



# THE SECOND LEBANON WAR: FROM TERRITORY TO IDEOLOGY

Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon

Rescue workers evacuate a seriously wounded man from a building directly hit by a rocket fired from Lebanon in the northern Israeli city of Haifa, July 17, 2006.

## Introduction

The 2006 Israel-Hizbullah war, in which the northern third of Israel came under 34 days of fire by 4,228<sup>1</sup> Iranian and Syrian rockets, should be a clear illustration that the hostility and aggression that Israel faces in the Middle East does not arise from Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank, or from Palestinian statelessness. While this longstanding "root cause" argument remains popular in international circles and even in some quarters of opinion in Israel, Iran's ongoing proxy war against the Jewish state shows the claim to be fundamentally flawed.<sup>2</sup> The Iranian-backed abduction and rocket war against Israel – starting with Hamas on June 26, 2006, and spreading via Hizbullah across Israel's northern border on July 12, 2006 – were launched from lands that are not under Israeli "occupation," and by terror groups operating at the behest of states such as Iran and its Syrian ally which deny Israel's existence within any borders.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, from the 1920s to the present day there has been an unrelenting ideological, religious, and cultural rejection of Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East on any territory, despite the current international fashionability of the notion that removing Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza and replacing it with a Palestinian state would inspire regional peace and stability.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly this conception – that Middle East wars are fought over Israel's borders, not its existence – was put on display on September 19, 2006, only a month after a UN-brokered cease-fire ended the Israel-Hizbullah war, when then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told the General Assembly at the opening of its 61st session: "As long as the Security Council is unable to resolve the nearly 40-year [Israeli] occupation and confiscation of Arab land, so long will the UN's efforts to resolve other conflicts be resisted including those in Iraq and Afghanistan."<sup>5</sup>

Yet, according to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iran's Syrian partners, the Second Lebanon War was in fact a hostile probe of U.S. reflexes, as determined through Israel, a state that Iran and Syria consider to be a direct extension of American power in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> National Arab grievance against Israel thus was irrelevant.<sup>7</sup>

**According to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the Second Lebanon War was in fact a hostile probe of U.S. reflexes, as determined through Israel, a state that Iran and Syria consider to be a direct extension of American power in the Middle East.**

Because of the desire to push back against any U.S. presence in the Middle East, Iran's goals in the Lebanon theater reach well beyond the destruction of Israel. Since 1982, Iran and Syria have each used Hizbullah as a terrorist means of striking at Western regional interests, in order to both achieve specific strategic objectives and to continuously demonstrate the truth of one of the central Islamist beliefs – the weakness of Western states. Hizbullah's 1983 suicide attack that killed 241 U.S. Marines near Beirut is one example; so is Hizbullah's 1984 torture and murder of Beirut CIA Station Chief William Buckley, and the 1985 hijacking in Beirut of TWA Flight 847 and murder of U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem.<sup>8</sup> The 1996 attack by Hizbullah's Saudi branch, *Hizbullah al-Hejaz*, which killed 19 U.S. Army personnel at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, is still another example of anti-American terrorism with its origins in Tehran.<sup>9</sup>

The sporadic Iranian-backed terror attacks of previous decades have evolved in recent years – especially since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came





A French UN peacekeeper's tank passes a billboard showing Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (left), and Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah (right), on the road in the village of Borj Qalaway, Lebanon, Sept. 19, 2006.

to power in 2005 – into a broader and more ambitious Iranian campaign that seeks to achieve regional supremacy. The tightened Iran-Syria-Hizbullah-Hamas axis serves the goal of Iranian power projection across the Middle East, from the Gulf States to Iraq, through Syria into Lebanon, and southward to Gaza. Israel now faces Iranian-backed military groups on two borders; meanwhile, Iran's deep involvement in the insurgency in Iraq, and its penetration of the Iraqi government, reflects Tehran's desire to bloody America and make its presence in the region as costly as possible, as a step toward destroying the prevailing international order that America enforces.

**Nabi Beri, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, leader of the Shiite Amal party, and a Hizbullah interlocutor, said that "Hizbullah will remain armed and fully operational in south Lebanon, despite the newly deployed UN forces."**

The more the United States and its Western allies hesitate to confront Iran's increasingly aggressive posture, the more Tehran and its allies become convinced of the West's cowardice and ambivalence, and of their own eventual victory. Many of the proposals contained in the 2006 Iraq Study Group report are examples of U.S. hesitation opposite Tehran. Ironically, the report's recommendation of a "softer" diplomatic approach to Iran and Syria, and Israeli diplomatic engagement with the Assad regime and with a Palestinian national unity government including Hamas, may serve to

accelerate the confrontation as Tehran becomes emboldened by the belief that the U.S. wishes to steer clear of a fight.

## The New Islamist War

The origins of the 2006 Second Lebanon War – and the larger Iranian effort today to expand its power in the Middle East – can be traced to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, during which the current Iranian regime took power, and in the following years, during which Iran co-opted organizations such as Hizbullah and inspired other *jihadis*, including PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who was one of the first Arab leaders to visit the newly triumphant Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>10</sup>

In the years prior to the most recent Lebanon war, Iran invested some one to two hundred million dollars per year in Hizbullah's war preparations, for a total expenditure of between one and two billion dollars.<sup>11</sup> Iran also established representative offices in Lebanon for nearly every one of its major government ministries, including intelligence, social welfare, housing, transportation, and infrastructure.<sup>12</sup>

These massive levels of Iranian financial and operational assistance to Hizbullah were dramatically on display during the 2006 war. Hizbullah was well-equipped, with a wide variety of Syrian- and Iranian-made rockets. The group also employed sophisticated weaponry, including a generous supply of modern anti-tank ordinance.<sup>13</sup> Up to 250 of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) best trainers were on the ground in Lebanon assisting Hizbullah units;<sup>14</sup> the Iranians supplied and assisted Hizbullah in using armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that were shot down by the IDF;<sup>15</sup> and, according to the IDF, the Iranian C802 radar-guided missile that hit an Israeli warship during the first week of the war was launched from Lebanon by members of the IRGC. Iran has also trained up to 3,000 Hizbullah fighters in Tehran since 2004, including nearly all mid- and senior-level Hizbullah officers.<sup>16</sup>

Today, despite the deployment of thousands of UNIFIL and Lebanese Army forces in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, Southern Lebanon remains effectively a Hizbullah-ruled province of Iran. Hizbullah has reconstituted its weapons supplies and has continued to receive truckloads of Syrian short-range rockets, Iranian long-range rockets, and anti-tank weaponry via Damascus. Hizbullah's surviving networks of tunnels and bunkers are still operational, despite the combined presence of nearly 25,000 UNIFIL



and Lebanese armed forces south of the Litani River. Where the combined UNIFIL and Lebanese Army presence has suppressed Hizbullah's ability to operate openly, the group has simply shifted its infrastructure and re-supply project north of the Litani, where UNIFIL has no mandate and the Lebanese Army dares not intervene.

Hizbullah's ability since the end of the war to reconstitute itself in a largely unhindered fashion was the expected result of the irresolution of the war itself and the inadequate diplomatic stipulations of Resolution 1701. In October 2006, just weeks into the cease-fire, Israeli and Lebanese observers offered similar assessments of Hizbullah's ability to quickly rebuild its strength: The IDF's Intelligence Assessment Chief, Brig.-Gen. Yossi Baidatz, noted that the smuggling of weapons from Syria to Lebanon was continuing with the full knowledge and support of Damascus.<sup>17</sup> Nabi Beri, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, leader of the Shiite Amal party, and a Hizbullah interlocutor, said within the same week that "Hizbullah will remain armed and fully operational in south Lebanon, despite the newly deployed UN forces. The UNIFIL presence will not hinder Hizbullah defensive operations. The resistance doesn't need to fly its flags high to operate. It's a guerrilla movement; it operates among the people."<sup>18</sup>

To Israel's southwest, Iran also continues to provide significant financial backing, arms, training, and strategic guidance to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Palestinian terrorist groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have been brought into the Iranian fold and been given extensive support, as evidenced by the initial \$50-100 million commitment to Hamas Iran made at the end of a "pro-Palestinian" summit in Tehran in April 2006 in which Khaled Mashaal, the Damascus-based Hamas leader, and Ramadan Abdullah Shalah, head of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, were key participants.<sup>19</sup> That summit came on the heels of extensive meetings between Mashaal and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad immediately following the January 2006 Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections.

Then, between August and October 2006 alone, nearly twenty tons of weaponry, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft rockets, were smuggled from Egyptian Sinai, often with the acquiescence of Egyptian authorities, into the Gaza Strip.<sup>20</sup> Numerous meetings between Mashaal and Ahmadinejad continued to take place in advance of and during the Israel-Hizbullah war.

Concerns at the time over the tightening relationship between Iran and Hamas were well-

A Hizbullah supporter waves a poster showing pictures of Hizbullah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah (right), Syria's President Bashar Assad (center), and Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (left), during a Hizbullah "Victory over Israel" rally, in Beirut's bombed-out suburbs, Sept. 22, 2006. Nasrallah said his guerrilla force would not give up its weapons until Lebanon was "strong," demanding changes in the government as he spoke at a rally of hundreds of thousands of supporters in a defiant challenge to Prime Minister Fouad Seniora.

Iranian-backed Hamas militants stand guard after their capture of the Preventive Security headquarters from Fatah loyalist security forces in Gaza City, June 14, 2007. Hamas fighters overran one of the rival Fatah movement's most important security installations in the Gaza Strip, and witnesses said the victors dragged vanquished gunmen from the building and executed them in the street. The capture of the Preventive Security headquarters was a major step forward in Hamas' attempts to complete its takeover of all of Gaza.



founded. On December 11, 2006, Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah, known as more moderate than Hamas' Damascus-based leader, Khaled Mashaal, said following a visit with President Ahmadinejad in Tehran that Iran had stepped up its commitment to the Hamas-led PA and pledged \$250 million. Iran even committed to pay the salaries of 100,000 Palestinian Authority employees for six months.<sup>21</sup> The Haniyah-Ahmadinejad meeting is also significant because previously, Hamas' relationship with Iran had been brokered exclusively by Mashaal; Israeli military intelligence indicated that the Haniyah-Ahmadinejad meeting reflected an upgraded strategic relationship between Iran and Hamas.<sup>22</sup> Haniyah confirmed Israel's assessment when he said, upon his return from Tehran in December 2006, that "Iran has provided Palestinians strategic depth."<sup>23</sup> Crossing into Gaza, Haniyah was found to be carrying \$35 million in cash in several suitcases.<sup>24</sup>

**These alliances – with Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, and with the Assad regime in Syria – are individual components of the larger Iranian strategy to galvanize the region's radical forces to the Iranian cause.**

It may seem strange that radical Shiite Iran has brought Sunni Arab Hamas into its orbit, especially in view of the longstanding and violent conflict between Sunnis and Shiites that manifests itself, among other places, today in Iraq. However, Iranian-led radical Shiites and their radical Sunni adversaries share a common commitment to destroying Israel and destabilizing Arab regimes allied to America. For now, Sunni and Shiite radical groups are allied by sharing a common enemy.

Syria's Assad regime is Iran's Arab partner and facilitator, and it continues to host Islamist terror groups within its borders, allowing them to organize terror attacks against Israel and direct the flow of insurgents into Iraq. Syria may not be an Islamist state, but its leader, Bashar Assad, clings to power through the manipulation of anti-Western sentiment and pro-Iranian Shiite loyalty. To mark the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's designation of Damascus as the 2008 "capital of Arab culture," Assad declared Damascus to be the "capital of resistance."<sup>25</sup>

These alliances – with Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, and with the Assad regime in Syria – are individual components of the larger Iranian strategy to galvanize the region's radical forces to the Iranian cause. But as the 2006 Israel-Hizbullah conflict so clearly illustrated, these alliances also serve an important tactical purpose for Iran: they are the means by which the regime can bring terrorism and asymmetrical warfare to its two great enemies in the region – Israel and America.



## Islamist Threats to the International State System

The Second Lebanon War also illustrated several new types of threats to the regional state system. First, the regimes in Iran and Syria have become architects of what can be called the “terror state within a state” model. Hizbullah and Hamas are examples of sub-state and quasi-state organizations, respectively, whose military power allows them to operate in defiance of their weak host governments. The same kind of terror blackmail relationship between al-Qaeda and its Saudi Arabian hosts has existed since the late 1980s, and exists today in other weak Arab and/or Muslim states, such as Yemen, Somalia, and Iraq.

In Lebanon, Hizbullah has become a “state within a state” due to massive political and military backing from Syria and Iran. Prior to the summer 2006 war, the Lebanese government allowed Hizbullah to operate from its soil as a *quid pro quo* for Hizbullah’s agreement not to attack targets in Lebanon. This mafia-style relationship resulted in Hizbullah’s “protection” of the Lebanese central government. However, this unstable relationship unraveled in November 2006 when Hizbullah’s two government ministers resigned as part of an Iranian- and Syrian-backed effort to topple the Seniora government, dissolve the parliament, and assert Hizbullah control over all of Lebanon.

Aside from its destabilizing political influence in Lebanon, Hizbullah’s superior fighting capabilities have raised its stature well beyond that of a terror organization, or a “non-state actor,” as such groups are often benignly called. It should be more accurately characterized as a heavily armed and highly disciplined Iranian military force that operates under the guidance of the IRGC.

Hizbullah thus presents a unique challenge to a world order that is premised on the legitimacy of the nation-state as international actor – a challenge that is precisely, for Iran and Syria, the point. Hizbullah benefits from its status as a de facto state actor, but without being burdened by a commensurate responsibility and accountability to the international system. For example, Hizbullah’s decision to attack Israel in July 2006 was made without the permission of, or notice to, its democratically-elected Lebanese host government. Moreover, Hizbullah exploited the international state system by agreeing to cease-fire negotiations opposite Israel, but was not held accountable, politically or diplomatically, in contrast to its Lebanese host government which, like Israel, ended up bearing international obligations as the contracting parties to United Nations-brokered and monitored UN Security Council Resolution 1701.<sup>26</sup>

## Subverting Arab Governments

Hamas’ 2006 parliamentary victory over the Palestinian Fatah party – itself a weak quasi-state actor – and the Islamist group’s violent 2007 takeover of Gaza represent another threat to the regional state system.<sup>27</sup> Various Palestinian Authority security forces nominally under the control of Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the PA, have a combined strength of at least 50,000 men – but these forces tend to be characterized by their disorganization, incompetence, and corruption.

The ineffectiveness of the PA security forces has ironically ended up being an important source of political and financial strength for Abbas: because of the precariousness of his rule, the PA has been lavished with unprecedented foreign aid and statements of support from the international community. For example, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice praised Abbas on October 11, 2006, before a leading Palestinian-American group, reiterating her “personal commitment” to his leadership and his efforts to establish a Palestinian state.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, the United States has deposited tens of millions of dollars into PA coffers earmarked for security. The Bush Administration has also buoyed Abbas by supplying high-level security training and coordination with various senior U.S. security envoys who report to Secretary of State Rice.<sup>29</sup>

**Hizbullah benefits from its status as a de facto state actor, but without being burdened by a commensurate responsibility and accountability to the international system.**

Abbas is not the first Palestinian leader to trade on his weakness for diplomatic gain with the West. Former PA leader Yasser Arafat exploited his declared weakness opposite Hamas to build broad international support during the Oslo years, from 1993 to 2000. Arafat consistently argued that he lacked the ability to reign in Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other terror groups, and thus simultaneously could not be held responsible for continued bloodshed, yet deserved more aid money. In the case of Abbas, the international community has demonstrated patience, tolerance, and understanding for the failure of his weak state to neutralize domestic terror groups.

Lebanon’s Prime Minister Fouad Seniora enjoys similar international sympathy for his inability



Rescue workers line up bodies beside a bomb-damaged passenger train at Atocha station following a number of explosions on trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004. The 10 blasts on the Madrid commuter rail network killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,500. Spain's worst terrorist attack was claimed by Muslim militants who said they had acted on behalf of al-Qaeda to avenge the presence of Spanish troops in Iraq.

to disarm Hizbullah. Instead of holding Seniora accountable for allowing the Iranian proxy group to operate from within sovereign Lebanon, the international community actively engaged Lebanon and Hizbullah in frantic UN-sponsored diplomacy to broker a cease-fire and deploy 15,000 UN forces to Southern Lebanon. This was a strategic error by the West. The international community should have established collective "red lines" and demonstrated unified political determination with respect to Hizbullah.

True, expelling or neutralizing Hizbullah as an armed force, even with the full backing of the international community's legal and financial muscle, poses a far greater, if not virtually impossible, challenge to the Seniora government. As a terror group, Hizbullah operates outside the boundaries of exactly the kind of state conduct which permitted the international community in 2005 to assist the Lebanese government in pressuring Syria to withdraw. However, it remains incumbent on the

international community to rise to the challenge, bolster Seniora militarily and perhaps financially, while impressing upon the Lebanese government that it will have no alternative but to summon even greater political and military will to bring Hizbullah to heel than it did in evicting Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005.

The same lesson applies to the PA's Abbas. International aid to the Palestinian Authority should have always been conditional first on the PA's separating itself from terrorism. A not insubstantial part of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, from 2000-2004, was underwritten by international aid money that the PA itself diverted to terrorists. Second, aid should have been pegged to the PA's demonstrated willingness to wage an intra-Palestinian war on terrorism, and third, on Hamas disarming before the Palestinian elections in January 2006. If the international community establishes an international code of conduct and mobilizes to enforce it, the leaders of weak host countries may likely discover previously unrealized political and military strength, in the interests of national and political self-preservation.

## Islamists take credit for pushing the United States out of Iran in 1979, Lebanon in 1984, and Somalia in 1993; the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1989; the Israelis out of Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005; and the Spanish out of Iraq in 2004.

Iran and Syria have pursued a strategy in the Middle East that delegates a great deal of responsibility to "non-state actors," precisely because the international system is so ill-equipped to handle such groups. It is often correctly noted that these groups pursue a strategy of asymmetric warfare on the battlefield, but it is rarely noted that they pursue an equally asymmetric strategy in the international arena in an attempt to confound and thwart the international state system.

## The Spread of Iranian and Syrian Regional Control

The Second Lebanon War embodied Iran's regional strategy in microcosm, which is to project its power and assert control across the Middle East by proxy. Proxies and allied groups include Moktada al-Sadr's Shiite Mahdi army in Iraq, Hamas in Jordan,



the Alawite regime in Syria, Hizbullah in Lebanon, as well as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and other radical Palestinian groups in the West Bank and Gaza. Iran has also backed Zaydi Islamists in Northern Yemen and provided weapons and financing to Somali Islamists.<sup>30</sup> Iran works through proxies to avoid Iranian fingerprints, fomenting maximum instability with minimum responsibility. Aside from Iran's operational and financial support of Hizbullah and Hamas, Iran finances, arms, and trains Shiite insurgency groups in Iraq in such tactics as the operation of EFPs (explosively formed penetrators, a particularly deadly type of armor-piercing bomb). The clandestine Iranian Qods Force also provides terror and militia training in Iran, sponsored by the IRGC and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security.<sup>31</sup> U.S. and Iraqi intelligence officials have also said that Hizbullah bases in Lebanon have been used to train up to 2,000 members of the Iraqi Shiite Mahdi army, while U.S. and Iraqi officials have quoted terror captives in Iraq who have admitted being trained by Hizbullah at Revolutionary Guard training camps in Iran.<sup>32</sup>

These activities have been well-documented by senior U.S. defense and intelligence officials. Gen. Michael Hayden, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, told the Senate Armed Services Committee in November 2006 that "the Iranian hand is stoking violence in Iraq and supporting competing Shiite factions."<sup>33</sup> This assessment was shared by Lt.-Gen. Michael Maples, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, in congressional testimony.<sup>34</sup> Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the multinational force in Iraq, has noted Iran's central destabilizing role in Iraq. In 2007 he testified to Congress of the U.S. capture of senior operatives of "Lebanese Hizbullah Department 2800, the organization created to support the training, arming, funding, and, in some cases, direction of the militia extremists by the Iranian Republican Guard Corps' Quds Force."<sup>35</sup>

Iran's Syrian ally also hosts terror proxies, who live and operate with impunity from Damascus. Syria's long arm of terror has been extended via Palestinian groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, without imposing any costs on the Assad regime greater than mild international rebuke. Syria has also allowed its territory to be used as a pipeline for transporting money and fighters to insurgent groups in Iraq. This was a fact noted by the 2006 Iraq Study Group (Baker-Hamilton) report.<sup>36</sup>

Since 2003, Bashar al-Assad has sanctioned the smuggling of weapons, and has "ignored" the infiltration of terror operatives from Syria to Iraq.<sup>37</sup> Beginning in March 2003, eyewitnesses in Aleppo, Syria, reported seeing busloads of *mujahideen*

heading into neighboring Iraq as Syrian border police waved them through.<sup>38</sup> Since 2003, U.S. forces have reported killing and capturing Syrian nationals and Syrian-sponsored *jihadis* involved in the insurgency.<sup>39</sup>

Iran's use of Syria as a bridgehead to the Arab world, together with Tehran's sponsorship of terror proxies to assert regional control, is a powerful model that has succeeded in destabilizing the region without the UN or any other major international organization stopping it, or even demonstrating an ability to adapt to the new challenge. As a result, Iran and Syria are able to expand their power and manipulate events in the region free from the constraints that they would confront through traditional state action.

## Western Passivity Magnifies the Jihadi Threat

From an historical perspective, Ahmadinejad and his allies have reason to believe that their objective of destroying Israel and defeating the West is on track. Islamists take credit for pushing the United States out of Iran in 1979, Lebanon in 1984, and Somalia in 1993; the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1989; the Israelis out of Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005; and the Spanish out of Iraq in 2004. According to this narrative, Western powers have been retreating in the face of Islamist resistance for decades – and now the Islamists believe they are close to pushing the Americans out of Iraq as well.

**Ahmadinejad reportedly received one of 1,000 pirated copies of Professor Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations that had been translated into Persian and trucked into Tehran by the IRGC in the mid-1990s.**

Iran has paid no price for its many transgressions – the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon; the 1992 fatal bombing of the Israeli embassy and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Argentina; the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in which 19 U.S. servicemen perished; and the unrelenting torture and imprisonment of thousands of dissidents. Iran has also continuously violated international agreements related to its nuclear program. Iran's acts of successful regional subversion have emboldened Islamists worldwide,





fueling a perception among radicals that the West is simply afraid to confront them.

Syria's Bashar Assad has also paid no penalty for his regime's involvement in a similar campaign of violence, from the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, involvement in the November 2006 assassination of Lebanese Christian Cabinet Minister Pierre Gemayel, the ruthless suppression of Syrian dissidents, the use of Syrian soil as a safe haven for terrorist operations against coalition forces in Iraq, and the sheltering of leaders of numerous terrorist groups.

Despite President Bush's veiled threats against Syria and Iran following the Gemayel and Hariri murders and for destabilizing Lebanon,<sup>40</sup> Assad's regime was so confident of its immunity from American or Israeli attack that it allowed Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal to hold a press conference in Damascus celebrating the June 2006 kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, even as local Hamas leaders in the Palestinian Authority distanced themselves from the abduction. On July 12, 2006, the day of the Hizbullah kidnapping of two IDF soldiers in northern Israel, Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), was in Damascus to discuss strategic matters with Mashaal and other Palestinian terror groups. According to reports, Larijani was also to have met with senior Hizbullah officials, who were unable to cross over from Lebanon that day.<sup>41</sup>

**Professor Bernard Lewis has noted that for Iran, "M.A.D. is not a deterrent but an inducement" that is part of Ahmadinejad's messianic objective of bringing the "end of days," annihilating Israel, and reaching a nuclear showdown with the United States.**

The international community is weak and divided over how to proceed in Iraq and against Iran. This may in part be a result of the fact that many European countries do not believe that the West is in the middle of a world war and a clash of civilizations with radical Islam. Ahmadinejad has been clearer on this point. He reportedly received one of 1,000 pirated copies of Professor Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* that had been translated into Persian and trucked into Tehran by the IRGC in the mid-1990s.<sup>42</sup>

Washington also seems to have lost its post-9/11 footing in the aftermath of the Second Lebanon War. The Iraq Study Group report underscored the growing preference among many in Washington for appeasing and negotiating over confronting and isolating the radical Islamists, particularly when it comes to Iran.<sup>43</sup> The report's central recommendations – that the Bush administration open diplomatic dialogue with Syria and Iran and actively pursue comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, including Israel's return of the Golan Heights to Syria<sup>44</sup> – represent an abandonment of President Bush's policy since the 9/11 attacks. Bush had declared in his 2002 State of the Union address that "some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will....If we stop now – leaving terror camps intact and terror states unchecked – our sense of security would be false and temporary."<sup>45</sup>

Aside from Israel's belated ground operation in the Second Lebanon War, it too has been hesitant to confront Iran and Syria. Historically, it had been much easier for Israelis to first confront and then negotiate with secular Arab states such as Egypt and Jordan, and reach bilateral peace treaties on the basis of the "land for peace" formula. However, in the case of Iran and its *jihadi* proxies, Israel faces uncompromising enemies. This requires the Jewish state to confront the *jihadi* threat with uncompromising political will.

From a military point of view, Hizbullah poses less of a danger than the armies of Egypt or Syria. However, the fundamentalist group's intense, religiously-based hatred of the West and its irrepressible political will to destroy Israel and export terror render it largely immune from embracing what moderate and reform-minded Arab regimes and the West consider overriding national considerations, such as economic interests. Iran and its proxies are not primarily motivated by the same national calculations characteristic of the West, but rather by religiously driven, apocalyptic dedication to vanquish democracies such as the United States and Israel.

Thus, conventional deterrence strategies, such as "mutually assured destruction," which the United States employed opposite the former Soviet Union, are far less relevant as security strategies to deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Professor Bernard Lewis has noted that for Iran, "M.A.D. is not a deterrent but an inducement" that is part of Ahmadinejad's messianic objective of bringing the "end of days," annihilating Israel, and reaching a nuclear showdown with the United States.<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, the passive posture of the United States, Europe, and even Israel with regard to



Iran, Syria, and their proxies has bolstered *jihadi* confidence and magnified their growing threat to the international state system. The West's interest in maintaining the current international order and avoiding a clash with Islamists has also enhanced Sunni and Shiite *jihadi* appeal to the Arab masses throughout the region, who increasingly see Islamic radicalism as on the winning side of history.

## Security Implications for Israel: Establishing Defensible Borders

Among the many lessons of the Second Lebanon War is a reinforcement of the importance for Israel of maintaining strategic depth to help ensure its survival. During the war, 90 to 95 percent of the more than four thousand rockets fired by Hizbullah at Israeli cities were short-range, 122mm rockets launched from distances of between six and twenty-two kilometers. These short-range rockets placed nearly two million Israelis, a third of Israel's population, under Hizbullah's rocket umbrella. Nearly a million Israelis were forced to flee, while more than a million remaining citizens were forced to live in underground bomb shelters. Twelve thousand buildings were hit and estimates of overall damage reached well over \$2.5 billion.<sup>47</sup> However, had Israel's ground operation

been executed in the first week of the war and a security zone established up to the Litani River – approximately twenty kilometers from Israel's northern border – nearly 95 percent of Hizbullah's rockets would have landed in Southern Lebanon instead of northern Israel, or they wouldn't have been fired in the first place.

The conclusion is clear: land is essential to Israel's self-defense and national security, *particularly* in the face of short-range rocket attacks by Islamist groups that continue to be a strategic threat to the Jewish state.

**Land is essential to Israel's self-defense and national security, particularly in the face of short-range rocket attacks by Islamist groups that continue to be a strategic threat to the Jewish state.**

Israel's need for strategic depth in the face of short-range rockets has far-reaching consequences for the future of the West Bank. If Kassam rockets were launched from the hills of a Palestinian-controlled

A forensic officer walks next to the wreckage of a double decker bus with its top blown off and damaged cars scattered on the road at Tavistock Square in central London after a terrorist attack, July 7, 2005.



West Bank toward the Tel Aviv metropolitan area below, Israel would face an unprecedented threat: Seventy percent of the state's civilian population and 80 percent of its industrial capacity is situated along the coastline, below the hilltops of the West Bank. Given the current reality, Hamas or Fatah control of the West Bank could easily result in weapons flowing from Iraq and Lebanon to the West Bank, creating a grave threat from Israel's eastern border. Given the unstable situation in Lebanon and to Israel's east in Iraq, Syria, and the West Bank, Israel must have *defensible borders* in the West Bank.

**It must be emphasized that the West Bank security fence that has been built along the 1949 Armistice lines (the pre-1967 Green Line) does not provide a solution to the Palestinian terror threat.**

It must be emphasized that the West Bank security fence that has been built along the 1949 Armistice lines (the pre-1967 Green Line) does not provide a solution to the Palestinian terror threat. The fence is only meant to be a tactical measure that has largely succeeded in blocking Palestinian suicide bombers from reaching Israel's major population centers. However, the IDF's anti-terror operations on the ground in the West Bank and against Hamas in Gaza continue to be the major means of prevention against Palestinian terror attacks on Israeli towns and cities. Accordingly, Israel must protect its vital security interests eastward in the Jordan Valley, as well as in the hilly areas surrounding Jerusalem and to the east of Ben-Gurion Airport. Israel must also maintain a security presence in the territory to the east of the security fence, where it is crucial that the IDF be able to protect Israeli population centers along the coast. One of the lessons of both the Lebanon withdrawal and the Gaza disengagement is the reality that territory abandoned by Israel will be seized by Iranian-backed terror groups. This reality extends to the West Bank, the relative peacefulness of which is sustained only by the IDF's ability to maintain security.

Iran's interest in Gaza goes well beyond supporting the Palestinian terror war against Israel with Iranian weapons. This rather more limited objective was in evidence as far back as 2002, when Hizbullah, under the command of its terror master, Imad Moughniyeh (who was killed in Damascus in February 2008), sailed the Karine A from the Iranian island of Kish to Gaza in 2002, in direct coordination

with PA leader Yasser Arafat. Israel intercepted the Karine A at sea and found it laden with a wide assortment of weapons and explosives. However, that did not dampen Iran's desire to transform Gaza into a platform to spread Iranian influence. Iran has been working with Hamas in Gaza to create a model similar to Hizbullah's Lebanon model, called "*Jihad al-Bina*," meaning "Construction Jihad."<sup>48</sup> In Gaza, similar to Southern Lebanon, the same system that supports civil affairs – such as construction, education, health care, and welfare – also creates a civilian infrastructure for terror.

A former senior U.S. Treasury official, Matthew Levitt, noted in 2005 congressional testimony that "according to U.S. officials, Iran offered the PA a substantial discount on the Karine A weapons in return for being allowed to run a hospital in Gaza and other social-welfare organizations in the Palestinian territories."<sup>49</sup> Outreach to the Palestinians in this fashion would follow efforts by Iran elsewhere to use humanitarian and diplomatic footholds as a cover for IRGC or Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) operatives.<sup>50</sup>

Hamas operatives also traveled to Iran for military training following the August 2006 cease-fire in Lebanon.<sup>51</sup> This direct Iranian penetration of the Palestinian arena has already triggered violence between the Hamas government in Gaza and other Palestinian groups. It also increases the likelihood of a Palestinian civil war and accelerates the deterioration in Gaza and the West Bank.

**Muslim extremists believe they defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Israel in Gaza and twice in Lebanon. And following the summer 2006 war, they are confident of defeating Israel in Tel Aviv. They sense they have destabilized a superpower, and will destabilize the West partially by defeating Israel.**

Hamas, an Islamic supremacist group that in many ways thinks and acts like Hizbullah, will not reach a territorial compromise with Israel. Mahmoud Abbas is unable to unseat the Hamas government or rein in radical Islamists in Gaza who are attacking Israel with Kassam and Katyusha rockets, while Palestinian security forces have failed to stabilize the Palestinian areas of the West Bank. Only Israel's security forces have maintained control there.



Therefore, a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not within sight and neither a two-state solution nor further territorial concessions in the West Bank are relevant for the foreseeable future. Israel took substantial risks to achieve a two-state solution, especially since the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords with Yasser Arafat and the PLO. Unfortunately, Israel's bilateral peace process experiment resulted in well over 1,100 Israelis dead and thousands more wounded.<sup>52</sup> It is imperative, then, that Israel and its Western allies learn the lessons of the political and diplomatic failures opposite the Palestinians.

In this context, Israel's 2005 unilateral disengagement from Gaza was also a strategic mistake of the first order. The Gaza withdrawal helped bring about Hamas' victory. It emboldened and inspired terror groups, from Hizbullah in Lebanon to insurgent groups in Iraq. It strengthened the assessment of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, and the Iranians that Israel can be beaten.

But of even greater consequence, Israel's Gaza pullback and subsequent war with Hizbullah have harmed America's strategic war on terror in the region. The United States and Europe had praised Israel's unilateral withdrawal from both Lebanon in 2000 and the Gaza Strip in 2005, believing that Israel's pullbacks would bring the region closer to peace and stability. However, fundamentalist Islam interprets Israel's moves differently from the way Western actors read them. Muslim extremists believe they defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Israel in Gaza and twice in Lebanon. And following the summer 2006 war, they are confident of defeating Israel in Tel Aviv. They sense they have destabilized a superpower, and will destabilize the West partially by defeating Israel.

The Free World, then, undermines its own regional interests by pressuring Israel to increase its vulnerability by withdrawing from additional territories in the West Bank, some of which are unpopulated and essential for Israel's defense and national security. Simply stated, Israeli concessions are viewed by radical Islam as proof of the West's weakness.

Iran is also exploiting the Palestinian arena as a platform for the subversion of Arab states that are amenable to the West, especially Egypt and Jordan.<sup>53</sup> Their concerns over increasing Iranian supremacy have been palpable. Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia led unprecedented public Arab criticism of Hizbullah after the first week of the Second Lebanon War, blasting Nasrallah for "adventurism."<sup>54</sup> They accused Hizbullah of attempting to drag the entire region into a military confrontation with Israel.<sup>55</sup>



## Conclusion

The ambiguous resolution of the 2006 Israel-Hizbullah war – despite the deployment of 25,000 Lebanese and UN troops in Southern Lebanon – has demonstrated to Iran that the strategy and tactics that led to the war have been successful. Building on that perceived success, Iran and Syria have redoubled their expansionist efforts, and today their influence can be increasingly found on Israel's borders – in the rebuilding and re-supply effort in Lebanon, in regular saber-rattling from Syria, and especially in the Gaza Strip, where Iran's increased influence is designed to act as a terror lever against Israel and the West as Tehran pursues its nuclear ambitions.

**Iran is also exploiting the Palestinian arena as a platform for the subversion of Arab states that are amenable to the West, especially Egypt and Jordan.**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addresses the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 25, 2007.



Despite the temptation, the international community must be careful not to interpret every “smile” from the Hamas leadership and every offer of a cease-fire to Israel as a sign of moderation and compromise. Hamas’ diplomatic shrewdness has and will manifest itself in tactical flexibility, which was on display, for example, in its fraudulent negotiation of a national unity government with Fatah and keeping its terror activities temporarily in check while pursuing a longer-term goal – the seizure of the Gaza Strip as a sovereign Hamas-ruled territory.

In the short term, Hamas will likely continue to receive support from Iran and other rogue states.<sup>56</sup> Despite the interest by some in international circles to attempt to “tame” or moderate Hamas, those same actors who failed to “tame” Arafat will not be able to transform Hamas into a viable peace partner and a constructive force for regional stability.

Iran is clearly the most ominous threat today to the West. Operating under a nuclear umbrella, the Iranian regime’s upgraded use of its international terror networks via Hizbullah and Palestinian groups could threaten the region with “dirty,” non-conventional weapons, and terror attacks dramatically more deadly than what has been seen so far. That is why Israel must maintain defensible borders in the West Bank and remind its Western allies that diplomatic pressure on Israel to withdraw to the indefensible 1949 armistice lines or to approximate borders would leave Israel’s major cities and infrastructure vulnerable to rocket and mortar attacks from West Bank hilltops.

**Despite the temptation, the international community must be careful not to interpret every “smile” from the Hamas leadership and every offer of a cease-fire to Israel as a sign of moderation and compromise.**

Israel is clearly not the only country on Iran’s target list. There is no arguing that Iran also threatens Europe. Hopefully, the United States and the international community will act determinedly against Iran, first by political and financial sanctions, and, if necessary, by decisive military action.

As U.S. Senator John McCain has said, there is only one option that is worse than using military force against Iran. That option is allowing Iran to achieve regional hegemony, and ultimately global power, under a nuclear umbrella. Only when the Iranian and Syrian regimes and the terrorists they nurture are squarely defeated can the Middle East and ultimately the West enjoy a more secure and peaceful future.



## Notes

1. According to Israeli police statistics as cited in Uzi Rubin, “Hizbullah’s Rocket Campaign against Northern Israel: A Preliminary Report,” *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, August 31, 2006. The Israeli Foreign Ministry website quoted Israel Police figures of 3,970 rockets, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+from+Lebanon-+Hizbullah/Hizbullah+att+ack+in+northern+Israel+and+Israels+response+12-Jul-2006.htm>.
2. Assessments that solving the Palestinian issue is the key to Middle East peace have also been widely embraced since the 1967 Six-Day War by Arab, Muslim, Third World, and European leaders. It has been convenient and even comforting for many to point to the Palestinian issue to simplify the complex root causes of the Middle East’s many ongoing crises. However, the summer 2006 Israel-Hizbullah war and the stepped-up assaults on Israel from Gaza by Hamas and other local *jihadi* groups suggest that Israeli occupation of disputed land is not the central issue for the future of the Middle East. Rather, any Jewish Israeli presence in the Middle East is seen by radical Islam as a violation of its rightful inheritance. See also Professor Martin Kramer, “The Islamist War,” [http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/2006\\_09\\_13.htm](http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/2006_09_13.htm).
3. For the Hamas Charter, see <http://www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/documents/charter.html>.
4. Resolving the future of the Golan Heights that Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 war is also considered key to fostering peace in the Middle East. However the greatest urgency expressed by most in the international community lies in resolving the Palestinian Israeli dispute. Martin Kramer lays out the historical rejection of Israel in his September 2006 analysis, “The Islamist War.” He argues that the world is witnessing the third, Islamist, stage of the Muslim Arab war against Israel. In the first stage, from Israel’s creation in 1948 through 1973, rejection of Israel dressed itself as pan-Arab nationalism. In the classic Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab states formed alliances in the name of Arab unity, with the aim of isolating Israel and building an Arab coalition that could wage war on two or more fronts. In the second stage, the Palestine Liberation Organization used a mix of politics and “armed struggle” to open up new fronts against Israel – in Jordan and Lebanon in the heyday of the *fedayeen*, in the West Bank and Gaza in the first intifada, and in Israel in the second intifada. In the third and present stage, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been superseded by the Israeli-Islamist conflict. See [http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/2006\\_09\\_13.htm](http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/2006_09_13.htm).
5. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s Address to the UN General Assembly, New York, September 19, 2006.
6. <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP124206>. For Syria’s view that the Second Lebanon War was a U.S. attempt to control the Middle East, see <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP124906>.
7. Hizbullah claimed that its attack came in view of Israel’s occupation of the disputed Shaba Farms and its holding of Lebanese prisoners. However, this claim is unfounded. The Shaba Farms are officially recognized by the international community as a part of former Syrian territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war. The dispute with Israel is to be resolved by direct negotiations between Damascus and Jerusalem in accordance with UNSC Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.
8. Three members of Hizbullah, ‘Imad Mughniyah, Hasan Izz-al-Din, and Ali Atwa, are on the FBI’s list of 22 Most Wanted Terrorists for the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847 during which a U.S. Navy diver was murdered. See <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/termughniyah.htm>, <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/termughniyah.htm>.



fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/terizzaldin.htm, and <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/teratwa.htm>.

9. See <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/khobar.htm>.
10. Pinchas Inbari, *Triangle on the Jordan*, as cited in Dan Diker and Pinchas Inbari, "A West Bank Palestinian Reengagement?" *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. viii, no. 2 (Spring 2006). Despite Arafat's longtime reputation in the West as an Arab secular nationalist terrorist turned Nobel Prize-winning statesman, Arafat has always been an Islamist revolutionary. His 55-year career as an activist and Palestinian leader was profoundly inspired by the ideas of radical Islam, particularly the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. His *nom de guerre* was Abu Amar – "the command of God." Even following the 1993 Oslo peace accords, Arafat frequently invoked *jihad* and other Islamic themes and terminology found in the Koran when addressing Arab audiences in Arabic. Arafat also launched the Al Aksa Intifada in the name of Jerusalem's Al Aksa Mosque. See Barry Rubin, "Is There an Alternative to Arafat's Leadership?" *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief3-13.htm>. Also see Arafat biographer Said Abu Riche, *Arafat, from Defender to Dictator* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999), p. 18.
11. Address by Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror, former Chief of Assessment, IDF, at the Institute for Contemporary Affairs, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, September 6, 2006.
12. Mehdi Khalaji, "Iranian President Ahmadinezhad's Relations with Supreme Leader Khamenei," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 12, 2006, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateCO5.php?CID=2514>.
13. Rubin, "Hizbullah's Rocket Campaign Against Northern Israel."
14. "Iranian Assistance to Hizbullah. Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps Officer: Hizbullah Has Iran-Trained Diver and Naval Commando Units, Has Constructed Command Rooms for Hizbullah," Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), *Special Dispatch Series* No. 1220, July 31, 2006.
15. [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/iran\\_hezbollah\\_e1.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/iran_hezbollah_e1.pdf).
16. According to IDF Intelligence. Also see *Asharq Al-Awsat*, July 16, 2006, [www.aawsat.com/details.asp?sectionfiltered=1&issue=10092&article=373285](http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?sectionfiltered=1&issue=10092&article=373285).
17. Amos Harel and Gideon Alon, "IDF: Hamas Trying to Create Balance of Terror with Israel," *Ha'aretz*, October 16, 2006.
18. Clancey Chassay, "Israel Warned: Lebanon War Could Start Again," *Guardian* (UK), October 11, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,329597720-111416,00.html>, [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&catgeg\\_id=2&article\\_id=76090](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&catgeg_id=2&article_id=76090).
19. Nazila Fathi, "Iranian Leader Renews Attack on Israel at Palestinian Rally," *New York Times*, April 15, 2006.
20. These findings were corroborated by a report by Israel Security Agency Head Yuval Diskin to the Olmert Cabinet on September 27, 2006. Also cited in "News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation, September 15 to 30, 2006," Center for Special Studies, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. On Egypt's failures, see also [http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060927/wl\\_mideast\\_afp/mideastisraelgaza\\_060927143119](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060927/wl_mideast_afp/mideastisraelgaza_060927143119).
21. "Palestinian PM Says Iran Has Pledged \$250 Million in Aid to PA," Reuters report in *Ha'aretz*, December 11, 2006.
22. *Ha'aretz*, December 14, 2006.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Amos Harel and Akiva Eldar, *Ha'aretz*, December 14, 2006.
25. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/946134.html>.
26. For the text of UNSC 1701, see <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>.
27. The Palestinian Authority is not considered a state actor by the international community, although it has attributes of sovereignty and maintains observer status at the United Nations.
28. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Keynote Address at the American Task Force on Palestine. Inaugural Gala, Washington, D.C., October 11, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/73895.htm>.
29. "Congress Okays \$59M in U.S. Funds for Abbas' Security Forces," *Ha'aretz*, April 10, 2007.
30. Colum Lynch, "U.N. Report Cites Outside Military Aid to Somalia's Islamic Forces," *Washington Post*, November 15, 2006. According to a UN Report, up to 750 Somali *jihadis* reportedly fought side by side with Hizbullah in the 2006 Israel-Hizbullah war.
31. Michael Gordon and Dexter Filkins, "Hizbullah Helps Iraq Shiite Army, U.S. Official Says," *New York Times*, November 28, 2006.
32. Patrick Quinn, "Hezbollah Training Iraqi Shiite Extremists in Iran," *Associated Press*, May 6, 2008, <http://www.irnavajahan.net/cgi-bin/news.pl?l=en&y=2008&m=05&d=06&a=3>.
33. Testimony of Gen. Michael Hayden, Director, CIA, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, November 15, 2006.
34. "The Current Situation in Iraq and Afghanistan," Testimony of Lt.-Gen. Michael Maples, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, November 15, 2006. Also see the congressional testimony of Gen. David H. Petraeus, Commander, Multi-National Force in Iraq.
35. <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/Petraeus-Testimony20070910.pdf>.
36. See *Iraq Study Group Report*, [http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq\\_study\\_group\\_report/report/1206/index.html](http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html).
37. Eyal Zisser, "Syrian Foreign Policy Under Bashar al-Assad," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, vol. 4, no. 2, August 29, 2004.
38. Ghaith Abdul Ahad, "From Here to Eternity," *Guardian* (UK), June 8, 2005.
39. "Coalition Forces Capture Syrian Insurgents in Iraq," press release, Public Affairs Office, Multi-National Force-West, Camp Fallujah, Iraq, February 2, 2006.
40. Robin Wright, "Assassination Increases Tensions with Syria, Iran," *Washington Post*, November 22, 2006. "President Bush blasted Syria and Iran yesterday after the assassination of Christian cabinet minister Pierre Gemayel for trying to destabilize Lebanon, reflecting tensions between Washington and its two Middle Eastern rivals that are increasingly playing out in Lebanon as well as Iraq. While the president stopped short of blaming Syria for the killing, he warned that the United States remains 'fully committed' to supporting Lebanon's democracy despite attempts by Damascus, Tehran and their allies in Lebanon 'to foment instability and violence.'"
41. See Radio Free Europe report at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/07/541d7659-f99f-4559-8281-3949d4fa3af7.html>.
42. "Final War Between Muslims, West: Ahmadinejad," *Al Jazeera*, January 21, 2006, [http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service\\_ID=10517](http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service_ID=10517).
43. *Iraq Study Group Report*.
44. *Iraq Study Group Report*, p. 7. [http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq\\_study\\_group\\_report/report/1206/index.html](http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html).
45. President Bush, State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002.
46. "Scholar: MAD Doctrine Does Not Apply to Iran," *World Tribune*, February 25, 2008.
47. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that \$1.4 billion in damages is derived from loss of business and tourist revenue, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+from+Lebanon+Hizbullah/Hizbullah+attack+in+northern+Israel+and+Israels+response+12-Jul-2006.htm>. Amnesty International also assessed direct damages at an additional \$1.14 billion, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMD020252006>.
48. Matthew Levitt, "Shutting Hizbullah's Construction Jihad," *PolicyWatch* no. 1202, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February, 20, 2007. Levitt, former deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, defines "*Jihad al-Bina*" as "construction for the sake of the Holy Struggle."
49. Testimony of Matthew Levitt, former deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in testimony before the Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, and the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, U.S. House of Representatives, February 16, 2005.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
51. Ehud Yaari, Israel Television Channel Two, October 12, 2006. See also Jonathan Halevi, "Hamas, Between Al-Qaeda Jihadism and Tactical Pragmatism," in *Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas and Global Jihad: A New Conflict Paradigm for the West*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2007.
52. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-%20Obstacle%20to%20Peace/Palestinian%20terror%20since%202000/Victims%20of%20Palestinian%20Violence%20and%20Terrorism%20sinc>.
53. Jordan uncovered numerous Hamas weapons caches and foiled several terror plots since March 2006, including assassination attempts against top Jordanian officials. King Abdullah has also noted his concern of an Iranian-led Shiite terror axis extending from Tehran to Beirut, as cited in *Defensible Borders for a Lasting Peace*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2005, [www.defensibleborders.org](http://www.defensibleborders.org). According to the Levitt congressional testimony on February 16, 2005, cited above, King Abdullah highlighted another Iranian operation when he visited President Bush on February 1, 2002. The king reportedly presented the president with evidence that Iran had sponsored no fewer than seventeen attempts to launch rockets and mortars at Israeli targets from Jordanian soil. This was, according to the King, an Iranian plot aimed at undermining the Jordanian regime and opening a new front against Israel.
54. Khaled Abu Toameh, "Arab World Fed Up with Hizbullah," *Jerusalem Post*, July 17, 2006.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *TIME*, October 13, 2006, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1546101,00.html>. According to the article, in underground meetings held in the West Bank and Gaza, a growing number of Hamas commanders say they are running out of patience with the U.S. and want to strike back in response to charges that the Bush administration is hostile toward Hamas.