

UNDERSTANDING THE IRAN-HEZBOLLAH NEXUS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OPERATIONAL ART

A Monograph

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING THE IRAN-HEZBOLLAH NEXUS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OPERATIONAL ART, by MAJ Muhammad Ali Qureshi, 56 pages.

The monograph critically analyzes the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah to contradict the prevailing belief that religion is the sole factor responsible for cohesion. It identifies the relationship between the master and its proxy as the problem rather than Iran or Hezbollah as the problem. The paper dissects the relationship to its roots by first providing a clear understanding of the shared ideologies, with its powerful influence on the strategic approach. The monograph then systematically builds on that to provide a better understanding of coinciding and differing strategic interests of both, and shows how Iran mitigates these differences through compromise and leverage policy. Iran tampers with its regional gains and alters them to coincide with those of Hezbollah. In this way, Iran attempts to show that similar strategic gains provide cohesion between Iran and Hezbollah that promises subordination of the proxy to its master without any stringent control. Iranians clearly know the cause and nature of the relationship with Hezbollah and understand the inherent limitations and constraints. By assigning a strategic objective to Hezbollah, they ensure that it lies within the bounds of the political ideology of Hezbollah while influencing Iranian strategic aims. Hezbollah sees the smaller picture and is incapable of identifying the hidden Iranian agenda behind the guidance they give Hezbollah. This monograph evaluates the method used by Iran to control Hezbollah through the framework of operational art by critically analyzing events through the lens of four of its elements: operational reach, tempo, depth, and simultaneity.

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ACRONYMS

IRGC	Iranian Republic Guard Corps
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization

INTRODUCTION

It is far more important to be able to hit the target than it is to haggle over who makes a weapon or who pulls a trigger.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Brainy Quote”

We did not start a fight with America, and we don't want a war with America. If someone launches an attack, though, we will respond. We will not take rejection or humiliation.

—Hassan Nasrallah, “Brainy Quote”

Hezbollah, as an armed organization, remains a focus of many notable researchers, and their efforts provide a quick glance at its existing robust relationship with Iran. Historically, Shiites of South Lebanon and Iran shared an identical sectarian belief of Twelver Shia. This belief, while catalyzing interdependence between the two, preserved the gains of the 1979 Islamic revolution for the entire Shiite population of the region. Soon after its origin, Hezbollah, duly supported by Iran, found itself in conflict with the Amal Movement over domination of South Lebanon following the withdrawal of Israeli Defense Forces in 1985.¹ The Amal Movement shared a similar sectarian belief as Hezbollah, but relied on support from Syria instead of Iran, and thus followed a different mindset towards Middle Eastern politics. This event clearly illuminates the supposedly overemphasized value of religion in tying proxies with their masters and invites attention to certain ignored facts responsible for ensuring obedience under challenging circumstances. This study is an endeavor to examine the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, from its inception to the current environment, with a view to identify those key facts or elements whose application ensures unquestioned compliance of Hezbollah to Iranian demands.

The Iranian government responded to the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in 1982 by dispatching the victorious 27th Brigade of the Iranian Republican Guard Corps (IRGC) to South

¹ Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, ed. Nicholas Noe, trans. Ellen Khouri (New York: Verso, 2007), 57.

Lebanon.² Under the command of Ahmad Motevasselian,³ they trained the local Shiites of South Lebanon and equipped them with captured Iraqi weapons and equipment. The support was perceived heavenly by the Lebanese, for it was being provided at a time when none seemed to care. The Lebanese Shiites believed that the Iranian support is based on the religious similarity, whereas Iran wanted to use Hezbollah for diverting Syrian attention from its staunch strategic ally-Iraq. The aim was to embroil Syria in the Amal- Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)-Hezbollah conflict over the domination of South Lebanon and deny Iraq the crucial military support through Syria during Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). Much of the research on the link between Hezbollah and Iran accounts for religion as the foundation of the connection between the two. However, the research falls short of supplying the evidence of the factors employed by Iran that ensured cohesion with Hezbollah for over 34 years.

Although religion provides the foundational linkage between Hezbollah and Iran, it cannot be the sole factor for the cohesion between the two. Other variables help explain why Hezbollah and Iran's linkage has lasted for 34 years. The historically extended sectarian relationship, the desire to maintain permanent presence of clerics in South Lebanon, and the heavy investment in political and military reformation of Hezbollah followed by testing of wits during the 2006 war with Israel are just a few.

A critical examination of the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran will expose key factors connecting them through relevant elements of operational art. Iran intentionally employs these elements to keep Hezbollah an organized, vibrant, and politically influential proxy, capable

² Members of the 27th Brigade, named after the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) himself, had distinguished them in the re-conquest of Khorramshahr two weeks earlier. In a private audience Khomeini received the commanding officer Ahmad Motevasselian and after congratulating him on the venerated victory asked him to be prepared to bound for Lebanon.

³ Houchang E. Chehabi, *Distant Relations, Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 2006), 213.

of providing regional and global reach to the former. It is only by understanding the true nature of the means employed by Iran that some underlying vulnerabilities can be identified to dissuade Hezbollah from this marriage of interest.

The study is valuable as it dissects the bond between Hezbollah and Iran by analyzing each cohesive thread under the lamp of necessity to justify Hezbollah's obedience as a proxy. The study will build on available research and create new knowledge capable of directing the attention of a Middle Eastern planner towards identifying those key elements whose exploitation empowers Iran to control Hezbollah. These elements are well understood, but remain unspoken by all actors in play without yielding to cultural or religious limitation.

It is important to understand four key definitions for the study. The first key term to understand is operational reach. U.S. military doctrine says that operational reach is the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities. It reflects the ability to achieve success through a well-conceived operational approach.⁴ The second important term to define is depth. Depth is the extension of operations in time, space, and resources. Operations in depth can disrupt the enemy's decision cycle. These operations contribute to protecting the force by destroying enemy capabilities before the enemy can use them.⁵ The third key term to understand is tempo. Tempo is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.⁶ The final important term to define is simultaneity. Simultaneity refers to the concurrent effects operations produce at the tactical,

⁴ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, May 2012), 4-5.

⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, February 2, 2012), 4-5, 7-14.

⁶ HQDA, ADRP 3-0, 4-7.

operational, and strategic levels. “Simultaneous actions across the depth of the operational area place more demands on enemy forces than they can respond to effectively.”⁷

The theoretical framework used to gauge operational insight of Iran, towards utilizing Hezbollah will be that of operational art. In essence, this framework comes from the synthesis of Simon Naveh’s description of the word operation, which constitutes that all complex warlike actions are governed by an identical concept, and directed towards attainment of the same aim.⁸ The question then emerges of how an identical concept can be shared by a proxy that is separated geographically and inhabits another country facing a different set of challenges. The author argues that the selective use of few relevant elements of operational art by Iran, empowers it to tie all tactical actions by Hezbollah with the Iranian regional aim. These elements will be examined through their description provided in U.S. military doctrine and other non-doctrinal publications.

Three hypotheses test this study. The first hypothesis is that Iran employs Hezbollah operationally in support of its own strategic objectives specifically by employment of its resources with reach, depth, tempo, and simultaneity. The second hypothesis revolves around the declared agenda of Iran against Israel and its loud advocacy of Palestinian rights that brought Hezbollah to the forefront of defending the Muslim cause in the Middle East. These sentiments enabled regional support to Hezbollah during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, and are likely to be the established reasons for accruing any worldwide Muslim support in the future. The last hypothesis focuses on the aforementioned reasons and how they result in unification of different organizations, thus closing the gap created by religious dichotomy; for example the Al Qaida-

⁷ HQDA, FM 3-0, 4-5, 7-13.

⁸ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: the Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 9.

Hezbollah nexus. This means the organization receives support from both Shia and Sunni dominated countries.

Ten questions provide focus to this research and gather evidence for the study. The first, second and third research questions seek answers to Iran's ideology, strategic approach, and strategic objectives. The fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions focus on Hezbollah's ideology, strategic approach, and objectives. The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth questions will gather information on how Hezbollah is used to achieve operational reach, depth, tempo, and simultaneity.

In the area of primary resources, the study relies on English interpretation of Persian and Arabic literature. Moreover, the nature and sensitivity of the study limits the author's access to open source material only. To examine recent trends, the study utilizes research papers and defense journals informing the latest trends applied by the actors.

The delimitations utilized by the researcher in this study are determined by the desire to focus on the relationship of Hezbollah with Iran only, without diverting attention towards other trivial linkages resulting in unimportant outcomes. Furthermore, the religious beliefs exercised by Hezbollah, Iran, and the Arab world will not be examined in detail.

The study assumes that the Iran-Hezbollah nexus will thrive under the tumultuous conditions of the Middle East for at least another decade. Furthermore, a comparatively clear understanding of the prevalent sectarian environment by different actors is discussed in the study, along with their presumed political acumen that guides judgment to hold an action accountable as a mean towards achieving an end.

This monograph is presented in six sections. The first section is the Introduction. The second section presents a review of the literature, stressing the type and source of existing research availed for analysis, with the aim of obtaining evidence to answer the research questions. The third section describes the methodology used for this research study, and includes the method

used for selection of relevant data, along with adopted data analysis procedures. The fourth section presents the case study, and tends to validate the research by applying evidence to a case. It provides a basis for understanding the essence of the research provided in the findings and analysis section. The research questions are tested in this section and results are systematically analyzed for confirmation. The sixth section provides a summary of the entire study, discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, recommendations for further research, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the rationale for conducting research on the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran. It highlights a few visible alterations made by Iran to steer Hezbollah in accordance with her perceived aims. These adjustments take the form of a few variables including operational reach, tempo, depth, and simultaneity. Iran's imaginative employment of these variables through operational art leverages effective control of Hezbollah. This control is examined by describing key concepts related to each variable, and their related significance through empirical research. The section focuses on identifying existing gaps in the current scholarly work to confirm the established hypothesis.

The theoretical framework of operational art is used to assess Iranian control on Hezbollah. This framework is pertinent, because it provides focus to this study by concentrating exclusively on military operations in support of the political and strategic aims of Iran. In essence, operational art takes directions from national military strategy, for using assigned forces towards achieving strategic objectives, selected to support the political aim of a country, and establishes the rationale for tactical actions.⁹ According to Shimon Naveh, operational art

⁹ Dwight L. Adams and Clayton R. Nawell, "Operational Art in the Joint Combined Arenas," *US Army War College* (June 1988): 1. The authors are retired U.S. Army officers who experienced war in Vietnam and remained on the faculty of the Army War College.

provides reason and continuity to tactical missions and moves the system towards its final objective. This final objective is the strategic aim that defines a predetermined meaning of the entire operational accomplishment by reflecting synergetic application of force.¹⁰

Shimon Naveh's description of operational art further alludes that the complexity of warlike actions are governed by an identical concept, and directed towards the attainment of same aim.¹¹ Then the question is: How can an identical concept be shared by Hezbollah which is separated geographically from Iran and inhabits another country facing a different set of challenges? One reason could be the ease of applying the meager means available through subconventional warfare that has its roots in the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

The famous Russian theorist, Georgii Isserson, speaks about the influence of revolution on operational art. His theory analyzes the flaws of slow, protracted operations of attrition for limited aims exercised during the trench warfare of World War I and introduces the concept of "deep strategy."¹² He believed that the entire concept of operational art is summarized by a progressive war of strategic offensive in depth directing destructive blows against an enemy.¹³ James J. Schneider applied the same concept, in a modified way, when he examined the American Civil War. He emphasizes the misunderstood nature of the battlefield, which while deep and expanded, has no room for decisive points. According to him, "each individual operation includes discrete activities, restricted to a battlefield, and these collectively form a

¹⁰ Naveh, 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Brigade Commander Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 2nd ed., trans. Dr. Bruce W. Menning (Moscow: The State Military Publishing House of the USSR People's Defense Commissariat, 1937), 38.

¹³ Ibid., 41.

theatre of operation.”¹⁴ Schneider believes that operational art is the creative use of operations for the purposes of strategy, wherein the employment of forces is practiced in deep distributed operations involving judicious use of spaces, to seize and retain freedom of movement.¹⁵

According to Clausewitz, the purpose of war is to serve policy and it does this through rational employment of means through planned ways for achieving an end.¹⁶ This point is considered his most prized argument towards providing a rationale for understanding the art of war. In his work *On War*, Clausewitz states that the political objective will change how a war is conducted.¹⁷ Applying his theory of operational art will facilitate the identification of Iranian political aims in the Middle East as an end, with the use of Hezbollah as a means through the way of sub-conventional warfare.

The main concepts used to assess the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah revolve around four key variables that are also the elements of operational art. These variables include: operational reach, depth, tempo, and simultaneity. Their true value can be understood by defining the main concept behind each variable through the lens of a military theorist and current U.S. military doctrine.

The concept of operational reach implies geographical separation of source from point of impact. It requires dedicated planning to transport a force over a distance with the same effectiveness without compromising on time. Early theorists referred to the concept as the ability of a force to maintain inherent combat power while traversing distant lands. According to

¹⁴ James J. Schneider, Ph. D, *Vulcan's Anvil* (Presidio Press 1994; repr., Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 16 June 1992), 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52, 58.

¹⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War, Indexed Edition*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Parret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 86.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 604.

Clausewitz, geography has primary influence on operational reach.¹⁸ He addressed its effects on armies throughout his book, *On War*. In the chapter “The Culminating Point of Victory,” he sees the distance of advance as a primary cause of loss in strength.¹⁹ According to current U.S. military doctrine, “it is the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities. It reflects the ability to achieve success through a well-conceived operational approach.”²⁰

James J. Schneider explains the element of depth when he compares it to the expanded nature (width and breadth) of the battlefield. Within this concept, he coined the term distributed operation, which means, “an ensemble of deep maneuvers, and distributed battles extended in space and time but unified through a common aim.”²¹ U.S. military doctrine gives justification to this thought. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, states: “operations in depth can disrupt the enemy’s decision cycle. These operations contribute to protecting the force by destroying enemy capabilities before the enemy can use them.”²²

U.S. military doctrine describes the concept of tempo as “the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.”²³ Robert R. Leonhard gives the most valuable non-doctrinal definition of tempo in his book, *Fighting by Minutes*. He compares it with

¹⁸ von Clausewitz, 348.

¹⁹ MAJ Scott W. Heintzelman, “Operational Reach: Is Current Army Doctrine Adequate?” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, May 2003), 24.

²⁰ HQDA, ADRP 3-0, 4-5.

²¹ Schneider, 36.

²² HQDA, FM 3-0, 4-5, 7-14.

²³ HQDA, ADRP 3-0, 4-7.

frequency and describes it as “the number of significant military events per unit time.”²⁴ A unit can only undertake significant military action if its resident combat power matches the projected employment. Operationally, tempo depends upon the peacetime preparations undertaken by forces to sustain themselves during protracted campaigns.

In regards to simultaneity, the concept coined by the Indian Army is worth mentioning here. It implies that, “overwhelming combat power is achieved when all combat elements are brought to bear simultaneously with violence, giving the enemy no opportunity to respond in a coordinated or cohesive manner, and thereby achieve victory at least cost.”²⁵ The essence of this concept is applied by joining tempo with simultaneity and depth. The combination is achieved by engaging the enemy in depth, simultaneously with a view to create a dilemma for correctly responding and allocating precise resources. Thus, the commander’s predicament entails the inability to prioritize a response to the enemy’s actions. Isserson asserts that shock troops are required to achieve shock action. Naveh brands these shock troops as the force responsible for operational maneuver that was accepted by the Russians as the “*appellation udar*”²⁶ (shock force) and the West as strike force. He dives deeper and introduces the by-product of shock action or simultaneity in the shape of a vital instrument of self-protection against its opponent’s endeavor to disrupt the efforts to attain his own aim.²⁷ According to U.S. military doctrine, “simultaneity refers to the concurrent effects operations produce at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

²⁴ Robert R. Leonhard, *Fighting by Minutes: Time and the Art of War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 69.

²⁵ Lieutenant General K. Nagaraj, *Indian Army Doctrine* (Shimla: Headquarters Army Training Command, October 2004), 30.

²⁶ Naveh, 16.

²⁷ Ibid.

Simultaneous actions across the depth of the operational area place more demands on enemy forces than enemy forces can effectively respond to them.”²⁸

Since Iran is an Islamic republic, its ideology is rooted in the teachings of Islam. However, its resident popular Shia belief separates it from the Sunni minority. However, within the context of the Middle East with Sunni majority, it induces a sense of survival that nurtures the memory of the 1979 revolution and seeks guidance from the actions of Walayat-e-Faqih. Mehdi Noorbaksh, from the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, asserts that the concept of Walayat-e-Faqih was personally presented by Ayatollah Khomeini to encourage the active involvement of clergy in politics.²⁹ The words and deeds of Walayat-e-Faqih are considered valuable and part of Iranian ideology. It is for this reason that Laurent Lamote describes that the Iranian government’s ideological priority remains the export of the Islamic Revolution in the Middle East.³⁰ This priority was mostly carried out by clerics to influence people with Shia beliefs in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. H. E. Chehabi claims that the famous cleric Musa Sadr was responsible for exporting Shia ideology into Lebanon and his mysterious disappearance left the Lebanese with an ideological vacuum that was later directly filled by Iranian post-revolutionary government.³¹

Iran is struggling to survive being an Islamic state with a distinct sectarian belief. By following the anti-U.S. agenda of Walayat-e-Faqih, Iran has closed all options of progressing in a

²⁸ HQDA, FM 3-0, 4-5, 7-13.

²⁹ Mehdi Noorbaksh, “Religion, Politics, and Ideological Trends in Contemporary Iran,” in *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability*, ed. Jamal S. al-Suwaidi (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996), 19.

³⁰ Laurent Lamote, Farhad Kazemi, John Hannah, Stuart E. Johnson, Shahram Chubin, Michael Eisenstadt, Ahmed Hashim, and National Defense University, *Iran's Strategic Intentions and Capabilities: Institute for National Strategic Studies Mcnair Paper 29*, ed. Patrick Clawson (Washington: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 5.

³¹ Chehabi, 169.

uni-polar world.³² Being embedded in the ideology, Iranians have no other option except to revive the energies of its desperate masses, which as Suzanne Maloney asserts, is done mostly through Jumma proceedings starting with the teachings of Imam Khomeini and shouting “Marg bar Amrika” (Death to America).³³ This slogan in itself is a strategic objective shaped to yield several means necessary for survival by accruing local support. One example is Ilan Bermer’s description of the Iranian objective to gain immediate regional energy resources in the face of western resistance by dominating the Caspian Energy Market against pro-western energy routes.³⁴ Another view of Iranian strategic objectives is provided by H. E Chelabi, who regards the holding of supreme leadership of the Shia community in the world and the Islamicization of the Middle East by uniting Muslims in struggle against Zionism as the two key strategic objectives of Iran.³⁵

An evaluation of Iran’s strategic objectives sequentially guides one to the most viable and adopted strategic approach. For Suzanne Maloney, polity in power influences the prioritization of strategic objectives. She explains the moderate approach of reformists by exemplifying the time of Khatami’s moderate Iran as opposed to Ahmadinejad’s rigid approach that caused more isolation.³⁶ H. E. Chelabi says that while facing certain limitations, Iran always focuses on confronting external threat. He covers the pre-revolution era and indicates that the United Arab Republic (political union of Egypt and Syria proclaimed on February 1, 1958 and ended on September 28, 1961), as a potent threat to Iran that dictated a strategic approach of instigating the

³² Lamote et al., 5.

³³ Suzanne Maloney, *Iran's Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World (Pivotal State Series)* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2008), 1.

³⁴ Ilan I. Berman, “Introduction,” in *Tehran Rising: Iran's Challenge to the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 91.

³⁵ Chehabi, 169, 230.

³⁶ Maloney, 8.

Shia population of Iraq and Lebanon. While discussing the post-revolution period, Chelabi highlights the restraint exercised by the Iranian Army in dealing with Syria (during Iran–Iraq War 1980-1988), when in 1987 Iran kept silent on the Syrian killing of 23 Hezbollah fighters in the clashes with the Amal, and the PLO over domination of South Lebanon.³⁷ Hezbollah, despite being a strategic partner for the past decade, hindered the Iranian strategic approach of keeping Syria (Iraq’s ally) away from Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988).

In 2006, Kenneth Katzman, while referring to similar old rivalries between Iran and Syria, indicated “hidden Iranian support to Hezbollah for undermining political dominance of the Lebanese government by anti-Syrian factions.”³⁸ Under the prevailing conditions, Ilan Berman describes contemporary Iran to be the greatest beneficiary of War against Terror, as this war facilitated an end to its arch rival Saddam and has embroiled the west in fighting the Sunni dominated organization—AL Qaeda.³⁹

Iran, with an isolated economy and experiences gained from Israel, Palestine, and the Lebanese conflict has identified sub-conventional warfare to be the most viable and inexpensive strategic approach. Fortunately for Iran, the realization occurred in an era when the situation in the Middle East was not as volatile as it is now. By declaring an anti-Zionist agenda, Iran created Hezbollah and successively exported its revolutionary agenda. Naim Qassem, the deputy secretary of Hezbollah, “declares that the ideology of Hezbollah is based on three pivotal ideas: Islam, resistance against Israeli occupation, and confirming the leadership of Jurist-

³⁷ Chehabi, 226.

³⁸ Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, RL32048, “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses” (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, April 2006), 19.

³⁹ Berman, xvii.

Theologian.”⁴⁰ H. E Chelabi also confirms that the ideology revolves around the Iranian revolution and hate for Israel and the West. Because this hatred inspired them in times when the Amal followers opposed Amal’s leadership, especially Berri, to cooperate with the United States for chalking out a peace settlement with Israel after the 1982 invasion.⁴¹ However, Shaul Shay elaborates on it by placing the Islamic revolution in the center of ideology with jihad as the legitimate defensive war directed by a learned scholar through manipulation of Islamic Law.⁴²

The strategic objectives of the Hezbollah are supported by its ideology and this promises the required sustenance from the Shias of region. As narrated by the organization’s Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, fighting against Israel and liberating Jerusalem are the two main objectives of Hezbollah. These objectives, while based on the immediate defense of Lebanon against Israel, call for strategic peace with Muslims of the region in particular and those of the world in general. H. E Chehabi confirms the same two objectives and affirms their publication in a 1985 manifesto by Hezbollah “declaring to fight for Israel’s departure from Lebanon as a prelude to its final obliteration.”⁴³ However, Shaul Shay adds three more objectives: “establishment of a revolutionary Islamic Republic in Lebanon, fighting western imperialism in Lebanon and consolidating organization’s status as the leading Islamic organization in

⁴⁰ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: the Story from Within* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 19. For Shias Jurist-theologian is considered to be the successor to the prophet and the Imams (PBUT). They believe that Jurist-Theologian draws the general guiding direction for the nation of Islam, and his commands and proscriptions are considered enforceable.

⁴¹ Chehabi, 220.

⁴² Shay, 64.

⁴³ Chehabi, 220.

Lebanon.”⁴⁴ Naim Qaseem, confirms the objective of the creation of a new Islamic state while describing the vision and goals of Hezbollah in his book, *Hizbullah, the Story from Within*.⁴⁵

According to Naim Qaseem, the organization based their strategic approach on Islam on ensuring national integrity. Earlier, the objective of freeing Lebanon from Israel remained the objective, which was supposed to be achieved through establishment of an Islamic State.⁴⁶ Later, the organization became subservient to the Iranian approach and practice to bring a change to the region’s map through relinquishing dependence on the West and adopting a promising Islamic vision. Naim Qasim denies “any connection between the internal administration of the Iranian State and Hezbollah’s administration.”⁴⁷ On the contrary, Judith Palmer Harik affirms the Iranian connection and brings to light the novel approach of the organization by participating politically in Lebanon. The approach guarantees that, “the party of God’s activities against the Israelis would receive official authorization to continue by virtue of the government’s recognition of the armed struggle as a national resistance.”⁴⁸ Hezbollah prioritizes national defense over regional concerns and this view often causes a disagreement with Iran. Matthew Levitt emphasizes this point by saying that in late 2009, Iran’s interest in Hezbollah’s operational prowess focused less on local issues like avenging Mughniyah’s death and more on issue of combating threats to its nascent nuclear program.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Shay, 64.

⁴⁵ Qassem, 31.

⁴⁶ Qassem, 34.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁸ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah* (2004; repr., New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2007), 47.

⁴⁹ Matthew Levitt, “Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran’s Shadow War with the West,” *Policy Focus* 123, Special Issue (January 2013): 4.

In order to use Hezbollah as a proxy, Iran includes the individual agenda of Hezbollah into her regional and strategic objectives. For example, in the wake of increased western threat to its nuclear ambition, Sebastian Rotella asserts that Iranian officials engaged in detailed talks with Hezbollah to lay out the latter's role in Iran's larger plan for achieving depth by coordinating shadow war. This concept was supposed to be achieved by targeting Israeli, American, British, and Gulf States' interests. Sebastian Rotella emphasizes that while coordinating the plans, the decision was made to include avenging Mughniyah's assassination, along with retaliation on Iran's nuclear program.⁵⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman believes that depth is achieved through a strategic arm originating from Iran, which passes through Iraqi Jihadi Group in Iraq, then Syria, and finally reaches Lebanon, thus covering the entire depth of Middle East. He relates how Hezbollah has acquired significant Iranian and Syrian support in training anti-Israeli Palestinian groups, and Iran maintaining combat worthiness of Hezbollah by providing modified AT-3 Sagger anti-tank missiles duly reworked for carrying tandem warheads.⁵¹

The main source of examining Iranian's exercising operational reach in the region appears to be the periodic Congressional Research Service report. Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, Kenneth Katzman from the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of Congress systematically analyzes the prevailing environment, and projects likely future scenario for U.S. policy options. The author critically examined his research in the report, *Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses*, issued quarterly from July 2004 to September 2012. The author found some

⁵⁰ Sebastian Rotella, "Before Deadly Bulgaria Bombing, Tracks of a Resurgent Iran-Hezbollah Threat," *Foreign Policy*, July 30, 2012, accessed May 5, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/07/30/before_deadly_bulgaria_bombing_tracks_of_a_resurgent_iran_hezbollah_threat.

⁵¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (July 15, 2006): 8.

facts little known to the average reader that evidently show Iranian efforts to execute regional and global influence.

The Qods Force is a brigade from the Iranian Republic Guard Corps (IRGC) with direct access to Wilayat-e-Faiqih. It “numbers approximately 10,000-15,000 personnel who provide advice, support, and arrange weapons deliveries to pro-Iranian factions in Lebanon, Iraq, Persian Gulf states, Gaza/West Bank, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The brigade has an efficient intelligence network to guide and assist all proxies in identification and engagement of targets. The Qods Force commander, Brigadier General Qassem Soleimani, is directly linked to the Supreme Leader, and bypasses the entire IRGC’s chain of command and Joint Staff command structure.”⁵² In addition to supplying arms to Hezbollah, it operates jointly with the latter inside Syria. Israeli defense news reported on the death of former Al Qods Commander, Brigadier General Hassan Shatter in Syria on February 13, 2013 which amply justifies the point.⁵³ Likewise, Ilan Berman, who describes the operational relationship between Iran and Al Qaeda, indicates an unexpected approach to global operation. The fact came to light when retired U.S. Army officer Mohammed, responsible for the 1998 American Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salam, Tanzania confessed to having provided training to key Al Qaeda lieutenants. He “outlined links between Al Qaeda and Hezbollah dating back to 1990. In that time Iran used Hezbollah to provide explosive training to Al Qaeda operatives.”⁵⁴ On the other hand, Matthew Levitt demonstrates operational reach in the region through the 1996 bombing of the

⁵² Katzman, 18.

⁵³ Or Heller, “Al Quds Commander Killed in Syria,” Israel Defense, August 7, 2013, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.israeldefense.com/?CategoryID=514&ArticleID=2244>.

⁵⁴ Berman, 21.

Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia—leveraging each party’s strengths and maximized combined capabilities.⁵⁵

In order to keep Hezbollah at comparative operability with Israel, Iran follows a comprehensive program of building and maintaining Hezbollah’s tempo. Kenneth Katzman, while quoting the news article of Robin Wright of May 6, 2001, stated that Iran stationed about 200 IRGC personnel to unload, distribute, and train Hezbollah in Iranian weaponry. However, in his Congressional Research Service report of November 2004, he reduced the strength to 50. Moreover, he indicates that in addition to the regular payment of approximately \$200 million per annum to Hezbollah,⁵⁶ Iran systematically builds the tempo of Hezbollah to match any planned activity in future. He highlights the uncertainty about Iranian instigation of Hezbollah to provoke the July-August 2006 crisis with Israel, but provides details of substantial military equipment supplied just before the start of crisis. It included Fajr, Katyusha rockets, and C-802 sea-skimming missiles⁵⁷ fired at the Israeli city of Haifa and Israeli-Lebanese border.⁵⁸ On the other hand, Matthew Levitt holds Al Qods responsible for providing efficient intelligence and supervising Hezbollah’s actions. He also believes that operating jointly or distributing multiple regional targets between Hezbollah and Al Qods enhances the frequency or tempo.⁵⁹

Kenneth Katzman believes that Iran exercises simultaneity in the region by concurrent engagement of different geo-sensitivities. Regionally, besides solely relying on Hezbollah, Iran

⁵⁵ Levitt, 1.

⁵⁶ Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, eds., *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 137.

⁵⁷ The missiles were unique in nature, as they were modified by Iranian to be operated by Hezbollah from land, mounted on trucks near sea shore. These missiles resulted in the destruction of an Israeli ship towards start of the 2006 conflict. The incident was a shock to Israelis.

⁵⁸ Katzman, 16.

⁵⁹ Levitt, 3.

also favors the indirect approach of influencing unrest through money. In this regards, he highlights secret funding of Shias in Bahrain during November 2006 election, while simultaneously supporting Hezbollah's war against Israel at the other end of the region. Globally, Matthew Levitt highlighted Iranian determination to achieve the element of simultaneity, following the death of Iranian Physics Professor Masoud Ali Mohammadi. Iran planned to do this by re-visiting its relationship with Hezbollah. Levitt based his argument on the report by the Israeli Intelligence Organization specifying two conclusions between Hezbollah and Iran after Mohammadi's death: "First Hezbollah had to revitalize its operational capabilities and second the IRGC would no longer rely solely on Hezbollah to carry out terrorist attacks abroad. It would now deploy Qods Force operatives to do so on their own, not just as logisticians supporting Hezbollah hit men."⁶⁰

One can see that there is very little work done on the exact nature of the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah. The relationship presumed to be solely based on Islam, appears to be unrealistic, and this research exposes a clear gap. Matthew Levitt tried to fill the gap in his recent book, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God*, but his effort proves to be partial and biased in nature, due to his over-reliance on Jewish intelligence sources.

The author has endeavored to confirm the hypothesis by identifying the link between the ideology of Hezbollah with Iran, its projected aims and adopted approaches. There is confirmation that Iran uses different elements of operational art to control Hezbollah with a view to accrue regional and global aims. The reasons for using these elements stems from the diversified nature of the threat faced by Hezbollah and Iran. Iran manipulates (with her and)Hezbollah's regional and objectives and systematically aligns them with each other to accrue Hezbollah's support. To enhance her operational credibility and global relevance, Iran

⁶⁰ Levitt, 3.

consciously devised her anti-Israel and anti-United States agenda, to receive maximum support from all spheres of the Muslim community. One example of this effect is the existing operational relationship between Iran and Al Qaeda. This link, dating back to 1990, validates its strong nature which persevered in face of the 1996 Khobar Tower bombings and other sectarian conflicts.

The nature of the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah demands attention, due to their seeming compliance to an agreed agenda without acknowledging different geo-locations and diverse threat challenges. When Hezbollah's leadership itself, through Naim Qaseem, negates any direct relationship with Iranian administration, then what are the means employed by Iran to accrue support of Hezbollah without compromising the latter's concerns? H. E Chehabi, Judith Palmer, and many other researchers do believe religion to be a platform, but also confirm its presence in the background. Relative examination of their work indicates few untouched links that confirm the power of interests over religion. Iran schematically ensured convergence of many interests by chanting anti-Israel slogans with a view of soliciting Sunni support from across the world.

METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of this study is to test the research question that related to the nature of the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran. The question stated in the first section aims to identify key variables, other than religion, which promise seamless cohesion between the two. Separate instruments to measure these variables were utilized to this end. The single case study methodology will test the research question. This procedure is better than the multiple case study method, because it will provide the focus needed to ascertain the exact nature of the relationship. This focus is ensured by segmenting the entire length of the relationship into three periods. Each period will have a terminal phase that will influence the phase in line, thus filtering the key facts needed to confirm the hypotheses.

The true nature of the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran can only be ascertained by analyzing the connection in its entirety. It is true that similar religious beliefs provided ideological similarity, but this similarity was exploited towards regional gains even before the revolution. Iran has always been the cradle of Shia leadership since the conquest of land by the Safavid dynasty in 1502.⁶¹ The Shah of Iran organized a secret police force, *Sāzemān-e Ettelā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar* (Organization of Intelligence and National Security or SAVAK), for internal stability and regional influence. For example, in addition to the Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, a designated SAVAK official was routinely stationed in Lebanon.⁶²

In 1974, the most esteemed Shiite scholar of Iran, Ayatollah Borujedi, issued an order to Shia ulema to stay out of politics.⁶³ However, in 1979, the concept of *Walayat-e-Faqih* was personally presented by Ayatollah Khomeini to encourage the active involvement of clergy in politics to actively influence political setup of the country and make it more religiously biased against westerners.⁶⁴ This dramatic shift identifies the use of religion for political gains towards certain national and regional interests. Thus, religion provided the common background for work, but interests delivered the exact meaning to the relationships. These interests dictated the required manipulation of religion towards achieving internal, regional, and global objectives.

It is with this background that the author intends to conduct a single case study by dividing the entire tenure of the relationship into three distinct times. The first period will be the pre-inception phase highlighting the time from 1969 to 1978, and specifying the role of Musa Sadr in extending Iranian influence. The second period will be from 1979 to 2000 starting with

⁶¹ Shapour Ghasemi, "History of Iran: Safavid Empire 1502 - 1736," Iran Chamber Society, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/safavids/safavids.php>.

⁶² Chehabi, 169.

⁶³ Ibid., 141.

⁶⁴ Noorbaksh, 19.

the Iranian Revolution, then the creation of Hezbollah and their earlier activities. The third phase will be from 2001 to the present and highlights the latest trends visible in the relationship.

The method of structured focused comparison is adopted within the case study approach to answer a few standardized and general research questions, reflecting the research objective and theoretical focus of the inquiry. In other words, after choosing the problem for study, a well-defined research objective and an appropriate research strategy to achieve that objective will guide the selection and analysis of the case. Within this case, a set of variables is chosen in the form of elements of operational art to provide a theoretical explanation of the problem.

A total of 10 research questions are selected for the study. The first question will focus on what Iran's ideology is. The author expects that Iran's ideology is based on a distinct Islamic belief and the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Since the revolution of 1979 resulted into a major shift in the state's approach to the West; it found its way into the ideology and is perceived to be a source of spiritual energy for the Iranians. This source of spiritual and worldly guidance becomes more relevant when answering the second inquiry formulated to focus on Iranian strategic objectives. The answer to this question can be routed through the concept of Jurist-Theologian, which is considered vital to survive in the face of numerous challenges imposed by the West. In addition to exercising a regional hold on key natural resources, the strategic objectives can be poised to accrue sectarian support by holding supreme leadership of the Shia community in the world and the complete support of Muslim Ummah (Muslim World) by declaring anti-Zionist aims.

The third question pertains to the Iranian strategic approach. The author expects that it is guided by the objectives and depends marginally on the polity in power. The strategic approach is mainly influenced by envisaged threat and focuses on the age old and current national interests. The fourth question focuses on the ideology that Hezbollah takes its lead from the Iranian regional objectives and adopted approach. The Iranians exported their revolutionary ideology and

it was adopted by Hezbollah. Furthermore, the Iranian aim of destroying the Zionist regime appeared more relevant to them and thus the revolutionary mindset was quickly embraced by a culture based on hatred for the West and Israel.

The fifth question pertains to the strategic objectives of Hezbollah. The author assumes that, along with fighting Israel, the objectives also speak of creating an Islamic State in Lebanon. While this objective promises the requires sustenance, it will also enhance Hezbollah's image as another Islamic state. Presumably, this link answers the sixth question regarding the strategic approach of Hezbollah.

The seventh question focuses on how Iran uses Hezbollah to achieve depth. The author expects that Iran thinks Hezbollah is a proxy with added value, as compared to its other siblings in the region. Iran employs Hezbollah by submitting a matching motive for action and sequencing it with other planned actions in the region. The concept of depth is achieved through multiple actions stretched through the region to project regional capability of Iran, while simultaneously providing prominence on the global stage. Subsequent questions about using Hezbollah to achieve operational reach by Iran will likely provide the same answer but with added value to combat worthiness, which while accomplishing the perceived aims, attracts different organizations with similar aims in the region. This open door policy provides an operational reach to Iran for acquiring balance and executes quid-pro-quo responses against the West.

The ninth question focuses on the Iranian method of employing Hezbollah for achieving tempo. Tempo is translated through funding, equipping, and training Hezbollah to achieve their multiple strikes against a target in the minimum time possible. The author expects the permanent presence of an Iranian contingent in South Lebanon with the task to offload equipment for training Hezbollah fighters. Dedicated machinery is in place that keeps the Iranian authorities abreast with the latest needs and viable methods of delivery. The last question focuses on the Iranian use of Hezbollah to achieve simultaneity. The question appears to already be answered in

the discussions on depth, tempo, and operational reach. However, the author expects a slight addition in shape of the simultaneous employment of Hezbollah with Al Qods force and other proxies for obtaining similar effects. The concept of simultaneity is of value as it lays out the true capability of the state towards undermining the strength of several actors in a single blow.

This section restated the purpose of the research and presented the research questions. The relationship of Iran with Hezbollah is analyzed through a single case study by segmenting the connection into three distinct periods. This method will provide focus and needed scrutiny by comparing causes and effects of each period with the other. The aim is to draw pertinent conclusions by systematically answering a set of 10 questions. These questions are framed so that after individually analyzing Iran and Hezbollah, they focus on the visible methods of Hezbollah's employment. These methods speak of the prevailing relationship, which can be compared and studied alongside elements of operational art to provide a theoretical explanation of the problem. The following section is a presentation and analysis of data.

UNDERSTANDING THE IRAN-HEZBOLLAH NEXUS

Hezbollah is seen as a proxy of Iran with the assumption that it accepts any decision made by its master. The prevalent view of this cohesion, resides on the shared religious beliefs between Iran and Hezbollah. However, since its creation, the organization has had multiple conflicts with the Amal Movement, who believe in a similar religious sect. Thus, religion cannot be the sole reason of tying Hezbollah with Iran. In a world of interests, there have to be a few additional factors responsible for the cohesion between the two. In this context, it appears important to identify uniqueness in this relationship by detecting the exact nature and value of those underlying factors.

This section presents the case method test and the results tend to corroborate that Iran is maintaining the relationship with Hezbollah by employing a few hidden facts in the shape of the elements of operational art to achieve its desired strategic ends. The case study covers the entire

life span of Hezbollah from its pre-conception period to its current status by segmenting it into three distinct phases. The first phase covers the period 1979 to 1989, from the days when Musa al Sadr and Al Musawi influenced its creation, to the time of the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. The second phase covers the period from 1990 to 2001. The third phase covers the period from 2002 to 2013. Each phase is unique to the development of Hezbollah when observed through the relative political endeavors of Iran in particular and the region in general.

The current involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian crisis rings an alarm bell as to what extent Hezbollah is prepared to go to follow the clerical Fatwa of Musa al Sadr, and later the teachings of Ayatollah Khamenei. It was Musa al Sadr, who as the chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council at Tripoli in 1969, declared that "today, those Muslims called Alawis are brothers of those Shi'ites called Mutawallis by the malicious."⁶⁵ If seen in detail, the Alawite religion is often called an offshoot of Shi'ism, Islam's largest minority sect, but that is something like referring to Christianity as an offshoot of Judaism. The sect retains some links to the veneration of Hazrat Ali (Peace Be upon Him), the cousin and son-in law of the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be upon Him). The main difference is the Alawite's belief that Hazrat Ali (Peace Be upon Him) was divine, one of many manifestations of God in a line with Adam, Jesus, Mohammad, Socrates, Plato and some pre-Islamic sages from ancient Persia.⁶⁶ A point to note here is the dependence of the Amal Moment on Alawites. The Amal Moment composed of Lebanese Shias sought refuge in the military arsenals of Syrian Army which was dominated by Alawites.

⁶⁵ Martin Seth Kramer, *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East* (New Burnswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 200.

⁶⁶ Tom Heneghan, "Syria's Alawites, a Secretive and Persecuted Sect," *Reuters*, February 12, 2012, accessed April 14, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/02/us-syria-alawites-sect-idUSTRE8110Q720120202>.

This imposed religious similarity exposes some gaps between the proxy and its master. It clearly reveals the hollow nature of cohesion induced by religion and discloses some non-identified factors. The same fatwa was forgotten when Hezbollah was at war with the Amalists from 1980-1988. The same Alawites that Hezbollah is supporting now were its archenemies, when the former supported the Amal Movement in 1980 and 1987. Richard Norton points out that in 1980-1981, the “Amalists were going off to train in Syria and coming back wearing Syrian-style uniforms and supporting military style radios.”⁶⁷ In 1988, the Amal Movement actively combated Hezbollah over the case of William R. Higgins, an American officer working for the United Nations, believed to be abducted by Hezbollah.

By providing these examples, the author is trying to provide an insight to the meaningless base provided by religion in joining these proxies with their masters. There are other factors that the masters, especially Iran, uses to control Hezbollah. Available research draws out these facts but does not systematically assess it to provide a clear insight into the true motive of Hezbollah in complying with every Iranian demand.

This section provides a case study method test of the Iran-Hezbollah nexus from 1978 to 2013. The argument is that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 provided a glimpse of a bright future, far better than the mere survival of the Shias of Lebanon, who were desperately trying to survive the 15-year long Civil War. This impression also owes its roots to the continued religious scholarly exchanges between Iran and Lebanon during the period of Shah of Iran as part of his foreign policy for the Middle East.⁶⁸ The Israeli Invasion of 1982 further compounded the prevalent predicament of the Shias of Lebanon. It was in these times that the brother nation, Iran, sharing the same sectarian belief, appeared as a role model to follow. Their emotional links with

⁶⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 32.

⁶⁸ Chehabi, 156.

Iran were strengthened when Ayatollah Khomeini sent immediate assistance in the form of 1,500 IRGC personnel for the training and arming of Lebanese Shia into Hezbollah against Israel.

The role of the Hezbollah during the Iran-Iraq War and its potential of augmenting Iranian Defense Forces in the face of any aggression from the region and the West provided numerous versatile options to Iran. This new military arm is unique in its character. Since it is located in a distant land, it is capable of operating independently and aggressively against Israel and all other powers that Iran fears. Over a period of time, the bond between Iran and Hezbollah became rusty due to the latter's enlightenment by becoming involved in the Lebanese political arena. This involvement showed Hezbollah that they have to prioritize Lebanese national sovereignty over the Iranian agenda. They started seeing their own national interests first and analyzed the Iranian agenda with a keen eye on assessing its benefits towards their own interests. Iran, while tracking the impending disassociation, changed its approach to Hezbollah by prioritizing its arming and funding on par with its paramilitary forces with special deliveries of arms and equipment during the conflicts of 1993, 1996 and 2006. Furthermore, Ayatollah Khomeini's declaration of war on Israel and its true manifestation by his successor, Khamenei, also aligned with the vested interests of Hezbollah. The political approach of the Iranian regime of announcing an annual package that ranged from \$45-\$200 million over the years, provided some respite to Lebanese Shias and confirmed their emotional attachment with Iran. Moreover, the Shia Sectarian belief obligates every rich Shia to pay one-fifth of certain income to charity in shape of *khums* which the hub of ayatollahs in Qom dispatches to Hezbollah. The estimated annual income from *khums* is in the millions of dollars. The ayatollahs and IRGC, not the Iranian state, have authority over this money and decide how to distribute it. So the change in political regime does not bear any direct influence on Hezbollah.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Sahar Ghoussoub, "Hezbollah and Rouhani," Al Monitor, Lebanon Pulse, October 3, 2013, accessed April 14, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/home.html>, 1.

Iran is facing multiple challenges in regards to its economic stability. Iran's enmity with the West and the large youth population with an uncertain future results in a hostile attitude with global players. With limited options at hand, Iran finds Hezbollah, as a cheap option to further its aims in the region by promoting anti-Israeli, anti-western, and anti-Sunni sentiments. This distant organization was incorporated in the mainstream Iranian strategy of achieving regional effects and its viability is kept relevant by establishing a direct link of Hezbollah with Supreme Leader Wilayat-e-Faqih through a dedicated brigade of IRGC, The AL Quds force. The Al Quds force, through the Supreme Leader, employs certain factors which align regional aims of Iran with Hezbollah, and are responsible for maintaining Hezbollah as a decisive force of Iran that remains ready for an order.

This argument of identifying key factors employed by Iran in controlling Hezbollah and affecting strategic aims is developed in 10 steps. The first step is to know Iran's ideology in regards to what made Iran as it is today. The second step is the strategic objective Iran wants to achieve in the face of prevailing predicament. The third step is Iran's strategic approach of employing Hezbollah in achieving those objectives. The fourth step concerns Hezbollah's ideology. The fifth and sixth steps discuss Iran's strategic objective and strategic approach. The seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth steps elaborate the methods employed by Iran for using Hezbollah to achieve depth, operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity.

What is the Religious Ideology of Iran?

This question attempts to determine the idea behind the creation of the current Iranian regime. This question tries to ascertain the ideological link of the people to a particular concept, and their emotional attachment to a particular belief, that spiritually binds them into a common fabric and motivates them to struggle for progress. The ethnic and religious composition of Iran is correlated. For example, 89 percent of the population is Shia and the largest non-Shia bloc, Sunni

Muslim, is largely drawn from Iran's Kurdish, Baloch, and Turkmen population.⁷⁰ Due to the distinctive difference in the two sectarian beliefs and the sense of leadership of the entire Shia population of the world since the Safavid Dynasty (1501 A.D.), Iranians are motivated to defend their sect at all costs. This struggle began with the Safavid era and remains persistent even today. The clerics in Iran are the main pillar shouldering the responsibility to guide and lead the entire Shia population of the world. The seminary at the city of Qom known as "hawza"⁷¹ is the main place where the clerical establishment educates and enables the clergies to take on the role of their representatives for spreading their word of Islam. Based on their knowledge, capabilities, and individual skills these clerics are posted to different communities within Iran and various countries in the region with Shia population. These clerics deliver Khutba (religious speech) and lead the Jumma prayers, which every Muslim attends. The speech of the Khutba has to be in line with the guidance received from supreme religious leader, Walayat-e-Faqih, and acts as a platform to deliver the guidance directly from the Walayat-e-Faqih to general masses without involving political structure. Thus, the sectarian teachings in particular, and Islam in general, remains alive and fresh in every Iranian's heart.

Ayatollah Khomeini fully exploited this environment by inciting the Iranian revolution of 1979, and its further advocacy in the region, especially Lebanon. Ayatollah Khomeini is considered to have saved Iran from tyranny. Therefore, his practice of embedding clerics in mainstream politics was readily accepted by the masses. He, with the support of existing clerical

⁷⁰ Keith Crane, Rollie Lal, and Jeffery Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities* (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 3.

⁷¹ Aalul Bayt (A.S.) Global Center for Information, "Hawza: Traditional Islamic School of Advanced Studies," Imam Reza (A.S.) Network, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=6718>. One of the greatest Shi'ah scholars to have lived was Shaykh al-Tusi (385 AH/995 CE–460 AH/1067 CE). He established the Hawza 'Ilmiyya in Najaf (Iraq) which remained the main center of learning for the Shi'ahs for over 1,000 years until its decline in the last century. With the decline of Najaf, the city of Qum (Iran) rose to prominence and remains to date as the primary centre of traditional Islamic learning for Shi'ahs today. Main subjects taught at hawza include: Mantiq (Logic), Usul al-Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence), Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and Tarikh (History).

establishment, was successful in adding the concept of Wilayat-e-Faqih with the accepted ideology of Islam. His success was so overwhelming that the Shia clerics of Iran promoted their ideology to other Shias of the world, and the revolution was advocated to be the most needed way to achieve it. Therefore, when Shias of Lebanon and Iraq saw Iran as a role model, they aspired to an Islamic Revolution for adoption of the same ideology.

Presently, Iran is struggling to survive being an Islamic state with a distinct sectarian belief. By following the anti-U.S. agenda of Walayat-e-Faqih, Iran has closed all options of progressing in a uni-polar world.⁷² Being embedded in the ideology, Iranians have no other option except to revive the energies of its desperate masses, which as Suzanne Maloney asserts, is done mostly through Jumma proceedings starting with the teachings of Imam Khomeini and shouting “Marg bar Amrika” (Death to America).⁷³ This slogan in itself is a strategic objective shaped to yield several means necessary for survival. One example is Ilan Berman’s description of the Iranian objective to gain immediate regional energy resources in the face of western resistance by dominating the Caspian Energy Market against pro-western energy routes.⁷⁴ H. E. Chelabi provides another view of Iranian strategic objectives. He regards the holding of supreme leadership of the Shia community in the world and the Islamicization of the Middle East by uniting Muslims in struggle against Zionism as the two key strategic objectives of Iran.⁷⁵

What is Iran’s Strategic Objective and Strategic Approach?

This answer tends to differentiate Iran’s strategic objectives in various periods that coincide with the existing political setup. The state, while based on the religious and political

⁷² Lamote et al., 5.

⁷³ Maloney, 1.

⁷⁴ Berman, 91.

⁷⁵ Chehabi, 169, 230.

agenda set forth by Ayatollah Khomeini, remains subservient to the political setup of the country for its growth and internationally recognized existence. The main theme adopted by the political administration coincides with the guidance given by the supreme religious leader, but their mitigation varies with the reformist or conservative approach implemented by the two prominent political groups. Iran, a state with unique political structure facing acute challenges, continues to seek three main strategic objectives: survival in the face of imposed challenges from the West based on its anti-West and anti-Israel agenda; to maintain leadership of the entire Shia population of the world; and to project an ideal Islamic state capable of thwarting western designs in its homeland while simultaneously engaging its enemies on their home front. The uprising of thousands of angry protesters over President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reelection in 2009⁷⁶ against Mir Hossein Mousavi, and its effective control through Basijis and IRGC personnel, is a case in point. Supporting Hezbollah in the Israel-Lebanon war of 2006, highlights its objective to engage the enemy away from its homeland.

While discussing the strategic objectives and strategic approach during the pre- and post-revolution era, it appears that the main difference was in the first objective of survival. During the pre-revolution era, the Shah of Iran maintained cordial relations with the West and Israel,⁷⁷ and the country remained economically viable through petro-money. However, the Shah used the concept of proxy, and executed it by placing its clergies like Musa al Sadr in Lebanon, in addition to the stationing of professionals from the Iranian Intelligence Agency, SAVAK, to oversee clerical representation and coordinate future operations with the mainland. In Lebanon, Sadr and Colonel Pashai of SAVAK remained in contact with each other and exchanged information.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ John Simpson, "Ahmadinejad Re-Election Sparks Iran Clashes," *BBC News*, 13 June 2009, accessed May 5, 2014, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8098896.stm.

⁷⁷ Chehabi, 155.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

The aim was to deter United Arab Republic by instigating the Shias of Lebanon. During the post-revolution period, all three strategic objectives remained in focus with an aggressive pursuit of the third objective by arming Hezbollah with weapons and equipment during the 1993 and 1996 engagements with Israel. This approach, while projecting Hezbollah onto the global stage, amplified Iran's status in the region in particular, and in the world in general.

What is Hezbollah's Ideology?

The question examines the basis of forming Hezbollah, which remained the sole reason for their survival and how Iran analytically voiced it to accrue maximum support of the former. Naim Qassem, the deputy secretary of Hezbollah, declares that the ideology is based on three pivotal ideas: Islam, resistance against Israeli occupation, and confirming the leadership of Jurist-Theologian.⁷⁹ This declaration confirms the success of Iran in exporting its ideology to Lebanon and uniting a faction through its ideology. The anti-Israel agenda was present in Iranian attitude even before its loud proclamation by Ayatollah Khamenei in 1989, because the first step Iran took to organize Hezbollah rested upon the hatred for Israel. The IRGC personnel dispatched to train South Lebanese Shias against Israel, and Ayatollah Khomeini was already known for his anti-Semitic views. In 1970, while being exiled to Najaf, Iraq, he wrote a book, *Hukumat-i Islami* (*Islamic governance*), that laid out the philosophy of clerical rule: "Khomeini referred to 'wretched Jews' and offered allusions to Islamic history to depict Jews as a source of corruption among Muslims, asking God to curse them."⁸⁰

In pursuance of his predecessor's agenda, since being elected Supreme Leader in 1989, Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear that he wants Israel to disappear. For example in September

⁷⁹ Qassem, 19. For Shias Jurist-Theologian is considered to be the successor to the prophet and the Imams (PBUT). They believe that jurist-theologian draws the general guiding direction for the nation of Islam, and his commands and proscriptions are considered enforceable.

⁸⁰ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1981), 47.

1991, while meeting with the leaders of the Palestinian group Islamic Jihad and the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Ayatollah termed Israel as the source of the Palestinians' plight: "The United States cannot solve the Palestinian problem to its own liking. The issue is like a bone choking them and, God willing, with Israel's disappearance will be solved."⁸¹ Such loud declarations reinforced Hezbollah's belief in the solidarity shown by Iran and strengthened their emotional link to the Iranian ideology and mainly to the Jurist-Theologian. In other words, Iran projected to Hezbollah the anti-Israeli sentiments as part of Iranian ideology for coinciding strategic objectives, but never spoke about the destruction of Israel's government by Iran or even by the Islamic countries' armed forces.⁸²

What is Hezbollah's Strategic Objective?

The organization officially follows Iran as a role model. Its objective is focused on the destruction of Israel, which Hezbollah believes can be accomplished by forming an independent Islamic state in Lebanon. This third objective, while declaring solidarity with Iran, deters the existing political setup of Lebanon and was originally adopted by the organization as an agenda during the Lebanese political elections of 2005. Its objective against Israel, while promoting Hezbollah's survival as an efficient militant wing, also remains a strong motive to accrue maximum funds. These funds are used to maintain Hezbollah as a potent force and an Iranian tentacle capable of executing anti-Israel actions based on the will of different Muslim factions notwithstanding their sectarian or ethnic boundaries.

This capability has often resulted in the unification of Sunni-Shia factions into Hezbollah for operations against Israel. One example is the Hezbollah network in Southeast Asia made

⁸¹ Akbar Ganji, "Ayatollah Khamenei and the Destruction of Israel," *Boston Review*, November 1, 2013, accessed April 18, 2014, <http://www.bostonreview.net/world/ganji-khamenei-israel>, 1.

⁸² Ganji, 1.

entirely of local Sunni Muslims, under Pandu Yudhawitna, a terrorist recruited by an Iranian intelligence officer in Malaysia in the early 1980s. The network was behind a failed truck bombing targeting the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok in 1994, as well as other terrorist plots throughout 1990s.⁸³

What is Hezbollah's Strategic Approach?

The objective of protecting Lebanon from western impact also supports Hezbollah's ideology of believing in the Iranian revolution of 1979, and seeks this as the only way of limiting western influences. However, after considering the prevalent environment of the Shias demographic ratio in Lebanon, coupled with the resultant economic disadvantages to the country, Hezbollah chose a smart approach by joining the political arena of Lebanon. This speaks of the shared intellect in the party's leadership and its evolving nature to adapt quickly under challenging situations. In fact, the party's notoriety on the global stage works in its favor and provides the organization with support and funding from unexpected resources. Hezbollah remains independent in projecting its agenda throughout the Arab world through its personally owned television station, Al Manar. The television station serves as a mouthpiece of Hezbollah to disseminate propaganda and promote terrorist activity. It was founded in 1991 with \$1 million in seed money from Iran, and by 2002, its annual budget had grown to \$15 million.⁸⁴

How is Hezbollah Used to Achieve Depth?

Iran now is well conversant with Hezbollah's evolved intellectual approach towards its dictated agenda. While considering the organization's own strategic interests, Hezbollah assesses every Iranian order with keen insight and participates only when the outcome is favorable to them. Therefore, while planning different operations, Iran makes sure that the

⁸³ Giraldo and Trinkunas, 138.

⁸⁴ Giraldo and Trinkunas, 138.

perceived end state coincides with Hezbollah's national and regional ambition. In some cases, Iran exploits Hezbollah's anti-Israel sentiment and anti-West sentiments by adding an Israeli and western target in addition to the already planned Sunni targets of the region. This exploitation and indoctrination is very easy for Iran, because no major effort is required in the case of Israel. However, in the case of the United States, it stems out from the enhanced U.S. security assistance aid to the Lebanese army, especially concerning anti-terrorist agenda. Moreover, in a September 23, 2013 meeting with Lebanese President Michel Sleiman, President Barack Obama affirmed that Lebanon "has the full support of the United States in [its] efforts to uphold Lebanon's sovereignty and independence and that the United States strongly rejects Hezbollah's deep involvement in the Syrian conflict, which . . . threatens to destabilize the region. President Sleiman rejoined that he hoped that the necessary impetus [and aid] would be given to support the Lebanese Armed Forces to the five-year capabilities building plan in order to enable it to undertake all its mission regarding the defense exclusively of the Lebanese territories and countering the terrorist operations which have reached out to all the world."⁸⁵

Such assertions directly threaten Hezbollah's survival and provide an opportunity for Iran to persuade Hezbollah into an operational scheme directed against the western, Israeli and regional targets all at once. Their calculated execution under Iranian supervision through Hezbollah achieves engagement of multiple depth levels, while confirming Iranian use of imaginative thinking known as operational art.

How is Hezbollah Used to Achieve Operational Reach?

The distant location of Hezbollah coupled with its shared ideology with Iran carries an innate value for providing regional operational reach to Iran. Iran amply exploits this fact as it can

⁸⁵ Abraham Chaibi, "U.S. Aid to Lebanon, a Delicate Balance," *Foreign Policy*, February 10, 2014, accessed April 22, 2014, <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2014/02/10/u-s-aid-lebanon-delicate-balance/>, 1.

commit Hezbollah in a regional endeavor without coming to the forefront itself. Iran not only exercises this element in regional dynamics, but also has expanded its sphere of influence around the world. The Al Qods force, while acting as a linchpin between Hezbollah and Wilayat-e-Faqih, guides Hezbollah to achieve effects around the world. Regionally, the active involvement of the Al Qods force with Hezbollah in the Syrian tragedy highlights its reach. However, its global reach is exemplified by the bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994, which killed 85 people. Investigation of the case led to the verdict of an Argentinean judge to issue arrest warrants for four Iranian diplomats, including former Intelligence Minister Ali Fellaheen. The Iranian intelligence minister allegedly organized and supervised this bombing through Hezbollah, who were also believed responsible for the March 17, 1992 bombing of Israel's embassy in the same city.

How is Hezbollah Used to Achieve Tempo?

Iranian intelligence agencies proactively feel the pulse of the region and in order to keep Hezbollah dependent on the former's military aid, the Al Qods force carefully plans the military supply to Hezbollah. In this regard, a compromise is often made by Iran through sacrificing her recently planned national and regional endeavors in favor of Hezbollah's survival and combat worthiness. An example is the Israel-Lebanon war of 2006. Even before the start of the conflict, the Iranian military came pouring into Lebanon, and technical advisors along with the command echelon of the Al Qods force were actively involved in militarizing Hezbollah. However, at the same time, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1737 (2006) under Article 41 of the charter's chapter VII, "the Council decided that Iran should, without further delay, suspend the nuclear activities and blocked the import or export of sensitive nuclear material and equipment and freezing the financial assets of persons or entities supporting its

proliferation.”⁸⁶ This setback did not alter Iran’s continual support to Hezbollah and it built a war tempo of Hezbollah being capable of firing numerous Katyusha rockets and C-802 sea-skimming missiles⁸⁷ at the Israeli city of Haifa and the Israeli-Lebanese border⁸⁸ throughout the war.

How is Hezbollah Used to Achieve Simultaneity?

The element of simultaneity is directly related to the element of depth, which is deliberately explained in the previous paragraphs. Iran uses this element to project its role as a regional player capable of engaging multiple targets in the shortest possible time. Towards this end, Iran plays out its other regional proxies instigated by its clerics along with Hezbollah, to stage a regional catastrophe demanding quick responses from the countries in the region in particular, and the world in general. This point can be well understood by Iranian regional plans and predicaments during the year 2006. The year was marked by Iranian declaration of nuclear ambition, active support of Hezbollah against Israel, the planned murder of Nuclear Physics Professor Masoud Ali Mohammadi, and prompted unrest in the Bahraini elections through money and active mullahs.

These events of strategic value confirm the Iranian capability to fend off the presumed shakiness in the Iranian approach in the face of challenges, and their ability to project their strength by employing the element of simultaneity through engaging multiple targets in the shortest possible time. This fact also highlights the cohesion between the Iranian Armed Forces, especially IRGC, and hidden intellect of the religious hierarchy in turning perceived

⁸⁶ United Nations Security Council, “Security Council Imposes Sanctions on Iran for Failure to Halt Uranium Enrichment Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1737 (2006),” December 23, 2006, United Nations, 14 May 2014, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8928.doc.htm>.

⁸⁷ The missiles were unique in nature, as they were modified by Iran to be operated by Hezbollah from land, mounted on trucks near sea shore. These missiles resulted in the destruction of an Israeli ship towards the start of the 2006 conflict. The incident was a shock to Israelis.

⁸⁸ Katzman, 16.

disadvantages into future gains. This fact also ensures greater reliance of Iranian proxies in unabated obedience to Iranian demands.

Assessment

It is evident that the religious similarity provides a foundation to the relationship between Hezbollah and Iran. However, the ideological construct cemented by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 has lost its value in the eyes of the Hezbollah, due to the resultant political, and economical isolation from the western world. Hezbollah, being a learning organization, remains quick to adapt from dynamic political scenarios and has started considering the protection of Lebanese sovereignty as a strategic end state, over its own survival. This end state imposes on Hezbollah to maintain itself as a potent means by remaining combat worthy through acquiring arms, funds, and training from Iran, but also levies it to assess each Iranian dictum in a cautious way. Thus, this shift in end state, while achieving its earlier version, induces a new scope to struggle. The way of Hezbollah's employment is now strictly guarded by attitude to achieve their newly perceived end state, while simultaneously procuring benefits for their masters.

Iran, while cognizant of this political shift of Hezbollah manages to strike a balance and maintains cohesion by projecting the essence of Hezbollah's ideology as its own, and in most cases overlapping Iranian regional end state with Hezbollah's strategic end state (threatening Israel and solidarity with Lebanon). Iranian leadership also possesses that imaginative thinking that is embedded in operational art through merging of mutual end states, and provides a vision to Shias of Lebanon and Iran, that while promising their survival, exploits their regional sentiments, and induces a sense of oneness down at the community level. That explains why the Iranian political setup has no influence on Hezbollah's funding, because these funds are generated by individual communities of Iran and are centrally controlled by IRGC and the Supreme Religious Leader. This is one reason Iranians are so protective of their Shia leadership role in the world because it leverages the control of proxies by one person, the Jurist-Theologian.

The Iranians themselves, being politically evolved, acknowledge Hezbollah's concerns and always remain a step ahead of their proxy. They have made Hezbollah exclusively dependent on Iranian support in a systematic manner. During the time of Ayatollah Khomeini, Hezbollah remained a willing and obedient servant inspired by the Iranian revolution, and remained indebted for Iranian prompt support in 1982. They unarguably executed every Iranian command whether it be against the Amal movement, Syrian Army or Israeli defense forces, without analyzing the timing of their employment and the negative effect it had on Lebanese survival. Later, Hezbollah started thinking nationally and regionally by joining the Lebanese political arena and vehemently agreeing to a different end state of Lebanese survival over Shia survival in Southern Lebanon. During these times, Iran also matched the pace, and instead of supporting only Hezbollah, started supporting Lebanese national stature by enhancing ties in economic, and energy sectors while agreeing to help militarily. The aspect of proposing military aid by Iran to the Lebanese Armed Forces is of particular importance as it was projected at the time (2010), when there was major debate in the United States against arming Lebanese Armed forces, for the fear of it ending up in Hezbollah's hands.⁸⁹

Summary

This section attempted to underscore the struggle by Iran in maintaining the relationship with Hezbollah by implementing a flexible approach. This flexibility is exercised by the supreme leadership of Iran through both IRGC (Al Qods Force) and polity in power. It comes with the nesting of military aims with the political end state that is decided by the Supreme Leader, whose vision for the future (end state) is supported through intermediate objectives perceived mutually by both IRGC and the political wing of the state. This joint endeavor by three different tiers

⁸⁹ Will Fulton, Ariel Farrar Wellman, and Robert Frasco, "Lebanon-Iran Foreign Relations," The Iran Tracker, August 5, 2011, accessed April 24, 2014, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/lebanon-iran-foreign-relations>.

provides the Iranian regime the leverage to employ operational art in controlling Hezbollah, while simultaneously achieving the desired strategic end state. The use of operational art is also justified by dwelling deeply in its four elements: depth, operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity with their judicious employment by Iran to maintain control on Hezbollah and force it to pursue an Iranian agenda. At no point does Iran provide Hezbollah the freedom and strength that might cause disassociation of Iran from its proxy. It exercises restraint through permanently stationing of the Al Qods personnel in Lebanon, continuous supply of material, and distribution of targets among its other proxies. Hezbollah, while acting under the Al Qods supervision, remains on track in pursuing the mutually agreed agenda, and this safeguards the existing cohesion and provides strength to the relationship.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The facts providing cohesion to the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah have already been discussed. The research can be of value by relating it to the theory of operational art. This section tends to justify the author's belief concerning a few collaborative factors that strengthen the already existing religious base of relationship by providing a mechanism to control its efficacy. This mechanism of control is like a steering wheel of a ship. The ship itself is the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, which when battered through the waves of regional politics and respective interests, becomes more dependent on the Iranian navigational power. This power draws consent between both parties and rotates the wheel in the direction best suited for Iran first, followed by its proxy. To draw relevance with operational art, this section has two components: the analysis and findings. The analysis tends to review some links found in research to draw their validity towards the theory itself, while findings will re-visit the hypothesis to measure their validity towards our thesis statement.

The relationship between Iran and Hezbollah itself is the center of gravity to the Iranian operational reach in the entire region, which is guided by planned depth of operations that

determine its tempo with the prospect of achieving best results through simultaneous application of force. The guarding of the center of gravity rests with Iran, which actually does it through the control measures for steering the wheel in the direction it wants, without succumbing to the diverse national aims of its proxy. In other words, the inducement of cohesion into the relationship depends upon the Iranian approach to the problem that is mostly motivated by the fear of losing operational reach into the heartland of the Middle East.

Schneider gives the best definition of operational art that clearly describes the Iranian approach of doing things. He believes that operational art is the creative use of operations for the purposes of strategy, wherein the employment of forces is practiced in deep distributed operations involving judicious use of spaces, to seize and retain freedom of movement. It appears that the Iranian regional strategy aims to provide support to regime's national interests internationally. Iran maintains a regional role capable of global recognition by exercising operational reach through targeting Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the West by the Hezbollah.

Iran is clearly dependent on its proxy to maintain its operational reach for deep distributed operations. This dependence while justified by similar sectarian belief draws strength from diplomatic, economic, and military support of Iran. These vital backings, while providing an opportunity of striking deep, also enable Iran to project threats beyond its national boundary. Therefore, the concept of depth executed by Iran through the Khober Tower bombings in 1996, or Hezbollah's war with Israel in 2006, while exemplifying its operational reach and the sense of distributed operations, projects a battlefield away from its national territory. This projection allows Iran to plan operations with an open hand while limiting the strategic vision of targeted countries to their internal peace and domestic stability issues only. This facet remains an asset for Iran to promote its role as a regional player with coercive capabilities.

The research highlights a visible trend in Iran's strategy in maintaining and using the relationship with the subjects in South Lebanon. Initially under Ayatollah Khomeini, it focused

on limited regional gains for the Shias of Lebanon to promote the Iranian seat of Shia leadership in the world and justify the concept of Jurist-Theologian (given by Ayatollah Khomeini himself) for internal support. This limited gain appeared to be a seed for a strong tree, capable of casting a shadow on the entire region. The exact potential of the Hezbollah was realized after using it to keep Syria out of the Iran-Iraq War in 1987. This potential was used in its true sense after Khomeini's death by targeting Israelis inside and outside their country. The bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994, and the failed attempt to bomb the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok during the same year is a case in point. Broadly, the Israeli targets promise support of Hezbollah to Iran, but in fact, these attempts highlight the Iranian approach of stabilizing the national situation through global undertakings, by achieving simultaneity and extending its operational reach throughout the world.

The strategic vision in 1994 was partially to pacify internal unrest caused by the bombing of the Imam Raza Shrine in Mashad in June 1994⁹⁰ and Armenian shooting down of an Iranian C-130 carrying embassy staff from Moscow, in March of the same year.⁹¹ Why is the pacification of internal unrest important? The answer is already given in the case study, as it directly stabilizes the Iran-Hezbollah Nexus through public funding. Thus, diverting public attention towards hate for Israel played well for Iran. Thus, it is true that the Iranian regional strategy aims to provide support to the regime's national interests.

The attempt to affect different targets at multiple locations justifies Iranian intellectual genius of foresight that adequately achieves the strategic vision by linking the tactical actions

⁹⁰ Rohullah Hoseinian, "Bomb Explosion in Imam Reza Holy Shrine," Islamic Revolution Document Center, accessed May 18, 2014, <http://www.irdc.ir/en/calendar/438/default.aspx>.

⁹¹ Home Edition, "32 Die as Iranian Plane Strays, Crashes in Karabakh War Zone," *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1994, accessed May 18, 2014, <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/offers.html?url=%2Fflatimes%2Fdoc%2F282209967.html%3FFMT%3DFT%26FMTS%3DABS%3AFT%26type%3Dcurrent%26date%3DMar%2B19%252C%2B1994%26author%3D%26pub%3DLos%2BAngeles%2BTimes>.

with the envisaged effects. In turn, these effects achieve the desired purpose to attain the strategic vision. Therefore, it will be correct to say that Iranians precisely calculate every action and ensure requisite buildup of strength before committing to it. In essence, this requisite buildup maintains the required tempo of operations, which remains directed to achieve the desired effect with the same intensity and cost, favorable to the overall strategic vision.

The four elements of operational art used to adjudicate this research are operational reach, depth, tempo, and simultaneity. According to the author, these four elements easily tie in the Iranian equation with Hezbollah by relating every Iranian action to be calculative in nature, based on foresight that links in the strategic vision with the planned tactical action. It guides requisite buildup to maintain tempo, while striking deep at multiple objectives with simultaneous execution to achieve its strategic vision and projecting its operational approach to provide strength to its regional standing with global recognition.

Overall, three hypotheses provided the focus for this research and their sequencing guided the flow of research to be reader-friendly by framing the answer to the first question as a premise for the next question. The first hypothesis is that Iran is using elements of operational art in maintaining a strong relationship with Hezbollah. These include operational reach, depth, tempo, and simultaneity. The research clearly attempted to understand the relationship from its roots. The evidence from the research suggests that religious similarity is not the sole factor strengthening the relationship. It was the main proponent until Ayatollah Khomeini's death and thereafter more factors came into play. These factors individually and collectively provided Iran with the tools to steer the relationship with Hezbollah towards achieving her regional and global strategy, while maintaining the required cohesion. Therefore, the first hypothesis has a supported outcome and defines the precise use of operational art by Iran.

The second hypothesis is that the Iranian agenda against Israel and loud advocacy of Palestinian rights brought Hezbollah to the forefront in defending the Muslim cause in the Middle

East. These sentiments enabled regional support to Hezbollah during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war and are likely to be the established reasons for accruing any support in future. The evidence in the research proposes that this hypothesis has a mixed outcome. Iranian and Hezbollah's agenda against Israel is basically based on Hezbollah's national aim of territorial sovereignty and the Iranian objective to support Hezbollah for her ulterior motives.

There are sharp ideological differences between the PLO and the Hezbollah. This ideological divide while based on different sectarian beliefs goes far back to the initial days, when the PLO supported by Syria and the Amal Movement fought with the Hezbollah for the domination of South Lebanon. Moreover, Iranian support to Hamas against the PLO indirectly denies Hezbollah's claim to be the sole representative of the Muslim cause in the Middle East. Nonetheless, Hezbollah's fight with Israel will always be supported by individual Muslims with utter disregard for their government's political lineage. This hatred for the Jews gained large Muslim support during the 2006 war and is likely to achieve the same result in any future conflict.

The third hypothesis rested on the answer of the second hypothesis and assumed that the hatred for Israel, and Muslim representation in the Middle East by Hezbollah will result in unification of different organizations, thus closing in the gap created by religious dichotomy; for example, the Al Qaeda-Hezbollah Nexus. The research recommends that this hypothesis is partially supported. There is evidence in the research that the Iranian agenda against Israel and the West resulted in a close collaboration between Al Qaeda and Iran. Furthermore, the establishment, organization, and training of IRGC were provided by a few PLO trainers provided by Yasir Arafat after 1979. This help was stimulated by the anti-Israel agenda of Iran and remained undeterred even after the Khobar bombing of 1996. The Muslim unity remains to be tested against Israel and according to the author, it is purely based on the size and type of conflict

with Israel along with the prevalent regional dynamics including the threat to Muslim institutions in the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Iran-Hezbollah nexus by researching the true cause of cohesion between the two. Their relationship was presumably thought to be based on similar religious beliefs and all their joint actions were supposed to be directed through the religious obligations towards each other. This monograph examines in detail the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah through different political timelines beginning in 1972 and continuing to the present. This paper highlights the true strength of the relationship that remains subjected to the political interests of both sides. This research also demonstrates the aggressive Iranian policy to guard this relationship and their intellectual genius to tie in Hezbollah's national-political agenda with Iranian regional strategy.

Ten research questions provide focus to the study and facilitate collection of evidence. The first, second and third questions seek answers to Iran's ideology, strategic approach and strategic objectives. The fourth, fifth and sixth questions focus on Hezbollah's ideology, strategic approach and objectives. The seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth questions focus on how Hezbollah is used to achieve depth, operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity?

The thesis for this monograph was: Although religion provides the foundation of the link between Hezbollah and Iran, it could not be the sole factor for the cohesion between the two. Other variables such as a historically extended sectarian relationship, desire to maintain permanent presence of a cleric in South Lebanon, heavy investment in political and military reformation of Hezbollah followed by testing of wits during the 2006 war with Israel, help explain why the Hezbollah and Iran link has lasted for 34 years.

There were three hypotheses that required answers to this study. The first two had a supported outcome, whereas the last had a mixed outcome. There is a likelihood that Iran is using operational art in an imaginative way by controlling Hezbollah to operate and indirectly achieve Iranian regional aims by acting towards her own national objectives. Differences in sectarian

beliefs hinder Hezbollah's claim of representing the Muslim cause in the Middle East, however the anti-Israel agenda sparingly accrues support of other regional organizations like Al Qaeda.

The methodology of structured focused comparison was adopted within the case study approach to answer 10 research questions; reflecting the research objective and theoretical focus of the inquiry. In other words, a problem was chosen first and then a research strategy was selected. This guided the analysis and findings which revealed certain underlying factors necessary to address the problem. A set of variables were chosen in the form of elements of operational art to provide theoretical explanation of the problem.

There is vast variety of research available on the topic and it only provides the extent of the relationship with its effect on the Middle East. In other words, it dwells on the topic of creating Hezbollah and then straightway jumps to the collaborative effects achieved by Iran. It fails to connect the execution of different tactical actions of Hezbollah with the supposed Iranian regional strategy. Moreover, it falls short of explaining the influence of geo-spatial differences between Iran and Hezbollah that give birth to different political interests and how these interests are mitigated by Iran to maintain its firm control on Hezbollah. According to the author, the seamless understanding could only prevail if the relationship between the two is studied in detail and few important actions are sequenced together through time, space, and purpose with the aim to orient them towards the most accepted Iranian end state.

The study is valuable as it dissects the bond between Hezbollah and Iran by analyzing each cohesive thread under the lamp of necessity to justify Hezbollah's obedience as a proxy. The study is built over available research and has created new knowledge capable of directing the attention of a Middle Eastern planner towards identifying those key elements whose exploitation empowers Iran to control Hezbollah. This study can act as a basis to explore more on the subject including the relationship between Russia and Iran and how it affects the region; the relationship

of Turkey with Hamas and how it affects Israel that is already being recognized by Turkey; and the Israeli aim in the Middle East and how it can again challenge peace in the region.

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