

American Myopia: American Policy on Hizbollah

American policy and Lebanese policy on Hizbollah has a distinct rift. Successful international relations between these countries are precarious because of the official status of Hizbollah in Lebanon. If Lebanon sees Hizbollah as a national resistance army and welfare society they will not push disarmament on Hizbollah, which then makes Lebanon a target for the War on Terrorism. Finding a suitable policy for Hizbollah is essential for US-Lebanese relations. If policy makers have a sustainable policy it is more likely that American interests will be met in Lebanon. Lebanon is a politically volatile country with links across the broader Arab world. Working policy on this militant but politically active party will improve the perception of the American government in the broader Islamic world. To aid in the policy analysis process this work gauges Lebanese opinions compared to American government statements and Hizbollah statements.

American Terrorism Policy

US policy traditionally denied funding and recognition to terrorist groups and their sponsors, terrorist groups being defined as having killed or kidnapped Americans within the past five years. The term "terrorism" in US government policy means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term "terrorist group" means any group that practiced, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.¹ In 1996 the US began to biannually review the status of all groups on the US Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list for possible renewal or dismissal.² Hizbollah stopped direct attacks against Americans at the end of the Lebanese Civil War, during the first Bush administration. It would have lost its terrorist designation in 1996 if the group had ceased their activities, but has continued to attack Israeli sovereign territory and was therefore kept on the government's terrorist warning list.

¹ Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Introduction," Patterns of Global Terrorism, 3 April 2001, <<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2000/2419.htm>>.

² U.S. Department of State, Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, 1996, (Washington D.C. : GPO, 1996)

The US did not significantly change the terrorism policy until after September 11, 2001. After such large scale attacks, President Bush declared the “War on Terrorism”, which changed US policy from a defensive policy to an offensive policy including preemptive strikes on terrorist groups and their financiers. President Bush indicated his intentions to stop all terrorist organizations before they have a chance to attack. He stated “Our commitment is clear: we will not relent until the organized international terror networks are exposed and broken and their leaders held to account for their acts of murder.”³ This applies to regimes that support terrorist organizations, which will be ousted if they are deemed dangerous to national security. According to the War on Terrorism, regime change will cause democratization. The Bush administration’s answer to ending terrorism is democratization. The Bush regime’s statements strongly back a democratic Middle East as the key to ending international terrorism. By democratizing, the Bush regime is helping the leaders of the Middle East fight Islamist takeovers. The War on Terrorism has taken a multifaceted arsenal of administrative, legal, military and political means of combating terrorism.

The US government considers Hizbollah to be a terrorist organization. Hizbollah is included in this designation because of its attacks on and kidnapping of Americans in the 1980’s, continued military attacks against Israel, funding by Iran and Syria and possible attacks on other countries. The Bush administration has been vocal in its stance on Hizbollah. The Department of State writes “[A]lthough Hizbollah has not attacked US targets in Lebanon since 1991, it continued to pose a significant terrorist threat to US interests globally from its base in Lebanon.”⁴

Richard Armitage has referred to the group as the “A-group of terrorists” to “al-Qaida’s B-Team.”⁵ Since September 2004 the Bush administration has been loudly advocating disarming Hizbollah. Given the perception of Hizbollah as terrorist, the Bush administration’s policy on this group also fits into to the government's War on Terrorism.

The Lebanese Context

³ The White House, Fact Sheet: President Bush Remarks on the War on Terror, 2005, (Washington D.C. : GPO, 2005)

⁴ U.S. Department of State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, (Washington D.C. : GPO, 2005)

⁵ Ed Bradley, “Hezbollah: “A-Team Of Terrorists,” CBS News, 18 April 2003, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/04/18/60minutes/main550000.shtml>> .

Lebanon's political system is based on a power-sharing system, established when France recognized Lebanese independence in 1943. Christians dominate the National Assembly and political positions in the government on the basis of a consociation democracy with six-Christians to five-Muslims.⁶ In Lebanon religions and the sub-sects are commonly referred to as 'confessions' and the Lebanese consociation democracy is referred to as 'confessionalism'. Maronite Christians, the largest confession, were to be in charge of the Presidency of Lebanon, Sunni Muslims, the largest Muslim confession, claimed the position of Prime Minister.⁷ According to the 'National Pact', an unwritten agreement, about among the powerful communities in Lebanon, political power was apportioned in a system of confessional democracy.⁸ The last official census in 1932 recognized the numerical dominance of Christians.

The system was destructive to the interests of other confessions. Christians in Lebanon have a lower birth rate and higher emigration rate than Muslims. While this tipped the numerical balance in favor of Muslims, the power structure continued to favor Christians. By 1974, Christians were assumed to a minority. Muslims in this system remained disempowered. Their numerical majority was rapidly increasing, especially among the Shi'a.⁹ As of the 1970s the average Shi'a household had nine children and the rates of fertility are assumed to have increased but the Shi'a had the least amount of political power among the large confession groups in Lebanon.¹⁰

⁶ A consociational state as a state which has major internal divisions along ethnic, religious, or linguistic lines, yet nonetheless manages to remain stable, due to consultation among the elites of each of its major social groups.

⁷ Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume IX, s.v. "Maronites." Maronites are the largest Eastern Church in Lebanon. When France established their mandate over Greater Syria it created Lebanon as a state to increase the rights of the indigenous Catholics of the area, the Maronite community. They were the majority group in Lebanon until approximately the 1950's. Sunni Muslims are the majority Muslim groups, consisting of about 90% of Muslims worldwide.

⁸ The National Pact laid down four principles. First, Lebanon was to be a completely independent state. The Christian communities were to cease identifying with France; in return, the Muslim communities were to protect the independence of Lebanon and prevent its merger with any Arab state. Second, although Lebanon is an Arab country with Arabic as its official language, it could not cut off its spiritual and intellectual ties with France. Third, Lebanon, as a member of the family of Arab states, should cooperate with the other Arab states, and in case of conflict among them, it should not side with one state against another. Fourth, public offices should be distributed proportionally among the recognized religious confessions. "Lebanon: Constitution, Government, & Legislation." Jurist The Legal Education Network, <<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/world/lebanon.htm>>.

⁹ Shi'a are a minority Muslim group. Shi'a doctrine believes the son-in-law (Ali) of the Prophet Mohammed should have succeed him as caliph after his death. The descendents of Ali, Imams, are followed by Shi'a as religious leaders. Ali's grandson Husayn was murdered by the caliph Yazid and is considered a martyr of Islam by Shi'a. The concept of martyrdom in Shi'ism is exulted by the pious.

¹⁰ Norton, A. Richard, "Hizballah of Lebanon: Extremist Ideals versus Mundane Politics," Council on Foreign

The inequalities of this system caused stress on the system and among the confessions.¹¹ Compounding this pressure is the relocation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Jordan to Lebanon in 1968. The PLO took control of large sections of Lebanon, primarily in West and South Beirut and South Lebanon. The influx of the mostly Muslim Palestinians increased Christian fear for their position. Muslims in Lebanon were angry about the increasingly unfair representation of Christians in politics and the civil sector. The political and economic struggles between Christians, Palestinians, and Muslims in Lebanon in exploded civil war in 1975.

All of the major actors had private militias at beginning of the conflict.¹² The Lebanese Forces (LF) and the Phalange parties were the major Christian militias. Both were led by the Gemayel family. The Phalange was solely Maronite and the LF was a splinter of the Phalange which overtook many smaller, multi-confessional Christian militias. The Sunni Muslim militia, named (al-Murabitun) the Sentinels, was insignificant for the majority of the war. The Druze had a militia associated with the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) led by the Jumblatt family.¹³ Amal, under the leadership of Imam Musa al-Sadr, was the Shi'a militia. Amal's anti-PLO stance aggravated many Shi'a, the majority of whom were pro-Palestinian. This alienation from the primary Shi'a group in Lebanon paved the way splintering from Amal. The largest Palestinian militia, the PLO, was led by Yasser Arafat. There were also splinter groups from the PLO, the strongest being the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The Christian militias and the PSP, fearful of Palestinian militia power, invited Syria into Lebanon to contain the Palestinians. The Syrian Army quickly became involved in the Lebanese in-fighting.

Israel, fearful of Palestinian and Syrian influence in Lebanon invaded Lebanon twice. In 1982 Israel, in alliance with the Maronite Phalange, launched "Operation Peace for Galilee", to rout the PLO from Lebanon and obstruct Syrian influence and control in Lebanon. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon left Israel in control of

Relations, 1999, 1-44.

¹¹ There were two other confessional-political wars in Lebanon before the major Civil War. They occurred in 1958 and 1968.

¹² See Fisk, Robert. Pity the Nation. New York: Nation Books, 2002. for a complete history of Lebanon's civil unrest, war, and militias.

¹³ Druzes are a subset of Muslims, currently numbering about 1 million. See <http://www.druzestudies.org/> for more information. The Druze held a militia in the Lebanese Civil War under Kamal and Walid Jumblatt and are currently active in Lebanese politics under Walid Jumblatt.

48% of Lebanon's territory. Shi'a are the poorest group in Lebanon.¹⁴ They are traditionally located in the least economically developed regions and Shi'a areas lost the largest percent of infrastructure during and after the Israeli occupation. Compounding the Shi'a economic difficulties was their population increase. After the collapse of the state in 1975 rural development and state welfare services ceased. This void allowed Hizbollah to step in and actively promote their group. They immediately formed a group to answer to the needs of the Shi'a.

During the Civil War the Shi'a were protected by secular militia Amal. After 1979 Amal developed a religious arm, Islamic Amal, largely due to the demonstration effect of Iran's Islamic Revolution.¹⁵ Iran was willing to fund any group willing to stage an Islamic revolution, especially Shi'a Muslim groups under the guidance of Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Husayn Fadlallah. Islamic Amal later merged with other smaller Islamist groups and became Hizbollah (Party of God) following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hizbollah is a Shi'a Islamic group in Lebanon. They are concentrated in the south and east of Lebanon. Hizbollah emerged in response to a crisis environment to deal with the needs of Lebanon's Shi'a.

Hizbollah used Iranian supplied funds to supply housing, welfare, and education to the Shi'a refugees. Those under the net of Hizbollah's economic services became increasingly loyal to the group and the group's identity. In offering working services that the state and Israeli military could not offer, the dispossessed of southern Lebanon found a new identity. Their loyalty enabled Hizbollah to recruit guerilla soldiers to fight Israeli occupation forces, some of whom turned into suicide bombers.¹⁶

Hizbollah is the only operating Shi'a Islamic group in Lebanon since 1985.¹⁷ During the Israeli occupation Hizbollah was the only effectively operating social service unit for the Shi'a. Israel remained in

¹⁴ Figures are unavailable due to the lack of census in Lebanon. Figures that are available show that Shi'a are underrepresented in civil sector and other high-wage employments and overrepresented in working classes. See Picard, Elizabeth. *Lebanon, a Shattered Country*. New York : Holmes and Meier, 1996. After the Palestinian influx in Lebanon Shi'a lost ever more jobs to Palestinians willing to work for lower wages. See A. Richard Norton, "Hizbullah of Lebanon".

¹⁵ For more information on Iran's history read Kedde, Nikki. "Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution." New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. The demonstration effect of the Islamic Revolution is covered in Hamzeh's "In the Path of Hizbollah"

¹⁶ Between April and October 1983 over 80 French, 240 American and 120 Israeli soldiers were killed in Lebanon by Hizbollah's armed jihad. Hizbollah was responsible for the most American deaths by a terrorist group until the Sept. 11 attacks.

¹⁷ For more information Dekmejian, R. Hrair. *Islam in Revolution Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, 2nd ed.

occupation of Lebanon until 2000. This militia is attributed by Lebanese as the cause of the end of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.¹⁸ To date, Hizbollah is the only militia to publicly retain its weapons after the end of the civil war.

In the 2005 elections Hizbollah-Amal won 23 seats in Parliament.¹⁹ These elections were regarded as the most legitimate in the history of the Second Lebanese Republic as they were the only free elections since the Civil War. The popularity of Hizbollah has skyrocketed in Lebanon since the Israeli withdrawal, although it was assumed that the popularity of the resistance would fade after the Israeli occupation ended. Hizbollah's welfare support of Lebanon's poorest doubtlessly plays a role in their popularity. The introduction of the United Nations Resolution 1559 and immense pressure to disarm likely encouraged voters as well.²⁰

There is a lot of contention in the Lebanese Parliament about the arms of the resistance. Hizbollah and Amal began boycotting Parliament in December 2005 because of the issue of Hizbollah's right to maintain arms and problems of consultation in the Parliament. The bloc is demanding full consultation on all matters dealing with Hizbollah's militia and the United Nations. They also demand a Lebanese statement to the Security Council that Resolution 1559 has been completed.²¹ The Prime Minister must not agree to these terms under Lebanese legislative law.²² The Parliament is continuing to meet without the bloc. There is a possibility that Hizbollah and Amal's bloc will withdrawal from Parliament, causing a government confidence crisis.²³

Introduction to Results

Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995 and Hamzeh, A. Nizar. In the Path of Hizbollah. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

¹⁸ See Hamzeh's assessment of Hizbollah's role in Hamzeh, A. Nizar. "Operational Choices" In the Path of Hizbollah. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

¹⁹ The next set of elections took place in 2005 due to a delay caused by Syrian influence. The Lebanese Parliament has 128 seats equally divided for Christians and Muslims. Hizbollah won 34 % of the seats available to Muslims. Muslims in Lebanon are divided as Sunnis, Shi'a, Druze, and Alawites.

²⁰ The UN passed Resolution 1559 in September 2004 that called for the end of all foreign occupation and militias in Lebanon. The US has been particularly vocal in calling for the disarmament of Hizbollah. Hizbollah's right to arms have however been recently questioned within Lebanon. Hizbollah's Syrian support made the group unpopular in light of the new political realities in Lebanon. Certain groups in Lebanon, mainly the upper classes, some Christian sects, and the Lebanese expatriates are calling for Hizbollah to disarm. Hizbollahis are still supporting the resistance. This is currently under national dialogue. Hizbollah's coalition has boycotted Parliament since a major disagreement about 1559 in Parliament.

²¹ Daily Star search "Hizbollah, Last 90 Days".

²² <http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/lebanon.html>

This section analyzes the results from the content analysis of the newspapers the Daily Star and al-Mustaqbal. Both are popular sources from which to track Lebanese perceptions of Hizbollah. The results were found using a reconstructed week for the year of February 1, 2005, through February 1, 2006. The data gained from the papers is being used to gauge Lebanese perceptions on Hizbollah. This quantitative analysis is useful because it offers statistics on distribution and frequency of the terminology used by the United States government and Hizbollah is used by the Daily Star and al-Mustaqbal.

Daily Star Results

In the year studied, 88 articles were defined by the search as being on Hizbollah. Of these articles, 34 articles contained the terminology used by either the US government or Hizbollah. 39% of articles published by the Daily Star speak of Hizbollah in terms other than by its party name.

Frequency of Terms Used in the Daily Star

Resistance	19	Sovereignty	2
Disarmament	13	Terrorist	1
Dialogue	8	Opposition	1
National Unity	8	Independence	1
Resistance			
Weapons	8	Legitimacy	1
Internal Affairs	5	Patriotism	1
Terrorism		Defend	Our
Organizations	3	Country	1
Terror Attacks	2		

²³ See Daily Star “Politics” section December – present.

Of the terms on the coding sheet, fifteen were used in the Daily Star. American policy statements submitted the majority of terms on the coding sheet but were the minority of terms used. American policy statements account for four of the fifteen terms used by the Daily Star. The most frequent word used in the Daily Star from the American policy statements is ‘disarmament’ which appeared in 13 articles. The most frequent term from the coding sheet is ‘resistance’, appearing in 19 articles.²⁴ The secondary ‘resistance weapons’, speaking of the armed wing of Hizbollah appeared in 8 of articles.²⁵ ‘Dialogue’ and “national unity’ also appears in 8 articles.

The data from the Daily Star suggests the most important issue under national scrutiny vis a vis Hizbollah is disarmament, in the terms of dialogue and national unity. The perception of Hizbollah as an organization is predominantly as a political party which can be extrapolated from the lack of descriptors used to describe Hizbollah in the articles. When there is a term used to describe the group the term used most commonly is ‘resistance’, suggesting that Hizbollah retains its legitimacy because of the continuing Lebanese-Israeli tensions.

Al-Mustaqbal Data

The reconstructed year produced 111 articles dealing with Hizbollah in al-Mustaqbal.²⁶ From these articles, 32 used terminology that was on the coding sheet. Fully 71% of the articles about Hizbollah did not use any sort of terminology to describe Hizbollah other than its party name. The results of the terminology search from the remaining 29% of articles found that only ten terms were used to describe Hizbollah.

Frequency of Terms Used in al-Mustaqbal

Dialogue	22
Resistance	20
Terrorist	7

²⁴ ‘Resistance’ is the term used by Hizbollah to legitimate its existence as a militia under the Geneva Conventions and describes Lebanon’s and Hizbollah’s status vis a vis Israel. ‘Resistance’ appeared in the articles as both ‘the resistance’ and ‘resistance’; Hizbollah’s name appeared in the articles as ‘the resistance’ and its activities are recorded as ‘resistance’.

²⁵ From the stance of Hizbollah, disarmament is a negative term and ‘resistance weapons’ is a positive term. A test was run to see if there was a significant difference between the terms, and in which direction the Daily Star leans on the topic of armament. The two terms had equal reporting.

²⁶ This paper is a highly facsimile paper and has been even more so since the founder’s assassination.

Presenter: Margaret Hall

Panel: The Muslim World: Questions of Policy and Politics

Date: April 8, 2006 – CERIS Undergraduate Research Symposium

Sovereignty	5
Legitimacy	5
Arms	5
Independence	3
Patriotism	2
Violence	1
National Unity	1

Two of the ten terms were from American policy statements. The most frequently used word of American policy statements from was ‘terrorist’, appearing in 7 articles. From Hizbollah’s statements, the word ‘dialogue’ appears in 20 articles, the most frequent word used. ‘Resistance’ was secondary to ‘dialogue’ in al-Mustaqbal; it appeared in 20 articles. ‘Sovereignty’ and ‘legitimacy’ each have a high frequency, likely because of the recent assassination of al-Mustaqbal’s founder and status of the current government and Syria in Lebanon.

Neither the term ‘disarmament’ nor the term ‘resistance arms’ appeared in al-Mustaqbal. There are three terms used in Standard Modern Arabic and Lebanese Arabic for disarmament *حالسلنا دي رجعت*, *حالسلنا*, *بحس*, and *عزن* and the spelling of the base for arms changes to *حلساً* when pluralized. ‘Arms’, however, appeared in the paper and is included in the data collected for this paper although it is not on the coding sheet because of the national interest in the topic. Although clear-cut policy statements are not present, armament and disarmament is clearly important in national discussion. ‘Arms’ appears five times, with the dates clustering between September and December.

The terms ‘martyr’ and ‘opposition’ are used in al-Mustaqbal. The contexts of these words were not, however, the same as the policy statements issued by Hizbollah. ‘Martyr’ is used generously in Lebanon as a concept, as any person who dies can be considered a martyr if they are an ally. Hizbollah and the Hariri bloc are not in the same political bloc or ideologically allied, therefore the returns on the term gave false results. A similar situation occurred with the term ‘opposition’. Hizbollah’s opposition is in opposition to foreign interference; Hariri’s opposition is the Opposition Party, of the March 14 coalition.²⁷ These two terms were mutually exclusive when they are used by the different parties.

The term ‘terrorism’ appears seven times, which is not surprising from this paper, but is coupled with one return on ‘violence’ which is less than 1% of the data. The largest returns for this term were in articles paraphrasing statements by Hizbollah’s rival, the Free Patriotic Movement, about Hizbollah; one article used ‘terrorism’ thirteen times and another used ‘terrorism’ seven times.

²⁷ Hizbollah is not directly allied with the majority party, the March 14 forces, and is still antagonistic with the Free Patriotic Movement. The March 14 forces are staunchly anti-Syrian and the Free Patriotic Movement and Hizbollah have lingering distrust from the civil war. Terrorism as a term or concept appeared chiefly in two articles, both articles being reports on the FPM’s statements.

Lebanese national discourse according to the data collected from al-Mustaqbal is focused on dialogue. The articles in al-Mustaqbal about Hizbollah, with the exception of the FPM's statements, focus on Hizbollah's place in the government which has been earned by its dedication to the resistance. Armament is a topic but it is not the direct focus of the discourse. Al-Mustaqbal plays to Member of Parliament and party leader Saad Hariri's official statements, which when addressing Hizbollah's weapons are anti-disarmament. Dialogue is open, but the majority party as of the current policy is not trying to disarm Hizbollah.

Comparison and Analysis

Chi square tests state there is no significant difference between the Hizbollah terms used between the papers but there is a significant difference in the use of American terms between the two papers. This suggests that the terms used by Hizbollah are the topics which are regularly addressed in conjunction with Hizbollah, but the terms used by in American policy statements differ by identity group. There is a significant difference between 'disarmament' and 'arms' with a p of 0.001 and one degree of freedom. The use of disarmament by the Christian influenced Daily Star is significantly more than the use of 'arms' by the Sunni-Druze influenced al-Mustaqbal.

The data from the Daily Star and al-Mustaqbal show Hizbollah as having legitimate claim to exist as a party and militia. The most common term used is 'resistance'; this indicated that its claim to be a militia against 'foreign interference' and 'Israeli aggression' is still reputable for segments of the Lebanese population. Resistance shows no difference between papers. Over two thirds of the articles from both papers do not refer to Hizbollah with any descriptors. This suggests Hizbollah's status as a legitimate political party in Lebanon. Hizbollah is seen by Lebanon as a protective force against foreign, especially Israeli, interference. The party won its seats in Parliament and the Cabinet by virtue of the resistance.

Hizbollah is a major provider of social services to Lebanon's poorest and still widely respected for its defense against Israel. Its continuing commitment to militarily ending the Israeli threat is supported by thousands of Lebanese because of the economic services provided to the Lebanese. If Hizbollah did not

maintain its constituency it might have deteriorated its ability to maintain its manned resistance against Israel. But there is a notable absence of terminology in Hizbollah's statements about itself and in the papers dealing with social welfare services. Several explanations seem possible. This suggests Hizbollah is not currently relying on its social service network to retain its following. The missing terminology could be attributable to a research error. If this study is pursued again, Hizbollah's statements should be reassessed for the groups' policies about its social welfare services. There are two other possibilities for the lack of reference to Hizbollah's social services by Hizbollah. Hizbollah exists in a system which divides voting blocs by religion. As Hizbollah is one of the two Shi'a parties in Lebanon, and the only religious Shi'a party in Lebanon, it does not have major competition for votes. Hizbollah's major concern is not winning votes, but retaining its armed wing. Therefore its statements' focuses are on its armed wing. The other possibility is that Hizbollah's evolution and current international events are moving its focus from the welfare services and toward preserving its arms and retaining its status as a legitimate political party in Lebanon.

Hizbollah has been the only operating Shi'a Islamic group in Lebanon since 1985.²⁸ During the Israeli occupation Hizbollah was the only effectively operating social service unit for the Shi'a. The group is widely recognized for its willingness to help all believers and fighters independent of Islamic orientation.²⁹ To date, Hizbollah is the only militia to publicly retain its weapons after the end of the civil war. Lebanon's official party is that Hizbollah is a national resistance force and has therefore not enforced disarmament on Hizbollah. The Lebanese credit this militia with bringing the end of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.³⁰

Lebanon does not see Hizbollah as a terrorist organization. The split between 'terrorism' and 'legitimacy' and 'sovereignty' coupled with the frequency of 'resistance' suggests that dialogue is focused on Hizbollah's status as a legitimate militia or as a terrorist group. Hizbollah was legitimately elected to the government. In the near future Lebanese citizens are unlikely to make a public outcry large enough against Hizbollah to convince them to disarm. The US government's goal of routing all terrorist groups cannot be

²⁸ For more information Demonian, R. Hair. Islam in Revolution Fundamentalism in the Arab World, 2nd ed. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995 and Hamzeh, A. Nizar. In the Path of Hizbollah. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

²⁹ Ibid, Hamzeh: Hizbollah provides government services and welfare to all religions in its domain. It advocate an all-Lebanon, democratically elected Islamic regime. Ibid Dalmatian.

³⁰ See Haze's assessment of Hizbollah's role in Hamzeh, "Operational Choices

accomplished without huge costs if Lebanon is not willing to disarm Hizbollah. Lebanon presents a growing concern. To date the United States has by proxy satisfied itself covering the issue of Lebanese sponsorship of terrorism under Syria's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism.³¹ However, this arrangement is being reassessed; Hizbollah is very active in Lebanon and is expected to continue its activities, barring major changes. If Lebanon sees Hizbollah as a national resistance force they will not push disarmament on Hizbollah, which might then make Lebanon a target for the War on Terrorism.

Opening another military front in the Middle East is not plausible for the Bush administration. Monetarily and militarily the US is already constrained. American military forces are stretched in Iraq and Afghanistan and diplomacy is strained with Syria, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Any further direct military involvement in the Middle East might well damage American relationships with even its closest allies in the region. If the US were to attack any part of Lebanese sovereign territory in the near future it would be a strategic disaster. An attack on the Hizbollah-Iran-Syria triangle, currently on the administration's radar, would cause a huge conflict in the region. Israel, America's closest ally, would likely suffer greatly which would also impede an Israeli-Palestinian peace process, giving further capacity to Hizbollah for continuing the resistance.

Considering the substantial amount of American presence in the Middle East and Islamic world currently, it is unlikely that the Bush regime wants to opt for a preemptive attack on Hizbollah. Hizbollah represents a segment of the population of Lebanon and is respected by many segments of the population. Removing Hizbollah from the government would not only alienate Shi'a Lebanese, it would alienate every citizen of Lebanon who supports the organization. Because Hizbollah is viewed as a legitimate political party in Lebanon, ejection of this group from the political system would cause a confidence crisis in the government. Hizbollah's place in the political system is permanent; since Hizbollah became engrained in the political system it cannot be removed without significant harm to public confidence in the government.

³¹ Matthew Leavitt, "Navigating the U.S. Government's Terrorist Lists," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 30 November 2001, < http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/winep/policy_2001/lem01.html>.