom had “blood on their hands,” according to Israel. They were exchanged for Sgt. Gilad Shalit, who was held captive in Gaza for over five years. But for the most part, Hamas kept quiet in Gaza.

Then, toward the very end of 2011, two major changes occurred in the organization. With the Syrian uprising turning into a full-blown Civil War, Hamas abandoned the Damascus headquarters it utilized since its expulsion from Jordan in 1999. Its political bureau leaders and the external leadership of the Qassam Brigades began spreading out across the region—to Qatar and Egypt to begin with—as Hamas explored possible arrangements with Turkey and Jordan as well. Explaining the rationale for the decision that would come a few months later, Yousef said in August 2011 that “if things don’t go the way we like and the Syrian people like, if the situation deteriorates more and more, then we might think of leaving Syria. If the people of Syria start to believe… we are affiliated or we are close to the Bashar Assad regime, then we will leave.”\textsuperscript{281}

\textsuperscript{280} The cable is dated 2 June 2009 from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv and its subject is: “Codels Casey and Ackerman meet with Defense Minister Barak.”
\textsuperscript{281} Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
always had, in leaving Syria, Hamas demonstrated that it was part and parcel of the Islamic and Arab people, and would not betray them. The final member of Hamas political bureau to leave Damascus, Imad el-Alami, returned to the Gaza Strip on 5 February 2012, 21 years after he was expelled by Israel.

At the end of 2011, it remained unclear how the dissolution of the Damascus headquarters would affect Hamas. What is clear is that in Syria, Hamas lost one of its most important allies in the Arab world. Not only had it received basing rights in Damascus for more than a decade, for years al-Qassam fighters had trained there, and the city served as a conduit to both Iran and Hezbollah. With the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, however, Hamas may have gained an even more important ally in place of the Mubarak government which had become more and more of an enemy in its later years in power. The political fall-out between Israel and Turkey as a result of the flotilla incident, and Turkey’s general geopolitical reorientation eastward, also could augur well for Hamas. But all of that remained to be seen.

The second major development was the December 2011 announcement by Khaled Mishal in Cairo that Hamas was giving up violent resistance for the time being and focusing on popular struggle. “The non-violent approach is part of a strategy for our present situation to draw world sympathy to our cause,” said Ahmed Youssef, explaining the decision.²⁸² The change, he said, was also due to Hamas’s “vulnerable situation against the Israelis who have a huge propaganda machine.” Many analysts speculated that

²⁸² “Hamas will focus on popular protests in struggle with Israel, group chief says,” The Associated Press, 23 December 2011.
the tactical renunciation of violence by Hamas was directly related to regional developments. (Indeed, it was only tactical as Hamas once again ramped up violence against Israel in late 2012.) They argued that with its base in Damascus gone, the temporary shift was part of Hamas’s good-will efforts to gain positive traction with other regional powers.

Summary of Independent Variables, 2007-2011

Elements of Statehood. For the first time in its existence, Hamas fully controlled a territory—Gaza. Its political authority and its monopoly on the use of force there were final. From time to time, it battled hold outs from Fatah or salafi groups like Jesh-al-Islam, but no one put up a serious challenge to Hamas rule. The only way in which it did not exercise full sovereignty over Gaza was that it did not control Gaza’s airspace or waters, and Egypt and Israel continued to maintain a cordon on Gaza’s borders. Hamas was also completely responsible for the welfare of Gaza’s population. It controlled all official welfare organs there, as well as the economy—both legal and illicit—and it continued to maintain the Islamist NGO network it established in previous years. Hamas’s attention to rebuilding Gaza following the Gaza War demonstrated its customary affinity for the population there.

Organizational Structure. Being in total control of Gaza allowed for a real chain of command to exist between Hamas commanders and its military apparatus. As such, the command and control between them was strong, though it was temporarily degraded
when Nizar Rayan and Said Siam were killed by Israel during the Gaza War. There were sporadic incidents where the military appeared to act on its own accord, such as when it fired rockets into Israel in August 2011 in response to Israeli bombing of Gaza. 283 But such incidents were aberrations far more than patterns. The inside leaders, in their roles as government officials, exercised decision-making authority over local matters. More important decisions continued to be made by the consultation and consensus process between the inside and outside that developed since the early 1990s and was reinforced following the deaths of Yassin and Rantisi in 2004.

Ideology. Hamas continued its moratorium on suicide bombing during this period, even as the first year saw a surge of rocket and mortar attacks against Israel. Once in control of Gaza, it focused its attention on governing the territory in addition to resistance against Israel, providing a constructive balance. Though it would not abide the three conditions of the international community, Hamas eventually relented on attacking Israel when it agreed to the June 2008 tahadiyeh, ostensibly in order to lift the blockade on Gaza, again for constructive purposes. Hamas briefly resumed attacking the Jewish State in November and December 2008, as it had from June 2007 to June 2008. But following the Gaza War Hamas emphasized that rebuilding Gaza and providing for the livelihood of the population was its top priority. At the same time, Hamas dramatically expanded its summer camps program for children that began in 2005, indoctrinating them with destructive ideology. It also stepped up its television programming aimed at children for the same purposes.

Inter-Factional Competition. With Hamas firmly in control of Gaza and the PA ensconced in the West Bank with IDF backing, the competition between Hamas and Fatah decreased significantly during this time period. From time to time, each faction rounded up activists from the other group in their respective territories, but the question of who led the Palestinian people was largely settled for the time being with the answer being: both. This arrangement suited the interests of each side enough that despite agreeing more times than can be counted to form a unity government, no such government was formed and elections for the PA presidency and PLC that were required by law were not held. Hamas did find itself from time to time competing with groups even more extremist than itself in Gaza; groups like Islamic Jihad and Jund Ansar Allah. Those groups did rile Hamas from time to time, accusing it of guaranteeing Israel’s security like Fatah once did in the 1990s. But for the most part, the difference in capabilities and followers between Hamas and those groups was so large that neither was ever a formidable threat to dislodge Hamas in terms of popularity or actual physical control of Gaza.

External Support. The support Hamas received from its traditional allies—Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah—remained steady and strong during this period. The Islamists also gained some support from Turkey, particularly following the flotilla incident. But most of the rest of the world worked to isolate Hamas, including Egypt, Jordan, and other regional powers that were critical of Hamas for its rocket fire against Israel that eventually resulted in the Gaza War. Egypt, in particular, worked very closely with Israel
to keep Gaza under a tight cordon until Mubarak’s fall. Indeed, the upheaval in the Arab world seems to have shuffled Hamas’s external relations significantly, with the organization losing its base in Damascus while possibly gaining an ally in Egypt.
Theoretical Predictions. According to the independent variables of the time period, Israel should be able to achieve **fair tactical deterrence** against Hamas.

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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fair</td>
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</table>
Israeli deterrence of Hamas during this period began with the same strategy it pursued at the end of the last period. When Hamas would launch rockets at Israel or attack the border, Israel would respond by bombing the smuggling tunnels into Egypt; buildings where it believed Hamas was manufacturing or storing weapons; and training bases. The IAF would also target rocket-launching crews—preferably on their way to carry out an attack, or after the fact if intelligence was not good enough for a preemptive strike. Israel did not target the leaders of Hamas for assassination. As the number of rockets hitting Israel steadily increased, the IDF also made ground incursions into Gaza’s border regions. During one raid into Jabaliyah in March 2008, the IDF killed 60 people, the highest daily toll of Palestinian lives since the 1980s.\footnote{Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 296.} The deterrence package also included the economic and physical blockade of Gaza, which it ratcheted up significantly following Hamas’s military takeover of the strip. In the year between the Palestinian Civil War and the June 2008 \textit{tahadiyeh} between Israel and Hamas, very little got into or out of Gaza, and the people of Gaza paid an ever increasing price. The final element of deterrence was the unprecedented pressure against Hamas \textit{dawa} institutions in the West Bank in 2007 and 2008 by the PA, which left Hamas in a “very weak position” there, said Ahmed Isa, who served in the PA’s preventative security services from 1994-2006.\footnote{Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.}

To an extent, the deterrence package worked. Hamas agreed in June 2008 to an Egyptian-brokered \textit{tahadiyeh}, the first reciprocal agreement that was ever achieved
between Israel and Hamas. As previously mentioned, it was Hamas’s expectation that Israel would significantly loosen the blockade during this time, but it was also a condition that PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad cease his actions against the dawa network in the West Bank.\textsuperscript{286} It was Israel’s expectation that all rocket fire would cease and progress would be made on negotiating a release of the captive soldier, Gilad Shalit. When asked if it was the suffering of the Gazan people that led Hamas to agree to the tahadiyeh, Abduljaber Fuqaha, a parliamentarian for Hamas’s political party, confirmed that this was “correct.”\textsuperscript{287} The “economic situation, the financial situation of the people,” was also cited by fellow Hamas-affiliated parliamentarian Fadel Hamdan as a rationale for the tahadiyeh. But Hamdan also said that Hamas was “trying to open windows with Fatah and President [Abbas.]”\textsuperscript{288} According to Barak Ben Zur, a former division head for the Shin Bet who was an assistant to the director during the second intifada, Hamas was additionally keen to demonstrate its ability to govern, and viewed the ceasefire as necessary toward establishing some normalcy of rule.\textsuperscript{289}

“For the first time [the Muslim Brotherhood] had full authority over a piece of land. The Muslim Brotherhood had territory and a population, and the opportunity to prove their capability to build a state and make an example that their mission and beliefs are capable of rule and not just opposition…. So they wanted to utilize the opportunity to establish a regime so [the ceasefire] was [in] their own interest at the time.”

\textsuperscript{286} The insistence by Hamas that the PA cease its actions against the West Bank dawa network is according to Barak Ben Zur, author interview 18 August 2011 in Rosh Ayin.
\textsuperscript{287} Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
\textsuperscript{288} Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
\textsuperscript{289} Author interview 18 August 2011 in Rosh Ayin.
During the first two months of the ceasefire, some dozens of rockets and mortars still hit Israel, many of them attributed to the other militant groups in Gaza who did not sign onto the agreement. When Israel retaliated by tightening the blockade even further rather than loosening it as was stipulated under the ceasefire terms, Hamas made a more serious effort to prevent the other militant groups in Gaza from attacking Israel. Groups more radical than Hamas complained that “Hamas is now preserving the security of Israel! Hamas has been exposed now, and we see them doing the same job that all the others in Fatah did before them.”\textsuperscript{290} That Hamas made a real effort to stop the other militant groups during the ceasefire was confirmed by Avi Dichter, the chief of the Shin Bet during the second \textit{intifada}.\textsuperscript{291}

When the \textit{tahadiyeh} did not significantly alleviate the economic suffering in Gaza, Hamas quickly returned to firing rockets at a heavy clip, firing 60 alone on the first day after the ceasefire’s expiration.\textsuperscript{292} Operation Cast Lead ensued. Though various Israeli objectives were stated for the war, one of them was clearly to establish better deterrence against Hamas. “Our aim is to create a new reality, a new security environment in which no longer will hundreds of thousands of Israelis have to live in fear,” Government Spokesman Mark Regev told journalists on the second day of the war.\textsuperscript{293}

\textsuperscript{290} Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 297. The authors attribute the quote to “an embittered resident on Gaza’s frontline.”
\textsuperscript{291} Author interview in Tel Aviv 14 September 2011.
\textsuperscript{292} Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 298.
\textsuperscript{293} Milton-Edwards and Farrell, pp. 300.
To meet that goal, Israel employed the “Dahiyeh Doctrine,” named after the southern Beirut neighborhood recognized as a Hezbollah stronghold that Israel leveled in the 2006 war. That doctrine relies on a disproportionate response; on inflicting casualties and material damage so severe that the price paid by an enemy bent on attacking Israel becomes too high to make such actions worthwhile. As a result, Gaza felt the wrath of the IDF as described in the previous section. “You impose 100 times more casualties on Gaza than they did on you,” Israeli Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit said. “That’s the idea of the operation.”

The effect on Hamas was dramatic. Rocket attacks from Gaza fell to the 40s per month in February and March 2009 from the previous par of about 200, while mortar attacks fell to the 20s. Then, from April to December 2009, only 62 rockets and 56 mortars total were launched at Israel, compared to 1,437 rockets and 1,154 mortars that were launched from January to June 2008. In 2010 in total, 152 rockets and 209 mortars were fired from Gaza. In 2011 in total, 419 rockets and 258 mortars were fired from Gaza. In essence, since Cast Lead, each year saw an increase of attacks over the previous year, but the violence remained far below pre-war levels. This confirms an observation by a senior Israeli intelligence official that “deterrence is like a popsicle. Once you take it into the sun, it begins to melt.”

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294 Byman, pp. 200.
295 Byman, pp. 200.
296 Data compiled from the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) website based on monthly and annual reports from the time period. See: http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Archive/Pages/default.aspx
297 Author interview 12 February 2012 in Israel.
Clearly, the level of damage Hamas suffered as an organization, as a government, and in terms of the popular support it held from the people of Gaza affected its calculations following Cast Lead. It seems clear that the movement miscalculated the expected Israeli response to its rockets. Ahmed Youssuf claims that the Hamas leadership believed there would be a war with Israel, but “maybe we didn’t expect that they were going to be with this full-scale, full-fledged war, or something like this with all-out war. We didn’t expect that.”

As a result of its miscalculation, Hamas was forced into a position where it had to set priorities other than fighting Israel, namely the welfare of Gaza’s population. On this point, there seems to be agreement by all parties, including Hamas, Israel, and the PA. Additional reasons for Hamas curtailing its violence include its lack of international support and its conclusion that violence simply was not effective against Israel. The following are selected quotes from all sides which demonstrate these points.

Ahmed Yousef, Hamas in Gaza:

“You have this kind of responsibility, you are a government then you have to listen to the people’s demands and people’s complaints. We know that this is not a better time for the Palestinians because of the sanctions and the siege. So we decided to make a unilateral ceasefire hoping that it will give us the time to take care of the people. As I told you, when you have 20,000 houses being destroyed and many families suffering and they are sheltered by their neighbors or their families, friends, those people need to be re-housed. And to make sure everything is available for the

298 Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
Palestinians we can postpone the military struggle for a while until we are making everybody comfortable in their life.”

Abduljaber Fuqahaa, Hamas-affiliated in the West Bank: ²⁹⁹

“The effects of the war were very destructive on the Palestinian people. Hamas saw that the Palestinian people have to breathe fresh air. And it wanted to give the opportunity for the international community to understand its political stance. Hamas wanted to show good intentions because it realized that the alliances against it and against the Palestinian people were extremely strong.”

Fadel Hamdan, Hamas-affiliated in the West Bank: ³⁰⁰

“Hamas is not fighting for violence. Hamas is fighting for freedom, to get rid of occupation. So when you fight and there is no results, or when you fight and the results are not good, you will stop fighting... I am not ready, nowadays, to participate in any fighting, or any violence, because it is useless. Why to waste your life? Why to waste your family life? Why to waste the life of others? It is not our wish to kill others or to see blood shed.”

Q: There is a drop in support for Hamas after war. There was some bitterness, some resentment, so how did this effect the way Hamas decided to govern after that?

A: “It is usual to take lessons from your experience and to consider the future… So Hamas now is thinking not to repeat the same mistake.”

Ahmed Isa, formerly of the PA preventative security services in the West Bank: ³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
³⁰⁰ Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
³⁰¹ Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
“The price for the 2009 war was very high, Hamas is still suffering from it. The very aggressive reaction from Israel that was clear in 2006 against Hezbollah—I mean a strike that the other side cannot absorb—this will be the title of the wars from now on. This was the political meaning from 2006. In 2009 it was the same strategy, that the price you will pay is above your capability… You are the ruler, you are the one who is responsible to rebuild Gaza.”

Q: And public support is very important to Hamas?

A: “Yeah, for sure this is part of it, the public support.”

Q: They won’t do a lot that goes against public opinion?

A: “No. They will never allow themselves to reach such a point.”

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Shalom Harari, Israeli Military Intelligence:302

“No doubt that Cast Lead was a very important component in the deterrence of Hamas until today. The scar that this operation left in the memory of the population and Hamas… The population, after celebrating, they approached Hamas and asked for a solution. [They] wanted to rebuild houses, wanted to improve services. And Hamas for a very long time is stuck in a situation where they can’t improve their life… The population wants now quiet time. You cannot do jihad every day on the shoulders of the population, especially when you haven’t yet compensated them for the casualties of the last war you dragged them to.”

Avi Dichter, former head of the Shin Bet:303

“Cast Lead, more than putting pressure on the people, it put pressure on Hamas as an organization. They tried to build a strategy against the penetration of the Israeli army, and when it happened they could see that it totally failed. They lost close to 1,000 people, terrorists, some of them very

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302 Author telephone interview 3 August 2011.
303 Author interview in Tel Aviv on 14 September 2011.
senior. They couldn’t stop Israeli penetration. Israel lost 10 soldiers, half of them from friendly fire. And we were there for three weeks, the whole operation. But we decided when to stop it, where to go, when to go. And they could see that unlike what happened in Lebanon they could do very, very little… They know that they cannot ignore pressure from the people. Mainly in [the] Gaza strip it’s a very miserable life. They cannot ignore what is going on amongst the people.”

As noted earlier, Hamas attacks against Israel did not cease entirely. But it became clear that “rules of the game” were established between the parties. Those rules, as described by Executive Director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism Boaz Ganor, are as follows: If Hamas launches, or allows other militant groups to launch Qassam rockets in limited numbers, Israel will retaliate with attacks on the rocket launching squads and on the Hamas tunnel infrastructure under the Egyptian border. If Hamas launches attacks using suicide bombers, grad missiles, or other higher-capability rockets, or if a rocket attack kills a significant number of civilians, Israel will launch a much larger military retaliation. These rules were put to the test in August 2011, when a terrorist cell operating from Sinai infiltrated the Israeli border and killed eight people near Eilat. In response, Israel bombed targets inside Gaza belonging to the Popular Resistance Committees, the group it held responsible for the attack. But the punch and counter-punch triggered an escalation that saw 145 rockets and 46 mortars launched from Gaza into Israel that month. According to a senior Israeli diplomat, the Netanyahu Government came “within a hair’s breadth” from launching another Cast Lead-type

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304 Author interview 10 August 2011 in Herzeliyah.
operation in Gaza in response.\textsuperscript{306} Instead, the IAF increased the quantity of bombs it dropped on Gaza and began targeting more senior levels of leadership of the other militant groups until the wave or rocket fire dropped to “normal” levels.

That incident brought to the fore another dynamic was is largely in play since Cast Lead—the degree to which Hamas prevents other militant groups from staging attacks from Gaza. Indeed, during the 2008 ceasefire, this became an issue for Hamas and Israel. During the first two months of the agreement, groups like Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Martyrs brigade continued firing rockets. Eventually, Hamas put a real effort into stopping those attacks during that time, as it did in the immediate aftermath of Cast Lead. But as the months, and now years, have passed since the war, the steady rise in attacks from Gaza have mostly come from Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and not Hamas. In this manner, according to a senior Israeli intelligence official, Hamas continued to “test” those boundaries by modifying the leeway it allowed the other militant groups to attack Israel throughout the period in question, even as Hamas sought to avoid another round of intense fighting. So when the flare-up in violence occurred in August 2011 after the terror attack in Eilat, not only did Hamas security forces on the ground physically intercede to prevent an escalation toward war, its political leadership also quickly sought to prevail upon the other militant factions to desist from attacking Israel before the IDF was compelled to take drastic action.\textsuperscript{307}

\textsuperscript{306} Author interview toward the end of 2011. (Exact date and location are withheld to protect the source).
\textsuperscript{307} Avi Issacharoff, “Israel and Hamas both working to stop the escalation,” \textit{Ha’aretz}, 22 August 2011.
Hamas has also used the time since Cast Lead to upgrade its military capabilities, in both qualitative and quantitative terms. By the end of 2010, the Shin Bet reported that “many hundreds of standard rockets (the majority of these rockets extend to 20km and 40km), about a thousand mortar shells, dozens of AT missiles, tons of standard explosives, and tons of raw material for explosives production” were smuggled into Gaza.\(^{308}\) The rockets the report refers to were not the tens of thousands of Gaza-manufactured Qassams Hamas has stockpiled, but much larger, more destructive, and farther reaching projectiles such as the Grad Rocket. The ordinance mainly originated in Iran and Syria came in along a smuggling route from Iran to Sudan to Egypt to Gaza. Hamas fighters also continued to receive training from Syria and Iran, as the rules of the game between Hamas and Israel did not extend to weapons smuggling and military training. In this regard, the high-ranking Israeli intelligence official said that it is widely believed that Hamas is more powerful now in a military sense than it was before Cast Lead.

After the closing of more than 100 \textit{dawa} branches in the West Bank, and the arrest of so many leaders there since the 2007 split with the PA, Hamas also made an attempt to reestablish itself in the West Bank following Cast Lead. Under orders from Damascus, 13 Hamas cells in the West Bank began preparing attacks against Israel in 2010 and 2011.\(^{309}\) Only a March 2011 attack, an IED placed next to a bus stop in


\(^{309}\) The following information comes from a September 2011 report issued by the Shin Bet titled: “Exposure of Judea and Samaria-based Hamas military terror infrastructures; prevention of suicide bombing in Jerusalem.” \(\text{http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/reports/shote070911-en.pdf}\)
Jerusalem, came to fruition before the Shin Bet was able to act. One British citizen was killed and 47 were injured in that bombing. According to the Shin Bet, at least one suicide bombing planned by those West Bank cells and scheduled for August 2011 was prevented, as were kidnapping attempts designed to increase Hamas’s leverage with Israel in the negotiations over a prisoner exchange.

The fact that the cell which was to attempt the suicide bombing was directed from Damascus as opposed to Gaza, as were most of the other cells, comes as no surprise. It has long been assumed by analysts that the inside political leadership is more moderate than the outside leadership due to circumstance. Though vigorously denied by Hamas members, this stands to reason as it is the inside that must deal with the consequences of Hamas’s actions while the outside leaders lay largely, but not totally, immune to Israeli action. Indeed, it is commonly speculated, though never proven, that figures like Mahmoud Zahar and Ismail Haniyeh were ready to call a ceasefire to end Cast Lead much earlier than Hamas finally did, only to be thwarted by Khaled Mishal and the outside leadership.

The December 2011 announcement by Khaled Mishal that the Islamic Resistance Movement was making a tactical shift away from violence only made de jure what was already a de facto position that had largely taken hold in Gaza. In that sense, one can infer that the same reasons that led Hamas to significantly curtail its attacks following Cast Lead were still play at the end of 2011. Even though the change was mostly in rhetoric and not in action, the announcement was significant in the sense that violence
has been a part of the Muslim Brotherhood’s identity in Gaza and the West Bank since the 1987 founding of Hamas.

Though the renunciation in violence last less than one year (major attacks resumed against Israel by late 2012), it is logical to assume that the scope of regional political change in 2011 pushed Hamas toward that temporary position. When interviewed, Ahmed Youssuf, Fadal Hamdan, Abduljaber Fuqahaa, Ahmed Isa, Reuven Paz, Barak Ben Tzur, Shalom Harari, and Boaz Ganor all stated in one form or another that a main priority of Hamas is international legitimacy. In particular, it places great importance on its relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds. With its base in Syria now gone, Hamas likely felt compelled to chart a different course at the time in order to gain external alliances that can compensate for that serious loss.

Findings. The combination of economic and physical blockade on Gaza; steady bombing of rocket launching crews, weapons factories and storehouses, and the tunnel infrastructure; and the closing of its dawa institutions in the West Bank was enough to compel Hamas to enter a tahadiyeh with Israel in June 2008. During that period, Hamas basically stopped firing rockets and after two months it also began to prevent other militant groups in Gaza from attacking Israel. However, when Hamas did not achieve the results it expected from the ceasefire, it quickly resumed the attacks.

Operation Cast Lead seriously changed the dynamic between Hamas and Israel. Following the three-week war, Hamas dramatically reduced its rocket fire against the
Jewish state and began a calibrated—though not total—effort to prevent other militant groups from attacking as well. The degree to which Hamas enforced the prohibition on attacking Israel appeared to fluctuate as it tested the “rules of the game” that were clearly established following the war. Hamas did make an attempt to reconstitute its terror apparatus in the West Bank during 2010 and 2011, but the attempt failed due to Israeli intelligence work and only one IED attack was perpetrated. By the end of 2011, Hamas again called a temporary halt to its violent activities against Israel. This was due to the continued pressure it felt to account for the welfare of the population of Gaza; to gain international legitimacy and support; and because its violent efforts continued to fail to produce the desired results.

Based on the data, Israel appears to have achieved **fair tactical deterrence** against Hamas during this period. Hamas’s refusal to completely clamp down on other militant factions in Gaza; the continued rocket and mortar fire from there; and its attempts to test the boundaries of the established “rules of the game,” do not allow the classification of strong tactical deterrence even though the dramatically reduced violence lasted from January 2009 to November 2012. However the fact that Hamas is probably stronger than it was before Cast Lead, and yet observed one of the least violent periods in its history, suggests that deterrence was fairly significant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/ Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hamas (2007-2011)
HAMAS CASE STUDY

CHAPTER VIII – HAMAS CONCLUSIONS

The Islamic Resistance Movement was founded to resist Israel’s presence in historic Palestine and establish a Muslim Palestinian state in its stead. While Hamas has never compromised its core beliefs and goals, it has modified the degree to which it employs violence over the years—sometimes more, sometimes less, but enough to state unequivocally that Hamas can be and has been deterred by Israel and the Palestinian Authority at certain periods of time. In analyzing those points where deterrence was established; what type of deterrence was established; the values of the independent variables; and Israeli (and PA) strategy vis-à-vis Hamas, one can draw conclusions as to which variables are most important in terms of Hamas being susceptible to deterrence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Elements of Statehood. Of the five sets of variables that made up the core theory—elements of statehood, organizational structure, inter-factional competition, ideology and external support, the one that is most obviously important in the case of Hamas is elements of statehood. Each of its component parts—political authority, territory, and the welfare of and affinity for a population—were elements that clearly affected Hamas’s decision-making process over the 24 years from its inception to 2011 and are therefore strongly correlated to its susceptibility to deterrence strategies.

In terms of the dependency of the Palestinian people on Hamas for their welfare, for 20 years before Hamas was formed, the Muslim Brotherhood of Gaza and the West Bank was busy developing its dawa infrastructure of social welfare, religious, and charity institutions. The dawa fills a dual role for Hamas. On the one hand, the MB believes that the long-term reformation of Muslim society toward one that is in accordance with Islamic tradition and sharia is best accomplished at the grassroots level, by slow and steady Islamization of the population. It was therefore in Hamas’s interests to expand the dawa network throughout the West Bank and Gaza in terms of both breadth and depth. That expansion, coupled with external factors like the corruption of the PA and the living conditions imposed on the Palestinian people by Israel, meant that, over time, more and more Palestinians were dependent on Hamas for their welfare. As the dawa network grew, its value as an asset to Hamas grew with it. It is therefore not coincidental that Hamas halted its violence after its dawa network in the West Bank was held at risk by the PA (1996 and 2008) and by Israel (2005). The dawa “is the organization. This is the whole organization. This is the power” of Hamas, said Ahmed Isa, a long-time official in
the PA’s preventative security forces. And when Israel and the PA held al-dawa at risk, Hamas for the most part backed down.

The second role of al-dawa was that it demonstrated in a concrete way that Hamas actually cared about the Palestinian people. That affinity for Hamas’s countrymen was not perfunctory, but genuine, as evidenced by the fact that in 1997, 2005, and 2009, Hamas leaders admit that the movement was compelled to halt violence against Israel because public opinion had turned against violence (1997), or because the Palestinian people were suffering from Israeli measures to a degree that they needed a break from the fighting (1997, 2005 and 2009). The opposite is also true. Hamas leaders said that during times when the Palestinian public was supportive of violence, the movement acted much more violently (1987-1993, 2000-2004 and 2006-2008). The extent to which Hamas respects Palestinian public opinion is a logical one since the movement itself is based on building an infrastructure that is rooted in the population.

The effect of holding political power and controlling territory was just as influential on Hamas. Since each was an asset the movement ascribed much value to, each was something Israel could credibly hold at risk in order to compel Hamas to modify its behavior. This is demonstrated most clearly in the sense that after 2007, when Hamas gained both political and territorial control of Gaza, Israel was able to establish the most comprehensive deterrence ever against Hamas. Particularly when measured against Hamas’s military capabilities, which following the rearming it undertook since Cast Lead are by far the strongest in its history, the much reduced level of violence

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310 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
perpetrated by Hamas from 2009-2011 stands out as a significant accomplishment of Israeli deterrence.

That Hamas ascribes much value to controlling Gaza stems from its primary goals of “liberation of the land and evicting the occupation from it” and “establishing a Muslim state” which is “an eventual result” of achieving a Muslim society, as stated by West Bank Hamas co-founder Sheik Mahmoud Musleh. As such, relinquishing a territory (Gaza) that Hamas already liberated would count as a tremendous set-back to the movement. So too would losing political dominance in that territory since governing allows Hamas the ability to mold Palestinian society even more directly and immediately than its dawa network. When asked how Hamas makes decisions in cases where its short-term goals conflict with long-term goals, such as whether to continue attacking Israel after Cast Lead, Sheik Musleh said: “Sometimes there’s a short-term decision that hurts the long-term objective, but in that case, it’s cancelled.” In other words, for Hamas, the conflict between the two is always reconciled with long-term objectives taking precedence over the short-term goals. For a movement with this kind of ideology, that means that any territorial or political gains will be valued highly. Holding those assets at risk, as Israel did during Cast Lead, forced Hamas to choose the long-term objectives of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a Palestinian state over the short-term objective of attacking Israel.

Another aspect of the deterrent power of political authority was apparent in how Hamas related to the other Palestinian factions. From 1987 to 2005, Hamas competed for

311 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
popularity in the Palestinian and Arab streets with Fatah (the PLO), Islamic Jihad, and an assortment of other Palestinian groups. During the first, and especially the second *intifada*, this competition manifested itself in the form of each group relentlessly trying to prove that it was more capable of “resisting” Israel than the others by seeing who could kill more Israelis. By the end of the second *intifada*, Hamas was broadly recognized as the most capable resistance group, was credited with driving Israel from Gaza, and was rewarded as such when it was elected to a majority of seats in the PLC. At that point, and definitely following its 2007 military triumph over the Fatah in Gaza, Hamas became the political authority in charge of the other militant factions there. The establishment of a clear hierarchy meant that Hamas no longer felt compelled (at least, most of the time) to engage in resistance competition with the other factions. In fact, the opposite took place. Being in charge meant that Hamas’s interests often laid in preventing attacks by the other groups—both for domestic reasons as a means of demonstrating who the final authority was in Gaza, and for external reasons in limiting Israeli reprisal measures against it.

While each of the statehood variables contributed to how deterrable Hamas became in the 2007-2011 period, it was the interaction between them all that achieved Israel’s best deterrence to date. Once Hamas took control of Gaza, it felt all of these pressures simultaneously, said Hamas political adviser and spokesman Ahmed Yousef, and it was forced to “talk about the daily difficulties [the people] are facing and not anymore talking about the struggle and how we can build a good resistance.”

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312 Author interview 13 September 2011 in Gaza City.
“The burden is big on the shoulder of the government. The resistance might cost you a lot once you are trying to build the infrastructure for the Palestinian life,” he said. “Resistance and trying to focus on building the infrastructure of Palestinian life… can’t go hand in hand.”

Q: So if you were not a government, you wouldn’t have to be so careful?
A: “That’s right.”

Q: So there’s a trade off. On the one hand being a government is something that Hamas values, and on the other hand it means more responsibility?
A: “That’s right, because now you are accountable for the whole Palestinian [population] living here in Gaza. In a movement you are accountable for your followers in the movement. But now you are accountable for the whole [population]. Everybody counts on you as a government to find a job for them and make sure that basic needs are available in the market, and everybody has to live in dignity.”

Not surprisingly, every Israeli security expert interviewed for this project agreed with Yousef’s assessment. A senior intelligence official said that with “every day that passes, Hamas has more to lose.”

Therefore, the Resistance Movement faces what he characterized as a dilemma between “spending its resources on advertising versus research and development”—in other words, attacking Israel or continuing to build the infrastructure of a Muslim Palestinian state. But as noted by Barak Ben Zur, a former assistant director of the Shin Bet, what makes the “linkage between population and territory and the calculation of costs and benefits” such a clear part of Hamas’s decision-making process is the affinity that Hamas has for and with the Palestinian people. “If there was no clear connection between leadership and population, maybe it wouldn’t be so quiet” in the aftermath of Cast Lead, he said.

313 Author interview in Israel 12 February 2012.
“But here we have a real connection and… once you have [the] responsibility of people that depend on you, and it’s recognized that they are dependent, there is a change. You can’t stay in the same place as you were when you were underground in the Qassam Brigades. Now you have a thousand civilian issues and you can’t bring your people to disaster.”

Organizational Structure. The effect that the organizational structure of Hamas had on how deterrable it was at given points of time is the hardest element of the five main variables to assess. Mainly, the difficulty is due to the fact that the decision-making process and the organizational structure of the movement are opaque. The overlapping shura councils, the consultation and consensus-based decision-making process, and the secrecy involved in who is a part of that process and on what level, make it hard to paint a clear picture of this variable. To the extend that we can decipher its status, it is still possible that variance in organizational structure did make some contribution to the extent to which Hamas was deterred.

The hierarchy and command and control of the organization was weakest from 1989-1997, when Sheik Ahmed Yassin was in prison. During those years, the Hamas military wing was organized in cell structures to avoid mass arrest by Israel while it took orders from the outside leadership in Amman. In contrast, the hierarchy and the command and control that military commanders exerted over their subordinates was strongest in the post-2007 period when Hamas gained full control of Gaza and both the political and military wings could operate overtly there for the first time. In that environment, orders could be given and followed, at least in Gaza, without too much
confusion. And it was in these two periods, respectively, that Israel achieved its worst and its best deterrence against Hamas.

That said, it seems that the best conclusion that can be drawn from Hamas’s organizational structure is that, in general, it makes deterrence complicated. Even during the post-2007 period, instances occurred where the military operated against the directives of the political wing. At other times, such as when Gilad Shalit was captured, the military inside Gaza acted without the knowledge of the inside political leadership but perhaps under orders from the external leadership. The fact that one arm of Hamas does not always know what the other arm is doing theoretically and practically makes deterrence more difficult, as does the fact that orders are not always followed. Therefore, without being able to draw such meaningful distinctions between the different periods under study, one can conclude that this type of organizational structure, in general, was problematic from a deterrence standpoint throughout the history of Hamas. That said, Hamas’s organizational structure is apparently cohesive enough—its foot soldiers following orders enough of the time—for Israel to achieve real, if not strong measures of deterrence.

*Inter-Factional Competition.* Even during its earlier incarnation as the Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank and Gaza, Hamas was engaged in a competition—mainly with Fatah and the PLO, but with other groups as well—over leadership of the Palestinian national movement. This inter-factional competition waxed and waned over the years in terms of its intensity, but it always played a roll in Hamas decision-making.
During the first *intifada*, this competition was one of the main factors that compelled the MB to establish Hamas, as it feared being made irrelevant on the Palestinian street if it did not shed blood along with the rest of the Palestinian militant factions. During the Oslo period, when Hamas’s ideology was marginalized in Palestinian society by the peace process with Israel and the creation of the PA, Hamas used suicide bombings against Israeli targets at least in part to stay relevant. Shortly there after, Hamas’s most docile period in the late 1990s came when the capabilities and popularity of the PA had so radically eclipsed Hamas that the competition between the two was basically settled.

When the second *intifada* erupted, Hamas leaders again saw an opportunity to wrest control of the Palestinian cause from Fatah and PLO and burnished their street credentials with the Palestinian people by becoming the most successful militant group in terms of both numbers and types of attacks inflicted on Israel. During that period, when each Palestinian faction was attempting to outdo the others in terms of attacking Israeli targets, deterrence against them became virtually impossible. That competition continued at a fevered pitch after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza when the factions—again, Hamas and Fatah chief among them—battled for control over that territory. And again, during that period, Israel managed only weak deterrence against Hamas at best.

Once Hamas fully took control of Gaza in 2007, and a clear *de facto* arrangement was established where the Islamists controlled Gaza and Fatah controlled the West Bank, the inter-factional competition ebbed somewhat. While the two traded rhetorical barbs, and made mutual arrests of the other’s operatives, the situation suited each well enough
that they both avoided implementing a plethora of unity agreements that were ostensibly acceded to from 2008-2011. Hamas also fielded challenges from other groups inside of Gaza, but none were serious in a material sense. Given the hierarchy that was established during this period, it is not surprising that this is when Israel established its strongest deterrence to date against Hamas.

The evidence therefore suggests that inter-factional competition is causally related to Hamas’s susceptibility to deterrence strategies. That said, on the pecking order of important factors it seems to rank lower than elements of statehood. It probably also ranks lower than ideology as well, a group attribute that is so fundamental that it pervades the group’s actions and decision-making processes at nearly every turn (see below).

External Support. The support Hamas received from external actors, including states and other non-state militant groups is not inconsequential. In the early days of the movement, during the first intifada, it was financially supported largely by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states. By 1992, Hamas formed a strategic alliance with Iran and Hezbollah that endured at least until the end of 2011 when Hamas abandoned its Damascus bureau and fundamentally altered its relationship with the “Axis of Resistance.” It was from them that Hamas imported arms and technical know-how, making it a much more lethal group. Hamas also clearly benefited from being allowed to base its external operations first in Amman (1990-1999) and then in Damascus (1999-2011) following the mass arrests of its Gaza and West Bank leadership in 1988 and 1989.
It is hard to imagine Hamas being able to conduct its military campaigns and rise to the level of influence and power that it has without this external support. Time will tell whether the collapse of its headquarters in Damascus and its shifting regional alliances fundamentally alter its calculations where violence is concerned. There is, however, conclusive evidence that part of the decision to dramatically reduce violence against Israel following Cast Lead was based on Hamas’s continued failure to gain international legitimacy beyond its narrow support base in the Middle East. Unlike Hezbollah or al-Qaeda, Hamas, by its own admission, seeks the legitimacy that can only come via recognition by states of the Western world. And despite numerous attempts, including a communiqué entitled “This is What We Struggle For,” released to the world in the late 1990s, the movement was unable to convince any significant segment of Western states that its violence was legitimate.\(^{314}\)

That said, there are examples where Hamas blatantly defied many of the Arab governments from which it seeks support. Among the best examples was the March 2002 Passover Massacre. In that instance, Hamas sent an explicit message to the Arab League that it would fight (literally) any attempt to negotiate with Israel over Palestinian rights by murdering 30 Israelis at a Passover Seder on the same night as the Arab League affirmed the Saudi Peace Initiative in Beirut. The same message was sent, albeit in less dramatic fashion, when Hamas opposed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference attended by most Arab governments.

\(^{314}\) The communiqué was published by the political bureau in Amman and can be found in: Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: A History from Within*, Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2007, Appendix I, pp. 265-270.
If there is a conclusion to be drawn from the external support Hamas derived and its susceptibility to deterrence, it may lay in isolating what external support Hamas deems as important at any given time, as opposed to looking for patterns in external support in general. Viewed through that lens, the fact that Hamas continued with violence in 2002 and halted its violence from 2009-2011, makes more sense. In 2002, while Hamas was engaged in the brutally violent second intifada, Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, and Iraq, which made up the firm base of its support, were happy to see Hamas continue to fight and provided it with the resources to do so. The support of other states at that point were simply less important.

By 2011, when Hamas already controlled Gaza; was preparing for a new round of Palestinian elections; and was seeking international legitimacy, it cared more about its relations with a broader range of states. Moreover, the loss of its Syrian headquarters; the weakness of Hezbollah due to the Arab Spring and the Rafik Hariri tribunal; and the precarious position of Iran as it sought nuclear weapons in the face of crippling economic sanctions, created a situation where Hamas was forced to expand its international support base lest it be left without any significant external patronage. At such a time, a more moderate stance on violence was probably called for in order to gain the support of countries like Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey, which the movement saw as extremely important potential allies. If indeed these conclusions from the dramatic events of 2011 turn out to be correct, then it would provide evidence that external support is correlated to Hamas’s susceptibility to deterrence.
Ideology. For the purposes of this study, ideology was researched as a non-static variable that could fluctuate from period to period like every other variable. Though this illuminated the thinking of Hamas at the times in question, it is problematic from a standpoint of drawing any conclusions about its relationship with deterrence because it appears as though causality works in both directions. For example, one could easily make the case that it was when Hamas was deterred from taking military action that its ideology shifted more toward building than destroying, rather than the other way around. This happened in 2005 when Hamas called a moratorium on suicide bombings and decided to participate in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections; in 2008 when it agreed to the tahadiyeh in order to allow itself the opportunity to govern; and after Cast Lead when continuing the violent struggle against Israel would have severely compromised its long-term goals. Moreover, it was when Hamas was not deterred, during the first and second intifadas, that its rhetoric and ideology was the most destructive. At each instance it seems that, at best, causality worked in both directions. A different reading of the situation could reasonably find that it was deterrence that was affecting a change in ideology more than a change in ideology was affecting deterrence. And if this is the case, then we cannot draw any substantive conclusions about ideology’s correlation with deterrence.

That said, if one accepts that Hamas’s ideology was a static, baseline belief system that is not prone to fluctuation, then this case indicates that ideology has a great deal of bearing on deterrence. In the static case, the ideology of Hamas, which is
that of the Muslim Brotherhood, can best be described as the belief that a Muslim Palestinian state should be established on all of historic Palestine. The best method for achieving that goal is through violent *jihad* against Israel and the long-term reformation of Muslim society toward one that is in accordance with Islamic tradition and *sharia*. Since the MB is part and parcel of the population, such a reformation should be accomplished at the grassroots level by slow and steady Islamization of the population.

That baseline ideology dictates that Hamas behave with more than a modicum of flexibility and pragmatism—the latter of which is a word that is overused in describing the Islamic Resistance Movement only because it is so true. The need to behave as much according to circumstances as to ideology also stems from the fact that Hamas is opposing Israel, rather than an ostensibly Muslim regime, as the MB does in the rest of the Arab world. Adapting to its political and social environment is a trait of the MB everywhere it operates, but because of this circumstance, Hamas was forced to construct its own playbook to a much greater extent than any other branch of its parent organization. Since there is no Sunni Muslim injunction against fighting infidels, as there is against *fitna*, that playbook included using violence. The incorporation of violence, and deciphering the circumstances and the terms under which it should be used, meant that Hamas was constantly reinventing itself.

But the combination of patience, flexibility, and pragmatism, and the fact that the final goal of Hamas—establishing a Muslim Palestinian state—is a constructive one, also dictates what many Hamas leaders have said throughout the history of the movement.
Despite what has seemed at times to be an unquenchable penchant for and dedication to violence, “using force is not an end, it is a means, and therefore Hamas looks at it in such a way,” as Sheik Musleh explained. “If it serves the end objective then it is used. If it disrupts and harms, then it is not used.”

Hamas’s pragmatism is also evidenced by one of the key tenets of Hamas: sabr (patience). As Hamas negotiator Abu Bakr Nofal eloquently stated: “The world is in a hurry. We are not in a hurry.” This contrasts starkly to groups like al-Qaeda, whose religious beliefs dictate that they are in a hurry to bring about their version of a Sunni Muslim utopia in all Muslim lands. Since Hamas is a pragmatic organization that views its long-term goals as more important than its short-term actions and is willing to be patient in achieving those goals, it opens up opportunities for exploitation by would-be deterrers. Those opportunities can be realized by manipulating Hamas into situations where its short-term and long-term goals are in conflict and/or its use of violence would place in jeopardy its long-term objectives.

That is exactly what Israel and the PA did when they held at risk the Hamas dawa network in the West Bank. It is what Israel accomplished during and after Cast Lead when it held at risk the welfare of the Palestinian population and the continued political and territorial control of Hamas in Gaza. And it is what happened in 2005 when the IDF turned the Palestinian public opinion against violence after four years of battle and also held at risk the viability of the Resistance Movement after assassinating nearly an entire

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315 Author interview 6 September 2011 in Ramallah.
generation of Hamas leaders. In each case, Hamas was maneuvered into a position where continuing its attacks would compromise its position with the Palestinian people and impede its ability to reform Palestinian society in its own image. And in each case, Hamas chose to hold its fire until the point where it concluded its short- and long-term goals were no longer in conflict, and/or that violence was the best way to achieve its long-term objectives. As such, there is compelling evidence that Hamas’s baseline ideology, rooted in the reformative belief system of the Muslim Brotherhood, is strongly correlated with its significant susceptibility to deterrence.

*Summary of the Dependent Variable (Deterrence).* There is a clear range of Hamas activity that allows for measuring the efficacy of deterrence. In the very early days of movement, its attacks were limited mainly to Israeli security forces and were not intended to inflict mass casualties. By 1994, this changed with the utilization of suicide bombings against civilian targets, the preferred method of attack during the exceptionally violent period of the second *intifada*, which represents the high range of Hamas violence but not necessarily the low range of deterrence achieved against it due to the strategy Israel pursued for most of the uprising which was focused on Fatah forces.317

Retrospectively, the worst deterrence Israel achieved was actually in the third time period under study (2005-2007), when it was trying any number of ways to deter Hamas and had exceedingly limited success, even though Hamas had mainly given up suicide bombings by that point. By contrast, the strongest deterrence Israel achieved was

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317 The period of 1997-2000, during which there was true quiet from Hamas, is subsumed within the 1997-2005 observation, but it still presents the low end of Hamas’s violent activity.
during the final time period (2007-2011), when Hamas gained by far its strongest military capabilities but used very little of them. Written as a formal equation:

\[
Deterrence (Y) = [Capabilities (X_1) \cdot Intentions (X_2)] - Actions (X_3).
\]

If \([X_1, X_2]\) and \(X_3\) both have ranges between 0 and 1, then where \(Y = 0\), deterrence is non-existent and where \(Y = 1\), deterrence is strategic (or total). In the case of Hamas, if \(Time_3=2005-2007\) and \(Time_4=2007-2011\) then \(Y_{T3} \neq 0\) while there was never a case where \(Y \neq 1\).\(^{318}\) It can also be said that in Hamas’s case, \(Y_{T3} < Y_{T1} < Y_{T2} < Y_{T4}\).

**Summary of Conclusions.** The predictions born out by the theory are not perfect, but they are largely confirmed (see table two pages forward). The baseline ideology of Hamas was very important, at perhaps every crucial juncture, in determining its use-of-force decisions. Based on the data revealed by the research, it is fair to say that in the case of Hamas, elements of statehood, ideology, and inter-factional competition are strongly correlated to its susceptibility to deterrence. While its organizational structure suggests a negative correlation, that correlation is not as strong due (this will be further explicated in the Hezbollah case study). Evidence exists that external support is also correlated, however, a significant portion of this evidence is based on inferences that are drawn from events since the end of 2011 that are far too recent to allow for proper historical perspective. Thus, while it appears likely that external support is a correlated factor, it is possible to say so only with mediocre confidence at this time.

\(^{318}\) Clarification: This final term reads that deterrence of Hamas at Time 3 approached 0 but did not equal 0 while there was never a case where deterrence approached 1.
Table 8.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hamas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987-1997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-2005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak/Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>None/Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2011</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEZBOLLAH CASE STUDY

CHAPTER IX – LEbanese shia background and ORiginS of HEZbollah

On 11 November 1982, a massive explosion leveled the Israeli Defense Forces headquarters in Tyre, a port city in southern Lebanon. The blast killed at least 74 IDF personnel and 14 Arab prisoners, while wounding 20 more. Originally, the IDF claimed a gas leak was responsible for the explosion. But three years later it emerged that Ahmad Qasir, a 15-year-old boy from a Shia village 16 kilometers inland, had driven an explosive-laden car into the IDF headquarters under the auspices of Hezbollah—the Party of God. Thus began the now 30-year struggle between Hezbollah and Israel, as well as Hezbollah’s ascent from a loose group of self-proclaimed “jihadi” resistance fighters to one of the preeminent political-military forces in the Middle East.

In order to understand the Lebanese Shia Islamic movement that is Hezbollah, it

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319 As noted in Chapter II, each case studies is broken down into mini case studies that isolate periods in time in the history of the groups in question. This is due to the fact that the independent variables which drive the main hypotheses are not static. Given that there are a host of independent variables, it would be possible to isolate dozens of time periods for each organization. But to make the case studies more meaningful (and manageable), I am choosing to break the time periods down based on major changes in the variables, not subtle ones. How these decisions are made is based on some subjective judgment on my part and I accept that different decisions could be made. But I believe that for the purposes of this particular research, these time periods are the most logical and most instructive.

Each of the mini-case studies follows the same three-part structure. First, the independent variables of study are examined via a historical narrative. Second, those variables are summarized. Finally, the dependent variable, i.e. the degree to which deterrence was achieved, is examined in a manner that also accounts for Israeli strategy at that time.

As a reminder to the reader, the theory developed in Chapter II states that elements of statehood (political authority, territorial control, and the dependency of a population on a group for its welfare), organizational structure (the clarity of the decision-making process and the degree of command and control exercised by group leaders), inter-factional competition, external support and/or influence, and ideology are predictive of the degree to which non-state militant groups can be deterred. The actual deterrence achieved is a function of those variables and the actions of the defending state.


is important to trace its history and the roots of its ideology, as many of the practices of Shiism and the history of the Lebanese Shia community are integral to the behavior of the organization. Shia Islam emerged due to a split in the followers of Mohammad following the Prophet’s death in 632 C.E. over who should become caliph and lead the ummah (Islamic nation). While the majority Sunni devotees pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr, the Shia followed the banner of Ali, Mohammad’s son-in-law, under the belief that only members of the Prophet’s family to whom he had granted sacred powers of divine interpretation were qualified to lead.\textsuperscript{322} After the deaths of Abu Bakr and his successors Umar and Uthman, Ali was finally selected as caliph. His reign was brief, however, as he was assassinated in 661 after only five years in power. Ali’s Sunni successor Mu’awiyah then had Ali’s first son, Imam Hassan, poisoned in 670. Mu’awiyah then passed the caliph to his own son Yazid.

Ten years later, Yazid’s troops surrounded Ali’s second son, Imam Hussein, in the desert of Karbala (modern day Iraq) with vastly superior numbers. Rather than surrender, Hussein and his troops fought to the death for ten days, choosing to martyr themselves instead of accepting the legitimacy of the Sunni caliph. Until today, the choice by Hussein to accept martyrdom rather than oppression is considered the cornerstone of Shia tradition as a model of courage and assertiveness.\textsuperscript{323} The cultural memory held by Shia of the events in Karbala are so strong that it continues to resonate


The anniversary of Hussein’s martyrdom is commemorated on the tenth day of the Muslim month \textit{Muharram} with the festival of \textit{Ashura}, where Shia men beat their chests and sometimes slash themselves in a ritual gorging in identification with the slain \textit{imam}.

\textsuperscript{323} Norton, pp. 50.
today as a rallying cry and as a guide for Shia behavior.

Equally powerful in the Shia Lebanese psychology are the effects of centuries of subjugation. After Hussein’s death, the Shia numerically became the vastly inferior Muslim sect, comprising to this day only 10-15 percent of the entire global Muslim population. From Southeast Asia to Western Africa, Sunni Islam dominated both politically and religiously with rare exception. No rulers of the *caliphate* after Ali were Shia and after the 12th Century, only rarely and briefly, as in the case of Safavid Dynasty in Persia (1501-1722), did Shia gain political independence anywhere in the world. The minority and blighted status of the Shia was absolutely the case in Lebanon as well, where they were persecuted by the Ottoman empire. The Shia population, which was mostly located in Jabal Amil (the South) and the Beqaa Valley, was economically marginalized as well. There they worked as farmers and poor tradesmen, eking out a subsistence living, for the most part, while state resources were directed mainly to the Sunni and Christian populations in Beirut and the northern districts.

In 1920, Lebanon was carved out of Syria and established as a protectorate by France, which assumed its prerogative to do so based on the mandate it gained over the region following the allied victory in World War I. The move to detach Lebanon from Syria was *not* generally supported by the Shia, who were violently forced into accepting

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324 Though the Ottomans allowed Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Druze the privilege of their own courts and personal status laws, the Shia were relegated to accepting religious dictates of Sunni jurists and were conscripted during wartime by the Ottomans—again, unlike the Sunni population. See: Hamzeh, pp. 10

325 For example, until at least the mid-1940s, there was not a single hospital in southern Lebanon. See: Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah’s Thirty-Year Struggle Against Israel*. New York: Random House, 2011, pp. 14.
the new state and the French-Lebanese Christian alliance that produced it.\textsuperscript{326} Twelve
years after Lebanon was established, a census of dubious reliability counted the Shia as
the third-most populous sect in the new country, following Christian Maronites and Sunni
Muslims.\textsuperscript{327} Thus in 1943, when Lebanon won its independence from France, the terms
of the \textit{mithaq al-watani} (national pact) produced a confessional political system that
guaranteed the Christians control of the presidency, the Sunnis the premiership, and the
Shia the speaker of parliament, which was, until 1989, by far the least powerful of the
three political positions. While the Sunnis and Christians benefited from this
arrangement, and directed state largess toward their communities, the Shia towns and
districts were once again neglected by the state.\textsuperscript{328} And with the exception of a few well-
healed families, Shia were mostly denied state employment as well.\textsuperscript{329}

Centuries of marginalization and subjugation combined with the lingering ethos
of martyrdom produced what some scholars refer to as the “Karbala syndrome”— a
strong persecution complex that sees enemies everywhere and fears attempts to dominate
the Shia \textit{ummah}. As the expert on Shia Islam, Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, writes:

“The legacy of Shiism is more than fourteen hundred years old. It is a legacy of martyrdom,
persecution, torment, suffering, powerlessness, and insecurity, resting on a religiously sanctioned
belief that Islamic history was derailed when political power passed from the hands of the family

\textsuperscript{326} In 1919, a contingent of 4,000 French soldiers joined French warplanes and Christian Maronite forces,
crushing a Shia rebellion and paving the way for France to mold Lebanon based on its alliance with the
Christians. See: Hamzeh, pp. 11
\textsuperscript{327} Norton, pp. 12. The 1932 census was the last one ever taken in Lebanon due to the politically charged
nature of national demographics.
\textsuperscript{329} According to Hamzeh, pp. 12, as of 1946, 40 percent of high-ranking posts in the Lebanese civil service
were occupied by Maronites, 27 percent by Sunnis, and only 3 percent by Shia.
Thus when Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, explained to his followers in 1998 why he was rejecting Western overtures to recognize Hezbollah as a legitimate political party if the group would lay down its arms, he did so in a language all Shia would understand. “We are the sons of Abu Abdullah al-Hussein, who know nothing of treason and who do not sell out their religion for the entire world,” he said. Such is the link that Lebanese Shia still feel today to their ancient ancestor.

As a means of coping with their persecution, Shia communities over the centuries developed the practice of political submissiveness to the Sunnis and other political and religious powers. They also practiced *taqiyya* (strategic fibbing) to conceal their true beliefs and avoid persecution. The transition from political submissiveness to activism began in the mid-20th Century when a Shia population boom coupled with severe economic deprivation in Jabil Amil and the Beqaa led many Shia to move to Beirut or to emigrate to other countries. A second major wave of Shia social and economic dislocation later took place during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1989), which led to a near total collapse of Lebanese state authority and institutions; a hardening of the old sectarian divides; and foreign interference by international and regional powers who favored particular sides in the conflict. These conditions directly affected many of the

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330 Hamzeh, pp. 7.
331 Noe, pp. 191.
332 Palmer Harik, pp. 59.
While they never gained political power, the Shia of Lebanon developed a reputation for ferocious warriors who were not to be needlessly provoked, as their cultural traits of defiance and embracing martyrdom made them dangerous enemies. See: Blanford, pp. 12.
333 The Shia population in Lebanon tripled from 250,000 in 1956 to 750,000 in 1975 (See: Hamzeh, pp. 13). By the end of the civil war in 1990, it was widely believed that the Shia were a plurality in Lebanon.
variables under study regarding Hezbollah, including the web of social-religious institutions it developed for its Shia constituents, its inter-factional competition with Amal, and the essential sponsorship it received from Iran and later Syria throughout its history. The social anomy produced by the war and the history of Shia marginalization also led to a ripe environment for political mobilization and radicalization among Lebanon’s Shia community.

The vacuum of Shia leadership was first filled by Imam Musa al-Sadr, an Iranian-born cleric from a Lebanese family who was educated in the preeminent Shia seminaries of Najaf, Iraq and Qom, Iran. Al-Sadr capitalized on his charisma and religious pedigree to form three key Shia institutions that mobilized the Shia sector around political Islam. The first was the “Supreme Shia Council” of Lebanon in May 1969, of which he served as its leader.\footnote{Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, From Revolution to Institutionalization*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, pp. 54-55.} Using the Council as a platform, al-Sadr issued demands in the military, social, and economic realms, including increased development funding for schools and hospitals in the south. Five years later, al-Sadr founded *Harakat al-Mahrummin* (Movement of the Deprived), the first Shia political movement, which fought discrimination against the Shia and agitated for an end to the confessional political system that legally marginalized them.\footnote{Norton, pp. 20} In 1975, the popular Shia cleric finally founded *Afwak Muquwama al-Lubnaniyya* (The Battalions of Lebanese Resistance or The Lebanese Resistance Detachments). Colloquially called by its Arabic acronym, *Amal* (Hope), the group acted as the main Shia military faction during the Civil War and, at
times, as a proxy for Syrian interests.\footnote{336}

In addition to political activities, al-Sadr began to construct a social welfare net for Lebanese Shia with assistance from Sheik Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, whose philosophy and religious rulings Hezbollah would come to rely on even though he was never formally a member of the group. Fadlallah, who himself returned to Lebanon from Najaf in 1966, established a variety of Shia charity and religious organizations. While al-Sadr’s groups mainly focused on Lebanese issues, those organizations tied to Fadlallah stressed to their members an identity grounded in the transnational Shia community whose ideological roots were in Najaf.\footnote{337} In the late-1970s, Fadlallah also wrote Al-Islam wa-Mantiq al-Quwwa (Islam and the Logic of Force), a treatise in which he exhorted his fellow Shia to reject the submissive path and to use force in opposing oppression.\footnote{338} The text resonated strongly with the community following the expulsion of over 100,000 Shia from Beirut’s Naba’a quarter in 1976 at the beginning of the civil war.

The political-religious mobilization of Lebanon’s Shia took place in the context of a wave of religious radicalism that was sweeping the Shia ummah. Most prominent of all the radical Shia clerics was Ayatollah Sayyed Ruholla Khomeini, who would become the Supreme Leader of Iran in 1979. Like their Muslim Brotherhood and salafi (fundamentalist) counterparts in Sunni Islam, the top echelons of Shia clerics believed in the diagnosis of Abu Ala al-Mawdudi and Sayid Qutb that Islamic society was living in a

\footnote{336} Despite Amal being a militia of Shia, Norton (pp. 21) notes that more Shia fought with multi-confessional parties and militias than with Amal.\footnote{337} Hamzeh, pp. 23. The models developed by al-Sadr and Fadlallah closely resembled that of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood in that they combined religious education with the provision of social services.\footnote{338} Azani, 139.
jahili (barbaric) condition brought upon it by abandoning the sharia and prostrating before Western imperialist powers. Corruption, based on Western influence and shameful collaboration with the West (which included the Soviet Union and communist states) by many Muslim secular leaders, flowed through the ummah as a result. While the Sunni Islamist answer took two forms—the reformist branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the radical branch of salafi groups like al-Qaeda—Khomeini, in the early 1970s, developed the principle of waliyat-al-faqih (guardianship of the jurist-theologian).

Unlike Sunni Islam, which rejects a hierarchical rule of the ummah and believes that religious clerics can issue differing religious interpretations, the Shia for many generations followed the religious dictates of a single imam who was a blood descendent of Mohammad. Khomeini used that precedent to develop his philosophy that if a Shia jurist managed to set up a government, it was the duty of the other Shia jurists to follow his rulings. Though that broke from Shia tradition established after the 12th imam, which allowed for jurists to act independently of one another, Khomeini’s stature among Shia clerics; his insistence that all non-sharia based governments were heretical; and his later success in establishing clerical rule in Iran convinced many Shia to accept him as wali-al-faqih (the jurist-theologian). Such a stature meant he alone among his Shia devotees possessed sacred knowledge to interpret hidden meanings in the Koran and therefore his religious rulings must be obeyed.

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339 When Imam Mahdi, the 12th imam, went into occultation in 941 C.E. claiming he would one day return, his deputies met to choose a mujtahid who would fill in as the supreme clerical ruler until that day even though the mujtahid were not viewed as infallible like the imams.
340 Hamzeh, pp. 31
In Khomeini’s world, much like the Muslim Brotherhood, Islam comprised a total way of life. As Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheik Naim Qassem later wrote, the sharia addresses “all societal concerns, events and arising queries.”341 Similar to the MB and salafis, Khomeini’s philosophy was grounded in jihad.342 While the principle of jihad was also prominent in Sunni interpretations of Islam, Khomeini built on Shiism and augmented the jihadi philosophy with the principle of martyrdom, painting the giving of one’s life as eternal bliss and dignity.343 “As Shiia, we welcome any opportunity for sacrificing our blood. Our nation looks forward to an opportunity for self-sacrifice and martyrdom,” he said.344 “Red death is much better than black life.” During the Iran-Iraq War, Khomeini put that philosophy into practice, ordering members of his Bassidji militia, sometimes children, to walk through fields of land mines in order to clear them out.345

In addition to advocating for the violent overthrow of all non-Islamic governments, Khomeini preached a particular hatred of the West and all its manifestations, including Israel. Muslims should continue their struggle to crush American hegemony and uproot the “cancerous gland” (Israel) which was implanted in

342 The types of jihad Khomeini defined were the “greater jihad,” an internal struggle waged by Muslims to free themselves of the bonds of material desires that weaken the soul, and the “smaller jihad,” the external struggle to violently resist the enemies of Islam. Similar principles exist in Sunni Islam.
344 Alagha, pp. 92
345 Khomeini also stressed that the greater jihad should be undertaken by Muslims before the smaller jihad, which explains to this day why the most elite Hezbollah forces—those whose goal it is to be martyrs—are limited to personnel who display extreme religious devotion. See: Noe, pp. 202.
the midst of Muslim lands, he said.³⁴⁶ Khomeini’s religious-ideological preachings and the dangers it posed to the secular Baath Party in Iraq led to the expulsion of many leading Shia clerics and students who studied in Najaf with Khomeni in the 1960s and ’70s. Among those clerics and students were Sheik Fadlallah, and the future secretaries general of Hezbollah Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah. While Khomeini moved on to exile in Paris, the Lebanese contingent at Najaf returned to their home country, where the political Islamic experiment begun by al-Sadr had gained much traction. Nasrallah, Musawi, and other militant Shia from their ranks joined Amal, whose fortunes as a result of the Lebanese Civil War had plummeted; that is until the mysterious disappearance of al-Sadr in Libya in 1978 once again galvanized the Lebanese Shia community. “The returnees from Iraq brought with them revolutionary fervor and the commitment to change their societies,” writes Richard Augustus Norton, an expert on Hezbollah. “They shared antipathy toward Israel and loyalty to Iran… [They] were instructed… to infiltrate secular Amal and reform it from within.”³⁴⁷ One year following al-Sadr’s disappearance, the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the ascendance of Khomeini to the position of wali-al-faqih provided even more momentum to the political-Shia Islamist cause.

The ascendance of religious-political Shiism in Lebanon coincided with the first major Israeli operations inside that country since Israel’s War of Independence in 1948. As a result of its expulsion from Jordan in 1970, the Palestinian Liberation Organization set up camp in Lebanon, mainly in the south, in the late 1960s and early ’70s and began a

³⁴⁶ Alagha, pp. 134.
³⁴⁷ Norton, pp. 31
decade-long terrorist campaign against Israel from its newly claimed territory. Having established a “state within a state,” thousands of PLO fighters launched over 1,000 rockets and mortars at northern Israeli settlements while its militiamen infiltrated Israel and staged a series of extremely bloody attacks against the Israeli civilian population.\(^{348}\)

After a particularly deadly terrorist attack on 11 March 1978 in which 37 Israelis were killed when PLO fighters hijacked a bus on Israel’s coastal road, and after years of limited responses, Israel launched Operation Litani. During the week-long operation, 25,000 IDF troops penetrated Lebanon and attacked PLO targets throughout the south of the country, resulting in at least several hundred deaths and more than 200,000 temporarily internally displaced people.\(^{349}\) When the IDF withdrew behind Israeli lines three months later, it designated a 10 km-wide security belt inside southern Lebanon where it left in charge the Christian “Army of Free Lebanon” led by Saad Haddad.\(^{350}\)

Of course, with the IDF gone, the PLO resumed its infiltrations and rocket attacks against the Jewish state, at points turning cities like Kiryat Shmoneh in northern Israel into ghosts towns.\(^{351}\) Israel responded by massive but abbreviated attacks into Lebanon, including bombings of Beirut that resulted in hundreds of deaths.\(^{352}\) Though Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin reached a ceasefire with the PLO in 1981 that brought quiet to northern Israel and southern Lebanon, leading members of Israel’s defense establishment,

\[^{348}\text{Daniel Byman, } A \text{ High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 60.}\]
\[^{349}\text{Byman, pp. 64.}\]
\[^{351}\text{Byman, pp. 65.}\]
\[^{352}\text{Byman, pp. 62.}\]
most prominently Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and Army Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, still advocated an expanded military operation in Lebanon in order to deal the PLO a fatal blow and provide security for northern Israel. On 3 June 1982, the Abu Nidal Organization shot and wounded the Israeli Ambassador to London Shlomo Argov. Though Abu Nidal was not allied with the PLO, the move provided the pretext for Israel to break the ceasefire, which had mostly held, and embark on Operation Peace for the Galilee. Despite initial goals that focused only on routing the PLO from Lebanon, it would be 18 years before the final Israeli troops would leave the country—and they would not do so on their own terms.

It took the IDF only days to push through 15,000 full-time PLO fighters, tank forces and artillery units. Meanwhile the Israeli Air Force downed 86 Syrian aircraft without losing one of its own and destroyed Syrian air defenses in the Beqaa Valley along the Lebanese-Syrian frontier. By the end of one week, the IDF had surrounded Beirut and forced the PLO to evacuate to Tunisia under cover of the American-French-Italian Multi-National Forces. In the initial invasion and in the following months as the IDF shelled pockets of Beirut, it is estimated that over 17,000 people died. Syrian and PLO fighters were among those but the majority were civilians.

Like many Lebanese, especially in the south, those Shia that did not fight

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353 Syria had originally joined the Lebanese Civil War on the side of the pro-Western Christians against the PLO and the Sunni Arabs as a means of maintaining its own internal stability. But as Byman (pp. 63) notes, “by the end of Lebanon’s civil war in 1990, Syria had worked with every faction in Lebanon in constant attempts to ensure that it remained the country’s powerbroker.”

354 Byman, pp. 67.
alongside the PLO had largely come to resent the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{355} Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, more than 100,000 Palestinian refugees swamped the Lebanese economy with cheap labor, undercutting Shia workers.\textsuperscript{356} Then in the 1970s and early ’80s, the overbearing PLO presence in the south and the Israeli reprisals against Shia territory that PLO actions provoked, stirred even more resentment and provoked a mass migration of Shia to the \textit{Dahiye}, an overcrowded southern suburb of Beirut which henceforth became the third major Shia population center in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{357} Thus when IDF troops returned to southern Lebanon in 1982, they were showered with rice and cheers from a Shia population that was grateful the PLO had been uprooted.\textsuperscript{358}

But rather than sticking to the declared mission, the IDF marched straight onto Beirut where it would stay for the next three years, immersing itself in the Lebanese Civil War on the side of the Christians.\textsuperscript{359} In the early days of the IDF presence, like many Shia, Amal’s new leader Nabhi Berri chose not to oppose Israel. Moreover, Berri aligned Amal with Bashir Gamayel, who Israel installed as president of Lebanon. However, those decisions by Berri were completely antithetical to the ideology of the Amal members who studied in Najaf and who were now religiously devoted to Ayatollah Khomeini as \textit{wali-al-faqhi} following his establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979. Thus in 1982, the core Islamist contingent of Amal split off from the group in protest of Berri’s refusal

\textsuperscript{355} Even with the creation of Amal, many Shia fought on different sides of the Lebanese Civil War, including for Palestinian groups that generally paid relatively well for their services. See: Norton, pp. 16-17
\textsuperscript{356} Norton, pp. 14.
\textsuperscript{357} Palmer Harik, pp. 19. Also, in the 1980s, the \textit{Dahiye} would become fertile breeding ground for Hezbollah recruiting and in the 1990s it would become headquarters to much of its operations.
\textsuperscript{358} Blanford, pp. 3.
\textsuperscript{359} It is widely believed that far from a limited operation to route the PLO, it was always the intention of Sharon and Eitan to intervene in the Lebanese Civil War and force the formation of a government in Beirut that was friendly to Israel.
to fight Israel and his alliance with Gamayel.

Two days following Israel’s 1982 invasion, Khomeini confirmed that he saw “no difference between the fronts in the south of Iran [against Iraq] and in the south of Lebanon.” Seeking to “export” the Islamic revolution and fight the United States and Israel wherever he could, Khomeini recognized the opportunity presented to him and sent 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guard members to the Beqaa to train, coordinate with, and further indoctrinate the former Amal Islamists and other assorted pro-Iranian Shia radicals who were religiously devoted to him. Indeed, Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem writes that “as soon as the Iranian Revolution was declared victorious… the inquisition [by Hezbollah’s founders] began into the appropriate means of liaising with the Islamic Revolution’s leadership.”

Other groups of Shia fundamentalists joined the Amal splinter group in the Beqaa. Among them was Imad Mughniyah, who would later become one of the world’s most skilled and most wanted terrorists. Sheik Ragheb Harb, a disciple of Sheik Fadlallah and another member of the Najaf cadre, also relocated to Beqaa at the same time, and took with him a group of Shia Islamist devotees ready to fight Israel. Though the loose group of Lebanese Shia revolutionaries committed to common cause lacked a name for themselves at the time, they would choose one in 1985 that would later evoke strong

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360 Blanford, pp. 43.
361 Qassem, pp. 63.

Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli, the second secretary general of Hezbollah who was expelled from the group following ideological differences in the early 1990s, adds that “when the [Israeli] invasion happened, it accelerated” Khomeini’s plans to spread the Islamic revolution to the front-lines of the Arab-Israeli conflict. See: Blanford, pp. 43.
feelings around the region from friend and foe alike: Hezbollah.

By the time these founders of Hezbollah had coalesced in the Beqaa Valley, much had changed among the Shia community in Lebanon in the preceding two decades. As a result of the (1) Islamic Revolution in Iran, (2) the religious-political mobilization of al-Sadr and Fadlallah, (3) the Lebanese Civil War, and (4) the Israeli invasion, Lebanon’s Shia population morphed “from a passive marginal clan in a multiethnic country to an activist community, belonging to a global Islamic entity under the leadership of Iran and standing at the forefront of the Islamic struggle against the West,” writes Eitan Azani, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism and an expert on Lebanese Shia. Now, their struggle, imbued with the ethos of martyrdom, a sense of historical injustice, and the tradition of defiance, would take on a new form.

*Summary of Independent Variables, Pre-1982*

Unlike Hamas, which came from the Muslim Brotherhood, there was no particular precursor organization for Hezbollah. There were a number of Shia social-religious-political institutions, but none can be said to have morphed into Hezbollah. Therefore, no elements of statehood were present and there was no organizational structure whatsoever. There was the ideology of the Islamic Revolution which would become the ideology of Hezbollah upon the group’s founding. That ideology was infused in the future leaders of Hezbollah over many years of study in Qom and Najaf with like-minded Shia revolutionaries, including Ayatollah Khomeini. Indeed, the ideological

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362 Azani, pp. 56.
divergence between Lebanese Shia aligned with Khomeini and the more secular Nabhi Berri led to the split in Amal which contributed to the birth of Hezbollah. Over the coming years, those two main Shia groups would engage in heated inter-factional competition for the support of Lebanese Shia, at times resorting to mass violent confrontation. Finally, there was the first vestiges of external support from Iran, which began upon Khomeini’s assumption of power in the Islamic Republic and his policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution. That support would later grow to hundreds of millions of dollars per year in aid of all kinds and the provisioning and training of a well-equipped quasi-army.
HEZBOLLAH CASE STUDY

CHAPTER X – HEZBOLLAH, 1982-1985

In the late summer of 1982, Israeli soldiers casually strolled the streets of Sidon and Tyre, shopping in markets and catching movies in local cinemas.\(^{363}\) Israeli businessmen drove the short distance from the border to explore new opportunities with their neighbors to the north, and even some tourists came to visit what was previously forbidden ground. In the aftermath of the IDF’s defeat of the PLO and the latter’s expulsion to Tunisia, Israelis were welcome guests of the Shia and Christians in southern Lebanon.

Unbeknownst to Israel, however, a group of radical Lebanese Shia clerics and militants had gathered in Lebanon’s Beqaa Valley to the east around the ancient city of Baalbek. Under the explicit instructions of Ayatollah Ruhollah Komeini, who met a number of them in August 1982 in Teheran, they founded an Islamist Shia movement to fight Israel, the United States and the West’s Lebanese allies.\(^{364}\) At the beginning, this disparate group of clerics and militants filled Beqaa’s fields with noise and dust that resembled a “scuffle of camels” in the desert, according to Hezbollah’s first secretary general Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli, referring to the generally disorganized group of fighters at the time.\(^{365}\) But with the assistance of 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps militiamen and advisers that entered the Beqaa with Syria’s consent and logistical aid,


\(^{365}\) Hamzeh, pp. 24.
they were soon melded into a potent militant organization that carried out spectacular attacks against their targets and dramatically altered the course of regional politics and the Lebanese Civil War raging at the time.\(^{366}\)

Between August and September, the leaders of the various Beqaa factions established the “Committee of Nine,” who were almost all Shia clerics, to lead the nascent organization.\(^{367}\) Three representatives each from the Islamist branch of Amal, the clerics of the Beqaa Valley, and other Lebanese Shia Islamist organizations were elected to the committee.\(^{368}\) Two years later, the same people would form the first *majlis shura* (consultative council) of Hezbollah—the body that, along with Iran, would set the organization’s main objectives and strategy.\(^{369}\) But in those first years, Hezbollah acted more as an umbrella movement for at least seven different organizations that held similar pro-Iranian, Islamist agendas.\(^{370}\) Until 1989, there was no single leader of the party or general secretariat.\(^{371}\) "Old Games, New Rules: Conflict on the Israel-Lebanon Border," *International Crisis Group*, 18 November 2002, Middle East Report No. 7, pp. 9-10.

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\(^{366}\) Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem comments on the assistance provided by Syria. See: Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*. Beirut: Saqi, 2010, pp. 66. This assertion is supported by Barak Ben-Zur (author interview in Herzeliyah 9 May 2012), the head of the IDF’s counter-terrorism division from 1991-1994 and an expert on Hezbollah.


\(^{368}\) Qassem, pp. 65

\(^{369}\) Qassem, pp. 128-129.

Khomeini, and according to the principle of *wilayat-al-faqih* in which we believe.”

The 2,000 or so members operated underground with “no institutions, no wide-ranging internal organizational structure” and were present only in the Beqaa, Beirut, and the South.

As conceived of by the Committee of Nine, Hezbollah’s original manifesto had three main elements: the recognition of Islam as the “comprehensive, complete, and appropriate program for a better life;” that “resistance against Israeli occupation” using the strategy of *jihad* was the “ultimate confrontation priority;” and recognition of Ayatollah Khomeini as the *wali-al-faqhi*, the successor to the Prophet Mohammad, and therefore the supreme religious leader whose “commands and proscriptions must be obeyed.”

The ideology of the new organization was far more revolutionary than reformist, as it committed to overthrowing the Lebanese regime and replacing it with a government based on *sharia*. Its other two main goals of the period were the expulsion of all foreign forces from Lebanon and the liberation of Jerusalem from Israel. “We wanted our own organization, which would be more pan-Islamic and supportive of the Palestinians [than Amal],” said Sheik Tufayli, Hezbollah’s second secretary general. “We wanted it to be completely dependent on Islamic law and not influenced by nationalist ideologies.” At least with other Islamists, Hezbollah did attempt some form of cooperation, engaging Sunni Lebanese and Palestinian clerics in an attempt to smooth

373 Noe, pp. 128-129.
374 Qassem, pp. 64.
375 Azani, pp. 63.
376 Blanford, pp. 47.
over some of the differences between them.\textsuperscript{377}

Whether in the long run Hezbollah could have established itself and grown as an organization without the extensive external support it received throughout the years is doubtful but debatable.\textsuperscript{378} However it is safe to say that without Iranian and Syrian assistance, Hezbollah could never have emerged so quickly nor had such an immediate impact as it did. Aside from the initial and considerable financial support and military hardware that Hezbollah would receive from Iran—aid that would grow into the hundreds of millions of dollars per year—the Islamic Republic was also instrumental in establishing Hezbollah’s military proficiency. The first training camps run by the IRGC near the village of Janta lasted 45 days and consisted of basic fitness, religious instruction, and military skills such as ambushing Israeli patrols, handling AK-47s and building improvised explosive devises (a skill they would later export to Iraqi militias following the 2003 American invasion).\textsuperscript{379} Promising recruits were sent onto Iran for three-month advanced courses. It was at the camps in the Beqaa that Hezbollah found its primary source of fighters for the “Islamic Resistance,” the military wing of the party.\textsuperscript{380}

Iran’s involvement with Hezbollah was not limited to its extensive financial and material support. Rather, it was of such a degree that, especially in the early years, it is widely believed that the group took orders from Teheran. “Everything that was done by

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\textsuperscript{377} Blanford, pp. 52.
\textsuperscript{378} The Hezbollah expert Amal Saad-Ghorayeb contends that even Hezbollah acknowledges that the movement’s achievements would have taken 50 years longer without Iranian and Syrian backing. See Daniel Byman, \textit{A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism}. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 213.
\textsuperscript{379} Blanford, pp. 54-56 and Byman, pp. 213.
\textsuperscript{380} Qassem, pp. 137.
\end{flushleft}
Hezbollah, it was coordinated by the Iranians,” said Col. (Ret.) Barak Ben-Zur, who headed the IDF’s counter-terrorism bureau from 1991 to 1994 and dealt extensively with Hezbollah. The IRGC and Iranian intelligence bureau were the two main interlocutors for Hezbollah with the Islamic Republic, he said, and at least until the mid 1990s Hezbollah remained squarely under the direction of Iran. For the next 30 years, this arrangement allowed Iran to inject itself into the Levant by proxy, complicating Arab-Israeli peace efforts and expanding the influence of the Shia population inside Lebanon.

Hezbollah’s relationship with Syria, particularly in its early years, was more transactional in nature and based on some mutual interests. Syria’s leadership is Alawi, an even smaller sect of Islam than Shiism that is regarded by Sunnis as even farther from Islam’s true tenets. Like the Shia, Alawites venerate Ali, making the two sects closer religiously. But in the 1970s and ’80s, Syria, a secular state, sponsored Amal, Hezbollah’s main rival for influence in the Lebanese Shia community. Moreover, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad was cautious in his support of whatever faction in Lebanon he was backing, preferring that none of them grew so strong as to challenge his primacy in Lebanese affairs. He also feared that a rise of the Shia in Lebanon could alienate the majority Sunni population in Syria, thus jeopardizing his own rule.

The trigger events leading to Syria’s cooperation with the Iranian program in Lebanon occurred in rapid succession. Following Israel’s 1982 invasion, the entrance of the Multi-National Forces led by the United States and the appointment of the pro-Western Bashir al-Gamayel as Lebanon’s president in August saw Syria’s fortunes in

381 Author interview 9 May 2012 in Herzeliyah.
Lebanon hit a nadir. To counter those developments, Syria permitted the IRGC presence in the Beqaa Valley and along the Syrian border because it shared with Iran common enemies in Israel and the United States. Still, Syrian support for Hezbollah was initially limited to cautious coordination on security issues and the facilitation of weapons and personnel transfers between Iran and Lebanon. Damascus also hedged that support by continuing to back Amal and by keeping a watchful eye over Hezbollah’s activities that it did nothing to damage Syrian interests.

In parallel to developing its military capabilities, Hezbollah also built off of the institutional history of Shia social welfare organizations in Lebanon and began constructing its own social-religious services network. In the wake of the Israeli invasion in 1982, the Khomeini Support Committee was established in the Beqaa Valley, providing food, clothing, and monthly stipends to impoverished families in the region. That same year, the Martyr’s Association and Association for the Wounded were established and funded by Ayatollah Khomeini as sister branches to similar Iranian groups. To this day, the Martyr’s Association takes care of the families of Hezbollah militants who were killed in action, providing monthly stipends for widows, high-quality and free education for children, and a network of social workers and other community activists that take care of the family in any number of ways. One year later, Hezbollah affiliates were providing health care services and garbage collection in the Dahiyeh, while during the early years of the 1980s a number of Islamic seminaries were

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382 Qassem, pp. 395; Palmer Harik, pp. 39.
383 Hamzeh, pp. 52 and Blanford, pp. 81.
established in the southern Beirut neighborhood.\[^{384}\]

The provision of social services was one of the avenues employed by Hezbollah in its inter-factional competition with Amal. Throughout Hezbollah’s meteoric rise, its relationship with Amal, which until the late 1980s constituted the preeminent Shia political-military faction in Lebanon, was often of a competitive nature. In the early years, Hezbollah could not compete with Amal in terms of popularity among Lebanon’s Shia, as Amal and the people who founded it had been advocating for Shia rights and improved state services for the better part of two decades. But after 1984, when Amal Chief Nabih Berri made the unpopular move to join the Lebanese unity government, Hezbollah pounced on the opportunity by working with Iran to convince members of Amal to defect to Hezbollah.\[^{385}\] In later years, the competition between the two factions would escalate into bloody confrontation.

The Autumn of 1982 was when Israel’s fortunes in Lebanon began to go south. The first stirrings of anti-Israeli sentiment among the Shia arose during a commemoration of Musa al-Sadr’s disappearance on 31 August when the crowds shouted slogans against Israel and the events in the town of Jibshit culminated in violent confrontation with the IDF. Two weeks later, President al-Gamayel was assassinated by a car bombing plotted by Syria. The assassination triggered a wave of revenge attacks by Christian forces against their enemies in Lebanon, including the massacres of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps between 15 and 17 September, an event for which

\[^{384}\] Blanford, pp. 81, on garbage collection; Palmer Harik, pp. 83, on health services; and Azani, pp. 72, on Islamic seminaries.

\[^{385}\] Azani, pp. 64.
Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was held indirectly responsible. After arranging for the replacement as president of al-Gamayel by his brother Amin, the IDF withdrew from Beirut on 28 September only to see its headquarters in Tyre destroyed by Hezbollah’s first suicide bombing on 11 November. That bombing, which killed at least 74 Israelis, was the first, but not the last massive attack by Hezbollah in the years to come.

In the succeeding months, Hezbollah irregular forces initiated a campaign of violence against the IDF and its Lebanese collaborators. Another suicide attack killed six IDF soldiers on 13 April 1983 and then on 18 April a suicide bomber hit the US embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people. Among those killed were 17 Americans, including much of the CIA’s Beirut staff. Though the bombing was claimed by a group calling itself “Islamic Jihad,” it is all but certain that it was perpetrated by Hezbollah personnel acting with Syrian and Iranian support.\textsuperscript{386}

The American-sponsored May 17 Accord signed between newly installed President Amin al-Gamayel and Israel, which called for peace between the two countries, was the last gasp attempt by Israel and the US to draw the new political reality in Lebanon. On 14 October another Hezbollah suicide bombing killed 29 more IDF soldiers in Tyre. Then, two days later, an Israeli military convoy attempted to drive through the ritual Ashura commemorations in the Shia village of Nabatiyya, sparking a riot in which several villagers were killed and wounded. After the Ashura riots, what had been a violent campaign waged almost entirely by the Islamic radicals of the nascent Hezbollah movement turned into a popular resistance joined by many Amal members and other Shia

\textsuperscript{386} Azani, pp. 179
as well.\textsuperscript{387} Shia clerics issued \textit{fatawa} (religious rulings) forbidding cooperation with Israel and Shia recruits to Israeli-allied militia deserted their posts.\textsuperscript{388} Only one week after the Ashura incident, Hezbollah struck its biggest blow of all when suicide bombers leveled the US Marine barracks and the French Paratroopers station in the Beirut Airport, killing 241 American and 58 French military personnel. A US commission later found that Iran was deeply involved in the planning and execution of the attack. Soon thereafter, the Multi-National Forces withdrew from Lebanon, leaving Israel and its allied Christian militias to defend their interests without international support.

For the next two years, Hezbollah continued its pattern of attacks against the IDF and its Lebanese collaborators and by 1984 an Israeli soldier was dying every three days.\textsuperscript{389} Hezbollah also engaged in kidnapping, holding hostage for years at a time and sometimes executing dozens of foreign diplomats, aid workers, journalists, and academics. The campaign to sew fear amongst the expatriate community was designed to encourage them to leave Lebanon. It was only in 1991 that the last non-Israeli hostage held by Hezbollah was released.\textsuperscript{390} Again, in these early years, the kidnappings were \textit{not} organized by a central Hezbollah command structure, which was non-existent at the time, but were undertaken by “a cabal of militants,” gangs, and other groups many of whom were linked to the Party, as the Hezbollah scholar Augustus Richard Norton writes.\textsuperscript{391}

\textsuperscript{388} Blanford, pp. 58.
\textsuperscript{389} Norton, pp. 81
\textsuperscript{390} Norton, pp. 41.
\textsuperscript{391} Norton, pp. 73.
By the Spring of 1984, the government of Lebanon had abrogated the May 17 treaty with Israel under duress of Syria and other anti-American Lebanese forces and the American-Italian-French Multinational Forces had withdrawn. With casualties mounting far beyond the Israeli public’s expectations and Israel’s political fortunes in Lebanon fading, the mood in the IDF was grim and comparisons were being made between the Lebanon War and the United States’ ill-fated venture in Vietnam. On 14 January 1985, the Israeli government announced it would undertake a phased redeployment to the old security strip it had established along Lebanon’s border with Israel between 1978 and 1982. That “security zone” would be maintained in order to prevent the return to the status quo ante of the summer of 1970-1982 period when infiltration of terrorists and the launching of rockets into Israel was common. In June, the redeployment was completed. Israel still held 1,100 square kilometers of territory comprising 168 villages and towns and around 10 percent of Lebanon.

Summary of Independent Variables, Hezbollah 1982-1985

Elements of Statehood. Hezbollah controlled no territory and held no political authority in this time period. It did, however, build off of pre-existing Shia social welfare institutions and begin to provide health care and garbage collection in the Dahiyeh. It also established associations for the families of martyrs and wounded militants, and provided for impoverished families in the Beqaa Valley in the wake of the Israeli invasion,

392 Azani, pp. 183
demonstrating an affinity for the Lebanese Shia population from its early days.

**Organizational Structure.** The “Committee of Nine” was established to guide the nascent organization in its foundation phase. Nonetheless, Hezbollah was, according to both its own leadership and independent observers, more of an underground “current” or “cabal” of like-minded pro-Iranian religious militants than a proper organization with a coherent structure. As such, there was only an inkling of an observed chain of command.

**Ideology.** The ideology of Hezbollah in its initial years was more revolutionary than reformist. It called for the overthrow of the Lebanese government and the establishment of an Islamic regime in its stead. Hezbollah’s original manifesto pledged religious allegiance to Ayatollah Khomeini as the wali-al-faqhi and regarded waging violent jihad against Israel and the United States as its chief goals, including the liberation of Jerusalem from Jewish control.

**External Support.** In many ways, Hezbollah owes its very existence to Iran. Without the financial support, transfers of military provisions, and training from 1,500 IRGC militiamen, it would never have gotten off the ground in 1982. That support continued and grew from 1982 to 1985 as Hezbollah acquitted itself well in fighting Israeli and Western forces. It is widely accepted that, particularly in these early years, Hezbollah took direct orders from Teheran, whose intelligence agency and Revolutionary Guard directed Hezbollah’s operations. Syrian support was also instrumental in that it provided the logistical conduit for the Iran-Hezbollah relationship to function by allowing
the Iranian presence in Lebanon and facilitating the transfers of men and military equipment between Iran and its proxy. Damascus also provided limited political cover in Lebanon for Hezbollah during this time, though Assad was chiefly allied with Amal.

Inter-Factional Competition. Much of the original Hezbollah leadership broke off from Amal, setting into motion a competition between the two Shia factions that would last well into the 1990s. In this early period, Amal was the dominant party while Hezbollah was forced to prove its capabilities and earn the support of Lebanese Shia.
Table 10.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hezbollah (1982-1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theoretical Prediction. Based on the variables from 1982-1985, it would not be theoretically possible for a state to establish deterrence against Hezbollah during this time period.
Until it announced its withdrawal to the security zone in January 1985, the IDF employed a heavy-handed response against Hezbollah’s attacks. The problem was that Israel often hit other parties as it lacked situational awareness regarding exactly who its enemies were. As a result, the IDF would blow up houses of Amal supporters or attack Palestinian or Syrian targets after it was targeted by Hezbollah. In November 1983, the Israeli Air Force started targeting Hezbollah and managed to hit specific Hezbollah targets—namely some of training camps in the Beqaa Valley. But it also engaged in mass arrests of “suspected” Shia militants, sending perhaps 10,000 to jail in 1983 alone. However, after Hezbollah captured six IDF soldiers and one Air Force pilot, Israel released 4,500 of them in a prisoner exchange on 23 November. In total, Hezbollah executed five suicide bombings in 1982 and 1983, killing at least 550 people. One of those bombings, an attack on the Israeli military government in Tyre on 4 November, killed 60 people and shattered the relationship between Israel and the wing of the Shia community that was willing to cooperate with it.

On 16 February 1984, the IDF did hit one top Hezbollah target—Sheik Rabheb

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394 In subsequent chapters, a more thorough examination of Israeli strategy during the respective time periods will be presented. In this chapter, however, only a short review of Israeli strategy is undertaken due to the lack of data available which results from three main factors. First, much less is written about this period. Second, it is farther in the past than other periods and therefore the memories of those interviewed for this project were not as cohesive nor expansive. Third, and most importantly, as noted in this chapter, Hezbollah was hardly a coherent organization during this time period. Thus, Israeli strategy was not focused on combating “Hezbollah” per se, but rather was built upon fighting a general insurgency against the Israeli and larger foreign presence in Lebanon.

395 Alagha, pp. 282.
396 Byman, pp. 216.
397 Alagha, pp. 282.
398 Hamzeh, pp. 82.
399 Azani, pp. 66.
Harb, a 32-year-old leader of the group in Jibshit, a village known for its militant opposition to Israel. Harb was killed by three sniper bullets fired from behind a wall in his garden.\footnote{Byman, pp. 216.} But that assassination, along with the arrests and other IDF operations, completely failed to deter Hezbollah, as Hezbollah and groups operating with it launched approximately 50 attacks per month in 1984.\footnote{Blanford, pp. 67.} On 12 April 1984, another suicide car bombing by Hezbollah killed six more IDF soldiers.\footnote{Blanford, pp. 64.} Then in September, Hezbollah targeted the US Embassy in East Beirut—where it was moved following the previous attack—killing 20 more people, most of them local staff. Moreover, with the collapse of the Lebanese army and absence of a central government as of February 1984, Hezbollah and other groups went on a kidnapping spree and branched out to hijacking airplanes.\footnote{Over 100 foreigners were kidnapped in Lebanon between 1982 and 1990, see Azani pp. 70. On the airplane hijacking, see Azani, pp. 178.} In response to the kidnappings, foreign governments negotiated for the release of their citizens with Hezbollah, making political payments at the behest of the Party and Iran.\footnote{Hezbollah leaders have consistently denied responsibility for the kidnappings as well as the bombings claimed by “Islamic Jihad,” see Qassem pp. 384. It is a claim that is generally not viewed as credible.} Hezbollah militants, Palestinian prisoners, and other jihadis were freed from captivity, weapons supplies to Iraq were cut, and other arms were channeled to Iran as part of the deals to free hostages.

After the Israeli cabinet voted to withdraw to the security zone in January 1985, the IDF briefly switched tactics, employing a “velvet glove” approach that focused on dismantling its own military infrastructure and moving it into the security zone rather
than combating the guerilla forces that were harassing its positions.\textsuperscript{405} However, the withdrawal only increased Hezbollah’s motivation to bleed the Israelis, and attacks against the IDF doubled to around 100 per month. Hezbollah also began targeting senior members of the IDF forces in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{406} As a result, Israel implemented a severe crackdown. A night-time curfew was thrown on the occupied south; motorcycles were banned; crossing points into the occupation zone were sealed; another wave of arrests of the local male population was carried out; homes of suspected militants were bulldozed; and at least 15 people were killed in raids—all to no avail. In June, Israel completed its withdrawal to the security zone and exchanged over 1,000 prisoners for three captured IDF soldiers.\textsuperscript{407} Meanwhile, the Higher Shia Council of Lebanon called for a “relentless jihad” against Israeli troops as long as they remained on Lebanese ground.\textsuperscript{408}

\textsuperscript{405} Blanford, pp. 67-68.  
\textsuperscript{406} Blanford, pp. 68.  
\textsuperscript{407} Byman, pp. 220.  
\textsuperscript{408} Blanford, pp. 70.
**Table 10.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hezbollah (1982-1985)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings.** Various methods were employed against Hezbollah by Israel and by Western governments from 1982 to 1985 in order to deter its attacks. None succeeded. At each stage, Hezbollah was able to maintain or even increase its attacks against the IDF, Israel’s Christian allies, and other foreign forces. At least six suicide bombings were perpetrated by Hezbollah, killing around 600 people, along with kidnappings and airline hijackings. In addition to there being no discernable impact on the frequency of Hezbollah’s attacks, the group demonstrated no discrimination in the targets it attacked, nor the methods it chose to use. It is safe to say that deterrence against Hezbollah **was not achieved** during this time period, confirming the predicted results.
After nearly three years of underground existence, Hezbollah announced itself publicly on 16 February 1985 in the form of its “Open Letter to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World,” read aloud by party Spokesman Ibrahim Amine al-Sayyed. According to the manifesto, the Party of God self-identified as an organization that hued the “Islamic revolutionary-political path.” The announcement came one year to the day after the killing by Israel of Sheik Ragheb Harb, one of the first leaders of the movement, and was dedicated to him. The name “Hezbollah,” which was vetted by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was chosen from the Koranic quotation: “Verily, the Party of God shall be victorious.”

At this stage, Hezbollah’s fealty to Khomeini was more than clear. In the very first section of the Open Letter, Hezbollah states that it follows “the orders of a single wise and just command represented by the guardianship of the wali-al-faqhi (jurist-theologian), currently embodied in the supreme Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Musawi al-Khomeini.” It was the “religious duty” of all Hezbollah personnel to follow his “legitimate and religious responsibility” and to answer “the call of jihad” when he so declares. The “religious edicts made by the faqhi,” who is referred to as “the authority of

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www.oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=406971


411 Open Letter, Section 1.
emulation,” are one of the three “main sources” of Hezbollah’s culture, along with the Koran and the Sunna. These Islamic sources are “clear, uncomplicated, and accessible to all without exception and they need no theorization or philosophy. All they need is abidance and application.”

The Open Letter also identified the communities with which Hezbollah felt kinship. As an Islamist revolutionary movement, Hezbollah is “an umma tied to the Muslims in every party of the world” and it is not a “closed organizational party nor a narrow political framework” based in Lebanon even though it is constituted of Lebanese Shia. As such, its stated goals of the period straddled both worlds. In Lebanon, its goals were threefold: to expel all foreign forces and their allies; “to submit the Christian Phalanges to a just power and bring them all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians;” and to end the confessional system of government and replace it with a government freely chosen by the people which, according to Hezbollah, should be an “Islamic state, which alone is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all.”  

Hezbollah was clear that those “bare minimum” terms it was willing to accept at the time could not be accomplished through mere reform, but would necessitate a political revolution as “the present regime is the product of arrogance so unjust that no reform or modification can remedy it.”

Relatively moderate voices affiliated with the movement like Sheik Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah emphasized by the late 1980s that the Iranian model was not viable.

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412 Open Letter, Section 7.
413 Open Letter, Sections 10 and 11.
within Lebanon due to differences in the countries. He sought to reassure the Lebanese people that Hezbollah did not seek to “coerce” them “in the framework of radicalization.” This represented a tension among the pro-Iranian ideologues over how far to push their Islamic revolution in Lebanon and whether to emphasize a strategy of coercion or persuasion with the Lebanese Shia in particular—a tension that has never fully resolved itself. But for all of Fadlallah’s spiritual and ideological influence on the organization, he did not represent the Party of God and, true to its words, Hezbollah refused to have any dialog whatsoever with the Lebanese government in the latter half of the 1980s. In August 1986, Abbas al-Musawi left no doubt that Hezbollah was seeking to overthrow the Lebanese government, saying that the organization was “using all the means at [its] disposal in order to make this regime illegal and powerless.” Indeed, Hezbollah signed its initial political declarations during this period as “Hezbollah—The Islamic Revolution in Lebanon.”

As Hezbollah attacks against Israel generated more support and the party gained power, it increasingly sought to impose its ideology on the people of the South. (This phenomenon was also related to the extent to which Hezbollah’s social services, mentioned below, penetrated a given region.) In areas with strong Hezbollah influence, Women were directed to wear the hijab (head scarf) and restaurants that served

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414 Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, From Revolution to Institutionalization*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2011, pp. 143. The characterization of Fadlallah as a “moderate” should, in this context, be viewed as moderate relative to other members of Hezbollah and those affiliated with the Iranian revolution. It should not be read as moderate relative to Western liberal notions of the terms.
415 Azani, pp. 142.
416 Azani, pp. 143.
417 Alagha, pp. 98. My emphasis on “Revolution.”
418 Azani, pp. 71
alcohol were threatened with closure.\textsuperscript{419} For a few years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, women swam fully clothed on Tyre’s public beach and the same restaurants served beer in opaque mugs as the non-fundamentalist Shia of Lebanon chaffed under Hezbollah’s strict Islamic code.\textsuperscript{420} The reversal of the trend only came after 1992, when a more pragmatic Musawi took over leadership of the organization from Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli.

Of the Party’s three stated goals vis-à-vis Lebanon in the Open Letter, the first two clearly bend toward the destructive end of the ideological spectrum. The third, since it calls for an overthrow of the government and its replacement by an Islamic regime, could be viewed as constituting both constructive and destructive ideology, particularly since the establishment of a sharia-based government would only come about “if the nation adopts this ideology.”\textsuperscript{421} But the ideology, as it particularly related to Lebanon, becomes even more destructive when it is viewed in terms of how Hezbollah saw Lebanon’s place in the world. The goal was not merely to turn Lebanon into one of “multiple Islamic Republics,” but to establish, in the words of Hassan Nasrallah in 1986,

> “a single Islamic world governed by a central government because we consider all borders throughout the Muslim world fake and colonialist... We do not believe in a nation whose borders are 10,452 square kilometers in Lebanon; our project foresees Lebanon as part of the political map of an Islamic world in which specifics would cease to exist.”\textsuperscript{422}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{419} Thanassis Cambanis, \textit{A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah’s Legions and their Endless War Against Israel}. New York: Simon & Schuester, 2010, pp. 111.
\textsuperscript{420} Cambanis, pp. 73.
\textsuperscript{422} Noe, pp. 32.
\end{flushright}
If there was at least a modicum of constructiveness in establishing a pan-Islamic polity, Hezbollah’s other international goals were destructive both in and of themselves and by the means with which Hezbollah sought to achieve them. Chief among them was the need to “completely obliterate” Israel, the “hated enemy” that represents “the greatest danger to our future generations and the destiny of our lands.”

It is important to note in this context that Hezbollah was very clear that its goal vis-à-vis Israel was not to force its withdrawal from Lebanese territory, but to destroy it entirely. It saw justification in this from the fact that

“the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception and built on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of Muslim people. Therefore our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease-fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.”

The only appropriate course of action against Israel, which the Open Letter referred to numerous times as a “Rapist Entity” and “Cancerous Gland,” is for the Islamic Resistance (Hezbollah’s military arm) to fight a “daily war of attrition” and “wipe it out of existence.”

Hezbollah’s position toward Jewish people, and marking the distinction between them and Israelis, was much more muddled—both at the time and ever since. The Open

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423 Open Letter, Section 15.
424 Open Letter, Section 16. Though not the target of such rhetoric as was the United States, the Soviet Union, and communism more broadly, was also rejected as “incapable of laying the foundations for a just society” according to Section 14.
Letter has a tone of religious hatred toward Jews, calling them and polytheists “the most hostile people to” Muslims.\textsuperscript{425} But Hezbollah’s weekly newspaper \textit{al-Ahad}, established in 1984, stated that as “people of the book,” Jews under Islamic rule should be treated as a protected minority as stipulated by the Koran, granting them religious rights while requiring the payment of a special minority group tax.\textsuperscript{426} In practice, Hezbollah translated this to mean that while Israel must be destroyed, Jews living in Palestine before the 1916 Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement were free to remain and live under those terms, while Jews that arrived after that date should be repatriated to their original countries. In later years as secretary general, Nasrallah would go on to make many contradictory statements regarding Jews. According to Hezbollah expert Judith Palmer Harik, in the conflicting statements on Jews, the proper government of Lebanon, and its relations with the Christian community in the country, the Open Letter and the other primary statements of Hezbollah leaders at the time “exemplify early use of the tactic of ideological ambiguity” where Islam remained the discourse when addressing the faithful and a “less confrontational and more conciliatory approach” was utilized in the pluralist public domain.\textsuperscript{427} But at least in terms of Israel it seems that in more honest moments, its hatred of the Jewish state was grounded as much in pure anti-Semitism as it was in the belief that Israel had stolen Palestinian/Muslim land; thus leaning the Shia Islamists further toward the destructive end of the ideological spectrum.

But Israel was only “the Little Satan” and “the vanguard of the United States in [the] Islamic world” while it was America that was “behind all our catastrophes” and is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{425} Open Letter, Section 3.
\item \textsuperscript{426} Alagha, pp. 130
\end{itemize}
“the first root of vice.” Echoing the words of Islamist revolutionaries like Said Qutb, Hezbollah grounded its hatred of “the arrogant superpower” or “the Great Satan” in terms of rejecting “injustice, aggression and humiliation” to which the Party’s devotees had been subjected. The US, NATO, and “the Zionist entity” (Israel) “attacked [the Islamic umma] and continue to do so without respite… This is why we are… in a state of permanent alert in order to repel aggression and defend our religion, our existence, our dignity.” Indeed, drawing on Shia religious history and the community’s history within Lebanon, Sheik Fadlallah, Hezbollah’s most influential spiritual guide, depicted the world as a black and white, perpetual struggle between arrogant oppressors and the downtrodden oppressed. And Fadlallah interpreted the Koran as encouraging revolt against oppression. In order to defeat Hezbollah’s enemies, there was “no alternative but to confront aggression by sacrifice.”

Much like the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah believed that the only answer to the calamities that befell the umma was the embrace of Islam as a total solution. “Only Islam is capable of becoming the intellectual foundation or thinking that is capable of resisting and confronting aggression,” the Open Letter stated. To that end, the Muslim ulama (religious leadership class) was encouraged to rear its children along the

428 Alagha, pp. 117 and Open Letter, Sections 15 and 3 respectively.
429 Open Letter, Sections 2, Alagha, pp. 117, and Open Letter Section 3 respectively.
430 Open Letter, Section 3.
431 Alagha, pp. 95
432 Again, it should be stressed that Fadlallah, for all his influence upon Hezbollah, was not a member of the organization.
433 Additional enemies of Hezbollah, as identified in the Open Letter, included UNIFIL forces in Lebanon, France, and “defeatist Arab regimes” such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iraq. See: Open Letter, Sections, 14, 20, and 6 respectively.
434 Open Letter, Section 4.
435 Open Letter, Section 21. It continued to say: “The time has come to be cognizant of the fact that all foreign ideas, concerning the origin of man and his instincts are incapable of answering his ambitions or saving him from the darkness of ignorance or waywardness.”
“righteous” Islamic path and graduate leaders from Islamic seminaries “who are faithful to God and who are committed to the victory of the religion and the umma.” These semi-constructive aspirations were accompanied by other more obviously constructive sentiments, such as the exhortation to avoid “the malignant” fitnah (intra-Muslim strife) between Sunnis and Shia and an olive branch offered to Lebanese Christians to not impose upon them an Islamic way of life so long as they “respect and honor [their] covenants with the Muslims and not aggress against them.”

Despite its hatred of America and its Lebanese Christian allies, it was for Israel that Hezbollah reserved its most spectacular attacks of the time period. From 1985 to 1989, it sent three suicide bombers on operations that killed a total of 62 Israelis and wounded scores more. Indeed, Hezbollah was the first group to introduce “martyrdom operations,” as it refers to suicide bombings, into the Middle East. The tactic had previously been frowned upon by Muslims due to the prohibition against suicide in Islam. But Sheik Fadlallah stated in a religious ruling that suicide attacks, including those that killed other Muslims as collateral damage, were permissible when fighting Israel and the United States so long as the number of non-Muslims killed was greater than the number of Muslims. The use of suicide bombings, of which Hezbollah in its history executed only 12 times (the last was in 1999), was seen as a means of equalizing the “power imbalance” between it and its enemies, particularly Israel. Hezbollah Deputy Secretary

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435 Open Letter, Section 23.
436 Open Letter, Sections 22 and 13 respectively.
438 Cambanis, pp. 104.
General Naim Qassem writes that it was always the preference of “the Resistance” to “inflict losses on the enemy without martyrs,” but that attacking “important military targets” sometimes necessitated a resort to the tactic.\footnote{Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*. Beirut: Saqi, 2010, pp. 148.} That Hezbollah employed suicide bombing is indicative of a bend toward destructive ideology. But that is moderated somewhat but the tactic’s limited use and the clear preference of the group to employ non-suicidal means under the vast majority of circumstances.

The ability of Hezbollah to recruit ever-increasing numbers of fighters, many of whom were ready to be martyrs for the Party of God, was due in no small part to the creation of the “Society of Resistance,” “an all-inclusive vision of a steadfast and resolute community existing in a constant state of war readiness” to confront Israel, as characterized by Nicholas Blanford, a British reporter who has covered Lebanon and Hezbollah since the late 1980s.\footnote{Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah’s Thirty-Year Struggle Against Israel*. New York: Random House, 2011, pp. 82. Also, though Hezbollah only resorted to suicide bombings 13 times, Nasrallah claims that there “hundreds” of recruits to take part in “martyrdom operations”; see Noe, pp. 157. The term “Society of Resistance” appears to have originated with Sheik Abbas Musawi, Hezbollah’s second secretary general; see Azani, pp. 90.} According to Qassem, Hezbollah viewed resistance as “a societal vision in all its dimensions, for it is a military, cultural, political and media resistance.”\footnote{Blanford, pp. 82, citing: *Al-Nahar*, 8 June 2007.} And the foundation of the society of the resistance was the web of religiously affiliated social welfare institutions developed by Hezbollah chiefly during this time period.

Among the most influential of these institutions up to the present time is *Jihad al-Binna* (The Holy Struggle for Construction), a construction and development agency that...
was founded in 1985 to rebuild homes in Beirut that were destroyed in Israeli shelling and the damage caused by a massive car bomb the nearly killed Sheik Fadlallah in March 1985.\textsuperscript{442} The organization also developed and rehabilitated infrastructure for schools, hospitals, shops, infirmaries, mosques, cultural centers and farmers, almost all of which were for the Shia community. Between 1988 and 2000, it carried out 78 construction projects and 10,528 rehabilitation projects.\textsuperscript{443}

\textit{Jihad al-Binna}, like the vast majority of Hezbollah’s social-religious services of the period, was funded by Iran, with estimates ranging from tens of millions to $100 million per year at the time. Many of the institutions fell under the Iranian financed Islamic Charity Emdad (ICEC), founded in 1987.\textsuperscript{444} Indeed, many of the Hezbollah-affiliated societies and institutions grew out of similar Iranian organizations that simply opened branches in Lebanon under the ICEC or on their own. Aside from \textit{Jihad al-Binna}, other, mainly Iranian-funded institutions were burgeoning in the mid- and late-1980s and were under the control of Hezbollah’s Social Unit.\textsuperscript{445}

Health care was a particular field in which Hezbollah developed strong institutional capabilities during the period. Between 1985 and 1987, the Party established two hospitals, 17 medical centers, and assorted dental clinics and Beirut and Beqaa.\textsuperscript{446}

\begin{flushright}
\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[442] Qassem, pp. 161.
\item[443] Hamzeh, p. 50-51.
\item[445] These additional institutions included the Martyrs Foundation, which by 1987 included seven branches in Beirut, southern Lebanon and Tripoli; the Foundation for the Wounded; and the Khomeini Support Committee, all of which were founded between 1982 and 1985. See: Hamzeh, pp. 49-54. On the branches of the Martyrs Foundation, see: Azani, pp. 72.
\item[446] Azani, pp. 71
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushright}
Then in 1988, the Martyr’s Foundation opened al-Rasul al-Azam Hospital and Mosque complex in *Dahiyyeh*. 1988 also saw the beginning of an agro-technical program in the Beqaa Valley sponsored by Iran under the auspices of Hezbollah’s Reconstruction Campaign. The venture included technical training for Shia farmers, donations of at least 30 tractors, consultation from agriculture experts, well-digging, and the opening of agro-technical centers and schools in the impoverished region. By 1990, Hezbollah was providing clean water to at least 15,000 residents of southern Beirut per day via mobile tanks.

The social services expansion paralleled the creation of Hezbollah affiliated cultural and religious groups. Women and youth societies were formed through mosques in districts where Hezbollah was active. Among the more prominent was the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts, which grew exponentially over the years and as such has indoctrinated two generations of Shia youth into Hezbollah’s Islamist resistance ideology. The Party also spread into the Lebanese university system, recruiting both students and faculty into professional and student syndicates. By the end of the decade, Hezbollah, largely thanks to a deluge of Iranian funding and other expatriate remittances, but also due to its own shrewd methods and boundless devotion to its cause, was interacting daily with the Shia communities of Lebanon on multiple levels. “The direct political effect of the help

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447 Though sponsored by The Martyrs Foundation, the complex was nonetheless open to all area residents and complimented the other two Islamist-affiliated hospitals in the area for which the Lebanese state provided no hospital coverage. See: Palmer Harik, pp. 83-84. In 1988, Hezbollah also began trucking garbage out of the *Dahiyyeh* at the rate of 65 tons per day after the municipal services proved inept in the matter. The Party continued in that role for at least three years until the city took over the essential service in the district. See: Qassem, pp. 161.
448 Palmer Harik, pp. 87.
449 Qassem, pp. 126.
450 Qassem, pp. 127.
from Tehran was that Hezbollah could never be viewed as having preyed on the
disintegrating Lebanese state, a charge leveled against its major Shiite rival, Amal, and
other political parties in Lebanon,” writes Palmer-Harik. “In essence, Hezbollah’s ‘free
money’… encouraged the organization’s ‘Mr. Clean’ image.”

As Hezbollah made the shift from a loose collection of underground, Islamist
guerilla fighters to a large organization with multiple branches and affiliated institutions,
its organizational structure grew more hierarchical and formal. Beginning in the mid-
1980s, the civilian social services apparatus and the military wing (the Islamic
Resistance) were now the two main pillars of Hezbollah. (Only in the early 1990s would
the political wing be added.) In 1985, a party spokesman was created and a nine-member
*Majlis al-Shura* (Consultative Council or Shura Council) elected by the Party’s Central
Council of around 200 members was formed to act as the overall leadership of the
movement. The terms of the Shura Council began as one year and were extended to
three years. Its members consisted mostly of Shia Lebanese clergy trained in Iran or
according to Iranian custom. Beginning in 1989, the members of the Shura Council
elected a secretary general of the party as well as the other senior positions in the
organization, most of which were filled by other members of the Council.

On 11 November 1989, Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli assumed the position of
Hezbollah’s first secretary general, though he had been nominally leading the group for
the few preceding years. Abbas Musawi, meanwhile, was placed in charge of a newly

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451 Palmer Harik, pp. 82
452 Qassem, pp. 128-129 and Hamzeh, pp. 45.
created southern branch of the Islamic Resistance whose responsibility it was to confront the IDF and SLA in the security zone. In those years, there was no administrative separation between the 500 to 1,000 full-time fighters and 3,000 to 5,000 part-time fighters. All were under Musawi’s command.

One group of fighters that was not under Musawi’s command was an elite squad commanded by Imad Mugniyeh that focused on operations outside of the Lebanon. It is unclear exactly when this group came into existence, but most likely it occurred in the late 1980s or early 1990s when Hezbollah’s capabilities and resources grew dramatically. That group operates so closely with Iran’s intelligence divisions that some Israeli security officials say it is difficult to tell where Iran ends and Hezbollah begins. Additionally, after being responsible for Hezbollah’s Beirut activities for two years beginning in 1985, Hassan Nasrallah was elected to the Shura Council in 1987 and was appointed as Hezbollah’s chief executive officer that same year.

And yet, Hezbollah’s ascendance in Lebanon was complicated by the continued loyalty of most Shia to Amal, the secular Shia faction led by the powerful Nabih Berri. The competition between the two groups for leadership of the Shia sect led to periodic

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453 The South, with the exception of the security zone, was split into four Hezbollah commands and each of those were sub-divided into around a dozen sectors that consisted of the villages in the area. Following the Israeli withdrawal, Hezbollah also added village guard units that consisted of part-time fighters who were nonetheless trained regularly and gained combat experience over the years. A liaison officer was also appointed in each village to coordinate party activities there. Information on the structure of Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon during this period comes from Blanford, pp. 79-80.


455 Byman, pp. 225.

456 Noe, pp. 129 and Blanford, pp. 92.
clashes beginning in 1985, as Hezbollah moved southward following the Israeli withdrawal. In a 1986 interview, Hassan Nasrallah said that the differences between the two parties stemmed from “the fundamental, serious need to unconditionally follow al-Khomeini’s leadership.”\textsuperscript{457} It was also clear that Amal’s willingness to deal with Israel and the United States was a policy Hezbollah could not accept. During the latter half of the 1980s, the trajectories of the two Shia factions generally skewed in opposite directions, as Hezbollah gained popularity due to its fight against Israel and the social services it provided while Amal spent resources fighting the remaining Palestinian factions toward the end of the Civil War in what is called the “War of the Camps” (1985-1988). By February 1988, when American marine Lt. Col. William Higgins was kidnapped by an Amal splinter group that was sympathetic to Hezbollah, sparking a series of intra-Shia battles over the next two years, Amal was already significantly weakened and increasingly seen as corrupt.\textsuperscript{458}

In response to the kidnapping, which challenged Amal’s status and reputation as the responsible party in southern Lebanon, Amal began arresting Hezbollah activists, leading to violent reprisals. Attack and counter attack ensued, with Amal routing Hezbollah fighters in southern Lebanon while Hezbollah won decisive victories in south and west Beirut. A ceasefire was arranged by Iran acting on behalf of Hezbollah and Syria on behalf of Amal, in May 1988. But clashes persisted and a second round of full-blown fighting erupted in December 1989 and again in mid-1990. After it became clear that Hezbollah was the superior military force and that Syrian President Hafez al-Assad

\textsuperscript{457} Noe, pp. 27.  
\textsuperscript{458} Norton, pp. 43 and Azani, pp. 77.
was not going to send in the Syrian Army to crush the Islamists, a final agreement was reached in 1990 between the two warring factions and their two state sponsors that coincided with the Taif Accords which ended the Lebanese Civil War.

According to the second “Damascus Agreement,” which ended what Qassem refers to as a “black page in history,” Hezbollah was allowed to return to the South to continue to fight Israel, while Amal began concentrating on consolidating its political strength ahead of what would be the 1992 national elections. Speaking for Hezbollah in February 1989, Nasrallah explained that Hezbollah’s Islamists “do not seek power and do not wish to compete with anyone over state positions; our political movement is based on the premise of fighting Israel. Our only concern is to safeguard the core—that is to say, the Islamic Resistance… For us, safeguarding the Islamic Resistance is what really matters.” In practice, the Damascus Agreement paved the way for Hezbollah to be allowed to keep its weapons while all other Lebanese militia disarmed, creating in many ways the material power imbalance that would lead to Hezbollah’s rise in Lebanon over the next 20 years. And while it was the Taif Accord that cemented Syrian hegemony in Lebanon, it was the Damascus Agreement that set the precedent for Syrian troops to be stationed in Beirut for the first time since 1982; where they would remain until ousted by the Cedar Revolution in 2004.

The September 1989 Taif Agreement ending the Lebanese Civil War was hugely

459 Qassem, pp. 186.
460 Noe, pp. 39. Interestingly, Nasrallah had left for Iran to further his Islamic studies in 1988 only to be summoned back to Lebanon by Hezbollah to lead the campaign against Amal in Beirut.
461 Hamzeh, pp. 102.
disappointing to Hezbollah. According to its terms, the confessional political system which institutionalized diminished Shia power in Lebanon remained intact; the positions of power in the military and government remained legally the right of the Sunnis and Christians; Syria was assigned the role of helping to preserve security in Lebanon; and as previously mentioned, all private militias were required to give up their arms and transfer their internal struggles to the political arena of Lebanon’s parliament. While the landscape in Lebanon was shifting, so too were regional power dynamics. Saddam Hussein’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War that followed placed Syria and the United States on the same side for a brief moment in time. Moreover, Hezbollah’s main patron, Iran, was just emerging from the eight-year war with Iraq and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989. The Islamic Republic’s new president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, was seen as a moderate and a leader under whom Iran’s policy of exporting the Islamic revolution might change.

As such, Hezbollah faced a significant juncture. It could remain outside the political process, and by extension maintain its hostile posture toward the Lebanese government and Syria, or accommodate itself to the changes by making some compromises. Fierce internal debate was undertaken within the Party, as its leadership well understood, even at that time, the dilemmas that the Party of God could find itself in should it choose the path of joining the system. According to Qassem:

“The party considered that where resistance falls under the willpower of government, it loses its capability to achieve liberation and is place inside a sphere of political limitations. As such, when Lebanon was under international pressure and the Lebanese government became the organ
responsible for administering the resistance, the latter might have been obliged to take steps that could have encumbered resistance activity… On the other hand, a resistance movement that is free of any political obligations can operate without restraint, not charging the government for responsibility for its actions."\(^{462}\)

Hard-liners like Secretary General Tufayli were against accepting the new paradigm and joining the political game.\(^{463}\) But more pragmatic leaders like Musawi, Nasrallah, Qassem, and Fadlallah (though officially unaffiliated) favored accommodating Hezbollah to the new reality rather than continue on a path which placed the organization on a collision course with Syria—an opponent the Islamists could not defeat. Moreover, agreement with Syria was reached on the legitimacy of the Islamic Resistance to continue the struggle against Israel and thus retain its arms for the purpose of conducting that fight. This had the effect of insulating the Lebanese government from responsibility for Hezbollah’s actions. More importantly to Hezbollah, the arrangement provided political cover for its violent resistance against Israel and did not require it to support any political negotiation with the Jewish State. With backing from the new Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the pragmatic wing of Hezbollah won a vote by a margin of 10-2 in a committee established by the Shura Council to examine whether to accept conciliation and participate in Lebanese parliamentary elections.\(^{464}\)

The ceasefire terms with Amal, the enormous expansion of Hezbollah’s social-

\(^{462}\) Qassem, pp, 194.
\(^{463}\) Blanford, pp. 93-95 and Palmer Harik, pp. 56-57.
Tufayli argued that Hezbollah should not accept non-Islamic authority and relations with a pluralist government and believed that the cause of waging jihad against Israel—Hezbollah’s primary duty—would suffer as a result.
\(^{464}\) Azani, pp. 95. It is not entirely clear when this vote took place, but it seems as though it was sometime in 1991 around the same time that Musawi became secretary general.
religious services, and the ultimate decision to participate in the Lebanese system are prime examples of the external influences that Hezbollah was subject to and sustained by from 1985-1992. The two main external influences on Hezbollah at the time and throughout its history were Syria and Iran. Hezbollah’s relationship with the former was dicey. While Assad generally supported Hezbollah’s activities against Israel, he strongly disapproved of the kidnappings of foreign nationals which damaged Syria’s international credibility.  

At times, in response to actions he disapproved of, Assad arrested members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah and cut off the supply line of arms and personnel between the Party of God and the Islamic Republic. Relations between Syria and Hezbollah reached a low point in February 1987 when the Syrian army killed 23 Hezbollah operatives after the latter refused to hand over a barracks in Beirut’s Basta neighborhood.  

While relations with Syria remained tense, and were not ironed out until Hezbollah’s acceptance of the Taif Accord and Syria’s preeminent role in Lebanon, Iran continued to pour money and arms into the organization. The Islamic Republic trained Hezbollah’s new recruits, maintained the ICRG presence in Lebanon, and Ayatollah Khomeini remained the Party’s unquestioned leader. It was only following his death and the election of Rafsanjani in 1989 that consultations between Iran and Hezbollah produced the agreement to appoint a Lebanese leader of the organization. And it was only after receiving religious sanction from Ayatollah Khamenei that Hezbollah moved to

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465 According to Qassem, relations with Syria at the time were limited to facilitating the transfer of arms and personnel from Iran over the Syrian-Lebanese border and “did not extend to a political relationship.” See: Qassem, pp. 395.

466 Blanford, pp. 90.
participate in Lebanese politics.

In May 1991, when Tufayli’s term as secretary general ended, he was replaced by Musawi and the post of deputy secretary general was given to Qassem, signaling a shift in Hezbollah’s strategy. Under Musawi, Hezbollah began to moderate somewhat, releasing the last of the foreign hostages it held from the Civil War period, loosening its Islamic policing of areas where it had strong influence, and agreeing to Lebanese Army deployment in certain southern districts. But Musawi made it clear that the core ideology of Hezbollah was not going to change. In a speech days after his election, the new secretary general reiterated that “maintaining the intifada and the Islamic resistance in Lebanon” were top priorities for the movement. He also maintained that despite Hezbollah’s new-found pragmatism, that the Lebanese regime was “rotten” and “must be destroyed down to its very foundations in order to be rehabilitated with a new base.” During another speech, he clarified that “between us and the Israeli enemy there is only the rifle” and that Hezbollah was not becoming a “party or a community movement or anything like that. We hold fast to political principles that cannot be appealed and unchangeable ideological and philosophical principles.” In essence, while Hezbollah underwent a significant transformation from 1990 to 1992, brought on by wholly pragmatic considerations, its leadership nevertheless maintained its hard-line rhetoric in an effort to not compromise too much on the ideals it still held true.

As it would turn out, Musawi’s term as secretary general lasted just nine months.

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467 Noe, pp. 131. At the same time, Hezbollah also reduced the number of Shura Council members to seven.
468 Azani, pp. 88.
469 Azani, pp. 89
On 16 February 1992, he was assassinated by Israel following his participation in a commemoration of the assassination of Sheik Ragheb Harb eight years earlier to the day. The following day, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was unanimously elected by the Shura Council to succeed Musawi as secretary general—a post he continues to hold until today. It was up to Nasrallah to lead Hezbollah into its new era of participation in the Lebanese political system while maintaining Hezbollah’s military independence, capabilities, and legitimacy to fight Israel.

Summary of Independent Variables

Elements of Statehood. During this period, Hezbollah did not fully control any territory, but it did become the dominant force for intermittent periods of time in some districts of the south and in the Dahiye. At times it lost this control to Amal and Syria but in general there was at least minimal Hezbollah control of some Lebanese territory during this period. The group, however, did not participate in the political system of Lebanon. Hezbollah also developed an extensive social-religious welfare network upon which tens if not hundreds of thousands of Lebanese Shia became partially dependent.

Organizational Structure. Following the Open Letter in 1985, Hezbollah developed a rudimentary organizational structure where a core group of leaders nominally directed military operations and the social-religious activities of the group. By 1989, the organizational structure became far more cohesive and formal and took on a pyramid shape. It was absolutely clear by that point who was responsible for making
decisions within the group and the leadership insisted that strict discipline was maintained within Hezbollah even when differences of opinion emerged. There is no evidence to the contrary that would dispute the strict observance of the chain of command at this time.

**Ideology.** The ideology of Hezbollah was particularly destructive during this period—at least until the early 1990s. Its Open Letter committed the Party of God to revolution, not reform, within Lebanon. Hezbollah believed in creating an Islamic state in Lebanon and refused to engage with the Lebanese government under any terms. It also harbored vehement anti-Semitic views that were not simply anti-Israel, and it called for the destruction of the Jewish state while refusing any negotiation or compromise with it. The Party also took to attacking foreign forces in Lebanon other than Israel, including the United States, France, and the United Nations. Its ideology changed somewhat toward the end of this period when Ayatollah Khomeini died, the Lebanese Civil War ended, and the “moderate” camp within Hezbollah won an internal struggle in favor of accommodating the new realities in Lebanon and the region by participating in the political process. Nevertheless, the group maintained that its goals were the elimination of Israel and the continuance of the struggle against the Jewish State at all costs; the creation of an Islamic regime in Lebanon; and that its ultimate leadership was the wali-al-Faqhi, who was now Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. (For the purposes of scoring Hezbollah’s ideology during this time period, I will use its ideology before it agreed to join the Lebanese political process.)

**External Influence and Support.** Iran continued to act as Hezbollah’s life-line in
many ways. The Islamic Republic maintained its policy of training Hezbollah fighters either in Lebanon or Iran and shipping weapons to Hezbollah via Syria. A massive expansion of Iranian financial aid was undertaken during this period as Iran funded the social-religious web of institutions and programs founded by the Party to the tune of around $100 million per year. Iran and Syria were hugely influential in brokering the ceasefire deals with Amal between 1988 and 1990 and Ayatollah Khamenei provided Hezbollah with religious sanction for standing in the 1992 Lebanese elections—a move that Hezbollah would not have undertaken without his approval.

Syria, meanwhile, was influential in a different sense. The interests of Hezbollah and Syria were only partially aligned during this period—they agreed of the need to Israel. In other matters, most especially in the Hezbollah-Amal conflict, the two were on opposing sides. Due to the overwhelming power disparity between Hezbollah and the Syrian army, Hezbollah was somewhat limited by Syria during this time. But it was ultimately Hafez al-Assad that allowed Hezbollah to keep its weapons while the other militias disarmed following the Civil War under the terms that Hezbollah would use those weapons only to resist Israel. (The score Hezbollah received during this period for external support is due to the mixed influence of Iran and Syria, which in many ways were pushing the group in opposite directions, with the former pushing it toward more fighting and the latter curbing some of its violence.)

*Inter-Factional Competition.* Amal was a strong rival of Hezbollah for these seven years. Beginning in 1985, the two periodically clashed over territory and leadership
of the Shia community in Lebanon even as they cooperated in attacking Israel. By 1988, their differences spilled over into a series of full-blown battles that stretched out over two-and-a-half years. Eventually, Hezbollah emerged the stronger party and the fighting was halted by Syria and Iran in 1990.
Table 11.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hezbollah (1985-1992)

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*Theoretical Prediction.* Given the values of Hezbollah during the period, the best possible deterrence that could theoretically be achieved against it would be **weak tactical deterrence**.
By mid-1985, the Party of God was out of the closet and the IDF had withdrawn to its “Security Zone” (or “Occupation Zone”) in the south of the country, which it occupied in collaboration with the Southern Lebanese Army led by Saad Haddad. But neither of those facts stalled Hezbollah’s determination to continue its resistance against Israel and Western-aligned forces in Lebanon. In parallel to the withdrawal, the IDF released 752 Lebanese and Palestinian detainees and transferred the remaining 1,167 prisoners to Atlit prison in northern Israel and another prison within the security zone at Khiam, a notorious facility which the SLA would run for the next 15 years.\(^{471}\) Israel viewed its prisoners as bargaining chips, hoping to secure missing IDF servicemen or at least information that could lead to their rescue. Hezbollah had other ideas. As a means of gaining the release of the Lebanese prisoners, it hijacked TWA Flight 847 from Cairo to Rome in June 1985 and forced it to land at Beirut’s airport in an operation for which Imad Mugniyeh would later be indicted by the United States. After ten days of tense negotiation, Israel agreed to release 764 prisoners from Atlit over three months. Another airliner, this one Kuwaiti, was hijacked in 1988, producing similar results when the Gulf State released 17 pro-Iranian militants from jail. And in other episodes proving Hezbollah’s global reach even in its early days, it worked with Iranian operatives to conduct bombings in Paris in 1986 and kill Iranian dissidents in Berlin in 1992.\(^{472}\)

Indeed, Hezbollah agents, operating under the banner of a group called Islamic

\(^{471}\) Blanford, pp. 73.
\(^{472}\) Byman, pp. 227.
Jihad continued to kidnap foreigners throughout the latter half of the 1980s, at times irritating not just its declared enemies but the likes of Syria and Amal. Only Iran seemed to benefit from the more than 100 kidnappings which Hezbollah Secretary General Sheik Tufayli said provided the Islamic Republic with “a big treasure” for which it could negotiate arms deals during the Iran-Iraq War.

Foreign hostages were held in horrific conditions, sometimes chained to radiators for days or months on end, and often tortured, as in the case of CIA Station Chief William Buckley. To the severe detriment of their deterrent positions, the Western states paid handsomely for the release of their hostages time and again, sometimes in the form of releasing prisoners while other times sending weapons to Iran or ceasing such shipments to Iraq, in the case of France. The French also responded to the killing of at least four of their soldiers by Hezbollah not by counter-attacking but by withdrawing the majority of their personnel from UNIFIL. But the most famous of the capitulations to the Hezbollah-Iran scheme was, of course, the Iran-Contra Affair initiated by the Reagan Administration. Predictably, such appeasement did not lead to any diminution of kidnapping activities.

Rarely was a more robust response attempted by any Western state against Hezbollah’s militancy. Among those efforts was a 8 March 1985 massive car bombing in

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473 As previously noted, a Hezbollah kidnapping of an American marine touched off what became a two-and-a-half year war with its rival Shia Lebanese faction and in general the kidnappings challenged Hafez al-Assad’s hegemony on the Lebanese security front during a period when Syria still cared about international legitimacy.
474 Blanford, pp. 77.
475 Norton, pp. 74.
476 Azani, pp. 70.
477 Blanford, pp. 86.
which the Central Intelligence Agency, working with other state partners, was at least indirectly implicated.\textsuperscript{478} The bomb tore through the home of Sheik Fadlallah in the Bir al-Abed neighborhood of Beirut. Though the Sheik survived the attack, more than 90 people were killed and at least 200 were injured. The fact that Hezbollah followed the action, only three months later, with the TWA hijacking, shows that such actions had little affect on the Islamist movement.\textsuperscript{479}

Only the Soviets succeeded in deterring Hezbollah kidnappings against their countrymen. When four of their diplomats were abducted by Hezbollah in 1985, and one was then killed and tossed lifeless into the streets next to the Soviet Embassy, the KGB enlisted a Druze militia to assist it in retribution.\textsuperscript{480} Together, they kidnapped and killed a relative of a Hezbollah operative responsible for abducting the four diplomats and left the body with a message stating that similar actions would follow if the remaining hostages were not immediately released. The hostages were promptly freed and Hezbollah never again targeted Soviet nationals.

While most official Hezbollah statements deny any organizational responsibility for acts carried out in the name of Islamic Jihad in Lebanon during that time, including the bombings of the US embassy and marine barracks, there is broad consensus that it was Hezbollah agents who were responsible. Interestingly, Hassan Nasrallah later seemed

\textsuperscript{478} Bob Woodward and Charles C. Babcock, “Anti-terrorist unit blamed in Beirut bombing,” \textit{The Washington Post}, 12 May 1985. According to the article, a counter-terrorism unit trained by the CIA and composed of Lebanese intelligence personnel and other foreigners was responsible for the bombing.\textsuperscript{479} The fact that Fadlallah was not actually a leader of Hezbollah—contrary to popular belief at the time—does diminish the conclusions one can draw from that event regarding deterrence against Hezbollah\textsuperscript{480} Blanford, pp. 76.
to speak out of both sides of his month about such involvement in a coy statement he made during a 1993 interview. “I cannot of course say that the Islamic scene is a total stranger to the incident, and that the kidnappers were Arab nationalists or communists,” Nasrallah said. In the same breath, however, he added that “the fact remains that they were not members of Hezbollah.” That denial is almost universally viewed as disingenuous by those outside of the movement.

Kidnappings of foreigners finally ceased and the last of the foreign hostages were freed in the early 1990s, following the establishment of Pax-Syriana in Lebanon and a change in Iranian foreign policy following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the election of President Rafsanjani. In particular, following the aforementioned 1987 “al-Basta Massacre,” Hezbollah understood that it could no longer act against Syrian wishes without paying a steep price, and moderated its actions as a result. Before then, Syria played only a “soft” hand against Hezbollah, according to Hezbollah expert Deputy Executive Director of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism Dr. Col. (Ret.) Eitan Azani, as Assad was loathe to jeopardize his relations with Iran. But by the early 1990s, Hezbollah was “eager to see the end of the hostage issue, since its fallout ended up entirely on the Party’s shoulders,” Nasrallah said.

After the Open Letter, the Islamic Resistance—the military wing of the organization—began staging attacks on its own, without participation from Amal and Palestinian militias that joined Hezbollah fighters in its initial years. Violent acts against

481 Noe, pp. 139.
482 Azani, pp. 181
483 Azani, pp. 182.
the IDF and SLA therefore continued in a modified form. With the establishment of the security zone, confronting enemy troops now required penetrating that area in order to plant bombs or mount ambushes. However, Hezbollah fighters gained a huge advantage in the sense that they now had a large area of operation in Lebanon that was not enemy territory, allowing its cadres to plan attacks, train personnel, establish social-religious networks, and smuggle supplies in relative safety. While the IDF established itself in defensive positions as backup to the SLA, Hezbollah coordinated with Iran and to a lesser extent Syria, to go on the offensive under the new paradigm.

From 1985 to 1989, the Islamic Resistance carried out at least 100 attacks, mostly against the SLA. In the first phase, according to Azani, Hezbollah attacked the SLA mainly in roadside ambushes of their patrols. In the second phase, Hezbollah expanded its attacks to include SLA posts, forcing the IDF to spend significant resources restoring the capacity of the SLA after the latter lost numerous positions to Hezbollah as well as military vehicles like APCs. In the third phase in the second half of 1986, Hezbollah was conducting “human wave” assaults against SLA and IDF forces. Those attacks, which lasted only until around 1987 or 1988, often left a dozen or even more than 20 Hezbollah fighters dead after each battle. Despite the high death toll on Hezbollah fighters, the assaults terrorized SLA militiamen and claimed some Israeli lives as well. For around eight or nine months in 1988, the IDF did manage to force Hezbollah away from the human wave assaults as the Party’s body counts ran ever higher, according to

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484 Hamzeh, pp. 89. Also according to an author interview with Eitan Azani in Herzeliyah on 23 May 2012.
485 Blanford, pp. 85 and Azani, pp. 184.
486 Blanford confirms the high death toll inflicted on Hezbollah during its attacks of this time period, pp. 86.
form former IDF Chief of Staff (2007-2011) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi. “They are not stupid,” said Ashkenazi, who was also served in Israel’s Northern Command that deals with Lebanon and Hezbollah from 1988 to 2002. “They drew the lessons and went back” to fighting. At that point, Hezbollah shifted to a strategy of carrying out remote attacks, by planting IEDs on the roadside and relying as well on artillery strikes. The Islamic Resistance also began roadside ambushes of IDF patrols in the security zone.

A noted drop-off in Hezbollah attacks against Israel did occur from 1988 to 1990 when Hezbollah was busy fighting Amal—but it was not for lack of trying. For a portion of those years, Hezbollah lost its positions in southern Lebanon to Amal’s control, inhibiting its ability to pursue actions against the IDF. As a result, the Islamic Resistance began initiating activities from the Western Beqaa region. It also reinstated its tactic of suicide bombings, a practice it suspended following the IDF’s withdrawal to the security zone in 1985. Hezbollah’s command sent three suicide bombers on missions against the IDF during the Islamists’ conflict with Amal, two in 1988 and another in 1989. In total, the bombings killed at least 50 Israeli soldiers and left dozens more injured. At least in part, former IDF Chief of Staff (1995-1998) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak believes that the suicide bombings were meant as messages for the Lebanese Shia as much as for Israel. “Amal has no capabilities to protect you. We are going to protect

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487 Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
488 Qassem writes that utilizing suicide bombings were a direct response to not being able to attack Israel using other means during this period, pp. 188.
489 Hamzeh, pp. 84.
490 Conflicting numbers on casualties and the number of suicide bombers are presented by Hamzeh, pp. 84 and Qassem, pp. 188-189. On the number of bombers, I have used Qassem’s figure of three (Hamzeh states two) since Qassem is in a better position to know what orders were given for what operations. On the number of casualties, I have used Hamzeh’s figure since they were complied from reports at the time.
you,’” Hezbollah was saying to its potential constituents, Lipkin-Shahak said.\textsuperscript{491} Indeed, Hezbollah’s willingness to accept the Syrian-Iranian brokered ceasefires with Amal stemmed not only from being directed to do so by Teheran but also from its desire to regain proximate access to Israeli forces.\textsuperscript{492}

Following the human wave assaults that cost so many Hezbollah lives, and the years of fleeting access to IDF targets in the late 1980s, Hezbollah returned prominently to the battlefield against Israel and the SLA by 1990. Its revised strategy called for “hit and run” attacks that left “the enemy surprised [and] without any visible retaliation target,” Qassem writes.\textsuperscript{493} Nasrallah further explained Hezbollah’s strategy in February 1992 interview, stating Hezbollah could not “fight the Israeli enemy through traditional and classical methods, but rather [must fight] through a war of attrition, whereby we drain its energy, weaken it, then one day force it to withdraw.”\textsuperscript{494}

With attacks mounting against the IDF to the tune of hundreds per year from 1990-1992, Israel sought alternative means of deterring Hezbollah. On 16 February 1992, following a ceremony commemorating the eighth anniversary of the assassination of Sheik Ragheb Harb by Israel, two IDF Apache helicopters fired a volley of missiles and 30mm cannon rounds into a convoy of black Mercedes leaving the village of Touffahta in southern Lebanon. Inside the vehicles that were laid to waste were Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Abbas Musawi, his wife, and his five-year-old son, all of whom were

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[491]{Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.}
\footnotetext[492]{Azani, pp. 78.}
\footnotetext[493]{Qassem, pp. 142.}
\footnotetext[494]{Noe, pp. 63.}
\end{footnotes}
killed in a matter of seconds. Five of Musawi’s body guards were also killed in the attack before the Apache’s retreated to Israel.\footnote{In fact, one of the signature moments of the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict was not originally meant to end in Musawi’s death. Rather, the operation was originally planned as an intelligence gathering exercise by the IDF, which for the first time had several new surveillance technologies integrated and was receiving images from the Harb commemoration in real time, according to Barak Ben Zur, the IDF’s chief of counter-terrorism from 1991 to 1994 who was intimately involved in planning the operation. In the long-run, the IDF meant to capture Musawi and use him as a bargaining chip to obtain information on the whereabouts of the missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad. But, according to Ben Zur, when then IDF Chief of Staff Ehud Barak realized only the day before the operation that Israel would have a chance to kill Musawi, he convinced the political echelon to back his plan over the resounding objections of the IDF establishment. Ehud Barak told the army brass “well, I heard you,” but he gave the command to the helicopters to attack the convoy,” Ben Zur said. Source: Author interview with Ben Zur 9 May 2012 in Herzeliyah.}

In response to the assassination of its leader, Hezbollah fired an initial volley of two dozen Katusha rockets into northern Israel. Though the PLO had fired Katushas into Israel regularly during the 1970s and early 1980s, it was the first time Hezbollah had deliberately targeted Israeli population centers with its supply of rockets. Over the course of three days of fighting with Israel, the party launched more than 100 rockets at the Jewish state, with around one-third of them landing inside Israeli territory.\footnote{Blanford, pp. 99.} Hezbollah followed up the rocket launchings by hitting Israel outside of the theater for the first time, with attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in Turkey on 1 and 2 March that killed one person.\footnote{Byman, pp. 223.} But the far more serious response from Hezbollah to Musawi’s killing was yet to come. On 17 March, a suicide bomber detonated his car at the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 people and wounding more than 200.

Explaining Hezbollah’s decision to launch rockets after the Musawi killing, Nasrallah for the first time articulated the understanding that certain rules of the game were being constructed by Israel and Hezbollah which governed the mode of conflict.
between the two parties. “We have to work… towards creating a situation in which the enemy is subject to our conditions, Nasrallah said on 27 February. “We should tell him: ‘If you attack us, we will use our Katushas. If you do not attack us, we will not have to use our Katushas. We will, however, keep fighting you as an occupier, using all our tactical options.’”\(^{498}\) With the help of Hezbollah’s international unit under the command of Imad Mugniyeh and the operation in Buenos Aires mere weeks later, the Party did at least manage to create a situation where both Israel and Hezbollah were subject to each other’s conditions. While the Buenos Aires bombing was a hugely disproportionate response from the Israeli perspective, from Hezbollah’s point of view it was the IDF which had changed the rules of the game to begin with by killing Hezbollah’s leader and doing so outside of the security zone, which had become more or less the accepted field of battle between the opposing forces.\(^{499}\)

Israel “learned the hard way with Musawi and Dardara (see footnote below) for which [Hezbollah] retaliated massively in Argentina,” said Senior Israeli Official A, who has long experience working on Hezbollah policy in the Israeli security establishment.\(^{500}\)

“We had to take into account that if something we do hits a large number of civilians, or if we go after certain quality targets, then Hezbollah may feel that we breached the understandings. And they also developed over time, not immediately, but they developed over time, a signaling system, a price list. You do this, we do that. Nasrallah was quite sophisticated about that.”

\(^{498}\) Noe, pp. 62.

\(^{499}\) Byman, pp. 222.

\(^{500}\) This official requested anonymity due to the fact that he is currently serving in a high-ranking government position. He will be referred to as Senior Israeli Official A for the duration of this writing. In terms of “Dardara,” Senior Official A was referencing an Israeli attack on a Hezbollah training camp in 1994 that also brought a sever Hezbollah response. That incident will be covered in the next chapter.
That price list and the signaling system would constitute the rules of the game established between Israel and Hezbollah that would delineate the conflict during the 1990s. And it was the Musawi killing and Hezbollah’s sharp counter-attack that helped to shape those rules into a coherent framework that both sides began to understand. Understanding those rules, and the likely response it could expect, it would be 16 years before Israel would again kill a top Hezbollah leader.

**Findings.** Numerous states were attacked by Hezbollah from 1985 to 1992, not just Israel. Given that their strategies amounted mainly to capitulation, it is not surprising that Western states such as the United States and France had no success whatsoever in deterring attacks against them. The Soviet Union had some success by resorting to the brutal tactics that Hezbollah itself employed, but since there was only one documented incident between them, it is not easy to draw general conclusions from this interaction. Moreover, the political dynamics involved with the Soviet Union were different. The case of Syria is more interesting. After playing a soft hand against Hezbollah for many years, it began to switch tactics in 1987 when it killed 23 Hezbollah soldiers who would not obey the Syrian army. In this regard, Syria’s relationship with Hezbollah as far as this research is concerned fulfilled a dual role during this time period. On the one hand, Syria was a sponsor of Hezbollah, especially toward the latter part of this time period. On the other hand, Syria also acted to deter Hezbollah when the Islamist group acted outside of the bounds Syria tolerated. Still, Hezbollah continued to fight Amal and act periodically against Syria’s wishes until the four-way agreement between Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and
Amal was imposed upon Hezbollah by Iran at the same time that Syria assumed a preeminent role in Lebanon according to the 1989 Taif Agreement.

In terms of Israeli deterrence against Hezbollah, there is evidence of very limited success for a short time after the IDF inflicted mass casualties on Hezbollah during its human wave assaults in 1986 and 1987. It is also noteworthy that until the 1992 killing of Musawi and the rules of the game that developed after that incident, Hezbollah chose not to use its Katusha rockets against Israel nor to utilize, to the extent that it could, its international unit. Regarding Musawi’s killing, the response by Hezbollah that played itself out over one month and across three continents also established some deterrence by Hezbollah against Israel. Mainly as a result of the legitimacy that Hezbollah had at the time to fight Israel, IDF Brig. Gen. Yossef Kuperwasser said that Israel was generally “not successful” in deterring Hezbollah.501 “They were able to say to their people, ‘listen, we are freedom fighters. We are trying to kick out a foreign power from Lebanon.’ And that was legitimate,” he said. Other Israeli military officials interviewed generally concurred with this assessment.

501 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
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<td>Actual Deterrence</td>
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Table 11.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hezbollah (1985-1992)
In aggregate, it seems **weak tactical deterrence in the earlier part of the time period morphed into fair tactical deterrence** toward the end as the most deterrence that was achieved against Hezbollah during this time period by a host of state actors. Rules of the game, which would theoretically indicate at least fair tactical deterrence, were at some point established, but only toward the very end of the period under study. Otherwise, Hezbollah was forced to modify its behavior only slightly in terms of method of attack. This occurred after Israel repelled its human wave assaults in 1987 and also by 1990 when Syria and Iran more or less forced the Party to cease its strategy of kidnapping foreign nationals. Hezbollah was also compelled to modify its target of attack by refraining from kidnapping Soviet nationals. In general though, Hezbollah escalated its attacks during this period in terms of frequency and in terms of target as well, moving from attacks against the SLA to the IDF in the security zone to, eventually, Israeli civilians. In terms of method of attack, the Islamic Resistance employed suicide bombings only sparingly but it did so on its own terms and it continued to into the next time period under study. Moreover, it was in 1992 that Hezbollah began its use of Katusha rockets against northern Israel and also undertook perhaps its most ambitious operation to that point when it bombed the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires. The empirical findings demonstrate slightly better deterrence than theoretical predictions.
HEZBOLLAH CASE STUDY

CHAPTER XII – HEZBOLLAH, 1992-2000

Following the killing of Abbas Musawi, Hezbollah rode a wave of public sympathy in Lebanon. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah seized on that momentum to propel Hezbollah into the third phase of its evolution. After beginning as an underground Islamist militant group, and then operating in the open and functioning as an organization that wore two hats of militant resistance and social-religious public service, Hezbollah would now plunge into the morass of Lebanese politics.

Hezbollah’s third secretary general, Nasrallah harbored close ties with Iran, where he studied Shia Islam as a youth and as an adult, and with whose Revolutionary Guard he trained in the earliest days of the Party, before it even had a name. In his elegy for the slain Musawi on 18 February 1992, Nasrallah made three things abundantly clear where Hezbollah’s ideology was concerned. First, “The Supreme Guide Ayatollah Khameini [would] remain [Hezbollah’s] leader, imam, master and inspiration in jihad.” Second, where Hezbollah and Jews were concerned, “there will never be peace or reconciliation between us, only war, resistance, and the language of war and bullets.” Third, “America will remain the nation’s chief enemy and the greatest Satan of all. Israel will always be for us a cancerous growth that needs to be eradicated.” Other themes remained intact regarding Hezbollah’s foundational ideology, including the glorification of martyrdom.

vis-à-vis Hezbollah created holidays that revolved around that theme.\textsuperscript{503} The Karbala syndrome also remained alive and well, as Nasrallah referenced the events of the 7\textsuperscript{th} Century repeatedly in the elegy for Musawi.\textsuperscript{504}

On other matters, despite the fundamentalist brand of Shia Islam that he practiced and demanded from the movement’s inner circles and best units of fighters, Nasrallah was more flexible than his predecessors. After he assumed leadership, the strict moral codes that the Islamists sought to impose in areas under their control were relaxed, as was the inflammatory religious rhetoric as it pertained to the domestic front.\textsuperscript{505} Rather than coerce his fellow Lebanese Shia to adopt Hezbollah’s strict value set, Nasrallah decided that persuasion was more likely to serve the Party’s interests.

But by far the biggest change in party ideology surrounded the decision to enter Lebanese politics—a decision Nasrallah supported during the internal Hezbollah debates following the Taif Accord. With national elections scheduled for August 1992, Hezbollah formed a party list comprised of senior, well-known members of the organization who were directed by Nasrallah to cooperate with other political parties with similar goals.\textsuperscript{506} In a post-hoc justification for why Hezbollah, after so many years of insisting on political revolution, had now accepted the legitimacy of the Lebanese system, Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem said that “when Hezbollah isn’t in this framework, it loses all

\textsuperscript{503} Thanassis Cambanis, \textit{A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah’s Legions and their Endless War Against Israel}. New York: Simon & Schuester, 2010, pp. 187-188.

\textsuperscript{504} Noe, pp. 52-55.

\textsuperscript{505} Cambanis, pp. 73-74.

influence… We want to change the situation and one way to do that, no matter how many limitations it involves, is entering the parliament.” Nasrallah also made no secret of the fact that Hezbollah viewed political participation as a means to protect the right of Hezbollah to continue the struggle against Israel in post-civil war Lebanon. “In reality, we were and will always be the party of the resistance that [operates] from Lebanon,” the secretary general said weeks after the election. “Our participation in the elections and entry into the National Assembly do not alter the fact that we are a resistance party; we shall, in fact, work to turn the whole of Lebanon into a country of resistance.”

The dueling ideological narratives presented by Hezbollah’s leadership at the time speaks to the uneasy position in which the movement found itself following the decision to enter politics. On the one hand, Hezbollah’s leaders scrambled to justify that decision to the hard-core Shia ideologues of the Party who worried, among other things, that participation in politics would compromise Hezbollah’s ability to carry on the resistance against Israel and form an Islamic state. On the other hand, they were hungry for greater power within Lebanon and calculated that continuing to alienate the majority of the public was not conducive toward that goal.

Reconciled to participating in Lebanon’s governmental system, Hezbollah’s political platform revolved around ending the electoral arrangement which awarded each sect a certain number of parliamentary seats; gaining benefits for the underprivileged of

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507 Azani, pp. 97
508 Noe, pp. 88.
509 This tension was visible in pre-election speeches by Nasrallah and Qassem, who said respectively that Hezbollah would not waiver in its “resistance or adopt a defeatist attitude” and that Hezbollah’s “struggle in the parliament will be conducted at the same time as the struggle outside it.” See: Azani, pp. 99.
society (read, the Shia); and resisting Israel. The sensitivity of the Party to public opinion was already visible for years in all of the social programs that were run by or affiliated with Hezbollah. But with its electoral fortunes now inextricably tied to how the Islamists were perceived by the Lebanese public, and in particular the Shia community (due to the confessional electoral system), Nasrallah had to heed the desires and whims of his constituents to a far greater degree. In addition to securing the viability of the Islamic Resistance, Nasrallah insisted that “there are internal issues that are important to the people in the political and economic spheres, and in their daily lives.” Nasrallah also promised never “to impose on others by force, or through violent means, [Hezbollah’s] own beliefs” and attempt to turn Lebanon into an Islamic state.

Hezbollah’s leadership in fighting Israel and standing for Shia rights for ten years propelled it to take 12 of 128 seats in the 1992 national elections as opposed to nine for Amal, which was now clearly losing the struggle for Shia leadership, at least in Beirut.

It was a very strong showing for Hezbollah given that only 27 seats were reserved for

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511 Indeed, it was only after polling the community in a number of areas served by Hezbollah that the group leadership decided in favor of seeking Ayatollah Khameini’s approval to participate in elections. See: Azani, pp. 96-97.
512 Noe, pp. 89.
514 Noe, pp. 91.
515 According to the Hezbollah scholar Judith Palmer Harik, Nasrallah and the Party leadership may well have been resorting at the time, and since, to the long-established Shia tradition of taqiyya (strategic fibbing), where the issue of establishing an Islamic state was concerned. Since taqiyya was a well-understood practice by the Shia faithful where issues of their religion are concerned, the Hezbollah leadership would be able to assume that “their muted Islamic goals would be understood by partisans when the pursuit of militant jihad depended on that ploy.” See: Judith Palmer Harik, Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 59.
Shia under the confessional system modified by the Taif Accords, and also given that Nasrallah only announced Hezbollah’s participation on 3 July, less than two months before the elections began. Nevertheless, Hezbollah was not offered, nor did the Party wish to join the government formed by billionaire construction tycoon Rafik Hariri. Instead, Hezbollah sat comfortably in the opposition, a position that allowed it to rail both against Hariri’s economic policies and pro-Middle East peace stance that took on added significance with the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 following the Gulf War and then the 1993 Oslo Accords. Indeed, in August 1993, despite much speculation of fundamental shifts in Hezbollah’s ideology, Nasrallah insisted that that all such talk was “inaccurate” and that the original 1985 Open Letter still “contained Hezbollah’s entire political program.”

Following the elections, Hezbollah undertook another internal reorganization to accommodate its extensive political activities as well as its expanding military and social-religious apparatuses. The political council, Jihad Council (which oversaw military activities of the Islamic Resistance), Judicial Council, the Executive Council (grouping heads from the cultural, social, educational, professional and other units), and Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc were all formed as semi-autonomous bodies that reported to the Shura Council. Though Nasrallah quickly became the face and voice of Hezbollah following Musawi’s death and the successful electoral campaign, he made it

516 Noe, pp. 129.

Shortly thereafter, relations between Hezbollah and Hariri, always fraught, hit a nadir in September 1993 when nine Hezbollah supporters were shot and killed by the Lebanese army during a rally against the Israeli-PLO agreement. See: Blanford, pp. 102.

517 Blanford, pp. 101 and Qassem, pp. 130.
clear that the same decision-making procedures were in place under his regime—that Hezbollah’s “collective leadership” made decisions based on the process of consultation.\textsuperscript{518} While Nasrallah and the Shura council were nominally in charge of all resistance activities, the operational decisions were mostly left in the hands of the individual commanders. Among them was Imad Mugniyeh, who was promoted to Chief of Staff of the Islamic Resistance around 1993 or 1994.\textsuperscript{519} True to its electoral platform, Hezbollah stepped up its military activities against the SLA and IDF in the early 1990s. Relying on the strategy of luring Israel into a prolonged war, Hezbollah focused not on gaining territory but on “striking at the enemy’s main point of weakness, which is his inability to bear extensive human losses,” Nasrallah said.\textsuperscript{520} The conflict maintained a steady drum beat in southern Lebanon, as Hezbollah focused on its war of “attrition” against Israel.\textsuperscript{521} But there were periodic flare ups in 1993, 1994, and 1996 in particular which will be covered more extensively in the deterrence section of this chapter.

In 1993 and 1996, major Israeli military actions had the effect of internally displacing hundreds of thousands of mostly Shia villagers in southern Lebanon and killing more than 100 each time. In both cases, “understandings” were reached between Israel and Hezbollah regarding a set of principles each side would abide by while fighting each other in order to minimize civilian casualties. In reaching those understandings, Syria played an integral role, as the extent of its influence over Hezbollah grew.

\textsuperscript{518} Azani, pp. 93.
\textsuperscript{519} Blanford, pp. 124.
At least by the late 1990s, Hezbollah had also divided its fighting core into two types of militants: “Fighters and officers whose objective is eventually to go back home, and those whose objective is martyrdom, pure and simple,” according to Nasrallah. See: Blanford, pp. 110.
\textsuperscript{520} Blanford, pp. 123.
\textsuperscript{521} Noe, pp. 95
dramatically in the 1990s in parallel to Syrian’s heightened influence in Lebanon.

Israeli security officials who worked on Hezbollah related issues at the time describe the Syrian influence on the Party of God to varying degrees, but all maintain it was extensive. Shabtai Shavit, who headed the Mossad from 1989-1996, said that “Hezbollah leaders would be called to Damascus and take orders. It was that simple.”522

Such was the influence Hafez al-Assad wielded on Hezbollah, since he provided the logistical support to transfer weapons and people from Iran to Lebanon and also because the Syrian army more or less controlled Lebanese territory until 2004. Disagreeing slightly with Shavit, Israeli Senior Official A maintains that Hezbollah “did not respond to [Assad’s] directives. But they were bound to take seriously Syrian restrictions because the Syrians constructed the grid of the game in Lebanon.”523

Among Israeli security officials, there is unanimous agreement that throughout the 1990s, Assad used Hezbollah as a proxy in his own conflict with Israel. Calculating that Syria would suffer too much damage in the event of a direct conflict with the Jewish state, and wholly unbothered by damage and casualties suffered by the Lebanese, he “played the Hezbollah card as [Syria’s] main political-strategic-military tool against Israel,” Shavit said. “[Assad] didn’t develop a softness or a sympathy at all [with Hezbollah.] It was sheer Machiavellian.”524 As such, the battle between Hezbollah and

522 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon, Israel.
523 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem. Former IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak agreed more with the latter assessment, saying that while Assad could not direct Hezbollah to heat up the conflict with Israel, he absolutely could direct the Islamic Resistance to cool it down.” Source: Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
524 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon.
Israel throughout the 1990s somewhat mirrored the regional situation, mostly as it related to the conflict and peace negotiations taking place between Israel, the PLO and Syria. “For Assad, helping Hezbollah was like riding a tiger,” Former IDF Chief of Staff (2007-2011) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi said. “That’s the reason why he kept Nasrallah under control.”

For his part, Nasrallah characterized relations with Syria in positive terms, saying in 1992 that Assad was “a genuine support for both Lebanon and the resistance” and in 2000 that “Syria is a sister country, and a friend, with whom we share a common fate.” He always insisted that Hezbollah did not take orders from Damascus.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah’s relationship with Iran remained extraordinarily close, as Iran continued to funnel hundreds of millions of dollars annually to Hezbollah, along with an ever-increasing quantity and quality of weapons. The IRGC also continued to train Hezbollah fighters and the Islamic Republic’s vision of Shia Islam and resistance against Israel and the West remained the ideological foundation of Hezbollah. It was an ideology that Iran spread throughout Shia Lebanon by funding a vast expansion of Hezbollah’s social-religious network. The difference between the influence of Iran and Syria, said Senior Official A, was that Iran “was the puppet master and [Assad] was giving [Hezbollah] the right to use his stage.”

In terms of the degree that Hezbollah followed directives from Teheran, Israeli security officials are again mainly in agreement. They describe generally that Hezbollah

525 Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
526 Noe, pp. 73 and pp. 224.
527 By the early 1990s, Iranian airlines were flying to Damascus between one to four shipments per month of weapons, including Katusha rockets and Sagger anti-tank guided missiles. See: Blanford, pp. 132.
528 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
was run to a large degree by Iran, but that the sponsor and proxy had debates about policy. “Iran gave Hezbollah orders within a framework of reason and pragmatism,” Shavit said. Only rarely would Iran simply give an order that Hezbollah would be compelled to follow. The degree of policy coordination, i.e. to what level of detail Hezbollah and Iran coordinated policy at the time is not totally understood by Israel. But it is generally believed, according to Barak Ben Zur, the IDF’s counter-terrorism chief from 1991 to 1994, that all reports from the field of operations were eventually sent up the chain of command to Teheran and that all major Hezbollah operations were planned, or at least cleared with Iran in advance. General Hezbollah strategy was also coordinated with Iran, specifically with the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and IRGC through Imad Mugniyeh until his death, Ben Zur said.

The Israeli characterization of Iranian-Hezbollah relations squares reasonably well with the way Nasrallah described those relations at the time. In a 1993 interview, he said that “the waliyat-al-faqhi” insisted on Hezbollah choosing its own leadership. “We do not receive instruction from any ministry, nor any other authority. The same goes for the supreme leader and the Imam; they do not interfere in our personal affairs—they just formulate the general policy line.” The main difference between the Israeli and Nasrallah version of Hezbollah-Iranian relations stems from the fundamental characterization of the group, during the period. While Israeli officials generally emphasize that Hezbollah was as much Iranian as it was Lebanese, Nasrallah took pains to describe the Party as “an Islamic, Lebanese jihadist movement that has its own

529 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon.
530 Author interview 9 May 2012 in Herzeliyah.
531 Noe, pp. 134.
independent internal and local decision-making process, and its own independent leadership and cadres.\textsuperscript{532} This reflected the sensitivity Hezbollah leaders held to the persistent suspicions of many Lebanese (which continue until today) that Hezbollah was much more an Iranian proxy than a Lebanese movement.

The 1993 and 1996 flare-ups with Israel also demonstrated the degree to which Hezbollah was now assuming responsibility for the welfare of Lebanon’s Shia population. The Islamists led both the relief effort during those Israeli operations as well as the rebuilding afterward. That it was able to do so was mainly a result, as mentioned above, of the massive infusion of cash from Iran that Hezbollah received during the 1990s for the very purpose of expanding its social-religious network. Between 1990 and 2001, the foundation for the wounded provided war-related medical services, general health services, monthly assistance payments and educational scholarships to at least 11,062 people wounded as a result of the battle with Israel.\textsuperscript{533} Significant assistance was also given to farmers of the South whose crops were deleteriously affected by continued Hezbollah-Israel fighting and villagers in the Beqaa Valley.\textsuperscript{534} As noted in the previous

\textsuperscript{532} Noe, pp. 135
\textsuperscript{533} By 2000, Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Unit treated 409,281 in a year; its Education Unit dispersed more than $14 million in financial aid between 1996 and 2001; and \textit{Jihad al-Bina} (the construction unit) built nearly 41,000 square meters of schools in the three main Shia enclaves of the country from 1988 to 2000. See: Ahmed Nizar Hamzeh, \textit{In the Path of Hizbullah}. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004, pp. 53-57. Already by 1995, Hezbollah was operating four schools, six women’s colleges for technical training, four seminaries, 15 other public institutions and sponsoring 130 sports teams only in the south of the country. Among those receiving totally free education sponsored by Hezbollah, were the children of Hezbollah fighters killed in combat. See: Azani, pp. 117. By comparison, the Lebanese government’s total expenditure on education did not exceed $541,739 annually at least through 2000. See: Hamzeh, pp. 57.
\textsuperscript{534} Assistance to southern farmers included consultations, compensation for damages, assistance managing projects, and help finding alternative income for farmers whose fields were in IDF firing range. See: Azani, pp. 116. Assistance to Beqaa villagers included credit lines, social security systems, and health care. See: Palmer-Harik pp. 86-88.
chapter, by 1992 Hezbollah was already extensively involved in providing services in the Dahiyeh, including health care, trash pick up, and access to water. The provision of water and electricity to residents in that area greatly expanded during the 1990s, particularly following the cut-off of those utilities during the fighting with Israel in 1993.\textsuperscript{535} The fact is that already by this time period, Hezbollah was providing the majority of services to Lebanon’s Shia population in a host of essential areas.

No doubt, Hezbollah was propelled to increase its involvement in the social sphere based partially on the results of the 1996 national elections, when Hezbollah and its partners won only nine seats in the National Assembly, and based on a small but significant revolt of the Shia in the Beqaa Valley against Hezbollah in 1997. Having won 12 seats in 1992, the 1996 results were a major disappointment to Hezbollah due to the fact that Amal and its supporters won 20 seats.\textsuperscript{536} Despite winning the most seats of any party in both elections, it had now lost ground to Amal in the last four years. The results were perhaps related to the timing of the voting, which came shortly after the major IDF operation “Grapes of Wrath” in 1996, in which severe damage was inflicted on southern Lebanon. Though that operation made Hezbollah more popular among the Shia, it created additional resentment among much of Lebanon’s non-Shia population—a pattern that would follow future flare-ups.\textsuperscript{537}

\textsuperscript{535} Between 1988 and 1996, Hezbollah dug 57 artesian wells and fitted them with pumps, laid down 15,000 meters of water pipes, built four water reservoirs and set up an additional 400 water tanks around the Dahiyeh. It also set up five electrical power stations, four power stabilizers, 25 generators and 4,100 meters of high-voltage wires in the district during that period. See: Palmer Harik, pp. 84-85.
\textsuperscript{536} Azani, pp. 124-125.
\textsuperscript{537} Hamzeh, pp. 115.
Hezbollah’s political platform might emphasize social issues, its detractors complained, but its priority of fighting Israel meant those issues always took a back seat to the resistance. Indeed, during Hezbollah’s 1995 fourth organizational conference, the movement decided to allocate half of all its resources to military operations. Such decisions did not only rankle non-Hezbollah members, however. In 1997, protests in the Beqaa arose against the Lebanese government, despite being officially banned, and against the policies of Hezbollah as well, which former Hezbollah leader Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli accused of abandoning its constituents when farming conditions took a dramatic turn for the worse. With apparently no sense of irony, Tufayli, who vehemently opposed Hezbollah joining the political process, formed a party of his own in advance of the 1998 municipal elections, Lebanon’s first local elections in more than 30 years. Specific figures on those elections are very difficult to amass due to the complex system of voting. In general, much like in the national arena, Hezbollah and Amal split most of the Shia vote in 1998, with Tufayli’s party fairing well in the Beqaa and likely taking votes from both of the major Shia factions.

Despite standing in the 1992, 1996, and 1998 elections, Hezbollah was not willing to walk the full nine yards and join the various Lebanese governments of the 1990s, instead choosing to remain in opposition. Over and over again, the issue of Hezbollah’s weapons and the independent policy it was running in the South—a policy which dragged Lebanon into war with Israel time and again—created constant friction between the Party and the Hariri administrations. After the 1993 and 1996 flare-ups with Israel, Hariri

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538 Azani, pp. 106.
539 Norton, pp. 105-106.
540 See Palmer Harik, pp. 95-110 for a detailed account of the 1998 municipal elections.
attempted to force Hezbollah to comply with the terms of the Taif Accords by 
relinquishing its weapons and incorporating its fighters into the Lebanese Army. 

However, both times, with backing from Assad, who forced his will upon Lebanon 
throughout the 1990s, Hariri was compelled to back down. Under the terms imposed by 
Assad, Hezbollah remained free to carry on the resistance against Israel since expelling 
the foreign presence was advertised as an issue of national consensus in Lebanon. 

In describing his rationale for remaining in the opposition, Nasrallah made it clear 
that Hezbollah calculated that moving into the government would endanger the resistance 
against Israel by making the Party accountable for its actions in a way that it could avoid 
as an independent movement. “As things stand, the Israelis cannot blame the actions of 
the resistance on the Lebanese Army and the state,” Nasrallah said in a 1996 interview. 
“If we link the resistance to the political authority of the state, [the state’s directions to it] 
would be along the lines of: ‘Young men, there will be no operations today, too many 
things happening;’ or ‘Young men, tomorrow’s operation would not be helpful on 
account of the regional situation.’ How can the resistance remain effective under such 
circumstances?”

Despite any problems Hezbollah had at the polling booths, its cause of resisting 
Israel gained steady traction over the mid and late 1990s as it racked up a series of 
accomplishments against the IDF and SLA (these will be covered in more detail in the 

541 Noe, pp. 156-157. That explanation seems quite accurate given that Hezbollah remained in the opposition even after Hariri was replaced in December 1998 by Salim al-Huss, a candidate supported by Hezbollah.
deterrence section of the chapter). But it was a major battlefield loss of the Islamic Resistance in 1997 that galvanized many non-Shia to join the Hezbollah cause. On 12 September, Nasrallah’s son, Hadi, was among a unit of Hezbollah fighters that ambushed an Israeli patrol in the hills around Nabatieh. The 18-year-old, along with two other Hezbollah fighters, was killed in the IDF’s counter attack. Already scheduled to deliver remarks the following day to commemorate the killing of eight Hezbollah supporters by the Lebanese army four years earlier, Nasrallah delivered a speech that became one of the more famous oratories of his tenure. “If we search the entire globe for a more cowardly, lowly, weak, and frail individual in his spirit, mind, ideology, and religion, we will never find anyone like the Jew—and I am not saying the Israeli: we have to know the enemy we are fighting,” he said. “We wish to tell this enemy: we are not a resistance movement whose leaders want to enjoy their private lives and fight you through the sons of their loyal followers and their good and true supporters from among the ordinary citizens... Generations of our people might still have to carry the gun.”

Offered by Israel a special deal for the return of Hadi’s body, Nasrallah refused, saying: Let them bury him with his companions in Palestine.

Following Hadi’s death, Nasrallah experienced an outpouring of sympathy from Lebanese of all stripes, including Prime Minister Hariri.

In order to channel the wave of support, Nasrallah’s speech was followed by the creation of the Lebanese Brigade for

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542 Noe, pp. 171, 172-173, and pp. 177. In March 1998, Nasrallah would back track somewhat, saying that “our attitude towards Israel is not an attitude towards Jews or Judaism. (See Noe, pp. 185.) But only a few months later, during a May rally in Beirut, he would refer to Jews as “the descendants of apes and pigs.” (See Noe, pp. 188.)

543 Noe, pp. 169. Nine months later, a deal was struck in which Hadi’s body was returned along with many others for the remains of Israeli commandos.

544 Blanford, pp. 196.
Resisting Occupation, a unit composed of volunteers from all of Lebanon’s sects who shared Hezbollah’s goal of expelling Israel from Lebanese soil. Though the brigade would not participate in much actual combat over the subsequent years, its symbolism was hugely important as it expressed a unity of purpose among Lebanese to end Israel’s occupation of the security zone.

By the late 1990s, the situation for Israel in Lebanon was deteriorating. It was losing around 20 soldiers per year to Hezbollah and the morale of the SLA was falling precipitously. Numerous rounds of peace talks with Syria had taken place in which an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and Southern Lebanon was on the table in exchange for peace with Syria and Lebanon. But the negotiations had not born fruit. After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by an extremist right-wing Israeli, and the subsequent election of the Likud government led by Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process also stalled.

The tide in Israeli society began to turn decisively against the IDF’s presence in Lebanon following a series of high-profile Hezbollah operations in which IDF troops and officers were killed by the Islamic Resistance and a February 1997 helicopter collision over northern Israel that killed 73 paratroopers. In the campaign leading up to the 1999 Israeli elections, the IDF’s presence in Lebanon became a major issue between Netanyahu and Labor Party Leader Ehud Barak, himself a former IDF Chief of Staff and the country’s most decorated soldier. One way or another, Barak promised during the

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545 The brigade, as constituted, consisted of 38 percent Sunni volunteers, 25 percent Shia, 20 percent Druze, and 17 percent Christian. See: Qassem, pp. 219-220.
campaign, if Labor was elected, the IDF would be gone from Lebanon by July 2000.\footnote{546} Barak’s preference was to negotiate that withdrawal with Assad and the Lebanese government in one package that would bring peace to Israel’s northern border. The Syrian leader was dying and it was generally believed that he wanted to bequeath to his son Bashar, who was lined up to take is place as president, a country complete with the Golan Heights. Syria and Israel entered into a series of negotiations mediated by Washington that would again include a total package of peace between Israel, Syria, and Lebanon. Despite not being thrilled over the prospect, the indications were that Hezbollah would once again accommodate itself if that situation materialized, cognizant of the fact that it could not oppose Syria and Iran, which in the late 1990s had also expressed its willingness to not stand in the way of Middle East peace. “We actually estimate that a peaceful resolution is a victory for the resistance and its logic,” Nasrallah said in a February 2000 interview.\footnote{547} Those words were a stark contrast to his usual line, which was expressed in March 1998 interview when Nasrallah said that Hezbollah “rejects completely any formula that talks about security arrangements and terms. We don’t accept that the Israeli enemy should received any rewards or gains for occupying our land.”

In the end, Nasrallah would get his original wish. On 5 March 2000, the Barak Administration announced its intention to make good on its campaign promise and

withdraw from Lebanon by July.\textsuperscript{548} Then on 26 March, Israeli-Syrian negotiations broke down once more during a final meeting in Geneva between Bill Clinton and Assad, when the latter rejected a proposal from Barak given to him by the American president. The result left Barak with the options of either breaking his campaign promise or unilaterally withdrawing IDF forces from Lebanon. Over the objections of much of the Israeli security establishment, he chose the latter.

Though the last Israeli soldier would exit Lebanon in May, the collapse of the security zone actually began in June 1999. Under heavy fire from Hezbollah, the SLA withdrew from the Jezzine salient on the northern edge of the security zone. The decision was a logical one. Having held their ground for 14 years until 1999 despite taking heavy losses, the declaration by Barak that Israel would leave Lebanon significantly altered the calculus of the SLA militiamen. For the next year, as the deadline for an Israeli withdrawal drew near, SLA militiamen began taking stock of their options. For those wishing to give up the fight sooner rather than later, Hezbollah offered to refrain from vengeance against them and their families and simply turn them over to the Lebanese authorities. For SLA fighters that did not wound or kill anyone during their service, Hezbollah was even willing to entertain a limited amnesty.\textsuperscript{549} But for those who insisted on fighting until the end, Hezbollah would show no mercy. SLA fighters must “leave with the Jews, turn themselves in, or be killed,” Nasrallah said.\textsuperscript{550} Stuck with three bad options, many of the SLA fighters opted to turn themselves in and face the music, and an

\textsuperscript{548} Blanford, pp. 250.
\textsuperscript{549} Norton 1999, pp. 31
\textsuperscript{550} Blanford, pp. 258.
increasing number of defections and surrenders began as a result.\footnote{Fearful of their fate under Hezbollah rule, some Christian villagers in the security zone began emigrating, though most opted to stay. See: Blanford, pp. 260-261.}

Israel would greatly have preferred an orderly withdrawal, but it was not to be.\footnote{The following description of the Israeli withdrawal is drawn from Blanford, pp. 262-277.}

After the SLA abandoned a post in Qantara on 21 May, massive crowds descended on the village to celebrate its liberation. A contingent of UNIFIL soldiers from Finland attempted to keep the masses at bay, but eventually gave way, allowing the crowd to push open the gates to the village. As news spread of the events, similar scenes began playing out in the villages of Qsair, Deir Sirian, and Taibe, where another SLA position was overrun. One by one SLA positions in the security zone collapsed in the face of thousands of Lebanese civilians, leaving the IDF dangerously exposed. By nighttime, the people of Southern Lebanon—not Hezbollah—had nearly split the IDF lines in two.

Over the next day, similar scenes played out all across what remained of the security zone. UNIFIL soldiers were unwilling to use violence to stop the crowds. Here and there, the IDF and SLA fired in attempt to slow the crowds down. But the strategic decision was made that since Israel was leaving anyways, the IDF should avoid a blood bath with the civilian population. SLA fighters who had not turned themselves in to Lebanese authorities began literally running with their families for the Israeli border. And that night, under the cover of artillery fire, IDF troops executed a rapid withdrawal from Lebanon, blowing up their own munitions depots and fortified positions. Hezbollah had envisioned forcing the IDF to withdraw under fire. But in the midst of the chaos, the Party leadership ordered its fighters not to fire a shot and risk a messy situation. “If
civilians were killed needlessly, then we would have lost the flavor of victory,” Hezbollah MP Nazih Mansour explained.” As dawn broke on 24 May, after the last IDF troops exited the security zone and returned home to Israel, an IDF officer slapped a simple padlock on the metal swing gate to Lebanon, ignominiously ending Israel’s 18-year occupation of its northern neighbor.

Two days later, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the first Arab force to ever legitimately claim victory over Israel, drove from Beirut to the town of Bint Jbeil in the former occupation zone. More than 100,000 people comprising all of Lebanon’s sects gathered there, in what Nasrallah called “the capital of the resistance.” In the victory speech, he praised all the Hezbollah “martyrs,” the villagers of the south, and the allies that stood with Hezbollah over the years. He vowed to free the remaining Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails and liberate the Shebaa Farms. And he claimed that Hezbollah’s achievements were proof that only resistance could bear fruit against the Jewish state. The victorious Hezbollah leader then directed his comments toward the Palestinians, saying “the Israel that owns nuclear weapons and has the strongest air force in the region is weaker than a spider’s web… If you put yourselves in God’s hands, He will give you victory and make you strong.” Four months later, the second Palestinian intifada erupted.

553 Blanford, pp. 276.
554 Noe, pp. 232-243. The Shebaa Farms is an area along the Golan Heights that the UN and Israel claim belongs to Syria but that Hezbollah claims belongs to Lebanon. Over the following years, Nasrallah would use that as a pretext to continue militant operations against Israel.
555 Noe, pp. 242.
Elements of Statehood. In 1992, Hezbollah made the decision to join Lebanon’s political process and stand in elections for the national assembly, marking a significant change in the movement’s character. It subsequently fielded candidates in the 1996 national elections and 1998 municipal elections. In both national elections, it gained the most seats of any party in Lebanon and it made a strong showing in the 1998 local elections as well. The rise of Hezbollah as a political party paralleled an increase in the social-religious services that the movement offered, mostly to the Shia population in the Dahiyeh, the Beqaa Valley and the South. It is fair to say that during this time period, Lebanese Shia became increasingly dependent on Hezbollah for their welfare, to the point where a majority was probably accessing Hezbollah institutions by 2000. Hezbollah did not control any territory in Lebanon during this time, though it held significant influence in the South, the Beqaa, and the Dahiyeh.

Organizational Structure. In order to accommodate its political arm and its continuously growing social-religious and military operations, Hezbollah added layers of hierarchy to its organizational structure during this time period. Importantly, it held elections at regular intervals in which Hassan Nasrallah was chosen to serve as secretary general of the Shura Council, the body which sets general Hezbollah policy, interacts with Iranian leadership, and gives orders down the command chain. It was very clear who the decision makers were in the organization and how decisions were made. In terms of command and control, it was very solid during this period, according to Lt. Gen. (Ret.)
Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, who was the IDF’s chief of staff from 1995 to 1998. Hezbollah “improved their communication dramatically. They became very professional and very effective in their chain of command [and] in their training. And they started to be a very serious enemy in Lebanon,” he said.  

*External Support.* The support Hezbollah received from Iran during this period increased from previous periods to at least some hundreds of millions of dollars per year. This funding allowed the huge expansion of the social-religious services Hezbollah offered the Shia in Lebanon. Hezbollah continued to pledge religious allegiance to the *wali-al-faqhi*, who was now Ayatollah Khamenei following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. The Islamic Republic continued to arm and train Hezbollah fighters and coordinate general policy with the Hezbollah leadership through its Revolutionary Guard and Ministry of Intelligence.

Syria also provided extensive support to Hezbollah, mainly in terms of logistics. Hafez al-Assad facilitated the transfer of weapons and personnel from Iran to Hezbollah and he allowed the Islamic Resistance to operate against Israel from Lebanese territory, which he more or less controlled via the Syrian Army. Assad also greatly assisted Hezbollah in the negotiations that produced the 1993 and 1996 “understandings” that bound the rules for the fighting between the IDF and Hezbollah. He also forced the various Lebanese governments of the period to accept Hezbollah’s retention of its arms so that it could continue to fight Israel. But Assad also proved an impediment to Hezbollah, at times ordering their fighters to stand down if he did not want to antagonize

[556 Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.]
Israel or the United States at certain moments. (The score on this variable is thus lower than it otherwise would be given that Syria sometimes acted as a restraint on Hezbollah.)

**Inter-Factional Competition.** Hezbollah continued to be engaged in a competition with Amal for Shia support and votes during the 1990s. In fact, in 1996 it suffered a setback at the ballot box to Amal and in 1997 it faced a revolt from former members of the Party in the Beqaa region. Though Hezbollah is generally characterized as having taken over dominance of the Shia movement by the mid-1990s, the movement still clearly behaved as though Amal was a strong competitor.

**Ideology.** Hezbollah’s ideology took a dramatic turn in the beginning of the 1990s when it decided to take part in the national elections. This meant, *de facto*, that its leaders gave up on the idea of a political revolution and overthrowing the government in Lebanon in the short- and medium-term, and accepted the legitimacy of its structure. Nasrallah and others stopped talking about forming an Islamic state in Lebanon and took pains to insist that the Party was a Lebanese movement rather than an Iranian proxy. Hezbollah also undertook a drastic expansion of its social-religious welfare network during this time period. These are all indications of a shift toward the constructive end of the ideological spectrum.

However, there remained strong destructive elements in Hezbollah’s ideology. Once elected to the National Assembly, Party leaders decided that they would remain in the opposition rather than join the government, and that Hezbollah would not lay down
its arms and have its fighters incorporated into the Lebanese Army because its leadership feared that doing so would negatively impact the ability of the Islamic Resistance to carry on the fight against Israel. Moreover, despite sometimes distinguishing between his hatred for Israel and his hatred for Jews, Hassan Nasrallah made a number of virulently anti-Jewish statements during this time period which strongly indicate that Hezbollah at its core was not only an anti-Israel organization, but an anti-Jewish organization as well. Nasrallah also made clear that Hezbollah’s mission was to destroy Israel, rather than just expel the IDF from the southern Lebanon.
Table 12.1 – Theoretical Deterrence of Hezbollah (1992-2000)

<table>
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_Theoretical Prediction._ Based on the independent variables at the time, the best possible deterrence a state could hope to achieve against Hezbollah would be **fair tactical deterrence.**
Before the 1992 national elections, the Hezbollah leadership made clear that it saw participation in the political process as a means of protecting the Islamic Resistance and guaranteeing its continued ability to fight Israel. Hezbollah made good on that promise throughout the 1990s, as its attacks against the IDF generally increased both in quantity and quality throughout the decade. Thirteen IDF soldiers were killed by Hezbollah in 1992, 12 in 1993, and 21 in 1994. Moreover, the ratio of Hezbollah fighters to IDF soldiers killed narrowed from five-to-one in 1990 to 1.5-to-one by the middle of the decade, where it remained until 2000. Overall number of attacks is difficult to measure. According to Hezbollah scholar Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, the Islamic Resistance engaged in 1,030 operations against the SLA and IDF between 1990 and 1995, while Blanford cites UNIFIL records which indicate that attacks increased from 80 in 1991, to 644 in 1994, to 908 in 1995.

By 1993, the IDF was struggling to cope with the successful guerilla tactics employed by Hezbollah fighters and the mutual deterrence that Nasrallah and the strategic minded leadership of Hezbollah had successfully created following the killing of Abbas Musawi in 1992. According to the rules of the game, targeting IDF soldiers and Hezbollah fighters in the security zone was deemed as legitimate by both sides. But when the IDF would fire on civilian areas or infrastructure in Lebanon, Hezbollah would fire

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557 Blanford, pp. 145.
558 Hamzeh, pp. 89 and Blanford, pp. 145.
Katusha rockets over the border at civilian communities in northern Israel.\textsuperscript{559} This arrangement obviously favored Hezbollah since its fighters operated from civilian areas. If the IDF chose to strike back with its favorite weapons of the time—artillery and air power—it risked provoking rocket attacks against Israeli civilians. Whereas if it sent soldiers into the villages, it placed their lives at far greater risk as they were operating on Hezbollah terrain. The situation left the IDF at a loss for how to respond to the mounting Hezbollah attacks against its forces.

Seeking to change the rules of the game, the IDF unleashed “Operation Accountability” in July 1993 after a particularly bloody period in which seven IDF soldiers were killed in the span of three weeks. During seven days of fighting from 25 to 31 July, the IDF killed 130 Lebanese and wounded at least 500 more while displacing around 300,000 people who fled to Beirut as temporary refugees.\textsuperscript{560} Around 6,000 homes were destroyed and 80 villages were damaged with estimates placing the damage in Lebanon as a result of the fighting at around $29 million. The IDF estimated that between 50 and 75 Hezbollah fighters were killed while Lebanese and international authorities put the figure at eight Hezbollah dead.\textsuperscript{561} On the other side, Hezbollah fired more than 300 Katusha rockets into Israel and the security zone, killing two Israeli civilians and wounding 24 more. One soldier was killed when an anti-take missile hit his tank.\textsuperscript{562}

Operation Accountability ended when US Secretary of State Warren Christopher

\textsuperscript{559} Blanford, pp. 146. This was confirmed in many interviews with Israeli security officials.
\textsuperscript{560} The following numbers are taken from Blanford, pp. 147 and Noe, pp. 100.
\textsuperscript{562} Byman, pp. 234.
brokered a deal between Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Hezbollah. According to the terms of the verbal “understanding,” as it was referred to, both sides were to refrain from targeting civilians. Israel could no longer shell and bomb Lebanese villages while Hezbollah was prohibited from firing rockets into northern Israel. Hezbollah also agreed not to initiate operations from within civilian areas. Both sides were allowed to continue to target each other’s combatants within the security zone.

Israel’s strategy at the time was to pressure the Lebanese government to reign in Hezbollah by initiating the refugee flow and angering the civilian population in the South, according to Barak Ben Zur, the IDF’s counter-terrorism chief from 1991 to 1994. Indeed, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Israeli Knesset that the IDF “want[s] Lebanese villagers to flee and we want to damage all those who were parties to Hezbollah’s activities.” Whether that strategy worked depends on who is interpreting the outcome of the conflict. All sides acknowledge that the real master of the Lebanese government of the time was not Prime Minister Rafik Hariri but Syrian strongman Hafez al-Assad, who could not care less about the plight of southern Lebanese villagers.

Some analysts say the strategy of pressuring the civilian population and Lebanese government was defective, and point to the fact that Hezbollah operations continued at a steady pace following Operation Accountability’s conclusion as proof that Hezbollah was not deterred. Most Israeli security officials, however, insist they knew that Assad was calling the shots and that the pressure did produce some tangible results. Specifically,

563 Author interview 9 May 2012 in Herzeliyah.
564 Blanford, pp. 146.
Hezbollah moving its operations outside of the villages gave Israel “the ability to retaliate” again, said Col. (Res.) Eitan Azani, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism. This change, along with the terms of the understanding, limited Hezbollah’s ability to fire rockets at Israel.

Indeed, it appears clear that Hezbollah was motivated by civilian pressure to slightly modify its behavior in that regard. In explaining why Hezbollah agreed to the terms of the 1993 Understanding, Qassem writes that it accepted limits on Katusha attacks against Israel “to the reciprocal [limiting of] aggression by Israel on civilian targets in Lebanon, for this was perceived as a buffer of safety for Lebanese civilians and was intended to limit Israel’s ability to exert this kind of pressure.” But the conclusion of Operation Accountability also revealed that Hezbollah had achieved significant goals of its own. “The Katusha bombardment has led to a new formula based on mutual forced displacement, mutual destruction, and equal terror,” Nasrallah said, citing “the rule of the game” with Israel.

The first test of those new rules came quickly. On 19 August, nine Israeli soldiers were killed in two road-side bomb attacks, but the IDF refrained from large scale attacks against civilian areas. Over the next three years, the rules of the game were generally followed by both sides, though instances of each breaking the rules also occurred. By mid-1995, it appeared that the mutual deterrence established by Hezbollah and Israel after Operation Accountability was fraying as waves of violence engulfed southern

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565 Qassem, pp. 201.
566 Noe, pp. 107
In that year, 23 IDF soldiers were killed in Lebanon and another 99 were injured. At the time, only Syrian intervention seemed to cool things down—albeit temporarily. Hezbollah clearly understood that it was always testing the boundaries of the rules, so much so that in March 1996, when it appeared that the situation between the IDF and the Islamic Resistance was heating up again beyond the “normal” amount of violence, Nasrallah told a press conference that Hezbollah’s actions were “well planned, so that they do not cause damage to civilians on our side.”

Nevertheless, on the morning of 10 April 1996, Hezbollah launched 25 Katusha rockets at Kiryat Shmoneh in northern Israel, wounding seven civilians. Hours later, one IDF soldier was killed and three were wounded in a Hezbollah mortar attack against an IDF position in the security zone. The timing was particularly sensitive in Israel. Four suicide bombings by Hamas in late February and early March had killed 59 Israeli civilians in the run-up to Israeli elections scheduled for May. Following Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination in November 1995, Shimon Peres was desperately attempting to salvage the peace process with the PLO while at the same time holding off a strong challenge from the right-wing Likud party. Together, the attacks from Hezbollah and Hamas at a politically sensitive time pressured Peres to order a strong response.

Operation Grapes of Wrath began on 11 April and lasted 16 days. In many ways it

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567 Azani, pp. 165.
568 Blanford, pp. 149.
569 Azani, pp. 192.
570 Azani, pp, 113.
571 Hezbollah claimed it was in retaliation for the killing of a Lebanese boy by a rock bomb—an explosive devise used by both Hezbollah and the IDF that looked like a rock and was often placed on the side of the road—while Israel claimed it was Hezbollah that was responsible.
was a repeat of the 1993 flare up—except for the extent of the damage. In the course of
the fighting, 154 Lebanese were killed, including around 24 Hezbollah fighters, and 401
people were wounded. This time, however, the IDF caused far more damage to
Lebanon’s infrastructure, bombing highways, bridges, and power stations, including
striking Beirut for the first time since 1982. Over the course of the war, the IDF hit
Hezbollah, Lebanese military, and civilian infrastructure targets in Beirut, the Beqaa
region, and the South. In one week, the Israeli Air Force carried out 2,350 air sorties and
artillery units fired 25,000 shells into Lebanon and the overall damage was estimated at
$700 million. On the other side, Hezbollah launched at least 746 Katusha rockets, 80
percent of which landed in northern Israel. Three IDF soldiers were killed in the
operation and 62 civilians were wounded by Hezbollah rocket fire.

Once again, huge numbers of Lebanese civilians fled the South—around
400,000—to escape the war, though during this round of fighting the Lebanese
government and Hezbollah were far better prepared and provided shelter for most.
Thousands more civilians sought refuge in the numerous UNIFIL positions dotting
southern Lebanon, assuming that the they would not be attacked inside a United Nations
installation. That assumption held until 18 April, when Israeli artillery shells hit a Fijian
compound in the town of Qana in what Shabtai Shavit, the director of the Mossad at the
time, called “a catastrophe.” According to the IDF, it mistakenly fired on the
compound while targeting a Hezbollah cell operating in close proximity—a claim the UN

572 On striking Beirut, see: Blanford, pp. 155.
573 Byman, pp. 237 on the number of temporarily internally displaced people and Palmer Harik, pp. 120 on
the preparations for them.
574 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon, Israel.
did not believe. Whatever the intent, the attack killed between 102 and 109 civilians and was dubbed a “war crime” by Israel’s detractors. It was also the turning point in the operation.

According to Brig. Gen. (Res.) Shimon Naveh, who headed the IDF’s research institute from 1995 to 2005, the strategy of “increasing the grievances of the people without killing them” was going very well up until the Qana incident. Similar to the strategy of 1993, the point of Grapes of Wrath was “to force the Lebanese government to intervene and affect the minds of the Shia leadership; to cause suffering without too much death. You can bring Hezbollah to a point of being torn by tension of adhering to militancy and caring for the people.”

It is not hard to understand why Israel thought that strategy could work. Nasrallah had said on numerous occasions that the welfare of the population was a chief concern of Hezbollah, and the organization had acted upon that premise. The IDF had also captured a document during a Hezbollah raid in 1995 titled “The Principles of Warfare” that was written by a top Hezbollah military commander as a guide to Islamic Resistance fighters. Among the 13 principles listed, number 12 said: “The population is a treasure—nurture it.” The second principle was also useful to Israel. “Protecting our fighters is more important than causing the enemy casualties!” it said. That indicated that Hezbollah was liable to modify its behavior based on battlefield losses, which itself is a strong indication of the ability to deter an enemy. Indeed, Naveh said that the IDF “had

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575 Author interview 16 April 2012 in Tel Aviv.
576 Blanford, pp. 123.
intelligence that Hezbollah was becoming nervous and was trying to escape from the battle until Qana… Qana messed up the terms of the ceasefire.”

International opprobrium rained down upon Israel following the Qana attack, once again forcing Secretary Christopher to the Middle East to negotiate a ceasefire. Just as in 1993, Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri was powerless to stop Hezbollah and Israel alike, even though he would have liked nothing better than to reign in the Islamist militants.\(^{577}\) Assad again played kingmaker, as diplomats from the United States, Lebanon, Iran, and France that were engaged in negotiations met in Damascus on Assad’s terms. The result was another “understanding;” this one, however, was written and included the creation of a monitoring group composed of the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel which were charged with monitoring and cataloging any violations of the agreement by the IDF and Hezbollah.\(^{578}\) The terms of the agreement were much the same as the 1993 Understanding, in that it prohibited the deliberate targeting by either side of civilians, including rocket attacks, and also prohibited conducting military operations from within civilian zones. It explicitly allowed the two sides to exercise the “right of self-defense,” which in practice meant that the IDF and Hezbollah fighters could continue killing each other within the security zone. But in committing the April Understanding to writing, the agreement also “provided the Resistance with the legitimacy of defying occupation,” writes Qassem.\(^{579}\)

Another stipulation of the April Understanding was the resumption of peace talks

\(^{577}\) Palmer Harik, pp. 114-115.  
\(^{578}\) Noe, pp. 145-147. The text of the April Understanding can also be found on those pages.  
\(^{579}\) Qassem, pp. 211-212.
between Syria and Israel under American mediation. Indeed, the timing of Hezbollah’s increasing attacks against Israel before Grapes of Wrath was likely partially due to a break down in those talks and the “Summit of Peacemakers” convened by the United States in Sharm al-Sheik, Egypt, following the four Hamas suicide bombings in Israel and the killing of Rabin.\(^{580}\) That summit, which was not attended by Syria, brought together 29 world leaders, including many from the Arab world to condemn Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both of which were headquartered in Damascus. Again, it seems that Israeli strategy partially foundered on the fact that “Assad was willing to let all the Lebanese die” if it served his own purposes, according to Col. (Res.) Eitan Azani, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism.\(^{581}\) As Assad himself said: “There can be no security for Israel as long as Arab land is occupied.”\(^{582}\)

Israeli security officials also believe the timing of Hezbollah’s increased operations that Spring was linked to Iran. “1996 is unique in that the Iranians had a clear stake in the outcome of the Israeli elections and a clear stake in destroying Oslo as best they could,” Israeli Senior Official A said, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. “And I think at the time there was a degree of regional spillover into Hezbollah’s conduct.”\(^{583}\)

Once again, Nasrallah justified the Understanding in “that the ability to protect our civilians” was “a considerable victory for” Hezbollah. “We will be very careful not to

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\(^{580}\) The last of the four bombings on 4 March was claimed jointly by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.  
^{581}\) Byman, pp. 238.  
^{582}\) Palmer Harik, pp. 118.  
^{583}\) Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
violate this very important achievement, and we have no compulsion or obsession whatsoever regarding the use of Katusha rockets,” Nasrallah said at the end of April 1996.\textsuperscript{584} He also stressed that in the aftermath of the battle, Hezbollah had “a major task on [its] hands in assisting the returning refugees, healing the wounds, and taking part in rebuilding the country.” Rebuilding was a task, as previously noted, that Hezbollah took very seriously. Combined with convincing the public that its rocket firing policy was indeed meant to secure their defense, this contributed to the increasing support that the Party of God would obtain from the Lebanese people in the mid and late 1990s.\textsuperscript{585}

In assessing the effectiveness of the operation, different viewpoints again emerge along the same lines as those analyzing the 1993 battle. “The Lebanese are among the most war hardened people in the world. Bombing the crap out of southern Lebanon and power stations in Beirut couldn’t make less of a difference,” said Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based journalist and author of a book on Hezbollah’s 30-year war against Israel. “It was not going to turn the people against Hezbollah and it wasn’t going to make an iota of difference against the government because Assad doesn’t give a hoot about a power station in Beirut.”\textsuperscript{586} Indeed, during and after both the 1993 and 1996 operations, Hezbollah suffered only minimal pressure to bring an end to the fighting, and in the bigger picture actually gained support because of the fighting as the Party was seen as the only actor in Lebanon that was standing up to Israel.\textsuperscript{587} It was therefore logical that only a matter of weeks passed before Hezbollah resumed operations against the IDF in the

\textsuperscript{584} Noe, pp. 155 and 162.
\textsuperscript{585} Azani, pp. 116.
\textsuperscript{586} Author telephone interview on 20 May 2012.
\textsuperscript{587} Byman, pp. 235 and Hamzeh, pp. 115.
security zone. By the end of June 1996, Hezbollah fighters had already killed nine IDF soldiers and wounded 21 more.\textsuperscript{588}

From the Israeli point of view, however, Operations Accountability and Grapes of Wrath were never meant to put an end to Hezbollah. Rather, they were designed, first and foremost, to put an end to Hezbollah’s shelling of northern Israeli communities, according to Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi, the IDF chief of staff from 2007 to 2011 who was based in the IDF’s Northern Command at the time and spent much time in Lebanon battling Hezbollah. Both operations were “limited in objective, limited in force,” Ashkenazi said. Only a massive invasion of Lebanon, he said, could have brought a total end to Hezbollah’s violence and, as such, Israel chose “the less bad alternative.”\textsuperscript{589}

There is broad agreement in Israeli security circles on that point, and that the operations in 1993 and 1996 did at least achieve their first tier objectives. After 1993 and particularly after 1996, Israel and Hezbollah entered a period of “mutual deterrence,” according to Shavit, the former Mossad chief. The rules of the game which emerged following 1996 were observed much more studiously than they were between 1993 and 1996. And the rules were very clear as well, Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yossef Kuperwser said.

“A rule of the game for them… was not to carry out attacks that would immediately call for retaliation that would immediately cause damage to the Shiite population… You can attack our positions, but you cannot launch rockets toward Israel. If you launch rockets toward Israel, you are going to suffer heavy retaliation. If you attack our positions inside Lebanon, we shoot back at the

\textsuperscript{588} Palmer Harik, pp. 124.
\textsuperscript{589} Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
people who attack us. If you launch a rocket from within a populated area, we will retaliate to this area, so take care. There were always rules of the game. And the rules of the game reflect the deterrence… There was an ongoing effort, especially by Hezbollah, to change the rules of the game, to push the boundaries, so whenever they are pushing it, you can see an Israeli reaction that is out of the ordinary. And then you know that there is a message that says ‘Hey, these are the rules of the game and you can’t change them…’ There wasn’t a clear chart with a price tag, but actually we did have a price tag saying: ‘Ah, they did this, we will do that. They only did this, we will only do that.’ And there were rules of the game. They knew them and we knew them. And both sides were playing according to these unwritten rules of the game.”

And with few exceptions, Israeli security personnel believe that Hezbollah more often than not, abided by those rules for the duration of the 1990s. In fact, Nasrallah explicitly recognized such conditions, referring to them as “rules of the game” in a February 2000 interview.591

Though the Israeli security establishment insists in retrospect that the outcomes of both the 1993 and 1996 were generally acceptable, the political ramifications at the time seemed otherwise. Hezbollah had taken on the most powerful military force in the Middle East and withstood its assault. Moreover, it managed to officially legitimize its operations in southern Lebanon and against Israel and place significant pressure on Israel both domestically in the Jewish State, for what was perceived as the IDF’s failure to stop Hezbollah rocket launchings, and internationally for causing mass civilian casualties and damage to Lebanese infrastructure. Both “understandings” also bound the conflict in ways that limited the IDF’s options—a bad result for the more powerful side which

590 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
591 Noe, pp. 216.
would have preferred to have all its capabilities at its disposal. By limiting the war between the IDF and Hezbollah to the security zone, Israel more or less agreed to allow Hezbollah to dictate the pace of fighting. As a result of the understandings, “the war boiled down to a contest of attrition, which heavily favored the less casualty-sensitive Hezbollah,” writes Daniel Byman, an author of a book on the history of Israeli counter-terrorism strategy.\(^{592}\)

Aside from the two major Israeli operations, one other major incident helped clarify the rules of the game between Hezbollah and Israel in the 1990s. On the night of 2 June 1994, IAF jets and helicopters attacked a Hezbollah training camp at Ain Dardara, in the Balbek region outside of the security zone. Around 150 Hezbollah recruits were sleeping in their tents at the time, and of those at least 40 were killed in the attack.\(^{593}\) After promising a severe response in the wake of the attack, Hezbollah delivered six weeks later. On 13 July, a suicide bomber detonated a 600-pound car bomb which leveled the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 85 people and wounding 300 more.

The bombing shocked the Israeli security establishment, which thought that it was operating within the established rules of the game at the time when it initiated the Ain Dardara raid. Even though Balbek was outside the security zone, there were no civilians near by. But according to Barak Ben Zur, among the dead that night were many sons of prominent Hezbollah leaders, targets Hezbollah was not willing to countenance. With the

\(^{592}\) Byman, pp. 236.
\(^{593}\) Byman, pp. 223.
twin Buenos Aires bombings—the Jewish Community Center in 1994 and the Israeli Embassy in 1992 which followed the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary General Abbas Musawi—Hezbollah drew a red line for the IDF in not targeting its leadership and their families. It was a line Israel observed at least up until 2008, when the Mossad may have been responsible for the assassination of Imad Mugniyeh, who both of the Buenos Aires attacks.

Meanwhile, as Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon grinded on during the latter half of the 1990s, Hezbollah’s attacks against the IDF and SLA mounted. From 1996 to 2000, the Islamic Resistance conducted 4,928 operations, as compared to 1,030 between 1990 and 1995.594 By 1995, the IDF had switched tactics to a degree and was utilizing a special new unit called “Egoz.” The commandos were specifically trained to conduct raids against Hezbollah deep inside Lebanese territory. The general Israeli strategy was that until the politicians found a way to extricate Israel from the Lebanese quagmire, it was the army’s job to “keep [Hezbollah] busy in Lebanon instead of making it easier for them to operate in Israel,” said Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the IDF’s chief of staff from 1995 to 1998.595 The Egoz unit, and others, scored some success against Hezbollah, but in general the rate of Hezbollah attacks increased, as did the quality of Hezbollah’s operations, Lipkin-Shahak said. In 1996, 27 IDF soldiers were killed in Lebanon, the highest toll since 1985.596 But it was two events in 1997 dramatically turned the tide against Israel, the former chief of staff said.

594 Hamzeh, pp. 89.
595 Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
596 Blanford, pp. 180.
The first was the previously mentioned helicopter crash in February 1997 that killed 73 paratroopers in northern Israel. Though Hezbollah had nothing to do with the crash, the accident caused many people in Israel to question what the IDF was accomplishing in Lebanon 15 years after the invasion. As if that blow was not hard enough for Israel to absorb, 1997 was shaping up to be a particularly bad year on the warfront, with 18 soldiers killed in Lebanon by the end of August.\(^597\) Then came the second event, known in Israel as the “Shayetet Disaster” after the commando unit that conducted a raid around the village of Ansariyah of southern Lebanon in September 1997. Unfortunately for the commandos, Hezbollah had received advanced warning of the coming raid by intercepting Israeli UAV video transmissions.\(^598\) The Islamic Resistance thus prepared an ambush that killed 12 troops, including 11 from the elite Shayetet 13 unit and one more from a rescue squad that was sent in when it became clear the Israelis were suffering serious losses. But the Ansariyah disaster did not end there. In the confusion of the ambush and the particularly gory details of how the troops were killed, Israel mixed up the body parts of two of its slain commandos. Hezbollah used the body parts it recovered to run propaganda against Israel, embarrass the IDF, and eventually to exchange them for 60 prisoners and the remains of 40 Hezbollah fighters.\(^599\)

After the Ansariyah raid, a poll found that 52 percent of Israelis favored withdrawing from Lebanon if Israel could obtain some security guarantees in

\(^{597}\) Blanford, pp. 185.  
^{598}\) Blanford, pp. 194.  
^{599}\) Blanford, pp. 192. On the number of prisoners exchanged, see Qassem, pp. 274. In another such exchange in July 1996, Hezbollah traded two Israeli bodies for 45 prisoners and the remains of 123 fighters. See: Norton, pp. 88.
exchange. “The fact that an elite unit paid an enormous price for an operation in Lebanon had a real impact on Israel,” Lipkin-Shahak said. “But it still took another two years” for the decision to be made to leave. During those years, IDF special forces would continue to deploy to Lebanon, but the Ansariyah raid was the last overt, deep-penetration operation that Israel conducted during the occupation.

Those final years of the IDF’s occupation were thus spent mainly in defensive positions, absorbing Hezbollah’s blows as the Islamic Resistance continually tested how far they could push the rules of the game with Israel. The IDF lost 37 troops in Lebanon in 1997, the most since 1985, and 23 more in 1998. The SLA lost around double those numbers. “From time to time, and especially when Lebanese civilians are targeted, we shell their settlements, breathe life into the understandings once again, and impose a measure of self-restraint on those Israeli soldiers and officers who do not hesitate to target civilians,” Nasrallah said in a June 1999 interview. He also reiterated in February 2000 that Hezbollah was acting with moderation because one of its objectives was “to protect Lebanon’s infrastructure and population. Based on that, we believe that it is in Lebanon’s national interest, and the interest of the resistance, that we restrain ourselves while reserving the right to respond as we see fit.”

Some improvement was visible from the Israeli perspective in 1999 and 2000.
when the IDF switched from a posture of executing deep raids to one of active defense. And as Nasrallah admitted, Hezbollah was mostly deterred from attacking Israeli civilians. In November 1998, it even apologized for a Katusha firing that it had not authorized, which indicates that Hezbollah sought to control other groups during this period, another sign of deterrence.  

But the terms of the understandings which tied the IDF’s hands; the turning of public opinion against the war and the related lack of will by Israel to engage in another full-blown invasion; and Hezbollah’s willingness to continue to accept casualties in a long-term war of attrition meant that the Party of God was increasingly dictating the terms of the battle. Any disproportionate reaction by the IDF to battlefield losses would instigate a Katusha rocket barrage on northern Israel, leaving Jerusalem little choice but to continue taking its lumps from the Islamic Resistance.

In the summer of 1999, under constant harassment by Hezbollah, the SLA was forced to retreat from its control around the Jezzine region. By then, Ehud Barak had already indicated Israel would leave Lebanon within a year, and the IDF was not willing to man the position itself with Israeli soldiers seeing little point in doing anything in Lebanon but staying alive. It was too late to turn the tide of public opinion in Israel, which had swung firmly against maintaining a military presence in its northern neighbor. Though only 13 soldiers were killed in Lebanon in 1999, Israel was trying to find a secure way out.  

Hopes for a positive exit collapsed one year later, when peace negotiations... 

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606 Norton, pp. 86 and Cambanis pp. 198.  
607 Blanford, pp. 244 on the number of soldiers killed.
between Israel and Syria that included Lebanon broke down. Though the rules of the
game governing combat between Israel and Hezbollah maintained their relevance up until
May 2000, Ehud Barak pulled the plug on Israel’s occupation of Lebanon. Over strong
objection from most of the military establishment, the Israeli prime minister chose to
move forward with a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon and to try to deter the Party of
God from inside Israeli territory instead.

Hezbollah lost 1,276 fighters during its 18-year battle to evict Israel, compared to
were light for a guerilla war. For example, from 1985 to 2000, Turkey suffered more than
6,000 combat deaths and another 6,000 civilian deaths at the hands of the PKK.\footnote{Luft, 2000.}
Nevertheless, Israeli society is very casualty averse, and as such Hezbollah won the war
of attrition.

**Findings.** From 1992 to 2000, Hezbollah attacks against Israel steadily grew in
quantity as well as quality. But after Israeli operations in 1993 and 1996, rules of the
game emerged that, for the most part, bound the conflict between the warring parties.
Neither side was allowed to target civilians or operate from areas where civilians were
located. If Hezbollah attacked from a civilian area, the IDF would generally counter-
attack against that area. If the IDF or SLA hit civilian targets, then Hezbollah would
generally counter with a barrage of rockets into northern Israel. Attacks by the IDF
outside the security zone would also be met with a stronger response by Hezbollah and attacks by the IDF against Hezbollah leadership would be met with severe responses on the international stage. Attacks by the IDF against Lebanese civilian infrastructure would probably result in a similar attack by Hezbollah against Israeli civilian infrastructure, with whatever means Hezbollah could muster. The rules were not perfect, and both sides violated them to a degree. But for the most part, both sides admit that the rules were mostly followed.

As such, a situation of “mutual deterrence” was created between Israel and Hezbollah. “The economies of the north needed quiet,” said Shavit, the Mossad director from 1989 to 1996, explaining why Israel accepted the paradigm despite its military dominance. “And the situation where kids don’t go to school underground is another consideration. You can keep a civilian population under extreme duress only to a point. The price of breaking mutual deterrence was considered to be too big at the time.”

That Hezbollah played by such rules no doubt stemmed largely from its sensitivity to the needs and welfare of the Shia population in Lebanon, as Nasrallah stated on numerous occasions listed above. As the captured Hezbollah document indicates, Hezbollah was also sensitive to losing fighters. It was also the Israeli perception that joining the political process added a degree of accountability—mitigated by the fact that Hezbollah was in the opposition—that affected the Party’s decision making. Following 1992, there was a higher bar for eliciting a military response from Hezbollah, Shavit said. “All the changes stem from a point of responsibility toward the country, responsibility

610 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon, Israel.
toward the people, and responsibility toward their allies,” he said.\(^{611}\)

That Israel could not achieve better outcomes than it did seems largely to stem from the fact that (1) it was an occupying power in Lebanon, and thus at a serious strategic disadvantage; and (2) it was unwilling to extract a price from Syria and Iran for their continued and substantial support for Hezbollah’s activities. Making Syria “pay a painful price… was very tough to decide because the quietest border that we had then, and now, is with the Syrians,” said Former IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi, adding that Assad proved very deft at balancing against Israel vis-à-vis Hezbollah.\(^{612}\) That support, coupled with Hezbollah’s ideology, and welfare system that could care for the people that were harmed as a result of the battle with Israel, allowed the Islamic Resistance to make only limited concessions during the 1990s in terms of its *modus operandi*. And as Hezbollah grew more popular with the Lebanese population, Israel held less leverage against it.

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\(^{611}\) Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon, Israel.

\(^{612}\) Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
Table 12.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hezbollah (1992-2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
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<td>Variables</td>
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<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
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<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
<td>Clear Leadership Structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Command &amp; Control</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ideology</td>
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<td>External Support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-Factional Competition</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Possible Points</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summation, Hezbollah increased its attacks against the IDF both in quantity and quality during the 1990s. But it agreed to and generally abided by a clear set of rules that bound the conflict. Hezbollah also sought to control the activities of other factions who sought to fight against Israel. Its behavior during this period is therefore indicative of fair tactical deterrence. This finding confirms the theoretical prediction.
Victory was sweet for Hezbollah and it rode the wave of public adoration all the way to a strong showing in the 2000 national elections that followed the Israeli withdrawal. The Party of God and its allies picked up 12 of the 27 seats reserved for Shia, compared to only six for Amal. Again, Hezbollah won the most seats of any party, and there was now no doubt who was the strongest power among the Shia community. Some began to wonder whether Hezbollah was in fact the strongest party in all of Lebanon.

Perhaps because Hezbollah’s victory over Israel was so clear and fresh in everyone’s mind, its electoral platform focused mainly on socio-economic issues rather than the resistance. Among its priorities were stamping out corruption, inefficiency, waste, red tape, favoritism, nepotism, and replacing the Lebanese spoils system with a meritocracy. Like previous electoral programs, the 2000 version did not include a word on forming an Islamic state in Lebanon. But the Party’s 2004 “Identity and Goals” document stated that such an order was a strategic aim. The movement clarified, however, that it would only implement an Islamic order if a majority of Lebanese were in favor of it, otherwise it would continue to operate under the current consensus-based

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615 Alagha, pp. 156
system, maintaining its stance since 1992.

There were some interesting changes on the margins of Hezbollah’s ideology, but the core of Hezbollah’s ideology remained intact. The principle of waliyat-al-faqhi and religious obedience to Ayatollah Khamenei; the belief that Islam must govern all actions in life; and that military jihad and martyrdom were proper means of achieving goals remained the pillars of Hezbollah’s ideological structure. “Opposition to Israel” also continued to be “the core of our faith, and this will never change,” Qassem said.

In the lead-up to May 2000, when it became clear that Israel was leaving Lebanon, Nasrallah was frequently asked what Hezbollah’s policy would be regarding its arms and its resistance campaign once Lebanon was liberated. Would the Islamic Resistance stand down and finally incorporate its men and arms into the Lebanese Army? Or would it continue to fight Israel as its religious ideology implied it must? Nasrallah preferred strategic ambiguity in answering those queries, always saying that the world

Among some of the changes are the following:
After the liberation of Lebanon, the phrasing on Hezbollah’s flag that read “The Islamic Revolution in Lebanon” was replaced by language that read “The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.” (My emphasis in both cases.) Religious pictures and banners were removed from polling stations in Christian districts. Hezbollah also displayed Lebanese flags more prominently at rallies and demonstrations rather than its own flag. See: Alagha, pp. 171.
Hezbollah also changed its attitude toward France, one of the countries that was listed in its 1985 Open Letter as an enemy of the movement. “France’s position toward us has changed, so we must change ours,” explained Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem in 2002. See: Daniel Sobelman, “New Rules of the Game: Israel and Hizbollah After the Withdrawal from Lebanon,” Jaffé Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum No. 69, January 2004, pp. 20.
Reflecting on some of the transformations within Hezbollah, Qassem added that it was a natural evolution as conditions around the region had also changed.

As late as May 2008, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah claimed to be “proud of being a member of the waliat-al-faqhi party, the wise faqhi, the scholar faqhi, the courageous faqhi, the truthful and sincere faqhi.” See: Nicholas Blanford, Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah’s Thirty-Year Struggle Against Israel. New York: Random House, 2011, pp. 482.
Sobelman, pp. 20.
would have to wait and see.\footnote{Sobelman, pp. 27.}

In his victory speech in Bint Jbeil, just two days after Israel completed its withdrawal, Nasrallah vowed to continue fighting the “Zionists.”\footnote{Noe, Nicholas, \textit{Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah}. New York: Verso, 2007, pp. 232-243.} Hezbollah’s stated reasons: Israel’s continued occupation of Lebanese territory in the Shebaa Farms; its holding of Lebanese “mujahedeen” prisoners; the “danger of nationalizing the Palestinians in Lebanon; and Israel’s expansionist avarice for land and water.” Until the Israeli withdrawal, few people had ever heard of the 25-square kilometer Shebaa Farms, and it was always acknowledged to be territory Israel took from Syria in the 1967 Six Day War, rather than from Lebanon in 1948-49. This fact was confirmed by the United Nations, whose team that demarcated the Israeli-Lebanese border in the months following Israel’s withdrawal certified that the Shebaa Farms was not Lebanese territory.\footnote{“Old Games, New Rules: Conflict on the Israel-Lebanon Border,” \textit{International Crisis Group}, 18 November 2002, Middle East Report No. 7, pp. 7.}

But that did not concern Hezbollah, which needed a reason to justify to its domestic constituents why the Islamic Resistance must retain its arms and continue the war against Israel despite the fact that the majority of Lebanese people simply wanted to turn the page and begin the rebuilding process. Syria also strongly preferred that Hezbollah remain armed in order to continue acting as a tool for Damascus to wrest concessions from Israel and retain options in Lebanon.\footnote{Over time, Nasrallah would come up with other \textit{casus belli} against the Jewish State, including seven villages located inside Israeli territory due to the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement. See: Eitan Azani, \textit{Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God, From Revolution to Institutionalization}. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2011, pp. 226.} And if there was even a
glimmer of doubt as to what Hezbollah’s goal vis-à-vis Israel was, the Party’s
spokeeman, Hassan Ezzeddin stated it bluntly in a 2002 interview with The New Yorker.
“If [the Israelis] go from Shebaa, we will not stop fighting them,” he said. “Our goal is to
liberate the 1948 borders of Palestine.”

Thus, once again, Hezbollah did not join the Lebanese government formed in
2000 by its old rival Rafik Hariri, who returned as Lebanon’s prime minister. And, once
again, with Syrian support for the Islamists, Hariri was powerless to stop Hezbollah from
operating an independent foreign and security policy from Lebanese territory. Rather than
the Lebanese Army, it was the Islamic Resistance that took control of the former
occupation zone in the South following the vacuum created by the Israeli-SLA pull-out.
Hezbollah fighters now stood nose-to-nose in some areas with IDF soldiers, as the Party
of God took up positions directly on the Israeli border.

With control of southern Lebanon now firmly in its hands, Hezbollah embarked
on three main military projects. The first was a massive build-up of its capabilities, which
Iran and Syria were only too happy to provide. By 2002, Hezbollah had acquired 10,000
rockets and by 2006, it possessed at least 13,000. For the first time, Syria became a

623 Jeffrey Goldberg, “In the Party of God: Are Terrorists in Lebanon Preparing for a Larger War?” The
New Yorker, 14 October 2002.
624 Included in Hezbollah’s territorial control were many Lebanese who had collaborated with Israel during
its occupation of the South. But as it promised in the days leading up to the withdrawal, Hezbollah did not
exercise summary judgment and punishment against those people and instead handed them over to
Lebanese authorities. See: Thanassis Cambanis, A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah’s Legions and their
625 Thousands of Katusha 220mm and B-302 rockets with ranges of up to 42 miles, some filled with
Chinese cluster sub-munitions, poured across the Syrian border into Hezbollah’s hands. (See: Blanford, pp.
337-339.) So too did long-range Iranian Fajr, Falaq, and Zelzal rockets with 1,100 pound payloads and
ranges of up to 126 miles. Advanced, Russian-made anti-tank missiles and even ship-to-ship cruise missiles
large supplier of Hezbollah’s weapons, supplementing what the Party received from Iran. The second project was the construction of a massive bunker system in the old security zone that was exposed only during the Second Lebanon War in 2006. 626 The third project was renewing the battle against Israel, and that will be dealt with in the deterrence section.

That Hezbollah was able to take control of the South and engage in such a massive military build-up against the wishes of the Lebanese government was in no small part due to increased support from Syria. Material, logistical, and political aid to Hezbollah all grew by leaps and bounds in 2000 as Bashar al-Assad assumed power in Damascus following the death of his father, Hafez, in June. “The differences between the father and son are huge beyond any comparison,” said Shabtai Shavit, the Mossad director from 1989-1996. 627 In many regards Bashar broke the rules his father set regarding Hezbollah, including that of never transferring to them “game changing” military technology. 628 “The glory of the defeat of the Zionists in May, sort of set the stage for a very different relationship” between Hezbollah and Syria, said Israeli Security Official A. The death of Hafez and the Israeli withdrawal “transformed the relationship from an instrumental relationship to one in which Bashar increasingly needed to bask in

were delivered to Hezbollah, at least tripling the military hardware at its disposal in relation to its capabilities before the Israeli withdrawal. (See: Azani, pp. 228.)

626 One bunker, for example, was built 120 feet deep and spread over three-quarters of a square mile. It included firing positions, ammunition storage facilities, operations rooms, dormitories, medical facilities, lighting and ventilation, kitchens, bathrooms, and hot and cold running water. See: Blanford, pp. 331.

627 Author interview 3 May 2012 in Holon, Israel.

628 Unlike his father, Bashar was not trained in the military. Installed by family cronies to the presidency, he lacked a certain legitimacy both on the street and among the Syrian elite. As such, he used Syria’s relationship with Hezbollah—now a heroic organization in much of the Arab and Muslim world—to confer that legitimacy upon himself. While Hafez kept Nasrallah at arms length, never once inviting him to the presidential palace in Damascus, and using Hezbollah only as it served his purposes, Bashar became much more cozy with the victor of Lebanon.
the glory of the achievement." As a result, Bashar gave Hezbollah carte blanche in terms of what it needed from Damascus.

Iran was happy to play its part as well. Following the Israeli withdrawal, Hezbollah promised massive reconstruction aid for the former occupation zone in the south. In addition to its standard package of military aid, Iran acted as the cash spigot which allowed Nasrallah to keep that promise. "Iran’s financial involvement in the bulk of our development and social services is not a secret," Nasrallah said in 2000. By that point, the Iranian investment in Hezbollah was believed to be between $500 million and $1 billion per year.

In the area of education, for example, Hezbollah spent at least $310 million on financial assistance to around 22,000 Lebanese students in the 2000-2001 academic year alone. In 2001, the Party also founded the Islamic Health Organization, which manages nine health centers and 19 infirmaries in 51 villages. The movement also became the chief lender among NGOs in Lebanon, handing out 7,500 loans per year by 2001 to the tune of around $4.5 million. All of these activities took place in addition to the services

629 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
630 Noe, pp. 238.
632 Martyrs’ children, in particular, were cared for by the Party through the Martyrs Foundation. They were sent to the best schools free of charge and received visits from social workers and psychologists who aided their recovery from trauma. (See: Cambanis, pp. 163.) A steady stream of social activities was organized for them, often via the Mahdi Scouts (Hezbollah’s youth movement) as well as for the widows of fallen fighters, who were encouraged to remarry other men affiliated with the movement. (See: Cambanis, pp. 166).
633 Qassem, pp. 162. Since 2001, the centers had treated over 111,000 cases and provided free medication and health services to 81 schools. Continuing its legacy from the late 1980s, Hezbollah workers still trucked out trash from the Dahiyeh at the rate of 300 tons of garbage per day at least until 2007. See: Palmer-Harik, pp. 83.
Hezbollah was already providing in the 1990s. “Such services do have a considerable effect on the populace” in terms of boosting support for Hezbollah, Qassem writes, even as he insists that their purpose is an altruistic one.634

Even as Iran continued to fund and arm Hezbollah to great degree, by the 2000s, the weight of Teheran on Hezbollah’s decision-making had evolved significantly from the early 1980s. As Hezbollah matured, “its dependency naturally decreased,”635 said Former IDF Chief of Staff (2007-2011) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi, but its interests remained almost totally aligned with Iran. (At least until 2007, that assessment was also shared by the CIA.636) A popular way of looking at Hezbollah from the perspective of Jerusalem is that of an organization that through the 2000s was trying to balance domestic and Iranian demands—both of which were extremely important to the organization. “Hassan Nasrallah walks around Lebanon with two cards,” said Israeli Security Official A. “One [card] says ‘Leader of Hezbollah, a Lebanese party.’ And the other one… says ‘Representative of the Supreme Leader [of Iran] in Lebanon.’”637 For Hezbollah’s part, its official line is that “the relationship between Hizbullah and Iran… is a genuine collaboration on common convictions and on the requirements of the relationship—a candid, transparent and declared relation.”638

As such, Iranian wishes were part of Hezbollah’s pivot in August 2000 to more

634 Qassem, pp. 165
635 Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
636 Seymour M. Hersh, “The Redirection: Is the Administration’s new policy benefitting our enemies in the war on terrorism?” The New Yorker, 5 March 2007.
637 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
638 Qassem, pp. 391.
directly involve itself in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—a decision that was reached by the Shura Council after encouragement to that end from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.\textsuperscript{639} Hezbollah’s official position of helping to “liberate” Palestine was a natural extension of its religiously based ideology and it was clear the group was already leaning in that direction, as doing so burnished its identity as a “resistance” movement. In his 2000 victory speech, Nasrallah also made a point of urging the Palestinian people into \textit{intifada} against Israel. “You do not need tanks, strategic balance, rockets or canons to liberate your land,” he said, using Hezbollah as an example. “All you need are the martyrs who shook and stuck fear into this angry Zionist entity.”\textsuperscript{640}

A mere four months later, the second Palestinian \textit{intifada} broke out, and Hezbollah did not sit on the side lines.\textsuperscript{641} In explaining Hezbollah’s involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Nasrallah stated that disassociating the Party from the battle “would mean the total elimination of Hezbollah’s head and heart, a complete disregard for the martyrs’ blood… It would also mean giving up our religious and legal duty to come to the assistance of Palestine.”\textsuperscript{642} Such was the level of ideological commitment Hezbollah held toward restoring Israel to Muslim control.

Following Israel’s withdrawal, the expansion of Hezbollah’s activities in Lebanon once again warranted an organizational restructuring.\textsuperscript{643} Most specifically, more units

\textsuperscript{640} Noe, pp. 242.
\textsuperscript{641} Hezbollah’s involvement in the \textit{intifada} and the Iraq War will be covered to greater detail in the deterrence section of the chapter.
\textsuperscript{642} Noe, pp. 258.
\textsuperscript{643} For Hezbollah’s organizational flow chart, see: Hamzeh, pp. 46.
were added to the bureaucracy in order to provide structure for Hezbollah’s expanded social services as well as the districts it now controlled in the South. Relevant to this study, the military and security apparatus still consisted of two main units.\textsuperscript{644} The Islamic Resistance continued to operate as Hezbollah’s chief combatants in the field and was charged with indoctrinating new recruits. The Security Organ, which is headed directly by the secretary general, was charged with internal party security, counter-intelligence, liaison with Iranian and Syrian intelligence, and covert operations outside of Hezbollah. According to an IDF colonel familiar with the latest intelligence on Hezbollah (he will be referred to from this point onward as “IDF Colonel B”), the movement remains extremely disciplined and was so throughout the last decade. In particular, the military section’s command and control is “almost 100 percent,” he said.\textsuperscript{645} The basic Israeli estimate for the number of trained Hezbollah fighters—most of whom are reservists—has hovered around 10,000 for most of the decade.

Hezbollah maintained its fight against Israel on a smaller scale in the initial years following the IDF’s withdrawal. The Islamic resistance attacked the Jewish state regularly and resumed kidnapping operations in order to trade IDF soldiers for Lebanese prisoners still held in Israeli jails. These actions will be dealt with in more detail in the deterrence section of the chapter. But the movement also set as a high priority the consolidation of its political gains. Thus much of the rhetoric from Hezbollah leadership shifted toward Lebanese domestic political issues such as corruption and the provision of

\textsuperscript{644} Hamzeh, pp. 70-74. An information unit, already operational in the mid-1990s, was also expanded, as was its external relations unit.

\textsuperscript{645} Author interview 29 May 2012 in Tel Aviv. The colonel’s name is withheld for security purposes.
social welfare. Hezbollah leaders also largely stopped referring to its alliance with Iran in religious terms and more along nationalist lines, characterizing the Islamic Republic as a stalwart ally of the Lebanese people in their struggle against Israeli and American influence. Even the revered Ayatollah Khomeini was largely referred to in nationalistic rather than religious terms by Nasrallah during a speech marking the 13th anniversary of Khomeini’s death in 2002.

In pursuing this dual-track policy of maintaining the war against Israel while focusing on the concerns of the Lebanese population, Hezbollah clearly had in its sights attaining additional political power. (It is clear in retrospect, at least.) The Party’s increased ambitions, however, and the fact that it continued to fight Israel even after the withdrawal, meant that the amount of friction between Hezbollah and the Hariri government increased beyond even the levels of the 1990s. Hariri was open to Middle East Peace, and beyond that, he felt that Hezbollah’s continued operations against Israel were delegitimizing Lebanon and negatively impacting his post-occupation reconstruction programs. But as much as he found the policy distasteful, Syrian hegemony in Lebanon meant that Hariri was forced to officially back Hezbollah’s continuing operations against Israel in the Shebaa Farms area; its control of the South; and the retention of its arms. But Hariri did publicly question Hezbollah’s commitment to Lebanon and Lebanese interests. And in October 2004, finding the situation finally untenable after Syria ordered the unconstitutional extension of pro-Syrian Lebanese President Emile Lahoud’s term in office, Hariri and his government resigned. Four

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646 Noe, pp. 263-266.
647 Noe, pp. 267-277.
648 Azani, pp. 228-229.
months later, Hariri and 22 others were killed in a massive car bombing in Beirut that struck his motorcade.

According to the indictment handed down by an international tribunal six years later, four Hezbollah operatives were responsible for the killing, including a brother-in-law of Imad Mugniyeh. But at the time, it was Syria that was singled out for blame by the Lebanese public, galvanizing popular protest in Lebanon against Syria’s meddling in Lebanese affairs as well as heavy international condemnation led by the United States and France. Under intense pressure and withering rhetorical attack, Bashar Assad ordered Syrian forces to withdraw from Lebanon in April 2005. The “Cedar Revolution,” as the popular, peaceful uprising was called, left Lebanon free of foreign military forces for the first time since at least the early 1970s.

The absence of the Syrian Army—its intelligence services still retained a strong covert presence, as did many other foreign intelligence services—produced yet another power vacuum in Lebanon and two competing coalitions emerged. The “March 14 Forces” led by Hariri’s son, Saad, and Fuad Siniora, were a Saudi-French-American backed coalition of mainly Sunni, Christian, and Druze parties. The “March 8 Forces,” which included Hezbollah, were an Iranian-Syrian backed coalition of mainly Shia and Alawite forces, but also some Christian parties. Each was named after competing demonstrations held in Beirut on those dates in 2005. In essence, politics in Lebanon had split between “The Axis of Accommodation” and “The Axis of Resistance,” the latter of

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650 Deciding when foreign forces had occupied Lebanon depends on what is considered to be a foreign force. I am counting since the PLO came in 1970, but other arguments can fairly be made.
whose state members were both part of George W. Bush’s declared “Axis of Evil.”

The May 2005 national elections produced a big win for the March 14 forces, as they gained 72 of 128 seats in parliament. But Hezbollah also increased its representation to 15 seats. In a nod to the growing influence of the Shia in Lebanese affairs, Prime Minister Siniora and Hezbollah agreed on the Islamists joining the cabinet with two ministers. However, the fissures between the two camps were too great to produce any national consensus. Hezbollah would not agree, as the government argued, to summon an international tribunal to investigate the Hariri assassination nor to implement UNSC Resolution 1559, which called for the disbanding of all Lebanese militias. And as the stalemate dragged on, the political terrorism conducted by those allied with Syria and Iran continued with a string of assassinations.

In the summer of 2006, as Lebanon descended further into internal strife, Hezbollah conducted a kidnapping operation on Israeli territory in which it killed two Israeli reservists on routine patrol and then abducted their bodies back to Lebanon. Israel responded with a failed rescue mission and a series of bombing raids over the next few days which precipitated Hezbollah rocket fire into northern Israel and eventually a full-blown war between the two long-time enemies. The 34-day conflict saw over 1,100 Lebanese people killed and $2.8 billion of damage inflicted on Lebanon, mostly, but not

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651 Hezbollah refers to itself as part of the Jabhat al-Mumana’a (The Front of Refusal), see: “Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis,” International Crisis Group, 10 October 2007, Middle East Report No. 69, pp. 22.
652 One of the ministers was actually from Amal, but by this point Amal ceded most control of its policy to Hezbollah.
653 At least six March 14 politicians were murdered between 2005 and 2007, in addition to many other journalists and other activists aligned with the movement.
654 The 2006 Second Lebanon War will be covered in detail in the deterrence section of the chapter.
exclusively, in the South and in the *Dahiyeh*. In addition to hitting Hezbollah targets hard, the IDF also destroyed much Lebanese infrastructure, including the main runways at the Beirut Airport. Nevertheless, when UNSC Resolution 1701 implemented a ceasefire, it was Nasrallah that declared a “divine victory” against Israel as Hezbollah withstood the IDF assault; continued firing rockets into Israel until the final day of the war; and did not relinquish the bodies of the kidnapped soldiers.

During the war, the social services network that Hezbollah built over the previous 20 years paid huge dividends. Refugees from the South and from the *Dahiyeh* were housed in safe locations all over the country. In the South, the Party mobilized its reserves of essential services workers, providing medical care to wounded civilians, and patrolling towns where civilians remained in schools and basement shelters. Its engineers created a series of dams to bridge the Litani River where bridges were bombed out, and they rerouted a highway in order to aid the population’s flight to the north.

Sensitive to the suffering that the movement once again had brought down upon the Shia, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict Hezbollah turned its attention to the reconstruction process, as it had done in 1993 and 1996. But this time, the damage was on a far greater scale. In a matter of weeks, the Party began handing out $12,000 in cash to families in Beirut whose homes were damaged and $10,000 to families in the

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656 In one Beirut underground parking garage, Hezbollah workers set up shelter for more than 2,000 people and provided them with provisions including mattresses, food, televisions, medicine, health services, and toys for children. See: Jon Lee Anderson, “The Battle for Lebanon,” *The New Yorker*, 7 August 2006.

657 Cambanis, pp. 42.
countryside. Indeed, as the Lebanese government stalled in distributing and spending international funds for reconstruction, *Jihad al-Bina*, Hezbollah’s construction firm, built at a quick pace with around $1 billion in reconstruction aid that Hezbollah received from Iran in the six years after the war.

During the conflict, Prime Minister Siniora, like Hariri before him, was caught between the warring parties. Unable to stop Hezbollah and at the mercy of the IDF, he was literally reduced to tears in pleading unsuccessfully with the Americans and French to bring a halt to the fighting weeks before it finally ended. At the beginning of the conflict, even Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia had sharply criticized Hezbollah’s conduct. But when the war was over, the perception that Hezbollah was the victor (even if it was not the material reality) brought the March 14 and March 8 camps into a domestic collision as, once again, Hezbollah sought to gain domestic power after a victory against Israel.

Siniora was in a difficult spot. The March 14 alliances believed Hezbollah to be responsible for an unnecessary and severely damaging war and sought to finally bring Hezbollah under state control. But despite the thousand dead and billions of dollars in damage, Hezbollah seemed, anecdotally at least, to have actually gained support. As was

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658 Blanford, pp. 413. One year following the war, Hezbollah claimed to already have spent more than $300 million on compensation and reconstruction.

659 Cambanis cites both Lebanese and American officials as providing that figure for Iranian post-war reconstruction aid. The specific figure of $1 billion is included in the electronic version of the book in a paragraph located on pp. 221 of the print version that deals with the amount of Iranian aid to Hezbollah, but that sentence is not included in the print version. The print version states that Hezbollah received around $370 million from after the war in 2006 until 2008. The $1 billion figure squares with estimates I have heard from security officials in Israel and the United States.

the case following Grapes of Wrath in 1996, Hezbollah saw an influx of Shia volunteers who came from a community that was ready “to forgive everything because the movement restored the honor of 200 million Arabs.” In retrospect, it seems that while Hezbollah alienated many non-Shia Lebanese for bringing the war upon the country, its support from its loyal core of Shia constituents grew even deeper and more expansive. Upon the war’s conclusion, Hezbollah officials insisted that “the weapons of resistance will remain, will remain, will remain.”

The Party leadership then went further, demanding the formation of a unity government in which it filled at least one-third of the cabinet seats and therefore held veto power over any government decision according to Lebanese law. When Siniora denied its demand in November and the cabinet scheduled a vote on accepting the UN investigation of the Hariri assassination, the five Shia members of the cabinet resigned. One month later, Hezbollah organized a massive demonstration in Beirut. Nasrallah called on his supporters to remain there until Hezbollah gained the power it sought and the Party’s partisans erected tents in the middle of downtown, blocking streets and bringing business to a standstill. The battle lines were drawn between Hezbollah, its domestic allies, and its international partners in “the resistance” and the pro-West March 14 coalition and its international allies.

As the political stalemate dragged on, Hezbollah rearmed posthaste. Already by 22 September 2006, Nasrallah declared that Hezbollah had rebuilt its arsenal to stronger

661 2007 ICG Report, pp. 5.
662 Blanford, pp. 415.
than pre-war levels. By the middle of 2007, Hezbollah had acquired at least 20,000 rockets—6,000 more than it possessed during the war—from Iran and Syria. But Hezbollah was also busy building and improving on an internal communications and surveillance systems that allowed its fighters to continue communicating during the war even once Israel had destroyed parts of Lebanon’s public telecommunications system. The Iranian-built, parallel fiber-optic network had no connection to the national grid and it was viewed as a superior strategic asset by the Hezbollah leadership. Its discovery by Lebanese authorities set off a chain of events.

Frustrated by nearly two years of political stalemate and Hezbollah’s continuing imposition of its demands on the rest of Lebanon, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt convinced his allies in government associated with the March 14 coalition to act. In May 2008, the government declared Hezbollah’s private telecommunications network illegal. It also forced the dismissal of the Hezbollah-aligned brigadier general who was in charge of security at the Beirut airport for running a Hezbollah spy ring there. Unwilling to allow two of his greatest assets to be taken from him, Nasrallah broke his repeated promise never to turn Hezbollah’s weapons on his fellow Lebanese and ordered Hezbollah fighters into the streets of Beirut.

Dispatched from the South and the Beqaa, Islamic Resistance fighters directed

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663 Blanford, pp. 433.
664 2007 ICG Report, pp. 13. The rockets included better quality and longer-range models as shipments arrived unhindered by land, by air, and by sea. Hezbollah fighters also flew to advanced training courses in Iran or took refresher courses in the Beqaa.
665 Cambanis, pp. 246.
666 Nasrallah justified his actions by claiming his domestic opponents had “insist[ed] on war.” See: Cambanis, pp. 247.
militants from Amal and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party as they rampaged through West Beirut.\textsuperscript{667} They cut off the road to the airport, ransacked and burned Saad Hariri’s newspaper offices and television stations, and surrounded the homes of Jumblatt and Hariri.\textsuperscript{668} On 8 and 9 May, Hezbollah fighters clashed with pro-government militia in Sunni, but not Christian, areas of Beirut, crushing them at every turn. And then, not wishing to take the country back to a full-scale civil war, they left and turned over control of the neighborhoods to the Lebanese Army.\textsuperscript{669}

After a few days and almost 100 killed, the government relented, agreeing to talks in Qatar with Hezbollah on forming a new cabinet. Nearly all of Hezbollah’s demands were met. There would be no disarming of the Islamic Resistance; no shuttering of Hezbollah’s telecommunications network; Hezbollah would obtain veto power in the cabinet; and Gen. Michel Suleiman, viewed as friendly to Hezbollah, would be elected the new president of Lebanon by the parliament. In exchange, Hezbollah agreed to disband the protest in Beirut and allow parliamentary elections in 2009 to go forward.

Over the following year, Hezbollah scored more impressive victories. It came to extremely favorable terms with Israel on a prisoner exchange that gave it yet another victory against its eternal enemy. And it also exposed what it claimed was a vast Israeli spy network in Lebanon. All the while, the movement kept its promise to continue with the reconstruction work that was needed following the war. In the June 2009 national

\textsuperscript{667} Cambanis, pp. 247-249.
\textsuperscript{668} Blanford, pp. 449.
\textsuperscript{669} Only in the Chouf Mountains did Hezbollah encounter stiff resistance—from Druze militia who acquitted themselves impressively against the Shia fighters. But Jumblatt understood well that he could not outlast Hezbollah in a true war. See: Cambanis, pp. 248-249.
elections, the March 8 alliance led by Hezbollah won the popular vote 54 percent to 46 percent. But the March 14 alliance led by Hariri won a majority of parliamentary seats due to the quirks of the Lebanese electoral system. The results were a disappointment to Hezbollah.  

Clearly, the movement paid a price for breaking its long-standing promise not to turn its weapons on fellow Lebanese. This was the case both during the 2008 clashes and in Hezbollah’s involvement in Rafik Hariri’s murder. Moreover, as the years following the 2006 war passed, more of the Shia began to make clear their misgivings about being dragged into another conflict with Israel and paying the inevitable price. “The mood in the South is marked by concern at the possibility of renewed escalation,” a UNIFIL official said in January 2009. “Memories of the 2006 war remain fresh.” Later that year, Hezbollah was rocked for the first time in its history by a series of corruption scandals, further tarnishing what had once been its squeaky clean image.

In 2010, as the international tribunal prepared to hand down its indictments in the Hariri murder, Hezbollah and its allies in the cabinet led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri demanded that he disavow its findings. Though Hariri had reconciled with Bashar Assad, he would not accept Hezbollah’s demands. Just before the indictments were handed down in January 2011, Hezbollah ministers and their allies resigned from the cabinet, toppling

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670 Of the election results, Hezbollah candidate Ali Fayyad said: “We have done our best to win a majority and we have failed.” See: Cambanis, pp. 287.
671 News of Hezbollah’s participation in the assassination leaked just a few months prior to the elections to vehement denials by Nasrallah.
673 Blanford, pp. 475.
the government. Days later, billionaire businessmen and Assad associate Najib Mikati was appointed Lebanon’s prime minister and the March 14 coalition found itself on the outside of the government looking in for the first time since the Cedar Revolution. Hezbollah’s ascension in Lebanon was complete.

But heavy is the head that wears the crown, even for the Party of God. In 2011, the Arab Spring and the uprising in Syria, in particular, placed Hezbollah in a serious dilemma. Would it side with the Arab people, who it claimed to protect and cherish, and whose interests it declared to represent? Or would it side with the Assad regime, its long-time military supplier, geographic lynch pin to Iran, and political protector in Lebanon and the region? The answer from Nasrallah was the latter and the consequences of that decision were not small. Rhetorical support for Assad was bad enough, but when Nasrallah sent Hezbollah fighters into Syria to support the besieged Syrian dictator, public support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, and in the region at large, plummeted. People who once voted Nasrallah the most popular leader in the Middle East turned on him and his movement in droves.674 “By 2011, it is fair to say that many Lebanese fear Hezbollah,” writes Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based journalist and author of a book on Hezbollah’s 30-year war against Israel. “They fear its obedience to Iran, they fear its determination to keep its arms at all costs, and they fear that its unrelenting hostility toward Israel will inevitably drag Lebanon into yet another destructive conflict.”675

By the end of 2012, Hezbollah was also faced with the strong possibility that

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675 Blanford, pp. 474-475.
Israel and Iran would go to war over the Islamic Republic’s nuclear program. Such a conflict represents a nightmare scenario for Nasrallah. After managing to bridge the Lebanese and Iranian worlds for three decades, he would once and for all be forced to firmly choose between his loyalty to both. On the one hand, after only recently completing the reconstruction from 2006, the majority of Lebanese, even the Shia, would not accept losing it all again for the sake of Iran. On the other hand, if Hezbollah stayed out of the battle, it would not only spurn Iran, its main source of finance and military hardware and training, but its credentials as a “resistance” movement would be seriously compromised.

Summary of Independent Variables

Elements of Statehood. In the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah assumed more responsibility for the welfare of the southern Lebanese people than ever before as it moved in to take control of the former occupation zone. It ramped up its social-religious welfare net accordingly and continued to receive massive aid from Iran to expand those activities both in the South and in Beirut. When Hezbollah gained veto power over Lebanese government decisions in 2008, its responsibility increased even further. Finally, when its allies gained control of the government in 2009, Hezbollah was unquestionably the predominant political power in Lebanon and was firmly responsible for the people’s welfare. In terms of the territory it controlled, from 2000-2006, the Islamic Resistance was the major military force in the South. Though it lost its ability to operate openly following the 2006 war with Israel, the
clashes between Hezbollah and other Lebanese militia in 2008 proved clearly that the Resistance was the predominant military power in the whole country and that Lebanon was subject to its material supremacy.

**Organizational Structure.** Hezbollah expanded its bureaucracy following the Israeli withdrawal and its related increased activity in the social-religious services sector. It also expanded its official presence to the former occupation zone in the South. The decision-making authority continued to rest with the Shura Council and most prominently Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. The command and control that he, and the military commanders on the ground, exerted over the Islamic Resistance was “almost 100 percent,” according to the IDF.

**Inter-Factional Competition.** Hezbollah’s victory over Israel in 2000 firmly and finally settled the competition between The Party and Amal as Hezbollah rose to hero status in Lebanon, even among many non-Shia, and in much of the Arab and Muslim world. From that point on, Amal basically allied itself with Hezbollah and followed its lead politically. Amal’s representatives in the National Assembly and in the Cabinet more or less followed Hezbollah’s directives.

**External Support.** Syrian support for Hezbollah increased dramatically following the Israeli withdrawal and assumption of power by Bashar Assad in 2000. In addition to greatly expanded political support, Syria became a significant supplier of weapons to Hezbollah and not just a conduit for their transfer from Iran. The Islamic Republic,
meanwhile, continued to pour money into Hezbollah’s social-religious services on the order of around $700 million per year and spent an additional $1 billion on Hezbollah’s reconstruction efforts following the 2006 war. The efforts of both countries allowed Hezbollah not only to rearm after that war but to attain military capabilities that by 2012 far surpassed its pre-war levels. Representatives of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Iranian intelligence services remained influential in Hezbollah’s strategic decision-making and it was widely believed that the two coordinated to such a degree on an operations level that it was sometimes difficult to know where Hezbollah ended and where Iran began. Still, as Hezbollah attained more political and military power, and more independent financial streams, the degree to which it actually followed direct orders from Teheran decreased.

**Ideology.** Slight differences emerged in Hezbollah’s ideology from the previous period. Its hostility toward Europe, for one, was markedly decreased as it welcomed a dialogue with France in particular. The Party also began using Lebanese flags in its demonstrations and rallies rather than just Hezbollah flags. It changed its motto from “The Islamic Revolution in Lebanon” to the “Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.” And it made slightly more of an attempt to be an inclusive Lebanese party. That said, its core ideology of *waliyat-al-faqhi* and of destroying Israel remained the same. It also stated that its long-term goal remained one of turning Lebanon into a Muslim state.
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
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<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
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Theoretical Prediction. Based on the independent variables at the time, the best possible deterrence a state could hope to achieve against Hezbollah would be **strong tactical deterrence.**
The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 left the region guessing as to Hezbollah’s next move. Many, mainly Western and non-Hezbollah-aligned Lebanese analysts were hopeful that the Party of God would stand down its fight and incorporate its arms and fighters into the Lebanese Army. The Israeli security establishment, on the other hand, presented a bleak assessment. It predicted that Hezbollah would not cease its fight against the Jewish state and that the IDF would now be forced to defend Israel from inside Israeli territory, contravening a long-standing Israeli military precept to fight wars on the other sides of its borders.  

Military Intelligence Chief Maj. Gen. Amos Malka wrote in the Spring of 2000 that establishing deterrence against Hezbollah under the conditions that prevailed at the time “would entail confrontation, escalation, and loss of life in order to demonstrate that behind the idea of deterrence stands the determination to realize it.” That assessment proved correct.

Only five months after Israel’s withdrawal, Hezbollah began the next phase of its resistance campaign against Israel with a bold move. On 7 October, just after the second Palestinian intifada erupted, Hezbollah staged a demonstration near the Israeli border at Marwahin, which included hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese. With the IDF sufficiently distracted, a detail of special fighters cut through the border fence, ambushed an IDF patrol in the Shebaa Farms region (also called Mt. Dov by the Israelis), and made

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676 Sobelman, pp. 30. The fact that this was the Israeli security establishment’s view was corroborated by every interview I conducted with members of the IDF and Israeli intelligence.

677 Sobelman, pp. 33.
off with the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.678 One week later, Hezbollah kidnapped IDF reserve colonel and businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum after luring him to Beirut under the guise of a drug deal.

In advance of Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak warned that “the land of Lebanon will be set on fire” if any hostile action against Israel was perpetrated by Hezbollah once the IDF no longer occupied Lebanese territory.679 Yet despite the kidnappings and the violation of the Israeli border by Hezbollah, Barak ordered only a limited bombing campaign against Lebanon and one Syrian radar station.680 The weak response, which amounted to virtually “no response” was a huge mistake, according to Former IDF Chief of Staff (1995-1998) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. A few factors explain the lack of Israeli action, including a desire not to escalate the situation in the north during the outbreak of the second intifada; some external pressure by the Clinton Administration; and also the political difficulty for Barak given that resuming large-scale operations against Hezbollah could be perceived as an admission that his unilateral withdrawal failed. Nevertheless, Lipkin-Shahak said that the lack of Israeli action against Hezbollah at the time set into motion new rules of the game between the two sides which basically allowed for Hezbollah to continue attacking Israel while paying only a very small price. “They are smart and they are listening,” Lipkin-Shahak said of Hezbollah. “And when they saw ‘yes, we can do it and nothing happened,

678 Hamzeh, pp. 97. It is not known whether the soldiers were killed during the operation or afterward.
680 Byman, pp. 244.
then [they asked themselves,] ‘why can’t we dare more?’”681

More is exactly what Hezbollah did for the next six years, as it waged a limited but continual battle against Israel in the Shebaa Farms region, constantly pushing the boundaries against the Jewish state in an exploration of the degree to which it could continue to wage its resistance campaign without provoking a severe response. Six weeks after the October abductions, Hezbollah detonated two roadside bombs against Israeli army jeeps on border patrol, injuring two IDF personnel. Ten days after that, another roadside bomb injured two more soldiers.682 In response, Israel shelled Hezbollah positions across the border and resumed its reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. It also beefed up its defenses in the Shebaa Farms area and succeeded at times in wounding and killing Hezbollah and Palestinian infiltrators from Lebanon.683 In response to the IAF flights over Lebanon, Hezbollah would fire at the aircraft with such a trajectory that the shells would land in Israel. Sometimes, the anti-aircraft fire would be directed at the airspace over kibbutzim (Israeli farming settlements) as much as half an hour after the IAF aircraft had flown.684

By early 2001, the road-side bomb attacks morphed into assaults from the Lebanese side, from which Hezbollah fired wire-guided TOW anti-tank missiles at Israeli armored vehicles on the Israeli side of the border. Then by June 2001, Hezbollah began battering Israeli outposts in the Shebaa area with mortars, rockets, and AT-3 Sagger anti-

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681 Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv. Lipkin-Shahak’s assessment is shared by every member of the Israeli security establishment interview for this project.
682 Blanford, pp. 302.
683 Sobelman, pp. 40-41.
 Eventually, hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was elected in February 2001, ordered a tougher response. In April, after Hezbollah hit an Israeli tank, killing its radio operator, the IAF bombed a Syrian radar position in Lebanon, killing three Syrian soldiers. But after a similar response to a Hezbollah attack in June, Hezbollah countered with a massive barrage of mortar fire against an Israeli radar position on Mt. Dov, forcing Israel to reconsider its policy of holding Syria accountable for Hezbollah’s actions. Like Barak, Sharon, who led the IDF’s ill-fated venture into Lebanon in 1982, also had ghosts of Lebanon past likely influencing him against a more belligerent response to Hezbollah provocations.

Predictably, Hezbollah again escalated the border conflict in March and April 2002. On 12 March, Hezbollah fighters aided members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in slipping through the Israeli border. The PIJ fighters then went on a shooting spree, killing five Israeli civilians and one soldier. Then at the end of March, in parallel with Israel’s initiation of Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank to combat the increasingly devastating Palestinian attacks of the second intifada, Hezbollah launched a 15-day mortar and Katusha barrage and exchanged fire with IDF troops across the border in an operation that expanded beyond the Shebaa Farms area to include the Golan Heights. Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah’s operations against Israel were “the extension of a form of assistance to our brothers undertaking resistance from the inside,” i.e. from inside

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685 Blanford, pp. 307-309.
686 Azani, pp. 234.
687 Azani, pp. 235.
Hezbollah wound down its attacks only after Yasser Arafat complained to Lebanese President Emile Lahoud that the Hezbollah-IDF skirmishes were drawing attention away from the beating Palestinians were taking in the West Bank.690

According to the International Crisis Group, from Israel’s withdrawal until September 2002, skirmishes between Israel and Hezbollah—what Nasrallah called “reminder operations”—occurred at a frequency of every six to eight weeks.691 Despite the provocation, Israel continued to act with marked restraint. Assessing Hezbollah’s ability to escalate the conflict versus Israel both in October 2000 and March 2002 without major consequence, Malka later wrote that Hezbollah correctly estimated Israel’s reticence to open a second major front of combat during the second intifada. This failure of Israeli deterrence stemmed from Israel’s regional and global stature during those years which was “so bad that any retaliation whatsoever in Lebanon was perceived [by Hezbollah] as unrealistic.”692

Nevertheless, the IDF and Israeli security services did not just sit on their hands. In August 2003, high-ranking Hezbollah operative Ali Saleh was killed in bomb blast in Beirut, an attack Hezbollah attributed to the Mossad. In July 2004, a similar attack killed Ghaleb Awali, another top Hezbollah militant. But in response, that same day, a Hezbollah sniper killed two IDF soldiers as they climbed a roof to fix an antenna on their base. In the aftermath, IDF officers spoke about a very strong message that would be sent

689 Sobelman, pp. 62.
690 Blanford, pp. 313.
691 2002 ICG Report, pp. 1. For Nasrallah’s quote, see: Noe, pp. 388.
to Hezbollah in the near future—but nothing happened. It appeared to the Israeli newspaper *Hatzofe* that deterrence between Hezbollah and Israel was now working “in the other direction.”

The March-April 2002 operation against Israel was perhaps Hezbollah’s most obvious involvement in aiding the Palestinians during the *intifada*, but it was not its first. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict heated up, Hezbollah established a unit to aid Palestinian militants on behalf of Iran. This unit created cells and networks within the Palestinian territories and Israel, trained Palestinian militants in the Beqaa, and in some cases sent them to Iran for advanced training. In addition to supporting the Palestinians through direct attack, Hezbollah took upon itself the task of aiding the arming of Palestinian militants, helping Hamas, among others, smuggle weapons through tunnels dug under the Egypt-Gaza border. Then in January 2002, the Israeli Navy seized the Karin A ship in the Red Sea. Its cargo included $15 million worth of Katusha rockets, mortar shells, anti-tank missiles and mines, sniper rifles, Kalashnikov rifles and ammunition. According to Israel, Hezbollah was deeply involved in the Karin A operation, as well as other weapons smuggling activities during the second *intifada*—a fact that was not denied by Nasrallah. “In principle, we don’t have anything against assisting [the Palestinians] in arms, but for practical and technical reasons providing them with money is easier,” Nasrallah said in a 2003 interview, explaining the group’s decision

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693 The article is cited by Blanford as appearing in *Hatzofe* on 22 July 2004. The quote is found on Blanford, pp. 328.
694 Blanford, pp. 351.
695 The Karin A’s cargo was reported as such by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2002/Seizing%20of%20the%20Palestinian%20weapons%20ship%20Karine%20A%20-
to transfer cash to Palestinian militants rather than arms following the Karin A incident.696

In January 2004, a new deal was completed by Hezbollah and Israel, utilizing German mediation, for an exchange of prisoners and bodies. The lopsided terms saw Hezbollah return Col. Tannenbaum and the bodies of the three soldiers captured in October 2000 for 435 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, only 11 of which were Hezbollah operatives, and 59 bodies of Hezbollah fighters.697 But the negotiation was not completed to its full terms. As part of the deal, Israel expected final information on the fate of Lt. Col. Ron Arad, an IAF pilot who was captured by Amal in 1986 and presumed to have been transferred to Hezbollah and/or Iran. The report Hezbollah produced on Arad was deemed unsatisfactory by the Sharon government and at the last minute one Lebanese Druze prisoner, Samir Kuntar, was retained by Israel.698

In a speech following the prisoner exchange, Nasrallah warned that Israeli leaders were “fools” to keep Kuntar and for not having “learned from their past mistakes.” As a result, he warned that Israel would “reap the consequences.”699 Nasrallah spelled out those consequences in November 2005, saying that it was Hezbollah’s “duty to capture Israeli soldiers and swap them for Arab prisoners in Israel and declaring 2006 to be the

696 Blanford, pp. 351.
697 Qassem, pp. 258.
698 The release of Kuntar was, in any regard, particularly objectionable from Israel’s point of view. The former member of the Palestinian Liberation Front was convicted of murdering three members of an Israeli family in a 1979 terrorist attack, including four-year-old Einat Haran whom he killed by smashing her head with the butt of his rifle against a rock.
699 Noe, pp. 306.
“year of retrieving prisoners.”\textsuperscript{700} Efforts were, however, already in effect to kidnap additional IDF personnel. All told, the speaker of Lebanon’s Parliament and Amal leader Nabih Berri later claimed that Hezbollah made 11 kidnapping attempts until 2006.\textsuperscript{701}

During the six years following Israel’s withdrawal and preceding the 2006 war, Hezbollah killed 17 Israeli soldiers—nine in the Shebaa farms and eight others along the border—that were operating within UN-certified Israeli territory. Additionally, one Israeli civilian was killed by Hezbollah and five more were killed by PIJ with Hezbollah’s assistance.\textsuperscript{702} All sides acknowledge that there were clearly established rules of the game at the time. According to Brig. Gen. Yossef Kuperwasser, those rules included the following: the acceptable theater of combat was the Shebaa Farms/Mt. Dov area; any attack by Hezbollah would precipitate a response from Israel; attacks outside of Shebaa, including rocket fire, would incur a stronger counter-response; Israeli reconnaissance flights over Lebanon would continue and any attempt to bring in serious anti-aircraft weapons into Lebanon that would challenge Israeli air dominance would not be accepted by Israel. The rules “were extremely well understood,” Kuperwasser said. “We didn’t like it, but we didn’t think it was worth while to start a war” to change the situation.\textsuperscript{703} Indeed, while Israel’s deterrence was clearly better in those years than before the withdrawal, it was still far from the result the IDF was looking for.

\textsuperscript{700} Byman, pp. 244.
\textsuperscript{701} “Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss,” \textit{International Crisis Group}, 25 July 2006, Middle East Report No. 57, pp. 10. In one incident in November 2005, one very alert Israeli sniper killed four Hezbollah infiltrators that were on a mission to kidnap Israeli soldiers.
\textsuperscript{703} Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
On 22 July 2006, after numerous attempts, Hezbollah finally did succeed in kidnapping two more Israeli soldiers. “Hizbollah launched its operation for the most banal reason of all: because it could,” stated a July 2006 report by the International Crisis group.\textsuperscript{704} Indeed, in attacking an IDF patrol operating in the Shebaa zone, Nasrallah—as we would learn after the war—calculated that doing so was within the rules of the game that had been established with Israel over the preceding six years. “In this sense, one can understand Hezbollah’s surprise when in July 2006 Israel broke the rules and decided to attack missile caches concealed in buildings and populated areas,” wrote Maj. Gen. (Res.) Amos Malka, the head of IDF intelligence from 1998 to 2001.\textsuperscript{705}

The Hezbollah ambush of the IDF patrol manned by Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev—reservists on their last day of duty before returning home—was a well executed operation that relied on the ruse of shelling the Israeli border at a different point while knocking out security cameras that were watching the area where the patrol was headed. The soldiers were likely killed in the attack, though the IDF did not know it at the time. Two hours after the ambush, an IDF platoon that entered Lebanon attempting to track where the missing soldiers were taken suffered five dead when Hezbollah fighters destroyed their tank with a pre-planted roadside bomb and then ambushed the platoon.\textsuperscript{706} Hezbollah issued a communiqué stating the soldiers (dead or alive, it would not say) would only be returned in the context of another German-mediated prisoner swap.

\textsuperscript{704} 2006 ICG Report.
\textsuperscript{705} Malka, pp. 7.
\textsuperscript{706} Byman, pp. 251.
But Israel would have none of it and decided to break the rules of the game that prevailed since its 2000 withdrawal. The reasons Israel reacted strongly to this particular Hezbollah provocation, where since 2000 it had settled for more perfunctory responses, are multifold. Two weeks earlier, Corp. Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and another soldier killed along the Gaza border by a group of Palestinian militants representing numerous factions. The top players in the Israeli government—Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Amir Peretz, and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni—were not career military personnel as Israeli leaders traditionally were, and they were now in danger of being viewed as weak. Their relative lack of military experience also meant they did not come with any of the Lebanon baggage that Barak and Sharon did. Hezbollah’s kidnapping operation may also have been the straw that broke the camel’s back. For six years, Israel had promised a harsh response to Hezbollah and had failed to deliver it. Finally, with the second intifada now mainly defeated, the IDF was again free to focus much greater attention on the north.

Rather than negotiate for the soldiers’ release, Israel began an air campaign that not only hit Hezbollah targets but took out major Lebanese infrastructure as well. In addition to the majority of Hezbollah’s stock pile of long-range rockets, roads, bridges, and fuel depots were knocked out in southern Lebanon and in Beirut; a blockade was placed on the country’s ports by the Israeli navy; and the runways at the Beirut International Airport were bombed—all in the first few days. Having taken a far more serious retaliatory blow from Israel than was expected, Hezbollah felt compelled to respond in kind. Hundreds of Katusha and Fajr rockets were launched not just at Israel’s
northern most towns and settlements, but for the first time at Israel’s third-largest city, Haifa. All the rules of the game were broken. Without either side having planned it, Hezbollah and Israel were once again at war. 707

In the initial days of the war, Israel’s inexperienced leaders made bold threats and defined unrealistic objectives. Peretz vowed that Nasrallah “would remember the name Amir Peretz for the rest of his life.” 708 Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz vowed that the IDF would “turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years if the soldiers were not returned.” 709 Among the goals Israel sought at the beginning of the war were the return of the kidnapped soldiers, the total cessation of rocket fire from Hezbollah, the complete implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559 (which meant the total disarming of Hezbollah), and the creation of a peace process that would change the regional political landscape. 710 After a week of air raids that were unable to stop the rocket fire from Hezbollah, let alone compel the group to declare its surrender, Israel injected ground troops into southern Lebanon where they would fight brutal battles with Hezbollah forces for the next three weeks.

707 The investigative journalist Seymour Hersh has a different take. According to him, Israel was waiting for a provocation from Hezbollah in order to launch a broad attack against the group. This, according to Hersh, was pre-planned with the George W. Bush Administration in the context of the United States gearing up for a war against Iran as a follow-up to the Iraq War initiated in 2003. (See: Seymour M. Hersh, “Watching Lebanon: Washington’s interests in Israel’s war,” The New Yorker, 21 August 2006.) However, mountains of data made available by the Winograd Commission and other investigations into Israel’s pre-war preparations show that the IDF was woefully unprepared for the conflict and that little political thought had been given as to how to operate such a war. While the Bush Administration clearly was hoping that Israel would deliver a decisive blow to Hezbollah, Hersh’s central claim based on a preponderance of anonymous sources—that the war was pre-planned and part of a broader American-Israeli strategy to take the war to Iran—seems quite exaggerated.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5173078.stm
All told, the IDF did extensive damage to Lebanon. Over 1,100 Lebanese were killed in the war, including between 250 and 500 Hezbollah fighters.\textsuperscript{711} The Lebanese government estimated that direct damages of the war were $2.8 billion; losses of output and income totaled $2.2 billion, and economic losses over the next three years totaled $15 billion.\textsuperscript{712} At least 125,000 houses and apartments were destroyed, entire villages in the south were reduced to rubble, 91 bridges were blown up, and roads and highways were rendered impassable in many areas across the country. During the course of the war, 900,000 Lebanese were internally displaced—mostly from the South.\textsuperscript{713} In addition to its fighters, Hezbollah also lost the extensive bunker network it built in the south when it was forced to retreat north of the Litani River (under terms of UNSC Resolution 1701 which ended the war). The Party also subjected its Shia base of support to a month of hell and years of rebuilding. Israel, on the other hand, lost 109 soldiers to Hezbollah on the ground in Lebanon. Twelve more soldiers and 44 Israeli civilians were killed by Hezbollah rockets that landed in Israel.\textsuperscript{714} The Jewish state suffered around $500 million in economic losses.

And yet, the immediate perception in Lebanon, Israel, and around the world was that Hezbollah either won the war or at least fought Israel to a draw. Such was the case after Israel defined its expectations in lofty terms while Hezbollah said it would win simply by surviving. Israel also suffered immensely from brutally negative media

\textsuperscript{711} Byman, pp. 260. The lower number is given by Hezbollah while the higher number is given by Israel. The UN estimate is closer to the Israeli estimate.
\textsuperscript{712} Blanford, pp. 412.
\textsuperscript{713} Norton, pp. 142.
\textsuperscript{714} Byman, pp. 260.
exposure, particularly following the bombing of an apartment building in the same town—Qana—where ten years earlier over 100 civilians were killed in the Israeli shelling of the UN compound during Operation Grapes of Wrath. This time, on 30 July, 28 civilians were killed in Qana, including 16 children. Hezbollah proved adept at using the Lebanese civilian casualties throughout the war as propaganda against Israel, and over the course of the conflict turned regional and world opinion mostly against its sworn enemy. While the governments of Egypt, Jordan, and even Saudi Arabia condemned Hezbollah for “irresponsible escalatory acts” and “uncalculated adventures” respectively at the beginning of the war, by the end they had joined a chorus that including many countries in Europe in calling Israel’s actions “disproportionate” and out of line.\(^{715}\)

After 34 days of fighting, Israel achieved almost none of its stated goals. The kidnapped soldiers were not returned. The IDF did not halt the rocket fire; in fact Hezbollah was firing over 200 rockets per day at the end of the war. Hezbollah remained armed to the teeth; already five weeks after the war Hezbollah had rearmed to such a degree that Nasrallah was able to declare that “the resistance is stronger than at any time since 1982.”\(^{716}\) And the new political situation in Lebanon that resulted from the war was the exact opposite of what Israel hoped, with Hezbollah rising to become the predominant force in Lebanese politics over the subsequent years. If Israel could point to one material victory it was that Nasrallah was forced to move Hezbollah’s fighters off the Israeli border and north of the Litani River and accept an increased UNIFIL presence in the South.

\(^{715}\) On Egypt and Jordan statements see: Byman, pp. 260. On Saudi statement see: Norton, pp. 136. On the turn of the countries against Israel see: Norton, pp. 140
\(^{716}\) Blanford, pp. 433.
The hand-ringing and political blame game that resulted in Israel in the war’s aftermath was intense. The main architects of the conflict—Olmert, Peretz, and Halutz—were all eventually forced from office as the Winograd Commission examining the war’s failures dealt them stinging rebukes. In a scathing critique of the government and army’s conduct during the war, top Israeli security analyst Prof. Efraim Inbar said Israel had “bungled” the war and “squandered an opportunity… to enhance Israel’s deterrence,” among other possible achievements. And yet the feel-good moments produced by Hezbollah following Nasrallah’s proclamation of a “divine victory” on 22 September against Israel did not last long as the reality of the damage Lebanon suffered due to Hezbollah’s continued and, many thought, pointless war against Israel sunk in. “In 2006 during war itself, Lebanese were backing Hezbollah, but that was because Israel was blowing up Lebanon,” said Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based journalist and author of a book on Hezbollah’s 30-year war against Israel. “But it was obvious at the time that the knives were going to come out against Hezbollah afterward” within Lebanon.

What happened afterward between Israel and Hezbollah was shocking in that nothing happened. Despite constant rhetorical threat from Nasrallah almost since the 2006 war ended, not one shot has been fired by Hezbollah across the Israeli border since. Even after a lopsided 2008 prisoner exchange in which Israel traded the reviled terrorist Samir Kuntar, four Hezbollah fighters captured in 2006, and 199 bodies for the bodies of Goldwasser and Regev, the guns remained silent. The Second Lebanon War, a conflict

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717 Inbar, 2007.
718 Author telephone interview on 20 May 2012.
that the vast majority of Israeli analysts openly said at the time was an epic failure looks in hindsight to have instead to have helped establish a degree of deterrence Israel never before achieved vis-à-vis Hezbollah.

In retrospect, the seeds of the deterrence can be seen only two weeks following the war’s conclusion during an interview of Nasrallah by New TV that produced one of the most startling moments of Hezbollah’s history. Commenting on the thought process that informed his decision to order the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers that sparked the war, the Hezbollah chief said the following:

Nasrallah: “The people are our people and kinfolk. When the evacuees returned to their villages and towns, our priority became the restoration of the social situation and giving the people time to breathe and feel comfortable… You ask me now: ‘If there was even a one percent chance that the July 11 capturing operation would have led to a war like the one that happened, would you have done it?’ I would say ‘no, absolutely not,’ for humanitarian, moral, social, security, military, and political reasons. I would not agree to it, and neither would Hezbollah, the prisoners in Israeli prisons, nor the families of the prisoners. This is absolute…

New TV: “This is why I asked if you would keep in mind, in any future operation, the destruction, death, and displacement that Israel has wrought. It is as if Israel is teaching you a lesson and telling you to beware that this will be the price of anything else you do.

Nasrallah: …When Lebanon—as a state, a people, and the resistance—wants to make any decision, it will take into consideration everything that has happened. We cannot ignore it, and say that we will behave and make decisions as if nothing has happened. I would not be a human if I behaved in such a manner…”
New TV: Israel twisted your arm with the civilians?

Nasrallah: No, they did not twist our arm, but they did hurt us, because we are not a mafia or an armed gang. The civilians who were killed are our people... our women, children, sons, brothers, and family members. Because the Israelis know that we have feelings, are human, and are genuine in our love for our people, they pressure us with this point.  

In Nasrallah’s mea culpa, it is clearly evident that he considered the price that Hezbollah and Lebanon paid for capturing the soldiers to be too high and that at least part of him regrets undertaking that mission. His reluctance to plunge Lebanon back into war since then thus fits the classic definition of deterrence—that of a challenger calculating that while it would like to attack, the price of doing so was made too high by the defender.

What makes the price too high for Nasrallah? Hezbollah experts on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanon border say that with Israel no longer occupying southern Lebanon the people there are not willing to endure the same suffering as they were during the days when they were resisting Israeli occupation. That situation severely challenges the paradigm Hezbollah fought under for so many years. “Everybody had to be committed to the logic of freedom fighting. Mukawama Islamiyeh (Islamic Resistance)” in order to expel Israel, said Brig. Gen. Yossef Kuperwasser. “But [now] the population is not really ready to pay the price of the mukawama (resistance) because they understand that the Israelis are here not to dominate them and occupy the land.”  

This sentiment was

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719 Noe, pp. 381, 394, 402.
720 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
confirmed by a UNIFIL official in Lebanon who said in 2009 that “the mood in the South is marked by concern at the possibility of renewed escalation. Memories of the 2006 war remain fresh.”

But it is not just memories of the 2006 war that is dragging down popular support for Hezbollah, constraining its actions, and leading to its deterrence. Hezbollah’s own actions within Lebanon and Syria have led to an erosion of its power base in Lebanon and the Arab and Muslim worlds. “The smelly stain of the murder of [Former Prime Minister Rafik] Hariri has stuck… And then there’s the scandals and there’s the drugs,” said Israeli Security Official A. “And above all there is the complicity in supporting Syrian President Bashar [Assad]… It’s one thing to kill Jews, which is glorified, and its another thing all together to be seen slaughtering Sunnis in the streets of Syria.”

As Nasrallah stated many times over the last 30 years, including in the 2006 interview with New TV, the welfare of Hezbollah’s support base is of chief concern to Hezbollah. With Israel gone and Hezbollah now the preeminent power in Lebanon, the Party is now responsible for the people’s welfare to a far greater degree than it ever was. Therefore when people like Brig. Gen. Herzi Halevy, commander of the IDF’s 91st Division, threaten Lebanon with a response that is “sharper, harder, and in some ways

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721 The interview was conducted by the International Crisis Group. See 2010 ICG Report., pp. 13, footnote No. 83.
Finally pushing the Lebanese Shia past a point they were willing to endure also had something to do with the sheer level of destruction Israel meted out in the conflict. “I think foreigners are not understanding the level of destruction that we did in 2006, and the price that the support base of Hezbollah in the south and in Beirut paid was enormously high, way higher than” in previous operations, said Former IDF Chief of Staff (2007-2011) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi. Source: Author interview 28 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
722 Author interview 22 May 2012 in Jerusalem.
very violent” in the event of a Hezbollah attack, Nasrallah is apt to listen. Indeed, Israel’s publicly stated *modus operandi* in a future conflict with Hezbollah will be its so-called Dahiyeh Doctrine. “What happened in the Dahiyeh quarter of Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on,” IDF Northern Commander Maj. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot said in 2008, speaking of the Hezbollah area of Beirut that Israel absolutely leveled in 2006. “This is not a recommendation. This is a plan. And it has been approved.”

Sending clear signals to the effect that the destruction of Lebanon in a future conflict will challenge Hezbollah’s viability has been an element of Israeli strategy since then, according to IDF Colonel B. He added that by doing so Israel is holding at risk Hezbollah’s medium- and long-term goals. Whether Israel would actually implement the Dahiyeh Doctrine in a future confrontation is debatable, since doing so would likely provoke a massive Hezbollah military counter-attack and severe internationally condemnation. But as a matter of deterrence, that is the clear signal Israel is sending. Hezbollah experts additionally maintain that the Party is constrained by Iran which viewed the 2006 war as a poorly timed battle in a long-term war that squandered huge investments the Islamic Republic made in Hezbollah and Lebanon—particularly the bunker system.

The combination of Israel not occupying Lebanon; Hezbollah attaining political

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prominence in Lebanon; Hezbollah caring deeply for the welfare of, in particular, Lebanese Shia; a caution flag from Iran; and the fear of an Israeli retaliation more vicious even than 2006 seems to be clearly responsible for the six years of quiet on the Israeli-Lebanon border—a period of relative tranquility not seen since the PLO invaded southern Lebanon in 1970. Two particular cases highlight just how stable the deterrence proved from 2006-2012.

On 12 February 2008, as Imad Mugniyeh exited a reception in Damascus marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a remote controlled bomb detonated his car, killing him instantly. Mugniyeh was the long-time head of Hezbollah’s Jihad Council, its main interlocutor to Iranian intelligence and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, a founding member of the movement, and one of the world’s most wanted terrorists. Even as the Mossad remained silent, Hezbollah laid blame for his death squarely on the shoulders of the Israeli intelligence service. But unlike when the IDF killed former Hezbollah leaders Sheik Ragheb Harb (1984) and Sayyed Abbas Musawi (1992), or even lower level functionaries like Ali Saleh (2003) and Ghaleb Awali (2004), Hezbollah launched no Katusha rockets, no mortars, nor did it even fire one bullet across the border into Israel.\textsuperscript{725} The second case came when Israel fought a war with Hamas in Gaza for three weeks in December 2008 and January 2009. Despite Hezbollah’s previous willingness to punish Israel for large operations against the Palestinians, once again,

\textsuperscript{725} In fairness, this particular example may also have to do with the lingering suspicion among Hezbollah that it was not the Mossad who killed Mugniyeh but the Syrians or some other faction or state seeking revenge for any number of acts perpetrated by him and the group over 30 years of violence.
Hezbollah did not fire a single shot.  

That said, deterrence of Hezbollah since the Second Lebanon War was not total. Fearing Israel’s wrath if it directly attacked the Jewish state, the Party of God nevertheless found ways of mounting some response to Mugniyeh’s assassination and of acting with Iran to revenge a series of attacks on Iranian nuclear scientists for which Hezbollah and Iran blame Israel and the United States. In particular, a series of attempted and successful attacks on Israeli diplomatic and civilian targets from 2008 to 2012 in India, Thailand, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Egypt all appear to be the work of Hezbollah probably working with Iran.  

In the deadliest attack, attributed by Israeli and American officials jointly to Hezbollah and Iran’s Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guard, five Israelis were killed by a suicide bomber in Bulgaria on 18 July 2012. In striking Israel abroad as part of the broader Shadow War, Hezbollah maintained some of the balance of terror it strove to achieve against the Jewish state since the early 1990s, and it signaled to Jerusalem that despite its reticence to engage the IDF in a full-fledged conflict, there would still be a price for Israeli action against the Party.

**Findings.** From May 2000 to July 2006, Hezbollah and Israel operated according to well understood “rules of the game” that bound the conflict between them. The

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726 At least one rocket was fired at Israel from Lebanon during the Gaza War but it was from a Palestinian faction.
727 For details to Azerbaijan, Egypt, and the Turkey incidents, see: Azani, pp. 256. For details on the India, Kenya, and Thailand incidents see: Nicholas Kulish and Jodi Rudoren, “Plots are tied to shadow war of Israel and Iran,” *The New York Times*, 8 August 2012.

The bombing was generally cast in terms by analysts as one of a series of events in the ongoing shadow war between the United States, Israel and their allies on one side and Iran, Hezbollah and their allies on the other side.
“reminder operations,” as Nasrallah referred to Hezbollah’s actions during the period, were mostly, though not totally, constrained to the Shebaa Farms (Mt. Dov) area, which represented a better result than Israel had pre-2000 but not the result it was looking for. When Hezbollah’s operations were not constrained to that area, Israel struck back with more force—a price Hezbollah understood it would pay for such action. In general, the target, method, and frequency of attack remained within well defined parameters.

In July 2006, Hezbollah believed that since Israel did not respond too harshly to the October 2000 kidnapping, and that since the kidnapping operation was conducted within Shebaa Farms area, it was acting more or less within the rules of the game. Indeed, both sides agree that it was Israel that decided at that time to break those rules of the game and attempt to institute new rules. The 34-day war which is known in Israel as the Second Lebanon War achieved at least that. “This was the first time for Nasrallah to understand that Israel can go crazy, play out of the rules—what he understood as the normal rules of the game,” said former IDF Chief of Staff (1995-1998) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon-Lipkin Shahak. “And he didn’t want [a] repeat.”

By mid-2012, IDF estimates said that Hezbollah possessed at least 40,000 short range (20-40km) rockets, 3,000-4,000 medium-range rockets (70-200km), and a few hundred long-range rockets—in essence, the ability to hit anywhere it wished in Israel save perhaps Eilat. The Party of God also had 10,000 men under arms, the majority of

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729 Author interview 24 May 2012 in Tel Aviv.
which were reservists while a few thousand were highly-trained, full time fighters. And yet, no shots were fired from Hezbollah across the Israeli border since August 2006, marking the most tranquil period for Israel’s northern border since 1970. Additionally, in at least a few cases, likely during the 2008-2009 Gaza War, Hezbollah acted to restrain Palestinian factions attempting to attack Israel. Much of Hezbollah’s restraint appears to be due to concern over what would happen to the Shia civilian population should the Party provoke another war with Israel. “Our primary concern is the fate of civilians who have endured much already,” one Hezbollah official said in March 2010. “Our fighters are ready [for war]; they are not.”

Hezbollah was, however, willing to take the chance of engaging Israel outside of the Israeli-Lebanese theater following the 2006 war. From 2008-2012, the Party was responsible for around a dozen attempted and successful attacks against Israeli diplomatic and civilian targets in several other countries in at least the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Therefore, while Israel did not achieve strategic deterrence against Hezbollah, it did achieve strong tactical deterrence during the time period under study. This confirms the theoretical predictions.

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730 The statistics on Hezbollah’s military capabilities come from Israeli Colonel B, interviewed by the author in Tel Aviv on 29 May 2012.
733 Nicholas Kulish and Jodi Rudoren, “Plots are tied to shadow war of Israel and Iran,” The New York Times, 8 August 2012.
Table 13.2 – Actual Deterrence of Hezbollah (2000-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
<th>Actual Deterrence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Score</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HEZBOLLAH CASE STUDY

CHAPTER XIV – HEZBOLLAH CONCLUSIONS

Hezbollah was founded by pro-Iranian, Shia Islamist, revolutionary clerics and militants in order to resist American hegemony in the Middle East, fight Israel, and establish an Islamic state in Lebanon based on the sharia. The methodology to pursue these objectives was primarily conceived of as violent jihad, though it also included winning over the Lebanese Shia population with a web of social-religious institutions that advanced Shia causes and living conditions in Lebanon and, in parallel, promulgated Hezbollah’s ideology. Over time, the pursuit of the original goals never changed, however the method of pursuing them was recalibrated. The recalibration was due in large part to environmental conditions and the changes that Hezbollah underwent as a movement in response to them. It was those changes, coupled with its core ideology, that were largely responsible for its susceptibility to deterrence strategies as it matured as an organization and gained power within Lebanon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>External Support</th>
<th>Inter-Factional Competition</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Possible Deterrence</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985-1992</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-2000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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</table>
Of the five sets of variables that constitute the core theoretical model in predicting the conditions under which non-state militant groups are susceptible to deterrence, elements of statehood is clearly among the most important in determining the final outcome. At its founding in 1982, Hezbollah possessed no elements of statehood to speak of: it controlled no territory and it rejected pursuing political power. Though some members of Hezbollah were marginally affiliated with existing Shia social-religious institutions in Lebanon, the group itself was not. However, even given its revolutionary ethos at the time, it did coordinate with Iran to care for Shia Lebanese who were negatively impacted by the Israeli invasion. This demonstrated the tie its leaders felt to the Shia Lebanese population and constituted the seed of the massive social-religious welfare apparatus that it would develop over the next three decades.

The growth of those social-religious institutions mirrored Hezbollah’s evolution as a movement, constantly increasing in breadth and depth as the years went by. The massive investment made by Hezbollah in the social-religious enterprise, with billions of dollars of Iranian aid, is indicative of the importance which Hezbollah’s leaders place upon those activities. This enterprise, as much as its military build-up, is what allowed Hezbollah to build the “society of resistance” that sustained the Party of God during its war of attrition with Israel. The society not only seduced more and more Shia (and even non-Shia) to join Hezbollah’s ranks over the years, but it sustained that community, and Hezbollah itself, during withering Israeli offensives in 1993, 1996, and 2006.

But reliance on popular support, both moral and material, for Hezbollah’s
endeavors proved a double-edge sword. Following Hezbollah’s victory against the IDF and the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, maintaining broad public support for continued “resistance” against Israel proved difficult. In particular, attitudes among the Shia population—not to mention Lebanon’s general population—seem to have turned firmly against further confrontation with Israel following the 2006 war and the massive damage that Lebanon suffered during the conflict.

The mid-1980s version of Hezbollah would not have cared one way or another what the public at large thought, committed as they were to their revolutionary ideals. But a movement that is political in nature, and not just revolutionary; a movement that seeks political power and control of a state, cannot afford to alienate millions of people it wishes to lead. Therefore, the 1990s politically minded Party of God, and the 2000s post-occupation version of the organization, were forced to make different calculations than it did in the 1980s.

Indeed, Hezbollah’s internal deliberations circa 1990 regarding whether it should join the Lebanese political process clearly indicate that its leaders were well aware of the dilemma that could result from seeking elected power. And in the 1990s and 2000s, a number of statements from Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and other Hezbollah leaders explicitly acknowledge that the degree it could fight Israel was constrained by public opinion and the negative material effects that confrontation would bring about for its constituency. Thus, even though Hezbollah would have preferred to launch more Katusha rockets at Israel following the 1996 Understanding, or would have preferred to
continue its cross-border raids against Israel following the 2006 war, it was constrained by domestic considerations. Indeed, Nasrallah clearly stated that Hezbollah did not do so out of concern for the welfare of its constituents, who, by virtue of Hezbollah’s own decisions, now had the power not only to cease signing up for Hezbollah’s military ranks, but to vote it out of office and deprive the Party of the domestic and international legitimacy it worked so hard to gain over 30 years.

The element of physical territory is also significant. In the aftermath of Israel’s 2000 withdrawal, the Islamic Resistance was quick to take control of the former occupation zone. There, it built an impressive array of military bunkers, supply depots, and forward positions to use against Israel in a war. The loss of that territory following UN Resolution 1701 and the ability of the Islamic Resistance to overtly operate there was one of the main material blows that Hezbollah suffered as a result of the 2006 war. In addition to Hezbollah’s own decreased tactical advantage from losing that territory, Iran’s displeasure with the loss of that logistical advantage and the fear that Hezbollah could lose further fields of operation in a future conflict with the IDF, seems to be partially responsible for the restraint Teheran has urged upon Hezbollah since then in terms of confronting Israel.

The fact is that the ability of Israel (and other states) to deter Hezbollah closely paralleled the increase in its elements of statehood, going from no ability at all in the early 1980s to being able to achieve strong tactical deterrence by the late 2000s. Territory, political power, and the welfare of the Shia Lebanese all played their part, but
in particular the latter two were the most important for Hezbollah’s calculations. (However, the lesser importance of the territorial dimension could also be because Hezbollah, probably correctly, estimates the likelihood of another Israeli takeover of Lebanon as next to zero.) The other variables in question in this study also contributed to Hezbollah’s susceptibility to deterrence, but none more so than elements of statehood.

Organizational Structure. Nasrallah described Hezbollah at its formation as a “current” of like-minded Shia Islamists more than a coherent movement. Until 1985, it did not have a name, nor did it operate overtly. It existed as an umbrella organization sponsored by Iran for a number of ideological and/or militant Shia groups operating in Lebanon at the time that shared a common cause of supporting the Islamic Revolution and fighting American and Israeli interests in Lebanon. Though Hezbollah had a steering group known as the “Committee of Nine,” there was no formal leader of the organization and therefore no chain of command. In those same early years, no deterrence was achieved by any state against Hezbollah.

With its announced existence to the world in the form of the 1985 Open Letter, Hezbollah formally constituted its Majlis Shura which was elected by 200 group members. It appointed a spokesman and at some point soon thereafter overall leadership of the organization was assumed by Sheik Subhi al-Tufayli, even though such leadership was not formalized by any official appointment. At the same time, Hezbollah began a rapid expansion of its social-religious services apparatus which also demanded some form of institutionalization. A social services and civilian wing of the organization was
thus formed.

In 1989, the hierarchy became even more formal when the position of secretary general was created and elected by the *Majlis Shura*. The movement also divided its military operations into separate commands based on geography, with Imad Mugniyeh, Abbas Musawi, and Hassan Nasrallah all assuming leadership roles. The move toward institutionalization continued following Hezbollah’s participation in the 1992 elections as the group formed separate councils related to politics, *jihad*, judicial issues, social issues, and its own parliamentary bloc. Thus, beginning in the early 1990s, a more formal hierarchy developed in the group’s structure. Throughout the rapid change that Hezbollah undertook in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and through the change of leadership from Tufayli to Musawi to Nasrallah in 1992, the process of consultation and consensus in the *Majlis Shura* remained the basis for Hezbollah’s decision making. And though Nasrallah has gained internal power in the last 20 years, that process still remains in place.

In terms of command and control, all evidence points to a near-perfect system whereby militants on the ground follow their commanders’ orders and those commanders follow the directives sent to them by the *Jihad Council* and *Majlis Shura*. This was the case throughout the 1990s according to former IDF Chief of Staff (1995-1998) Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, and it remains the case today according to IDF Colonel B, who said in 2012 that Hezbollah’s command and control is “almost 100 percent.”

The rigid hierarchy and the universal respect for command has proved important
in the deterrence of Hezbollah in the sense that armed militants from the movement have rarely, if ever, taken matters into their own hands and attacked Israel without orders from the top. The fact that not a single shot was fired by Hezbollah into Israel from 2006 to 2012 would not have been possible without that level of command and control, given the ideological bent of the group to fight Israel until judgment day. One need only look at the situation in Gaza for a comparison that proves the point. Despite Hamas being firmly in power there, its militants fire rockets into Israel from time to time, even following the 2008-09 war. As was detailed in the Hamas case study, those actions were sometimes undertaken despite the orders of the political wing to maintain the ceasefire with Israel. Such has not been the case with Hezbollah.

Organizational structure is therefore an important variable. In the initial years of the organization, there was no deterrence of Hezbollah. However, since at least 1989 (probably even since 1985), the Party has maintained a true organizational hierarchy; a clear decision-making process; and a firm command and control. The decisions of its leaders to observe periods of quiet are followed by the militants in the field, thus preserving the calm to a greater degree than would otherwise be possible and allowing for true deterrence.

*Inter-Factional Competition.* The competition between Hezbollah and Amal for leadership of the Shia cause in Lebanon was present from the very founding of the organization when a number of Hezbollah’s original members broke off of the more secular Amal. For the duration of the 1980s, the two waged an intense competition that
broke out into serious violence from 1988 to 1990. From the beginning, Hezbollah used its attacks against Israel, the United States, and foreign forces as a means of gaining support among the Shia in its competition with Amal, and Hezbollah’s firmly belligerent, rejectionist position propelled it to higher levels of support.

During the 1988-1990 Amal-Hezbollah conflict, Hezbollah reinstated the tactic of suicide bombings against the IDF when it lost the ability to confront Israel directly by virtue of being forced to relinquish territory in southern Lebanon following battlefield defeats to Amal. Hezbollah also used its continued resistance against Israel throughout the 1990s as a selling point to its constituents in its elections campaign and it road its fight against Israel to excellent electoral results following the IDF’s withdrawal in 2000.

That said, Hezbollah’s main decisions regarding the use of force against Israel—when to escalate it and when to cool down the situation—stem largely from factors other than its competition with Amal. The fact remains that even once Hezbollah had clearly gained dominance of the Shia constituency in Lebanon following the Israeli withdrawal, it did not cease its operations against Israel, nor is there any evidence that its victory against Amal was ever a part of its major strategic thinking regarding the conflict with Israel. It may be fair to say that the conflict with Amal was one of the motivating factors that pushed Hezbollah to attack Israel, but Hezbollah, by virtue of its ideology and methodology, needed no additional motivation. Therefore, in comparison to the other variables in question, inter-factional competition mattered only on the margins where deterrence of Hezbollah is concerned.
**External Support.** Gauging the importance of this variable in Hezbollah’s susceptibility to deterrence is extremely difficult due to the fact that two countries—Iran and Syria—maintained relations with Hezbollah that significantly impacted its actions. The quick answer is to say that greater external support makes deterrence more difficult, however that would ignore the complexities of both relationships as they developed over time.

The relationship with Iran is the most fundamental relationship Hezbollah has with any party, be it within or outside of Lebanon. It is from Iran that Hezbollah derived its fundamental ideology at all periods of its existence. The Islamic Republic provided Hezbollah with literally billions of dollars in financial aid to build its extensive web of social-religious institutions and to conduct reconstruction work in Lebanon following its confrontations with Israel. Teheran also delivered to Hezbollah the military resources and training to fight Israel for 30 years, as well as provided political support internationally. To this day, Hassan Nasrallah maintains fealty to the wali-al-faqhi, who is currently Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In particular, the support Iran grants Hezbollah in terms of its ability to rearm and conduct reconstruction following conflict with Israel appears crucial. That advantage allows Hezbollah to maintain a far more belligerent policy against Israel that it would be able to were it forced to stand alone against the Jewish state. Indeed, it is speculated that one of the reasons Hezbollah was relatively quiet in recent years is that Iran’s ability to provide Hezbollah funds and military hardware has decreased as the weight of international sanctions against the
Islamic Republic have taken a severe toll.

The extent of Iran’s influence in founding Hezbollah with its original contingent of 1,500 IRCG members in 1982; in allowing it to participate in politics in 1992; in coordinating with its military wing; and in formulating the Party’s overall strategy until this day means that Hezbollah can also be constrained by Iran. Despite the popularly held belief that Iran is always driving Hezbollah toward more conflict with Israel, experts who follow the Hezbollah-Iranian relationship, including Israeli experts, believe something to the contrary. They say that while Hezbollah-initiated violence definitely served Iranian interests in scuttling Middle East peace initiatives in the 1990s, the Islamic Republic has also worked to dampen Hezbollah’s violent instincts since 2006. Indeed, these experts claim that Iran actually demanded that Hezbollah maintain the calm with Israel rather than revert to violence since Teheran’s own exigencies are such that it wishes to save Hezbollah’s capabilities for the war it believes it will soon fight against Israel and the United States over its nuclear program.

External support from Syria, as it pertains to the deterrence question, is less ambiguous. During the Hafez al-Assad regime, Damascus kept Hezbollah under a leash that, while not tight, was still in place to be tugged on by Assad at any moment. Syria’s logistical support to Hezbollah over the decades proved invaluable, as it allowed Iran to transfer the weapons and personnel to Hezbollah to carry on the fight against Israel. But Hafez Assad never abided the Shia Islamists gaining too much power and during the 1980s he put Hezbollah and Iran firmly into place when, according to his calculations,
they crossed the line in Lebanon. This was firmly evident when the Syrian army killed 23 Hezbollah militants in 1987.

Once Assad established Pax-Syriana in Lebanon following the 1989 Taif Agreement, Hezbollah was forced to firmly commit itself to the rules the Syrian strongman laid down. Thus, when Assad was making progress in negotiations with Israel over return of the Golan Heights, Hezbollah would be ordered to quiet its operations against the IDF in the south. It was even made clear to Hezbollah that were those negotiations to succeed, that its days of violent resistance would be over—a proposition the group appeared resigned to in the late 1990s. By that same token, when Assad felt that he needed to bleed Israel, he would loosen the restraints on Hezbollah activity. The fact that it was Assad that negotiated for Hezbollah and committed on Hezbollah’s behalf to observe the 1993 and 1996 “understandings,” demonstrates just how influential he was in determining the scope of the group’s military actions. The Syrian constraint on Lebanon firmly evaporated with the death of Hafez and the assumption of power by Bashar, who made unconditional support of Hezbollah a signature element of his policy. Armed with more and better quality weapons that ever before, Hezbollah continued to attack Israel even after its withdrawal from Lebanon up until the 2006 war.

Thus where Syria is concerned, it seems clear that support and constraint from an external power were directly correlated to the level of Hezbollah’s belligerency. Where Iran is concerned the same appears to be true, although it is important to note that as with Syria, Hezbollah received both support and constraint from Iran and, and not simply the
former; and its actions demonstrate that fact. Therefore, external support is also an important variable, though with Hezbollah, it was also the case that such support made the group more susceptible to deterrent strategies and not just more resistant.

**Ideology.** Hezbollah began as a pro-Iranian, Islamist revolutionary group with a maximalist agenda of imposing an Islamic state in Lebanon, destroying Israel, and banishing all foreign forces from Lebanon. It preached a hatred of Jews, the United States, and “defeatist” Arab governments. Capitulation to and negotiation with any of its declared enemies was unacceptable. Its methodology for achieving its goals was very simple—violent *jihad* coupled with the development of social-religious institutions designed to slowly win over the Shia population in Lebanon and convert them to practicing the type of Islam preached by Hezbollah and its ideological masters in Iran. Compromise, not just with Israel but with the Lebanese government, was totally rejected. Hezbollah would not settle for reform, only for revolution, it said in the 1980s.

In its early years, Hezbollah utilized coercion in order to reshape Lebanese society in its own image—not just in the form of violence against its enemies, but within its own community as well. This is evidenced by the period in the late 1980s when it demanded that women wear the *hijab* and men cease consuming alcohol. These actions fit, in many ways, with those of the *salafi* Sunni groups that removed themselves from society lest they be corrupted by it. But like Hamas, Hezbollah viewed itself, even at the time, as part and parcel of society and subsequently as the party responsible to initiate Lebanon’s transformation to a more Islamic way of life. In so doing, it not only resorted
to coercive means but it employed persuasive means as well, as evidenced by its devotion to the construction of the social-religious apparatus, which begun in earnest already in the mid-1980s. As such, Hezbollah demonstrated that it cared about its constituents, namely the Shia Lebanese, and was at least partially sensitive to their needs.

Then in 1992, the organization underwent a significant ideological recalibration. After intense internal debate, its leadership decided, with the blessing of Teheran, that reform from within the political system was acceptable and that it would participate in the new political order constituted following the 1989 Taif Agreement. This ideological shift fundamentally altered Hezbollah, just as the hardliners within the organization feared at the time. In transforming itself, Hezbollah committed to following a specific course for achieving power and realizing its goals, and it became responsible to and for its constituency to a far greater degree.

The new strategic model championed by Musawi and Nasrallah that emphasized more persuasion and less coercion of Hezbollah’s constituency was obvious in the loosening of the previous social restrictions in areas within its influence. But it also fundamentally changed Hezbollah’s calculations regarding its fight with Israel. While the Party of God remained committed to Israel’s destruction, and continued to preach virulently anti-Jewish rhetoric, destroying Israel now had to be achieved in parallel with safeguarding and improving the welfare of the Shia Lebanese to a far greater degree. Whereas in 1989 Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah’s “only concern and interest is to safeguard the core—that is to say, the Islamic Resistance,” by 1993 he justified the
“understanding” reached with Israel which imposed limits on Hezbollah’s military actions because it compelled the IDF to halt “the aggression” against Lebanon.” Given the ideological rigidity of Hezbollah before 1990, it is difficult to imagine that such considerations would have compelled it to fundamentally alter its military strategy; and there is no evidence to suggest it either. Indeed, the only time the Islamic Resistance altered its military approach before 1992 was when too many of its fighters were being killed in human wave assaults against well defended IDF and SLA positions. After the 1992 elections, the suffering of the Lebanese Shia consistently proved to be a weak spot of Hezbollah that Israel exploited to achieve deterrence with varying degrees of success.

Two other elements of Hezbollah’s ideology remained consistent over the course of its history that affected it where deterrence is concerned—just as the same elements affected Hamas. First, Hezbollah was always willing to play the long game in Lebanon, not only in fighting Israel and the United States, but first in winning the inter-factional rivalry with Amal and later in wresting control of the country from the Christians and Sunnis. Where Israel is concerned, Hezbollah’s leadership emphasized time and again that its strategy was to bleed Israel in a long war of attrition that would, over many years, compel the IDF to exit Lebanon. Domestically, the slow and steady buildup of its social-religious institutions and its political program were executed over nearly three decades. The willingness to privilege long-term over short-term goals meant that when Hezbollah was forced to choose between fighting Israel in a particular moment and risking the long-term viability of its political and social projects, or curbing its violence, it generally chose

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to curb its violence.

The second element is that Hezbollah, again like Hamas, is a pragmatic movement whose leaders constantly analyze the strategic environment and react to changes. In the 1980s, when Hezbollah made gains by carrying out massive suicide bombings, kidnappings, and hijackings, the group utilized those tactics. Later, when it faced the prospect of incurring the Syrian Army’s wrath if it continued that behavior, it switched gears. Hezbollah demonstrated similar pragmatism in altering its military strategy following the failure of its human wave assaults, and especially in its decision to join the political process in the early 1990s. Just the same, when politics was no longer working for Hezbollah in 2008, it sent its fighters into the streets of Beirut, breaking the long-standing promise Nasrallah made never to turn the Islamic Resistance weapons on fellow Lebanese. In essence, violent jihad may be Hezbollah’s preferred method for resolving its conflicts, but it is pragmatic enough to understand that violence does not always suit its purposes.

*The Interaction Between Ideology and Elements of Statehood.* As was the case in the Hamas study, it seems evident that the key factor in Hezbollah’s susceptibility to deterrence strategies is the interaction effect between ideology and elements of statehood. Unconcerned with political power or territorial control, committed to revolution and not reform, the pre-1992 Hezbollah had very little to lose other than devotees. And while it cared about winning over Shia to its cause, the threat of their suffering was not enough to stop its violence against Israel. But once Hezbollah became a movement that valued
political authority and territorial control, rather than revolution and a worldwide Islamic government, then its decision-making became far more complex.

Post-1992, Hezbollah was forced to weigh how its battles with Israel would help or hinder its political program and its territorial control within Lebanon. As it accrued power; as it expanded its social-religious network and more Lebanese became dependent upon the Party for their welfare, the dilemmas it faced became more acute. By ideological nature it cared about the welfare of the Shia Lebanese and now the Party’s leadership was forced to take into consideration how public opinion would affect its play for power in Lebanon’s government. By remaining in the opposition for more than a decade, Hezbollah managed to have the best of both worlds most, though not all of the time. But once it joined the cabinet in 2005, and even more so when it nominally gained control of the government in 2009, it could no longer shirk responsibility.

Thus, following the 2006 War, the interaction between ideology and its increased elements of statehood forced Hezbollah to silence its guns, just as the group’s hardliners feared in 1992 would eventually be the case. Since Hezbollah values its political power and its territorial control of Lebanon; since its power and influence in Lebanon stem in large part from the support of Lebanese Shia; and since the Party also intrinsically values the welfare of the Shia population, Israel’s ability to hold the welfare of the Shia population at risk forced Nasrallah and the leadership of Hezbollah to refrain from violence lest the entire 30-year Hezbollah project in Lebanon be jeopardized. Indeed, following the 2006 war and the strong preference of the Lebanese people to avoid another
conflict, heating up the situation at the current juncture could subject Hezbollah to a potentially devastating blow of the population turning against the Party of God if the Islamists are blamed for the outbreak of further violence.

This interaction effect, though entirely more pronounced following 2006, is not new. Rather, it has constrained Hezbollah to greater and greater degrees at least since Operation Accountability in 1993. What evidence supports that conclusion that the interaction effect is the strongest predictor of possible deterrence? Consider, for example, external support as an alternative explanation, since it is also correlated with deterrence. Beginning in 2000, following Bashar Assad’s assumption of power, Syria offered almost unconditional support for Hezbollah—a significant change from the very calibrated aid his father previously provided the movement. And yet, Hezbollah became more susceptible to deterrence as the 2000s wore on, due to the leap in its political authority and territorial control in Lebanon and its strong sensitivity to the welfare of its constituency.

Summary of the Dependent Variable (Deterrence). There is a clear range of Hezbollah activity that allows for measuring the efficacy of deterrence. Until the late 1980s, Hezbollah basically utilized whatever means it had at its disposal to attack Israel. This represents the high range of Hezbollah activity in the sense that there was no distance between is capabilities and its actions. By the late 2000s, despite being armed to the teeth, Hezbollah carried out no attacks against Israeli territory and only periodic attacks against Israeli interests abroad. This represents the low range of Hezbollah
activity in the sense that there was an enormous gap between its capabilities and its actions. Written as a formal equation:

\[ \text{Deterrence (}\ Y\ \text{)} = [\text{Capabilities (}\ X_1\ \text{)} \cdot \text{Intentions (}\ X_2\ \text{)}] - \text{Actions (}\ X_3\ \text{)}. \]

If \([X_1 \cdot X_2]\) and \(X_3\) both have ranges between 0 and 1, then where \(Y = 0\), deterrence is non-existent and where \(Y = 1\), deterrence is strategic (or total). In the case of Hezbollah, if \(Time_1 = 1982\)–\(1985\) and \(Time_4 = 2000\)–\(2012\) then \(Y_{T1} = 0\) while \(Y_{T4} \rightarrow 1\). It can also be said that in Hezbollah’s case, \(Y_{T1} < Y_{T2} < Y_{T3} < Y_{T4}\).

\[735 \text{ Clarification: This final term reads that deterrence of Hezbollah at Time 4 approached 1 but did not equal 1.}\]

Summary of Conclusions. The theoretical predictions match almost precisely the actual results (see table on next page). This was not expected, nevertheless it represents the results as best as can be determined. According to this study, elements of statehood and ideology were the most important variables determining the degree to which Hezbollah could be deterred, and the interaction between the two was particularly important. Hezbollah’s organizational structure and its external support were also significant factors, while inter-factional competition seems to be correlated, but not as significant.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
<th>Territorial Control</th>
<th>Population Affinity/Dependency</th>
<th>Clear Leadership Structure</th>
<th>Command &amp; Control</th>
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CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER XV – THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

A central, entirely fair question, that pervades this entire project is whether the numerical values of the independent variables can truly be added together into a total score that is a strong predictor of possible deterrence. The argument against this approach would state that while assigning numerical values to these variables and totaling them is a useful heuristic, it does not rise to a scientific level of confidence that can be reasonably used to predict susceptibility to deterrence. Indeed, upon commencing this research, I was hopeful, but not convinced, that the Asymmetric Deterrence Matrix (ADM) would prove a reliable predictor. However, the excellent results achieved lead me to believe that, in fact, the methodology developed is a truly reliable predictor within acceptable degrees of deviation.

Of the eight observations in this project, the theoretically predicted deterrence results exactly matched the actual results in five. In the other three cases, the actual deterrence results were on the border between the theoretically predicted results and the next level of tactical deterrence. Thus, in zero cases did the theoretical predictions truly miss the mark, and this is despite the fact that the actual deterrent result also depended on the actions Israel took and not only on the organizational characteristics which predict susceptibility to deterrence and not the actual deterrent result.

At a minimum, these robust results suggest that this research has significantly
contributed to the development of unified asymmetric deterrence theory by demonstrating that there is an entire second side of the theory—the side that examines asymmetric deterrence through the lens of the challenging non-state group—that is a strong predictor of deterrent outcomes and yet was almost totally ignored since deterrence theory began adapting itself to non-state threats in the mid 2000s. As such, this research has unlocked an area of study that was previously an “unknown unknown” and should now lead to a number of follow-up studies, some of which are suggested at the end of this chapter. It has also provided an extremely useful tool to policy makers, giving them a solid methodology for how to analyze non-state adversaries.

At a maximum, and this will only be proven with further research, observations, and applications, the Asymmetric Deterrence Matrix will prove to be an essential tool to academics and policy-makers alike that study asymmetric conflict. For policy makers, the ADM is extraordinarily applicable in supporting efforts to deter various non-state threats around the world and devise tailored deterrence strategies that fit each group, and thus have a much higher likelihood of success. (Some of these strategies are suggested in Chapter XVI.) For academics, the ADM has clearly defined at least five different research sub-programs that correspond to the five main variables identified. If the elements of statehood and organizational structure variables are broken down further into their component parts, there are at least eight lines of research that can be pursued. As such, this is an area of potential research that could keep security scholars busy for years to come as they drill down into the variables and refine this theory of asymmetric deterrence further.
Theoretical Conclusions on Independent Variables

This project sought to answer the question: under what conditions can non-state militant groups be deterred? Subsumed under that question was the goal of determining whether evidence existed that the groups studied in this research—Hamas and Hezbollah—were deterred at times. The focus of the research was on key attributes of non-state militant groups that would allow for the groups to be deterred, rather than the strategies states use to execute deterrence. As such, five main hypotheses were tested in the two case studies which related to the five main independent variables that were assumed to relate to a non-state group’s susceptibility to deterrence strategies. The five variables were: elements of statehood (broken down into political authority, territorial control, and ties to a dependent population), organizational structure (broken down into leadership structure and command and control), inter-factional competition, ideology, and external support.

All of the hypotheses proved correct, including some variables which suggest very high levels of significance and clear causation. There is also clear evidence that Hamas and Hezbollah were deterred over the course of their existence—and not just by Israel. Since deterrence cannot be separated from the actions of the defending state, this research also unintentionally produced interesting conclusions regarding the efficacy of strategies that states adopt to deter non-state militant groups.
<table>
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<th>Group (Year)</th>
<th>Political Authority</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**H1a:** Holding territory will lead a non-state militant group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

With both Hamas and Hezbollah this proved correct, though evidence is stronger in the former case. After Hamas gained total control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Israel’s ability to deter it grew far greater. The mechanism that achieved this was Israel’s ability to hold Hamas’s territorial control of Gaza at risk. It was a strategy that worked because Hamas placed strong value on holding that territory as a significant step in its long-term plan of seizing all of historic Palestine and gaining control of the Palestinian national movement.

Hezbollah also proved more deterrable following its seizure of the security/occupation zone which Israel withdrew from in 2000. However, the mechanism that operated here is somewhat more opaque since Hezbollah’s territorial control of southern Lebanon was never as clear cut as Hamas’s control of Gaza. While Hezbollah was the dominant military group in that territory from 2000 to 2006, it still shared it with the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL forces. That said, the loss of that territory in 2006 was a huge blow to the Party of God and evidence suggests that the loss directly contributed to the strong tactical deterrence Israel established against Hezbollah from 2006 to 2012.

**H1b:** Holding political power will lead a non-state militant group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.
With both Hamas and Hezbollah this proved correct since both place high value on the political authority they have in their respective political structures. Against Hamas, Israel achieved far better deterrence once the Islamic Resistance Movement was the unquestioned political authority in Gaza. Meanwhile, the increasing ability of Israel to deter Hezbollah basically mirrors the growth in political authority of the movement. Each step that Hezbollah took to increase its political authority in Lebanon—standing in the 1992 elections, joining the cabinet in 2005, and taking power of the government in 2009—meant that it had more to lose, as hardliners in the movement warned would happen. Thus, with both Hamas and Hezbollah, the mechanism at work in this hypothesis was Israel’s ability to hold their political power at risk. That it worked is due to the fact that both organizations placed strong value in their political authority in Gaza and Lebanon respectively.

**H1c:** Ties to a population whose welfare is dependent on a non-state militant group will lead that group to be more susceptible to deterrent threats.

While all the hypotheses in this set were proven correct, none was proven more clearly than this one. It may be said that the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of each organization is its ties to a population; the Palestinian people in the case of Hamas and the Shia Lebanese in the case of Hezbollah. The *dawa* network of Hamas and the web of social-religious institutions of Hezbollah allowed each to interact with their respective constituencies on a daily, granular level. In both cases, those institutions took the place of the state authority in providing essential services to the people and helped the
groups expand their popularity and spread their militant Islamist ideologies. The value each group places on these institutions cannot be understated.

But Hamas and Hezbollah did not spend billions of dollars and a combined century (if you count the work of their predecessors in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon) constructing those institutions only to gain power. They did so as well because they have a genuine affinity with their constituencies. (This will be explored more in the ideology section.) Thus, as the dependency of the Palestinian people and the Shia Lebanese, on Hamas and Hezbollah respectively, grew over the years, Israel was able to achieve greater deterrence against the two groups. Israel’s ability to hold at risk the welfare of those populations and, in the case of Hamas, the viability of the dawa network, provided the mechanism for the Jewish state to achieve that deterrence. The evidence of this is incontrovertible in both cases, as Hamas and Hezbollah leaders freely admit that they were constrained in acting violently against Israel due to the probable suffering those actions would cause their constituents.

Theoretical Conclusions on Elements of Statehood. Along with ideology, elements of statehood proved to be the most important variable in this study. The correlation between its values in both Hamas and Hezbollah and the degree of deterrence Israel was able to achieve suggest that it is a causal variable for achieving tactical deterrence against a non-state militant group.

H2: Groups that are ruled by leadership structures that are unambiguous and functional
and possess a firm command and control over their members will be more susceptible to deterrent threats. Groups that have diffuse leadership structures or where the leadership lacks firm command and control will be less susceptible to deterrent threats.

The two case studies provide an excellent comparison for this variable, and they allow for the definitive conclusion that the hypothesis was proved correct. Hamas’s leadership structure and decision-making process is opaque. Its leadership consists of multiple, overlapping shura councils and, since Sheik Ahmed Yassin was killed by Israel in 2004, no single, authoritative leader. The full membership of its Majlis Shura, the body believed to set overall Hamas policy, is not even known to Israeli intelligence. Moreover, the Qassam Brigades (military wing) is not necessarily subordinate to the political leadership, nor is the command and control within the Brigades 100 percent. Though Hamas’s military command was more unified following the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, until today there is not a full and total chain of command and certain factions or individuals continue to “freelance” operations according to their own will and exigencies with varying degrees of frequency.

By comparison, Hezbollah’s organizational structure was quite unified and hierarchical since the late 1980s. Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah wields extensive decision-making power within the organization and, according to Israeli security officials, command and control within the Islamic Resistance (Hezbollah’s military wing) is near if not at 100 percent. The correlation where deterrence is concerned is obvious. By the late 2000s, the values for the other independent variables for Hamas and Hezbollah
were extremely close, and yet the deterrence Israel achieved against Hezbollah following the 2006 war was strong tactical deterrence while against Hamas it was only fair tactical deterrence. To be sure, there are other factors involved, including, crucially, inter-factional competition and external support/influence, which also explain the difference between the two. However, it was also clear on multiple occasions that the Qassam Brigades attacked Israel without the knowledge of Hamas’s political bureau or even against its explicit orders to ceasefire. By contrast, since the Second Lebanon War in 2006, not one shot was fired by Hezbollah across the border into Israel.

There are three possible mechanisms at work in the case of organizational structure. The first, that a centralized leadership provides avenues for the defending state to personally coerce decision-makers of the challenging non-state group and thus deter it (a corollary to Byaman and Waxman 2002), is probably valid to some degree. However, the evidence is not overwhelming. It is the strong belief of most, but not all Israeli security officials that the assassination campaign against the Hamas leadership from 2002 to 2004 was partially responsible for finally forcing the group to end the second intifada in early 2005. One Hamas official interviewed agreed with this assessment while the others denied it. Israeli security officials also believe that the IDF’s threats against Hassan Nasrallah have kept him in bunkers nearly every day since the 2006 war and contributed to the period of quiet. But particularly on the second point, there is a lack of hard evidence.

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The second mechanism, that a transparent decision-making process and a full command and control allow for ceasefires to be decided upon and adhered to (Bar 2007) is unambiguously in play. Given the ideological motivation of Hezbollah to fight Israel, it would not be possible for a ceasefire to last more than six years without that mechanism at work every day. The results are also readily observable in Gaza, where the lower value of those variables has contributed to lower degrees of tactical deterrence; and in Lebanon in the 1982-1985 period when Hezbollah was not a coherent organization and no deterrence was achieved against it.

That a more cohesive organizational structure will present more obvious material assets to target (Byman and Waxman 2002; Pillar 2003) is the third possible mechanism, and it also seems to be unambiguously the case with Hezbollah and Hamas. As the militant wings of each movement came out into the open following Israel’s respective withdrawals from Lebanon and Gaza, they assumed many characteristics of regular armies. Hezbollah, in particular, was described by Israeli security officials as no less than a division of the Iranian army. Subsequently, in the Second Lebanon War and in Operation Cast Lead, the IDF had far more visible targets to hit, leading both groups to lose far more material assets than had previously been the case in battling the IDF. The loss of such material assets, including the lives of fighters, was clearly a factor in deterring both groups since those operations.

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Byman and Waxman, pp. 19, 190-193.
**Theoretical Conclusions on Organizational Structure.** Holding all other variables constant, the more diffuse the organizational structure of a group and the less command and control its leaders exercise, the weaker deterrence will be. The fact that Hamas lacks a strong command and control places an upper limit on the degree to which it can be deterred. The opposite is true of Hezbollah. Thus, the case studies prove that organizational structure is causally related to deterrence, particular in terms of degree of achievable deterrence.

**H3:** Increased competition with other factions in the domestic political sphere, particularly if those factions also practice violent methods, will lead a non-state militant group to be less susceptible to deterrent threats.

Hamas and Hezbollah both faced rival factions in their domestic spheres and in both cases the rivalries produced more violence against Israel. Thus the mechanism at work is that groups that are engaged in inter-factional rivalries will place added importance on attacking defending states in order to gain notoriety, followers, and recruits, and will therefore be less susceptible to deterrence.

For Hamas, there were multiple periods during its history when it used attacks against Israel as a means of gaining popular support from the Palestinian people. There is very strong evidence that during the first and second *intifadas*, Hamas’s desire to gain leadership of the resistance was a key factor in its campaigns of violence against Israel.
Once Hamas was clearly the most powerful faction in Gaza following its 2007 takeover of the territory, this became less of a factor. However, through 2011, the data suggests that competition from other militant groups inside Gaza, particularly Islamic Jihad, continued to pressure Hamas to attack Israel, at least periodically, so that it could maintain its resistance credentials and its leadership of the resistance social current. Perhaps the greatest evidence suggesting the importance of this variable lies in the Hamas 2005-2007 observation, which among the eight total observations in this research constitutes the only case of temporal backsliding in deterrence. It was during this period that competition between Palestinian factions was the most intense in its history, as they fought each other for control of Gaza following Israel’s withdrawal. During that period, almost nothing the IDF tried deterred Hamas.

In Amal, Hezbollah had a rival for leadership of the Shia Lebanese. Like Hamas, Hezbollah used its resistance of Israeli occupation as a means of winning the support of its constituency throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, Hezbollah briefly resumed suicide bombings against Israel in the late 1980s after battlefield losses to Amal. By 2000, when Israel withdrew, it was abundantly clear that Hezbollah won the competition between the two, and thus the rivalry no longer became a factor in Hezbollah’s attacks against Israel.

In both cases, these findings confirm McCormick’s (2003) theory of organizational logic that groups engage in terrorist activities in order to compete for status with other terrorist groups; to demonstrate continued relevance; and as a recruiting
mechanism. In the case of Hamas and Hezbollah, all three mechanisms were active. In theoretical terms, this could also be seen as an extension of Wohlforth (2009) into the non-state realm. He contends that since status competition often drives states toward international conflict, clearly unbalanced power distribution would lead states toward accepting their status, thus mitigating international conflict. In this case of asymmetric conflict between states and non-state groups, clear hierarchy between competing non-state factions may tame violent confrontation between those factions and the defending state by virtue of removing the status competition between the factional rivalries and thus alleviating some of the need to attack the defending state.

All that said, the mechanism by which this variable operates on deterrence is important to clarify, because there is a significant caveat that comes along with it. Since non-state militant groups use attacks against a state as a means of gaining popular support, the mechanism will only function if the contested constituency favors continued attacks. For example, during the second intifada, when a large Palestinian majority supported attacks against Israel, the mechanism functioned very well. However, Hamas is currently still engaged in a genuine competition with Fatah, and yet Israel maintains fair tactical deterrence mostly because the Gaza public does not want another war.

To clarify the mechanism further, the contested constituencies can be broken down into: 1) the public at large (e.g. the Palestinian people in the case of Hamas), 2) key

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constituent bases (e.g. potential funders, community leaders, etc.), and 3) potential recruits, especially young, would-be militant men. It is entirely possible that support for violent attacks against a defending state may run in different directions among the sub-constituencies. Indeed, in the case of both Hamas and Hezbollah at the current time, the broad public constituency no longer favors attacks even while the young militant men likely do. In such cases, the group’s ideology must be examined for clues as to which constituency’s support the group places the highest priority on for a clue as to how the mechanism will function. This suggests an interaction effect between the inter-factional competition variable and the ideology variable.

*Theoretical Conclusions on Inter-Factional Competition.* Inter-factional competition absolutely contributed to the belligerence of Hamas and Hezbollah vis-à-vis Israel and there is a clear correlation between the variable and deterrence outcomes. Despite the complexity of the mechanism involved, *there is a causal relationship between inter-factional competition and deterrence* when the combination of other factors—an ideology that is sensitive to public opinion and a public opinion that favors attacks—is present. In the absence of those factors, its importance seriously declines.

**H4:** *To the extent that a group’s ideology is more constructive than destructive, it will be more susceptible to deterrent threats.*

As noted in the methodology chapter, quantifying ideology is extremely difficult due to the intrinsic nature of ideology being one of quality and not quantity. Therefore,
this project sought to score ideology along key metrics that could be at least partially quantified including: the presence and privileging of “reasonable” or “realistic” organizational long-term goals; the degree of pragmatism among decision-makers as opposed to having actions governed purely by ideology; the construction of social and/or civil institutions; demonstrations of taking public opinion into account where decision-making was concerned; differentiating between violence as a means to an end and violence for the sake of violence; whether and in what cases it justifies targeting civilians for violence; self-conceptions of whether the group was “part and parcel” of society or whether it must separate itself from society; and the degree to which a group sought to impose its own ideology on others in the domestic sphere. The presence or lack thereof of these factors determined the values that were assigned to the ideology scores. For example, Hamas and Hezbollah appear to be aligned on all these factors in their final respective observations except for one. While Hamas seeks to destroy Israel as a means to the end of building a Palestinian state that it believes is its right, Hezbollah seeks to destroy Israel out of simple ideological rejection. This slight difference also manifests itself in the different attitudes Hamas and Hezbollah take toward non-Israeli Jews. While Hamas does not target non-Israeli Jews for violence, Hezbollah does. These two manifestations suggest that Hamas tilts more toward the attitude that violence is a means to an end as compared to Hezbollah and it is the reason that Hezbollah (2000-2012) scores one point lower on the ideological spectrum than Hamas (2007-2011).

Before discussing the conclusions to be drawn regarding this hypothesis, it is also necessary to note that a main historical difference between Hamas and Hezbollah is the
The evolution of the latter’s ideology while the former’s remained static. This fact was not assumed previous to undertaking the research but was rather discovered during its course. The fact is that major shifts in Hamas’s ideology simply cannot be detected based on available data. It went through periods of calling for more or less violence against Israel, including against Israeli civilians, but those fluctuations appeared to be evidence of deterrence rather than causal factors in determining it.

Hezbollah was different. It underwent a major ideological shift in 1992 when it abandoned its revolutionary ethos and agreed to take part in Lebanon’s political system. A smaller shift occurred in 1985 when it declared its existence and intentionally became a more coherent organization than it was during its first three years. One can speculate that Hamas’s ideological consistency stems from its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood. That movement’s long history provided many decades for its ideology to be ironed out, and subsequently Hamas was firmly grounded in that structure. Hezbollah, on the other hand, was born in the fire of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Lebanese Civil War, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. While its members came from various Shia Lebanese movements, its founding ideology was a very young ideology given to it by Ayatollah Khomeini, and hence a more malleable one. Over the years, as conditions changed in Lebanon, Iran, and the region, and the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah matured, the Party of God’s ideology shifted.

Based on the Hamas and Hezbollah case studies, ideology is clearly one of the most important variables in determining susceptibility to deterrence. By the 2000s, the
two groups shared three main constructive ideological elements that contributed to their
deterability. First, both groups have long-term goals, the attainment of which they
privilege over short-term goals. In the case of Hamas, the long-term goal is building an
Islamic state in all of historic Palestine (which necessitates destroying Israel). In the case
of Hezbollah, the long-term goals are maintaining control of Lebanon, morphing the
country into an Islamic state, and destroying Israel. While each group would prefer to
attack Israel now, they both refrained from attacking during periods when they judged
that conducting such attacks would place into risk their long-term goals.

Related to the first ideological element, the second element is that both groups
have pragmatic leadership. Though each is often characterized in the media as
“extremist”—and extremist they are—they are also both highly rational groups whose
leaders continuously weigh their options and vary their methods based on the current
environment. While each has an ideology that clearly prefers violent *jihad* against Israel
as a means of achieving its long-term goals, each group also views violence, ultimately,
as a method rather than a goal in and of itself (although to varying degrees, as previously
noted). Thus, when presented with situations where violence will hurt their causes,
Hamas and Hezbollah are pragmatic enough to refrain from violence *for periods of time.*

Finally, the affinity that Hamas and Hezbollah both have for their constituencies,
and their self-identity as part and parcel of their societies, are strongly constructive
elements. In both cases, this ideology led the groups to build vast networks of social-
religious institutions that provided for the welfare of their constituents and helped them
build the Islamic societies which they sought. These networks were largely responsible for the rising popularity each group experienced in its respective domestic sphere. Yet ultimately, the dependency of the Palestinians and Shia Lebanese on Hamas and Hezbollah respectively became each group’s Achilles’ heel.

The mechanism by which a constructive ideology contributed to deterrence is evident in each of these ideological elements. Since Hamas and Hezbollah privilege long-term over short-term goals, Israel was able to hold at risk their respective long-term goals unless they stopped attacking. Since Hamas and Hezbollah both care about their domestic constituencies, Israel could hold at risk the welfare of those populations as a means of deterring attacks against it (confirming Bar’s predictions). And since Hamas and Hezbollah are both pragmatic, as opposed to rigidly ideological, they were both willing to forgo their preferred methodology of violent jihad at times based on the strategic environment and perceived threats from Israel.

Theoretical Conclusions on Ideology. Even for militant organizations, an ideology with significant constructive elements clearly leaves it susceptible to deterrence strategies. There is incontrovertible evidence of this in the statements of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders and thus it is definitively a causal variable in the groups’ susceptibility to deterrence.

**H5:** Groups that lack the traits mentioned in H1 may still be indirectly susceptible to deterrent threats if they are dependent upon external support from other states or non-
state groups which can be coerced.

Hamas and Hezbollah both received strong external support over their histories and, at times, this support clearly made the groups more belligerent toward Israel. However, contrary to popular belief, the influence these patrons exerted upon Hamas and Hezbollah also constrained them from attacking Israel at times. This is absolutely the case for Hezbollah with Syria in the 1980s and 1990s, and with Iran post-2006. Adding to the complexity, there were many times when Syria and Iran took opposite roles in encouraging and discouraging Hezbollah’s violence. This was the case throughout the 1980s when Hafez Assad generally backed Amal over Hezbollah. It was also the case during various parts of the 1990s when Assad ordered Hezbollah to calm the fight with the IDF during sensitive political moments. The opposite dynamic was in play after 2006, when Bashar Assad gave Hezbollah free reign while Teheran seemingly demanded Hezbollah’s restraint. In fact the only time when Syria and Hezbollah were totally aligned behind their support for Hezbollah attacking Israel was between the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 and the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Rather than tie itself to one main patron, as Hezbollah did with Iran, Hamas chose to solicit different supporters at different times based on its calculations regarding which states were more likely to support its chosen strategy. As a result, Hamas’s external supporters varied over the years from the Axis of Resistance to the American-aligned Sunni Arab countries of the Middle East, to Turkey and Sudan. For most of its history, this meant that the external support Hamas found aided its belligerency against Israel.
This was the case during the second intifada when sponsorship from Iran, Syria, and Iraq made it more lethal to Israel. And it was true during the first intifada when it received support from many of the Sunni Arab states. On the other hand, it is possible that Hamas’s 2011 realignment with the Sunni Arab states and Turkey may force a modicum of pacificity on the group—only time will tell.

*Theoretical Conclusions on External Support.* That external support affected Hamas’s and Hezbollah’s susceptibility to deterrence is beyond question. However, it affected it both positively and negatively. Drawing clear theoretical conclusions is therefore difficult. The best that can probably be said of this variable is that it is very important and correlated, but its effects work both ways and defy simple classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Relation to Deterrence Susceptibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Statehood</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Factional Competition</td>
<td>Causal Under Certain Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Support</td>
<td>Correlated But Complicated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interaction Effects and Necessary Conditions

In both the Hamas and Hezbollah cases, it was the interaction effect between ideology and elements of statehood, particularly ties to a dependent population, that drove much of the deterrence. But other factors, including organizational structure and inter-factional competition, were also important in affecting degree of deterrence and in spoiling deterrence. Based on the comparison of the two meta-case studies and eight observations, some interesting conclusions can be draw.

With four of the five variables causally related to deterrence, the key question becomes: what combinations of variables produce different levels of tactical deterrence? The answer is that the greater the number of high-level interacting variables, the better the deterrence. To achieve strong tactical deterrence, it is a necessary condition that the interaction effect of ideology and elements of statehood be present, plus high values of the two other causal variables. This exists in only one case (Hezbollah 2000-2012) where values for ideology, elements of statehood, organizational structure, and inter-factional competition are all high.741

To achieve fair tactical deterrence, the research demonstrates that the ideology and elements of statehood interaction effect must be present in addition to high values of at least one other causal variable. This exists in two observations. In the Hamas 2007-2011 observation, the interaction effect is present as is a high value for inter-factional competition.

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741 As a reminder, the values for inter-factional competition are inverted, i.e. high values denote low levels of inter-factional competition and low values denote high levels of inter-factional competition.
competition. In the Hezbollah 1992-2000 observation, the interaction effect is coupled with high levels of organizational structure.

*To achieve weak tactical deterrence, the research demonstrates that only the interaction effect is necessary.* This is the case in three observations (Hamas 1987-1997, Hamas 1997-2005, and Hezbollah 1985-1992). That said, as the Hamas 2005-2007 observation shows, *while the interaction effect is necessary to produce tactical deterrence it is not always sufficient in and of itself to produce even weak tactical deterrence*, as it was present in that case yet the result achieved by Israel was none-to-weak tactical deterrence. This deterrence failure was largely due to the intense competition being waged by Hamas, Fatah, and the other Palestinian factions for control of Gaza at the time and the resulting violence against Israel that it produced. It is therefore apparent that under certain conditions—though not all of the time, as the Hezbollah 1985-1992 observation demonstrates—high levels of inter-factional competition can spoil deterrence. Illuminating precisely what those conditions are was not achieved in this study, and it is discussed below in suggestions for further research.
### Table 15.3 – Necessary Conditions for Types of Tactical Deterrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactical Deterrence Type</th>
<th>Necessary Conditions*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Interaction effect + high levels of two more variables ^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Interaction effect + high levels of one more variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Interaction effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Intense inter-factional competition has the ability to spoil deterrence, but the conditions under which that happens remain unclear.

^ The interaction effect is the interaction between ideology and elements of statehood.

It should be noted that there is a degree of endogeneity built into the relationship between ideology and elements of statehood variables. Organizations that have very low scores on the ideological spectrum by definition will lack the constructive ideological elements that lead non-state militant groups to take on characteristics of a state, particularly gaining political authority and developing an affinity with and responsibility for a population.742 However, this endogeneity works in one direction only, as Hamas and Hezbollah both demonstrate that it is entirely possible to have high ideological scores but low elements of statehood for any number of reasons including, but not limited to, deficiencies of political acumen, popular support, and/or military power. Thus, the interaction effect between the ideology and elements of statehood variables is not a given and must be watched closely for the effects it produces where deterrence is concerned.

742 Groups that score very low on the ideological spectrum might still seek to hold territory as a means to enhance their militant capabilities even if they do not seek to build state-like structures.
Dependent Variable: Tactical Deterrence

Recognizing that proving deterrence beyond a shadow of a doubt is difficult, this research sought evidence where deterrence was the most reasonable explanation of reduced violence by Hamas and Hezbollah. In seven of the eight observations, this bar was easily cleared. Indeed, in most cases, statements from Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, either found in secondary research or provided via interviews, did actually prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that deterrence was at work in their decisions to reduce violence against Israel.

\[
\text{Deterrence (Y)} = \text{[Capabilities (X_1) \cdot Intentions (X_2)] - Actions (X_3)}
\]

Referring to the formal equation above, where \(X_1X_2\) and \(X_3\) both have ranges between 0 and 1, then where \(Y = 0\) deterrence is non-existent and where \(Y = 1\) deterrence is strategic (or total). In seven out of eight observations in this research, \(0 < Y < 1\), denoting the achievement of tactical deterrence, while in one case \(Y=0\), denoting no deterrence. There were zero cases of strategic deterrence where \(Y=1\).

Utilizing tactical deterrence (Bar 2007) as the dependent variable proved most useful. And the metrics developed in this project for measuring weak, fair, and tactical deterrence, while imperfect, nonetheless proved effective. Examining type, target, and frequency of attacks allowed for standards that were employable across observations. Situations where “rules of the game” were in play were easily discoverable via interviews.
from Israeli security officials on one side and, particularly, from statements by Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah on the other side. Instances where Hamas and Hezbollah each prevented other factions from attacking Israel were also illuminated during the course of the research and provided additional backing to the dependent variable findings.

Particularly where the dependent variable was concerned, this research contributed new and novel empirical data to the field. Interviews with Israeli security personnel provided excellent historical information on Israeli strategy vis-à-vis both Hezbollah and Hamas. But the most important empirical contribution came from the interviews with Hamas leaders in Gaza and the West Bank. The candid statements given by officials in genuine leadership positions within the organization, who were privy to many decisions taken by Hamas over the course of its existence, provided a window into the thinking and decision-making process of the Islamic Resistance Movement that was rarely opened before. This is particularly true in regards to the considerations that informed Hamas’s decision-making process where engaging in or ceasing from violence against Israel was concerned. This information should prove valuable to practitioners and academics in the years to come.

*Additional Theoretical Implications*

Though unintentional, this research also tested other theories concerning asymmetric deterrence. To begin with, it confirmed assumptions of Trager and
Zagorcheva (2006), Kroneig and Pavel (2012) and others that classifying groups that practice terrorism as “irrational” was misguided.\textsuperscript{743} Hamas and Hezbollah both incorporate terrorism into their respective strategies and yet both are deeply rational organizations. They are each led by people that fit Morgan’s (2003) criteria for “rational action:” they evaluate their strategic environment, weigh the costs and benefits of particular actions, and decide on actions according to their analysis of what course will support their desired goals.\textsuperscript{744} Sometimes they rationally calculate that violence, including terrorism, will benefit their activities, while other times they calculate that violence will impede progress toward their objectives. Nothing could be more rational than such calculations. This supports theories such as McCormick (2003) and Abrahms (2008).\textsuperscript{745}

It is also clear that theories suggesting suicide terrorism cannot be deterred via “deterrence by punishment” strategies (Dutter and Seliktar 2006) are also erroneous.\textsuperscript{746} It is true that individual suicide terrorists may not be deterred by punishment due to their preference for action greatly outweighing their preference for non-action. But by the beginning of 2005, Hamas as a group was deterred by Israel from employing suicide bombers through the use of punishment strategies. The breakdown of the theory lies in its mechanism that assumes that since individual suicide bombers have “noting to lose,” they


\textsuperscript{744} Matthew Kroenig and Barry Pavel, “How to Deter Terrorism,” \textit{Washington Quarterly}, 35:2 (Spring 2012), pp. 21-36. Specifically, see pp. 25 for a discussion on how specific nodes in a network can be deterred.


\textsuperscript{746} Lee E. Dutter, and Ofira Seliktar, “To Martyr or Not to Martyr: Jihad is the Question, What Policy is the Answer?” \textit{Studies in Conflict and Terrorism} 30 (2007): pp. 437.
cannot be deterred. What that theory fails to consider is that while individual bombers may have nothing to lose, the groups themselves may have a great deal to lose. Thus, as a collective, the militant group’s preference for suicide action does not always outweigh the preference for non-action. This was clearly the case with Hamas when its leaders perceived their own lives, the movement’s long-term goals, and the support from its constituency to be at risk if it continued sending suicide bombers to attack Israel.

Indeed, this project provides support for a host of theories developed around the strategies defending states can use to deter non-state militant groups. Strong empirical data is presented backing Trager and Zagorcheva (2005/2006), Pillar (2003), and Kroenig and Pavel in contending that essential nodes in terrorist networks value their lives and certain material assets enough to be influenced by the threat of punishment. Trager and Zagorcheva’s suggestion of holding at risk the political goals of such organizations as a means to deter terrorism was also affirmed by this research as a potentially highly effective avenue for states to pursue. Pressuring host populations (Bar 2008) was proven effective as well, though this strategy is necessarily limited for utilization against groups that have an affinity with a population.  

But such strategies are also potentially problematic, as theories that posit particular difficulties for liberal state defenders to deterring non-state militant groups (Bar 2008) were also confirmed by this research. In Operations Accountability (1993) and Grapes of Wrath (1996), and in the blockade of Gaza post-2006, IDF strategy included intentionally causing suffering among the Palestinian and Lebanese populations.

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While that strategy did achieve tactical deterrence against Hamas and Hezbollah to varying degrees, it created secondary negative effects for Israel in the international arena. Condemnation from the international community for IDF actions in those operations was frequent and heavy and included charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. And, in general, Israel’s international status became more isolated as a result.

As a result of its own ethical code and international pressure, the IDF adopted more strict rules of engagement that were in place in the 2006 Lebanon War. These rules proved to be a serious hindrance to IDF operations and, in tandem with other factors, contributed to an advantageous battlefield for Hezbollah that the Islamic Resistance took full advantage of, as Byman and Waxman (2002) predicted could happen. As a result of perceived failures in the 2006 war, the IDF shifted back to less restrictive rules of engagement during Operation Cast Lead (2008-09) and ran roughshod over Hamas and Gaza. While the operation helped establish the best deterrence ever versus Hamas, it also seriously damaged Israel’s international reputation, already degraded following the war with Hezbollah. Some European countries issued arrest warrants for senior IDF officers and Israeli politicians and the UN-issued Goldstone Report contended Israel was possibly guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. 748

Another theoretical strategy proposed by a host of scholars (Trager and Zagorcheva, Bar, Gray 2003, Byman 2005, and Kroenig and Pavel), that of indirect

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748 Though Judge Goldstone later retracted those two claims in a Washington Post op-ed, the UN never retracted his report and the damage it did to Israel’s international standing and legitimacy remained severe. For the op-ed cited above, see: Richard Goldstone, “Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes,” The Washington Post, 1 April 2011.
deterrence vis-à-vis the patron state of a terrorist group, was also shown in this research to be extraordinarily difficult to achieve.\(^{749}\) Despite years of investigating the possibilities of employing such methods against Syria and Iran, Israel met with very little success in such attempts, proving correct the skepticism of Byman and Bar. The challenge for Israel in deterring those two states that sponsored Hamas and Hezbollah was always one of cost. Limited actions by the IDF against Syria under the Sharon government in the early 2000s proved largely ineffective under the political circumstances at the time. And the government and IDF were simply never willing to fight a full war against those states, and pay all the associated costs in blood and treasure, in order to achieve better deterrence against Hamas and Hezbollah.

Though it is not specifically related to deterrence of non-state groups, this research also supported general theories of asymmetric warfare as well. The contention that powerful states often lose wars to less powerful adversaries (Arreguin-Toft 2001, Shimshoni 1988) due to an asymmetry of relative will was absolutely born out in the study of Hezbollah.\(^{750}\) In the Lebanese theater, Hezbollah intentionally wore down the IDF in an openly declared “war of attrition,” the annual toll of which eventually became too high a price for Israeli society to bear. From a strategic and resource standpoint, the IDF could easily have remained in Lebanon indefinitely, and indeed, the IDF leadership strongly recommended doing so to Prime Minister Ehud Barak in 1999. But mounting


losses of life to Hezbollah sapped the will of the Israeli public to remain there and Barak ordered the unilateral withdrawal in 2000.

Generalizing the Results

As a means of exploring the research findings’ broader impact, it is helpful to think about the possibilities for deterring al-Qaeda, an organization that provides an excellent basis for comparison by virtue of its extensive differences with Hamas and Hezbollah. Al-Qaeda lacks most elements of statehood: it does not hold political power, it has no affinity with a specific population, nor is it materially responsible for one. While it does not control a state, it does control some territory (or at least possesses “safe havens” in Pakistan, Yemen, and perhaps Somalia). Al-Qaeda’s organizational structure is very diffuse, particularly post-Osama bin Laden, and subsequently decision-making is mostly decentralized. Along those lines, command and control may exist within individual cells, but whether commanders in Yemen, for example, would follow the orders of a leader in Pakistan is unclear.

The ideology of al-Qaeda is also far more destructive than Hamas and Hezbollah. It does not aspire to care for a people or build a political entity in a state, and the only truly constructive goal it espouses is the wholly unattainable reestablishment of the Caliphate. It does possess destructive goals, such as expelling “Crusaders” and “Zionists” (read: Christians and Jews) from Arab and Muslim lands. There is also evidence which suggests it values violence for the sake of violence. Al-Qaeda does not believe in leading
reform of Muslim society from within but rather in coercing fellow Muslims to follow the one interpretation of Islam it deems correct and is perfectly willing to kill countrymen and co-religionists who will not follow its path. As such, it is in a perpetual inter-factional competition with all other Muslim movements. Finally, while al-Qaeda no longer receives official state support, there are some governments (e.g. Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan) that agree to look the other way at times where its activity is concerned.
Table 15.4 – Estimated Independent Variables Associated with al-Qaeda (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Elements of Statehood</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Authority</td>
<td>Clear Leadership Structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Territorial Control</td>
<td>Command &amp; Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population Affinity/Dependency</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>External Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-Factional Competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Possible Points</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible Deterrence</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 15 | None |
Theoretically, it is impossible to achieve any form of tactical deterrence against al-Qaeda and that does appear to be the actual case. Crucially, al-Qaeda is missing the key interaction variable of ideology and affinity with and responsibility for a population. Accordingly, states cannot hold at risk the welfare of a population as a means of deterring al-Qaeda because it does not care whether people suffer or not. This observation is clearly demonstrated in the empirical record in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The lack of value al-Qaeda places on holding territory or gaining political power dictates that correlated long-term goals also cannot be held at risk. Finally, even if a hypothetical ceasefire was reached with one branch of al-Qaeda, it is questionable whether other branches would follow suit.

Methodological Limitations

There is one clear area where the theoretical findings are limited by methodology. The values of the independent variables were assigned based on the author’s best reading of the available data and the metrics laid out in the research methodology. However, I am just one person capable of human error and subconscious bias. A better way of constructing the matrices that predict theoretical deterrence levels would be to assemble a panel of experts and build consensus among them regarding the independent variables’ assigned values. Even if consensus could not be reached, the individuals on the panel could each score the variables and the scores could then be averaged out to construct the matrix. This methodology was attempted in this project. Unfortunately, lack of response among identified experts made this exercise impossible. Thus, the research is left to
depend on the less perfect, sole analysis of the author and the nod from the two Middle East experts on the research committee who affirmed that the assigned values were fair.

Suggestions for Further Research

The quick comparison with al-Qaeda suggests that the research findings are generalizable beyond Hamas and Hezbollah to other Islamist groups at the least. More broadly, there is nothing in the research that theoretically limits its applicability to Islamist groups, and the Asymmetric Deterrence Matrix should apply to all non-state groups. That said, further case studies testing the ADM on non-Islamist, militant non-state actors would prove most illuminating. Groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Irish Republican Army and Tamil Tigers would provide excellent case studies and would clearly demonstrate how far the theory can stretch.

One semi-mystery the research leaves us with is why inter-factional competition matters more at some times than others where asymmetric deterrence is concerned. The mechanism at work in the variable suggests that public opinion of the constituency population is involved to the degree that it does or does not support violence against a defending state at a given time. Interviews with Hamas leaders, as well as Palestinian Authority and Israeli security officials, also suggest that public opinion is heavily involved. It is possible that drilling down into the opinions of the sub-constituencies identified above is necessary to fully understand this variable and its impact on deterrence.
For now, the importance of this variable, relative to the other variables, is difficult to discern. Was inter-factional competition an essential factor in determining the choices of violence or non-violence on the part of Hezbollah and Hamas, or was its influence more on the margins? Was it more important to Hamas than to Hezbollah? The data suggests it was, but is this true or is the finding due to a lack of data? If it was more important to Hamas, why was that so? How important is this factor in the calculations of other non-state militant groups? These would all be excellent questions to explore.

Also related to the inter-factional competition variable would be further research designed around status, competition, and violence between and by non-state groups. This extension of Wohlfirth’s research would be most fascinating. While it seems that this project has unambiguously demonstrated that clear hierarchies among non-state militant groups in the same domestic sphere can limit violence against a defending state, it would be interesting to delve further into the topic and understanding the conditions under which that phenomenon exists in greater detail. Understanding whether clear hierarchies amongst such factions affects violence between the groups themselves would also be worthy research.

In terms of the strategic dimension for states to achieve deterrence, another set of questions is suggested by this research. One interesting question is: how well does personal coercion of organizational leaders works as a tactic? And if that tactic is chosen, is it more effective to kill, arrest, or expel those leaders? According to former Shin Bet
Chief Avi Dichter, expulsion is the most effective means of coercing terrorist leaders because it robs them of community status and the means to direct attacks. Arresting leaders is the second-most effective tactic since it denies them the means to direct attacks even if does not rob them of community status. Killing terrorist leaders is only the third-most effective tactic, Dichter said, because while it permanently ends their operational effectiveness, it elevates them to martyr status and provides an example for community members to rally around and emulate. These insights are most fascinating and would provide the basis for excellent research.

A second research direction in the strategic framework involves potential differences between liberal states and non-liberal states in deterring non-state groups. This project, like Byman (2005), strongly suggests that liberal states face particular challenges to deterring non-state militant groups. Granting that, an interesting question is how much did Israel’s liberal nature actually affect the decisions it made in deterring Hamas and Hezbollah? How often did it refrain from hitting certain targets? To what degree was it forced to change its strategy to avoid collateral damage? Did international pressure force Israel to shift tactics and strategies, or was the IDF’s own ethics the reason for such shifts? We take it for granted that all of these questions are affirmative on some level, but understanding the degree that Israel’s liberal nature made deterrence more difficult would be most useful. Along those same lines, a comparison between sets of liberal states and how they dealt with the threats posed by non-state militant groups would also be informative. For example, was the United States, as a superpower, less constrained in its attempts to deter Sunni terror cells in Iraq than Israel was in Lebanon?

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751 Author interview 14 September 2011 in Tel Aviv.
and the Palestinian Territories?
CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER XVI – POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Dahiyeh Doctrine is a strategy coined by Israeli policy makers following the Second Lebanon War as a signal to Hezbollah and as a means of deterring the Shia group. It implies that any further serious attacks against Israel by Hezbollah will be met with overwhelming force, the likes of which Hezbollah witnessed first hand in the Dahiyeh neighborhood of Beirut, which Israel obliterated in 2006. As if to drive home the point further, Israel implemented a smaller war premised upon a lighter version of the Dahiyeh Doctrine against Hamas in Operation Cast Lead (2008-09). Based on the quiet prevailing on the Israeli-Lebanese border since 2006, it seems as though Hezbollah received the message. The Dahiyeh Doctrine does not mean Hezbollah will never again attack Israel, but it has made the price Hezbollah will pay after any attack much steeper and significantly altered the group’s strategic calculations. This is the model definition of deterrence.

But the Dahiyeh Doctrine cannot function, isolated as it were, as a military strategy. Its success depends on Hezbollah being a certain type of adversary; an adversary with political aspirations, territorial holdings, a constituency from which it draws strength, and a clear organizational structure with solid command and control within its military ranks, among other factors. Scholars and practitioners in the fields of security studies and international relations tend to focus on the strategic element of the Dahiyeh Doctrine, but they ignore the second side of the coin that deals with the type of non-state
group being deterred. Even the Israeli strategists who devised the doctrine do not always fully consider that its functionality depends on certain conditions being met—conditions that are linked to the non-state group itself. For the Dahiyeh Doctrine to succeed, both sides of the asymmetric deterrence coin are necessary. And this is a central explanation for the fact that we observe greater levels of deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah than vis-à-vis Hamas at the time of this publication.

For groups that are on the far end of the ideological spectrum’s destructive side, it is highly unlikely that asymmetric deterrence is a viable strategy to mitigate threats to a defending state. In those cases, the interaction effect between ideology and elements of statehood will not be present and defending states should focus on strategies other than deterrence. But for non-state militant groups where the potential for the interaction effect does exist, deterrence must be examined as a primary strategy to defend against the threat. Indeed, while not perfect, deterrence has the potential to provide a relatively low-cost, reasonably effective solution to many of the emerging 21st Century threats—just as it did for 20th Century threats. The main advantage to deterrence is that it does not require costly and ultimately ineffective military occupation, nor does it seek to unrealistically defeat ideologies whose causes are often organic, local, and beyond the ability of states to resolve as external actors.

Utilizing the Asymmetric Deterrence Matrix (ADM) developed in this research is the first step toward devising strategies to achieve points of deterrence. As this research demonstrated, elements of statehood, organizational structure, inter-factional
competition, ideology, and external support all affect a non-state group’s susceptibility to
deterrence. Practitioners should carefully study non-state militant groups’ characteristics
in these areas and assign values in each category. At a minimum, this will be a useful
exercise for policy makers to understand what type of organization they are dealing with.
At a maximum, utilizing the ADM will provide clear guidelines regarding how effective
deterrence can be and a direction regarding strategies to formulate to achieve that goal.
Asymmetric deterrence strategies do not come in a one-size-fits-all package. They must
be specifically tailored for a given non-state group based on the variable levels that are
observed.

Since no two militant groups are identical, strategies to deter such groups must
vary to be effective. That said, this research does lead to three general recommendations
that, when adapted correctly, may prove effective in deterring non-state threats.

1. *The Corridor of Difficult Decisions*

   The key interaction effect that produces deterrence in non-state militant groups is
between ideology and elements of statehood, and it is there that defending states should
focus the majority of strategic attention. For militant groups which have significantly
constructive elements in their ideology, *and that posses high values of at least one of the
elements of statehood*, the overall strategy should focus on forcing the group down a
“corridor of difficult decisions” where it must choose between its desire to attack and the
safety of assets it values highly. This can be accomplished by holding at risk: 1) the political authority and/or goals of the group, 2) the territorial holdings of the group, and/or 3) the welfare of a population that is dependent upon the group.

Operationally, this strategy rests on creating suffering among the dependent population. The suffering causes public opinion to demand a halt in fighting between the challenging non-state group and the defending state as a means of alleviating the population’s burden. Under these circumstances, a refusal by the non-state group to bend to public will would place its political authority and territorial control at risk from internal challenges, as public opinion turns against the non-state group. Indirectly creating these internal challenges is likely the most effective means for a state to operationalize this strategy because while such groups can likely bear heavy amounts of external pressure, and even heavy amounts of internal pressure, bearing the two together without breaking will prove extraordinarily difficult.

A second option is to create external challenges to political authority and territorial holdings by supporting proxy forces. However, supporting proxy forces is complex, high-risk, and prone to interference from the law of unintended consequences. As many state powers have learned painfully over the years, once proxy forces have achieved their immediate objective, there is no guarantee they will not then turn on their state sponsor with the weapons the state provided them. Such was the case of the United States and the mujahedeen in Afghanistan and even the Palestinian Authority security

752 The “corridor of difficult decisions” terminology comes from Gidi Grinstein, Eran Shayshon and the Re’ut Institute in Tel Aviv. www.reut-institute.org
forces that were armed by Israel previous to the second intifada. Even if the consequences are not disastrous, as in those two cases, proxy forces are still less likely to be effective since they have their own objectives that are never 100 percent aligned with a sponsor and they are almost never as capable in pure military terms as state militaries.

A third option is to hold at risk political authority, territory, and the population’s welfare by credibly threatening military occupation. However, military occupation has proven nothing short of disastrous in the post-WWII period, particularly for liberal states. In a world where insurgency is cheap and self-determination is recognized as a universal right, military occupation is absolutely not advised, as the long-term outcome will almost certainly be worse than the original problem.

2. Direct Personal Coercion

For militant groups which have significantly constructive elements in their ideology, and that posses high values of organizational structure, direct personal coercion of the group’s leaders may prove effective. Even for groups that preach “martyrdom” and utilizes suicide terrorism, targeting the leadership can effectively deter for two main reasons. First, some group leaders are perfectly happy to send others to die, even though they very much value their own life and the lives of their families. Second, the leadership of non-state groups often consists of small numbers. Removing even 25 percent of such a group’s key personnel can render it ineffective.\textsuperscript{753} Moreover, since some non-state groups understand their vulnerability in this regard, targeting even small numbers can be a challenge.\textsuperscript{753}

\textsuperscript{753} The 25 percent number was suggested by Former Shin Bet Chief Avi Dichter.
numbers of their leaders can effectively convince them to cease their attacks before they reach the point of organizational destruction.

Operationally, this can be achieved through expelling, arresting, and killing key personnel of the militant non-state group. However, when deciding whom to target, states should run careful network analysis (where it is possible) to best understand which nodes in the group’s network are most key to the decision-making process as it relates to the use of violence. If the strategy is to deter, rather than to defeat, then someone or some group of people must be left in place that has significant enough stature to order the group to halt its violence. Indeed, if no leader is left to order a ceasefire, deterrence will fail.

Decisions regarding whether to expel, arrest, or kill group leaders were mainly made by Israel according to circumstantial exigencies. There was generally (though not always) a preference against killing such targets. However, in situations where arrest or expulsion was impossible or deemed too dangerous, kill orders were issued.\(^754\) Each of the three options has its own advantages and disadvantages (outlined in the previous chapter) which must be weighed. But in most cases where killing a group leader can be avoided, the arrest or expel option will prove preferable.

3. Sponsors v. Dependents

\(^{754}\) Particularly when such targets were located in Gaza, the IDF often determined that no reasonable arrest or expulsion options existed and it resorted to killing the target.
For militant groups where the interaction effect between elements of statehood and ideology is in play, and that possess high values of external support, creating scenarios where the goals of the group’s sponsors and the goals of its dependents are in conflict may prove effective. In such cases, the tension created between the two may create a deterrence point that is exploitable due to the group being pulled in opposite directions by its supporters and dependents.

The best example of this scenario is one that has not happened yet, but is potentially looming on the horizon. In the event of an Israeli or American attack on Iran’s nuclear program, Hezbollah will be placed in a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” scenario over whether to initiate hostilities against Israel. If Hezbollah does not join the fight against Israel, it could lose the crucial support of Iran in financing its social-religious institutions and arming and training its fighters. But if it does join the fight, Hezbollah will likely lose the support of a substantial bulk of its power base within Lebanon. Its vulnerability in this regard is now greater than ever given its preeminent position in Lebanese politics. “If Hezbollah looses support of the Shia [in Lebanon], it doesn’t matter how much Iran gives them, they are doomed,” said Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based journalist and author of a recent book on Hezbollah’s 30-year war against Israel.

In this particular example, it is the dependents that do not want war while the sponsors may. But in the past, there are examples of the opposite dynamic. For example,
in the 1990s, the Shia Lebanese largely supported Hezbollah’s operations against Israel as a means of expelling the occupying Israeli army. But there were many times when Syrian President Hafez al-Assad found it politically inexpedient for Hezbollah to heat up its war with Israel, and in those cases Hezbollah acceded to his demands to temporarily stand down.

The specific avenue this suggests for states is that if either a sponsor or a dependent population of a non-state militant groups favors attacks, the defending state should devise strategies that cause the other the side to favor ceasing attacks as a means of creating the internal dilemma within the non-state group. This strategy has a weak point in the sense that the non-state group may, in the end, prioritize the preferences of the side (either the sponsor or dependents) that favors attacks, in which case the strategy will fail to achieve deterrence. But the potential nevertheless exists for the strategy to succeed. Of the three main strategies suggested in this section, the “Sponsors v. Dependents” strategy is the one that has proven most difficult to execute in reality, but it also harbors much potential if states can get it right.

*Dilemmas of 21st Century Deterrence*

Despite many creative alternatives for achieving asymmetric deterrence that were suggested in recent years by scholars and policy makers, this research shows that traditional punishment strategies remain the most effective means of deterring adversaries, including non-state groups. In essence, 47 years after Thomas Schelling
suggested it, “the power to hurt” is still the power to deter.\textsuperscript{755} Punishment often takes the form of actions against combatants, but a central difference between classical deterrence and asymmetric deterrence is the degree to which punishing non-combatants is the most expedient path to achieve the objective. Indeed, this research clearly demonstrates that causing suffering of dependent populations significantly aids in achieving deterrence. After the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead, Hezbollah and Hamas were respectively deterred not only because they lost hundreds of their own fighters and much of their military assets, but also because their dependent populations suffered greatly and turned against renewed conflict after those wars.

The effectiveness of targeting dependent populations for suffering presents four main dilemmas. First, \textbf{states must ask to what degree causing such suffering amongst non-combatants is ethical in the pursuit of deterrence}. Does the prevention of suffering for a defending state’s civilians take precedent over and justify purposefully causing suffering of enemy civilians? One metric to employ in answering this difficult question might be to look at the long-term results of a given punishment action. If, for example, the action achieves years of quiet, which therefore saves both sides from long-term suffering associated with continued conflict, then perhaps the action is moral. But such results, by nature, cannot be known ahead of time. Moreover, the calculation itself abstracts from realities on the ground; civilians who lose family during the course of such actions will never be mollified by the knowledge that they died for “higher” purposes.

Second, establishing strong asymmetric deterrence may also result in making long-term peace more unlikely and thus, perpetuating the larger conflict. This is because punishment actions that cause suffering leading to deterrence ultimately harden attitudes among populations toward their enemies. In 2013, it may be the case that Gazans wholeheartedly prefer that Hamas not attack Israel due to intense fear over the potential Israeli reprisals. But what is also true is that the hatred and animosity of Gazans for Israel increased substantially following Operation Cast Lead.\(^{756}\) As a result, Israelis and Palestinians are farther away from peace than at any time in the last 20 years. Deterrence may be a good strategy if the goal is conflict management, but it may not be wise if the goal is conflict resolution.

Third, the Dahiyeh Doctrine in particular functions because the threat is so powerful, the costs to Hezbollah and Hamas so high, that it significantly alters their respective cost-benefit analyses for attacking Israel. But in the event that Hezbollah one day decides to initiate another round of fighting, Israeli decision-makers will face a dilemma of their own: if they choose against implementing the Dahiyeh Doctrine, and rather to respond with lesser force, Israel’s credibility will be shot and its ability to deter Hezbollah afterward will significantly erode. But it is entirely possible that, depending on the circumstances of the time, Israel may not want to engage in a full-out war with Hezbollah. Any number of reasons could lead to such a situation. Thus, in announcing the Dahiyeh Doctrine publicly, Israeli leaders have probably enhanced their current deterrent position via Hezbollah, but they have also put themselves in a potential

\(^{756}\) This was evident when comparing interviews I conducted in Gaza amongst the civilian population before and after Cast Lead.
strategic bind if and when the next round of fighting comes. This signaling dilemma was always a problem for defending states where deterrence is concerned, and it is no different in asymmetric deterrence.

Fourth, the actions necessary to achieve asymmetric deterrence may run afoul of international law. Targeted killings of terrorist leaders caused problems not only for Israel but for the United States as well, in legal terms. Targeting civilians in conflict is expressly forbidden under international law, and the belief that the IDF did exactly that in the Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead led to serious ramifications for Israeli security and political officials who had charges brought against them in various international legal forums. It also led to increased international isolation for the Jewish state. That said, Hamas and Hezbollah both openly flaunt the rules of war, as do many other non-state militant groups. Abiding by those rules, written as they were for state-on-state conflict, places states at a serious disadvantage.

International humanitarian law (IHL) delineates only two types of people, combatants and civilians, and allows for states to target civilians only if and when they are directly participating in hostilities (“DPHing”). During such time as civilians are DHPing, they lose their legal immunity from attack. While on the surface this criteria would seem to allow states to target militias like Hamas and Hezbollah as needed, the latest guidance issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2009 constructs a very narrow interpretation of both “direct” and “participation” where
For example, even when civilians “engage in hostile acts on a persistently recurrent basis,” states are still only allowed to target such people during “specific hostile acts” and not before and after. This is true even if a state suspects that a person will carry out hostile acts in the future. In effect, such interpretation means that states may only target non-state militants during an actual battle and it provides them immunity from attack even when they are planning, fund raising, and producing weapons for a military operation. Even the “assembly and storing of an improvised explosive device (IED) in a workshop, or the purchase or smuggling of its components” does not qualify as “direct participation,” the ICRC guidance states, nor does acting as a “voluntary human shield.”

In asymmetric deterrence, IHL further complicates matters for states regarding the concept of proportionality, which currently is interpreted as ensuring that “no more death, injury, or destruction be caused than is actually necessary for the accomplishment of a legitimate military purpose in the prevailing circumstances.” The ICRC guidance does recognize that “it is impossible to determine, ex ante, the precise amount of force to be used in each situation.” Nevertheless, such an interpretation places states in a position of stretching the concept of proportionality the minute they decide to engage in asymmetric deterrence strategies, as achieving deterrence against non-state groups can rarely be accomplished in the absence of creating significant suffering among a civilian

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758 Melzner, pp. 45-46.
759 Melzner, pp. 52.
760 Melzner, pp. 54 and 57. My emphasis on “voluntary.”
761 Melzner, pp. 80.
762 Melzner, pp. 80.
population. When Israel has done this, it has been accused by human rights activists, and even the United Nations, of war crimes for, among other reasons, disproportionate military activity. But the history of Israel’s conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah suggest the opposite. It was only when Israel responded to attacks against it with ferocious military might that included causing civilian suffering, that it succeeded in establishing deterrence. This indicates that the force used by the IDF was proportional to the military objective, even if many people, including not a few Israelis, found it to be distasteful.

In aggregate, the manner in which IHL is currently interpreted and applied to asymmetric conflict amounts to creating a uneven playing field tilted in favor of non-state militant groups, particularly in the realm of asymmetric deterrence. Sophisticated groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are aware of this phenomenon and use it strategically to their advantage, particularly in blurring the lines between combatants and civilians and deliberating placing civilians in harm’s way. They also expect that international condemnation directed against Israel for disproportionate military activity will restrain Israel’s use of force against them. All of these elements have the effect of emboldening Hamas and Hezbollah and making deterrence more difficult to achieve against them.

Since defending against non-state militant groups is a task many states must now undertake, it may be appropriate for states to alter the rules of war and IHL to account for the realities of 21st Century conflict, which is often asymmetric between a state and a non-state group. Unless and until those rules are changed, acting effectively against challenging militant non-state groups will often leave defending states susceptible to
charges of violating IHL. That said, altering such rules is not a simple task. Striking a balance between allowing states to legitimately defend against non-state militant groups and maintaining solid protections for civilians in warfare will prove no mean feat. The debate the Obama Administration is now embroiled in over who is a legitimate target, and under what circumstance the United States can and should target “terrorists” in other countries using unmanned aerial vehicles is a manifestation of how difficult that balance is to achieve in real life when real lives are at stake.

A final asymmetric deterrence dilemma exists immaterial of whether punishment is involved. Non-state groups that control territory, exercise genuine political authority and have soldiers that follow orders are not only more deterrable than less organized, less state-like groups, they are also far more powerful. As a result, the damage such groups can inflict on states is far worse than smaller, harder-to-deter groups. And it is clear by now that joining the political process, while it may temporarily moderate actions, will in many cases not moderate group ideology. This is extremely important because if a state pursues a strategy of achieving peace in a particular region, encouraging militant groups to join a political process that they may one day control may therefore not be advisable. On the other hand, if the goal is simply to achieve quiet and lower levels of conflict, then bringing such groups into the political fold may be advantageous.

States are therefore faced with a dilemma of whether to pursue policies that keep militant groups small, disorganized, less dangerous, and subsequently less deterrable, or to attempt to bring militant groups into the political fold and allow
highly functional militias and organizational structures that grow far more

threatening and far less prone to permanently negotiated peace settlements, but are

also far more deterrable. This dilemma is currently a topic of much debate within

Israeli security circles and its resolution does not appear to be forthcoming. As with other

aspects of 21st Century conflict, states are left with no easy answers.
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**Books**


*Reports*


