

Hizbullah's Jihad Concept

Hilal Khashan, American University of Beirut
Ibrahim Mousawi, Birmingham University

Abstract

This paper argues that Hizbullah's jihad concept essentially derives from the underprivileged status of the Lebanese Shiite community at the time of the appearance of the party in the early 1980s. Although the ideology of Hizbullah and the articulation of its jihad concept borrowed heavily from ayatollah Khomeini's doctrinal contributions to Shiism, Hizbullah has readily adapted itself to the needs of Lebanese Shiites, but at the expense of the requirements of sectarian participation in Lebanese politics. This study examines the meaning of jihad for Hizbullah, as well as its political and religious foundations. It also discusses the four components of the party's jihad concept, namely: (1) military jihad, (2) personal jihad, (3) societal jihad, and (4) political jihad. The study shows that Hizbullah has successfully developed a flexible and highly workable jihad concept that won it unrivalled acclaim from Lebanese Shiites whom it empowered after many years of political marginalization. The paper concludes that Hizbullah has the institutional mechanism and the ideological flexibility to adapt its jihad concept in response to a rapidly changing regional and domestic political environment.

Introduction

[1] The concretization of the idea of Hizbullah in 1982 as a result of the merger of three Islamic Lebanese Shiite groups (*Da'wa* Party, Islamic Committees, and Islamic *Amal*) went almost unnoticed as it received little media attention at the time. This was hardly surprising; the emergence of Islamic movements had been a familiar occurrence since the early 1970s. The rise and fall of such movements was so repetitive that – save for the occasional use of violence by some militant Islamic groups – their birth and demise was often treated as a domestic security threat that did not elicit widespread interest. Despite the fanfare about the Islamic movement and its potential, governments in the Middle East, for example, have been successful in containing the tide of the Islamic movement. This happened in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan, and Syria. Elsewhere, the Islamic movement was

coerced into the secular tradition (Turkey) or dealt traditional heavy handedness (Morocco). Olivier Roy reports on the failure of the Islamic revolutionary movement: “[T]he Iranian revolution got bogged down in internal struggles and the economic crisis; the activism of the MB [Muslim Brotherhood] dissident groups never managed to achieve a change in regime in an Arab country” (25).

[2] Hizbullah stands out as an example of a militant Islamic movement that grew unabatedly over quarter of a century despite the abundance of internal and external adversaries. It has thus far managed to adapt itself to changing domestic and regional conditions without losing sight of its primary objectives. It differs from other Shiite religious movements in Lebanon in that it demonstrates the triumph of the *usuli* (fundamentalist) school in Shiite jurisprudence, a process that started to gain momentum in Safavid Persia in the eighteenth century (Halm: 97-103). Groups such as the Free Shiite Movement of Muhammad Hasan and the *Jabal ‘Amil* Philanthropic Association of ‘Ali ‘Alawiyya either espouse the pro-government policy line or merely deal with social issues. Even the *Amal* Movement, founded by Imam Musa al-Sadr in 1974, sought to deal with the Shiite question in Lebanon from the perspective of Lebanese sectarian representation. Na‘im Qassim, deputy secretary-general of Hizbullah, outlines the three defining objectives that necessitated the formation of his party by politico-religiously mobilized Shiites as follows:

1. Islam provides the intellectual and doctrinal foundation of the party since it offers a comprehensive program for a better life.
2. Resistance of the Israeli occupation as a primary threat for Lebanon and the region, which requires founding a jihadist structure to perform this duty.
3. Compliance with the directives and pronouncements of the jurisconsult (the supreme Ayatollah of the Islamic Republic in Iran) who represents the sole legitimate continuity to the Prophet and the Imam (23).

[3] Salient among these objectives is the concept of jihad that has consistently given shape and direction to Hizbullah’s revolutionary Islamic foundation. There has been no wavering on the sanctity of jihad ever since Hizbullah formally declared its existence in an Open Letter to the Dispossessed on 16 February 1985 (Williams: 38). Nabil Qawuq, Hizbullah’s leading official in southern Lebanon, views jihad as an “exceptional human means – sanctioned by God and endorsed by Islam – employed by an individual, group, or nation to protect its existence and recover its usurped rights, and to confront impending dangers” (interview, 21 November 2006).

[4] The domestic and regional environment that made jihad an integral component of Hizbullah’s worldview at the time of its founding continues to provide impetus for its relevance today. The summer war of 2006, precipitated by Hizbullah’s cross border raid on Israel in which it killed eight Israeli soldiers and captured two others, heightened the party’s jihad concept and gave it an added impetus. Despite the heavy human and material losses inflicted on Lebanon as a result of the war, Hizbullah preserved its footing for the duration of the conflict and managed to fight the Israeli army to a standstill. Encouraged by the Israeli

political leadership's clumsy handling of the war, as well as the vacillation of its military command, Hizbullah was quick to declare the outcome of the war a divine victory.

Statement of Objective

[5] The authors contend that Hizbullah's concept of jihad, although multi-faceted, primarily concerns itself with confrontation of what it considers Israeli territorial ambitions in Lebanon. Even though it may be argued that Hizbullah continuously drums up support for its anti-Israeli stand in order to deflect attention from demands for its disarmament and transformation into a mainstream political party, the fact remains that, as a devout religious movement, the party's leadership and membership genuinely believe that Israel has long-term aims in Lebanon, as well as elsewhere in the region. But Hizbullah's jihad concept does not limit itself to war, since Islam has identified areas of jihad other than in the name of Allah and Islam.¹ In fact, certain aspects of non-military jihad – notably the development of righteous, God-fearing, temperate, and community oriented party members – appear to have precedence for Hizbullah over military jihad. Beverley Milton-Edwards accepts this proposition in the context of discussing this party; she observes that Islam's “. . . five fundamental keepers (praying, fasting, pilgrimage, zakat, and profession of faith) in fact say more about a fundamental attachment to peace than violence” (42).

[6] In order to place Hizbullah's concept of jihad in proper perspective, it is necessary to lay the grounds for this by defining jihad from a Shiite Islamic perspective, as articulated and practiced by Hizbullah since its emergence.² The paper takes note of the impact of the late Khomeini's formulation of the *wilayat al-faqih* concept (guardianship of the jurisconsult) on the mission of Hizbullah. Furthermore, it proposes that Hizbullah differs from other Islamic militant movements in that it succeeded in integrating in its jihad concept the experiences of several national liberation movements in Asia and Africa. In connection with this, this paper intends to demonstrate that Hizbullah has evolved into a formidable movement encompassing a comprehensive package of jihad. Therefore, this paper seeks to probe the components of jihad as understood and applied by Hizbullah.

The Meaning of Jihad for Hizbullah

[7] Shaykh Shafiq Jradi, director of the institute of al-Ma'arif al-Hikmiyya and a senior cultural official in Hizbullah sums up the party's understanding of jihad. In large measure, he concurs with Qawuq's understanding of Hizbullah's jihad concept that incorporates three dimensions, in addition to its own jihadist experience. The first dimension emanates from

¹ Sunni and Shiite fundamentalists seem to see eye to eye on issues pertinent to the place of religion in public life, perceptions of the state and the inseparability of politics from religion. Whereas the Palestine question is central to the Islamic movement, irrespective of sectarian identification, it would make more sense for Hizbullah to dwell on this issue since the party operates in an overwhelmingly Sunni environment that forms the core of the Arab East. Quite sensitive to Sunni stereotypes that often derogatorily label Shiites as *rafida* (rejecters of true Islamic beliefs), Hizbullah featured the Palestine question and Zionist expansionism prominently in its jihad concept, evidently in order to win Sunni Arab support (see further, Khashan and Kreidie: 83-96).

² It is important to mention here that Sunnis and Shiites agree on the principle elements of jihad as mentioned in the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet. Aspects of jihad that are exclusive to Shiites will be noted in the text.

the Islamic-Qur'anic legacy, especially during the formative period that saw the consolidation of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. The second dimension, which is central to Hizbullah, derives from the Battle of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Karbala has been permanently ingrained in Shi'ite collective consciousness as a symbol of the ongoing clash between good and evil. In striving to defeat their declared enemies, Hizbullah leaders have presented themselves as role models for the party's rank and file. Hizbullah's top brass has always placed itself at the forefront of fighting against Israel: Shaykh Raghīb Harb and party chief Abbas Mousawi died in Hizbullah's line of duty; Hasan Nasrallah's son Hadi was killed by the Israeli army in September 1997, when he crossed with other Hizbullah fighters into Jabal al-Rafi', then occupied by Israel. The third dimension is predicated on the summation of the battle experiences of Third World peoples who waged wars of liberation against the forces of European colonialism (interview, 26 December 2006). Hizbullah drew heavily, for example, on Iran's war experience against Iraq during 1980-88, learned from the mistakes of the PLO in its encounter with Israel in southern Lebanon during 1968-82, and integrated the tactics of the Vietcong during the Vietnam War.

[8] The Qur'an provides ample evidence of the role of jihad in propagating Islam and defending it against the infidels. Certain Qur'anic verses take it for granted that the faithful will strive in the cause of Allah: "And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive . . ." (Surat al-Hajj, 77). The Qur'an stresses that God created man for the purpose of hard work so that his life on earth can be worthwhile: "Verily We have created man into toil and struggle" (Surat al-Balad, 4). In fact, the Qur'an makes it absolutely clear that admission into Heaven is contingent upon striving in the cause of Allah: "Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His cause) and remained steadfast" (Surat al-i-Imran, 142). It is important to stress that jihad in Islam is not limited to military jihad. Islam distinguishes between lesser jihad (military jihad) and greater jihad (jihad of the self), and it particularly emphasizes the role of the latter in nurturing a cohesive and well-functioning community of believers. This is well explained by a saying for the Prophet when he received a contingent of Muslim soldiers returning from conquest: "Welcome to people who performed lesser jihad, and still have greater jihad awaiting them . . . Jihad of the self" (quoted in Qassim: 44).

[9] Hizbullah's conception of jihad is based on such Qur'anic and Prophetic pronouncements; the party, however, incorporates into its formulation of jihad the unique experience of the martyrdom of Ahl al-Bayt (the household of Prophet Muhammad), specifically that of Hussein, the third Imam in Twelver Shi'ism, without which the meaning of jihad for Hizbullah would be indistinguishable from its Sunni counterpart. The martyrdom of Hussein at Karbala eventually gave rise among Shi'ites, especially *usulis* (as opposed to traditionalists), to the concept of living martyrdom, with its emphasis on perpetuating the memory of the sacrifices of Hussein, and other martyrs, in preparation for the eventuality of holy jihad (Al-Baghdadi: 76). Living martyrdom promotes among Shi'ites the merits of bloody martyrdom and endears it to them, provided they know its purpose and when to seek it in order to achieve victory. In view of this, living martyrdom, with Hussein as its central figure, has far-reaching implications beyond the time and setting in which the Karbala Battle took place. Thus weeping with pain over the martyrdom of Hussein has come to assume important political dimensions: "We do not weep for Hussein in order to weaken,

but to relive the tragedy so that there shall never again be another Yezid [the second Umayyad caliph who ordered the killing of Hussein, after the latter's rebellion at Kufa in 680] . . . We weep to get tougher . . . so that we do not forget, because if humans forget a tragedy they eventually forgive its perpetrators" (Al-Baghdadi: 201).

[10] Hizbullah departs from the concept of classical jihad in the sense that it is a Western-minded organization when it comes to the appreciation of technology and the application of modern organizational principles. Richard Antoun notes, when discussing the party's communication system, that they have "selectively modernized with a vengeance" (127). Hizbullah is a modern organization that has succeeded in becoming an institution. It has a workable mechanism for leadership succession that has survived assassinations and an operational bureaucracy that continues to grow in terms of the provision of services despite war and a murky political horizon.

The National Wars of Liberation as Conceptual Markers

[11] Most Lebanese Shiites believe that their country's political system has discriminated against them ever since the French created modern Lebanon in 1920. Historical rejection and persecution by Sunni rulers has created a sense of embedded persecution among Shiites. In the Lebanese state, Shiites found themselves marginalized politically, economically, and socially. They came to see the Lebanese political system as both illegitimate and corrupt for failing to integrate them. Abdelaziz Testas regards political exclusion and failure of integration as prerequisites of breeding political opposition movements (260). The revival of religion as a competitor for political space in the Middle East since the 1970s has baffled Westerners who came to see world politics free from religion. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that ended the Thirty Year religious war had ". . . developed a format for relations between states which intentionally did not include religion" (Fox and Sandler: 297). In the Middle East, religion has survived as the main source of allegiance since it was never seriously contested by modern crosscutting cleavages based on economic interest or territorial nationalism. The weakness of civil society, as well as its suppression by successive dictatorships, has ensured that religion would remain as the primary outlet for political mobilization. Abdou Filali-Ansary admits that Muslims reject secularism as a Western concept associated with colonialism, and continue to see Islam ". . . as an eternal and immutable system, encompassing every aspect of social organization and personal morality" (24).

[12] Some writers have erroneously suggested that Hizbullah's rise was the product of a spontaneous reaction to former President Elias Sarkis' setting up of a six-man National Salvation Committee to deal with the consequences of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (Osman: 2). It is true that several religious members of Amal Movement resigned to protest Nabih Berri's decision to participate in the committee that included "the pro-Zionist Phalangist military commander Bashir Jumayyil" (Osman: 4). Nevertheless, the Amal Movement did not fulfill the expectations of many Shiites, who joined it until such a time when conditions allowed for the establishment of an organization that better expressed their religious orientation. For years, religious Shiite activists had been drawing on the experiences of political parties and movements, such as Iraq's doomed al-Da'wa party, and the infelicitous experience of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). They also closely

examined the successful experiences of national liberation movements, namely Mao Tse Tung's triumphant socialist revolution, the Viet Minh's (Vietnamese revolutionary forces) victory in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, the National Liberation Front's (FLN) achievement of Algeria's independence, and the ascendancy of Ayatollah Khomeini as the supreme leader of the Iranian revolution.

[13] From its onset, Hizbullah focused its attention on efforts to liberate southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation, and persistently eschewed involvement in thorny domestic issues. The party avoided controversy and endeared itself to a broad cross section of Lebanese and Arabs by militarily resisting Israel and pledging to eventually liberate Palestine. They consciously refrained from repeating the mistakes of Iraq's al-Da'wa party and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that aimed at overthrowing the existing regime and setting up an Islamic republic. In both cases, the overwhelming machinery of state coercion aborted the agenda of the Islamic movement. Since many Hizbullah members formerly enlisted in the Fatah Movement, the leading PLO group, they could see for themselves the shortcomings of rapid expansion and the absence of indoctrination. Fatah's diversity and open door policy made it easily penetrable by Israeli intelligence.

[14] The founders of Hizbullah studied the organization of the Chinese Communist party and adopted its cell structure. They admired Mao's ability create a formidable political entity and overcome the indignities of the Opium Wars (1839-42 and 1856-60) and the Boxer rebellion of 1900 when six European nations, the United States, and Japan sent troops to defeat the Chinese rebels. Hizbullah learned from Mao's experience the importance of preparing revolutionary vanguards to lead the struggle and rally the masses behind their movement. But it was Ho Chi Minh's victory against the French at Dien Bien Phu that particularly interested Hizbullah (Jradi). It was there that Ho Chi Minh's efforts at creating a highly disciplined and well-organized fighting outfit transformed the Viet Minh into first-class combat regiments. Hizbullah learned from the FLN to separate the political establishment from its military counterpart. In addition to the FLN, its political establishment, the Algerian rebels administered the National Liberation Army (ALN), which maintained its presence in Moroccan and Tunisian bases. Hizbullah also valued the capability of the FLN to find foreign allies and sources of support.

[15] It was the Iranian revolution of 1979 that ultimately made it conceivable for the emergence of Hizbullah. Its antecedent, Amal Movement, created by Musa al-Sadr in 1974, had no discernible ideology, and even though it aspired to maintain an independent political course, it nevertheless suffered from the same woes of the Lebanese politics of vacillation and shifting alliances. The rise of the Islamic republic in Iran made the emergence of an ideological Shi'ite political movement in Lebanon only a matter of opportunity. This came in the wake of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The 1982-85 period served as an incubation period that produced Hizbullah as a politico-religious party with a total societal perspective. Thus it came to embody a clear transnational political project whose agenda transcends the geographical boundaries of Lebanon into the broad horizons of the Arab and Islamic world. For many Arabs and Muslims, "Hizbullah represents the first and only successful movement in their midst since the creation of the state of Israel" (Abu al-Nasr: 22).

[16] From its inception, the leaders of Hizbullah have fully realized the value of culture in forming the character of party members. They were evidently influenced by Khomeini's teachings, such as "a country and its culture's rectitude are one and the same," and "a nation's happiness or misery is rooted in its culture" (Abu al-Nasr: 56). The culture in which Hizbullah immerses its members includes four crucial components: deep and unalterable faith is the party's strongest asset; jihad in Allah's way supersedes all other priorities; thorough religious and spiritual rehabilitation in accordance with Shiite doctrines; martyrdom as Hizbullah's ultimate weapon (Abu al-Nasr: 60-65).

Foundations of Jihad

[17] The Islamic revival movement of the 1970s onward, be it Sunni or Shiite, has incorporated an elaborate and comprehensive jihad perspective, in part to inform Westerners that the sword is not its main constituent, but also to exhort Muslims to become more involved in community affairs. At its core, jihad concerns itself with cleansing sin from the souls of believers and to ready them to become worthy of God's worship and spreading his word. Thus practicing Muslims are expected to persuade non-religious coreligionists to immerse themselves in God's worship. Islam also urges them to introduce non-Muslims to Islam as Allah's religion. Living and preaching Islam in its pure form wins the believer tranquility and peace of mind on earth and eternal happiness in heaven. Naturally, Hizbullah raises the question of the imamate and the epic of Karbala in inculcating faith, yet it agrees with Sunni fundamentalist groups on the means to achieve religious ends. Apart from military jihad, which this paper tackles in another section, Hizbullah religious instruction dwells on deliverance from infliction and proselytism to Islam.³ Militant Islamic revivalists like Muhammad 'Abdulsalam Faraj – whose concept of the totality of jihad (in that it is multi-leveled) is similar to Hizbullah's – go as far as describing it as *al-farida al-ghai'ba* (the forgotten pillar of Islam) (Khashan 2000: 118).

[18] Islam requires more from the faithful than the performance of *ibadat* [ritualistic religious requirements] such as fasting and praying; it expects them to surpass the *ibadat* requirements through active involvement in serving God by promoting Islam. Redemption necessitates displays of valor, truthfulness, nobility, and self-sacrifice: "And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle)" (Surat Muhammad, 31). Hizbullah emphasizes party discipline, strict obedience of religious canons, upholding the true faith as embodied by the household of the Prophet and the Karbala legacy. They regard earthly life as a test of religious fidelity and self-denial in the cause of God (see Surat al-i-Imran, 142). Hizbullah members are often exemplars in their interpersonal interactions, as well as their intensity of religious feelings and ever readiness to perform sacrificial feats.

³ Proselytism to Islam implies Twelver Imami Shiism. Proselytizing non-Muslims is a straightforward activity, yet converting Sunnis into Shiism, which is crucial in Ja'fari thinking, requires living proof. In fact, Hizbullah's immense popularity, especially among Arabs, is wholly attributable to the determined fight that it has put against the Jewish state. Hizbullah is adamant about maintaining its military wing in Lebanon because it unfailingly insists that Israel is a strategic threat to Lebanon, Arabs, and Muslims of all persuasions that must be confronted vigilantly and mightily. In fact, a few Sunnis in Palestine and Syria have converted to Shiism as a result of Hizbullah's determined military posture vis-à-vis Israel.

[19] Islam is a monotheistic and universalistic religion; Muslims regard its eventual spread into every corner of the globe a foregone conclusion. Muslims are so heavily socialized to believe that human life on earth will not end before humanity enters into Islam that even non-religious Muslims seem to concur with this vision. The rapid expansion of Islam, especially at the expense of Byzantium and in Iberia, led many Europeans to view Islam as a bloody religion that spreads with the sword. This has made many Muslims self-conscious about the propagation of their religion, which they consider as decreed by God. In recent years Muslim clerics, even radical activists, began to articulate the notion of peaceful jihad. This involves setting oneself as an example of impeccable behavior for non-Muslims, encouraging the establishment of *da'wa* (religious propagation) centers, training preachers, disseminating religious literature, and donating money for proselytism purposes.

[20] The choice of approach for converting non-Muslims to Islam depends on the status and power of Muslims in the international arena. In times of weakness, as in the present era, Muslims resort to indirect methods to spread Islam, but in better times, such as during periods of peak military power, Muslims used a combination of diplomacy and military jihad to spread their religion. Islam gave precedence to diplomacy over military force; the latter does not deprecate the relevancy of the former. What can be won through diplomacy must not be sought militarily. Muslims – Sunnis and Shiites alike – strongly believe that Islam is God's true religion and that it must prevail. Both sects believe in the eventuality of creating a universal Islamic community of believers, even though for Shiites in general, and Hizbullah in particular, the foundations of this Islamic entity ought to emanate from belief in the inviolable entitlement of the twelve Imams from the household of the Prophet – beginning with Ali's caliphate in 656 until the beginning of the *Ghabyba Sughra* (Lesser Occultation) of Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar (the awaited) around 878 – to preside over it.

Typology of Hizbullah's Jihad Creed

[21] Hizbullah's jihad concept incorporates four dimensions that cover aspects of personal life, societal interactions, political endeavors, and military activity. Military jihad is an act of necessity that relies heavily on certain personal attributes and the presence of a supportive societal setting. Military jihad in Hizbullah's doctrine is the ultimate course of action and may not be authorized unless all diplomatic means have been exhausted. The party's jihad concept has been largely shaped by developments in the Middle East over the past three decades, as well as politico-military upheavals and major demographic shifts in Lebanon during the same period.

Military Jihad

[22] Military jihad in Islam is *fard kifaya* (sufficiency obligation) imposed on the adult males in the Muslim community. It is a collective, not individual obligation. Once a sufficient number of fighting volunteers has been secured, the rest of the community eligible for this type of jihad becomes exempt from involvement in it. Should the Muslim community confront overwhelming odds on the battlefield that threaten Muslims as a collectivity, military jihad transforms into *fard 'ayn* (individual obligation) imposed on all bodily and mentally capable members of the community, including females.

[23] Hizbullah's formulation of military jihad is inseparable from developments in Iran under the religio-political doctrinal contributions of Ayatollah Khomeini, during the 1960s and 1970s, which eventually led to the triumph of the Islamic Republic in Iran. The Islamic Republic instituted the concept of the *wilayat al-Faqih* as compellingly mandated by the need to install and empower an Islamic government during the period of occultation. The underlying assumption of this formulation supports the establishment of a self-governing Islamic community under the leadership of the *faqih* until such time when the infallible twelfth Imam returns to redeem humanity (Al-'Amili: 179-83). Fuad Ibrahim observes that since 1982 Hizbullah has accepted, and been thoroughly abided by, the imperatives of the supreme Ayatollah in Iran (Khomeini, then Khamenei) as the "ultimate result of the evolution of Shiite political jurisprudence" prior to the return of the savior Mahdi (5). In Lebanon, Hizbullah has had the unique opportunity of developing its own military jihad concept over a period of quarter a century, essentially due to its resistance of Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

[24] Unwavering Iranian patronage, an alliance with the regimes of Hafiz and Bashar Asad in Syria that vacillates between the tactical and the strategic, and strong local Shiite support, have so far ensured Hizbullah's continuity as a jihadist movement against all domestic, regional, and international odds. Hizbullah has developed a military jihad concept founded on a military doctrine inspired by the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, a comprehensive military intelligence network, and an impenetrable security apparatus (Al-Sadiq: 119-30). Hizbullah's military jihad integrates five components, which both reflect the challenges and opportunities that have crossed its path since 1982.

[25] *Primary Jihad*. This type of jihad, which requires Muslims to initiate war with the aim of conquering territory controlled by infidels, is not presently an option. Primary jihad typified the early period of the Islamic era. The shifting of the balance of military power towards Europe since the seventeenth century caused Muslims to retrench, and later ushered in the period of Western colonialism, which continues until the present day in different guise. The overwhelming technological superiority of the West renders primary jihad out of the question under existing conditions of gross disparity. This matter has to wait until the return of the Hidden Imam to assume his divine duties and spread Islam worldwide (Qassim: 47). In the meantime, Muslims, as is the case with Hizbullah, can engage in some sort of primary political jihad, such as advocating a political stand at its face value without contesting its inner implications, if the supreme Ayatollah in Iran warrants it.

[26] *Defensive Jihad*. Hizbullah has been carrying out defensive jihad against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon since its emergence. The inaugural attack took place on November 11, 1983, when a Hizbullah operative stormed into the building accommodating the Israeli military governor in Tyre, detonated the car-load of explosives, and destroyed the headquarters. Between this operation and May 25, 2000, when the Israeli army pulled out unilaterally from the security belt it held in southern Lebanon, Hizbullah launched thousands of attacks against the Israeli army and its local proxy Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). These attacks included 12 suicidal operations, 858 roadside bombs, 554 ambushes, 258 close range encounters, 66 raids, 68 snipings, and 3514 shelling incidents (Ahmad: 163). During the same period, Israel launched two major offensives against Hizbullah: Operation Galilee Accountability in July 1993 and Grapes of Wrath in April 1996. The ceasefire that ended the

Grapes of Wrath offensive recognized Hizbullah's resistance of Israeli occupation forces provided that it did not set up roadside bombs and fire rockets into northern Israel.

[27] *Preemptive Jihad*. The Qur'an prods Muslims to stay on guard to engage their enemies at any moment should they feel threatened by them: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies" (Surat al-Anfal, 60). Preparedness for war has been a hallmark of Hizbullah ever since its emergence as a fighting force. From its inception, Hizbullah has emphasized rigorous training, strict discipline, organization, and preemption, which its command put to efficient use within the party's sphere of activity. Hizbullah is primarily a Lebanese movement whose legitimacy derived from confronting the oppression of international forces (Israel and the U.S.) as their primary enemies. The party has deliberately eschewed involvement in Lebanon's divisive internal issues that did not seem to lend themselves to resolution. Viewing them as secondary in importance for their mission, the party leadership has played down its involvement in the country's religious affairs and decided to focus, instead, on the international issues of injustice and oppression (Ahmad: 35-51).

[28] Hizbullah's spokesmen and advocates have repeatedly asserted that the party's operation on July 12, 2006, which triggered the summer war, forced the Israelis to launch their massive air raids prematurely. During the summer war, Hizbullah broadcast that their raid had actually forced Israel to launch its war before completing its preparations to decimate the party. Hizbullah's proclamations on this issue articulated a conventional wisdom readily acceptable to most Lebanese Shiites, as well as many Arabs and Muslims. The ingredients of the "Divine Victory," as advanced by a local TV announcer, included a preemptive strike on July 12, clumsy response by Israel's military and political establishments, and sacrificial valor by Hizbullah fighters (Al-Manar TV, 20 August 2006). Hizbullah's ideology justifies preemptive strikes against Israel since one of their objectives is to "completely evict Israeli troops from Lebanon, as a first step towards wiping out the Jewish state, and the liberation of Jerusalem from the claws of occupation" (Ahmad: 39).

[29] *Logistics Jihad*. Adequate logistics activities are so important that no war can be won without them. Hizbullah has not lost sight of the requirement to develop a workable logistics system, especially in relation to weapons acquisition, transportation, storage, and supply to combat units. Hizbullah continually has had to adapt itself to changing local and regional conditions that often hindered the supply, replenishment, and distribution of arms, ammunitions, food, and medical supplies. Hizbullah quickly realized the need to dig tunnels in Lebanon's rugged mountains to protect fighters and materiel against Israeli air raids. The expansion of the party's fighting capabilities from the early 1990s meant that Hizbullah needed to further develop its logistics capabilities. Huge storage depots in basement shelters and mountain tunnels were constructed to keep up with the acquisition of large numbers of rockets, missiles, launchers, and a wide assortment of additional war supplies. To weather Israeli air force attacks and sabotage, Hizbullah uses an array of facilities to store its arsenal, which includes underground warehouses, schools, private residences, and hospitals. On August 2, 2006, the Israeli air force attacked a hospital in Baalbek, allegedly because Hizbullah used it as a logistics base.

[30] The summer war has caused the destruction of much of Hizbullah's warehouses and tunnels and the loss of the south as a primary Hizbullah base. The war has created a new reality on the ground, not just in the south, but throughout Lebanon. The mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFL) has been expanded to ensure that Hizbullah does not regroup and rearm in the south. European naval units attached to UNIFIL maintain a tight grip on Lebanese territorial waters and make it exceedingly difficult to smuggle arms by sea to Lebanon. The difficulties that Hizbullah goes through to acquire and distribute munitions makes logistics a jihad practice.

[31] During the summer war scores of trucks transporting materiel to Hizbullah were destroyed from the air and many truckers lost their lives as a result of these attacks, as Israel sought to dislocate Hizbullah's logistics. No doubt, then, that Hizbullah treats logistics as an aspect of military jihad. This perspective is supported by prophet Muhammad's sayings such as: "He who equips an army for conquest is a conqueror" (quoted in Fadlallah: 55), or "were it not for Ali's (his cousin) sword and Khadija's (his first wife) money, Islam would not have been on the map" (55). Islam treats financial contributions for the sake of Islam an act of jihad. The well-being – if not the survival – of the Islamic community relies on constant combat readiness and the availability of a supportive logistics apparatus. Committing scarce financial resources is indispensable for providing good logistics, which explains why the Qur'an emphasizes the former: "And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction" (Surat al-Baqara, 195).

[32] *Negotiations Jihad*. The jihadist nature of Hizbullah and its firm ideological stand gave it the appearance of an unlikely negotiating partner. The illicit activities previously attributed to Hizbullah – such as seizing Westerners as hostages in Lebanon on behalf of Iran during the 1980s – did not eventually engage the party in negotiations to free them. Hizbullah never admitted involvement in taking hostages, whose capture was claimed by shadowy organizations. Hostages taken in Lebanon were subsequently released in Damascus. Even though Hizbullah has participated in the Lebanese parliamentary elections since 1992, it eschewed participation in the cabinet until after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005.⁴ The party considered itself a liberation movement seeking to evict the Israeli army from southern Lebanon and, thus, was able to evade disarmament after the signing of the Ta'if Agreement in 1989, which banned all militias. The exemption of Hizbullah from disarmament encouraged them to enter the Lebanese parliament, mainly to protect their recognition as a special military organization.

[33] A follower of Hizbullah's behavior encounters two focal points that explain the leadership's negotiation posture: image and survival. Image has featured prominently in Hizbullah's scant negotiation endeavors. As a millennial movement that sees the world from the perspective of a good-versus-evil dichotomy, winning over supporters to their side has

⁴ Hizbullah's decision to participate in a national unity government demonstrated their concern about the changing environment of the Lebanese political system, which put tremendous pressures on them to dismantle their military structure. The withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon in April 2005 in partial fulfillment of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 cornered Hizbullah, since the resolution demanded their disarmament as well. Lebanon's inherent divisive politics mandate that participants get involved in negotiations with rivals, mainly confessional, in order to reach consensus.

always been central for Hizbullah strategists, especially under Hasan Nasrallah's leadership. In April 2002, Hizbullah proposed to swap an Israeli businessman, whom they captured after luring him into Beirut, for approximately 100 Palestinian fighters holed up in Jenin's refugee camp during a major military operation in the West Bank. Israel declined Hizbullah's offer and the encircled Palestinian fighters eventually perished. A few days later, and nearly a month after the Israeli army had encircled more than 200 Palestinians (including 30 wanted militants) in the district's compound in Ramallah and in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Hizbullah offered to negotiate the release of the Palestinians in exchange for Israeli prisoners held by the party. The Hizbullah statement read:

Hizbullah is mindful of the predicament of our four brothers accused of assassinating the Zionist minister of tourism who are besieged in Ramallah, as well as the ordeal of the brothers who sought shelter in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. In view of the failure of all efforts to secure their freedom, Hizbullah expresses its readiness to negotiate [with Israel] through the good offices of a third party the freedom of our brothers . . . in return for prisoners held by Hizbullah (Al-Manar TV, 20 April 2002).

[34] Hizbullah's gesture towards the Palestinians on these two occasions is in conformity with the party's Open Letter of 1985, which emphasized the saliency of military jihad against the forces of international arrogance. Hizbullah gave preference to sparing the lives of besieged Palestinian fighters in Jenin and securing the freedom of others in Ramallah and Bethlehem at the expense of 13 Lebanese fighters held in Israeli prisons.

[35] Hizbullah has previously launched raids into northern Israel and in the Shib'a Farms contested area in order to capture Israeli soldiers in order to use them for negotiating the freedom of Lebanese and Arab prisoners in Israel. A number of attempts by Hizbullah to kidnap Israeli soldiers were unsuccessful and resulted in the death of several party fighters. The importance of negotiation jihad and its high cost in terms of human and political assets for Hizbullah make it one of the most dignified aspects of their jihad concept.

Personal Jihad

[36] Hizbullah has grown into an avant-garde party. Its leadership understood from the outset the importance of recruiting high quality party members. It has instilled into the party's members and fighters personal aspects of jihad that are prerequisite for advanced jihadist activity. Hizbullah's school system curriculum takes into consideration three aspects of personal jihad: self-interest, self-control, and spirituality.

[37] The Qur'an repeatedly tells believers that God does not need their sacrifices and devoutness. Whatever they do for God's sake only attests to their rectitude, hence deservingness of his largess: "and if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls. For Allah is free of all needs from all creation" (Surat al-Ankabut, 6). Personal jihad, therefore, polishes individual Muslims and reflects positively on communication with fellow workers; it improves the quality of their marital interactions, and contributes to personal betterment.

[38] Self-control is one of the most challenging aspects of jihad, especially in the context of Middle Eastern cultures, where it is a much valued but not-so-often attained attribute. Islam

treats self-control as a *fard 'ayn* (a personal duty on all Muslims). Self-control compels the faithful to curb their proneness to anger, strengthens their resolve to accomplish demanding tasks with no regard to obstacles. It boosts their steadfastness and teaches them that a molehill of truth towers over a mountain of lies. Self-control engenders patience, augments the sense of righteousness, and instills unshakable moral values as it combats lust and enables the faithful to forgo sin.

[39] The spiritual type of jihad derives its impetus from reflecting on the travails of Hussein in Karbala, through the introduction of Shiite mystical symbolism (Mirsepassi: 71), and from the memory of the woes endured by the Imams at the hand of the Sunni state that prevailed in the Islamic world until the rise of the Shiite Safavid state in Persia in 1501. Even though spiritual jihad has become a lasting feature of the Shiite faith, the triumph of Ayatollah Khomeini's *wilayat al-faqih* concept has undermined it. Spiritual jihad essentially belonged to an earlier stage of Shiite history; it resulted from a sense of inner defeat despite the great sacrifices made in the face of tyrannical rule. Spiritual jihad underlay avoidance of political involvement for fear of retribution. Instead, it focused on matters related to protecting the faith in its unadulterated form, dissemination of religious knowledge, and training of preachers and clerics. Spiritualism thrived as part of the imposition of Shiism in Persia in the seventeenth century, a process that entailed veneration of the Imams, as well as high respect for the sayings attributed to them (Halm: 98).

[40] Hizbullah's political activism and military dynamism have taken plenty of space from the practice of spiritual jihad. Nevertheless, since it has become a permanent feature of Shiism, spiritual jihad, which has deep roots in folk religion, has the capacity to bounce back in times of distress.

Societal Jihad

[41] Hizbullah's appreciation for societal jihad derives in part from integrating the experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The Brotherhood, who mainly focused on military and political jihad during the 1950s and 1960s, received debilitating blows from Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, which eventually sent them underground. Since the 1970s they have appreciated the importance of preparing society for the eventual creation of an Islamic government, and decided to establish an inseparable bond with the population through education, socialization, and the provision of badly needed services.

[42] The building of an ideal society is conducted through *jihad al-nahda* (renaissance). In this utopian Islamic society, community members think positively; they commit themselves to volunteer work, and find no difficulty in expressing an independent opinion in front of an onerous ruler. The fifth Imam Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (word-splitter), known for his erudition and contribution to the development of Shiite jurisprudence as we know it today, understood what it took for the community of believers to create an ideal Islamic society: "It is insufficient for Shiites to hold the household of the Prophet in high esteem. Shiites must fear and obey God; they must be humble, devout, trustworthy, thorough believers, good to their parents and committed to the poor and orphans" (quoted in Shu'aib: 47). Hizbullah has indeed created its own Islamic society. Of course it is not ideal; yet, it is readily discernible not only from Lebanese society at large, but also from Shiites who are not members of the party. Hizbullah leaders evince seriousness and a strong sense of self-righteousness. The

party's administrators and rank and file are much less corrupt, and substantially more efficient, than Lebanese civil servants.

[43] A salient type of jihad in Hizbullah's doctrine is *jihad al-Bina'* (construction); it includes building construction, provision of basic services such as primary medical care, drinking water, agricultural projects, schooling, and transportation for villagers in remote areas. Hizbullah's overwhelming popularity among Lebanese Shiites is not merely a function of the stiff military resistance they displayed against Israel. For the most part, it is the fruit of heavy party involvement in welfare projects that have benefited broad segments of Lebanese Shiites, especially since seizing control of the southern suburbs from Amal Movement in 1988 (Khashan 1995: 63). Since then Hizbullah has built an impressive infrastructure of public welfare that has benefited the Shiite community throughout Lebanon (with emphasis on the south, the Biqa', and the densely populated southern suburb of Beirut). Benefiting from generous Iranian contributions and donations of affluent Lebanese Shiites in West Africa, Hizbullah established *Mu'assasat al-Shahid* (the martyr foundation) to cater to the needs of the dependents of fallen fighters. The foundation operates a series of hospitals such as al-Rasul al-A'dham in the southern suburb, Shaykh Raghīb Harb in Nabatiyyeh in southern Lebanon, and al-Hikma in Ba'albek in the northern Biqa'. It also runs a chain of al-Mahdi schools in areas of Shiite presence. Hizbullah has paid attention to Shiite farmers, who represent a majority of the community in Lebanon. For this purpose, it created *Mu'assasat Khidmat al-Muzari'in* (farmers' service foundation), which provides free agricultural consultation, and subsidized seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides.

[44] Hizbullah's involvement in military jihad for more than a quarter of a century against Israel has resulted in the death of more than 2,000 fighters, in addition to many more wounded. Hizbullah provides for the dependents of fallen fighters through the *Shahid* Foundation, which provides their dependents with monthly financial allocations and gives them access to comprehensive medical services, in addition to ensuring that their children get free schooling in the Hizbullah school system. The party has not neglected to care for the wounded, especially those with permanent disabilities. For this purpose, it established *Mu'assasat al-Jarba* (the wounded foundation) to attend to wounded fighters whose conditions require long-term attention. Hizbullah's *jihad al-Bina'* reaches out to poor Shiites through *Mu'assasat al-Imdad* (provisions foundation), which provides food, shelter, and cash relief.

Political Jihad

[45] Combating what Hizbullah considers corrupt government falls under the category of greater jihad. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities of the 2006 summer war, Hizbullah found itself in the midst of a major political confrontation, both domestically and internationally. Despite the tenacity of Hizbullah's fighting in the war against Israel, the ensuing political confrontation presented the party with staggering challenges. In addition to outright Israeli and American hostility and antipathy by most Arab governments, Hizbullah had to confront an unsympathetic Lebanese government, whom it regards not only as a Western lackey, but also as incorrigibly corrupt.

[46] Hizbullah's decision in December 2006 to force the expansion of the Fuad Sanyura government in order to give the opposition, of which it is the major party, greater

representation in the cabinet provides a prime example of political jihad. Frequent sit-ins and rallies in Beirut's downtown area, principally manned by Hizbullah supporters, involved committing huge human and material resources over a sustained period of time. The importance of the issue at stake for the party's survival as a politico-military organization further attests to the significance of negotiation jihad in Hizbullah's unfolding jihad concept. Hizbullah precipitated the fall 2006 crisis in order to deflect attention from implementing UN resolutions that mandate its disarmament: "We know that Hizbullah's leadership will not accept the exit of Lebanon from the equation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is capable of evading compliance with UN Security Council Resolution by insisting on phased implementation" (Sadiq: 5).

[47] For years Hizbullah chose to stay out of Lebanon's divisive politics, but Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in June 2000 and the summer war of 2006 created new challenges for Hizbullah that mandated increasing its involvement in the domestic political arena. A statement by the party placed participation "in peaceful and civilized rallies to force the expansion of the cabinet" on a par with military jihad (Al-Manar TV, 4 December 2006).

[48] Hizbullah is a Lebanese politico-religious party that maintains an active military wing. Its rise represented a felt domestic need by religious Shiites whose political aspirations were not accounted for by existing political movements in Lebanon. There is no doubt that Hizbullah's rise was expedited by the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Political movements in Lebanon, be they confessional or secular, usually look outside Lebanon for allies and sources of support. The Maronites sought and obtained help from France since the seventeenth century; the Druze appealed for British sponsorship since the mid-nineteenth century; the Greek Orthodox received Tsarist Russian assistance at the beginning of the twentieth century; Sunnis looked toward neighboring Arab countries for identification and assistance, and during the civil war they relied heavily on the PLO to fight on their behalf.

[49] With such an established Lebanese trend of seeking outside help, Hizbullah simply followed the path of other Lebanese sects. It is in this context that one should place Hizbullah's association with its two principal foreign allies – Iran and Syria. Hizbullah's ideology has been heavily influenced by the proclamations of the Iranian Revolution, and many of its officials and members have manifested strong loyalty for Iran.

[50] Loyalty is the price of patronage and on this Hizbullah has walked in the footsteps of other Lebanese sects whose political mobilization antedates Lebanese Shiites'. Since Musa al-Sadr – the Iranian born cleric who sparked Lebanese Shiite political awareness in 1959 – founded Shiite Amal Movement in 1975, it has maintained until today a staunch pro-Syrian stance without compromising its Lebanese credentials. Hizbullah realized the strategic significance of allying itself with Ba'thist Syria despite their pronounced ideological incompatibility. A study in 1989 found that Lebanese Shiite college students were more likely to blame Syria than Israel or the United States for the civil war in their country (Khashan 1989: 587-88). On February 24, 1987 Syrian troops lined up 23 Hizbullah fighters against a wall and shot them dead. Nevertheless, Hizbullah and Syria found a strong basis for becoming allies two years later. With Hizbullah growing in size and diversifying its activities, Syria became indispensable as a conduit for Iranian supplies and the movement of personnel. From its own perspective, Syria desperately needed a regional ally to compensate

for its inability to win the PLO on its side. As a fighting military movement committed to driving the Israeli army from southern Lebanon, Syria found in Hizbullah an invaluable ally connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Future of Hizbullah's Jihad

[51] Hizbullah has become a permanent feature of Lebanese politics, regardless of whether it maintains its military arsenal or disbands it. It has grown from modest beginnings in 1982 to the undisputed representative of the Lebanese Shiite ethos. Hizbullah has succeeded in developing into a political institution where other Lebanese parties have failed. It has a workable mechanism for political recruitment and leadership succession. Hizbullah's success is attributable to regional instability, Lebanese political volatility, strict party discipline, immersion in Lebanese Shiite community needs, a sense of mission, character building of partisans, eschewal of intra-Lebanese divisiveness, and the adoption of a multi-tiered jihad concept.

[52] Hizbullah has presented itself as a role model for other jihadist movements, especially Hamas. Palestinian Islamic militants incorporated suicide missions in their fight against Israel after they interacted with Hizbullah people in Marj al-Zuhur site on the Lebanon-Israel border.⁵ In addition, Hamas learned from Hizbullah to avoid involvement in polemics and to shun religious debates. Interestingly, both movements became embroiled in divisive domestic politics during the first two months of 2006. Hizbullah has also made its name in Iraq allegedly by training the militia of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr. Hizbullah appears to have become an inextricable component of the Middle Eastern scene.

[53] Hizbullah's ideology, including its jihad concept, faces major challenges in the context of Lebanon's confessional politics. Its meteoric growth into the country's strongest movement has upset Lebanon's delicate sectarian makeup and triggered fear and resentment from the country's other major sects: most Sunnis, Maronites, and Druze appear united on the question of Hizbullah's armament and insist on transforming the party into an exclusively political movement. Intense political polarization in the Middle East, the standoff between the United States and Iran on the latter's nuclear program, and efforts to win influence in the Persian Gulf are bound to reflect themselves in the course of Lebanese politics. The fate of Hizbullah as a jihadist movement in the military sense is more contingent on developments outside Lebanon than inside it.

[54] The expansion of the mandate of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon and the deployment of the Lebanese army there after an absence that spanned more than 30 years have already altered realities on the ground. Hizbullah has been pushed underground south of the Litani River; these new proximal realities have profoundly reshaped Hizbullah's jihad concept by eliminating any legitimate or executable pretext for military jihad against Israel.

⁵ In December 1992, Israel expelled 415 Hamas members to the border area with Lebanon, where they stayed for four months. During that period, they were frequently visited by Hizbullah officials who convinced them to adopt the tactic of suicide attacks. Sunni Islam does not recognize suicide in war, whereas it is an intrinsic quality of Shiite jihad.

[55] Despite the heavy punishment that Israel exacted from Hizbullah during the summer 2006 war and the destruction of much of its military and civilian infrastructure, the party has made an amazing recovery in just a few short months and resumed much of its public services to the Shiite community. Superb organization, deep public commitment to it its sectarian constituency, and clarity of elite vision have enabled Hizbullah to reassert its distinguished position within the Lebanese Shiite community so shortly after the suspension of military hostilities. The international system, with its impact on the Middle East in general and Lebanon in particular, is bound to rearrange the power relationships in Lebanon in a way that restores sectarian balance. This will most definitely curtail Hizbullah's influence as a jihadist movement, and eventually reshape it. Institutionalized movements have a built-in capacity to adapt their ideological makeup and bounce back. Naim Qassim already accepts the principle of improving relations with the West: ". . . Hizb Allah sees itself capable of having relations with the West in the future" (quoted in Milton-Edwards: 62). Hizbullah appears sufficiently resilient to make the transition.

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