

Exploring the Iran-Hezbollah Relationship: A Case Study of how State Sponsorship affects Terrorist Group Decision-Making

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Abstract

Understanding the impact of state sponsorship on the decision-making of violent non-state actors is among the more important issues to scholars of security studies. This article addresses the issue by examining the relationship between Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah. To preview its conclusions, there are two main perspectives to consider with regard to the terrorist group – state sponsor relationship. First, state support has a powerful, yet indirect effect on violent non-state actor decision-making by shaping the options available to groups' leaders. Second, state sponsors can also directly leverage their aid to shape the strategic decisions of armed non-state actors, forcing their clients to either expand or restrict their activities. Because of inevitable lacunae and contradictions amongst published accounts, this study relies heavily upon primary sources and data collected during field research in Lebanon, including interviews with leaders from Hezbollah, the Lebanese Army, the United Nations' Peacekeeping Mission in Southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the rival Shia organization, Amal.

Introduction

Understanding the impact of state sponsorship on the decision-making of non-state armed actors is among the more important issues to scholars of security studies. Since the end of the Cold War intra-state wars and internationalized civil wars have outnumbered traditional inter-state conflicts by a factor of more than twenty-to-one.[1] As a consequence, the outcome of most contemporary conflicts hinges on non-state armed groups' capabilities. Because many of these groups are supported by one or more states, questions must be posed as to how state sponsorship shapes the decision-making processes of violent non-state actors.

This article addresses the impact of state sponsorship on decision-making within violent non-state groups by examining the relationship between Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah, a group known among scholars and policymakers alike as an exceptionally capable organization. From its beginnings, Hezbollah demonstrated a high aptitude for conducting successful attacks against more powerful foes and displayed continued effectiveness over the course of three decades of conflict with Israel. Consequently, the organization has been referred to as the "A Team of terrorists" and is widely considered to be one of the world's most innovative armed non-state actors.[2] This analysis indicates that there are two main perspectives to consider with regard to the terrorist group – state sponsor relationship.

First, state support has a powerful, yet indirect effect on violent non-state actor decision-making by shaping the options available to groups' leaders. When states offer violent non-state actors sanctuary and steady financial assistance, they empower such organizations to undertake long-range planning and adopt a long-term perspective towards their struggle. Moreover, the ability

to pay regular salaries and use safe havens as loci for transferring knowledge within the organization enables the personnel of sponsored groups to develop a greater degree of professionalism and pursue improved organizational learning. In certain instances, sponsored violent non-state actors can also leverage the financial resources provided by sponsors to pursue “hearts and minds” campaigns predicated on their ability to provide social services and welfare benefits. In short, through the resources they provide, state sponsors fundamentally shape both the environment within which terrorist and insurgent leaders make decisions and the options available to them.

Second, besides indirectly influencing groups’ decisions by enhancing their professionalism and capabilities, state sponsors can also directly leverage their aid to shape the strategic decisions of armed non-state actors. In certain instances, states may encourage the escalation of violence by compelling the recipients of their support to attack targets or undertake actions they would normally have eschewed. In other cases, states can act as a constraining force; persuading a group to either forego or scale-back certain activities. In instances when state sponsors demand that armed non-state actors pursue escalation or exercise restraint, the latter are obliged to weigh the potential loss of support that might follow a refusal against the negative consequences that would likely ensue from a modification of its strategy, tactics or targeting.

Sponsorship’s Indirect Impact on Group Decision-Making

Scholars and policymakers alike have long asserted that active support from states enhances the overall capabilities of armed non-state actors, but relatively little has been published on how this support impacts decision-making within the group. Despite this lacuna, there are powerful reasons for anticipating that state sponsors will exercise both indirect and direct influences on decisions within armed non-state actors. Indirectly, the aid provided by state sponsors fundamentally shapes the opportunity costs of the strategies an organization *can* adopt. Secure finances and foreign sanctuaries enable non-state actors to embrace long-term strategies that rely on a high degree of professionalism, particular weapons systems can alter the military balance between terrorists and counter-terrorists, and training by state sponsors can widen a group’s intellectual horizons to include new tactics and techniques.

Before analyzing state sponsorship’s impact on decision-making within one particular non-state actor, it is first necessary to explore how the different forms of support states offer shape the opportunity costs of different forms of organizational behavior. To this end, the impact of the four distinct forms of support—financial assistance, material aid, sanctuary and political backing - articulated by scholars Daniel Byman and Bruce Hoffman - will be successively examined.[3]

With the steady financial support states can provide, violent non-state actors can take a long view towards their struggles. One reason for this is that well-resourced armed non-state organizations can pay their personnel regular salaries, which enables such groups to attract and retain promising human capital. Moreover, freed from the need to hold jobs on the side, individual terrorists and insurgents can devote themselves full-time to subversive and paramilitary activities, becoming ‘professional’ (as opposed to amateur) operatives.[4] Logically, these financially-secure, full-time professional cadres belonging to state-sponsored organizations can be expected to pursue strategies that are both more measured and sophisticated than counterparts

from organizations with tenuous financial incomes.[5] Besides changing how individual terrorists and insurgents view their struggles, financial support from states also permits long-range budgeting, which enables violent non-state organizations to pursue long-range strategic planning.

Besides changing the strategic outlook of violent non-state actors, financial sponsorship from states also enables these organizations to offer welfare benefits and social services in an effort to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of target populations.[6] Thus, rather than predatorily extracting wealth from a population, financially-supported armed non-state groups can compete with their state adversaries and other civil society actors for a population’s loyalty.[7] Amongst the benefits offered are: functioning judicial systems, healthcare, schools and running water.[8] Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the importance this welfare dimension—which can be conceptualized as a distinct operational front—of many contemporary intra-state conflicts. To give but one example, recent struggles amongst Fatah, Hamas and other groups to mobilize Palestinians in the occupied territories and refugee camps hinged on their comparative ability to use sponsor-provided resources to offer constituents social services.[9]

While financial support constitutes one way that state sponsorship impacts non-state actors’ calculations, the provision of weaponry constitutes another. Banned by international law from legally importing armaments, most non-state actors both depend on a narrow range of tactics and have trouble innovating. Consequently, state transfers of sophisticated weapons to their non-state protégées can dramatically increase the military options available to the latter, while degrading their opponents’ capabilities.[10] For example, the United States’ decision to supply Afghanistan’s mujahideen with man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) in the 1980s reduced the Soviet Union’s ability to use tactical airpower against them; and Iran’s provision of explosively-formed projectiles (EFP) gave Iraqi Shiite militias new options for inflicting damage on coalition forces in the 2000s.[11]

Besides supplying money and weaponry, states also indirectly effect group decision-making when they provide violent non-state organizations with sanctuary. As Al-Qaeda’s travails since 9/11 demonstrate, it is extremely difficult for organizations to formulate effective policies and plan intricate operations when they are constantly on the run.[12] Moreover, organizations bereft of safe havens can only with great difficulty manage their assets and draw lessons from past operations because the standard bookkeeping and archival procedures necessary for routinized organizational management is a liability when financial records and archives are liable for seizure. Consequently, state sponsors foster conditions conducive to both better decision-making and to more effective organizational management by providing sanctuaries where their clients can plan and organize in comparative safety. Furthermore, it is easier for such organizations to transmit tactical lessons and tacit knowledge between their different units and between veteran and novice fighters when they can locate permanent training camps in safe havens.[13]

In addition to material support and the offer of sanctuary, states also indirectly shape decision-makers’ calculations within armed non-state organizations when they provide them with political support.[14] For groups fighting either to control a state or secede from one, diplomatic recognition and support in international forums provides non-state groups with an aura of legitimacy and complicates their opponents’ efforts to repress them. Such is especially the case

when state sponsors highlight (real or alleged) civilian casualties and human rights abuses to discredit counter-terrorist and counterinsurgent forces. For example, Arab states increased the diplomatic costs of France's counterinsurgency campaign and limited its political options by formally recognizing Algeria's anti-colonial Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN), raising the "Algerian question" at the UN, and criticizing French forces' use of torture.[15] Support of this variety can be expected to have a powerful, yet complex impact on decision-makers' calculations by simultaneously reducing the costs of attacks that might generate limited political blowback and raising the cost of operations that would place the organization 'beyond the pale' of international relations.

Taken as an ensemble, the support states offer armed non-state organizations can powerfully, yet indirectly influence the latter's decision-making processes. Because financial assistance enables groups to retain trained cadres and safe havens permit them to transfer knowledge within the organization, state-sponsored non-state organizations can develop a higher degree of professionalism and continue to perfect their tactical repertoire over time. Moreover, a wider variety of armaments and more thorough training increases the range of options available to such organizations. When combined with the long-range budgeting and strategic planning that state supported non-state actors can undertake, these institutional advantages encourage sponsored organizations to adopt a long term perspective towards their struggles. Overall, the greater tactical flexibility, long-range planning and professionalism of state-sponsored groups yield, under *ceteris paribus* conditions, enhanced effectiveness and greater durability. Thus, given the extreme attrition rate of armed non-state actors—with 90 percent of terrorist groups collapsing during their first year of existence—a state sponsor's aid frequently means the difference between being relegated to the status of historical footnote and developing the power needed to inflict meaningful damage on their opponents.[16]

State Sponsors' Direct Influence on Group Decision-Making

Besides these indirect effects of state sponsorship on decision-making in non-state groups, states can also leverage the aid they provide to intervene more directly in their clients' planning processes. Although ideological factors can contribute to states' willingness to assist groups, governments also seek to advance concrete foreign policy interests through their relationships with armed non-state actors. However, because the preferences of states and their non-state protégées are rarely identical, the former must compel the latter to deviate from their preferred courses of action if they will succeed in attaining their ends. In certain cases, states will use their influence to coax their clients into attacking targets they would otherwise have eschewed. In other cases, the dictates of national foreign policies will lead states to restrain their clients.

Many states are tempted to use the leverage that their sponsorship of insurgents and terrorists gives them to compel violent non-state actors to attack their opponents. In certain instances, governments exploit non-state actors in this way because using proxies to conduct attacks, rather than their own military and intelligence agencies enables them to deny their responsibility and, therefore, avoid reprisals.[17] In other cases, states compel non-state groups to attack their opponents because the latter are considered more effective at the tasks at hand than the state's

own services.[18] As a result of both motivations, states often compel violent non-state actors to attack targets they would not otherwise have considered.

For example, Iraq bribed a Palestinian group—Wadi Haddad’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – Exterior Operations (PFLP-EO)—to hijack the 1975 OPEC meeting and assassinate Saudi Arabia’s oil minister.[19] Likewise, Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu compelled a Marxist West European terrorist group he supported to bomb a Radio Free Europe office in Munich to stop its criticism of his regime.[20] In both of these cases, groups faithfully and skillfully executed missions whose accomplishment in no way contributed to their broader political objectives, which were respectively Palestine’s liberation and an end to capitalist democracy in Western Europe. When states instrumentalize non-state organizations to strike targets they would not normally have attacked, as occurred here, the end result is an enlargement of the latter’s target lists beyond what would normally have been the case, which could earn the non-state organizations new enemies that would otherwise have been better disposed towards their struggles.

While states sometimes push their non-state protégées towards violence against a wider-range of foes, their national interests can also drive them to counsel restraint.[21] Because the actions of armed non-state actors can precipitate military retaliation against their sponsors, states have an incentive to keep their clients’ level of violence below some ill-defined threshold, beyond which the sponsoring state itself becomes a target for retaliation. Consequently, states frequently find it in their interest to constrain their non-state clients’ activities. For example, Jordan cracked-down on the PLO in 1970 after the Palestinians refused to scale-back the raids they launched from Jordanian territory.[22] While the Jordanian case is extreme, states often seek to calibrate the activities of their non-state clients to maximize the damage against the state’s foes, while minimizing the risks of their suffering military reprisals.

Thus, states can use the leverage their sponsorship provides to compel non-state armed groups to expand or restrict their activities. In either case, state sponsor seek to coax their clients into adopting courses of action that the latter *a priori* consider sub-optimal. However, the considerable advantages that state support confers on terrorist and insurgent groups render it difficult for armed non-state organizations to categorically reject demands from their sponsors. Consequently, relations between states and their non-state clients are often characterized by dynamics redolent of principal-agent theory, with sponsoring states employing the power of their disposal to compel armed non-state actors to undertake activities these latter would otherwise never consider.

Case Selection

In this article, the focus is on Hezbollah’s relationship with Iran during Hezbollah’s first decade of existence in order to assess how Iranian sponsorship both indirectly and directly shaped decision-making within Hezbollah. To enhance the relevance of the findings, the analysis deliberately focuses on an organization widely regarded as one of the most formidable of its kind - Lebanon’s Hezbollah - whose state sponsor – Iran - is amongst the most active supporters of violent non-state groups. By examining how Iranian support shaped decision-making within Hezbollah, this study aims to provide both general insights into how state sponsorship shapes

their clients' decision-making processes and fresh insights about the specific relationship uniting one of the world's premier violent non-state actors and a state that is one of the most active supporters of such groups.

Now thirty years old, Hezbollah has acquired a reputation for competence equaled by few violent non-state groups. This fact led terrorism scholar Daniel Byman to refer to Hezbollah as "the single most effective adversary Israel has ever faced" and (former) Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to opine that "Hezbollah may be the 'A-Team of Terrorists' and maybe Al-Qaeda is actually the 'B' Team." [23] Besides its acknowledged competence, Hezbollah is also one of the most geopolitically significant violent non-state actors. Hezbollah's military operations have exerted a continual pressure on Israel and its example of successful resistance has inspired Palestinian groups to emulate both its tactics and organizational practices. [24] This reality, as reflected in a recent survey of American policymaking elites, led informed observers to hypothesize that Hezbollah and Israel are the two entities most likely to go to war. [25] Moreover, besides opposing Israel, Hezbollah sent its veterans to advise insurgent groups in Iraq and used its military wing to strong-arm domestic Lebanese opponents in 2008. [26]

While Hezbollah is one of the world's premier violent non-state actors, Iran is one of the most active sponsors of such groups. As a number of scholars have demonstrated, Iranian support of armed non-state organizations is motivated by three distinct, yet interrelated considerations. Firstly, through support for anti-Israeli militant groups, such as the Palestine Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah, Iran injects its voice into the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; an issue central to the Arab world that has enabled Iran to garner a degree of popularity otherwise unobtainable by a state that is both religiously Shiite and ethnically Persian. [27] Secondly, besides its desire for a greater voice in regional affairs, Iran has been driven to support violent non-state actors because of its de facto status as the self-appointed champion of Shia Muslims, who suffer from discrimination and oppression at the hands of Sunni governments. Within this context, Iran has sponsored Hazara militias in Afghanistan and terrorist groups in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain (both named Hezbollah in imitation of the Lebanese organization). [28] A third and final motivation for Iranian sponsorship of violent non-state actors is its conventional military weakness, which has led it to rely on proxies to deter or attack its adversaries. [29] As a result of the above three reasons, Iran is exceptional in terms of the number of organizations it supports and their role in its foreign policy.

Considering Hezbollah's importance as a violent non-state actor and Iran's prominence as a sponsor of such groups, the following pages first examine how Iranian support has indirectly affected decision-making within Hezbollah by shaping the opportunity costs of different strategies. After examining sponsorships' indirect influence, the study analyzes Iran's direct impact on Hezbollah's decision-making, including efforts to both expand and constrain its activities. Because of inevitable lacunae and contradictions amongst published accounts, this study relies heavily upon primary sources and data collected during field research in Lebanon. In addition to systematically examining published primary sources, leaders from Hezbollah, the Lebanese Army, the United Nations' Peacekeeping Mission in Southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the rival Shia organization, Amal were interviewed.

Sponsorship's Indirect Impact on Hezbollah's Decision-Making

Iranian sponsorship has played a critical, yet indirect role in shaping the strategies adopted by Hezbollah's leaders since that organization's creation in 1982. Within this context, Iranian financial aid enabled Hezbollah's founding cadres to adopt a long-range approach, wherein a combination of the professionalism of its combatants and the group's gradual development of social services would exhaust Hezbollah's Israeli adversaries and win it the allegiance of Lebanese Shiites. Likewise, Iran's provision of safe havens inside Iran itself and (through its intercession with Syria) within Lebanon's Beka'a valley, enabled Hezbollah's politico-military command structure to plan operations in relative security and permitted the organization to develop a sophisticated infrastructure of training camps and administrative facilities. Finally, Iran's constant political support—especially its intermediation vis-à-vis Syrian authorities—proved a *sine qua non* for Hezbollah to operate freely in Lebanon. Thus, taken as a whole, Iranian support was a prerequisite for Hezbollah to pursue the strategies that ultimately brought it such success.

Of particular importance to Hezbollah's rapid development is the fact that many Lebanese Shiites belonged to violent non-state groups and had acquired considerable military experience prior to Hezbollah's creation in 1982. Some Shiites—including the future leaders of Hezbollah's intelligence service (Husayn al-Khalil) and Jihad Council (Imad Mughniyah)—had joined Palestinian groups from 1969 onwards when the Cairo Agreement erected South Lebanon as a sanctuary that Palestinian guerrillas could use to attack Israel.[30] Many other Shiites acquired their military experience fighting in Lebanon's Civil War for the militia belonging to the country's established Shiite movement, Amal. However, Amal's status as Lebanon's Shiite movement *par excellence* was already being contested in the years prior to Hezbollah's creation by religious scholars dissatisfied with the increasingly secular platform adopted by Nabih Berri since he assumed control of the party in 1980.[31]

Given these preconditions, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon provided the final impetus needed for the creation of a new, more militant Shiite movement—Hezbollah. When Berri ordered Amal's militia not to resist Israel's advance, many of his combatants spontaneously disobeyed his orders and joined Palestinian and Syrian forces in resisting the Israeli army as it approached Beirut.[32] Meanwhile, Israel's lightning advance through South Lebanon left the Shiite fighters formerly employed by Palestinian groups both unemployed and footloose, yet willing to carry on fighting Israel. At a higher level, Amal's chief military commander, Husayn al-Musawi, broke overtly with Berri and called for Shiites to resist the invasion in the name of Islam.[33]

The spontaneous and individual decisions of some Shiites to fight against invading Israeli forces laid the basis for the emergence of some form of insurgency. However, both the scope and strategy of the movement would likely have been far different in the absence of Iran's support. In its initial phases, Shiite resistance against the Israelis was conducted under the aegis of a wide range of small groups, ranging from disaffected Amal units to associations of Islamic students. [34] Without any hierarchy, village mullahs and seasoned militia leaders organized attacks as best they could. Moreover, Lebanon's Shia community was by no means united in opposition to Israel. Many Shiites in South Lebanon initially considered the Israelis liberators from

Palestinian domination, while Lebanon's largest Shiite party, Amal, adopted a wait-and-see approach to the invasion.[35]

Although it is impossible to ascertain with certainty what would have ensued had no state sponsored Shiite resistance against Israel, the disjointed origins of the resistance suggests that a counterfactual unsponsored campaign would have been both less controlled and less well-planned than what actually transpired. Thus, rather than a single monolithic entity—Hezbollah—managing a cohesive long-term effort to mobilize Shiites against Israel, resistance might have been characterized by local acephalous groups operating independently of one another. Although such uncoordinated resistance can be troublesome, as witnessed by Iraq's anti-American Sunni insurgency, its strategic impact is often lessened by the absence of centralized military leadership or coherent political direction.[36] Without the resources needed to remunerate their members or provide social services, such groups also employ terror and intimidation to control their constituent populations, risking popular backlashes (e.g. equivalent to Iraq's 'Anbar Awakening').[37]

Recognizing the shortcomings of the spontaneous, unsponsored resistance that followed the Israeli invasion, three Lebanese clerics who knew Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini travelled to Tehran where they appealed for Iranian support to form an Islamic resistance movement.[38] Khomeini and his inner circle responded enthusiastically to this request and began plotting to supply the nascent anti-Israeli resistance with a range of different types of support. First, in exchange for an annual subsidy of 9 million barrels of Iranian oil, Iran convinced Syria to allow it to use Lebanon's Syrian-occupied Beka'a Valley as a safe haven where the anti-Israeli resistance could organize itself.[39] Once this has been negotiated, Iran initially deployed 5,000 members (soon thereafter to be reduced to 1,500 and later 300) of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) to establish training camps and begin managing the influx of financial assistance that followed.[40] Thus, Iran provided, in short order, Hezbollah with sanctuary, financial assistance and political support.

Iranian aid had an almost immediate impact on decision-making within the nascent Shiite resistance. Having been launched disjointedly by groups dispersed across the southern half of Lebanon, decision-making was originally confined to the local level and lacked any strategic dimension whatsoever.[41] However, Iran's offer of the Beka'a Valley as a sanctuary provided a locale where a common politico-military command structure could be forged. Consequently, the leaders of numerous Shiite resistance groups converged on Beka'a after Iran's Revolutionary Guards arrived in July. There they hammered out a common platform that nine delegates signed—including three former Amal cadres, three leaders of small religious groups, and three clerics connected with the Da'wa (Islamic Call).[42] The negotiations that led to the adoption of this platform, which is known as the 'Manifesto of the Nine' and has been referred to as Hezbollah's founding act, were influenced by Khomeini's representative in Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, and bore an Iranian imprimatur.[43]

Within this context, the document called for jihad against Israel, emphasized Islam as the movement's organizing principle and declared the signatories' adherence to the doctrine of *wilayat al-faqih* (rule of the supreme jurist) that accords supreme temporal authority to an Iranian cleric.[44] Despite the general nature of this platform, its adoption paved the way for the

formation of a centralized politico-military decision-making body - the *Shura*, or Council - whose initial numbers are unknown and reportedly varied, but later stabilized between seven and nine.[45] While the Shura would guide Hezbollah's political and military activities, the organization's adoption of the doctrine of *wilayat al-faqih* meant that Iran's supreme religious leader (through emissaries) could adjudicate disputes within Hezbollah or define new broad directions for the organization to follow. Ultimately, this combination of a domestically-based collective decision-making body with a foreign authority empowered to resolve intra-organizational disputes enabled the resistance leaders to gradually forge a multitude of spontaneously-formed local resistance groups into a single movement.[46] Thus, by prompting the centralization of authority under Hezbollah's Shura, Iranian sponsorship radically improved decision-making within the movement.

While Iran's sanctuary and organizational aid were crucial to Hezbollah's development of centralized decision-making bodies, its long-term commitment to providing financial aid fundamentally shaped the strategic options available to Hezbollah's policymakers. Whereas unsupported organizations are frequently obliged to adopt short time horizons, hoping that spectacular acts will either achieve their strategic ends or at least attract donors, state-sponsored groups *can* pursue their goals over the long-term, gradually building their own capacities and seeking to eventually exhaust their opponents' resolve. Within this context, Iran's firm commitment to support the resistance with an annual subsidy estimated at \$140 million during the 1980s gave Hezbollah's leaders the leeway to adopt either short- or long-term strategies.[47] Given a choice, Hezbollah's leaders wisely decided upon the latter policy of preparing for a long war because they recognized that Israel's military superiority rendered the organization's prospects for short-term success illusory.[48]

In keeping with their decision to use Iran's financial aid to build an organization suited to prolonged conflict, its founders enshrined in the Manifesto of the Nine that, "Resistance against Israeli occupation, which is a danger to *both the present and future*, receives ultimate confrontation priority... This necessitates the creation of a Jihad *structure* that should further this obligation, and in favor of which all capabilities are to be employed (emphasis added)."[49] In short, Hezbollah's leaders seized the opportunity provided by Iranian aid to embark on the long-term strategy of developing an organization that could mobilize Lebanese Shiites and inflict a steady stream of casualties on Israel.[50] To this end, Hezbollah's leaders embarked on a long-term campaign to win Shiites' "hearts and minds" by providing them with social services and welfare benefits.[51] In the years prior to Israel's invasion, Hezbollah's future leaders personally witnessed how Palestinian guerrilla groups alienated southern Lebanon's inhabitants by provoking Israeli reprisals while failing to provide any countervailing benefits to Lebanon's population. As a consequence, Hezbollah's founding cadres concluded that the organization could only sustain a long-term struggle if they could offer Shiites tangible benefits and mitigate the losses they suffered in the conflict.

To highlight their commitment to win the "hearts and minds" of Lebanese Shiites, Hezbollah's governing Shura (Council) adopted the slogan of building a "society of resistance." As part of this strategy, Hezbollah developed generous welfare initiatives - financed by Iran's Martyrs Foundation - to encourage families to support their male members' decisions to fight for Hezbollah. As one of Hezbollah's welfare agencies forthrightly argues, "The martyr goes

forward welcoming martyrdom while relying on resistance institutions, which take care of his son and family after him.”[52] Examples of such welfare provisions include comprehensive medical care for injured fighters, vocational schools, and employment in subsidized workshops for fallen fighters’ dependents.[53]

Beyond providing welfare benefits to fighters and their families, Hezbollah’s leaders developed services to succour Lebanese civilians caught in the cross-fire between Hezbollah and Israel. The objective of such services was to prevent the collateral damage generated by Hezbollah’s resistance from triggering a popular backlash against the organization, as the earlier Palestinian guerrilla campaign had provoked in southern Lebanon. Beginning in 1983, Hezbollah paid 70 percent of the medical costs of civilians injured in its clashes with Israel.[54] Recognizing that war’s material effects also alienated non-combatants, Hezbollah’s decision-makers launched the *Jihad al-Binâ* (Reconstruction Campaign) in 1985 to rebuild damaged homes.[55] Through this agency, Hezbollah rebuilt 1,200 lodgings by 1993, and another 16,000 prior to 2006.[56]

Besides the purely instrumental purposes of incentivizing fighters’ families to accept the loss of loved ones and recompensing civilians for collateral damage, Hezbollah’s founding leaders also pursued a long-term strategy of using social services to penetrate Shiite civil society. Shiites had been comparatively neglected by the Lebanese state even before the countries’ civil war and were virtually bereft of government social services at the time of Hezbollah’s foundation.[57] Although the existing Shiite movement, Amal, had attempted to provide social services, its efforts had suffered from poor management and endemic corruption.[58] Consequently, Hezbollah’s decision-makers perceived an opportunity to improve the organization’s performance legitimacy by providing social services the state and other political parties could not.

With Iran’s assistance, Hezbollah began its campaign to provide social services in 1982 when the affiliated Imam Khomeini Assistance Committee opened its doors in Lebanon, whence it would grant 130,000 scholarships and provide financial assistance to 135,000 needy families.[59] With a gift of 30 Iranian tractors, Hezbollah expanded its activities in 1988 to improving the existence of rural Shiites by organizing agricultural co-operatives.[60] That same year, Hezbollah organized the first regular garbage collection service that Beirut’s Shiite suburb, the Dahiya, had known since the Civil War began in 1975.[61] As its administrative capabilities expanded, Hezbollah broadened its community engagement activities to include: micro-credit loans, providing clean water in South Beirut, building low-cost housing, and managing an affordable healthcare system.[62]

Over time, Hezbollah’s social services achieved the objectives its founding decision-makers had set for it. By the 1990s, the perception that Hezbollah alone could provide adequate social services enabled the organization to build an unrivaled popular base within Lebanon’s Shiite community.[63] Nevertheless, although Hezbollah’s “hearts and minds” campaign was domestically managed, it depended on Iran’s financial assistance. As one study of Lebanese militias’ provision of social services concluded, “Iran’s contributions have placed Hizballah in the strongest financial position of the... organizations examined.”[64] Hezbollah’s own director of media relations, Ibrahim Moussawi, likewise conceded that the organization’s provision of

social services depended on the generosity of both Iran's government and its principal Ayatollahs, who contribute independently of the state.[65]

In keeping with its long-term efforts to win the "hearts and minds" of Lebanese Shiites, Hezbollah's founding cadres also adopted a long view of their military confrontation with Israel. In their eyes, the key to victory was building the organizational capacity to inflict a steady stream of casualties over a prolonged period of time, rather than pursuing spectacular results in the short term. Iran's support was, moreover, considered vital for such a strategy to succeed because only salaried, full-time insurgents could acquire the requisite expertise to enact this strategy and re-training for new tactics could only be conducted in a safe haven, such as Iran provided in the Beka'a.[66]

As part of their long war strategy, Hezbollah's decision-makers embarked on a policy of gradually building up the organization's combat strength. Hezbollah was able to attract both veteran Shiite fighters formerly employed by Amal and Palestinian groups, and eager young recruits, by offering salaries of \$150-200 per month.[67] However, Hezbollah's leaders' insistence on thoroughly vetting recruits meant that many volunteers waited six months or more before being inducted into the organization and might wait even longer after training before being infiltrated into Israeli occupied zones. Meanwhile, Hezbollah's Shura forced many of its founding militants to temporarily suspend their resistance activities by insisting that all members—even clerics who would have administrative duties—should graduate from a common 45-day paramilitary training course held in the Beka'a before being considered active.[68]

While Hezbollah's leaders emphasized quality over rapidity in recruitment and training, they also sought to encourage continuous tactical improvements by rotating seasoned fighters between the front and training camps in the Beka'a. Through continuous contacts between active fronts and its secure rear area, Hezbollah decision-makers created an environment where fighting methods could be continuously developed and refined. For example, after Israel developed effective defenses for its command posts after several successful Hezbollah suicide attacks, Hezbollah shifted to attacking vulnerable logistics convoys. Then, when these targets became increasingly well defended, Hezbollah abandoned suicide attacks altogether in favor of roadside improvised explosive devices (IED) and complex ambushes.[69] Hezbollah constantly enhanced its ability to inflict casualties in keeping with its dedication to incremental improvement over the long term. For example, during the period of 1990 to 1993 alone -for which good data exists - Hezbollah progressed from losing five fighters for every Israeli soldier killed to 1.5.[70]

The long-term strategy Hezbollah's decision-makers adopted in the early 1980s has paid significant dividends over time. Faced with its inability to halt the steady attrition of its forces, Israel withdrew its armed forces from most of Lebanon in 1985 and then retreated from its so-called "security zone" in South Lebanon in 2000.[71] Moreover, Israel's efforts to coerce Lebanon's Shiites into turning against Hezbollah, either through the "Iron Fist" occupational policy of 1985 or the deliberate bombing of Shiite civilians in 1993 during "Operation Accountability," repeatedly foundered because of the popularity Hezbollah's social services provision had generated.[72]

Although Hezbollah's long war strategy was designed by the organization's founding cadres, it was an indirect product of Iranian aid. Within this context, it is doubtful whether Hezbollah

would have developed the centralized decision-making structures needed to formulate such a strategy had Iran not provided it with political support and a sanctuary in the Beka'a Valley. Likewise, the group's "hearts and minds" campaign, which was predicated on the provision of a wide-range of social services, depended on generous long-term Iranian funding. Finally, the organization's military emphasis on gradually building its fighting potential was only possible because Iran provided the money needed to employ full-time combatants and its sanctuaries were essential to the organizational learning and the diffusion of new tactics. Thus, state sponsorship was a prerequisite for the type of campaign Hezbollah's leaders chose to implement.

While state sponsorship was a necessary condition for Hezbollah's long war approach, it did not deterministically shape that strategy. Indeed, whereas Hezbollah's leaders made creative and intelligent use of the resources Iran provided, other groups have made less effective use of equivalent largesse. For example, the Iranian-sponsored Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) never pursued a "hearts and minds" campaign based on the provision of social services and developed an authoritarian leadership structure far different from the consensual politics of Hezbollah's Shura. As a consequence, PIJ failed to develop deep roots in Palestine's civil society and was severely disorganized by Israel's 1995 assassination of its leader, Fathi al-Shiqaqi.[73] Thus, although Iranian sponsorship made it possible for Hezbollah's decision-makers to adopt the strategy they successfully pursued, it was not the only driving force and only yielded substantial benefits because an experienced cadre of policymakers adopted an efficient course of action.

Iran's Direct Impact on Hezbollah Decision-Making

Clearly Iranian sponsorship had a powerful, yet indirect effect in shaping both Hezbollah's decision-making processes and the strategic options that its Shura could choose between. At times, however, Iran's government exerted a more direct influence on Hezbollah's decision-making. Although a shared Shiite identity and religious militancy contributed to Iran's decision to support Hezbollah, geopolitical factors were also part of the Iranian government's calculations.[74] Consequently, Iranian leaders periodically sought to use Hezbollah as a proxy to attack its enemies and therefore coaxed the organization to enlarge its target list to include objectives it would otherwise have never considered. At other times, however, Iranian decision-makers worried lest Hezbollah's actions prove deleterious to their foreign policies. On these occasions, it used its leverage as Hezbollah's sponsor to restrain the organization. Thus, foreign policy considerations could alternatively lead Iran to exert an escalatory or a restraining influence.

The root cause of Iran's efforts to enlarge Hezbollah's target list lies in the different objectives pursued by the state sponsor and its client. As an organization whose key constituency resides in southern Lebanon and which was formed in response to Israel's invasion, Hezbollah privileges operations against Israel to the exclusion of other objectives. Indeed, jihad against Israel has been one of the constant leitmotifs in Hezbollah's political platform, which has evolved considerably since the organization's founding.[75] To the extent that they have independently considered targeting non-Israeli objectives, Hezbollah's decision-makers have largely focused on Lebanese political forces. During the Civil War, Hezbollah's leaders expressed a willingness to fight Lebanon's premier Maronite Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces, which had periodically

allied itself with Israel.[76] Likewise, Hezbollah viewed other Lebanese political movements with a large Shiite following—particularly Amal and the Lebanese Communist Party—as potential rivals for its key domestic constituency.

In sharp contrast to Hezbollah's preoccupation with Israel as its primary opponent and secondary focus on other Lebanese movements, the Islamic Republic of Iran had a wide range of adversaries during the 1980s. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini considered the United States an existential menace and resented both its freezing of Iranian assets and the arms embargo that crippled Iran's armed forces. France also attracted Iran's ire. By offering asylum to the Shah's last Prime Minister, Chapour Bakhtiar, and the leadership of the anti-Khomeini terrorist group, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, France had become a hotbed for opposition to Khomeini's regime. To make matters worse, France was a major supplier of weaponry to Iraq and refused to repay a \$1 billion loan that the Iran's Shah had accorded Eurodif, a French state-owned company.[77] Finally, Iran also considered the Soviet Union an adversary because of its arms exports to Iraq and ties with Iranian Marxist groups opposed to Khomeini.[78] Isolated internationally and embroiled in a ruinous war with Iraq, the Iranian government could count on only a single ally, Syria, which demanded Iranian aid to consolidate its control over Lebanon. In short, fundamental differences in the power positions and strategic objectives of Hezbollah and Iran periodically led the latter to coax the former into enlarging its target list.[79]

One of the first and most dramatic occasions when Iran compelled Hezbollah's decision-makers to expand their target sets culminated in the October 1983 suicide attacks against the American and French contingents of the four nation Multinational Force (MNF), which had played an increasingly contentious role in Lebanon's Civil War since 1982.[80] According to the most detailed accounts yet available, Iran's ambassador in Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, initiated preparations for the attack by contacting the Iranian IRGC commander in the Beka'a Valley to request that Hezbollah attack the MNF. The IRGC commander, Ahmad Kan'ani, convened a meeting with key Hezbollah decision-makers, including future general secretaries Abbas al-Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah.[81] The fact that the impetus for the attack came from Iran's Damascus Embassy suggests that Syria may have requested Iranian aid in countering MNF activities it considered prejudicial to its interests in Lebanon.

Hezbollah's leaders chose to conduct a vehicular suicide attack similar to the one it had conducted against an Israeli military headquarters in Tyre the previous November. Originally, the MNF's Italian contingent was the designated target, but the objective was later changed after intelligence sources indicated that American Marines and French paratroops were more vulnerable.[82] Tactically devastating, Hezbollah's two suicide attacks killed 300 military personnel (241 Marines and 59 paratroops) and precipitated the MNF's withdrawal from Lebanon; paving the way for Syria's eventual return to Beirut.

While the 1983 attacks on the MNF provide one example of Iran directly intervening in Hezbollah's decision-making, the Lebanese hostage crisis of 1982 to 1991 constitutes another. Indeed, the event that triggered the Shiite kidnappings of foreigners was the disappearance of four Iranian embassy personnel travelling in a Christian-controlled region in Northern Lebanon. To compel the United State to help locate its missing diplomats, Iranian agents kidnapped David Dodge, President of the American University of Beirut, and smuggled him into Iran via Syria.

[83] However, Iran's direct involvement in this hostage-taking backfired because the United States was able to quickly ascertain Dodge's whereabouts and lobby Syria into pressuring Iran for Dodge's release. Faced with the shortcomings of using Iranian agents to abduct Westerners, Iran's decision-makers chose to use local proxies to continue pursuing the same strategy.[84]

The evidence available suggests that Hezbollah's Shura viewed kidnapping American and European expatriates as a policy that could rebound against them. The organization's first Secretary General, Sobhi Tufayli, declared that the kidnappings were a "mistake" that "ruined the image of the resistance." [85] Likewise, its third Secretary General, Nasrallah, remarked that "Hezbollah is eager to see the end of this hostage issue, since its fallout ended up entirely on the party's shoulders." [86] Indeed, the Shura's current and past members all deny that the organization played a direct role in the kidnappings. However, strong evidence suggests that two prominent Hezbollah military commanders—Imad Mughniyah and Husayn al-Musawi—masterminded the kidnapping of at least 87 of the 110 Westerners abducted. [87] Moreover, most of the hostages were reportedly held in Hezbollah- or IRGC-controlled facilities in Beirut's southern suburbs and the Beka'a Valley. [88]

Given these facts, Iran's IRGC may have either bypassed Hezbollah's Shura to plan the abductions with field commanders or compelled Hezbollah's Shura to conduct a kidnapping campaign that the organization took great pains to disavow. However, what is clear is that Iranian demands largely set the tone of the hostage negotiations and that these demands and the pace of kidnapping grew in keeping with Iranian perceptions of the hostages' value. [89] For example, French hostages were progressively released as France acquiesced to Iranian demands to expel the Mujahedin-e Khalq's leadership and resolved the dispute over the Shah's \$1 billion loan to France's state-owned Eurodif Corporation. [90] Likewise, Iran used its American hostages to bargain for clandestine arms sales. However, the Reagan Administration's extreme eagerness to trade arms for hostages paradoxically led Iran to retard hostages' release. According to former Hezbollah Secretary General Tufayli, Hezbollah reached an agreement with the hostage takers to release all foreign detainees in May 1986, but former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane's trip to Tehran led the Iranian government to demand the deal's cancellation because "They [Iranian leaders] wanted to sell the hostages piece for piece [in exchange for weaponry]." [91]

Besides instigating both Lebanon's hostage crisis and attacks on the MNF, Iran also intervened in Hezbollah's decision-making by directing the organization to attack French peacekeepers in southern Lebanon. Established in 1978 to mitigate war's effects in southern Lebanon, the peacekeepers of the United Nations' Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were popular with the region's Shiite inhabitants and had never tried to prevent Hezbollah's anti-Israeli operations. However, Iran desperately sought to coerce France into curtaining its arms shipments to Iraq and expelling Iranian dissidents. [92] To this end, it compelled Hezbollah's decision-makers into targeting UNIFIL's French contingent in a campaign of roadside IED attacks. As a consequence, Hezbollah killed four French peacekeepers in two IED attacks in September 1986. Nevertheless, rather than acquiesce to Iranian demands, France withdrew the bulk of its personnel from UNIFIL, which limited Iran's ability to coerce them. [93]

Thus, Iran leveraged its position as Hezbollah's sponsor in the early 1980s to compel the organization's decision-makers on at least three occasions to expand their attacks to include Western nations' soldiers and civilians. Hezbollah has also been accused, with less hard evidence presented, of assassinating Iranian dissidents abroad and helping Iran organize terrorist attacks in Paris. Ultimately, Iran's direct interventions to expand Hezbollah's targeting helped the Iranian government achieve such important foreign policy objectives as obtaining American weapons, persuading France to expel the regime's opponents and strengthening Syria's hold on Lebanon. For Hezbollah itself, this direct and escalatory Iranian influence on its decision-making was less salutary. While Hezbollah's leaders universally view the hostage crisis as having tarnished the organization's image, the lasting enmity generated by the attacks on the MNF led American policymakers to insist on Hezbollah's continued "terrorist" status and drove their French counterparts to strive to diplomatically weaken Hezbollah's position inside Lebanon.

Although the desire to apply pressure to its foes prompted Iran to intervene directly in Hezbollah's decision-making to expand the organization's activities in certain respects, Iran's need to preserve its only foreign alliance—that with Syria—also led it to restrain Hezbollah in other ways. Despite Syria's acquiescence to both Hezbollah's creation in 1982 and Iran's use of the Bekaa Valley to support the movement, tensions inevitably underscored relations between a revolutionary movement seeking to create an Islamic republic (e.g. Hezbollah) and a secular dictatorship attempting to establish its hegemony over Lebanon (e.g. Syria). Within this context, the first incidents broke out between Syria and Hezbollah in 1986 after Syrian troops deployed to Hezbollah-controlled areas within Beirut. Tensions escalated dramatically in early 1987, when Hezbollah attempted to assassinate Syria's top intelligence officer in Lebanon and the Syrian Army responded by cold bloodily executing 27 Hezbollah fighters. Hezbollah's leaders transformed the funeral of these 27 "martyrs" into a demonstration of force, mobilizing a crowd of 50,000 mourners that chanted "death to Syria." [94] Recognizing that Hezbollah and Syria were on the verge of open conflict, Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani personally reined in Hezbollah's decision-makers and compelled them to call for extreme restraint on the part of their rank-and-file members. [95]

A graver crisis between Hezbollah and Syria broke out the following year when Hezbollah came to blows with its principal Shiite rival, Amal. Although the two movements had been competing non-violently to control Lebanon's Shiite-inhabited regions since Israel's 1985 withdrawal, their rivalry erupted into an intra-Shiite civil war in 1988. During the next two years, these Shiite rivals fought a conflict that was arguably the bloodiest either had ever engaged in. Over time, their superior discipline gave Hezbollah's fighters the upper hand, despite Amal's superior numbers. [96] Because Amal had been Syria's closest ally in Lebanon, Syria risked being drawn into an overt conflict with Iran's client, Hezbollah. For Iranian leaders, the prospect of war between their only international ally and most important non-state client was such that they acted vigorously to restrain Hezbollah. [97] To this end, Iranian diplomats obliged Hezbollah's policymakers to accept a ceasefire and the negotiated settlement of the Amal/Hezbollah dispute via a quadripartite committee composed of representatives of Amal, Hezbollah, Syria and Iran. [98]

Between 1989 and 1992, Iran intervened a third time to moderate Hezbollah's behavior by convincing its decision-makers to accept the peace accord ending Lebanon's Civil War and partake in electoral politics. During the Civil War, Hezbollah's leaders repeatedly condemned Lebanon's pre-war constitution and called for a radical change in the country's political system. Indeed, the most authoritative statement of Hezbollah's political ambitions—its 1985 Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World—suggested that Lebanon should be remodeled along Islamist lines, proclaiming, “We call on all the populace to be conversant with it [Islam].... We also call upon the population to adhere to its teachings at the individual, political and social levels.”[99] However, when a viable peace process began in 1989, its logic ran contrary to Hezbollah's stated objectives. In a series of negotiations mediated by both Syria and Saudi Arabia, Lebanese factions agreed to disarm and engage in democratic electoral politics within a slightly-modified sectarian constitutional order. The resultant agreement—the Document of National Reconciliation, signed in Taif, Saudi Arabia—soon generated conflict within Hezbollah's Shura.[100]

Led by Secretary General Tufayli, conservative Shura members urged Hezbollah to reject the so-called Taif Accord and proclaim their preference for an Islamic republic.[101] As one hesitant step in this direction, Hezbollah publicly expressed dissatisfaction with the Accord's arrangements, which it branded as “minimal” and “insufficient.”[102] However, the prospect of Hezbollah becoming a “spoiler” to the Taif Accord alarmed Iranian leaders because the Accord was supported by an unprecedented coalition of Syria, the Arab League and the United States; meaning that Hezbollah's obstructionism could have severe foreign relations consequences for Iran.

Consequently, both Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Rafsanjani pressured Hezbollah's Shura to accept the Accord and participate in future democratic elections. As a result of Iran's activism and latent divisions in Hezbollah's leadership, the Shura refused to renew Tufayli's mandate as Secretary General and elected the pro-Accord Abbas al-Musawi to replace him in May 1991.[103] Additional Iranian pressure was needed to sway Hezbollah's decision-makers to participate in Lebanon's first post-war election, in August 1992. Indeed, Shura's deciding vote, wherein ten out of 12 members voted for participation, occurred less than two months prior to the election and was announced only 50 days prior to voting-day. [104]

In short, foreign policy considerations drove Iranian policymakers to intervene in Hezbollah's decision-making to restrain the organization on three separate and well-documented occasions. In each case, Iran sought to curb behavior that could lead to a rupture between it and its principal ally, Syria. Only in the case of the Taif Accord did relationships with a broader range of states appear to matter. That Iran placed such importance in its relationship with Syria can perhaps be attributed to both its extreme isolation and the many dossiers (i.e. opposition to Iraq and the Arab-Israeli peace process) where their interests converged. In retrospect, Iran's restraining influence also proved beneficial to Hezbollah itself, as the organization would have been gravely weakened had Syria cut-off the Iranian aid that flowed to it through Syrian territory or closed Hezbollah's training camps located in the Syrian-occupied Beka'a Valley. Indeed, the fact that Iran repeatedly needed to restrain Hezbollah from a conflict with Syria suggests that either Hezbollah's prior successes against foreign powers (e.g. the MNF's withdrawal in 1984 and

Israel's 1985 retreat) lulled the organization into overestimating its own power or revolutionary, violent non-state actors may have an inherent tendency to strategically overreach themselves.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the preceding analysis of Iranian support's impact on decision-making within Hezbollah demonstrates the complex, yet powerful influence that a state sponsor can have on its clients' operations. Within this context, Iran's lavish assistance indirectly shaped decision-making within Hezbollah by defining both the physical environment where decisions were made and the options available to its leaders. Nevertheless, although external support was a prerequisite for the long war approach Hezbollah embraced, this course of action was only one amongst many the group could have adopted and how Iranian-supplied resources were used ultimately depended on Hezbollah's leaders. Besides this pervasive, yet indirect effect of Iranian aid, Iranian policymakers also repeatedly intervened directly in Hezbollah decision-making processes to either expand or restrain the group's activities. Thus, although an armed Shiite resistance to Israel's invasion would probably have emerged even in the absence of a sponsoring state, Hezbollah's centralized decision-making structure, long-term strategy and most dramatic actions were all directly or indirectly shaped by Iran.

As illustrated by Hezbollah's case, state sponsorship plays a critical indirect role in shaping both how violent non-state actors make decisions as well as the potential courses of action amongst which they can choose. Although Shiite resistance against Israel was initiated by seasoned Amal veterans and popular clerics, Iran's political support and provision of sanctuary was crucial to uniting the efforts of these talented administrators into a centrally-directed movement. Similarly, Iranian money was essential for the recruitment and retention of experienced combatants whose skills improved the military options available to Hezbollah's political leaders. Thus, Iranian aid indirectly enhanced the quality of Hezbollah's decision-making process.

Perhaps as a consequence of these improvements to its decision-making process, Hezbollah's Shura effectively employed a wider range of strategic options that Iranian sponsorship provided. Within this context, Hezbollah deftly exploited the financial security provided by Iran's long-term support to launch a "hearts and minds" campaign, using social services to gradually enlarge its support amongst Lebanese Shiites. Similarly, Hezbollah leveraged the professionalism possible amongst salaried fighters and the organizational learning potential of permanent training camps to conduct a long-term, attritional campaign predicated on Hezbollah's ability to inflict a stream of casualties on Israeli forces. Throughout this process, a combination of adequate salaries paid to combatants and generous welfare provisions for fallen fighters' families ensured that Hezbollah never suffered from a shortage of willing martyrs. Although the above components of Hezbollah's long war strategy were all pioneered by the movement's founding cadres, each depended on Iranian aid and can therefore be considered an indirect product of Iran's sponsorship.

In addition to its indirect impact on Hezbollah's decision-making, Iran frequently intervened directly in Hezbollah's decision-making process to impose its preferences. At times, these interventions had an escalatory effect, driving Hezbollah to attack American and European targets that the organization would have otherwise avoided. Executed with considerable tactical

acumen, direct Iranian efforts to expand Hezbollah's target set yielded tangible benefits for Iran, but arguably proved infelicitous for Hezbollah over the long term by earning it the enmity of several great powers. While Iran's foreign policy sometimes prompted it to urge Hezbollah to attack a wider range of targets, at other times it restrained it lest Hezbollah's actions prove detrimental to Iran's interests. During the period in question, Iran intervened most frequently to restrain Hezbollah's decision-makers when these latter adopted courses of action that risked undermining Iran's relationship with Syria. Given the importance of the Syria-Iran alliance to Hezbollah's own success, Iran's restraining influence arguably benefitted Hezbollah as well.

In light of both these indirect and direct efforts, the net impact of Iranian sponsorship on Hezbollah's decision-makers was positive during the period in question. However, when the interactive processes between state sponsors' inputs and policies with client organizations' decision-makers are examined in detail, it becomes possible to envision many scenarios when groups' leaders will fail to effectively use the resources provided by a state sponsor. For example, while a state's support increases the options available to non-state organizations' decision-makers, there is no guarantee they will use those opportunities judiciously. As already discussed, the PIJ failed to use the resources Iran provided to conduct a "hearts and minds" campaign similar to Hezbollah's. In certain cases, sponsors' resources may even lead violent non-state organizations' decision-makers to adopt counterproductive strategies. Within this context, Communist states' support for Oman's Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) prompted the organization's decision-makers to abandon their hitherto successful insurgent tactics for a more ambitious conventional effort to control "liberated areas." [105]

Like sponsorship's indirect impact on group decision-making, direct sponsor interventions in decision-making can also have a deleterious impact on their clients. Within this context, certain sponsor efforts to broaden their clients' targeting may invite catastrophic retaliation against these latter. For example, if Iran prompted Saudi Arabia's Hezbollah al-Hijaz to attack the American troops residing in the Khobar Towers in 1996, as is widely suspected, then Iran's impact on Hezbollah al-Hijaz's decision-making was detrimental insofar as this attack prompted a crackdown from which the organization never recovered. [106] As a corollary to harming violent non-state organizations by encouraging a reckless escalation in their activities, state sponsors could theoretically harm their clients by imposing excessive restraints. For example, both Abu Nidal (Sabri al-Banna) and Carlos the Jackal (Ilich Ramirez Sanchez) were eventually consigned to virtual inactivity by their respective Iraqi and Sudanese sponsors, when they wished to avoid attracting retaliation.

In sum, as a result of both its indirect and direct effects, state sponsorship exercises a momentous, yet complex effect on decision-making within violent non-state organizations. Although sponsorship opens new horizons to terrorists and insurgents, the effective use of the resources provided depends on both characteristics intrinsic to the non-state actors themselves and the strings attached, in terms of direct interventions in their decision-making, by sponsoring governments. In Hezbollah's case, the net effect of Iranian sponsorship was undeniably positive for the organization. Nevertheless, such is not always the case and many state-sponsored violent non-state organizations have remained ineffective either because their decision-makers failed to

exploit the aid provided or because the negative consequences of sponsors' direct interventions in their clients' decision-making outweighed the benefits provided by greater resources.

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Notes

[1] Lotta Themnér & Peter Wallensteen (2011) "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2010," *Journal of Peace Research*. 48 (4), 525-536.

[2] The focus of this study is armed non-state actors in a general sense, rather than insurgencies, militias or terrorist groups per se, because the central argument is applicable to all three categories of organization. In fact, Hezbollah possessed characteristics of all three types of armed non-state actor in the 1980s. If it is accepted that terrorism involves employing violence against civilians for the purpose of generating fear, then most of Hezbollah's activities during this period were *not* terrorism, but guerrilla warfare against Israeli military forces. Likewise, Hezbollah's battles with Amal over the control of Shiite population centers between 1988 and 1990 saw the organization behave and fight like a typical, albeit well-disciplined Lebanese militia. Within this context, Hezbollah's only activity that emphatically constituted terrorism consisted of the kidnappings of foreign civilians that it perpetrated. cf. Daniel Byman (2003) "Should Hezbollah be Next?" *Foreign Affairs* 82/6, 54-66; and Judith Harik (2004) *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*. London: I.B. Tauris, p. 163-75.

[3] Bruce Hoffman (1998) *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 258-267. Daniel Byman (2005) *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 53-78.

[4] Brian Jackson (2001) "Technology Acquisition by Terrorist Groups: Threat Assessment Informed by Lessons from Private Sector Technology Adoption," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 24 (3), 200-02.

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[6] Some violent non-state actors have relied on funding from ethnic diasporas to pay salaries to personnel and pursue the 'hearts and minds' of populations through the provision of services. See Richard English (2003) *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, passim.

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- [12] Daniel Byman, 2005, 65-67.
- [13] James Forest. 2007, "Training Camps and Other Centers of Learning," In James Forest (ed.) *Teaching Terror: Strategic and Tactical Learning in the Terrorist World*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 75-96.
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- [83] A Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces, had already killed the Iranians. However, the United States knew nothing about their whereabouts. See Dominique Avon & Anaïs-Trissa Khatchadourian, 38; and Robert Baer (2002) *See No Evil: A True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terror*. New York: Three Rivers, 73-104.
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