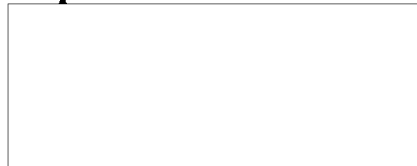




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Lebanon's Hizballah: The Rising Tide of Shia Radicalism



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An Intelligence Assessment

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NESA 85-10194C

October 1985

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Lebanon's Hizballah: The Rising Tide of Shia Radicalism



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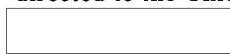
An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by 
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,
with a contribution by the Political Psychology
Center of the Office of Scientific and Weapons
Research. It was coordinated with the Directorate of
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directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, NESA,



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**Lebanon's Hizballah:
The Rising Tide of
Shia Radicalism**



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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 11 September 1985
was used in this report.*

Shia radicalism in Lebanon is a long-term problem crippling the political process and impeding reconciliation among the country's warring sectarian factions. Shia extremist groups have the capability to prevent the Lebanese Government or any of the factional militias from reestablishing effective authority over West Beirut, Al Biqā' (Bekaa Valley), and probably southern Lebanon. Armed radical Shia fighters have created a potent underground organization that will, at a minimum, play a spoiler role in Lebanese politics. The extremists will also pose a problem for any foreign power that attempts to exercise influence in Lebanon.



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The Shia fundamentalist movement in Lebanon, known as the Hizballah (Party of God), is driven by a fanatic ideology that is inspired by the Iranian revolution and aims ultimately to establish an Islamic republic in Lebanon. The immediate objectives are to remove all vestiges of US, Western, and Israeli influence from Lebanon and to challenge the leadership of the more moderate Amal movement in the predominantly Shia areas of West Beirut and southern Lebanon.



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Hizballah is both an increasingly well-organized network of paramilitary and terrorist groups and a grassroots movement that has political, social, and religious dimensions. The influence of the Hizballah has grown dramatically during the past two years, and it almost certainly will thrive as long as political and social chaos pervades the country. Events in southern Lebanon—a traditional stronghold of Amal—will play a critical role in determining the long-term prospects for the Hizballah. Amal is trying to resist Hizballah efforts in the south but has thus far failed to turn the fundamentalist tide.

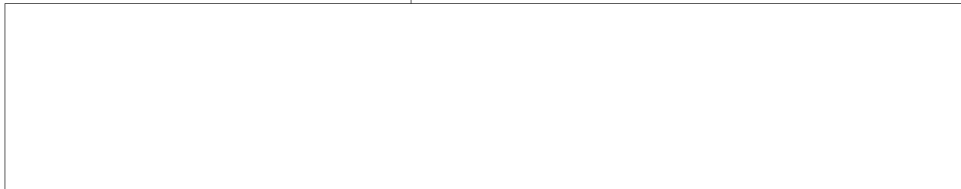


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The Iranian Government has accelerated the development of militant Shia fundamentalism in Lebanon and has influence in nearly every area of Hizballah activity in Lebanon.



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The Syrian Government allows the Hizballah to operate from bases in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley despite President Assad's strong opposition to the ultimate goals of the Shia fundamentalists. Syria, however, is gradually moving toward confrontation with them. Political, economic, and security considerations thus far have prevented the Syrians from cracking down on the Hizballah network in Lebanon, despite increasing disputes between Syrian and radical Shia leaders. Direct Syrian military intervention could significantly weaken the radical Shia network, but Assad does not perceive the Hizballah as an immediate threat to Syrian efforts to stabilize Lebanon. Assad, however, may underestimate the capabilities of the Hizballah network and the dynamic potential of Shia fundamentalism in Lebanon. 

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Hizballah terrorism, which has included extremely lethal suicide car bombings as well as assassinations and kidnappings, will pose a serious threat to US personnel and installations in the Middle East and Europe as long as the United States maintains an Embassy in Beirut. Radical Lebanese Shia terrorists can operate much more effectively in Lebanon than elsewhere, but their capabilities outside of the country will increase over time as the Hizballah network grows in size and sophistication. Some Hizballah fighters will try to carry their campaign of violence into northern Israel. 

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Further successes of the Shia fundamentalist movement in Lebanon could weaken some US alliances in the region. Moderate regimes such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia would view the political and military ascendancy of the Hizballah as an indication of the potential danger that Islamic fundamentalism represents to their grip on power. They probably would alter some of their domestic and foreign policies—including the visibility of their relationships with the United States—to appease indigenous fundamentalist sentiments. 

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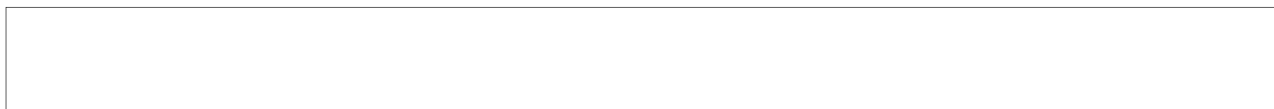
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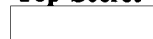


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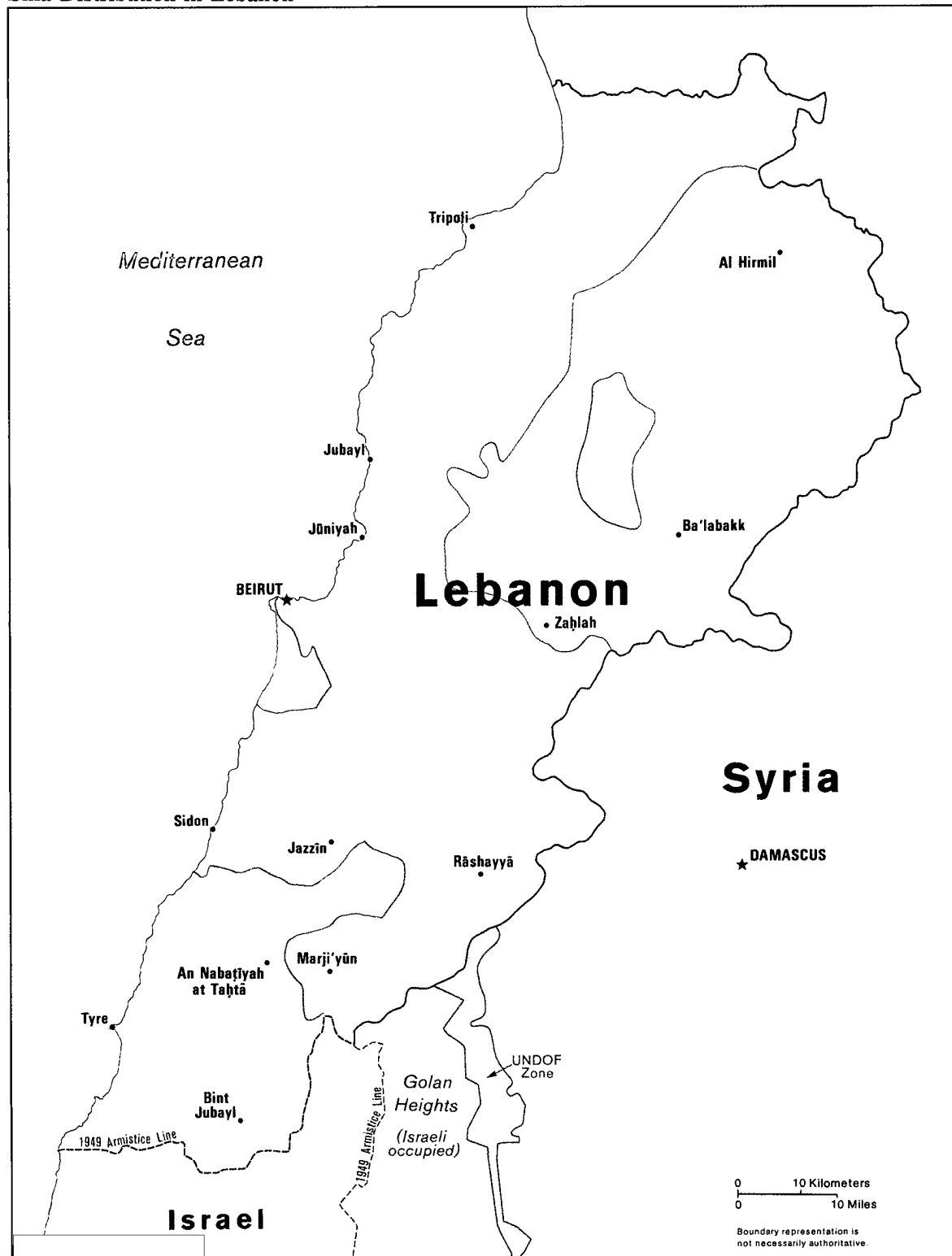
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Figure 1
Shia Distribution in Lebanon



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**Lebanon's Hizballah:
The Rising Tide of
Shia Radicalism** [Redacted]

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Islamic fundamentalist groups, collectively known as the Hizballah (Party of God) movement, are attracting considerable support in Lebanon's large Shia Muslim community. Radical Shia leaders, supported by Iran, have transformed a handful of relatively insignificant fringe groups into a fairly well-organized and growing network that has become an important factor in the Lebanese political equation. [Redacted]

1970s changed the outlook of many Shias. Resentment of their political and economic situation mounted as the charismatic Musa Sadr demanded reforms to redress Shia grievances. The political-military organizations that he founded encouraged the Shias to abandon their traditional passivity and try to improve their situation by whatever means necessary.

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Hizballah leaders are attempting to create a broad-based political, social, and religious movement that will dominate the Shia community and pave the way for the eventual realization of fundamentalist goals in Lebanon. The Hizballah is determined to eliminate all Western and Israeli influence from Lebanon as a first step toward Islamic revolution and the ultimate establishment of an Iranian-style Islamic state. We believe that Hizballah radicals represent a grassroots movement that is gradually gaining ascendancy in the Shia community. In the past year, the Hizballah has become the principal competitor of the more moderate Amal organization for the loyalty of Lebanon's Shias. [Redacted]

- The Iranian Revolution contributed to the radicalization of the Shias by providing a well-formulated extremist ideology and a model for Shia fundamentalist activism. The Ayatollah Khomeini became a strong leadership figure whom the Shias could idolize. The stationing of an Iranian Revolutionary Guard contingent in the Bekaa Valley in the summer of 1982 opened up a new era of Iranian influence with the Lebanese Shias, many of whom have family ties to Iran.

- The prolonged Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon after its invasion in 1982—which devastated much of the economy—infuriated many Shias and gave the extremists an issue around which to rally the Shia population. The occupation radicalized many formerly passive Shias and increased popular discontent by demonstrating the inability of the central government in Beirut to defend Shia interests. [Redacted]

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The trend toward radicalism has been incubating within the Lebanese Shia community since the 1960s. Many Shias are receptive to extremist ideologies because they believe they have been denied their fair share of power and wealth. The National Pact of 1943, upon which the Lebanese political system is based, distributes most influential positions in government to Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims. The Shias are the largest religious community in Lebanon, but they are at the bottom of the political and economic ladder. Many Shias, particularly those in the slums of southern Beirut, live in poverty compared to the relative affluence of the Christians and Sunnis. Three events have served as important catalysts in the development of Shia radicalism in Lebanon:

The Hizballah Network

Radical Shia leaders have transformed a collection of rival factions into a highly structured, cooperative network. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Their individual organizational identities are becoming submersed in the broader Hizballah network. [Redacted]

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- The rise in prominence of Imam Musa Sadr, an Iranian-born Lebanese cleric, in the 1960s and

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The Hizballah Manifesto

Hizballah leaders published their first comprehensive political platform in Beirut newspapers last February. The 45-page document lays out the ideology and objectives of the fundamentalist movement.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Some excerpts:

We, the son of Hizballah's nation, consider ourself a part of the Islamic nation in the world, which is facing the most tyrannical arrogant assault from both the East and West.

Each of us is a combat soldier when the call of Jihad demands it. . . . we are moving in the direction of fighting the roots of vice, and the first root of vice is America. America and its allies in the Zionist entity that has usurped the Islamic land of Palestine engage in constant aggression against us and are working to constantly humiliate us.

They have attacked our country, destroyed our villages, massacred our children, violated our sanctities, and installed over our heads criminal henchmen who have perpetrated terrible massacres against our nation. Their bombs fell on our kinsmen like rain during the Zionist invasion of our country and the Beirut blockade.

We appealed to the world's conscience but heard nothing from it and found no trace of it.

Our people could not withstand all this treason and decided to confront the infidelity of America, France, and Israel. The first punishment against these forces was carried out on 18 April and the second on 23 October 1983.

We have risen to liberate our country, to drive the imperialists and the invader out of it and to determine our fate by our own hands. . . . we declare that the sons of Hizballah's nation have come to know well their basic enemies in the area: Israel, America, France, and the Phalange.

Our sons are now in a state of ever-escalating confrontation against these enemies until the following objectives are achieved:

- Israel's final departure from Lebanon as a prelude to its final obliteration from existence and the liberation of venerable Jerusalem from the talons of occupation.
- The final departure of America, France, and their allies from Lebanon and the termination of the influence of any imperialist power in the country.

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The Hizballah Manifesto (continued)

- Submission by the Phalange to just rule and their trial for the crimes they have committed against both Muslims and Christians with the encouragement of America and Israel.
- Giving all our people the opportunity to determine their fate and to choose with full freedom the system of government they want, keeping in mind that we do not hide our commitment to the rule of Islam.

It is not important that military parades be held. . . . what is important is to increase operations against Israel. It is not important that we draft statements and call for conferences . . . what is important is that we turn Lebanon into a graveyard for American schemes.


We are convinced of Islam as a faith, system, thought, and rule, and we urge all to recognize it and to resort to its law. If our people get the opportunity to choose Lebanon's system of government freely, they will favor no alternative to Islam. We declare that we aspire to see Lebanon. . . . ruled by Islam and its just leadership.

As for Israel, we consider it the American spearhead in our Islamic world. . . . a usurping enemy that must be fought until the usurped right is returned to its owners. Therefore, our

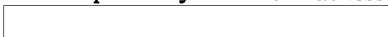


confrontation of this entity must end with its obliteration.

Through their Islamic resistance, the strugglers—the women with rocks and boiling oil for their weapons, the children with their shouts and their bare fists for their weapons, the old men with their weak bodies and their thick sticks for their weapons, and the youth with their rifles and their firm and faithful will for their weapons—have all proved that the nation. . . . is capable of making miracles and to change the imaginary fates.

As for the Arab regimes falling over themselves for reconciliation with the Zionist enemy, they are decrepit regimes incapable of keeping up with the nation's ambitions and aspirations We urge the peoples to unite their ranks, to chart their objectives, and to rise. . . . and to overthrow the agent governments that oppress them.

As for those who reject us, we will endure until God issues his judgment on us and the oppressors. 

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Islamic Amal. Husayn Musawi withdrew from Amal because of its weak resistance to the Israeli invasion in 1982 and founded this extremist organization, which is the largest radical Shia group. Its membership may total between 1,000 and 1,400, but the number of active, full-time members probably is somewhat less at any given time, 
 Islamic Amal quarters and trains its members at several different locations in the Bekaa Valley.


Husayni Suicide Forces. Another member of the Musawi extended family—Abu Haydar Musawi—leads this loosely organized subgroup of Islamic Amal, which is based in Beirut. The Husayni Suicide Forces probably do not function as a permanent organization but consist of individuals recruited for specific operations. The group's membership fluctuates but probably numbers fewer than 100 at any

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Figure 2. Shia militiamen beneath a poster of Lebanese Shia leader Imam Musa Sadr, who disappeared in 1978.

time, [redacted] Members of this group can sometimes be recognized in the southern slums of Beirut—despite attempts by Amal to arrest Abu Haydar’s followers—because they often wear yellow headbands, according to press reports.

Muslim Students Union. Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah controls this fundamentalist group based in southern Beirut. It is intimately involved with the other radical Shia groups. We believe the Muslim Students Union serves as a front for the Lebanese branch of the clandestine Da’wa Party, from which many Hizballah leaders emerged. The Muslim Students Union probably has fewer than 500 full-time members, but Fadlallah commands the loyalty of far greater numbers of Shias in the southern slums of Beirut.



Figure 3. Portraits of Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini are increasingly common in the predominantly Shia slums of southern Beirut.

Hizballah Militias.

Subhi Tufayli, Abbas Musawi, Abd al-Karim Ubayd, and other clerics command radical Shia militia contingents in the Bekaa Valley, Beirut, and the south.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard works closely with these organizations, which may be organized as “auxiliaries” of the Guard.

Assembly of Ulama. Several assemblies of fundamentalist clerics—mostly Shia but including some Sunnis—have sprung up in the Bekaa, West Beirut, and southern Lebanon.

Their basic objective is to increase the ranks of the “faithful” and to recruit as many young Shias as possible into the Hizballah network.

Relatively few individuals are full-time members of the groups that comprise the Hizballah network, but the groups operate effectively because the Iranian Revolutionary Guard supports them and because they have the sympathy and tacit cooperation of a significant segment of the Lebanese Shia population. The collective membership of the groups has grown from

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Figure 4. Islamic Amal leader Husayn Musawi surrounded by bodyguards at his headquarters in the Bekaa Valley.



Figure 5. Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah attending a funeral for victims of a car bomb near his mosque.

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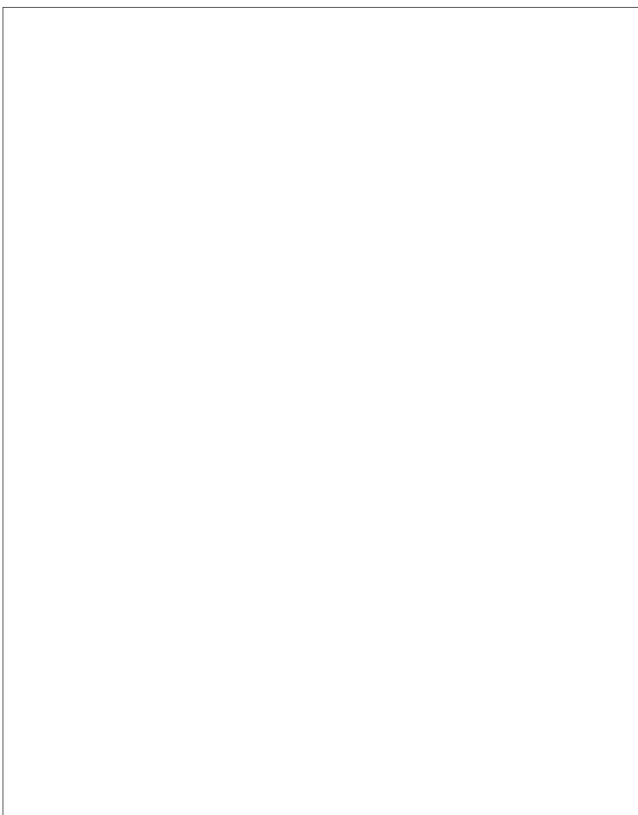
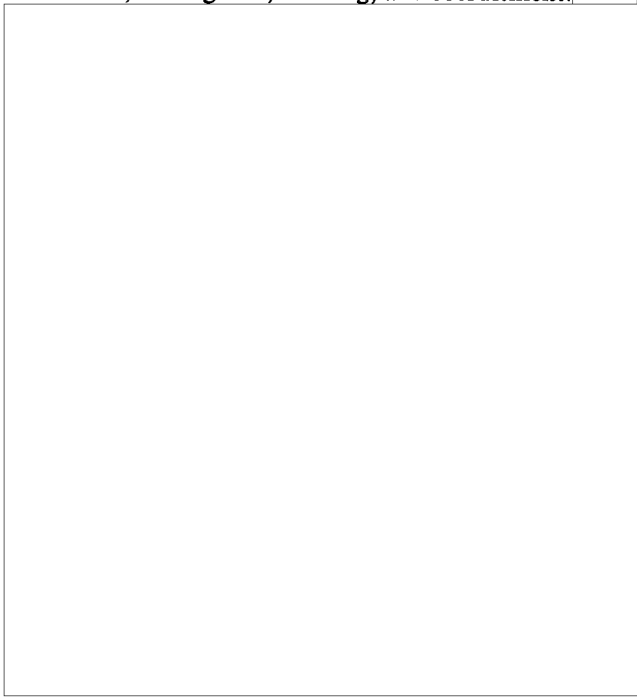
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several hundred to several thousand during the past two years,

A large part of the Hizballah network functions as an organization along conventional military lines, with officials responsible for operations, logistics, communications, intelligence, training, and recruitment.



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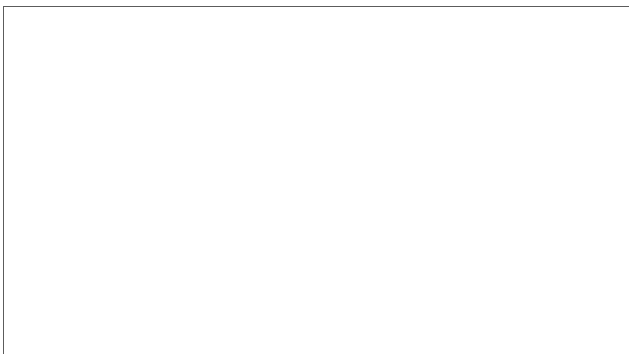
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Figure 6. Subhi Tufayli, one of the youngest and most militant Hizballah leaders. [Redacted]



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Amal-Hizballah Rivalry

Hizballah leaders are challenging the more moderate Amal movement for dominance in the Shia community. The fundamentalists scorn the secularist approach of Amal, which seeks redress of Shia grievances through negotiation with other factions in the Lebanese political system. Radical leaders advocate a more simplistic, less compromising strategy—"jihad" (holy war)—to accomplish their goals. [Redacted]

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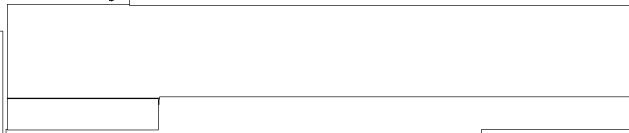
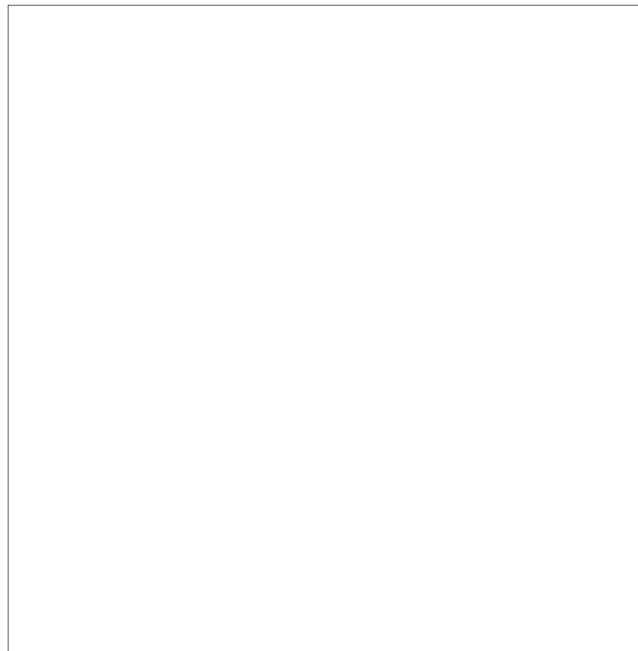
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The Hizballah is gradually eroding Amal's support throughout Lebanon. [Redacted] many Shias who belong to Amal have become sympathetic to the Hizballah and no longer fully respond to Amal authority. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] postponed Amal politburo elections last March because he was afraid that Hizballah-backed rivals might seize control. [Redacted]

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Increasing unpopularity and dissatisfaction with Amal also help the Hizballah. Nabih Barri, despite his position as Minister of Justice and Minister for the South, has failed to obtain significant political or economic gains for the Shia community. In the view of most Shias, he has provided no evidence that moderate policies can produce results or improve their situation, while the Hizballah has undertaken a high-visibility campaign to achieve its objectives. Many Shias are also disillusioned with Amal because of

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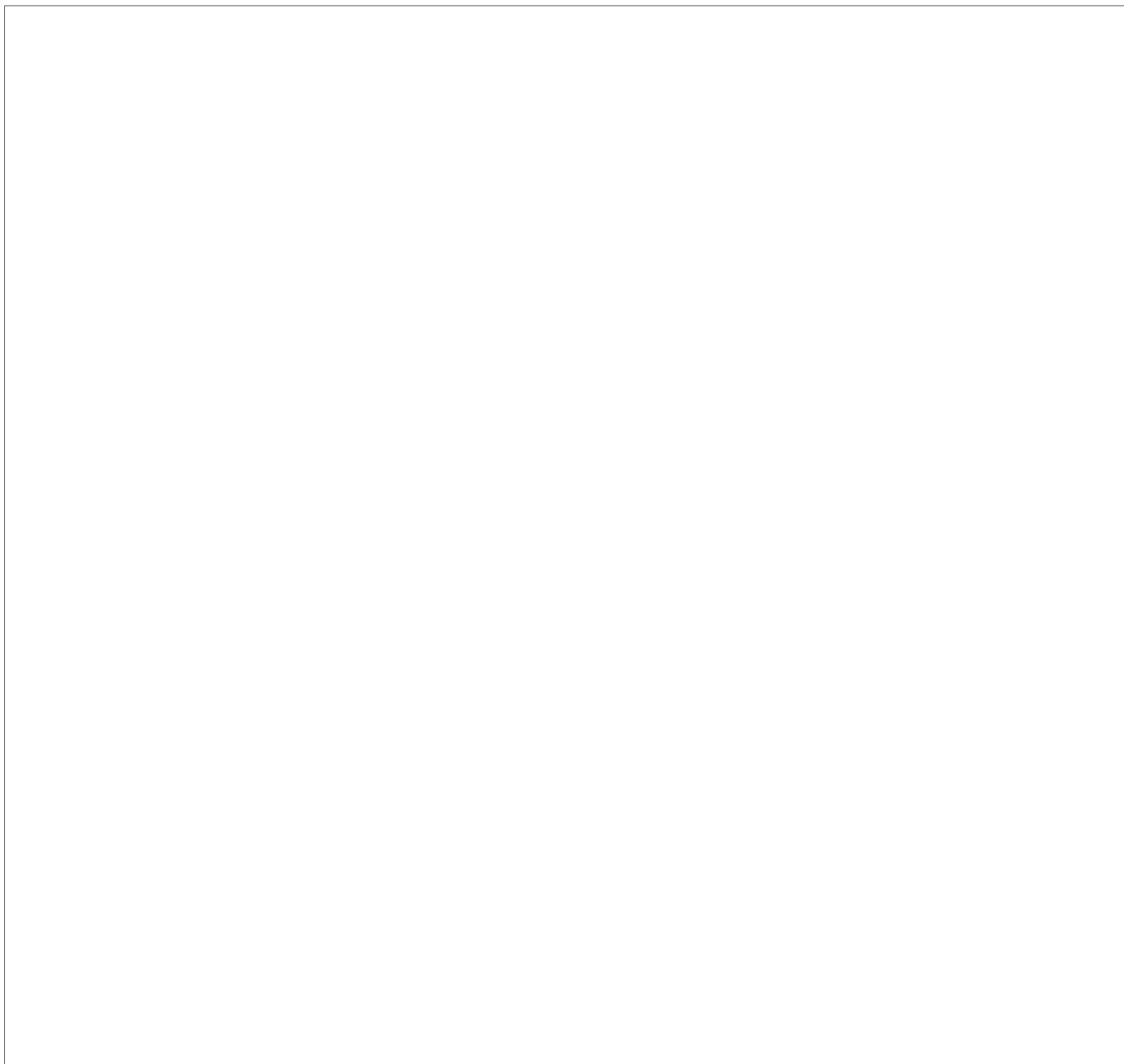
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rampant corruption within the organization, [redacted]

[redacted]

parts of Beirut, especially the southern slums. Radical Shia elements have proven their ability to operate virtually at will throughout the Muslim quarters of the city. [redacted]

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The Hizballah has succeeded in replacing Amal as the dominant Shia organization in the Bekaa Valley, and the network is rapidly expanding its influence—at Amal's expense—in West Beirut and the southern suburbs of the capital. [redacted]

Hizballah leaders are now focusing their efforts and resources on the extensive Shia-populated areas of

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the Hizballah has grown stronger than Amal in many

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Figure 9. The Hizballah thrives in the alienating environment of war-torn Beirut.

galvanizing effect that the Iranian revolution has had on Shia communities throughout the Muslim world.



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Many uneducated Shias are falling under the influence of clerics who advocate a return to the Koran and Islamic values. Since the mosque is the focal point in their lives, they are particularly susceptible to political rhetoric couched in religious terms. Several militant clerics have risen in prominence—the most important is Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah—who are strong orators and who attract increasingly large audiences. Cassette tape recordings of sermons by Lebanese and Iranian fundamentalist clerics, including Ayatollah Khomeini, are becoming increasingly common in Shia areas of Lebanon.

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southern Lebanon from which the Israelis have withdrawn. Hizballah adherents there have to operate in Shia villages where loyalty to Amal has always been strong and where Amal still provides patronage and controls local services. Southern Shias have traditionally been more affluent and less prone to religious extremism than their coreligionists in the Bekaa Valley or the southern slums of Beirut. Nonetheless, [redacted] popularity and support for the Hizballah are growing in the south. [redacted]

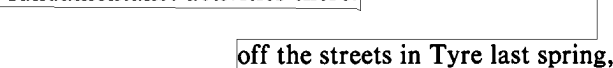
The intensity and size of the Ashura demonstrations—in which Shias publicly perform ritual self-flagellation—in Beirut and other Lebanese cities this year illustrate the growing appeal of fundamentalist ideology. Hizballah leaders have organized public marches that drew thousands of their supporters into the streets. Another indication of the intimidating power of the fundamentalists is the increasing reluctance of Muslims in West Beirut and elsewhere to serve liquor, gamble, partake of Western-style entertainment, or allow women to be seen in public without a veil. Hizballah gangs often march through the West Beirut commercial district vandalizing bars and clubs suspected of catering to “Western” vices. [redacted]

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Amal has responded to the Hizballah challenge in southern Lebanon by attempting to crack down on fundamentalist activities there. [redacted]

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[redacted] off the streets in Tyre last spring,

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[redacted] Armed confrontations have occurred between militiamen from the two organizations in recent months. [redacted]

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Social and Religious Activities

The exponential growth of the Hizballah network has resulted in large part from a grassroots movement toward Islamic fundamentalism that is taking place within the Shia community. A decade of civil war has torn apart the fabric of Lebanese Shia society and prompted many Shias to turn to religion as a panacea for their suffering. Economic and political grievances have made the Lebanese Shias more susceptible to the

Hizballah leaders are cultivating and capitalizing on this fundamentalist mood to build their base of support within the Shia population and transform the Hizballah into a mass movement. A key element of their strategy is religious and political propaganda. The Hizballah newspaper, *al-Ahid*, outsells by a wide margin Amal's newspaper, [redacted]

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[redacted] The fundamentalists broadcast their views to the Shia community through a radio station—“Voice of the Oppressed”—set up by Iran last year in the Bekaa Valley. [redacted]

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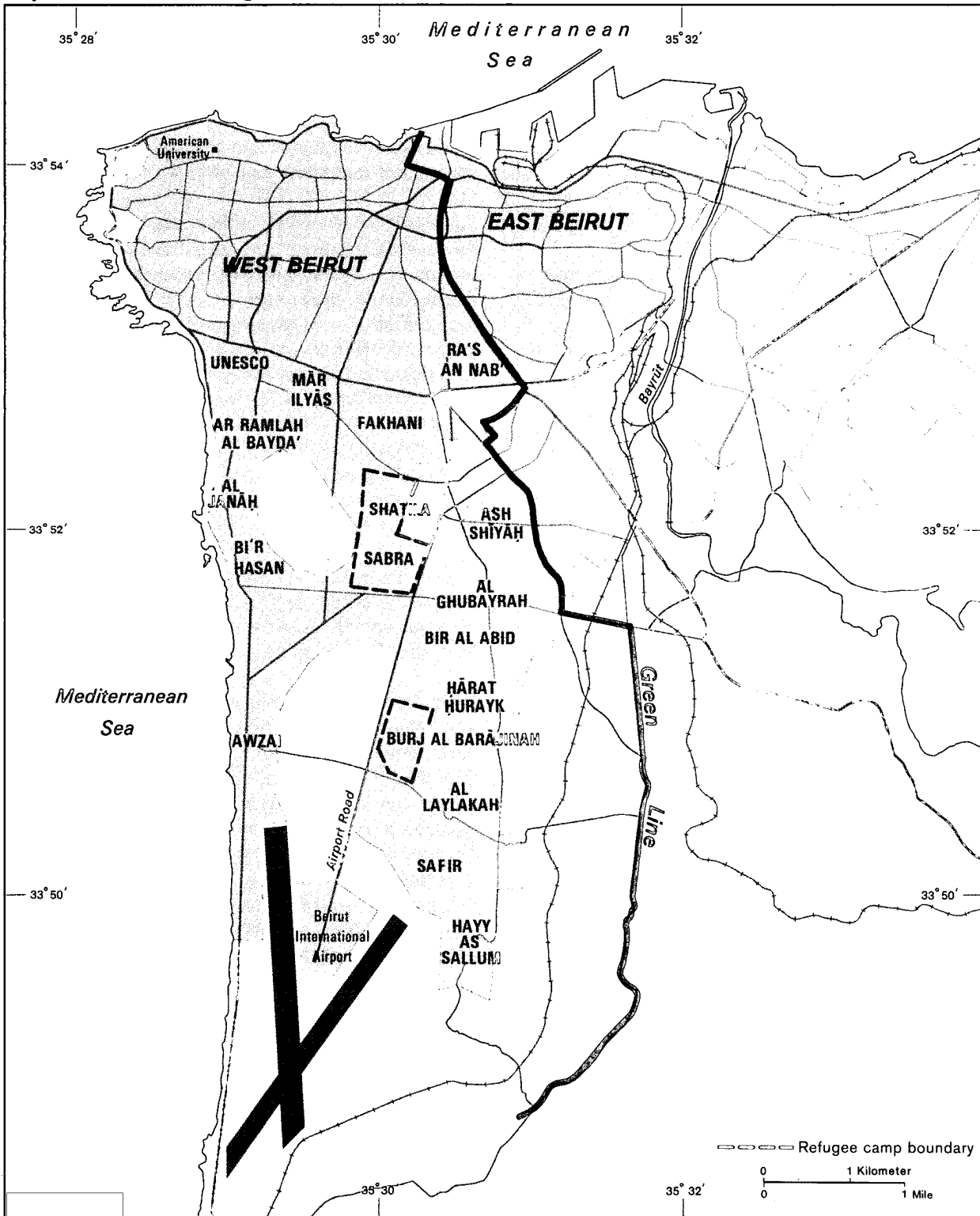
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Figure 10
Key Shia-Controlled Neighborhoods in South Beirut



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Figure 11. Hizballah fighters patrol Shia neighborhoods in southern Beirut. [Redacted]

The fundamentalists also use social programs to improve their public image and attract recruits. Hizballah charity projects, funded largely by Iran, give financial assistance to poor Shia families. [Redacted]

[Redacted] The Hizballah sponsors a welfare system that provides money for hospital care and academic scholarships to lower-class Shias and has set up community service projects, such as rebuilding homes and mosques destroyed in the war, that create jobs for the young. [Redacted]

Hizballah propaganda and religious indoctrination appeal especially to young Shias who have come of age in the turbulent and anarchic environment of the civil war. [Redacted]

Many Shia youths are attracted to the Hizballah largely because they are out of school, unemployed, and frustrated with their current situation. [Redacted]

Terrorism: A Key Hizballah Weapon

Many Hizballah leaders are committed to terrorism as a means of eliminating Western influence from Lebanon and achieving other radical Shia goals. [Redacted]

[Redacted] implicates the Hizballah in the continuing violence against US and other Western personnel and facilities in Lebanon. Its members, operating under the covername "Islamic Jihad," carried out the devastating car bombings of the US and French Multinational Force installations in 1983 and the US Embassy annex in East Beirut last year. Hizballah elements are also responsible for the kidnaping and continuing detention of US citizens. [Redacted]

Small cells of Hizballah militants committed to terrorism coalesce around individual clerics or paramilitary leaders. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] These terrorist cells are usually subject to influence by the broader Hizballah network, but they almost certainly carry out some operations without seeking formal approval from Shia leaders. [Redacted]

Hizballah terrorism poses a greater danger and is often more destructive than attacks by other groups because Hizballah recruits are willing to sacrifice their lives in their operations. This fanaticism distinguishes the Hizballah from most other groups that use violence as a calculated political weapon. Shia suicide terrorists believe that dying in the name of Islam will guarantee them a place in paradise. Most other groups limit themselves to assassinations, kidnapings, and boobytrapped and timer-activated vehicle bombs, which are less effective than a car bomb that is actually driven into the target. [Redacted]

Hizballah terrorism against US targets is driven by radical Shia leaders' visceral hatred of the United States. Shia terrorists see themselves as "true believers" involved in a holy war to force all Americans,

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Figure 12. The car bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in April 1983 marked the beginning of the Hizballah terrorist campaign against US targets. [Redacted]



Figure 13. The destroyed US Marine headquarters at Beirut airport in which 241 died—Hizballah's most successful terrorist operation. [Redacted]

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Europeans, and Israelis out of Lebanon. The fundamentalists believe that Western influence—especially American—is the primary obstacle to the eventual establishment of an Islamic republic and that terrorism will force the US and European governments to withdraw their representatives from Lebanon. [Redacted]

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A more immediate goal of some elements of the Hizballah network is to secure the release of the Shia terrorists—three of whom are Lebanese—in prison in Kuwait. [Redacted] the leader of the Hizballah faction holding the US hostages, Imad Mughniyah, has close family ties to the prisoners in Kuwait, and their release has been the principal condition levied by the Hizballah for the return of the kidnaped Americans. [Redacted]

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Hizballah elements also target US personnel as a means of indirectly challenging the other factional militias and the Lebanese Government. Successful terrorist attacks enhance local perceptions of the strength of the fundamentalist movement and demonstrate its ability to operate with impunity even in areas under the nominal control of other groups, such as Amal. The US Embassy in Beirut reports that most Lebanese Government and traditional sectarian leaders are afraid to speak out or act against Hizballah terrorism. [Redacted]

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**The Hizballah Terrorist Campaign
Against US Targets
(Incidents known or suspected to be Hizballah-directed)**

14 June 1985 TWA flight 847 hijacked; one American killed.
 10 June 1985 American University in Beirut (AUB) Prof. Thomas Sutherland kidnaped.
 29 May 1985 AUB Prof. David Hill shot dead.
 28 May 1985 AUB Dr. David Jacobsen kidnaped.
 18 April 1985 AUB Vice President kidnaped, released.
 16 March 1985 AP Beirut bureau chief Terry Anderson kidnaped.
 10 February 1985 Two AUB doctors kidnaped, released.
 22 January 1985 Bombing attempt at AUB.
 8 January 1985 Catholic priest Lawrence Jenco kidnaped in Beirut.
 22 December 1984 Car belonging to US Embassy Beirut employee bombed.
 4 December 1984 Kuwait Airways Flight 221 hijacked; two Americans killed.
 30 November 1984 AUB librarian Peter Kilburn disappears.
 25 November 1984 Seven Hizballah members arrested in Italy and one in Switzerland with plans and materials to blow up US Embassy in Rome.



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20 September 1984 US Embassy annex in East Beirut destroyed in suicide car bombing; two Americans killed.
 5 June 1984 AUB classroom bombed.
 8 May 1984 Presbyterian minister Benjamin Weir kidnaped in Beirut.
 28 March 1984 AUB building bombed.
 16 March 1984 US Embassy officer William Buckley kidnaped in West Beirut.
 7 March 1984 Cable News Network Beirut bureau chief Jeremy Levin kidnaped in West Beirut.
 5 March 1984 US defense attache in Beirut wounded in assassination attempt.
 10 February 1984 AUB Prof. Frank Regier kidnaped, later released.
 18 January 1984 AUB President Malcolm Kerr shot dead.
 8 January 1984 Marine guards at US Embassy fired upon; one Marine killed.
 23 October 1983 US Marine barracks at Beirut airport destroyed in suicide car bombing; 241 killed.
 Fall-Winter 1983 Numerous incidents of sniping against US Marine contingent in Beirut.
 18 April 1983 US Embassy in West Beirut destroyed in suicide car bombing; 17 Americans killed.



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Figure 14. Hizballah supporters storm the Saudi Embassy in West Beirut in the summer of 1984. [Redacted]

The capability of the Hizballah to act independently ensures that radical Shia terrorists will pose a serious threat to US personnel and facilities as long as their two basic motivations—the continued US official presence in Lebanon and the detention of their Da'wa Party comrades in Kuwait—remain unchanged. The success of major Hizballah terrorist operations during the past two years has emboldened the Shia radicals,

[Redacted]

Hizballah terrorists, however, will pose a much greater threat inside Lebanon than elsewhere in the Middle East or in Europe. Hizballah members are effective at carrying out destructive terrorist acts in Lebanon largely because they have a well-developed support network in their native country. Their proven terrorist capabilities in Lebanon do not necessarily extend to operations elsewhere. Most Hizballah volunteers are poor, uneducated youths with little or no experience outside Lebanon. Unlike many leftwing European and Palestinian terrorists, they generally do not speak foreign languages and cannot easily blend into the population of a European capital. [Redacted]

Despite these limitations, we believe they are determined to strike US targets in Europe—especially as US security precautions in the Middle East are

strengthened. Their capabilities almost certainly will improve over time as the Hizballah organization grows and trains more sophisticated fighters. Radical Lebanese Shias have already been involved in two successful skyjackings and the 1983 bombings in Kuwait, although in none of these incidents did it appear that the Hizballah leadership had planned or sponsored the operation. In our judgment, anonymous callers claiming Islamic Jihad responsibility for recent terrorist attacks in Madrid, Paris, and Copenhagen did not represent the Hizballah. [Redacted]

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Hizballah in the South: Threat to Israel

[Redacted]

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the radical Shia network is escalating its paramilitary operations against the Israeli forces remaining in southern Lebanon and their surrogates, primarily the Army of South Lebanon (ASL). We believe that some Hizballah elements will try to carry their campaign of violence into northern Israel. Radical Shia leaders stated as early as last September that they were cultivating a capability to launch offensive attacks in southern Lebanon. [Redacted]

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Hizballah paramilitary operations in southern Lebanon are facilitated by the willingness of local Shia communities to support or at least tolerate the activities of the radicals. The US Embassy in Beirut reports that open resentment of Israel is almost universal in the south. The often heavyhanded Israeli occupation radicalized the political attitudes of southern Shias, transforming formerly passive farmers and merchants into activists. Large numbers of Shias have participated in demonstrations and strikes protesting the Israeli occupation. [Redacted]

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The Hizballah network is unlikely to end its guerrilla war against Israel even if all Israeli troops withdraw from their "security zone" in southern Lebanon. Although their immediate objective is to end the

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Figure 15. Angry Shias burn an Israeli jeep in southern Lebanon. [Redacted]



Figure 16. Hizballah members released by Israel last spring. [Redacted]

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Israeli occupation of the south, the Hizballah militants have declared themselves to be Islamic warriors involved in a long-term struggle against Israel itself. Fundamentalist fighters, encouraged and to some extent indoctrinated by Iran, believe their proximity to Israel places them in a unique position to lead the Muslim struggle against Zionism. Hizballah leaders publicly describe their campaign of violence as the first stage in a battle to “liberate” Jerusalem. [Redacted]

Hizballah leaders probably believe that cross-border attacks—which would provoke Israeli retaliation inside Lebanese territory—would accelerate the radicalization that has been taking place in southern Shia villages. The Hizballah movement has profited from the rising tide of extremism in the south and has a vested interest in perpetuating it. [Redacted]

The Hizballah will concentrate on targeting Israeli and ASL troops on Lebanese soil as long as the Israeli “security zone” remains in existence. Assassinations, car bombings, and guerrilla-style ambushes will remain common. Rocket attacks into northern Israel, however, are also likely because they can easily be launched from Shia-held territory. [Redacted]

Amal leaders have publicly expressed their determination to prevent cross-border provocations, but we doubt they will be able to exercise more than nominal control over Hizballah activities. The same factors that have made it nearly impossible for Amal to

control the growing Hizballah underground in Beirut—public sympathy for the fundamentalists, increasing Hizballah capabilities and weapons stores, and Amal military ineffectiveness—are likely to hamper Amal efforts in the south. Moreover, militias rarely exercise complete control over their areas—especially in an area as large as southern Lebanon—and small-scale Hizballah rocket attacks or other operations across the border would be extremely difficult to detect. [Redacted]

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In the event of a complete Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, at least some Hizballah adherents almost certainly would try to send terrorists across the Israeli border. Although the Amal militia and the Shia population of the south probably would not participate directly in cross-border violence, elements of both would provide indirect assistance to the radicals. [Redacted]

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Hizballah fighters could eventually pose as great a threat to northern Israel as the Palestinians did before the invasion. Hizballah “true believers” have demonstrated their willingness and ability to mount spectacular suicide operations that are nearly impossible to defend against. The southern Lebanese population

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Figure 17. Radical Shia clerics lead funeral prayers for victims of gunfights with Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

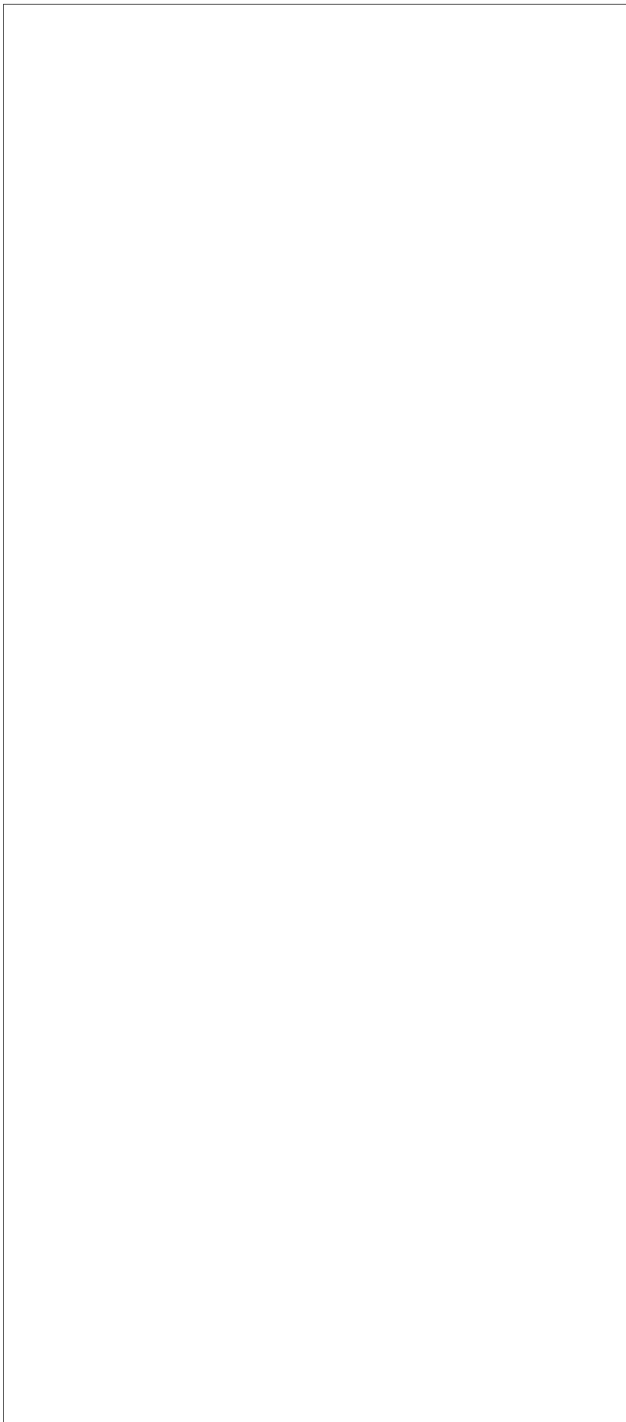
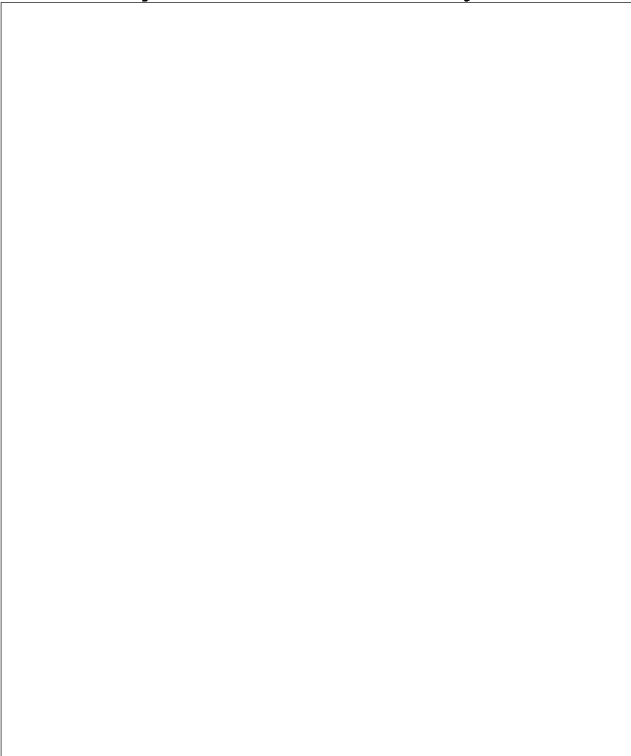


provides a large pool of potential Hizballah recruits who, unlike the Palestinians, are native to the area and therefore difficult to isolate.



Iran: Aiding and Abetting

Iran has played an important role in the development of the Hizballah network and is deeply involved in almost every area of radical Shia activity in Lebanon.



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1983, but the radical Shia movement no longer depends on Iran for its existence. Although the termination of Iranian support would hurt the Hizballah and slow its progress, radical Shia leaders can satisfy many of the movement's material needs through the open market for arms in Lebanon or from other Lebanese factions. [Redacted] Palestinian guerrilla leaders, including Yasir Arafat, pay large sums to the Hizballah in return for passage through radical Shia territory. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Hizballah leaders almost certainly believe they will continue to receive Iranian material support even if they refuse to act as puppets of Iran. The Lebanese fundamentalists, aware of the importance that the Iranian Government attaches to exporting its revolution to Lebanon, probably take Iranian material support for granted. [Redacted]

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Syrian Displeasure

The Syrian Government tolerates Hizballah activity but is gradually moving toward confrontation with the fundamentalists. Damascus allows the Hizballah network to operate from bases in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa, [Redacted]

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Growing Disillusionment and Independence From Iran

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The Syrians have indirectly facilitated terrorist operations by permitting the movement of men and materiel through Syrian checkpoints. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Disruptive Hizballah activity suited Syrian interests from 1983 through early 1984. During this period, President Assad used military pressure to reduce US influence in Lebanon and force the Lebanese Government to cancel its accord with Israel, which moved toward normalization of relations. Assad also almost

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Despite material support to the Hizballah, Iranian officials often cannot control their Lebanese allies. Iranian assistance may have been critical in 1982 and

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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certainly believed that an aggressive Shia guerrilla movement in the south would keep pressure on the Israeli Army to withdraw. [Redacted]

in each case these measures were dropped after a few weeks. [Redacted]

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Syrian and Hizballah strategies began to diverge sharply in mid-1984 after Lebanese President Amin Gemayel capitulated to Damascus and abrogated his government's agreement with Israel. Since then, the Syrians have been determined to stabilize security in and around Beirut and strengthen the Gemayel government. Shia radicals, on the other hand, are trying to disrupt the security situation and dispose of Gemayel. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

There are several reasons for the Syrian tolerance of the Hizballah, in our judgment:

- Assad does not want to damage the Syrian-Iranian relationship, which provides Syria with valuable economic benefits, including high-quality crude oil for which Damascus pays only a fraction of the market cost. [Redacted]

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Assad has grown increasingly disenchanted with the Shia radicals. Assad reacted angrily to the car bombing of the US Embassy annex in East Beirut and strongly disapproved of a large Hizballah demonstration in Sidon last February, according to the US Embassy in Damascus [Redacted]

[Redacted]

- Assad may worry that a total crackdown on the Hizballah would prompt the terrorist network to begin targeting Syrians or Syrian interests. Although the Hizballah has tried to maintain friendly relations with Syrian officers in the Bekaa Valley, Assad almost certainly realizes that the radical Shia movement could easily grow hostile toward the secular Alawite regime. [Redacted]

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Assad is frustrated by the refusal of Hizballah leaders to accede to Syrian demands. The US Embassy reports that Syrian officials spent 24 hours arguing with the Hizballah over the hostages from the hijacked TWA airliner. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

The long-term objectives of Syria and the Hizballah are fundamentally incompatible. Islamic extremism is anathema to the secular Syrian regime, which has dealt brutally with its own fundamentalists, the Muslim Brotherhood. The Hizballah commitment to Islamic revolution in Lebanon dramatically contrasts with the Syrian goal of a multiconfessional Lebanese client state in which no faction dominates the others. [Redacted]

- The Syrians still prefer to try to co-opt the Hizballah rather than move against it militarily. [Redacted] Assad believes he can manipulate the Shia radicals to Syria's advantage. He has used the Hizballah in the past as a tool for putting pressure on Amal leader Nabih Barri and almost certainly believes that Hizballah paramilitary operations will eventually force the Israelis to withdraw fully from Lebanese territory. [Redacted]

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Assad's Ambivalence

Despite these disagreements, the Syrians have thus far been reluctant to crack down on Hizballah or Iranian activity in the Bekaa Valley. [Redacted]

[Redacted] the Syrians have imposed restrictions several times on the freedom of movement of Hizballah members—provoking clashes between Syrian troops and Shia gunmen—but

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[Redacted]

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Assad, in our judgment, does not yet perceive the Hizballah as an immediate threat to Syrian policy goals in Lebanon. He appears confident that Syrian or pro-Syrian forces in Lebanon will be able to crush the radical movement if and when it becomes a sufficiently serious problem. Assad almost certainly sees the Hizballah as another Lebanese faction that will be susceptible to Syrian pressure when the time comes.

We believe that Assad underestimates the capabilities of the Hizballah network and the dynamic of Shia fundamentalism in Lebanon. In our judgment, fundamentalist ideology is already so deeply rooted in the thinking of large segments of the Shia community that the Syrians will be unable to eradicate it by any means. Although Syrian troops could arrest some Hizballah leaders and shut down Hizballah bases in the Bekaa Valley, they have far less direct influence in West Beirut and its sprawling southern slums. Only a major commitment by the Syrian Army to reoccupy West Beirut could turn the Hizballah tide there. Similarly, Syria has only limited direct leverage over the Shia network in the south.

Outlook

Shia radicalism is a long-term problem that will further disable the crippled Lebanese political process over the next few years and will impede reconciliation among the warring factions. In our judgment, the Shia extremists will prevent the Lebanese Government or any of the sectarian militias from establishing effective authority over West Beirut, the Bekaa, and probably southern Lebanon. The armed Shia underground will, at a minimum, play a spoiler role in Lebanese politics.

Continued Hizballah expansion is likely but by no means inevitable. Events in southern Lebanon over the next year or two will have a decisive effect on the long-term prospects for the fundamentalist movement. Amal still remains strong there despite Hizballah gains, and Syrian moves to bolster Amal—for example, the delivery of 50 tanks to the militia—will improve the Amal's position. Amal almost certainly will step up its resistance to the Hizballah and will seek greater assistance from Syria and other Lebanese factions.



Figure 18. Syria is bolstering with tanks the Amal militia, the primary rival of the Hizballah.

Despite this opposition, trends in the south favor the Hizballah, which undoubtedly will intensify its political, military, social, and religious campaigns there and probably will continue to gain ground at Amal's expense. Sustained radicalization in the south over the next few years, in our judgment, would make it possible for Hizballah elements to eliminate Barri and seize control of Amal. If that happened, the Hizballah almost certainly would turn its attention and resources to challenging the Lebanese Government and the Christians.

A dramatic improvement in the political and military environment in Lebanon—such as a lasting cessation of hostilities and the start of genuine national reconciliation—would significantly weaken the radical Shia movement. The civil war, however, has dragged on for over a decade, and we see no evidence that the Lebanese factions are prepared to make peace.

A gradual increase in Syrian military pressure would hamper Hizballah activities and make it difficult for the Shia radicals to operate in the Bekaa Valley. In that event, Hizballah leaders probably would shift the focus of their operations to Beirut and southern Lebanon. We believe that the Hizballah movement

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Figure 19. Veiled Shia woman in southern Lebanon beside Hizballah slogan.

Attacks by Hizballah elements against northern Israel will provoke Israeli retaliatory measures and revive the cycle of cross-border violence that existed before the Israeli invasion. A prolonged war between the Israelis and the Shias in southern Lebanon almost certainly would cause an angry backlash throughout the Arab world and provide ammunition for opponents of negotiations with Israel.

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The political ascendancy of the Shia fundamentalist movement in Lebanon will indirectly damage US relations with moderate Arab regimes. Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, for example, would fear that the success of the Hizballah increases the danger that Islamic fundamentalism represents to their grip on power. A Hizballah political victory in Lebanon would represent the first radical Shia victory in an Arab country. They may alter some of their domestic and foreign policies to counter indigenous fundamentalist sentiments and almost certainly will be more reluctant to moderate their policies toward Israel. The threat of Hizballah violence probably would prompt moderate regimes to reduce the visibility of their relationships with the United States.

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would continue to grow, although at a slower pace, even if the Syrians tried to sever the Hizballah-Iranian connection by forcing the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to withdraw from Lebanon. In our judgment, it has achieved sufficient momentum and internal cohesion to withstand most forms of external pressure.

We do not believe that a Shia fundamentalist revolution in Lebanon could succeed in the next few years. The Hizballah is not strong enough to challenge the Druze and Christian militias, and Sunni leaders would bitterly oppose it. Over the longer term—perhaps in the 1990s—the Hizballah could expand beyond the Shia regions of the country. The Shia community, if united behind the Hizballah, would have sufficient numbers, political and economic grievances, and religious motivation to attempt a major uprising or revolution. A reoccupation of most of Lebanon by the Syrian Army could stop a revolution but would not end the underlying political and religious movement toward Shia radicalism.

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Implications for the United States

The Hizballah poses a serious threat to US interests both as an aggressive terrorist network and as a rising fundamentalist political movement in Lebanon. The determination and growing capability of the Hizballah to strike US personnel and installations will hamper the conduct of normal US diplomatic, military, and commercial business in the Middle East and possibly Western Europe.

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Figure 20. Hizballah poster exhorts all Muslims to join the battle against Israel.

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