RELIGION,
NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND
CONFESSIONAL POLITICS
IN LEBANON

The Challenge of Islamism

ROBERT G. RABIL

Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon

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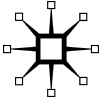By Robert G. Rabil

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Robert G. Rabil

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To Patricia
and
Georges, Grace, Nick, and Olivia
with love

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Note on Transliteration

The English transliteration from Arabic generally follows the rules of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Arabic names commonly used by the *New York Times* and whose spellings are thus becoming standard retain their original form as they appeared in that newspaper. For example, Koran has not been transliterated as Qur'an.

Series Editor's Foreword

No change had been more important for Lebanon, nor for the Middle East as a whole, than the rise of revolutionary Islamism. Indeed, the coming to power of Hizballah in 2011—though not officially, in practice—was the culmination for three decades of struggle and maneuver by these forces.

This book examines the case of Lebanon in great detail and other important issues. Basically, Professor Rabil concludes that the advance of the Shia Muslim Hizballah and of the smaller Sunni Islamist groups was based to a large degree on the backing they received from Iran and Syria. Of course, the communal base for Hizballah is also a central factor in this historical process.

To understand all of this, of course, one must understand the truly unique Lebanese system, torn between a sense of Lebanese national sentiment and communal friction; elite cooperation and ideological conflict, and the foreign interferences of warring powers. After decades of success, Lebanon went into a long period of turmoil that is far from over.

Professor Rabil has a long and close familiarity with this incredibly complex mix—possibly the most complex of any country in the world, and certainly for a country that is so small in extent and population. He is a reliable guide through this thicket of controversial matters. This book is a fine edition to our series on the contemporary Middle East.

Barry Rubin, Series Editor
Director, Global Research in
International Affairs (GLORIA) Center

Introduction

Since the founding of Greater Lebanon in 1920 under the French mandate, the interplay between religion and politics has been a dominant feature of the country, defining its identity and political system. Pursuing a communitarian policy in line with entrenched traditions, the French weaved together small and large communities, but with no one *Taifa* (sect) an absolute majority, into a national quilt distinguished by its confessional/sectarian system. Citizens of the newly established nation-state have been grouped according to religious affiliation or confession. As such, this sectarian system preserved the importance of religion as the primary carrier of values and a determining factor of the way of life, as well as the vital function of the sect as the "primary social organization through which political security has been maintained."[1] It was institutionally organized by mainly officiating the legal status of the religious communities, sectarian representation in elective office, and sectarian distribution in public sphere, as well as lending a sectarian character to political, educational, and social organizations.[2] Thus, the birth of Lebanon had been forged as a nation-state in relation to a composite of several *Taifas,* whose traditions, values, and political security had been purportedly safeguarded in the system according to a sectarian "balancing" formula.[3]

The Lebanese constitution of 1926 consecrated the prevailing confessional system by recognizing the country's various sects. At the same time, it considered (article 7) all Lebanese equal before the law, guaranteed (article 9) to the communities respect for their personal status laws and religious interests, and granted (article 10) them freedom to decide their education.[4] However, it gave the country its confessional basis. Article 95 of the constitution stated that: "Temporarily, with the intention of assuring justice and harmony, the communities will be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of ministries."[5]

Besides scaffolding an imperfect communitarian equilibrium, the confessional system did not resolve the outstanding questions of identity and political orientation. Broadly speaking, Muslim elites identified with Arab nationalism, and aspired for national sovereignty within the framework of unity with Syria, whereas Christians aspired for a sovereign Lebanon, asserting a Phoenician-Lebanese identity and a Westward outlook. A national political platform was elaborated to bring about independence

from the French and band the various sects together, whereby Christians would forsake Western tutelage and Muslims their penchant for unity with Syria. This was the famous *al-Mithaq al-Watani* (the National Pact), which declared that "Lebanon is an independent state with an Arab face."

From both a social constructivist approach and a social psychologist approach, the National Pact neither fostered nor forged a national identity.[6] It was based on a compromise guided by the false assumptions that Muslims would *Arabize* the Christians while Christians would *Lebanonize* Muslims. Walid Phares remarked that "in its historical perspective, the National Pact aimed at appeasing contradictory community ideologies."[7] Admittedly, whereas the constitution consecrated the confessional system, the National Pact consecrated political sectarianism (confessionalism) by organizing the structure of the system and how it worked. Yet, the National Pact provided under certain domestic and regional circumstances a sense of national unity and the opportunity of dissent given its liberal substance.

This unity collapsed on more than one occasion under the double weight of what Malcolm H. Kerr famously termed "The Arab Cold War" and Arab nationalism. In the name of Arab nationalism, leftists, pan-Syrians, and pan-Arabs were more interested in removing a regime dominated by political Maronitism than reforming the system. The National Pact had become a mere illusionary term as the country split along sectarian lines, and Beirut emerged as the new battle ground for the Arab-Israeli conflict and Palestinian militancy. As the civil war tore Lebanon apart and foreign armies encamped behind tenuous political and confessional alliances, attempts at national reconciliation were doomed in their infancy. Amidst the throes of civil strife and war in 1985, President Amin Gemayel spoke about religious affiliation, national identity, and the confessional system in a conciliatory tone dissimilar to that of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when his Phalange party under the leadership of Bashir Gemayel questioned the very essence of the National Pact:

> We are all Lebanese…There is no majority in modern Lebanon: we are a country of minorities. There is neither a political majority, nor an economic majority, still less a social majority. Religious affiliation has been the primary factor of individual identity, and most Lebanese today agree that the political system we developed was too rigid, drawing confessional lines around many problems that otherwise had no sectarian significance. Despite the importance of religion in Lebanese…society, we know, and always have known that our identity is with Lebanon. There is no Christian Lebanon, no Muslim Lebanon…There is but one Lebanon.[8]

This cris de coeur fell on deaf ears as Lebanon plunged deeper in civil strife, and all attempts at national reconciliation collapsed until 1989.

The same year, Lebanese deputies, at the urging and pressure of Saudi Arabia and Syria, ironed out a constitutional compromise, the Document of National Understanding (Taif Accord), which helped end the civil war in 1990. The Taif Accord amended the constitution and by extension the National Pact. Lebanon was identified as an Arab state and the definitive homeland of all its members (sons).

It is within this contextual interaction between religious affiliation and confessional politics that this book traces the path of Islamism, as an expression of religious-political ideology, political program, and vision, from terrorism to *Jihadi* Resistance, from social marginalization to political empowerment, and from an *Ummah*-centric affiliation to a Lebanon-centric practicality. The book examines the ideological foundation out of which Islamism emerged in Lebanon, and surveys the ways in which Islamists navigated the stormy waters of the country's civil strife and war. It probes the ideological transformation of Islamists from opponents of to participants in the political system. Islamism in Lebanon has managed to situate itself at the heart of the confessional system in order to affect the sociopolitical conditions of the country and to Islamize both the state and society.

The struggle for the state and society has undergone several phases whereby Islamism has constantly readjusted itself according to the changing conditions in the region in general and in Lebanon in particular. But this ideological and practical reconfiguration has not affected the core of Islamism's objective: *Jihad* against Israel. In fact, despite ideological, political, and confessional incongruities and concerns, Islamism, in both its Sunni and Shi'ite denominational variants, has maintained a unity of purpose: *Jihad* against Israel and abolishment of political sectarianism. This unity of purpose has been in many ways a dress rehearsal for reducing Christian *Imtiyazat* (privileges) to insignificance and controlling the state. This formed the basis of the tacit "holy alliance" between Sunni Islamism and Shi'a Islamism, which has played out in favor of the Shi'a Islamist party, Hezbollah, and its "Islamic Resistance." In fact, both variants of Islamism can be defined more in "Resistance" than ideological terms. Hezbollah, as I will show, has been attempting to Islamize the state by trying to control it and to Islamize society by trying to create what it terms as the society of resistance. Hezbollah's vast social program network and elaborate social welfare system have been used to expand the party's sociopolitical base of support and bolster its *Islamization* process. In this respect, *Islamization* is about inculcating and imposing Hezbollah's political program and vision on state and society. In part due to the tacit "holy alliance" between the Sunni Islamist party, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (Islamic Association) and Hezbollah, *al-Jama'a* has played an implicit role in supporting Hezbollah's political program and vision.

As Islamism became concerned with and focused on the state, Fathi Yakan, the pioneer of Sunni Islamism in Lebanon, explained, even before the founding of Hezbollah, the transitional objective of Islamism:

> It is stupid, in light of our confrontation with the challenge and the battle ground [of the struggle for Lebanon], to allow others to have the lion share in every matter and to acquiesce to that...On the contrary, doing so is a betrayal of Islam, for that would help liquidate the Islamic presence and prevent the implementation of the creed [law] of Islam in society and state...Islam today is in a asymmetrical war with *Jahiliyah* everywhere, and war is a ruse...What cannot be taken in war cannot be forsaken, and for the Muslims to win some positions in the way of a comprehensive Islamic change is better than losing all positions without reaching the aspired goal.[9]

This focus on the state has fit neatly with Hezbollah's attempt at *Islamization* of society and state in the service of *Jihad* against Israel and confronting what Hezbollah terms the American-Zionist hegemonic project. This *Islamization* whose real objective is to perpetuate Resistance and to create a society of resistance based on the methodology, program of action, and curriculum of the "Resistance" as a paradigm, has been emphasized by Hezbollah's leadership. Deputy secretary general of Hezbollah Naim Qassem explains the project of Resistance and the way in which the rest of society should integrate with the Resistance (and not vice versa):

> Resistance is a project of liberation and rebellion...We refuse that our Islamic Resistance be cut off from the course of actionable resistance in our region and in the world. We refuse that it be cut off from its historical course that extends to the prophets, apostles and liberators, because rejection, rebellion and confrontation with occupation are required actions for those whose performance, intellect and personae are exalted with humanity. On this basis, our nationalist and Islamic Resistance is a legitimate right...Resistance for us is a societal vision in all its dimensions, for it is a military, cultural, political and media resistance. It is the resistance of the people and the *mujahidin,* it is the resistance of the ruler and the *Ummah*, it is the resistance of the free consciousness anywhere. As such, we have always called for building the society of resistance. Not one day have we accepted a group of resistance, because the society of resistance bears continuity, whereas the performance of the group of resistance is circumstantial...So those who would chase the group of resistance would tire greatly, because they would face the society of resistance.[10]

Qassem underscores the hallowed nature and timelessness of the Resistance, as he situates it within a context (beyond its reality as a priority

of Islamism) that goes back to the apostles and prophets, so as to give it an eternal, sacrosanct right. At the same time, this nationalist-Islamist right is best expressed in the society of resistance, because it accords the Resistance a continuity that cannot be disrupted. As such, Hezbollah has never shied from asserting its Islamic and nationalist Lebanese identity.

The book attempts to illustrate in detailed analysis this "comprehensive" project of Islamism according to its ideological and practical evolutionary change. In this respect, the book grounds its analysis and examination of Islamism in Lebanon's milieu in relation to inter- and intracommunal relations and sociopolitical conditions, which have been critically affected by the Arab-Israeli conflict and in particular by Iran and Syria's policies in Lebanon. The book reveals that neither Hezbollah nor the Islamic Association would have undergone their ideological, military, and political evolution and/or regression had it not been for Iranian and Syrian policies and actions in Lebanon. Similarly, the book shows that neither Hezbollah nor the Islamic Association, especially the former, would have been able to act on their political programs and policies had it not been for the ideological and political state of disarray gripping the multicommunal majority. This, however, does not mean that the government or political parties have not tried to reduce the political and military power of the Islamist parties. In fact, the book underscores the way in which Hezbollah has outgrown its patron-client relationship with Syria. No less significant, the book disputes a school of thought built around the concept of Hezbollah's *Lebanonization and Infitah* policy that the Islamist party would eventually evolve into a conventional political party, integrating its Resistance and weapons with the army.

Objective and Methodology

Since the term Islamism is sometimes interchangeably used with religious fundamentalism and variably defined, the book pays attention to Bassam Tibi's definition of religious fundamentalism:

> I identify religious fundamentalism not as a spiritual faith, but as a political ideology based on the politicizing of religion for socio-political and economic goals in the pursuit of establishing a divine order. By definition, then, this ideology is exclusive, in the sense that it attacks opposing options, primarily those secular outlooks that resist the linking of religion to politics. Fundamentalists are thus absolutist, by their nature, and as we move into the next century, they seem to be placing their imprint on world politics.[11]

Nevertheless, the book employs a working definition of Islamism more specific to its Lebanese and regional milieu by reconciling Radwan

al-Sayyid's definition of Islamism with that of Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. Radwan al-Sayyid's defined Islamism is as follows:

> The Islamists in all their factions perceive that they are in disagreement with all intellectual and political currents in the Arab fatherland and the world. They possess a universal vision or a universal perspective, because they rely on Islam. This began in the Islamic reform era with the saying that Islam is a *Din wa Dunia* (religion and world), then came Hassan al-Bannah who said that Islam is a *Din wa Dawlah* (religion and state), and a [holy] book and sword. But in the contemporaneous era the efforts of the Islamic political movements have pivoted around the matter of the state. In this respect, they see that Islam constitutes the fundamental legitimacy of every political system.[12]

In response to a question about what is termed Islamic fundamentalism, the spiritual Lebanese Shi'a leader Ayatollah Fadlallah explained:

> There is no such thing here as "Islamic fundamentalism" as the West presents it-in other words, exclusive recourse to violence to bring about change and negation of the "other." This description does not fit the Islamists. Concerning violence, *Jihad* in Islam is a defensive movement and deterrent…We…consider the call to *Jihad* to be a call to protect the basic issues affecting human destiny from those who are committing aggression against us…From an Islamic perspective, we compare violence to surgery: One only turns to it as a last resort. As for negating the Other, we read in the Book of God: "Say: 'O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah'" [Al-'Imran:64]. Christians and Jews differ with Muslims concerning the interpretation of the unity of God and the personality of God. Despite that, the Qur'an commands: Turn to the principle of unity—the unity of God and the unity of mankind. We interpret this to mean that we can meet Marxists on the common ground of standing up to the forces of international arrogance; we can meet nationalists, even secular nationalists, on the common ground of Arab causes, which are also Islamic causes. Islam recognizes the Other…Therefore we Islamists are not fundamentalists the way Westerners see us. We refuse to be called fundamentalists. We are Islamic activists.[13]

The objective of this project is to go beyond studying the Islamist parties in Lebanon as ideologically inflexible and/or terrorist organizations in isolation of their domestic and regional milieu, and shed light on Islamist parties-state relations and Islamist parties—intra and inter—communal relations against the backdrop of Iranian-Lebanese-Syrian relations. In this respect, the book focuses only on the Sunni Islamist party *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* and the Shi'a Islamist party Hezbollah because both parties

have recognized the legitimacy of the confessional system and have used it as a focal point for their political programs. Though Hezbollah has been the focus of a number of studies, no work has been undertaken on Hezbollah's relationship with both the Lebanese state and the country's confessional groups. More specifically, there has been no contemporary study that addressed the development of Islamist parties in Lebanon in relation to the state, confessional groups, and vis-à-vis each other. As such, our understanding of these highly determined and sophisticated Islamist parties is still quite primitive in relation to the fast-paced development of Hezbollah and to a lesser extent *al-Jama'a* as central actors in Lebanon and in the region.

The methodological approach to the study will be qualitative, based on detecting and examining patterns and shifts in the Islamist parties—Iranian-Syrian and Islamist parties—state relations and whether any change in those patterns and shifts is reflective of a broad Iranian, Syrian, and/or Hezbollah strategy in Lebanon in particular and the Middle East in general.

The structural approach to the study will be systematic and comprehensive. The study will investigate *al-Jama'a* and Hezbollah's religious-political ideologies, political programs, visions, and outreach initiatives (*Lebanonization and Infitah)*, examining in the process the interaction among the country's confessional groups and assessing the impact of Lebanon's communal responses to *al-Jama'a* and Hezbollah's political overtures and actions on the country's confessional system.

1

GREATER LEBANON AND THE NATIONAL PACT: THE ELUSIVENESS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

This chapter underscores the historical premise of Lebanon's bifurcated and contested national identity. Partly mythical and partly constructed by the brush of Francophones, who aspired to connect the past glory of Phoenicia with a Western outlook, Christian national identity clashed with a Muslim national identity that identified with the glory of Arab civilization and Arab nationalism. Domestic and regional considerations helped bring about a national readiness and resignation to reach a compromise on Lebanon's national identity. A National Pact, undergirded by a confessional system, expressed the ideological and political underpinnings of this national identity, which remained in many ways elusive.

GREATER LEBANON

On September 1, 1920, the French high commissioner Henri Gouraud proclaimed the establishment of the State of Greater Lebanon:

> Before all the peoples of Mount-Lebanon gathered here, people of all religions, who were once neighbors, but who shall from this day forward be united under the auspices of a single nation, rooted in its past, eminent in its future; at the foot of these majestic mountains, which in prevailing as the impregnable stronghold of your country's faith and freedom, have shaped your nation's strength; on the shores of this mythical sea, which has been witness to the triremes of Phoenicia, Greece, and Rome, and which once carried across the universe your subtle, skillful, and eloquent forefathers; Today this same sea is joyfully bringing you confirmation of a great and old friendship, and the good fortune of French peace; Before all of these witnesses to your aspirations, your struggles, and your victory, and in sharing your pride, I solemnly proclaim Greater Lebanon, and in the name of the French Republic, I salute her in her grandeur and in her

power, from Nahr el-Kebir to the gates of Palestine and to the peaks of the Anti-Lebanon.[1]

This seminal statement in the history of modern Lebanon, which was hailed by some, vilified by some, and condemned by others, cast a pall of ambiguity over the national identity of Lebanon from the outset of its creation. To the Maronites, the statement pronounced the longstanding cultural and political kinship, mythical and/or constructed, between them and France, earnestly called "La mere du Liban." It expressed the toil of the Maronite Church which worked industriously to create an exclusive Christian national identity, separate from Arabism. It also intimated the national aspirations of the Maronites, as expressed in Phoenicianism and Lebanonism, whose symbols, thanks to nonclerical Francophones, permeated the collective heritage of the nation.

Tracing the beginning of its relationship with the Maronites to the Crusaders, France, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, had begun to systematically attempt to acculturate Christian society along French intellectual and cultural lines. Acting in the capacity of France's cultural arm, the French Jesuit order established a chain of schools, and most importantly, Saint Joseph University in 1875 in Beirut, which soon evolved into the nodal cultural center linking Beirut to Paris. It was there that Henri Lammens planted the ideological seeds of a separate Christian identity.[2]

Influenced by the intellectual atmosphere at Saint Joseph University, Maronite graduates drew the Phoenician ancestral link to a separate Christian identity, which found its expression in modern Greater Lebanon. Among them was Yusuf al-Saouda who unequivocally spoke about the Phoenician origins of the Lebanese people, while glorifying Phoenician culture and Lebanon's heritage. He asserted

> Every nation has a strong desire to return to its roots by drawing from the well of its past to its present the glory of its pedigree. Italy is proud to be the heir of mighty Rome with its victories, its glory and its banner. The Greeks glorify their lineage to the important dynasty of personalities of the *Iliad* with its poets and philosophers. The civilized world thanks Italy and Greece and respects their descendants and the greatness of their forefathers…As a nation is proud of its roots and draws its good virtues from its good progeny, so is Lebanon proud to remember and remind us that it is the cradle of civilization in the world. It was born at the slopes of its mountain and ripened on its shores, and from there, the Phoenicians carried it to the four corners of the earth. The same as Europe has to be committed to Italy and Greece it also has to be committed to a land that is the teacher of Rome and the mother of Greece.[3]

This perspective of the glory and contribution of Phoenicia to Western civilization, not the least the invention and dissemination of the Alphabet

by the mercantilistic Phoenicians, which were embodied in Lebanon's cultural heritage and collective identity, became the mantle of Phoenicianists in early twentieth century's Lebanon. Among others Michel Chiha and Charles Corm, the doyen of Phoenicianism, standardized and routinized Lebanon's Western orientation and national identity as an aspect of Phoenicianism. In 1919, Corm began publishing *La Revue Phenicienne,* which became the mouthpiece of the intellectual and political activity of the Phoenician idea, and subsequently, inspired by Maurice Barres, wrote *La Montagne Inspiree,* which was regarded by many as the apotheosis of Phoenicianism.[4]

Parallel to this intellectual effort to reify Lebanon's Phoenician myth of origin and national character uniqueness, the assiduous work of the Maronite Church to create a separate non-Arab Christian identity culminated in providing the political foundation to the Phoenician idea in Greater Lebanon. This was illustrated by the decisive role played by Maronite patriarch Elyas Huwayek in creating Greater Lebanon. The patriarch (E. P. Hoyek) headed the Lebanese delegation to the Peace Conference in Versailles, where he called for the creation of Greater Lebanon as a separate Christian entity. He justified his claim on the grounds of the Phoenician idea.[5]

As such, not only did Gouraud's statement materialize the national aspirations of the Maronite Church and the Phoenicianists, but also helped *Lebanonize* the Phoenician myth of origin, even though non-Christian communities rejected such notions.

Paradoxically, true that the creation of Greater Lebanon was an attempt to typify historical and/or mythical Phoenicia; however, Greater Lebanon reduced the majority of the Maronites to a slim plurality in the new state. Mount Lebanon, the abode of the majority of Maronites, was not economically viable as a political entity without the coastal cities, out of which shores the Phoenician seafarers set out. Correspondingly, the fertile Beka' region and the regions around the coastal cities of Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre, with their large Sunni and Shi'a communities, were added to the Mountain to form Greater Lebanon.[6] This condition posed a challenge to the supporters of Greater Lebanon, as many in the new state were then neither predisposed nor ready to identify with the national concept of Greater Lebanon (see the following paragraph). Consequently, Lebanonism grew from and in response to Phoenicianism. But in contrast to Phoenicianism, whose appeal was confined to a Christian base, Lebanonism, as it was locally referred to, promoted patriotism and Lebanese nationalism. It is with the objective of transcending an essentially Christian Phoenicianism so as to appeal to the Muslim community that Lebanonism concerned itself with an inclusive Lebanese national idea. At the base of the myth of this national idea, born in the time of ancient Phoenicia, was the theme, articulated by Said Akl, of

an immemorial "Lebanese People." In other words, the Lebanese constituted a sui generis endogenous and complete nation, which seduced and transmuted (Lebanonized) all invaders. As Franck Salameh remarked "being 'simply Lebanese' would come to constitute one of the foundational tenets of Lebanonism, and the phrase 'Lebanon is Lebanon, free of labels and epithets extrinsic to its nature' would emerge as the movement's lapidary motto."[7]

Initially, the Muslims rejected out of hand the national concept of Greater Lebanon. The Sunni community, being socially and politically more advantaged than the Shi'a and Druze communities, led the opposition against the formation of Greater Lebanon. The Sunni leadership, which supported King Faisal as ruler of Bilad al-Sham (Greater Syria), had been furious with the French who forced the self-proclaimed monarch from Damascus once they had the mandate over Syria. These Arab nationalists believed that Greater Lebanon was severed from Syria and thus advanced union with the latter. But their initial opposition was temporized by internal and external factors during the mandate, yielding a compromise in the form of an unwritten national pact (*Mithaq Watani*) that became the cornerstone of Lebanon's confessional system.

THE FRENCH MANDATE AND THE NATIONAL PACT

Once the French had the mandate over Lebanon, they set about laying the foundation for its political structure. They issued a series of decrees, among which were the creation of a Representative Council, an electoral law, and a Constitution in 1926, all of which served to shape Lebanon's confessional system. At the heart of this system was the apportionment of representation in the council and the administration of the new state on a confessional basis, where every religious community (seventeen all together) would be represented according to its demography.[8] In fact, this system was a revised version of the political structure that existed during the *Mutasarifiyya* (autonomous statue) in Mount Lebanon (1861–1920) during Ottoman rule, which thanks to French intervention solidified Maronite political power.[9]

The Sunni elite, most of whom unionists (Arab nationalists advocating a union with Syria), from the three major coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon, led, in the words of Farid el-Khazen, an "organized, systematic effort" against the attachment of their territories to Greater Lebanon, an effort far from being "an act of desperation by local notables disenchanted with the state of affairs that prevailed during the mandate."[10] They organized a series of conferences in which they reiterated their rejection of the fait accompli of Greater Lebanon and petitioned the French High Commissioner about their grievances. Simultaneously, they

tried to coordinate their efforts with Arab nationalists in Syria, namely the National Bloc leaders.[11]

But a combination of internal and external factors tempered the singleness of purpose and assiduity with which they pursued their political activism. Generally speaking, four factors affected the political outlook of the Sunni elite. First, the political leadership had become concerned about the growing reality, endurance, and the legitimizing role of services rendered by the mandate's institutions. This was reflected by the leadership petitioning the high commissioner, demanding equal treatment between the territories. No less significant was their concern about the bearing of the census taken in 1932, which favorite the Christians, on the distribution of political power and citizenship in the new state.[12]

Second, the Maronite Church by the 1930s had become more or less critical of French policies, demanding Lebanon's full independence.[13] This position caused a thaw in the icy relationship between the Church and the National Bloc leaders. Sunni elite frowned upon this budding political rapprochement, fearing a weakening of their "unionist" position.[14]

Third, the Maronite leadership, represented by Beshara al-Khoury, began advocating a pro-Arab policy in the late 1930s, which was neither incompatible with the position of the Maronite Church nor with Christian elites calling for a Christian-Muslim national understanding. The growing base of this development within the Christian community helped ease Christian-Sunni tensions.[15]

Finally, the Sunni leadership grew disenchanted and disillusioned with the policies of the National Bloc leaders. They felt betrayed by the National Bloc leaders negotiating a treaty with France that did not include the disputed territories added to Lebanon.[16] The cumulative effect of all of this tempered Sunni rejectionism and reinforced a trend advocated by Riad al-Solh that an independent Lebanon could bring about internal unity as a precondition to Arab unity.[17]

Consequently, Khoury and Solh found in each other an ally to support their national vision. The corollary of this alliance was the birth of the National Pact as a political formula for Lebanon's confessional system and problematic national identity. While political power would be distributed along religious (confessional) lines according to the 1932 census,[18] Lebanon's identity would be characterized by an "Arab face" and manifested by the slogan "No East, No West."[19] Nonetheless, the birth of the National Pact, which actually put the last nail in the coffin of the French mandate, would have been hardly possible without propitious regional developments.

The French position in the Levant had been steadily deteriorating. They, unlike the British, clashed caustically with Arab nationalists. Their position took a detrimental turn when Vichy government assumed power and the Free French under De Gaulle sought to control Syria and

Lebanon. Circumscribed by few resources, the Free French needed British military assistance, as well as support from the local nationalists, to retake control. Consequently, in 1941, they promised full independence to Syria and Lebanon. But once Vichy Forces were defeated, the Free French were no longer willing to live up to their promise. Prodded by British-French rivalry, the British, under Major General Edward Louis Spears in the Levant, supported the nationalists by trying to force the French from the Levant.[20] In fact, in June 1942, a British-sponsored meeting in Cairo between Khoury, Syrian president Jamil Mardam, and Egyptian prime minister Mustafa Nahas Pasha engendered an Arab blessing for Lebanon's independence.[21] Upon the enunciation of the National Pact in October 1943, the French arrested Lebanese leaders, including Solh and Khoury, in Rashaya. The British responded by threatening to declare martial law. Recognizing their untenable situation, the French released the nationalists on November 22, 1943. This momentous day has been celebrated as Lebanon's independence day. Reinforcing the National Pact, the newly independent state adopted the constitution designed by the French, though with slight variations, to accommodate the hetero-geneous population. Modeled after the constitution of the French Third Republic, it provides for a parliamentary republican order. The parliament is elected by the people every four years, and the parliament in turn elects the president of the Republic for a period of six years. The president, in consultation with parliament, designates the prime minister and the ministers, who would constitute a cabinet responsible constitutionally to the parliament. The National Pact together with the constitution provided the framework for Lebanon's confessional system.

No doubt, Maronite-Sunni cooperation in the shadow of British and Arab support proved decisive in creating the National Pact, which actualized independence. Nevertheless, other communities, especially the Shi'a community given its demographic significance, had little, if any, role in the process of concluding the National Pact. Considered as a hetero-dox community by the Sunni Ottoman empire, the Shi'a community was denied official recognition as a separate religious community in the empire, thereby facing debilitating discrimination. At a great political and socioeconomic disadvantage from other communities at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Shi'a community, had been led by *Zu'ama* (local notables basing their leadership on the control of patron-client relationships in the community) who were more interested in maintaining the feudal system, which supported their traditional clan leadership. The Zu'ama viewed their representation in the parliament as a means by which they could maintain their patron-client relationships. Moreover, their participation early on in the institutions of Greater Lebanon was eased by the French premeditated policy toward the Shi'a that officially recognized the Shi'a community as an independent sect and sanctioned

the Ja'fari school of jurisprudence as a governing body for Shi'a religious affairs.[22] Previously, deprived of privileges accruing to recognized religious communities in the Ottoman empire, the Shi'a had to suffer the indignation of submitting to Sunni Hanafi juridical law as a legal recourse for their personal status issues.

This lack of influence was illustrated by the reality that the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic communities continued to contest the position of the Speaker of the parliament after the National Pact was established. In fact, in 1946 the Greek Orthodox Habib Abu Chahla was elected as Speaker. Afterwards, only Shi'a have occupied this position. But all this does not mean that Shi'ites were not involved in some religious, social, and/or political activism. Some were Arab nationalists who supported King Faisal and opposed the French, while others joined secular and leftist parties. For example, the preeminent Zai'm of the South (Jabal 'Amil), Kamil al-As'ad opposed initially the French mandate and supported union with Syria. Similarly, the Shi'a notables of the Haydar family in the Beka' supported King Faisal and actively opposed the French. On the other hand, the 'Usayran family supported Greater Lebanon and became identified with the Lebanese nationalist movement. But by the late 1920s widespread support in the wider Shi'a community in both Jabal 'Amil and the Beka' for Greater Lebanon became visible as many Shi'a notables began to recognize the political value of being a considerable community in Lebanon, rather than a minority in the larger Sunni Arab world.[23] Simultaneously, the founding of Shi'a institutions enhanced the power of religious scholars and served as a vehicle for integration into the Lebanese state.[24]

Evidently, the National Pact helped bring about under special circumstances communal conciliation, and to some extent unity. But it neither fostered nor forged a national identity. It was based on a compromise guided by the false assumptions that Muslims would "Arabize" the Christians while Christians would "Lebanonize" Muslims. This also is not to say that the National Pact was supported by a majority of Christians and Muslims. Emile Edde, a rival of Khoury over the presidency, represented a deep current with variant impulses within the Maronite community, ranging from the belief of organic affiliation with the West to Christian humanist character. Besides opposing Arabism and espousing the idea of Phoeninician origin, Edde advocated a smaller Lebanon, where Christians would constitute a majority.[25] Similarly, Muslim elites, such as Abdul Hamid Karame of Tripoli and Salim Salam of Beirut, had acquiesced to the Pact and independent Lebanon not out of conviction but rather out of resignation, as they felt betrayed by the National Bloc leaders. This left a strong impulse of Syrian irredentism within the Muslim community were Syria's position on Lebanon changed. No less significant, the National Pact was concluded by Muslim and Christian elites,

leaving the masses either alienated from the process of national concilia-
tion or torn by the hybridity and multiplicity of nationalist, Syrian, and
pan-Arab ideologies.[26]

Commenting on the National Pact, Georges Naccashe, editor of the
pro-Edde *Le Jour*, published an article titled "Deus Negations Ne Font
Pas Une Nation." He wrote:

> What kind of unity can one derive from such formula? It is easy to see what
> half the Lebanese do not want. And it is easy to see what the other half
> do not want. But what the two halves actually both want-that one cannot
> see . . . The Lebanon that they stitched together was a homeland made up
> of two fifth columns . . . And in toiling to spurn both East and West, our
> leaders ended up losing their bearings . . . The folly was in having elevated
> a compromise to the level of a state doctrine . . . in having believed that
> two "No's" can, in politics, produce a "Yes" . . . A state is not the same of
> a double negative.[27]

However, remarking, in hindsight, on its historical legacy, Farid el-
Khazen wrote:

> Despite its shortcomings and "reactionary" confessional character, the
> National Pact, based on the very concept of dissent, was liberal in sub-
> stance and was the last remnant of the liberal age in Arab politics that came
> to an end at the hands of military dictators and self-styled revolutionaries.
> Nonetheless, with Lebanon's disintegration and emergence of a variety of
> post-war pacts, ranging from federation formulas to "Islamic solutions,"
> the 1943 National Pact was, and is, an indispensable preliminary working
> paper without which the reshaping of Lebanon's future is impossible.[28]

2

The Confessional System between Lebanonism and Pan-Arabism

This chapter emphasizes the precariousness of the Republic, and underscores the efforts to reform the political system as a means to strengthen national identity. However, these efforts failed as the struggle for Lebanon became torn between a strident pan-Arabism, which embraced the Palestinian cause, and a besieged Lebanonism, which became fearfully obsessed with neutrality and maintaining the status quo. Led by the man of the left Kamal Jumblat, pan-Arabism was more about removing a regime dominated by political Maronitism. The National Pact and the state collapsed, propelling a utilitarian Syrian intervention to restore communal equilibrium and preclude an Israeli intercession with the Christians.

The Precarious Republic: The 1958 Crisis

Thanks to the Khoury-Solh arrangement and the support each of them lent to the other, the Republic's early years weathered the heterogeneous impulses of a heterogeneous society. The admission of Lebanon to the newly founded Arab League in 1945 legitimized Arab official recognition of the country's independent status. Christian concerns about "Arabization" of Lebanon were mitigated by the Arab League's recognition; and Muslim concerns about a Hashemite's Greater Syria union scheme, supported by Britain, were alleviated by membership in the League.[1] Similarly, the emergence of a mercantilistic Lebanon at the hands of Christian oligarchs did not alienate the Muslim traditional leadership, which benefited either from the capitalist economy or from the confessional system that maintained feudalism as a means to sustain patron-client relationships. No less significant, the merchant Republic enjoyed a proverbial freedom and stability at a time when Arab societies were succumbing to military dictatorships. But the winds of change were in the air.

The emergence of Egyptian president Jamal Abd al-Nasser as the charismatic champion of Arab nationalism sent shockwaves throughout the Arab world. His bombastic rhetoric, populist style, and charismatic appeal notwithstanding, Nasser's vicarious triumph without firing a shot in the 1956 Suez crisis consecrated his Arab nationalist leadership in the eyes of Arab masses. His "Nasserist" Arab unity movement, referred locally as *al-Harakah al-Nassiriyah* (or Nasserism), resuscitated dormant pan-Arab impulses and sentiments no less in Beirut than in any other Arab capital. Lebanese Muslims zealously supported Nasser, the long-awaited pan-Arab leader.

This compelling political force posed a serious challenge to Lebanon's Christian leadership. Though President Camille Chamoun (1952–1958) tried to walk a fine line trying to accommodate Nasser without being swallowed by him, he soon internalized the enormity of Nasser's challenge to the regional order in general and to Lebanon in particular. The strand of Nasser's nationalism turned any modicum of cooperation with the West into an act of sedition. Not only did Nasserism identify with the bloc of non-aligned countries, but also with third world revolutionary (anticolonial) movements. Chamoun described Nasser as a power-hungry, expansionist dictator. At the same time, he accused Muslim leaders like Saib Salam and Abdallah Yafi among others, and Druze leader Kamal Jumblat as partisans of Nasser, blindly following his directives.[2] Chamoun also initially expressed concerns about joining the Baghdad Pact, the British anti-Soviet defense plan for a northern tier alliance, as he tried to play a mediating role between the pro-Western and pro-Nasser protagonists. But as the threat became immediate to his rule, Chamoun sided with the pro-Western axis led by Iraq. In November 1956, he replaced the pro-Egyptian government of Abdallah Yafi with Sami al-Solh's. Shortly thereafter, al-Solh's government adopted the Eisenhower doctrine, under which terms Lebanon would receive economic and military support to check Soviet expansion.[3]

Subsequently, Chamoun began to prepare for the June 1957 parliamentary elections with the objective of helping the election of his supporters, knowing well that the new parliament would elect the next president in 1958. He, obviously, contemplated amending the constitution so that he could be reelected. Alternatively, he would ensure the election of a successor who would follow his policy line. In the meantime, opposition to his rule swelled in the country. But the breaking point occurred when Syria relinquished its independence at the instigation of the nationalist Ba'th party and entered into a political union with Egypt, forming the United Arab Republic (UAR).[4] The union helped crystallize the applicability of the Nasserist vision of Arab unity for Nasser's supporters in Lebanon, who began agitating to integrate

Lebanon in Nasser's pan-Arab system. Remarking on the dire situation, Kamal Salibi wrote:

> When Syria relinquished her independent existence and united with Egypt in February 1958, the Lebanese Moslem enthusiasm for the union broke all bounds. The last traces of Moslem unity to Lebanon seemed suddenly to disappear, and it was soon clear that the Lebanese Republic stood in danger.[5]

Before long, hostilities broke out as pro-Nasser supporters rebelled against President Chamoun and his supporters. Though the Sunni political establishment spearheaded the opposition and insurrection, Shi'a, Druze, and some Christian leadership were no less adamant about overthrowing Chamoun's government. The Shi'ite leaders Ahmad al-As'ad of the south and Sabri Hamade of the Beka', the Sunnites leaders Rashid Karame of Tripoli and Saib Salam of Beirut, Druze leader Kamal Jumblat, and Christian leader Suleiman Franjieh were Chamoun's most ardent opponents. In fact, they established, under the leadership of Jumblat, the United National Front, which was immediately supported by Egypt and Syria.[6]

It is noteworthy that the zeal with which they tried to remove Chamoun was not solely rooted in the ideological conviction of Nasser's pan-Arab vision. Internal factors played no insignificant role in fueling their opposition. Upon assuming power, Chamoun tried to weaken the hold of political feudality on the system by introducing electoral reform. The parliamentary electoral system, which was based on few large electoral constituencies, allowed the Zu'ama (feudal leaders) to manipulate the system by introducing large lists in their constituencies, whereupon they guaranteed their election. Enacting electoral reform law virtually by presidential decree, Chamoun's government promulgated a new law in November 1952, marking a sharp break with the past. The country was divided into 33 electoral constituencies, thereby killing the prospects of the large list, and, by extension, the unrivalled power of the Za'im.[7] In this way, the Zu'ama had to operate and compete in several constituencies in place of the single large constituency of previous elections. In addition, the Zu'ama had to compete in mixed areas where they had few supporters. The Zu'ama perceived Chamoun's reforms in 1952 (and 1957) as an attack on their leadership. However, as Arnold Hottinger noted Nasserism offered an attractive ideology for a new generation of Zu'ama trying to maintain their local leadership.[8]

In July 1958, the political situation took a dramatic turn to the worst when the pro-British Hashemite monarchy in Iraq was overthrown by

Arab nationalists. Fearing that the crisis would spiral out of control, and given the flow of arms and Arab volunteers into Lebanon from Syria, Chamoun invoked the Eisenhower doctrine, whereupon the U.S. Marines were dispatched to Lebanon to stabilize the country.[9] Hostilities subsided but the crisis was not resolved. An initial attempt at resolving the crisis entailed the departure of Chamoun from the presidential palace and the election, following President Nasser's approval, of Commander of the Army Fouad Shehab as president.[10] To Chamoun's chagrin, Shehab tried to maintain the unity of the army by keeping it above the fray of sectarian violence. Yet, he managed to prevent the overthrow of Chamoun's government without resorting to force.[11] Nevertheless, this attempt backfired as soon as the Christian community became aware that the new government would be controlled by Nasserist insurgents.

Consequently, the pro-Chamoun paramilitary cadres of the Christian nationalist Kataeb party (Phalange), whose Lebanonism ideology could be traced to Maronite clergymen and lay thinkers of preindependence Lebanon, took to the streets and effectively paralyzed the capital. Bloody sectarian strife ensued causing the downfall of the three-week old government of Rashid Karame. This counterrevolution, as it was dubbed, led to a political compromise under the term "No Victor, No Vanquished," and to the creation of a four-man salvation cabinet, which included the leader of the Phalange party Pierre Gemayel.[12] To the unsusceptible eye, the crisis was over.

To Jumblat, the true revolutionary man of the left, the "revolution ended where it should not have ended."[13] As far as he was concerned "the true causes of the recent Lebanese revolution still stand and cannot be treated except by means that are revolutionary in spirit and program."[14] This was so telling before the spark of civil war in 1975, reflecting both the precarious nature of the Republic and the conviction of revolutionary change.

ATTEMPT AT REFORM AND NATIONAL UNITY

Upon his assumption of the presidency, Shehab was adamant about nurturing a sense of national unity in Lebanon. He felt that the most glaring injustice of the confessional system, about which Muslims and Druzes consistently complained, had been related to the disproportionate representation of the Christians in the administration. In response, he adopted a reformist policy of enforcing equal representation in all administrative posts between Christians on one side and Muslims and Druzes on the other.[15] This policy was well received by the Muslim leadership, who initially supported Chehab for keeping the army neutral in the 1958 crisis. This policy became the hallmark of his regime.

However, true that this policy had, broadly speaking, a wholesome effect on the country; yet it was criticized by some as keeping competent Christians out of civil service and by others as favoring the Sunnis over the Shi'ites since the former had been more advanced than the rural Shi'ites.[16] Nevertheless, this policy was not the only tool President Shehab used to promote reform and national unity. He, simultaneously, initiated a plan to develop Lebanon, focusing on underdeveloped rural areas, which stood in stark contrast to cosmopolitan Beirut. Neglected Muslim areas, especially in predominant Shi'a towns and villages, benefited from this public works' policy. In addition, he enhanced and organized the president's office in a way so as to curb the influence of political leaders on the country's developmental plans and to make it administratively efficient and capable to handle the regime's reform policies.

Significantly enough, Shehab's policy of reform and deepening communal loyalty to Lebanon was both and at the same time supported and undermined by a Deuxieme Bureau (Military Secret Service). According to Walid Phares the "real decision-makers of the government were the members of the Second Bureau under the strict directives of the president."[17] President Shehab believed that in order to introduce and implement reforms he needed to rule the country with firmness.[18] He, through the Deuxieme Bureau, put the country's movements and parties under surveillance, and maintained close watch of the Palestinians. The Christian leadership of Camille Chamoun and Emile Edde (and son Raymond) complained that Shehab's regime undermined Lebanon's democracy and civic rights. What truly lay behind this attitude was their chief concern that Shehab's major containment efforts were directed at them. The Phalangists, who had adopted a progressive program in line with a doctrinal modification, supported and collaborated closely with Shehab's regime to the chagrin of Chamoun and Edde. As John Entelis observed, underlying their program was the recognition that Lebanon needed a gradual social change to avoid violent resolution of Lebanon's multifaceted sociopolitical problems.[19] This coincided with the Phalange's attempt at de-emphasizing the Phoenician component of their nationalist Lebanonist ideology, in the interest of being a party representing a broad cross-sectarian segment of the population.

Shehab's term came to an end in 1964, but his allies and supporters in the parliament were able to elect a Shehabist, Charles Helou, as president. Though Helou sought to continue with the reformist policies of his patron, his term was marked by a deep political polarization that not only put a stop to the path of reform, but also hardened the will of the protagonists to dig in their political and sectarian trenches.

THE OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR: THE COLLAPSE
OF THE STATE AND NATIONAL PACT

It was under these circumstances that the Phalange party moved away from the Shehabist line in the direction of Edde's National Bloc and Chamoun's Liberal Nationalist Party. This was illustrated in the creation of the *al-Hilf al-Thulathi* (Tripartite Alliance) as a response to a systemic threat. According to John Entelis the *Hilf*, an alliance of the Phalange, National Bloc, and Liberal Nationalist Party was the result of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war.[20] But the *Hilf*, as it rallied its forces in support of the state and to counter leftist and pan-Arabist forces, found its political expression in refusing political concessions and asserting Christian prerogatives as a form of guarantee for Christian security and freedom. One of its first manifestos was to oppose Arab demands for the suspension of diplomatic relations with the West, especially United States, for its support of Israel during the war.[21] Apparently, the *Hilf* sought to pursue a policy of neutrality in the cold war in general and in the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular, countering the centrifugal forces of pan-Arabism exerted no less by leftists than by pan-Arabists including the traditional Sunni leadership. This tug of war manifested in the parliament where the *Hilf* persisted in scuttling any attempt for political reform while at the same time challenging the efforts of Sunni prime ministers Abdullah al-Yafi and Rashid Karame to involve Lebanon in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As Walid Phares noted: "This debate over the political system continued to be at the heart of Lebanon's internal conflicts."[22]

This charged political atmosphere steadily intensified as clashes between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese army became frequent, leading Prime Minister Rashid Karame to boycott presidential meetings with Helou throughout most of 1969. A settlement, under pressure from Nasser, was brokered whereby the PLO under the Cairo agreement was allowed to organize militarily for self-defense. This only whet the appetite of the pan-Arabists and leftists to press their demands; only to be challenged by the Christian leadership that favored maintaining the status quo and noninterference in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As Elie Salem pointed "Palestinian activism in Lebanon in the 1970s coincided with Sunni activism to secure more for the prime minister's office and to make representation in parliament on a 50–50 basis."[23] Simultaneously, the Palestinian question had become the focus of the Arab nationalist ideology. This deepening political polarization, accompanied by renewed sporadic clashes between the Lebanese army and Phalangists on one side and Palestinians and their Muslim supporters on the other, soon imploded into an ethnic civil war, driven no less by political grievances than revolutionary actions and programs. The state

collapsed and the National Pact failed again to contain the impulses and demands of the protagonists.[24]

The civil war initiated the process of dividing Lebanon along heavily armed sectarian lines, and as the war intensified Lebanon posed a security problem for Syria as partition of Lebanon could well become de jure. Driven by Muslim and Palestinian pressure, the Maronites could well be provoked to declare their own independent state, opting for close cooperation with Israel.[25] More than any pan-Arabist leader, the Druze, quasifeudal, enigmatic, man of the left, Kamal Jumblat, led the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), the mainstay of the Muslim camp. The *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (Islamic Association), the then only organized Islamist organization, supported the LNM (see chapter 3); but given its weak base of support in contrast to leftist and pan-Arabist militias, it limited its military activities to fighting the Christians in north of Lebanon, mainly the Zugharta region, near its power base in Tripoli.[26]

Jumblat abhorred Maronite privileges in Lebanon and sought to overthrow Maronite hegemony over the Lebanese system. In fact, the LNM's Reform Program, announced in August 1975, aimed at changing the political system. It proposed complete secularization by eliminating sectarianism from the whole system and opening the three highest offices in the land to all communities.[27] Significantly, Jumblat perceived the Maronites as central players in a U.S. and Zionist conspiracy against Lebanon and the Arabs in general. According to him, the Maronites strove to cut Lebanon off from its Arab surroundings in the hope of creating a "Christian Zion" called Lebanon, serving to undermine Arab unity. Thus, according to Jumblat, the "battle of the National Movement was to save Lebanon and its Arabism and to reaffirm Lebanon's commitment to the Palestinian cause, foiling the Phalangist conspiracy."[28] In fact, Jumblat, in the name of Arabism, was recruiting the PLO to fight his war against the Christians. This posture was grist for the mill of the PLO, which eventually became a decisive player in Lebanon's civil war.

Soon enough, President Asad was alarmed at the shift in the military balance in favor of the LNM. He feared that a victory of the left and the PLO would bring in Israel's intervention on behalf of the Maronites. Asad called on Jumblat and Arafat to stop their offensive. In March 1976, Asad had a long stormy meeting with Jumblat during which the latter refused to obey a Syrian request for an immediate cease-fire. Jumblat recalled the meeting in his posthumously published memoirs:

> The Syrian president misunderstood our intentions. He would not accept the refusal regarding the cease fire . . . The struggle which had turned from defensive to offensive was very important to [the National Movement], we could not let the opportunity of turning the confessional organizations

into secular and democratic ones pass away. We say this because we could not let this historic opportunity evade us. And the revolution does not forgive you: You have to seize it the moment destiny appears propitious and victory within hand's reach.[29]

It's noteworthy that President Asad had brokered a constitutional compromise with President Suleiman Franjieh in February 1976 in the form of a Constitutional Document. The document proposed equal distribution of seats in the parliament between Muslims and Christians; the election of the prime minister by the parliament; and elimination of confessionalism in civil service appointments. Jumblat disapproved of the constitutional compromise and, as we have seen, sought to change the whole system by force. Apparently, Jumblat's call for the elimination of political confessionalism had become a rallying cry for the elimination of political Maronitism.[30]

Jumblat's contretemps with Asad and unrelenting offensive against the Christians only hardened the will of Asad to enter Lebanon and put a stop to it. No less significant, in the meantime, the prospective defeat of the Christian camp brought about a conflation of concerns among the Syrians, Israelis, and Americans that paved the way for Syria to enter Lebanon. This entrance was legitimized by a formal Christian invitation, the result of a Christian stoic resignation due to their untenable position. On the night of May 31, 1976, Syrian armored columns crossed the border into Lebanon, dashing the hopes of the left to transform the country's confessional system.[31] The irony for the LNM was that Syria, the champion and cradle of Arab nationalism, dealt a severe blow to Arab nationalism.

The intervention of Syrian troops in Lebanon and their ensuing clashes with LNM's forces to adjust the military balance heaped opprobrium on President Asad coming from the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Arab leaders. Unfazed, Asad managed to wrest an agreement from the Arab League and the LNM under which terms Syrian troops would enter the capital as part of an "Arab Deterrent Force." In November 1976, Syrian troops entered west Beirut, and a couple of months later in January 1977 they entered east Beirut. The civil war was declared over. In fact, this marked the beginning of a new phase in the war for Lebanon. Not only did the major disputes among the antagonists remained unresolved but also became affected by new developments.

The Disillusion: The Shi'a Awakening and the Israeli Connection

It did not take long for the Christian leadership, which metamorphosed into the Lebanese Front, to frown upon Syrian intervention in Lebanon.

This was more pronounced among the new generation of Christians who led the Christian militias, namely Bashir Gemayel of the Phalange and Dany Chamoun of the Tigers, the Liberal Nationalist Party's militia. More importantly, Christian leaders, including Pierre and Bashir Gemayel and Camile Chamoun, began sounding the death knell of the National Pact and, even, pondering the question as to whether the formation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 was a grave error.[32] Against this backdrop of uncertainty, Bashir, thanks to his charisma and military power, was able to move the Christian camp into the direction of Israel for support. This new alliance stemmed from Bashir's realization that Lebanon's sovereignty could not be restored so long as Syrian and Palestinian troops remained on its soil and from his recognition that without American or Israeli intervention his forces could not force Syrian troops from Lebanon.[33] Before long, Bashir had established a strong relationship with Israel to the chagrin and infuriation of Syria. But this did not mean that Christian leaders were behind Bashir's policies. In addition to his brother Amin, Phalange politburo members expressed reservation about the alliance. Commenting on the policy of the Christian leadership, Karim Pakradouni, a Phalangist ideologue and politburo member, in an article published in *Le Monde* on August 8, 1978, warned that the two errors to be avoided were, one, to assume that the Syrians could be or even needed to be evicted by force, and, two, to ally with Israel and risk becoming an Israeli "kibbutz," something probably not even the Israelis wanted.[34]

Meanwhile, chafing over the Maronites' close cooperation with Israel, Syria decided to whittle away at Maronite power and began a process of rapprochement with the Muslims and Palestinians. The assassination of Kamal Jumblat on March 16, 1977, the leader of LNM and outspoken critic of Syria, whose death was allegedly orchestrated by the Syrians, made the rapprochement less troublesome. Nevertheless, on April 27, 1978, the Lebanese parliament endorsed an agreement drafted by a special parliamentary committee representing all religious communities calling openly for "an end to the Palestinian and non-Palestinian armed struggle all over Lebanese territories." It also called to "forbid any armed presence other than the forces of the legitimate authority and to apply Lebanese laws and rules on the all Lebanese and all those who reside in Lebanon without any exception."[35] But this attitude made a little, if any, dent in the stormy dynamics sweeping Lebanon.

Asad, for his part, continued his infamous divide and conquer strategy while trying to cultivate special relationships with some influential members of the country's various communities. He cultivated a strong relationship with the Shi'a community, notably with Imam Musa al-Sadr, even at the expense of its traditional leadership, the Zu'ama. Admittedly, despite the fact that members of the Shi'a community had been active

in pan-Arab, leftist, and Palestinian groups and organizations, the community, broadly speaking until the second half of the 1970s, did not project the sociopolitical power commensurate with its growing number. Traditional Shi'a Zu'ama maintained more or less a hold on Shi'a politics. Nevertheless, their power began to wane with the mobilization of the community at the hands of Musa al-Sadr.

The Iranian born Shi'a cleric arrived in Lebanon in 1958 and immediately took note of the Shi'a predicament and undertook the task of improving their political and economic standing. Cognizant of Shi'a deprivation, political underrepresentation, and lack of government investment in Shi'a areas, Imam Sadr railed against Lebanese inequalities. Stressing the importance of Shi'a tradition and history, he reconciled the community's dispossession in Lebanon with Shi'a rituals that glorified sacrifice. He read into the Shi'a reality of today the inequity and injustice committed against them throughout history, emphasizing that the Shi'a community was at a crossroads and the time had come to set right their condition. Correspondingly, he inculcated in the Shi'a collective consciousness a strong commitment to bringing about a new era of politics in Lebanon based on Shi'a centrality.[36] But in doing so he did not work to delegitimize the state; rather he preferred to work within the system to reform it. He championed the rights of his community by putting pressure on the state to provide more Shi'a representation in the confessional system. At the same time, he challenged the Shi'a Zu'ama who stultified Shi'a political advancement so as to maintain their bailiwick.[37]

In order to better effectuate the transformation of his Shi'a community, he established in 1969 the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council, which aimed at representing Shi'a demands and interests before the state on a par with other sects. During his inauguration ceremony in May 1969 as first president of the council, Imam Sadr outlined his political program along seven principal points: (1) To organize the affairs of the Shi'a community and to improve its socioeconomic conditions; (2) to play an intellectually, practically, and *Jihadi* comprehensive Islamic role; (3) to strive to total unity without discrimination among Muslims; (4) to cooperate with all Lebanese sects to safeguard national unity; (5) to perform the patriotic and national duties, and to protect Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; (6) to combat ignorance, poverty, backwardness, social injustice, and moral degeneration; and (7) to support the Palestinian Resistance and to effectively take part with brotherly Arab countries in the liberation of violated land within the framework of an Arab unified strategy.[38]

Evidently, Imam Sadr, unlike Jumblat and his leftist allies, strove to improve the sociopolitical conditions of his community, without seeking to topple the system, while at the same time stressing communal cooperation in the interest of national unity. Sadr's conservative position at a

time of growing extremism sat well with the Christian leadership. Even more so with President Asad who saw in Imam Sadr a potential political ally and the Islamic legal authority to resolve the question as to whether the Alawis were Muslim Shi'a. Traditionally, Syrian Sunnis perceived the Alawis as heterodox and non-Muslim. Antagonized by Sunnis over the Alawi character of his regime at a time he was trying to consolidate his power, Asad found religious relief and political expediency in Imam Sadr issuing a fatwa (religious opinion) asserting that Alawis are Twelver Ja'fari Muslims.[39] But drastic developments were rapidly unfolding in Lebanon, particularly in the south, the abode of Sadr and the majority of the Shi'a, that affected Sadr's intercommunity openness.

The extraterritorial status granted by the Cairo agreement to the PLO served to sanction a growing "armed struggle," inseparable from an unruly militancy in all but in name, in large parts of south Lebanon, which became known as "Fatahland." This only intensified with the influx of thousands of armed Palestinians expelled from Jordan in the aftermath of their rebellion against the monarchy in 1970, in what came to be known as "Black September." Consequently, Israel continued its disproportionate retaliatory policy to deter Palestinian militancy, on account of which the Shi'a paid the heaviest price. Meanwhile, Iranian dissidents continued to come to Lebanon to train at the hands of Fatah and to help in the mobilization and organization of the Shi'a community.[40] Fouad Ajami remarked that "Among those who returned to Iran in 1978 were guerrillas trained by Fatah in Lebanon, including Mohammad Ghazani, the future Islamic Oil Minister; Ayatollah Ali Janati, who had taken part in several Fatah operations against Israel. In addition, Khomeini's sons, Mustafa and Ahmad, frequently visited Lebanon and received military training in the south at the hands of Amal and Fatah."[41] In sum, southern Lebanon became the liaison between Iran and Lebanon, as well as a hotbed of militancy, Islamic activism, and deprivation. Commenting on the hybrid activities in the south, Joseph Alagha commented that "This manifested to a great deal the interlinkage that was prevalent then among the three causes: The Iranian Revolution, the Palestinian struggle, and the process of Shi'ite mobilization in Lebanon."[42]

It was against this background that Imam Sadr (together with Greek Catholic Archbishop Gregoire Haddad) established *Harakat al-Mahrumin* (the Movement of the Deprived) in 1974 to alleviate the suffering of all deprived, regardless of sect. But as sectarian militancy intensified, the Movement of the Deprived developed into a Shi'a movement, providing an alternative to non-Shi'a movements and parties. And before long, Imam Sadr founded a militia *Afwaj al-Muqawamah al-Lubnaniyah* (the Brigades of the Lebanese Resistance, known as AMAL). AMAL was no less an instrument of social mobilization and protest than

an instrument of armed struggle for political ends and security.[43] But, according to Marius Deeb, what eventually brought AMAL to the center of Lebanon's political arena were three factors: First, the disappearance of Imam Sadr in Libya in 1978, which became a major focus and rallying point for the community. Second, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. And third, the establishment of a Shi'i Islamic state in Iran, after Khomeini's successful overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty in February 1979, which heightened the political consciousness of the Shi'a of Lebanon *qua* Shi'a, and gave them a source of identity that transcended national borders.[44]

The grounds have been prepared for the creation of an Islamist *Jihadi* organization, whose spark came in the form of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. But, in the meantime, the government, under president of the Republic, Elias Sarkis, made an attempt at national reconciliation and reconstituting the army. On March 5, 1980, Sarkis outlined a political program of 14 points. They included (1) reestablishing Lebanese sovereignty (in collaboration with the Arab Deterrent Force) over all regions and institutions, (2) emphasizing social justice and creating the appropriate conditions to deal with the question of sectarianism in the future, (3) asserting that Lebanon is an Arab state, (4) supporting the Palestinian cause, (5) rejecting all forms of collaboration and cooperation with the Israeli enemy, and (6) recognizing special fraternal relations with Syria while assuring mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of each country.[45]

This proposal was comparable to that of Fanjieh and Asad in 1976, and was similarly resisted by the LNM. In fact, the LNM tried to resurrect its program and form popular committees to replace the government. The Muslim religious establishments adamantly opposed their efforts.[46] Before long, Israel invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982, triggering new developments and new realities. Significantly, influenced and more or less shaped by Syria and Iran, Islamic and *Jihadi* activism moved to the forefront of Lebanon's political scene, as pan-Arabist and leftist parties and groups that heretofore dominated the Muslim political arena continued their political retreat.

The fact that Israel's army had entered Beirut and none of the Arab brotherly states had come to the rescue jolted the Sunni religious establishment into reevaluating its position after eight years of fighting. Hussain Quwatli, the editor of *Dar al-Ifta*'s monthly review illustrated his community's disillusion:

> The Muslims of Lebanon were devoted to Islam and its values to a degree surpassing Lebanon, and they were devoted to Arabism to a degree surpassing the capacities of the Arab world. They attempted to act as the plenipotentiaries of Islam and Arabism. They were niggardly and negligent

about their affiliation to Lebanon. The summer of 82 showed clearly that the Muslims don't want our Islam and the Arabs are not interested in our Arabism. We have only one choice: to formulate an Islam and an Arabism to the measure of Lebanon.[47]

This newly founded Lebanese political awareness was soon overtaken by a radical Islamist movement, whose blood-spattered political ascendance was inseparable from a resistance movement that transcended national boundaries and largely defined confessional discourse. But it would be inadequate to examine the emergence of this radical Islamist movement before examining its precursor Islamist movement, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (the Islamic Association), which more or less helped create the religious-political climate conducive to the emergence of Hezbollah.

3

Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah and Fathi Yakan: The Pioneer of Sunni Islamic Activism in Lebanon

This chapter explores the ideology of Fathi Yakan, the pioneer of Sunni Islamism in Lebanon and a principal founder of the Islamist party *al-Jama'a al-Islamiya*. It also traces the establishment of *al-Jama'a* as the first organized Islamist party in Lebanon. As secretary general of *al-Jama'a,* Fathi Yakan blazed the ideological trail for Islamism's participation in Lebanon's political realm. Significantly, Yakan's political activism, in much the same vein as that of Kamal Jumblat, was also more concerned with removing Maronite hegemony over the state.

The Ideological Background of Fathi Yakan

The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, as articulated by Hassan al-Bannah and Sayyid Qutb, formed the core of the ideological foundation out of which Fathi Yakan's Islamic activism and orientation had been expressed. Yakan, like Bannah and Qutb, believed that the Islamic *Ummah* had lost its civilizational luster and become weak because Muslims had digressed from the principles and tenets of Islam as set forth by Prophet Muhammad and the righteous *salaf* (first generation of Muslims). He, like them, emphasized the early Muslim community as the political paradigm to be emulated. Nevertheless, Yakan's philosophy of Islamic activism did not neatly overlap with that of the Muslim Brotherhood, in particular that related to *Jahiliyah* (the age of ignorance before God's message to Prophet Muhammad) as expounded by Qutb.

Yakan embraced and built on the definition of al-Bannah's Islamic movement. Al-Bannah based the ideology of the Brotherhood on three principles: (1) Islam is a comprehensive system, (2) Islam emanates from, and is based on, two fundamental sources, the Koran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), and (3) Islam is applicable to all times and places.[1] He described his movement as a *Salafiyyah* message, a Sunni way, a

Sufi reality, a political organization, an athletic group, a scientific and cultural society, an economic enterprise, and a social idea. This protean exposition so as to appeal to "all men" underlined the universal program of the Brotherhood that sought to "internationalize" the movement by stressing the liberation of the whole Islamic world from foreign control and to institute an Islamic government.[2]

Yakan, a founder of the Islamic Association (*al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah*) in Lebanon, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, regarded al-Bannah as "an eternal leader, the pre-eminent one in the history of Islam in the Twentieth century...for he built a 'Da'wa' (Islamic propagation, call to Islam), created a [new] generation [of Muslims] and shook the modern history of Egypt."[3] Centering his definition of the Islamic movement on al-Bannah's ideology, he described the Islamic Association "as an Islamic movement, whose message is Islam and whose objective is to help people worship God as individuals and groups by establishing the Islamic community, which derives its rules and teachings from the book of Allah and His Prophet's Sunnah..."[4] He added that the Islamic Association

> seeks (1) to propagate clearly and wholesomely to the people the call for Islam, as related to the problems of the era and the requirements of the future, (2) to organize, educate, and nurture those who responded to the Da'wa as the vanguard...to forge an Islamic public opinion, (3) to confront the challenge of Western civilization, and (4) to rally the different Muslim sects by going back to the fundamentals of Islam.[5]

In much the same vein, like al-Bannah, Yakan considered Islamic activism as essential since Islam had been fighting a fateful battle. But he leaned more toward the actionable ideology of Qutb to face the challenges of this fateful battle. Building on Abu al-A'la Mawdudi's reinterpretation of the Muslim term *Jahiliyah* (the age of ignorance before God's message to Prophet Muhammad), Qutb transformed the designation of the term from a historic period to a condition that can exist at any time. He described *Jahili* society as "any society other than the Muslim society...a society which does not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas, in its observances of worship, and in its legal regulations. According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are Jahili."[6] He also identified what he termed as the so-called Muslim societies as *Jahili* societies. He explained:

> We classify them among Jahili societies...because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe in the Unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life.[7]

Qutb buttressed his dogmatic view of *Jahiliyah* by asserting that God alone possesses *Hakimiyah* (sovereignty) and that God alone is to be obeyed. Correspondingly, any ruler who does not govern by what God has mandated lapses into *Jahiliyah* and thus is to be resisted. Under this condition, Resistance takes the form of *Jihad*.[8]

Yakan apparently believed in Qutb's *Jihadist* ideology as he centered the methodology of Islamic activism on the *Hakimiyah* of God. He underscored the notion that the fundamental specificity of the methodology of Islamic activism is *Hakimiyah Allah* (God's Sovereignty), which can be accomplished by way of the Koran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). From these two fundamental sources, al-Shari'a (Islamic law) places people on an equal footing, where no one is better than another except for his/her *Taqwa* (devoutness) to God. According to Yakan, this "Godly" methodological Islamic activism is superior to any temporal methodology because it is worldly and flexible and can grasp the multiple, diverse, and multifaceted problems of life.[9]

He also made uprooting *Jahiliyah* a focal point of Islamic activism. Yakan believed that the existing political and economic system, complemented by a secular and materialistic ideology, threatened the very existence of Islam as a global paradigm of thought and way of life. He emphasized, as a priority of Islamic activism, the destruction of this *Jahili* system and society and setting up in its stead an Islamic society.[10]

But, unlike Qutb who called for a break between Muslims and *Jahiliyah*, Yakan, believing in a gradualist strategy of activism, rejected Qutb's "isolation" as harmful to the comprehensive objective of Islam: The transformation of *Jahili* society into an Islamic community. Qutb asserted that "there would be a break between the Muslim's present Islam and his past *Jahiliyah*…as a result of which all his relationships with *Jahiliyah* would be cut off and he would be joined completely to Islam."[11] Yakan, despite his assertion that Islamic transformation of all *Jahiliyah* aspects is fundamental, defined Qutb's isolation as psychological. He believed that Islamic activism and *Da'wa* (call to Islam) are not possible if one is physically isolated. He explained that "psychological isolation and uplifting of faith in the course of the vastness of *Jahiliyah* detects fakeness and confronts wickedness…but work, movement, interaction, and Da'wa are not possible in isolation or seclusion."[12]

One could deduce from Yakan's postulations that, in spite of the fact that he believed in Qutb's *Jihadist* ideology, he typified *Jihad* more in terms of transformational than radical (revolutionary) activism. This does not mean that Yakan condemned *Jihad* as a form of Resistance; rather, he based his activism in the Islamic variegated situational context according to which his tactical efforts to uproot the *Jahili* society are best served. Generally speaking, Yakan linked his Islamic activism to two operationalized concepts: *al-Mabda'iyah* (principium) and *al-Marhaliyah*

(Periodicization/Gradualism). According to Yakan, *al-Mabda'iyah* means "we should always be bonded to the principal objective of our existence as Muslims which is to make people worship God," whereas *Marhaliyah* in Islamic activism means "to advance gradually from one step to another and to move from one stage to another...but within *al-Mabda'iyah's* circle."[13]

This approach led some Muslim scholars either to assume that Yakan's Islamic activism is ambivalent or not in line with the Muslim Brotherhood's actionable ideology and activism.[14] In fact, Yakan's ideology and praxis manifested themselves in his attitude toward *Jihad* as related to Palestine and Osama bin Laden and toward the Islamic Association's participation in Lebanon's realm of politics.

Yakan emphasized that the Palestine question is one of the highest priorities and duties for Muslims. He added, "The truth is military Jihad is a duty prescribed by Islam to venerate this religion..."[15] Significantly enough, speaking about Bin Laden on the Arabic *al-Jazeera* television station, Yakan stated:

> There is no doubt that sheikh Osama bin Laden has a high level of faithfulness, trustworthiness, and transparency. He is faithful to his religion and to Jihad for the elevation of the word of Allah...This man has a pure, honest and believing personality. He defends all that belongs to Islam and who renounces anything that is not Islamic, and therefore, he is a man after my own heart.[16]

In response to a question about Bin Laden's terror attacks, Yakan commented: "If we examine the ideology of al-Qaeda and Bin Laden in depth, we see that he has become completely convinced that the only way to curb the disease that is afflicting the Islamic world...The only way to stop this octopus is to crush the serpent's head." Then, answering the question as to whether he shared Bin Laden's opinion, Yakan stated:

> It's fine with me. I might have crushed the serpent's head in a different way. I might have crushed it by means of the Islamic resistance in South Lebanon, by attacking Israel. But Bin Laden said: "No, I will strike it in the World Trade Center, and shake its economic status." This is his methodology, and he should bear responsibility for it, but I am not sad or depressed that this happened, and I do not condemn it. In all honesty, I have never condemned this. Just like it had negative ramifications, it had positive ones as well.[17]

But more than anything else, Yakan's ideology and praxis manifested themselves in *al-Jama'a's* gradual but growing activism in Lebanon, marking Sunni Islamic activism in Lebanon's confessional system and politics.

Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah: The Birth and Early Stage of Activism

First signs of Islamic activism transpired in Lebanon in the aftermath of the Palestinian debacle in 1948. A Muslim activist from Yafa (born in Beirut in 1933), Muhammad Umar al-Da'uq, distressed by the Arab defeat in Palestine, fled to Beirut, whereupon he established the Muslim organization Jama'at Ubad al-Rahman. His organization reflected his belief that the loss of Palestine was linked to the distance of Muslims from their religion and that it was imperative to prepare the future generation of Muslims to reclaim Palestine. He set about to bring Muslims back to "Islam as a faith, dogma, way of life, and moral values inspiring the spirit of Jihad and sacrifice."[18] He based his propagational (Da'wa) activity on the educational, cultural, ethical, and spiritual tenets of Islam. By the early 1950s, his propagational activity reached many majority Sunni cities and towns, including the capital of North Lebanon, Tripoli, where a center for Jama'at Ubad al-Raham was opened.

Born in Tripoli in 1933 to a conservative Muslim family, Yakan, impressed by al-Da'uq's educational and cultural Da'wa, joined his organization.[19] Around the same time, Mustafa al-Siba'i, the superintendent of the *Al-Ikhwan* (Muslim Brotherhood) in Syria moved to Beirut following the outlawing of *Al-Ikhwan* and the arrest of many of its cadres by the Syrian Shishakli regime in 1952.[20] Invited by Muslim associations to Tripoli, including *Jam'iyyat Makarim al-Akhlaq al-Islamiyyah,* al-Siba'i organized a series of lectures and forums that were well received. It was during these lectures and forums that Yakan came to know and forge a friendly relationship with al-Siba'i. Yakan was moved by al-Sibai's Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and dedication to "liberating the Islamic nation from foreign rule" and "establishing a free Islamic state."[21] It is believed that this exposition of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood against the backdrop of tribulations that the Muslim world was going through instigated Yakan and his colleagues in *Jama'at Ubad al-Rahman* to move beyond Islamic cultural and educational activism.

At the same time, Da'uq wanted his organization to remain involved only in the Islamic cultural and educational fields so as to shield it from the lethal confrontation between Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood. Yakan and his colleagues considered such a limited course of action as too inadequate to withstand the challenges facing the Muslim *Ummah*. Hence, they decided to found a movement similar to the Muslim Brotherhood. Reportedly, this movement began its activities in 1957 under the name of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (Islamic Association), though it was officially licensed by Lebanon's Interior Ministry on June 18, 1964.[22]

Yakan, as a principal founder and first secretary general of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah*, initially focused on building the hierarchy and structure

of the organization, and expanding its base of support. In as much as he actively propagated the objectives and paramountcy of *al-Jama'a* in Tripoli and other Sunni majority cities and villages he relied on publicity, especially Islamic literature organs to disseminate the organization's ideology and views to laymen and students.[23] It is noteworthy that *al-Jama'a* was then trying to compete with leftist and pan-Arabist organizations, especially Nasserist forces, which had a large repertoire of literature and wide public appeal. In fact, this period was marked by a sharp hostility to all Islamists from Nasser and his political forces throughout the Arab world. Commenting on this condition, Yakan sarcastically commented that "everything was permissible in Lebanon except Islamic activism or the Islamic Association."[24]

Still, during its incipient formative stage in 1958, the Islamic Association, despite its reservation about Nasser's harsh policies against the Muslim Brotherhood, decided to stand on the side of pan-Arab, Nasserist forces against the pro-Western Christian forces. They aligned themselves with pan-Arabist leader Rashid Karame and opened offices for recruitment and training in Tripoli, let alone a radio station, *Sawt Lubnan al-Hur* (The Voice of Free Lebanon), to drum up Muslim mass public opinion. This early episode in the history of the Islamic Association foreshadowed the organization's political stances in confessional Lebanon.

However, this sharp thrust in domestic affairs did not entail a formulation of the Islamic Association's political program. In fact, throughout the 1960s, at the height of the Arab cold war, the organization preoccupied itself with educational, cultural, and philanthropy projects in order to expand its base of support and propagate its message to the Muslim community. This went hand in hand with the *al-Jama'a*'s efforts to improve and strengthen its relationships with Islamic associations and groups, in particular the country's *Dar al-Ifta'* (office of legal opinions), which handled personal status matters and *waqf* (religious endowments) under the supervision of the grand mufti of the Lebanese Republic.[25]

It is in this spirit of making the Islamic Association known to as many Muslims as possible, as well as to propagate its message, that it nominated Muhammad Ali Dinawi as a candidate for Tripoli for the 1972 parliamentary elections. Correspondingly, it did not devise any political program or agenda, though this running for a seat in the parliament marked the first attempt by the Islamic Association to participate in Lebanon's politics.[26]

Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah and the Lebanese State

The Islamic Association's detachment from Lebanon's political system was soon overshadowed by the country's civil war. It mobilized its members and created a militia *al-Mujahidun* and a radio station *Sawt al-Mujahidun* (Voice of the Mujahidun). Throughout 1975 and most of 1976, *al-Mujahidun*

fought on the side of leftist, pan-Arabist forces against the Christians. But unlike other parties, the Association decided to dismantle its militia and move away from military activism. According to a leader and cofounder of the Association, Zuhair al-Abidi, "the Association voluntarily left this diabolical game…for it is not the work it believes in."[27] On a closer look, however, it appears that the entrance of Syrian troops in summer 1976 into Lebanon had changed the dynamics of the civil war, as they initially battled pan-Arabist and leftist forces led by Druze leader Kamal Jumblat. This direct Syrian involvement in Lebanon posed then a conundrum for the Islamic Association, for it neither had a political position vis-á-vis the state nor a political program defining its activities and vision for the state. Even more so, it was fighting on the side of pan-Arab and leftist forces with which it had serious ideological conflict given its Islamist nature.

In hindsight, the Islamic Association's experience in Lebanon's civil war compelled it to define its outlook toward the state, as it was evidenced by the publication in 1979 of Yakan's *al-Masa'la al-Lubnaniyah min Manthur Islami* (The Lebanese Question from an Islamic Perspective). Though falling short of outlining a political program for the Islamic Association's participation in Lebanon's politics, the book expressed in painstaking details the organization's perspective on Lebanon as a state and a confessional system.[28]

Yakan, secretary general of the Islamic Association, believed that there is a "contradiction in the confessional belonging that made Lebanon throughout its history conducive to explosion."[29] He explained that the French mandate gave the Maronites an upper hand over the other communities by according them prerogatives that instituted Maronite ascendancy in all state matters. As such, the confessional system, which gave the Maronites political hegemony over the state, produced a confessional bureaucracy and administration that consigned to the Maronites the top positions in the state, beginning with the presidency.[30] This contradiction, Yakan added, coincided with another one reflected in the various political currents in Lebanon, spanning the gamut from capitalism, Islamic, reactionary, progressive to communism. This made the allegiance of the Lebanese not to Lebanon, making the state incapable of imposing its authority on the Lebanese. This is so because the state itself is a bloc of contradictions.[31] Subsequently, Yakan railed against this confessional system that did not give the Sunnis the rights that demonstrate their active participation in governing the state. He asserted that, given the authority the Maronite president had over the Sunni prime minister, the post of the prime minister was functionary and not authoritative.[32]

Yakan, significantly, short of calling outright for abrogating the "confessional system, linked the annulment of administrative confessionalism to annulling confessionalism on every level, calling for gradually subordinating all civil and non-civil positions to the logic of exchange

and equity."[33] Years later, in an interview with *Al-Diyar*, Yakan claimed that the Islamic Association was the first to pose the question of abrogating "political confessionalism (political sectarianism)" back in 1975, because the crises and civil wars tearing Lebanon apart were inherent in the prerogatives granted to one community at the expense of all other communities.[34]

Yakan, in providing the background of the Lebanese crisis, maintained that behind every crisis in the region including that of Lebanon was the failure of temporal regimes to provide stability, justice, and freedom for human beings. He added that "peoples governed by Islam did not know extremism as all lived peacefully and securely in the shadow of the Islamic state."[35] He bolstered his statement by professing that *Dhimmi* people (protected Christians and Jews under Islamic rule) had all rights under Islamic law. Regarding the *Jizya* (tax), which the *Dhimmis* were required to pay to the Islamic state for protection, Yakan averred that once Christians sought to fight alongside Muslims the *Jizya* would be lifted.[36]

Finally, Yakan, taking into consideration the background of the causal factors of Lebanese crises, concluded that as a first step the solution, which could dissolve the deep-seated contradictions in the Lebanese entity, lies in the fusion of Lebanon into a bigger entity. In other words, Lebanon should go back to what it used to be before 1920: A part of Bilad al-Sham (Syria).[37]

The first impression of Yakan's solution to Lebanon's crisis leads one to observe that Yakan was as much a pan-Arab nationalist as Islamist. On closer examination, however, Yakan's ideology and gradualist approach (*Marhaliyah)* underline with no uncertainty his solution to the Lebanese crisis. Although this book did not outline a political program for the Islamic Association, it revealed the depth of the Association's opposition to Lebanon's confessional system as headed by the Maronites. This opposition was more about Maronite prerogatives (*Imtiyazat*) than about the confessional system. It follows from this that the Islamic Association did not call for the creation of an Islamic state on account of the presence of multiple confessions (communities) in the state, but it sought union with Syria as a means to strip the Maronites their privileges. For Yakan, this was a first step in a long-term gradual process to bring about the objectives of the Islamic Association. At the same time, the arguments and concerns proffered in the book about the secondary status of Sunni political and administrative power in Lebanon only helped to underscore the necessity for the Islamic Association to address this intolerable situation. No less significant, the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, besides inspiring Yakan and Islamists alike, added a sense of urgency for the Islamic Association to ponder and address the nature of Islamic activism in Lebanon.

The Nature of Islamic Activism in Lebanon

Deliberating the rationale and nature of Islamic activism at a time of political upheaval in Lebanon, Yakan published *Abjadiyat al-Tasawor al-Haraki lil-'Amal al-Islami* (The Elementary Facts of the Conceptual Movement of Islamic Activism) in 1981, which complemented his previous book on Lebanon. Yakan, as secretary general of the Islamic Association, justified Islamic activism in Lebanon within the contextual framework of how to reconcile the *Mabda'iyah* of Islamic activism with the *Marhaliyah* of Islamic activism. He recognized that (1) cultural pluralism and sectarian and party affiliations did not provide the appropriate grounds for establishing any ideological rule, be it Christian, Islamic, or leftist; (2) the public and economic structure of Lebanon was not adequate to create a state, let alone an ideological one; and (3) the Lebanese arena was not appropriate to achieve the principal objective of Islamic activism—the creation of an Islamic state. Correspondingly, Yakan emphasized that the gradualist work of Islamic activism should focus on (1) maintaining the unity of Lebanon and preventing its fragmentation into sectarian and ethnic ministates, (2) protecting Lebanese life from moral depredations and intellectual impairment so as to save the [future] generations from Westernization and secularism, and (3) taking advantage of profound social problems as proof of the failure of temporal regimes, thereby affirming that the fundamental solution was the return to Islam.[38]

In sum, Yakan justified Islamic activism in Lebanon on the grounds of saving Muslims. But in responding to the charge of this Islamic activism meant partnering with non-Muslims in governance, Yakan made the distinction between participation of Muslims and participation of Islam. He explained that participation did not mean participating of Islam in the rule of temporal regimes, nor was it the alternative to Islamic rule. Rather, the intention of participation (and its proposals) was to relieve Muslims from oppression and salvage their rights, while at the same time strengthening their social, economic, political, and military positions in order to better confront Westernization and degeneracy.[39]

Yakan, apparently, while calling for the abrogation of "political confessionalism," supported "equal participation" in Lebanon so as to check and prevent non-Muslim's monopoly of power, which in his opinion meant the extraction and dissolution of Islam.[40] However, Yakan's deliberations on Islamic activism blazed the ideological trail for Islamism's participation in Lebanon's realm of politics. But for the next few years this stance remained a theoretical practice, if only because Lebanon descended in the chaos and strife of a new civil war phase, whereby the struggle for the state became linked with domestic and regional considerations and concerns.

The Reassertion of Sectarianism and the Rise of Islamism

This chapter describes Lebanon's further descent into civil strife and war, and underscores the failed attempts at national reconciliation. It examines the sociopolitical and ideological context out of which the Shi'a Islamist party Hezbollah emerged and the ways in which the Party of God navigated the stormy waters of Lebanon's civil war, against the background of Israel's invasion of Lebanon and Iran and Syria's response to the invasion. It surveys Syria's approach to the PLO and its alliance with anti-Syrian Islamists in Tripoli. It also contextualizes the creation of a framework of cooperation between Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the way in which this cooperation played out in relation to Lebanon's communal groups and systems.

Khomeini, Asad, and the Birth of the Party of God: Hezbollah

Coinciding with Imam Musa al-Sadr's political mobilization of the Shi'a community, two other religious scholars, Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine and Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, played no less significant a role in the Shi'a awakening in Lebanon, all of which helped to invigorate Islamic thought and activism. Trained in Najaf seminaries, Ayatollah Shamseddine distinguished himself as a religious scholar who wrote about Islamic thought and Islamic political culture partly as a response to the growth of communism and secularism.[1] His work in Lebanon served to underscore and nurture Shi'a culture and education. He chaired the Cultural and Charity Association, which produced the set of "Cultural Direction" educational booklets. Subsequently, the Association expanded its activities by establishing auxiliary institutions, the most significant of which was the Islamic Institution of the Arts.[2] Shamseddine also served as the deputy director of the Supreme

Islamic Shi'a Council, a position that thrust him at the forefront of Shi'a sociopolitical work in the aftermath of the disappearance of Imam Sadr. Nonetheless, he positioned himself at an equal distance from all Shi'a groups. Naim Qassem remarked, Shamseddine's view of the council's role was that of "taking all of the Shi'ite congregation's divergent influences under its wings."[3]

Ayatollah Sayyid Fadlallah, a distinguished Najafi scholar as well, initially focused on cultural and educational work and preaching. He traveled and lectured throughout the country and held regular religious classes in the capital and its suburbs. He initially founded the Brotherhood Association in Naba'a in east Beirut, along with a cultural center, a mosque, a religious school, and a dispensary. During the civil war, he moved to the southern suburbs of Beirut, where he led mosque prayers at the Imam al-Rida mosque. He, then, founded the Association of Philanthropic Organizations, which included educational, religious, and social institutions.[4] His stance toward Israel's invasion of Lebanon, as we shall see, helped align various Islamist strands and groups and legitimize *Jihad* against Israel Defense Forces (IDF).[5]

While these religious scholars formed the crucible of Shi'a activism, religious scholars from Qum and Najaf, who studied under the supervision of Ayatollah Muhammad Baqer al-Sadr and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, helped flow Shi'a activism out of the crucible. By serving as imams of mosques and establishing *Hawzat* (circles of learning) across many villages and towns, some scholars helped deepen Shi'a Islamic thought and widen the scope of Shi'a activity.[6] Others either forged strong relationships with AMAL and/or joined the ranks or became associated with the Da'wa party in Lebanon, especially after the Ba'thi regime in Iraq clamped down on the Islamist party.[7]

The manifestation of the breadth and scope of Shi'a activism was reflected in the massive demonstrations in support of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, organized under the banner of "The Supportive Committees of the Islamic Revolution."[8] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and the disappearance of Imam Sadr in the same year only intensified this activism. When Israel invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982 the ground was already fertile to the creation of an Islamist *Jihadi* movement. Nonetheless, the Islamists of all hues did not have any organizational framework so as to support a concerted resistance movement against the IDF. Still, Islamists put up a fierce fight against the advancing IDF on the approaches of the capital, notably in Khaldeh. This fierce Islamist confrontation with the IDF, which became a prototype for military operations against Israel's occupying forces, was partly the outcome of the encouragement and

consecration of military operations against the IDF as self-defense by Ayatollah Fadlallah.[9] Nevertheless, commenting on the activities of Islamists during the initial phases of the invasion, Hassan Fadlallah said that their actions were marked by spontaneity.[10] But as the war progressed, the need to found a united Islamist organization had become immediate.

In the meantime, as a response to the Israeli invasion, the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, who had made the slogan "The Elimination of Israel from Existence" a rallying cry for Islamists, brokered an agreement with Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad under which terms a contingent of one thousand five hundred *Pasdaran* (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)) would be dispatched to Lebanon in June 1982 to train Islamist fighters to confront Israel's forces.[11] Adamant about preventing Israel and its Lebanese allies from controlling Lebanon, President Asad blessed the Iranian proposal—but not before establishing a cooperation framework that would govern the Iran-Syria-Islamist movement axis. The main points of this 1982 deal provided that (1) Damascus would secure the Beka' Valley as an operational location to host Iran's Pasdaran and set up training camps there; (2) Damascus would secure an overland route to ship Iranian weapons to these units in the Beka' Valley and other locations; (3) Tehran would provide *mujahideen* units with training and monthly salaries, as well as taking care of benefits for their families; and (4) Tehran would help organize and institutionalize the Islamist movement without devising separate plans with it.[12]

Paralleling these developments, Lebanese president Elias Sarkis formed a Salvation Committee on June 14 to deal with the grim unfolding events. The Committee included Prime Minister Chafic al-Wazan and the chief warlords in the country, Bashir Gemayel of the Lebanese Forces, Walid Jumblat of the Lebanese National Movement, and Nabih Berri of AMAL. Objecting to Berri's participation in the Committee, Berri's deputy, Hussein al-Mussawi, seceded from AMAL and established the Islamic Movement, AMAL. Similarly, AMAL's representative in Tehran, Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, split from the movement.[13]

The presence of the *Pasdaran* in the Beka' Valley only added more incentive to the Islamists not only to found a united Islamist movement, but also to unite under the banner of Ayatollah Khomeini's doctrine *Wilayat al-Faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurisprudent or Rule of the Supreme Jurist). Consequently, representatives of Islamist groups held discussions regarding their vision of Islamic activity in Lebanon. A document was produced, and nine representatives, divided into groups of three, were elected to address the convening parties: the first group represented the clerical congregation of the Beka'; the second represented the various Islamic committees; and the third represented the Islamic

Movement, AMAL.[14] The document, which came to be known as the Manifesto of the Nine, upheld the following objectives:

1. Islam is the comprehensive, complete, and appropriate programme for a better life. It is the intellectual, religious, ideological and practical foundation for the proposed organization.

2. Resistance against Israeli occupation, which is a danger to both the present and future, receives ultimate confrontation priority given the anticipated effects of such occupation on Lebanon and the region. This necessitates the creation of a *Jihad* (holy war) structure that should further this obligation, and in favour of which all capabilities are to be employed.

3. The legitimate leadership is designated to the Jurist-Theologian who is considered to be the successor to the prophet and the Imams (PBUT) [The twelve imams are descendants of Prophet Muhammad]. The Jurist-Theologian draws the general guiding direction for the nation of Islam. His commands and proscriptions are enforceable.[15]

Out of the committee of nine, a delegation led by Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi traveled to Tehran to submit the document to Ayatollah Khomeini for his approval and to pledge allegiance to him. Ayatollah Khomeini gave his approval by bestowing the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent (Juristconsult). He notified the delegation: "The import is work, your phase is Karbalite, don't expect reaping the fruit in your lifetime."[16]

Various Islamic groups adopted the Khomeini-endorsed manifesto and dissolved their organizations into one organizational framework, which later came to be known as Hezbollah or the Party of God. As such, the Islamist *Jihadi* movement was born, though it did not become public until 1985. Though it was born in Lebanon, the movement's foundation could not have been possible without Iran's ideological and military backing. Nor could it have been developed as a potent *Jihadi* movement without Syria's support.

Significantly, Khomeini's endorsement of the movement and its allegiance (*Ba'yah*) to him added not only a transnational Islamic dimension to Hezbollah, but also a *Jihadi* dimension not limited to Lebanon. Israel had become a focal point of Hezbollah's *Jihad*, the objective of which was to force Israel from Lebanon and then to eliminate Israel altogether from the region. Khomeini looked at Israel as a cancerous gland and a bacteria of corruption planted in the heart of the Muslim world to control and seize it. He admonished Muslims that "getting rid of this black colonialist nightmare cannot not be achieved but through martyrdom, steadfastness and unity of Islamic countries."[17] Significantly, he substantiated his call to eliminate Israel with Koranic verses. In a speech in which he called for a Holy *Jihad* to liberate Palestine, he began with stating excerpts of verses 191 and 193 of *Surat*

al-Baqqara: "And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for persecution [strife] is worse than slaughter...And fight them on until there is no more persecution [strife]." Then he enjoined Muslims to participate in the Holy *Jihad* against Israel.[18] Thus, in theory, Khomeini doctrinally imbued the new movement with a sacrosanct perpetual *Jihad* against Israel, irrespective of Lebanese matters and considerations. Even before the creation of Hezbollah, Khomeini was calling for *Jihad* and martyrdom to liberate Jerusalem and Muslim lands. Addressing a group of Palestinians in 1979, he exhorted them:

> Don't expect the [Arabic] governments to assist you...If you want to save Jerusalem, Palestine, Egypt, and the rest of Arabic countries from the claws of those agents and foreigners, then the peoples need to rebel...and not to wait for the intervention of governments, for they act on matters benefitting their interests. Peoples should rebel and should know the secret of victory. It is the desire for martyrdom, for peoples not to give value to life, material or animalistic life. This is the secret for the advancement of peoples...The secret which the Koran has brought.[19]

Khomeini took pride in his enmity with the United States and Israel, asserting that the "Islamic peoples and the *Mustad'afin* (oppressed, feeble) pride themselves that their enemies, who are the enemies of Almighty God, Holy Koran and cherished Islam, are predatory beasts...headed by America the terrorist...and its universal Zionist ally which commits crimes the pen shies from penning and the tongue from mentioning, driven by its foolish illusions to create greater Israel."[20] More specifically, he envisioned Hezbollah as the spearhead of the *Mustad'afin's* rebellion against the *Mustakbirin* (oppressors). Hezbollah was to be the revolutionary prototype, vanguard, and instrument to overturn the rule of the *Mustakbirin,* particularly the United States and Israel. Addressing Hezbollah's *Shura* (Consultative) Council members, Khomeini said:

> Defending the honors of Muslims, their countries, and their dignities is an essential matter. We have to prepare ourselves to achieve the divine objectives and defend Muslims, especially under these circumstances where our realistic sons of Islamic Palestine and Lebanon, i.e. Hezbollah and revolutionary Muslims in the raped lands and Lebanon, are calling "Oh Muslims," as they sacrifice their souls, and bloods, we have to resist and stay steadfast in all our moral and material powers to confront Israel.[21]

Dialogue, Confrontation, and Terror

Israel's invasion of Lebanon posed a serious threat to Syria, whose armed forces and missile batteries came under attack only a few days from the

start of the invasion on June 6, 1982. Syria's forces were pushed back far from the capital, its Surface-to-Air-Missiles (SAM) missile batteries the very symbol of its power in the Beka' were destroyed, and its intercepting air force MIG jets were humiliatingly gunned down by Israel's air force. In a matter of days, President Asad was forced to the margins of Lebanon's politics and influence. Bashir Gemayel, Israel's main ally, was elected president by a simple majority of parliamentary deputies on August 23, 1982. Meanwhile, following an Israeli bombing saturation of Beirut, an evacuation plan for the PLO and other Palestinian groups was ironed out. A Multinational Force (MNF), consisting mainly of Americans, French, and Italians, was brought to Beirut to supervise the evacuation. More indignant to Asad was Bashir's call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, putting on a par Syrian and Israeli forces.[22] It seemed as if Israel and its Maronite allies had won the day.

But events took a dramatic turn as Syria and its allies in Lebanon began to reclaim the initiative from Israel. On September 14, President-Elect Bashir Gemayel was assassinated in east Beirut by Habib Tanious Shartuni, a member of the pro-Syrian party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP).[23] The assassination was followed by the massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut. The international community heaped opprobrium on Israel and the Phalangists. In a gesture unparalleled in the Arab world, hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets demonstrating against Israel's involvement in Lebanon and the massacres.[24] Faced by internal and external pressures, the Begin government began the process of withdrawing from Lebanon, but not before signing an agreement with Lebanon.

Despite Syrian opposition, the government of Amin Gemayel, who was elected president on September 21 following the assassination of his younger brother, signed the May 17 Accord with Israel, which was approved by the parliament in June. The Accord was the closest to a peace treaty the parties could achieve. President Asad denounced the Accord and the "isolationists" who had signed it and threw all what he got in the battle to defang Gemayel and his supporters.[25] He encouraged the creation of the National Salvation Front, bringing together Lebanese factions that opposed the Accord.[26] The opposition accused Gemayel of resisting change to perpetuate Maronite privileges and advancing Israel's ambitions in Lebanon. Asad also unleashed the fury of Islamist movements in the north, the capital, and the south against Gemayel's government and the Israelis, let alone provoking AMAL into attacking Gemayel's armed forces in west Beirut, as he was trying to build the state's authority in Beirut with the help of the MNF.

Already in the fall of 1982, Hezbollah militants, who had been working underground and anonymously, stormed Ba'albeck town hall and seized Sheikh Abdallah's army barrack on Lebanese Independence Day, falling

on November 22, 1982.[27] Significantly, on November 11, Ahmad Qasir, Hezbollah's first suicide bomber, drove his explosive-laden Peugeot into Israel's headquarters in Tyre, in southern Lebanon, killing and wounding scores of Israelis.[28] Hezbollah kept a lid on the operation(s) so as to consolidate its military power beneath Israel's radar. Nonetheless, Qasir's operation opened a new phase in the struggle against Israel, marked by suicide bombings, recognized as martyrdom operations by Hezbollah and initially legitimized by Hezbollah's *Wali al-Faqih* (Juristconsult) Imam Khomeini. Subsequently, in March 1983, they confronted an army unit near Brital in the Beka', forcing the army from strategic locations there. According to a Hezbollah leader, Hasan Fadlallah, it was this military confrontation that began to circulate the name of Hezbollah for the Islamist Shi'a militants in political and military circles.[29]

However, it was in response to the signing of the May 17 Accord that the notorious confrontation between the Islamists, who operated then under various banners, mostly under the Islamic Resistance, and Lebanese authorities took place on May 17. Islamists led demonstrations initially next to Imam al-Rida mosque, in Bir al-'Abad, which subsequently turned violent and spread throughout the southern suburbs of the capital. The Islamic Resistance regarded the Accord null and void, produced by an illegal government.[30] Before long, in September 1983, AMAL joined the Islamic Resistance (Hezbollah) against the Lebanese army to wrest control of west Beirut. At the same time, once the IDF began to withdraw from areas overlooking Beirut, mainly the Shouf mountains and 'Aley, Jumblat forces, aided by the Syrians, routed the forces of the Lebanese Forces and the government that had taken positions there.

As the country descended into chaos and the authority of the state contested, Shi'a and Sunni religious and secular leaders convened on September 21 in *Dar al-Ifta'* to express their position regarding Lebanon as a nation and a state. The attendees included Grand Mufti Hassan Khalid, vice chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council, Ayatollah Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine, former prime ministers Saib Salam and Salim al-Hoss, former Speaker of Parliament Adil Osseiran, and deputy and former head of AMAL Hussein al-Husseini. Their position was issued in the form of *al-Thawabit al-Islamiyah* (The Islamic Fundamentals). On the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity, *al-Thawabit* called for the end of Israeli occupation and the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese troops. On the issue of the legitimacy and support for state institutions, they rejected all that undermined state legitimacy and the continued existence of militias. On the issue of national identity, they affirmed that Lebanon was a definitive nation for all Lebanese and that Lebanon was Arab in its affiliation. And, on the issue of the political system, they demanded the abolition of political sectarianism in all state agencies and institutions.[31]

The Christian leadership welcomed the position of the Muslim religious establishment with both content and reservation. They were happy to see the Muslims recognize Lebanon as their definitive nation; but unhappy about the Muslims' call for the abolition of political confessionalism. Islamists of all hues gave short shrift to the Islamic fundamentals and continued their militant campaign against Gemayel's government and *Jihad* against the Israelis.

However, the initiative of the Muslim religious establishment boosted the efforts of the Gemayel government to convene a National Dialogue Conference. The novelty was the invitation of the Syrian foreign minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam as an observer (along with a Saudi official) to appease President Asad. The conference took place in Geneva from October 31 to November 4, 1983. The participants, who included Amin Gemayel, Walid Jumblat, Nabih Berri, Rashid Karame, Pierre Gemayel, Camile Chamoun, Saib Salam, and Adil Osseiran, agreed mainly on the identity of Lebanon: Arab in its affiliation and identity.[32]

Meanwhile, two watershed events helped turn the tide of events decisively in Asad's favor. On October 16, an Israeli military patrol cutting through a religious procession clashed with a crowd of Shi'a who were acting out Ashura ceremonies, the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in 680 A.D. in Karbala, in the southern town of Nabatiyah. Two Lebanese were killed, but the clash roused Shi'a apprehension and disdain against the Israelis, who were initially welcomed by the same Shi'a with rice as deliverer from Palestinian unruly and disruptive presence in the south. Ayatollah Shamseddine declared a total civil resistance based on forbidding any interaction with the Israelis and spurning their agents.[33] Ayatollah Fadlallah took a broader position by calling on the "Southerners to pursue the Israelis everywhere and by all means, by bullets, rocks, and everything they could so as to create for them a political and economic crisis in every home."[34] All this was grist to the mill of the Islamic Resistance whose *Jihad* against the Israelis began to garner broader support among their community. For Asad, the more the Israelis were attacked and chased further south toward their border, the more chances he had to impose his authority over Beirut.

The other deadly event took place on October 23, when a suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden truck into the U.S. Marines barracks near Beirut International Airport, killing 241 American servicemen, the highest number of American casualties in one day prior to the September 11 terror attacks. An operation of this magnitude could not have been carried out without the support and sponsorship of a state, allegedly Iran with the connivance of Syria since its troops were deployed in Lebanon. This came in the aftermath of the U.S. Embassy bombing in

April 1983, in which high-ranking Central Intelligence Agency operatives and analysts were killed. Islamic *Jihad* claimed responsibility for the attacks, and Imad Mughniyeh was identified by intelligence agencies as the mastermind of the operations. Though the Iranian government and Hezbollah denied all involvement, enough circumstantial evidence pointed to involvement by high-ranking members of the regime in Tehran.[35] Though Hezbollah denied any link to Mughniyeh, the party came to recognize him as the leader of its *Jihad* Council following his assassination in Damascus in February 2008. The sheer magnitude of these suicide bombings turned American policy in Lebanon on its head, and soon enough the U.S. Marines (and the rest of the MNF) were redeployed to their fleet in the Mediterranean. Apparently, Asad won the battle of wills with Sharon and helped drive the Americans out of Lebanon.

Next, he turned his eyes to the capital to impose his writ there. Already, supported by Damascus, the Islamic Resistance and AMAL had been battling the Lebanese army in west Beirut. As the MNF prepared to leave Beirut in February 1984, Jumblat's militia, AMAL, and the Islamic Resistance wrested control of west Beirut from the Lebanese army in heavy fighting that left dozens dead. No less significant, the army broke down along confessional lines, as the Sixth Brigade joined AMAL. Confessional lines dividing the city reemerged, but, unlike the early years of the civil war, the Christian eastern half of the city was mired in self-denial and despair.

Following the battle of west Beirut, on February 23, Sunni leaders convened again at *Dar al-Ifta'* to readjust their position. A declaration was issued, marking in essence the alignment of the Sunni community with the opposition to President Gemayel. It called for the abrogation of the May 17 Accord, censured the army, and denounced sectarian hegemony.[36] This position reflected more the weakness of the Sunni leadership than their desire for a radical change in the political system. The leadership, such as Saib Salam, had a stake in the political system that guaranteed them political power at the highest levels of the state. Following the Palestinian evacuation from Beirut and the arrival of the MNF, it looked as though the system could be reestablished. It was, therefore, not surprising that the Sunni leadership had not aligned itself with the Syrian-backed opposition in Geneva. But once the regime lost control of west Beirut, the leadership moved away from Gemayel's government in the direction of the opposition; a position that was carried over to the second National Dialogue Conference.

Reduced to a figurehead, President Gemayel traveled to Damascus to meet President Asad (February 21–March 1, 1984) and succumb to his wishes. On March 5, to the delight of Asad, Gemayel's government abrogated the May 17 Accord.

The abrogation of the Accord paved the way for a second round of national dialogue. This time the National Dialogue Conference took place in Lausanne from March 12 to March 20, 1984. The participants were joined again by Khaddam as an observer. The conference led to nowhere beyond mainly agreeing on forming a high-security committee and a commission to draft a new constitution. Though by this time, the Islamic Resistance had become a power to reckon with, yet it preferred to sit out the political realm until the time it felt strong enough militarily and ready to withstand political wrangling and compromise.

Meanwhile, the fighting continued unabated in the south against Israel, in the capital and suburbs against Gemayel's government, and in the north against an Islamist organization that aligned itself with Arafat in the bastion of Islamism, Tripoli.

THE BATTLE FOR TRIPOLI

President Asad had harbored reservations about Arafat, based on the notion that Arafat's parochial and unilateral actions had been detrimental to Arab unity and stance vis-à-vis Israel. Conversely, Arafat had always been disquieted by Asad's attempt to control the PLO's decision-making process. During the course of Palestinian evacuation from Beirut, Asad reversed his initial position and allowed a few thousand PLO fighters to move into Syrian-controlled areas in Lebanon, mainly in the Beka', whereupon their number had doubled. Arafat had also some two thousand fighters in Palestinian refugee camps near Tripoli and in the city itself. The dire situation Asad had found himself in at the time made it all the more necessary, from his standpoint, to have a compliant PLO leadership.[37] He tried to remove Arafat by force by provoking Palestinian dissidents against him; but as the PLO stood its ground, Asad mobilized a significant force to bring Arafat into submission. Taking wind of Syrian military preparation, Arafat escaped to Tripoli and set up his headquarters in the al-Baddawi refugee camp. He also had supporters in Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, ten miles north of the city. Shortly thereafter, PLO units from the Beka' managed to follow him, escaping under the cover of night the Syrian siege.

Asad immediately feared that Tripoli might become a lightning rod for the enemies of his regime, bringing together Islamists and the PLO. The Asad Alawi regime had barely survived a rebellion by the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition to being historically connected to the heartland of Syrian towns, Homs and Hama, where the regime had faced a stiff rebellion by the Muslim Brothers in late 1970s and early 1980s, Tripoli had been a stronghold for Islamists. The Islamic Association, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, had been the most organized party in the city, though pan-Arab and leftist forces held the political upper

hand. But coinciding with Israel's invasion of Lebanon, a radical Islamic organization, *Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami* (Islamic Unity Movement) had gained ground. Significantly enough, its charismatic *Emir* (leader) attracted both pan-Arabists and anti-Syrian Islamists to the movement. In fact, a budding relationship had developed between the PLO and the Islamic Unity Movement to the chagrin and concern of Asad.[38]

Under these complex circumstances, Asad had to clip the wings of the PLO before it constituted a grave threat to his national security. He assembled a motley force of about eight thousand, and on November 3, the force moved on the Palestinian refugee camps, supported by heavy Syrian shelling. Surprisingly, Asad had an odd ally against Arafat. While Syrian forces shelled PLO units from land, Israeli gunboats, off Tripoli's coast, shelled them from sea. Apparently, Israel was adamant about forcing Arafat from Lebanon. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in about three weeks. Faced with an unrelenting and ruthless campaign against him, Arafat agreed to leave the city with his men on December 20. But the battle of Tripoli was far from over.

Overstocked with arms left by the PLO, the Islamic Unity Movement continued to chase out all pro-Syrian parties and groups from Tripoli. From 1983 to 1985, it imposed its control over the city, including introducing Shari'a law whereby, among other things, women had to wear the veil and liquor stores and clubs were forced to close.[39] But its meteoric rise in Tripoli was matched by a swift fall. The movement was born in the house of a former Islamic Association leader, Sheikh Said Sha'ban. Hashim Minqara served as his deputy. The new movement brought together various groups not all of which had an Islamic orientation. The three main groups that joined the movement were: *Harakat Lubnan al-Arabi* (The Arabic Lebanese Movement) led by 'Usmat Murad; *Al-Muqawamah al-Sha'biyah* (Popular Resistance) led by Khalil 'Akkawi; and *Jund Allah* (Army of God) led by Kan'an Naji and Fawaz Hussein Agha.[40]

The former Islamic Association leader forged close relations with revolutionary Tehran. Though he supported Khomeini's revolution and perceived him as a trailblazer for Muslims, he did not champion the implementation of Khomeini's doctrine *Wilayat al-Faqih* or his Iranian-style order in Lebanon, for he knew this would alienate his Sunni followers.[41] He perceived the Koran and the Sunnah as the foundation upon which to unite all Muslim groups and sects. He opposed the "Maronite" order, and denounced nationalism and political confessionalism. He believed that "the non-Islamic state is not legitimate because it does not govern people according to Koranic justice…and that only the belonging to the Ummah is accepted, which was chosen by God as the heir to his prophet."[42]

Despite Sha'ban's ability to rally around him various groups, his movement by 1984 began to face internal dissent, which led first to the

secession of Akkawi and then in 1985 of Naji. At the same time, the movement opened a front along a "religious" line dividing the Sunni majority Bab al-Tabaneh from the Alawi majority Jabal (or Ba'l) Muhsin. The radical Sunni movement ruthlessly fought the Alawi-led Arab Democratic Party, which was supported by Syria. By this time, President Asad had dealt a severe blow to Gemayel's government and was freed to deal with Sha'ban's movement. He rallied all pro-Syrian leftist, pan-Arab, and pan-Syrian (SSNP) parties and groups, and supported their assault on the Islamic Unity Movement. Outgunned and outnumbered the movement took a severe beating. However, it took the intercession of Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati with President Asad to save Sha'ban and stop the assault. Velayati entered Tripoli and took Sha'ban with him to Damascus, as Syrian troops entered the city. Hundreds were arrested and all signs of authority of the movement in the city were removed.[43]

As the Syrian army was forcing the movement to disarm, President Asad tried to co-opt Sha'ban by maintaining his leadership of the movement. Key commanders of the movement frowned upon Sha'ban's budding close contacts with the Syrians. On December 16, militants loyal to some of these commanders, including a prominent commander, Hashim Minqara, launched a series of attacks on Syrian checkpoints throughout the city, killing 15 Syrian soldiers. In response, Syrian forces sealed off parts of the city, including the al-Tabaneh district, where the movement was headquartered, and at dawn the next day they launched an all-out attack on the movement militants. Scores of the movement's members were arrested, including Minqara, and over two hundred were killed, some of whom, according to Amnesty International, were deliberately murdered.[44] Through persuasion and/or brute force President Asad managed to take control of the city and smother any potential threat to his regime and to his plans in Lebanon.

Interestingly enough, throughout the whole ordeal, the Islamic Association, led by Fathi Yakan, did not come to the help of the Islamic Unity Movement, partly on account of Asad's co-optation of Yakan, and partly on account of the Association's priorities: removing Maronite prerogatives and fighting Israel.[45] In fact, the Islamic Association took an active role in fighting the Israelis, as it established a significant political and military presence in the southern city of Sidon. But the banner under which the Islamists, AMAL, and Palestinians united to fight Israel concealed conflicting strategies, interests, and alliances that soon imploded in the most tragic ways. At this juncture, it would be hardly possible to understand the layered complexity that enveloped Lebanon without covering the crystallization of the vision of Hezbollah in the form of an Open Letter that served as a vehicle to its entry into Lebanon's political realm.

Hezbollah and the Political System:
The Open Letter

Commemorating the first anniversary of the assassination of a key Hezbollah leader, Sheikh Ragheb Harb, Hezbollah issued an Open Letter that introduced the party and declared its ideological, *Jihad*, political, and social visions. The Open Letter was orated on February 16, 1985, by a leader of the party, Sayyid Ibrahim Amine al-Sayyid.[46]

The Open Letter, guided by Ayatollah Khomeini's political ideological view, dichotomized the world into the oppressed and the oppressors, and presented Hezbollah (the Party of God) as the party of the oppressed, supporting the struggle of all the oppressed. It identified the members of Hezbollah as the sons of the Muslim community (*Ummah),* whose nucleus has been established by the Iranian Revolution. They abide by the wise and just command represented by the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent (*Wilayat al-Faqih)*. Correspondingly, the Open Letter specified the identity of the party as an *Ummah*, not confined to Lebanon, but tied to all Muslims. The Open Letter stated that "we in Lebanon are neither a closed organizational party nor a narrow political framework. Rather, we are an Ummah tied to the Muslims in every part of the world by a strong ideological-doctrinal, and political bond, namely Islam, whose message God completed at the hands of the last of His prophets, Muhammad."

As such, the party considered itself an indivisible part of the Islamic nation readily prepared, on the grounds of religious duty *(Wajib Shar'i),* and in light of *Wali al-Faqih's* decisions to confront all what befall Muslims. It identified the United States as the first root of vice and underscored the unremitting attack waged by America's NATO allies and the Zionist entity in the holy land of Palestine [Israel] on Muslims. It denounced the Zionist-Phalangist cooperation and specified three objectives in Lebanon: expelling the Americans and their allies; submitting the Phalanges to a just power and bringing them to justice for their crimes; and allowing the Lebanese to determine their political future and the form of their government, though enjoining them to choose Islam, which is alone capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. It called for the establishment of the Islamic state (*al-Dawla al-Islamiyyah)* in Lebanon, on the basis of free choice and not on force. Correspondingly, it condemned the Lebanese political system, even censuring any opposition that did not demand changing the very foundation of the system. It emphasized to the Christians that political Maronitism cannot guarantee for them peace, for [Maronite] confessional privileges and alliance with Israel and colonialism have been the principal causes of the great explosion that ravaged the country. In this respect, it called on the Christians to embrace Islam so as to be happy in this world and the hereafter. Otherwise, if they refuse to adhere to Islam, then they are expected to respect and honor

their covenant with the Muslims. Significantly, it called for the obliteration of Israel, rejecting any form of negotiation, settlement, proposal, or treaty with the Zionist entity. It appealed for a broad Islamic participation in the Islamic Resistance, stressing the continuity of martyrdom and *Jihad* until the Zionists evacuate the occupied lands, as a first step in the right direction to wipe them out from the face of the earth.[47]

The Open Letter reflected in no uncertain terms the radical nature of Hezbollah. Espousing the fundamentalist view of dividing the universe between good and evil forces, theirs was the vanguard of good forces. United States, Israel, and the "Maronite Regime" were the evil forces to be crushed by the hand of Hezbollah, as guided and instructed by *Wali al-Faqih*. To borrow Joseph Alagha's terminology, Hezbollah anathematized the Lebanese political system. No political reform was acceptable short of abolishing the system.[48] And no system was better than the Islamic order. The free choice to form the system was conditioned on a call for the Christians to embrace Islam. Otherwise, if they don't do so, then they should respect the covenant with Muslims. Apparently, in this Islamic order, Christians were reduced to a *dhimmi status*, according to which they would have social and religious freedom, but not political freedom. No less significant, Phalangists were to be tried for their crimes, and *Jihad* waged relentlessly against the Zionists until their obliteration.[49]

This political ideology, in contrast to that of the Islamic Association, was thoroughly fanatic and radical. Fathi Yakan, the secretary general of the Islamic Association, initially called for the fusion of Lebanon into Syria, then for abolishing political sectarianism (confessionalism). Even so, he supported his party's participation in the political system so as to check the power of political Maronitism as a first step in the direction of changing the system. Hezbollah, in contrast, wanted a radical change. There was no room for reform or for that matter reconciliation, for Hezbollah shunned any contact with the Christian leadership until its *Infitah* (opening up) to the system in the early 1990s. Interestingly, Hezbollah political ideology in relation to the Lebanese political system was similar but not identical to that of Jumblat's Lebanese National Movement. But, Jumblat was motivated by essentially a secular ideology, whereas Hezbollah epitomized the reassertion of sectarianism as its political ideology emerged first and foremost from Shi'a grievances.

THE WAR WITHIN AND ACROSS BORDERS

As Asad continued to extend his authority throughout Lebanon, he turned to the militia leaders, as the new power brokers, to bring about a security-political solution to the ongoing civil strife in Lebanon. Throughout the last few months of 1985, Syrian vice president Abd al-Halim Khaddam,

along with Syrian intelligence chief in Lebanon, Ghazi Kana'n, embarked on a political mission to mediate among three powerful militia leaders: Nabih Berri of AMAL, Walid Jumblat of the Progressive Socialist Party, and Elie Hobeika of the Lebanese Forces. Initially, the meetings took place in Beirut on an individual basis, then they were held with all leaders in attendance in Damascus, where President Asad met with the Lebanese leaders separately and/or jointly.[50]

On December 28, 1985, the three leaders, along with Khaddam acting in the capacity of a witness, signed the Tripartite Accord, laying out the details for ending civil strife and reforming the system whereby confessionalism would be eliminated.[51] The Accord emphasized the Arab identity of Lebanon and Lebanese-Syrian special relations.[52] Interestingly, neither the Sunni leadership nor the Islamists were involved in devising the Accord. Hezbollah opposed the Accord on the grounds that it involved a party, the Lebanese Forces, whose members according to the Party of God were Israeli agents, and that the system cannot be reformed. However, Hezbollah conveyed a clear message to Damascus that its opposition would be expressed politically and not violently.[53] As it turned out, the Christian opposition to the Accord from within the Lebanese Forces, the Phalange party, and the president of the Republic, which took the form of a rebellion against Hobeika and his colleagues, saved Hezbollah the trouble of repealing the Accord.[54] The Accord, lacking a Christian endorsement, was put to rest.

In the meantime, the forced eviction of Arafat's PLO from Tripoli did not hinder the organization from gradually, stealthily, but steadily reinfiltrating the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. Little by little, by 1985, Arafat's power in the camps had become palpable to AMAL and the Syrians. Since its takeover of west Beirut, AMAL had been trying to co-opt the Sunni leadership and to emerge as the political powerbroker of Muslim Beirut. The reemergence of Arafat in Beirut did not sit well with AMAL as he could foil its political ambitions. No less significant, AMAL, and the Shi'a in general, had harbored deep resentment toward the PLO and other Palestinian groups since the late 1970s, for their obnoxious and ruffian ways. To a community witnessing the revival of its power, this feeling, contrary to platitudes of amity, was endemic and deep-seated.[55]

At the same time, President Asad was furious with Arafat's audacity to regroup in Beirut against his wishes, and concerned about the implication of Arafat's growing military power for Lebanon's military equation. He reacted by unleashing AMAL upon the Palestinian camps in Beirut and near Sidon and Tyre. Supplied to the teeth by Syrian arms, AMAL besieged the refugee camps and battled the Palestinians on and off from May 1985 to January 1988. The recurrent ruthless fighting came to be known as "War of the Camps."[56] Thousands were killed, wounded, and

starved to the bones. In a classic miscalculation, the PLO underestimated the anti-Palestinian feelings among Lebanese Muslims. This feeling, however, did not move Hezbollah to join AMAL in battling the Palestinians, despite heavy pressure from the Shi'a community in general and the families of the party's members in particular. Hezbollah called for Muslim unity and maintained that these provoked sectarian wars were the product of colonialism.[57] Hanna Batatu, however, maintained that though it did not participate in the fighting, Hezbollah had a "tactical alliance" with Arafat loyalists.[58] No less surprising, the Christian Lebanese Forces, in an effort to curb Syria's influence, allowed the entrance of large numbers of fighters loyal to Arafat through the port of Jounieh. Similarly, they allowed anti-Syrian Islamists into the areas under their control when Syrian troops entered Tripoli.[59]

Eventually, bending to pressure from the international community and Iran, Asad reintroduced his troops into west Beirut in February 1987, and partially eased the dreadful conditions in the camps. Nevertheless, it was not until January 1988 that his troops relieved AMAL's fighters from positions sealing off the camps; but not before pressuring the Lebanese parliament to annul the 1969 Cairo Accord. In a farcical gesture, typical of the vacuous Arab-Palestinian camaraderie, lifting the siege off the Palestinian camps was presented as a show of solidarity with the Palestinian *Intifadah*, the popular uprising in the West Bank and Gaza.

No sooner the war of the camps ended than an intracommunal war erupted between AMAL and Hezbollah. The provenance of this war lay no less in the rivalry between the two parties than in Damascus's desire to check the growing power of Hezbollah and its desire for independent action. Hezbollah early on perceived AMAL's position on the "Maronite Regime" and the Arab-Israeli conflict as vague. After all, AMAL's leader had cooperated with the Maronite establishment and fought the Palestinians. When Berri joined the cabinet of Gemayel following the takeover of west Beirut by AMAL and Hezbollah, Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi censured Berri, reflecting his distrust of AMAL's leader. He said: "We neither trust this government nor this regime, and especially those who sat in the negotiating room [in reference to Berri]."[60] This distrust only deepened as the two parties competed for political control of the southern suburbs. AMAL, whose grip on the Shi'a community had been slipping since 1983, was getting unnerved by Hezbollah's thriving *Jihad* against Israel and the financial and military support the party was receiving from Iran. Skirmishes, little by little, escalated into armed confrontations under a charged political climate. The fighting took a dramatic twist when AMAL began to restrict Hezbollah's movement in the south and to try to disarm Hezbollah. In May 1988, Hezbollah leadership perceived the fight as one of survival and ordered an all-out attack on AMAL. AMAL, despite significant

Syrian support, was no match for Hezbollah, which began to gain the upper hand over its rival from the southern suburbs of Beirut to the south.[61]

However, President Asad was not ready to deliver Hezbollah any sort of victory as he was adamant, then, about putting Hezbollah in its place. True, Hezbollah proved to Asad its capability and lethality; yet Assad's support for Hezbollah was not unconditional. He expected to maintain a tight grip over the group. When, on July 19, 1982, Hezbollah, acting under Iranian direction but without Syrian knowledge kidnapped David Dodge, the acting president of American University in Beirut, Assad was furious and threatened to expel the IRGC from Lebanon.[62] Damascus and Tehran also sparred over Hezbollah's June 14, 1985, threat to execute hijacked TWA flight 847 passengers on the tarmac of Beirut International Airport. On June 17, 1987, Syrian troops beat Hezbollah members for kidnapping ABC correspondent Charles Glass near a Syrian checkpoint.[63] And, later that year, Syrian troops, under the pretext of ending raging strife in west Beirut, shot 23 Hezbollah fighters.[64] Clashes between AMAL and Hezbollah more or less reflected continuing tension between Damascus and Tehran. Still, such tension was the exception, not the norm, and improving processes, such as the Quadripartite Committee (see the following paragraph), to resolve conflicts improved their working relationship.

Nevertheless, the clashes did not stop despite an initial cease-fire agreement brokered by Iran and Syria in February 1989. In fact, this cease-fire was the result of intensive negotiations by the Quadripartite Committee, which was established by Syria and Iran and included representatives from Tehran, Damascus, AMAL, and Hezbollah. Hassan Fadlallah remarked that the Committee was considered as the first Syrian political recognition of Hezbollah.[65] Yet, the fighting continued as the situation became more difficult as a result of the political developments associated with the efforts to reform the political system, which crystallized in the Taif Accord (see chapter 5). Hezbollah was concerned about any political settlement that could entail disarming its militia. It took another round of a few months of bitter fighting, mainly in the south, and intensive negotiations by the Quadripartite Committee to reach a cease-fire and an AMAL-Hezbollah Agreement in November 1990. The Accord sanctioned the deployment of the Lebanese army in south Lebanon, with the understanding that it would not stand in the way of the "Resistance" against the Israeli occupation.[66] It goes without saying, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 only added to the urgency Iran and Syria placed on ending the intracommunal confrontation.[67]

Essentially, this bitter episode laid the foundation not only for an AMAL-Hezbollah reconciliation, but also for a Hezbollah-Syrian understanding that institutionalized a framework for strategic cooperation

between the two actors in Lebanon. Significantly, the long meetings of the Quadripartite Committee, which were followed at certain times with meetings between President Asad and Hezbollah's leadership, helped dispel past distrust and set the relationship on a new path. As the Gulf War progressed and amendments to the constitution of Lebanon (Taif Accord) were approved by the parliament, Asad began to see Hezbollah not only as a "resistance movement" but also as a strong Lebanese political force.

The Islamists and the Political System: *Al-Infitah* and *Lebanonization*

This chapter scrutinizes the ideological transformation of the Islamist parties that justified their participation in Lebanon's confessional system and politics. It explores the ideological and political motives of the Islamist parties' *Infitah* (opening up) *and Lebanonization*, as expressed in their religious-political ideologies, political programs, policies, and visions, and surveys the communal responses to their *Infitah and Lebanonization*. At the same time, it probes the question as to whether Hezbollah's integration into the state as a venue to shed its *Jihadi* character and to transition into a conventional political party is plausible. It also juxtaposes Hezbollah's *Infitah* policy with Syrian policy in Lebanon.

The Internal and Regional Setting: Toward Taif and Syrian Hegemony

The fortunes of the Christian camp sank to a new low in 1988 when President Amin Gemayel's term neared its end. The president, torn between domestic, regional, and international pressures, was unable to present to the Lebanese parliament an agreed-upon list of presidential hopefuls, as mandated by the constitution. Thus he appointed General Michel Aoun to head an executive cabinet until a president was agreed upon and elected.[1] Pro-Syrian deputies disapproved of Aoun's appointment, regarding it constitutionally illegitimate, and lent their support to the government of Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss. At the time, Lebanon witnessed two authorities: one formal, led by Aoun and exercising its authority over the Christian area, the other de facto and pro-Damascus, led by Hoss and extending its authority over the areas under Syrian control.

In March 1989, General Aoun proclaimed a "liberation war" against Syria. His war was to take the form of an *intifadah* against Syria similar to that of the Palestinians in the West Bank.[2] Syria responded by shelling the Christian area and imposing on it a sea-and-land blockade, especially

on east Beirut. In view of the constitutional impasse and the escalation of hostilities, and at the urging of Saudi Arabia, Lebanese deputies left for the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia. At the meeting there, the Lebanese deputies, with the intercession of Arab delegates from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco, managed to introduce significant amendments to the Lebanese constitution. The new version of the constitution became known interchangeably as the Document of National Understanding and the Taif Accord. In addition, over Aoun's objections, the deputies elected Elias Hrawi president, whom Aoun refused to recognize. On August 21, 1990, the Lebanese parliament approved the constitutional amendments introduced by the Taif Accord, which were signed into law by President Hrawi on September 21.

General Aoun opposed the Taif Accord as a Syrian scheme to whittle away at Maronite power and called on the Lebanese Forces to stand by him in order to meet the Syrian challenge. Contemplating the surge of Maronite support for Aoun, the Lebanese Forces, in addition to considering Aoun's liberation war against Syria as political suicide, reckoned that under the pretext of meeting the Syrian challenge, Aoun was paving the way for dismantling them. Deadly hostilities broke out between the Lebanese Forces, commanded by Samir Geagea, and Aoun's forces in Christian east Beirut. Remarking on Aoun's losing battles with Syria and the Lebanese Forces, Karim Pakradouni wrote: "The General lost the 'liberation war' against Syria because it was bigger than him, and he lost the 'eastern battle' [east Beirut] against the Lebanese Forces because he considered it smaller than him."[3]

It was against this background that Iraq rocked the region by invading Kuwait in early August 1990. The United States needed Syria's help in forming the international and Arab anti-Iraq coalition to extract Iraq from Kuwait. On October 13, the Syrian army, along with a unit of the Lebanese army under the command of Colonel Emile Lahoud, launched an all-out attack on Aoun's forces. The Syrian air force intervened for the first time in the history of the Lebanese conflict and bombed Aoun out of the presidential palace. Within hours, east Beirut, the last bastion of Lebanese opposition to Syria, fell. Obviously, the United States had yielded to Asad's demand for total hegemony over Lebanon as a price for bringing Syria into the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition. No less significant, a by-product of the war was the launching of the Madrid Peace Conference, with Syrian participation.

The collapse of east Beirut and the emergence of a "new Lebanon," the Second Republic, under Syrian hegemony expedited the implementation of the Taif Accord.[4] The Accord was divided into three parts: General Principles and Reforms (political and other reforms); Extending Lebanese Sovereignty over All Lebanese Territories; and Liberating Lebanon from Israeli Occupation.

The Document stated that Lebanon is a free, sovereign state, and a definitive homeland to its citizens (sons); and that Lebanon is Arab in identity and affiliation (belonging). The thrust of political reforms revolved around conferring equal powers to the three high posts in the land. Executive power was transferred from the president to the council of ministers, which would set the general policy of the state, draft bills and decrees and take the necessary measures for their implementation, and supervise the activities of all state agencies. The president would name a prime minister on the basis of consultations with the Speaker of the Chamber (parliament). He could attend a meeting of the council but without the right to vote.

The chamber was enlarged to 108 members, divided equally between Muslims and Christians and apportioned according to sect. The chamber, being the legislative authority, would exercise full control over government policies and activities. The Speaker's term was increased to four years. The electoral law would be based on the province (governorate) in light of cross-sectarian representation.

Political confessionalism (sectarianism) would be abolished in phases, set by a national committee. But, in the meantime, all posts in the civil service with the exception of the top three, would be accorded on the basis of competence. Other reforms included administrative decentralization.

The other two sections dealt mainly with (1) building the armed forces to shoulder their responsibilities in confronting Israeli aggression, (2) dismantling all militias, (3) implementing United Nations (UN) Resolution 425, and (4) taking the necessary measures to liberate all Lebanese territories from Israeli occupation. The Accord also provided that Syrian forces shall assist the legitimate Lebanese Forces in establishing the state's authority within a period not exceeding two years and that the two governments shall decide on the future redeployment of Syrian forces. With regard to Lebanese-Syrian relations, the Accord underscored that "Lebanon, which is Arab in identity and affiliation, is bound by fraternal, sincere relations to all Arab states and has special relations with Syria that draw their strength from the roots of kinship, history and common internal interests."[5]

Admittedly, true the Taif introduced major reforms, yet confessional representation dominated the new system as the new distribution of power was an expression of a confessional formula. One could argue that the Accord, written with the philosophy of "confessionalism" in mind, complemented the National Pact by institutionalizing "confessionalism." Augustus Richard Norton remarked:

The Document of National Understanding which emerged from the Ta'if negotiations hardly represented a radical departure from previous attempts to reform the Lebanese political system. Many of its features

were anticipated by the Constitutional Document accepted by then-president Franjiyah in 1976 and the Tripartite Agreement of 1985, both of which were mediated by Syria. The accord, approved at Ta'if by 58 of the 62 deputies, represented the end of efforts to jettison the National Pact of 1943. Indeed, the Ta'if document implicitly ratifies the National Pact with its emphasis upon confessional compromise and intercommunal cooperation.

Deconfessionalization is stated as an explicit goal in the agreement, but without a specified deadline or timetable. The accord effectively concedes the futility of any serious attempt to expunge political sectarianism in Lebanon, at least for the foreseeable future. (It bears recalling that the unwritten 1943 pact also was not intended to institutionalize political sectarianism.) The accord leaves no doubt that, rhetoric aside, confessionalism is here to stay for some time to come.[6]

But this view had an opposite side within the Christian community. In fact, Christians had mixed feelings about the Taif Accord. The very "confessionalism" that protected their prerogatives had given way to a "confessionalism" that robbed their privileges. Some Christians saw in the Taif Accord a denouement of the constant attempts to abolish Maronite privileges. Some Christians had already seen the writing on the wall and were girding themselves for these essential changes in the new confessional equation of power. Others rejected the Taif outright and refused to acknowledge the sea of change that had taken place in Lebanon. All of these feelings played themselves out in a community frayed at the seam by internecine squabbling and fighting. Aoun opposed the Taif and was forced from his presidential palace. Geagea came to support the Taif in light of the cataclysmic changes in the region and Lebanon; but soon opposed the government and boycotted the upcoming elections on account of Syrian hegemony over the system. And the Maronite patriarch went along with the Taif; but was harassed by Aoun's supporters.[7]

Meanwhile, in line with the Taif Accord's emphasis on the Lebanese-Syrian special relations, the Syrian and Lebanese presidents signed the May 20, 1991, Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination and the September 1, 1991, Lebanon-Syria Defense and Security agreement, which institutionalized Syrian trusteeship (occupation) over Lebanon.[8] Before long, with Syrian prodding, parliamentary elections were scheduled for summer 1992, after a hiatus of two decades.

Hezbollah and the Political System: Infitah (opening up) and Lebanonization?

Since Hezbollah had not yet gained political representation and thus no say in the outcome of the Taif Accord, and in light of the regional changes consequent upon Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the Islamist party

was extremely wary and concerned about both the upcoming elections and the resulting impending change in the system and the ramifications of the implementation of the Taif for its *Jihadi* organization. The Islamist party initially opposed the Taif Accord because it kept important positions in the system in the hands of the Maronites, such as the presidency and the army command, not to mention the Accord did not radically change the system as the party aspired to. Even more so because the party believed that the Accord did not adopt clear options about Israel's occupation of south Lebanon.[9]

Hezbollah tried to create a political bloc opposing the Taif, but to no avail. Most political forces in Beirut supported the Taif Accord and were toeing the Syrian line. However, Hezbollah made a distinction between its political and military opposition, and opted not to stand in the way of the Taif's implementation, beginning with the deployment of the army in Beirut. This calculated, pragmatic decision was the outcome of several meetings between the party leadership and President Asad on one side and the Lebanese government on the other. In dealing with the Taif, and by extension the sponsor of the Accord Syria, Hezbollah based its decision-making process on what it called *al-Thawabit* (immutable fundamentals/principles) and *Maslaha* (interest). Foremost among the *Thawabit* was the absolute enmity to Israel, while *Maslaha* was an expression of common denominators with other parties under the "ceiling" of *Thawabit*. The party leadership saw that Damascus was the only Arab state confronting Israel, even after it had joined the Madrid Peace Conference. And it saw that the two (Damascus and Hezbollah) had a common interest in forcing Israel from Lebanon.[10] Simultaneously, the defense and agriculture ministers (Muhsin Daloul and Albert Mansour) held a few meetings with the party leadership in which they decided to create coordination committees to avert and preempt problems. Most importantly, Hezbollah's decision not to confront the government of the New Republic laid in the understandings with President Asad and the government that its freedom of action would not be restricted, nor its Resistance against Israel obstructed.[11] Nevertheless, according to Hassan Fadlallah, it was the vision of President Asad that governed the development of Hezbollah-Syrian relations, as he was careful to nurture the Resistance against Israel.[12]

But if dealing with the Taif reflected some kind of a qualitative jump from rejectionism and radicalism to some sort of accommodation; it was the decision over whether to participate in the political system and the upcoming elections that would test the political flexibility and maturity of the party. Participation in the elections was essentially an admission of the legitimacy of the political system that the party was so adamant about abolishing. This decision entailed a scrutiny and an evaluation of the party's religious-political ideology, as expressed in the Open Letter,

in relation to its evolution into a vigorous social movement. Similarly, it also prefigured a definition of a political vision expressed in a political program. This provoked an extensive internal debate in the party.

Deputy secretary general of Hezbollah Naim Qassem gave a detailed account on the debate among Hezbollah's leading cadres regarding the party's participation in the Lebanese political system and parliamentary elections. Hezbollah's seven-member *Shura* (Consultative) Council and five leading members of the party formed a committee to assess the situation. Four questions were at the heart of the debate: (1) the legitimacy of parliamentary participation in a confessional political system that does not represent Hezbollah's view of an ideal system; (2) where the legitimacy issue is solved, would participation imply a recognition of the political system's reality, whereby the party would adopt and defend the system, foregoing its Islamic vision; (3) are there disadvantages or benefits, which outweigh sure and clear benefits? and (4) would participation lead to a readjustment of the party's priorities, whereby Resistance would be abandoned in favor of partaking in the internal political game?[13]

Qassem explained that the committee could not address the question of legitimacy, since it was the prerogative of the just jurisconsult (*Wali al-Faqih),* Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. So the committee comprehensively addressed the remaining questions in order to submit all standpoints to the jurisconsult, who would ultimately define the doctrinal legitimacy regarding dealing with the regime and especially with the parliamentary elections.

The committee perceived that although participation in parliamentary elections is an expression of taking part in the political structure of the system, it does not accord a commitment to preserve the system. More so, participation has significant advantages, key among them are as follows: (1) using the parliament as a political podium to take care of the Resistance and its matters; (2) drafting legislation to benefit the livelihood of people and oppressed areas; (3) taking a priori knowledge of legislations under discussion so as to study them and, if needed, to suggest amendments to them, thereby obviating the surprise of being bound by legislative realities that cannot be discussed after their official adoption; (4) creating a network of political relationships with representatives of Lebanon's various sects and areas to conduct direct discussions, thereby removing false barriers and misperceptions; (5) granting Hezbollah official recognition from the Lebanese parliament, thereby conferring on the Resistance official and popular legitimacy; and (6) presenting an Islamic viewpoint on different issues, alongside other views.

The committee also pointed out disadvantages to parliamentary representation, chief among them: (1) the difficulty of having a precise popular representation on account of the system's confessional-based allocated number of representatives, which renders representation in the parliament

more political than numerical; (2) the enactment of laws contradictory to *Shari'a* (Islamic law), despite their opposition by Hezbollah's deputies; and (3) holding deputies responsible for delivering services to their constituencies, though his or her responsibility is to legislate while the cabinet has the power of execution.

Significantly, the committee underscored that the priorities are decided by the party's political decision-making apparatus, which gave Resistance against Israel's occupation precedence over all other priorities. Given that there are no preconditions linking parliamentary participation with the specificity of the Resistance, and given that the party linked its participation in the elections to a candid declaration about maintaining the priority of Resistance, the committee saw that there is no need for concern that such participation would have a negative bearing on Resistance activity. Instead, elections constitute an additional capital supporting the Resistance.

Based on the above deliberations, the committee voted (10 out of 12) in favor of parliamentary participation, not only as an interest but also as a necessity.[14] This was harmonious with Hezbollah's total vision for defending the affairs and interests of people in the political realm, and not in conflict with the priority of *Jihad* for liberation. This also provided a new experience for a nascent Islamic party. Subsequently, the committee presented its findings to Ayatollah Khamenei and requested from him a legal opinion (*Istifta'*) on the legitimacy of participating in the elections, which he authorized and supported (*ajaza wa Ayyada*).[15] Immediately thereafter, the party began drafting its political program, and on July 3, 1992, announced its participation in the elections. This marked the *Infitah* (opening up) of Hezbollah to Lebanon's political system.

But this *Infitah* was not only made possible by the blessing of Ayatollah Khamenei. Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah played a crucial role in nudging the Islamist party toward what he termed Lebanonization of the Islamist movement in Lebanon, a term that became synonymous with *Infitah*. In fact, the *Infitah* can be traced to the second conclave of Hezbollah (May–July 1991) in which Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi was elected secretary general of the party and a working plan was fashioned to conduct a dialogue with the Christians, excluding those Maronites who had a relationship with Israel and constituted the symbols of the political regime (Maronite regime).[16] The path to fashioning the dialogue plan was paved by none other than Ayatollah Fadlallah, who removed the ideological and political obstacles between the Islamists and Christians. Ayatollah Fadlallah made nonsectarian common causes the focal point of the Christian-Muslim dialogue. He believed that the attitude of the Muslims toward the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) does not stem from military considerations or from charged, complex feelings. As such, there are prospects for coexistence, cooperation, and dialogue,

without making a concession of a strategic Islamic position or moving away from the reality of the total strategy of the Islamist movement.[17] Ayatollah Fadlallah acted on his beliefs by engaging in an open dialogue with Christian intellectuals, politicians, and clerics.

It follows from this that Ayatollah Fadlallah supported Hezbollah's engagement of Lebanon's political system as a means for the Islamist movement to electorally legitimize itself and to realize transitional goals without even confirming the legitimacy of the system. Such "Lebanonization," he explained, had to heed the unique circumstances of confessional Lebanon and the particular condition of the Maronites. Elucidating the concept and practice of Lebanonization, Ayatollah Fadlallah stated:

> When I spoke of the Lebanonization of the Islamist movement in Lebanon, what I meant was that the Islamist movement should examine the prevailing circumstances in Lebanon and formulate its strategy within that framework, making allowances for Lebanon's particular circumstances, its confessional sensitivities, its perception of its environment. In other words, in spreading the faith, the Muslims in Lebanon should not follow procedures that would be inappropriate to Lebanon...Examining the state of affairs in Lebanon, one finds that the Christian situation is more complicated than it is in other Arab or Islamic countries. Christians in Lebanon have a "complex," or fear of the Islamic reality that leads them to seek control over the presidency of the republic and other key positions and things of that sort. So the Maronite question in Lebanon assumes a large dimension at the political, security, and cultural levels. The Islamists in Lebanon must be sensitive to the problem, taking care not to let it become a bone of contention that could lead to warfare among Lebanese, which would bring Islamic activities to naught, and Christian ones as well...Lebanon cannot be transformed into an Islamic republic, which is unrealistic, but the Islamists should give free reign to their ideas in Lebanon, taking advantage of the fact that Lebanon is not only a window on the West, but also a window for the West on the East. Thus Lebanon presents the opportunity of interaction with all other arenas and for conveying our views to the other arenas. Lebanon could thus be a pulpit from which to spread the word of God, just as it has always been a theater for political action.[18]

Over whether or not Hezbollah should participate in the parliamentary elections, Ayatollah Fadlallah explained:

> Hizballah should enter the electoral arena if only for the sake of Islamic legitimacy in Lebanon, which dictates the formation of a parliamentary party. This is not to say that the Islamists have embraced the parliamentary system, but parliament does provide a forum where they can express their views and urge others, if not to adopt those views, at least to be more accommodating toward them. Participation in this system may enable

Hizballah to realize some transitional goals. I believe that Hizballah has reached a stage of reasonable political maturity. It has amassed expertise in military, security, cultural, and political affairs, which greatly enhances its chances of spreading its influence in Lebanon, despite the challenge from the international American-Israeli campaign against it. It would be very difficult to terminate the role of Hizballah, because that role has strong grass-roots support and is furthermore well grounded in its structure, methodology, thought, and political activities.[19]

Concomitantly, Ayatollah Fadlallah's support for Hezbollah's Lebanonization and participation in parliamentary elections helped undermine the position of the militants in the party and their supporters in Tehran, whose grip on power had begun to slip following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the election of Hashimi Rafsanjani as president. A. Nizar Hamzeh perceptively remarked that "Fadlallah's Lebanonization of Hizbullah has greatly undermined the position of extremists in the party."[20] But, at the same time, it would be implausible to endorse Hamzeh's statement that "the shift in Hizbullah's orientation was tied largely to shifts within Iran's leadership."[21] Deputy secretary general of Hezbollah Naim Qassem made it clear, as we have seen, that the shift was largely the result of an internal debate in the party in response to domestic and regional changes. But that does not mean that factional politics among Iran's leaders did not have a bearing on Hezbollah's decision-making process, as Amal Saad-Ghorayeb observed.[22]

Though Hezbollah's Lebanonization was inspired by Ayatollah Fadlallah, it employed a nuanced political discourse to describe Lebanonization and *Infitah* whereby the two terms became synonymous without each term losing its literalist meaning. Speaking about Lebanonization, secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah addressed the issue quite differently. He described Lebanonization in terms of patriotism. He questioned: What is non-Lebanese about Hezbollah, and needs to become Lebanese? He ascribed the highest level of patriotism to Hezbollah because it shed much blood liberating the Fatherland. Then he spoke about Lebanonization from the perspective that the Lebanese, by sharing common feelings and values, are able to form a single, cohesive community in the face of aggression. Because of this, Hezbollah will be more open and encouraged to forge stronger relations with other groups, and to be more forthcoming in interacting with various sectors of the Lebanese population.[23]

Interestingly enough, Lebanonization as a term and concept has taken a political dimension far from its original meaning, leading to a confused reading of Hezbollah's intentions and policies. Hezbollah's entry into Lebanon's political arena has raised questions about the future of the Islamist party. Some scholars, such as Augustus Richard Norton, Hala

Jaber, Judith Palmer Harik, A. Nizar Hamzeh, and Magnus Ranstorp, have argued in slightly different versions that Hezbollah's Lebanonization process would in due time transform the Islamist party into a conventional political party, shedding both its *Jihadi* character especially vis-à-vis its struggle with Israel and its long-term ideal of an Islamic regime and state.[24] This line of reasoning has become a sort of biblical mantra following Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in summer 2000, in spite of the fact that it was refuted by the party itself. Brushing aside the notion of making political concessions in return for political and administrative positions, Qassem sarcastically observed that "the repeated talks about the Lebanonization of Hezbollah and its admission into the internal political life is but another title of the necessity to abandon its fundamentals and the priority of resistance, and to stop fighting Israel and surrender its weapons and the reasons for its power."[25]

Essentially, Lebanonization of Hezbollah is at the heart of the political process to support Hezbollah's *Jihad* and Resistance. In fact, this process did not begin until the party was sure about its sociopolitical and military power in the Lebanese milieu and no longer concerned about the cost of politicization of Hezbollah at the expense of its Resistance role. As Qassem asserted: "The introduction [identity] of Hezbollah, which has been fashioned in a way so as to interrupt the debate and resolve the relationship between the [party's] *Jihadi* and political aspects, is that 'the movement of Hezbollah is a *Jihadi* movement whose primary objective is the struggle [*Jihad*] against the Zionist enemy,' and 'the clever and sagacious political *Jihad* can and should be the buttress and pillar of this *Jihadi* movement'."[26]

This inseparable "organic" link between Hezbollah's political and *Jihadi* organizations was apparently ignored by the various aforementioned scholars of the Islamist party. Arguably, this oversight rested with the desire of the scholars to project an image of Hezbollah consistent with its pragmatic transformation into a political party far from the stigmatization of terrorism. But in so doing, they obfuscated and/or misread the true reality of Hezbollah, as a *Jihadi* movement commandeering political *Jihad*, to use Qassem's terminology. Interestingly, Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders perceptively pointed out that "partly as a result of the shortcomings of the terrorism label, various analysts of Hizbullah developed a counter-view emphasizing the organization's gradual but unavoidable transformation into a conventional party that will be fully accommodated by the Lebanese political system."[27] In emphasizing the failure of this "Lebanonization" thesis to acknowledge the interactions between the armed and the civilian activities of Hezbollah, they proffered the thesis that Hezbollah's social and political activities operate as an integrated and holistic network, disseminating the values of Resistance that produce what has been designated by the party as the

Mujtama' al-Muqawamah (Resistance society).[28] The holistic network together with the Resistance society it produces form the *Hala al-Islamiyah* (Islamic sphere). Adhering to this *Hala al-Islamiyah*, in turn, "produces a collective identity generating a strong sense of belonging, which gives meaning to the individual."[29] While Harb and Leenders aptly pointed out to Hezbollah's construction of the Resistance society, they failed to recognize that this Resistance society is not only limited to the Shi'a community in general and to the *Hala al-Islamiyah* in particular. In fact, Hezbollah (as we shall more see) has been keen on transforming (or integrating) Lebanese society into a Resistance society as part of its Islamist Resistance project, whereby the society at large would be integrated into the Resistance. In expounding the way in which the rest of society should integrate with the Resistance, Qassem asserted:

> Resistance for us is a societal vision in all its dimensions, for it is a military, cultural, political and informational [media] resistance. It is the resistance of the people and the *mujahidin,* it is the resistance of the ruler and the Ummah, it is the resistance of the free consciousness anywhere. As such, we have always called for building the society of resistance. Not one day have we accepted a group of resistance, because the society of resistance bears continuity, whereas the performance of the group of resistance is circumstantial.[30]

No less significant, though they spoke about "some pockets of dissent" against Hezbollah's hegemony and intricate network of institutions, Harb and Leenders painted a glossy picture of Hezbollah's popularity and success in mobilizing a large and loyal constituency (which partly explains the party's hegemony among the Shi'a) untarnished by serious opposition to the party's policies and actions, and the way in which the party uses coercive measures to sustain its hegemony. Sayyid Ali al-Amin, a well respected Shi'a religious scholar and harsh critic of Hezbollah since the July 2006 war, was removed from his position as the mufti of Tyre and Jabal 'Amil following his criticism of Hezbollah's seizure of Beirut in 2008. His removal, as instigated by Hezbollah, was not appropriately done according to the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council's regular procedures. Commenting on the Council's decision to remove him from his post, al-Amin poignantly referenced Hezbollah's seizure of Beirut by stating: "We don't have militias to force the council to withdraw its decision."[31] Moreover, he was forced from his office in Tyre without being allowed to retrieve his books and personal possessions.[32]

Another critic of Hezbollah, Ahmad al-Asa'd, son of former speaker of the House Kamil al-As'ad and chairman of the Lebanese Option Gathering, was attacked along with his supporters while campaigning for the 2009 parliamentary elections in the south and the Ba'albeck-Hermel

region. Hezbollah supporters and members hurled stones at them and set fire to some of their cars. Moreover, the car of the political bureau chief of the gathering Ahmad Hijazi was burned, and the secretary of the party Aqil Hussein kidnapped for two hours. Both attacks took place in al-Dhahiya, the southern suburbs of Beirut and Hezbollah's stronghold.[33] Other prominent Shi'a critics of Hezbollah include Sheikh Muhammad al-Hajj Hassan, head of the *Al-Tayyar al-Shi'i al-Hurr* (Free Shiite Current) and Sheikh Yusuf Kanj. Standing shoulder to shoulder next to March 14 coalition members, Sheikh Hassan has pungently and repeatedly criticized Hezbollah. Reportedly, Hezbollah has impeded the movements of Sheikh Hassan and fueled a family feud, whereby he would be the victim.[34]

THE ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION AND LEBANONIZATION

As we have seen in chapter 3, secretary general of the Islamic Association Fathi Yakan had already ideologically paved the path for the participation of his party in Lebanon's confessional system. Nevertheless, prior to the first parliamentary elections in 20 years in 1992, the Islamic Association subordinated its decision to participate in the upcoming election to a legal Islamic study. On August 9, 1992, the study, The Islamic Legal Justifications to Enter The Elections Battle, released its findings, which recommended the Association's participation in the parliamentary elections. The study based its findings on the following: (1) to consider parliamentary work as a method of *Husbat*[35] (accountability) and a pulpit for those who "enjoin good and forbid the reprehensible," (*al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa Nahi 'an al-Munkkar*) especially on the basis of *Husbat* that relies on change through the tongue and not force. All Muslims are required to carry out this duty to achieve the principles of Islamic law, safeguard social life, and protect people from moral deviation; (2) to participate in parliamentary sessions does not mean approving any legislative position contradicting Islamic law. A deputy can object, provide an alternative, criticize or boycott the session. This means that the principle of participation rests with the position and the practice. If the practice is religiously legitimate with the objective of rightly informing legislations and reforming the system, then it is a duty to do so; (3) to participate in parliament sessions is a gateway to *Da'wa* [the call to Islam] in Islam and to propagate its beliefs and principles through dialogue and conversation; and (4) to participate in parliament activities is to provide opportunities to realize peoples' interest and block vices, and to achieve a balanced economic development.[36]

Along with these justifications, the study underscored that "its participation would fill the void left by the downfall of the various leftist currents, which until recently monopolized political decisions in the name of Muslims, let alone enhance the nationalist and *Jihadi* feeling to stand up to

the projects of Westernization and to the hegemony and domination practiced by the international system and the oppressive powers in the world."[37]

SYRIAN SUZERAINTY AND LEBANONIZATION

For Syria, Lebanonization of Hezbollah had a complete different dimension related no less to Damascus's national security than to Hezbollah's utilitarian political and military *Jihad*. As the Syrian government began to exert more formal suzerainty over Lebanon, it sought to use Hezbollah to pressure Israel for a return of the Golan Heights and to undermine the development of any opposition movement in Lebanon. Such objectives were difficult to reconcile. How could Syria help to build Lebanon's state institutions and support Hezbollah's military role? President Asad established rules to govern the relationship among the state, Lebanese political forces, and Hezbollah, which the Syrian intelligence chief in Lebanon would oversee:

1. Pro-Syrian officials would staff Lebanese state institutions and the army.
2. The cabinet of ministers would exclude any anti-Syrian official, and Damascus would retain effective veto power over sensitive government portfolios such as the ministries of the interior, defense, and foreign affairs.
3. The Syrian chief of intelligence in Lebanon would oversee elections and gerrymander districts to control them.
4. Hezbollah would take the lead on military operations against Israel but enjoy the implicit political support of the Lebanese government. Whereas Hezbollah would pursue armed resistance, the Lebanese government would resist by politically supporting Hezbollah.
5. Unless otherwise approved by Damascus, Hezbollah would limit its operations to the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southern Lebanon.
6. Neither Hezbollah nor the state could use force against the other with Damascus the arbiter in disputes.
7. Lebanese political parties could pursue their objectives so long as they did not conflict with Syrian policies.
8. Absent Damascus's approval, no political party could use external forces to advance a political agenda.
9. While Damascus would supervise Hezbollah's operations against Israel, Hezbollah could decide the timing within windows specified by Damascus.
10. Hezbollah could capitalize on its resistance role and financial assistance from Iran to advance its political agenda but could not do so at the expense of pro-Syrian parties such as Amal.[38]

This new framework became the backdrop against which Hezbollah evolved militarily, organizationally, and politically. In other words, thanks to Syria, Hezbollah became a preeminent military and political force in Lebanon, while other parties were forced to disarm and toe the Syrian line. Oppositional figures, mainly from the Christian camp were either exiled, imprisoned, or liquidated. As it turned out, Aoun and Gemayel were exiled and Geagea imprisoned.

It was against this background that Hezbollah and the Islamic Association formulated their parliamentary election programs, charters, and declarations.

Islamist Programs, Charters, and the Confessional System

In order to better understand the positions of the Islamist movements toward the confessional system and Lebanon as a "nation," this section, based on parliamentary election programs, speeches, political programs, and Islamic Charters, deals with several issues that underscore and elucidate the Islamist stance and approach to the confessional system and Lebanon as a plural society.

Views on the United States and Israel

The Islamic Association in its 1992 parliamentary elections program, which revolved around the Association's "Project of Liberation, Reform and Change, perceived Lebanon as an undivided part of the Arabic Ummah [community], where Arab-Muslim existence provides the strategic depth to Lebanon."[39] It also perceived the United States as the unipolar, hegemonic power in the world that has imposed an Arabic regime in the region incapable of fulfilling peoples' aspirations and desire for freedom and independence. At the same time, the United States has suppressed all those who deviated from its colonialist plans and tightened the noose on all liberation and resistance movements.[40] Similarly, the Islamic Association asserted that the Zionist project has posed the biggest threat to the *Ummah* and Lebanon, for it was able to rape Palestine and vagabondize its people. It stressed that confronting this danger and its implications is a religiously legal and nationalist duty.[41] In its 2003 Islamic Charter in Lebanon, the Islamic Association rejected all decisions by the United States and the European Union that consider Palestinian popular resistance as terrorism; and condemned the American administration for its aggression and support of occupation in Palestine.[42] No less significant, according to former secretary general of the Islamic Association Fathi Yakan, it was colonialism that created the sickly, insidious confessional system in Lebanon.[43]

Hezbollah, for its part, prefaced its 1992 parliamentary elections program with a Koranic verse that syllogistically helped the Islamist party both to portray itself as the defender of the oppressed and present itself as religiously responsible for the oppressed in Lebanon.[44] The program cautioned that "the project of the oppressors, headed by United States, continues to bet on subduing Lebanon and the region, on achieving recognition of the Zionist entity, on normalizing relations with it, and on thawing the civilizational identity of the peoples of the region while linking its destiny to the wheels of market economy and Western mode of production, with all that entails in terms of plundering the riches, imposition of regimes, and execution of programs."[45] The program also pledged to liberate Lebanon from the Zionist occupation and from those riding on the coattails of the oppressor's hegemony.[46] This theme, in a slightly different version, was repeated in Hezbollah's 1996 parliamentary elections program. The program condemned the policies of American hegemony and Zionist terrorism for the perils and challenges overwhelming the region.[47] While this theme became constant, secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah, in an interview with the Syrian daily *Teshreen,* replicated Ayatollah Khomeini's view of Israel as an illegal entity. He stated: "Israel is an illegal and usurper entity built on false pretenses, on massacres, and on delusions, and has therefore no chance for survival."[48]

In the aftermath of the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, Hezbollah began aligning U.S. hegemonic policies and Israel's aggression with defeat. Hezbollah's 2009 parliamentary election program pointed out:

> This war of aggression [2006 war] formed the height of international onslaught against Lebanon. It aimed at breaking the Lebanese will to resist and to completely subjugate Lebanon within the context of what was then called "The New Middle East Project." Nevertheless, the great achievements and remarkable heroic acts achieved by the Mujahidin of the Islamic Resistance turned the brutal aggression—backed by international and regional powers—into a shamefaced defeat with repercussions ranging from a comprehensive defeat of all the Zionist entity's components to the fall of their political and military crew and the dispersion of illusions of control over the region by the U.S.[49]

Views on the State, the Confessional System, and the Christians

From the time Hezbollah and the Islamic Association decided to participate in Lebanon's confessional system in 1992 under Syrian suzerainty, neither has called for the creation of an Islamic state. And both tempered their political discourse. At the same time, there was a gradual change in the way both groups approached the system and the Christians.

The Islamic Association's 1992 parliamentary election program asserted that "it is a duty to review all laws that contradict with Islamic law, so long as this would not clash with the beliefs of the rest of the population."[50] At the same time, it called for the institution of the "principle of separation of powers so as to prevent interference in the prerogatives among the cabinet, presidency and the parliament."[51] It also called for the "abolition of the regime of confessional prerogatives," which, the program maintained "requires the recognition of the reality of co-existence and urges the development of an accepted formula for co-existence, heeding the specificities of every sect to live a free, noble life."[52]

The 2001 political program of the Islamic Association maintained that an "effort should be made to cancel political sectarianism," and that a balanced, just "electoral law should be enacted on the basis of proportional representation on the governorate [province] level . . ."[53] But it was the Islamic Association's 2003 Islamic Charter in Lebanon that elaborated and detailed its slightly revised position on the confessional system and the Christians. Interestingly, unlike previous programs, the Charter inserted Koranic verses in every topical section, serving to justify the position of the Islamic Association. Regarding the confessional system, the Charter declared:

> Despite the fact that the Islamic regime differs from democracy in some of its aspects, we see that political pluralism, and the consecration of the right of the citizens to choose their rulers and to hold them accountable through free elections, as a civil system endorsed by Islam and suitable with the nature of Lebanese society. But it needs transparency in implementation, and the issuing of firm and just laws that organizes the finest of political activism (Party Laws). It also needs to foster honest general elections, whereby all political forces have equal opportunity (Electoral law). In addition, it needs laws that will organize the powers of the three authorities [presidency, cabinet, and parliament] in a way guaranteeing their separation but complementing their performance . . . We cannot but remind about the necessity of dealing with the chronic disease which corrodes and spoils the body of political life, and that is political sectarianism. The article in the constitutional document [Document of National Understanding] dealing with the creation of a "Higher Council to Abolish Political Sectarianism" is the natural entry to treat the ramifications of this "undemocratic" configuration. Based on all this, we call for a positive participation in political activism in Lebanon, allowing us to develop our performance to achieve social peace, political stability, and balanced economic development.[54]

With respect to the topic on the Christians and national coexistence, the Charter, inserting Koranic verses throughout the section, stated that

> the duty of the human being is to worship God, and his mission is to build the earth . . . and this is a mission in which all people participate, Muslim and non-Muslims. They all live on one land. Thus their fate is to

live together despite all differences to carry out the mission to which they
have been assigned. If we have a choice in Lebanon, then it is to put firm
foundations for coexistence, with which everybody feel comfortable . . . In
our opinion the foundations for coexistence are four:

1) Respecting and recognizing the other and dealing with him/her: This
   for us, we Muslims, is a legal matter, covering religious and political
   difference, according to the contemporary division. Almighty God
   has allowed the human being the freedom of choice between faith
   and disbelief. Moreover, He did not prevent the infidel from what
   was given to the believer. However, He showed the infidel that faith
   is the firm grip that does not split, and He called and induced the
   infidel to this [Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands
   out clear from error and whoever rejects false deities and believes in
   God has grasped the most trustworthy firm grip that never splits.
   And God hears and knows all things, Surat al-Baqarah, Verse 256].

   This expansive freedom for all people to chose what they want,
   even with regards to faith and disbelief, utterly compels the recogni-
   tion of its consequences and to deal with them according to Islamic
   law safeguards. Otherwise, there will fundamentally be no meaning
   for freedom.

2) Morality: Through the perception of Islam morality constitutes
   absolute values, with which the human being deals with those who
   consent and those who differ. It is neither influenced by religious
   differentiation, nor by any other consideration. Morality is not the
   method by which only the Muslim deals with either the one he/she
   likes, or with the sons of his/her clan, nation or religion. It is the
   method by which people deal with each other.

3) Justice: It is absolutely the most important of human values. God
   sent the messengers with the revelations in order to achieve justice
   [And We sent down with them The Book and the Balance so that
   people stand forth in justice, Surat al-Hadid, Verse 25]. The Book
   is the source of justice, and the Balance is the method by which to
   achieve it, for this means the balance between rights and duties.

4) Cooperation: There is no meaning for national co-existence if the
   people don't cooperate on achieving mutual interests. And God has
   shown that cooperation is required even from polytheists [And let
   not the hatred of some people shut you out of the sacred Mosque
   and lead you to transgression. Help one another in righteousness and
   piety, Surat al-Maida, Verse 2].[55]

The Charter also maintained that coexistence with non-Muslims had
to address the issue of implementing Islamic law. Regarding this issue,
the Charter stated:

Lebanon is composed of eighteen recognized sects. It is instinctive that no
sect should impose on another its view, regime, and laws . . . Our religion
does not allow us to impose on people what they do not want, and the

Holy Koran states that clearly (No compulsion in religion). From the per-spective of Islam, religion is not merely a creed and worship but includes all kinds of laws, be they for the individual or society…We depart from the freedom of belief that the constitution has granted, and from the fact that Lebanon is a civil state that respects religions, to call for the adoption of Islamic law [Shari'a], for it is part of our religion; and, as we believe, it achieves the best structure for social life among people, insuring justice for all and protecting their rights without distinction or discrimination. We rely for this on dialogue and persuasion, and not on compulsion…It is the right of the non-Muslim to accept or reject this call…There is no problem when we call for the implementation of Islamic laws, especially that these laws are most suitable to our Eastern characters, and most harmonious with our Arabic societies. This is, in our opinion, the true reform for the reality of Lebanon and humanity.[56]

Hezbollah, though roughly sharing some of the positions of the Islamic Association, has been more politically adept about its approach to the confessional system and the Christians. Its discourse has been refined and nuanced. As mentioned above, Hezbollah has not called for the establishment of an Islamic state since 1992. Hezbollah's 1992 parlia-mentary elections program revolved mainly around two objectives: The Liberation of Lebanon from Zionist occupation and the abolishment of political sectarianism.[57] The program did not vilify political Maronitism [Maronite regime] or the Maronites, but it conceived that "political sec-tarianism is one of the biggest fundamental flaws, responsible for the corruption of the current regime in Lebanon and for all the tragedies and political, cultural, social, security, and developmental calamities that have plagued the country."[58] It called for amending the electoral law so that it will be more representative of the population, by adopting two measures: make Lebanon one election district and reduce voting age to 18.[59]

In its 1996 parliamentary election program, Hezbollah reiterated its call for the abolishment of political sectarianism and called for a just and balanced electoral law. In addition to what it called with regard to electoral law in the 1992 program, the 1996 program called for proportional rep-resentation.[60] Meanwhile, Hezbollah had been engaging the Christians. First, the party began to visit Christian families in al-Dahiyah (Beirut's southern suburbs) and the Beka' to congratulate them on Christmas. Next, it began meeting representatives of small Christian parties, fol-lowed by visits to Catholic and Greek Orthodox spiritual authorities.[61] Then, on December 1, 1992, two leading cadres of Hezbollah, Khudr Tleis and Nawaf al-Mussawi, visited Bkirki, the seat of the Maronite patri-arch and Cardinal Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir. Though it was conducted in a relaxed and candid atmosphere, the visit to the spiritual leader of the Maronite community reverberated throughout the Christian community and was received with mixed emotions.

Hezbollah perceived the "dialogue as a means to reach common denominators which would help cooperation on common causes, and help to resolve disputes so that conflicts and clashes would not occur, while every group upholds its beliefs and specificities…"[62] Tleis and Mussawi affirmed to the patriarch that "religious, cultural, and political freedoms in Lebanon are sanctities that should not be touched," and that "the Resistance, which has defended the country and fatherland and has been able to prevent the extension of occupation, requires that all Lebanese stand by it."[63]

In a gesture to continue the dialogue, a patriarchal delegation headed by Bishop Roland Abou Jaoude visited secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah on January 22, 1993. No less significant, Hezbollah included Christians (mainly from the south and Ba'albeck-Hermel regions) on its parliamentary and municipality electoral lists. But, admittedly, this *Infitah* did not supplant Hezbollah's idea of establishing an Islamic state, which has eventually become a long-term objective. Secretary General Nasrallah explained:

> I do not wish [an Islamic State] by force or violence, rather we prefer to wait for the day that we succeed in convincing our countrymen—by means of dialogue and in an open atmosphere—that the only alternative is the founding of an Islamic state.[64]

Nevertheless, the *Infitah* on the Christians took a marked step forward following the pope's visit to Lebanon in April 1997, where he communicated his "Apostolic Guidance." Hezbollah, as Joseph Alagha observed, underscored the Apostolic Guidance's call for a constructive Christian-Muslim dialogue, national coexistence, and the building of a virtuous society that upholds human values and dignity as well as peace and reconciliation.[65]

Subsequently, in its 2000 parliamentary election program, Hezbollah tempered its call for abolishing political sectarianism by emphasizing the establishment, as the Taif Accord stipulated, a National Committee for the Abolishment of Political Sectarianism. This was followed by secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah's statement in 2001 that called for the abolition of political sectarianism in the mentality, before abolishing it in the texts[66]; a statement that has become consistent with the Maronite patriarch's position on political sectarianism whenever the issue of its abolishment has arisen.[67]

Views on Syria and Iran

As mentioned in chapter 3, secretary general of the Islamic Association Fathi Yakan had called in 1979 for the fusion of Lebanon into Syria as

the means to resolve civil strife in Lebanon. But from the early 1980s, he began to promote the Islamic Association's participation in Lebanon's political system and move away from his previous argument. But he maintained throughout his life a political stance supporting Syria as the country at the forefront of the confrontation with the United States and Israel, a position decidedly expressed in the Islamic Association's programs.

The 1992 parliamentary election program of the Islamic Association stated that "departing from the fact that Lebanon is an undivided part of the Arabic Ummah, and since the Arabic presence presents the strategic depth to the Lebanese entity, thereby it is a duty a) to establish the strongest of relationships with our Arab brethren, especially Syria and the countries that reject the American-Zionist project, b) to establish friendly relations with all Muslim countries and liberation movements...and c) to consider Palestine a sacred Arabic land that all serious forces should work for its liberation by all available methods, in particular armed resistance."[68]

Following Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, and in response to heightened Christian calls, especially by the Maronite patriarch, for Syrian troops' redeployment in Lebanon, the Islamic Association unequivocally supported Damascus. The 2001 political program of the Association averred:

> Since Syria is the closest neighbor, the gateway for Lebanon to the Arabic world and its strategic and economic depth, the Association considers Syrian presence in Lebanon as a brotherly presence, accomplishing Lebanon's supreme interest. Therefore, this presence should not be put forward as a matter of conflict among Lebanese, and any negative markers consequent upon it should be addressed by the constitutional institutions.[69]

In the aftermath of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, this stance was further advanced by the 2003 Islamic Charter of the Association, which underscored in Ba'thist-like nationalist terms Arab unity. The Charter, under the section on the of Our Commitment to the Arab and Islamic World, stated:

> We see that the duty and interest of all viable forces in Lebanon and Syria is to coordinate and complement each other in all fields...for we recognize that our fate is forging ahead and complementary. This does not mean a temporary or exploitative alignment with the Syrian *Qutr* [region] or with another of the Arabic *Aqtar* [regions]; but it is the principled commitment to the unity of this *Ummah*.[70]

Deputy secretary general of Hezbollah Naim Qassem forthrightly described the Islamist party's relationship with Syria as based in the foundation of Hezbollah's calculations regarding its resistance to Israel's

occupation.[71] The 1996 parliamentary election program of Hezbollah described Lebanese-Syrian relations as an aspect of Lebanon's Arab affiliation, and posited that these relations were factors of stability for the uneasy Lebanese formula.[72] This stance was further advanced in Hezbollah's 2000 parliamentary election program, in which Lebanon's "special and destined" relations with Syria were perceived as an element of strength for both countries to confront their challenges, mainly from the "Zionist Entity." As Christian calls for redeploying Syrian troops in Lebanon heightened in the aftermath of Israel's withdrawal in May 2000, Hezbollah, like the Islamic Association, defended Syrian presence in Lebanon and reiterated the importance of Syria's elemental and supportive security role. Following Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, the party consistently defended and supported the uniqueness of Lebanese-Syrian relations in the face of regional and international attempts at isolating Syria [see chapter 6]. This stance was decidedly conveyed in the party's 2009 parliamentary election program, in which it expressed a "desire to build the best distinguished brotherly relations with the Syrian Arab Republic."[73] The program also added that the party will never depart from this system of constants and axioms.

Elaborating on the party's relationship with Syria, Qassem maintained that "it departs from the ideological and political vision of Hezbollah. But the party's hold onto the effectiveness of the relationship departs from a geo-political equation, which puts weak Lebanon throughout its history in the center of polarized international and regional politics." He added that "Lebanon is at a historical juncture between two choices: Syrian or Israeli one . . . The approbation of one means the denial of the other . . . And Syria is the cornerstone for confronting regional vindications."[74] But, according to Hezbollah, this neither meant that Hezbollah subordinated its decision-making process to Damascus nor it acted as a Syrian instrument. Qassem underscored that "the movement of Hezbollah has distinguished itself in an extensive independence of action, even though this was not typical of the relationships between states and parties." He added: "The clear political presentation [program] of the party, its professional work and its skillful follow through on mobilizing support for the Resistance created a re-assurance for the Syrian leadership about the harmony of the direction [path] of the party with the Syrian vision."[75]

No less significant, Hezbollah also promoted and supported Iranian-Lebanese relations. It goes without saying, as we have seen, that Iran played an essential role in helping establish Hezbollah, which subscribes to the *Wilayat al-Faqih*. Elaborating on Hezbollah's subscription to the *Wilayat al-Faqih* and its role, Qassem wrote:

> This *Wilayat* is necessary to preserve and apply Islam, for you cannot deal with a prominent Islamic project with individual initiatives or separate

actions. There should be a common line tying the Ummah practically with each other, and this can only be achieved through the leadership and guardianship of *Wali al-Faqih* [just jurisconsult].[76]

Needless to say, it was Ayatollah Khamenei, *Wali al-Faqih* [just jurist-consult], who sanctioned Hezbollah's participation in Lebanon's confessional system. Conversely, the party has never shied from admitting that the Islamist party consults on a regular basis with Iran and that Tehran has helped the party financially, economically, militarily, and politically. The vast network of Hezbollah's social programs ranging from hospitals, to Islamic schools, to cultural centers dotting the Shi'a landscape displays in no uncertain ways Iranian largess. The 2000 parliamentary election program of Hezbollah emphasized developing Lebanon's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has always been a staunch supporter of Lebanon.[77]

Moreover, *Wilayat al-Faqih* is a source of pride for Hezbollah. In the aftermath of the vast destruction wrought upon Lebanon during the 2006 summer war between Israel and Hezbollah that intensified non-Shi'a reservations about the party's weapons and unilateral decisions, and that was looked upon as a proxy war between Iran and United States (see chapter 6), secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah delivered a fiery speech declaring a "divine" victory and taking pride in the party's relationship with both Syria and Iran.[78] In much the same vein, in the aftermath of Hezbollah's forceful seizure of Beirut in May 2008, Nasrallah delivered a speech in which he took pride in being a member of *Wilayat al-Faqih*.[79]

At the same time, however, Hezbollah leading cadres have been at pains to assert that, though Iran and Syria support Hezbollah, the Islamist party is a Lebanese party, making its own decisions on nationalist grounds. In an interview with National Broadcasting Network (NBN) Television station in March 2008, Nasrallah affirmed that "who governs the party and its decisions is the interest *(Maslaha)* of Lebanon as number one priority. We have friends with whom we meet and discuss and converse, but no one dictate to the party its decision. This does not absolutely exist."[80] Similarly, in May 1995 in a move granting Hezbollah more religious and financial independence, Ayatollah Khamenei, *Wali al-Faqih,* appointed Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sheikh Muhammad Yazbik, a *Shura* Council member, as his representatives in Lebanon. Nasrallah and Yazbik represented Ayatollah Khamenei respectively in Beirut and Jabal 'Amil, and in North Lebanon and the Beka'.[81] This appointment delegated the authority of *Wali al-Faqih* to the two party members in terms of granting them special prerogatives and responsibilities dealing with religious and financial matters. They legally acquired the power to issue *Fatwas* [religious opinion] as *Marja' Taqlidi* [source

of emulation] and collect *Zakat* and *Khums*.[82] In much the same vein, in June 2005, Sheikh 'Afif al-Nabulsi religiously sanctioned Hezbollah's participation in the Lebanese cabinet; a decision until recently reserved only to *Wali al-Faqih*.[83]

Significantly enough, both Islamist parties, Hezbollah and the Islamic Association, supported revising the country's history books and public schools curriculum in order to reflect Lebanon's Arab and Islamic culture.[84] However, this call for the "Arabization" of the curriculum has become more pronounced in the programs of the Association than those of Hezbollah, as the latter focused more on developing public schools and the Lebanese University.[85]

The Praxis of Islamism and Syrian Suzerainty

This chapter examines the regional and domestic background against which the relationship between Syria and Hezbollah had transformed, and surveys the way in which Damascus dealt with other sectarian and political parties and groups vis-à-vis the Islamist parties, especially Hezbollah. It explores Hezbollah's transformation into a resilient political party and legitimization as a nationalist resistance movement, and probes communal and governmental reactions to Hezbollah's rise to political and military preeminence. It also underscores Syrian occupation of Lebanon and its implication for Lebanon's confessional politics.

State Building and Hezbollah: A Red Line

The forced removal of General Michel Aoun from the presidential palace and the participation of Syria in the Madrid Peace Conference to resolve the longstanding Arab-Israeli conflict foreshadowed a hopeful and auspicious beginning for Lebanon's Second Republic. Civil war came to an end, and, as stipulated in the Document of National Understanding (Taif Accord), all militias were dismantled, with the exception of Hezbollah, which was regarded as Lebanese Resistance. Parliamentary elections took place for the first time in 20 years between August 23 and September 6, 1992. Rafiq Hariri, the Lebanese billionaire with strong connections to the Saudi royal family, was charged by the parliament to form a cabinet. Although most Christians boycotted the elections in protest to Syria's hegemony over Lebanon (see the following paragraph), Hariri's potential ascent to the premiership reinforced the hopeful mood permeating the country.

Many Lebanese saw in the rising political clout of Hariri a Saudi-Syrian endorsement to rebuild and secure Lebanon. Hariri would not have been considered as a candidate to the premiership without Syrian approval. And since Syria participated in the peace conference, his candidacy was perceived as a step in the direction of preparing Lebanon (and Syria) for

peace with Israel. His plan to rebuild Beirut and re-create the old glory of the city as a hub for business and tourism indicated that he was wagering his political future and program on peace in the Middle East.

The parliament gave Hariri's government a vote of confidence a few days before the anniversary of Lebanon's independence on November 22, 1992. His cabinet was the largest in the history of Lebanon, comprising 30 ministers. The Christian opposition and Hezbollah were not represented in the cabinet. Hezbollah had not given Hariri's government a vote of confidence, let alone had taken a decision to join the cabinet. Hezbollah was concerned about the ramifications of the peace process for its Resistance and was worried that Hariri under the pretext of building the state institutions and securing stability would restrict the movement of the Resistance or bring it under the control of the state.[1] Hezbollah was also concerned about the extent to which Damascus supported President Elias Hrawi and the government of Hariri. Already, Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz had issued his famous slogan "The necessity of harmony between the state and the resistance."[2] Taken literally and within the context of the peace process and rebuilding Beirut, the slogan suggested a government desire to subordinate the decisions of the Resistance to the political decisions of the state, which could translate into the Resistance losing its ability to continue its *Jihad* against Israel and reducing the Islamist party to a political party robbed of its raison d'être.

Though Hezbollah continued its *Jihad* against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and its proxy force the South Lebanese Army (SLA) in the buffer zone (which Israel created in 1978), its fears and concerns about the government's true motives toward the Resistance began to come true. It's noteworthy that in the aftermath of Israel's assassination of secretary general of Hezbollah Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi and his wife and son on February 16, 1992, Hezbollah retaliated by launching for the first time soviet-made Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. This introduced a new element in the confrontational equation between Hezbollah and Israel.[3] Subsequently, in response to Hezbollah's rising attacks on the IDF and the SLA, including launching Katyusha rockets on northern Israel, Israel launched a weeklong military operation, codenamed "operation Accountability," into southern Lebanon on July 25 to curb the power of Hezbollah and to provoke a mass exodus toward Beirut as a means to put pressure on the Lebanese government to secure its border with the Jewish state. Israel's then-Chief of Staff Ehud Barak declared that the Lebanese government should disarm Hezbollah so that Israel would not do it.[4]

The operation was wide in scope, causing much human and material destruction, let alone a large number of internally displaced citizens.[5] It also threatened regional stability and the collapse of the peace process. Secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah, who was elected the

new leader of the Islamist party by Hezbollah's *Shura* Council following the murder of Mussawi, declared that "we consider ourselves in an open war with this enemy, and the operations defending our families in the south and Western Beka' will continue without parameters and red lines imposed by the enemy. The Resistance will decide the parameters."[6]

Consequently, the United States and France tried to broker a cease-fire as a stepping stone to stabilizing southern Lebanon under governmental control. Washington pursued two concurrent policies, one with Damascus and the other with Beirut. U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher negotiated with President Asad and Syrian foreign minister Farouq al-Shara the appropriate measures to stop the confrontation. Out of these talks emerged a plan according to which Hezbollah would continue its Resistance in the Israeli-occupied buffer zone and would desist from launching rockets into Israel, providing that Israel would not target civilians.[7] But this plan was mainly the brainchild of President Asad who held consultations with the Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and a delegation from Hezbollah in Damascus.[8] Asad's plan went beyond stopping the hostilities to creating new "rules for the game," which would compel the United States to indirectly recognize Hezbollah as a resistance movement while at the same time keep the confrontation open in the buffer zone as an instrument of political and military pressure on Israel. Once the parties involved (Israel, Hezbollah, Lebanon, and Iran) approved the plan, hostilities stopped in the evening of July 31, 1993. Significantly, the "July Understanding" was born in the form of an oral, tacit understanding for the new rules of engagement.

On the other hand, Christopher had negotiated a secret agreement with President Hrawi and Prime Minister Hariri to the effect that United States would support the redeployment of the Lebanese army to southern Lebanon, including the area under the control of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to secure peace along the border with Israel.[9] In fact a series of actions undertaken by the government revealed its collaboration with Washington without Syrian knowledge.

On the first day following the end of hostilities, the cabinet held an extraordinary session in which it decided to deploy the army in the operational area of the UNIFIL. The U.N. approved the cabinet's decision on the same day, though it had objected to this decision in the past. The next day President Hrawi convened a meeting of the Defense Supreme Council, in which he questioned, without mentioning Hezbollah, the presence of "armed men" in areas where the army had clear orders to prevent any armed presence there. He accused the Army Command of being "scandalously lax" in executing its clear orders in the south, Iqlim al-Tufah, and the Western Beka'. He added: "We are with the Resistance, but we cannot accept a Resistance that would compromise the state and does not coordinate with the army."[10]

Prime Minister Hariri strongly approved the position of the president and declared that "we are all nationalists, we appreciate the army's role and its importance; but it must execute orders and not to be lenient with any one," and added that "the government is ready to bear the responsibility for the Resistance on the condition that it does not exceed its bounds and keep its objectives within the interest of the state, without compromising it."[11] Consequently, the council decided to stop recognizing the licenses to carry and ship arms, unless they were referred to the Defense Ministry for approval or suspension.

According to Karim Pakradouni, a former minister and former head of the Phalange party, "the summary of this meeting was that the president and the prime minister were in agreement that the army does not implement the directions given to it and does not confront Hezbollah members. Both hold [commander of the army] Emile Lahoud responsible for this condition and accuse him of indulging the Resistance, and think that he is covertly coordinating with Damascus."[12]

This marked the beginning of an apprehensive and troubled relationship between Hariri and the future president of Lebanon. In any event, following a pointed communication between Hariri and Lahoud, the latter refused a request by a U.N. delegation to send the army to the south and prepared himself to resign from his post.

The flurry of these drastic events took Damascus by surprise and confirmed Hezbollah's suspicions and concerns. Immediately thereafter, the political deputy of Nasrallah Hajj Hussein al-Khalil traveled to Damascus to discuss the unfolding events and was surprised to know that the Syrian leadership knew about them from the media. Before long, President Asad made a call to his Lebanese counterpart and conveyed his unhappiness and refusal to any concession affecting the Resistance. No sooner the call ended than Lebanese authorities began blaming each other; and most importantly, suspended all decisions regarding the Resistance and sending the army to southern Lebanon. In fact, they began clamoring for supporting the Resistance and coordinating with Syria.[13] Moreover, President Asad called on Lahoud to visit him in Damascus, where he expressed his gratitude to Lahoud's nationalist stance. The intent of the visit was not lost on Hrawi or Hariri. Lahoud stood in favor of Asad and that spoke volumes about the fact that the commander of the army had become in Lebanese parlance "untouchable."[14] More importantly, this episode also marked the beginning of a gradual but steady process to fill Lebanon's institutions with Syrian loyalists and affirm the framework of cooperation between the Resistance and Lebanese authorities set up by President Asad (see chapter 5). The Lebanese government would play a subordinate role to Hezbollah's Resistance role against Israel in south of Lebanon. Put simply, whereas Hezbollah pursues armed resistance, the Lebanese government resists by politically supporting Hezbollah.

THE LEGITIMIZATION OF HEZBOLLAH
AS A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

Syria's diktat in Lebanon was based on a delicate balance between a divide and rule policy and maintaining to more or less a confessional equilibrium. The advent of Hariri into Lebanon's political arena revitalized the Sunni community, whose traditional leadership had been undermined by the evacuation of the PLO, Syria's hegemony, radicalization of the urban poor, and the Shi'a's control of west Beirut. The assassination of the community's spiritual leader and grand mufti of *Dar al-Ifta'*, Hassan Khalid in May 1989 dealt a severe blow to the morals of the sect. Consequently, many Sunnis saw in Hariri a remedy to the community's ebbing political fortunes and thus many rallied around him as the new *Zai'm*, a power broker in Lebanon and the region, thanks in no small part to his charisma, prodigious wealth, and vast political network. As such, Damascus was careful about giving Hariri some domestic political room to maneuver so long as he toed the Syrian political line. As we have seen, President Asad immediately clamped down on the Hariri's government when it tried to undercut Hezbollah's military arm. But, on the same grounds, Damascus would stand idly by when its strategic interests or tactical policies converge with the policies of the Lebanese government.

A case in point was the first confrontation between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah in September 1993. In a show of opposition to the Oslo Accords, Hezbollah organized a demonstration in Beirut's southern suburbs, in spite of the government's ban on demonstrations. President Hrawi and Defense Minister Muhsin Daloul insisted that the army and military intelligence take measures to prevent the formation of any demonstration. As the Hezbollah-led demonstration moved in the direction of the airport, they were confronted by an army unit. As the confrontation escalated, the unit opened fire on the demonstrators, killing nine.[15] Neither Hezbollah nor Damascus took any retaliatory action against the government. But Hezbollah and the government had a chilly relationship until May 1995, when Hariri issued a statement expressing regret and considering the casualties as martyrs for the fatherland and Resistance.[16]

Meanwhile, as Hezbollah continued its operations against the IDF and the SLA in southern Lebanon, President Asad continued separating his peace negotiations with Israel from his support to Hezbollah. When Shimon Peres became Israel's prime minister following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli fanatic in November 1995, a promising feeling pervaded the region that peace between Israel and Syria had become within reach. Peres was quick to assert his eagerness for peace with Syria. His famous expression "to fly fast and high" characterized his readiness to take a giant leap in the peace process.[17] But soon enough, the promising political mood turned into a gloomy one as a spate of suicide

bombings carried out by the Palestinian Islamist party Hamas shook Tel Aviv, causing dozens of casualties.

At the same time, Hezbollah increased its operations in southern Lebanon, prompting Israel to widen the scope of its retaliatory attacks. In response, Hezbollah began launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. This wave of violence unsettled the Israelis and more or less compromised the image of Peres as a strong leader capable of shepherding his flock toward peace. Meanwhile, the international community, led by United States convened a peace summit, under the name "Summit of the Peacemakers," in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in March 1996 in order to put the Palestinian-Israeli peace process back on track after the spate of suicide bombings in Israel and to boost Peres's political image. President Asad boycotted the summit, which did not go far in helping to stop the violence.

Apparently, in response to the escalating violence and as a means to dispel the image that he was "weak on security," which was pointedly projected by the right in Israel, Peres ordered on April 11, 1996, a military operation, codenamed "Grapes of Wrath," into Lebanon. The purpose of the operation carried the hallmarks of the previous operation, Operation Accountability. It aimed at striking at Hezbollah, putting pressure on the Lebanese government, and by extension its patron Syria, to disarm the party. But Israel's raw power demonstrated time and again its limitations. The operation, conducted among civilians, resulted in the unintended consequence of shelling a large group of civilians taking shelter at the headquarters of the U.N. in Kafar Qana, killing more than a hundred.

World public opinion heaped its opprobrium on Israel, forcing a change in Israel's course of action and compelling the United States to change its position from supporting Israel's campaign to intervening to help mediate a cease-fire. Washington initially supported a proposal that sought to end attacks on civilians and disarm Hezbollah. Undeterred, President Asad, rejected the proposal, and moved to build on the 1993 July oral understanding a new but formal one officiated by the international community. France helped bring about a written agreement, known as the "April Understanding," which was close to Asad's objective. The Understanding as posted on the website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reads as follows:

> The United States understands that after discussions with the governments of Israel and Lebanon, and in consultation with Syria, Lebanon and Israel will ensure the following:
>
> 1. Armed groups in Lebanon will not carry out attacks by Katyusha rockets or by any kind of weapon into Israel.
> 2. Israel and those cooperating with it will not fire any kind of weapon at civlians or civilian targets in Lebanon.

3. Beyond this, the two parties commit to ensuring that under no circumstances will civilians be the target of attack and that civilian populated areas and industrial and electrical installations will not be used as launching grounds for attacks.
4. Without violating this understanding, nothing herein shall preclude any party from exercising the right of self-defense.

A Monitoring Group is established consisting of the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Its task will be to monitor the application of the understanding stated above. Complaints will be submitted to the Monitoring Group.

In the event of a claimed violation of the understanding, the party submitting the complaint will do so within 24 hours. Procedures for dealing with the complaints will be set by the Monitoring Group.

The United States will also organize a Consultative Group, to consist of France, the European Union, Russia and other interested parties, for the purpose of assisting in the reconstruction needs of Lebanon.

It is recognized that the understanding to bring the current crisis between Lebanon and Israel to an end cannot substitute for a permanent solution. The United States understands the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region.

Toward this end, the United States proposes the resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel at a time to be agreed upon, with the objective of reaching comprehensive peace.

The United States understands that it is desirable that these negotiations be conducted in a climate of stability and tranquility.

This understanding will be announced simultaneously at 1800 hours, April 26, 1996, in all countries concerned.[18]

Though it brought about a cease-fire and created a monitoring group, the April Understanding was regarded in Lebanon and Syria as a win for Hezbollah and President Asad. The Understanding legitimized Hezbollah as a resistance movement by sanctioning its military operations, and undercut whatever desire, aspiration, or plan entertained by Hariri and other politicians to reduce Hezbollah to a disarmed political party under propitious circumstances. Though, under Syrian tutelage, the government of Lebanon approved the Understanding, the Understanding "consecrated" the power and weapons of Hezbollah at the expense of the power and legitimacy of the state.

POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL BATTLES, AND SYRIAN ARBITRATION

The Taif Accord gave equal parliamentary representation to Muslims and Christians, divided proportionally between the two sects' various

denominations. Before the 1992 elections, the legislature, under Syrian pressure, was enlarged from 108 to 128 seats, with 64 Christian representatives (34 Maronite, 14 Greek Orthodox, 8 Greek Catholic, 5 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Armenian Catholic, 1 Evangelical, and 1 candidate representing various "minorities," including Jews) and 64 Muslim representatives (27 Sunni, 27 Shiite, 8 Druze, and 2 Alawite).

Using a system in certain variations still in place today, voters were assigned to electoral districts originally drawn around Lebanon's six administrative regions, requiring candidates to appeal to a broad cross-section of religious communities in order to win office. Candidates generally run as members of a list for their district. Broadly speaking, the 1992 and 1996 election laws were virtually identical, dealing unevenly with districting. As provided in the Taif Accord, the *muhafazat* (administrative regions) were used as electoral districts in the north, south, Beka' Valley, and Beirut. But for the *muhafazat* of Mount Lebanon, the smaller *qada'* districts were used as the electoral constituency in order to help Druze leader Walid Jumblat and to fragment the power of the Christian opposition.

The Islamic Association and Hezbollah ran the 1992 parliamentary elections on a practical rather than ideological basis. Relying on their experience as founders and organizers of vast networks of social institutions, they ran an efficient, grassroots campaigns, reaching out to dozens of rural villages. Broadly speaking, the Islamic Association entered the elections battle without significant allied help, fielding candidates in Lebanon's all governorates.[19] But three candidates won, Fathi Yakan for Northern Lebanon in Tripoli; Asa'd Harmouch for Northern Lebanon in al-Dinniyeh; and Zuhair al-'Abidi in Beirut. Admittedly, the victory of their three candidates was no easy feat, reflecting some popular support. However, Christian boycott of the elections helped their candidates win, especially in Beirut.

Hezbollah, on the other hand, running a practical and politically sophisticated elections campaign, fielded its candidates in coalition lists, complete lists, and as independents. It also fielded incomplete lists so as to include nonparty members for the purpose of political maneuvering and compromises with all factions and tribal families, as was the case in Ba'albek-Hermil.[20] In the district of Baabda of Mount Lebanon, Hezbollah entered into a coalition with Walid Jumblat's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP); in Beirut it entered into "undeclared coalition" with the Islamic Society of Philanthropic Project (see the following paragraph); and in the south it entered into a coalition list with Nabih Berri's AMAL. Hezbollah (and its supporters) won 12 seats in the parliament, making it one of the biggest blocs.

As soon as the elections ended, Hezbollah, as already mentioned, did not give a vote of confidence to Hariri's cabinet, opposed its big

reconstruction projects, and their consequential ballooning national debt. In addition, as shown above, Hezbollah grew wary about Hariri's motives and plans regarding its military arm, which were frustrated by Syria. But as the political and military power of Hezbollah grew, other parties, including former Hezbollah allies like the PSP and AMAL, rallied around Hariri to curb Hezbollah's political power as represented in the state. Damascus, supervising the whole political scene, had to walk a fine line balancing its support of Hezbollah with its support of pro-Syrian parties. All this came to the open in the 1996 parliamentary elections, which was regarded in Lebanon as the battle to cut down Hezbollah to size.

As the 1996 elections approached, Hezbollah found itself the target of Hariri and his allies and even its own erstwhile allies. Nabih Berri of AMAL was not ready to give Hezbollah its fair share of number of candidates in a joint slate for the elections. Hariri defined the elections as a "battle between moderation and extremism," and declared that he would not cooperate with extremists.[21] Even Jumblat broke his alliance with Hezbollah, which went back years. A day before the elections, he railed against the Resistance and its actions. Hezbollah's deputy Muhammad Ra'd asserted that "*al-Sultah* (government) seeks to contract [reduce] the presence of the Resistance in the parliament."[22] Bayram Ibrahim, writing in Lebanese daily *An-Nahar*, captured the essence of the war to cut down Hezbollah to size: "As such Hezbollah faces a merciless war from three active factions. It has become clear that this war targets 'clipping' the wings of the bird that has developed and grown in a way overshadowing the others, causing them discontent and anxiety."[23]

Hezbollah took on the challenge and threatened to enter the battle of elections either singly or in alliance with Sunni Islamists, independents, and leftists. The tripartite alliance (Hariri, Berri, and Jumblat) cost Hezbollah two seats, one in Beirut and the other in Mount Lebanon. Observers assessed that Hezbollah would overwhelmingly beat AMAL in the Beka' and receive a slight majority of votes in the south. Nevertheless, Hezbollah became concerned about vote rigging and warned AMAL of the consequences.[24] Berri and Nasrallah exchanged sharp statements, which intensified the politically charged climate. Both groups mobilized their allies. The Islamic Association in Sidon, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party–Higher Council, the Communist party, and former Speaker of the House Kamil al-As'ad supported Hezbollah. The Ba'th party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party–Ali Qanso, and Hariri allies supported AMAL. With tension escalating many feared renewed fighting between the two Shi'a parties. It was at this juncture that Nasrallah was called to Damascus, whereupon his party joined a coalition list with AMAL; and the "merciless war" came to an end. Hezbollah (and supporters) won ten seats. Hezbollah's submission to a joint list with AMAL demonstrated

time and again Syria's arbitrary power; but also Hezbollah's deficient freedom of choices.

Unlike Hezbollah, the Islamic Association was roundly beaten in the 1996 elections. It won only one seat in north Lebanon. Even there, their candidate received the lowest number of votes among the Sunni elected deputies. Though this loss in their bastion of power reflected a weak popular support and/or disaffected population, it was principally the Christian voter turnout, unlike the 1992 elections, that diminished their chances for winning.[25] True this Christian factor affected *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah's* position in Beirut; yet the combination of Hariri's juggernaut election campaign and the Islamist competition between *al-Jama'a* and *al-Ahbash*, all of which characterized the Beirut scene, killed the Islamic Association's prospects. This has consistently undermined *al-Jama'a's* political standing.

In the 2000 elections, the Taif provisions were entirely ignored, and the country was divided into 14 electoral districts. Overseen by Ghazi Kana'n, then-chief of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon, this division created districts that favored pro-Syrian candidates, bringing together unconnected areas with vast demographic differences. In particular, such gerrymandering joined areas containing denominations of one sect with large areas containing a single majority denomination of another sect. This practice helped dilute anti-Syrian votes, mainly from Maronites. For example, less than half of the 64 Christian representatives were elected from Christian-majority districts; most came from areas annexed to larger Muslim districts, essentially elected by Muslim votes.[26]

Hezbollah entered the elections battle riding the wave of victory of forcing Israel from Lebanon. The parties that tried to cut it down to size in the 1996 elections either entered into coalition lists with or supported Hezbollah's candidates. Hezbollah (and supporters) won 12 seats. Hariri had a landslide victory, especially in Beirut. However, the Islamic Association's fortunes sank to a new low, losing even its sole parliamentary seat in North Lebanon.

AL-AHBASH AND POSTWAR BEIRUT

The Sunni community emerged from the civil war weak and in a state of disarray. Its traditional leadership had been overshadowed by the militia leaders, who themselves were beaten by the Shi'ite forces. The community's spiraling downfall was also affected by the murder of important political and religious figures, such as Sheikh Subhi Saleh; Nazem al-Qadri [a member of parliament]; Prime Minister Rachid Karame; and Grand Mufti Hassan Khalid. Its weakness was best illustrated when the Sunnis were excluded from the Tripartite agreement, brokered by Syria in 1985 to end the civil war. No less significant, the mainstay of the religious leadership of the community, *Dar al-Ifta'*, and other Sunni institutions,

including mosques, had been affected no less by the damage of the civil war than by attempts from Islamist groups, especially the al-Ahbash, to take them over. In addition, Khalid's deputy Muhammad Rashid al-Qabbani had been held back from exercising any effective power to resurrect *Dar al-Ifta's* paramountcy in the Sunni community because he was not voted as grand mufti until 1996.

Nizar Hamzeh and Hrair Dekmejian argued that al-Ahbash was a middle class intellectual Sufi protest against political Islamism.[27] Al-Ahbash, in fact, acted more in the capacity of a moderate Islamist force, supported by Syria, to counteract Sunni radical Islamists in Lebanon. The Association of Islamic Philanthropic Projects (*Jam'iyyat al-Mashari' al-Khairiyya al-Islamiyya*), commonly known as al-Ahbash, is one interesting and controversial grassroots Islamist organization that does not fit the mold of conventional Islamist movements. It is a Sufi (spiritualist) movement that devoutly follows the teachings of its founder and ideologue Sheikh Abdallah Ibn Muhammad Ibn Yusuf al-Hirari al-Shi'bi al-Abdari, also known as Abdallah al-Habashi, an appellation signifying his Ethiopian origins. Habashi was born in 1920 in al-Hirara, Ethiopia, where he studied Shafi'i jurisprudence and became a mufti. In 1947, the sheikh left for Hijaz, after being expelled from Ethiopia by Emperor Haile Selassie. A year later, he went to Jerusalem and then to Damascus to study with the Rafaiiyya and Qadiriyya Sufi orders. In 1950, he made Beirut his home and was licensed as a sheikh by al-Azhar University's branch in Lebanon.[28]

As explained on al-Ahbash's own Internet site, his system mixes elements of Sunni and Shi'a theological doctrines with Sufi spiritualism. Some of their tenets, as publicized on their site and in their journal, *Manar al-Huda*, emphasize Islam's pluralist character and oppose the use of violence against the ruling authorities; accept the legitimacy of Imam Ali (the Shi'a doctrine of legitimacy), and of his sons Hassan and Hussein, as well as uphold the teachings of Hussein's son, Zayn al-Abidin (In this, al-Ahbash set themselves apart from all other Sunni jurists and are closer to Shi'a Islam); defend many Sufi beliefs and practices condemned by Islamists as heresies; reject the ideology and intolerance of Islamist thinkers beginning with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and their contemporary disciples Qutb, Mawdudi, and Yakan; reject the doctrine of *Takfir*, which levels the charge of unbelief on Muslims; and oppose the creation of an Islamic order in Lebanon, endorsing the current communal-based political system.[29]

The Syrian regime has cultivated a strong relationship with al-Ahbash. The Alawi-dominated Syrian regime has tried to check the power of Sunni Islamist organizations by bolstering al-Ahbash as a mainstream moderate Sunni movement. However, al-Ahbash's outlook as an Islamist movement coextensive with Lebanonism and Arab nationalism made the movement receptive to Syrian overtures. The depth of the relationship

was fairly gauged when Syrian hegemony over Lebanon began to be questioned by prominent Sunni political figures in the wake of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in summer 2000.

During Lebanon's civil war, al-Ahbash, unlike other parties, refrained from creating its own militia; nor did they participate in fighting Israel. Espousing a stance of moderation, they have focused on proselytizing and recruitment. In 1983, the sheikh's followers took control of the Society of Islamic Philanthropic Projects, which was originally formed by Sheikh Ahmad al-Ajuz in 1930. Though al-Ahbash experienced significant growth in the 1980s and 1990s by offering an alternative to radical Islamist movements it was not able to translate its growing popularity into gains in the country's parliamentary elections. Competing against the Islamic Association and Hariri for Sunni votes, it won only one seat in Beirut in 1992.[30] In the 1996 elections, 'Adnan Trabulsi of the al-Ahbash lost out to Tamam Salam. The al-Ahbash suffered a severe blow when their promising leader Sheikh Nizar Halabi was assassinated in 1995 by a radical Islamist group, Isbat al-Ansar.[31]

Meanwhile, the acting leader of *Dar al-Ifta'* al-Qabbani was finally promoted to grand mufti of Lebanon in December 1996. Significantly, his appointment was facilitated by President Asad who had met him two days before his appointment. In fact, his appointment was engineered by the Syrians and Hariri, who managed to pass a law reducing the number of electors from over one thousand to 96. Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen remarked that "the reduction of the electoral college was aimed at making it easier to convene—and control—but also to keep the Ahbash and the Jama'a Islamiyah influence at a minimum and redress the balance between religious and political electors. This can be seen as the end of a long process whereby the election of the Mufti has been removed from the men of religion to the Sunni politicians."[32] Hariri, by then, had emerged as the *Za'im* in Beirut. His reconstruction of the capital and contributions to Sunni Muslim institutions, including *Dar al-Ifta'*, had ingratiated him with many Sunnis who felt that he was reempowering the Sunni community.

The Islamic Association protested the procedural process made possible by Hariri to elect the grand mufti as another step by the Hariri's government "to quell all critical voices and make religion an instrument of its policies."[33] In March 1997, when three of al-Halabi murderers were executed, the Islamic Association furiously protested and called for the abolition of the al-Ahbash. The Islamic Association's stance regarding al-Ahbash was best illustrated by Fathi Yakan in an interview with *Al-Masirah in 1995*. Remarking on al-Ahbash, Yakan said:

> The Association of Philanthropic projects or what's called al-Ahbash are the one who characterized themselves . . . outside of the whole Islamic spectrum . . . I would like to ask why this body has been created to be separate

from the body of the *Ummah*…This group has leveled the charge of *Takfir* (unbelief) on any one contradicting it.[34]

It was against this background of layered complexity that the ramifications of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 began to affect the Syrian-imposed politico-security regime.

ISLAMISTS, CHRISTIANS, AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL

Despite the fact that the Lebanese Forces and the Phalange party had supported the Taif Accord, they found themselves the target of systemic marginalization by the regimes of Hrawi and his successor General Emile Lahoud. Though Geagea initially joined the Omar Karame government in the aftermath of the Taif, he resigned by early 1991 and moved to the opposition. The Lebanese Forces believed that the government had intentionally been opening "files" against it, and harassing and arresting its members.[35] Significantly, Geagea became a suspect of the bomb explosion in the Church of *Sayidat al-Najat* in Zuq al-Mukayil in February 1994, which caused ten casualties. Following a series of actions against the party and its members, the cabinet issued decree number 4908 on March 23, 1994, dismantling and outlawing the Lebanese Forces. Before long, Geagea was arrested on April 21, 1994, and was charged, among other things, with the church explosion and with the assassination of former Prime Minister Omar Karame.

Meanwhile, plagued by internal dissent and inertia, the Phalange party faced its biggest challenge in the form of what stand it should take regarding the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon and Israel's proxy militia the SLA, whose main officers were Maronites. Initially, the party tried to evade the issue. However, resisting the occupation became a central theme in Lebanese politics thanks largely to Hezbollah, which led the campaign against Israel and ingeniously exploited it to transform itself into a national political party with grassroots support. At this juncture the initial attitude of the party mutated into an ambivalent one. While the party implicitly agreed to the national consensus that Israel occupied south Lebanon, it refrained from explicitly affirming that Israel was an enemy and from publicly supporting the Islamist-nationalist struggle against Israel. Apparently, this attitude stemmed from its traditional opposition to all foreign forces present on Lebanese soil and its wishful thinking that tied Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to that of Syria. In addition, the Phalangist contention that the Maronite community after Taif was the sole loser reinforced this attitude.[36]

This ambivalent attitude did not sit well with Hezbollah, which heightened its verbal attacks on the Phalangists and Lebanese Forces, implying

their collaboration with the SLA. In late January 2000, Hezbollah assassinated a high-ranking member of the SLA, the Maronite colonel Akl Hashim. Answering to his community's call, Maronite patriarch Sfeir sent a representative to the Israeli-occupied zone to perform Hashim's funeral services. While the patriarch justified his action on religious grounds, Hezbollah's leader, Hasan Nasrallah, made a general swipe at the Maronites questioning their loyalty to the country, thereby enraging the whole Maronite community. In an act of solidarity with the Maronites, Sunni leader Rafiq Hariri affirmed the Maronite community's historical roots and nationalism.[37]

Despite Hezbollah's much trumpeted *Infitah,* it did not feel uncomfortable with or unjustified in its charge of treason against the Maronites. Following the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and the patriarch's call for Syrian withdrawal (see the following paragraph), Hezbollah again questioned the loyalty of Maronite leaders. The attitude of Hezbollah was summed up by the organization's spokesperson, Nawaf al-Mussawi: "I won't speak of a conspiracy, but there is a Lebanese side [Maronite] that has an agenda different from our working agenda . . . At the time we were fighting the Israeli occupation, others didn't see it as an occupation."[38]

Most importantly, on September 20, 2000, from Bkirki, the seat of the Maronite patriarch, the Council of Maronite Bishops released a statement in the form of a "call to all whom it may concern in and outside Lebanon to participate in the rescue."[39] The call began by stating that the situation in Lebanon had reached such a crisis that it had become a matter of obligation to speak the truth without any reservation. It dealt with four subjects: parliamentary elections, economic conditions, political conditions, and the question of Syrian withdrawal. Under the rubric of these subjects, Bkirki's statement emphasized the following main points:

> a) Israel has withdrawn from south Lebanon and the time has come for the Syrian army to re-deploy in Lebanon in preparation for its full withdrawal in accordance with the Taif accord; b) The talk over the possibility of civil strife is superficial unless someone intends to fuel it; c) The presence of the Syrian army next to the presidential palace, a symbol of national dignity, distresses the Lebanese; d) Lebanon is no longer sovereign in the shadow of a hegemony that includes all organizations, agencies and administrations whereby many Lebanese are in Israeli and Syrian prisons; e) Half of the population lives below the poverty level, and Lebanese production finds neither export markets nor government protection against external production, especially Syria's; f) Lebanese laborers compete with foreign laborers, especially Syrians who obtain special treatment; and g) Election law is corrupt in a way so as to allow the election of parliamentary deputies who do not represent their constituency.[40]

Bkirki's statement not only broke the taboo against public criticism of Syria but also challenged Syrian rule in Lebanon. But inasmuch as

Bkirki's statement exposed the grievances of the Maronite community, it ominously revealed the highly charged sectarian climate of Lebanon and its famous hallmark of weak national integration. It provoked a raucous debate reminiscent of those before and during the civil war. Lebanon suddenly became split into two camps charging at each other, one mainly Muslim, the other mainly Christian, opposing Syria's presence in the country.

Immediately following Bkirki's call, the grand mufti of the Lebanese Republic, Sheikh Muhammad Rashid al-Qabbani, along with vice president of the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council Sheikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan issued a statement expressing surprise at the patriarch:

> We express our surprise about the contents of the [Bkirki] statement, and we hope to be able to work together to overcome any negative effect on the brotherly relations, which bond Lebanese from all various sects. We find that no talk, exciting to the feelings, at this time or at any other time, helps the higher national interest…It is not possible for us to forget the costly sacrifices that Syria made on behalf of Lebanon in order to protect its unity, safety and stability.[41]

No sooner a raging debate about Syrian withdrawal gripped the country than two hundred Muslim clerics issued a statement on December 10 accusing Patriarch "Sfeir of serving Israeli interests by raising questions about Syrian influence."[42]

On March 20, Hezbollah, AMAL, Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and al-Ahbash joined a rally in Beirut in a show of solidarity with Damascus.[43] Two months later, on May 1, 2001, Christian dignitaries signed a document, known as the Document of Qornet Shahwan, which roughly rehashed the patriarch's statement. In addition to calling for Syrian redeployment in preparation for a complete withdrawal, the document called for completing national reconciliation and working toward fashioning an Arab comprehensive peace project that would protect Arab rights and establish a modern Arab regional order.[44] According to Karim Pakradouni, this was the time of "Christian disappointment," which led the Maronite patriarch to nurture the creation of a political current, known as the Gathering of Qornet Shahwan. The Gathering included all those who opposed then-president Emile Lahoud, and ascribed every problem to Syria so as to justify its presence in Lebanon.[45]

As the debate about Syrian withdrawal raged and sectarian tension intensified, momentous international and regional developments took place ushering in a new conflicted era in Lebanon; an era plagued by different and incongruous struggles for freedom, for controlling the state, and for Islamizing the country in the name of a nationalist-Islamist Resistance.

7

The Takeover of Beirut:
The Struggle for the State

This chapter probes the political dynamics of the country following the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut, against the background of dramatic repercussions of the 2003 Gulf War and American foreign policy in the Middle East, especially vis-à-vis Damascus and Tehran. It traces the path leading to Hezbollah's seizure of Beirut, whereas at the same time underscoring the causal factors of the heightened tension of political sectarianism and the charged political climate in the wake of the July 2006 war. It also examines the domestic and regional ramifications of the political fallout of Beirut's surrender.

Outgrowing the Patron-Client Relationship

The year 2000 marked a new phase in Hezbollah's development and its relationship with Syria. Israel's unilateral withdrawal from south of Lebanon in May 2000 undercut the legitimacy of the Syrian presence. With Syrian encouragement, the Lebanese government exerted a claim to Lebanese sovereignty over disputed border areas, mainly the mountainous Shebaa Farms and the Hills of Kfarshouba.[1]

On June 10, 2000, President Asad passed away after 30 years in power. His son Bashar assumed power. Though Bashar sought to observe the rules governing Syria's relationship with Lebanon and Hezbollah, he enhanced Hezbollah's political status and power not only by receiving Nasrallah warmly in Damascus but also by supplying Hezbollah with sophisticated weaponry including from Iran. This rapprochement accelerated after the United States launched military operations against Iraq in March 2003, shattering the regional order. Both Iran and Syria sought to prevent the United States from creating a new regional order that could threaten their rejectionist regimes.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the rapid unfolding of events in the region, many Lebanese sought to reclaim their country from Syrian occupation. The Lebanese question was placed on the international

stage with the American-French cosponsorship and successful passage of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1559, which called for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and for Hezbollah to be disarmed.[2] While Damascus sought to extend the mandate of pro-Syrian president Emile Lahoud, former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri and Druze leader Walid Jumblat began to rally anti-Syrian politicians.[3] It was at this critical juncture in Lebanese-Syrian relations that Hariri was assassinated on February 14, 2005, sparking mass protests—the Cedar Revolution.

Approximately 1.5 million Lebanese, roughly over a third of the entire population, took to the streets on March 14 demonstrating for Syria's withdrawal.[4] Under significant international pressure, on April 26, 2005, Syrian troops humiliatingly withdrew from Lebanon. However, bombings, assassinations, and violent clashes followed in subsequent months. All along Damascus continued to arm not only Hezbollah but also Palestinian groups in Lebanon such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah-Intifada at a time a debate about their disarmament raged in Beirut.[5]

In early January 2006, members of PFLP-GC shot two Lebanese municipal workers outside the Palestinian base in Naameh,[6] and in mid-May, Fatah-Intifada attacked a Lebanese patrol unit in the area of Eita al-Fakhar-Yanta near the Syrian border.[7] Reportedly, these Palestinian groups fired rockets into northern Israel, provoking on May 28, 2006, Israeli retaliatory air raids on their bases. Skirmishes ensued between Hezbollah and Israel Defense Forces. Lahoud responded by commending Hezbollah's "resistance" and criticized political forces calling for the party's disarmament.[8] No less significant, Hezbollah extended its initial assertion to keep its arms until all Lebanese territories are liberated from Israel's occupation to insist on keeping its arms as the guarantee to defend Lebanon's sovereignty against Israel's aggression.[9] Apparently, Syrian actions undercut Lebanon's national dialogue (see the following paragraph) and undermined the argument that Hezbollah needed to disarm.

At the heart of this Syrian policy has been the belief that only the Shi'a Islamist party Hezbollah could help Damascus reclaim its "historical" role in Lebanon. The Syrian army's withdrawal from Lebanon and the consolidation of an anti-Syrian nationalist alliance, bringing together a majority of Sunnis, Christians, and Druzes under the banner of March 14 Forces, undercut Syria's position. While Syrian intelligence could activate its Palestinian allies inside Lebanon, these were not organic to Lebanon's society. But this came at the price of increased Iranian involvement in Lebanon at the expense of Syria and Hezbollah outgrowing its proxy relationship with Syria.

Confessional Politics at Work:
The 2005 Elections

The withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon created a political vacuum, sparking a sectarian struggle for political power. In fact, this struggle initially began when the pro-Syrian government of Omar Karame resigned, and pro-Syrian and opposition forces haggled over the composition of a new government whose mandate was mainly to oversee the parliamentary elections set to begin in late May. Following *Marathonic* hours of wrangling, a new government was born in April reflecting a delicate balance of sectarian power distribution. However, given the politically charged atmosphere and the rapid erosion of Syrian power, the Hariri's Future Current obtained two important cabinet positions, the interior and justice ministries, which were essential for overseeing the elections and leading the probe into Hariri's assassination.[10] The birth of the new government did not mitigate the polarization of Lebanese politics. But this polarization, unlike that recently over Syria, was now over the elections, including choosing an electoral system and forging alliances, all in the interest of staking a claim to political power in the new parliament.

Attempting to fill the political vacuum created by the Syrian withdrawal, the opposition and pro-Syrian forces sharpened the sectarian struggle for political power, blurring in the process the lines between the two camps. Angered by the February 2005 assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, allegedly by or with the connivance of Syria, Lebanon's Sunni community rallied around the leadership of Hariri's son Saad. At the same time, Hariri's Sunni archrival, the pro-Syrian Omar Karame, lost his clout with the crushing of the Syrian order in Lebanon. The Hariri family, riding the wave of his martyrdom as a symbol of national unity, sought to become the focal point of national reconciliation and thus position itself at the center of Lebanese politics.

Meanwhile, the Shiite community, led by the pro-Syrian Hezbollah, sought to claim a political role in Lebanon commensurate with its demographic strength. Hezbollah became concerned about UNSC Resolution 1559, part of which calls for its disarmament. The group recognized that it could become a target of the international community, led by the United States. Consequently, it pursued a dual policy of co-opting other communities in the name of national unity and making the elections both a referendum for its role as a Resistance movement and a means of showing its political strength. At the same time, Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah defiantly refused disarmament and urged political reconciliation in Lebanon by reaching out to Christian factions, which have been among the most vocal in calling for Hezbollah to surrender its weapons.[11]

Among the Druze, PSP chief Walid Jumblat was central to the unity of the anti-Syrian opposition, given the contrast between his pro-Syrian

past and his more recent unwavering stance against Damascus. Once Syria withdrew, however, Jumblat was hemmed in by his community's numeric weakness and feared a Christian nationalist revival. Consequently, he solidified his alliance with Saad Hariri and mended his relations with Hezbollah. Admittedly, he struck a deal with the Sunnis and Shiites to base new parliamentary elections on the 2000 electoral law. This would allow Hariri, Nasrallah, and Jumblat to shape the emergence of the new political order and enable Hezbollah to undermine the candidacy of any Christian calling for its disarmament. This was the background against which the Quadripartite alliance (Hezbollah, AMAL, PSP, and Future Current) was born. More specifically, as implied by Naim Qassem, the alliance was about allowing Hariri's Future Current and Jumblat's PSP a majority in the Parliament in return of a guarantee that neither the Resistance nor its weapons would be touched.[12]

Christians were taken aback by Jumblat's maneuvering, prompting the League of Maronite Bishops to issue a statement on May 12 condemning the electoral law: "In light of this law, the Christians can elect only 15 MPs out of 64 while the others, almost 50 MPs, are elected by Muslims."[13] Still, Christian factions decided not to boycott the elections for fear of prolonging the parliament's pro-Syrian character. Saad and Jumblat (with Nasrallah's support) tried to temper Christian discontent by forging alliances with Christian leaders who had been old foes. For example, Saad included in his Beirut electoral list Solange Gemayel, wife of late Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel, while Jumblat (along with Hezbollah) included Edmond Naim of the Christian Lebanese Forces in his Baabda-Alley list. Saad also forged an alliance with Strida Geagea, wife of then-imprisoned leader of the Lebanese Forces, to contest the elections in North Lebanon.[14] Christian ranks were further shaken by the apparent defection of General Michel Aoun, who recently returned to Lebanon after 15 years of exile. In disagreement with the mainstream Christian factions, Aoun created his own lists, even allying himself with pro-Syrian politicians such as Michel Murr and Suleiman Franjieh. This development amplified Christian discontent with the overall direction that the anti-Syrian opposition has taken.

Staggered over four dates corresponding to particular districts (May 29 for the Beirut area, June 5 for southern Lebanon, June 12 for Mount Lebanon and Beka, and June 19 for northern Lebanon), the parliamentary elections took place in a free, democratic environment, crowning the new leaders of Lebanon. Saad, Jumblat, Nasrallah, and Aoun emerged as the uncontested leaders of their respective communities. The biggest upset was Aoun's victory in Mount Lebanon (North Metn and Jbeil-Keswran) and Beka' (Zahleh), where his lists won out over almost all mainstream and historic Christian candidates. Apparently, Christian

protest votes were partly responsible for his victory. In general, the elections ushered in a new era for Lebanon.

On the one hand, Hezbollah has maintained its belief that armed resistance is central to its raison d'être. Nasrallah sees the conflict with Israel as perpetual. While calling for national reconciliation (even borrowing Bashir Gemayel's famous slogan of Lebanon's 10,452 square kilometer), he asserted that Lebanon's territorial integrity not only include the disputed Shebaa Farms but also the disputed Seven Villages, which have been under Israeli control since Israel's independence in 1948.[15] The underlying assumption is that Hezbollah will continue its armed resistance, even if Israel withdraws from Shebaa Farms. On the other hand, Hezbollah has engaged the democratic process and has decided to be part of the new government. But its decision to join the government, which was sanctioned by a Shi'a senior cleric and not *Wali al-Faqih*, was based on practical justifications related to safeguarding the Resistance in the absence of the Syrian protective role.[16]

It's noteworthy that though the Islamic Association did not win any seat in the 2000 parliamentary elections, it decided to boycott the 2005 elections on the grounds, according to its statement, that "foreign interference has increased and the financial role has become a significant factor in the electoral process."[17] But this statement masked the state of disarray gripping the Islamic Association. Days before the election on June 14, 2005, Islamic Association former depute Zuheir al-'Abidi paid a visit to Michel Aoun, praising him as "rescuer of Lebanon in his moderation and desire to build the state of socialist justice."[18] This was interpreted as an endorsement by the Islamic Association of Aoun, whose Free Current ran against Hariri's Future Current. In response, the head of the Islamic Association Politburo former deputy Asa'd Harmouch issued a statement in which he asserted that the visit was personal. At the same time, the Islamic Association secretary general Sheikh Faisal Mawlawi stated that the leadership of the Association had no knowledge of the visit.[19]

THE FREE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT—HEZBOLLAH UNDERSTANDING

In late July 2005, the new government of Fouad Siniora issued a statement declaring its domestic and foreign policy positions. An outcome of compromise, the statement did not mention UN Resolution 1559 while confirming the government's abidance by international law. In reference to Hezbollah, the ministerial statement emphasized that "the government considers the Lebanese resistance a truthful and natural expression of the national right of the Lebanese people to liberate his land and defend his dignity in the face of Israeli threats, ambitions and aggressions, and to work to resume the liberation of Lebanese land."[20] A few

days later on July 29 the UNSC issued Resolution 1614, which called on the Lebanese government to "fully extend and exercise its sole and effective authority throughout the south, including through the deployment of sufficient numbers of Lebanese armed and security forces, to ensure a calm environment throughout the area, including along the Blue Line, and to exert control and monopoly over the use of force on its entire territory and to prevent attacks from Lebanon across the Blue Line."[21]

The political climate of compromise, ushered in by the Quadripartite alliance, rapidly dissipated as Jumblat and later on as Hariri withdrew from the alliance. In December 2005, political tensions between the government and Syria heightened on account of pro-Palestinian groups firing rockets into northern Israel. Jumblat sarcastically inquired "where does our Hezbollah comrades stand toward the regime in Damascus," and added "there is no Quadripartite agreement and it will not be present."[22] He also justified his position on the grounds that Hezbollah has weapons it does not need.[23]

Parallel to the ongoing tension, in early February 2006 a mob, protesting against the publication of cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in Denmark, stormed Christian east Beirut to set the Danish Embassy on fire. On their way, they vandalized shops, cars, and churches, shocking and horrifying the population. In a symbolic gesture to try to contain Christian-Muslim ill feelings, secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasarallah and General Michel Aoun met in Mar MeKhayel (Saint Michael) church in Shiah, a Beirut suburb across the "Green line" that divided the city during the civil war, and signed a ten-point Memorandum of Understanding dealing with consensual democracy, electoral law, building the state, the missing during the war, security, Lebanese-Syrian relations, and protection of Lebanon.[24] On the question of Lebanese-Syrian relations, the Memorandum recommended four measures to establish mutual and sound relations: (1) to assert the Lebanese identity of Shebaa Farms, (2) to delineate the Lebanese-Syrian borders, (3) to call on the Syrian state to cooperate with the Lebanese state to find out the fate of Lebanese detainees in Syrian jails, and (4) to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries.

These measures had been for the most part comparable to the demands of the Maronite Church, and had guided the policies of the March 14 Forces. However, regarding the Resistance and its weapons, the Memorandum suggested that the Lebanese people should assume their responsibilities and share the burden of protecting Lebanon, safeguarding its existence and security, and protecting its independence and sovereignty by: (1) Liberating the Shebaa Farms from the Israeli occupation, (2) liberating the Lebanese prisoners from Israeli prisons, and (3) protecting Lebanon from Israeli threats through a national dialogue leading to the formulation of a national defense strategy.[25]

The Memorandum was the product of months of negotiations between the two parties. But no sooner the Memorandum was announced than it was vilified by some and hailed by others. No doubt, the Memorandum was close to a political coup de grace for the March 14 Forces, as it sowed discord among its ranks and structured a new configuration of alliances. The shift of the Free Patriotic Movement (or Free Current) from March 14 Forces to March 8 Forces greatly benefited Hezbollah. According to Naim Qassem, the Memorandum "specified the mechanism according to which to deal with the weapons of the Resistance as part of a comprehensive national defense strategy, establishing the foundation for dialogue about the Resistance and its weapons instead of the logic of UNSC 1559."[26] No less significant, Qassem attested that "the Memorandum gave Hezbollah a wide nationalist extent through the Christian community, a principal pillar for the Resistance and independence of Lebanon, and dispelled the scare campaign about Hezbollah directed at the Christians."[27]

For the March 14 Forces, the Memorandum was most unfortunate, for it gave Hezbollah political cover and drove a wedge among Christians. But according to an outside observer, the Arab philosopher Sadek J. al-Azm, "The Memorandum prevented Christian-Shi'a antagonism and alienation, especially that the Shi'a community has become the largest one in Lebanon. At the same time, the Maronites have become the glue, sustaining national co-existence, as they are on an equal distance from all other communities."[28] This, of course, did not sit well with many Phalangists and Lebanese Forces, as they considered Aoun senseless and driven by a thirst for power.[29] Conversely, some Christians considered Aoun an uncorrupt nationalist leader who managed through his understanding with Hezbollah to strengthen national coexistence.[30]

It was against this background that Speaker of the House Nabih Berri called for national dialogue. March 14 Forces agreed and the parties drew an agenda for talks revolving mainly around finding the truth behind the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, Lebanese-Syrian relations, UNSC Resolution 1559, the presidency, Shebaa Farm and Hills of Kfarshouba, Palestinian weapons, and the Resistance and its weapons. On March 2, 2006, 14 leaders, representing the various confessional groups, met in the parliament.[31] Disagreements among the protagonists soon emerged and were carried over a few sessions. National dialogue stopped when the July war erupted. Other than reaching a consensus on finding the truth behind the murder of Hariri, little was achieved regarding the other issues.

THE JULY WAR AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE STATE

As the Quadripartite alliance fell through and national dialogue led nowhere, tension heightened between the government of Fouad Siniora

(and its March 14 Forces allies) and the Hezbollah-led opposition (March 8 Forces), which included AMAL and the Bloc of Reform and Change, led by General Michel Aoun. March 14 Forces sought to set up an international tribunal to investigate the murder of former prime minister Hariri, followed by that of other political activists (allegedly by Syrian intelligence and/or their allies and agents in Lebanon). The Hezbollah-led opposition sought to prevent the Siniora government from taking unilateral political actions or any action deemed detrimental to the interest of the party and the "resistance." Initially, Hezbollah opposed the international tribunal on the grounds that it was instigated by Israel's patron and ally, the United States. Moreover, it prevented the government from appointing anti-Syrian officials to sensitive posts.

Meanwhile, Damascus and Tehran continued to supply Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian Palestinian groups with weapons. It is within this context that the summer 2006 war erupted between Hezbollah and Israel. The hostilities ended on the basis of a seven-point plan introduced by Siniora and according to UNSC Resolution 1701, which increased the number of UNIFIL troops in southern Lebanon and called for the dismantling and disarming of all militias. Despite the destruction wrought upon both Lebanese infrastructure and Hezbollah's members, the group's secretary general leader Hassan Nasrallah declared a "divine" victory. In his "divine" victory speech, Nasrallah called for a national-unity government and a new electoral law, asserted that the Resistance had dealt a blow to the American Middle East strategy, and took pride in his relationship with both Syria and Iran.[32] Iran and Syria rode Hezbollah's wave of Hezbollah's Pyrrhic victory.

Ominously, from the moment Hezbollah sparked hostilities with Israel on July 12 with a crossborder raid, Lebanon's multicommunal society had been torn by divergent views on the Islamist party. The conflict deepened the divides between Lebanon's political factions and communities.[33] Central to this had been the question of how a nonstate entity, Hezbollah, could monopolize the decision of war and peace for the whole country. Significantly, the majority of the March 14 coalition, which sparked the Cedar Revolution, regretted its inability to implement UNSC Resolution 1559, which calls for Hezbollah's disarmament. Many Lebanese believed that their country had become an arena for settling regional scores between Israel and the United States on one side and Iran on the other, with Hezbollah fighting Iran's war.

Criticism of Hezbollah slowly but steadily surfaced. Druze leader Walid Jumblat questioned Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah's talk of victory by asking, "To whom are you going to give the victory?" Echoing some of his colleagues in the March 14 coalition, Dory Chamoun of the Christian Liberal National Party criticized Nasrallah's "uplifting talk of dignity" while the country suffered under Israel's air raids.[34]

It's noteworthy that as the level of destruction and internal displacement from the south of Lebanon reached a crisis level, the government of Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora, came close to collapsing, potentially plunging the country into a dangerous political vacuum. Torn by its inability to bring about a cease-fire and sidelined politically by Hezbollah's independent actions, Siniora's government was further crippled by infighting among cabinet members. Siniora could communicate with Nasrallah only through parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri. But as the ministers grasped the danger of the government's collapse, they rallied around Siniora in a show of unity. This was made possible by the flurry of international activity that took Siniora to Rome to present his plan for a cease-fire, and most importantly by Hezbollah's agreement to the plan. The seven-point plan had four essential points: returning the disputed territory Shebaa Farms to Lebanon, extending Lebanese authority throughout the country, confining arms and authority to the Lebanese state, and increasing the responsibilities of UN force in south Lebanon.[35]

Hezbollah's speedy agreement to Siniora's plan came as a surprise to analysts and politicians. Yet Hezbollah's ministers, Trad Hamadeh and Muhammad Fneish, expressed reservations only about the mission of the UN force. Hezbollah, like Syria, apparently did not want to see a powerful international force guarding Lebanon's borders. Despite Hezbollah's uplifting talk of "steadfastness, dignity, and victory," the organization suffered significantly from Israeli strikes and came under criticism from within the Shiite community.[36] Saddened by the level of destruction wrought on Lebanon, the prominent Shiite political columnist Jihad al-Zein published a letter addressed to Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei in the Lebanese daily *An-Nahar*.[37] The crux of al-Zein's letter questioned Iran's use of Shiite groups in the Middle East to advance Tehran's political interests without regard for the consequences the local Shiite groups may face. Al-Zein also emphasized that although communities in Lebanon have connections with foreign powers, only Hezbollah has a military relationship with a foreign state.

Before long, criticism of Hezbollah spread in the Shi'a community. Mufti of Tyre and Jabal 'Amil Sayyid Ali al-Amin, in an interview with *An-Nahar*, criticized Hezbollah for provoking the war asserting that "the Shiite community never gave anyone the right to wage war in its name." He also demanded that the Lebanese government bear its responsibility and redeploy in the south of Lebanon.[38] Similarly, Mona Fayed, an academic in Beirut, asked in an article also published in *An-Nahar* "Who is a Shiite in Lebanon today?" And she provided the sarcastic answer "A Shiite he is…who terrorizes co-religionists into silence, and leads the nation into catastrophe without consulting anyone."[39] All this criticism, no doubt, was an attempt to loosen Hezbollah's grip on the Shiite community.

Significantly, during and following the eruption of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, the Islamic Association supported Hezbollah's right to keep its arms. In response to the efforts of Fouad Siniora's government, which enjoyed the backing of the anti-Syrian March 14 Forces including Hariri's Future Current, to peacefully disarm Hezbollah, Secretary General Mawlawi stressed that "all Lebanese should be proud of the weapons of resistance which forced the Zionist enemy to retreat...We need for the meaning of resistance to depart from Palestine and Lebanon and reach the Golan, Jordan, Egypt, and all Arab and Muslim countries because resistance is the Ummah's [Muslim community] only choice, and not humiliating peace."[40]

Yet, the Islamic Association did not burn its bridges with Hariri's Future Current. The two parties managed to meet and discuss pressing national and communitarian issues especially in light of the recent attempt by Hezbollah and the Aoun's current to topple Siniora's government. Apparently, in as much as the Islamic Association would like to support Hezbollah, it did not support the removal of Siniora, recognizing that many in the Sunni community, including its religious establishment, had backed the Siniora government. Against a backdrop of growing fears of deepening the Sunni-Shi'a divide in the country, some even stressed that a potential collapse of the Siniora government would be synonymous to a political fallout for the Sunni community as a whole.[41]

At the same time, Fathi Yakan, the former secretary general of the Islamic Association who split from the party and established a rival loose association of small Islamist movements by the name of the Islamic Action Front, unequivocally sided with Hezbollah, brushing aside all concerns within the Sunni community.

On the other end of the political spectrum, Samir Geagea of the Christian Lebanese Forces and former president Amin Gemayel reflected the opinion of many of their colleagues in the March 14 coalition by calling for intervention by a powerful international force and for Hezbollah's disarmament. They asserted that "there is no return to pre-July 12," in reference to Lebanon's politics before the eruption of hostilities on July 12. In contrast, the Aounist Christian leader Michel Aoun announced a position close to Hezbollah, questioning the utility of an international force. He called for resolving of what he considers the root of the problem—a return of the disputed Shebaa Farms and an exchange of prisoners—before dealing with the question of disarming Hezbollah. Despite the polarization of these political positions, Lebanon's major political forces decided to support Siniora's political agenda rather than let the government collapse.[42]

The unfortunate civilian deaths in a July 30 Israeli air raid on Qana further polarized Lebanon. This played into Hezbollah's hands, and many in the Arab world hailed the organization as the only Arab force to

withstand Israel's military power. Consequently, the regional and international media, driven by raw emotions and some signs of support for Hezbollah, confused Lebanon's show of unity in the face of the deepening humanitarian crisis with solidarity with Hezbollah.

However, as criticism of Hezbollah spread and sharpened, affecting Hezbollah's claim of victory, Nasrallah responded by stating that "had I known about the scope of Israel's response, we would not have kidnapped the two soldiers."[43] Yet Hezbollah, Syria, and its allies in Lebanon had prepared for a political comeback in a postconflict Lebanon by riding the wave of the victory Hezbollah was adamant about claiming whatever the outcome—a supposed triumph that in reality had been at best a Pyrrhic victory. Even more so, Damascus and Hezbollah (with the support of Iran) claimed a regional strategic victory and turned the party's perceived triumph into a political victory. One could argue that Hezbollah won a strategic victory against Israel by the sheer fact that it withstood Israel's attack. But Hezbollah suffered a domestic defeat by the sheer scope and breadth of destruction Lebanon sustained.

In fact, Damascus had already drawn the parameters of its new foreign policy strategy, including demonstrating its strategic relationship with Hezbollah and Iran. This was clearly reflected by President Asad's speech to Syria's press union. He redefined Syria's position in the Arab world by severing its moribund relationship with conservative Arab regimes (Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) and by empowering Arab Resistance as the new paradigm of Arab nationalist struggle against a weakened Israel. He criticized Arab leaders by calling them "half men" who brought humiliation to the Arab world and lauded Hezbollah's achievements by reaffirming Syria's support of and the legitimacy of the central role of Resistance as a viable alternative to conflict resolution when peace negotiations fail. No longer should Arabs separate Resistance from peace in dealing with Israel. He asserted that "resistance and peace are one axis, not two, and he who supports part of it should support the other part." No less significant, he accused the March 14 Forces of being Israeli agents.[44]

As a result, whatever semblance of national unity Lebanon had exhibited during the summer crisis dissipated. Recriminations and counter-recriminations became a staple of Lebanese politics. The struggle for controlling the state moved to the heart of this charged political climate. The government and its allies attempted to implement UNSC resolutions and to elect a president who was not pro-Syrian. However, at a minimum, Hezbollah sought veto power over government decisions under the pretext of national unity; at a maximum, Hezbollah sought to change the political structure in Lebanon so as to make it commensurate with *Shi*'a plurality.

Interestingly enough, the call to change Lebanon's confessional system came from none other than Iran. Throughout his shuttle diplomacy

to Beirut, Iran's foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki charged the system as outdated because it discriminated against the Shi'a plurality. He argued for a new formula based on distributing political power equally among Christians, Sunnis, and Shiites, in contrast to the present system that divides power equally between Christians and Muslims. This political initiative hanged over the Christians as Damocles sword, confounding their actions.[45]

Iran's argument had an effect. Before long, the pro-opposition *Shi*'a ministers (and a Greek Orthodox minister) resigned from the cabinet in the belief that the government would no longer be legitimate without the representation of the *Shi*'a community. However, the government did not resign. Rather, a wave of assassination of anti-Syrian figures, including in November 2006 that of minister Pierre Gemayel—the son of former president and head of the Phalange party Amin Gemayel—emboldened the government to officially ask the UN to proceed with the international tribunal.

The opposition called for a national-unity government and threatened to take the streets. Hassan Nasrallah, rebuffed by the government, called for a sit-in before the *Grand Serail*, the premier's official residence in downtown Beirut. This sharpened the struggle for Lebanon and the battle of wills between Nasrallah and Aoun on one side, and Siniora and Saad Hariri (the head of the largest parliamentary bloc, and Rafiq al-Hariri's son), on the other.

In January 2007, the Hezbollah-led opposition attempted to take over the state by forcing the resignation of the government. It blockaded most major routes to and from the capital. However, Siniora remained steadfast in his *Grand Serail*. But behind the façade of steadfastness, cracks in the wall of solidarity of the March 14 Forces began to appear. The government and its allies, driven by regional/international and confessional considerations, gradually lost leverage over the presidential elections, which were supposed to be held in November 2007.

Meanwhile, concerns about a civil war (which could spill over into regional strife between *Shi*'a and *Sunni*) mounted, as did worries about the political influence of the key figures in the 14 March Forces (i.e. Saad Hariri and the main Druze leader Walid Jumblat). These led the government and its allies to forego the constitutional formula of electing a president with a simple 50 percent-plus-one parliamentary majority (something that would neutralize Hezbollah and Syria) and instead support a compromise candidate.

A consensual presidential candidate, in the person of the commander of the Lebanese army Michel Suleiman, was agreed upon by the two camps. But the Hezbollah-led opposition exploited this shift by introducing several proposals revolving around what the movement had termed the "basket of conciliatory demands." These demands, shared by

the opposition if aired in slightly different versions by Michel Aoun and speaker of parliament Nabih Berri, were at their core the acquisition of veto power in a national-unity government; the establishment of a new electoral law based on the *qada'* (district); and the election of Michel Suleiman as president. The government and its allies rejected the opposition's multilateral proposal.

At the same time, Damascus and Tehran continued transporting weapons to Hezbollah and replenishing its arsenal—in violation of UNSC Resolution 1701.[46] No less significant, Lebanese authorities moved to confront radical Islamist movements, perceived by some March 14 Forces as Syrian proxies. A new *Jihadist* organization called Fatah al-Islam became the focal point of an uprising in the Palestinian Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in May–June 2007. Simultaneously, the government deepened its investigation into the assassination in Lebanon of anti-Syrian figures and representatives of political movements. These efforts undoubtedly unnerved Damascus and its allies. It is against this background that senior intelligence and army officers had become targets of assassination, a new trend given that these earlier murders involved political figures and activists critical of Syria.[47]

Consequently, Lebanon plunged deeper into a political vacuum and sociopolitical flux. A president was yet to be elected even though the term of Emile Lahoud ended in November 2007. A significant and worrying factor was that the contending parties engaged in an escalatory discourse of "treason," which further intensified political polarization.

A Declaration of War

The immediate spark of civil strife, however, came in the form of two decisions taken by the government on May 5, 2008: to remove airport security chief Brigadier-General Wafiq Shuqeir over his alleged links to Hezbollah, and to consider a private-communications network set up by Hezbollah illegal and unconstitutional, something that amounted to criminalizing the Islamist party and exposing its senior cadres.

Nasrallah immediately responded by describing the government's decisions a "declaration of war" and asserting his readiness to use force to protect the "weapons" of Hezbollah.[48] He followed by ordering a swift military onslaught on west Beirut. The pro-government groups were no match for Hezbollah's well-equipped and trained fighters. Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblat were put virtually under house arrest. Hariri's television station and *Al-Mustaqbal* newspaper headquarters were respectively taken off the air and destroyed. The fighting then expanded to some Druze areas in the Chouf and Mount Lebanon and to the northern city of Tripoli. Hezbollah, though sustaining a number of casualties, clearly asserted its military prowess. The veteran Druze leader Walid Jumblat

called on his supporters to lay down their arms in Mount Lebanon, while dignitaries in Tripoli succeeded in reaching a cease-fire.

An Arab diplomatic delegation led by the foreign minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem al-Thani, traveled to Beirut and held intensive meetings with Lebanese leaders to defuse the crisis. On May 15, pending the launch of a national dialogue in Doha, the government reversed its two decisions in "the view of the higher national interests." Consequently, the fighting ended.

Hezbollah's Victory

The major parties and groups met in Doha and an agreement was reached that gave the opposition almost all of their demands including a veto power in a national-unity government, adoption of the *qada'* for the electoral law, and election of Suleiman as a president. Though the Doha agreement provided for upholding the sovereignty of the state throughout Lebanon, it did not address the question of Hezbolla's weapons.[49] No doubt, Hezbollah scored a political victory, embodied in the Doha agreement, by the sheer virtue of the fact that the government reversed its decisions.

True, the decision to deem Hezbollah's communications network illegal was about the potential of the Islamist party to compete with the state over revenues from private cellular lines as much as about security considerations. To many Lebanese, this network confirmed beyond doubt Hezbollah's objective of strengthening and expanding its "state within the Lebanese state" to the point of making it a façade of legitimacy for its existence as an Iranian satellite. The Islamist party has now used its weapons against Lebanese groups, thus debunking its own self-myth as a resistance movement beyond the pale of Lebanon's Byzantine politics. No less important—and against the view of many pundits who have proclaimed Hezbollah's "victory" and capacity to impose its will on Lebanon—the fighting has exposed the party's limitations.

Hezbollah's advance into the Chouf and Mount Lebanon was checked by Jumblat's supporters who raced to defend their towns. Several Hezbollah fighters were killed including Abou Fadl, considered a hero of the 2006 summer war. Jumblat's decision to call on his followers to lay down their arms may have arisen from his recognition that his fighters did not have enough ammunition to outlast Hezbollah's attack, but it also reflected his concern to prevent intercommunal infighting. In much the same vein, Hezbollah's advance in Tripoli was swiftly checked by the creation of an all-encompassing bloc of the city's major movements committed to securing the area. While Christian areas themselves remained largely free from fighting, hundreds of armed Christians staked out defensive positions along the approaches of east Beirut. In addition, and notwithstanding the grumbling among some allies of Hezbollah,

the party received sharp criticism from the spiritual leaders of both the Sunni and Druze communities.[50]

Hezbollah's admission after these events of the need (expressed by its deputy secretary-general) to return "to doing politics openly, without pre-conditions"[51] was a recognition of both the movement's newly revealed limitations and the prohibitive price of seizing power in Lebanon in the manner of Hamas in Gaza.

THE VISION AND STRATEGY OF THE RESISTANCE

The speeches of both Secretary General Nasrallah and Speaker of the House Berri following the Doha agreement illustrated the vision and strategy of the "resistance" for a new phase in Lebanon and the region. Presiding over the parliament session to elect Suleiman as president, Berri, while thanking states for their assistance in resolving the crisis, referenced the United States but not without remarking that it "real-ized that Lebanon was not the appropriate place to implement its great Middle East project."[52] Nasrallah outlined Hezbollah's strategy for the upcoming period by emphasizing that (1) negotiations lead nowhere and "resistance in its methodology, culture, will and action is the only way out of the catastrophe . . . and that the resistance's liberation strategy is the only option to restore rich, wounded and strong Iraq to its people and nation," (2) possibilities of America's war on Iran and Israel's war on Syria have become distant in the aftermath of Lebanon's lessons, (3) a new strategy for liberating Shebaa Farms, Hills of Kfarshouba, and the prisoners in Israel should be designed, (4) the forthcoming government in Lebanon and the Hariri's Future Current should heed former prime minister Rafiq Hariri's strategic thinking about Lebanon whereby he was able to "reconcile the project of reconstructing and building the state with the project of resistance," and (5) he is proud of being a member of Iran's *Wilayat al-Faqih*.[53]

Upon analysis, it becomes clear that Hezbollah had been trying to affect regional policies by offering a successful model of military confron-tation and by affirming the death knells of American diplomacy in the region. On a tactical level, Hezbollah would focus on restoring the role of the Lebanese state as a protector of the Resistance while at the same time enhancing its own separate *Jihadi* apparatus.

The Future of Islamism in Lebanon

This chapter scrutinizes the project of Islamist parties in Lebanon on the basis of their political programs and manifestos, policies and visions, as it underscores the polished veneer of Islamism's realpolitik and Machiavellian approach to politics. At the same time, it examines this project within the context of Lebanon's confessional system and inter- and intracommunal relations. It also probes the background of *al-Jama'a's* tacit "holy alliance" with Hezbollah. Upon analysis and on the basis of a consistent pattern, it becomes clear that the Islamist project, as led by Hezbollah, is grounded in a bipolar world in which the Islamist party seeks an alternative to American cultural and political preeminence and a perpetual *Jihad* against Israel, concurrent and supported by Lebanon's society and state.

Post-Doha Lebanon: The 2009 Parliamentary Elections and Its Aftermath

As agreed in Doha (see chapter 7), the consensus president commander of the army Michel Suleiman was elected on May 25, 2009, by 118 out of 127 deputies in the parliament. Finally, the country had a president after six months without a head of state. No sooner a president was elected than Lebanon's political forces began preparing for the 2009 parliamentary elections, based on *al-qada'* (district). The parliament agreed that the elections would take place only on one day, falling on June 7, 2009.

True, the Doha agreement defused a perilous crisis, but also ushered in a new phase of Lebanese politics marked by simmering sectarian tension and an exchange of accusations of sedition. Sunnis, led by Saad Hariri's Future Movement, grappled with the bitter reality of the aftershocks of their defeat in west Beirut; Hezbollah watched with suspicion the growing contacts between the March 14 Forces and Washington; March 14 Forces worried over Syria and Iran's interference in Lebanon and support of Hezbollah; Michel Aoun denounced attempts by other Christian parties in the March 14 coalition forces to marginalize him. This political

condition further opened Lebanon to a regional arena where the United States and its Arab allies were pitted against Iran and Syria.[1]

The approach of the elections on June 7, 2009, intensified this already charged political atmosphere. The core polarization between the camps remained as deep as ever; the outward unity of each camp barely concealed internal schisms and fallouts; the new electoral law revived dormant rivalries and family-clan feuds.

The 2009 electoral law provided for 26 electoral districts (against 14 under the 2000 and 2005 electoral laws). This tended to shrink cross-sectarianism among religious communities, and heightened the contest of the elections among relatively compact majority denominations within each electoral district.

There were major disagreements within the March 14 coalition, many of them around labyrinthine negotiations to forge electoral lists with the potential of getting the highest number of votes. In consequence, some high-profile political figures of the alliance (among them Samir Franjieh, Misbah al-Ahdab, and Ghatas Khoury) found themselves excluded from the alliance's main list or relegated to less favorable electoral districts. The opposition was affected too, with Michel Aoun disputing Nabih Berri over Jezzine district's electoral list. A scrutiny of the election dynamics reveals that the new electoral law has wound itself around Lebanon's time-honored confessional democracy.

Interestingly, the Future Current had painstaking negotiations with the Islamic Association, which decided, unlike its decision in 2005, to participate in the upcoming elections. In fact, since the July 2006 War, the two parties had been trying to smoothen the rough edges of their relationship, as a result of the Islamic Association's support of Hezbollah's Resistance in that war. Two important developments paved the way for better cooperation between the two protagonists. Saad (and his aunt Bahiya) Hariri had launched an initiative, under the pretext of Sunni unity as a prelude to national unity, to foster a better relationship with the Islamic Association. After several meetings, Hariri and the secretary general of the Islamic Association Sheikh Faisal Mawlawi agreed on a "memorandum of understanding" as a basis for their relationship. This understanding, referred to as a "gentleman deal," provided that the Islamic Association would maintain its independent decision as a supporter of the Hariri-led March 14 coalition, but would cooperate and coordinate with Hariri in the interest of the Sunni community.[2]

The other development was reflected in Fathi Yakan's split from the Islamic Association and the establishment of Islamic Action Front in Lebanon.[3] Former secretary general of the Islamic Association Fathi Yakan had problems with the leadership of the Association (mainly Sheikh Faisal Mawlawi, Abdallah Babeti, and Asa'd Harmouch) over their support of Rafiq Hariri and then his son Saad. Yakan unequivocally

supported Hezbollah as the leader of the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and consistently criticized Hariri's attempt to impose his control upon the Sunni community, as well as his grand plan to rebuild Beirut. He considered supporting the Islamic Resistance as a priority preceding all other considerations.[4]

Eventually, following *Marathonic* discussions and negotiations with Hariri's Future Current that came close to falling through, the Islamic Association agreed to support the Future Current's candidates in Rashaya-Western Beka', Sidon, and Tripoli electoral districts in return for including the Islamic Associations' candidates Imad al-Hout and Khaled al-Daher in the Future Current's Lists in Beirut III and Akkar electoral districts respectively.[5]

Hezbollah, for its part, maintained its alliance with AMAL and brokered mediation talks over Jezzine electoral district between Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement and Berri's AMAL. Given the alliance between the two Shiite groups, the results in the south and the Beka' were predestined, as the two parties won hands down. But the Hezbollah-led opposition did not win a majority of seats. The March 14 coalition won 68 seats, the March 8 coalition won 57 seats, and 3 seats went to independents.[6] The biggest upset of the elections were the loss of the March 8 Elias Skaff's list in Zahle and the loss of the pro-Hezbollah head of the Popular Nasserist Organization Mustafa Saad against the Future Current's Fouad Siniora in Sidon.

In a televised statement, one day after the elections, secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah conceded defeat, congratulated Saad Hariri and his March 14 coalition, and called on them to form a national-unity government. But forming a national-unity government proved to be a *Herculean* task in Lebanon's labyrinthine politics. Following 72 days of consultations and haggling with the different parties over the formation of the cabinet, whereupon Hariri submitted his proposed 30-seat cabinet to the president on September 7, 2009, the proposed cabinet did not see the light of the day as the March 8 coalition immediately opposed the lineup.

At the heart of the matter were security issues associated with Hezbollah's precautionary measures over possible breaches in the Telecommunications and Interior Ministries. Since Hezbollah's takeover of Beirut in May 2008, the Islamist party has considered the aforementioned ministries as important "security" ministries. MP Gibran Basil, Aoun's son-in-law and political ally of Hezbollah, had been the minister of telecommunications in the outgoing cabinet. Hariri did not reappoint Basil, prompting Aoun, Nasrallah, and Berri to oppose the cabinet lineup. In response, Hariri resigned but was recommissioned by the parliament to form a cabinet. Weighing in on the cabinet deadlock, Maronite Patriarch Sfeir criticized the opposition by stating that "appointing losing ministers is against popular will."[7]

Nevertheless, a cabinet lineup was not accepted until a favorable compromise to Aoun and Nasrallah was worked out. Charbil Nahas, Aoun's nominee, was appointed as minister of telecommunications and Ziad Baroud, President Suleiman's nominee, was reappointed as minister of interior (and municipalities). In fact, on November 9, 2009, a national-unity government was formed, based roughly on the power-sharing formula agreed upon in Doha.[8]

Subsequently, the cabinet held several sessions to discuss its ministerial statement, which would govern the socioeconomic and political orientation of the government. Finally, in late November, the cabinet issued its statement, which bore a striking similarity to the 2005 ministerial statement regarding the Resistance. Article VI of the statement reads as follows:

> Departing from its responsibility to safeguard Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, the government affirms the right of Lebanon, its people, its army and its Resistance [Hezbollah] to liberate or retrieve Shebaa Farms, Kfarshouba Hills and the Lebanese part of the Ghajar village, to defend Lebanon in confronting any aggression, and to uphold its riparian rights, in all legitimate and available means. The government affirms its adherence to the UNSC Resolution 1701 in all its provisions, and also affirms its effort to unify the stance of Lebanese by agreeing on a comprehensive national strategy, determined by national dialogue, to protect and defend Lebanon.[9]

A product of compromise, the statement sought to reconcile the government's adherence to Resolution 1701 with its right and that of the Resistance to defend Lebanon and liberate its territories. In other words, this government, like previous ones, has legitimized Hezbollah's military arm as a national Resistance and not a militia to be disbanded as called for by UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1701.

The Lebanese parliament overwhelmingly approved the national-unity government along with its statement. However, five Christian ministers from the March 14 coalition registered their reservations about article VI of the ministerial statement. Moreover, the Phalange party challenged the constitutionality of article VI and submitted an appeal to the constitutional court.[10] Phalange MP Sami Gemayel asked, "Why do some Lebanese have the right to have weapons while others don't?"[11] Another member of the Phalange Elie Keyrouz remarked that "Hezbollah's weapons 'no longer have any justification' after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in may 2000, which ended 18 years of occupation."[12]

Moreover, two other Christian parties the National Liberal Party and the Lebanese National Bloc opposed what they termed as the legitimization of weapons other than those of the state.[13] Significantly, weighing in on the debate on the ministerial statement, Maronite patriarch Sfeir

reiterated his position by refusing "the presence of two armies in the country: a national army and a Resistance army," and considered that "the regular army alone protects the fatherland, and that the Resistance should join with its weapons the Lebanese army, thereby everyone resist the enemy."[14] In an implicit reference to Hezbollah's armed seizure of Beirut, the patriarch ironically asked: "Is it rational that there is a regular [orderly] weapon and another armed outside the legitimacy [of the state] one day directed at the enemy and another day at home?"[15]

Immediately, the vice president of the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council Sheikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan responded to the Patriarch's statements: "The army and the Resistance were born from the womb of the nation…we don't distinguish between the army and the Resistance because they are both concerned about safeguarding Lebanon." He added: "We are in the service of Lebanon and we are the principal shield to protect the Maronites in Lebanon; as such, the apprehensions about the Resistance are made outside Lebanon, therefore we should put our hands together as Lebanese to protect the fatherland, for our only enemy is Israel." Then he called on the patriarch: "We want from the master of Bkirki to embrace all Lebanese and not to be against the Resistance; rather he should safeguard it, for the Resistance is a division of the army. It was created to protect Lebanon and is the protective shield of the fatherland. The Resistance is for the defense of Lebanon."[16]

Meanwhile, as the debate over the ministerial statement, and in particular over Hezbollah's weapons, raged, Hezbollah issued its new Political Manifesto on November 30, 2009, underscoring the political vision of the party.[17]

The Political Manifesto of Hezbollah: A Reading

In line with Hezbollah's 1985 Open Letter, the 2009 Manifesto looked at the world through Ayatollah Khomeini's prism dividing the world into the "oppressors" and the "oppressed." But, unlike the Open Letter, the Manifesto did not explain its vision in relation to *Wilayat al-Faqih*. It also moved away from distinguishing its relationship with Lebanon's communal groups. The focal point of the Manifesto was the relationship between the Resistance and its legitimate weapons on one side, and the paramountcy of upholding the Resistance on the other, to face regional and international dangers.

The 2009 Manifesto begins with a preamble that locates the political vision of the Islamist party as related to three topical chapters: "Hegemony and Reawakening," "Lebanon", and "Palestine and Settlement Negotiations." The Manifesto departs from the party's conviction that its political vision has to be seen against the backdrop of an exceptional political phase replete with changes taking place between

two diametrically opposed courses in a world witnessing the regression of the hegemonic, unipolar power of the United States toward a plurality of power whose impressions have not yet been defined. The first relates to the Resistance and its political and military victories, which has led to tipping the balance of forces in the regional equation in favor of the Resistance. The second course relates to the American-Israeli hegemony (and oppressiveness) in all its dimensions and alliances, which has been facing military and political defeats leading to the continuous failing of American projects. The Resistance stands at the heart of these changes.

Hegemony and Reawakening

The Manifesto begins the first chapter with two sections: one on the "World and the Western-American Hegemony" and the other on "Our Region and the American Project." In the first section, the Manifesto rails against the bestiality of capitalist power and the arrogance of the West, especially the United States It underscores that

> Globalization has reached its dangerous level [limit] as it mutated at the hands of those possessing the Western hegemonic project into a military globalization, whose manifestations we have seen in the Middle East, beginning from Afghanistan, to Iraq, to Palestine, to Lebanon, and…to a total aggression in July 2006 carried out by Israeli hands.

The Manifesto continues by asserting that the American war on terror has turned into a pretext used by the United States to extend its hegemony in the most, inhuman and indiscriminate ways and that American terrorism is at the root of all terrorism in the world.

Moving into the next section, the Manifesto avers that the "oppressed" world suffers from the oppressive hegemony of the West and that the Arabic and Islamic world has been the target of bestial, colonialist wars, whose advanced form began with the planting of the Zionist entity in the region. It contends that the principal objective of American hegemony is to impose its political, military ,and cultural control over all populations and rob them. As such, the Manifesto argues that American oppressiveness has left no choice to "our Ummah" [Arabic-Islamic community] but that of the Resistance, and that the confrontation with the United States is global and generational.

Lebanon

The second chapter of the Manifesto is divided into seven sections: "The Fatherland", "The Resistance", "The State and the Political System," "Lebanon and Lebanese-Palestinian Relations", "Lebanon and Arab

Relations"; "Lebanon and Islamic Relations", and "Lebanon and International Relations."

The first section, under the rubric of The Fatherland, the Manifesto, unlike the Open Letter, does not call for or refer to the creation of an Islamic state in Lebanon; rather it sees Lebanon as the homeland for all the Lebanese, the country of their fathers and forefathers, and the country of their children and future generations. It calls for a unitary, unified Lebanon, united in people, land, state, and institutions. It opposes any form of partition and federalism. It seeks an independent, sovereign, strong Lebanon, enabled to be present in the regional equations and a principal maker of its present and future. The Manifesto stresses that in order to build such a country, Lebanon should have a strong, capable, and just state, as well as a political system representing rightfully the aspirations, freedom, dignity, and stability of the population.

As related to the second section on The Resistance, the Manifesto affirms the constant threat posed by Israel on Lebanon, and exposes the great danger of Israel's historical ambitions in Lebanon, and the peril it poses to the coexistence of followers of divine revelations that Lebanon uniquely manifests. All this, in addition to the geographic proximity of Lebanon to occupied Palestine, compel Lebanon to bear nationalist and patriotic responsibilities. The Manifesto states that

> this perpetual Israeli threat to Lebanon imposes on Lebanon the founding of a national defense strategy, built on reconciling a popular resistance contributing to the defense of the country in the face of any Israeli aggression and a patriotic army protecting Lebanon and bolstering its security and stability. This complementariness had proven in the past phase its success in overseeing the confrontation with the enemy and achieved victories for Lebanon and means to protect it.

The Manifesto adds that the Resistance must consistently reinforce its power and better equip its capabilities to carry out its national responsibilities to liberate Shebaa Farms, Kfarshouba Hills, and the Lebanese village of Ghajar, to retrieve detainees, the missing, and the bodies of martyrs, and to participate in the task of protecting and defending the land and the people.

As related to the third section on The State and the Political System, the Manifesto asserts that the fundamental problem in the Lebanese political system, which prevents its modernization, development, and reform, is political sectarianism. It conditions the application of a true democracy to the abolishment of political sectarianism, as stipulated by the Taif Accord. But it cautions that until the Lebanese through national dialogue achieve this sensitive and historic accomplishment, that is abolishing political sectarianism, consensual democracy remains the

fundamental basis for ruling Lebanon; because it embodies the spirit of the constitution and the essence of the Charter of national coexistence. The Manifesto adds that consensual democracy opens the door to everyone to join the phase of state building. The Manifesto, then, lists 17 items related to how Hezbollah seeks to participate with Lebanese in building the state, including proper and correct parliamentary representation through a contemporary electoral law; an independent judicial authority; and a decentralized administrative system.

As related to the fourth section on Lebanon and Lebanese-Palestinian Relations, the Manifesto opposes the naturalization of Palestinian refugees and upholds their right of return. But it calls for granting the Palestinians social and civil rights so that they could live in dignity and humanly.

As related to the fifth section on Lebanon and Arab Relations, the Manifesto asserts that Lebanon's Arab identity and belonging constitute an authentic and natural way to construct Lebanese society. It also posits that given the strategic, organic, and political geographic depth of Lebanon, Lebanon is compelled to abide by just Arab causes, at the forefront of which is the Palestinian Cause and the confrontation with the Israeli enemy. Significantly, The Manifesto emphasizes the importance of Syria. It stresses that

> Syria has recorded a distinctive and steadfast stance in the struggle against the Israeli enemy, has supported resistance movements in the region, and has stood by them under the most difficult circumstances. It sought to unify Arab efforts to ensure the region's interests and confront the challenges. We confirm the necessity to adhere to special relations between Lebanon and Syria, for this is a common political, security, and economic need.

As related to the sixth section on Lebanon and Islamic Relations, the Manifesto stresses that the Arabic and Islamic world is facing multidimensional threats, causing denominational and ethnic tension, all of which is provoked by the West, especially the United States Within this context, the Manifesto affirms that

> Hezbollah considers Islamic Iran as an important and central state in the Islamic world. Its revolution brought down the regime of the Shah and its American-Zionist projects. It supported resistance movements in our region, and stood with courage and determination alongside Arabic and Islamic causes, at the forefront of which is the Palestinian cause.

As related to the seventh section on Lebanon and International Relations, the Manifesto reaffirms that Hezbollah's vision and program [methodology] regarding conflicts and struggles are gauged according

to a moral-political base, between the oppressed and oppressor. The Manifesto lashes again at the United States and its support of Israel. It asserts that

> the unlimited support of the U.S. for Israel, prodding its aggression and covering its occupation of Arab lands, in addition to the hegemony of the American administration over the international institutions, the double standards in issuing and implementing international decisions, and the militarization of the world and the reliance on the logic of shifting wars in international conflicts…put the American administration in the adversarial position toward our *Ummah* and peoples.

The Manifesto, then, admonishes Europe that its moral and humanitarian duty compels it to admit to the right of people to resist the occupier on the basis of distinguishing between Resistance and terrorism. The Manifesto, next, looks with interest and admiration at the liberating, sovereign experiment rejecting hegemony in Latin America. In addition, it considers that there are wide spaces for the confluence of its project and the project of the Resistance movements in our region, which help to build a more just and balanced international system.

Palestine and the Negotiations of Settlement

The third chapter, Palestine and the Negotiations of Settlement, is divided into four sections: The Palestinian Cause and the Zionist Entity, Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestinian Resistance, and Settlement Negotiations. The language in this chapter is similar to that of the Open Letter.

Regarding the first section on The Palestinian Cause and the Zionist Entity, the Manifesto illustrates a macabre reality of Israel. It states that

> The Zionist movement is ideologically and practically a racial movement, and is the product of an oppressive, arrogant, hegemonic mentality. The project of the movement is essentially and fundamentally an expansionist, colonialist "Judaizing" project…The U.S.'s link to [the Zionist entity] through a strategic alliance makes it a true partner in the entity's wars, massacres and terror practices.

Regarding the second section on Jerusalem and al-Alqsa Mosque, the Manifesto rejects all Israeli projects and plans to *Judaize* Jerusalem and evict its citizens, and warns that the continuous and dangerous attacks on the mosque constitute a real and serious danger, portending perilous ramifications for the whole region.

Regarding the third section on Palestinian Resistance, the Manifesto asserts that Palestinian Resistance is sanctioned by international law,

heavenly messages, and humanistic values. It adds that experiences throughout the struggle and confrontation have unequivocally confirmed the importance and efficiency of *Jihadi* Resistance and military struggle. The Manifesto, then, affirms in absolute and certain terms Hezbollah's support, assistance, and backing of the Palestinian people, Palestinian resistance movements, and their struggle in confronting the Israeli project.

Finally, regarding the fourth section on Negotiations of Settlement, the Manifesto, like the Open Letter, affirms its total rejection of the very foundation and principle of the option of settlement with the Zionist entity. It adds that this "standpoint is final, permanent and immutable...even if the whole world recognized 'Israel'." It calls on Arab officials to abide by their peoples' choices and to absolutely and permanently give up on the repressive and illusory settlement process, falsely called the "peace process."

Responses to the Manifesto: Implications for the Future

Despite the pragmatic face it tried to put on the Manifesto, and its claim that it was widely received in the country, Hezbollah's Manifesto was not spared poignant criticisms.

Former member of parliament and senior member of the Future Current Mustafa Aloush stated that "the Manifesto did not offer anything new...it is like a summary of the party's stances in the last few years, in particular the presence of weapons outside the purview of the state."[18] Vice president of the Phalange party Joseph Abou Khalil queried about "the Manifesto of Hezbollah, which speaks about belonging to the homeland; yet, at the same time, Hezbollah affirms its connection to Iran and belief in *Wilayat al-Faqih*."[19] Member of Parliament Amar Houri considered that "consensual democracy has been invented in the aftermath of the elections, and it contradicts the principle of democracy and parliamentary system."[20] Paul Salem, director of the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Centre, pointed out that "the second manifesto, while softer in tone, nonetheless defends the party's right to bear arms."[21] Member of Parliament Antoine Zahra of the Lebanese Forces sarcastically questioned the extent to which Hezbollah has been *Lebanonized* through the document it issued. He states that "the party, on the contrary, has gone farther and farther in the direction of Iranian choices and interests; and whoever does not support or back these interests would be considered a traitor."[22] The coordinator of the secretariat of March 14 coalition Fares Souaid remarked that "hearing Sayyid Nasrallah remind me of the Communist speeches of the 1960s," and wondered why "the document ignored to mention the Taif Accord and did not affirm the definitiveness of the entity [Lebanon]."[23]

Nevertheless, to the surprise and shock of many in the March 14 coalition, Walid Jumblat, who had been the pivot of the coalition, declared that he agreed with most of the clauses of Hezbollah's Manifesto. He concurred that Israel posed the "essential and strategic threat"; and that the United States protects "Israeli interests without taking into consideration Arab aspirations." He also agreed that "political sectarianism is the main 'flaw' of Lebanon's political system," and that "until political sectarianism is abolished, consensual democracy is the best way forward."[24] Jumblat's volte-face from a harsh critic of Hezbollah and the Syrian regime to an adamant Arab nationalist greatly supportive of Hezbollah and the Syrian regime helped bring down the ivory tower upon which the March 14 coalition perched its political program and power as a majority coalition (see the following paragraph). It is noteworthy that Jumblat began expressing his conciliatory statements on the heels of a *Der Speigel's* article that pointed to Hezbollah's complicity in Hariri's murder.[25] Jumblat called *Der Speigel's* article an attempt to "disrupt national unity," by those who "want a more explosive situation in Lebanon."[26] Admittedly, Jumblat's conciliatory stance, as we shall see, had more to do with his disillusionment with the March 14 coalition and American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Be that as it may, undoubtedly, Hezbollah's 2009 Political Manifesto marked a qualitative giant leap from its 1985 Open Letter. The 1985 Open Letter was issued at a time when Hezbollah was mobilizing all its resources to wage its *Jihad* against Israel. It shunned politics in the interest of keeping the party above Lebanon's confessional politics. But at the same time, it called for the establishment of an Islamic state, though by persuasion, and railed against the Maronite regime. In contrast, the 2009 Political Manifesto was issued at a time when the party has matured politically and has become a constitutive element of the political system. At the same time, the party has enhanced its military arm in unprecedented ways, becoming a remarkable potent force in the region. The power of the state pales in comparison to the power of Hezbollah, making a separation between the party's political power and military power hardly possible.

Yet, a sober reading of the 2009 Political Manifesto, as I tried to show, reveals that Hezbollah's political maturity and astuteness is being put in the service of its *Jihad* against Israel while at the same time providing the pretext and praxis to control the state. Hezbollah asserts its Lebanese identity and the unity of Lebanon. But, on the same grounds, it constructs its political program and vision not only regardless of the cultural and political plurality of Lebanon's communities, but also in a way so as to overlay its program and vision over the heads of political parties, all in the name of patriotism.

The Manifesto is as much a political document as an ideological one. The ideological view of Ayatollah Khomeini's bipolar world of the

oppressor versus the oppressed is at the heart of the Manifesto, superfluously manifested in Hezbollah's "permanent" and "irreconcilable" enmity to the United States and Israel, the oppressors of the world. It is from this ideological conviction that Hezbollah outlines its political vision. It makes clear the permanency of *Jihad* against Israel is justified and unquestionable, and it seeks to sanction it both constitutionally through consensual democracy whereby a majority cannot impose its political will and nationalistically through a national defense strategy. More specifically, Hezbollah preordains the national defense strategy by fashioning a strategic duality linking a "popular resistance," that is Hezbollah, to a regular army in the interest of confronting Israel. In other words, Hezbollah's Resistance (and weapons) will be simultaneously part and separate from the state. Hezbollah's weapons, as referred by the Manifesto, would remain a "fixture" appended to the state but not integrated with the army.

This is bolstered by the ideological conviction of Hezbollah's leadership to confront Israel and provide an alternative culture to that of the West, as pronouncedly defined by the United States. This has been manifested, on the one hand, by Hezbollah's attempt to construct a society of resistance in place of a resistance for society. Nasrallah has clearly stated that the program and curriculum of the party is about creating a society of resistance, as a panacea to the ills, cruelty, and oppression afflicted by Israel and its supporter the United States on Lebanon and the region. Deputy secretary general of the party Naim Qassem was more descriptive. He explained:

> The Resistance for Hezbollah is a social vision in all its dimensions. It is political, cultural, informational, and military resistance. It is the resistance of the people and the *Mujahiddin*, the resistance of the ruler and the *Ummah*, and the resistance of free conscience whatever it may be. Thus, we have always called to build the society of resistance, and not one day did we accept resistance as a group; because the society of resistance sustains permanency, whereas the performance of the resistance as a group is circumstantial.[27]

However, Hezbollah's preliminary plan to force its national defense strategy on the country was expressed by Nasrallah in a speech commemorating Hezbollah's "martyrs" on February 16, 2010, which drew the qualifying framework for any future confrontation with Israel.[28] He introduced the deterrent equation according to which Hezbollah would retaliate proportionally to any Israeli aggression: "Tel Aviv for Beirut, and Ben Gurion international airport for Beirut international airport."[29]

The purpose of this strategic-parity deterrence—or deterrence-by-terror—goes beyond altering the balance of power between Hezbollah (and by extension Iran and Syria) and Israel. It widens the theater of

operations between Israel and Hezbollah, highlights the effectiveness of retaliation and includes Syria in the potential calculus of destruction. It is significant here that Syria's foreign minister Walid al-Moallem has confirmed that in the event Lebanon was attacked, Syria would not stand idly by.[30] Consequently, the Lebanese government has been left with no choice but to support Hezbollah's Resistance and defense strategy. Interestingly, taking an unequivocal stance in support of the Resistance, President Michel Suleiman declared in Lebanese colloquial parlance that "we shall protect the Resistance with our eyelashes." This prompted the leader of the Lebanese Forces Samir Geagea to call on the president to remain neutral. Subsequently, Geagea criticized the president's partiality when he publicly committed himself to "the Ministerial Statement clause that the Lebanese army, people and Resistance are all legitimate means to face recurrent Israeli threats."[31]

In fact, the Lebanese Forces believes that Hezbollah's attempt to control the government is coterminous with its attempt to control the country's institutions, at the forefront of which is the Lebanese Army. In a study entitled "The Internal Situation of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)," the Lebanese Forces examined and assessed the power structure of the LAF as an institution. They pointed out:

> Following the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanon in 2005, the LAF were practically left without any supervision, after having enjoyed the strong backing of Syrian officials and military. The Lebanese Government was split between a weak [pro-Syrian]…president and a capable patriotic figure (PM Siniora), but whose relation with the military was rather strained. Meanwhile, the Parliament was totally paralyzed by…Speaker Nabih Berri. Subsequently, the Army persisted in its mission of security and intelligence, as it had during the Syrian days…but with no actual political authority to report to.[32]

After emphasizing that the LAF, like other governmental institutions in Lebanon, is subject to favoritism, confessionalism, and political interferences, the report underscored:

> The Syrian conquest in the 1990s changed that perception [of a Maronite army]. Today and after the Syrian makeover, the Lebanese Army became more of a Shiite-controlled body. In reality, the troops currently are roughly composed of 30% Shia, 40% Sunni and 30% Christian with a few Druze. The officers are still equally divided into 50–50 Christian-Muslim with a minority of Shiite officers. But practically, the LAF today is mainly run by pro-March 8 officers whose allegiances are to Nasrallah, Berri and Aoun, with the Shiite officers being the most aggressive and clearly in charge. As an example, if we examine the chief combat units of the Army: 1) Among the eleven infantry and mechanized brigades, six are commanded

by pro-March 8 officers, five Shiites and one Christian (Aounist) allied to Hezbollah, 2) Among the nine Special Forces units, seven are led by pro-March 8 officers: three Shiites and four Aounists. These are the units that deploy first in case of emergency, 3) And within the Military Intelligence, out of the twenty senior positions, twelve are held by pro-March 8 officers: Ten Shiites and two Aounists. So despite the fact that Shiite officers, most of whom are loyal to Hezbollah, barely make up 20% of the total body of army officers, they hold over 60% of the key posts within LAF. The fact is that the pro-Syrian, pro-Iranian March 8 leaders have been decisive in asserting their control over the LAF after the Syrian departure and imposing their choice of officers for key positions.[33]

Taking all this into consideration, one could safely argue that from the time Hezbollah issued the Open Letter in 1985 to 1992 its dual mission had been to wage a *Jihad* against Israel and Islamize the state through a top-down process. From 1992 to the present day, as Hezbollah has become a constitutive element of the political system, the Islamist party has continued its dual mission but with the distinction that it has pursued a gradual bottom-up process to Islamize the state. The vast network of its socioeconomic institutions, including its enormous social welfare system, only enhances this bottom-up process by widening and sustaining the base of its popular support.[34] The focal point of this *Islamization* is to create a society of resistance whereby nationalism and Islamism conflate in the interest of *Jihad* against Israel. True Hezbollah's *Infitah* has helped the Islamist party forge alliances and relationships with groups and parties from all communities; yet the true motive of *Infitah and Lebanonization* has been to create a political process geared towards supporting the Islamic Resistance and creating the society of resistance. In this respect, Lebanonization and *Infitah* are not about integrating the hydra-like Hezbollah into Lebanon's political system but it is about a reverse integration, whereby society and the state would be integrated into Hezbollah's project. In the meantime, Hezbollah, besides trying to fill the state's institutions with its own loyalists, has ingenuously introduced the concept of consensual democracy to protect the Resistance, while at the same time fashioning a national defense strategy to sanction the independence and legitimacy of the Resistance. But this process is also interdependent on political dynamics rooted in the political system and the confessional equilibrium of power that provokes a shift and reshuffle of alliances whose make up is consequent upon regional considerations. The collapse of the March 14 coalition, coupled with the volte-face of Jumblat, is a case in point.

The Collapse of the March 14 Coalition and the Volte-Face of Jumblat

The mass protest on March 14, 2005, which helped force the Syrian troops from Lebanon, symbolized what came to be known the Cedar

Revolution. This spontaneous mass revolution represented more a unifying movement than a liberation movement. It brought together ideologically disparate parties, groups, and independents that fought each other in the not so distant past. The parties spanned the gamut from the far left to the far right. The PSP and the Communist party, the mainstay of the Lebanese National Movement during the civil war, aligned themselves with the Lebanese Forces and the Phalange party, the mainstay of the Lebanese Front. In the middle of this political spectrum stood the Future Current, The Free Patriotic Movement, and other groups and independents. True the leaders of these parties came together; nevertheless, this coming together did not extinguish personal enmities nor ideological disparities. The focal point of their unity had been the creation of a democratic Lebanon free from direct or indirect Syrian hegemony. This constituted the ideological and political foundation of the March 14 coalition.

What also helped create the political climate of unity was the regional alignment of forces in the aftermath of the 2003 Gulf War, coupled with the U.S.-led international attempt to isolate Syria.[35] But before long, as the parties prepared themselves for the 2005 parliamentary elections, confessional considerations rooted in the time-honored political truism of acquiring the maximum public space trumped the purpose and intent of the March 14 coalition. Out of these considerations the Quadripartite alliance [AMAL, Hezbollah, PSP, and Future Current] was born (see chapter 7). This contracted the public space, over which the Christians fought. General Aoun, believing to be the target of marginalization by the Lebanese Forces and the Phalange, forged an independent political path from the Christians of March 14 coalition, and moved in the direction of the opposition.[36]

This blow to the unity of Christians was partly, according to political analysts, a manifestation of the unsettled score between Aoun and Geagea.[37] Nevertheless, Aoun's secession from the March 14 coalition and his ability to garner significant number of seats in the parliament divided the Christian camp and undermined the March 14 coalition. Still, the coalition had enough political capital to lead the country. But, according to Tom Harb and other activists, the Hariri-led coalition relied more on the United States to do its "dirty" work.[38] The Sinioura government acted as if it were compelled by the international community to take action, ceding in the process the initiative for Hezbollah to frustrate the government's decisions. Permanent members of the UNSC were baffled by Sinioura's actions. A few examples are in order.

The Siniora government tried hard to persuade the permanent members of the UNSC to set up the international tribunal without a formal request from the Lebanese cabinet.[39] A similar case took place when the Siniora government, over the objection of some members of the

UNSC and March 14 members, successfully convinced the international organization to raise the number of UNIFIL troops in south Lebanon in the wake of the Hezbollah-Israel conflagration in summer 2006 without the cover of Chapter Seven.[40] The letter by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora to the UNSC requesting the extension of the term of the UNIFIL for an "additional period of one year ending on 31 August 2008, in conformity with the activity of UNIFIL as stipulated in paragraph 11 of resolution 1701 (2006), and without amendment," perplexed UNSC members.

Given that the UN itself expressed its concern about arms smuggling into Lebanon from Syria in violation of UNSC Resolution 1701, and that six members of UNIFIL were murdered in their area of operations in south Lebanon, UNSC members found it troubling that the Siniora government did not include an amendment of the resolution's mandate in its request for an extension of the term of the UNIFIL. This is all the more so because the resolution itself (paragraph 16) "expresses its intentions to consider in a later resolution further enhancements to the mandate."[41] Moreover, the March 14 coalition gave up its option to elect a president on the basis of a simple majority in the parliament on the false premise that Washington objected.[42]

But it was more than anything else Walid Jumblat's volte-face that showcased the cascading downfall of the March 14 coalition. Since the murder of Hariri, Jumblat had been a vocal and pungent critic of Syria and Hezbollah. He, at one time, entertained the idea that the United States sooner or later would remove the Asad's regime in Syria. He even wagered his political stances on this misguided belief. In October 2007, he visited Washington where he met Vice President Cheney and delivered a talk at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP). His message was blunt and clear: What is Washington waiting for to remove the Asad regime? In his keynote speech to WINEP, he sardonically wondered why the United States does not send car bombs to Damascus?[43] Jumblat's antipathy to the Asad's regime was made public in an interview with Wolf Blitzer on *Sunday's Late Edition* on *CNN*. He said: "As long as we have this tyrant, this butcher in Damascus alive, we won't be able to have a . . . stable democracy in Lebanon."[44]

Despite the tapping on Jumblat's shoulder and the tough words on Damascus, Washington's message to Jumblat was that the "Bush Administration is interested in effecting only a Syrian behavioral change," a message that did not ring well in Jumblat's ears. Jumblat had overestimated both the George W Bush administration's eagerness to remove the Asad regime from power, and its readiness to use force to aid Lebanon's anti-Hezbollah, anti-Syrian political alliance. His bitter *volte-face* was catalyzed during Hezbollah's seizure of Beirut in May 2008, when militants

of the movement put him under house arrest. The response was resounding by its absence: no American jet whizzed over his palace, no allied force came near his doorstep, no Lebanese Christians mobilized in a show of support. Jumblat's frantic calls to the Lebanese-American lobby were followed by a realization that his political survival (and that of his son and political heir Taymour) necessitated a complete reversal of roles. In this decisive moment, Hezbollah acquired a veto in Saad Hariri's cabinet and managed in the accompanying ministerial statement to have its role (and weapons) legitimized as a "resistance."

Parallel to these developments, the White House witnessed a change of guards, and its policy on the Middle East continued to shed its offensive orientation in favor of engagement. Before long, the reversal of Jumblat's position was followed by a reversal of Hariri's position. Saudi Arabia had set an example for Hariri by beginning a rapprochement with Syria, which culminated in a visit by King Abdullah to Damascus. The Saudi initiative—itself following diplomatic outreach to Syria in September 2008 by France's president, Nicolas Sarkozy—paved the way for Hariri's own visit. The end of the Washington-led policy towards Syria was reflected in the remark of the state department official Jeffrey Feltman: "It was no longer Syria being isolated. It was the United States that was being isolated."[45]

On July 18, 2010, in a display of close cooperation between Lebanon and Syria, Hariri and his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Naji al-Ottari oversaw the signing of 17 bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding in various realms, including agriculture, education, culture, tourism, marine trade, investment protection, environment, and fighting drugs.[46]

Commenting on the marked improvement of the Lebanese-Syrian relationship and on the slew of signed agreements, Nasrallah called on the March 14 coalition to undergo self-criticism and admonished them:

> It is not enough to say we want good relations with Syria in 2010; rather, it should be said that since 2005 we were mistaken and did many mistakes...Some heroes requested that the army be sent to the border to confront Syria, and to contest the agreements signed with Syria...to find out today that the recent amendments to these agreements were cosmetic.[47]

This dramatic political reversal in the March 14 coalition, consequent upon domestic and regional transformational policies, was compounded by structural flaws reflected in the inadequate cooperation among the members of the coalition. According to journalist and Phalange Politburo member Saja'an Qazi: "The March 14 coalition was not able to establish an organizational framework for the plurality of its parties and policies, whereas The General Secretariat of the Coalition failed to play a unifying

role."[48] Qazi's words encapsulated the essence of the collapse of the March 14 coalition and its failure to build and reform the state:

> The past state did not protect the Christians or the Muslims. The current state, in its structure, weakness, paralysis, corruption, compromises and concessions, call us more to leave it than enter it. This is the truth...But the other truth has been recently martyred, and it pleads with us not to insist on knowing the murderer.[49]

It was against this background that the Islamic Association issued its Political Manifesto.

THE POLITICAL MANIFESTO OF *AL-JAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYAH*: A READING

The Islamic Association held a general congress between June 20 and 24, 2010 in which it formulated its political vision and accordingly it issued its Political Manifesto on June 24, 2010.[50] Broadly speaking, the Manifesto borrows from and builds upon the 2003 Islamic Charter (see chapter 7).

The Manifesto is divided into a preface, *al-Muntalaqat al-'Ammah* (General Points of Departure), and the Political Vision of *al-Jama'a*.

The preface affirms that

> *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* in Lebanon is a reformist, ideological, and Islamic movement whose objective is satisfying almighty God and accomplishing the total meaning of worship in the life of the individual and society. *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* upholds national co-existence with non-Muslims within Islamic law safeguards, and cooperates with all citizens in order to achieve social justice and to protect human rights and his/her freedoms. *Al-Jama'a* operates in its *Da'wa* [call to Islam] within Lebanon's reality and through legitimate means. It seeks to reform, among other things, the moral, economic, and political conditions so that they could become more harmonious with Islamic principles, which, we see, realize the interests of society.[51]

The second section of the Manifesto is *al-Muntalaqat al-'Ammah*, which justifies political activism and specifies the Islamic Association's general objectives. The Manifesto affirms that "political activism is an undivided part of the program of the Islamic Association...political activism is the reflection of the thinking and program of the Islamic Association, which works to achieve."[52] The Manifesto, then, specifies the Islamic Association's general objectives as follows:

> 1) To build the Muslim individual who adheres to Islamic safeguards, and who is able to co-exist with others and to contribute to the building of

his/her future nation on the basis of justice...2) To propagate the call [*Da'wa*] to Islam to all citizens in a clear and pure way...based on persuasion and rejection of compulsion...3) To contribute to the opening up of the Islamic society to all segments of civil society in Lebanon; [and] to consider dialogue and cooperation as the foundation of the relationship among all Lebanese groups...4) To positively participate in all civil society organizations with the objective of reforming and strengthening them alongside the institutions of the state...5) To participate in political activism within the safeguards of Islamic law. This is done through: a) presenting a political Islamic vanguard capable of guiding the Muslims to the path that gratifies God...b) striving to reinforce national co-existence so as to ensure the creation of a just state...c) requesting the guaranteeing of the freedom of political activism for all Lebanese, and affirming the principle of peaceful exchange of power by the way of honest and free elections, d) seeking to abolish political sectarianism and liberating the institutions of the state from the shackles of political sectarianism...e) calling for political and administrative reforms, which would ensure the societal and economic livelihood and interests of citizens...f) working on developing Lebanese legislations so that they could conform with Islamic laws, considering that, from our standpoint, they fulfill the interests of all Lebanese and ensure justice among them, g) adopting *al-Da'wa* (call to Islam) as a pan-Arab coalescence...considering that unity is a means to achieve the aspirations of the *Ummah*...h) rejecting the recognition of the Zionist entity [Israel], confronting all aspects of normalization, and considering resistance as the ideal solution to liberate the raped lands.[53]

Finally, the Manifesto, on the basis of the *al-Muntalaqat al-'Ammah,* and according to Lebanon's realities, outlines the political vision of *al-Jama'a* in seven sections: The Political Regime in Lebanon, Implementation of *Shari'a*, National Coexistence, Relations in The Lebanese Arena, The Palestinian Cause and the Role of the Resistance, The Palestinian Reality in Lebanon, and International and Arab Relations.

The Political Regime in Lebanon

The Manifesto describes the distinctive nature of Lebanon's democratic political system, which allows political plurality and a wide range of freedoms, in contrast to other regimes in the region. This is so because of the "nature of the confessional, demographic Lebanese structure that makes all constituencies—on their own—minorities incapable of individually appropriating power." But, according to the Manifesto, this partial, positive description does not negate the presence of flaws and imperfections that almost brought down the Lebanese structure from its foundation, and still limit the capacity of the Lebanese regime to develop. True the Taif Accord has ended the civil war and introduced fundamental improvements to the political system; yet fundamental articles of the

accord have not yet been implemented. This essentially include "creating a national committee to abolish political sectarianism, establishing a modern electoral system that relies on proportional representation; instituting administrative decentralization; and upholding the right of all areas to a balanced development."[54]

Implementation of *Shari'a*

This section conforms largely with a similar one in the 2003 Islamic Charter. The Manifesto admits the plurality of sects in Lebanon and that no sect can impose on another its vision, ideology, or laws. Yet, the Manifesto asserts:

> This pluralism should not lead to the violation of our freedom by believing as we wish, expressing our thoughts within the limits of society's order and security, and calling on people [to do] what we see make them happy. These freedoms are bestowed on the human being by almighty God, and this is the special feature of this era, which has been consecrated by the charter of the United Nations. This feature affirms our right in calling for legislations and rules conforming with the rulings of Islamic law, for, on the one hand, it is part of our religion. And, on the other hand, it is our belief that Islamic law realizes the best structure for societal life among people of different creeds\religious denominations without discrimination. Correspondingly, we base our *Da'wa* on the method of dialogue and persuasion, far from imposition and compulsion.

National Coexistence

This section conforms neatly with a similar one in the 2003 Islamic Charter. The Manifesto attests that God granted human being the blessing of freedom and free will, made his/her duty in this life worshipping Him, and his/her mission the building of earth. Muslims and non-Muslims partake in this mission, as all share one earth. Therefore, their fate is coexistence despite all kinds of disagreements. The Manifesto states that "if there is a choice for us in Lebanon, it is to put for this national co-existence solid foundations." It adds that the foundations of national coexistence are four: Respect of the Other and Recognizing and Dealing with him, Morality, Justice, and Cooperation (see chapter 6 for details).[55]

Relations in the Lebanese Arena

The Manifesto avers that the Islamic Association deals with the various political forces according to the foundational view: "We cooperate on what we agree upon, and we excuse from each other on what we disagree upon." The Islamic Association considers that "there are no enemies in

the internal realm, for the only enemy in our classification is the Zionist entity and whoever stands by or supports it." *Al-Jama'a* also considers:

> The Islamic associations and movements in all their ideological stripes and projects intersect with the work of the Islamic Association in many areas. Whatever afflicts these movements would directly reflect on *al-Jama'a* and its project. This requires making a great effort to fashion an accepted method to garner all the efforts of these movements and to coordinate among them, or among the most of them as much as we can, especially in limiting the penetrations that target the Islamic sphere in order to exploit it, marginalize it, or deflect it from its natural course.

Since the Islamic Association's quest is to bring about Islamic unity, and since the Association is concerned about Islamic denominational strife, *al-Jama'a* feels it is necessary to forge a strong and distinctive relationship with all Shi'a groups. Significantly, *al-Jama'a* is at one with the Shi'a community regarding the issue of Resistance against the Zionist enemy. It considers this a strategic matter.

Regarding the Christians, the Islamic Association considers that it has succeeded to a great extent in breaking the barriers between the two groups, and that the path has been paved to forge real relationships, consecrating national coexistence.[56]

The Palestinian Cause and the Role of the Resistance

The Manifesto asserts that what's happening in Lebanon cannot be separated from the struggle against the Zionist enemy and the biased American position supporting this entity. The Islamic Association affirms that "the Zionist project in the region poses the greatest threat to our *Ummah* and our nation...[and] that confronting this danger and its ramifications as Arabs, Muslims and Lebanese is a nationalist and religious duty." The Manifesto underscores:

> We [Islamic Association] need to mobilize the *Ummah* and to make it aware of this Zionist danger that threatens all its fundamentals and existence. We also need to work to build the society of resistance intellectually and practically, and to coordinate with the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance forces, at the forefront of which Hamas, so that we can resist this danger through all possible means.

Significantly, the Manifesto points out that the Islamic Association has been an essential part of the nationalist, Islamic Resistance [Hezbollah], which had been embraced by the various segments of the Arab and Lebanese society. But this embrace faltered, as a result of the events of May 7, 2008, when Hezbollah was forced into the internal Lebanese

equation and the country almost slipped into a denominational strife. Consequently, the Islamic Association perceives:

> It is necessary to confirm the role of the resistance in the Lebanese equation, to keep it away from internal conflicts and struggles, and to reach a dependable method for the [national] defense strategy, affirming the role of the army, the people, and the resistance in defending the nation whereby all forces in society could participate in the defense of the nation and protect its land and people.[57]

Palestinian Reality in Lebanon

The Manifesto expresses that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and its implications for domestic policy can be confined to two matters: The Case of Weapons and the Case of Civil Rights. The Manifesto considers that "there is no need for these [Palestinian] weapons outside the [Palestinian refugee] camps...[and] that these weapons inside the camps should be regulated according to a transparent method of coordination that guarantees Lebanon's sovereignty, and secures for the Palestinian people the right of self-defense, and precludes the use of these weapons to rebel against the Lebanese and Palestinian internal reality, as happened in Nahr al-Bared refugee camp."

The Manifesto points out that some Lebanese laws treat Palestinians in despicable, racist ways under the baseless excuse of rejecting naturalization. Consequently, the Manifesto insists that the Islamic Association adopts the "rightful Palestinian causes in Lebanon, key among them amending the laws that deprived the Palestinians their civil and human rights."[58]

International and Arab Relations

The Manifesto affirms that Lebanon is part of the Arabic and Islamic world. It states that "duty and interest compel us [Islamic Association] to seek to forge balanced relationships with all Arabic countries," as an "alternative to the policy of axis that deepens the *Ummah's* rift and reflects negatively on the Lebanese harsh reality." The Manifesto underscores that the Islamic Association's "long term goal is to reach a real unity that will restore to the *Ummah* its significance among the nations," and that the Islamic Association "should carefully read regional changes, especially the entry of Turkey into the region as a prominent force."[59]

AL-JAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYAH, HEZBOLLAH, AND THE LEBANESE MILIEU: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

True the Islamic Association does not subscribe to the doctrine of *Wilayat al-Faqih* and does not see the world through the prism of Ayatollah

Khomeini's bipolar world of "oppressors" and "oppressed," yet the Islamic Association shares with Hezbollah the central tenet that the United States and Israel pose the most significant threat to the *Ummah*. A collation of Hezbollah and the Islamic Association's Political Manifestos reveal that the two parties support common central issues, though this support does not neatly overlap with the concerns of both parties.

On the issue of Lebanon's political system, the two parties share the belief that political sectarianism should be abolished and that the Resistance should be supported as a legitimate and nationalist duty. The Association has called for the creation of a committee to look into abolishing political sectarianism, as called for by the Taif Accord, but, unlike Hezbollah, it did not call for consensual democracy. Both parties support a new electoral law on the basis of proportional representation and administrative decentralization. More specifically, the Islamic Association's Manifesto is concerned with building a "true" Muslim society and implementing Islamic laws, on the basis of social justice and freedom. But its view of social justice and freedom stems from its conviction that Islam is comprehensive and its laws are most suitable to all Lebanese. In fact, the Association has demanded that the laws of the land conform to Islamic religious safeguards and that they don't contradict Islamic laws. Admittedly, it calls for the implementation of the *Sha'ria*, though through persuasion. In addition, the Association supports *Infitah* but with *Da'wa*, as it considers the call to Islam an essential tenet of its raison d'être. Hezbollah, however, has not touched on its religious ideology and orientation vis-à-vis Lebanese society.

On the other significant issue of the Resistance, the Islamic Association shares Hezbollah's belief that supporting the Resistance is a strategic nationalist matter essential to confronting Zionist aggression and project. Both parties reject recognizing the "Zionist entity" and all forms of normalization with it. The Association even prides itself on being an essential component of the Islamic Resistance, but at the same time it qualifies its support of the Resistance or Hezbollah. Apparently, the seizure of west Beirut by Hezbollah in May 2008 did not sit well with the Islamic Association. Though it took the controversial decision, in contrast to that of the political and religious leadership of the Sunni community, to unequivocally support the Resistance during and following the 2006 July War, the Islamic Association frowned upon Hezbollah's forced takeover of west Beirut on May 7, 2008, and considered that day a "black day."[60]

Consequently, the Islamic Association, like Hezbollah, supports the creation of a society of resistance, but seeks to confirm the role of the Resistance in the Lebanese equation through an approved national defense strategy, ensuring the role of the army, people, and resistance in defending the country whereby all political parties can participate in

that defense. In other words, the Association supports a national defense strategy that does not consecrate the monopoly of Hezbollah over the Islamic Resistance. At the same time, the Association has sought better relations with all groups in the Shi'a community so as to prevent denominational tension and strife.

It follows from this that the Islamic Association has qualified its support of the Islamic Resistance by endorsing Hamas, and not Hezbollah, as the vanguard of the resistance against Zionist aggression. However, both parties have supported granting the Palestinians in Lebanon civil rights. Significantly, the Association, unlike Hezbollah, has not mentioned anything about forging special relations with Syria, opting instead to support balanced relationships with all Arab countries.

No doubt, the Political Manifesto of the Islamic Association illustrates its repositioning as a "centrist," Lebanese Islamist movement, trying to saddle the political ground between remaining faithful to its founding principles and supporting the Islamic Resistance on one side, and remaining committed to the general interest of the Sunni community in Lebanon, as being largely led by the political leadership of the Hariri family and the religious leadership of *Dar al-Ifta'*, on the other.[61] Admittedly, the Islamic Association, unlike Hezbollah, has not been able to emerge as the leading force in the Sunni community. The left overshadowed it in the 1960s and 1970s, and Damascus circumscribed its activities in the 1980s and 1990s. Its political ascent in the 1992 parliamentary elections was partly due to the Christians boycotting the elections. Hariri's advent to the Lebanese scene further complicated its attempt at garnering a Sunni political capital, save Damascus's writ that allowed only Hezbollah to use its Resistance against Israel as a political dividend on the home front. Its political influence gradually waned as reflected by winning only one seat in the 1996 parliamentary elections and none in the 2000 parliamentary elections. It boycotted the 2005 parliamentary elections partly because of its weakness vis-à-vis the Hariri elections juggernaut and partly because of internal dissent and disagreement, which led to a split in the party.

But, more importantly, the murder of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri ushered a new phase in Sunni politics marked by a surge in Salafist movements' activities in the wake of Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.[62] Though the Salafists have maintained a presence in northern Lebanon, mainly in the city of Tripoli and the rural areas of Akkar and Dinniyeh, their political influence on the country's confessional system had been negligible, because they have not more or less engaged the political system, focusing mainly on their *Da'wa*. Significantly, during Syrian hegemony over Lebanon Islamists in general and Salafists in particular were put under strict watch and their movements were regulated. A Salafist-*Jihadist* group, *al-Takfir wal-Hijra*, dubbed the *Majmoua't al-Dinniyeh* (Dinniyeh Group), and outlaws rebelled in 1999, but were crushed by

the Lebanese Army and many followers of the group were arrested and served long term prison sentences.[63] Lebanese authorities, following in the Syrian footsteps, monitored the Salafists' activities and cooperated with Arab and international security forces to apprehend militant and/ or terrorist Salafists. This created a schizophrenic relationship between the Salafists and Lebanese authorities, which manifested in violence and rebellions in Palestinian refugee camps, the latest of which was the *Fath al-Islam* rebellion in Nahr al-Bared refugee camp.[64]

In the wake of the Hariri's murder, the Hariri's Future Current tried to emerge as the leading political force in the Sunni community and in Lebanon as a whole. Riding a wave of nationalist fervor, it began a process of forging political alliances with all groups and parties based in the most part on confessional expediencies and politics, favoritism, and Hariri largess, the very instruments of Lebanon's confessional system. This included seeking support from Salafists in northern Lebanon to undermine oppositional political forces there, mainly the leadership of Omar Karame in Tripoli. In fact, at the urging of the Hariri's Future Current, President Emile Lahoud, in late July 2005, signed two amnesty laws approved by parliament in favor of releasing the leader of the Christian Lebanese Forces and some 30 Islamic militants involved in the Dhinniyeh clashes. Obviously, this was a reconciliatory measure meant to improve Christian-Muslim relations and Hariri-Salafist relations in the north of Lebanon, especially following the 2005 parliamentary elections in which Hariri's Future Current partnered with Geagea's Lebanese Forces and received Salafist support.[65]

However, Hezbollah, in line with its strategic policy of *Infitah,* signed a memorandum of understanding with several Salafi representatives, including Hassan al-Chahal and Safwan Zu'bi, aimed at rejecting any "act of aggression by one Muslim group against another," ending "sectarian incitement," standing against "the American-Zionist project," and abolishing "*Takfiri* ideology [to level the charge of unbelief (Takfir) against a Muslim or non-Muslim] within both Sunni and Shiite community."[66] The document was widely condemned by Islamists and Salafi groups and leaders, including the main Salafi leader Da'i al-Islam al-Chahal, and immediately thereafter, the document was suspended.[67]

All this changed the whole political dynamics within the Sunni community, affecting the policies and political reach of the Islamic Association. Nothing illustrated this point more than the confoundedness of the Islamic Association on the eve of Hezbollah's seizure of Beirut when its support of Hezbollah was shaken in the face of Salafists clamoring the death knells of Hezbollah, dubbing it the party of Satan.

Accordingly, one could safely argue that the Islamic Association's "gentleman pact" with Hariri has been no less about the general interest of the Sunni community than a "marriage of convenience." It is against

this political weakness and politico-ideological bipolarity (torn between its founding principles, including support of the Islamic Resistance, and political expediency and pragmatism) of the Islamic Association that its Political Manifesto needs to be read. It becomes clear then that the Association's impact on the political system would remain "manageable," to use the word of Beiruti Sunni politicians, but in no way it should be regarded as irrelevant or incapable of helping transform the system. In as much the Association understands that it has some sort of a political sectarian misunderstanding with Hezbollah, as it is cognizant about the fact that for so long its "holy alliance" with Hezbollah is based on Islamic Resistance against "the Zionist entity" and abolishing political sectarian-ism; its political decisions are but congruent with the policies, vision, and program of Hezbollah.

Conclusion

The catharsis of nationalism, as profusely expressed by the country's communitarian leaders, have paradoxically continued to whittle away at national coexistence, emptying terms such as "sovereignty," "independence," and "patriotism" of their nationalist meanings and values. Recriminations and counterrecriminations among parties and groups, ranging from charges of sedition and/or treason to ascription of stooges of foreign countries, plague the national discourse, even as the country renews its commitment to national dialogue. To some, this is a manifestation of political convictions; to some, this is a means to lord the sword of Damocles over the head of the political opponent; to some, this is done for public consumption in order to accrue political dividends; and to some, this is a nationalist problem, demonstrating Lebanon's weak, and more precisely the plurality of, national identity.

National identity as a product of national culture in Lebanon has continuously found itself torn by the relative cultural heterogeneity of the country. Born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire as Greater Lebanon under the French mandate, Lebanon's 17 communities, whose cultures and sociopolitical conditions and particularities did not neatly overlap, were patched together into a unitary state. The French, pursuing a communitarian policy, built upon the legacy of the Ottoman communitarian structure a confessional system that represented and distributed political power according to a "confessional" formula. This is the complex case and reality for Lebanon and for the Lebanese, who see their national identity, consciously or subconsciously, stratified into levels of identification. One identifies himself as a Lebanese, in the most generic and specific meanings of the word, conflating cultural traits and common traditions. But this identity is also expressed in religious terms, according to whether he/she is a Christian or Muslim, in so far as "religion" refers not only to canonical and theological beliefs but also to social beliefs, practices, and values associated with the various religious communities. And depending on his/her religious affiliation, a preferential identity, consequent upon a cultivated affinity with the Arab or Western world, is unconcealed.

The interactional mode of this "multiple" identity consciousness is easily sensed in regular day-to-day conversations with a taxi driver, a

salesman, or a lawyer; and put on display in the intellectual use of met-
aphors, metonymies, and language. In certain respects, Said Aql, the
Lebanese poet and the proponent of Lebanonism (sui generis Lebanon)
and Lebanon's linguistic distinctiveness, and the Syrian pan-Arabist Sati
al-Husri, the proponent of the Arab nation (as a form of *Gemeinschaft*)
on the *Germanophile* basis of common history and language, represented
the extremes of this identity consciousness discourse.[1]

The National Pact of 1943 tried to conceal the incongruities of
Lebanon's national identity by declaring that Lebanon is a country with
an "Arab face." For the Muslims, this compromise was seen as the begin-
ning of the process to Arabize Lebanon; for the Christians, the compro-
mise was more related to form than content. Yet, the state more or less
promoted a monochromous, homogenous cultural identity in the name
of national coexistence. The 1958 crisis demonstrated Lebanon's fragile
nationalist harmony, which only deepened with the intensification of the
Arab-Israeli conflict. Concerned about their political [minority protec-
tive] privileges and Palestinian destabilizing actions, the Christians fully
realized the ponderous weight of Arab nationalism on their culture and
society following the June 1967 War. In response to an Arab call to sever
Arab-Western relations on account of Western support of Israel, the three
largest Christian parties, the National Liberal Party, the National Bloc,
and the Kataeb (Phalange) joined together, a feat in Christian modern
history, and issued the Manifesto of Three:

> Le choix des trois partis, le P.N.L., les Kataëb et le Bloc National, en faveur
> de la continuité de nos relations avec l'occident. Car les pays occidentaux
> ont la même foi que nous en un Dieu unique, dans les droits de l'homme,
> ses libertés et sa dignité, ainsi que dans le liberalism économique. Ils ont
> également notre foi en la nécessité d'une coexistence pacifique entre tous
> les peuples, quels que soient leur croyance, leur tendance politique et leur
> régime, à l'exception de ceux qui nourrissent des intentions agressives.[2]

The Manifesto unequivocally expressed the Christians' "organic" link
to the West in religious, political, and economic terms. It was unimagi-
nable for the Christians to cut off their relations with the West. But this
did not mean a negation of the Christian link to the Arab culture and
world. The Muslims, however, supported pan-Arab politics and causes,
at the forefront of which the Palestinian Cause. Moreover, the Sunnis,
in contrast to other communities, had not developed a communal con-
sciousness. They had tended to look to Arab nationalism for their politi-
cal inspiration; and to the PLO as the community's foot soldiers. Theirs
was a large but nebulous Arab community. The Shi'a, despite their varied
degrees of commitment to the Iranian Islamic Republic, had been more
or less influenced by parochial communalism.[3]

The National Pact and the confessional system caved in under the heavy burden of domestic and regional conflicts to the warlords of communities. This paralysis of the system continued, despite several attempts at national reconciliation. The left, represented by the National Movement and led by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblat, steered the Muslim camp in the name of Arab nationalism and political reform. But his real objective was the defeat and removal of the Maronite regime. Taking root and organized in northern Lebanon, especially in the city of Tripoli, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah,* representing the first organized Islamist movement, joined the left in fighting the Christian "isolationists." Though the left and the pan-Arabists, especially the Nasserists, sought to marginalize and circumscribe the movements of *al-Jama'a,* the Sunni Islamist party, nevertheless, dug in the trenches of the Arab nationalists. Fighting the Maronite regime trumped all considerations and doctrinal tenets. Even more so, then secretary general of *al-Jama'a* Fathi Yakan called for the integration of Lebanon with Syria as a solution for Beirut's civil war. Yakan's unionist call at a time when the Syrian regime had been suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria illustrated more than anything else *al-Jama'a's* apprehension and opposition to non-Muslim privileges. In as much as Jumblat abhorred Maronite hegemony over the political system as *al-Jama'a* loathed Christian power, and both in spite of their diametrically opposed ideologies were at one in seeking to remove Christian supremacy from the system.

Subsequently, Fathi Yakan, whom I consider the pioneer of Sunni Islamism in Lebanon, paved the way in theory and practice for *al-Jama'a* to engage the system. The power of *al-Jama'a* waxed when the left began its decline in the 1980s, the extreme Islamist organization *Harakat al-Tawhid* was dismantled by the Syrians, and the Islamic Revolution in Iran mobilized Islamist movements of all ideological stripes. However, the Syrians restricted and regulated their activities and movements. It was at this juncture in Lebanon's history that Israel invaded Lebanon and Syria moved to oppose the Israelis and their ally Bashir Gemayel of the Phalange party. It found in Iran an ally and in the newly found Shi'a Islamist party Hezbollah, the brainchild of the Iranian Islamic Republic, a tool of terror with which to strike at the Israelis, Americans and their allies in Lebanon. The birth of Hezbollah from a group of Islamist factions ideologically motivated by Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary approach to politics and dedicated to rebelling against domestic inequalities and regional apprehensions manifested the continuum of what Vali Nasr has termed the Shi'a revival.[4] Until 1992, Hezbollah pursued a dual strategy: To wage a *Jihad* against Israel and Islamize Lebanon by first and foremost trying to bring down the Maronite regime and its symbols. Consequent upon drastic regional developments in the early 1990s, Hezbollah, with the blessing of *Wali al-Faqih,* decided to participate

in Lebanon's confessional system and pursue a *Lebanonization and* an *Infitah* policy, which has been essentially a political instrument of pressure and/or persuasion in the service of Islamic Resistance. Certainly, the central tenet of its raison d'être remained consistent and immutable: *Jihad* against Israel. Supporting this *Jihad* required an adjustment and constant readjustment of Hezbollah's political program and policies in accordance with domestic and regional considerations, mainly related to Syrian national security until 2005. This shrewd and Machiavellian approach to politics helped the party navigate the stormy waters of Lebanon's confessional politics, while at the same time occasioning its development into a hydra-like organization bringing together a sophisticated political structure, an elaborate vast network of social institutions and welfare system, and an omnipotent *Jihadi* Resistance. This, of course, would not have been possible without the dedication, commitment, and ingenuity of Hezbollah's leadership.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the 1990 Gulf War, the Syrians occupied Lebanon and dealt with the country as an appendage of security and an outlet of patronage to the Syrian regime. Syria's chief intelligence officers Ghazi Kana'n and Rustum Gazaleh ruled Lebanon like a vassal Syrian province, permeating the state and its institutions with a network of loyalists and clients. But the Syrians enabled Lebanon's communities to reach a constitutional compromise, the Document of National Understanding (or Taif Accord), to end the civil war and to introduce significant amendments to the constitution. The political system retained its confessional character but was now more or less equitable in distributing confessional political power between Muslims and Christians. However, executive power, once the domain of the Maronite president, was transferred to the newly empowered council of ministers. The Accord granted Syria unique and special relations with Lebanon, in fact institutionalizing Syria's lordship over its weak neighbor. In one respect, Syria brought security to Lebanon at the expense of its sovereignty. But, most importantly, they molded the state into a shell whose essential role had been to sanction Hezbollah's Resistance as a legitimate nationalist resistance. Hezbollah, which was the only party allowed to keep its weapons, reaped political dividends from its role as a Resistance. Nevertheless, the state, supported by political parties considered close to Hezbollah, tried on several occasions to contain and cut down Hezbollah to size. But Damascus immediately clamped down on their efforts, unmasking the legacy of sycophancy that was impregnated into the system by the Damascene regime.

Syria's hegemony, coupled with Hezbollah and *al-Jama'a* Islamist policies and activities, robbed Lebanon not only of its freedom but also of its prospects for change. Nevertheless, true the Syrians were able to suppress political opposition; yet, they were not able to silence intellectual

opposition. The word became the sword in the hands of intellectual activists, such as Ghassan and Gibran Tueini, and Selim Abou, who penned their resistance to Damascus.[5] Significantly, a supranational identity was added to the compounded national identity of Lebanon. Islamism, as a political ideology, program, and identity, transformed the moral code of Islam into a defender of dogmatism in relation to non-Muslims. Despite assertions and statements to the contrary, Islamism's dogma prevailed over Islam's traditional role of coextensiveness with other religions in Lebanon. Tolerance became the expression of faith in accepting the non-Muslim, the Christian in Lebanon. But to the Christian, tolerance is tantamount to condescension in national coexistence discourse. Nothing illustrates this point more than *al-Jama'a's* objective as expressed in the preamble of its 2010 Manifesto:

> *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* upholds national co-existence with non-Muslims within Islamic law safeguards, and cooperates with all citizens in order to achieve social justice and to protect human rights and his/her freedoms. *Al-Jama'a* operates in its *Da'wa* [call to Islam] within Lebanon's reality and through legitimate means. It seeks to reform, among other things, the moral, economic, and political conditions so that they could become more harmonious with Islamic principles, which, we see, realize the interests of society.[6]

This jibes with *al-Jama'a's* attempt at Arabizing and Islamizing Lebanon's public educational curriculum, as expressed in its 2003 Islamic Charter in Lebanon; an attempt slowly but steadily gaining ground.

No sooner than Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000 than the spiritual leader of the Maronite community Patriarch Sfeir issued a statement calling for the redeployment of Syrian troops in preparation for their withdrawal from Lebanon. The quest for independence began, but it was matched by another more calculating and daring quest for turning Hezbollah's victory into a political fort in Lebanon's morass. Secretary general of Hezbollah Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah represented the face not only of the revival of but also the assertiveness, sociopolitical, and military *Jihad* of the Shi'a. No longer a Sunni, Druze, or a Christian ascribed the pejorative term of *Mutwali* to a Shi'ite. The Sunni capital and emblem of Sunni religious and political fortitude west Beirut was ran over by Hezbollah in 1984 as a prelude to its seizure in 2008.

Whenever I hear Nasrallah speak, I cannot help it but make the contrast with Bashir Gemayel. Both of them are unique in the history of their respective communities and both of them entertained dreams and visions bigger than Lebanon. Both of them share the charisma and "baby-face" complexions that occult the will and ability of being cruel, and the zealous ambition for their cause. Both trekked to power on the remains of

"martyrs." Bashir dreamed of a free, independent, and strong Lebanon, folded into Western civilization and protected by U.S. power. His political program and policies addressed the resolution of the Lebanese civil war as a precondition to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As president-elect, he explained his foreign policy orientation:

> It is not appropriate that our relationship with the Arab world be at the expense of our sovereignty . . . We will cooperate with every Arab state that respects our national dignity and political independence . . . We cannot stay in the name of neutrality without allies . . . We may need an ally, a strong one. And this ally for the time being is the U.S. I'll request from the U.S. to offer us the same guarantees it provide Israel . . . On the other hand, we need to develop and make progress in all fields so we can get closer to the West and not stay in the Third World.[7]

Nasrallah shared a similar but not identical vision. He has been seeking a strong, free, and independent Lebanon, capable of withstanding and confronting the American-Zionist project and Zionist aggression, and folded into the Muslim-Arab civilization as led by Iran. His political program and policies have centered on a *Jihad* against Israel as a precondition to peace in Lebanon. His is a "divine" doctrine embedded in the antipathy toward the United States and enmity to Israel; a doctrine "divine" in its impracticability outside the confines of Lebanon in general and the Shi'a community in particular. Nasrallah could learn few lessons from Bashir and other historical figures of Lebanon who dared to challenge bigger powers.

Apparently, Nasrallah's Machiavellian politics and realpolitik in the service of a hallowed mission have sustained and even nurtured his ambition. He faced the aftershocks of the murder of Hariri by joining the government and sanctioning his entry through a local fatwa (legal opinion) and not through *Wali al-Faqih*. He realigned his party's stances with those of Syria and Iran, and dug an unbending pole of opposition in the heart of the government. When the government tried to bypass Hezbollah's positions, the Islamist party, allied with the Free Patriotic Movement and other oppositional groups, brought the country and the government to a standstill. In fact, Hezbollah defied the very theory defining Lebanon. Political analysts defined Lebanon as a "consociational democracy" in line with Arend Lijphart's work.

According to Lijphart, consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy. Successful consociational democracy requires that (1) the elites have the ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures, (2) they have the ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival

subcultures, (3) this in turn depends on their commitment to the maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability, and (4) finally, all of the above requirements are based on the assumption that the elites understand the perils of political fragmentation. Lijphart considered Lebanon as a case of a successful consociational democracy.[8]

Contrary to Lijphart's assumptions, Hezbollah's elites brushed aside concerns about maintaining the system, improving its cohesion, or recognizing the perils of political fragmentation. Hezbollah, as a "minority tyranny," paralyzed the country for over half a year. Moreover, as the country and government were preparing for a prosperous, touristic summer in 2006, Hezbollah "gave its word" to the government that it would not carry out any military operation in the summer.[9] As it turned out, Hezbollah provoked a war that wreaked havoc on Lebanon. Despite the destruction wrought upon both Lebanese infrastructure and Hezbollah's members, the group's secretary general Hassan Nasrallah declared a "divine" victory against Israel. In his "divine" victory speech, Nasrallah called for a national-unity government and a new electoral law, asserted that the Resistance had dealt a blow to the American Middle East strategy, and took pride in his relationship with both Syria and Iran.[10]

In response to growing concerns about Hezbollah's weapons, Nasrallah, in an interview with *New TV* in the wake of the July 2006 War stated that "this party, from the very first day, clearly declared that its weapons were pointed at this enemy [Israel]. My weapons are to defend the country and all Lebanese . . . Have we ever threatened the Lebanese? Have we ever used these weapons to wage a battle inside Lebanon?"[11] As the country plunged deeper in sectarian tension and political polarization, Hezbollah stood its ground regarding its demands. When in May 2008 the government tried to impose its authority on Hezbollah's "security public space," the Islamist party used its weapons inside Lebanon and seized west Beirut, forcing the government to backtrack on its decisions. The Arabs, some of whom had been trying to isolate Damascus and Tehran, scurried to Doha to consecrate Hezbollah's "internal" victory. Hezbollah got what it wanted. The impotence with which Arab leaders conducted regional policy showcased in no uncertain ways Shi'a revival and assertiveness. This constituted a "dark episode" for the Islamic Association. Yet, the Sunni Islamist party supported the Islamic Resistance, as it has sought to loosen Hezbollah's monopoly over the Resistance. Hezbollah, keen as ever to forging and maintaining strong relationships with utilitarian parties and groups, has created a political framework according to which the Islamic Association and the Shi'a Islamist party meet on a regular basis to coordinate their policies. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Hezbollah from trying to forge a relationship with Salafists groups, whose ideology conflict with that of the Party of God.

Meanwhile, the scurrying (*al-Harwalah*) to Damascus picked up pace as America's policy waned into engagement and humility. The March 14 coalition meekly pinned its incoherence and indetermination on America's policy reversal, and many of its members covertly or overtly scampered toward Damascus. Damascus established public diplomacy with Lebanon, setting up an embassy in Beirut for the first time since the independence of the two countries. And it repositioned itself as the big brother and arbiter in Lebanon's confessional and labyrinthine politics. But that did not mean, like before the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, acquiring a preeminent security and political role, especially at the expense of that of Iran in Beirut. Admittedly, the three actors, Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, have formed a tripartite alliance to face the "Zionist aggression" and American hegemony. Standing shoulder to shoulder in Damascus, they laughed off at American political naivete.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, standing alongside his counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, made a notable remark at a news conference in Damascus on February 25, 2010, where the deepening of the two countries' relations was celebrated. "We hope others will not give us lessons when it comes to our region and history...We know what is our interest...We thank them for their advice."[12]

The reference to the Barack Obama administration's attempt to lure Syria from its alliance with Iran— reaffirmed only the day before by secretary of state Hillary Clinton at a Senate hearing—was unmistakable. For his part, Ahmadinejad addressed the backdrop of escalating rhetoric between Israel on one side and Syria and Hezbollah on the other; he warned the "Zionist regime" against any military operation, which would spell out "its end forever." Nasrallah soon joined the two leaders in a show of solidarity, which in the Arabic world was referred to as the "nuclear meeting."

Undoubtedly, these statements and displays of solidarity should extinguish any wishful hope that Damascus is prepared to steer away from Iran in return for peace with Israel and recovery of the Golan Heights. This, however, does not mean that efforts at peacemaking are stillborn. Rather, they reflect the near-completion of the Iranian strategy to realign the forces in the Middle East, especially those confronting Israel. Lebanon and Syria are the main pillars of this ambitious and dangerous strategy whose real objective is the disruption of the Arab-Israeli politico-military balance in favor of an Islamist-nationalist Resistance led by Iran and spearheaded in action by Hezbollah.[13]

The Iranians appear to believe that by transforming the longstanding Arab-Israeli balance of power in the region into an asymmetrical balance of "deterrence-by-terror," they can deepen the impotence of the Arab moderate countries of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan into a complete paralysis—and thus press their claim to lead the Muslim populations of

the region. It is within this context and against this background that Nasrallah declared his "deterrence-by-terror" strategy against Israel, taking Lebanon into uncharted and dangerous waters, irrespective of what many Lebanese think. The euphoria of "divine" victory in Lebanon only hardened the will of Hezbollah to create the society of resistance as the pillar for perpetual *Jihad* against what Hezbollah term the "Zionist entity." Seen through the prism of Hezbollah, the methodology, program, and curriculum of the Resistance have encapsulated the essence of *Zeitgeist* of the nation. It has become the scalpel and "bible" of Hezbollah's "Revolution" in Lebanon.

Taking all this into consideration, it becomes clear that Hezbollah's "Resistance" role will not end any time soon, even in the distant prospect of a Palestinian-Israeli and/or Israeli-Syrian peace treaties. Even if Israel withdraws from Shebaa Farms, Hills of Kfarshouba, and the Lebanese part of the Ghajar village, supposedly robbing the Resistance of its raison d'être, Hezbollah could and would raise other issues, such as Israel's aggression and the Seven Villages in Israel, in order to justify keeping its arms. It is not out of naivete nor out of altruistic reasons that Hezbollah has called for a national defense strategy whereby Hezbollah's Resistance will not be integrated with the army. It is in line with this analysis that Hezbollah has called for a consensual democracy as a means to govern the country until the abolishment of political sectarianism. But this radical change of the system is next to impossible. Certainly, Nasrallah and Sfeir recognize this, as both have seldom agreed on anything except on the precondition "to eliminate political sectarianism from the hearts before the texts." In fact this recognition is pointedly and cerebrally shared by the late leader of the Supreme Shiite Islamic Council Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin. Shamseddin, remarking on the subject of abolishing political sectarianism, stated:

> This slogan is a constant in Lebanese politics. We adopted it as did the "The Supreme Islamic Shiite Council."…However, I thoroughly examined the nature of the Lebanese social fabric, the various groups forming Lebanese society, the nature of the parliamentary regime, the democratic parliamentary regime that is marked by certain peculiarities as a result of sectarian pluralism. I also looked in depth at the interactions in the Lebanese conflict (*fitna*) and at what was hidden behind the thoughts of the belligerent leaders, whether these were political, religious or cultural, despite the differences among them. I thus came to the conclusion that abolishing political sectarianism in Lebanon, i.e. abolishing this regime of political sectarianism in Lebanon, represents a major venture that might jeopardize the future of Lebanon or at least its stability…Therefore, I recommend to the Lebanese Shiites in particular, and I wish and I recommend to the Lebanese Muslims and Christians alike to eliminate from

political activity, from political thought, the project of abolishing political sectarianism.[14]

Despite all its flaws and misgivings, the confessional system has performed as the primary mechanism to protect minority rights and the country's plurality. This explains the vocal opposition of Christian leaders to the establishment of a national committee to abolish political sectarianism, as stipulated by the Taif Accord.

This also paradoxically explains why Hezbollah has been trying to control the political system through a bottom-up process to control the state and its institutions. By controlling the state, Hezbollah would consecrate consensual democracy as a means to strike down any attempt to delegitimize or undermine its political program and vision, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the power of Resistance through a national defense strategy. Will Hezbollah agree to a new social contract, other than that encapsulated in the National Pact and the Taif? Hezbollah will not endorse any new social contract that does not support its political program, vision, and *Jihad*. In fact, a significant number of Christians are still wary and unconvinced of Hezbollah's *Infitah and Lebanonization*. Contending Hezbollah's very claim of its true identity, the spiritual leader of the Maronite community patriarch and cardinal Sfeir dismissively identified Hezbollah by the term "so-called Party of God." Hezbollah's media relations immediately responded: "We would like to draw Patriarch Sfeir's attention to his use of the term "so-called Party of God," which comprises a kind of denial, abuse and disregard, something we do not want to believe His Holiness intended."[15] Other Christian parties have also expressed their reservations about the true motive of Hezbollah's Lebanonization; but few spoke in more certain terms like Carlos Edde of the National Bloc. He said: "This *infitah* comes with a heavy tab to Christians, and very little in return, except the promise that there will be no new "May 7" [the day Hezbollah launched its offensive on west Beirut]."[16]

Significantly, Christian leaders have been concerned about a new war with Israel, which could be catastrophic to Lebanon. In fact, Hezbollah and Israel have been preparing themselves for the eventuality of a new war. Israel, besides upgrading and acquiring sophisticated missile defense shields, has been carrying out large military drills in northern Israel. At the same time, Israeli leaders have been transmitting messages publicly and through American officials to the Lebanese government that it would be held responsible for any future war with Hezbollah and that no area or governmental institution would be off limits from the IDF's firing range.[17] Hezbollah, for its part, has been upgrading its weapons arsenal and drawing plans to respond to various Israeli offensive scenarios throughout Lebanon. Christian leaders have been extremely concerned

about Hezbollah's expanding military drill activities, including drawing plans to involve the Lebanese army.[18]

Focusing on reform, fighting corruption, and peaceful national coexistence, General Michel Aoun, however, has brushed aside his coreligionists' concerns.

At the same time, it is important to note that Hezbollah's ability to formulate, adjust, and act on its political program cannot be separated from the ideological and political near bankruptcy of the March 14 coalition. The coalition that sought the truth behind the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and others could not even handle the "presumptive" [preliminary] truth. As speculation mounted that the International Tribunal may indict Hezbollah members for the murder of Hariri, March 14 members preferred to wish the Tribunal away for the sake of stability. Moreover, Nasrallah, in his speech about the Tribunal presumptive accusation of Hezbollah members, mentioned that Prime Minister Saad Hariri had already informed him that the Tribunal might accuse couple of rogue members of Hezbollah, but that he would not blame the party for the assassination of his father.[19] The rumor mill in Lebanon began churning out scenarios that even Saad does not want to know the truth. Significantly, this speech came in the wake of a statement by Nasrallah accusing Siniora's government of making an Israeli decision on May 5, 2008, which provoked Hezbollah's onslaught on the capital.[20] Subsequently, Nasrallah laid out his analysis of the murder of Hariri in another speech in which he accused Israel of the assassination.[21]

Interestingly, Hezbollah apparently is concerned about the Tribunal's findings. Hezbollah and its allies have been laying the ground for discrediting the Tribunal on the basis of being politicized, and have been cautioning that any indictment of Hezbollah members could lead the country into a Sunni-Shi'a strife with dire consequences for Lebanon and the region. These events accompanied preparations for a new round of national dialogue. Not surprisingly, Hezbollah, prior to attending the national dialogue, has preordained its nature and outcome. Hezbollah member of parliament Nawaf al-Mussawi illustrates this point. In an interview with *Al-Watan*, Mussawi asserts that "the point of departure of the national dialogue is the admission that the Zionist entity is the enemy of Lebanon, as stipulated in the Taif Accord, and therefore we should work to confront this threat." He adds that "in light of past experience showing negotiations to have been useless, and to have deadlocked, we go to the table of national dialogue with pride and with a successful model, which is the Resistance." Then he ominously reproves those who would like to address the question of Hezbollah's weapons by stating that "whoever goes to the table of national dialogue thinking he will discuss what he terms 'weapons of Hezbollah,' he better not come."[22]

As it turned out, national dialogue resumed on August 19, 2010, at the Beiteddine Palace, under the chairmanship of President Michel Suleiman. Hezbollah called for the abolition and replacement of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Though the March 14 coalition renewed its adherence to the International Tribunal, it adopted more or less a conciliatory attitude toward Hezbollah as a party. Future Current member of parliament Ahmad Fatfat remarked that "nobody knows the preliminary decision that is expected to be issued by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon...the expected decision will accuse somebody, and it is the right and duty of whoever is accused to go to court to confirm his innocence." But he added: "The Tribunal cannot charge a state or group and therefore it is certain that there will be no accusation of Hezbollah."[23]

Given the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Syria and the repositioning of Damascus in Lebanon, it is not unlikely that Hezbollah, in the event the Tribunal accused its members of the assassination, would weather the indictment. In addition, based on the pattern of its political maneuvering, Hezbollah would, through its Machiavellian approach to politics, alternate between raising the stakes of communal violence and extending a hand for peaceful national coexistence, while at the same time continuing its attempt to Islamize society and state.[24] In this respect, given the tacit "holy alliance" between *al-Jama'a* and the Party of God on the basis of *Jihad* against Israel and abolishment of political sectarianism under the pretext of reform, the Islamic Association would be willingly or unwillingly complicit in Hezbollah's political program, policies, actions, and vision. Meanwhile, the country slips deeper into limbo, torn between its self-denial of the irrevocable extent of change brought about by Islamism and its aspiration for stability and national coexistence in a politically and ideologically convulsed "land" and region.

Appendix

The Political Vision of the Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Association) in Lebanon 2010

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Thanks to almighty God, and prayer and peace be upon all God's prophets, upon the seal of prophets, our master Muhammad, and upon all his companions. Thereafter: *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* in Lebanon is a reformist, ideological, and Islamic movement whose objective is satisfying almighty God and accomplishing the total meaning of worship in the life of the individual and society. *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* upholds national co-existence with non-Muslims within Islamic law safeguards, and cooperates with all citizens in order to achieve social justice and to protect human rights and his/her freedoms. *Al-Jama'a* operates in its *Da'wa* [call to Islam] within Lebanon's reality and through legitimate means. It seeks to reform, among other things, the moral, economic, and political conditions so that they could become more harmonious with Islamic principles, which, we see, realize the interests of society.

General Departing Points

Political activism is an undivided part of the program of the Islamic Association. It is similar to all other areas of activisms, be they cultural, physical, societal, or propagational, which cover the life and needs of people in their religion and world. From this departing point, political activism is the reflection of the thinking and program of the Association, which works to achieve. Political activism is neither a sheer reaction nor an acquiescence to the political reality in which we live. This necessitates that activism should rely on a clear vision of the intellectual tenets that govern all aspects of *al-Jama'a's* activism, including political activism. Moreover, a reading of the environment in which we operate and the transformations this environment goes through at certain times is necessary to enhance the level of harmony and understanding between the people and supporters of the Islamic Association, and the rest of citizens.

The Islamic Associations has identified general objectives, for which it works hard to accomplish. They are the following:

1. To build[1] the Muslim individual who adheres to Islamic safeguards, and who is able to co-exist with others and to contribute to the building of his/her future nation on the basis of justice and respect of human rights and his/her freedoms.
2. To propagate the call [Da'wa] to Islam to all citizens in a clear and pure way, whereby it is connected to the modern world and its problems and the future and its requirements. The call is based on persuasion and rejection of compulsion.[2] It seeks to maintain the principles and rulings of Islam, which came to delight humanity and to reject sectarian, denominational, and racial discrimination and all aspects of oppression.
3. To contribute to the opening up of the Islamic society to all segments of civil society in Lebanon; to consider dialogue and cooperation as the foundation of the relationship among all Lebanese groups; and to specify the common ground that would help create a bonded society, whose institutions would serve all citizens in a just, equitable, and meritorious way.
4. To positively participate in all civil society organizations with the objective of reforming and strengthening them alongside the institutions of the state, whose work cannot be rectified without the presence of effective civil society organizations.
5. To participate in political activism within the safeguards of Islamic law. This is done through:

   a) presenting a political Islamic vanguard capable of guiding the Muslims to the path that gratifies God and protect the dignity and interests of all citizens.
   b) striving to reinforce national co-existence so as to ensure the creation of a just state without assailing the specificities and rights of the sects.
   c) requesting the guaranteeing of the freedom of political activism for all Lebanese, and affirming the principle of peaceful exchange of power by the way of honest and free elections.
   d) seeking to abolish political sectarianism and liberating the institutions of the state from the shackles of political sectarianism so that they could serve all Lebanese citizens without discrimination.
   e) calling for political and administrative reforms, which would ensure the societal and economic livelihood and interests of citizens, stop waste, and abolish corruption in public sectors.
   f) working on developing Lebanese legislations so that they could conform with Islamic laws, considering that, from our standpoint, they fulfill the interests of all Lebanese and ensure justice among them.
   g) adopting *al-Da'wa* (call to Islam) as a pan-Arab coalescence, in much the same way as the European Union and other international gatherings, considering that unity is a means to achieve the aspirations of the *Ummah* (community of believers), to perform its message, and safeguard its stance in the international arena.

h) rejecting the recognition of the Zionist entity [Israel], confronting all aspects of normalization, and considering resistance as the ideal solution to liberate the raped lands.

Building on the aforementioned, and on the basis of current developments in the Lebanese polity, we identify the political vision of *al-Jama'a* as follows:

First: The Political Regime in Lebanon

Lebanon enjoys a democratic political regime that allows political pluralism across wide areas of freedoms, distinguishing Lebanon's regime from most regimes in the region. The most salient factor for this distinction is the nature of the sectarian, demographic Lebanese arrangement that makes all constituencies-on their own-minorities incapable of individually appropriating power.

But this partial, positive description does not negate the presence of many gaps and multiple flaws, which constantly shook the domestic milieu and subjected it to tribulations that almost brought down the Lebanese structure from its foundation. Moreover, these gaps and flaws, until today, limit the capacity of the Lebanese regime to develop and move toward real reform in all areas.

In addition to ending the civil war, the Taif Accord has contributed to introducing fundamental improvements to Lebanon's political regime. However, fundamental parts of this Accord, which became part of the constitution, have not been implemented, thereby impeding the path of political reform that could have reinforced and fortified the domestic milieu against any violent repercussions. Therefore, we see the priorities that cannot be deferred are about moving ahead in implementing the articles of the Accord, in particular creating a national committee to abolish political sectarianism, establishing a modern electoral system that relies on proportional representation, instituting administrative decentralization, and upholding the right of all areas to balanced development.

Second: Implementing Shari'a (Islamic Law)

Lebanon is composed of nineteen recognized sects. It is intuitive that no sect can impose on another its vision, ideology, or laws. Our religion prohibits imposing on the people what they don't want. The holy Koran states clearly that there is "no compulsion in religion" (Koran 2:256). And religion in the perception of Islam is not sheer creed and worship; but it is holistic since it covers all kinds of legislations for the individual and society.

However, this pluralism should not lead to the violation of our freedom by believing as we wish, expressing our thoughts within the limits of society's order and security, and calling on people [to do] what we see make them happy. These freedoms are bestowed on the human being by almighty God, and this is the special feature of this era, which has been consecrated by the charter of the United Nations. This feature affirms our right in calling for legislations and rules conforming with the rulings of Islamic law, for, on the one hand, it is part of our religion. And, on the other hand, it is our belief that Islamic law

realizes the best structure for societal life among people of different creeds\
religious denominations without discrimination. Correspondingly, we base our
Da'wa on the method of dialogue and persuasion, far from imposition and
compulsion.[3]

Third: National Co-Existence

Almighty God granted reason to the human being, and He gave him/her the
blessing of freedom and free will. He made the duty of human being in this life
the worship of God, and his/her mission the building of the earth. On account
of this, God created him/her (It is He who has produced you from the earth
and settled you therein, Surat Hud, Verse 61); He commanded you to build the
earth. Muslims and non-Muslims participate in this mission, for they all live on
one earth. In spite of all kinds of disagreements, their fate is co-existence so that
they can carry out the mission conferred up on them.

If there is a choice for us in Lebanon, it is to put for this national co-existence
solid foundations, with which everyone will be at ease. Otherwise, we neglect
this and we become from time to time target of civil strife and internal struggles,
consuming everybody's capacity and furthering our backwardness from the civi-
lization of humanity.

In our perception, the foundations of national co-existence are four:

1) Respecting and recognizing the other and dealing with him/her: This
   for us, we Muslims, is a legal matter, covering religious and political dif-
   ference, according to the contemporary division. Almighty God has
   allowed the human being the freedom of choice between faith and disbe-
   lief. Moreover, He did not prevent the infidel from what was given to the
   believer. However, He showed the infidel that faith is the firm grip that
   does not split, and He called and induced the infidel to this [Let there be
   no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error and whoever
   rejects false deities and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy
   firm grip that never splits. And God hears and knows all things, Surat al-
   Baqarah, Verse 256].

   This expansive freedom for all people to chose what they want, even
   with regards to faith and disbelief, utterly compels the recognition of its
   consequences and to deal with them according to Islamic law safeguards.
   Otherwise, there will fundamentally be no meaning for freedom.

2) Morality: Through the perception of Islam morality constitutes absolute
   values, with which the human being deals with those who consent and
   those who differ. It is neither influenced by religious differentiation, nor
   by any other consideration. Morality is not the method by which only the
   Muslim deals with either the one he/she likes, or with the sons of his/her
   clan, nation or religion. It is the method by which people deal with each
   other.

3) Justice: It is absolutely the most important of human values. God sent the
   messengers with the revelations in order to achieve justice [And We sent
   down with them The Book and the Balance so that people stand forth in

justice, Surat al-Hadid, Verse 25]. The Book is the source of justice, and the Balance is the method by which to achieve it, for this means the balance between rights and duties.

4) Cooperation: There is no meaning for national co-existence if the people don't cooperate on achieving mutual interests. And God has shown that cooperation is required even from polytheists [And let not the hatred of some people shut you out of the sacred Mosque and lead you to transgression. Help one another in righteousness and piety, Surat al-Maida, Verse 2].

Fourth: Relations in the Lebanese Arena

The vision according to which the Islamic Association deals with the various Lebanese forces proceeds from the foundation "we cooperate on what we agree upon, and we excuse from each other on what we disagree upon."[4] In other words, we seek common grounds and not differing ones with our partners in the nation. We consider that there are no enemies in the internal realm, for the only enemy in our classification is the Zionist entity and whoever stands by or supports it. Otherwise, we are either cooperating or in alliance with him, or having a temporary political difference governed by democratic protocols and free opinion.

In addition to the afore-mentioned, there are certain standpoints that help shape our relationship with some groups. The Islamic associations and movements in all their ideological stripes and projects intersect with the work of the Islamic Association in many areas. Whatever afflicts these movements would directly reflect on *al-Jama'a* and its project. This requires making a great effort to fashion an accepted method to garner all the efforts of these movements and to coordinate among them, or among the most of them as much as we can, especially in limiting the penetrations that target the Islamic sphere in order to exploit it, marginalize it, or deflect it from its natural course.

Likewise, with regard to the political forces with which we are joined together in the same area of activism throughout Lebanese territories. This requires integrating our work within the framework of securing the unity of the Islamic realm and safeguarding its rights within the renowned Lebanese reality. This necessitates creating an integrative and coordinative relationship that goes beyond the common people and the upcoming benchmarks, leading to the crystallization of a strategic project. The project would fulfill the ambitions of our Islamic realm and contribute to the revival of the nation.

However, our demand for achieving Islamic unity, and our concerns about attempts at sowing denominational strife among our ranks, compel us to seek special and solid relationship with our Shi'a coreligionists. This is in addition to what unifies us regarding the subject of resistance against the Zionist enemy; and this is a strategic matter to the Islamic Association.

With respect to our Christians compatriots, we consider that we have succeeded to a great extent in breaking the barriers that stood between us. The way has been paved to build true relationships, and to cooperate to consecrate national co-existence, as well as to build this nation on strong foundations in line with our aspirations, values and morals.

Fifth: The Palestinian Cause and the Role of the Resistance

What's happening in Lebanon cannot be separated from the struggle against the Zionist enemy and from the biased American attitude supporting this entity. The Zionist project in the region poses the greatest threat to our *Ummah* and our nation, as it seeks to tear the Islamic and Arabic *Ummah* apart by provoking all kinds of racial, denominational and sectarian strife, as well as internal wars. From this point of departure, we consider that confronting this danger and its ramifications as Arabs, Muslims and Lebanese is a nationalist and religious duty. Since this enemy seeks to confine us, still occupies all of Palestine and part of our land, violates our sky and waters, and threatens us day and night, we bear a great responsibility for confronting this project. Particularly, we need to mobilize the *Ummah* and to make it aware of this Zionist danger that threatens all its fundamentals and existence. We also need to work to build the society of resistance intellectually and practically, and to coordinate with the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance forces, at the forefront of which Hamas, so that we can resist this danger through all possible means.

The Islamic Association has always been a fundamental part of the constitutive elements of the nationalist and Islamic resistance. This resistance had been embraced and supported by the various segments of the Arab and Lebanese society, in addition to being officially embraced, leading to the liberation of the largest section of occupied Lebanese land and to the historical steadfastness in the July 2006 aggression.

But this embrace faltered thereafter, especially after the Resistance [Hezbollah] was forced into the internal Lebanese equation. Specifically, this was during the events of May 7, 2008 when the country almost slipped into the furnace of denominational strife, squandering all achievements and presenting gratuitously to the enemy what he could not seize by all his military might.

Therefore, we see that it is necessary to confirm the role of the resistance in the Lebanese equation, to keep it away from internal conflicts and struggles, and to reach a dependable method for the [national] defense strategy, affirming the role of the army, the people, and the resistance in defending the nation whereby all forces in society could participate in the defense of the nation and protect its land and people.

Sixth: The Palestinian Reality in Lebanon

The Palestinian presence in Lebanon formed an essential element that affected the general political situation. This has been the case on account of the size of this presence, on one hand, and the constant attempt by regional and Lebanese parties to employ this presence in one way or another in the internal Lebanese political equation, or more broadly in the equation of the struggle with the Zionist enemy, on the other. Notwithstanding the practices that took place during the past period, specifically during the Lebanese civil war, we find that the file of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and its implications for internal politics is confined to two cases:

A. The Case of Weapons

The Palestinian weapon in Lebanon is a result of the Zionist rape of Palestine and the displacement of a great segment of its people, 400,000 of whom reside

in Lebanon. They are in proximate tension with the Zionist entity, which compel them to be continually ready to defend themselves against any possible aggression. Based upon this specific justification for keeping Palestinian weapons, we believe that there is no need for these weapons outside the [Palestinian refugee] camps. We also believe that these weapons inside the camps should be regulated according to a transparent method of coordination that guarantees the sovereignty of Lebanon, secures for the Palestinian people the right of self-defense, and precludes the use of these weapons to rebel against the internal Palestinian and Lebanese reality [state] as happened in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp.

B. The Case of Civil Rights

It is noteworthy that some Lebanese laws treated the Palestinian people in despicable racist ways under the baseless excuse of rejecting naturalization. This is a principle agreed upon by both the Lebanese and Palestinians. And we don't need to affirm this principle by engendering oppressive laws that are not incompatible with the rights of brotherhood and hospitality, and that contravene with human rights established by international charters. Therefore, we see a necessity to adopt the rightful Palestinian causes in Lebanon, key among them amending the laws that deprived the Palestinians civil and human rights, and [concomitantly] accelerating the rebuilding of the Nahr al-Bared camp.

Seventh: International and Arab Relations

Lebanon is part of the Arabic and Islamic world, complementing and reacting to it throughout the past centuries. It is in response to the matters of the victorious countries in World War One that the Sykes-Picot agreement divided our Arabic East. As a result of this division, we reaped the loss of Palestine, the monopolization of our region by the colonial states, and the rape of our riches. Until this day, we are still suffering from turbulent relations among Arab regimes, which are reflected onto the Lebanese arena, increasing cleavages at times and contributing to their mitigation at other times.

Within this context, we see at one and the same time that duty and interest compel us to seek to forge balanced relationships with all Arab countries, and to improve the bond between the regimes on one side, and between the regimes and their peoples, on the other. This is an alternative to the policy of axis that deepens the *Ummah's* rift and reflects negatively on the Lebanese harsh reality. Moreover, we see that it is our duty to move in the direction of securing a military, political and economic integration among the Arab countries. We see that our long term goal is to reach a real unity that will restore to the *Ummah* its significance among the nations. We have a good example in the European unity that did not come together on account of language, religion and race; it was rather common interests in confronting the powers and enormous international crises.

Therefore, we should read very carefully the regional transformations, in particular the entrance of Turkey, government and people, as an essential power to the region, profiting from various regional and international factors. It is expected that this Turkish role will have a strong influence on the region in the

near future, will complement the forces supporting the resistance and, not as rumored, will not become its alternative.

It is much in the same vein with regard to international relationships that we should not set aside, especially with the states that have not been involved in the support of the Zionist entity. Probably, we can win them over and earn their support of the rightful causes for the peoples of the region, especially that large segments of public opinion in many European and other countries have begun to be dismayed with the biased policies of their governments toward the Zionist entity. The large demonstrations against wars in the Middle East, and the consecutive participations in the flotillas, overland or in the sea, to break the siege on Gaza constitute a good indication of this transformation in the mood of the European and international public opinion.

This is what the General Congress of the Islamic Association ratified, asking God to grant us success in achieving our political vision, and our final call is to praise God, the Lord of all creation.

The Islamic Association
Beirut, May 24, 2010.

Glossary

Al-Ahbash	Organization of Islamic Philanthropic Projects.
ALC	American Lebanese Coalition.
Al-Da'wa Party	A Shi'a Islamist party initially founded in Iraq.
Al-Dhahiya	Beirut's southern suburbs and the stronghold of Hezbollah.
Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah	The Islamic Association.
AMAL	Shiite party and militia founded by Imam Musa al-Sadr and now led by Nabih Berri.
ANM	Arab Nationalist Movement.
Aqida	Religious creed.
Ayatollah	Literally means "sign of God"; a honorific title for a leading Shi'a Muslim scholar.
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency.
Da'wa	Islamic Propagation; Call to Islam.
Dawlah	State.
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.
Dhawabit Shar'iyah	Islamic Legal Safeguards.
Din	Religion.
DOD	Department of Defense.
EU	European Union.
Faqih	Jurisprudent or jurisconsult, who is an authority on Fiqh.
Fatwa	Religious edict.
Fiqh	Religious jurisprudence.
Fitna	Strife.
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council.
Hadith	Tradition of the Prohpet; documented accounts of the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad.
Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami	The Islamic Unity Movement.
Hezbollah	The Party of God.
Husbah	Accountability for the application of the religious and moral instructions of Islam, which covers financial and administrative matters.

Huseiniyyah	Shiite religious centers named after Imam Hussein, which also serve as mourning houses and social centers.
IDF	Israel Defense Forces.
Ijtihad	The application of an intellectual effort to make a religious decision on the basis of independent reasoning.
Imam Hussein	Grandson of Prophet Muhammad martyred at the battle of Karbala, Iraq in 680 CE.
Infitah	Opening up.
Istishhad	Martyrdom.
Jabhat al-Amal al-Islami	The Islamic Action Front.
Jahiliyah	The age of ignorance before God's message to Prophet Muhammad.
Jihad	Literally means "struggle"; Broadly speaking, it is the struggle of the Muslims to reform the self and/or one's community. It also refers to a war waged in defense of Islam, a war which could be offensive and/or defensive.
LF	Lebanese Forces, mainly Christians, whose leadership came from the Phalange party.
LNM	Lebanese National Movement. Organized and led by Kamal Jumblat, LNM included leftist and pan-Arabist parties and groups.
LNP	Liberal National Party.
Marja' al-Taqlid	The supreme Islamic legal authority to be emulated.
MNF	Multinational Peacekeeping Force.
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement.
Mujahidin	Those who carry out Jihad.
Mustad'afin	Oppressed.
Mustakbirin	Oppressors.
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization.
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party, mainly a Druze party founded by Kamal Jumblat and now led by his son Walid Jumblat.
Salaf	Prophet Muhammad's virtuous companions.
Salafists	Followers of the prophetic model as understood by the companions. Pious predecessors.
SALSRA	Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.
SAM	Surface-to-Air-Missiles.
SANA	Syrian Arabic News Agency.

Shahada	Testimony of faith.
Shahid	Martyr.
SLA	South Lebanon Army. Created in 1978 and dismantled in 2000. SLA was supported, equipped and funded by Israel.
SSNP	Syrian Social Nationalist Movement. A Pan-Syrian party founded by Antun Saade.
Sunnah	The customs and practices of Prophet Muhammad.
Taqiyyah	Dissimulation.
Taqlid	Emulation.
Taqwa	Devoutness.
Tawhid	The oneness/unity of God.
Ulama	Muslim religious scholars.
Ummah	The worldwide Muslim community of believers.
UNIFIL	U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon. UNIFIL is deployed in south of Lebanon.
Wajib	Religious duty.
Za'im	Feudal leader.
Zakat	Religious tax.

Notes

Introduction

1. Michael C. Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 21; Muhammad A. Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon," *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 43, No. 6 (November 2007).
2. See Ralph E. Crow, "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (August 1962).
3. Clyde G. Hess, Jr. and Herbert L. Bradman, Jr., "Confessionalism and Feudality in Lebanon," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1954); Crow, "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System."
4. The complete text of the Lebanese constitution is available at the government website at http://www.lp.gov.lb/SecondaryAr.Aspx?id=12. Accessed on April 6, 2011; for a textual and analytical examination of the Constitution, see Edmond Rabbath, *La Constitution Libanaise: Origines, Textes et Commentaires* (Beirut: Universite Libanaise, 1982).
5. Article 95 was amended in 1990 according to the Document of National Understanding: "During the transitional phase: 1) sects will be justly represented in forming the cabinet, 2) the foundation of sectarian representation will be abolished, and merit and specialization will be relied upon in the public sector, judiciary, security and military institutions, and public and mixed institutions according to the requisites of national understanding, with the exception of group one positions and what is equivalent to group one positions, which would be divided equally between Christians and Muslims without allocating any position to any sect and according to the principles of merit and specialization."
6. Building their theoretical framework of ethnicity and nationalism on the concept of "imagined communities," social constructivist approaches have conceived of identity "as an idea or discourse rather than as an empirically observable social 'unit' defined by features such as dress, language, or customs." Their studies focus on "determining the elements, factual or otherwise, that contribute to the construction of a particular identity. They include explorations of the circumstances under which identities develop, the changes they undergo over time, and the social and political objectives for which identities may be created." Thomas C. Davis, "Revisiting Group Attachment: Ethnic and National Identity," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (March 1999), pp. 25–26; see also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread*

of Nationalism (London: Verso, revised edition, 1991). The social psychologist approach emphasizes the essence of national identity as an individual group association. "It is ... the self view of one's group, rather than the tangible characteristics, that is of essence in determining the existence or non-existence of a nation." Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 43.

7. Walid Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Resistance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 89.

8. Amine Gemayel, "The Price and the Promise," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 63, No. 4 (Spring 1985), p. 760.

9. Fathi Yakan, *Abjadiyat al-Tasawor al-Haraki lil-'Amal al-Islami* (The Elementary Facts of the Conceptual Movement of Islamic Activism) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1981), p. 166.

10. Naim Qassem, "Kayfa Yankharet Baqi al-Mujtama' fi al-Muqawamah?" (How Does the Rest of Society Integrate with the Resistance?), *An-Nahar*, June 8, 2007.

11. Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 20.

12. Radwan al-Sayyid, *Siyasiyat al-Islam al-Mu'aser: Muraja'at wa Mutaba'at* (The Politics of Contemporaneous Islam: Revisions and Follow Ups) (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1997), p. 218.

13. Shaykh Muhammad Hussayn Fadlallah and Mahmoud Soueid, "Islamic Unity and Political Change: Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Hussayn Fadlallah," *Journal of Palestine Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 1 (Autumn 1995), pp. 63–64.

1   Greater Lebanon and the National Pact: The Elusiveness of National Identity

1. Adel Ismail, *Le Liban, Documents Diplomatiques et Consulaires Relatifs a L'Histoire du Liban* (Beirut: Editions des Oeuvres Politiques et Historiques, 1979), Vol. XIX, p. 18.

2. See Kamal Salibi, "Islam and Syria in the Writings of Henri Lammens," in Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 330–342. See also Henri Lammens, *La Syrie, Precis Historique* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1921).

3. Yusuf al-Sawda, *Fi Sabil Lubnan (For Lebanon)* (Alexandria: Madrasat al-Farir al-Sina'iyah, 1919), p. 15. Quote first cited from Asher Kaufman, "Phoenicianism: The Formation of an Identity in Lebanon in 1920," *Middle East Studies,* Vol. 37, No. 1 (January 2001).

4. Maurice Barres's concept of nationalism was based on pride in tradition and heritage, patriotic spirit of Catholicism, and geographical determinism as a determinant of the unique national character of France. Barres's concept was an intellectual fodder to Phoenicianists, who took pride in the glory of their Phoenician heritage, Catholic Maronitism, and the unique national character of Lebanon. Even Corm's title apparently took its inspiration from

La Colline Inspiree, by Barres. See Maurice Barres, *La Colline Inspiree* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1922), and *Le Culte du Moi* (Paris: Plon-Norrit, 1922). See Charles Corm, *La Montagne Inspiree*; *Chasons de Geste* (Beirut: Editions de La Revue Phenicienne, 2nd edition, 1964).

5. See E. P. Hoyek, "Les Revendications du Liban, Memoire de La Delegation Libanaise a la Conference de la Paix," in David Corm et Fils, *La Revue Phenicienne* (Beirut: Edition Maison D'Art, Juillet 1919).

6. On the formation of modern Lebanon see Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

7. Franck Salameh, *Language, Memory and Identity in the Middle East: The Case of Lebanon* (New York: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 47.

8. The French systematically amended some of these decrees and issued new ones so as to overhaul the system in line with their overall policies; including, for example, the abolition of the upper house (Senate) in the chamber of deputies (Representation Council). For French policies under the mandate See Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon;* and Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban Politique et Constitutionnel* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1973).

9. On the *Mutasarifiyyah* see Asa'd Rustum, *Lubnan fi 'Ahd al-Mutasarifiyyah* (Lebanon under the Era of the Mutasarifiyyah) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar Lil-Nashr, 1973); see also Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1965).

10. Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, October 1991), p. 10.

11. On the most comprehensive account of Syria's Arab nationalist politics during the mandate, see Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

12. See Rania Maktabi, "The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 26, No. 2 (1999), pp. 219–241.

13. See the communique addressed to the French High Commissioner by the Patriarchate on February 6, 1935, in Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban,* pp. 407–408.

14. Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, p. 10.

15. Ibid., pp. 34–37.

16. See Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, pp. 486–493.

17. See Raghid Solh, "The Attitude of the Arab Nationalists towards Greater Lebanon during the 1930s," in Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills, eds., *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), pp. 149–161.

18. Out of a total resident population of 793,396, the Maronites numbered 227,800 (28.8 %), the Sunnis 178,100 (22.4%), and the Shi'a 155,035 (19.6%). The Maronites, being the largest sect, were allocated the powerful office of the president of the Republic; the Sunnis, the second largest sect, were allocated the Premiership; and the Shi'a, the third largest sect, were

allocated the position of Speaker of parliament. The distribution of parliamentary seats was set up at Christian: Muslim ratio of 6:5, and government positions were also distributed according to the 6:5 ratio. For the official results of the census see a copy of the census as it appeared in the official gazette in Maktabi, "The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese?" p. 223.

19. The celebrated term "Arab Face" was first mentioned by Solh's speech on October 7, 1943, which is considered the formal enunciation of the National Pact. See text of speech in Basim al-Jisr, *Mithaq 1943, Limadha Kan? Wa Hal Saqat?* (National Pact 1943, Why It Was Founded? Did It Collapse?) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar lil-Nashr, 1978), pp. 485–495; The other celebrated theme "No East, No West" was emphasized by Khoury, while advocating a special relationship with the Arab world. Al-Jisr, *Mithaq 1943, Limadha Kan? Wa Hal Saqat?* pp. 482–484. Both quotes were first cited from el-Khazen.

20. See A. B. Gaunson, *The Anglo-French Clash in Lebanon and Syria, 1940–1945* (London: Mcmillan Press Ltd, 1987).

21. Georges Catroux, *Dans la Bataille de la Mediterranee, Egypte, Levant, Afrique du Nord, 1940–1944. Temoignages et Commentaires* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1949), p. 259.

22. See Pierre Rondot, *Les Institutions Politiques du Liban, des Communautes Traditionnelles a L'etat Moderne* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1947), pp. 65–66.

23. Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon: Clans, Parties and Clerics* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 29–32.

24. For a detailed account on the Shi'a during the French mandate see Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal Amil and the New Lebanon: Community and Nation-State, 1918–1943* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

25. On Christian movements and currents during this episode in Lebanon's modern history see Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism,* pp. 85–90.

26. For example, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, founded by the Greek Orthodox Antun Sa'ada in the 1930s, advocated Syrian nationalism, as opposed to the Ba'th party that advocated Arab nationalism. On SSNP ideology see Labib Zuwiyya Yamak, *The Syrian Social Nationalist Party: An Ideological Analysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). This party was supported by Muslims and Christians.

27. Georges Naccache, *L'Orient,* March 10, 1949; reproduced in *Un Reve Libanais: 1943–1972* (Beirut: Editions du Monde Arabe, 1983), pp. 57–58. Quote first cited from Salameh and Phares.

28. El-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, p. 68.

2   The Confessional System between Lebanonism and Pan-Arabism

1. On Hashemite regional ambitions and postwar Arab politics, see Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

2. Camille Chamoun, *Crise Au Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 376.

3. Omri Nir, "The Shi'ites during the 1958 Lebanese Crisis," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 6 (November 2004), p. 110. On the 1958 crisis see also Fahim I. Qubain, *Crisis in Lebanon* (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1961).

4. For detailed analysis, see Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*.

5. Kamal Salibi, "Lebanon under Fuad Chehab, 1958–1964," *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (April 1966), p. 215.

6. Nir, "The Shi'ites during the 1958 Crisis," p. 110.

7. See Hess, Jr. and Bodman, Jr., "Confessionalism and Feudality in Lebanese Politics," pp. 18–19.

8. Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama' and Parties in the Lebanese Crisis of 1958," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1961), p. 138.

9. Chamoun, *Crise au Moyen-Orient*, pp. 384–420.

10. Salibi, "Lebanon under Fuad Chehab, 1958–1964," p. 218.

11. On Shihab's role during the crisis, see Chamoun, *Crise au Moyen-Orient,* p. 409; and Salibi, "Lebanon under Fuad Chehab," pp. 217–218.

12. John P. Entelis, "Party Transformation in Lebanon: Al-Kata'ib as a Case Study," *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (October 1973), pp. 332–333. See also Kamal Jumblat, *Haqiqat al-Thawrah al-Lubnaniyah* (The Truth about the Lebanese Revolution) (Beirut: Dar al-Nashr al-'Arabiyah, 1959).

13. Jumblat, *Haqiqat al-Thawrah al-Lubnaniyah,* p. 155.

14. Jumblat, *Haqiqat al-Thawrah al-Lubnaniyah,* p. 173; quote cited first in Malcolm H. Kerr, "Book Reviews: Lebanese Views on the 1958 Crisis," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1961), p. 213.

15. Salibi, "Lebanon under Fuad Chehab," p. 218.

16. Ibid., 219; see also Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism,* pp. 100–101.

17. Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism,* p. 100.

18. For a detailed and nuanced account of Shehab's policies and rule see Nicholas Nassif, *Jumhuriyat Fuad Shehab* (The Republic of Fuad Shehab) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar lil-Nashr, 2008).

19. Entelis, "Party Transformation in Lebanon: Al-Kata'ib as a Case Study," p. 335.

20. Entelis, "Party Transformation in Lebanon," p. 336.

21. See statement of the *Hilf* in *L'Orient,* July 11, 1967.

22. Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism,* p. 103.

23. Elie A. Salem, "Lebanon's Political Maze: The Search for Peace in a Turbulent Land," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Autumn 1979), p. 453.

24. For an excellent account on the breakdown of the state, see Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

25. For details on the civil war, see Robert G. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors: Syria, Israel and Lebanon* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 43–84.

26. Ibrahim Bayram, "al-Jama'a al-Islamiya min Ubad al-Rahman ila al-Intikhabat al-Niyabiyah" (Islamic Association from Ubad al-Rahman to Parliamentary Elections), *An-Nahar,* April 1, 1997.

27. For details on the program of the LNM, see Marius Deeb, *The Lebanese Civil War* (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 74–77.

28. Kamal Jumblat, *Lubnan wa Harb al-Taswiyah* (Lebanon and the War for a Settlement) (N.p.: Center of Socialist Studies, Progressive Socialist Party, 1977), pp. 19–21. See also Kamal Jumblat, *Hadhihi Wasiyati* (This Is My Will) (Paris: Stok, 1978), pp. 12–16; and Kamal Jumblat, *Fi Majra al-Siyasah al-Lubnaniyah* (In the Course of Lebanese Politics) (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, 1962), pp. 42–60.

29. Jumblat, *Hadhihi Wasiyati,* p. 24.

30. See Deeb, *The Lebanese Civil War*, pp. 85–88.

31. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors,* pp. 50–53.

32. Discussion by the author with Phalangist members throughout the early 1980s.

33. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors,* pp. 54–55.

34. *Le Monde,* August 8, 1978; initially cited from David C. Gordon, *The Republic of Lebanon: Nation in Jeopardy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), p. 130.

35. Antoine Khuwayri, *Hawadith Lubnan 1977–1978: Wa Akhiran Haraquh* (Lebanese Events: Finally They Burned It) (Jounieh: Dar al-Abjadiya, Vol. 6, 1978), p. 242; quote cited initially in Marius Deeb, *Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 40.

36. For details on Imam Sadr's role in mobilizing the Shi'a community, see Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Majid Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992); and Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University Press of Texas, 1987).

37. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, pp. 147–148.

38. See Imam Sadr's political program on the council's website http://www.shiitecouncil.com/edara/index.php?id=1. Accessed on April 4, 2011.

39. For details see Martin Kramer, "Syria's Alawis and Shi'ism," in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 237–254.

40. Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, p. 48.

41. Ibid., p. 224. For the names of Iranian trainees and activists in Lebanon who came to play an influential role during and following the Iranian Revolution, see Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), p. 193.

42. Joseph Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), p. 28.

43. Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology,* p. 30.

44. Marius Deeb, "Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1988), p. 685. See also Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*; Halawi,

A Lebanon Defied; and Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*.

45. See Sarkis's program as translated to English in Gordon, *The Republic of Lebanon*, p. 135–137.

46. See John J. Donohue, "Changing the Lebanese Constitution: A Postmodern History," *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 30, No. 6, 2009, p. 2518.

47. Hussain Quwatli, *Al-Fikr al-Islami* (Islamic Thought), October 1983; quote taken in its English entirety from Donohue, ibid., p. 2519.

3 *AL-JAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYAH* AND FATHI YAKAN: THE PIONEER OF SUNNI ISLAMIC ACTIVISM IN LEBANON

1. Zakariya Sulayman Bayyumi, *Al-Ikwan al-Muslimun wa al-Jama'at al-Islamiyah fi al-Hayat al-Siyasiyah al-Misriyah, 1928–1948* (The Muslim Brothers and the Islamic Association in the Egyptian Political Life, 1928–1948) (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1979), p. 90.

2. Ibid., pp. 90–91.

3. Fathi Yakan, *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Harakiyah* (The Encyclopedia of Activism) (Amman: Dar al-Bashr, 1983), pp. 55–56.

4. Fathi Yakan, *Al-Mas'ala al-Lubnaniyah min Manthur Islami* (The Lebanese Question from an Islamic Perspective) (Beirut: al-Mu'assassah al-Islamiyah, 1979), p. 22.

5. Ali Lagha, *Fathi Yakan: Ra'ed al-Harakah al-Islamiyah al-Mu'asirah fi Lubnan* (Fathi Yakan: The Pioneer of the Contemporary Islamic Movement in Lebanon) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1994), pp. 263–264. See also the objectives of the Islamic Association on its website: http://www.al-jamaa.org/pageother.php?catsmktba=15. Accessed on April 5, 2011.

6. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Cedar Rapids: The Mother Mosque Foundation, n.d.), p. 80.

7. Ibid., p. 82.

8. Ibid., pp. 53–76; See also L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 153–159.

9. Fathi Yakan, *Madha Ya'ni Intima'i lil-Islam* (What Does it Mean Being a Muslim) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1977), pp. 73–74; Lagha, *Fathi Yakan,* p. 57.

10. Lagha, *Fathi Yakan,* p. 35.

11. Qutb, *MIlestones,* p. 20.

12. Yakan, *Madha Ya'ni Intima'i lil-Islam,* pp. 120–121.

13. Fathi Yakan, *Abjadiyat al-Tasawor al-Haraki lil-'Amal al-Islami* (The Elementary Facts of the Conceptual Movement of Islamic Activism) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1981), pp. 154–155.

14. Lagha, *Fathi Yakan,* pp. 65–77.

15. Ibid., p. 185.

16. See Fathi Yakan's interview on *Al-Jazeera TV,* March 16, 2007; excerpts of which transcribed by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Special Dispatch No. 1518, March 23, 2007.

17. Ibid.

18. *Al-Harakat al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan* (Islamic Movements in Lebanon), *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (Islamic Association), in *al-Harakat al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Arabi lil-Ma'lumat, 2007), p. 110.

19. Lagha, *Fathi Yakan,* pp. 24–25.

20. On *al-Ikwan* in Syria, see Robert G. Rabil, "The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood," in Barry Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

21. For details on the Muslim Brotherhood's doctrine and objectives see The Information Center of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, "Introducing the Muslim Brotherhood, Part One and Two," January 29, 2007, and February 7, 2007, respectively, available at http://www.ikhwansyria.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=114; http://www.ikhwansyria.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=218&Itemid=114. Accessed on April 29, 2010.

22. See al-Harakat al-Islamiyah, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah fi Luban,* p. 111. See also Ibrahim Bayram, "al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah min Ubad al-Rahman ila al-Intikhabat al-Niabiyah" (The Islamic Association from Ubad al-Rahman to Parliamentary Elections), A*n-Nahar,* April 1, 1997. At the time, Kamal Jumblat was the Minister of Interior. Based on the official license, the founders were Fathi Yakan, Sheikh Faisal Mawlawi, Zuhair al-Abidi, and Ibrahim al-Misri.

23. In 1958, the Islamic Association published a weekly newspaper called *Al-Mujtama',* which remained in circulation for five years. In 1964, the Islamic Association began publishing *Al-Shihab* and another weekly by the name *Al-Iman*. In addition, Islamic Association students published a periodical by the name *Al-Tali'a* that was replaced by *Al-Mujahid*.

24. Lagah, *Fathi Yakan*, p. 29.

25. In the early 1960s, *al-Jama'a*, in conjunction with independent Muslim activists, established *Jam'iyat al-Tarbiah al-Islamiyah* (the Islamic Educational Association), which served as the foundational organization for founding dozens of Islamic pedagogical and technical schools throughout Lebanon under the name *Madaress al-Iman (*The Faith Schools). Out of these schools emerged *Kashafat al-Iman* (The Faith Boy Scout). Then the graduates of these schools helped establish *Rabitat al-Tulab al-Muslimin* (The Muslim Students League) as the Islamic Association's student organ in Lebanese Universities. At the same time, the Islamic Association established the Cooperative Medical Center, which became the nucleus of the Islamic Medical Association. The Islamic Medical Association has supervised a vast network of dispensaries and health centers throughout Lebanon, in particular in Sunni populous areas and neighborhoods. For information on the Islamic Association's organizations, see its website http://www.al-jamaa.org/index.php. Accessed on April 5, 2011. See also al-Harakat al-Islamiyah, *"al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah,"* p. 112.

26. See the Islamic Association's website at http://www.al-jamaa.org/pageother.php?catsmktba=15. Accessed on April 5, 2011.

27. Ibrahim Bayram, "Al-Jama'a a-Islamiyah min Ubad al-Rahman ila al-Intikhabat al-Niyabiyah" (The Islamic Association from Ubad al-Rahman to Parliamentary Elections), *An-Nahar*, April 1, 1997.

28. Fathi Yakan, *al-Masa'la al-Lubnaniyah min Manthur Islami* (The Lebanese Question from an Islamic Perspective) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1979).

29. Yakan, *al-Masa'la al-Lubnaniyah*, p. 39.

30. Ibid., pp. 40–43.

31. Ibid., pp. 61–62.

32. Ibid., pp. 116–118.

33. Ibid., pp. 116. It's noteworthy that, to Yakan, administrative confessionalism is synonymous with political confessionalism (political sectarianism) when it comes to the distribution of political and administrative positions in the state on the basis of sectarianism (from the office of the Maronite president to the lowest position in the state).

34. See Yakan's interview with *Al-Diyar,* March 1, 1995, published in Fathi Yakan, *Adwa' 'ala al-Tajribah al-Niyabiyah al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan: al-'Ida' al-Niyabi 'Ubr al-I'lam* (Lights on the Islamic Parliamentarian Experience: The Parliamentarian Performance Through the Media) (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, Book No. 2, 1996), pp. 93–94.

35. Yakan, *al-Masa'la al-Lubnaniya,* p. 127.

36. Ibid., p. 135.

37. Ibid., 136.

38. Yakan, *Abjadiyat al-Tasawur al-Haraki,* pp. 160–162.

39. Ibid., pp. 164–166.

40. Ibid., p. 165; see also Yakan's interview with *Al-Diyar,* March 1, 1995.

4　The Reassertion of Sectarianism and the Rise of Islamism

1. For the work of Shamseddine, see the website of the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council at http://www.shiitecouncil.com/edara/index.php?id=14. Accessed on April 5, 2011.

2. See Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), p. 15.

3. The honorific title "Sayyid" connotes descent from Prophet Muhammad. Ibid., p. 16.

4. Ibid., pp. 16–17.

5. On Fadlallah see Jamal Sankari, *Fadlallah: The Making of a Radical Shi'ite Leader* (London: Saqi Books, 2005).

6. Among these scholars were Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi and Sheikh Ragheb Harb, who came to play prominent roles in founding Hezbollah.

7. On the emergence and activities of the Da'wa party in Iraq, see Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2003); on how the regime clamped down on the party, see Robert G. Rabil, *The Iraqi Opposition's Evolution: From Conflict to Unity? Middle East Review of*

International Affairs Journal (MERIA), Vol. 6, No. 4 (December 2002). Among those who came to Lebanon from Iran was Mustafa Shamran, who helped Imam Sadr found AMAL and train its members. Two other important figures who came to Lebanon regularly and then became Iranian ambassadors to Syria are Ali Muhtashami and Muhammad Hassan Akhtari. These two figures played a significant role in founding and supporting Hezbollah. See Akhtari's interview with *Ash-Sharq al-Awsat,* "Akhtari: Hezbollah, Hamas wa al-Jihad Abna' Shari'youn lil-Thawra al-Iraniyah" (Akhtari: Hezbollah, Hamas, and [Islamic] Jihad are Legitimate Sons of the Iranian Revolution), May 14, 2008.

  8. Hassan Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar: Hezbollah: Al-Sirah al-Zatiyyah wa al-Mawqaf* (The Other Choice: Hezbollah's Autobiography and Stance) (Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 1994), p. 22; Qassem, *Hizbullah,* p. 18.

  9. Hassan Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat: Sira' al-Muqawamah wa al-Ihtilal al-Israeli fi Lubnan* (The Battle of Wills: The Struggle of the Resistance and the Israeli Occupation in Lebanon) (Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 3rd edition, 2009), p. 59.

10. Ibid., pp. 61–62.

11. Ibid., pp. 59–61. See also *As-Safir,* June 11, 1982.

12. Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 38; Ibid. (both sources).

13. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* p. 69. Qassem, *Hizbullah,* p. 20.

14. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* pp. 90–91; Qassem, *Hizbullah,* p. 20.

15. Qassem, *Hizbullah,* p. 19.

16. Fadlallah, *Al-Khayar al-Akhar,* p. 41; see also Qassem, *Hizbullah,* p. 20. By declaring "your phase is Karbalite," Ayatollah Khomeini was referring to the battle of Karbala in 680 in which Imam Hussein and his family were killed fighting oppression and injustice. Imam Hussein is known as the prince of martyrs. What Ayatollah Khomeini was implying was that this new Islamist movement would confront injustice and oppression with sacrifice and martyrdom.

17. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "Al-Khatar al-Israili Yuhaded al-Sharq al-Awsat wa al-Aradi al-Islamiyah Kulaha" (The Israeli Danger Threatens the Whole Middle East and all Islamic Lands), *Al-Nur,* November 8, 1973, p. 209, in *Al-Qadiyah al-Falastiniyah fi Kalam al-Imam al-Khomeini* (The Palestinian Cause in the Words of Imam Khomeini) (Tehran: The Institution for Organizing and Publishing The Heritage of Imam Khomeini, 1995), p. 37.

18. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "Rusu Sufufakum lil-Qada' 'ala Israil" (Align your Ranks to Terminate Israel), *Al-Nur,* November 28, 1973, p. 209, in ibid., pp. 114–115.

19. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "Thawrat al-Shu'ub hiya Tariq Tahrir Falastine" (The Revolution of Peoples Is the Path to Liberate Palestine), *Al-Nur,* April 1, 1979, p. 242, in *Al-Qadiyah al-Falastiniyah fi Kalam al-Imam al-Khomeini*, pp. 210–211.

20. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, " 'Ada'una li-Israil Mafkharatun lana" (Our Enmity to Israel Is Our Pride), *Al-Nur,* June 5, 1989, p. 172, in ibid., pp. 248–249.

21. Ayatollah Khomeini addressing Hezbollah's Shura members, *Al-Nur,* February 28, 1982, p. 184, in ibid., p. 243.

22. For details see Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 376–391; Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors: Syria, Israel, and Lebanon,* pp. 64–71; and see also General Mustafa Tlas et al., *Al-Ghazu al-Israili li-Lubnan* (The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon) (Damascus: Tlas Press, 1985).

23. Ibid. (Seale), p. 391.

24. For details on the massacre and those responsible for it, see the Israeli government's Kahan Commission, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the events at the refugee camps in Beirut, February 8, 1983, on Israel's Foreign Ministry website http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/ Foreign%20Relations/Israels%20Foreign%20Relations%20since%20 1947/1982–1984/104%20Report%20of%20the%20Commission%20 of%20Inquiry%20into%20the%20e. Accessed on May 19, 2010. Phalangist leaders, including former chief of intelligence Elie Hobeika, who commanded the Phalangist force that entered the camps, and Politburo member and former president of the Phalange, Karim Pakradouni, after some years of silence, contradicted the Kahan commission's findings, putting the blame for the massacre squarely on Israel's shoulder. See Hobeika's public statements on major television stations, including the Lebanese Broadcasting Company (LBC) in July 2001; and Pakradouni's interview with LBC on July 29, 2001.

25. Tlas, *Al-Ghazu al-Israili li-Luban,* pp. 751–752; see also *Al-Ba'th,* May 15 and 18, 1983.

26. The core of the opposition comprised the Sunni leader from Tripoli in northern Lebanon, Rashid Karame; Druze leader Walid Jumblat; SSNP leader In'am Ra'd; and former president Suleiman Franjieh.

27. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* p. 93.

28. For details on the operation, see ibid., pp. 130–131.

29. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* p. 47.

30. Ibid., pp. 47–49.

31. Marius Deeb, "Lebanon: Prospects for National Reconciliation in the Mid-1980s," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring 1984), pp. 275–276.

32. Markaz al-Tawthiq wa al-Buhuth al-Lubnani, *Al-'Alaqat al-Lubnaniyah al-Suriyah: 1943–1985* (Lebanese-Syrian Relations: 1943–1985) (Antilias, Lebanon: Dar al-Nashr wa al-Taswiq, part one, 1986), pp. 452–455.

33. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* p. 110. See also *As-Safir,* October 18, 1983.

34. Ibid., pp. 110–111. See also *As-Safir,* October 20, 1983.

35. See Augustus Richard Norton, "Walking between Raindrops: Hizballah in Lebanon," *Mediterranean Politics* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 1998); and Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

36. Faculte des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, *Annales de Sociologie et d'Antropologie* (Beirut: Saint Joseph Universite, 1990), p. 140; initially cited in Donohue, "Changing the Lebanese Constitution: A Post-modern History," p. 2520.

37. Hanna Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 303–307.

38. Ibid., p. 305.

39. "Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami," *An-Nahar,* April 4, 1997. See also "Al-Harakat al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan" (Islamic Movements in Lebanon), *Al-Wasat,* January 1, 2000.

40. "Indimam 'Jund Allah' ila Harakat al-Tawhid" (Jund Allah Joins Harakat al-Tawhid), *As-Safir,* April 5, 1983; Khudr Taleb, "Al-Islamiyoun fi al-Shamal: Min Manabir al-Masajid ila al-Maqa'ed al-Baladiyah" (Islamists in the North: From the Pulpits of Mosques to Municipality Seats), *As-Safir,* July 14, 1998.

41. A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Islamism in Lebanon: A Guide," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1997).

42. "Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami," *An-Nahar*, April 4, 1997.

43. Ibid. See also "Hashem Minqara: Free at Last," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin,* Vol. 2, No. 8 (September 5, 2000).

44. Ibid. (MEIB). Amnesty International, *Lebanon: Arbitrary Arrests, "Disappearances" and Extrajudicial Killings by Syrian Troops and Syrian-backed Forces in Tripoli* (AI Index: MDE 24/02/87, February 1987).

45. According to Ali Lagha, Fathi Yakan met President Asad three times, in December 1979, July 1985, and August 1988. President Asad discussed with Yakan Lebanese and Islamic matters, key among them how to deal with and confront Israel's aggression. See Lagha, *Fathi Yakan: Ra'ed al-Harakah al-Islamiyah al-Mu'asirah fi Lubnan,* pp. 31–32.

46. See the text of Open Letter in Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* pp. 184–213. An English translation of the letter is available in Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology,* pp. 233–238.

47. For an excellent analysis of the Open Letter, see Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, pp. 115–148.

48. Ibid., p. 36. While Ayatollah Khomeini considered the Lebanese system as illegitimate, Ayatollah Khamenei argued that Muslims should rule Lebanon since they were the majority. See Waddah Sharara, *Dawlat Hizbullah: Lubnan Mujtama'n Islamiyan* (The State of Hezbollah: Lebanon as an Islamic Society) (Beirut: An-Nahar, 2nd edition, 1997), p. 342.

49. Ayatollah Fadlallah, in addition to Ayatollah Khomeini, justified martyrdom as an act of *Jihad*. He regarded martyrdom operations as self-sacrificial defensive *Jihadi* acts of resistance against the occupying Zionist enemy; and as such he defined martyrdom as a legitimate act of defense. See Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology,* p. 139–140. See Ayatollah al-Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, *Al-Islam wa Mantiq al-Quwwa* (Islam and the Logic of Power) (Beirut: Dar al-Malak, 3rd edition, 1985), p. 193.

50. For the timeline of the meetings and the names of those who accompanied the three leaders to Damascus, see Markaz al-Tawthiq wa al-Buhuth al-Lubnani, *Al-'Alaqat al-Lubnaniyah al-Suriyah,* pp. 500–515.

51. Ibid., p. 515.

52. Ibid. For an analysis of the Accord see Donohue, "Changing the Lebanese Constitution," pp. 2520–2521.

53. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* pp. 102–105.

54. Ibid. For a detailed account of the Christian position and opposition to the Accord see Karim Pakradouni, *La'nat Watan: Min Harb Lubnan Ila Harb al-Khalij* (Curse of a Fatherland: From the Lebanese War to the Gulf War) (Beirut: Trans-Orient Press, 1992).

55. As'ad Abu-Khalil, "The Palestinian-Shiite War in Lebanon: An Examination of Its Origins," *in* Altaf Gauhar, *ed., Third World Affairs 1988* (London: Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, 1988), pp. 84–85; and "Syria and the Shiites: Al-Asad's Policy in Lebanon," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 1990), pp. 1–20.

56. Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics,* p. 310.

57. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar*, pp. 133–134.

58. Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics*, p. 311.

59. Interview with a former member of the Lebanese Forces command leadership, October 12, 2009.

60. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* p. 53. Following AMAL and Hezbollah's forced eviction of army units from west Beirut in February 1984, Nabih Berri joined Gemayel's government, which, in the same month, participated in United Nations–sponsored Israeli-Lebanese talks in the Naqourah.

61. Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism, pp.* 50–52. Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, pp. 101–102.

62. Robert Baer, "It's Not Syria's Problem Anymore," *Newsweek International*, August 14, 2006.

63. Ibid.; Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon*, pp. 99–100.

64. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar*, p. 145. Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within,* p. 240.

65. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* p. 146.

66. Ibid., p. 147.

67. Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within,* p. 102.

5   The Islamists and the Political System: *Al-Infitah* and *Lebanonization*

1. The United States, Israel, Syria, and Lebanese Christians and Muslims all preferred different candidates. Frustrated, President Gemayel appointed General Aoun. I sat in on a meeting with President Gemayel, Archbishop Elia Elia of the Catholic Orthodox Church, and Maronite Chairbishop Joseph Lahoud at the Sheraton Commander in Cambridge, MA in September 1991, during which the question over Aoun's appointment was discussed.

2. Pakradouni, *La'nat Watan: Min Harb Lubnan Ila Harb al-Khalij,* p. 205.

3. Ibid., p. 219.

4. For the text of the Taif Accord see *An-Nahar*, August 22, 1990; For an analysis of the Accord, see Fida Nasrallah, *Prospects for Lebanon: The Question of South Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992); and Joseph

Maila, *The Document of National Understanding: A Commentary* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992).

5. Ibid.

6. Augustus Richard Norton, "Lebanon After Ta'if: Is the Civil War Over?" *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1991), p. 461.

7. Author had discussions with members of the Lebanese Forces, Phalangists, and Aoun supporters throughout 1991 and 1992.

8. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors,* pp. 130–132.

9. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* pp. 109–110.

10. Ibid., pp. 142–143.

11. Ibid., p. 116.

12. Ibid., p. 148; see also Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal* (Hizbullah: The Curriculum [program], the Experience, the Future) (Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 6th edition, 2009), pp. 152–154.

13. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal,* pp. 333–334.

14. Ibid., pp. 335–338.

15. Ibid., pp. 338–339.

16. Fadlallah, *Al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* p. 137.

17. Ibid., 138.

18. Fadlallah and Soueid, "Islamic Unity and Political Change: Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Hussayn Fadlallah," pp. 67–68.

19. Ibid., p. 69.

20. A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 14, No. 2 (1993), p. 324.

21. Ibid., p. 323.

22. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto press, 2002), p. 47.

23. See Nasrallah interview with *As-Safir,* as transcribed in Nicolas Noe, ed., *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 159–161.

24. Richard Augustus Norton, "Hizbullah: From Radicalization to Pragmatism?" *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1998); Magnus Ranstorp, "The Strategy and Tactics of Hizballa's Current Lebanonization Process," *Mediterranean Politics,* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 1998); Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism,* pp. 51–52 and 73–78; Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 205–214; and A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation." Most recently, Marlin Dick, writing in *Middle East Report Online,* emphasized that Hezbollah behaves more and more like a Chicago political machine than a branch of the Revolutionary Guards. Marlin Dick, "Hizballah's Domestic Growing Pains," *Middle East Report Online*, September 13, 2010; available at http://www.merip.org/mero/mero091310.html. Accessed on April 6, 2011.

25. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 352.

26. Ibid., p. 113.

27. Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, "Know Thy Enemy: Hizbullah, 'Terrorism' and the Politics of Perception," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2005), p. 192. It's noteworthy that Joseph Alagha has not refuted the link between the social and military organizations of Hezbollah. He argues that Hezbollah's practical engagement of Lebanon's political system, or *Lebanonization*, follows the party's political programs, and not the party's religious-political ideology. In his forthcoming work *Hizbullah's Identity Construction, 1978–2010,* he acknowledges Hezbollah's manipulation of the system. Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Identity Construction, 1978–2010* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

28. Harb and Leenders relate what they term the "integrated and holistic network" of Hezbollah to the notion that Hezbollah's institutions manage a diversity of policy sectors: social, educational, medical, urban, economic, cultural, and religious. These institutions, besides offering their material and professional help, "also disseminates codes, norms and values that produce what has been designated by the party as the 'Resistance society.'" As such, they aptly argue that the resistance "identity" and "culture" are essential products of Hezbollah's institutions. Ibid., pp. 188–190.

29. Ibid., p. 191.

30. Qassem, "Kayfa Yankharet Baqi al-Mujtama' fi al-Muqawamah?" *An-Nahar*, June 8, 2007.

31. Dalia Nehme, "Sayyed Ali Amin Rejects Faqih Rule and Demands Investigation in Hizbullah Assault," *Naharnet,* June 3, 2008.

32. See Sayyid Ali al-Amin's interview with *Ash-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 14, 2009.

33. For details see the Lebanese Option Gathering's website, available at http://www.intimaa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=16. Accessed on May 25, 2010. During an interview with the author on February 6, 2008, Al-As'ad expressed not only his opposition to Hezbollah's monopoly of the Shi'a community's political decision-making process, but also to the way in which the Islamist party imposes its hegemony among the Shi'a community. Besides the coercive measures the party use to suppress any challenge to its hegemony, Al-Asa'd emphasized that the Islamist party even uses the political system to undermine its competitors.

34. See Alagha, *Hizbullah's Identity Construction.*

35. Husbah connotes the accountability to obey the religious and moral instructions of Islam, which include financial and social matters.

36. See the full text of the Islamic Association's study in Yakan, *Adwa' 'ala al-Tajribah al-Niyabiyah al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan: Al-ida' al-Niyabi bayn al-Mabda' wa al-Tatbiq,* pp. 179–198.

37. Ibid.

38. Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, pp. 43–52. Author's discussions with senior members of the Phalange party and Lebanese Forces, and Lebanese analysts throughout the 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993.

39. Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Association), "al-Barnamej al-Intikhabi li-Murashihi al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah" (The Electoral Program of the Islamic

Association's Candidates), August 1, 1992, in Yakan, *Adwa' 'ala al-Tajribah al-Niyabiyah al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan: Al-ida' al-Niyabi bayn al-Mabda' wa al-Tatbiq,* p. 209.

40. "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah Tatruh li-awal Marah Mashru'aha al-Siyasi" (Islamic Association Presents for the First Time its Political Program), *As-Safir,* April 25, 2001.

41. Ibid.; and see also "Al-Nas al-Kamel li-Mashru' 'al-Mithaq al-Islami fi Lubnan'" (The complete Text of the project of 'The Islamic Charter in Lebanon), *Al-Mustaqbal,* December 12, 2003.

42. "Al-Nas al-Kamel li-Mashru' 'al-Mithaq al-Islami fi Lubnan'" (The complete Text of the project of 'The Islamic Charter in Lebanon), *Al-Mustaqbal,* December 12, 2003.

43. See Fathi Yakan's speech at the Cultural Center for Research and Documentation in Sidon, April 6, 1995, in Yakan, *Adwa' 'ala al-Tajribah al-Niyabiyah al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan,* p. 308.

44. The Koranic verse is the following: "Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity. And with Allah rests the outcome of events." (Surah 22: Verse 41). See the text of Hezbollah's 1992 Election Program in Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal,* pp. 455–464; for an English translation of the text, see Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within,* pp. 271–277.

45. Ibid., p. 456.

46. Ibid., p. 457.

47. For an English translation of the 1996 parliamentary election program, see Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology,* pp. 254–260.

48. See interview in Noe, ed., *Voice of Hezbollah,* p. 206.

49. See text of Hezbollah's 2009 parliamentary election program on the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon website: http://englishmoqawama.org/essaydetailssf.php?eid=8199&fid=29. Accessed on March 10, 2010.

50. Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Association), "al-Barnamej al-Intikhabi li-Murashihi al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah," p. 202.

51. Ibid., p. 202.

52. Ibid., p. 203.

53. "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah Tatruh li-awal Marah Mashru'aha al-Siyasi" (Islamic Association Presents for the First Time its Political Program), *As-Safir,* April 25, 2001.

54. "Al-Nas al-Kamel li-Mashru' 'al-Mithaq al-Islami fi Lubnan'" (The complete Text of the project of 'The Islamic Charter in Lebanon), *Al-Mustaqbal,* December 12, 2003.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 457.

58. Ibid., p. 460.

59. Ibid., p. 460.

60. Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology,* pp. 256.

61. Fadlallah, *al-Khiyar al-Akhar,* pp. 139–140.

62. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 360.

63. Ibid., pp. 360–361.

64. See Nasrallah's statement in *Al-'Ahd*, April 10, 1994; as cited initially from Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon: Clans, Parties and Clerics*, p. 104.

65. Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, p. 159.

66. See Nasrallah's speech in *As-Safir*, July 11, 2001; as cited initially from Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, p. 160.

67. In response to the president and the Speaker of the House's call for establishing a national committee to abolish political sectarianism in November 2009, Patriarch Sfeir stated that "for some time they have been calling for the abolishment of sectarianism, but sectarianism cannot be canceled by a pen. Before abolishing sectarianism from the texts, it should be abolished from the souls." See *Al-Mustaqbal*, November 23, 2009.

68. Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Association), "al-Barnamej al-Intikhabi li-Murashihi al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah," p. 209.

69. "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah Tatruh li-awal Marah Mashru'aha al-Siyasi," (Islamic Association Presents for the First Time its Political Program), *As-Safir*, April 25, 2001.

70. "Al-Nas al-Kamel li-Mashru' 'al-Mithaq al-Islami fi Lubnan'" (The complete Text of the project of 'The Islamic Charter in Lebanon), *Al-Mustaqbal*, December 12, 2003. It is interesting that the Islamic Association used the term *Qutr* to describe Syria and other Arab countries. This term is a hallmark of Ba'thist nationalist terminology, which connotes that every Arab country as a *Qutr* or a region of the Arab nation.

71. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal*, p. 415.

72. See Hezbollah's 1996 parliamentary election program in Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, p. 259.

73. See text of Hezbollah's 2009 parliamentary election program on the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon website: http://englishmoqawama.org/essaydetailssf.php?eid=8199&fid=29. Accessed on March 10, 2010.

74. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal*, p. 416.

75. Ibid., p. 415.

76. Ibid., p. 72.

77. See text of program in Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, p. 264.

78. Nasrallah's speech was aired on the party's television station *Al-Manar* on September 22, 2006 and carried over by LBCI.

79. See Nasarallah's speech in *Al-Intiqad*, May 27, 2008.

80. See Nasarallah's interview with NBN, March 1, 2008.

81. "Khamenei Yu'ayin Nasrallah wa Yazbik Wakilayn lil-Umur al-Hasbiyah wa al-Wujuh al-Shar'iyah" (Khamenei Appoints Nasrallah and Yazbik Representatives for Financial and Religious Matters), *As-Safir*, May 18, 1995.

82. Zakat is a pillar of Islam recognized by all Muslims. In addition to Zakat, the Shi'ites are enjoined to give *Khums*, or one fifth of their yearly net profit, to the religious establishment.

83. See *As-Safir*, June 2005; cited initially from Alagha, *Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology*, p. 163.

84. See Hezbollah and the Islamic Association's 1992 parliamentary election programs respectively, Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal*,

p. 463; Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Association), "al-Barnamej al-Intikhabi li-Murashihi al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah," p. 208.

85. See the section on the Education Sector in Hezbollah's 2009 parliamentary election program on the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon website: http://englishmoqawama.org/essaydetailssf.php?eid=8199&fid=29.   Accessed on March 10, 2010.

6   The Praxis of Islamism and Syrian Suzerainty

1. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal* pp. 156–157.
2. Ibid., 156.
3. Ibid., p. 160.
4. *Haaretz*, July 27, 1993; see also Qassem, *Hizbullah,* pp. 109–110.
5. According to various reports, the operation caused the death of dozens of Lebanese, the destruction of approximately six thousand homes, and the displacement of one quarter of a million Lebanese from the south. See various Lebanese newspapers August, 1993.
6. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 162.
7. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* pp. 171–172.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 171; Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* pp. 163–164; and *Al-Hayat,* August 3, 1993.
10. Karim Pakradouni, *Sadmah wa Sumud: 'Ahd Emile Lahoud (1998–2007),* (Shock and Steadfastness: The Era of Emile Lahoud (1998–2007)) (Beirut: All Prints Distributors & Publishers, 2nd edition, 2009), p. 25.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 27.
13. Fadlallah, *Harb al-Iradat,* pp. 174–175.
14. Pakradouni, *Sadmah wa Sumud,* pp. 29–30.
15. See various Lebanese newspapers, *An-Nahar, Al-Anwar, and As-Safir,* September 14, 15, and 16, 1993.
16. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 167.
17. For details, see Rabil, *Embattled,* pp. 210–211; and pp. 248–251.
18. The text is available at http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Israel-Lebanon+Ceasefire+Understanding.htm. Accessed on April 7, 2011.
19. See "Al-Makinah al-Intikhabiah lil-Jama'a al-Islamiyah," in Fathi Yakan, *Adwa' 'ala al-Tajribah al-Niyabiyah al-Islamiyah fi Lubnan: Al-ida' al-Niyabi bayn al-Mabda' wa al-Tatbiq,* pp. 133–135.
20. For details on Hezbollah's parliamentary elections campaign, see Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation."
21. "Al-Hariri fi 'Ayn al-Tinih: Bayna al-Tataruf wa al-I'tidal" (Hariri in 'Ayn al-Tinih: Between Extremism and Moderation), *An-Nahar,* August 21, 1996.
22. "Ra'd: al-Sultah Tasa' ila Tahjim Hudur al-Muqawanah fi al-Majlis," ibid.

23. Bayram Ibrahim, "Al-Janub wa al-Bika' ba'd Intikhabat Baabda! Hal Tanjah Siyassat Tahjim Hezbollah?" (The South and the Beka' after Baabda Elections! Will the Policy of Cutting Down Hezbollah Succeed?) Ibid.

24. Bayram Ibrahim, "'Ad Asabe' fi Ma'rakat al-Janub wa Hezbollah Yatahim bi al-Tahdir lil-Tazwir" (Biting Fingers in the Battle of the South and Hezbollah Accuses of Preparation of forgery), *An-Nahar*, September 4, 1996.

25. Rozana Bou Munsif, "Tasfiat Hisabat Suriyah-Iraniya Atahat al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah" (Syrian-Iranian Settling Scores Brought Down al-Jama'a al-Islmiyah), *An-Nahar*, August 29, 1996.

26. Robert G. Rabil, "Lebanon: At the Crossroads between Democracy and Rogue State," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch 1004* (June 17, 2005).

27. See Nizar Hamzeh and Hrair Dekmejian, "A Sufi Response to Political Islamism: Al-Ahbash of Lebanon," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (May 1996).

28. Ibid.

29. See www.aicp.org; www.al-ahbash.org; Hamzeh and Dekmejian, "A Sufi Response to Political Islamism." Accessed on April 7, 2011.

30. See Khazen, "Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 612–618. During the 1992 parliamentary elections, the *Al-Ahbash* fielded two candidates for Beirut, one of whom, 'Adnan Trabulsi, won a seat.

31. Isbat al-Ansar (League of Partisans) is a Sunni Palestinian Islamist organization that operates in the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, Ain al-Hilweh, near the southern city of Sidon; and in Nahr al-Bared camp near the northern city of Tripoli. Isbat al-Ansar was founded by Hisham Shridi, a former prominent Palestinian leader of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*. Shridi became known for his participation in fighting the Israeli forces in South Lebanon. In 1986, he fought the forces of Nabih Berri's AMAL movement at a time when Hezbollah and AMAL were engaged in internecine fighting for the control of Shi'a areas in Beirut and the south of Lebanon. As a result, he was dismissed from the Islamic Association and consequently founded Isbat al-Ansar. In December 1991, Shridi was assassinated by Amin Kayid, leader of the PLO's Fatah movement in the Ain al-Hilweh camp. Shridi had tried to curb the power of Fatah in the camp by participating in revolts against Yasir Arafat's leadership. Shridi was succeeded by his closest aide, Muhammad Abd al-Karim al-Saadi, known as Abu Muhjin, who has led the Islamist organization ever since. During the 1990s, Abu Muhjin's group, in an attempt to assert its radical ideology, carried out a number of attacks on Christian religious targets and liquor stores. Then he became involved in a power struggle with other extremist groups over the control of the region of Sidon in general and the camp in particular. In 1995, his group assassinated sheikh Nizar al-Halabi, the leader of al-Ahbash, whose group had been supported by Syria to either co-opt or curb the power of Islamists. Lebanese authorities executed

three members of the group for their participation in the plot and issued a death sentence in absentia against Abu Muhjin. Another participant, Yasir Izzat Saud, was sentenced to death but his sentence was later commuted. Since then, Abu Muhjin has disappeared from public view and de facto leadership of the organization passed on to his brother, known as Abu Tarik. Nevertheless, the organization continued with its extremist pattern. In 1999, the group, avenging the murder of Shridi, assassinated Amin Kayid and his wife. Moreover, in June 1999, the group assassinated three Lebanese judges and the chief prosecutor for southern Lebanon, at the Justice Palace in Sidon in an act of revenge for the execution of three of their colleagues. Despite the outrage the killings evoked and the strict measures enforced by the Lebanese army to restrict the movement of Isbat al-Ansar's members outside the camp, the organization managed to fire bombs at the Russian embassy in Beirut and engage in armed skirmishes with the Lebanese army staking out the camp. In addition, the group has established contacts with Islamist organizations in northern Lebanon, mainly al-Takfir wal-Hijra. See Gary C. Gambill, "Ain al-Hilweh: Lebanon's 'Zone of Unlaw'," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (June 2003); "Halabi's Killer Gets Sentence Commuted," *Daily Star*, July 28, 2000; and Robert G. Rabil, "Lebanon" in Barry Rubin, ed., *Guide to Islamist Movements* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, vol. 2, 2010), pp. 323–324.

32. Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Sunni Religious Scene in Beirut," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 1998), p. 78.

33. Ibid., p. 79.

34. See Fathi Yakan's interview with *Al-Masirah,* August 28, 1995.

35. Among the files opened against the Lebanese Forces were the murder of Lebanese officers in the confrontation between Geagea and Aoun and the assassination attempt on President Hrawi. Scores of LF members were arrested on charges of inciting war. Joe Hitti, *Qumat al-Iltizam: Samir Geagea* (The Peak of Commitment) (Canada: n.d.).

36. Robert G. Rabil, "The Maronites and Syrian Withdrawal: From "Isolationists" to "Traitors"?" *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 8, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 34.

37. Prime Minister Hariri appeared on major television stations, including *LBCI*, to affirm Maronite nationalism. See ibid., p. 35.

38. Susan Sachs, "Breaking Taboo, Lebanese Prelate Criticizes Syria," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2000.

39. See the full Bishops' Council's statement in *As-Safir*, September 21, 2000.

40. Ibid.

41. See the muftis' statement in A*l-Hayat*, September 21, 2000.

42. Sachs, "Breaking Taboo."

43. See *Al-Hayat*, March 21, 2001. It is noteworthy that parties of the Left, mainly the Progressive Socialist party of Walid Jumblatt, did not join the rally.

44. See text of document in *Al-Hayat*, May 1, 2001.

45. Pakradouni, *Shock and Steadfastness,* p. 223.

7   The Takeover of Beirut:
The Struggle for the State

1. Gary C. Gambill, "Syria and the Shebaa Farms Dispute," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin,* May 2001. Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors,* pp. 271–272.
2. U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559, September 2, 2004.
3. *Daily Star* (Beirut), January 29, 2006 and February 3, 2006.
4. The demonstration of March 14 came also in response to a demonstration on March 8 organized by Hezbollah to express thanks to and solidarity with Syria. Approximately, half million Lebanese participated in this demonstration.
5. See Serge Brammertz, Fourth Report of the UN International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC), June 10, 2006.
6. *Daily Star*, January 10, 2006.
7. See *An-Nahar,* May 18, 2006; and *As-Safir,* May 18, 2006.
8. See President Lahoud's statements on the Lebanese Broadcasting Company International (LBCI) May 28, 29, and 30. It is noteworthy that the rockets were fired in the wake of the assassination of two senior members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Lebanon on May 25, 2006. PIJ and other forces blamed Israel for the assassination. See *As-Safir,* May 26, 2006.
9. See Hezbollah deputy secretary general Naim Qassem's statement in *As-Safir*, June 1, 2006.
10. The formation of the government was as follows: (1) Najib Mikati, prime minister, Sunni, close to President Emile Lahoud and Syria, (2) Elias Murr, deputy prime minister and defense minister, Greek Orthodox, close to President Lahoud, (3) retired General Hassan Saba', interior minister, close to Hariri family, (4) Ghassan Salameh, minister of education and culture, Catholic, close to Hariri family (he declined the nomination), (5) Mahmoud Hamoud, foreign minister, Shi'a, close to President Lahoud and speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, (6) Damianos Kattar, minister of finance and economy, Maronite, close to Mikati, (7) Adel Hamieh, minister of public works and displaced, Druze, close to both Druze leaders Walid Jumblat and Adel Arslan, (8) Alain Tabourian, minister of telecommunications, youth, and sports, Armenian, close to President Lahoud, (9) Judge Khaled Kabbani, minister of justice, Sunni, close to Hariri family, (10) Bassam Yamine, minister of energy and industry, Maronite, close to Suleiman Franjieh, (11) Charles Rizk, minister of information and tourism, Maronite, close to president Lahoud, (12) Mohammad Khalifeh, minister of public health and social affairs, Shi'a, close to Berri, (13) Tarek Mitri, minister of environment and administrative development, Orthodox, close to President Lahoud and Mikati, and (14) Trad Hamadeh, minister of labor and agriculture, Shi'a, close to Hezbollah.
11. Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah has consistently defied mounting international pressure to disarm his party. Addressing a rally in south of Lebanon during elections, Nasrallah threatened to "cut off any hand that reaches out to our weapons because it is an Israeli hand." In

addition, he warned that the "resistance has more than 12,000 rockets that can target northern Israel at any time." See *As-Safir,* May 26, 2005.

12. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 238.

13. See The Maronite Statement in full in the *Daily Star,* May 12, 2005.

14. The main opposition alliance put together by Hariri, Jumblat, and Geagea included in its platform a demand to release LF leader Samir Geagea. The first order of business undertaken by the newly-elected parliament was an overwhelming vote to free Geagea after more than 11 years in jail.

15. See Nasrallah's speech in *As-Safir,* June 9, 2005. "The seven villages were incorporated into Palestine during the French Mandate period, when Lebanon's southern frontiers were drawn by France and Britain." See Asher Kaufman, "Who Owns the Shebaa Farms? Chronicle of a Territorial Dispute," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 56, No. 4 (Autumn 2002). According to an email message by Kaufman to the author "The seven villages became part of mandatory Palestine in 1923, following the finalization of the boundary between Lebanon-Syria and Palestine. The first boundary between Lebanon and Palestine was determined in 1920 in an agreement between France and Britain. However, this line was modified in 1923 and some territory that was considered to be part of Lebanon was given to Palestine. There were 24 villages within this territory, seven of them were Shi'ites. We know today only about the Shi'ite villages because it has become a political issue, first of Amal and then of Hizballah. The seven villages became another arena for Shi'ite Lebanese to assert their place in Lebanese society."

16. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* pp. 238–240.

17. "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya: Al-Intikhabat E'adat Intaj lil-Waqe' al-Qadim" (Islamic Association: The Elections Repeated Production of the Past Reality), *As-Safir,* June 6, 2005.

18. "Ri'ah al-Jabal Ta'suf bil-Shamal wal-Intikhabat Tahuz al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya" (Mountain Winds Storms the North and the Elections Shakes the Islamic Association), *As-Safir,* June 16, 2005.

19. Ibid.

20. See "The Ministerial Statement of the Government of 'Reform and Revival'," *As-Safir,* July 26, 2005.

21. See UNSC S/Res/1614 (2005), July 29, 2005.

22. "Jumblat Yarfud Itifaqa Qahira Jadidan wa Itifaqan Ruba'iyan Dakhiliyan" (Jumblat Refuses a New Cairo Agreement and an Internal Quadripartite Agreement), *Al-Mustaqbal,* December 30, 2005.

23. Ibid.

24. For an English translation of the Memorandum, see "Full English Text of Aoun-Hezbollah Agreement," *YaLibnan,* February 9, 2006; available at http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2006/02/full_english_te.php. Accessed on April 7, 2011.

25. Ibid.

26. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribat, al-Mustaqbal,* p. 242.

27. Ibid., p. 243.

28. Author's interview with Professor Sadek J. al-Azm, November 9, 2009.

29. Discussions with several members of the Phalange party and Lebanese Forces, including senior members, throughout 2006 and 2007.

30. Discussions with several Aoun supporters throughout 2006 and 2007.
31. See *Al-Mustaqbal,* March 3, 2006.
32. Nasrallah's speech was aired on the party's television station *Al-Manar* on September 22, 2006, and was carried over by LBCI.
33. See Robert G. Rabil, "Trust Allah, Not Nasrallah: The Hezbollah Crisis Reshapes Lebanese Politics," *PolicyWatch No. 1134 ,* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 2, 2006).
34. Ibid.
35. Fouad Siniora, "End this Tragedy Now: Israel Must Be Made to Respect International Law," *Washington Post,* August 9, 2006.
36. Reportedly, over five hundred Hezbollah fighters were killed and a larger number wounded. Hezbollah's power had been seriously degraded.
37. See Jihad al-Zein's article in *An-Nahar,* July 26, 2006; see also Rabil, "Trust Allah, Not Nasrallah."
38. See interview of Al-Amin with Toni Abou Najm in *An-Nahar,* August 22, 2006.
39. For an English translation of Fayed's article see MEMRI, August 25, 2006.
40. "Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya: Nafkhar bi-Silah al-Muqawama wa Nakhjal min Silah al-Futna al-Ahliah" (Islamic Association: We Are Proud of the Weapons of Resistance and We Are Mortified of the Weapons of Civil Strife), *As-Safir,* September 29, 2006.
41. Based on interviews with Beiruti Sunnis.
42. For background notes see Robert G. Rabil, *Syria, the United States and the War on Terror in the Middle East* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), pp. 161–181.
43. See *An-Nahar*, August 28, 2006.
44. See President Asad's speech in *Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA)*, August 15, 2006.
45. See Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir's interview with May Chidiac on LBCI on April 29, 2008.
46. For example, on February 8, 2007, Lebanese authorities detained a truck transporting weapons to Hezbollah, which confirmed that the weapons belonged to it but reiterated its right to fight to liberate "the remainder of occupied territories." See *An-Nahar,* February 9, 2007.
47. The departure from the pattern established in February 2005 by Rafiq al-Hariri's killing is exemplified by the car-bomb assassination of the army's chief of operations, Brigadier Francois Haj, in east Beirut in December 2007. The same month, Samir Shehadeh—the head of an intelligence unit closely involved in the UN-led investigation—was wounded by a roadside bomb south of Beirut. He was replaced by Wissam Eid, who was killed in January 2008.
48. Nasralallah's speech was published by *Al-Intiqad,* May 8, 2008.
49. See text of Doha agreement in *As-Safir,* May 22, 2008.
50. Robert Rabil, "Hizbullah and Lebanon: The Curse of a State," *OpenDemocracy,* May 21, 2008.
51. See Qassem's statement in *Now Lebanon,* May 15, 2008; available at http://nowlebanon.com/Print.aspx?ID=43028. Accessed on April 7, 2011.

52. See Berri's speech in *Al-Akhbar,* May 26, 2008.
53. See Nasrallah's speech in *Al-Intiqad,* May 27, 2008.

8   The Future of Islamism in Lebanon

 1. Robert G. Rabil, "Lebanon at Crossroads," *OpenDemocracy,* June 5, 2009; available at http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/lebanon-at-the -crossroads. Accessed on April 8, 2011.
 2. Amar Na'meh, "Warqat Tafahum Tuassess li-'Alaqah Takamuliah bayn al-Hariri wa al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah (A Memorandum of Understanding Establishes a Complementary Relationship between Hariri and the Islamic Association), *As-Safir,* September 13, 2006.
 3. "Tashkil 'Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami fi Lubnan'" (Forming the Islamic Action Front in Lebanon), *Al-Mustaqbal,* August 3, 2006.
 4. Ibid.; see also Khudr Taleb, "al-Islamiyun fi al-Shamal" (Islamists in the North), *As-Safir*, July 14, 1998.
 5. "Jamaa Islamiya Proposes Future Movement Election Swap," *Now Lebanon*, June 1, 2009, available at http://www.nowlebanon.com/Print. aspx?ID=91712. Accessed on April 8, 2011 ; for an extensive review of the elections see "Legislatives 2009," *L'Orient Le Jour*, June 9, 2009.
 6. The breakdown is as follows: March 14 coalition received 68 seats comprising: Future Current 33, Democratic Bloc 11, Lebanese Forces 5, Phalange party 5, Tripoli Bloc 3, Islamic Association 2, National Liberal Party 1, Democratic left 1, and others 7. The March 8 Coalition received 57 seats comprising: Bloc of Reform and Change (Free Patriotic Movement) 19, Amal 14, Hezbollah 12, Marada 3, Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) 3, Ba'th party 2, Tashnaq 2, Lebanese Democratic Party 1, and Solidarity party 1. "Legislatives 2009," *L'Orient Le Jour*, June 9, 2009.
 7. "Al-Hariri Yaqbal al-Taklif al-Thani" (Hariri Accepts the Second Commissioning), *Al-Mustaqbal,* September 17, 2009.
 8. March 14 coalition acquired 15 ministers, March 8 coalition acquired 10 ministers, and President Suleiman's bloc acquired 5 ministers. For more details on the cabinet formation and members see *Al-Mustaqbal,* November 10, 2009.
 9. See the political and economic sections of the ministerial statement in *As-Safir*, November 27, 2009; the complete text of the statement is available at the Lebanese government's website: http://www.pcm.gov.lb/Cultures /ar-LB/Pages/default.aspx. Accessed on April 8, 2011.
10. Stance of Phalange party is available at its website: http://www.kataeb.org /printnews.asp?news_id=27352. Accessed on April 8, 2011.
11. Associate Press, "Lebanon Vote Lets Hezbollah Keep Weapons," *New York Times,* December 11, 2009.
12. Ibid.
13. See statements of the Lebanese National Bloc and the National Liberal Party in *An-Nahar,* November 27, 2009.

14. "Al-Hariri: Masu'liyatina I'adat Tazhir Demucratiat al-Nazam" (Hariri: Our Responsibility Is to Restore the Regime's Democracy), *Al-Mustaqbal*, December 9, 2009.

15. Ibid.

16. "Sheikh Qabalan Radan 'ala Sfeir" (Sheikh Qabalan Responds to Sfeir), *Al-Intiqad*, December 9, 2009.

17. See complete text of Hezbollah's Political Manifesto on the website of the party's newspaper *Al-Intiqad*, available at http://www.alintiqad.com /essaydetailsf.php?eid=22807&fid=43. Accessed on April 8, 2011.

18. "Majlis al-Wuzara' Yaqur al-Bayan al-Wizari al-Yawm" (The Council of Ministers Resolves the Ministerial Statement Today), *Al-Mustaqbal*, December 2, 2009.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. "Hezbollah Strikes Softer Tone in Second Manifesto," *Lebanon Wire*, December 2, 2009.

22. "Qira'a Messihiyi 14 Athar li-Wathiqat Hezbollah" (The March 14 Christians' Reading of Hezbollah's Document), *As-Safir*, December 2, 2009.

23. Ibid.

24. See Jumblat's statement as transcribed by *Al-Manar TV*, December 2, 2009.

25. Eric Follath, "Breakthrough in Tribunal Investigation: New Evidence Points to Hezbollah in Hariri Murder," *Der Spiegel*, May 25, 2009.

26. "Jumblat Calls Der Spiegel Article an Attempt to 'Disrupt National Unity'," *Now Lebanon*, May 26, 2009; available at http://www.nowlebanon.com /NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=95135. Accessed on April 8, 2011.

27. Qassem, *Al-Manhaj, al-Tajribah, al-Mustaqbal*, pp. 275–276.

28. See Nasrallah's speech in *Al-Intiqad*, February 17, 2010.

29. Ibid.; significantly, in May 2010, Nasrallah, speaking on the tenth anniversary of the liberation of south Lebanon from Israel's occupation, delivered a speech in which he added to the "deterrence by terror" strategy the notion that "if Israel in any future war on Lebanon lays siege to our shores and ports, then all military, commercial and civilian ships navigating towards Palestinian ports along the extent of the Mediterranean sea will be under the fire range of the missiles of the Islamic Resistance." See Nasrallah's speech in *Al-Intiqad*, May 25, 2010.

30. Robert G. Rabil, "Hezbollah vs Israel: The Coming Clash," *OpenDemocracy*, March 9, 2010. See also "Qumat Dimashq: al-I'tida' 'ala Lubnan I'tida' 'ala Suria wa bil-'Akas" (Damascus Summit: Aggression against Lebanon Is an Aggression against Syria and Vice Versa), *Al-Akhbar*, March 1, 2010.

31. "Berri: Suleiman Should not Be Neutral on Hezbollah," *YaLibnan*, May 26, 2010.

32. Lebanese Information Center, Department of Political Affairs, "The Internal Situation of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)," November 2009, p. 4.

33. Ibid., p. 8. The assessment and conclusion of the report roughly jibes with an interview I conducted with a senior army officer in Beirut on July 10, 2006.

34. Since the early 1980s, Hezbollah has put a great effort to construct a vast network of various social institutions to help and support the Shi'a community, which rarely relied on the state for social and economic services and help. Iran has provided Hezbollah with significant financial and organizational help. Some of the institutions include a counterpart of Iran's construction organization, Jihad al-Bina' (Construction Jihad), which was founded in 1984 and later on was licensed by the state; The Islamic Health Committee, established also in 1984, runs hospitals, infirmaries, dental clinics, and pharmacies; The Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini, which was founded at the request of Ayatollah Khomeini, has grown into an elaborate social welfare organization, whose services more or less surpass those of the state; and the Martyr Foundation doles money to the families of Hezbollah's martyrs. The organization, aptitude, and expanse of Hezbollah's institutions were illustrated in the aftermath of the July 2006 when the party managed to rebuild the heavily damaged southern suburbs in a timely, efficient, and fairly aesthetical manner. In fact, in the aftermath of the war, the party, through Jihad al-Bina', launched project *Wa'd* (promise) to rebuild the *Dahiyah* (southern suburbs), bringing together a large group of well known architects, engineers, and contractors. According to eye-witness accounts gauging the cost of reconstruction, the bill of the project was in the billions of dollars. For Project *Wa'd,* and the professionals and technicians associated with it, see "Hezbollah Yatluq Mashru' Wa'd li-I'adat I'mar al-Dahiyah" (Hezbollah Launches Project Wa'd to Rebuild al-Dahiyah), *As-Safir,* May 25, 2007; For various details on Hezbollah's social organizations, see Shawn Teresa Flanigan and Mounah Abdel-Samad, "Hezbollah's Social Jihad: Nonprofits as Resistance Organizations," *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 2009); Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance,* pp. 145–168; Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation,"; and Robert G. Rabil, "Hezbollah: Lebanon's Power Broker," *The Journal of International Security Affairs,* No. 15 (Fall 2008).

35. For details see Rabil, *Syria, the United States and the War on Terror in the Middle East,* pp. 121–208.

36. Ibid.

37. Discussions with several analysts on Lebanon, including Professor Walid Phares, throughout 2005 and 2006.

38. Interviews and discussions with Tom Harb, secretary general of the International Lebanese Committee for the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559, and secretary general of the Council for the Cedar Revolution, throughout 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. Chapter Seven of the Charter of United Nations empowers the Security Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of

the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken . . . to maintain or restore international peace and security."

41. See UNSC Resolution 1701 (2006), August 11, 2006.

42. Reuters, "Lebanon Delays Presidential Vote to December 29," *YnetNews,* December 21, 2007.

43. The author attended Jumblat's keynote address at WINEP's conference. Following the exchange of greetings with Jumblat, Ghatas Khoury, and Misbah al-Ahdab, Jumblat's representative in the United States queried the author as to why he does not write about and lobby for the removal of the Asad regime. During the peak of Syria's isolation by the United States when some political figures were calling for the forced removal of the Asad regime, the author considered such an action foolhardy and dangerous, and wrote about it. See Rabil, *Syria, the United States and the War on Terror in the Middle East,* p. 159 and p. 208.

44. See Jumblat's interview with Blitzer on Sunday's Late Edition on CNN, October 28, 2007.

45. Jeffrey Feltman, "The Obama Administration's Middle East Policy: Is the Strong Horse Losing its Lead?" *Hudson Institute*, January 19, 2010.

46. "Lebanon and Syria Sign over 15 Bilateral Agreement," *Now Lebanon,* July 19, 2010.

47. See Nasrallah's speech "Nasrallah li-Qiyadat 14 Azar: Ihsibuha Sah hathih al-Marah" (Nasrallah to the Leadership of March 14: Count it Right this Time), *Al-Akhbar,* July 23, 2010.

48. Saja'an Qazi, "Masir Tajamu' 14 Azar" (The Fate of the March 14 Coalition), *An-Nahar,* March 14, 2010.

49. Ibid.

50. The complete text of the Islamic Association's Political Manifesto (The Political Vision of the Islamic Association) is available at the party's website: http://www.al-jamaa.org/upload/Wathika_2462010.pdf. Accessed on April 8, 2011.

51. Ibid., p. 3.

52. Ibid., pp. 3–4.

53. Ibid., pp. 4–6.

54. Ibid., pp. 6–7.

55. Ibid., pp. 7–10.

56. Ibid., pp. 10–12.

57. Ibid., pp. 12–13.

58. Ibid., pp. 13–15.

59. Ibid., pp. 15–16.

60. Following a meeting of the political bureau of the Islamic Association on May 19, 2009, it issued a communiqué in which it expressed that "the day of May 7, 2008, unlike what others refer to, is a black day, which caused much pain and put Lebanese territories, especially Beirut, on the brink of civil war." See the communiqué on the party's website, available at http://www. al-jamaa.org/play.php?catsmktba=246. Accessed on April 8, 2011.

61. The 2003 Islamic Charter affirmed that *Dar al-Ifta'* is the official religious establishment and *Marja'* (source of religious referral) for the Sunni

community. See the complete text of the "Islamic Charter in Lebanon" in *Al-Mustaqbal*, December 12, 2003.

62. The term "Salafi" signifies followers of the prophetic model as understood by the companions of Prophet Muhammad. Salafis follow a puritanical approach to religion, eschewing religious innovation. Broadly speaking, Salafists can be divided into two groups. Reformist Salafists believe that society can be transformed through Da'wa and education. Salafist-Jihadists believe that peaceful strategies, including Da'wa and political reform, are not viable and only violence can lead to the establishment of an Islamist state. For a detailed article on the Salafi Movement, see Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29 (2006).

63. This group has its ideological origins in the movement founded in the 1960s in Egypt by an agricultural engineer named Shukri Mustafa. The ideology of this group goes beyond the common ideological denominator of Islamist organizations of creating an Islamic state ruled by *Shari'a* law and adhering to a strict Salafi interpretation of the Koran. The group believes that much of the world is heretical and consequently enjoins its members to purify the world of *kufars* (heretics, infidels). As such, the group is known for perpetuating violence against those it considers *kufars*, including those Muslims who do not live according to true Islam.

   Al-Takfir wal-Hijra was reportedly established in Lebanon in 1997 by Bassam al-Kinj, also known as Abu-Aisha. Family and friends of Kinj appear to comprise a significant number of this group. In addition to believing in the aforementioned ideology, the group opposed Lebanon's confessional system and Syria's hegemony over Lebanon. According to Amnesty International, prior to their clash with the Lebanese Army in 2000, members of the group set up a couple of annual encampments in Jurud al-Dinniyeh, an area east of Tripoli in the north of Lebanon, to offer Islamic teaching and training in the use of arms. Reportedly, Kinj fought alongside bin Ladin, during the 1980s in Afghanistan against the Soviets. During his stay in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1988, he forged close relationships with a number of Islamists, who later on formed the nucleus of al-Takfir wal-Hijra. In 1990, while working as a taxi driver in Boston, Kinj befriended Raid Hijazi, who was later indicted by Jordanian authorities for his involvement in plotting to bomb tourist targets in Jordan during the millennium celebrations. In 1996, Kinj decided to return home to Lebanon, whereupon he established Al-Takfir wal-Hijra. Kinj split the organization into three regional branches: a North Lebanon branch, which he led; a Beirut branch led by a member of the Akkaoui family; and a Beka' branch led by Qasem Daher. Kinj received financial support from associates of bin Ladin to establish and arm his organization. In late 1999 and early January 2000, the group clashed with the Lebanese army, which increased its presence in and around Tripoli following a series of bomb attacks on Greek Orthodox churches in October and November 1999 in the city. Heavy fighting took place in Asun, Jurud al-Dinniyeh, and Kafr Habbu. Lasting for eight days, the clashes claimed the lives of 11 soldiers, 5 civilians, and 28 members

of the group, including Kinj. The incident had regional and international repercussions because many of those arrested were foreign nationals, including Chechens, Pakistanis, and Afghanis. In July 2000, Mount Lebanon Criminal Court indicted 120 men, dozens of them in absentia, "for their alleged connection with the Dhinniya clashes" and charged them on various counts of "attacking internal state security" several months after their arrest. See Amnesty International, *Lebanon: Torture and Unfair Trial of the Dhinniyah Detainees* (AI Index: MDE 18/005/2003); Etienne Sakr (Abu Arz), "Syria and the Islamist Movements in Lebanon," *The Guardians of the Cedars National Lebanese Movement,* February 23, 2003; *An-Nahar,* July 27 and 28, 2005; and *As-Safir,* July 27, 2005.

64. The Salafi-Jihadist organization Fath al-Islam emerged in November 2006 when it split from Fatah al-Intifada (Fatah Uprising), a Syrian-backed Palestinian group based in Lebanon. The Lebanese government linked Fath al-Islam to deadly bus bombings in Ain Alaq, Lebanon, on February 13, 2007, which killed three people. On May 20, 2007, a battle between Fatah al-Islam and Lebanese troops erupted in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared following a police search for suspects in a bank robbery. The fighting lasted until September 2, 2007 and claimed the lives of over 160 Lebanese soldiers. The Lebanese government initially claimed that the Salafi-Jihadist organization was the creation of Syrian intelligence. Damascus denied any relationship with Fath al-Islam. Later on, Lebanese authorities discovered that the Jihadi organization had links to al-Qaeda. For a detailed account on Salafi-Jihadis in Lebanon, including Fath al-Islam, see Fida' 'Itani, *Al-Jihadiyoun fi Lubnan: Min Quwat al-Fajr ila Fath al-Islam* (Jihadis in Lebanon: From the al-Fajr Forces to Fath al-Islam) (Beirut: Dar al-Saqi Books, 2008); see also Bilal Y. Saab and Magnus Ranstorp, "Securing Lebanon from the Threat of Salafist Jihadism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* Vol. 30, No. 10 (2007).

65. See *An-Nahar*, July 27 and 28, 2005; and *As-Safir,* July 27, 2005.

66. See the text of the Memorandum of Understanding and its signatories in *As-Safir,* August, 18, 2008.

67. "Wathiqat al-Tafahum byna Hezbollah wa Jihat Salafiyah Tuthir Rududan Rafidah" (The Memorandum of Understanding between Hezbollah and Salafi Factions Provokes Responses of Rejection), *An-Nahar,* August 19, 2008.

Conclusion

1. On Said Aql, see Salameh, *Language, Memory, and Identity in the Middle East,* pp. 161–214; and on Sati al-Husri, see Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2nd edition, 1990), pp. 123–158.

2. "Le Manifeste Des 'Trois'," *L'Orient Le Jour,* July 11, 1967.

3. Michael Johnson, *Class & Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840–1985* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), p. 213.

4. Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

5. In response to a slew of agreements aimed at institutionalizing Syrian suzerainty over Lebanon, Ghassan Tueini editor in of *An-Nahar* wrote a daring article criticizing the whole span of Syrian moves aiming at "unifying" the two countries. A few years later, in an Open Letter to Syrian heir apparent Bashar al-Asad, who handled then the Lebanese file, Ghassan's son and managing director of the daily *Gibran Tueini*, openly declared that many Lebanese were neither comfortable with Syrian policy nor comfortable with the Syrian presence in Lebanon, and that Lebanon was not a Syrian province. See respectively, *An-Nahar,* January 29, 1996 and *An-Nahar,* March 23, 2000. Selim Abou, as rector of Universite Saint Joseph, delivered annual speeches (1996–2003) that criticized the cultural and political hegemony Syria imposed on Lebanon. His speeches were translated and compiled by Chibli Malat into a book bearing the title "Freedoms: Cultural Roots of the Cedar Revolution." See Selim Abou, *Freedoms: Cultural Roots of the Cedar Revolution* (Beirut: Presses de L'universite Saint Joseph, 2005, translated by Chibli Malat).

6. The complete text of the Islamic Association's Political Manifesto (The Political Vision of the Islamic Association) is available at the party's website: http://www.al-jamaa.org/upload/Wathika_2462010.pdf. Accessed on April 8, 2011.

7. Karim Pakradouni, *Al-Salam al-Mafqud: 'Ahd Elias Sarkis, 1976–1982* (The Missing Peace: The Era of Elias Sarkis, 1976–1982) (Beirut: Tans-Orient Press, 1984), p. 275.

8. Arend Lijphart believed that since Lebanon has a liberal tradition and Lebanese democracy is consensus-based (consociational), its system, despite having a fragmented political culture, uses democratic rules to maintain stability. Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics,* Vol. 21, No. 2 (1969); and "Consociational Theory: Problems and Prospects. A Reply," *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 13, No. 3 (April 1981).

9. Interviews and correspondence with March 14 political figures, including with leader of National Bloc Carlos Edde on July 12, 2010.

10. Nasrallah's speech was aired on the party's television station *Al-Manar* on September 22, 2006, and was carried over by LBCI.

11. See Nasrallah's interview with *New TV* on August 27, 2006.

12. See various dailies, *An-Nahar, As-Safir,* and *Al-Mustaqbal*, February 26, 2010.

13. Rabil, "Hizbullah vs Israel: The Coming Clash."

14. Muhammad Mahdi Shams Al-Din (translated by Hanadi Assaf), *The Testament* (Beirut: Presses de L'universite Saint-Joseph, 2008), pp. 32–33.

15. Media Relations of Hezbollah issued its response statement on June 18, 2010, available on the website of the Islamic Resistance at http://english.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=11452&cid=226. Accessed on Aril 7, 2011.

16. Carlos Edde's correspondence with the author on July 13, 2010.

17. According to a military intelligence analyst Netanyahu's government asked U.S. Middle East envoy Fredric Hof to deliver a message to the Lebanese government to the effect that the IDF would wipe out the Lebanese army in

24 hours in the event it supported Hezbollah in any future war with Israel. Telephone interview with the analyst on August 10, 2010.

18. On August 28, 2008, an army helicopter was shot down near Jezzine in south Lebanon. Captain Samer Hanna was killed. Hezbollah turned over Mustafa Hassam a militia member to the Lebanese government. See *An-Nahar* (and other dailies), August 29, 2008. On July 14, 2009 a Hezbollah weapons cache exploded in the village of Kirbit Silim in South Lebanon. Army units tried to stop UN troops from conducting their investigation. See *An-Nahar*, July 15, 2009. Before long, on October 12, 2009 another Hezbollah ammunition cache exploded in the village Tayr Filseh and a Hezbollah official Abdel Nasser Issa was seriously injured. Army units quickly cordoned off the area. See *An-Nahar* (and other dailies), October 13, 2009. On couple of occasions, in late 2009 and early 2010, students were stopped in Ouyoun Siman, a high mountainous area in Mount Lebanon towering over the Beka' Valley, by armed men reportedly Hezbollah members. Similarly, in March 2010, a group of geologists were stopped in al-Aqoura by armed men, reportedly Hezbollah members. Interview by the author with Lebanese Forces senior members, who expressed to him their concerns about Hezbollah's activities in mountainous Christian areas, May 15, 16, and 17, 2010. Based on the aforementioned and discussions with Lebanese and American analysts and officials, the author assumes that Hezbollah is basing its military defensive strategy on the following criteria: (1)Restructure Hezbollah's Shura Council by streamlining political and Muqawamah (Islamic Resistance) decisions. Member of Parliament Muhammad Raad was included in the Shura Council membership. (2) Enlarge the Muqawama to include auxiliary forces: SSNP, Islamist forces, Fatah-Intifada (Abu Moussa), PFLP-GC (Ahmad Jibril). (3) Increase the number of elite forces from 5000 to 25000 members. (4) Pivot the coordination between Lebanese, Iranian, and Syrian intelligence. (5) Align Lebanese army units (Commando forces) with Hezbollah's elite units. (6) Secure multiple missile launch bases throughout Lebanon, with a focus on the rugged hills of Mount Lebanon. (7) Secure the gateway to the Beka' and the passage to the sea through Byblos. (8) Secure contact with Syrian, pro-Syrian placements along the north, north-east, and south-east border with Syria (Wadi Khaled, al-Qaa, Ras-Baalbeck, Arssal, Toufeil, Maarboun, Yahfoufa and Nabi Sheet (military camp), Kossaya, Ain Kfarzabad, Kfarzabad, Wadi Anjaar). (9) Acquire the necessary and advanced weaponry (missiles) to reach any location in Israel, focusing on Tel Aviv and surroundings. (Kornet/M-600, Zelzal and Fajr rockets, C802 antiship missiles, Sam 6 (SA2, SA3). (10) Move from open-area engagement to village engagement (move battles inside Shia villages); and reinforce multiple and separate operations by commando cells. (11) Maintain the element of surprise. And (12) Design the military strategy on the basis of denying the IDF an exit strategy.

19. See Nasrallah's speech in *Al-Akhbar*, July 23, 2010.

20. "Nasrallah: Qarar al-Hukumah fo 5 Ayar 2008 Kana Israiliyan" (Nasrallah: The Decision of the Government on May 5, 2008 was an Israeli Decision), *An-Nahar*, July 17, 2010.

21. See Nasrallah's speech in *Al-Intiqad*, August 9, 2010.

22. See Nawaf al-Mussawi's interview with *Al-Watan,* March 16, 2010.

23. Yusuf Diyab and Liyal Abu Rihal, "Hezbollah No Longer Recognizes International Tribunal and Calls for its Abolition," *As-Sharq al-Awsat,* August 19, 2010.

24. In fact, commenting on the international tribunal's decisions in a speech in November, Ayatollah Nasrallah stressed that "whoever thinks that the Resistance might accept any charge against any of its Mujahidin is mistaken regardless of pressures and threats," and he threatened that "the hand that will attack any of our Mujahidin will be cut off, [and that] Hizbullah is ready for any 'Israeli' war on Lebanon." See Nasrallah's speech on the party's *Moqawama's* (Resistance) website, November 11, 2010; available at http://english.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=12597&cid=231. Accessed on April 7, 2011. On the eve of the Shi'a Ashoura religious holiday, Nasrallah conveyed again his rejection of the international tribunal and his concerns about civil strife. He stated that "we reject any unjust indictment and we will fail the aims of this indictment. We will fight the objectives of the accusations in the tribunal's indictment and we will protect our resistance and country against attempts to stir strife." See Nasrallah's speech on the party's *Moqawama's* website, December 16, 2010; available at http: //english.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=12915&cid=231. Accessed on April 7, 2011. Significantly, in an effort to add more pressure on Lebanon's communities, especially the Sunni community, to invalidate the legality of the Special International Tribunal, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei weighed in on the growing polarizing issue of the tribunal by affirming that "the tribunal is rejected, and it is a tribunal for executing orders [in reference to the charge leveled by Hezbollah that United States and Israel have politicized the tribunal]…and that any decision issued by the tribunal is null and void." See Ayatollah Khamenei's statement in *Al-Intiqad*, December 20, 2010.

Appendix: The Political Vision of the *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyah* (Islamic Association) in Lebanon 2010

1. The word *bina'* (build) connotes *al-Jihad al-Akbar* (Greater *Jihad)* whereby the individual is capable of controlling his/her desires and passions through rational deliberations.

2. [In reference to the Koranic verse (16:125): Call to the way of your Lord with (1) wisdom and (2) mild exhortation, and (3) argue with them in the best manner. Your Lord surely knows best those who stray from His path, and He knows well those who are rightly guided].

3. Repetition of (16:125) mentioned above.

4. This is based upon a *hadith* by the Prophet.

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