

Push-Pull Hezbollah: *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* News Coverage of
Three Israel-Lebanon Conflicts (1996, 2000, 2006)

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This dissertation titled
Push-Pull Hezbollah: *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* News Coverage of
Three Israel-Lebanon Conflicts (1996, 2000, 2006)

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Abstract

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Push-Pull Hezbollah: The New York Times and the Washington Post News Coverage of Three Israel-Lebanon Conflicts (1996, 2000, 2006)

Director of Dissertation: Robert Stewart

This content analysis of attributed sources in the 1996, 2000, and 2006 news coverage of Israel's military actions in Lebanon shows a "Late Breaking Foreign Policy" effect Warren P. Strobel cites in his work, wherein media "Push" forward with reliance on government sources and allies in conflicts, but "Pull" back after setbacks. Israel dominated news sources in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, but there was significant increase in attributions to Lebanese sources due to rising civilian casualties in each conflict.

Dedication

*This work is dedicated to
Terry Anderson, my teacher,
and Sourabh Narang, my friend.*

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Foreword

I am not a Muslim, nor an Arab. Most of my studies and observations have, therefore, been as a student of the materials discussed here with no family ties to the events in Lebanon or Israel.

I was born and brought up in Delhi, India, and my interests in terrorism and geopolitics peaked due to the insurgency in Punjab and, later, Kashmir, which were unavoidable topics for any active student of my generation. By the time I graduated high school, I had visited, albeit for short durations, Libya, England, the United States and the Soviet Union (Moscow and Yalta), and I had a fairly broad internationalist view of a diverse world, as opposed to other people of my generation who might have had more isolationist or nativist world views.

It was in the Soviet Union, in 1987, that I first met students from Lebanon who had arrived from a country then ravaged by civil war. I was impressed by their sense of national pride and positive outlook in the midst of a complex and divisive conflict. The rich tapestry of religions and clans that were at the heart of the diversity of Lebanon presented an illustration of the diversity and depth of the people of the region itself – and the international nature of the Lebanese civil war also well illustrated the machinations of the regional and world powers who fought their proxy-wars on the streets and in the skies of Lebanon. By the time I attended Delhi University, the Cold War was over, the Lebanese civil war also ended, and new manners of international alliances and conflicts began to take shape, which became all the more relevant as I began a career in journalism.

As a part of my doctoral studies at Ohio University, I had the opportunity to participate in a Middle East Studies Program with the Scripps Institute for International Journalism in 1999, which included a five weeks study and research trip to the American University of Beirut and visits to various places in Lebanon for my field research. This was an invaluable opportunity for me to get to know the country whose students had fired my imagination and heightened my curiosity about the world twenty-two years ago. Given the ongoing academic interests at that time in the Lebanese group Hezbollah, and the nature of American media coverage of Lebanon, I decided to focus my research on the same, especially as the first visit in 1999 came three years after the 1996 Israeli Operation Grapes of Wrath.

I returned to Lebanon as a teaching assistant in the same program in the summers of 2000 and 2001, and then again on a shorter research trip in the summer of 2003. These travels in Lebanon gave me an opportunity to witness the ground reality of the events, including interviews with various journalists, academics, politicians and members of various NGOs and UNIFIL representatives, which pointed me to a diversity of sources and narratives to contrast with some of the news coverage discussed here.

While the 2006 conflict is many years old, the threat of a new military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon is reawakened almost every year, and its news coverage persists in similar patterns. I sincerely hope that this dissertation serves to deepen the understanding of the media coverage of these previous conflicts in Lebanon.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Thomas Jefferson had a “Mahamedan” problem. In examining and explaining his views in 1776, and therein exploring the work of John Locke, one of Jefferson’s “intellectual heroes,” Jefferson had attributed to Locke his thinking on civil rights, that “neither Pagan, nor Mahamedan [Muslim] nor Jew ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the Commonwealth because of his religion.”¹

However, it was one thing to suggest that the almost exclusively Protestant Christians among the ranks of the American Founders practice toleration of Muslims, and quite a different challenge to raise the issue of a freedom of religion, and a ban on religious tests for office, possibly leading to citizenship and, perhaps, even the presidency falling in the hands of a Muslim. As Denise A. Spellberg notes in her book, “Americans had inherited from Europe almost a millennium of negative distortions of the faith’s theological and political character.”² Beyond the crusade of historical religious animosity permeating into American thinking over many years from Europe, there was also the very real challenge of North African Piracy waged by the Barbary States, with Americans being held hostage for ransom in the decade after the American Revolution, a period that ran concurrent to efforts for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. As Spellberg notes, the first Muslim whom Jefferson ever met, in March 1786 in London, was the diplomatic envoy from Tripoli, during the negotiations for a treaty to resolve the piracy and hostage crises.³

¹ Denise A. Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson’s Qur’an: Islam and the Founders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ *Ibid.*, 124-25.

While there were some Muslims living in the U.S. in this time – almost all brought as slaves from Africa – the image of a Muslim was fired up in the popular imagination as that of a foreigner, variously described in the writings as a Turk, or Mahamedan, or Mohotmetan, or Musselmans or other premodern variations on references to Muslims.⁴ And so it was that the voices raised in criticism of the proposed constitution, and published in various newspapers, questioned the wisdom of provisions such as Article VI, which stated that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” James Madison wrote in October 1788 to Thomas Jefferson, then in Paris, that “one of the objections in New England was that the Constitution by prohibiting religious tests opened a door for Jews Turks and infidels.” Indeed, publications of that time often printed writings by anti-Federalists raising the issue of the proposed constitution opening the path for non-Protestants to occupy high office, with one warning that “we may have a Papist, a Mohomatan, a Deist, yea an Atheist at the helm of the government.”⁵

Nevertheless, Thomas Jefferson, along with like-minded founders, was able to convince the majority of the delegates and voters that the Constitution’s and the Bill of Rights’ provisions for freedom of religion, and the ban on religious tests for public office, were principles that could not be abandoned in fear of Islam. Ironically, as the political rivalry between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson heated up in 1791, Adams’ son John Quincy Adams wrote to a Boston newspaper under a pseudonym alleging that Jefferson’s recent statement in an introduction to Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man* were expressions that “imply more; they seem, like the Arabian prophet, to call upon all true

⁴ Ibid., 7-8.

⁵ Ibid., 158-59.

believers in the *Islam* of democracy, to draw their swords, and, in the fervor of their devotion, to compel their countrymen to cry out, ‘There is but one goddess of Liberty, and Common Sense in her prophet.’”⁶

Among the very first generation of America’s Founders, therefore, there were challenges posed by anti-Islam hysteria, as well as rumors that the political rival was somehow connected to Islam, all published in newspapers. Ironic, again, was President John Adams’s Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Tripoli, signed June 10, 1797, whose Article 11 noted that: “As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion, -as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen,- and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.” The Article 11 text noting that the U.S. government was not founded on Christianity led one newspaper editor in Philadelphia to retort on June 23, 1797, that “it certainly looks a little like trampling upon the cross.”⁷

The United States government, therefore, has had a long and controversial history of conflict and compromise with Islamic states, with a domestic constituency tuned in various parts in support or opposition of the leadership, often driven by the heady mix of electoral politics and anti-Islam rhetoric, with the press playing an important part in heightening or cooling the tensions between the nations by informing or agitating the American audiences.

⁶ Ibid., 202-3.

⁷ Ibid., 207-8.

Almost 150 years after Adams's and Jefferson's negotiations with the Barbary States, in February 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Saudi King Abdul Aziz on board the USS *Quincy* in the Suez Canal and allied the U.S. with Saudi Arabia, providing the United States with great influence over one of the world's major suppliers of oil, but also building an international relationship with one of the most conservative Sunni Islamic governments of the region, promising in return military training and support.⁸ Saudi Arabia's importance, as estimated by the U.S. military, State Department, and the OSS (Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor to the CIA) in 1945, was due to its oil reserves and the nation's support for the Allied war effort, along with U.S. plans to acquire a major air base at Dhahran, thereby providing the U.S. military with an important launching pad in the region.⁹

During the Cold War, devout Muslims would prove to be committed anticommunists, and the United States often backed fundamentalist and radical Islamic movements during the Cold War with the goal of beating back Marxists and Communists in the region.¹⁰ These efforts would ultimately climax with the joint U.S.-Saudi multi-billion dollar efforts to radicalize and train thousands of Muslims to come together from across the world, to be trained in guerrilla warfare and terrorism in Pakistan, and then be sent to wage war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.¹¹ The blowback from

⁸ Adam Taylor, "The First Time a U.S. President Met a Saudi King," *Washington Post*, Jan. 27, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/01/27/the-first-time-a-u-s-president-met-a-saudi-king>

⁹ Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 11-13.

¹⁰ Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005), 65-93.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 244-69.

these measures was, however, first evident in a country populated by a completely different sect of Muslims, the Shi'ites.

Similar exploitation of Shi'ite religious sentiments was at play in the 1950s, when the U.S. joined with the British government's efforts to dislodge the democratically elected nationalist government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq¹² – efforts that included false flag attacks on Shi'ite mosques by paid agents that were then falsely blamed on Marxists to inflame religious sentiment against the democratic Iranian leadership. In fact, one of the key elements of the plan decided by the CIA's area chief for the Middle East, Kermit Roosevelt, agreed upon during his clandestine meeting with the Shah at the royal palace over the night of August 1, 1953, was “an alliance with the ulema,” the body of religious-legal scholars.¹³ Among the outraged anti-Marxist protesters out on the streets in August 1953 were Ayatollah Ahmed Kashani and Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini.¹⁴

The primary concerns of the British and U.S. joint activities in Iran were based on control of production, distribution and sale of Iran's oil, which Mossadeq's government was poised to nationalize.¹⁵ As noted in an exposé published in *The New York Times* in April 2000: “The operation, code-named TP-Ajax, was the blueprint for a succession of C.I.A. plots to foment coups and destabilize governments during the cold war - including the agency's successful coup in Guatemala in 1954 and the disastrous Cuban intervention

¹² Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 118-22.

¹³ Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1985; iUniverse: toExcel Press, 2000), 34-35.

¹⁴ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 103-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93-98.

known as the Bay of Pigs in 1961. In more than one instance, such operations led to the same kind of long-term animosity toward the United States that occurred in Iran.”¹⁶

After Mossadeq’s removal, over the next twenty-five years, the Shah in Iran faced growing opposition from an outspoken religious movement that he could neither quell nor crush and that ultimately led to his flight from Iran in 1979, and the installation of a Shi’ite Islamic government in Tehran. This revolution and the resulting new theocratic regime was led by the very same Ayatollah Khomeini who had been part of the anti-Mossadeq protests in 1953, subsequently exiled by the Shah, but now returning triumphant, having been seriously underestimated by the CIA.¹⁷

America’s recent sense of animosity toward Shi’ite Muslims in particular dates to the capture of the U.S. Embassy and the taking of American hostages in Tehran in the fallout of that Islamic revolution and the Shah’s asylum in the U.S.¹⁸ That sense of animosity was further heightened by the attack on the U.S. Marines in Beirut, Lebanon, in October 1983, resulting in the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel.¹⁹ That attack was blamed on Lebanese Shi’ite radicals backed by Iran,²⁰ eventually identified as “Hizballah,”²¹ who were also blamed for the series of kidnappings and the hostage crises

¹⁶ James Risen, “SECRETS OF HISTORY: The C.I.A. in Iran - A special report.; How a Plot Convulsed Iran in '53 (and in '79),” *New York Times*, April 11, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/16/world/secrets-history-cia-iran-special-report-plot-convulsed-iran-53-79.html>

¹⁷ Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 426-33.

¹⁸ Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 154.

¹⁹ “Key Sections of Pentagon’s Report on Attack on the Marines,” *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/12/29/world/key-sections-of-pentagon-s-report-on-attack-on-the-marines.html>

²⁰ The U.S. State Department’s *Country Reports on Terrorism* has designated “Hizballah” as a terrorist organization responsible for these attacks since the very first such report in 1997. The 2016 report is available on the web: <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272238.htm>

²¹ “Hezbollah” is the spelling used by American newspapers when referring to the Lebanese group – other researchers and writers use various forms of spellings – “Hizb’allah,” “Hizbullah,” and “Hizbollah” being common – but this dissertation uses the American newspapers’ version of the spelling.

across Lebanon that lasted until 1991.²² That year, of course, had been the fixture of national attention as an international coalition led by U.S. troops liberated Kuwait and beat back the Iraqi occupation forces – another conflict that informed anti-Muslim sentiments in the United States.²³

Numerous terrorist incidents kept the public’s attention on Islam and terrorism off and on during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, but most of these attacks took place overseas, and some of them were focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict, although Al Qaeda did focus attacks on U.S. targets in the 1990s, most notably the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, and the attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.²⁴

Then, on September 11, 2001, the American public was informed by the news media in live news reports that a group of terrorists had crashed four passenger airliners into various targets in the United States. In the feverish reporting that followed the terrorist attacks on America, it was revealed by the U.S. government — various officials of President George W. Bush’s administration — that the airplanes had been flown by nineteen Muslim terrorists loyal to Al Qaeda and under direct orders from Osama bin-Laden. The reaction of the Bush administration and various American politicians to the terrorists’ attacks brought the issue of the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to the forefront of American media attention, and over the next several weeks the mainstream news organizations in the United States devoted millions of words and thousands of

²² See: British journalist Robert Fisk’s reporting on the end of Lebanon’s civil war and the hostage crises in *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Nation Books, 2002), 628-63.

²³ “A History of Backlash against Arabs and Muslims in America,” *We Are Not the Enemy* (Human Rights Watch Report, November 2002), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102-03.htm#P221_29794

²⁴ See “Al Qaeda Timeline: Plots and Attacks,” *NBCNews.com*, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/4677978/ns/world_news-hunt_for_al_qaida/t/al-qaida-timeline-plots-attacks/#.WaxbS-mQzIU

hours to examining the threat posed by Islamic fanatics, their countries of origin, and examined the suitable U.S. response – all largely sourced by the news media from either U.S. officials of the Bush administration, or federal, state and city politicians, or American specialists/experts from renowned centers of foreign policy thought – each aligned to a particular political group or ideology within the United States. Foreign sources tended to be dominated by politicians and experts from the allies of the United States, most notably Israel and Western Europe.²⁵

Once the Bush administration decided the U.S. response — a campaign of bombing in Afghanistan followed by U.S. ground forces coordinating with the Northern Alliance to uproot the Taliban and crush Osama bin-Laden's Al-Qaeda network — the mainstream media busied themselves in covering and analyzing the benefits of this campaign, with government sources and think tank experts leading the media's discussion on which targets to pursue next, with focus developing on the three states — Iran, Iraq and North Korea — which the Bush administration subsequently labeled collectively as the “Axis of Evil.”²⁶

To most journalists and mass communication researchers, it was obvious that any attack on the United States, be it a military, terrorist, economic, diplomatic or cultural assault, would focus the mainstream media attention on the sources of the violence due to a hostile interest in these perpetrators among the American public. The 1973 oil crises had sparked interest among the American audiences in the Middle East because of the hardships caused by the scarcity and escalating price of oil. This first widespread media

²⁵ See: Newseum Institute's report *Journalism and Terrorism: How the War on Terrorism Has Changed American Journalism* (First Amendment Center, Oct. 2002), www.newseuminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/JournalismandTerrorism.pdf

²⁶ David E. Sanger, “The State of the Union,” *New York Times*, Jan. 30, 2002.

introduction of the common American media consumer to the Middle East, therefore, was decidedly unpleasant. Then came the 1979 revolution in Iran, the flight of the Shah, and the return of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In the mass media news and pop culture, the American public had found no reason to love the Arabs or the Muslims, and the framework for hostility toward the Arabs and Muslims as an enemy went very well with the general hostility toward other American enemies of the time, namely the communists and the socialists.²⁷

Meanwhile, working mostly in a covert fashion, the U.S. government, especially through the Central Intelligence Agency, worked to support Islamist groups that opposed the growth of Marxist or socialist or communist factions in their countries. These efforts escalated significantly after the 1978 Communist coup in Afghanistan. “During the Reagan presidency, there was sustained cooperation between the CIA and Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), and neither party had much interest in a negotiated settlement,” notes Mahmood Mamdani.

Both intelligence agencies came to share a dual objective: militarily, to provide maximum firepower to the mujahideen and, politically, to recruit the most radically anti-Communist Islamists to counter Soviet forces. . . . The Islamist recruits came from all over the world, not only Muslim-majority countries such as Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Indonesia, but also such Muslim-minority countries as the United States and Britain. . . . The Islamic world had not seen an armed jihad for nearly a century. But now the CIA was determined to create one in service of a contemporary political objective.²⁸

²⁷ This framework of hostility toward the Arab and the Muslim in the fallout of the 1979 Iranian Revolution was addressed by Edward Said in his 1981 book, *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997). The overall hostility toward Arabs and Muslims in American popular media has been documented by Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing Group, 2001).

²⁸ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2005), 126-27.

This covert American role in escalating a violent Islamist ideology, building its supply chain, and effectively weaponizing it into murderous fury at a global level went mostly under-appreciated until the blowback, the unintended consequences, that came in the form of the Al Qaeda attacks against the U.S.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, created a newfound interest in Islam and the Middle East among various American news organizations. The Associated Press introduced the words “jihad,” “mujahedeen” and “mullah” in its *Stylebook and Libel Guide* in 2002. Among other new entries were “dad,” “mom” and “bloodbath.”²⁹ News reports rushing along the AP wire to small and medium sized newspapers across America were increasingly bringing into focus the three high profile post-9/11 news story elements of family, violence and Islam.

The increase in interest in Islam during a crisis situation involving American foreign policy could be described as part of a larger trend in the editorial process of the American mainstream press. While Herbert Schiller,³⁰ in 1978, and Mustapha Masmoudi,³¹ in 1979, claimed that the mass media severely under-represented foreign news, W. James Potter argued in 1987 that foreign news coverage had been steadily increasing, but admitted that a significant portion of this news was sensational.³²

This discrepancy was explained in part by Pamela J. Shoemaker, Lucig H. Danielian and Nancy Brendlinger, who noted in their 1991 study of foreign news selection that the volume of foreign news published in the American mainstream media

²⁹ *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002).

³⁰ Herbert I. Schiller, “Decolonization of Information: Efforts towards a New Information Order,” *Latin American Perspective*, 5 (1978), 35-48.

³¹ Mustapha Masmoudi, “The New World Information Order,” *Journal of Communication*, 21 (1979), 172-79.

³² W. James Potter, “News from Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers,” *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, no. 1 (Spring 1987), 73-79.

was decided by U.S. interests: the U.S. foreign policy, U.S. national security, and U.S. business in the region, as well as the curiosity factor of deviance.³³ The more deviant the foreign event, or the more important it is perceived to be to U.S. interests and business, the more likely it is to be covered by the mainstream press, noted Shoemaker, Danielian and Brendlinger.

While this analysis explained the sudden change in volume of foreign news coverage, it did not account for the change in tone of coverage in the mainstream media in concert with the change in American foreign policy. Such a tendency, to cover news within the parameters defined by American foreign policy, was found to be pervasive in many content analysis studies that examined the mainstream media's coverage of crises during the Cold War. American sources close to the U.S. administration dominated most of the news coverage in those studies, leading to what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky called the “propaganda effect” brought about by, among other factors, an ideology of “anticommunism.”³⁴ If anti-communism could be a national ideology constructed through the media during the Cold War, similar sources could just as easily whip up a national ideology of intolerance and hostility toward the “militant” or “evil” “Islamic” enemy.

In their examination of the political economy of the mass media, Herman and Chomsky pointed toward factors such as the editorial filters created by influences of ownership, profits, advertising, fear of flak, and ideology on the behavior of the mainstream press, arguing that these factors created a chilling effect on the American

³³ Pamela Shoemaker, Lucig H. Danielian and Nancy Brendlinger, “Deviant Acts, Risky Business and U.S. Interests: The Newsworthiness of World Events,” *Journalism Quarterly*, 68, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 781-95.

³⁴ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

media's ability to provide a fair and balanced view of the crises involving the communists and socialists in the 1980s.³⁵ With Arab and Islamic radicalism having clearly established itself as the major challenge and irritant to U.S. foreign policy after the weakening and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, beginning with Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, it is worth examining whether the factors outlined by Herman and Chomsky, coupled by the wave of jingoism that follows the press in any war, created an atmosphere of anti-Islamism, wherein the mainstream press again found itself playing a propaganda role by excessive reliance on government and allied sources in the narrative of conflict against a foreign enemy.

Such a research effort is worthwhile, as a propaganda-based portrayal of Islamic radicalism, or Islamic groups and Muslim states, is bound to create a partial picture of the reality of the challenges before American policy, thereby depriving U.S. citizens of the awareness required to hold their government's policy accountable to plausible and realizable policy goals, and the moral, political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and military means to achieve the same.

David Perry claimed in his 1987 research, on the affect of foreign news coverage on readers' perceptions of foreign nations, that an "Image Gap" affected the readers that was directly related to the news content on a particular country available to the said readers.³⁶ Perry argued that the information available in the mainstream media on a particular foreign country directly affected the public's understanding of that country and

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ David K. Perry, "The Image Gap: How International News Affects Perceptions of Nations," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64 (1987): 416-33.

controversy, therefore highlighting that the lack of news regarding foreign affairs leads to a lack of public understanding of foreign issues, or a misunderstanding of the same.

Previous studies of news coverage of U.S. foreign policy have shown that the media interest in foreign issues has been largely foreign policy driven, supporting Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet campaign of 1980-1989 but, in the same period, showing deep suspicion and prejudice toward Islamic fundamentalism in Iran. Indeed, the focus on Iran proved to be so intense that another “monster,” Saddam Hussein, escaped scrutiny largely due to his perceived strategic role of undermining the Iranian clerical regime through a long and bloody war from 1980 to 1988, during which Saddam received covert U.S. and European support.³⁷

With increasing consolidation in the ownership of major news media, advances in technology, and the establishing of populist radio and twenty-four-hour cable television talk shows, along with online and social media oriented sources of information and misinformation, the Image Gap may now be turning into a Reality Gap, with American audiences perceiving a world based on deeply flawed self-serving narratives, while audiences in the other countries perceive a completely different reality. A recent example of this disconnect, which brought forth a rare admission of failure by some sections of the American press, came in the wake of the invasion and occupation of Iraq, beginning in 2003. The reporting on the reasoning, planning and implementing of the Bush administration’s plans for war against Iraq was provided by journalists relying primarily on U.S. officials or official-friendly experts and allied sources. A few months into the conflict, as U.S. casualties mounted, it became clear that the reporting of the reasoning,

³⁷ Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 155-58.

planning and implementing of this war had been flawed, if not corrupted, precisely because it had relied heavily on official and official-friendly sources who were predisposed to the idea of invading and occupying Iraq. In effect, at a time when the news media were relying ever more heavily on government sources, the Bush administration was increasingly curtailing information from the press³⁸ while feeding reporters cherrypicked and self-serving information, quite a lot of which turned out to be false. The Center for Public Integrity noted in its study that “President George W. Bush and seven of his administration's top officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, made at least 935 false statements in the two years following September 11, 2001, about the national security threat posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq.”³⁹

On August 12, 2004, Howard Kurtz wrote a lukewarm apology for the *Washington Post*.⁴⁰ Kurtz argued that while the *Post* had published news reports that questioned the administration's Iraq policy, the reports had been given low editorial priority and prominence. The *Post*'s article came nearly three months after a May 26, 2004, admission by the editors of *The New York Times*, which stated that they had “found a number of instances of coverage that was not as rigorous as it should have been. In some cases, information that was controversial then, and seems questionable now, was insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged. Looking back, we wish we had

³⁸ The Bush administration's efforts with respect to secrecy and lack of transparency are examined in The Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP) White Paper “Homefront Confidential” (September 2005), https://www.rcfp.org/news/documents/Homefront_Confidential.pdf

³⁹ Charles Lewis and Mark Reading-Smith, “False Pretenses,” The Center for Public Integrity, Jan. 23, 2008, <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2008/01/23/5641/false-pretenses>

⁴⁰ Howard Kurtz, “The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story,” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004.

been more aggressive in re-examining the claims as new evidence emerged — or failed to emerge.”⁴¹

The assumption in these apologies was that both the *Post* and the *Times* had fallen for official and official-friendly sources, but the articles also stressed that this was an exception to their otherwise exemplary news coverage. In fact, as numerous studies highlighted in the literature review of this dissertation demonstrate, the two leading liberal national newspapers have repeatedly reported on American foreign policy and wars relying overwhelmingly on official and official-friendly sources, rarely standing in the way of the information juggernaut spearheaded by the White House and the related U.S. government, U.S. military, and U.S. civilian information sources spread across various prominent and influential institutions in the United States. And just as the Iraq War coverage had suffered from significant blind spots, the coverage of the Syrian civil war would similarly leave Americans largely unprepared for a shocking turn of events with respect to the increasingly sectarian war spilling out from Iraq into Syria during the Bush and Obama administrations.⁴²

In August 2014, audiences around the world watched the online video in horror as a hooded man with a British accent ranted about the United States, menacingly branding a large combat knife in his hand, and then beheaded American journalist James Foley on camera.⁴³ Suddenly, the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS for Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) became a household name and, over the space of

⁴¹ Editorial, “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 26, 2004, 10.

⁴² See, for example, David Ignatius, “How ISIS Spread in the Middle East,” *The Atlantic*, Oct. 29, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/how-isis-started-syria-iraq/412042/>

⁴³ “Timeline: ISIS Hostage Killings,” *The Guardian*. Nov. 16, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/16/isis-hostage-killings-timeline>

a year, they seized a tremendous amount of Syrian and Iraqi territory with seeming ease. As cities and towns fell into ISIS hands in Syria and Iraq, Americans grew curious about the few capable Shi'ite militias that were able to withstand ISIS assaults – among them the fighters of the Lebanese Hezbollah.⁴⁴ And when ISIS and Al Qaeda inspired terrorists attacked the office of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and murdered journalists, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah declared that "takfiri terrorist groups" had insulted Islam more than "even those who have attacked the messenger of God through books depicting the Prophet or making films depicting the Prophet or drawing cartoons of the Prophet."⁴⁵ In a sign of changing perspectives among some U.S. media, CNN's Anthony Bourdain included in a Sunday, June 21, 2015, "Parts Unknown" episode a segment wherein he shared a meal and discussed politics and conflict with a family loyal to Hezbollah in the suburbs of Beirut.⁴⁶

The history of the U.S. conflict with the Lebanese Hezbollah is, therefore, a long and complicated story – and one not always told very well by the American press. From the early attacks on the Israeli military after its 1982 invasion of Lebanon, to the bombing of the U.S. Marines barracks and attacks on the U.S. embassy in Beirut in 1983 and 1984, followed by the years-long campaign of kidnappings and negotiations over hostages in Lebanon, and continuing hostilities against Israel, the Shi'ite militias that coalesced into Hezbollah have a long history of opposition to U.S. and Israeli interests in the region.⁴⁷ In

⁴⁴ AFP, "Hezbollah announces battle with ISIS on Syria-Lebanon border," *Al Arabiya*. June 10, 2015, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/06/10/Hezbollah-announces-battle-with-ISIS-on-Syria-Lebanon-border-.html>

⁴⁵ "Hezbollah chief says terrorist damage Islam more than cartoons," *Reuter.com*. Jan. 9, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/09/us-france-shooting-hezbollah-idUSKBN0KI1OM20150109>

⁴⁶ "Anthony Bourdain: Back to Beirut," *CNN.com*. June 21, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/20/travel/beirut-bourdain-parts-unknown/index.html>

⁴⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 27-88.

fits and bouts, the Shi'ite political party and militia have been designated a terrorist group by the U.S. government, called the "A-Team" of terrorists,⁴⁸ and seen as a dangerous threat to U.S. interests in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, not to mention the threat they pose to Israel.

"In all these assessments Hizbullah emerges as a formidable, if not the most dangerous, exponent of the terrorism that the U.S. State Department believes to constitute 'a fundamental feature of the Middle East political landscape'," note Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders.⁴⁹ And yet, as the authors note, "students of terrorism have been seriously hampered by systematically resorting to factual incorrectness regarding what can be known, by skipping relevant historical data, by anachronistic arguing and by relying on philological essentialism," and that "those labeling Hizbullah as a terrorist organization have had few qualms about the methodological flaws."⁵⁰

For the most part, the dominant narrative of framing Hezbollah has been articulated in the American media by either U.S. or Israeli sources, who have largely painted the group as a deviant, dangerous or evil factor in the region. However, in the same period, Hezbollah has performed well in many democratic elections in Lebanon,⁵¹ and has seemed to grow larger and more capable in its military skills despite repeated attempts by the Israeli military at "mowing the lawn" in Lebanon, as in the 2006 "Second

⁴⁸ Rebecca Leung, "Hezbollah: 'A-Team' of Terrorists," *CBS News*. April 18, 2003, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hezbollah-a-team-of-terrorists/>

⁴⁹ Mona Harb and Reinoud Leenders, "Know Thy Enemy: Hizbullah, 'Terrorism' and the Politics of Perception," *Third World Quarterly*, 26, no. 1 (2005): 176.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁵¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 97-105.

Lebanon War, widely perceived as a failure by the Israel public, and confirmed as such by the government-appointed Winograd Commission.”⁵²

This contradiction in narratives, between how Hezbollah is perceived in America and Israel as opposed to how it exists in Lebanon, was previously largely absent in the American media. This type of American media behavior is not uncommon – in fact, many journalism studies point to a propaganda influence that keeps the news media largely in favor of U.S. government and allied policies and narratives in the build up to foreign conflicts.⁵³ The 2006 conflict might be many years old now, but the nature of the threat of military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon remains largely the same, and so does the pattern of news coverage as those threats rise and recede.

By studying the sourcing of news by two premier American newspapers, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, over the three conflicts in 1996, 2000 and 2006, this dissertation attempts to statistically track how these two influential newspapers have changed their news sourcing in reporting the conflicts, and also examine the historical and theoretical arguments that might help explain these shifts. The theoretical framework for this analysis, building on the “Propaganda Model” developed by Herman and Chomsky,⁵⁴ and the “Indexing Hypothesis” developed by Bennett,⁵⁵ while developing the “Push and Pull” effects theory suggested by Strobel,⁵⁶ is explained in the literature review that follows.

⁵² Yoni Dayan, “Mowing the Lawn,” YnetNews.com. Nov. 27, 2012, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4312017.00.html>

⁵³ Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1-36.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

⁵⁶ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The press in the United States exists in a unique position of power, perhaps less encumbered in its activity than the press in most other countries of the world. However, the American press also operates under certain restraints, both internal and external, and an examination of literature examining the content, routines, character and impact of American news best begins with an understanding of the legal and cultural traditions of press, politics and the judiciary in the United States.

The History of Press Censorship and Self-Censorship

In 1966, when the U.S. Senate adopted the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was meant to facilitate the process to open government records to public inspection, the Purpose of the Bill section quoted James Madison: “Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.”¹

The framers of the U.S. Constitution and the advocates of the Bill of Rights knew from the personal experiences of their struggle against a colonial power as to how an oppressive government could obfuscate and misdirect the public opinion, and thereby retard the political will to action, by controlling the flow of information. This was well illustrated by the fact that one of the first American-owned newspapers, Benjamin Harris’s *Publick Occurrences*, was shut down by the colonial government within a day of its publishing because it was unlicensed and hostile toward the establishment. Colonial

¹ Don. R. Pember and Clay Calvert, *Mass Media Law* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 320.

laws were used with impunity to crush American dissent and silence criticism, but in turn fostered in revolutionary Americans the spirit to speak truth to power and oppose the tyranny of seditious libel laws, and by the mid-eighteenth-century, Americans had grown tired of this censorship and dared to challenge the repression of the British colonial power, a trend well demonstrated by the trial of John Peter Zenger. Zenger, a publisher in New York, was put on trial for seditious libel for having published “stinging attacks” on the unpopular colonial governor, William Cosby. However, as Don Pember and Clay Calvert note in their *Mass Media Law* textbook, Zenger’s attorney, Andrew Hamilton, was able to convince the jury that “no man should be imprisoned or fined for publishing criticism of the government that was both truthful and fair.”² It is in keeping with these experiences leading up to the American revolution that some of America’s founding fathers, with significant opposition from within their own ranks, backed the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, to provide, among other rights, for a freedom of the press from the laws of Congress. As Zechariah Chafee Jr. noted, “the framers of the First Amendment sought to preserve the fruits of the old victory abolishing the censorship, and to achieve a new victory abolishing sedition prosecutions.”³ It should also be noted that the framers had failed to get these rights enshrined in the Articles of Confederation in 1781. It took ten years for the Bill of Rights to be ratified by three-fourths of the former colonial states in 1791, and Connecticut, Georgia and Massachusetts did not ratify the Bill of Rights till 1941.⁴

² Ibid, 32-34.

³ Zechariah Chafee Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 22.

⁴ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 39.

The first major challenge faced by sections of the press after the passage of the First Amendment came from the administration of President John Adams and its exercise of the Sedition Act of 1798 – which “forbade false, scandalous and malicious publications against the U.S. government, Congress and the president” with punishment ranging from a fine up to \$2,000 and a jail term up to two years.⁵ Coming just seven years after the adoption of the Bill of Rights, this law and its companion Alien Act were passed by a Federalist-dominated Congress out of fear of a domestic and foreign policy crisis, amid bitter divisions between the political camps of President Adams’s Federalist party and Thomas Jefferson’s Republican/Jeffersonian party, and a perceived national security threat from the French Revolution. However, the Adams administration used these laws to prosecute eight Jeffersonian newspaper editors, and a Republican member of Congress and Federalist judges heard most of the cases, with convictions being common.⁶ Ultimately, these laws created dissension among President Adams’s supporters and, as Calvert and Pember note, “many argue that Adams lost his bid for re-election in 1800 largely because of public dissatisfaction with his attempt to muzzle his critics.”⁷

The newly elected President Thomas Jefferson then pardoned all people convicted under the Sedition Act, and Congress eventually reimbursed all the fines paid under it and, as Pember and Calvert note, this nation’s first peacetime sedition law “left such a bad taste that another peacetime sedition law was not passed until 1940.”⁸ However, the highest level of suppression of freedom of expression occurred in U.S. history during World War I, with the passage of the Espionage Act of 1917, and the Sedition Act of

⁵ Ibid., 48; also see Chafee Jr., *Free Speech in the United States*, 27-28.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 48-49.

⁸ Ibid., 49.

1918, with punishment levying fines up to \$10,000 and imprisonment up to twenty years under both laws. According to Pember and Calvert, nearly two thousand people faced prosecution under these laws, and about nine hundred were convicted. The U.S. Supreme Court developed standards that tested the limits of First Amendment freedom of speech and press versus the government's interests in preserving national security in 1919 in cases involving the federal government's actions against Socialist Party leaders such as Charles Schenck⁹ who was accused of attempting to "cause insubordination... in the military and naval forces of the United States, and to obstruct the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States, when the United States was at war with the German Empire, to-wit, that the defendant wilfully conspired to have printed and circulated to men who had been called and accepted for military service."¹⁰ The printed and mailed documents were deemed to be dangerous because:

In impassioned language it intimated that conscription was despotism in its worst form and a monstrous wrong against humanity in the interest of Wall Street's chosen few. It said, 'Do not submit to intimidation,' but in form at least confined itself to peaceful measures such as a petition for the repeal of the act. The other and later printed side of the sheet was headed 'Assert Your Rights.' It stated reasons for alleging that any one violated the Constitution when he refused to recognize 'your right to assert your opposition to the draft,' and went on, 'If you do not assert and support your rights, you are helping to deny or disparage rights which it is the solemn duty of all citizens and residents of the United States to retain.' It described the arguments on the other side as coming from cunning politicians and a mercenary capitalist press, and even silent consent to the conscription law as helping to support an infamous conspiracy. It denied the power to send our citizens away to foreign shores to shoot up the people of other lands, and added that words could not express the condemnation such cold-blooded ruthlessness deserves . . . winding up,

⁹ *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919). Case brief quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1901-1939/1918/1918_437

¹⁰ From the transcript of *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/249/47.html>

‘You must do your share to maintain, support and uphold the rights of the people of this country.’¹¹

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Schenck’s conviction, with Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes ruling, “The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”¹² This “clear and present danger” test set the precedent for many more convictions under the Espionage Act and Sedition Act, including that of Eugene Victor Debs,¹³ the Socialist Party’s candidate for president. However, as noted by Pember and Calvert, Justice Holmes changed his mind about the clear and present danger test he had created “in less than six months and broke with the majority of the high court to outline a somewhat more liberal definition of freedom of expression in a ruling on the Sedition Act in the fall of 1919.”¹⁴ But the majority of the court continued to use the Holmes test to reject First Amendment appeals.¹⁵ While ruling that the First Amendment protection did apply to even state laws because of Fourteenth Amendment protection for due process, the majority of the U.S. Supreme Court also upheld state-level criminal prosecutions of Benjamin Gitlow in New York¹⁶ in 1925 (with Justices Holmes and Brandeis dissenting),

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Debs v. United States*, 249 U.S. 211 (1919). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1901-1939/1918/1918_714

¹⁴ *Abrams v. United States*, 250 U.S. 616 (1919). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/250us616

¹⁵ Don. R. Pember and Clay Calvert, *Mass Media Law* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 54.

¹⁶ *Gitlow v. New York*, 268 U.S. 652 (1925). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1901-1939/1922/1922_19

and unanimously upheld the conviction of Charlotte Anita Whitney in California¹⁷ in 1927, wherein Justice Holmes concurred but argued:

In order to support a finding of clear and present danger it must be shown either that immediate serious violence was to be expected or was advocated, or that the past conduct furnished reason to believe that such advocacy was then contemplated. . . . Those who won our independence by revolution were not cowards. They did not fear political change. They did not exalt order at the cost of liberty. To courageous, selfreliant men, with confidence in the power of free and fearless reasoning applied through the processes of popular government, no danger flowing from speech can be deemed clear and present, unless the incidence of the evil apprehended is so imminent that it may befall before there is opportunity for full discussion.¹⁸

The next major decision by the U.S. Supreme Court with respect to the First Amendment and sedition laws came in 1951 against eleven Communist Party members in *Dennis v. U.S.*¹⁹ who had been convicted under the 1940 Smith Act. Congress had passed the Smith Act, America's second peacetime sedition law, which made it a crime to advocate the violent overthrow of government, to conspire to advocate the violent overthrow of government, to organize a group that advocated the violent overthrow of government, or to be a member of a group that advocated the violent overthrow of government.²⁰ The majority of the court upheld the conviction under an even lower standard of the "clear and probable danger test" by Chief Justice Vinson.²¹ However, now Justices Black and Douglas dissented, with Douglas writing a rousing dissent, arguing:

So far as the present record is concerned, what petitioners did was to organize people to teach and themselves teach the Marxist-Leninist doctrine contained chiefly in four books. . . . The opinion of the Court

¹⁷ *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357 (1927). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1901-1939/1925/1925_3

¹⁸ From the transcript of *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357 (1927), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/274/357.html>

¹⁹ *Dennis v. United States*, 341 U.S. 494 (1951). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1950-1959/1950/1950_336

²⁰ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 51.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

does not outlaw these [communist and socialist] texts nor condemn them to the fire, as the Communists do literature offensive to their creed. But if the books themselves are not outlawed, if they can lawfully remain on library shelves, by what reasoning does their use in a classroom become a crime? The crime then depends not on what is taught but on who the teacher is. That is to make freedom of speech turn not on what is said, but on the intent with which it is said. Once we start down that road we enter territory dangerous to the liberties of every citizen.²²

These dissenting opinions, defending freedom of speech and press activity against sedition laws, finally became the majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court six years later in the case of *Yates v. United States* in 1957.²³ As noted by Pember and Calvert, “in a surprising reversal of its earlier position, the Supreme Court in 1957 overturned the convictions of West Coast Communist Party leaders. Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote for the 5-2 majority that government evidence showed that the defendants had advocated the violent overthrow of the government but only as an abstract doctrine, and this was not sufficient to sustain a conviction.”²⁴ Instead, Justice Harlan raised the bar for the government, stating:

The jury was never told that the Smith Act does not denounce advocacy in the sense of preaching abstractly the forcible overthrow of the Government. We think that the trial court's statement that the proscribed advocacy must include the ‘urging,’ ‘necessity,’ and ‘duty’ of forcible overthrow, and not merely its ‘desirability’ and ‘propriety,’ may not be regarded as a sufficient substitute for charging that the Smith Act reaches only advocacy of action for the overthrow of government by force and violence. The essential distinction... is that those to whom the advocacy is addressed must be urged to do something, now or in the future, rather than merely to believe in something.²⁵

²² From the transcript of *Dennis v. United States*, 341 U.S. 494 (1951), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/341/494.html>

²³ *Yates v. United States*, 354 U.S. 298 (1957). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, http://www.oyez.org/cases/1950-1959/1956/1956_6

²⁴ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 51.

²⁵ From the transcript of *Yates v. United States*, 354 U.S. 298 (1957), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/354/298.html>

As Pember and Calvert note, “this added burden of proof levied against the government prosecutors made it extremely difficult to use the Smith Act against the Communists, and prosecutions dwindled.”²⁶ The Yates decision was not an isolated event, as Robert M. Lichtman notes, “the Court’s level of resistance to repressive McCarthy-era government action reached its zenith in the 1956 term... The Court issued eleven signed decisions in ‘Communist’ cases, and the government lost them all. Four were issued the same day, June 17, 1957, a day critics called ‘Red Monday.’”²⁷

According to Pember and Calvert, “with the practical demise of the Smith Act... the last time the Supreme Court heard an appeal in a sedition case was in 1969 when it overturned the conviction of a Ku Klux Klan leader.”²⁸ In that case, *Brandenburg v. Ohio*,²⁹ the Supreme Court raised the burden on state governments trying to prosecute speech activity ruling that “the constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit a State to forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action.”³⁰

The legal precedents, therefore, point to a First Amendment protection in the U.S. that provides for a broad amount of freedom for those expressing violent anti-government opinions. And while it is a federal crime to “knowingly provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization” under 18 U. S. C. §2339B(a)(1), the law

²⁶ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 51.

²⁷ Robert M. Lichtman, *The Supreme Court and McCarthy-Era Repression* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 91.

²⁸ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 51.

²⁹ *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1968/1968_492

³⁰ From the transcript of *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/395/444.html>

doesn't prohibit journalists from contact with hostile groups in order to conduct interviews and collect information for news coverage. While the U.S. government did successfully stave off a challenge by individuals and organizations providing political advice to the PKK³¹ and the LTTE³² in recent years under the prohibition against providing material support to designated terrorist groups, legal action under these laws has not been pursued against journalists in the U.S. The U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 interpretation of the "material support" in the case of *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*³³ was distinguished from pure political speech or actions of the press, because, as Chief Justice John Roberts wrote, the First Amendment issue in this case was "more refined than either plaintiffs or the Government would have it. It is not whether the Government may prohibit pure political speech, or may prohibit material support in the form of conduct. It is instead whether the Government may prohibit what plaintiffs want to do — provide material support to the PKK and LTTE in the form of speech."³⁴ Chief Justice Roberts added that, in its subsequent amendments to the law, "Congress considered and rejected the view that ostensibly peaceful aid would have no harmful effects. We are convinced that Congress was justified in rejecting that view. The PKK and the LTTE are deadly groups... Material support meant to 'promot[e] peaceable, lawful conduct'... can further terrorism by foreign groups in multiple ways."³⁵

³¹ The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), active mostly in Turkey, is listed by the U.S. Department of State as a designated terrorist group, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

³² The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), active mostly in Sri Lanka, are listed by the U.S. Department of State as a designated terrorist group, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

³³ *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, 561 U.S. 1 (2010). Summary quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2009/2008_08_1498

³⁴ From the transcript of *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, 561 U.S. 1 (2010), available online through FindLaw.com: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/08-1498.html>

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The United States Supreme Court, therefore, ruled that the law was constitutional because the statute did not penalize political activity, such as mere association with a foreign terrorist organization. Agreeing with the Ninth Circuit, Chief justice Roberts quoted from its decision: “The statute does not prohibit being a member of one of the designated groups or vigorously promoting and supporting the political goals of the group. . . . What [§2339B] prohibits is the act of giving material support.”³⁶ Chief Justice Roberts also referred to American history, stating: “The Preamble to the Constitution proclaims that the people of the United States ordained and established that charter of government in part to ‘provide for the common defence.’ As Madison explained, ‘[s]ecurity against foreign danger is . . . an avowed and essential object of the American Union.’ . . . We hold that, in regulating the particular forms of support that plaintiffs seek to provide to foreign terrorist organizations, Congress has pursued that objective consistent with the limitations of the First and Fifth Amendments.”³⁷

Therefore, the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on the question of First Amendment defense against the charge of material aid to terrorists relates to a fairly defined set of circumstances that do not involve the news media. There is, however, the matter of confidential source protection when journalists are issued a court order relating to an investigation.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1972 opinion in *Branzburg v. Hayes*³⁸ declined a First Amendment protection for journalists who had been issued subpoenas in three separate cases, ruling in a 5-4 decision that “there was no privilege under the First Amendment for

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972). Summer quoted from the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971_70_85

journalists to refuse to reveal the names of confidential sources or other information when called to testify before a grand jury.”³⁹ The precedent is all the more important because, as Pember and Calvert note, “this ruling is the last word the nation’s high court has spoken on the subject.”⁴⁰ The Supreme Court was hearing appeals here from three cases — Branzburg, a staff reporter for the *Courier-Journal*, a daily newspaper published in Louisville, Kentucky, had written a news story about two local hashish makers, and then appeared before a grand jury but “refused to identify the individuals he had seen possessing marihuana or the persons he had seen making hashish from marihuana.”⁴¹ Pappas, a television newsman-photographer working out of the Providence, Rhode Island, office of a New Bedford, Massachusetts, television station, had been reporting on the Black Panthers, as was the case with Earl Caldwell, a reporter for *The New York Times*, who was assigned to cover the Black Panther Party and other black militant groups. Pappas and Caldwell had also sought First Amendment protections against grand jury efforts to seek confidential source information from them. In denying their appeals, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that “we perceive no basis for holding that the public interest in law enforcement and in ensuring effective grand jury proceedings is insufficient to override the consequential, but uncertain, burden on news gathering that is said to result from insisting that reporters, like other citizens, respond to relevant questions put to them in the course of a valid grand jury investigation or criminal trial.”⁴² However, Justice Lewis Powell provided the fifth vote needed in the majority opinion of

³⁹ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 376.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ From the transcript of *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972), available online through FindLaw.com, <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/408/665.html>

⁴² *Ibid.*

the court, but his concurring opinion “seemed to support the opposite proposition.”⁴³

Justice Powell wrote:

If a newsman believes that the grand jury investigation is not being conducted in good faith he is not without remedy. Indeed, if the newsman is called upon to give information bearing only a remote and tenuous relationship to the subject of the investigation, or if he has some other reason to believe that his testimony implicates confidential source relationships without a legitimate need of law enforcement, he will have access to the court on a motion to quash and an appropriate protective order may be entered. The asserted claim to privilege should be judged on its facts by the striking of a proper balance between freedom of the press and the obligation of all citizens to give relevant testimony with respect to criminal conduct. The balance of these vital constitutional and societal interests on a case-by-case basis accords with the tried and traditional way of adjudicating such questions. In short, the courts will be available to newsmen under circumstances where legitimate First Amendment interests require protection.⁴⁴

Ironically, the most serious area of legal prosecution against journalists in recent years has been in instances when they have relied not on sources that are opposed to the U.S. government, as was the case with confidential Black Panther sources in 1972, but rather from cases where journalists have relied on confidential sources, often from within the government, in order to report on secrets relating to international or national security issues, wherein the journalists are subsequently subpoenaed for grand jury investigations into the alleged criminal leaks of confidential information. This, for example, was the situation in the case of *The New York Times* reporter Judith Miller whose First Amendment appeal to protect her confidential source (I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, the chief of staff of then Vice President Dick Cheney) was denied by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, resulting in her spending almost three months in prison for

⁴³ Pember and Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 378.

⁴⁴ From the transcript of *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972), available online through FindLaw.com, <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/408/665.html>

contempt of court. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear her appeal, and she was released from prison only after agreeing to divulge her confidential source.⁴⁵

Therefore, under current U.S. law, it is more dangerous for journalists to speak to confidential government sources about matters of national security and foreign conflicts, than it is for journalists to talk directly to the foreign actors. Notably, in the weeks after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda, the Voice of America radio service broadcast an interview it conducted with the leader of the Taliban⁴⁶ – while there was widespread political outrage and controversy of the government-funded news organization’s decision to broadcast the interview with the leader of a new enemy, there were no legal implications for the VOA broadcast. It remains open to interpretation as to whether the political flak directed at the VOA was more painful than any other formal form of legal action.

The American journalists’ normative principles of applied ethics, as outlined in the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics,⁴⁷ set the broadly accepted standards of the American journalism industry and are taught in journalism schools across the country:

Journalists should – Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.

Journalists should – Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.

Journalists should – Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.

⁴⁵ David Johnston and Douglas Jehl, “Times Reporter Free From Jail; She Will Testify,” *New York Times*, Sept. 30, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/30/politics/times-reporter-free-from-jail-she-will-testify.html>

⁴⁶ Felicity Barringer, “Voice of America Under Pressure to Toe U.S. Line,” *New York Times*, Oct. 8, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/08/business/voice-of-america-under-pressure-to-toe-us-line.html>

⁴⁷ The SPJ Codes of Ethics are available on its web site: <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Journalists should – Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government.

Journalist should – Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.

Journalists should – Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.⁴⁸

Other journalism organizations also replicate many such ethical codes. The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) Statement of Principles⁴⁹ notes:

The primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the general welfare by informing the people and enabling them to make judgments on the issues of the time. Newsmen and women who abuse the power of their professional role for selfish motives or unworthy purposes are faithless to that public trust. The American press was made free not just to inform or just to serve as a forum for debate but also to bring an independent scrutiny to bear on the forces of power in the society, including the conduct of official power at all levels of government.

Good faith with the reader is the foundation of good journalism. Every effort must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly.

Journalists should respect the rights of people involved in the news, observe the common standards of decency and stand accountable to the public for the fairness and accuracy of their news reports. Persons publicly accused should be given the earliest opportunity to respond.⁵⁰

The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA)⁵¹ also emphasizes similar ethics in its guiding principles:

Journalism's obligation is to the public. Journalism places the public's interests ahead of commercial, political and personal interests. Journalism empowers viewers, listeners and readers to make more informed decisions for themselves; it does not tell people what to believe or how to feel.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The ASNE Statement of Principles is available on its web site: <https://www.asne.org/content.asp?pl=24&sl=171&contentid=171>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The RTDNA Code of Ethics is available at its web site: http://www.rtdna.org/content/rtdna_code_of_ethics

Ethical decision-making should occur at every step of the journalistic process, including story selection, news-gathering, production, presentation and delivery.

Practitioners of ethical journalism seek diverse and even opposing opinions in order to reach better conclusions that can be clearly explained and effectively defended or, when appropriate, revisited and revised.

For every story of significance, there are always more than two sides. While they may not all fit into every account, responsible reporting is clear about what it omits, as well as what it includes.

Journalism challenges assumptions, rejects stereotypes and illuminates – even where it cannot eliminate – ignorance.

Ethical journalism resists false dichotomies – either/or, always/never, black/white thinking – and considers a range of alternatives between the extremes.⁵²

Clearly, American journalism ethics codes compel journalists to provide a fair and accurate coverage of events, without regard for whether they be domestic or foreign, even if such news reporting utilizes sources that are antagonistic toward U.S. policies.

Therefore, given that the American journalism ethics codes demand fair and accurate news coverage, and U.S. law doesn't prohibit American journalists from collecting such information from enemy or terrorist sources, the factors that determine the propaganda effects in American international news coverage have more to do with the news industry itself, as argued by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in their "Propaganda Model," wherein it is primarily the American news media's routines, their political economy, and the manner in which they determine who gets included in the news and who doesn't, that create this type of international news.⁵³

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1-36.

The Defining of Propaganda in a Free Society

The bulk of the foundational analysis of the functioning of the media and theory building took place in the United States before, during, and after the end of the Second World War. At that time, sociologists and social scientists, such as psychologist Carl Hovland, were alarmed and intrigued by the success of the Nazis in using the mass media to mobilize the masses toward a violent and immoral campaign in Germany. It was feared that the strong effects of the mass media might again be used to influence and indoctrinate the residents of the free world, and much effort was put in to defining the role of the mass media in society.⁵⁴

In 1948, Harold Lasswell identified the social role of the mass media as being, among other things, that of surveillance. This effectively became well known in the mass media theorists' domain as the "watchdog" function of the press.⁵⁵ This understanding of the media's role in free societies persisted over the next four decades, and mass communication theorists asserted that the media played an important role in society by warning people of dangers that lay ahead by effectively surveying the contemporary circumstances in any society.

However, during this same period, some popular American publications were also issuing overblown warnings regarding the threat from foreign and domestic enemies, and these reports fell neatly into the realm of propaganda because they tolerated no opposing points of view. In her study of the *Reader's Digest*, Joanne P. Sharp noted how the magazine consistently published articles over many decades from a position of assumed

⁵⁴ Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message* (New York: Longman Publishers, 1996).

⁵⁵ Harold Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," *The Communication of Ideas*, Lyman Bryson ed. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1948).

authority that were designed to define and celebrate American identity in a propagandistic style, especially by describing the enemy, the Russians, to possess negative qualities such as “backwardness,” and a “fear” of “the truth.” Readers were also warned by the *Digest* of a “communist masterplot” that, by its “impending timetable” would “sooner or later” reach the readers.⁵⁶ Such writing was clearly informed by the sense of hostility toward the Soviet Union that was at the foundation of most U.S. foreign policy rhetoric during these time periods.

When it comes to foreign policy, Bernard Cohen wrote in 1963 in *The Press and Foreign Policy* that the press had a symbiotic relationship with the government. Just as the press depended on the government for information regarding policy, the government depended on the press for the distribution of its information to influence public opinion. Cohen’s description of the interaction between the press and government was thereby largely non-confrontational, though he did accommodate the fact that the press could take the lead in influencing public policy on foreign affairs, while being informed of the same by government.⁵⁷

The advent of television and satellite feed technology made it easier for news and politics to confront each other on a daily basis. However, writing in the *Gazette*, Eytan Gilboa highlighted how the American government, in many historical foreign policy decisions, had devised various models and techniques to share information, manipulate it or keep it secret in order to mold the media coverage of the diplomacy.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Joanne P. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader’s Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), ix-xix.

⁵⁷ Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

⁵⁸ Eytan Gilboa, “Secret Diplomacy in the Television Age,” *Gazette*, 60 no. 3, 211-25.

In all the cases studied by Gilboa, the author noted, “there were leads and partial information that if correspondents had adequately followed could have revealed the secret talks and meetings. They failed to follow the leads, primarily because they were captive of an intellectual and mental framework that did not allow any room for talks of the kind that Kissinger held in China and Israel and PLO conducted in Oslo.”⁵⁹

As Warren Strobel also notes, in cases ranging from William Randolph Hearst’s war-mongering over the sinking of the *USS Maine* before the Spanish-American war, to media cheerleading during the Korean War, the influence of the press has largely been in keeping public opinion on the favorable side of the government’s foreign policies and foreign activities, especially in cases of violent conflicts.⁶⁰

By the early 1970s the myth of the “strong effects” of the mass media had evaporated as, in a number of instances, the media failed to provide the impulse to influence change in society and remained largely a collaborative actor in the process of policy making. In 1972, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw put forth their theory of the “agenda setting function” of the mass media. McCombs and Shaw argued that while the media did not tell the audience what to think, they did tell them what to think about. This reinforced the role of the press as an agenda setter, though it remained unclear whether the press set the public agenda for the government, or on behalf of the government.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 223.

⁶⁰ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 37-38.

⁶¹ Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36 (Spring 1972), 176-87.

The government-press symbiosis, according to Strobel, lasted through the Korean War, yet started crumbling in the Vietnam War.⁶² Granted the freedom to travel at will, and at their own risk, many correspondents in Vietnam were able to discover facts that had been underreported, downplayed, or hidden by the U.S. government and its related institutions in South Vietnam. This development introduced tensions into the relations between the government, the military and the press; and these tensions laid the ground rules for the government's conditioning of the future role of the press in the times of conflict and crises. In the post-Vietnam era, the theorists had to address the issue of how journalists were collecting and publishing information, and whether there existed factors that sought to influence the nature and content of news, thereby influencing the nature of the perceived reality of a foreign conflict.

In *Mediating the Message*, Shoemaker and Reese propose a model⁶³ that derived extensively from past research and explained the various influences and factors that affected the production of media content. Shoemaker and Reese outline these levels of influence as follows: individual, media routines, organization, extramedia, and ideological.

The Shoemaker and Reese model is best described as a set of concentric circles, with each successive circle describing the next level of influence on media content, starting from the individual and then progressing outward to the larger realm of the ideological.

Starting at the first level, the individual, Shoemaker and Reese point out that an individual's educational, religious, political, economic, cultural and social background

⁶² Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 37-38.

⁶³ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 63-253.

may affect the manner in which he or she performs on the job. Everything from story selection to source selection to editing relies to some extent on personal-level decision making that draws heavily on a person's training and also on the person's understanding of their role in society as a mass media professional.⁶⁴

In the next level of influences on media content, routines, Shoemaker and Reese argue that set routines in news gathering and editing may well influence the media content. Routines define set manners of news collection – daily press briefings or morning editorial meetings set a pattern of activity that is rigorous and perceived as efficient, therefore any attempt to deviate from the routine would be discouraged. These routines, therefore, persist over time and the rhythm of the news beats subdues individual enterprise in news gathering, writing and editing.⁶⁵

Shoemaker and Reese also point out that organizational issues, such as ownership, methods of generating income, and the need for profits may well influence the final content. The owner's personal financial or political agenda may clash with the process of news selection, and pressure from advertisers may be seen as an imperative to editorial decision-making that is more revenue friendly. While it is assumed that most news media perform journalism independent of their owner's interests, the pressures of corporations and cross-ownership are apparent as the reins of the media slip out of the hands of traditional publishers and broadcasters and over to the multinational corporations and conglomerates balancing many corporate eggs in their conglomerate basket.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., 63-104.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 105-38.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 139-74.

Shoemaker and Reese identify factors outside of the realm of the individual, routines, and media ownership that also influence media content.⁶⁷ The most immediate of these is the advertisers, who form the single most important block of revenue generators for most media companies. Criticism of their product might well influence advertisers to pull their investment from the concerned news media, and often even a perceived public slight or unpopular message is seen as grounds for advertisers to issue threats of withdrawal of financial support.

Apart from advertisers, a number of establishment sources that help fill the efficient news gathering routines also wield considerable influence; the loss of a prominent source can prove to be time consuming and costly to the news gathering process. There is also the issue of public denouncement, criticism and lawsuits from establishment sources or special interest groups that threaten the media, thereby causing some pre-publishing concern among editors, often leading to an unhealthy environment of self-censorship.⁶⁸

Shoemaker and Reese's model identifies the controversial and disruptive factor of ideology as a general understanding across all levels of society of a certain political, social and moral set of norms that are deemed inviolable. The understanding of ideology is pervasive and intrudes upon the media content at all levels, from individual up to the public, and the effective collaboration with the ideology of the day is seen as convenient to both, avoiding dissonance and also promoting a perceived virtue through the media content.⁶⁹ Shoemaker and Reese define the boundaries set by ideology to be set across

⁶⁷ Ibid., 175-220.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 221-52.

spheres of consensus, legitimate controversy and deviance.⁷⁰ They argue that, in any society, there exists a sphere of consensus on ideas that are uniformly held by all members of society. There is, therefore, no effort made to contest ideas that are within the sphere of consensus. Next, there is the sphere of legitimate controversy, wherein members of the public may have differences but accept these differences as legitimate. In the arena of politics, for example, American society may often be divided between Democrats and Republicans, but these differences are accepted as legitimate controversy. On the outskirts of society there lies the sphere of deviance; the ideas that are widely believed to be abhorrent and deemed not worthy of any legitimacy. Such deviant ideas, be they communism or militant Islam, find very little play in society precisely because they are rejected outright and not considered worthy of discussion. Journalists, being part and parcel of a society, may very well absorb such notions of what is legitimate and what is deviant. As Shoemaker and Reese note:

Media scholar Daniel Hallin (1986) introduces a useful model to help understand the ways in which the news media maintain ideological boundaries. . . . He divides the journalistic world into three spheres: legitimate controversy, consensus, and deviance. The sphere of legitimate controversy is where objectivity and balance are sought: “This is the region of electoral contests and legislative debates, of issues recognized as such by the major established actors of the American political process.” . . . At the core is the sphere of consensus, the “motherhood and apple pie” domain: “Within this region journalists do not feel compelled either to present opposing views or to remain disinterested observers. On the contrary, the journalist's role is to serve as an advocate or celebrant of consensus values.” . . . Beyond the sphere of legitimate controversy is the sphere of deviance, the realm of people and ideas outside the mainstream of society. Here, says Hallin, journalism casts off neutrality: “It plays the role of condemning, or excluding from the public agenda those who violate or challenge the political consensus. It marks out and defends the limits of acceptable conflict.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., 227.

⁷¹ Ibid. 227-28.

The significance of the Shoemaker and Reese model is that it draws a comprehensive picture that provides for an effective understanding of the forces that influence the selection of media content, especially news content. When undertaking a study of media content, this model pointed the researcher toward the various factors that need to be identified and addressed in a thorough study of media content. The model, therefore, disrupts the myth of the “independent” reporter or editor, and points out that a content analysis of media content should address various issues that contribute toward the publishing of the material at hand.

As noted in the introduction, with regard to foreign policy and foreign news coverage, editorial discrepancies have been noted in various content studies. A number of studies in the last five decades have indicated that foreign news coverage is often slanted toward framing the foreign events within the context of the U.S. government policy, if not in outright support of U.S. policy. There does, hence, exist an apparatus that influences the media to publish content that is within the framework of discussion set by the establishment, if not decidedly in favor of the establishment. It is this framework that Herman and Chomsky sought to identify in *Manufacturing Content*.⁷²

In this book, Herman and Chomsky describe a Propaganda Model wherein the news media is affected by a series of factors that influence it to disseminate information and opinion from a decidedly pro-establishment framework. This Propaganda Model was a direct contradiction to long-held views that propaganda simply could not manifest itself systemically in a free society such as the United States. It should be noted here that Wilbur Schramm, Theodore Peterson and Fred S. Seibert identified the four theories of

⁷² Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

the press to be Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Communist,⁷³ and it was assumed since the publishing of their work in 1956 that the Authoritarian theory, applying to countries ruled by dictators, was similar to the Communist theory, covering countries that were socialist or communist, in aspects of the censorship of the media that resulted in propaganda, while the Libertarian theory and the Social Responsibility theory applied to capitalist democratic societies where the media was thought to be free from censorship and propaganda.

American mass media researchers, therefore, found little to be common, in theoretical and systemic terms, between the American press model, which was assumed to be free, and the communist press model that was seen to be censorial and restricted in its ability to allow free discourse. If propaganda was a facet of the Communist or Authoritarian systems, then surely propaganda could never exist in the western press model, they assumed. Herman and Chomsky argued that while propaganda in the Communist and Authoritarian mass media may be easier to identify, there existed in free capitalist societies a propaganda effect that, though it was more difficult to identify, was nevertheless pervasive in mass media content.⁷⁴

Herman and Chomsky outlined factors influencing news in their Propaganda Model in a manner somewhat similar to the Shoemaker and Reese model. They identified influences on news content from: ownership, reliance on advertising for profits, over reliance on government and establishment sources, fear of flak, and the ideology of anti-communism.

⁷³ Wilbur Schramm, Theodore Peterson and Fred S. Seibert, *Four Theories of the Press* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

⁷⁴ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1-2.

Herman and Chomsky argued that the nature of ownership of the media influences its content. The need to synergize, to accommodate various interests in a conglomerate with a media wing, and the need to stay above the bottom-line lead mass media owners to influence the content by a variety of measures. For instance, a media owner may act proactively and issue an editorial policy that openly discourages certain content. Or, the media owner may function at a more discreet level by controlling funds, thereby making it more difficult for journalists to function as independent reporters relying more on their own investigative work rather than the usual establishment sources.⁷⁵

As in the Shoemaker and Reese model, Herman and Chomsky also argue that reliance on advertising as the most important source of revenue provides advertisers, often acting on behalf of the business elite who are close to government, exerts pressure on news selection, collection, and publishing. The loss of advertising revenue due to controversial media content is increasingly seen as a threat to the ability of the media to function independently.⁷⁶

The factor of media routines described by Shoemaker and Reese is addressed in Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model as a matter of sourcing mass media news, wherein the journalists' routines of collecting information and opinions lead to an over reliance on establishment sources and experts and, therefore, are a major cause of propaganda in the media. The effort required to break the established routine, along with the costs involved in carrying out enterprising and investigative work, combine to ensure that easy accessibility and cost-effective routines that rely on establishment sources

⁷⁵ Ibid., 3-14.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 14-18.

remain in place. It is, after all, in the interest on the establishment to continue to have unrestricted access to the media and thus the public. Independent sources, activists, and groups that have little political leverage, who seek to challenge the officials and the social elite, on the other hand, often find it difficult to approach the news media and be taken seriously.⁷⁷

While Shoemaker and Reese identify “external factors” that influence media content from outside the organization itself, Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model identifies these factors more precisely by narrowing them down to “producers of flak.” According to Herman and Chomsky, these flak producers are experts or special interest groups backed by the establishment who acquire funding from various establishment sources for the purpose of publicly criticizing and harassing those in the mass media who try to work beyond the establishment propaganda. The nature of this public criticism and harassment can range from name calling to frivolous law suits, such as SLAPP or Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, that in turn effect the media ownership’s desire to make profits and, by virtue of highlighting public outcry against the enterprising media coverage, may prompt advertisers to threaten publishers and broadcasters with withdrawal of business in fear of loss of patronage.⁷⁸

Shoemaker and Reese identify ideology as a factor of influence on media content; a pervasive and general understanding across all levels of a society to a certain political, social and moral set of norms that are deemed inviolable. In the Propaganda Model, Herman and Chomsky identify this ideology factor to be “anticommunism” and describe

⁷⁷ Ibid., 18-25.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 26-28.

it as a “control mechanism” in the Cold War era (their book was published in 1988).⁷⁹ So strong is the public resistance to communist thought, argue Herman and Chomsky, that anything perceived as communist in its nature or definition is automatically relegated to what President George W. Bush in 2002 called “history’s unmarked grave of discarded lies.”⁸⁰ Bush, of course, was equating militant Islam with communism. The overall result of the banishing from the news media of all such ideas and the people who hold them, deemed deviant and contrary to American ideology by officials and elites, is propaganda.

While noting that Herman and Chomsky have “essentially the same model in their book” as the Shoemaker-Reese model, Michael S. Sweeney points out that “one major difference between *Mediating the Message* and *Manufacturing Consent* is the latter’s development of the concept of *flak*, a term borrowed from the anti-aircraft defenses of World War II. Chomsky and Herman argue that when journalists upset the apple cart with stories that run counter to the dominant, government-economic narrative, they experience pushback. From mass media history, we know the range and variety of such flak in in modern times when it comes from the American president.”⁸¹

Another theory that attempts to explain the behavior of the American press and its sourcing routines for news and opinions is the Indexing Hypothesis developed by W. Lance Bennett.⁸² Bennett argues that “mass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to ‘index’ the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorial according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate

⁷⁹ Ibid., 29-31.

⁸⁰ Dan Balz and Bob Woodward, “A Presidency Defined in One Speech,” *Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 2002.

⁸¹ Michael S. Sweeney, “Divided Loyalties: A Reporter’s Fearless Work Stirs Up ‘Flak’,” *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, 19, no. 3 (2017): 252-53.

⁸² W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

about a given topic . . . ‘other’ (i.e., non-official) voices filling out the potential universe of news sources are included in news stories and editorials when those voices express opinions already emerging in official circles.”⁸³ Bennett’s findings from his own study of *The New York Times*’ coverage of Nicaragua (1983-1986), showed that “opinions voiced in news stories came overwhelmingly from government officials.”⁸⁴ The study reviewed 2,148 news articles and editorials relevant to Nicaragua policy indexed under “Nicaragua” in the *New York Times Index* from January 1, 1983, to October 15, 1986. Of the 889 voiced opinions in the news, Bennett found, 604 came from officers, offices, or committees of U.S. governmental institutions.⁸⁵ “The evidence suggests that *Times* coverage of Nicaragua was cued by Congress, not by the paper’s own political agenda or by a sense of ‘adversarial journalism,’” Bennett noted. “The ‘new professionalism’ of the press would seem to operate on the assumption that ‘the system works,’ despite any evidence to the contrary, and that the ‘responsible press’ keeps its criticisms within the bounds of institutional debate, however narrow or distorted those bounds may become.”⁸⁶

Andrew Kennis notes that sourcing in journalism – the choice of people to interview, or sources of information – is “a key theoretical link between indexing and the propaganda model.”⁸⁷ Kennis states that the utilization of sourcing tendencies as an explanation of news coverage in Indexing theory is “more elaborate and useful than what is offered by the propaganda model” because it “captures the nuanced differences found in differing news coverage and time periods by linking sourcing tendencies to volume of

⁸³ Ibid., 106.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 114-16.

⁸⁶ Ibid., page 121.

⁸⁷ Andrew Kennis, “Synthesizing the Indexing and Propaganda Models: An Evaluation of U.S. News Coverage of the Uprising in Ecuador, January 2000,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6, no. 4, (2009): 388.

coverage.”⁸⁸ Kennis’s summarization of the Indexing theory is that “the extent that government officials disagree about a given issue will be linked to the shrinking or expanding of the ideological spectrum found in resulting news coverage.”⁸⁹ Kennis’s study of six major U.S. daily newspapers from January 1, 2000, to April 1, 2000, focused on the media coverage of Ecuador and found that “official sources were prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources and their premises were not questioned,” and that “Ecuador’s leaders, because they are our allies, were characterized as being dedicated to peace and democracy 92 percent of the time.”⁹⁰

Florian Zollmann’s analysis of the propaganda theory and its possible applications to the UK media notes that the “U.S. and UK governments also spend huge sums on PR, which they euphemistically label as public diplomacy. . . . The U.S. State Department invests at least \$1 billion in order to shape opinion overseas, whereas the Pentagon has its own propaganda apparatus.”⁹¹ Zollman adds that these developments are “part of a news propaganda strategy that is subsumed under the headline of ‘perception management’ . . . the strategy is adapted from the U.S. and is in particular applied during times of war.”⁹² Zollman notes that “the model might be particularly useful in areas of significant societal concern: coverage of foreign policy, war and corporate affairs.”⁹³

Another dimension of understanding news coverage might be to understand the social routines of journalists that intercept with their work interests. In a social network analysis of German journalists, Uwe Krueger found that four senior foreign policy editors

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 403.

⁹¹ Florian Zollmann, “Is it Either Or? Professional Ideology vs. Corporate-media Constraints,” *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 6, no. 2, (2009): 106.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 113.

with the leading newspapers were “involved in a number of associations, think tanks and policy-planning groups, which have ties with the German federal government, the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization where they potentially had contact with national and international political and business elites.”⁹⁴ The study noted that, of the 219 journalists in the population, sixty-four (one-third) were in eighty-two organizations “where they potentially had contact with political and/or business elites.”⁹⁵ The results of the study’s frame analysis of the four journalists articles found that all four journalists wrote “in detail about the concept of security... without questioning it critically,”⁹⁶ and that all four journalists mentioned a “catalogue of threats similar to the catalogue of threats in official documents of the German government, the EU, NATO and the United States.”⁹⁷

The social network of journalists can also be affected by their nationality, in situations where international news media might hire foreigners. As Shoemaker and Reese note:

The influence of backgrounds may be most obvious when demography is related to expertise, as in the changing nature of foreign correspondents. Scott Shuster (1988), a former freelance foreign correspondent, says that budget trimming among U.S. media is making it more practical to hire foreign journalists as “foreign” correspondents than to send American journalists abroad. “There is an army of foreign journalists out there, ready to put an end to the ancient and ridiculous practice of sending speak-only-English American reporters halfway around the world to pretend to be experts on places they have never seen before.”. . . And, fiscal responsibility aside, these foreign journalists can probably do a better job: Because they know more about the local environment, they “should be able to depict foreign reality more accurately than a ‘parachuting’ foreign correspondent.”⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Uwe Krueger, “Manufacturing consent through integration: Social networks of German journalists in the elite milieu and their effects on coverage,” *European Journal of Communication*, 30, no. 2, (2015): 152-70.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁹⁸ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 76-77.

As discussed earlier, the downside of foreign news being dominated by propaganda is that it effectively alters the reality of the world the audience perceives - David Perry claimed in his 1987 research, examining the affect of foreign news coverage on readers' perceptions of foreign nations, that an "Image Gap" affected the readers that was directly related to the news content on a particular country available to the said readers.⁹⁹ Perry argued that the information available in the mainstream media on a particular foreign country directly affected the public's understanding of that country and controversy, therefore highlighting that the lack of news regarding foreign affairs leads to a lack of public understanding of foreign issues, or a misunderstanding of the same.

In his book *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*,¹⁰⁰ Strobel argues that an exception exists to the norm of media allegiance and over reliance to government and allied sources – a norm that Strobel defines as the "Push" effect going into any crisis. The exceptional cases occur, Strobel found in his study of peacekeeping initiatives during the 1990s, when the government itself is caught unprepared for a crisis. In these situations, the media tend to break free of traditional reliance on government sources and allies, what he describes as a "Pull" effect, and often finds themselves relying on the very sources that, in times of well-defined government policy, they would most decidedly under represent. The content analysis of foreign policy decision making that is the focus of this dissertation also takes into account Strobel's *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy* hypothesis to test whether, in situations where the U.S. government was caught unprepared in the

⁹⁹ David K. Perry, "The Image Gap: How International News Affects Perceptions of Nations," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64 (1987): 416-33.

¹⁰⁰ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

Middle East, the newspapers' reporting showed any significant differences from their usual sourcing patterns.

The Theories of Foreign News Selection

The discrepancies in news flow from international sources have been explained in various manners. While Schiller, in 1978, and Masmoudi, in 1981, criticized the press for providing little international news and ignoring the Third World, Potter, in 1987, argued to the contrary, claiming that Third World coverage had been steadily rising.¹⁰¹

In an analysis of the newsworthiness of world events, Pamela Shoemaker, Lucig H. Danielian and Nancy Brendlinger pointed in 1991 toward an editorial process biased in favor of foreign news that is either deviant or imperative to U.S. national security or business interests.¹⁰² This criterion for selection of foreign news was also identified as an influence on gatekeepers/newspaper editors in their decisions regarding use of wire stories. Tsan-Kuo Chang and Jae-Won Lee noted in 1992 that the presumed threat of a certain country or event to the U.S. security and national interest was found to be a decisive factor in the gatekeepers' selection of news.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, while such analysis can explain the difference in the volume and prominence of news space that a story/country enjoys in the U.S. press, it does not explain why the *tone* of the news coverage of a certain country changes with U.S. foreign policy.

¹⁰¹ Herbert I. Schiller, "Decolonization of Information: Efforts Towards a New Information Order," *Latin American Perspective*, 5, (1978): 35-48; Mustapha Masmoudi, "The New World Information Order," *Journal of Communication*, 21, (1979): 172-79; W. James Potter, "News From Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, no. 1, (Spring 1987): 73-79.

¹⁰² Pamela Shoemaker, Lucig H. Danielian and Nancy Brendlinger, "Deviant Acts, Risky Business and U.S. Interests: The Newsworthiness of World Events," *Journalism Quarterly*, 68, no. 4 (1991): 781-95.

¹⁰³ Tsan-Kuo Chang and Jae-Won Lee, "Factors Affecting Gatekeepers Selection of Foreign News: A National Survey of Newspaper editors," *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, no. 3, (1992): 554-61.

Foreign Policy Influence on Press Coverage

A bias in the manner in which the press covers some of the countries vital to U.S. interests can be judged in terms of “anticommunism” being the “dominant religion” in the American “cultural milieu” described in the Propaganda Model constructed by Herman and Chomsky in 1988,¹⁰⁴ and also as a shift in the Indexing pattern of the news media in relation to the shifting priorities of the government, as postulated by Bennett in 1990.¹⁰⁵ The effect of U.S. foreign policy on news coverage has been addressed in studies such as Sandra Dickson’s examination of the bias in the reporting of the conflict in Nicaragua between 1983 and 1987.¹⁰⁶ In this study, both *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were found to have relied heavily on U.S. government sources with only 5 percent to 6 percent of material coming from the Contra rebel sources that were fighting the actual war against the Sandinistas. With the U.S. sources defining the aims and goals of the Contra for them, the newspapers demonstrated a pattern of legitimizing U.S. foreign policy in the Nicaraguan conflict. The limited criticism published by the newspapers was found to be criticism of the means of achieving stated U.S. policy goals, rather than being a criticism of the U.S. policy itself.¹⁰⁷

The nature of the press bias is not limited to issues of “anticommunism” alone. An analysis of the coverage by newsmagazines of the 1989-1990 U.S. invasion of Panama confirmed that the mainstream American newsmagazines, *Time* and *Newsweek*, offered little criticism of U.S. policies and mostly offered arguments that reinforced the

¹⁰⁴ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 29.

¹⁰⁵ W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

¹⁰⁶ Sandra H. Dickson, “Press and the U.S. Policy Towards Nicaragua, 1983-1987: A Study of the New York Times and Washington Post,” *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, no. 3 (1992): 562-71.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

U.S. foreign policy stand for removing President Daniel Noriega, and supported the invasion.¹⁰⁸

The findings of the newsmagazine study were further corroborated by Sandra Dickson's analysis of *The New York Times* coverage of the U.S. invasion of Panama. A content analysis of the sources used by *The New York Times* in its coverage of the invasion again proved a bias in favor of the U.S. view on the conflict, with U.S. officials largely defining and dominating the political debate regarding the invasion in the newspaper.¹⁰⁹

Researchers have discovered that the press coverage of a certain country or crises abroad has kept pace with U.S. foreign policy, and the mainstream American press has dressed its editorial attitude along these shifts in foreign policy. A study of *The New York Times* coverage of the Soviet intervention and subsequent withdrawal from Afghanistan, conducted by Jothik Krishnaiah, Nancy Signorielli, and Douglas M. McLeod, showed that the newspaper coverage satisfied the Propaganda Model predictions of being consistent with the U.S. foreign policy interests.¹¹⁰ The newspapers' coverage of the Soviet troops, the Afghan government, the USSR and the Soviet intervention was decidedly negative and unfavorable until the rapprochement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in 1985. After this point, as foreign policy toward the USSR started thawing, the press coverage of the Soviets became more favorable.

¹⁰⁸ Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos, James K. Hertog, and Ramona R. Rush, "Press Support for the U.S. administration during the Panama Invasion: Analyses of Strategic and Tactical Critique in the Domestic Press," *Journalism Quarterly*, 71, no. 3 (1994): 618-27.

¹⁰⁹ Sandra H. Dickson, "Understanding Media Bias: The Press and the U.S. Invasion of Panama," *Journalism Quarterly*, 71, no. 4, (1994): 809-19.

¹¹⁰ Jothik Krishnaiah, Nancy Signorielli, and Douglas M. McLeod, "The Evil Empire Revisited: New York Times Coverage of The Soviet Intervention in and Withdrawal From Afghanistan," *Journalism Quarterly* 70, no. 3, (1993): 647-55.

Similar changes in the framing of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung were noticed as the U.S. foreign policy went from supporting Taiwan to officially recognizing and reaching out to communist China. The study, conducted by Yang-Chou Yu and Daniel Riffe, examined the editorial importance awarded to each leader and showed that while the leaders remained the same in word and deed, the U.S. newsmagazines gave them different emphasis and changed their framing as U.S. policy went through a transition from 1949 to 1976. Chiang was treated less favorably and Mao more favorably as the U.S. policy shifted from support of Taiwan to recognition of China.¹¹¹

The nature of press coverage can, therefore, be sweepingly biased, so as to misrepresent entire countries by narrowing their representation through the lens of U.S. foreign policy, as described in the Propaganda Model. As the U.S. policy has changed to a less prejudiced view of the communist/socialist state, these editorial biases have corrected themselves, to correspondingly reduce their own levels of prejudice. Another study of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* front page-news and editorials, by Tsan-Kuo Chang, revealed that pejorative labels attached to countries' *names* also changed to keep up with the changing U.S. foreign policy. As the U.S. policy changed to better relations with the Chinese, the newspapers' use of ideologically symbolic names such as "Communist China," "Red China," or "Chinese Communist regime" gave way to a more appropriate "China" from 1950 to 1984. On the other hand, newspapers gradually dropped the use of "Nationalist China" when referring to Taiwan, particularly after the U.S. severed diplomatic relations with the Nationalist government of Taiwan in 1979,

¹¹¹ Yang-Chou Yu and Daniel Riffe, "Chiang and Mao in U.S. News Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66, no. 4, (1989): 913-19.

and moved to recognize the communist government on mainland China as the sole representative of the state.¹¹²

Propaganda from the Cold War to the War on Terror

On March 17, 1968, *The New York Times* carried on its front page a story that declared that American soldiers had successfully mounted an operation and killed 128 enemy soldiers in Vietnam. The news story quoted U.S. sources in Saigon as the providers of this information. For many months this news item stood as fact, until a freelance journalist reporting on the Pentagon, Seymour Hersh, discovered during his investigative reporting that the event had taken place in a village called My Lai, and all of the 128 killed had been civilians.¹¹³

In the months between the 1968 *Times* news story and Hersh's 1969 revelation, the government, or at least the Department of Defense had conspired to cover up the incident and conduct a secret inquiry, which would ultimately lead to a secret trial. Hersh's reports upset that plan because he was a freelancer working from the U.S. and not based in Vietnam, where his work on My Lai could have been controlled. In his 1995 book, *The Captive Press*, Ted Galen Carpenter, of the Cato Institute, notes that had the Pentagon had the chance, it would have surely covered up the My Lai story in Vietnam.¹¹⁴

In his study of *The Military and the Press*, Michael S. Sweeney describes the Korea and Vietnam War era as "The Great Divorce" in military-press relations, noting that "South Korea and South Vietnam appeared to have little significance to American

¹¹² Tsan-Kuo Chang, "The News and U.S.-China Policy: Symbols in Newspapers and Documents," *Journalism Quarterly*, 65, no. 2, (1988): 320-27.

¹¹³ Ted Galen Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, (Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute, 1995), 153.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

security until the clash of Cold War ideologies recast them as the front lines of a new fight for global dominance” wherein “the correlation of the wars’ heightened levels of news coverage with their unsatisfactory conclusions has continued to spark debate.”¹¹⁵ In the years since the Vietnam War, Sweeney notes that “a legend has grown up linking the communist victory to the actions of the media in general, and television in particular.” However, Sweeney notes other research that found that “studies of public opinion and casualties in the Korean and Vietnam wars revealed that regardless of the level of press coverage, public support fell 15 percentage points for every tenfold increase in casualties.”¹¹⁶

This is not, of course, a news media phenomenon restricted to only the United States. Similar trends have been observed in the British press as well, where political, military, commercial and industry forces have also come together to generate criticism of their scribes when journalists criticize their government’s wars.

During the Falkland war between the UK and Argentina, there was a relationship of common gain from the conflict for the press, if it supported the British foreign policy of military action against Argentina.¹¹⁷ At that time the British press had largely sought to align itself with the national cause rather than actively pursue an objective reportage of comprehensive facts.

As Ralph Negrine noted in his study of the mass media in Britain,¹¹⁸ a section of the British press tried to report on Argentina's side of the story during the Falkland

¹¹⁵ Michael S. Sweeney, *The Military and the Press: An Uneasy Truce* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006) 121-22.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹¹⁷ Deborah Holmes, *Governing The Press: Media Freedom in the U.S. and Great Britain* (London: Westview Press Inc., 1986).

¹¹⁸ Ralph Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 110-12.

campaign, but the combined flak by government foreign policy makers and foreign policy supporters in the British media was such that the news organization had to retreat. This news organization was the BBC and, as Negrine noted, the pressure by the supporters of British policy in the Falklands was such that the BBC was forced to reconsider its editorial policies and started to reflect solely the British government's arguments in defense of the actions it was taking in the Falklands.¹¹⁹

Patriotism was also a profitable enterprise for the British newspapers, and in past conflicts unpatriotic newspapers had been known to lose business and readers.¹²⁰ For instance, newspapers that had been presenting critical news and views of the British government in its attack on Egypt during the 1956 Suez War lost between 30,000 and 70,000 readers in just one week, prompting newspapers to quickly corner the market in patriotism when the Falkland crises arose in 1982.¹²¹

The behavior of the British government during the Falkland war was, in fact, recognized as a lesson in dealing with the press during military operations; a lesson that the post-Vietnam era U.S. would shortly apply in its military action in Grenada.¹²² In the Falkland campaign, the British government set the precedent by declaring and defending the claim that news could be dangerous to national interests if it jeopardized operational goals and the morale of troops by reporting on facts contrary to those stated by government or military sources.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Robert Harris, *Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crises* (London: Faber and Faber, Inc., 1983), 44.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Valerie Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1986), 149-155.

¹²³ Ibid.

Carpenter claimed that the Vietnam War taught the government and the military an important lesson: to effectively manage the press to ensure smooth flow of propaganda in times of war. After Margaret Thatcher led a publicly supported war against Argentina in the Falklands in 1982, U.S. officials took note of the fact that part of the astoundingly high public support resulted from a well muzzled British press that was denied access to most of the war, and heavily restricted when access was granted.¹²⁴ By remaining in control of the source of the news, Thatcher's government was able to control the content in the mass media.

In his study of the relation between press freedom and democratic peace, Douglas Van Belle noted significant deviation from normal reporting standards in the British newspaper *The Times* when it reported on the Falklands War. "In the conflict with Argentina, the infrequent times when Argentine sources were used, they were treated as unreliable, interrupted with speculation concerning the true intent of the statement, or verified factually with other sources," noted Van Belle.¹²⁵ All facts regarding the conflict were attributed to British sources, and when the fighting started, the Argentine sources vanished from *The Times* reporting, noted Van Belle, who titled his conclusion "the troublesome findings at the edges of democratic war."

Both Strobel¹²⁶ and Carpenter¹²⁷ agree that subsequent U.S. military actions in Grenada, in 1983, and in Panama, in 1989, derived heavily from the Thatcher model of press control: access to Grenada was denied to the press during the combat phase, and in

¹²⁴ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 165-67.

¹²⁵ Douglas A. Van Belle, "Press freedom and the Democratic Peace," *Journal of Peace Research*, 34, no. 4 (1997): 405-14.

¹²⁶ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 38-42.

¹²⁷ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 167-68, and 178-84.

Panama the press, which arrived forty-eight hours late, was huddled in government controlled press pools. Within this environment the government was able to control the flow of information for the crucial period during which a high level of public support was required.

Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model can be used to explain this press behavior to some degree. High costs and risks made it difficult for journalists to go it alone, the risk of offending the usual sources and public opinion was also too high. However, on an ideological level, things had gone beyond mere anticommunism in Panama and the 1991 Gulf War. The ideology had elevated itself to a more unilateralist understanding of "pro-Americanism" or at least "anti-anti-Americanism." Or, in terms of Bennett's Indexing theory, the press was merely indexing to the government's new and varied foreign policy interests, without any historical sense of its contradictions.

These studies' findings defy Schramm's argument¹²⁸ that the Communist press was fundamentally different from the Libertarian or Social Responsibility press; even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold war, media content had not freed itself of its ideological limitations, and its inability to listen to the parties defined by the U.S. government and the social elite to be the enemy. A press-pools model similar to that used in Grenada and Panama was enforced in the Gulf War of 1991, and as Carpenter notes, from the controls exercised on the press in the 1991 Gulf War to subsequent U.S. military interventions in Yugoslavia to Somalia, the press was seemingly "content to be a lapdog rather than a watchdog."¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Schramm, Peterson and Seibert, *Four Theories of the Press*.

¹²⁹ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 10.

The media's support until 2003 for the U.S.-led action against those described as "evil" by President George W. Bush¹³⁰ effectively introduced a new item to the Propaganda Model under the category of national ideology. Just as journalists found it difficult to cover those defined by their government to be communists or socialists in the Cold War, the reporters in the new conflicts find it difficult to attach any credibility to those defined as Islamic fanatics in the War on Terror. There are similarities in the two factors: in both cases it is the U.S. government officials and pro-establishment experts, or the social elite, who are defining the opponent. Indeed, the George W. Bush administration, which sought to differentiate good Islam from bad Islam, had within it many of the same officials who, twenty years earlier, were seeking to differentiate good foreigners from socialists and communists.

News Coverage of U.S. Policies and Middle East

The hostility toward Islam or the Arabs in the media is not a new phenomenon. Noted linguist Edward Said pointed out in his discourse on the popular and academic media in his book *Orientalism*¹³¹ that the Western mass media has been inundated by unrealistic, exaggerated and often bigoted images of the Middle East. In *Culture and Imperialism*,¹³² Said further noted that the study of colonialism and imperialism by those who viewed foreign culture through a colonialist and imperialist prism was in itself flawed, thereby leading to a framework of study that could not realistically draw upon the reality of the outrage against colonialism and imperialism. In a more contemporary work directly related to the mass media, Said noted in *Covering Islam*¹³³ that the mass media's

¹³⁰ David E. Sanger, "The State of the Union," *New York Times*, Jan. 30, 2002.

¹³¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹³² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

¹³³ Edward Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

reporting on conflicts in Islamic countries was flawed, lacking background and perspective, and biased in favor of the American government's interpretation of these conflicts.

Similarly, Deborah Barranco and Leonard Skyles's study of the coverage of Arab versus Israeli news in 1976 and 1984 found that in these years *The New York Times* gave more coverage to issues of importance to Israel, a long-standing U.S. ally, thereby favoring one segment of a geopolitical region over another and infecting the international news agenda with disfigured perceptions of the Middle East.¹³⁴

And if journalists seek views on U.S. foreign policy from politicians, they are likely to get the same, uniform limitations on debate. Democrats and Republicans know their limits when offering criticism of the White House initiatives on any matter of foreign policy. In particular, as noted by former Congressman Paul Findley, both Democrats and Republicans understand that the flak generated by pro-Israeli groups can be damaging to their political health.¹³⁵ Any journalist hoping to find a reexamination of the U.S. Middle East policies of military, political, diplomatic, and economic support for Israel will, therefore, seldom hear any such views from Democrats or Republicans in Congress.

In her study of the *Reader's Digest*, Joanne Sharpe noted how the magazine applied the same propagandistic touches to America's new enemies; be they radical Muslims during the 1980s,¹³⁶ or among the "terrorists" in the post-Cold War period.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Deborah A. Barranco and Leonard Skyles, "Arab vs. Israeli News Coverage in the New York Times, 1976 and 1984," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, no. 1 (1988): 178-81.

¹³⁵ Paul Findley, "The Deliberative Body Fails to Deliberate," in *They Dare to Speak Out* (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books, 1985), 81-116.

¹³⁶ Joanne P. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 126-27.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 137-62.

“Anyone could be a terrorist, just as anyone in the past might have been a communist,” Sharpe observed in the *Digest*’s articles. “Articles helped readers identify terrorists as in the past they had been told how to spot a communist.”¹³⁸

In the post-Cold War era, the first major academic attempt to define the new enemy was penned by Samuel Huntington, who noted that Islam was headed toward a “clash of civilizations” with the West, and that by virtue of the nature of the Muslims’ faith itself, “Islam has bloody borders.”¹³⁹ However, in his 1996 book *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin Barber pointed out that Islam’s problems with the West were largely due to a state of political and economic dissonance created by the spread of American neoliberal economics via globalization, rather than a clash of cultures, or civilizations, between Islam and the West.¹⁴⁰

The challenge may very well lie in reporting facts contesting official accounts in times of rising populist fervor.

“Covering war is unlike covering anything else, and it leads inevitably toward nationalistic accounts,” wrote Everette E. Dennis, executive director of the Gannett Foundation Media Center shortly after the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. “Historically,” Dennis added, “the consequence of such coverage is cheerleading rather than critical analysis.”¹⁴¹ Dennis went on in this report to ask a panel of senior journalists for their views on the performance of the press in the Persian Gulf War.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 144.

¹³⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996/2001).

¹⁴¹ Everette E. Dennis, *The Media At War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict*, A Gannett Foundation Report (New York: Gannett Foundation, June 1991), 2.

“There is no question that in war, reporters tend to be cheerleaders for their own side and their own country,” said Lawrence Grossman, President of PBS. “But,” he added, “certainly in this war (Persian Gulf War, 1991), which lasted for such a short time and was so intense, I think there is no question that we saw an unusually patriotic, supportive journalistic corps.”¹⁴²

Jack Nelson, then Washington bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*, was sure he saw something else in the Persian Gulf War of 1991, something more sinister. “If you look at it from the outset,” noted Nelson, “the press was reflecting the views of the government and it never really changed. Bush and the people around him did a masterful job controlling exactly what the American people were seeing.”¹⁴³

If the American press was cheerleading and toeing the line during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, then was its behavior any different during the days after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001? Had the press learned any lessons from dealing with the government and the military during the 1991 campaign?

Margaret Blanchard pointed out in her study in 1992¹⁴⁴ that the practice of censoring information reaching the American people during wartime, the deliberate twisting of information by government sources to manipulate public opinion and the unwillingness to tolerate dissent during wartime, were not traits limited to the government’s attempts to control the press during the 1991 Persian Gulf War alone, but

¹⁴² Lawrence Grossman, *The Media At War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict*, A Gannett Foundation Report (New York: Gannett Foundation, June 1991), 65.

¹⁴³ Jack Nelson, *The Media At War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict*, A Gannett Foundation Report (New York: Gannett Foundation, June 1991), 67.

¹⁴⁴ Margaret Blanchard, “Free Expression and Wartime: Lessons from the Past, Hopes for the Future,” *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, no. 1 (1992): 5-17.

rather a practice that could find many precedents in two hundred years of the American press covering American wars.

“If the past is any indication of the future,” wrote Blanchard, “government efforts to restrict dissent and press activity in wartime should be no surprise. What may be the surprise is that such restrictions have continued for two hundred years without being changed. Continued efforts at suppression and repression of the free flow of information may well cost the nation some of its most prized freedoms.”¹⁴⁵

According to Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model, the Western capitalist system addresses itself to the infrastructural and operational needs of a privately owned and profit-driven news organization, resulting in the use of easily available, cheap and flak-free information through government sources that tends to drown out other dissenting voices from access to the media. Such efforts to round up the press within a Propaganda Model could be seen during the decisive days of the bombing of Iraq in March 2003. Elaborate press briefings were organized in which Pentagon and State Department officials quoted impressive facts, and commanded significant news space and air time. When land forces swept across the Iraqi desert, journalists gushed with excitement from their embedded positions inside the military columns. When the forces were stalled due to a sand storm, the only people voicing their critical evaluation were former U.S. military officers. The managing of the source routines, therefore, was carried out perfectly by the military.

The use of flak, by the views-as-news pro-government media commentators and social elite, was also very effective in this period. Days after the September 11, 2001,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

attacks, those trying to offer criticism of the Bush administration's populist rhetoric were similarly drowned out in a backlash of jingoism. When a University of Texas journalism professor and a foreign graduate student wrote in Long Island's *Newsday* newspaper that the "Bush administration's confrontational posture is likely to exacerbate the threat of terrorist attacks," the university alumni threatened to withhold donations.¹⁴⁶

Similarly, Bill Maher, the host of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*, was fired after making remarks that questioned the logic of President Bush's explanation of the September 11 attacks, in which Bush called the terrorists cowards. ". . . [W]e have been the cowards, lobbing cruise missiles from two thousand miles away," said Maher. "That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it's not cowardly." Reacting to Maher's comment, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said, "Americans . . . need to watch what they say, watch what they do, and . . . this is not a time for remarks like that; there never is."¹⁴⁷

The flak was not merely limited to days immediately after the attacks of September 11, 2001. When a newspaper in Crawford, Texas, decided to endorse John Kerry for the 2004 presidential elections and criticized Bush's war policies, it was met with local uproar in Bush's hometown, with local businesses pulling their advertising and local shops refusing to allow the newspaper to be placed on their property for distribution.

The *Lone Star Iconoclast*, in Crawford, Texas, where Bush has a ranch, enjoyed a circulation of 920 but decided to endorse John Kerry in the race for the White House. Readers, wrote the paper's editor, Leon Smith, "should not rate the candidate by his

¹⁴⁶ Ann McFeatters, "What Does 'Loyalty' Really Mean?" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Oct. 7, 2001.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

home town or even his political party, but instead by where he intends to take the country.” President Bush, he continued, “has let us down” on Iraq and the economy.¹⁴⁸

While the newspaper gained admiration and subscriptions in places as far off as Spain, Canada, and Ireland, its financial woes were overwhelming. “It’s very nice to get interest from abroad,” said Smith, “But we get our money from advertising, and Texas advertisers are not interested in readers from Doncaster or Barcelona. The shops won’t distribute the paper. I don’t even dare to go into the Coffee Station.” President Bush reportedly dropped in at the Crawford Coffee Station occasionally to savor their fried onion rings.¹⁴⁹

As discussed previously, in their examination of the effect of ideology on the news routines, Shoemaker and Reese list the ideological spheres of Consensus, Legitimate Controversy and Deviance.¹⁵⁰

The effect of flak is that it drives the mainstream news media into reporting from non-controversial sources, such as those government and government-friendly elite sources that do not dare cross the line of the ideological realm of Legitimate Controversy. This largely allows the discussion of matters of national and foreign policy to be restricted to the political figures that enjoy some legitimacy in their community, namely the Democrats and Republicans. Other views on issues of political, economic, military, commercial, and industrial importance are simply cast aside because they are deemed too controversial and too likely to provoke dissonance and outrage.

¹⁴⁸ Julian Coman, “This is the editor who told Texans to vote for Kerry,” *Sunday Telegraph* (London) Nov. 7, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 227-28.

The views-as-news network shows that rely on opinionated talk show or rage-radio personalities, of course, keep themselves strictly inside of the sphere of ideological Consensus with their consonance and propaganda addicted audiences, providing them with a “fair and balanced” reporting of the government and government-friendly elite sources. Non-friendly or non-elite and critical sources are often covered, but only as subjects of ridicule whose opinions are deemed worthy only of rebuke and rejection. Such populist and jingoistic propaganda also drives other networks to mimic the trend in order to preserve audience share and advertising revenues.¹⁵¹

The overall effect of this replication and repetition of propaganda is one of widespread misinformation and misconception. For example, an October 2003 study published by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) found large sections of the viewers it polled to be suffering from significant unfamiliarity with the truth when quizzed on the possession and use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by Iraq in the ongoing Iraq war.¹⁵² Such was the effect of the propaganda aired by the news media, PIPA reported, that more than 20 percent of its respondents continued to believe that U.S. had found Iraqi WMD, in polls conducted in June, July and August 2003, even though such reports had been debunked within days of their airing in April 2003.

Similarly, 22 percent of respondents polled in May 2003 believed that Iraq had used chemical and biological weapons against the U.S. in the March 2003 invasion, and, as late as September 2003, PIPA found that 20 percent of those polled still believed that

¹⁵¹ See, for example, the Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) report on MSNBC’s efforts to compete with Fox News, available online at: <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2002>

¹⁵² The PIPA report is available online in PDF format: http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/Iraq/Media_10_02_03_Report.pdf

Iraq had used chemical and biological weapons against the United States. Again, none of this was based in truth or any reported facts.

PIPA's study, aptly named "Misperceptions, the Media and the Iraq War," reported that in responding to questions about "Iraq's links to Al Qaeda," the discovery of "Iraq's WMD" and the "global support" for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, 80 percent of the respondents watching Fox News had one or more misperception. Other news networks did not fare better. The percentage of viewers having one or more misperception for the following networks was reported by PIPA as: CBS (71 percent), ABC (61 percent), NBC (55 percent) and CNN (55 percent). Among those responders claiming to get their news from print media, 47 percent were found to be suffering from one or more misperception. Even among responders claiming to be viewers of PBS and listeners of NPR, considered the independent broadcasters, the PIPA study discovered that misperceptions were held by 23 percent of this audience.¹⁵³

This level of misperception of the facts among the American news audiences is stunning, and a clear indicator of the manner in which propaganda has distorted the worldview of the American public and created a Reality Gap. In circumstances where the United States decides to pursue foreign policies of war, this recent study shows that the idea of a free press is largely a myth, and that Americans are no less likely to be misled, misinformed, and cajoled into wars than they have been in the past. The technological advances in the mass media seem to have created a larger net within which to sedate, enthrall and entrap the American public.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

In May 2004, as it became increasingly clear that all the Bush administration and its allies' claims about WMDs and Al Qaeda ties against Iraq were false, *The New York Times* published a Section A1 editorial from the Foreign Desk titled "The Times and Iraq"¹⁵⁴ – a 1,200-words self-analysis of the newspaper's coverage of the build up to the Iraq War, a phase that Strobel's theory would define as the "push" phase on news coverage of American foreign policy building up to a conflict.¹⁵⁵ The *Washington Post* followed up in August 2004 with its own Page A1 self-analysis by staff writer Howard Kurtz that ran more than three thousand words.¹⁵⁶ These self-analysis articles by the two newspapers admitted some of the flaws in their news reporting in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War, that clearly match violations of the SPJ Code of Ethics.

For example, the *Times* noted, "Editors at several levels who should have been challenging reporters and pressing for more skepticism were perhaps too intent on rushing scoops into the paper."¹⁵⁷ That runs counter to the SPJ code of ethics that states, "Journalists should: Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it."¹⁵⁸

The *Post* noted that it "published a number of pieces challenging the White House, but rarely on the front page."¹⁵⁹ The *Post* editors also admitted that "the voices raising questions about the war were lonely ones... We didn't pay enough attention to the

¹⁵⁴ From the Editors, "The Times and Iraq," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

¹⁵⁵ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*.

¹⁵⁶ Howard Kurtz, "The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Editors, "The Times and Iraq," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

¹⁵⁸ The SPJ Codes of Ethics is available online: <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

¹⁵⁹ Howard Kurtz, "The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004.

minority.”¹⁶⁰ The SPJ code of ethics clearly states that journalists be “vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.”¹⁶¹

The *Times* noted that some of its news reporting was based on controversial information that was “insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged.”¹⁶² That runs counter to the SPJ code that states, “Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.”¹⁶³

The *Times* noted that, in a news story where it eventually discovered problems in the original government claims, “the misgivings appeared deep in the article on page A13, under a headline that gave no inkling that we were revising our earlier view.”¹⁶⁴

The *Post* also acknowledged that it had pushed back a news story contradicting the Bush administration’s claims and “the article was relegated to Page A17.”¹⁶⁵ The SPJ code requires that journalists “gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story” but also that journalists “acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently.”¹⁶⁶

As this dissertation will illustrate, the two newspapers were largely par for the course in the manner they followed the U.S. government and its allies’ narrative in the build up to the conflict – it was only after serious and disastrous policy reversals that the mainstream U.S. news organizations started pulling away from the U.S. government and allied narratives – a “pull” effect that was quite contrary to the news media’s behavior during the “push” in moving forward into the conflict in previous years. This particular

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ SPJ Codes of Ethics.

¹⁶² Editors, “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

¹⁶³ SPJ Codes of Ethics.

¹⁶⁴ Editors, “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

¹⁶⁵ Howard Kurtz, “The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story,” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004.

¹⁶⁶ SPJ Codes of Ethics.

developing theoretical framework of the “push” and “pull” behavior of the American news media highlighted by journalist and scholar Warren Strobel in his book, *Late Breaking Foreign Policy*, will be further examined in this dissertation.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This dissertation is designed around three content analysis studies that test for the “Propaganda Model,” the “Indexing Hypothesis,” and the “Push – Pull” effects in two of the mainstream news media’s most prominent newspapers during their coverage of the U.S. foreign policies during times of conflict, ranging from 1996 to 2006, drawing upon the factor of their sourcing routines by testing for statistically significant over-reliance on official or pro-establishment elite sources. The qualitative analysis portions of the dissertation will point out, by comparing American news reports with other published contemporary sources, how the news coverage provided by the American newspapers distorted its coverage on certain types of facts and opinions due to their under-representation of certain types of sources. One common deflection of content shortcomings is to argue that the sources simply were not available. Comparisons with other international and local news publications by other international journalists will provide a contrast as to how such sources were available readily in the news reporting of other foreign correspondents working for British or Lebanese English language press.

The New York Times and the *Washington Post* are chosen as the publications for this study because they are considered to be “leading newspaper empires” in the top tier of media companies in the United States,¹ and because of their established record as leading mainstream national news publications that regularly report on American foreign policy and are also known to have a sizeable impact on the public opinion across the

¹ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988, 2002), 5.

country by virtue of their news reporting.² While the *Times* has at times been accused of either pro-Israel or anti-Israel bias in its coverage of the Middle East, its journalists argue that “the paper’s coverage has been overwhelmingly fair and appropriate.”³ The *Times* is described as “the newspaper of record in the United States and one of the world’s great newspapers,”⁴ while the *Post* shares similar high praise as “the dominant newspaper in the U.S. capital and usually counted as one of the greatest newspapers in that country.”⁵

In order to examine the content of the *Times* and *Post* news coverage in the context of the information available in the period of the news reporting, a contemporary history analysis will accompany each content analysis study to help illustrate how the narrative presented by the sourcing of the news in the *Times* and the *Post* missed or downplayed certain key historical narratives.

This dissertation seeks to identify and analyze the sources of information and opinion that were used in the news reports of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in their coverage of American foreign policy in conflicts in Lebanon. This method of quantitative source analysis is based on the arguments provided in the “Propaganda Model” by Herman and Chomsky, in their discussion of the “filter” they describe as “Sourcing Mass Media News”⁶:

The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The media need a steady, reliable flow of the raw material of news. They

² See, for example, Edward S. Herman’s discussion of the role of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in reporting on U.S. foreign policy and contemporary terrorism in his book *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda* (MA: South End Press, 1982), 139-200.

³ Neil Lewis, “The *Times* and the Jews,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, January/February 2012, https://archives.cjr.org/feature/the_times_and_the_jews.php

⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “The New York Times,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-New-York-Times>

⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “The Washington Post,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Washington-Post>

⁶ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 18-23.

have daily news demands and imperative news schedules that they must meet. They cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all places where important stories may break. Economics dictates that they concentrate their resources where significant news often occurs, where important rumors and leaks abound, and where regular press conferences are held. The White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department, in Washington, D.C., are central nodes of such news activity. On a local basis, city hall and the police department are the subject of regular news “beats” for reporters. Business corporations and trade groups are also regular and credible purveyors of stories deemed newsworthy. These bureaucracies turn out a large volume of material that meets the demands of news organizations for reliable, scheduled flows. . . .

Government and corporate sources also have the great merit of being recognizable and credible by their status and prestige. This is important to the mass media. . . .

Another reason for the heavy weight given to official sources is that the mass media claim to be “objective” dispensers of the news. Partly to maintain the image of objectivity, but also to protect themselves from criticisms of bias and the threat of libel suits, they need material that can be portrayed as presumptively accurate. This is also partly a matter of cost: taking information from sources that may be presumed credible reduces investigative expense, whereas material from sources that are not *prima facie* credible, or that will elicit criticism and threats, requires careful checking and costly research. . . .

To consolidate their preeminent position as sources, government and business-news promoters go to great pains to make things easy for news organizations. They provide the media organizations with facilities in which to gather; they give journalists advance copies of speeches and forthcoming reports; they schedule press conferences at hours well-g geared to news deadlines; they write press releases in usable language; and they carefully organize their press conferences and “photo opportunity” sessions. It is the job of news officers “to meet the journalist's scheduled needs with material that their beat agency has generated at its own pace.”

In effect, the large bureaucracies of the powerful subsidize the mass media, and gain special access by their contribution to reducing the media's costs of acquiring the raw materials of, and producing, news. The large entities that provide this subsidy become “routine” news sources and have privileged access to the gates. Non-routine sources must struggle for access, and may be ignored by the arbitrary decision of the gatekeepers. It should also be noted that in the case of the largesse of the Pentagon and the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy, the subsidy is at the

taxpayers' expense, so that, in effect, the citizenry pays to be propagandized in the interest of powerful groups. . . .

Because of their services, continuous contact on the beat, and mutual dependency, the powerful can use personal relationships, threats, and rewards to further influence and coerce the media. The media may feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order not to offend their sources and disturb a close relationship. It is very difficult to call authorities on whom one depends for daily news liars, even if they tell whoppers. Critical sources may be avoided not only because of their lesser availability and higher cost of establishing credibility, but also because the primary sources may be offended and may even threaten the media using them.

Powerful sources may also use their prestige and importance to the media as a lever to deny critics access to the media. . . .

Perhaps more important, powerful sources regularly take advantage of media routines and dependency to "manage" the media, to manipulate them into following a special agenda and framework (as we will show in detail in the chapters that follow). Part of this management process consists of inundating the media with stories, which serve sometimes to foist a particular line and frame on the media (e.g., Nicaragua as illicitly supplying arms to the Salvadoran rebels), and at other times to help chase unwanted stories off the front page or out of the media altogether (the alleged delivery of MIGs to Nicaragua during the week of the 1984 Nicaraguan election). This strategy can be traced back at least as far as the Committee on Public Information, established to coordinate propaganda during World War I, which "discovered in 1917-18 that one of the best means of controlling news was flooding news channels with 'facts,' or what amounted to official information."

The relation between power and sourcing extends beyond official and corporate provision of day-to-day news to shaping the supply of "experts." The dominance of official sources is weakened by the existence of highly respectable unofficial sources that give dissident views with great authority. This problem is alleviated by "co-opting the experts"-i.e., putting them on the payroll as consultants, funding their research, and organizing think tanks that will hire them directly and help disseminate their messages. In this way bias may be structured, and the supply of experts may be skewed in the direction desired by the government and "the market." As Henry Kissinger has pointed out, in this "age of the expert," the "constituency" of the expert is "those who have a vested interest in commonly held opinions; elaborating and defining its consensus at a high level has, after all, made him an expert." It is therefore appropriate that this restructuring has taken place to allow the commonly

held opinions (meaning those that are functional for elite interests) to continue to prevail.⁷

Similarly, this study tests for the “Indexing Hypothesis” defined by Bennett to examine the sources whose opinions and statement of fact are published in the two newspapers and to detect whether these sources and their views are largely in keeping with the “index” of stated U.S. government policies, and the boundaries of the debate created on the Lebanon issue within the U.S. government’s pronouncements.⁸

In order to test for some of these “Propaganda Model” and “Indexing” traits, numerous research studies in content analysis since the late 1980s have focused on a statistical analysis of source paragraphs to note whether statistically significant differences can be spotted in the comparison of means (t-test), or whether correlations can be detected, in the overall numbers, prominence and dominance of the types of sources (government officials, military officials, government or industry experts, allied countries’ officials) that can be counted in the American news reporting. I discuss some of these research findings in my literature review, but in order to illustrate the methodology, I quote the explanation here from one of the studies by Sandra Dickson:⁹

Ideally, this study will complement previous research like Bennett's analysis of the New York *Times*' coverage of Nicaraguan and Contra policy. By adding a second mainstream paper, the Washington *Post*, the generalizability of the findings should be enhanced. Likewise, by expanding Bennett's categorization schema to include all sources who make a statement on the U.S.-Nicaraguan conflict — not just those who voice an opinion on Contra policy — greater insight will be gained into the overall political debate on Nicaragua. A quantitative content analysis was conducted on 1,633 randomly selected articles in the *Post* and *Times* to determine the origin of the story and the types of sources present. Furthermore, a subset of 439 articles was coded to determine the direction

⁷ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 18-23.

⁸ W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

⁹ Sandra H. Dickson, “Press and the U.S. Policy Towards Nicaragua, 1983-1987: A Study of the New York Times and Washington Post,” *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, no. 3 (1992): 562-71.

of sources, i.e., positive, negative or neutral. Commentaries and editorials were excluded from the subset analysis because they do not purport to be objective and, as a result, are not viewed by the reader as a fair and balanced presentation of the facts. . . . The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were selected because they are acknowledged agenda setters for policy makers, the public and other news organizations. The sample period covered 1983 to 1987, the time period in which the U.S.-Nicaraguan conflict was at its peak. It should be noted the sample segment covered the Iran-Contra scandal (December 1986-1987) and included only those stories which focused chiefly on Nicaragua or U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.¹⁰

Therefore, my method is also to quantify the number of sources by counting every paragraph in the news reports as one unit each and coding each unit by certain identifier variables that point to the nationality, profession and disposition of the source in that paragraph. If comparison of means (t-tests) and correlation analysis show there exists a statistically significant publication of pro-establishment sources, and a statistically significant under-representation of anti-establishment sources, the study will point toward a “Propaganda Model” and/or “Indexing” effect in the *Times* and the *Post* reporting on U.S. foreign policy in the conflicts examined in this dissertation.

The statistical approach behind the quantitative methodology here might benefit from a hypothetical explanation: If a resourceful reporter covering a conflict that involved five distinct groups of sources conducted one hundred interviews, the laws of probability say that each group of sources would have an equal opportunity for twenty of the interviews. That is, if the reporter was merely walking around and interviewing sources as they happen to stop by, the laws of probability also hold that each group of sources, having been randomly tossed into this reporter’s path, would probably end up with an equal opportunity to land an interview. We know that something other than

¹⁰ Ibid., 564-65.

chance and probability is at work if the reporter's interviews are over-representing one particular group of sources over the others in numbers that are statistically significant. This factor is *the editorial process*, wherein editors and reporters decide whom to interview and how many times. The editorial process also decides how much space (length of copy) and prominence (page number) should be provided to the facts and opinions presented by a particular group of sources. Therefore, if we find by statistical analysis that a particular group of sources is being overrepresented in statistically significant numbers in the news coverage (by testing comparison of means, or correlations), while all other equally available groups relevant to the crises are being underreported or downplayed, then we can assume that this over-representation of some sources is due to a particular bias in decision making in the editorial process of that news publication – a bias that Herman and Chomsky would argue fits into their discussion of the “filter” of “Sourcing Mass Media News.”¹¹

If the statistically significant over-representation happens in only one conflict, in one country, in one publication, in one window of time at one bureau, then that can probably be explained away as a one-time instance of bias. The *Washington Post*¹² and *The New York Times*¹³ have tried to use this argument to explain their failure to objectively report the reasoning, planning, and execution of the March 2003 Iraq War.

However, if numerous case studies, as conducted in this dissertation, over numerous crises involving different countries, in different periods, spread across many bureaus of the publications in question consistently show a statistically significant over-

¹¹ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 18-25.

¹² Howard Kurtz, “The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story,” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004.

¹³ Editorial, “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

representation of particular sources, then this suggests that the underlying editorial process itself is flawed or biased.

As Bennett points out, some people argue that “the press is acting in a democratically responsible fashion by favoring the views of public officials – who are, after all, representatives of the people.”¹⁴ But this overreliance on U.S. officials can be quite devastating if the said officials are misinformed or deliberately lying to the public. While one may presume that the statistically significant over-representation of one particular group of sources, namely the official and pro-government elite sources, when covering conflicts is a direct consequence of reporting the most truthful or reliable sources, this is hardly the case. In numerous instances of war and crises reporting it has been discovered that significant over-representation of U.S. policy supporters creates a “Propaganda Model” and an “Indexing” effect, which in turn succeeds in lulling the readership and viewers into rallying around the flag in support of disastrous decisions. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution of 1964¹⁵ and the Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002¹⁶ are two historical examples wherein legislators were convinced into supporting the president in an authorization for use of military force by the citing of unreliable and inaccurate information — official information that was neither contested nor verified by the press.

This dissertation includes a contemporary history introduction and discussion in every content analysis chapter that examines, in some detail, the development of Hezbollah in each of the periods that are addressed in the content studies. The aim of

¹⁴ Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” 103.

¹⁵ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 206-10.

¹⁶ Simon Maloy, “Yes Bush Lied About Iraq,” Salon.com. Feb.10, 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/02/10/yes_bush_lied_about_iraq_why_are_we_still_arguing_about_this/

these chapters is to establish some evident facts regarding the political, social, economic, and cultural circumstances that led to the development and rise in power of Hezbollah in Lebanon. The contemporary history portions relies on some interview-based research, but primarily includes numerous English-language secondary sources, including the work of journalists (not belonging to *The New York Times* or the *Washington Post*) who were involved in covering the said crises for other foreign news organizations, and also other relevant published work by scholars and journalists that was widely available in English language media in these time periods.

With the presentation and citation of these contemporary facts, the historical studies' narratives seeks to examine the effect of overrepresentation of friendly sources in the news coverage of these conflicts, and also seeks to compare the focus of the *Times* and the *Post* versus the reality of the crises as they developed in the years in question.

The content analysis case studies cover three conflicts over ten years in recent history when Hezbollah directly challenged the Israeli and U.S. policies in the region. The studies cover the two mainstream print publications: *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The inclusion of *two* newspapers as the subject of content analysis helps establish a propaganda effect that is pervasive beyond the staff of *one* particular publication, in more than *one* particular country or window of time. Care was taken in maintaining a consistency in the methodological design and the coding sheets¹⁷ in order to have consistency in data collection and data analysis.

The data in all case studies were gathered through the Lexis-Nexis news database using the appropriate keyword, Lebanon, in searches to identify the conflicts under study

¹⁷ Coding sheet is provided as Appendix 1.

and to keep within the defined time-period of the conflict in question. Once the data had been gathered, the content analysis focused on the identity of sources quoted in the published material. The general guideline were as follows:

1. The newspapers chosen from the American mainstream press are *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. These newspapers daily covered the conflicts under study and had a bureau on many sides of the conflict to generate news reports from various parties concerned. Both newspapers are also highly regarded in the public and policy circles.
2. The stories from the publications were identified for the purposes of content analysis by a keyword search of the Lexis-Nexis news database. The time frame of the data is restricted to the period of the conflict in question, and every effort was made to define this period to include the entire period. No sampling was conducted.
3. The objective of the content analysis was to identify the sources that were represented in the news articles so as to recognize the effect of the government-dominated reporting patterns on the coverage of facts during an international crisis situation. Therefore, comment pieces and editorials are omitted from the study as they do not always reflect attribution to the sources of the facts used in the arguments presented. The sources were coded for every attributed statement, recognized in the text by words such as '*said, stated, offered, claimed, replied, explained, asserted,*' etc. The reporter's own explanation of the events was not coded as this is independent of the sources used, and most often reflects the dominant source's views or analysis of the situation. The analysis was also limited to news pages and therefore the articles published in the fashion, style, financial and other supplementary feature pages were left out. The

keywords used for the search included the country name, Lebanon, and the time frame in question.

4. After the data had been collected, each news story was read and every attributed source identified in a paragraph was coded for its nationality, its professional background, and its opposition or no direct opposition to the American policy issue that was the focus of the particular conflict. Every fact mentioned in the news story attributed to a source was coded and each attributed paragraph counted as one unit of measure irrespective of its length because, on the whole, paragraph lengths per source even out over a number of articles.

5. The source's nationality was coded when mentioned in the news report. Sources with foreign-sounding names (Rashidi, Said, Hourani, Parsi) who are not identified in the news report as foreigners in reports filed from domestic bureaus were coded as USR sources – U.S. residents whose nationality or citizenship is not stated in the news report. In the instance where a significant number of such sources show up in the news coverage, the examination and discussion of these sources is detailed in the findings in each chapter. The source's professional background is coded as: **Military**, **Government** (including members of legislature, executive and judiciary), **Non-Governmental Organization**, **Expert**, an **Ordinary person** (with no special/authoritative skills mentioned in the story as in man-on-the-street interviews), **Other Media** reports, and **Opinion polls** reported in the news reports, which were coded on the basis of their nationality. **Hezbollah** sources were coded as **HB** and coded as Government or Military based on how the news reports describe them – Member of Parliament, or fighter. (Please see Appendix 1 for the coding sheet).

6. The U.S. policy toward the particular international crises was derived from stated positions of the U.S. president, and/or the staff of the White House, the State Department, and the Defense Department. The subsequent coding of the quoted source's disposition on the policy is clearly outlined in each study, and in each coding instruction book constructed for the studies, as Unopposed to U.S. policy (marked as 1), or Opposed to U.S. policy (marked as 2). A **Military** source paragraph marked as **US1**, for example, would identify the source as an American military official providing one paragraph of attributed information or opinion that was unopposed to U.S. foreign policy, while **HB2** would indicate a comment in a paragraph from a Hezbollah fighter criticizing U.S. policy. Similarly, a **Government** source marked as **LB2** would identify the source as a Lebanese government official providing one paragraph of attributed information or opinion that was critical of U.S. foreign policy.

Coder Reliability

As the author teaches in a program in Pennsylvania that has no graduate students, and the majority of the undergraduates are majoring in corporate communication, there were some limitations on finding coders for reliability analysis. While all undergraduates enroll in a research methods course here, they do not get much instruction in quantitative content analysis. Therefore, as the first step, the author took on a guest lecturer role to carry out a class session in introduction to quantitative content analysis, and students were offered an opportunity to code one news report. Based on this experience, one senior and, later, one junior, were invited to participate in further training in quantitative content analysis, and the author instructed them on the particulars of the 1996 news reporting that constituted the first set of materials in this study.

After some training, the senior student was provided with a randomly selected sample of 10 percent of the 1996 materials - ten news reports - to code. Later, the junior student also received the same packet of materials, which were also coded by the author. Each of the three coders worked on the coding off campus, and submitted the coding sheets back to the author on different days, given their varied work load and schedules.

The method chosen for the coder reliability analysis was Krippendorff's Alpha Reliability Estimate,¹⁸ and the sample of 10 percent of the 1996 news reports yielded 166 entries by each coder. The analysis calculated a low Alpha = 0.6340 for the agreement between the senior student and the author. A review of the coding sheets indicated that the senior has misread the coding instructions and only coded "direct quotes" from the news reports – therefore, while the other two coders (junior, and author) had coded direct, indirect and paraphrased quote paragraphs, the senior student had many missing entries. It was not possible to revisit the materials with the senior student, as she had graduated. The dataset submitted by this student was then omitted, and the analysis was run again with two judges – the author and the junior student. This yielded an Alpha = 0.8844 for the 166 entries. This was the high Alpha value of the entire coding sheet information, but the author wanted to focus specifically on the coding information relating to the source paragraphs coded by profession, nationality and disposition. The analysis was run again on a data set that included only the entries for the source paragraphs coded for the news reports, a total of 106 entries by each coder across the ten 1996 news reports in the random sample, and this yielded an Alpha = 0.8109, an acceptable level of coder reliability.

¹⁸ A. F. Hayes and K. Krippendorff, "Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data," *Communication Methods and Measures*, 1, no. 1, (2007): 77-89.

Moving forward, the (junior) student and the author completed coding 10 percent of the news reports from the 2000 news coverage – a randomly selected sample of seven news reports yielded 111 entries by each coder. This yielded an Alpha = 0.8847 for the 111 entries by the two judges. This was the high Alpha value of the entire coding sheet information. Again, the author wanted to focus specifically on the coding information relating to the source paragraphs coded by profession, nationality and disposition. The analysis was run again on a data set that included only the entries for the source paragraphs coded for the news reports, a total of sixty-nine entries by each coder across the seven 2000 news reports in the random sample, and this yielded an Alpha = 0.8061, an acceptable level of coder reliability.

Next, the (junior) student and the author completed coding 10 percent of the news reports from the 2006 news coverage – a randomly selected sample of thirty-nine news reports yielded 903 entries by each coder. This yielded an Alpha = 0.8775 for the 903 entries by the two judges. This was the high Alpha value of the entire coding sheet information. The author again wanted to focus specifically on the coding information relating to the source paragraphs coded by profession, nationality and disposition. The analysis was run again on a data set that included only the entries for the source paragraphs coded for the news reports, a total of 669 entries by each coder across the thirty-nine news reports in the 2006 random sample, and this yielded an Alpha = 0.8322, an acceptable level of coder reliability.

Research Questions for Quantitative Content Analysis

1. Which sources, by nationality and profession, were dominant in the news coverage of the newspapers? Did the overall news reporting overrepresent or

underrepresent any particular nationalities central to the news? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000 and 2006 studies?

2. Which country datelines did most of the news reporting come from? Did reporting from a certain country change the length and positioning of the story? Did it change the distribution of types of sources? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?

3. How did the length of the stories, their positioning and the nature of sources change over the period of each crises, from its beginning to the end? Did any particular sources show a correlation with the passage of time, as the crises intensified and then dissipated? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?

Research Questions for Qualitative Content Analysis

4. In what manner did the reporting of the American newspapers, as opposed to that of other journalists in the region, ignore or avoid certain facts or opinions that, in historical terms, proved to be important to the conflict and its resolution? Did the “Propaganda Model” and/or “Indexing” effect demonstrate that American readers of these two newspapers received an incomplete, if not flawed, representation of the crises and its resolution? Did these aspects of the news coverage differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000 and 2006 studies, in support of the “push” and “pull” effects hypothesis developed by Strobel?¹⁹

5. In what manner did the content of the reporting of the American newspapers’ journalists based in the United States (domestic dateline in news report) differ from that

¹⁹ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

of the same newspaper's foreign correspondents (international dateline in news report)?
Did these aspects of the news coverage differ significantly from the findings of the 1996,
2000, and 2006 studies?

**Chapter 4: Coverage of Lebanon and Hezbollah during the period of the
Israeli Operation “Grapes of Wrath” (April 1996)**



Figure 1: Map of Lebanon (Source: www.cia.gov; public domain)

The Birth of Hezbollah in Lebanon

On November 11, 1982, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) military headquarters in the occupied Lebanese city of Tyre was destroyed by a human car bomb, killing “at least 75 Israeli officials and soldiers.”¹ The eight-story building crumpled under the impact of the blast and 141 people died. It was a massive blow to Israeli occupation in Lebanon, delivered by Ahmad Qassir (Kassir), a seventeen-year-old boy.² Ahmad, it was later discovered, was part of a secret group of Lebanese Shia resistance fighters, inspired by the Islamic revolution of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,³ and determined to expel Israeli forces from Lebanon. In the coming years these fighters would organize themselves into a cohesive organization, with both military and social goals, and a strict code of discipline.⁴ The world would then come to recognize, fear, and, in some countries, respect them, as members of Hezbollah.⁵

The Shi’ite resistance fighters, however, were not the first to utilize car bombs as a technique of unconventional warfare in Lebanon – by September 1981, numerous Israeli agents in Lebanon had been setting off car bombs in Palestinian neighborhoods of Beirut and other Lebanese cities, and these car bombs were developed in the IDF’s Special Operations Executive, according to Ronen Bergman, an Israeli investigative

¹ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 12-14; also see Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God* (New York: Random House, 2011), 80.

² Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born With a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 75. Also, see Robert Fisk’s eyewitness accounts of the aftermath of the incident in *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Nation Books, 2002), 458-61.

³ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 16.

⁴ The year of the formal founding of Hezbollah is most commonly set as 1985. See Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 19.

⁵ Hezbollah – Hizb’allah, meaning party of God. The organization’s name is spelled differently in various publications, ranging from its most accurate Arabic root representation (Hizb’allah) to a more western understanding of its pronunciation (Hezbollah). This dissertation refers to the organization as Hezbollah as this is how the American newspapers refer to the organization in their news coverage, which is the subject of this study. Other spellings of the group’s name have been preserved in “direct quotes.”

journalist, author, and recipient of many awards, including the 2017 Sokolow Award for journalism in Israel. Bergman claims that a “Mossad man who was in Lebanon at the time” said, “I saw from a distance one of the cars blowing up and demolishing an entire street. We were teaching the Lebanese how effective a car bomb could be. Everything that we saw later with Hezbollah sprang from what they saw had happened after these operations.”⁶

The 1982 car bombing of the IDF headquarters in Tyre is widely recognized as the first Hezbollah operation of this type, with Hezbollah members describing “Sheikh Ahmad Kassir” as the “pioneer of all martyr attacks.”⁷ The attack, therefore, also established the precedent, approved by Hezbollah’s religious and political authorities, of Hezbollah “martyrdom” attacks against IDF targets.⁸

The radical Lebanese Shi’ite groups became the widespread focus of U.S. attention when, on October 23, 1983, suicide bombers destroyed the compound for the U.S. Marines, killing 241, and the barracks of the French troops, killing eighty, in Beirut.⁹ While the U.S. government has held Hezbollah, and by extension, Iran, responsible for these bombings, the official claim of responsibility for these attacks was taken by a group called Islamic Jihad (al-Jihad al-Islami), which had also bombed the U.S. embassy in Beirut in April 1983, killing eighty people.¹⁰

While the Hezbollah of the 1980s was starkly different from the Hezbollah of the

⁶ Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel’s Targeted Assassinations* (Random House, 2018), Amazon Prime First Edition (Jan. 30, 2018), 242-243 of 755. Also see:

<https://ronenbergman.com/biography/>

⁷ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (Beirut: Saqi, 2010), 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 106-12.

⁹ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 82.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

1990s¹¹ and the twenty-first century, some key ideological and institutional traits have remained the same, most prominent among them being the party's commitment to Shia theology and political aspirations. Similarly, while the Hezbollah's relations with Syria are based almost entirely on Realpolitik, the organization's relations with Iran are downright spiritual, given the common bonds of religious beliefs and geopolitical aspirations between the members of Hezbollah in Lebanon and their acceptance of the leadership of the al-Wali al-Faqih, the "jurist-theologian" based in Iran, beginning with Imam Khomeini and then Imam Khamenei.¹²

In his widely acclaimed study of Hezbollah, Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh identifies four "acute and pervasive crisis conditions" that provide a conceptual framework for the emergence of Hezbollah: an "Identity Crisis" defined by the historical experiences of the Shi'ite community; a "Structural Imbalance" in Lebanon that further alienated the Shi'ite community; a "Military Defeat" in the face of Israel's invasions that put further stresses on the Lebanese Shi'ites; and the "Demonstration Effect" of the success of the Shi'ite Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.¹³

The Rise of the Shia in Lebanon

It is important to establish, at the outset, that Lebanon is a unique country, whose complicated and controversial history lies at the heart of its varied challenges and triumphs – it has, at various times, been a place of refuge, and survival, and strength for persecuted minorities of varied Christian and Muslim sects, all of whom believe Lebanon to be an inseparable part of their identity. Over the last thousand years it has gone from

¹¹ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly*, 4, no. 2, (1993): 321- 37.

¹² Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story From Within*, 112-123.

¹³ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 2-3.

being an important landmark in the Crusades to being dominated by Muslims, and in the last one hundred years, it has gone from being an Ottoman territory presumed to be part of Syria to being a French protectorate and, finally in 1943, an independent nation whose sixteen distinct recognized religious sects were afforded, based on a 1932 census, a representative political role in a democracy under the auspices of a “national pact.”¹⁴

Historically, the Shia sect of Islam has faced persecution and prejudice from the Sunni, who are a majority among Muslims, because of the Shi’ites belief that the Prophet designated Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, as the rightful head of the Muslim community after the Prophet’s death in A.D. 632. However, the followers or partisans of Imam Ali, known as Shi’ites, lost the argument over the Prophet’s succession, and while Ali did eventually rise to be the fourth Caliph in 656, he was murdered in 661, at which point the next caliph, Mu’awiyah, had Ali’s son, Imam Hasan killed in 670, and the next caliph Yazid, Mu’awiyah’s son, had Ali’s second son, Imam Husayn, murdered in 680, after which the Shi’ites refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Sunni caliphs. Thus, the first three Imams, or those deemed the legitimate successors for leadership of the Muslim community by the Shi’ites, were killed within fifty years of the Prophet’s death, and the legacy of Shi’ism over the next 1,400 years became a “legacy of martyrdom, persecution, torment, suffering, powerlessness and insecurity.”¹⁵ It is this legacy that Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh places at the historical core of the “Identity Crises” among the Shi’ites that played a central role in the development of Hezbollah in Lebanon. As Hamzeh notes, while the Shi’ites enjoyed a period of dominance during the tenth century rule of the Buyid dynasty in Iraq and Iran, and the Fatimids in North Africa, Egypt, and Syria, the

¹⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 17.

¹⁵ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 7-8.

conquest of territories by Salah-al-Dine Ayyubi in 1171, followed by the conquests of the Mamluks (Turkish warlords) and the Mongols effectively meant that Shi'ite dynasties were destroyed by 1258, beginning "centuries of oppression and persecution of Shi'ites everywhere."¹⁶

As Hamzeh notes, this history of persecution reflects in the pattern of Shi'ite settlements in Lebanon in South Lebanon and the Biq'a Valley,¹⁷ having been expelled from other areas of Lebanon by the Mamluks in the late thirteenth century, and then losing "almost all land and authority to the expanding Maronite and Druze communities" under the Sunni Ottoman rule over Lebanon (1516-1922).¹⁸ And when the Safavid established Shi'ism as Iran's official religion in the early sixteenth century, contacts between the Shi'ites of Lebanon and the Shi'ites of Iran raised suspicion among the Ottoman rulers, leading to persecution and discrimination against the Shi'ites in Lebanon.¹⁹ After World War I, the Shi'ites favored Sharif Husayn's efforts to create an independent Arab state, but the Allies who had supported Sharif Husayn in the revolt against the Ottomans then "renege on their promises, creating a fragmented Arab world under French and British hegemony" wherein the French "wanted to incorporate the Shi'ites into a Greater Lebanon led by the Maronites."²⁰ Efforts among Shi'ite community leaders to push the cause for union with Arab Syria led to clashes with Maronite groups, and the French military aided the Maronites in crushing the Shi'ites, wherein "French warplanes and artillery bombarded Shi'ite villages and centers such as

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Some author often also refer to the Biq'a Valley as the Bekaa Valley.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ Ibid., 10-11.

Nabatiyyah, Tyre, and Bint Jbeil” and the subsequent defeat of the Shi’ites enabled the French to incorporate South Lebanon and the Biq’a into the new State of Greater Lebanon, formally proclaimed on September 1, 1920.²¹ Even after Lebanon became independent on November 22, 1943, the Shi’ites “felt that they were the despised stepchildren of a state governed by a Maronite-Sunni alliance.”²²

The Shia community in Lebanon was, for many years, a deprived community, with the Bekaa Valley²³ and South Lebanon, where Shi’ites were concentrated, being “severely deprived of even such basics as sewer networks and clean water distribution.”²⁴ The Shi’ite community was allowed little representation in the running of government, and there was a lower share of government spending in Shia community areas for schools, hospitals and roads. In 1955, for instance, only 3.6 percent of the top bureaucrats in Lebanon were Shia.²⁵ While small sections of the Shia society were wealthy landowners or migrants who made money in oil-rich countries, the larger sections were trapped in underdevelopment.²⁶ The National Pact (al-Mithaq al-Watani) of 1943 vested legislative, executive, and military positions in Lebanon in rough proportion to the demographic size of the country’s eighteen recognized sectarian groups, but these numbers were based on the 1932 official census, which recorded the Maronite Christians as the majority and hence gave them the presidency (the president of Lebanon has to be a Maronite), while the Sunnis, counted as the second largest community, were given the

²¹ Ibid., 10-11.

²² Ibid., 11-12.

²³ Some authors refer to the Biq’a Valley as the Bekaa Valley.

²⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 18.

²⁵ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 117.

²⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 12-14; also see Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God* (New York: Random House, 2011), 13-15.

premiership (the prime minister of Lebanon has to be Sunni), while the Shi'ite Muslims, counted as the third largest, got the weaker position of speaker of Parliament.²⁷ By 1975, however, Shi'ites had grown to be almost 30 percent of the national population, but the “inflexible formula for political representation” in Lebanon did not change, leading to Shi'ites living in “double-trouble” – belonging to the “most disadvantaged social group” and living in “the least developed geographical regions of Lebanon.”²⁸ Matters were made worse by the fact that most Shi'ites living in rural South Lebanon tried to make a living from farming, with little help from the government for rural development, and were also caught up in the fighting between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) – those who tried to escape the harsh conditions in South Lebanon ended up in shantytowns in the suburbs of Beirut, known as the “belt of misery” that in turn became the “breeding ground of Shi'ite militancy in the 1980s.”²⁹ These are the conditions that Hamzeh categorizes as the “Structural Imbalance” in Lebanon.

While the Lebanese government had been aware of regional inequalities as early as 1958, the spread of education and modernization coupled with urbanization raised the expectations of Shi'ites, but these were not met in terms of closing the political and economic gaps as they were “excluded from both the political and the economic structure of Lebanon’s confessional system” with the problems getting worse with the outbreak of Lebanon’s civil war in 1975.³⁰ The Israeli invasions through South Lebanon in 1978, and again in 1982, further ruined the situation by forcing poor Shia families to flee to an overcrowded suburb of Beirut – the *Dahiyeh* - where they were reduced to a slum life,

²⁷ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

and it is in these miserable conditions that the Lebanese Shia started forming the roots for fundamentalist thought.³¹ These are the conditions Hamzeh categorizes as “Military Defeat” among the crisis leading to the rise of Hezbollah, noting that “when identity crisis and structural imbalance are reinforced by military defeat, a society’s militancy potential increases markedly,” and when defeat results in foreign occupation of one’s territory, it “opens the way for militant movements fostering political organization or employing guerrilla warfare and enjoying widespread grassroots support.”³²

It should be mentioned that the devout section of the Lebanese Shia community was, in the years before the Lebanese civil war, largely transnational, identifying with seminary cities such as Najaf and Karbala. Shia clerics and opinion leaders studied theology at schools in Iraq alongside exiled radical Iranian revolutionary clerics such as Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and there was a rich, common history of fundamentalist thought between a certain section of the Lebanese and Iranian Shia that went back many years.³³

These strong ties dated to the sixteenth century when the Safavids established Shi’ism as the official religion of the Persian Empire, thereby leading to extensive family ties and personal bonds between the Lebanese Shia of Jabal Amil (South Lebanon) and the Shia in Iran. Prominent Shia clerics in Lebanon often collaborated in religious matters with the clerics of Iran – for instance, Sheikh Raghieb Harb, a south Lebanese cleric and one of the founding members of Hezbollah, helped Muhammad Baqer al-Sadr with an early draft of the constitution of Iran after the 1979 revolution.³⁴

³¹ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 18-19.

³² Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 15.

³³ Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb’allah in Lebanon* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 25-26.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

Thus, the collaborative spirit among the Shia clerics of Iran and Lebanon was fostered by their ties formed in Shia religious academies outside their home countries. Islam in itself does not recognize the distinction between nationalities, thereby leading to the phenomenon of pan-Islamism. The Shia tradition narrows the differences by advocating the need to recognize an opinion leader on Shia affairs. Before, and during, the years of the Lebanese civil war the aspiring Shia clergy of Lebanese society went to study at the religious academies in southern Iraq, notably Najaf and Karbala, where many of them met and studied under the guidance of Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Khomeini. Khomeini was advocating a revolutionary brand of Shia Islam that sought to govern Muslim-populated territories under Islamic law, enacted by Shia clergy who would serve in all institutions of government. The graduates from these academies went on to form Islamic fundamentalist movements such as the *al-Dawa al-Islamiya* in Iraq, the *Lebanese al-Dawa* and the *Association of Muslim Uluma in Lebanon*.³⁵

However, it should be noted that in the years before the formation of the Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia did not have a fundamentalist Shia political organization. In the absence of a Shia party, the disaffected Lebanese Shia, especially the youth, jumped into the political process by joining the Lebanese left, particularly the Communists, the Nasserites, the Ba'ath or the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, which were all largely secular or pan-Arabic in nature.³⁶

The first successful attempt in recent history to mobilize the Lebanese Shia into a distinct politically conscious community was made by Imam Musa al-Sadr.³⁷ Al-Sadr

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 117.

³⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 17-21.

arrived in Tyre, in southern Lebanon, in 1960 as the deputy of Ayatollah Mohsen al-Hakim, with whom he had studied in Najaf, Iraq, in the 1950s.³⁸ While al-Sadr was not born in Lebanon, but in Qom, Iran, he was the son of a leading Lebanese Shi'ite scholar, Ayatollah Sadr al-Din Sadr.³⁹ Al-Sadr did not attempt to follow the Islamic fundamentalist view, but took up a “more reformist ideology comprising a potent combination of traditional values and modern concepts” as he set out “to activate the politically quiescent Shi'ites and organize them as a formidable force in Lebanon” starting with the creation of the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council in 1969, of which al-Sadr was elected the first president, and he “soon became the symbol of the new, politically aware Shi'ite presence in the multireligious sectarianism of Lebanon.”⁴⁰ As Hamzeh points out, the erstwhile Shi'ite tradition of “submission and political indifference, encouraged by their quiescent religious leaders, had contributed significantly to the political marginalization of the Shi'ite masses” in Lebanon, but now al-Sadr moved against that tradition and claimed that “political activism was now not only necessary for preserving Shi'ite identity in Lebanon but equally important in keeping with authentic Shi'ism.”⁴¹ The martyrdom of Imam Husayn in Karbala was, al-Sadr argued, not a “warrant for political quietism and submission” but rather “an identity-shaping episode of political choice and courage” wherein Shi'ites should not reflect on their history to find martyrdom plausible when “suffered for lofty ideals of a just and

³⁸ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

equitable public order on earth” and “if the occasion demanded” this martyrdom was also “desirable through violent revolution.”⁴²

In 1974, al-Sadr made the Shia a political force under the banner of Harakat al-Mahroumeen (the Movement of the Dispossessed), which, in 1975, developed into a Shia militia called Afwaj al-Mugawama al-Lubnaniya (Lebanese Resistance Detachments), popularly known by the acronym Amal (Hope).⁴³

It has been argued by some scholars that al-Sadr had no real desire to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon through an Islamic revolution – his views were seen to be more in tune with Iranian Islamic modernist Ali Shariati, rather than revolutionary fundamentalists such as Ayatollah Khomeini.⁴⁴ However, al-Sadr did seek to establish political equality for the Shia who became, by the 1970s, the largest ethnic group in a pluralist Lebanon. Al-Sadr also bestowed upon his followers a distinct Shia consciousness, having established in 1967 a Higher Islamic Shia Council in Lebanon (Majlis al-Shii al-Aala), thereby separating his followers from the theological organization of the Sunni Lebanese establishment.⁴⁵

Amal was widely popular among the Shia community, especially in the South where there was a crises of insecurity and poverty. Palestinian refugees had started to flee to Lebanon with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.⁴⁶ Since 1968, Palestinian guerrillas had been using South Lebanon as a base to attack Israel.⁴⁷ Lebanon became the center of guerrilla activity when, in 1970, the Palestine Liberation Organization

⁴² Ibid., 21.

⁴³ Jaber, *Hezbollah*, 11-14.

⁴⁴ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 117-18.

⁴⁵ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 56-58; also see Harik, *Hezbollah*, 22.

⁴⁶ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 15.

⁴⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 17-19.

spearheaded by Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, failed to organize an uprising against King Hussein of Jordan. As a result of this, King Hussein, who had offered asylum to Palestinian refugees within Jordan, retaliated by forcibly ousting the trouble-making PLO guerillas out of Jordanian refugee camps. These guerillas, and their families, subsequently fled and found refuge in South Lebanon.⁴⁸

Given Lebanon's large Arab and Muslim population (mostly Sunnis who enjoyed political power and supported the largely Sunni factions of the Palestinian resistance), the Lebanese government was in a bind on how to deal with the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who settled in South Lebanon.⁴⁹ While the Muslim (mostly Sunni) section of the government was overwhelmingly in support of allowing the Palestinians to stay, the Christians (mostly Maronite) were afraid that Palestinian bases in Lebanon would draw Israeli attacks. This, however, was not their only fear. Palestinians had also started forming a state within a state in Lebanon, arming and training the local communities in the south.⁵⁰ When the confrontation between the PLO and Israel started wreaking havoc in South Lebanon, the Lebanese government was caught in a split between the Sunni and Maronite political powerhouses. They could not order the Lebanese army to contain the Palestinians as the multi-faith Armed forces would probably split into factions on the question of curbing Palestinian activities to benefit Israel. As the political deadlock in Lebanese government continued, the Shia of the south had to deal with increasing PLO

⁴⁸ Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 7-9; also see Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 15.

⁴⁹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 34-35.

⁵⁰ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 18-22; also see Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 15.

interference in their daily lives and also a barrage of attacks from the Israeli defense forces, which indiscriminately targeted southern villages to deter Palestinian activity.⁵¹

Al-Sadr organized a political forum on behalf of the Shia to call upon the Lebanese government and demand security from Israeli raids, demand improvements in living conditions in Shia sectors, demand better representation for the Shia in the government and also to demand higher Shia recruitment into government sector jobs.⁵² Al-Sadr's leadership drew on Shia extremism and often used religious parallels to draw the community into action. He invoked Imam Hussein's martyrdom to fire up his followers, and was able to draw thousands to his meetings and protest marches. By 1975 Amal had become a force to reckon with, having drawn sizeable portions of the Shia back into its folds from other political groups and organizations.⁵³

However, the moderate movement did not last. With increasingly clear signs of a coming civil war, al-Sadr armed his militia, Amal, to protect the interests of the Shia community. The war eventually broke out when the Maronite militia of the Phalange party lost their patience with the government's indecision on the Palestinian question, and began street battles with the PLO and their local Muslim militia allies. This armed confrontation quickly escalated into a sectarian conflict and collapsed into an all-out civil war in Lebanon in 1975.⁵⁴

As the war dragged on and put a heavy burden on the Shia community, al-Sadr decided to break with both the Palestinians and Kamal Jumblatt's Lebanese National Movement (LNM), and opted to back a Syrian sponsored peace initiative. Al-Sadr's

⁵¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 18-22.

⁵² Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 118.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 20-25.

falling out with the LNM and the PLO had political repercussions that hurt him.⁵⁵ In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon in its “Litani Operation” intending to “push Palestinian guerrillas north of the Litani River,” and this invasion “provided a context for creating a border “security zone” under the nominal control of a proxy militia.”⁵⁶ Five months after the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, al-Sadr disappeared on an official visit to Libya. He was last seen on August 31, leaving his Tripoli hotel for a meeting with Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi subsequently claimed that al-Sadr had left the meeting and boarded a flight for Rome, but no one ever reported seeing al-Sadr again.⁵⁷

Al-Sadr’s disappearance succeeded in firing up the Shia, especially with parallels drawn between him and the twelfth Imam from the ninth century Shia theology, the Mahdi, who was widely believed to be the rightful leader of Islam and was expected to reappear on the Day of Judgment.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the failure of al-Sadr’s successors to step in and match his martyr status led to the decline of Amal. In subsequent years, the increasingly moderate and secular stance of the new Amal leader, Nabih Berri, would push radical Shia leaders such as Hussein Musawi further toward the outskirts of the party and create the disillusionment in the ranks that split the organization to form, first, Islamic Amal, and ultimately regroup with other religious Shia militias to form Hezbollah.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 119.

⁵⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 79.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 21; also see Harik, *Hezbollah*, 22.

⁵⁸ Jaber, *Hezbollah*, 13.

⁵⁹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 22-23; and also see Norton, *Hezbollah*, 21-23.

The Rise of Fundamentalism Within the Lebanese Shia

The unleashing of the Iranian revolution in 1979 strengthened the belief of the radical, fundamentalist Lebanese Shia in their own ability to construct a similar revolutionary and unified cadre on Lebanese soil, even though the foundations for the development of the religious-political aspirations of the Lebanese Shia had been laid in the previous years by Imam Mussa al-Sadr, Ayatullah Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine, and Ayatullah al-Sayyed Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah.⁶⁰ When Ayatullah Khomeini succeeded in ousting the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran, and formed an Islamic government, he was “designated the leading religious authority, and the inquisition began into the appropriate means of liaising with the Islamic Revolution’s leadership.”⁶¹

The success of the Iranian Islamic Revolution prompted many Shia followers to seek the implementation of a similar Islamic self-rule in their own territories outside of Iran,⁶² which Hezbollah member Naim Qassim describes as a “thirst for an Islamic revolution” that “came in tandem with a rising and insistent need for political revitalization in a country like Lebanon, a need that was not fulfilled by practical Islamic activity as the time of the [Iranian] Revolution.”⁶³ Hamzeh also describes this influence of the Iranian Revolution on the Lebanese Shi’ites as the “Demonstration Effect” that led to the rise of Hezbollah.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 56-61.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

⁶² Harik, *Hezbollah*, 16.

⁶³ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 63.

⁶⁴ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 17-19.

Ayatullah Khomeini himself had long advocated Vilayat-i-Faqih – a system of government of the religious scholars in Islam, under the authority of a supreme religious authority.⁶⁵ After the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Khomeini launched the *Mashru al-Thawa al-Iraniyah*, the Project of the Iranian Revolution, aimed at furthering the Islamic revolution to other countries, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (often referred to as the Pasdaran) becoming an “integral part of the programme.”⁶⁶ Moreover, Khomeini had, even in his years of exile, taken a keen interest in the Shia of Lebanon and regularly pointed toward the situation in Lebanon as one deserving the attention of his followers, stating at one point that:

Today the first *qibla* of the Muslims has fallen into the grasp of Israel, that cancerous growth in the Middle East. They are battering and slaughtering our dear Palestinian and Lebanese brothers with all their might. At the same time, Israel is casting dissension among the Muslims with all the diabolical means at its disposal. Every Muslims has a duty to prepare himself for battle against Israel.⁶⁷

Such furious rhetoric was particularly attractive to sections of the Shia community in Lebanon that were watching their country fall apart in the midst of a civil war, that escalated with two Israeli invasions – in 1978 up to the Litani River in South Lebanon, and then much further in 1982.⁶⁸ The existing secular Lebanese Shia movement, Amal, had failed to address the post-1982 problems of Shia in South Lebanon, especially on the question of seeking the withdrawal of Israeli troops and a resolution to the civil war. Thus, the dissatisfied fundamentalist elements within Amal gravitated toward the idea of launching a Shia movement of Islamic resistance in Lebanon, with the ultimate aim of

⁶⁵ Hamid Algar (Translator), *Islam and Revolution: Writing and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 27-39.

⁶⁶ Jaber, *Hezbollah*, 109.

⁶⁷ Algar (Translator), *Islam and Revolution*, 276.

⁶⁸ A map of the 1978 and 1982 occupied Lebanon is provided by Naim Qassem in *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (Beirut: Saqi, 2010), 180.

establishing an Islamic state in the region that would spread all the way to Jerusalem if they succeeded. They chose, as “The Three Pillars of Hizbullah,” first, a deep rooted “Belief in Islam,” and second, to struggle and strive in Holy War or “Jihad,” and third, and perhaps most importantly, they swore allegiance to the “Jurisdiction of the Jurist-Theologian (al-Wali al-Faqih).”⁶⁹

It is important to note here that, coming within the years of the Lebanese civil war, the agenda of the Shi’ite radical movement was not to establish an Islamic Republic in Lebanon – instead, their “sacred obligation” was “to conduct *Jihad* against ‘the usurpers of Muslim lands’ – the Israelis.”⁷⁰

The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon, 1982

As mentioned previously, Israel had invaded Lebanon in 1978 in its “Litani Operation” intending to “push Palestinian guerrillas north of the Litani River,” and this invasion “provided a context for creating a border “security zone” under the nominal control of a proxy militia.”⁷¹ The UN Security Council Resolution 425, calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty, was passed in 1978 with U.S. support, but Israel repeatedly refused to withdraw from Lebanon, and invaded the country a second time in June 1982, this time pushing north all the way to Beirut, and “when it became clear that Israel had no intention of disengaging from Lebanon anytime soon, a variety of groups across the political spectrum began to organize attacks against the Israeli occupation forces.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 67-123.

⁷⁰ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 19.

⁷¹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 79.

⁷² Norton, *Hezbollah*, 79-80.

In effect, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 itself created the conditions for the rise of a violent and radical Shia militia movement in Lebanon, which in subsequent years supplanted the PLO as the major source of a security threat to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. According to the narrative from within the ranks of Hezbollah, they saw the 1982 invasion as an Israeli attempt to “annihilate the military structure” of the PLO, with initial resistance in Lebanon measured as “limited and ineffective.”⁷³ By August 1982, an agreement led by the U.S. between Israel and the PLO decreed that all Palestinian fighters would leave Beirut, Bashir al-Gemayel was elected Lebanese president “in an election that occurred under the supervision of Israeli tanks and troops” and Yasser Arafat and the PLO left Beirut under the supervision of the multinational forces comprising of U.S., French, British and Italian troops. In September, Bashir Gemayel was killed by a bomb placed in his Phalangis movement’s building, and the Israeli army entered Beirut “taking the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian campus under siege and coordinating with the Lebanese Forces to enter the camps on September 16. Horrifying massacres ensued; the death toll reached 1,500 Lebanese and Palestinian individuals. Amine al-Gemayel was elected president on September 23, 1982, succeeding his late brother.”⁷⁴ From the perspective of this narrative of events in 1982, the situation in Lebanon was primed for the creation of a new resistance group, given the failures of the PLO and the Lebanese Army.

Around the time of the Israeli invasion in 1982, Lebanon’s leading Shia clerics, including some of the founding members of Hezbollah, were attending an Islamic conference in Tehran, where they met Ayatollah Khomeini who “urged the ‘ulama’

⁷³ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 166-167.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 168-169.

[clerics, religious leaders] to go back home and mobilize the people to fight the Israeli occupation and to turn the mosques into bases for their jihad activities.”⁷⁵

Soon the first contingent of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard (the Pasdaran-e-Inqilab-e-Islami) was dispatched to the Biq’a Valley to train hundreds of Lebanese Shi’ites led by “several fervent young clerics” who “rushed to pledge their loyalty to Khomeini.”⁷⁶ While there were early disagreements over the name to give to their new organization, given that several organizations already existed that wanted to fold into the new one, such as Islamic Amal, Ayatollah Khomeini sent instructions that a new name had to be chosen that would “unite all Islamists” and so the new organization took the name Hezbollah (The Party of God), from a verse in the Qur’an: “Those who accept the mandate of God, his prophet and those who believed, Lo! The Party of God, they are the victorious” (*Surat al-Maida*, 5:56).⁷⁷

Amal leader Nabih Berri’s decision to participate in the National Salvation Committee, which brokered the May 17, 1983, accord between Lebanon and Israel, further alienated his party from the Shia of the south because this agreement allowed Israel to retain a proxy militia in an area extending thirty miles inside Lebanon; and given that the accord was sponsored by the United States, Berri’s initial refusal to align with Syrian efforts to sabotage the agreement convinced critics that Berri’s Amal had, in effect, accepted U.S. mediation in Lebanon.⁷⁸ Subsequently Berri rethought his position, especially after the Israeli backed President Amin Gemayel sought to take control of

⁷⁵ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 24.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Jaber, *Hezbollah*, 50.

Amal influenced West Beirut, but by then the damage to Berri's reputation had been done.

The movement to collect the disillusioned factions of the Amal and seek cooperation of other Shia militia, such as Hussein Musawi's Islamic Amal, was spearheaded by the very clerics who had studied under Ayatullah Khomeini or alongside other Iranian and Iraqi Shia clergy in Najaf. They decided to model their goals for a government in Lebanon along the Iranian Islamic Republic, and pledged their allegiance to Imam Ruhollah Khomeini. From here on, the planning and organizational aspects of the creation of Hezbollah were settled during long consultations with then Iranian Ambassador to Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, at the embassy in Damascus, or directly with the Iranian Revolutionary Council in Tehran.⁷⁹

One prominent cleric, Sheikh Raghieb Harb, returned from the conference in Tehran to Jibsheit, his village in Lebanon, and started "an activist mobilization movement against Israel."⁸⁰ He was arrested in March 1983, but released after widespread protests, and his murder, in February 1984, only served to further radicalize the population. The anti-Israel movement in Lebanon was now marked by two concurrent trends: "one marked by clerical mobilization, and the other represented by military training in the Bekaa camps."⁸¹

According to the narrative from within Hezbollah, it is the resistance to Israeli occupation launched by "collaboration of the Islamic Resistance, the National Resistance and Amal" that pushed the Israeli Cabinet to approve a withdrawal plan in January 1985,

⁷⁹ Ibid., 47-49.

⁸⁰ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 175-76.

⁸¹ Ibid., 176-77.

but even after the Israeli withdrawal plan was completed in April 1985, Israel continued to occupy a vast region in South Lebanon estimated at “1,100 square kilometers.”⁸² It is this territory of occupied South Lebanon that continued to be the focus on increasingly sophisticated Hezbollah attacks over the next ten years, leading to the conflict in 1996.

And while the organization had been secretive in its first couple of years of founding and growth starting from mid-1982, Hezbollah declared “the birth of its organization publicly, through a communique called ‘al-Risalah al-Maftuha’ (the Open Letter)” in February 1985 marking “the first anniversary of the assassination of Shaykh Raghīb Harb” and “the second anniversary of the Sabra and Chattila massacres.”⁸³ A close reading of this 1985 letter, according to Harik, “illustrates that Hezbollah expressed moderate political goals at the very same time as maximum efforts were being made to mobilize Shi’ites around a radical Islamic agenda!”⁸⁴ According to Harik, the Open Letter exemplified the “early use of the tactic of ideological ambiguity” wherein “Islam remained the backbone and essence of discourse when addressing the faithful” while a “less confessional and more conciliatory approach was considered more effective in the pluralist public domain,” a technique that Harik identifies as “widely used by Lebanese politicians who need to retain the allegiance of their religious brethren without coming across as biased toward other communities with whom they must cooperate.”⁸⁵ The Open Letter, therefore, contained not only the material pertaining to the Identity, Struggle and Objectives of Hezbollah, but also “a word to the Christians.”⁸⁶ The Open Letter identified

⁸² Ibid., 178.

⁸³ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 26.

⁸⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 66.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Hezbollah “with the vanguard that was victorious in Iran,” and identified its struggle as that for expelling the U.S., and its allies, and the “Zionist Entity” from Lebanon, and “submitting the Christian militias to just punishment for crimes perpetrated against both Muslims and Christians during the civil war.”⁸⁷ While Hezbollah’s Open Letter exhorted “all to choose Islamic government” it also stated “We do not want to impose Islam upon anyone” and stressed the importance of “permitting our children to freely choose the form of government they desire.”⁸⁸ Addressing Christians in Lebanon, the Open Letter stated that:

We are confident that Christ, God’s Prophet, peace be on Him, is innocent of the massacres perpetrated by the Phalange militia [the major Christian organization whose military wing was Bashir al-Gemayel’s Lebanese Forces] in his name and yours, and innocent of the stupid policy adopted by your leaders to oppress you and oppress us. . . . Mohammed, God’s Prophet, peace and mercy be upon Him, is also innocent of those who are counted as Muslims and who do not observe God’s law and who do not seek to apply God’s rules to you and to us.⁸⁹

The Open Letter reassured Lebanese Christians by stating that “peaceful Christians are still living among us without being disturbed by anybody,” referring to areas dominated by Shi’ites where Hezbollah had not faced any charges of misdeeds against Christians, and ended with these words: “We wish you well and we call you to embrace Islam . . . if you refuse, then all we want of you is to uphold your covenants with the Muslims and not to participate in aggression against them.”⁹⁰

Accompanying Hezbollah’s activities as a resistance group aimed at driving Israel out of Lebanon, the group also gained significant public support for its expanding

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 68-69.

networks of social welfare activities, often filling in the void left by the lack of national or local governmental aid in a country devastated by civil war and the 1982 Israeli invasion. According to Harik, “Hezbollah owes much of its appeal to the fact that it has been able to outstrip all other parties in the delivery of social and other public services in Muslim areas,” but unlike other Islamic movements in the region, Hezbollah “uses its good works as a means of underlining and enhancing its legitimacy as a bona fide Lebanese political party rather than as a means of challenging Lebanon’s pluralist system.”⁹¹ While Hezbollah’s social services started by aiding the fighters, and their families, battling the Israelis in the South, the services were gradually “expanded and extended to all needy civilians in areas under the Party of God’s [Hezbollah’s] influence.”⁹² Unlike other militias that relied on revenue from exploiting government resources such as port facilities and refineries, Hezbollah’s services are “heavily underwritten by Iranian institutions” that are foundations run by clergy, thereby protecting Hezbollah from claims of “having preyed on the disintegrating Lebanese state, a charge levelled against its major Shi’ite rival, Amal, and other political parties in Lebanon.”⁹³ Hezbollah’s social services range from picking up garbage in neglected areas of Beirut’s suburbs to opening and running a modern hospital specifically aimed at treating war casualties, the al-Rasul al-Azam Hospital, in the *dahiyeh* suburbs of Beirut in 1988, whose services are available to all the residents of the area with 70 percent of the cost paid by Hezbollah’s Martyr’s Foundation for civilians injured in the war.⁹⁴ Another Hezbollah organization, Jihad al-Binnaa (Reconstruction Campaign) installed drinking

⁹¹ Ibid., 81.

⁹² Ibid., 82.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 83.

fountains and toilets at public schools in the *dahiyeh* suburbs of Beirut, and providing lighting fixtures and desks for classrooms.⁹⁵ The organization also dug wells, installed pumps, laid pipes, and built water reservoirs to make potable water available to residents, and also built five electrical power stations in the suburbs.⁹⁶ As Harik notes, “in Lebanon, unremitting efforts by parties or politicians to serve the public in these ways are almost unheard of.”⁹⁷ Hezbollah’s social programs extend well beyond the suburbs of Beirut to rural areas of Lebanon where they provide dispensaries and health centers, run hospitals and clinics, run agricultural cooperatives, provide veterinary clinics, dig wells for water, have built an agro-technical center and multiple schools, and provide free reconstruction for housing destroyed by Israeli bombardments, and also offer to build low-cost housing for the public, while poor farmers are offered heavy machinery on loan for no cost for collective usage, and sold seeds and fertilizers at reduced cost from five outlets in the Bekaa and three in the South.⁹⁸ Hezbollah has also established a model dairy farm, set up pathology and soil-testing labs, and constructed a tomato processing and canning plant to stimulate agricultural development.⁹⁹

Over the years after the 1982 Israeli invasion, significant shifts occurred in the organization and activities of Hezbollah, developing with the end of the Lebanese civil war under the Taif Accord of 1989 that increased political power for Muslims in Lebanon by increasing their share of the seats in the national legislature from a 6 to 5 ratio that used to favor Christians, to an evenly divided ratio among Muslims and Christians

⁹⁵ Ibid., 84.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 87-88.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 88.

proportioned across the different Lebanese confessional [religious] groups across 128 parliamentary seats, wherein twenty-seven seats each went to “the three largest Lebanese sects – Shi’a, Sunni and Maronites [Christians] with most districts confessionally mixed.”¹⁰⁰ In effect this meant that a district might have within it a seat available for a Shi’a and a Christian MP, and all residents of that district would vote for each open seat in their district, irrespective of whether the voters were Shi’a or Christian. The system, therefore, “promotes local inter-sectarian alliances to persuade voters to cast votes for an entire alliance list rather than picking and choosing individual candidates.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, Hezbollah candidates, for instance, often stand for election as part of an allies list that includes allied Christian candidates as well as other relevant confessional candidates for seats across various districts in Lebanon. At the end of the civil war in Lebanon, elections had not been held for eighteen years and “only about two-thirds of the parliamentarians from the 1975 Chamber of Deputies survived” thereby providing an opportunity for Syria, which took on a caretaker role in Lebanon as part of the 1989 Taif Accord, to extend its influence deeper by orchestrating parliamentary appointments in 1991 for forty seats “to seed the new parliament with pro-Damascus militia leaders who had gained power during the civil war” and these appointments “coincided with the consolidation of Syria’s grip on Lebanon, which was formalized in May 1991 with a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination” that “legitimated a heavy Syrian hand” in Lebanon “particularly in defense and security realms.”¹⁰² Syria also conducted “covert

¹⁰⁰ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 97.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 97-98.

manipulation” of the 1992 elections – the first after the end of the civil war – “with a view to isolating opposition voices and insuring the victory of Syria’s allies.”¹⁰³

As Lebanon headed toward the first national elections in 1992, Hezbollah moved from leading a “military Jihad” against Israel and the West to a “new phase since 1989” that Hamzeh described as “political jihad” wherein “the party has concentrated more on the ballot box than on bullets and military victories.”¹⁰⁴ Hezbollah members and sympathizers also started making active efforts to encourage Lebanese Christian support for its resistance role from the time leading to the 1992 elections, and this policy of *Intifa* (Opening) led to Hezbollah engaging in socio-political discussions with Christian community leaders in numerous ways – “through formal and informal dialogue with notables and ordinary citizens of other sects, through the establishment of organizational linkages with different social, economic and political organizations and through various activities in areas under its control that embraced all residing there regardless of their religious affiliations.”¹⁰⁵

Hezbollah’s efforts to establish good relations with all sectors of Lebanese society “made perfect political sense,” notes Harik, because “Lebanon’s version of confessional democracy requires candidates of different faiths to work together to create winning electoral tickets,” meaning that “in many mixed confessional districts Hezbollah candidates stand with Christians on the same electoral ticket and must attract Christian votes as well as Shi’ite ones to win seats.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid., 98.

¹⁰⁴ Hamzeh, “Lebanon’s Hizbullah: from Islamic revolution to parliamentary accommodation,” 321.

¹⁰⁵ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 73.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 75.

A poll of 1,427 people, Christians and Muslims, by a Lebanese newspaper before the 1992 elections, whose results were analyzed by Harik, found that 62 percent of respondents said that they would vote for a member of the resistance [Hezbollah], while 38 percent said that they would not. Harik “believed it logical to interpret the results of the question as a public acknowledgement of the Party of God’s [Hezbollah’s] contribution to the Lebanese ‘cause’ – reclamation of national territory.”¹⁰⁷

The Effect of the Syrian-Iranian Relations on Hezbollah

Since the beginning of Lebanon’s Civil War, Syria had been competing with Israel for influence over Lebanon,¹⁰⁸ and Israel’s partial withdrawal from Lebanon in 1984 “seemed to open the door to a Pax Syriana in Lebanon,” although by 1986 Syria was struggling due to the rise of Maronite resistance and efforts by the PLO to re-establish a presence in Lebanon.¹⁰⁹ Syria sought allies among the Shi’ites of Lebanon and Amal “proved to be Syria’s most consistently reliable surrogate.”¹¹⁰ This is important to note because the news coverage of Hezbollah repeatedly mischaracterized it in the conflict with Israel as being a group controlled by Syria.

As noted previously, while the more religious elements of Lebanon’s Shi’ite community, inspired by the example of the Iranian Revolution, gravitated toward the groups that would gather under the umbrella of Iranian patronage, a significant number of Lebanon’s Shi’ites remained in Amal under the leadership of Nabih Berri and closely aligned with Syria.¹¹¹ The schism that ran through the Lebanese Shi’ite community,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 50.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁹ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 129. Also see Ranstorp, *Hizb’allah in Lebanon*, 54.

¹¹⁰ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 129.

¹¹¹ Ranstorp, *Hizb’allah in Lebanon*, 30-33.

divided between secular and fundamentalist, allied with Syria or Iran, came violently into focus during the Lebanese civil war in a period of the mid-1980s known as the “War of the Camps”¹¹² when Amal attacked Palestinian militias in Lebanon’s refugee camps as a part of Syria’s attempts to bring the Palestinians in line with Syrian leadership of Lebanon, while Hezbollah, backed by Iran, supported the Palestinians; and again in the late-1980s due to disagreements about the taking of Western hostages leading to pitched street battles between Hezbollah and Amal.¹¹³ These violent confrontations among Lebanon’s Shi’ites were put to rest when Syria and Iran forged a regional alliance toward common interests in Lebanon,¹¹⁴ wherein Iran would not interfere with Syria’s leadership in Lebanon, while the Syrians would support the Hezbollah’s resistance against Israel.¹¹⁵

Amal, as a Shia militia and as a Shia political party, was heavily influenced by Syria, and the Amal-Syrian ties go back to Imam Musa al-Sadr’s decision to affirm recognition of the Alawites, Syrian President Hafez Assad’s community, as members of the Shia Muslim community in 1973.¹¹⁶ This declaration was made to benefit the Alawite Syrian President Hafez Assad who was, at that time, facing a Sunni fundamentalist challenge in Syria. Al-Sadr’s declaration gave Assad the Islamic credentials he required, as an Alawite, to be able to put down Sunni fundamentalism. In return, Syria helped al-Sadr create the Amal militia.¹¹⁷

Amal shared Syria’s distrust of the PLO, and supported Syrian proposals for political reform and reconstruction in Lebanon.¹¹⁸ After Israel refused to allow Syrians

¹¹² Ranstorp, *Hizb 'allah in Lebanon*, 50.

¹¹³ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 12-14; also see Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 43-44.

¹¹⁴ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 102.

¹¹⁵ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 130-135.

¹¹⁶ Ranstorp, *Hizb 'allah in Lebanon*, 111.

¹¹⁷ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 130.

¹¹⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 12-14; also see Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 32.

entry into the South, Syria used Amal to help control the area, and Amal was also backed by Syrian support in its war of the camps with the Palestinians in Lebanon, as Syria wanted to rid the camps of Arafat's influence. That conflict ended with pro-Syrian Palestinian militia, such as the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and the DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine), gaining control of the Lebanese refugee camps, but Hezbollah, on the other hand, rejected Amal's attempt to pacify the southern border, and aligned itself with the PLO in 1986.¹¹⁹

Syria, having full support of Amal in the mid-1980s, saw Hezbollah as a hindrance, especially as Hezbollah's radical Islamist vision was incompatible with Syria's goals of reconstructing a pluralistic and secular Lebanon. Control over Hezbollah was also necessary in order for Syria to calibrate the pressure of the Shia resistance against Israel in the South.¹²⁰ Differences over these matters often brought the Iranian-backed Hezbollah into violent conflict with Amal.¹²¹

The nature of the Syrian-Iranian alliance has repeatedly had an effect on the fortunes of the Hezbollah in Lebanon. The pan-Arab secular Ba'athist Syria and Islamic fundamentalist Iran have had an "odd couple" understanding in their larger strategic and tactical interests to check the U.S. hegemony over the area., and this special relationship between the ideologically disparate states of Iran and Syria also stems from their common need to address primary concerns in combating the shared threat from their regional neighbors.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ehteshami and Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 131.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 130-135.

¹²¹ Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon*, 100-102. Also see Harik, *Hezbollah*, 51.

¹²² Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 87.

The Document of National Reconciliation (Taif Accord), sponsored by the Saudi, Moroccan and Algerian leadership and signed by Lebanon's MP's in 1989 to end the civil war, recognized "Syria's 'special interest' in Lebanon" and allowed some 40,000 Syrian troops to remain in Lebanon to "assist the Lebanese government to extend its authority over all Lebanese territory by disarming the militias and providing security while the national army was being reconstituted."¹²³ However, while Syria tried to consolidate its relationship with the West and make peace with Israel in the late 1980s to early 1990s, Iran used the situation to consolidate its regional interests by demanding Syrian concessions to the Hezbollah in return for Iranian co-operation. Thus, the Hezbollah, among other things, became a tool for the counter-balancing of the regional power between Syria and Iran. For instance, during the mobilization of support for the U.S.-led initiative to oust Iraq from Kuwait in 1990, Iran chose not to oppose the Syrian support to Western forces, and in return Syria did not press for the disarming of Hezbollah in South Lebanon.¹²⁴

Iranian support in the mid-1980s meant that the Hezbollah could offer the Shia community a comprehensive welfare package that gave them a leg up over Amal's influence in the community. The Shia were, all things considered, in a desperate shape after the first Israeli invasion of 1978, named Operation Litani, that drove the Shia refugees into slums near Beirut's common sewer, and their areas of residence came to be known as the "belt of misery."¹²⁵ Basic necessities such as clean water and electricity were a luxury. As the situation in the south worsened, more and more Shia refugees fled

¹²³ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 44-45.

¹²⁴ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 106-107.

¹²⁵ Jaber, *Hezbollah*, 145.

to these slums. The Lebanese government, and also fellow Muslim Sunnis in Beirut, refused to help the Shia, while powerful minorities continued to enjoy the benefits of political power. For instance, Walid Jumblatt, a Druze leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, used his position as the Minister of Public Works to ensure the Druze villages had all the basic amenities secured. The visible disparity between the Shia and the other confessions [politically recognized Lebanese religious groups] around them bred anger and discontent and proved to be the bastion for the Hezbollah cadre.¹²⁶

The extensive package of social welfare activities offered to the Lebanese Shia community by Hezbollah is largely in keeping with the philosophy of an Islamic welfare state. In the 1980s most of the assistance to set up and run these programs in Lebanon came directly from Iran. Iran, under the guidance of Ayatollah Khomeini in the early 1980s, saw the Lebanese Shia as a “fertile ground” to plant the seeds of exporting the Islamic revolution.¹²⁷ Therefore, millions of dollars in assistance were channeled to the Hezbollah to provide aid and also help secure the Lebanese Shia on the path of the Islamic resistance movement.

In 1984, the Hezbollah started Jihad al-Binaa, or the construction jihad, to help rebuild the homes and properties of the Shia, especially those that had been destroyed by Israeli bombings. The same year they also launched the Islamic Health Committee that opened clinics and built hospitals to serve the poor, mostly within Shia communities, who could not afford expensive medical treatment in private Lebanese hospitals. In 1987 the social welfare branch of the Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini (RCIK) opened in the southern suburbs of Beirut to, in the view of Ayatollah Khomeini, “alleviate the pain of

¹²⁶ Ibid., 146.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 147.

the Lebanese oppressed who had not only suffered at the hands of the colonialists, but were further afflicted, impoverished and orphaned by the civil war and the wars of opportunists seeking to overtake their country.”¹²⁸ The combined work of these Hezbollah agencies provided relief in material and medical terms to the Shia community, many of whom had grown highly disillusioned with the old structures of leadership in their community and would, in the future, become supporters of Hezbollah’s political candidates.¹²⁹

As mentioned earlier, the loss of Shia support and the issue of the Palestinians in Lebanon drove the Amal militia into a violent clashes with the Hezbollah in 1986 and 1987, and the fighting between the two intensified in Beirut in 1988,¹³⁰ while Syria also sought to crack down on the radical Shi’ite militias that were taking Western hostages in an attempt to improve its international position as the responsible caretaker of Lebanon.¹³¹ It took the agreement of Iran and intervention by Syrian troops to stop the bloodshed. Subsequently Amal announced the disbanding of all its militia except in the South where it organized military strikes against IDF and SLA (South Lebanon Army, an Israeli proxy militia).¹³² This is also important to note because the news coverage of the conflict focused on Hezbollah, but resistance against Israeli occupation of South Lebanon included Amal.

The Syrian and Iranian collaboration in Lebanon helped navigate the factions toward mutual benefit¹³³ through the Saudi-sponsored Taif Accord of 1989 that

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 113.

¹³⁰ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 51. Also see Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah: Politics & Religion* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002), 52-53.

¹³¹ Ranstorp, *Hizb’allah in Lebanon*, 120-24.

¹³² Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 130-35.

¹³³ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 26.

“effectively ended the Lebanese civil war” and was seen as a “consecration of Syria’s role as the supreme authority over Lebanese affairs”¹³⁴ and helped keep the peace between Amal and Hezbollah ensuring participation in the 1992 elections,¹³⁵ and even created power-sharing agreements between Amal and Hezbollah in the 1996 elections between the major parties and personalities in the Shia community. Much of this was made possible because of the passing of the leadership in Iran itself from the radicals to pragmatists in the late 1980s, which subsequently reflected in a shift in Hezbollah’s leadership as well.

Hezbollah After Khomeini – The Rolling Back of Iranian Extremism

In a journal article published in 1993, Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh identified a shift in Hezbollah’s movement – the group that had dedicated itself to the ideal of a revolutionary Islamic Republic along the lines of the one in Iran was now effectively moving to participate in peaceful democracy, a shift that Hamzeh headlined in his article as “Lebanon’s Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation.”¹³⁶

While one can not expect the journalists covering the conflict in Israel and Lebanon in 1996 to know everything that is known about Hezbollah today, it is fair to conclude that journalists working in the Middle East in 1996 would have had access to any number of academics, politicians, UN observers and Hezbollah’s own media operations (the party had a newspaper by 1984, a radio station by 1988, and a TV station by 1991¹³⁷) to know how the movement had changed within Lebanon. Among the major

¹³⁴ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah*, 52-53.

¹³⁵ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 45-47. Also see Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 111.

¹³⁶ Hamzeh, “Lebanon’s Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation,” 321-37.

¹³⁷ Olfa Lamoum, “Hezbollah’s Media: Political History in Outline,” *Global Media and Communication*, 5, no. 3: 353-67.

catalysts of the shift was the end of the civil war in Lebanon under the Taif Accord of 1989, which had been preceded by the end of the Iran-Iraq War as per the Security Council Resolution 598, and the transition of power in Iran to a new leadership after the demise of Ayatullah Khomeini. Scholars have noted that “the most important development of 1988 in the Persian Gulf was Iran’s unconditional acceptance of SCR [Security Council Resolution] 598, almost a year after its unanimous passing by the UN Security Council.”¹³⁸ Moreover, the decline of Iranian radicals after Ayatollah Khomeini’s death in June 1989 “opened the door to increasing Iranian-Syrian cooperation in Lebanon.”¹³⁹

Lebanese Shi’ite militias drew international attention in the mid to late 1980s for activities such as the hijackings and hostage takings in Lebanon, but after Ayatollah Khomeini’s death, the power struggle between the radicals and the pragmatists in Iran threatened to turn the Pasdaran factions of Ayatollah Montazeri and the supporters of Iranian President Rafsanjani in a bitter clash against each other.¹⁴⁰ According to Hamzeh, the ascendance of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to the position of Wali al-Faqih and Hashemi Rafsanjani to the presidency led to the emergence of “a pragmatic course of action in Iran” that influenced Hezbollah’s “gradualist pragmatism.”¹⁴¹

The internal struggle that developed in Iran, between the moderates who sought to distance themselves from Khomeini’s agenda, and the fundamentalists who wanted to continue implementing the hard line, also spilled over into the Hezbollah in Lebanon. In

¹³⁸ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 44-45.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁴⁰ Edgar O’Ballance, *Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism, 1979-95: The Iranian Connection* (New York: Washington Square, 1997), 98.

¹⁴¹ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 109.

Khomeini's time the Hezbollah had been generously funded by Iran. However, with the election of moderates led by President Rafsanjani, the political force in post-Khomeini Iran sought to distance itself from the legacy of the radical Islamic revolution and started to influence changes within the Hezbollah in Lebanon to reflect Iran's larger regional interests. This was indicated early in 1990 by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Vilayati, who, in trying to restore diplomacy with Egypt, pointed toward the new Iranian administration's efforts to discontinue the earlier Lebanon policy of supporting Hezbollah — the step back was shown to be a sign of Iranian willingness to trade radicalism in exchange for better relations with the outside world.¹⁴²

The change in Iranian attitude directly affected the Hezbollah infrastructure and leadership. One such development, coming after the ascension of political moderates in post-Khomeini Iran, was the removal of Sheikh Subhi Tufayli (who had been Hezbollah's secretary general during the 1980s hostage-taking phase) and the passing over of the post to Sheikh Abbas Musawi.¹⁴³ According to some accounts, a meeting between Hezbollah leaders and Iranian President Rafsanjani in Damascus in 1991 was indicative of these changing priorities, and indicated Rafsanjani's intent to improve relations with the West by moving Hezbollah's focus, from an unrepentant revolutionary resistance on all fronts, to a more limited role of combating Israeli troops in South Lebanon.¹⁴⁴

After the murder of Abbas Musawi and his family by Israeli forces in 1992, Hojjatoleslam Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was chosen to be the next Secretary General of

¹⁴² Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 140-41.

¹⁴³ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 110.

¹⁴⁴ O'Ballance, *Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism*, 119-20.

Hezbollah.¹⁴⁵ Nasrallah was the first Lebanese southerner to hold the post, and had been a hard-liner in the past having acted as Hezbollah military chief in Beirut. In this role he had been closely attached to Iranian hard liners. In fact, in the 1980s Nasrallah was known as the most faithful disciple of Ayatollah Khomeini and had also gained prominence as a military leader in the intra-Shia disputes — Hezbollah’s violent clashes with Amal.¹⁴⁶

After Khomeini’s death, Nasrallah had aligned himself with Iranian hard-liners such as Ali Akbar Mohtashemi and Ayatollah Khamenei. He was, consequently, sidelined by moderate forces of President Rafsanjani and kept in Tehran as Hezbollah’s representative. After Israeli forces killed Abbas Musawi, Ayatollah Khamenei pressed for Nasrallah’s appointment and succeeded. It should be noted that Nasrallah subsequently made accommodations toward his previously radical views, and as Hezbollah secretary general he remained in tune with the foreign policy aspiration of a moderate Iranian government.¹⁴⁷ Hezbollah continued on its “gradualist-pragmatic mode” and gained remarkable political success in Lebanon in the 1992 democratic elections wherein it won eight seats of 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament.¹⁴⁸

Hezbollah’s decision to participate in the 1992 elections “had sent a clear signal that it had changed its radical course and was abiding by the time-honored rules of Lebanon’s electoral game” in a manner that “quickly enhanced the Party of God’s [Hezbollah’s] legitimacy as a mainstream party with a resistance wing, since as a result

¹⁴⁵ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 110.

¹⁴⁶ Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Iran*, 139-40.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 112-13.

of its victories at the polls it fielded the largest single party bloc in the new parliament – 12 of 128 members.”¹⁴⁹

While engaged in Lebanese national parliamentary and local municipal level politics, Hezbollah continued its resistance operations against the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon and, in 1993, Israel carried out a series of attacks on Lebanon during “Operation Accountability” that was “strikingly similar” to its military action three years later, but was unsuccessful in curbing Hezbollah.¹⁵⁰

According to Israeli Major General Moshe Kaplinsky, the head of IDF’s Golani Brigade (1993-1997), there had been a miscalculation on Israel’s part in assuming that the “resistance had ended with the end of the civil war” in Lebanon, but instead the period from 1990 to 1993 led them to realize “that we were facing a guerrilla war.”¹⁵¹

However, as journalist Nicholas Blanford wrote:

The IDF found itself caught in a trap largely of its own making: Hezbollah would kill Israeli soldiers in the [occupied Lebanon] zone, but when Israel’s inevitable retaliatory artillery shelling or air strikes caused civilian casualties or damage, rockets would be fired into northern Israel. The problem for the IDF was that it had yet to figure out a way of striking back effectively at Hezbollah without risking Lebanese casualties and thus provoking the Katyusha [rockets] salvos into the north [of Israeli mainland]. The IDF’s main weapons in South Lebanon – artillery and air power – were too clumsy for the challenge it faced. It was like trying to swat a mosquito with a baseball bat in a china shop.¹⁵²

By July 1993, seven IDF soldiers had been killed in three weeks, and “a frustrated IDF lashed back, deliberately directing its firepower against civilian targets in South Lebanon in a week-long air and artillery offensive to inflict mass punishment on the

¹⁴⁹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 52.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 146.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Lebanese. There was no attempt to disguise the purpose of the operation; Israeli officials readily admitted that the aim was to batter South Lebanon and force the Lebanese government to curb Hezbollah.”¹⁵³

According to Blanford, by the time of the cease-fire on July 31, 1993, after seven days of fighting, almost 130 Lebanese civilians had died, 500 had been wounded, around 300,000 civilians were temporarily displaced, and Lebanon suffered an estimated \$28.8 million in damages. Hezbollah had fired around three hundred Katyusha rockets into the Israeli occupied zone and northern Israel, killing two Israeli civilians and wounding about twenty-four.¹⁵⁴

Operation Accountability had ended, according to Blanford, with a secret unwritten agreement brokered by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in which both sides agreed not to target civilians. “It meant that Israel could no longer shell and bomb Lebanese villages and Hezbollah could not fire rockets into northern Israel,” writes Blanford, “but both sides could continue to kill each other’s combatants in the occupation zone.”¹⁵⁵

According to the narrative from within Hezbollah, it had defeated Israel’s stated objectives in July 1993 of using military force to compel the Lebanese government and its allies to disarm Hezbollah or take actions “terminating the activity of Hizbullah,” but the continued retaliation against Israel using Katyusha rockets by Hezbollah eventually led to the “July Accord” cease fire that offered Israel no new advantages, thereby leading Hezbollah to declare that the resistance “came out victorious.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 147.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Also see Norton, *Hezbollah*, 85.

¹⁵⁶ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 198-201.

In the period after the 1993 conflict, even as Israel created a special Anti-Guerrilla Micro-Warfare (Egoz) unit “trained specifically in guerrilla warfare tactics to fight Hezbollah” the IDF fatalities continued to rise and, according to Blanford, “morale was sinking among troops serving in the [Lebanon occupation] zone, reminiscent of fears experienced by an earlier generation of Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon before the 1985 pullback to the border [occupation] zone.”¹⁵⁷

For journalists reporting on the escalating conflict in Lebanon in 1996, the fallout of the 1993 Israeli “Operation Accountability” and its failure to check Hezbollah’s growth in Lebanon would have been the most recent opportunity to understand the limitations of the use of Israeli military force against Lebanese civilians to achieve political goals. By 1995, “a clear pattern of reciprocity began to emerge,” according to Blanford: “Whenever Israel or its SLA allies caused civilian casualties, Hezbollah would fire rockets across the border” in what became known as the “Katyusha policy” that was publicly confirmed by Hezbollah leader Nasrallah in March 1995 who stated that, because Israel had in 1995, by March that year, killed sixteen civilians, wounded sixty, bombed seventy-five villages and destroyed or damaged 212 houses, “Zionist settlers in northern Israel should know that their racist and aggressive government, their settlements and the residents inside, will not be in a better condition than our towns and their residents.”¹⁵⁸

Israel’s Politics in the 1990s

For Israeli soldiers serving in South Lebanon, by the early 1990s “Hezbollah had come into its own, the outline of the security zone war had been set” and 1994 “found the

¹⁵⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 148-49.

¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God* (New York: Random House, 2011), 133.

Israelis dug in at positions across the south of Lebanon: a perilous little world of hilltops peering at each other through binoculars and sending radio messages flitting back and forth over the canyons, like the bonfires relaying word of the new moon from Jerusalem over the summits in the rabbinic writings, ‘from the Mount of Olives to Sartaba, from Sartaba to Grofina, from Grofina to Hoveran, from Hoveran to Beit Baltin,’ and on to Babylon.”¹⁵⁹ The security zone “from Mount Hermon in the east to the Mediterranean in the west” was “meant to keep guerrillas away from the border and protect the people of Israel’s north: the frontier turkey farmers, the canners of corn and peas in the urban factories, the Hebrew-speaking Arab plumbers, the beauties of Jewish Leningrad circa 1958, newly arrived in Israel with the great Soviet immigration and now lying on the beaches near the Lebanon border, exposing their pale bodies to the unfamiliar ferocity of our sun.”¹⁶⁰

Matti Friedman, a journalist and award-winning writer who served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in South Lebanon, noted the “floral preoccupation in our military” wherein “the army gave the outposts pretty names like Basil, Crocus, Cypress and Red Pepper” and “in the jargon of army radiomen, wounded soldiers are ‘flowers.’ Dead soldiers are ‘oleanders.’ It isn’t a code, because it isn’t secret. Instead the names seem intended to bestow beauty on ugliness and allow soldiers distance from the things they might have to describe. If you listened to the language of the Lebanon troops, you might have thought they occupied a kind of garden.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Matti Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers: A Soldier’s Story* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2016), 23-24.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

Writing about conversations he had with troops who had also served in South Lebanon in the 1990s, Friedman notes one soldier's point of view that "We were like sheep led to the slaughter," and while his friends laughed, the soldier added:

You do all kinds of nonsense, you don't know what you're doing – "Go there, go here, go there again tomorrow." I didn't know what I was doing. I washed dishes. [Laughter] They made me listen to all kinds of nonsense that they used to say there, all kinds of empty bullshit about this, about that, about whatever, and I didn't understand what they wanted from me. Sometimes we'd go to lay an ambush and lie there in the snow, the cold, I remember that. And that was it. It's all faded now. Now we're talking about who shot what, he shot, the other guy shot, I don't remember who shot who. It was all chaos.¹⁶²

In October 1994, Hezbollah scored a propaganda victory by videotaping and then broadcasting an assault by its fighters on an IDF outpost, which Friedman calls The Pumpkin, wherein the Hezbollah fighters "are in uniform, with webbing and helmets. They appear capable," and in the finale of their assault on The Pumpkin outpost a fighter "raises a Hezbollah flag with both hands and plants it in triumph: it's Iwo Jima, or the moon landing. That's where the video ends, so you don't see them turn around and run away," and while "the significance wasn't clear right away" Friedman notes that "the TV images were the real weapons" and that "the Hezbollah fighters and Israeli soldiers had been turned into actors in an attack staged for the camera" and, in the days that followed, as "the footage was broadcast across the Middle East and picked up by Israel's television stations" the "Hezbollah man entered everyone's living room, raised his arms, and drove his flag in again and again. Israelis were horrified. Fear that we are no longer sufficiently tough is one of the key chemicals in our country's communal brain, and this explains the hysteria that followed the fixing of that little flag. The incident was taken to be not a

¹⁶² Ibid., 29.

small failure, the kind of thing that happens of garrisons whose senses are deadened by routine, but a sign of decay in the army and a frailty among Israel's youth."¹⁶³

The political mood in Israel had been shifting in 1995, as the country wrestled with the criticism of the Oslo accords signed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was facing political challenge from the right-wing and anti-Oslo platform of the Likud party's Benjamin Netanyahu:

Despite Rabin's image as a national hero and champion of the nation's security, Israeli society was deeply divided over Labor's negotiations with the Palestinians and with Syria. When the Oslo II agreement was presented to the Knesset, in October 1995, it was approved by a margin of only one vote. Opinion polls indicated that the Israeli population was equally divided between those agreeing with Labor's "land for peace" approach to a settlement and those who feared that withdrawal from the West Bank or the Golan Heights would undermine Israel's security. Consequently, Netanyahu and Likud made "retreating" from these two territories the chief electoral issue in their attempt to replace Rabin and his Labor-led coalition. They asserted that Rabin, and especially his foreign minister, Peres, had become too lax on security matters. By the end of 1995, Netanyahu was ahead of Rabin in some polls.¹⁶⁴

After Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in November 1995 by a right-wing Jewish zealot terrorist, Netanyahu "was careful in his criticism of Labor's peace policy" but by early 1996 a series of suicide bombings by Hamas in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashkelon "changed the political atmosphere" wherein the dominant issue became "Labor's ability to maintain security"¹⁶⁵:

During the early months of 1996, nearly 20 percent of the electorate had not made up their minds between the two candidates. Usually the undecided, often risk-averse, tend to support the incumbent over a challenger. In this case, however, where two thirds of the Jewish

¹⁶³ Ibid., 32-34.

¹⁶⁴ Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, "Israel's 1996 Election: A Second Political Earthquake?" *Middle East Journal*, 50, no. 4 (1996): 532.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 533.

undecided voters had a centrist or right wing political orientation, they were more doubtful of Peres; they became Netanyahu's prime target.¹⁶⁶

In the days leading up to the Israeli Operation grapes of Wrath, U.S. news coverage was largely focused on the threat posed by Hamas to the Oslo Peace Process in Palestine and the rise of the Likud and right-wing politics in Israel, as in both Israel and Lebanon, national elections were being planned for 1996, placing political pressures on the incumbent governments. As the *Washington Post* reported in a front page article in March 1996:

The bombs of the past nine days have traumatized Israel in a way that previous attacks never seemed to. Part of the reason is in the numbers; at least 60 people have been killed in that span, a new and hideous record for a country of fewer than 6 million in which everyone seems to know everyone else. Part of it is timing; the bombs come four months after the assassination by a Jewish gunman of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, the former war hero and Zionist patriarch who had guided Israel through the turbulent peace process with calloused but reassuring hands. And they come just as Peres - Rabin's successor and partner in negotiating peace with Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization - was launching a reelection campaign in which he hoped for a mandate to finish the process.

“We're not only burying 70 people, we could also be burying Shimon Peres's vision of a new Middle East and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian state and the chances for a new Labor government,” said Harry Wall, director of the Jerusalem office of the Anti-Defamation League. “Peres and Arafat knew they were chained together, and like two suicide lovers they may be going over the cliff together.”

Peres has pledged “war in every sense of the word” against terrorists. That could mean a return to the cruel punishments of the old blood feud: the predawn raids, assassinations, house demolitions, detentions without trial and physical “pressure” against prisoners that were regular features of Israeli military operations against Palestinian militants during nearly three decades of occupation. It also means treating Palestinian-controlled territory in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as another Lebanon - zones that Israeli forces enter and operate in with impunity, even if it further destabilizes Arafat's shaky rule. Those kinds of factors no longer matter, said Wall. “People want blood and vengeance, and now they'll get it.”

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

In war, Israelis unite. Many believe Peres will feel compelled to postpone the election until October and invite opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu and his Likud Party to join a government of national unity. There is precedent; in 1967, prime minister Levi Eshkol invited Menachem Begin and his small Herut party into the government in the harrowing days before the Six-Day War.

It was highly symbolic that the Israeli government announced it was ordering home its delegation to exploratory peace talks with Syria and indefinitely suspending the discussions. For more than four years, Israelis had pushed to keep negotiations going at all costs; Rabin always insisted he would never let terrorist actions deter him from pursuing Israel's best interests at the bargaining table. Even when they were angry or frightened, most Israelis respected his tenacity.

But Rabin is gone, and there is no political leader left with the credibility to absorb the stinging and emotional criticisms of Israel's angry right wing and still insist that the peace process go on.¹⁶⁷

In Israel, the right-wing parties had been gaining momentum ever since the Oslo accords and, irrespective of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, the Likud led by Benjamin Netanyahu in particular was highly critical of the Labor leader and Prime Minister Shimon Peres' administration's alleged failures with respect to attacks against Israel at home and in Lebanon.¹⁶⁸ Heading into the elections for May 1996, Netanyahu's Likud campaign focused on the narrative that "Peres has failed."¹⁶⁹

In an Op-ed article published a few days before the escalation of the conflict in Lebanon, Thomas Friedman was discussing the arguments offered by the Likud

¹⁶⁷ Glenn Frankel, "Israel Unnerved by Peace That Kills; Terrorist Attacks Undermine Hopes for Mideast Stability as Election Approaches," *Washington Post*, March 5, 1996.

¹⁶⁸ Peretz and Doron, "Israel's 1996 Election: A Second Political Earthquake?," 529-46.

¹⁶⁹ Barton Gellman, "Israel Finds Challenge Impossible to Ignore; Hezbollah, Elections Pressure Push Jerusalem to Send Message to Syria," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1996. Also see - Joel Greenberg, "An Attack On Israel Brings Woes To Peres," *New York Times*, April 10, 1996.

leadership with respect to Palestinian terrorism, but he began his article with these sentences:

I knew an Israeli colonel who had commanded Israeli troops in both South Lebanon and the West Bank, and I once asked him what was the difference between the two. Well, he said, on the West Bank, because of media and government scrutiny, “you have to explain every little move you make to 10 different people.” But in South Lebanon, he said, you could do whatever you wanted. Or as he put it: “In South Lebanon, there is nothing between you and God Almighty. The only question you ask yourself when you are going to blow up someone's house is whether to use 50 kilos of dynamite or 25 kilos.”¹⁷⁰

On April 11, 1996, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered his forces to attack suspected Hezbollah targets in South Lebanon. The bombings, initially stated to be retaliations against Hezbollah’s Katyusha attacks, escalated over a couple of days to become a planned campaign of terrorizing Lebanese villagers in return for a new cease-fire agreement that could deliver Peres the political goods to win the upcoming round of elections. It was largely seen as an Israeli military operation “intended to undermine popular support for Hezbollah among the Lebanese, as well as to prompt Syria to rein in the organization.”¹⁷¹ When the dust settled, more than a hundred Lebanese civilians lay dead, a large proportion of them women and children, cut down in their homes, dogged by helicopter gun-ships and, in one case, shelled inside a UN camp as they slept after lunch. In all cases Israel maintained that it had been aiming at Hezbollah targets.

A number of reasons were offered by the political pundits in the media to explain the gruesome violence unleashed by Israel. Some believed Peres had been pushed into a corner on the eve of elections with no other option but to retaliate. Others held that

¹⁷⁰ Thomas L. Friedman, “Foreign Affairs; No Pain, No Gain, No Peace,” *New York Times*, March 31, 1996.

¹⁷¹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 84.

Hezbollah had deliberately escalated the tensions on the directions of Iran, which was feeling left out of the developing Middle East peace talks. Blaming the Hezbollah became an easy way to absolve the Israelis, and Peres, of the blame for civilian casualties in Lebanon. Moreover, Hezbollah, which was designated as a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department later in 1997, was the major player in the conflict – the Israeli forces were not battling Lebanon, or Syria, or Egypt; they were specifically after Hezbollah, and the operation had been described as designed to clear Hezbollah out of South Lebanon. As the attacks escalated on April 11, the U.S. government position was illustrated in the *Times* news reporting as a mediator that was supporting Israel and blaming the conflict on Hezbollah and Syria:

Today's raids marked the most serious escalation of the war in South Lebanon since July 1993, when the United States mediated an agreement between Israel and the Party of God, or Hezbollah, a militant Shi'ite Moslem organization backed by Iran. The two sides agreed to restrict their fighting to the nine-mile-wide "security zone" that Israel maintains in southern Lebanon with the help of Lebanese Christian allies known as the South Lebanon Army.

Israel set up the buffer zone to prevent infiltration into northern Israel when it withdrew from Lebanon in 1985, and the Party of God has been waging a guerrilla war ever since to oust the Israelis. . . .

The United States, which in the past has worked behind the scenes with Israel and Syria to prevent the south Lebanese conflict from growing, urged both sides to show restraint. But Secretary of State Warren Christopher laid the blame for the current crisis solely on the Party of God [Hezbollah] saying, "Fundamentally, the problem is created by Katyusha attacks into northern Israel."¹⁷²

In a similar vein, the *Washington Post* summarized the U.S. government position as follows:

¹⁷² Serge Schmemmann, "Israeli Aircraft Strike Guerrillas In Beirut Suburbs," *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in Washington that Hezbollah rocket attacks were responsible for the flare-up. At the White House, spokesman Michael McCurry said Israel was “compelled to respond” to the rocket barrages.¹⁷³

This was the historical backdrop to the 1996 conflict, and the political climate within which it took shape. Journalists working in Lebanon in this time period would have been aware of most of this history and the political developments, and Hezbollah itself had made itself easy to access through its media relations teams in Beirut in the years leading up to 1996. This chapter is a content analysis of the sources utilized to tell the story of the 1996 Operation Grapes of Wrath by two leading American newspapers - *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* - who had correspondents in Lebanon and Israel covering the conflict.

Findings

A total of 101 news reports were coded for the time period of March-April 1996. They yielded 1,170 source paragraphs, across more than 80,000 words of news coverage. A content analysis of the forty-nine *Washington Post* and fifty-two *New York Times* articles showed that the Hezbollah was one of the least-quoted sources in news reports, averaging less than one attribution for every two news reports in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Meanwhile, Israeli sources topped the total count, averaging about four attributions in every news report. Similarly, U.S. sources dominated the news coverage as well, averaging about three attributions for every news report filed. It should be noted that non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant news coverage, averaging about 2.7 attributions per news report, but most of the times they were asked to

¹⁷³ John Lancaster, “Israel Attacks Hezbollah Sites In Lebanon; S. Beirut, Other Areas Hit In Retaliation for Shelling,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 1996.

comment on aspects of the effects of the conflict, and not the politics of the conflict and the U.S. policy of supporting Israel. The Iranian government, arguably the dominant source of influence on Hezbollah, got zero source paragraphs in the two newspapers' coverage of the conflict.

The overall distribution of the top five sources is shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Sources by Nationality (1996)		
Nationality	Number of Attributions	%age of Total (1170)
Israel	413	35.29%
United States	306	26.15%
Lebanon (non-Hezbollah)	276	23.58%
United Nations	82	7.00%
Hezbollah	44	3.76%

Hezbollah accounted for less than 4 percent of all source paragraphs in the content, and Israeli source paragraphs outnumbered Hezbollah source paragraphs by a margin of more than 9 to 1 in the entire news coverage.

Hezbollah was under represented in both newspapers source paragraphs, as is shown in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2 Sources by Nationality in Each Newspaper (1996)	
Washington Post (Source tally, Rank)	The New York Times (Source tally, Rank)
(%age of total of 566 source paras)	(%age of total of 604 source paras)
Israel (169, #1)(29.85%)	Israel (243, #1)(40.23%)
United States (169, #2)(29.85%)	Lebanon (161, #2)(26.65%)
Lebanon (115, #3)(20.31%)	United States (137, #3)(22.68%)
United Nations (53, #4)(9.36%)	United Nations (29, #4)(4.80%)
Hezbollah (23, #5)(4.06%)	Hezbollah (21, #5)(3.47%)

As can be seen in Table 4.2, both newspapers awarded Hezbollah less than 5 percent of the total number of source paragraphs in their news reporting, even though the conflict, and the accompanying government narrative, was aimed at the Hezbollah. A t-test comparison of means of the source paragraphs in the news reporting of the two newspapers showed no statistically significant difference in their use of the major news sources. This indicates that journalists for both newspapers were following near similar routines of news reporting and editing, with no significant difference in the number of source paragraphs in the two newspapers.

For the most part, the newspapers' news coverage showed remarkable similarities in news source paragraphs as shown in Table 4.3, when the means of each news source paragraphs were calculated across their entire news coverage of the conflict:

Table 4.3 Means of Source Paragraphs in Each Newspaper (1996)	
Washington Post	The New York Times
U.S. Government (1) = 2.90	U.S. Government (1) = 2.48
Israel Government (1) = 2.06	Israel Government (1) = 2.71
Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.98	Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.88
Lebanese Government (1) = 0.76	Lebanese Government (1) = 0.92
Israel Military (1) = 0.88	Israel Military (1) = 0.83
United Nations (1) = 0.88	United Nations (1) = 0.54
Hezbollah (2) = 0.29	Hezbollah (2) = 0.33

The only statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the two newspapers was that *The New York Times* published the news reporting on this conflict more prominently, with the mean page number for its fifty-two news reports being 6.08, while the Washington Post had a larger mean page number, 16.86, for its forty-nine news reports on the conflict, thereby publishing the news reports less prominently ($t=6.584$, $df = 99$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). The overall tally showed that the U.S. government dominated the news sources, as shown in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4 Sources by Nationality, Profession and Disposition (1996)		
Type of Source	Number of sources (%age)	Overall Rank
U.S. Government (1)	271 (23.16%)	1
Israeli Government (1)	242 (20.68%)	2
Lebanese Civilians (1)	94 (8.03%)	3
Israeli Military (1)	86 (7.35%)	4
Lebanese Government (1)	85 (7.26%)	5
United Nations (1)	71 (6.06%)	6
Israeli Experts (1)	40 (3.41%)	7
Israeli Civilian (1)	37 (3.16%)	8
Hezbollah (2)	31 (2.64%)	9
Lebanese Experts (1)	29 (2.47%)	10
Lebanese Civilian (2)	26 (2.22%)	11
French Government (1)	23 (1.96%)	12
Lebanese Government (2)	21 (1.79%)	13
Hezbollah (1)	13 (1.11%)	14
U.S. Experts (1)	11 (0.94%)	15
United Nations (2)	11 (0.94%)	16
U.S. NGO (2)	10 (0.85%)	17
U.S. Military (1)	7 (0.59%)	18
South Lebanon Army (1)	7 (0.59%)	19
Syrian Government (1)	7 (0.59%)	20
Lebanese Expert (2)	7 (0.59%)	21

As Table 4.4 shows, in some important categories the distribution of sources was extremely lopsided. American and Israeli government sources dominated the news, with overall criticism of U.S. policy, coded as (2), accounting for about 10 percent of all news

content – that provides considerable support to Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda model,¹⁷⁴ wherein sources that did not oppose U.S. policy made up for almost 90 percent of all quoted materials in the news reporting.

There were no U.S. government sources quoted in the news reporting that opposed the U.S. policy – these circumstances also point to strong support for Bennett’s Indexing Hypothesis,¹⁷⁵ wherein reporters for both newspapers gravitated toward the majoritarian consensus view of the U.S. government officials they interviewed.

When fighting escalated on April 10, 1996, after Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel in retaliation for a bombing that had killed and injured children in Lebanon, the *Times* news report¹⁷⁶ described the political climate in Israel in this manner:

Political pressure mounted on Prime Minister Shimon Peres today after Shi’ite Muslim guerrillas in Lebanon fired rockets into northern Israel for the second time in 10 days - this time wounding at least six people.

The attack came after an explosion on Monday killed a teen-ager near the southern Lebanese village of Brashit and wounded three people, two of them children.

Leaders of Israel’s right-wing opposition, challenging Mr. Peres in national elections next month, called for a tough military response and criticized the Prime Minister for holding the army in check. There were also demands for action from Mr. Peres’s own Labor Party.

The Party of God, which is backed by the Shi’ite-run Government of Iran, claimed responsibility for the rocket attack today, saying it had been retaliation for Monday’s blast. The Israeli Army said it was not responsible for the explosion on Monday. But Israel did respond to today’s attack.

Although this latest flare-up along Israel’s northern frontier brought increasing calls for action against the Party of God, Mr. Peres, who has avoided a large-scale army operation during the weeklong Passover holiday, asserted that he would not be pushed into a hasty response.

¹⁷⁴ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

¹⁷⁵ W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

¹⁷⁶ Joel Greenberg, “An Attack on Israel Brings Woe To Peres,” *New York Times*, April 10, 1996.

Speaking at an army base near Qiryat Shemona, a northern town hit by the rockets, Mr. Peres said: “The Government does not have a policy of restraint. The Government has a policy of using judgment. I think I would be derelict in my duty if I were to introduce politics into this judgment. This is not restraint, not fears and not elections. This is completely cold calculation.”

Mr. Peres canceled plans to inspect the damage in Qiryat Shemona after residents protested in the streets, burning tires and holding up a sign that read, “Peres has failed.”¹⁷⁷

When the Israeli government decided to retaliate by bombing Lebanon, the policy of the Israeli and U.S. governments was presented in the news reporting¹⁷⁸ a couple of days later in this manner:

Charging that Party of God guerrillas in Lebanon had gone too far in their shelling of northern Israel, Israel today sent planes, helicopters and gunships deep into Lebanon to strike at the group. The raids included the first attack on Beirut since the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

In the most audacious attack, four Israeli Apache helicopters invaded Beirut under overcast skies at 10:30 A.M. and fired on the Party of God headquarters in the ground floor of a high-rise building in the city’s southern slums.

Earlier, in the pre-dawn darkness, Israeli warplanes struck what they described as a guerrilla depot near Baalbek in the eastern Bekaa region, only 700 yards from a Syrian base, and another base in southern Lebanon. Other gunships fired on cars used by Party of God leaders. Reports from Lebanon put casualties at four or five killed.

The attacks came in response to rocket attacks by the Party of God on northern Israel this week.

Today’s raids marked the most serious escalation of the war in South Lebanon since July 1993, when the United States mediated an agreement between Israel and the Party of God, or Hezbollah, a militant Shi’ite Moslem organization backed by Iran. The two sides agreed to restrict their fighting to the nine-mile-wide “security zone” that Israel maintains in

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Serge Schmemmann, “Israeli Aircraft Strike Guerrillas In Beirut Suburbs,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

southern Lebanon with the help of Lebanese Christian allies known as the South Lebanon Army.

Israel set up the buffer zone to prevent infiltration into northern Israel when it withdrew from Lebanon in 1985, and the Party of God has been waging a guerrilla war ever since to oust the Israelis.

Several hours after the attacks, Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his top military commanders proudly showed videotapes of laser-guided missiles scoring pinpoint hits on what were described as major bases of the Party of God, including the headquarters in the high-rise.

But at the same time, frightened residents of Qiryat Shemona, Israel's northernmost city and the primary target of the Party of God's Katyusha rockets, packed their children on buses or fled the city themselves in anticipation of retaliation. Most shops were closed, and the streets were empty as loudspeakers urged residents to go to bomb shelters.

Among those preparing to leave was Prosper Alfalu, a resident of Qiryat Shemona who already lost one home to a Katyusha rocket but has never evacuated the city in his 24 years there. This time, he said, he was getting out.

"I don't want to be a dead hero," Mr. Alfalu said as a line of parents and children clutching travel bags scurried from a shelter to a bus.

The Israeli strikes followed two rocket attacks against northern Israel by the Party of God over the last two weeks, in which several Israelis were wounded and several dozens were treated for shock. Israel depicted the attacks as part of a general escalation by the Party of God, while that group said the attacks were retaliation for the killing of Lebanese civilians outside the buffer zone.

Though such exchanges have occurred before and no Israeli civilians were killed in the attacks, the flurry of Katyusha rockets seemed to add to a powerful wave of frustration and rage among Israelis over a spate of suicide bombings six weeks ago and the consequent freeze on any movement toward peace.

After the second Katyusha attack on Tuesday, angry residents of Qiryat Shemona protested in the streets, and military officers joined with opposition politicians in demanding action from Mr. Peres. The Prime Minister faces elections on May 29, and he is trying to dispel the idea that he is soft on security.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the conservative Likud leader, had visited damaged homes in Qiryat Shemona and told appreciative residents, "There are many ways of fighting terrorism, but the first decision is to fight it, and I hope that decision is forthcoming."

The decision Mr. Peres reached was to order surgical strikes on Party of God targets across Lebanon, strikes that security officials said were intended to minimize civilian casualties while forcefully bringing the message that Israel is prepared to strike anywhere and any time.

"Hezbollah came to the illusory idea that it had an advantage in weapons, manpower and initiative over us," Mr. Peres said. "If Hezbollah has Katyushas, we have superior missiles. If Hezbollah has trucks we have better vehicles, if we have to create an advantage we will create the necessary advantage."

"And indeed this time we used those tools that have an advantage, with the very simple message: that there will be quiet in Lebanon if there is quiet in Qiryat Shemona and in the whole state of Israel."

But the chance of quiet seemed remote. Addressing the news conference with Mr. Peres, Gen. Moshe Yaalon, the chief of military intelligence, warned, "Hezbollah will retaliate, and will try to do this in a way that will be painful for us."

In Beirut, the leader of the Party of God, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, pledged a retaliation that Israel does not anticipate. "The response for today's aggression in the southern suburbs will not be in the northern part of Palestine," he said. "Northern Palestine and Qiryat Shemona have no relation with what happened in the southern suburb. The response for what happened in Beirut today will be elsewhere, at a different place, and I'm not going to tell you where this place is. We will set the time and the place and both will astonish Peres."

The United States, which in the past has worked behind the scenes with Israel and Syria to prevent the south Lebanese conflict from growing, urged both sides to show restraint. But Secretary of State Warren Christopher laid the blame for the current crisis solely on the Party of God, saying, "Fundamentally, the problem is created by Katyusha attacks into northern Israel."

The Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik al-Hariri - whose divided country is too weak either to curb the Party of God or to fend off Israel - warned that Israel was creating a vicious cycle. "If they decide to bombard Beirut, they can," he said. "We don't have the forces to stop them. But this will not solve the problem."

Syria, which in effect maintains military and political control over Lebanon, condemned the Israeli strikes and accused Israel of violating the 1993 agreement.

Both Israel and the United States have repeatedly demanded that Syria curb the guerrillas, but President Hafez al-Assad of Syria has insisted that the Party of God, a Lebanese movement, is within its rights to fight against Israeli forces occupying Lebanese territory.

This week, after meeting in Damascus with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Mr. Assad said, "It is difficult for a person, regardless of whether he is an Arab or not, to say to the one who is defending his land that he is wrong or to say that he is a terrorist and demand that others condemn this person because he is practicing what they claim is terrorism."

In any case, Israeli political analysts noted that there was even less chance now than before that Syria would seek to muzzle the Party of God, since Israeli peace negotiations with Damascus were abandoned after the wave of suicide bombings in late February and early March.

In general, the abrupt escalation of fighting in Lebanon, and the promise of more strife to come, reflected the sharp reversal of what Israelis call the "peace process" since the four suicide bombings, which killed more than 60 people.

Until then, the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities in the West Bank, and the start of negotiations with Syria, had raised hopes of imminent peace, and Mr. Peres held a strong lead in public opinion polls. The attacks changed everything, leading Mr. Peres to revive brutal measures against the Palestinians and to suspend the talks with the Syrians.

With peace no longer beckoning on the horizon, the continuing attacks in the north changed in Israeli perception from nuisance to provocation.

Two weeks ago, an Israeli tank fired on a group of Lebanese civilians and killed two. Though the Israelis insisted that it was an error, the Party of God retaliated by firing 28 Katyusha rockets into Qiryat Shemona, slightly wounding a woman and damaging several buildings.

Then on Monday, two Lebanese boys were killed in an unexplained explosion just north of the security zone. Though Israel insisted that it had nothing to do with the incident, the Party of God unleashed another salvo of Katyushas, seriously wounding a woman in Qiryat Shemona and damaging several houses.

The Party of God maintained today, as it had in the past, that it sent Katyushas into Israel only in response to attacks on Lebanese civilians, and that its only goal was to get the Israelis out of Lebanon.

“We have always acted in defense against what the army of conquest has done against villages and civilians in southern Lebanon or in the western Bekaa,” said Sheik Nasrallah, the Party of God leader. “We know that Shimon Peres needs gains and victories of this sort for election purposes.”

But in Israel, the Katyusha attacks were perceived this time as the last straw, a provocation that demanded reaction.

In addition, the army command in southern Lebanon had long argued that the Party of God was using the 1993 agreement to hide in civilian villages that Israel could not strike, and that the guerrillas were developing a new sophistication that demanded a tougher response.¹⁷⁹

The *Times* report delayed the explanation of the sequence of attacks on Lebanese civilians and Hezbollah’s statement until the last paragraphs of its news report, giving them the least priority as per the Inverted Pyramid hard news structure format of American journalism. Similarly, the *Post* news report that day focused on the Israeli and U.S. narratives up top, laying the blame for the conflict squarely on Hezbollah and framing Lebanon as a pawn in the larger regional power play by Israel against Syria:

If a single incident spurred Israel into sending helicopter gunships to Beirut, it was the mortifying advice broadcast to Israelis last month by the Hezbollah leader, Said Hasan Nasrallah.

His organization, an Iranian-linked fundamentalist group whose name means Party of God, had just launched 28 rockets at the Galilee and sent thousands of Israelis scrambling for bomb shelters at the start of the Passover holiday week. He recommended in a March 30 television interview that Israelis remain in their bunkers three more days, lest they be hurt by another barrage.

Even had the country not been in the midst of a hard-fought election campaign, with the vote less than two months away, the incident might still have been seen in Israel as an intolerable challenge. Six times in the last four months - breaking eight months of quiet - Hezbollah had fired

¹⁷⁹ Serge Schmemmann, “Israeli Aircraft Strike Guerrillas In Beirut Suburbs,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1996.

Katyusha rockets across the border in retaliation for Israeli shelling that it said targeted Lebanese civilians. The three-year-old “understandings” that ended Israel’s last major incursion into Lebanon appeared to be breaking down.

A campaign advertisement in today’s newspapers by the opposition Likud Party suggested how much domestic politics has intensified pressure on Prime Minister Shimon Peres to act. The entire text, but for Likud’s latest slogan (“Peres has failed”), was a quotation from a woman interviewed by Israel Radio in a bomb shelter two days ago. “Where is my great army, beautiful, vigorous, that always protected us?” she asked. “Why are its hands tied? Why do I have to listen to the Hezbollah, which right now is my prime minister?”

Even after the airstrikes today, Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu said the raids would be effective only if they were part of a prolonged military campaign.

Few commentators here expect Israel to find a decisive military answer to its war in southern Lebanon, the last active Israeli-Arab battle front. The government’s goal is more modest: to keep most of the fighting contained in the strip of southern Lebanon it declared as a “security zone” in 1985 and has occupied along with Lebanese allies ever since.

Only a peace treaty with Syria, in the view of Peres and his slain predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, would put an end to the guerrilla war for good. Israel has no hope of peace with Hezbollah or its Iranian sponsors, but Syria’s 35,000 troops in Lebanon control the territory from which Hezbollah operates, and Hezbollah relies on arms flown from Iran to Damascus and sent on by truck to Lebanon.

Syria has shown the ability to shut down Hezbollah activity entirely during negotiating rounds with Israel and visits to the Middle East by U.S. dignitaries. President Hafez Assad also reached “understandings” with Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1993 in which Hezbollah and Israel agreed to avoid attacks on civilians. But repeated U.S. interventions with Assad in the past 12 days achieved no reduction in Hezbollah's Katyusha fire.

Today’s airstrikes were part of a brutal chess game using Lebanon as the board and with each move chosen to send a message. The Israeli military noted today that the first bombing target was only 700 yards from the nearest position of the Syrian army’s 5th Division.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Barton Gellman, “Israel Finds Challenge Impossible to Ignore; Hezbollah, Elections Pressure Push Jerusalem to Send Message to Syria,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 1996.

Over the course of the conflict, Lebanese government sources and UN personnel sources each got less than 10 percent of overall news coverage, even though they had an important say in the conflict. Similarly, Syria, which was an important player in the conflict due to its military and political domination in Lebanon, got less than 2 percent coverage, even though American government sources regularly berated Syrian policies in the region. France, which added important clauses and amendments to the U.S. cease-fire agreement got about 2 percent coverage, most of it unopposed to the U.S., with much of that news coverage carrying U.S. government sources focused on belittling French claims of aiding in the peace process that led to the April Understanding. There was only one source paragraph, out of 1,170, attributed to a French official that was critical of U.S. policy and Israeli actions – it was published in the *Washington Post*, which also published the other twenty-three French (1) source paragraphs. *The New York Times* published no source paragraphs attributed to the French, effectively denying its readers any knowledge of the French efforts leading up to the April Understanding.

Lebanese civilians got about 10 percent of the coverage, and this was understandable as more than 400,000 Lebanese civilians were displaced from their homes due to the Israeli bombings of civilian areas. The magnitude of the civilian suffering was too significant to overlook, though the analyses of such incidents was, again, left to U.S. diplomats. Lebanese Experts got thirty-six source paragraphs in the news coverage, of which seven were critical of U.S./Israeli actions, while Israeli experts got forty-three source paragraphs, of which only three were critical of the conflict. Lebanese NGOs, as health workers and emergency relief personnel, could have played an important part in

the news gathering and fact checking process – they accounted for eight source paragraphs out of 1,170.

On the whole, the conflict which was based around the Israelis and Hezbollah saw very little of Hezbollah views presented to counter the Israeli allegations. While Israeli Government (1) sources’ approval of its actions accounted for more than 20 percent of all source paragraphs published Hezbollah (2) sources’ criticism of these actions accounted for less than 3 percent of the source paragraphs. Moreover, arguments presented by the Hezbollah (1) sources that did not address merely the U.S. policy on Israeli action but spoke of broader issues got even more underrepresented, accounting for less than 2 percent of source paragraphs, while the U.S. Government (1) sources made up 23 percent of the coverage.

The two newspapers did not differ significantly on the distribution of their datelines – the places their news stories were filed from, as shown in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5. Datelines of News Reports (1996)		
Origin of Story	Washington Post	New York Times
Israel	11	25
Lebanon	25	21
USA	7	2
Middle East (Syria, Egypt)	4	2
Other/Unknown	2	2

While a chi-square test of this crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper’s distribution of datelines for their news reporting

on the 1996 conflict, a comparison of means for the news content from the three major datelines showed interesting results, as shown in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6 Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (1996)						
<i>Variable Measured</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>Washington Post</i>		
Dateline(#of reports): Israel(25) Lebanon(21) U.S.(2)	Israel(11) Lebanon(25) U.S.(7)					
Length (number of words)	956.24	653.9	972.5	1068.82	716.24	725.14
Page Number	4.64	8.19	6.5	13.45	17.6	19.71
#1 Source mean	GovIS1(4.8)	CivLB1(2.1)	GovUS1(11.5)	GovIS1(4.6)	CivLB1(1.9)	GovUS1(4.4)
#2 Source mean	GovUS1(2.7)	GovLB1(1.8)	GovIS1(3)	GovUS1(3.6)	GovIS1(1.6)	NgoUS2(1.2)
#3 Source mean	MilIS1(1.4)	UN1 (1.1)	UN1(0.5)	MilIS1(1.5)	UN1(1.4)	ExpertUS1(1.1)
#4 Source mean	CivIS1(1.1)	CivLB2(0.9)	UN2(0.5)	ExpertIS1(1.3)	GovLB1(1)	GovIS1(1)
#5 Source mean	ExpertIS1(0.9)	ExptLB1(0.85)	ExptUS2(0.5)	CivIS1(0.6)	GovUS1(1)	NgoUS1(0.86)

A t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed that the *Washington Post's* news reports from Israel (mean = 1068.82 words) were given more news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 716.24 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.169$, $df = 34$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.037). *The New York Times* also showed this difference, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 956.24 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 653.90 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.676$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.010). In addition to this, *The New York Times* also gave the Israeli news reports more prominence (mean page number = 4.64) than those from Lebanon (mean page number = 8.19), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -2.829$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.007).

If one looks at the top source paragraph means in Table 4.6 for news reports from the dateline of Israel for the *Times* and the *Post*, we see a strong propaganda and indexing effect – most source paragraphs are given to Israeli and U.S. sources that are unopposed to the *Operation Grapes of Wrath*. The 1996 population of Israel included Arab citizens, including members of the Knesset, and Palestinians living in Israeli-controlled territories – the Israel dateline news reporting on the conflict in Lebanon does not provide any reporting from these sources. Similarly, Israel has non-governmental organizations, including liberal pro-peace groups – none of these show up in the news coverage from the Israel dateline for both newspapers’ reporting from Israel on Operation Grapes of Wrath.

If one examines the Lebanon dateline news reports, both newspapers give these news reports significantly lower mean copy lengths than the Israel dateline news report, as noted earlier. The *Washington Post’s* top source paragraph means are all sources that are unopposed to the Israeli and U.S. actions – apparently no one who matters in Lebanon was opposed to the Israeli and U.S. policy during the 1996 Operation Grapes of Wrath. *The New York Times* has Lebanese Civilians (2) source paragraphs show up in their top five means, but the bulk of these critical voices, eighteen of the nineteen source paragraphs, were published in the “Pull” period after April 12, as civilian casualties were on the rise, giving support to the “Push” and “Pull” news reporting theory.¹⁸¹

It is important to note here that the U.S. Datelines set for the April 1996 news reporting on Lebanon was small – only nine news reports, of which seven were published

¹⁸¹ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

in the *Washington Post*, and the reason NGO-US2 is ranked second in the U.S. dateline quote paragraphs means in Table 6 is because the *Post* published a single news report on April 24 containing nine source paragraphs reporting that: “Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan last night criticized President Clinton for not speaking out firmly against the Israeli assault on Lebanon, calling it symptomatic of the ‘madness’ that will eventually destroy America.”¹⁸² It is debatable whether Farrakhan has any serious political influence on the *Post*’s readers, or whether his criticism of Israel only serves to bolster Israel’s supporters in the U.S. As noted later in this section, April 24 also falls into the “Pull” phase of news reporting, given that civilian casualties in Lebanon started to rise from the time period after April 12, 1996, thereby giving some support to the “Push” and “Pull” news reporting theory.¹⁸³

When the entire data set for the Operation Grapes of Wrath news reporting, by both the *Times* and the *Post* combined, was analyzed for a t-test comparison of the means of source paragraphs across Datelines for the news reports filed from Israel, Lebanon, and the U.S., in order to compare their mean story length, mean page numbers, and mean source paragraphs, the following findings were reported, as shown in Table 4.7:

¹⁸² Michael A. Fletcher and Hamil R. Harris, “Farrakhan Attacks Clinton on Lebanon; President Must Condemn Israel, Minister Says,” *Washington Post*, April 24, 1996.

¹⁸³ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

Table 4.7 Total Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (1996)			
<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports): Israel(36)	Lebanon(46)	U.S.(9)
Length (number of words)	990.6	687.78	780.11
Page Number	7.33	13.3	16.78
#1 Source mean	GovIS1(4.8)	CivilianLB1(2.04)	GovUS1(6)
#2 Source mean	GovUS1(3)	GovLB1(1.41)	GovIS1(1.44)
#3 Source mean	MilIS1(1.44)	UN1(1.33)	NgoUS2(1)
#4 Source mean	ExpertIS1(1.08)	GovIS1(1.02)	ExpertUS1(0.89)
#5 Source mean	CivilianIS1(1)	GovUS1 (0.65)	NgoUS1(0.67)
Gov Lebanon 2	0.25	0.24	0.11
Hezbollah sources1	0.17	0.15	0
Hezbollah sources2	0.39	0.37	0

The mean length of the stories from Israel was 990.64 words, while those from Lebanon was 687.78 words. This difference was statistically significant in the t-test ($t=3.323$, $df=80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001). Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were given more news copy than those filed from Lebanon.

Also, mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports was 7.33, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 13.3. This difference was statistically significant ($t=-3.048$, $df=80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003). This finding indicates that the stories filed from Israel were featured more prominently in the newspapers and closer to the front page, whereas those originating from Lebanon were published less prominently by being pushed further back in the newspaper.

While it may be assumed that news reports from Israel will carry more Israeli sources and those from Lebanon will carry more Lebanese sources (and this was

established in the t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the means for Israeli, U.S. and Lebanese sources in the two different datelines), it was interesting to note the similarities in the means of source paragraphs that did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Hezbollah (2) sources was 0.39 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.37 in news reporting from Lebanon, implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to under-represent Hezbollah sources as was the American news reporting from Israel. There were no Hezbollah source paragraphs in any of the news reports from the U.S. datelines for both newspaper.

Similarly, Lebanese Government (2) sources critical of the U.S. and Israeli policies also did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the datelines of Israel and Lebanon – the mean number of source paragraphs for Lebanese Government (2) sources was 0.25 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.24 in news reporting from Lebanon, implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to under-represent Lebanese Government sources critical of the U.S. and Israel as was the American news reporting from Israel.

Moreover, when the data were correlated with the page numbers two interesting findings surfaced. Firstly, the page numbers exhibited an inverse correlation with story length that was statistically significant (Pearson Correlation = -0.433, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This indicates that as stories progressed from the front page to further back in the newspaper they got smaller.

Significant correlation was found between Israel Government (1) source paragraphs and page number and copy length; as the page numbers increased the Israeli

Government (1) source paragraphs decreased with statistical significance (Pearson Correlation = -0.364, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This indicates that Israeli Government (1) sources were more likely to be featured prominently, closer to Page 1, and that they were less likely to be pushed into the back pages. Also, as the copy length increased, the Israeli Government (1) source paragraphs also increased with statistical significance (Pearson Correlation = 0.530, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This indicates that the Israeli Government (1) sources were more likely to be featured in news reports with more copy length, another indicator of the importance afforded to these sources. A similar but weaker correlation was also observed for the Israeli Experts (1) sources – accounting for forty source paragraphs – with respect to increasing copy length (Pearson Correlation = 0.272, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.006) and page numbers (Pearson Correlation = -0.217, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.029), indicating that Israeli Experts (1) source paragraphs were likely to be featured in longer news reports closer to the front pages.

The other interesting development, and one that perhaps gives some credence to the Strobel's "Push" versus "Pull" hypothesis,¹⁸⁴ was that the Lebanese Government (2) source paragraphs, those critical of the U.S. policy on the Israeli activities, although accounting for only twenty-one source paragraphs, did show some correlation with copy length (Pearson Correlation = 0.247, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.013) and page numbers (Pearson Correlation = -0.210, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.035). Given that most Lebanese Government (2) source paragraphs appeared as civilian casualties mounted, this would provide some support to Strobel's "Push" versus "Pull" hypothesis, wherein voices

¹⁸⁴ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*.

critical of U.S. and Israeli policies were like to feature in longer news copy placed closer to the front page once the civilian casualties mounted. It is important to note here, again, that Lebanese Government (2) only accounted for twenty-one out of 1,170 source paragraphs in the news coverage.

There were two major incidents of Israeli attacks on Lebanese civilians that should be considered when addressing the possibility of a short “Pull” effect in the news reporting in this period. The first incident came on April 13, 1996, when “an Israeli helicopter rocketed an ambulance filled with refugees, killing two women and four children as they fled Israeli air attacks in southern Lebanon, according to U.N. observers and Lebanese witnesses.”¹⁸⁵ While both newspapers carried this news on Page 1, the *Washington Post* account of the incident most directly contradicted the Israeli narrative, while still reinforcing Israeli claims, false as they were, that the ambulance was carrying Hezbollah combatants:

While expressing regret at today’s civilian deaths, Israel asserted that the rocket attack was justified because the vehicle was not being used as an ambulance, because it belonged to Hezbollah, or Party of God, the Iranian-backed group that is fighting to dislodge Israeli soldiers from southern Lebanon, and because it was transporting a Hezbollah fighter.

Israel’s account, however, was contradicted by a Reuter reporter who witnessed the attack from a distance she estimated at 60 feet, as well as by a U.N. spokesman in southern Lebanon. According to the report by Najla Abu Jahjah, the Reuter reporter, the vehicle was marked with the logo of the Islamic Scouts Association, an offshoot of the Shi’ite Muslim movement Amal, which is a political rival of Hezbollah.

At the time of the attack, the ambulance was passing near a checkpoint manned by United Nations peacekeeping troops southeast of the southern port of Tyre, according to local news reports. As described in Jahjah’s account, the vehicle disappeared “in a huge cloud of smoke followed by a

¹⁸⁵ John Lancaster, “Israel Expands Retaliation On Lebanon; Gunboats Block Ports; Rocket Hits Ambulance, Killing Children Inside,” *Washington Post*, April 14, 1996.

powerful blast” that hurled it 60 feet off the road and into the front room of a house.

“Moments later, a girl aged about 11 who somehow survived the blast ran toward us shrieking, ‘I want my brothers,’” Jahjah wrote. “She rolled on the ground screaming with grief, ‘My sister’s head blew apart. I want my sister. I want my sister. Oh God, oh God.’”

The account continued, “Two small children were still alive inside the wrecked ambulance packed with dead bodies. Two women, aged about 50 and 35, leaned against each other, dead. A child of about 3 lay on the stomach of one of the women, also dead. Three girls aged 11 or 12 were also dead.

“Two men and two other girls in the vehicle were wounded. Blood poured from the men’s faces as one of them ran from the ambulance carrying a wounded girl and a baby in his arms.”

The Reuter account was corroborated by Timor Goksel, political counselor of the U.N. force in southern Lebanon, who described the vehicle as a white station wagon with a blue light on its roof and the insignia of the Amal charitable group.

U.N. peacekeeping troops from Fiji watched the attack from about 500 yards away. Goksel said the car, driven by a man in his fifties, was jammed with villagers from Mansuri who wished to flee toward Tyre and was destroyed just after it passed through the U.N. checkpoint.

“The first report from our Fijian soldiers reported at least three killed and three wounded at the scene,” Goksel said. “They said that was not all because it was total chaos. I just now talked to the Lebanese army, and they told me there were six killed and eight wounded. They said [the dead included] 3-, 4- and 7-year-old children, one 18-year-old, and a 4-month-old baby badly wounded.”

Israeli accounts were sharply different, correspondent Barton Gellman reported from Jerusalem. Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, chief of Israel's general staff, told reporters that “the ambulance hit in Tyre today was to the best of our knowledge transporting a Hezbollah terrorist from one Hezbollah position in the area of Tyre to another.

“In the event that civilians were hit, it should be noted that we have repeatedly warned civilians to stay away from Hezbollah terrorists and not assist them,” he said. “When all the details will be known, it will be conclusively proven that the target was Hezbollah terrorists using the ambulance for their own needs.”

Chief government spokesman Uri Dromi said in an interview that the vehicle was specifically known to Israeli intelligence as a Hezbollah vehicle, and that it had not been in use as an ambulance. He said the owner, a Hezbollah activist, used the vehicle's blue emergency light and "semiofficial" status to move freely through checkpoints on behalf of the fundamentalist militia.

"We know from later reports, with a great level of accuracy, that this guy was hit," Dromi said.¹⁸⁶

The New York Times front-page report provided a much shorter account of this Israeli attack on a Lebanese ambulance, and delayed these details to begin from paragraph nine of the news report:

In the deadliest incident today, an Israeli helicopter fired a rocket at a Lebanese ambulance. According to a Reuters photographer who witnessed the attack, two women and four girls were killed and several people wounded in the ambulance, which was hit after driving through a United Nations checkpoint.

An Israeli Army spokesman said the ambulance had been attacked because it was carrying a Party of God guerrilla from one position to another.

"If other individuals in the vehicle were hit during the attack, they had been used by the Hezbollah as a cover for Hezbollah activities," the spokesman said, adding that Israel had warned Lebanese citizens to keep clear of guerrillas.¹⁸⁷

The next major incident that could be associated with a "Pull" effect in the news coverage came five days later on April 18, 1996, when Israel fired artillery shells into a UN compound and killed and gravely injured more than a hundred Lebanese civilians taking shelter there. As Norton notes, while the Operation Grapes of Wrath "was intended to undermine popular support for Hezbollah among the Lebanese, as well as to

¹⁸⁶ John Lancaster, "Israel Expands Retaliation On Lebanon; Gunboats Block Ports; Rocket Hits Ambulance, Killing Children Inside," *Washington Post*, April 14, 1996.

¹⁸⁷ Serge Schmemmann, "Israelis Blockade Ports in Lebanon and Shell South," *New York Times*, April 14, 1996.

prompt Syria to rein in the organization . . . the strategy failed, largely as a result of the horrible slaughter at Qana . . . at the UN base in Qana – a protected zone in international law” where “civilians sought refuge from IDF air and ground attacks. But rather than finding safety, 106 civilians were killed by Israeli artillery.”¹⁸⁸

Here’s how Douglas Jehl reported the news for *The New York Times* on page 1:

The Israeli Army fired an artillery barrage into a United Nations peacekeeping camp today, killing at least 75 Lebanese civilians and wounding more than 100. The attack, which Israel said came in response to rocket and mortar fire by guerrillas near the base, was by far the deadliest yet in the eight-day-old offensive in southern Lebanon.

The civilians were among hundreds of local people who had taken refuge in the camp, the headquarters of a Fijian infantry battalion. Most died when the shells set a recreation center and two prefabricated buildings ablaze.

Israel said the attack on the base was a grave error. It prompted worldwide outrage and a rapid intensification of diplomatic efforts to bring a halt to the conflict.

For hours after the midafternoon attack, smoke and smoldering flames continued to pour from the shattered camp, and Fijian officers who pulled the dead and wounded from the wreckage described a scene of carnage, with many dismembered bodies.

Israel had warned civilians here and across much of southern Lebanon to flee or risk being caught up in its attacks. A United Nations spokesman said Hezbollah guerrillas had launched Katyusha rockets and mortar rounds toward Israel from a site near the camp only minutes before the Israeli bombardment began.

But the spokesman, Mikhal Lindvall, said he could see no excuse for hitting the well-marked United Nations compound, where officers fired red warning flares in vain before taking shelter when the shells began to fall about 2 P.M.

“I never thought I would see a massacre like this,” Mr. Lindvall said today in Tyre. “It’s bad enough when it takes place in a Lebanese village, but to see it in a United Nations camp is truly a tragedy.”

¹⁸⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 84.

Fijian officers said many howitzer shells landed in or near the base over a period of about 90 minutes. That attack was among dozens of strikes that Israel launched today in its bid to suppress the guerrillas of Hezbollah, or Party of God, whose rocket attacks on northern Israel have left thousands of settlers there in a state of terror.

One Israeli air strike today in the village of Nabatiye al-Fawqa tore into an apartment building and left 11 Lebanese civilians dead, including a 4-day-old infant and 6 other children, according to the Lebanese Army.

Shelling from offshore Israeli warships at targets nearer to the coast shut down most of the remaining traffic on the all-but-deserted highway along the Mediterranean, even as ambulances screamed southward from Beirut to assist in evacuating the victims from Qana. The village of Qana sits atop rock-strewn hills about five miles east of the Tyre, Lebanon's southern port.

At the city's largest hospital, where the wounded were taken by ambulance, United Nations helicopter and private vehicles, blood spattered the entryway and emergency-room floors. Doctors who had worked through Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its offensive here in 1993 said they had never seen so much suffering.

"I saw my sister burning with her child in her arms," said Laila Atwe, a 22-year-old woman who survived the attack but said she had lost 12 family members, including her parents, grandparents and uncles.

There were various accounts of the number of civilians killed and wounded in the attack. Fijian officers said 45 Lebanese had died at the camp itself, while others died on their way to hospitals or while being treated there.

None of the Fijian peacekeepers were killed, and only four were wounded. Many were out on patrol; the remainder were in underground bunkers that they shared with some of the refugees. But officers said the bunkers were too small to allow most of the 850 civilians in the camp to take shelter.

Maj. Joseph Sabua, second in command of the 500-man battalion, said many of those killed and wounded had fled instead to the prefabricated buildings and to the recreation center, a 45-by-90-foot wooden structure built in a traditional Fijian design.

Major Sabua and other witnesses described their shock at emerging from their bunkers at about 3:30 P.M. to find the buildings ablaze and dead bodies littering the ground.

“To tell the truth, most of us now believe it is time to go home,” the Fijian officer said of his battalion, which is part of the 4,500-member United Nations interim force in Lebanon that was set up in 1978 as a buffer between the two countries.

“We don’t think we are of any use here after what happened today,” the officer said.

Across southern Lebanon, as many as 5,000 civilians are now encamped in United Nations compounds, United Nations officers said. Scores of thousands of other Lebanese have heeded the Israeli warnings and fled the region altogether. United Nations spokesmen said that many of those who sought refuge at the base had done so because they feared that they had waited too long to leave the area safely.

Qana was all but deserted tonight, but the bright headlights of white United Nations armored vehicles illuminated the posters of proclaimed Hezbollah martyrs that are displayed along the streets. They vividly illustrate the sympathies of a population that like that in the rest of southern Lebanon is overwhelmingly Shi’ite Muslim.

“My neighbors were all killed,” said Moussa Haidar, a middle-aged man who survived the attack from inside the camp and was walking the streets in a daze.

Behind the high gates and barbed wire of the United Nations compound, Fijian troops wore expressions of shock. Many sang mournful hymns at a nightly chapel service that had assumed a very somber air.

“It was chaos,” said Capt. Blake Tuitubou, the battalion's engineering officer. “Everything was haywire.”

A few miles down the hill in Tyre’s hospitals tonight, some of the wounded lay awake in shock, their limbs broken, bandaged or severed. Still others had suffered severe burns to their bodies or faces. Doctors said that about half of the wounded were children, some of whom lay in bed moaning softly for their parents.

Among them was Ibrahim Ismael, a 7-year-old whose arm had been fractured and who had suffered severe burns on his face, neck and ears. “He keeps asking for his mother,” a nurse by his bedside said. “I told him, ‘Don't worry, she’s coming, she’s coming.’”

The nurse later said privately that the boy, along with at least a half dozen other children in the hospital, had been orphaned in the attack.¹⁸⁹

The *Washington Post's* news report¹⁹⁰ on the incident by John Lancaster was also published on Page 1:

Israeli artillery shells, fired in retaliation for a rocket barrage, slammed into a U.N. compound filled with hundreds of refugees near Tyre in southern Lebanon today, killing about 90 people, many of them women and children, and wounding at least 100.

The blasts of several 155mm artillery shells turned the shelter into a bloody nightmare of dismembered bodies. Lebanese camera teams recorded gruesome images of dead children being zipped into body bags, grief-stricken parents, and hospital floors slick with blood. U.N. relief workers cried and hugged each other for support as they went about their tasks.

An older man pounded his temples and wailed, "God, why did they do this to us? Why did they do this to us? Oh my God. Oh my God."

"I couldn't count the bodies," Mikael Lindvall, a U.N. official who visited the compound shortly after the attack, said in an interview. "There were babies without heads. There were people without arms and legs."

The attack marked a turning point in Israel's eight-day-old air and artillery campaign in Lebanon, which until now has enjoyed nearly unbridled support from the Israeli public as well as from the Clinton administration in Washington.

President Clinton, on arrival in St. Petersburg, Russia, called on both sides to observe an immediate cease-fire, saying it has become "painfully clear" the border conflict must end. U.S. officials announced Secretary of State Warren Christopher will travel to the Middle East on Saturday, breaking off from Clinton's traveling party in Russia in a peacekeeping attempt.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel, responding to Clinton's call in a CNN interview, said Israel is ready to implement a cease-fire immediately if Hezbollah also agrees to halt its rocket attacks against Israeli soldiers in

¹⁸⁹ Douglas Jehl, "Death in Lebanon: Israeli Barrage Hits U.N. Camp in Lebanon, Killing At Least 75," *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁹⁰ John Lancaster, "Israeli Shells Kill 90 in Lebanon Camp; U.N. Site Struck; Peres Offers Truce to Guerrilla Group," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1996.

southern Lebanon and towns in Israel. "I think we can negotiate a solution or an agreement without shooting at each other," Peres said. "There is no need for fire in order to reach an agreement."

There was no immediate response from Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed political party and militia that draws most of its membership from Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims.

The shelling of the U.N. installation instantly compounded the price Lebanese civilians have paid during Israel's intensive wave of assaults, designed to punish Hezbollah guerrillas for their attacks on Israeli troops in an Israeli-occupied portion of southern Lebanon and their cross-border rocketing of towns in Israel's northern Galilee region.

In a separate incident this morning near the southern Lebanese market town of Nabatiyah, an Israeli air attack killed 11 people, including a mother, her 4-day-old baby and six other children, according to Lebanese news reports. The death toll from the Israeli campaign now stands at about 150, most of them Lebanese civilians, according to unofficial U.N. and Lebanese estimates. The guerrilla rocket attacks have injured about 50 Israelis, but no one has been killed in Israel.

Israeli officials expressed regret for today's shelling but blamed the tragedy on guerrillas from Hezbollah. In Jerusalem, officials said Israeli gunners were trying to hit Hezbollah fighters who moments earlier had fired Katyusha rockets toward Israel from a position estimated by U.N. spokesmen as lying 350 to 400 yards from the compound.

"We don't want to see any woman, or child or Lebanese civilian killed, but they are the victims of Hezbollah," Peres told reporters.

U.N. spokesman Lindvall estimated the number of dead at 94. Other accounts from Lebanese rescue teams and police around Tyre ranged from 75 to more than 100. The precise total was difficult to establish because bodies, many of them in pieces, were taken to several hospitals.

U.N. officials accused the Israeli gunners of disregarding the safety of the refugees and noted they had repeatedly protested to the Israeli army in recent days after incidents in which Israeli shelling imperiled civilians and U.N. personnel.

After a surge in Hezbollah attacks on the Israeli-occupied border strip and northern Israel in recent months, Israel began its offensive April 11 in an effort to force the Lebanese and Syrian governments to rein in Hezbollah guerrillas. Hezbollah says it is fighting to drive Israeli troops from the Lebanese territory they occupy as what Israel calls its "security zone."

Syria keeps 35,000 troops elsewhere in Lebanon and exercises decisive influence on important government decisions here. In addition, Israeli and U.S. officials have said Hezbollah supplies from Iran pass through Syria and on to southern Lebanon through Syrian-controlled areas in the Bekaa Valley.

Since warning residents of southern Lebanon to leave, Israel has pounded towns and villages with 3,000 to 4,000 artillery shells and 50 to 100 airstrikes a day, according to U.N. estimates. Although most residents of southern Lebanon have heeded the warning, some have stayed behind in their homes or sought refuge nearby in U.N. compounds manned by peacekeeping troops.

In addition to attacking the sources of Hezbollah fire, Israeli warplanes and helicopter gunships have destroyed Lebanese infrastructure, including two major electric power stations for Beirut, and blasted Hezbollah offices and residences in the capital's Shi'ite-inhabited southern suburbs. Israeli warships have blockaded major Lebanese ports, searching arriving ships in a blow to the country's commerce and to its hope of recovering from a long civil war and previous Israeli invasions.

Israel has said it is trying to avoid civilian casualties while reserving the right to strike Hezbollah targets wherever they reveal themselves. On Saturday, an Israeli helicopter rocketed what Israeli officials said was an ambulance used by Hezbollah for military operations, killing two women and four children, including a 2-month-old baby. The driver and father of three of the dead children denied any Hezbollah connection.

The U.N. compound hit in today's incident sits in the village of Qana, about six miles southeast of the port city of Tyre. The compound serves as the battalion headquarters for Fijian peacekeeping troops in southern Lebanon. Since the offensive began, it also had become a refuge for about 400 civilians, many of whom were staying in an open-sided thatch-roofed hut normally used as a recreation hall, according to Lindvall.

Briefing reporters in Israel tonight, Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said the exchange began at 1:55 p.m. local time, when the guerrillas launched several Katyusha rockets and mortar rounds from their hiding place outside the U.N. compound. Using sophisticated "counter-battery" radar, the Israelis identified the origin of the incoming fire, then responded with a barrage of five shells, he explained.

Several "overshot the mark," in Shahak's words, and slammed into the heart of the compound.

The dead and wounded were evacuated by ambulance to hospitals in Tyre, Sidon and Naqurah, site of the U.N. force's headquarters, according to Lindvall. Several Fijian peacekeepers were reported hurt.

Despite the presence of refugees in the compound, Israeli officials insisted their gunners had acted properly. "The right to defend ourselves is not dependent on anyone's permission," Peres said. "The Hezbollah hides behind the backs of the civilians of Lebanon, and that is why we asked the Lebanese civilians to evacuate. They are not our enemies."

While acknowledging that Hezbollah guerrillas often fire on Israeli targets from near Lebanese civilian areas, U.N. officials have grown increasingly concerned at the forcefulness of Israel's response.

They say there is no evidence that Israeli shelling has killed any guerrillas since the campaign began.¹⁹¹

For contrast, here is how Robert Fisk of *The Independent*¹⁹² reported on the same incident for the British press:

It was a massacre. Not since Sabra and Chatila had I seen the innocent slaughtered like this. The Lebanese refugee women and children and men lay in heaps, their hands or arms or legs missing, beheaded or disembowelled. There were well over a hundred of them. A baby lay without a head. The Israeli shells had scythed through them as they lay in the United Nations shelter, believing that they were safe under the world's protection. Like the Muslims of Srebrenica, the Muslims of Qana were wrong.

In front of a burning building of the UN's Fijian battalion headquarters, a girl held a corpse in her arms, the body of a grey-haired man whose eyes were staring at her, and she rocked the corpse back and forth in her arms, keening and weeping and crying the same words over and over: "My father, my father." A Fijian UN soldier stood amid a sea of bodies and, without saying a word, held aloft the body of a headless child.

"The Israelis have just told us they'll stop shelling the area," a UN soldier said, shaking with anger. "Are we supposed to thank them?" In the remains of a burning building - the conference room of the Fijian UN headquarters - a pile of corpses was burning. The roof had crashed in

¹⁹¹ John Lancaster, "Israeli Shells Kill 90 in Lebanon Camp; U.N. Site Struck; Peres Offers Truce to Guerrilla Group," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁹² Robert Fisk, "Massacre in Sanctuary," *The Independent*, April 18, 1996, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/massacre-in-sanctuary-1305571.html>

flames onto their bodies, cremating them in front of my eyes. When I walked towards them, I slipped on a human hand.

So why did the Israelis kill all these refugee civilians - more than 70 at the latest count - and go on sending 25 shells into the survivors and the bodies around them for up to 10 minutes after the first round had landed? A Fijian soldier, looking at a dead woman lying at his feet, her neck encircled with blood, said simply: "The guerrillas fired six Katyushas from near our position. The shells came in two minutes later. But the Israelis know we're here. This has been a UN battalion headquarters for 18 years. They knew we had 600 refugees here."

Indeed they did. The Israelis know that 5,200 penniless civilians - too poor to flee to Beirut - are crowded into the compounds of the 4,500- strong UN force. The Fijian battalion headquarters is clearly marked on Israel's military maps. The UN buildings were plastered with white and black UN signs. They are lit up at night. Not a soul in southern Lebanon is ignorant of their location. Nor is the Hizbollah. It is not the first time the guerrillas have fired their missiles at Israel from beside a UN building; when a Fijian officer tried to prevent the Hizbollah from firing rockets close to his position on the coast road two days ago, a Hizbollah man shot him in the chest.

But does a Hizbollah target of opportunity justify the nightmare scenes which confronted us yesterday? Are Lebanese civilians worth so little on the immoral scales of war that armies can write them off as "collateral damage" while following the hopeless goal of eradicating "terrorism" by gunfire and blood? True, the Hizbollah should bear a burden of guilt, though they will refuse to do so.

But Israel's slaughter of civilians in this terrible 10-day offensive - 206 by last night - has been so cavalier, so ferocious, that not a Lebanese will forgive this massacre. There had been the ambulance attacked on Saturday, the sisters killed in Yohmor the day before, the 2-year-old girl decapitated by an Israeli missile four days ago. And earlier yesterday, the Israelis had slaughtered a family of 12 - the youngest was a four-day-old baby - when Israeli helicopter pilots fired missiles into their home.

Shortly afterwards, three Israeli jets dropped bombs only 250 metres from a UN convoy on which I was travelling, blasting a house 30 feet into the air in front of my eyes. Travelling back to Beirut to file my report on the Qana massacre to the Independent last night, I found two Israeli gunboats firing at the civilian cars on the river bridge north of Sidon.

Every foreign army comes to grief in Lebanon. The Sabra and Chatila massacre of Palestinians by Israel's militia allies in 1982 doomed Israel's

1982 invasion. Now the Israelis are stained again by the bloodbath at Qana, the scruffy little Lebanese hill town where the Lebanese believe Jesus turned water into wine.

The Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres may now wish to end this war. But the Hizbollah are not likely to let him. Israel is back in the Lebanese quagmire. Nor will the Arab world forget yesterday's terrible scenes.

The blood of all the refugees ran quite literally in streams from the shell-smashed UN compound restaurant in which the Shi'ite Muslims from the hill villages of southern Lebanon - who had heeded Israel's order to leave their homes - had pathetically sought shelter. Fijian and French soldiers heaved another group of dead - they lay with their arms tightly wrapped around each other - into blankets.

A French UN trooper muttered oaths to himself as he opened a bag in which he was dropping feet, fingers, pieces of people's arms.

And as we walked through this obscenity, a swarm of people burst into the compound. They had driven in wild convoys down from Tyre and began to pull the blankets off the mutilated corpses of their mothers and sons and daughters and to shriek "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great") and to threaten the UN troops.

We had suddenly become not UN troops and journalists but Westerners, Israel's allies, an object of hatred and venom. One bearded man with fierce eyes stared at us, his face dark with fury. "You are Americans," he screamed at us. "Americans are dogs. You did this. Americans are dogs."

President Bill Clinton has allied himself with Israel in its war against "terrorism" and the Lebanese, in their grief, had not forgotten this. Israel's official expression of sorrow was rubbing salt in their wounds. "I would like to be made into a bomb and blow myself up amid the Israelis," one old man said.

As for the Hizbollah, which has repeatedly promised that Israelis will pay for their killing of Lebanese civilians, its revenge cannot be long in coming. Operation Grapes of Wrath may then turn out then to be all too aptly named.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Robert Fisk, "Massacre in Sanctuary," *The Independent*, April 18, 1996, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/massacre-in-sanctuary-1305571.html>

Most notable in this comparison is the fact that Fisk's reporting quoted Lebanese civilian sources as condemning the actions and policies of Israel and the U.S., where the *Post* and *Times* both published accounts based on interviews conducted in Qana, but did not publish a single civilian source paragraph directly opposed to U.S. or Israeli policy.

When the data were analyzed over the passage of time, with a value of 1 assigned to the first day of news reporting in each newspaper in March and subsequent days added to the variable of Conflict Days as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the months of March and April (with the beginning of the Israeli operation on April 11 and the peace agreement on April 27), the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

The length of the news reports correlated with the passage of time (increase in the value of the Conflict Days variable), indicating that news reporting got intensive as the conflict progressed (Pearson Correlation = 0.371, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). However, the page numbers decreased, implying that the news coverage moved farther back into the newspaper pages over time (Pearson Correlation = -0.358, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). Also, U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant correlation with the Conflict Days (Pearson Correlation = 0.226, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.023), implying that U.S. Government sources increased in the news coverage over passage of time, even as the conflict grew worse, and kept dominating the news narrative albeit with a shift in the stated U.S. policy goals now of seeking an immediate cease fire. The strong correlation between the U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs and the passage of time in the conflict supports both the Propaganda Theory and also the Indexing hypothesis.

As noted earlier, another interesting development that perhaps gives some credence to the Strobel's "Push" versus "Pull" hypothesis,¹⁹⁴ was that the Lebanese Government (2) source paragraphs - those critical of the U.S. policy on the Israeli activities - became with the rising civilian deaths in the conflict (although their overall source paragraph numbers – twenty-one out of 1,170 - were too low to establish statistical significance), indicating that the news coverage of the Lebanese Government's critics of the U.S. and Israeli policies was published as the conflict grew worse and civilian casualties mounted.

In order to check for the "Push" versus "Pull" effect on the news reporting of the 1996 conflict, the data were then divided into two sets – all news reports up to April 12 were considered part of the "Push" period, and as April 13 marked the date of rise of Lebanese civilian casualties, the news reporting from this day forward was coded as the "Pull" period. When these two set of news reports were compared in a t-test analysis of means, the following statistically relevant changes were noted:

The mean news copy length increased, from 408.68 words to a mean of 896.16 words ($t = -5.168$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.000$). This implies a strong "Pull" effect in which the news coverage of the conflict increased and was given more news copy as the conflict caused more civilian casualties in Lebanon.

The mean page number decreased, from 15.68 to 10.29 ($t = 2.199$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.030$). This implies a strong "Pull" effect in which the news coverage moved further to the front of the newspapers as the civilian casualties increased in Lebanon.

¹⁹⁴ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*.

The mean source paragraphs of Israeli Military (1) sources decreased, from 1.84 to 0.62 ($t= 3.105$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.002$). This implies a strong “Pull” effect in which the news coverage reduced the number of Israeli Military source paragraphs supporting the conflict as the civilian casualties increased in Lebanon.

The mean source paragraphs of Lebanese Military (1) sources also decreased, from 0.26 to 0.01 ($t= 3.330$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.001$). This implies a strong “Pull” effect in which the news coverage reduced the number of Lebanese Military source paragraphs unopposed to the conflict as the civilian casualties increased in Lebanon.

The Hezbollah (1) source means showed no statistically significant change (increasing from 0.11 to 0.13), but the mean source paragraphs of Hezbollah (2) sources decreased, from 0.68 to 0.22 ($t= 2.617$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.010$). This implies a weak “Pull” effect in which the news coverage reduced the number of Hezbollah source paragraphs opposed to the conflict as the civilian casualties increased in Lebanon.

This is interesting given that the mean source paragraphs of U.S. Government (1) sources increased considerably from the pre-April 12 to post-April 13 news content, increasing from a mean value of 0.53 to 3.18 ($t= -2.488$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.015$). This implies a strong “Pull” effect in which the news coverage greatly increased the number of U.S. Government source paragraphs on the conflict as the civilian casualties increased in Lebanon – albeit now the U.S. Government sources were changing their policy narrative to one seeking a cease-fire.

In particular, the Israeli shelling of the U.N. camp in Qana, and the killing and wounding of more than a hundred civilians, including many women and children, on April 18, was probably the major turning point in the conflict, after which U.S. policy

goals shifted from supporting Israel to brokering a cease-fire, as was reported in the news coverage. On April 19, the *Times* news reporting¹⁹⁵ stressed Israel's defense of its actions, blaming Hezbollah, but also noted the shift in U.S. policy, in effect a "Pull" away from the conflict:

Prime Minister Shimon Peres expressed regret today over the deaths of at least 75 Lebanese civilians in an Israeli artillery strike and said Israel was prepared to accept an immediate cease-fire if its Islamic guerrilla opponents did too.

But Mr. Peres defiantly insisted that Hezbollah guerrillas had provoked the attack on a United Nations base where the civilians were seeking shelter. He said Israel responded to guerrilla fire from near the base, not knowing that it was packed with civilian refugees.

United Nations officials said guerrillas had fired two Katyusha rockets and several mortar rounds at Israelis from positions only a few hundred yards from the base.

"We are not bloodthirsty and we are not looking for adventures," a grim Mr. Peres declared after an emergency meeting of his Cabinet, which authorized him to seek an immediate end to the large-scale air and artillery strikes that had sent hundreds of thousands of Lebanese civilians fleeing northward in panic.

As he spoke, another Katyusha rocket reportedly fell inside northern Israel, and Israeli artillery was heard firing in response. [Hezbollah forces and Israeli troops continued to trade fire across the border early Friday, Reuters reported.]

Despite Mr. Peres's assertions that an end to the fighting was what Israel always wanted, it was obvious from the crisis atmosphere in Israel's Government that the eight-day-old operation, intended to put pressure on Syria to curb Hezbollah while keeping casualties at a minimum, had abruptly gone wrong.

Instead of the proud briefings with video-tapes of pinpoint bombings, Israel now stood on the defensive before an accusing world.

¹⁹⁵ Serge Schmemmann, "Death in Lebanon: Israel; Voicing Regret, Israeli Leader Offers a Cease Fire," *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

The United States, which had tacitly endorsed the Israeli operation and had begun brokering an agreement that Israel hoped would guarantee it against Hezbollah attacks, now joined Britain and France in calls for an immediate cease-fire.¹⁹⁶

The news report also noted the political backdrop of the events, pointing out that Peres was facing an electoral challenge from his rival Netanyahu in the Israeli elections in May 1996:

A sampling of Israelis found people sharing Mr. Peres's sense that Hezbollah was to blame. "It will only strengthen each person in his opinion," said Ora Silverstein, a 29-year-student.

But however the operation ended, it was certain to figure into the tough race between Mr. Peres and the conservative opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, for the elections on May 29. Mr. Netanyahu described the day's incident as a "tragic mistake," but he insisted the military operation must continue.

"The one important thing is that the Prime Minister not crack," Mr. Netanyahu said. "I am telling Peres, do not crack, you began the operation, now complete it to bring security to the north."

"He has to allow the I.D.F. to operate in the north," Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to the Israel Defense Force, "and in this he will get the full support of the opposition."

The statement suggested that if Mr. Peres did agree to a cease-fire, Mr. Netanyahu would accuse him of lacking resolve, and so try to undo whatever advantage the Prime Minister had gained from launching the popular operation.¹⁹⁷

Within just a couple of days, however, the "Pull" effect was apparent as the *New York Times* news coverage¹⁹⁸ noted the changing reality of the conflict and its impact:

Whatever arrangements are made to stop the fighting in southern Lebanon, it is already apparent that Israel's military operation has been a painful failure and a diplomatic disaster.

¹⁹⁶ Serge Schmemmann, "Death in Lebanon: Israel; Voicing Regret, Israeli Leader Offers a Cease Fire" *New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Serge Schmemmann, "A Debacle For Israel," *New York Times*, April 22, 1996.

Though Prime Minister Shimon Peres never spelled out the objectives of the operation, the basic idea was clear: to use Israel's overwhelming military and technological superiority to apply precise and selective force in Lebanon until Syria, the dominant power there, was compelled to restrain the guerrillas of Hezbollah, or the Party of God, and return to the negotiating table.

But the deaths of scores of Lebanese refugees at the United Nations base at Qana in southern Lebanon under an Israeli artillery barrage abruptly turned things upside down.¹⁹⁹

On May 8, 1996, despite U.S. pressure to squash it, the UN report investigating the Israeli artillery attack on the UN base in Qana by Major General Franklin van Kappen concluded that "it is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or procedural errors."²⁰⁰ According to Blanford, "Van Keppen suspected that the Israeli artillery gunners switched from targeting the [Hezbollah] mortar site to the Fijian headquarters because footage from the passing [Israeli] drone had shown Hezbollah men entering the camp."²⁰¹ Blanford reported that almost a decade and a half later, van Kappen told him, "I think it was a deliberate act. It was a war crime."²⁰²

Conclusions

The content analysis of the coverage of the 1996 Israeli Operation Grapes of Wrath reveals that *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were biased in their selection of news sources during the conflict. Greater representation was given to American and Israeli points of view that sought to place the conflict along the broader American foreign policy goals, which, in this case, were very supportive of the Israeli

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 168-72; also see Norton, *Hezbollah*, 84.

²⁰¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 170.

²⁰² Ibid., 173.

goals. Irrespective of the degree of human suffering and civilian carnage that the conflict inflicted on the Lebanese civilian population, the news coverage sought to legitimize the overall policy goals by representing the American and Israeli diplomatic and policy arguments more prominently. In keeping with this line of thinking, the Hezbollah, who were an irritation to American and Israeli policy goals in the region, were underrepresented and their criticism of the operation was not given as much prominence.

The early attempt of the U.S. policy for the resolution of the 1996 conflict was rejected by Lebanon and Syria as it was biased in favor of Israel, while the Israelis dismissed a French proposal to formally accept the 1993 understanding, saying it was “too soon to negotiate.”²⁰³ The proposal was accepted by the five-nation monitoring group (comprised of the U.S., France, Lebanon, Syria and Israel)²⁰⁴ in the days after the Qana massacre, that tacitly recognized Hezbollah’s right to resist Israeli occupation but cautioned both the Israelis and Hezbollah against targeting civilians. The French officials, though, only accounted for 2 percent of the overall news coverage. They were largely underreported in one newspaper, while in the other they were castigated for wanting to attract attention or demand credit away from what was touted to be a diplomatic success for the U.S.

The study, therefore, pointed toward the Propaganda Model effect of American foreign policy on the newspapers’ coverage of the 1996 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict. It also provides evidence that the Indexing pattern of over-reliance on government and pro-government sources continued to influence the news gathering operation and taint the coverage and understanding of this foreign conflict. Not enough data were available to be

²⁰³ Ibid., 160-61.

²⁰⁴ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 86.

able to statistically substantiate any powerful “Pull” effect in the news coverage, mostly because so few news sources paragraphs were published that were critical of the U.S. and Israeli policies.

The newspapers also missed the deteriorating state of the morale of Israeli soldiers stationed in South Lebanon, although the soldiers and their officers were accessible in Israel, where many of the veterans returned back to reservist life and told stories of their disappointment and dismay over their tours of duty in Lebanon.²⁰⁵

Very little attention was paid to the blowback – the larger unintended fallout and possible backlash against the manner in which the U.S. support for the Israeli Operation Grapes of Wrath affected the millions of Arabs and Muslims watching the horrific news from Lebanon around the world. One twenty-seven-year-old Egyptian man studying in Germany was so enraged by what he saw as the U.S.-backed Israeli attack on Lebanon that he signed his last will and testament at the militant Al-Quds mosque in Hamburg in April 1996, offering up his life in response for the attack. His name was Mohammed Atta.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ See, for example, Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*.

²⁰⁶ Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 2006), 307.

**Chapter 5: Coverage of Lebanon and Hezbollah during the period of the
Israeli Forces' Withdrawal from South Lebanon
in Operation "Dawn" (May 2000)**

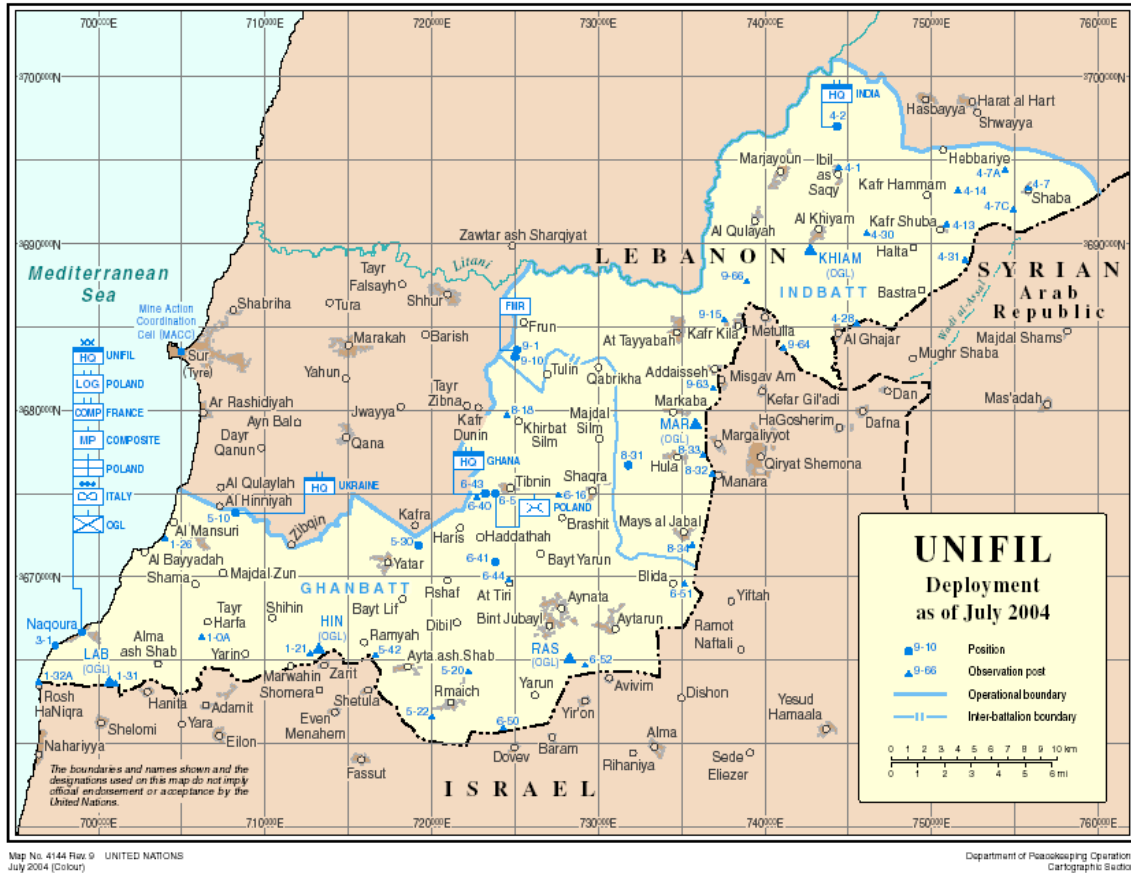


Figure 2: UNIFIL Map: Area of South Lebanon occupied by Israel till May 2000. (Source: www.un.org; public domain)

The Growth of Hezbollah in Lebanon After 1996

Based on her observations of the behavior of Hezbollah and the Lebanese government during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" military campaign of April 1996, Harik states that the action that "left 150 people dead, the vast majority of them civilians, and caused millions of dollars in damages" was "strikingly similar to 'Operation Accountability,' launched by Israel against the same 'targets' in July 1993."¹ Both operations "unleashed massive destruction in South Lebanon in order to pressure the Syrian-backed Lebanese government to halt Hezbollah's attacks on northern Galilee" but "it was this ability to hand the Israelis repeated setbacks in their self-declared 'Security Zone' that led to the Jewish state's decision to evacuate it in 2000."²

"The fact that Israel's use of force in Lebanon missed its political mark by a wide margin was a source of humiliation for the Peres government and gave the USA the embarrassing task of seeking Syrian assistance to arrange a ceasefire that would let its ally off the hook," noted Harik, adding that the "centrality of Syrian involvement in international efforts" was "evident in the mechanics of the ceasefire negotiations" wherein "no fewer than seven foreign ministers were present in the Syrian capital toward the end of April as Assad conducted bilateral and trilateral consultations with them at his own pace and convenience."³

The 1996 April Understanding "made explicit the Party of God's [Hezbollah's] right to continue resistance activities against Israeli and SLA combatants within the 'Security Zone'. Affirmation of Hezbollah's right to resist Israeli occupation in an

¹ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 112.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 122.

agreement signed by the USA, France and Israel seemed to deal quite a blow to the terrorist image the Party of God had been trying to shed”, while Syria was “also pleased that the monitoring committee idea initiated by France” – a committee that now included representatives of Israel, U.S., France, Syria and Lebanon - “disturbed U.S. hegemony in the region.”⁴

If the goal of the Israeli attacks on Lebanon in Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996 had been to weaken Hezbollah in Lebanon, the measure of the Israeli political goals was on full display just a few months later when Hezbollah, which had campaigned under the slogan “They resist with their blood, resist with your vote,”⁵ won seven seats in the August-September 1996 Lebanese parliamentary elections, losing just one seat from the 1992 elections, illustrating a resilience in the political role of the group in Lebanon.⁶ This decline is also better understood in the context of a similar loss of one seat by Hezbollah’s rivals in Amal, whose membership in parliament fell similarly by one seat from nine seats in 1992 to eight seats in 1996.⁷ Moreover, if one is to consider the entire list of candidates that were backed by one political party including non-Shi’ites on Hezbollah’s party list, “Hezbollah’s candidates won 12 of the 128 seats in parliament in 1992 and nine in 1996, making it the largest single party bloc in the legislative chamber both times,” states Harik, who also notes that “these elections were not a true measure of the Party of God’s [Hezbollah’s] clout in the Shi’ite arena, since competition was restricted in ‘resistance areas,’” meaning that in the Bekaa and in the South, Hezbollah and Amal, its main rival for Shi’ite seats, “had to form single consensual lists rather than

⁴ Ibid., 122-23.

⁵ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 102.

⁶ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 113.

⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 103.

competing against each other for seats” in order to “forestall partisan clashes that would damage resistance unity.”⁸

Lebanon’s national elections were seen to be heavily influenced by Syria, which strove for national political parity between Hezbollah and Syria’s ally Amal, by limiting the number of seats each party contested, often referred to as the “Syrian Ceiling” in national elections, but the municipal elections had “largely been left alone.”⁹ Hamzeh notes that “Hizbullah’s gradualist-pragmatic mode was reflected even more clearly in the municipal elections” held for the first time in thirty-five years in 1998, which provided Hezbollah “the opportunity to come into power in several important cities, towns, and local governments.”¹⁰

In the 1998 municipal elections, Hezbollah demonstrated its popularity by winning in Beirut’s al-Dahiya suburbs as well as Bourj al-Barajnah and al-Ghubayri, and also won in the southern regions in al-Nabatiya, and in the northern region of Hirmil.¹¹ Having closely observed all the campaigns, Harik found three factors, “besides Hezbollah’s shrewd exploitation of its resistance record and public services, to be enormously important” in Hezbollah’s electoral strategy in 1998:

First, rather astonishingly, the fundamentalist party relied on democratic precepts to counter challenges from its rivals. Second, it adapted strategies and tactics that are traditionally associated with this type of election in Lebanon. And third, it used the election machine that had been finely tuned and polished after the preceding [1996] parliamentary elections and developed modern campaign tactics in ways that could not be matched by any single competitor or coalition of rivals.¹²

⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 95.

⁹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 103.

¹⁰ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 122.

¹¹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 103-5; for more details on Hezbollah’s electoral performance in each region, please see Harik, *Hezbollah*, 95-110; and Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 122-30.

¹² Harik, *Hezbollah*, 96.

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, Hezbollah members and sympathizers had been making active efforts to encourage Lebanese Christian support for its resistance role from as early as the time period before the 1992 elections, and this policy of *Intifa* (Opening) had led to Hezbollah engaging in socio-political discussions with Christian community leaders in numerous ways – “through formal and informal dialogue with notables and ordinary citizens of other sects, through the establishment of organizational linkages with different social, economic and political organizations and through various activities in areas under its control that embraced all residing there regardless of their religious affiliations.”¹³ As one of Israel’s goals in its operations in 1993 and 1996 was “to provoke dissension within Lebanese ranks, these meetings tried to encourage a united front as far as the national resistance was concerned.”¹⁴

In fact, by targeting Lebanese civilians, killing and injuring hundreds, destroying their homes, businesses, schools and medical facilities, and laying waste to the Lebanese infrastructure in many regions of South Lebanon, Israel in effect laid the groundwork for the deepening of Hezbollah’s influence in Lebanon, for it was Hezbollah that paid out pensions, rebuilt homes, businesses, and schools, and built health clinics and a hospital, while offering relief in terms of food, water, and medical supplies to thousands of civilians in Lebanon.¹⁵ As Hamzeh notes, “On the contrary, Israel’s Grapes of Wrath operation made Hizbullah’s resistance movement more popular.”¹⁶ Among notable Hezbollah organizations involved in the social welfare programs were al-Qard al-Hasan, making small loans available, the Martyr’s Association, the Association for the

¹³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁴ Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁵ Ibid., 81-88.

¹⁶ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 115.

Wounded, the Hezbollah Women's Committee and the Health Committee, Hezbollah-run hospitals and clinics, and the Jihad al-Bina Development Organization that had "literally reconstructed and repaired much of the damage wrought by war."¹⁷ As Harik notes, the funding for the eight social welfare associations run by Hezbollah also remained robust, relying on contributions from "Lebanese individuals, Hezbollah members, Iran (including charitable associations) and donations that are part of Shi'ite religious obligations to provide a fifth of one's income to help those in need."¹⁸

Another measure of Israel's 1996 Grapes of Wrath military operation would be a military weakening of Hezbollah, but this too did not happen – starting from May 9, 1996, Hezbollah resumed its attacks on Israeli-backed SLA militiamen in South Lebanon, and killed four Israeli soldiers and wounded three in a roadside bomb attack on May 30, and killed five Israeli soldiers and wounded six in an ambush ten days later.¹⁹

Meanwhile, for the Israeli soldiers serving in South Lebanon, "the Lebanese underbush was full of Israelis, soldiers waiting for guerrillas on hillsides and in riverbeds" for "the ambush, the army's main offensive tactic in the security zone. Sometimes the soldiers stayed for days or even a week, camouflaging themselves in bushes, taking turns sleeping, eating chocolate and shitting in plastic bags spread over upside-down helmets and peeing in bottles that they had to carry out with them afterward. Sometimes there were guerrillas waiting in the same bushes, and they killed the soldiers. Sometimes the soldiers killed one another."²⁰

¹⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 109-10.

¹⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 92-93.

¹⁹ Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God* (New York: Random House, 2011), 179.

²⁰ Matti Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers: A Soldier's Story* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2016), 58.

According to Israeli officials, by August 1996, Hezbollah had not only replenished its arms supply from Iran, but also acquired newer Katyusha rockets capable of reaching Haifa, Israel's third-largest city.²¹ By the end of 1996, according to Blanford, twenty-seven Israeli soldiers had been killed in the border zone in Lebanon, the highest annual toll since 1985.²²

And then, on February 4, 1997, two Israeli CH-53 troop transport helicopters collided en route to South Lebanon – seventy-three Israeli soldiers died – and the “Four Mothers” group was formed by the mothers of the dead soldiers, a new movement calling for a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon.²³

For Israeli soldiers stationed in South Lebanon, the helicopters crash of February 1997 “was the beginning of the end,” notes Friedman. “This was when the security zone began to collapse under the weight of its contradictions. The way this happened had a lot to do with a small group of angry mothers.”²⁴ Friedman recalls that “the grief from the Lebanon fighting was individual, usually not more than one or two soldiers at a time,” being killed in an ambush or by a roadside bomb, wherein “one or two families would drop through the thin crust dividing our everyday lives here from the lava beneath the surface and climb back out disfigured by scars no one else could see, and things would go on” but the death of seventy-three soldiers in one incident was different as “everyone seemed to have someone on the helicopters” and the crash “was described at the time as an atom bomb, the release of a destructive force compared to which the insignificance of

²¹ Ibid.

²² Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 180.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 85.

the cause – a series of arbitrary mishaps one evening in northern Israel – seems absurd.”²⁵ Friedman states that it is “an irony worth noting” that “the crash turned out to be the hinge around which the whole period revolved” because while “later everyone came to accept Hezbollah’s claim to be responsible for breaking our will and pushing us from Lebanon, if we are all being honest more credit is due to our air force. People have chosen to accept the enemy’s narrative because that is easier than remembering that the worst wound in all the years of the Lebanon fighting, the decisive blow, was self-inflicted – a self-inflicted wound to end a self-inflicted war.”²⁶

Other tactical problems escalated in 1997 for Israel – in September 1997, an ambush carried out jointly by Hezbollah and Amal fighters killed eleven elite naval commandos of Israel’s Shayetet 13 (Israeli Navy SEALs), prompting Netanyahu to admit “We lost some of our best soldiers, and that’s not an exaggeration.”²⁷ One week later, Hadi Nasrallah, the eighteen-year-old son of the Hezbollah leader, was killed in a clash with the Israeli Egoz special forces unit and his corpse was filmed lying in the corridor of the Israeli headquarters in Marjayoun in South Lebanon – but his death created an “outpouring of public sympathy in Lebanon for Nasrallah” and “boosted his credibility even further.”²⁸ Nasrallah then announced the creation of a new resistance unit, the Lebanese Resistance Brigades, which would be open to Lebanese volunteers regardless of religion, as “a response to the number of Lebanese clamoring to join the resistance.”²⁹

²⁵ Ibid., 86-87.

²⁶ Ibid., 87.

²⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 186-93.

²⁸ Ibid., 196.

²⁹ Ibid., 197.

A few days later, in September 1997, Hezbollah ended “the myth of the Merkava” Mark 2 – Israel’s main battle tank in Lebanon – by successfully using the Russian AT-4 Spigot antitank wire-guided missile with a shaped-charge warhead and killing a tank commander in South Lebanon.³⁰ Ironically, Hezbollah had also obtained American TOW anti-tank missiles from Iran, which had been supplied to Iran covertly by Israel in the 1980s under the Iran-Contra deals, and these missiles were also being used against Israel in South Lebanon.³¹

For Israeli soldiers “things in Lebanon seemed to be getting worse” through 1997, as “nearly one hundred soldiers died that year” while the Four Mothers movement spread their petitions calling for a withdrawal from Lebanon, handing them out to drivers at intersections, to visitors at the kibbutz library, posting their manifestos on kibbutz bulletin boards, and using their connections “to get important people to meet them” but “few took them seriously” and “it was common to hear said, by men of course, that the mothers were ‘speaking from the uterus.’”³²

Friedman, who arrived in Lebanon as an IDF soldier in early 1998, recalls that it was “the rainy season, and Lebanon was lush and eerie” and that “there were bombs on the road, we knew that. There were guerrillas in the bushes.”³³ The soldiers were “urged not to let our guard down,” because Nabatieh, they were told, was a “nest of terrorists” and “anyone moving within a few hundred yards of the outpost was to be shot, even someone who seemed harmless, like a shepherd with his flock; the shepherds were often Hezbollah scouts” and “even if you weren’t sure what you saw was real, even if you were

³⁰ Ibid. 197-98.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 103.

³³ Ibid., 111.

nearly certain it was just a bush or a shadow, you opened fire – those were the orders and had been since the guerrillas with their flag and video camera caught the Pumpkin unprepared three and a half years before. If any of the sentries began shooting, the entire garrison was to conclude that we were being attacked. Then everyone opened up with light machine guns, heavy machine guns, machine guns that fired grenades, whatever weapons were at hand; this made an impressive noise, if nothing else, and was known as a ‘crate of fire,’ another of the army’s poetic flourishes.”³⁴

But, as Friedman notes, much of the soldiers’ time was spent on edge, nervous, waiting, and often shouting warnings into the radio only to realize that the colorful lights “rising into the sky and bursting apart” were false alarms “as people in the nest of terrorists celebrated a wedding with fireworks.”³⁵ Sometimes, when the guerrillas did attack, as in one incident Friedman recalls involving Sagger rockets, the Israeli video surveillance of the attacks showed the guerrillas “disappeared” after setting up their rockets, escaping Israeli retaliatory fire, and “the guerrillas’ ears might have been ringing, but both were alive and well,” noted Friedman. “Maybe they still are today.”³⁶

By 1998, Hezbollah had also developed the deployment of anti-armor Explosively Formed Projectile (EFP) weapons that could be fired by invisible infrared beam triggers, and these triggers were also used with other types of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and such roadside bombs were increasingly used to ambush Israeli troops, totaling sixty such attacks in 1998.³⁷

³⁴ Ibid., 117-18.

³⁵ Ibid., 118.

³⁶ Ibid., 137-39.

³⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 214-16.

While the Israeli military admitted it had a “serious intelligence problem” in infiltrating Hezbollah, the guerrilla group had infiltrated the South Lebanon Army and, therefore, Hezbollah had intelligence networks allowing it to track and target Israeli troops and senior officers in the post-Grapes of Wrath period of the late 1990s.³⁸ With Israeli troops spending more time “hunkered down in newly hardened hilltop outposts” in South Lebanon, Israel relied more on air combat patrols in 1998, staging almost 150 air raids that year, along with an increasing reliance on combat helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) drones for surveillance and attacks.³⁹ Yet, the resistance attacks increased steadily, according to Blanford, almost all of them by Hezbollah, reaching nearly 1,500 attacks in 1998, almost double the 855 attacks launched in 1997.⁴⁰

By 1999, Hezbollah’s casualties numbers were almost equal to those they inflicted on the Israeli troops and their South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, and “neither the Israeli Army nor the SLA was able to force a decisive showdown with Hizbullah.”⁴¹ Hamzeh states that the “need to get out of such a lost war” was made clear by an Israeli officer who said that “Even if unilateral withdrawal is interpreted as weakness, that does not mean it ought to be ruled out. . . . The truth is that there isn’t a whole lot the IDF can do against Hizbullah.”⁴²

In the view of the Israeli soldiers serving in South Lebanon, the Lebanese SLA, the South Lebanon Army, “was in many ways a familiar arrangement – the kind of local force you are theoretically supporting but which in fact supports you and follows your

³⁸ Ibid., 199.

³⁹ Ibid., 203-6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 211.

⁴¹ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 94.

⁴² Ibid.

orders, more or less; which is usually said to be on its way toward operational independence but never quite arrives; and which in the end turns out to exist only as long as you are there.”⁴³ As Friedman notes, “the militia was a remnant of the Lebanese civil war, when Christians in Lebanon’s south allied themselves with Israel to protect themselves from Palestinian guerrillas and from their Muslim neighbors, but though the senior officers and some of the men were Christian, by the nineties many of the soldiers were Shi’ites and Druze who were in it for the salary Israel paid in American dollars.”⁴⁴

Friedman adds that the residents of “the security zone” numbering “about two hundred thousand of them, mostly Shi’ites” had been “severed from the rest of their country and were suspended between us and Hezbollah, sustaining themselves with agriculture, work permits for jobs inside Israel, and smuggling,” and that “serving in the militia was one way to make a decent wage” but “Hezbollah also had money, of course, and its own agents and informers.”⁴⁵ As an Israeli soldier serving in South Lebanon, Friedman notes, “We were told that the [SLA] Lebanese militiamen were our allies but that we were not to trust them because many had cousins in Hezbollah.”⁴⁶

In 1999, Hezbollah utilized its intelligence gathering capabilities and its infra-red triggered shaped-charge IEDs to devastating effect when it killed Israel’s top commander in Lebanon, Brigadier General Erez Gerstein.⁴⁷ Friedman recalls Gerstein as the “most famous of Lebanon commanders” and “beloved of the troops and known for bravery, impolitic comment, and for stalking around the security zone bareheaded because he was

⁴³ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 141-42.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 223-24.

too tough for a helmet.”⁴⁸ “If residents of South Lebanon thought we were leaving, he warned, they would switch their allegiance to Hezbollah,” Friedman recalls Gerstein as having said, adding that Gerstein “also said the guerrillas were being weakened by our operations, that they had lost forty fighters since the beginning of the year. We were always winning and they were always being weakened, but somehow we never won and they never got any weaker, and a few months later they killed Gerstein with a roadside bomb.”⁴⁹

The general’s death prompted Israel’s *Ha’aretz* newspaper to publish a monologue by an anonymous senior Israeli army officer, titled “Time to Go,” stating that in South Lebanon “little by little we’re becoming Crusaders who primarily guard only ourselves.”⁵⁰ According to Blanford, sensing a decline in public support for the continued Israeli involvement in Lebanon, Israel’s opposition Labor Party leader Ehud Barak announced the day after General Gerstein’s death that, if he won the upcoming national elections in May 1999, he would “bring the boys home” from Lebanon within a year of taking office.⁵¹ Barak, the retired general, who had served as chief of staff of the Israeli army, made the campaign promise that the withdrawal from Lebanon would happen “within twelve months of assuming office, either in conjunction with bilateral negotiations with Syria or unilaterally, with the former the obvious preference.”⁵²

The Netanyahu government, which had struggled with calculating an appropriate response to Hezbollah’s attacks, and had witnessed the escalation leading up to

⁴⁸ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 156.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 225.

⁵¹ Ibid., 225-26.

⁵² Norton, *Hezbollah*, 88-89.

Gerstein's assassination, including a Hezbollah ambush that had killed three Israeli officers of the Paratroop Reconnaissance Battalion just five days before the attack on General Gerstein, announced after the general's death that Israel would launch a new offensive action against Hezbollah, and a convoy of artillery guns and Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) was shown by the media driving through Kiryat Shemona, putting the UNIFIL on red alert in anticipation of another massive Israel attack, but nothing happened beyond a few air raids that night, prompting an Israeli columnist to write that about the Israeli action: "It wasn't a lion that roared. It was a mouse crying before it wriggled back into its hole."⁵³ In truth, Netanyahu was "beleaguered" and didn't risk taking chances in escalating the conflict in the run up to the 1999 national election wherein he was in a "tough electoral battle" against Ehud Barak "whose pledge to pull the troops out of Lebanon within a year of taking office had won broad public support."⁵⁴ Barak won the election in mid-May 1999, a victory that was seen as a "broad mandate to pursue peace with Syria" and "be out of Lebanon within a year" but the "collapsing morale of the SLA militia" indicated that "a major reconfiguration of the occupation zone was imminent and would not await diplomatic developments between Israel and Syria."⁵⁵

Israel, Syria and the Collapse of the Peace Process

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Israel had invaded Lebanon in 1978 in its Litani Operation intending to "push Palestinian guerrillas north of the Litani River," and this invasion "provided a context for creating a border 'security zone' under the nominal control of a proxy militia."⁵⁶ The UN Security Council Resolution 425, calling for the

⁵³ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 227-28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 228-29.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁵⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 79.

withdrawal of Israeli forces and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty, was passed in 1978 with U.S. support, but Israel repeatedly refused to withdraw from Lebanon, and invaded the country a second time in June 1982, this time pushing north all the way to Beirut, and “when it became clear that Israel had no intention of disengaging from Lebanon anytime soon, a variety of groups across the political spectrum began to organize attacks against the Israeli occupation forces.”⁵⁷ One of the reasons for Syria’s support of Lebanese and Palestinian groups attacking the Israeli occupation in Lebanon was to create the conditions for its own renewed negotiations for Syrian territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war, wherein UN Security Council Resolution 242 called “for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from land taken during the war, in return for the security of all states (including Israel) in the area.”⁵⁸ The question looming over Israel, Lebanon and Syria in the late 1990s was whether Israel would withdraw to the satisfaction of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and 425, or just one, or neither.

As the year 2000 began, there was hope that the new Israeli administration led by Ehud Barak would make peace with Syria, leave Lebanon, and also seal the Oslo Accord and end the dispute with the Palestinians. There were skeptics, among them British journalist Robert Fisk, who wrote in early January 2000:

In the coming year, we are told, there will be peace between pliant Arab neighbours and the “new” Israel of Ehud Barak, a peace to mark the new millennium. If only.

If Israel gives back all of Syrian Golan. If it returns Golan and leaves Lebanon. If it gives back all the Palestinian land it took in the 1967 war. If it allows the Palestinians a capital in east Jerusalem. If it ends settlements on occupied land. If refugees can return. But refugees cannot return. Mr

⁵⁷ Ibid., 79-80.

⁵⁸ Robert Fisk, “Syria Wants Its Own Golan Back, And No Arafat-Style Compromises,” *The Independent*, Jan. 20, 2000.

Barak has said so. Jerusalem must remain the “undivided and eternal” capital of Israel. Mr Barak has said so. The major Jewish settlements on Palestinian land will stay. Mr Barak has said so. Indeed, Mr Barak has been extending those very settlements at great speed.

And Arabs and Jews now demand mass amnesia to support this “peace”. We must always remember the Jewish Holocaust but not even acknowledge the dispossession of Palestinians by the Jewish armies in 1948. We must remember Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 - because Kuwait was our friend - but not Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in 1980 - because Iran was our enemy. Just now, we must remember that the corrupt Yasser Arafat has just appointed a convicted torturer as his new West Bank prosecutor, but must forget that Mr Barak has appointed Amos Yaron - notorious as the divisional commander in Beirut at the time of the Sabra and Chatila massacre - as the director general of the Israeli Defence Ministry.

And so, amid such double standards, we are asked to believe in peace. During the opening of the new Israeli-Syrian talks in Washington this month, Israeli shells wounded 25 children in a Lebanese village school. The world was silent. Had those shells been Syrian and the victims Israeli, the world would, rightly, have been loud in condemnation.

Peace, peace, peace; just keep saying that word. And anyone who says this peace is unjust, or who suggests that America is planting a time-bomb in the Middle East, is - remember this - an enemy of peace, a racist, potentially if not actually anti-Semitic, and a possible “terrorist”.⁵⁹

Under the leadership of President Hafez Assad, the Syrians had tried to attach the promise of a peaceful IDF withdrawal from South Lebanon to their negotiations with Israel regarding the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in the early months of 2000, in negotiations that included representatives of the Clinton administration, as reported by Fisk:

Mr Assad sent al-Sharaa to Virginia with strict instructions to avoid the Arafat trap. Golan, seized in the 1967 war, was Syrian. There would be no compromise. A close reading of the American working-paper shows Syria and Israel are still in dispute over the total Golan Heights land area, which was illegally annexed by Israel. Syria wants a withdrawal to the boundary existing on 4 June 1967, at the start of the Middle East Six-Day War; this

⁵⁹ Robert Fisk, “No End in Sight to the 1,000-Year-Old Struggle Between Arabs and the West,” *The Independent*, Jan. 3, 2000.

conforms to UN Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from land taken during the war, in return for the security of all states (including Israel) in the area.

The Syrians are now archly demanding that the Americans “guarantee” the Israeli withdrawal. The U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, has predictably replied that America can act as a “substitute” for the Israelis.⁶⁰

Of the three Arab countries with large militaries neighboring Israel’s borders, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, that had lost territory to Israel in 1967, Syria in 2000 remained the only one without an effective resolution to its claim; Egypt had signed a deal with Israel and the United States in 1978, and Jordan had signed one in 1994, with each deal dealing a blow to the Syrian Assad regime.

As the *Times* reported in 1979:

The Camp David accords were opposed by most countries in the Arab world for two reasons. The Arabs regarded the decision by Mr. Sadat to sign a peace treaty with Israel as a betrayal of the Arab cause, since it suggested that Egypt would no longer be willing to go to war against Israel to help Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians regain territory. Arabs also viewed the self-rule agreement for Palestinians as insufficient because it did not guarantee the creation of a Palestinian state.⁶¹

And as a *Times* Op-Ed stated in 1994:

There is a new alliance for regional peace and regional prosperity that includes Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and the United States. Before this alliance, Syria is powerless. Its President is one of the great losers of our time.⁶²

In 2000, therefore, the Assad regime in Syria was left with one partner in seeking a new deal with Israel – Lebanon – and one military operation to exert pressure on Israel – the Lebanese resistance. If the Syrian leadership were to allow Hezbollah to launch an

⁶⁰ Robert Fisk, “Syria Wants Its Own Golan Back, And No Arafat-Style Compromises,” *The Independent*, Jan. 20, 2000.

⁶¹ Bernard Gwertzman, “Egypt and Israel Sign Formal Treaty, Ending a State of War After 30 Years,” *New York Times*, March 27, 1979.

⁶² Leon Wieseltier, “Forget Assad for Now,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/27/opinion/forget-assad-for-now.html>

unrestrained attack on Israel, it would complicate the issue of Israel's withdrawal and raise further questions in Israel regarding the security of the Israeli settlements close to the Lebanese border. But, on the other hand, a measured campaign of attacks on IDF and SLA targets within the occupied Lebanese territories was a good tactical measure for continuing to keep the pressure on Israel and its allies, including the members of the SLA, and to keep alive the threat that a retreat from Lebanon might not mean the end of attacks if all occupied territories were not vacated by Israel. Accordingly, Hezbollah leaders "threatened dire results if withdrawal was attempted without concluding negotiations with the Syrian and Lebanese governments first."⁶³

As Blanford notes, starting from the summer of 1999, Hezbollah officials stated a "wait and see" approach when questioned about their response to the resumption of peace talks and the accompanying "preliminary diplomatic dance" of behind the scenes maneuvers and bargaining between Israelis, Syrians and Americans.⁶⁴ This strategic silence on the peace process, Blanford notes, was justified by Hezbollah's Secretary General Nasrallah in July 1999, when he stated that, "We think that remaining silent . . . and not talking in detail about our role following the settlement . . . gives Lebanon and Syria strength as they continue on the tracks they believe in."⁶⁵

The prospects of peace between Syria and Israel, requiring the Israeli withdrawal and return of Golan Heights to Syria, were motivated by the dangling of the possibility of disarming Hezbollah in Lebanon – in August 1999, Blanford notes, Bashar al-Assad, who was "being groomed to succeed his father, hinted in a newspaper interview that

⁶³ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 125.

⁶⁴ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 240.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 240-41.

Hezbollah would lay down its weapons once the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon was ended.”⁶⁶ There were other “teasing indications” that “Syria might be planning for a future of peace with Israel,” Blanford notes, including “reports that Damascus had advised Hezbollah and pro-Syrian Palestinian groups that they should prepare for disarming once peace had been achieved with Israel.”⁶⁷

Meanwhile, there were also concerns within Israel as to what a withdrawal from Lebanon might imply, Blanford writes, noting that “the IDF General Command were gritting their teeth at the prospect of losing their fiefdom in South Lebanon, especially if Barak ordered a unilateral withdrawal should the prospective negotiations with Syria go nowhere. Not only would it bring Hezbollah to Israel’s northern border, it would also signal to the Palestinians and other Arab enemies that the Jewish state would surrender to determined armed resistance.”

On December 8, 1999, President Clinton announced that “peace talks would begin the following week with a preliminary meeting in Washington between Ehud Barak and Syrian foreign minister Farouq al-Sharaa,” but in a sign that the Lebanese government “played a secondary role to the Syrian-Israeli track in the pre-negotiations phase,” notes Blanford. “Beirut was left in the dark,” as Blanford’s call to the Lebanese prime minister’s home for a reaction was met with the response from an aide that the PM “saw the announcement on CNN like everyone else, and now he’s gone to bed.”⁶⁸

The *Washington Post* reported:

Clinton, at an afternoon news conference, said he had taken a “blood oath” to refrain from discussing details of the renewed talks, but called them “a significant breakthrough.” The initial talks will involve Israeli Prime

⁶⁶ Ibid., 241.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 242.

Minister Ehud Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara. But Clinton said Syrian President Hafez al-Assad “is very personally involved.”

Syria has pressed Israel to return the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Israel considers the heights to be militarily important, and will not surrender them unless it believes Syria will make solid guarantees for Israel's security.

White House aides said it's possible that Assad, who is in poor health, may meet directly with Barak when the talks move to a Middle East site to be determined after the initial round in Washington. They said Clinton and Barak had spoken today with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to reassure him that the Israeli-Syrian talks will not diminish the importance of ongoing peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.⁶⁹

According to Harik, “since Israel looked as if it might withdraw its troops without making a deal that would include negotiations with Syria over the Golan Heights, the question of how the resistance card could be retained in the aftermath of the withdrawal would require careful planning and tight coordination between the Lebanese and Syrian government and Hezbollah” especially as “internal and external pressure to send the Lebanese army into the vacuum created by Israel’s departure was anticipated and this pressure would have to be countered if Hezbollah was to carry on its mission.”⁷⁰

Among the list of demands put forward by the Lebanese government in 1999, that would have to be met before peace could be agreed with Israel, was the demand for “the return of all Lebanese territory annexed by Israel, including the Seven Villages and the Shebaa Farms.”⁷¹ However, as Blanford notes, the Seven Villages were Shia populated villages that had been granted Lebanese citizenship in 1920, but ended up in Palestine when the Lebanon-Palestine border was ratified in 1924, but its residents “were expelled

⁶⁹ Charles Babington, “Israel, Syria to Hold Talks in Washington,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 8, 1999, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/pmextra/dec99/8/clinton.htm>

⁷⁰ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 125.

⁷¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 242.

or fled their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, joining the Palestinian refugees streaming into Lebanon.”⁷²

As Blanford notes, this Lebanese demand for the Seven Villages was “clearly unacceptable to Israel, and it was hard to imagine that the Lebanese were serious about the claim,” and Blanford’s attempt to seek a clarification on the demand with Lebanese PM Selim Hoss led to his admission that “the villages were never part of Lebanon as they were incorporated into Palestine” and that it was “unlikely” that the demand would remain on the list of the Lebanese government’s requirements for the Israeli withdrawal. However, when Blanford’s newspaper, *The Daily Star*, published Hoss’s comments in a front-page news report, Hoss contacted Blanford to say that “while the Seven Villages were not covered by Resolution 425, the claim was not being dropped from the government’s list of demands.”⁷³ Blanford concluded that “someone whose ear was close to Syria, it seemed, had taken exception to the prime minister’s unilateral amendment of the seven-point list and had advised him to retract.”⁷⁴

Meanwhile, Hezbollah attacked twenty Israeli and SLA outposts in the days after the resumption of the Israeli-Syrian peace talks, and “significantly stepped up operations” in January 2000, launching “fifteen or more attacks a day, detonating roadside bombs, and battering Israeli and SLA outposts with large quantities of AT-3 Sagger antitank missiles, mortar rounds, and shells” – the fresh offensive coming “days after the first major round of peace talks between the Israelis and Syrians at Shepherdstown, Virginia, had come to an inconclusive end.”⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid., 243.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 244-45.

According to Blanford, the Syrians representative, Farouq al-Sharaa, “had surprised the American mediators by showing behind closed doors an uncharacteristic flexibility and an evident desire to push the talks forward, despite maintaining a hostile stance in public” but the Israeli PM Barak “failed to reciprocate,” and the Syrian delegation “returned home assuming that Barak was not serious about peace. Now the Israelis were going to pay the price in South Lebanon.”⁷⁶

There was circumstantial evidence to support this trend in the early months of the year 2000: the Syrian disappointment over the negotiations for peace with Israel was accompanied by a continued volley of attacks by the Hezbollah on the SLA and IDF positions. In the early months of the year 2000, an unrelenting Hezbollah kept the pressure on the IDF by regularly attacking SLA positions and IDF patrols. On January 30, Hezbollah killed the SLA’s western sector commander Aql Hashem by setting off three IEDs that they had planted at a farmhouse that was to be the meeting point for Hashem’s meeting with local tobacco farmers – “the Hezbollah hit team infiltrated the zone three days earlier, planting the bombs and then settling into a camouflaged observation post nearby,” writes Blanford, noting that “the dismay in Israel over Hashem’s death was palpable” but that his assassination was “only the beginning,” with Hezbollah launching a TOW missile the following morning “straight through the slit window of a concrete observation bunker” in the Ezziyah compound in South Lebanon, with the missile blast killing three soldiers and wounding another four.⁷⁷

Then, on February 6, 2000, Hezbollah “ambushed an Israeli patrol six hundred yards from the border” killing the patrol’s bomb sniffing dog and wounding three

⁷⁶ Ibid., 245.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 245-6.

soldiers, and then “Hezbollah fighters observing from nearby directed accurate mortar and rocket fire into the patrol” killing one soldier and wounding another four, and because “the intense fire prevented helicopters from touching down to evacuate the casualties” the Israeli medics had to treat the casualties “on the main road beside the border with Israel” – meanwhile, cameramen from two Israeli TV stations filmed “the screaming, blood-soaked soldiers” through the border fence, and “the grim reality of the South Lebanon quagmire was broadcast into Israeli homes that night to a stunned audience,” while the next morning’s *Maariv* newspaper in Israel ran the banner headline “PICTURES FROM HELL” noting that “The Lebanese valley of the dead penetrated the living room of Mr. Israel after 18 years of avoidance.”⁷⁸

According to Blanford, the Israeli PM Barak “was caught in a dilemma. He knew that a heavy retaliation to the spate of military fatalities in South Lebanon could jeopardize prospects of further talks with Syria” but “the upsetting television images of the wounded soldiers and the inability to stop Hezbollah’s deadly missile attacks could not be ignored” and so, “with his top commanders military screaming for action, Barak gave the order for air strikes against Lebanese infrastructure targets.”⁷⁹

The Israeli forces launched air strikes on Lebanon’s power stations – the move coming after the IDF lost their sixth man to Hezbollah guerrilla operations conducted over the previous two weeks.⁸⁰ The casualties had weakened the political base of Ehud Barak, who already faced domestic pressure over the stalled Palestinian peace talks that week. Barak reacted to the Hezbollah attacks by bombing Lebanese electrical power

⁷⁸ Ibid., 247.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 247.

⁸⁰ Robert Fisk, “Israeli Jets in Revenge Attack on Power Stations in Lebanon,” *The Independent*, Feb. 8, 2000.

plants. This was, in effect, a repeat of many such earlier Israeli actions against Lebanon, wherein Israeli leadership hoped to use civilian strife in Lebanon as a method of coercively influencing the foreign policy decisions being made in Beirut and Damascus. The Israeli bombing raids carried on over two days, destroying millions of dollars of infrastructure, and plummeting parts of Lebanon into darkness and misery.

According to Blanford, during the Israeli bombardment, Hezbollah's Katyusha rockets were on the launchers with the operators "waiting for the order to fire" but the order didn't come, and "Hezbollah stayed its hand, choosing instead to respond in the most appropriate manner possible" – that action came "thirteen hours after the Israeli jets finished smashing the electricity plants" when a "Hezbollah antitank squad shot yet another TOW missile into an Israeli outpost, killing one more soldier."⁸¹

Seventeen civilians were reported injured in the Israeli bombings in Lebanon, but the lack of fatalities made it politically feasible for the Hezbollah to refrain from firing Katyushas – an operational choice that could have resulted in wider Israeli bombarding of Lebanese territories. Israel was trying, in effect, to repeat a formula it had used to good effect in the past. In its statements to the world press, Israeli government officials refused to accept the April 1996 understanding brokered by France and the United States (which prohibited both sides from attacking civilian targets). Israel was, again, using loss of military personnel stationed in Lebanon as an excuse to launch attacks on civilian targets in Lebanon.⁸²

⁸¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 247-48; Also see, Robert Fisk, "Lebanon on Brink of War With Israel," *The Independent*, Feb. 9, 2000.

⁸² Robert Fisk, "Lebanon on Brink of War With Israel," *The Independent*, Feb. 9, 2000.

According to Blanford, “Israel had expected Hezbollah to retaliate with a Katyusha barrage on Galilee and was prepared to counterrespond with an even more damaging bombing campaign against Lebanese infrastructure. But Hezbollah did not take the bait” but at the same time “the mere threat to retaliate with Katyushas was sufficient to achieve paralysis in northern Israel” with PM Barak ordering “a 48-hour state of emergency in the north, forcing some three hundred thousand people to flee or sit in bomb shelters” in northern Israel, and “economic losses ran at \$2.4 million per day” – all of this happened in Israel, notes Blanford, “without a single Katyusha rocket crossing the border.”⁸³

While the United States tried to blame the developments on the Hezbollah, the French were upset at the Israeli efforts to escalate the conflict.⁸⁴ France, in fact, had been involved in transfer of millions of dollars of funds and services to Lebanon as aid to overcome the infrastructure damage inflicted by the Israeli air raids of 1999. This time around, the Israeli attempt at an escalation, which was also indirectly aimed at the Syrian armed presence in Lebanon, could very well set the peace process back and start a larger war. The situation grew all the more complex when Hezbollah guerrillas managed to kill an IDF soldier during an attack on the otherwise impregnable Beaufort castle.⁸⁵

According to Blanford, “on Feb. 11, the delegates to the Monitoring Group arrived in Naqoura [in Israeli-occupied South Lebanon] to address a flurry of protests filed by both sides” but the “Israeli delegation refused to leave its room despite coaxing by the American and French representatives” and subsequently, “an hour and a half after

⁸³ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 248.

⁸⁴ Robert Fisk, “U.S. Heaps Blame on the Victim, Say Lebanese,” *The Independent*, Feb. 11, 2000.

⁸⁵ Robert Fisk, “Death Comes Calling Again on a Crusader castle,” *The Independent*, Feb. 12, 2000.

the meeting was supposed to start, Hezbollah struck again” killing another Israeli soldier by firing an antitank missile at an observation turret of Beaufort Castle in South Lebanon, and when this news reached Naqoura, “the Israeli delegation stormed out. It was the last time the Monitoring Group convened.”⁸⁶

Under considerable pressure from the international community, the Israelis stopped their infrastructure bombing campaign against Lebanon and averted a repeat of the infamous 1996 Operation Grapes of Wrath. It seemed clear that Israel could not, at this point in the peace process, afford to isolate itself from the world community by escalating the conflict in Lebanon. The Israelis would have to leave Lebanon, and leave quickly to avoid further casualties. Hezbollah’s “three-week escalation” of attacks on Israeli and SLA military targets in January and February 2000 “was perhaps the pinnacle of Hezbollah’s resistance campaign against the Israeli occupation,” notes Blanford. “It blended thoughtful intelligence work to discover the weak spots in the Israeli outposts; skilled battlefield exploitation of the TOW missiles; and tactical foresight by playing within the rules of the April Understanding.”⁸⁷ In March 2000, a Gallup poll for Israel’s *Maariv* newspaper reported that “61 percent of respondents wanted an immediate withdrawal from Lebanon, even without an agreement with Lebanon and Syria.”⁸⁸

The Israeli government announced on March 5, 2000, that it would “pull the troops out of Lebanon by July 2000, hopefully within the framework of an agreement” with Lebanon and Syria, but if there was no agreement “the government will convene at an appropriate time to discuss the method of implementation” of the July 2000

⁸⁶ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 248-49.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

withdrawal from South Lebanon – “There was no going back now,” notes Blanford, “the countdown to withdrawal had begun.”⁸⁹

According to Blanford, the Israeli army prepared two plans for withdrawal from South Lebanon – “New Horizon” involved a withdrawal to the international border “in conformity with Resolution 425” of the UN Security Council (1978), while “Morning Twilight” was the plan for a unilateral withdrawal, “a redeployment to the Purple Line, Israel’s military border where the fence had been pushed deeper into Lebanon in certain places over the years to seize high ground” leaving “under Israeli control eight outposts either straddling the border or fully inside Lebanese territory” because the “Israeli army assessed that if a withdrawal was conducted without an agreement with Syria, Hezbollah would continue to launch attacks against Israel” and so “if fighting was unavoidable, Israel might as well retain the tactical advantages offered by the Purple Line deployment” along Lebanon’s border.⁹⁰

“Yet the Lebanese would consider the adoption of the Morning Twilight plan to be a redeployment, not a full withdrawal,” wrote Blanford, “thus making the Israeli army’s prediction of continued fighting a self-fulfilling prophecy. Hezbollah consistently declared that it would continue to attack Israeli forces as long as ‘one inch’ of Lebanese land remained under occupation.”⁹¹

Meanwhile, several months of preparatory discussions by Israel and Syria were followed by a meeting in March 2000 between President Clinton and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad in Geneva, but the negotiations failed as Israeli PM Barak “refused (to

⁸⁹ Ibid., 250.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Clinton's apparent annoyance) to release a pocket of Syrian land abutting Lake Tiberias, and the Syrians found this unacceptable . . . Israel then began focusing on unilateral withdrawal" from Lebanon.⁹²

According to Blanford, Abdel-Halim Khaddam, then Syrian vice-president, told him that the ailing Syrian president Assad "had wanted to conclude a peace deal with Israel before his death because he believed it would smooth the succession of Bashar [his son] to the presidency" in Syria, and that "despite his ill health, Assad undertook the trip to Geneva because he had been told by Sharaa that Barak was willing to withdraw to the June 4, 1967, line, thus satisfying the Syrian president's long-standing demand. He had also been reassured by Clinton, who telephoned Assad prior to the Geneva summit to say that he was bringing some new and serious proposals from the Israeli prime minister."⁹³

"I think if he had known the position did not include the withdrawal of all territory prior to 1967, he would not have even accepted to go to Geneva," Khaddam told Blanford. "Of course, he was disappointed. He thought he was tricked by the Americans."⁹⁴

While Clinton and Barak "initially blamed Assad for the failure at Geneva," notes Blanford, "even Israeli negotiators acknowledge that the primary responsibility rested with Barak, who dithered at the crucial moment in Shepherdstown when the Syrians were clearly eager for a deal. Even Clinton subsequently wrote in his memoirs that he believed Assad was serious about peace and that Barak had gotten 'cold feet.'"⁹⁵

⁹² Norton, *Hezbollah*, 88-89.

⁹³ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 251.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

After the failure in Geneva, “Barak abandoned hopes of achieving a withdrawal from Lebanon within the framework of an agreement with Syria and began preparing for a unilateral pullout,” notes Blanford, and while Barak was initially leaning toward implement Morning Twilight’s partial withdrawal plan, “he changed his mind when warned by the UN that the Security Council would recognize only a full pullout to the international border.”⁹⁶ After the Israeli government announced plans to leave Lebanon by July, the Syrian Foreign Minister “Farouq al-Sharaa said Israel would be committing ‘suicide’ to withdraw without making a deal with Syria first.”⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the Lebanese government told the UN’s representative Terje Roed Larsen “that the Shebaa Farms was sovereign Lebanese territory and demanded that Israel withdraw from the mountainside along with the rest of the south,” a demand to which Larsen responded by telling Blanford that “I went to see the Shebaa Farms and saw it was a worthless piece of land. I very quickly realized that this was what they would construct in order to say that this was not an end to the occupation and use it as a justification for having Hezbollah as a resistance.”⁹⁸ Blanford notes that Larsen traveled to Damascus and met with Farouq al-Sharaa and asked him if the Shebaa Farms was Lebanese or Syrian land, to which Sharaa responded by saying, “It’s occupied Arab land,” and subsequently Sharaa informed then UN Secretary General “Kofi Annan by telephone that Damascus supported Lebanon’s demands for the restoration of all its occupied land, including the Shebaa Farms.”⁹⁹

The signs of an impending Israeli withdrawal became clear early in May 2000. On May 3, British correspondent Robert Fisk reported that the Israeli withdrawal from

⁹⁶ Ibid., 252.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 253-54.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 256.

Lebanon had begun, with eighty-five Israeli soldiers vacating their posts in Taibe and heading home.¹⁰⁰ Earlier, in March, the Israelis had vacated two posts in the Bekaa Valley, but this time, Fisk noted, the Israelis “withdrew like mice . . . leaving before dawn, in silence and in secret.” The evacuation from Taibe came five days after a Hezbollah guerrilla blew himself up in South Lebanon, injuring three SLA men and destroying a gun battery.

The situation escalated again on May 5, 2000, when Israeli forces fired Hellfire missiles on the Lebanese power plant at Bsalim, destroying four transformers, and causing more than \$2 million worth of damages.¹⁰¹ The attack came in retaliation to the Hezbollah barrage of Katyusha rockets into Kiryat Shimona that had killed one Israeli soldier and injured sixteen Israeli civilians. The Hezbollah defended their launch of the Katyushas on the grounds that shelling by the SLA one day earlier had killed two Christian women in South Lebanon.

The Israelis had warned Lebanon earlier in the year that if Katyushas were fired into Israel, the “soil of Lebanon will burn.”¹⁰² However, the Hezbollah, in this case, found itself backed into a corner. As per the 1996 April Understanding, the Hezbollah had sworn to retaliate with Katyusha strikes into Israel every time IDF or SLA actions caused civilian casualties in South Lebanon. To not do so now would indicate a softening of the Hezbollah position and could result in a slow down of the Israeli withdrawal. It was also interesting to note that Israel, at this point in the conflict, had openly and

¹⁰⁰ Robert Fisk, “After 22 Years, Israel Begins Its Departure From Lebanon,” *The Independent*, May 3, 2000.

¹⁰¹ Robert Fisk, “Israel Redirects Hellfire Missiles ‘After U.S. Advice’,” *The Independent*, May 6, 2000.

¹⁰² Robert Fisk, “Lebanon Conflict: The War Never Really Went Away – We Just Got Used to It,” *The Independent*, Feb. 10, 2000.

aggressively warned that it would attack Syrian positions in Lebanon in retaliation for the Hezbollah attacks, as Israel held the Syrians responsible for Hezbollah actions in Lebanon. However, after the Hezbollah barrage on Kiryat Shimona, the Israeli refrained from attacking Syrian targets. Journalist Robert Fisk alleged that this decision had been influenced by the U.S. ambassador to Israel who had warned against a strike on Syria's Lebanese positions as this would have crumpled the ongoing, U.S. brokered, Israeli-Syrian peace talks.¹⁰³

As this was a case of Hezbollah having retaliated on behalf of casualties in the Lebanese Christian community, and as the Bsalim power plant was in a Christian neighborhood, the exchange seemed to have strengthened Hezbollah's position against the Israeli actions in the Lebanese community.¹⁰⁴ Hezbollah was able to draw legitimacy to its claim that it was a Lebanese movement aimed at Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory, irrespective of religious differences among the Lebanese communities residing in the occupied areas. Furthermore, Israel's hesitation in attacking the Syrian Army created an atmosphere of strategic limitation – the Hezbollah now knew that it could engage the Israelis in a limited conflict that was balanced in favor of the Hezbollah. The Hezbollah seemed unafraid of casualties among their ranks, but the Israelis could not bear the political weight of more casualties in Lebanon. And the issue of whether Israel's withdrawal would be recognized by the Lebanese government as grounds for a cessation of hostilities remained contentious, with the status of Lebanese territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war, such as the Shebaa Farms, becoming a key point of contention,

¹⁰³ Robert Fisk, "Israel Redirects Hellfire Missiles 'After U.S. Advice'," *The Independent*, May 6, 2000.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

and a possible justification for continued resistance against Israel, as Fisk reported in early May 2000:

Resolution 425, the Lebanese point out, calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. But the resolution was passed in 1978 and the Israelis are leaving 22 years late. The Israelis have conditions: they want their proxy and hated collaborationist militiamen — the “South Lebanon Army” — to be protected in Lebanon after their retreat. They want border security guarantees. They want the Lebanese Hizbollah resistance disarmed. The Lebanese refuse. The resolution calls for an unconditional withdrawal, they say.

Then come the farms. Lebanese still live in four of them — under Israeli occupation — and the rest are derelict; but they were in Lebanese territory until 1967, when the Israeli army, storming on to the Syrian Golan Heights, occupied the strip of Lebanese land beside Shebaa. As far as Israel was concerned, they were Syrian, not Lebanese. But now that Israel wants to withdraw from Lebanon, the government in Beirut expects this withdrawal to include the 18 farms.

Into this cartographical nightmare, the Israelis decided to drive their own demands. One of the most senior generals in the Israeli army’s northern command saw fit to announce that along with an Israeli withdrawal, there may have to be some “alterations” to the international frontier between Israel and Lebanon. It was another of Israel’s now familiar warnings of what would happen if an Arab nation, in this case Lebanon, dared to defy it.

And the Lebanese hit back with precision. Yes, said the Beirut government, they would like a border alteration — they would like the return of seven Lebanese villages that were ceded to the British mandate of Palestine in the 1920s. A few elderly inhabitants of these villages still exist. They began life as citizens of the Ottoman empire, became Lebanese in 1920, Palestinian within a decade, and then dispossessed after the first Arab-Israeli war.

Israeli troops massacred dozens of men from one village in 1948, but the place names are known to most Lebanese today. The problem for the Israelis is that all seven are now inhabited by Jewish Israelis — and the largest of them is the settlement which was bombarded by the Hizbollah’s Katyusha rockets last week.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Robert Fisk, “Hopes of Peace Lie in Mr. Pinter’s Maps,” *The Independent*, May 7, 2000.

Meanwhile, realizing that they were caught in the middle of an impending IDF pullout, the SLA started decaying and falling apart. Hezbollah had been pursuing a policy of escalating psychological warfare against the SLA in recent months because “Hezbollah leaders were very conscious of the opportunities offered by the plummeting morale among SLA fighters as their masters debated departure plans.”¹⁰⁶ According to Harik, the SLA members expected that “they ran the risk of having acts of revenge perpetrated against themselves and their families” if they surrendered, and that the Lebanese government might prosecute them for crimes against the state and charge them with treason, “which could carry a death sentence.”¹⁰⁷ Hezbollah exploited these SLA fears by promising leniency “to any SLA foot soldier that defected before the full withdrawal took place” while also stepping up “attacks against Israeli soldiers and SLA fighters in the ‘Security Zone’” – the end result of this pressure becoming evident in the Christian town of Jezzine, where “SLA defections in that locale thus became a serious matter for the Israelis in 1999 and it soon became obvious that the Jezzine area, including some 22 villages with a population of about 4,000, could no longer effectively be held.”¹⁰⁸ The SLA members began abandoning their posts, and turning themselves in at a local church accompanied by a priest, where Lebanese government security forces took charge of them, while Hezbollah focused mostly on continuing attacks on the remaining posts “taking great care not to subject the evacuated villages to incoming fire from the Israelis covering the retreat.”¹⁰⁹ As Harik notes, “Defection picked up speed as the SLA militiamen realized that it was safe to surrender” while “the manner in which Hezbollah

¹⁰⁶ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 126.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 126-27.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

harassed the departing SLA troops and left the government to handle those who wished to surrender” sent a message to the SLA: “You may safely surrender and you will be taken into custody by the state. If you do not surrender, then you will have to take your chances with the resistance.”¹¹⁰ Harik describes this as the “carrot and stick routine, where the state dangled the carrot of imprisonment in government jails and fair and individual trials in military courts for any militiaman who surrendered, while Hezbollah promised hell to the recalcitrant.”¹¹¹

On May 10, 2000, the SLA commander, General Antoine Lahd, threatened that his soldiers would continue to wage a war against the Lebanese Army in South Lebanon unless the government agreed to provide amnesty to all his troops.¹¹² Lahd did not request amnesty for himself, but his announcement was seen as a last ditch measure by the SLA leaders to seek a solution in Lebanon in the face of Israeli hesitation in accommodating the militia within Israeli territories. Lahd’s threat was seen as a desperate action and only reinforced the confidence among the Hezbollah guerrillas, who dismissed his threat and countered it by assertions that they were capable of routing the SLA. The Lebanese government responded by refusing to provide amnesty to the SLA and demanding they surrender to face the law of the land, and “the Prime Minister in Beirut, Selim Hoss, [said] General Lahd is a traitor who must hand himself over to ‘justice.’”¹¹³

Having failed to secure a future in Lebanon, the SLA realized that their only option was to demand asylum in Israel, and in order to do this they would have to charge the border before the IDF itself had an opportunity to cross over and reinforce the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 128-129.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 129.

¹¹² Robert Fisk, “Israel Fires Barrage of Threats on Eve of Pull-out,” *The Independent*, May 10, 2000.

¹¹³ Ibid.

positions. In effect, the SLA had realized that if they stayed behind and fulfilled their role of guarding the IDF withdrawal, the impending exchange of fire with the advancing Hezbollah guerrillas would destroy them. Signs of this realization were visible as the SLA men started defecting to the Hezbollah or surrendering to the Lebanese Army in droves.¹¹⁴

Those among the ranks of the SLA who knew they couldn't surrender, having committed torture and war crimes against suspected resistance supporters in South Lebanon, knew their only option was to escape to Israel before the border closed. Their fear was heightened by Hezbollah's offer of amnesty to any SLA militiaman who would kill an SLA officer or an Israeli soldier before defecting.¹¹⁵ Among the first to cross the border into Israel with their families were GSS' (Shin Bet's) Lebanese agents who had tortured and killed civilians at the behest of their Israeli bosses.¹¹⁶ The loss of the GSS agents and informers greatly reduced the IDF's capacity to collect information, and increased concerns regarding the safety and security of the IDF troops in Lebanon. In effect, a spiral of events had been successfully set into motion by Hezbollah that deteriorated the Israeli and SLA forces day by day.

For the Israeli soldiers serving in South Lebanon, "the end came ahead of schedule, on a Sunday in late May" when "a civilian parade organized by Hezbollah crossed from Lebanon proper into the security zone and approached a South Lebanon Army outpost. The Lebanese militiamen fled, and their commander cannily joined the

¹¹⁴ Robert Fisk, "No Mercy for Israel's Allies in South Lebanon," *The Independent*, May 17, 2000.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ From June 2000 background interviews with UNIFIL officers in South Lebanon who witnessed the evacuation of SLA officers in May 2000. The UNIFIL officers, who recognized the GSS agents, claimed that these interrogators were the first to leave the occupied areas and escape into Israel.

marchers. There were more processions toward militia outposts the next day,” but when Israeli aircraft “fired at the road in front of the marchers to hold them back they just walked off the asphalt and continued in the brush, daring the pilots to shoot them. The pilots didn’t shoot. After that the militiamen near the Pumpkin abandoned Red Pepper, Cyprus, and Citrus. And just like that, the security zone disintegrated.”¹¹⁷

On May 22, 2000, journalists scrambled in a frenzy across South Lebanon as the news spread that the much anticipated completion phase of the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied areas had begun. The Israelis had hoped to surprise everyone, most of all the Lebanese guerrillas attacking it, by pulling out ahead of schedule and, therefore, reducing IDF and other troop casualties by not allowing the enemy enough time to prepare a sustained offensive on the retreating Israeli soldiers and their South Lebanon Army militia allies.¹¹⁸ However, as the scribes arriving in South Lebanon discovered, the guerrillas of Hezbollah and Amal, along with other resistance militias, were hot on the heels of the withdrawing troops. “The guerrillas knew it was the end and wanted the Israelis to leave under fire,” notes Friedman, “I supposed they figured there was no point in conserving their ammunition if there wouldn’t be anyone to shoot at tomorrow. The barrage started early the next morning and hardly let up after that.”¹¹⁹

By May 22, 2000, the IDF had evacuated a third of its occupied zone and returned to Israel.¹²⁰ As word of the withdrawal spread, Hezbollah guerrillas, followed by news crews and hundreds of ordinary Lebanese civilians drove down to the liberated villages and towns. In many cases the convoys of Lebanese guerrillas, journalists and patriots

¹¹⁷ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 168.

¹¹⁸ Robert Fisk, “In the End, They Just Skulked Away,” *The Independent*, May 23, 2000.

¹¹⁹ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 168.

¹²⁰ Robert Fisk, “In the End, They Just Skulked Away,” *The Independent*, May 23, 2000.

arrived in time to watch the last IDF or SLA vehicle leaving. Many a times the retreating tanks and armored vehicles fired at the approaching hordes of vehicles to keep them at a distance while the troops made their getaway. With the Hezbollah on their heels and no concrete SLA positions to provide cover, the IDF started a race for the border that carried on, over night and day, over many skirmishes, with the IDF positions close to the border inside Israel providing cover to the retreating troops by conducting artillery barrages, tank attacks and helicopter gunship missions.

In village after village, journalists discovered scenes of celebrations among smoldering ruins, and many Western scribes saw, for the first time, the guerrillas of Hezbollah out in the open with their weapons in hand. While Hezbollah had made themselves available to the media in Beirut through their public relations apparatus in previous years, the Shi'ite militia had been largely secretive and difficult to approach in South Lebanon, but now it was out in the open for all to see.¹²¹ In addition to the major southern towns and cities, where the Hezbollah or Amal militia quickly ran up their respective flags, the journalists scrambled to catch up with the locals at the various dreaded landmarks of the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon.

In the hilltop detention and interrogation center of Khiam prison, “officers from the [SLA] militia and Israeli security agents worked the black arts on guerrilla suspects.”¹²² Harik notes that the Khiam detention center was “built by the SLA and Israelis to hold captured members and sympathizers of Hezbollah and other political

¹²¹ The author visited South Lebanon in July 1999, June 2000, June 2001 and June 2003.

¹²² Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 142.

opponents – some of whom were young women,” adding that “the facility was a loathsome symbol of the occupation.”¹²³

British journalist Robert Fisk reported on May 17 on the questions surrounding the prisoners still held in Khiam prison:

There are only 160 prisoners left there and their fate, despite requests for information from the International Red Cross, remains unknown. Will these hostages, held for the return of missing Israeli troops in Lebanon, be freed or taken across the border into Israel?

There are men in the jail who have been held without charge for more than 10 years. Sulieman Ramadan, for example, has been in Khiam for 16 years, one of four men who tried to dig a tunnel out of the walls last year but who were punished most severely for their attempts at freedom, their food and letters and family visits suspended.

Ramadan’s leg was stamped on and burnt during interrogation. It was later amputated. He will be in no mood to offer compassion or clemency to his Lebanese collaborator torturers.¹²⁴

On May 23, villagers from the area swarmed into Khiam only to find that the prison guards had vanished overnight. As villagers and local militia broke down the doors and prison cells, the guerrillas and civilians held as prisoners in the facility poured out, their ghastly sights and stories finally available to the journalists who had been kept out of the prison for years.¹²⁵ Harik, who saw the images from Khiam on Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV station, noted it was “the most emotional of the events” as the prisoners, some of whom “had been detained for more than ten years and had no idea what was happening,” including a father and daughter, “stumbled out of their cells into the daylight

¹²³ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 138.

¹²⁴ Robert Fisk, “No Mercy for Israel’s Allies in South Lebanon,” *The Independent*, May 17, 2000.

¹²⁵ Robert Fisk, “Chaos, Humiliation, Bloodshed: After 22 Years Israel Withdraws From Lebanon,” *The Independent*, May 24, 2000.

and embraced.” Harik was watching the events on TV with her neighbors and notes “there wasn’t a dry eye in the room.”¹²⁶

By daybreak on May 24 the last convoy of the IDF troops had left the occupied Lebanese territories. The IDF troops, who had captured Beaufort castle in 1982 in a daring paratrooper landing, left the castle the way they had arrived: by air. The invincible fortress had turned out to be as difficult to get out of as it had been to get into. As Hezbollah guerrillas crossed minefields to organize mortar attacks, the IDF had no option but to pin down in their concrete bunkers and await evacuation. Once the bulk of the IDF had crossed the border and more resources were made available, under the cover of darkness, helicopter after helicopter arrived in the region of Arnoun to help evacuate the IDF soldiers trapped inside the castle. The retreating Israeli soldiers blew up portions of the castle before they left, but within a day Lebanese families were swarming to the fortress they had not seen in more than eighteen years and having picnics with their children by the banks of the Litani River that flowed through the valley below the mountain fort.¹²⁷

Among those headed into the liberated South Lebanon that day was Harik, “along with what seemed to be most of the Lebanese population” piled into “thousands of passenger cars, taxis, trucks and buses jammed with jubilant flag-waving passengers” that “crept along the bomb-cratered roads near the border. People swarmed over the rubble of Israeli-SLA bunkers that had been blown up by evacuating forces, searching for ‘souvenirs.’ The Khiam detention facility, its main gate draped with Hezbollah banners

¹²⁶ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 138.

¹²⁷ Robert Fisk, “Withdrawal From Lebanon: At the Gates of Eden, the Holy Warriors of Hezbollah Realize Their Impossible Dream,” *The Independent*, May 25, 2000.

and manned by partisans in uniform, was thronged with people and encumbered by Japanese, Spanish, German and other media caravans setting up equipment near al-Manar TV's central location. . . . Elsewhere, at the entrance of some villages I drove through, crowds lined the street ready with rose petals, candies and rice to toss at local sons and politicians whose arrival was expected imminently. Some were making their returns after absences of more than 20 years."¹²⁸

Strangely enough, the pictures of the retreating IDF troops broadcast all over the world showed them to be smiling and waving "V" signs. It had been a victorious journey back home for the Israelis who, even in their defeat at the hands of the Hezbollah, had found ways of expressing the contrary. Meanwhile, Hezbollah guerrillas swept in to capture the tanks, armored vehicles, artillery and ammunition left behind by the escaping SLA troops. In the confusion and frustration of the withdrawal, IDF troops fired upon SLA men and their families on their way to the border in order to keep the roads open for a quick withdrawal of IDF troops and equipment. Two SLA fighters and a woman died by Israeli firing, and six others were wounded.¹²⁹

Firing as they retreated, Israeli Merkava tanks lobbed shells across the border onto vehicles driving down the roads in South Lebanon.¹³⁰ One of the shells hit a car carrying the BBC correspondent Jeremy Bowen. Bowen, who was standing beside the car recording the developments, escaped unhurt, but his driver was killed.¹³¹ Abed Taqqoush, the BBC's driver, had also driven Blanford to South Lebanon in the previous days, and

¹²⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 138.

¹²⁹ Robert Fisk, "Chaos, Humiliation, Bloodshed: After 22 Years Israel Withdraws From Lebanon," *The Independent*, May 24, 2000.

¹³⁰ While SLA troops were given possession of some T-55 and T-72 Soviet tanks captured from the Syrians, the Israeli Merkava tank was operated only by the IDF troops.

¹³¹ Robert Fisk, "Chaos, Humiliation, Bloodshed: After 22 Years Israel Withdraws From Lebanon," *The Independent*, May 24, 2000.

while he “was not the only civilian victim of Israeli tank fire during the withdrawal,” Blanford noted, Abed had “the tragic distinction of being the very last Lebanese civilian killed during Israel’s occupation of Lebanon” in May 2000.¹³²

By late afternoon on May 24, hundreds of Hezbollah guerrillas and ordinary Lebanese civilians were jeering at IDF troops across the fence, many of them seeing the land of Palestine (refusing to call it Israel) for the first time. Helpless IDF soldiers watched as the Lebanese waved Hezbollah flags and raised anti-Israel slogans.¹³³ Harik noted that “along the border fence, crowds were already gathering to taunt and throw stones at the Israeli soldiers manning observation towers on the other side” and that the “casting of a stone in defiance of the Israelis became a rite for almost all visitors to the border area.”¹³⁴

General Antoine Lahd, the SLA commander who had issued statements from Paris announcing his imminent arrival to rally his troops against the Lebanese (Hezbollah) forces, never showed up. On May 24, gunmen from the Amal militia moved into Lahd’s home village of Marjayoun and looted his home.¹³⁵ In many cases the Hezbollah had to move in quickly to secure the SLA prisoners. The Hezbollah was widely reported, in local and international media, to have arrested the SLA men who were left behind and treated them as prisoners, without subjecting them to revenge killings.¹³⁶

¹³² Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 272-74.

¹³³ Robert Fisk, “Withdrawal From Lebanon: At the Gates of Eden, the Holy Warriors of Hezbollah Realize Their Impossible Dream,” *The Independent*, May 25, 2000.

¹³⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 138-39.

¹³⁵ Robert Fisk, “Withdrawal From Lebanon: At the Gates of Eden, the Holy Warriors of Hezbollah Realize Their Impossible Dream,” *The Independent*, May 25, 2000.

¹³⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah*, 89-90.

Over three days – between May 22 and May 24, 2000 – the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) withdrew from its reinforced positions within South Lebanon, ending its twenty-two-year occupation of the region (if one considers the four-year period of Israeli-backed militia presence in South Lebanon, from 1978 to 1982, to be a part of its formal occupation of the region). The withdrawal, as per Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s numerous public announcements over the past year, was supposed to have occurred in the month of July.¹³⁷ However, it was carried out ahead of schedule as the IDF realized that Hezbollah guerrillas had started making inroads into the General Security Services (GSS or Shin Bet) intelligence network and the guerrillas showed no signs of easing their mounting operations against the IDF and their militia – the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

At the end of the day, on May 24, 2000, the last IDF soldiers had left their garrisons in South Lebanon and more than 6,000 SLA soldiers and their families had moved into Israel. Hezbollah’s victory over the Israeli occupation was as much a reflection of its military prowess, as it was a victory of its media savvy information campaigns which had won it immense publicity and support in the region.

In its dusty and dangerous retreat from South Lebanon, the Israeli military left behind a Lebanese population that was, for the first time in twenty-two years, completely free to speak its mind in front of a press corps that was completely free to interview and photograph them. This was a major setback to the carefully constructed image of Israel’s security zone in South Lebanon, where journalists had previously had restricted access.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 244.

¹³⁸ Robert Fisk, “Withdrawal from Lebanon: At Khiam jail: Inside a torturers’ den,” *The Independent*, May 25, 2000.

This chapter is a content analysis of the sources utilized to tell the story of the May 2000 withdrawal of the Israeli military from South Lebanon by two leading American newspapers — *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* — that had correspondents in Lebanon and Israel covering the conflict. It is the attempt of this study to explore, through source analysis, whether the news coverage of two elite American newspapers overrepresented certain views and underreported others during the May 2000 withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon. If Lebanese opposition and resistance sources, such as the Hezbollah, were significantly underreported, it would indicate that there was a propaganda effect at play in the U.S. news coverage, and that these propaganda influences in news gathering and editing continued to disfigure foreign reporting by glossing over foreign policy failures and the human suffering caused thereof. The previous chapter's content analysis study noted statistically significant overrepresentation of U.S. and Israeli sources in the April 1996 Israeli attacks on Lebanon, a time when Israel enjoyed an upper hand in the planning of the military operation and anticipated the media campaign. However, as the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000 was a sudden and surprising tactical retreat, this study also examined whether the U.S. authorities lost their command over their media campaign, thereby leading to a higher coverage of opposition sources in Lebanon in May 2000, which Strobel described as a "Pull" effect,¹³⁹ than had been observed in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* news coverage in April 1996.

¹³⁹ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

A total of sixty-two news stories were coded for the time period of May 2000. They yielded 764 attributed source paragraphs across more than 50,000 words in the news coverage of the conflict. (A total of 101 news stories were coded for the time period of March-April 1996 in the earlier study, and had yielded 1,170 attributed source paragraphs across more than 80,000 words of news coverage.)

Findings

A content analysis of the twenty-nine *Washington Post* and thirty-three *New York Times* articles from May 2000 showed that the Hezbollah had become more prominent in the sourcing of the two newspapers, accounting for eighty attributions and averaging 1.29 attributions per news story (as opposed to March-April 1996 when it was one of the least reported sources with a total of forty-four attributions, averaging less than one attribution for every two news stories in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*.) This increase in Hezbollah source paragraphs is consistent with Strobel's "Push" and "Pull" effects argument, wherein opposition groups get more traction with the press in times when the U.S. government is unprepared for a surprise or sudden setback in foreign policy. Meanwhile, Israeli sources still topped the total count with 332 attributions, averaging about 5.35 attributions per news story (higher than the March-April 1996 study wherein Israeli sources accounted for about four attributions in every news story). Most remarkably, and consistent with Strobel's findings, U.S. sources accounted for only eighty-six attributions, averaging 1.38 attributed source paragraphs per news story (significantly down from the March-April 1996 study when they dominated the news coverage, averaging about three attributions for every news story filed). Non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant coverage, with 130 attributions, averaging 2.09

source paragraphs per news story (a little lower than March-April 1996 when Lebanese sources averaged about 2.7 attributions per news story). The overall distribution of the top five sources is shown in Table 5.1 in comparison with the rankings of the 1996 results.

Table 5.1 Sources by Nationality (2000 & 1996)		
Nationality	May 2000 Attributions	April 1996 Attributions
Israel	#1. 332/764 (43.45%)	#1. 413/1170 (35.29%)
United States	#3. 86/764 (11.25%)	#2. 306/1170 (26.15 %)
Lebanon (non-Hezbollah)	#2. 130/764 (17.01%)	#3. 276/1170 (23.58%)
United Nations	#5. 59/764 (7.72%)	#4. 82/1170 (7%)
Hezbollah	#4. 80/764 (10.47%)	#5. 44/1170 (3.76%)

Hezbollah accounted for more than double the percentage of source paragraphs in the May 2000 analysis, accounting for 10.47 percent, as compared with the March-April 1996 news coverage wherein Hezbollah accounted for less than 4 percent of all source paragraphs in the content; and Israeli source paragraphs outnumbered Hezbollah source paragraphs by a margin of more than 9 to 1 in the entire news coverage in March-April 1996, but in the May 2000 news coverage the Israeli advantage had dropped to a little more than 4 to 1 in the published source paragraphs. The rise from March-April 1996 to May 2000 of Hezbollah source paragraphs, to more than 10 percent of attributed source paragraphs of news content, was similarly noted in both the newspapers source paragraphs, shown in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2 Sources by Nationality in Each Newspaper (1996 & 2000)	
1996 Washington Post (Source tally, Rank)	2000 Washington Post (Source tally, Rank)
(%age of total of 566 source paras)	(%age of total of 355 source paras)
Israel (169, #1)(29.85%)	Israel (149, #1)(41.9%)
United States (169, #2)(29.85%)	United States (43, #3)(12.11%)
Lebanon (115, #3)(20.31%)	Lebanon (60, #2)(16.9%)
United Nations (53, #4)(9.36%)	United Nations (36, #5)(10.14%)
Hezbollah (23, #5)(4.06%)	Hezbollah (37, #4)(10.42%)
1996 New York Times (Source tally, Rank)	2000 New York Times (Source tally, Rank)
(%age of total of 604 source paras)	(%age of total of 409 source paras)
Israel (243, #1)(40.23%)	Israel (183, #1)(44.7%)
Lebanon (161, #2)(26.65%)	Lebanon (70, #2)(17.11%)
United States (137, #3)(22.68%)	United States (43, #3)(10.51%)
United Nations (29, #4)(4.80%)	United Nations (23, #5)(5.6%)
Hezbollah (21, #5)(3.47%)	Hezbollah (43, #4)(10.51%)

As can be seen in Table 5.2, both newspapers had awarded Hezbollah less than 5 percent of the total number of source paragraphs in their news reporting in 1996, even though the conflict, and the accompanying government narrative, was aimed at the Hezbollah. However, by 2000, the share of the news paragraphs sourced from Hezbollah had risen to over 10 percent, indicating some support for Strobel's "Pull" effect hypothesis. As was the case in 1996, t-test comparison of means of the source paragraphs in the news reporting of the two newspapers showed no statistically significant difference in their use of the major news sources in May 2000. This indicates that journalists for both newspapers in May 2000 were following near similar routines of news reporting and

editing, with no significant difference in the number of source paragraphs in the two newspapers, just as was the case in March-April 1996.

For the most part, both newspapers news coverage showed remarkable similarities in news source paragraphs as shown in Table 5.3, when the means of each news source paragraphs category were calculated across their entire news coverage of the conflict:

Table 5.3 Means of Source Paragraphs in Each Newspaper (2000 & 1996)	
Washington Post 1996-2000	The New York Times 1996-2000
U.S. Government (1) = 2.90-1.38	U.S. Government (1) = 2.48-0.94
Israel Government (1) = 2.06-2.76	Israel Government (1) = 2.71-2.58
Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.98-1.1	Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.88-0.94
Lebanese Government (1) = 0.76-0.55	Lebanese Government (1) = 0.92-0.48
Israel Military (1) = 0.88-1.21	Israel Military (1) = 0.83-1.33
United Nations (1) = 0.88-1.24	United Nations (1) = 0.54-0.7
Hezbollah (2) = 0.29-0.62	Hezbollah (2) = 0.33-0.45

The only statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the two newspapers was that *The New York Times* published the news reporting on this conflict more prominently, with the mean page number for its thirty-three news reports being 6.79, while the *Washington Post* had a larger mean page number, 17.31, for its twenty-nine news reports on the conflict, thereby publishing the news reports less prominently ($t=5.005$, $df = 60$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This was, again, remarkably similar to the 1996 analysis, where the only statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the two newspapers was that *The New York Times* published the news reporting on this conflict more prominently, with the mean page

number for its fifty-two news reports being 6.08, while the *Washington Post* had a larger mean page number, 16.86, for its forty-nine news reports on the conflict, thereby publishing the news reports less prominently ($t=6.584$, $df = 99$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.000$).

The overall tally showed that the U.S. Government (1) category dominated the sources used in the coverage of the March-April 1996 crises, but Israeli Government (1) sources were at the top of the tally in the May 2000 news coverage in the two newspapers, as shown in Table 5.4.

Type of Source	Number of sources (%age) [1996-2000]	Overall Rank [1996-2000]
U.S. Government (1)	271 (23.16%)-71 (9.29%)	1-3
Israeli Government (1)	242 (20.68%)-165 (21.59%)	2-1
Lebanese Civilians (1)	94 (8.03%)-63 (8.24%)	3-4
Israeli Military (1)	86 (7.35%)-79 (10.34%)	4-2
Lebanese Government (1)	85 (7.26%)-32 (4.18%)	5-9
United Nations (1)	71 (6.06%)-59 (7.72%)	6-5
Israeli Experts (1)	40 (3.41%)-18 (2.35%)	7-11
Israeli Civilian (1)	37 (3.16%)-49 (6.41%)	8-6
Hezbollah (2)	31 (2.64%)-33 (4.31%)	9-8
Hezbollah (1)	13 (1.11%)-45 (5.89%)	14-7
South Lebanon Army (1)	7 (0.59%)-21 (2.74%)	19-10

As Table 5.4 shows, in some important categories the distribution of sources was just as lopsided in 2000 as it had been in 1996. American and Israeli government sources dominated the news reporting in May 2000, with overall criticism of U.S. policy, coded

as (2), accounting for less than 10 percent of all news content (sixty-seven of 764 source paragraphs) – that provides considerable support to Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda model,¹⁴⁰ wherein sources that did not oppose U.S. policy made up for more than 90 percent of all quoted materials in the news reporting.

As was the case in the 1996 study, there were no U.S. Government sources quoted in the news reporting that opposed the U.S. policy in the May 2000 news reporting – these circumstances also point to strong support for Bennett’s Indexing Hypothesis,¹⁴¹ wherein reporters for both newspapers gravitated toward the majoritarian consensus view of the U.S. government officials they interviewed.

As was the case in March-April 1996, over the course of the May 2000 conflict, Lebanese government sources (forty-one/764 source paragraphs) and UN personnel sources (fifty-nine/764 source paragraphs) each got less than 10 percent of overall news coverage, even though they had an important say in the conflict. Similarly, the Syrian government (five/764 source paragraphs), which was an important player in the conflict due to its military and political domination in Lebanon, got less than 1 percent coverage, even though American government sources regularly berated Syrian policies in the region. France (five/764 source paragraphs), which had added important clauses and amendments to the U.S. cease-fire agreement in April 1996, got less than 1 percent coverage, all of it unopposed to the U.S and published in the *Washington Post*, while *The New York Times* published no source paragraphs attributed to the French in May 2000, just as it had published no source paragraphs based on information from the French

¹⁴⁰ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

¹⁴¹ W. Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

government in March-April 1996 effectively denying its readers any knowledge of the French efforts leading up to the April Understanding.

Lebanese civilians (sixty-nine/764 source paragraphs) got about 9 percent of the coverage, while Lebanese Experts got four source paragraphs in the news coverage, of which none were critical of U.S./Israeli actions, while Israeli experts got nineteen source paragraphs, of which only one was critical of the conflict. Lebanese NGOs, as health workers and emergency relief personnel, could have played an important part in the news gathering and fact checking process – they accounted for nine/764 source paragraphs, a slight improvement from March-April 1996 when they had received only eight source paragraphs out of 1170.

The May 2000 conflict, which was based around the Israelis and Hezbollah, saw some more of Hezbollah views presented to counter the Israeli allegations as compared to the March-April 1996 news coverage. While Israeli Government (1) sources' approval of its actions (165/764 source paragraphs) accounted for more than 20 percent of all source paragraphs published, while Hezbollah (2) sources' criticism of these actions (thirty-three/764 source paragraphs) accounted for less than 5 percent of the source paragraphs in May 2000, and improvement over March-April 1996 news coverage when they accounted for less than 3 percent of the source paragraphs. Arguments presented by the Hezbollah (1) sources (forty-five/764 source paragraphs) that did not address merely the U.S. policy on Israeli action but spoke of broader issues was better represented in May 2000, accounting for almost 6 percent of the news source paragraphs, as compared with March-April 1996 when it got less than 2 percent of source paragraphs, while the U.S. Government (1) sources that had 23 percent of the March-April 1996 coverage declined

to only 9.29 percent of source paragraphs (seventy-one/764) in May 2000 news coverage – this overall decline in source paragraphs for U.S. Government (1) sources paragraphs from 23 percent to 9.29 percent accompanied by an increase in Hezbollah sources paragraphs from less than 5 percent to over 10 percent from 1996 to 2000 provides support for Strobel’s “Pull” effects hypothesis.

As was the case in March-April 1996, the two newspapers also did not differ significantly on their datelines – or the place stories were filed from – in the May 2000 conflict’s reporting, as shown in Table 5.5:

Table 5.5 Datelines of News Reports (1996-2000)		
Origin of Story	Washington Post	New York Times
Israel	11-13	25-15
Lebanon	25-11	21-11
USA	7-5	2-4
Other/Unknown	2-0	2-3

A chi-square test of this crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper’s distribution of Datelines for their news reporting on the 2000 conflict, just as was the case on the 1996 conflict.

A comparison of means for the news content from the three major datelines showed some interesting results in the two newspapers, as shown in Table 5.6:

Table 5.6 Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (2000)						
<i>Variable Measured</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>Washington Post</i>		
Dateline(#of reports): Israel(15) Lebanon(11) U.S.(4)	Israel(13) Lebanon(11) U.S.(5)					
Length (number of words)	779.73	862	662	943	1008.73	702.6
Page Number	7.40	4.91	11.75	17.54	16.7	18
#1 Source mean	GovIS1(4.4)	CivLB1(2.4)	GovUS1(6)	GovIS1(5.3)	CivLB1(2.5)	GovUS1(6.4)
#2 Source mean	MilIS1(2.67)	HB1(2)	MilUS1(2)	CivIS1(1.6)	HB1(1.4)	France1(1)
#3 Source mean	CivIS1(1.33)	GovLB1(1.2)	UN1(1.2)	UN1(1.5)	MilIS1(1.4)	UN1(0.8)
#4 Source mean	SLA1(0.73)	UN1(1.1)	EU1(0.75)	MilIS1(1.3)	GovLB1(1.3)	NgoUS2(0.4)
#5 Source mean	HB2(0.47)	GovIS1(1)	GovIS1(1)	HB2(0.77)	UN1(1)	MilIS1(0.2)

A t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed no statistically significant differences in the May 2000 conflict news reporting in either newspaper – this was an interesting development compared to the t-test comparisons for the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon in March-April 1996 wherein the *Washington Post*'s news reports from Israel (mean = 1068.82 words) were given more news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 716.24 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.169$, $df = 34$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.037). *The New York Times* also showed this difference in 1996, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 956.24 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 653.90 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.676$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.010). In addition to this, *The New York Times* also gave the Israeli news reports more prominence in 1996 (mean page number = 4.64) than those from Lebanon (mean page number = 8.19), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -2.829$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.007). The lack of a statistically significant

difference in any measures of comparison of the Datelines between Lebanon and Israel in the May 2000 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis,¹⁴² given that Israel based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length as opposed to that from Lebanon.

Another interesting development in the May 2000 news reporting from both newspapers from Israel and Lebanon was that both now showed Hezbollah source paragraphs within their top five means, again demonstrating the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis, given Israel’s military retreat from Lebanon in May 2000. When the entire data were tested for a t-test comparison of the means across the Datelines for the news reports filed from Israel, Lebanon and the U.S. to compare their mean story length, mean page numbers, and mean source paragraphs, the following findings were reported, as shown in Table 5.7:

¹⁴² Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

Table 5.7 Total Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (2000)			
<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports): Israel(28)	Lebanon(22)	U.S.(9)
Length (number of words)	855.54	935.36	684.56
Page Number	12.11	10.82	15.22
#1 Source mean	GovIS1(4.8)	CivilianLB1(2.5)	GovUS1(6.2)
#2 Source mean	MilIS1(2)	HB1(1.7)	MilUS1(1)
#3 Source mean	CivIS1(1.4)	GovLB1(1.3)	UN1(1)
#4 Source mean	UN1(0.8)	UN1(1.1)	France1(0.56)
#5 Source mean	HB2(0.6)	GovIS1 (1)	EU1(0.33)
Gov Lebanon 2	0.11	0.27	0
Hezbollah sources1	0.04	1.73	0
Hezbollah sources2	0.61	0.55	0

The mean length of the stories from Israel in March-April 1996 was 990.64 words, while those from Lebanon was 687.78 words. This difference was statistically significant in the t-test ($t= 3.323$, $df= 80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001). Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were given more news copy than those filed from Lebanon in 1996 with statistical significance. In May 2000, however, the mean length of the stories from Lebanon was 935.36 words, while those from Israel was 855.54 words — this difference was not statistically significant, but it was a reversal of the advantage. Therefore, the news stories filed from Lebanon were given more news copy than those filed from Israel in May 2000, but the difference in the means was not statistically significant.

The mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports in March-April 1996 was 7.33, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was

13.3. This difference was statistically significant ($t = -3.048$, $df = 80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003). This finding indicates that the stories filed from Israel in 1996 were featured more prominently in the newspapers and closer to the front page, whereas those originating from Lebanon were published less prominently by being pushed further back in the newspaper. In May 2000, the mean page number for the Lebanon dateline news reports was 10.82, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Israel was 12.11. This difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the stories filed from Israel in May 2000 were not featured more prominently in the newspapers as compared to those originating from Lebanon. Again, the lack of a statistically significant difference in any measures of comparison of the Datelines between Lebanon and Israel in the May 2000 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis,¹⁴³ given that Israel based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length, as opposed to the news reporting from Lebanon in May 2000 during the period of Israel’s military retreat.

As was found in the 1996 analysis, it may be assumed that news reports from Israel in May 2000 would carry more Israeli sources and those from Lebanon would carry more Lebanese sources, and this was established in the t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the Means for Israeli, Hezbollah and Lebanese sources in the two different datelines, it was interesting to note the similarities in the means of source paragraphs that did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Hezbollah (2) sources increased to

¹⁴³ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

0.61 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.55 in news reporting from Lebanon - implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was still just as likely to represent critical Hezbollah sources as was the American news reporting from Israel, where no Hezbollah sources were present, yet their critical comments were being published by journalists reporting from Israel (In 1996, the mean Hezbollah (2) source paragraphs from Israel were = 0.39, and from Lebanon = 0.37). Similarly, Lebanese Government (2) sources critical of the U.S. and Israeli policies also did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Lebanese Government (2) sources was 0.11 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.27 in news reporting from Lebanon - implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to under-represent Lebanese Government sources critical of the U.S. and Israel as was the American news reporting from Israel, where there were no Lebanese government leaders.

As was the case in the 1996 news coverage analysis, when the data were correlated with the page numbers in the May 2000 news coverage two interesting findings surfaced. Firstly, the page numbers exhibited an inverse correlation with story length, which was statistically significant (Pearson Correlation = -0.272, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.033). This indicates that as stories progressed from the front page to further back in the newspaper they got smaller.

Significant correlation was found between Israel Government (1) source paragraphs and copy length — as the copy length increased, the Israeli Government (1) source paragraphs also increased with statistical significance (Pearson Correlation = 0.326, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.010). This indicates that the Israeli Government (1)

sources were more likely to be featured in news reports with more copy length, another indicator of the importance afforded to these sources. A similar correlation had also been discovered in the 1996 analysis, but what was interesting about the May 2000 analysis was that this correlation between source paragraphs and copy length also showed statistical significance for Hezbollah (2) source paragraphs (Pearson Correlation = 0.247, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.053). This interesting development from 1996 to 2000 also gives some credence to the Strobel's "Push" versus "Pull" hypothesis,¹⁴⁴ accompanied by the finding that the Lebanese Government (1) source paragraphs — those not directly critical of the U.S. policy on the Israeli activities — accounting for thirty-two source paragraphs, showed significant correlation with copy length (Pearson Correlation = 0.434, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), as did the UN(1) sources accounting for fifty-nine source paragraphs, showing significant correlation with copy length (Pearson Correlation = 0.254, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.046) in the May 2000 news coverage.

When the data were analyzed over the passage of time, with a value of 1 assigned to the first day of news reporting in each newspaper in May and subsequent days added to the variable of "Conflict Days" as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the month of May, the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

Israeli Military (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant negative correlation with the "Conflict Days" (Pearson Correlation = -0.362, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.004), while Hezbollah (1) sources showed a statistically significant positive correlation with "Conflict Days" (Pearson Correlation = 0.256, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.045), implying that Israeli Military sources decreased in the news coverage over

¹⁴⁴ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

passage of time in the May 2000 conflict, while Hezbollah (1) sources increased — this is another interesting development that gives some credence to the Strobel’s “Push” versus “Pull” hypothesis, wherein a military retreat for Israel led to a loss of its 1996 advantages in leading the news coverage of the conflict, and critical voices gained notable advances in the source paragraphs attributed to them in the May 2000 news coverage of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.¹⁴⁵

Conclusions

This content analysis of the May 2000 news coverage of Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon, when compared with news coverage of Israel’s April 1996 attacks on Lebanon, shows distinct indicators of the presence of a “Late Breaking Foreign Policy” effect that Strobel cited in his work, wherein the media tend to break free of traditional reliance of government sources and allies in times of crises when government is caught unprepared. While Israel continued to dominate the news sources in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, there was also a significant drop in the attributions provided to U.S. government sources who seemed to lose an authoritative presence in the news coverage, while the native opposition groups took advantage of the flux to provide the journalists with a local narrative that was difficult to ignore due to the developing crises. The Hezbollah, in particular, was able to assert itself in these crises and raise its news presence from less than 5 percent of news attributions in April 1996 to more than 10 percent of all news attributions in the reporting of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* in May 2000. However, there were still signs of a strong Propaganda effect in the news coverage, wherein Israeli sources still topped the total count with 332 attributions,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

averaging about 5.35 attributions per news story (higher than the March-April 1996 study wherein Israeli sources accounted for about four attributions in every news story). The most notable decline, in keeping with the “Pull” hypothesis, was in the use of U.S. sources, which accounted for only eighty-six attributions, averaging 1.38 attributed source paragraphs per news story (significantly down from the March-April 1996 study when they dominated the news coverage, averaging about three attributions for every news story filed). However, even though U.S. sources were reduced in the news reporting on the conflict, the narrative framework often linked Israel’s experiences to those that would resonate with Americans, such as the parallels, though historically questionable, over the Vietnam War. This is how *The New York Times*¹⁴⁶ reported from Jerusalem on the IDF withdrawal on May 23:

Prime Minister Ehud Barak today declared an end to the “tragedy” of Israel’s two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon, as the last remaining Israeli troops and pro-Israeli militias pulled out of the border strip once known as Israel’s security zone.

A hundred or more Israeli soldiers and three small Druse and Christian militia battalions were reported late tonight to be abandoning posts in the hilly eastern sector of the border, including the historic Crusader-built Beaufort Castle. Witnesses on the border said Israeli forces appeared to be blowing up their own former installations at the strategic vantage point before their final departure.

Earlier today, Israel and its allies withdrew from the western stretch of the buffer zone from the Mediterranean to the central Lebanese foothills, Israeli officers said.

“This 18-year tragedy is over,” Mr. Barak said today, referring to the huge 1982 invasion of Lebanon that deepened Israel’s hold on the southern border district, to protect northern Israel from attack during Lebanon’s civil war. After several earlier incursions, the Israeli military had permanently occupied a narrow swath of the Lebanese border zone since 1978.

¹⁴⁶ William A. Orme Jr., “Retreat From Lebanon: The Israelis – Barak Declares End to ‘Tragedy’ as Last Troops Leave Lebanon,” *New York Times*, May 24, 2000.

In an emergency session of Israel's security cabinet that lasted until early this morning, the prime minister was authorized to remove all Israeli forces from Lebanon as soon as possible. The withdrawal will be completed six weeks ahead of Mr. Barak's original self-imposed deadline of July 7, army officers said.

Some Israeli soldiers remained at their posts today along the border, and Israel was hoping that they, too, might be replaced by United Nations peacekeepers. But with or without United Nations replacements, they were expected to be gone soon, a senior Israeli officer said.

Once Israeli forces are fully redeployed across the border, Israel will hold Beirut and Damascus directly responsible for attacks on Israeli territory launched from Lebanon, Mr. Barak said. Israeli Army officials said future retaliatory strikes from Israel "would not exclude" Syrian military installations in Lebanon.

Israeli officers said they were anxiously awaiting an official United Nations map delineating the 1923 border between Lebanon and British-ruled Mandate Palestine. United Nations cartographers have prepared a map, they said, but it needs approval by the Security Council before serving as a guideline for the withdrawal.

Under the terms of United Nations Resolution 425, which Israel has now pledged to respect, Israeli forces are obligated to move permanently south of an international border that has never been fully marked or even surveyed.

"I want to withdraw, I am ready to withdraw, but to where?" an Israeli officer asked today.

Israel, criticized for years for ignoring United Nations resolutions demanding its withdrawal from Lebanon, is now in the peculiar position of virtually demanding that the Security Council impose tough and specific conditions on the withdrawal. Two United Nations demands have already been met, albeit inadvertently: the disbanding of the Israeli-supported South Lebanon Army, and the release of prisoners held by the militia. But Israel wants to pull south of an internationally recognized border, thus depriving Hezbollah guerrillas of their air of nationalist legitimacy and leaving Syria as the sole foreign occupier in Lebanon.

"In redeploying along the international border, we are regaining control of the initiative," Foreign Minister David Levy said today. "If our security is threatened by anyone - whether directly or through any organization - we will act in accordance with the right to national self-defense accorded by

international law, with all this implies with regard to those who help these organizations to attack and threaten our security.”

Meanwhile, on the nightly news programs here, shots of fleeing pro-Israeli militiamen were juxtaposed with jubilant Hezbollah followers entering hamlets and empty army bases a few thousand yards across the border. Israeli air strikes against border targets were aimed at abandoned Israeli weaponry that Israel had bequeathed to its militia allies just days before, viewers were told.

“Just like that last helicopter on the embassy roof in Vietnam, we witnessed a set of difficult images last night that will be forever engraved in our collective consciousness,” Hemi Shalev said in the newspaper *Maariv* today. “We too learned that there are no happy withdrawals, no free withdrawals. The scent of humiliation permeates the air.”

But also like the American withdrawal from Vietnam, the humiliation was tempered by a deep sense of relief. In a brief session of the Israeli Parliament today, opposition legislators angrily attacked the withdrawal as “inept” and “an embarrassment.” But few said they would now favor a re-entry into Lebanon, whatever the provocation.

Senior military commanders insisted continually today that the evacuation had gone “surprisingly well,” as one commander said.

In diametrical contrast to the popular view that the withdrawal was dangerously chaotic, Israeli officers contended that they had anticipated the Hezbollah entry and quick demise of the South Lebanon Army. Indeed, they noted, dissolution of the militia was a United Nations requirement for future peacekeeping support.

Of paramount importance to commanders, not a single Israeli soldier was killed or seriously wounded in the withdrawals, they stressed. Since 1978, more than 900 Israeli soldiers have died in southern Lebanon.¹⁴⁷

The Americanization of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon using the filter of the Vietnam War narrative was demonstrated by the *Washington Post*'s reporting¹⁴⁸ from Israel as well:

¹⁴⁷ William A. Orme Jr., “Retreat From Lebanon: The Israelis – Barak Declares End to ‘Tragedy’ as Last Troops Leave Lebanon,” *New York Times*, May 24, 2000.

¹⁴⁸ Lee Hockstader, “Reality of Withdrawal Fires Debate in Israel,” *Washington Post*, May 24, 2000.

With the swift unraveling of its two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon, Israel's own version of Vietnam has come crashing into the nation's consciousness this week, propelled by televised images of mayhem at its northern border. And much as America's withdrawal from Vietnam ignited a searing national debate, Israel's pullout from Lebanon has generated finger-pointing, recrimination and denial.

Already, the argument about who "lost" Lebanon, who "betrayed" Israel's Lebanese allies and who "humiliated" Israel's vaunted army is audible in the political debate. And it is easy to imagine it festering until the next general elections, then returning with a vengeance to haunt Prime Minister Ehud Barak and his allies.

In the anguish of the moment, some commentators seemed to forget that a clear-cut majority of Israelis have tired of the country's occupation of southern Lebanon and the slowly mounting casualty toll it produced. Most favor Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, and Barak, who won a landslide election a year ago, promised in his campaign to bring the troops home in a year.

But the abstract notion that Israel could get out quickly and cleanly - and with little risk to its own security - was shattered by the unseemly military reality. "Retreats," said Amikam Rothman, a popular Israeli radio personality, "are not photogenic."

Particularly not this one. In a sequence of events whose speed surprised nearly everyone here, Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" has become an insecurity zone, transformed from a more or less stable, if messy, status quo to something closer to, if still not quite, pandemonium.

Last week, Israel pulled out of three of its outposts in the 750-square-mile zone, handing them over to its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army. Then, starting Sunday, the SLA began to desert the positions under fire from guerrillas of Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim movement. On Monday, as hundreds of SLA militiamen deserted, surrendered and fled, Hezbollah guerrillas advanced, using crowds of Lebanese civilians as their cover and took village after village.

By today, the SLA had disintegrated, with hundreds of militiamen and their families fleeing for the safety of Israel. Meanwhile, Hezbollah guerrillas, armed with assault rifles, drove their Mercedes-Benzes through the streets of newly captured Lebanese villages a mile or two from Israel's northern frontier.

“Hezbollah is right across from my kitchen,” said Simcha Cohen, a resident of the Israeli border village of Manara, just south of the main northern town of Kiryat Shemona. “We don't wave to them.”

Meanwhile, the radio played sound bites of cheerful Israeli troops leaving the occupation zone: “I'm . . . sick of you, Lebanon,” one group sang.

As Israelis took it all in, it was difficult to tell which of the staggering images was most wrenching. But for many, it was the plight of the SLA militiamen and their family members, at least 2,000 of whom had fled to Israel by tonight. Thousands more may arrive in coming days, officials said.

The sight of Israel's allies - militiamen trained, paid, equipped and armed by the Jewish state for 15 years - begging for asylum upset and unnerved many people here. And, perhaps inevitably, the government's right-of-center opponents seized on the SLA's collapse, declaring it a national disgrace, a glaring symbol of shame - and a black eye for Barak.

Among them was Ariel Sharon, leader of the right-wing opposition Likud party and the driving force behind Israel's full-scale invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Today, a chauffeur-driven Volvo limousine delivered him to a facility on the shores of the Sea of Galilee where Israeli officials were processing bus loads of SLA men and their families arriving fresh from southern Lebanon.

“Israel didn't give them protection,” said Sharon, after speaking with some of the refugees. “This is a terrible tragedy; it's a shameful thing. They said, ‘Israel betrayed us.’ Believe me, I could not look in their eyes.”

The hawkish opposition was not alone in its assessment. Avshalom Vilan, a left-leaning lawmaker, demanded that Israel take care of its Lebanese allies. “This is above politics,” he said. “The Jewish people, who have suffered so many difficult experiences, cannot watch while people are being hurt.”

In the army, officers expressed concern that Hezbollah will be able to portray Israel's withdrawal as an outright defeat - the first clear-cut setback inflicted on the Jewish state's vaunted military by Arab forces. But one senior commander suggested that the SLA's dissolution, however painful for Israel, may be a blessing in disguise.

The United Nations, whose endorsement of Israel's withdrawal Barak covets, has demanded that the SLA be disbanded completely before it will certify the pullout as complete. Some Israeli officers were unsure how to go about disarming the militia and had even feared their longtime allies

might turn their guns on Israeli troops. Now that the SLA has collapsed, it may clear the way for a swift U.N. approval of Israel's withdrawal. That, Israel says, would give it diplomatic cover to retaliate in force against Lebanon and its Syrian patrons for any cross-border attacks.

Beyond the soul-searching about the SLA, unsettling questions about the future remained. Would the Arab world, and particularly Israel's Palestinian neighbors, take a cue from Hezbollah and conclude that the Jewish state could be undone by the use of force? Would Hezbollah make good on its threats to continue the fight even after the Israeli withdrawal, penetrating Israel's northern border?

Would Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, encourage Palestinians and Lebanese there to harass Israel as a way to press Barak to return the Golan Heights, captured from Damascus in the 1967 Middle East war?

The answers were elusive, but the questions alone made many Israelis uneasy. "We have seen agonizing and painful pictures in southern Lebanon," said Dan Meridor, a centrist Israeli lawmaker. "I'm afraid we will see more before the process is over."¹⁴⁹

The most serious issue with respect to the U.S. administration's support for the Israeli actions was whether Israel's withdrawal would be to the satisfaction of UN Security Council Resolution 425, or whether the Syrian and Lebanese governments would prevail in demands that Israel's withdrawal be consistent with both UN Security Council Resolutions, 242 and 425, wherein the Lebanese had insisted on Israeli withdrawal from not just the areas occupied since 1982 or 1978, but also the territories Israel occupied since 1967, including most the most prominently cited dispute over the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms.¹⁵⁰ "The collapse of the Israel-Syria track in March 2000 set in motion a series of events that have helped shape the current political landscape in Lebanon, Syria and Israel," observed Blanford in his 2011 book:

If a peace deal had been concluded in the spring of 2000, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria probably would have enjoyed calm and stability along their respective borders for the past decade. Lebanon would have followed

¹⁴⁹ Lee Hockstader, "Reality of Withdrawal Fires Debate in Israel," *Washington Post*, May 24, 2000.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Fisk, "Hopes of Peace Lie in Mr. Pinter's Maps," *The Independent*, May 7, 2000.

Syria's lead and signed a deal with Israel, Hezbollah would have been disarmed under Syrian fiat, and quiet would have prevailed along Israel's northern border. There would have been no Shebaa Farms campaign, no military buildup by Hezbollah in South Lebanon from 2000 on, and no war in 2006, nor would the Lebanese and Israelis continue to be living under the unremitting threat of a fresh conflict that promises to be even more destructive than the last.¹⁵¹

If war is the continuation of politics by other means, it can be argued that Israel's wars in Lebanon were largely driven by the politics of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories – the 1978 and 1982 conflicts were designed under the impetus of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the need to address the Palestinian resistance based in Lebanon; the 1996 conflict was largely a measure of the Israeli government's entrenchment in the occupation of South Lebanon and the threats posed by new resistance groups that had risen in reaction to the 1982 invasion and occupation of South Lebanon; and the new Israeli administration in 2000 withdrew from South Lebanon under a new political dynamic of addressing the declining necessity of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, as opposed to the continuing necessity for the occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and other contested Lebanese territories (occupied since the 1967 war). As we will see in Chapter 6, the entrenched politics of Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and other contested Lebanese territories, and its insistence on holding on to hundreds of prisoners it had captured during its occupation of South Lebanon, lay the groundwork that led to the mobilization for another war in Lebanon in 2006.

¹⁵¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 251-52.

Chapter 6: Coverage of Lebanon and Hezbollah during the period of Israel's "Second Lebanon War" (July-August 2006)



Figure 3: UNIFIL Map: Area of South Lebanon monitored by UN troops after 2006.

(Source: <https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-maps>; public domain)

The Growth of Hezbollah in Lebanon After 2000

The period after Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 is widely considered to be the high point of national and international prestige for Hezbollah, which saw a surge in support not only among Shi'ites, but also among Arabs and Muslims across the world. "As Hezbollah officials received congratulations from delegations of businessmen, journalists, trade union members and Lebanese notables from all walks of life, as well as official Arab delegations for their victory, there was no doubt that they were living their finest hours," notes Harik. "Yet Hezbollah's continued jihad rested on whether or not the government reached agreement with the UN over whether Israel had left Lebanon completely or not."¹

It was apparent to the organization that its identity as a "resistance" group was singularly important to its popularity in the future, albeit the group had also made serious inroads into Lebanon's domestic politics at both the national and local level, while also emerging as a strong social welfare organization providing access to clean water, healthcare, education, housing, employment, and pensions among Lebanon's Shi'ite communities. As noted by Hamzeh, by 2002, Hezbollah's Jihad al-Bina construction projects aided more than 10,000 schools, homes, shops, hospitals, infirmaries, mosques, cultural centers, and agricultural center cooperatives, while also providing potable water and electricity, building "four hundred reservoirs of potable water for the eight hundred thousand residents of Beirut's southern suburbs" satisfying about 45 percent of their water needs, and "dug more than fifty-eight artesian wells, divided evenly between the Biq'a, South Lebanon and Beirut," while also installing "more than twenty big power

¹ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 143.

generators in South Lebanon and the Biq'a” and even providing “maintenance for the government’s power network in these two regions.”²

According to Hamzeh, Hezbollah’s Foundation for the Wounded provided emergency, health, social and educational services to more than 11,000 members as of 2001, while the Khomeini Support Committee provided health services to more than 100,000 individuals per year, including “medications, transfer of patients, medical checkups and surgery.”³ Under its Islamic Health Unit, Hezbollah operates six hospitals, twenty-one dispensaries, twelve mobile dispensaries, ten dental clinics and seven civil defense centers that served more than 400,000 people per year, according to Hamzeh.⁴ As of 2001, Hezbollah’s Education Unit provided more than \$14 million in financial aid and scholarships, reflecting “the serious commitment that Hizbullah has to the needy students of its constituency,” notes Hamzeh. “More important, Hizbullah’s spending in this area has been extremely effective in expanding the party’s base in a country where the public school system suffer from lack of funds, building facilities, and advanced learning technology.”⁵ In this same period, Hezbollah had also become an effective media presence, operating a TV broadcasting station (Al-Manar), four radio stations, and five newspapers/journals, with the cumulative size of its media outlets being “far greater than that of any other political party in Lebanon or the region.”⁶

“The year following the Israeli withdrawal and immediately preceding America’s war on global terrorism was exceedingly important for Hezbollah, for parliamentary

² Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 50-51.

³ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

elections were to take place and the effects of its improved tactical position along the frontier with Israel could be tested,” notes Harik. “Ever conscious of their organization’s standing and image at home and abroad, Hezbollah leaders hoped the electorate would richly reward them with votes for their performance against the Israelis a few months earlier. If that happened, those results could be read as a mandate for continuing resistance activities.”⁷

The overall impact of the growth of Hezbollah’s social services, its media presence and its military success resulted in the party gaining two more seats in the Lebanese parliament in the 2000 elections, growing from seven to nine elected members of parliament,⁸ and “the 2000 parliamentary elections showed more clearly that Hizbullah was not only able to enhance its representation over Amal, nine to six, but also to perform as a first-class pragmatic player,” notes Hamzeh.⁹

“In addition to the party’s committed constituency and its social welfare services that have contributed to Hizbullah’s successes, Hizbullah has capitalized on two other factors for winning the 2000 elections,” writes Hamzeh, noting these to be the “liberation of South Lebanon” with the May 2000 withdrawal of the IDF and SLA from Lebanon that “boosted Hizbullah’s image as a heroic organization”; and also the transition of power and leadership in Syria in June 2000, whereby the death of President Hafiz al-Assad “removed an obstacle from Hizbullah’s way when it came to operational choices and the freedom to act.”¹⁰

⁷ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 147.

⁸ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 113.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

However, despite Hezbollah's political successes in Lebanon in the years after the Israeli withdrawal, the countdown for the next Israeli attacks on Lebanon was arguably in motion in the days after the withdrawal as Hezbollah drew up a military plan of action for continuing its "resistance" activities against the Israelis, and also encouraging Palestinians living under Israeli occupation to follow the Hezbollah's model for liberating their territories. "The world soon learned that Israel's withdrawal had not put an end to Syria's 'state/resistance' policy by eliminating Hezbollah's combat role in the South," notes Harik. "This fact was broadcast from Beirut the very day of the Israeli pull-out when, in a speech addressed to the nation, President Lahoud declared that this victory was still not enough to realize the comprehensive peace desired. For that to occur, he said, Israel must return all Arab lands, including Lebanon's Shebaa Farms region, a strip of water-rich territory 25 kilometers long and eight wide that constitutes about two percent of Lebanon's total area."¹¹

As discussed in Chapter 5, Israel claimed that the Shebaa Farms area was part of Syrian territories occupied by Israel in 1967, and therefore not subject to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. "Although Syria declared Shebaa to be Lebanese land and both governments presented documents to that effect, they were not considered by the Security Council as constituting sufficient evidence to establish Lebanon's claim," writes Harik, noting that "Lahoud's remarks about the Shebaa Farms thus made clear at the outset that the policy guiding state and resistance activities for the last decade had not been altered a jot as a result of what now was being called Israel's *partial* retreat – or more darkly, its political *manoeuvring*. The Shebaa Farms region was considered

¹¹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 139.

occupied Lebanese territory and it would now receive the attention of the resistance.”¹²

As Harik notes, a subsequent news report by Celina Nasser of Beirut’s *Daily Star* discovered¹³ that “the deeds for Shebaa Farms” were registered in “the Sidon property registry” in Lebanon, and not in Syria.¹⁴ “Two years later, an Israeli scholar, Asher Kaufman of the Hebrew University’s Truman Institute came to a similar conclusion about Lebanon’s ownership, based on information he had located in Paris,” writes Harik, noting that “the French colonial officials reported that Shebaa residents paid their taxes in Marjayoun, Lebanon” during the period the French held mandates over Lebanon and Syria.¹⁵

“At any rate, in May 2000, Beirut backed up its claim with the facts to hand and produced Damascus’ testimony that the land in question was not Syria,” writes Harik. “Since there was no doubt that the Israeli presence in Shebaa was illegal, then forcing their troops to evacuate that area could, according to the Lebanese authorities, be defended as national resistance. Since the Israelis clung to the position that their military presence was needed in the Shebaa area, since the sparseness of population and rough nature of the district made terrorist border infiltration a real possibility, the stage was set for the post-withdrawal conflict to begin.”¹⁶

Two days after the last Israeli soldier departed Lebanon in May 2000, Blanford notes, “Hezbollah held a huge victory rally in Bint Jbeil” where almost a hundred thousand people gathered to hear Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah speak on his first visit to

¹² Ibid., 140.

¹³ Cilina Nasser, “The Shebaa Landowners are Lebanese,” *Daily Star*, June 15, 2001.

¹⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 142.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 142-43.

the former occupation zone, “a moment for the Hezbollah leader to savor, the culmination of eighteen long years in which the Islamic resistance was born, nurtured, shaped, and developed until it had achieved a feat of arms unprecedented in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Neither the armies of Jordan, Egypt, nor Syria had been able to drive Israeli forces from occupied Arab land. But a relatively small yet resolute band of Shia warriors from Lebanon had achieved just that. Nasrallah stood on a podium inscribed with the figure 1,276, the number of Hezbollah ‘martyrs’ since 1982, and gazed out at the sea of supporters before him. Significantly, a Lebanese national flag hung behind the Hezbollah leader; Nasrallah wanted to convey the message that this was a day of victory for all Lebanese, not just one party.”¹⁷

Harik also notes that Nasrallah addressed the issue of the Shebaa Farms when addressing the “giant rally” in Bint Jbeil on Friday, May 26, 2000. “Facing a crowd of some 100,000 people, including Christians and Muslims, he boasted: ‘Barak and his government have no other alternative than to withdraw from the Shebaa Farms area and the coming days will prove that,’” writes Harik, noting that “As before, the Hezbollah leader underlined the fact that the victory over Israel belonged to all Lebanese citizens and not to any one party, movement, organization or community. On the other hand, lest anyone forget the price Hezbollah had paid for that victory, he noted that the struggle to liberate the South to date had resulted in 1,276 Hezbollah ‘martyrs.’” Later, as she watched a TV broadcast of a ceremony to honor the combatants, to which their families had been invited, Harik noted that “Hezbollah’s flare for the dramatic was demonstrated when, at one point, when Hassan Nasrallah was making the argument for continuing

¹⁷ Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God* (New York: Random House, 2011), 281.

jihad against the Israelis, the 1,276 black-garbed young men who had volunteered to replace the fallen mujahidin silently filed in and were seated before the podium.”¹⁸

Blanford notes that Nasrallah also “served warning that the struggle against Israel was not over” with the May 2000 Israeli withdrawal, but that “the confrontation would continue. The resistance, he said, was determined to win the freedom of the remaining Lebanese detainees in Israel and secure the return of the Shebaa Farms.”¹⁹ Those two objectives – the release of Lebanese prisoners still held by Israel, and the end of the Israeli occupation of Shebaa Farms – would define Hezbollah’s armed campaign in distinct ways in the coming months.

The “most significant part of Nasrallah’s address,” notes Blanford, “was directed toward the Palestinians. Hezbollah’s victory over the Israelis in Lebanon, he said, represented a model of resistance that could be adopted and adapted by subjugated people.”²⁰ Blanford provides a translated excerpt of Nasrallah’s speech from Bint Jbeil in his book:

[W]e offer this lofty Lebanese example to our people in Palestine. You do not need tanks, strategic balance, rockets, or cannons to liberate your land; all you need are the martyrs who shook and struck fear into this angry Zionist entity. You can regain your land, you oppressed, helpless, and besieged people of Palestine. . . . The choice is yours, and the example is clear before your eyes. A genuine and serious resistance can lead you to the dawn of freedom. . . . I tell you: the Israel that owns nuclear weapons and has the strongest air force in the region is weaker than the spider’s web.²¹

“Nasrallah’s defiance clearly hit a nerve among the Palestinian leadership, which found itself caught between its commitment to the peace process and the growing

¹⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 140-41.

¹⁹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 281.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 281-82.

impatience of the Palestinian street,” notes Blanford, adding that in the end of June 2000, Yasser Abed Rabbo, a Palestinian adviser to President Yasser Arafat, told the Israeli deputy defense minister: “With you Israelis, one should only speak in ‘Lebanese.’ It’s the only language you understand.”²²

Meanwhile, in the days after Israel’s withdrawal and “the liberation of the south, crowds continued to roam the former occupation zone, gathering at several places along the border” to “hurl stones and abuse across the fence at increasingly irate Israeli soldiers,” writes Blandford, noting that while UNIFIL began armored patrols of the border district, “the Lebanese government refused to permit a full deployment of [Lebanese] army troops and UN peacekeepers into the border area until the process of verifying Israel’s withdrawal was completed.”²³

Lebanon’s southern border had not been surveyed properly for decades, notes Blanford, and the UN had “suggested devising a line, matching the border as much as possible, that could be used to gauge the extent of Israel’s compliance with Resolution 425” passed by the UN Security Council in 1978.²⁴ The path of this “Blue Line” left the Shebaa Farms under Israeli control, notes Blanford, but it also bisected the village of Ghajar, occupied by Israel since 1967, and also divided in half the tomb a hermit, claimed as Sheikh Abbad by the Lebanese and as Rabbi Ashi by the Israelis.²⁵ In early July 2000, the “UN peace coordinator” Terje Roed Larsen negotiated an agreement with the Lebanese President wherein Lebanon “would accept and honor the Blue Line ‘with reservations,’” while the Israelis also provided a similar document, and “on July 24, two

²² Ibid., 282.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 283.

²⁵ Ibid., 283-85.

months to the day after the last Israeli tank crossed the border, UNIFIL finally was able to confirm that Israel had departed Lebanon in conformity with resolution 425.”²⁶

UNIFIL began moving to new positions along the Blue Line in August 2000, followed by “the first Lebanese troops to deploy in the border district in a quarter century,” notes Blanford. “However, the deployment was a chimera. Only a thousand personnel moved into the former occupation zone, a joint task force of five hundred military police and five hundred paramilitary Internal Security officers. Ghazi Zeaiter, the Lebanese defense minister, said that the force would not deploy along the Blue Line as ‘border guards’ for Israel.”²⁷

“Immediately after the tumultuous events of May 2000, small groups of three or four Hezbollah fighters armed with assault rifles began patrolling the withdrawal line established by the UN between Lebanon and Israel and ignoring it where Shebaa was concerned,” notes Harik. “Shipping containers had been moved into place to serve as observation posts and checkpoints near the old passages between Lebanon and Israel and were dotted around and between the posts manned by UN observers on duty in the area.”²⁸

According to Blanford, “Hezbollah began to quietly deploy militarily along the Blue Line” within days of the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000, taking over “several former Israeli outposts close to the border” and creating “Hezbollah’s logistical headquarters for the eastern sector” in the former SLA training camp at Majidiyah “at the foot of the Shebaa Farms hills.”²⁹ Hezbollah also set up several small observation posts

²⁶ Ibid., 286.

²⁷ Ibid., 286-87.

²⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 155.

²⁹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 287.

along the Blue Line, “initially consisting of little more than a tent or hut, some camouflage netting, and seats” – Blanford recalls one such Hezbollah observation post set up beside the Israeli security fence near an outpost on the edge of the Shebaa Farms, where the unarmed Hezbollah militants wearing civilian clothes were present “carrying only walkie-talkies and binoculars” but exhibiting a distinct message to the Israeli troops on the other side – “*The daily clashes may have ended*, ran the unspoken message [to Israel], *but Hezbollah is still here.*”³⁰

Within Israel, the withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 was followed by months in which “our society hardly paid a thought to the security zone war once it ended,” recalls Matti Friedman.³¹ “Israelis were soon preoccupied with other events. They were also afraid that if they looked too closely they might reach, and then speak out loud, the conclusion that it had all been an error.”

As Israel’s negotiations with the Palestinian Authority broke down and the Oslo Accords unraveled, Hezbollah flags started appearing at Palestinian rallies, and its model of armed and violent resistance started gaining ground, especially among Islamist Palestinian groups. As Friedman notes in recalling the last night of Israel’s May 2000 withdrawal of its occupation troops from Lebanon:

It turned out the Palestinians were watching closely that last night in the security zone, earlier the same year. That night was “a light at the end of the Palestinian tunnel, a hope that liberation might be achieved by treading the path of resistance and martyrdom,” wrote Hezbollah’s deputy secretary-general. “What happened in Lebanon can be repeated in Palestine.” Israelis had elected a government that would end the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and make peace, but now the peace talks collapsed. For the Palestinians, there would be no more humiliation or compromise, just as Hezbollah had brooked none. Watching Palestinian television, I saw yellow Hezbollah flags appear at rallies. Propaganda

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Matti Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers: A Soldier’s Story* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2016), 179.

videos showed riots in Gaza with clips of Israeli vehicles leaving the occupation zone.³²

Palestinian tactics also soon reverberated in the Israeli consciousness with echoes of the Lebanon experience. As Friedman notes:

For a while the word *Lebanon* started showing up in newspapers again. When Palestinian gunmen ambushed a bus in the West Bank, crippling the vehicle with a bomb and machine-gunning the passengers as they fled, the headline the next day was “Just Like Lebanon.” Soldiers in Gaza and the West Bank began to move in convoys, and roads were swept for bombs. Hezbollah men and their Iranian patrons appeared among the Palestinians with money, weapons, and advice, and the Palestinians increasingly expressed their opposition to us in the language of holy war.³³

Given that Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon without a peace treaty with Syria, thereby remaining in occupation of contested Lebanese and Syrian territories since 1967, and also because Israel refused to release the Lebanese prisoners it had captured during its twenty-two years of the occupation of South Lebanon, Hezbollah now defined its rationale for a continuation of the resistance activities along two lines – to attack Israeli troops in areas they still considered to be occupied lands, with the main area of this activity being the Shebaa Farms region, and, secondly, to carry out raids to capture Israeli soldiers (or their corpses) in order to compel Israel to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, wherein Hezbollah pressed for the return of not only Lebanese but also Palestinian prisoners, thereby deepening its appeal as a resistance organization.

“With parliamentary elections around the corner, electoral campaigning appears to have led Hezbollah to opt for a lull in the armed struggle during late summer 2000,” notes Harik. “However, on 7 October, straight after the elections, it was business as usual

³² Ibid., 181.

³³ Ibid., 183.

for the party's fighters. On that day, three Israeli soldiers on patrol in the Shebaa Farms area were abducted by Hezbollah guerrillas."³⁴

Friedman notes that "after our withdrawal the south of Lebanon came under the control not of the Lebanese government but of Hezbollah" and that the guerrilla attacks against Israel soon resumed:

Guerrillas crossed the border into Israel that fall, unhindered by any security zone, killed three soldiers and took their bodies. . . . Nearly everyone agreed that pulling the soldiers out of the outposts in Lebanon was the right decision. It was, because this gave our enemies fewer targets and made it harder for them to attack. But our move turned out to have no bearing on their intentions. Their war against us was still on after all.³⁵

Friedman sums up the year 2000 in Israel as one that led to the decline of the "left" in the Israeli political spectrum due to the failure of the peace process and the escalation of violence:

The Israel that believed in compromise, a country rooted in the old left of the kibbutz movement, was shattered. The left went from ascendant to defunct in a matter of months. The triumph of the Four Mothers was, in retrospect, the last charge of the kibbutzniks, the final instance in which those Israelis would lead anything of national importance. By the end of the pivotal year, 2000, they receded into the margins, where they remain.³⁶

Israel's Prisoner Exchanges

After Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, Blanford writes, "there had been a near- ceaseless barrage of warnings from Israeli military officials that Hezbollah was preparing for a renewed military struggle. Specifically, the Israelis expected Hezbollah to carry out kidnappings of soldiers or civilians, in Israel or abroad, and also to exploit the Shebaa Farms as a new theater of military operations."³⁷

³⁴ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 155.

³⁵ Friedman, *Pumpkinflowers*, 182.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 288.

Hezbollah's "unfinished business" with Israel focused on the continuing Israeli occupation of the Shebaa Farms, and the continued detention of Lebanese prisoners in Israel, according to Blanford, who notes that in July 2000 Israel "extended the administrative detention of Sheikh Abdel-Karim Obeid and Mustafa Dirani, prolonging their indefinite incarceration as bargaining chips for the return of missing Israeli servicemen."³⁸ At that point, in July 2000, Dirani had begun his seventh year in Israeli custody, while Obeid had been in Israeli custody for eleven years, and Hezbollah had "vowed to secure the release of Obeid, Dirani, and the remaining Lebanese prisoners," with the party issuing a statement that stated: "We will never rest until we see them free; we will work with all means to secure the release of Sheikh Obeid, Dirani and all the hostages."³⁹ Hezbollah's use of the term "hostages" for the prisoners held by Israel well illustrated the group's perspective on the situation.

Hezbollah leader Nasrallah had met with the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Beirut in June 2000, and had "warned" Annan that Nasrallah "would allow only a few months for diplomacy to secure the release of the detainees" held by Israel, and that "if diplomacy failed, Nasrallah told the UN chief, he would seek more drastic methods to bring the detainees home."⁴⁰

The failure of the Syrian peace talks with Israel, and the subsequent death of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad on June 10, 2000, had "granted Hezbollah and the Lebanese government public justification, endorsed by the new leadership in Damascus," notes Blanford, and while Hafez al-Assad "had always viewed Hezbollah as a useful

³⁸ Ibid., 289.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

tool” his son and heir, President Bashar al-Assad “did not share his father’s cold realism, and viewed Hezbollah’s martial accomplishments with admiration. Unlike his father, who only met with Nasrallah twice, Bashar was well acquainted with the Hezbollah chief and appeared to hold him in high regard.”⁴¹

According to Blanford, given that “the Americans and Ehud Barak had abandoned Syria” in May 2000 and Israel had unilaterally withdrawn from South Lebanon, “a new limited conflict on the Shebaa Farms from would serve the dual purpose” for Syria’s new leader, Bashar al-Assad, “of renewing pressure on Israel and reminding the United States that Damascus could not be ignored if stability was to be maintained between Lebanon and Israel.”⁴²

It was against this backdrop of regional and domestic politics that “Hezbollah’s military leadership settled on a kidnapping operation as the best means of launching its new campaign against Israel and the most effective option to secure the release of the detainees” held in Israel, with the Shebaa Farms targeted as the venue of the kidnapping operation “in order to confirm the occupied mountainside as the new theater of the conflict and bolster the notion of legitimacy” for Hezbollah’s continuing attacks on Israel in what it claimed to be occupied territories “at least in the eyes of the Arab and Islamic worlds if not the West.”⁴³

Blanford quotes Nasrallah as stating later that:

The operation in Shebaa had a double meaning. One, to remind that Shebaa is Lebanese-occupied land and it is only our natural right to fight to recover it. Second, the operation has a humanitarian goal, that of releasing Lebanese hostages and prisoners held in Israel. I think choosing

⁴¹ Ibid., 290.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 290-91.

this place will enjoy national consent since we fought on occupied land and took Israeli soldiers from occupied Lebanese land.⁴⁴

According to Blanford, Hezbollah setup the ambush at a gate in the border fence “about a mile South of Shebaa village” and used a Lebanese drug smuggler to tell “his Israeli contacts that he had a package of drugs for them and could arrange a transaction across the Blue Line in the rugged Shebaa Farms area. His Israeli interlocutors approached relatives in the Israeli army who were deployed on the Shebaa Farms front to pick up the package” and, during the initial phase of the contacts “in the weeks leading to the abduction, Indian [UNIFIL] peacekeepers saw Israeli soldiers and what they took to be Hezbollah men talking to one another through a fence at the Shebaa pond gate.”⁴⁵ Hezbollah had harnessed a drug smuggler’s access to Israel because “despite its opposition to drugs on moral and religious grounds, Hezbollah was not averse to using narcotics as a weapon of war against Israel.”⁴⁶

The countdown of the Hezbollah kidnapping operation, Blanford states, was started by Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon on Sept. 28, 2000, when Sharon, “escorted by a thousand policemen and bodyguards, went for an early morning stroll around the Temple Mount compound in Jerusalem, which houses the Al-Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest shrine in Islam” where hundreds of praying Palestinians that morning “saw Sharon’s visit as a deliberate act of provocation” and set off what became known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada.⁴⁷ Nine days later, on October 7, 2000, hundreds of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon staged demonstrations against Israel at the border, assisted by

⁴⁴ Ibid., 291.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 290.

Hezbollah operatives, who used the protests to distract the Israeli soldiers at key points on the border, and then carried out their ambush against an Israeli jeep at the Shebaa gate.⁴⁸ As Blanford notes, “the vehicle was a soft-skinned military jeep carrying three soldiers” because “all armored jeeps had been withdrawn from the Shebaa Farms sector just a week earlier and sent to the West Bank and Gaza, where the intifada was raging.”⁴⁹

“In less than three and a half minutes,” the Hezbollah fighters ambushed the Israeli jeep using roadside bombs, pinned down Israeli outposts nearby with mortars and rockets, while a team of Hezbollah fighters in “a dark blue Range Rover” sped to the ambushed Israeli jeep, blew the border fence door lock while other fighters shot at the soldiers in the jeep, and then grabbed the three Israeli soldiers, bundling them “into the rear of the Hezbollah vehicle” which then sped off back into Lebanon. “It was the most sophisticated military operation ever undertaken by the Islamic Resistance,” notes Blanford.⁵⁰

As the “abduction squad raced away to the north” into Lebanon, the Hezbollah fire support teams “continued pounding the Israeli outposts for another forty minutes,” firing more than three hundred mortars, missiles and rockets, and “amid the chaos and shock, it was at least thirty minutes before the Israelis realized that three of their men were unaccounted for. By the time Israeli soldiers reached the scene of the kidnapping, the Hezbollah team and their hostages were long gone,” notes Blanford, who states that he was “later able to piece together what happened during the kidnapping from equipment abandoned by the Hezbollah squad” hidden among the rocks “about 150 years

⁴⁸ Ibid., 293.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 293-94.

from the gate” in a small white canvas tent “containing clothes, sleeping bags, pots, pans, even a radio set. A table and chair stood in front of the tent. On the table were a telephone and two remote control units, the triggers for the roadside bombs.”⁵¹

Israeli helicopters and jets “penetrated Lebanese airspace for the first time” since May 2000 “in a bid to intercept the kidnappers” shooting at vehicles on the roads to prevent them from leaving, and Israeli PM Barak “warned that Israel would take ‘decisive action’ against Lebanon” if the three soldiers were not returned “within four hours,” while “senior Israeli officers urged Barak to hit back quickly, concerned that a failure to do so would only embolden Hezbollah to strike again,” notes Blanford.⁵²

Major General Moshe Kaplinsky, then commander of the Israeli army’s Galilee Division, told Blanford later, “We demanded to retaliate strongly straight away. I told [Barak] personally we have to create new rules on the ground.”⁵³ However, Blanford notes that Hezbollah “was prepared for a stiff Israeli response” with its fighters positioned “in the hills facing the Shebaa Farms” with “bomb pits dug beneath roads beside the border” and even a “SAM-7 antiaircraft missile launcher” kept ready at Beaufort Castle.⁵⁴

“But Barak stayed his hand,” writes Blanford, “Despite his threats to respond forcefully to any Hezbollah attack along Israel’s northern border, Barak had no wish to ignite a second front with Hezbollah while he was busy handling the Palestinian intifada. . . . Additionally, Barak felt there was little sense in risking a war along the border when much of the blame for the kidnapping do to lie with the Israeli army. . . . Given the

⁵¹ Ibid., 294-95.

⁵² Ibid., 296.

⁵³ Ibid., 296-97.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 296.

expectations of an attack in the Shebaa Farms, how was it possible that an unarmored jeep – of a variety normally used along Israel’s quieter borders with Jordan and Egypt – could be permitted to patrol the Blue Line unaccompanied?”⁵⁵

UNIFIL discovered two abandoned cars that evening, “engines still running, on a road near Kfar Hamam village, three miles east of the Shebaa gate” with the blue Range Rover used in the abduction “abandoned in a hurry” with “very heavy blood loss” visible in the rear of the vehicle, according to Blanford, who notes that “in fact, the three [abducted Israeli] soldiers were killed in the ambush or died from their wounds shortly afterward” but in the lengthy negotiations that followed the abduction “brokered by Ernst Uhlrau, the coordinator of the German secret service, to exchange the three soldiers for Lebanese and Arab detainees in Israel, Nasrallah consistently refused to divulge the condition of his captives.”⁵⁶ Blanford states that Hezbollah’s refusal to provide information on the captured Israeli soldiers’ condition, or even confirm whether they were alive or dead, was part of the hard negotiation approach of the group. “Other than being a trick of psychological warfare to maximize the pressure on the Israelis, the decision to remain silent on the well-being of the captives also set a precedent for future abductions,” notes Blanford.⁵⁷

Eight days after the Shebaa Farms operation, Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah “stunned his audience” during a conference in support of the Palestinian intifada by “declaring that Hezbollah had captured an Israeli officer in an elaborate sting operation,” writes Blanford, quoting the Hezbollah leader as saying: “With God’s help, I am honored

⁵⁵ Ibid., 297.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 298.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 298.

to inform you gladly that the Islamic Resistance performed a qualitative and complex security operation, capturing an Israeli colonel, who works for an Israeli security apparatus.”⁵⁸

Elhanan Tannenbaum, a businessman and reservist colonel in the Israeli army, was kidnapped “during the course of arranging a massive shipment of heroin and cocaine from Lebanon into Israel,” writes Blanford, adding that Tannenbaum “had attended a top secret military exercise” code named Northern Forest, a drill simulation of a war with Syria, “just five days before his capture” and that he had also “helped develop a secret weapons program in which Israel was collaborating with the United States” that was “subsequently scrapped on the assumption that the kidnapped colonel had revealed its details to his Hezbollah interrogators.”⁵⁹

“It was reported that when U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright later met with Bashar al-Assad and asked him to pressure Hezbollah to release the four captured Israelis, he told her: ‘This party [Hezbollah] has serious social power and is within its rights,’” writes Harik, noting that, “These were almost the exact words Assad’s father had used when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher asked him to intervene to health Hezbollah’s Katyusha fire during Israel’s Grapes of Wrath military operation in 1996.”⁶⁰

While German-brokered negotiations went on for a prisoner swap between Israel and Lebanon,⁶¹ Hezbollah continued its sporadic attacks on Israeli military targets in the Shebaa Farms, and “Hezbollah made no apology for the limited pace of attacks, noting

⁵⁸ Ibid., 299.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 299-300.

⁶⁰ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 155-56.

⁶¹ In 2004, Israel released Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners in return for the Israelis, alive and dead, being held by Hezbollah; see “Hezbollah, Israeli prisoner swap set for Thursday,” CNN.com, Jan. 25, 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/01/25/israel.prisoners/>

that the strategic concept for the Shebaa Farms campaign was very different from the effort to liberate the occupied south,” notes Blanford.⁶² Hezbollah’s deputy leader, Sheikh Naim Qassem told Blanford, “We estimated that the Shebaa Farms did not require more from the resistance than reminder operations separate in time because we are not a regular army that attacks, takes positions, and defends positions. If we had fired on a regular basis, it would have been a useless exchange of fire.”⁶³

Hezbollah was now creating a concept of “defensive resistance,” writes Blanford, wherein there was “the blending of guerrilla and conventional tactics and weaponry,” which “served as an additional justification to skeptical Lebanese who questioned the need for Hezbollah to keep its weapons. It was not enough to expel Israel from Lebanese soil, Hezbollah argued. Now the ‘resistance’ had to ensure the Israelis would not come back.”⁶⁴

Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah told Blanford in 2003:

The best means of defending Lebanon in the face of a potential Israeli aggression is the presence of a popular resistance in South Lebanon. Any regular army that may exist in South Lebanon will be dealt a severe blow if the Israelis launch an overall aggression. The regular army has tanks and armored vehicles all above ground and Lebanon does not have air defenses, which means that the Israeli Air Force can destroy regular forces within a few hours. What the Israeli Air Force cannot destroy is the popular resistance, which exists in every mountain, every hilltop, every wadi, every house, and every street. And its members come from the villages themselves. The real equation right now is that the presence of Hezbollah in South Lebanon is a defensive necessity to defend Lebanon, not just the south but also Beirut. Any disarming of Hezbollah or removing it from the south will mean that the [Lebanese] arena will be left open for the Israelis to do whatever they want.⁶⁵

⁶² Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 304.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 305-6.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 306.

Over the remainder of 2000, and going into 2001, Hezbollah maintained a “balance of terror” with Israel, wherein attacks were carried out in a calculated response – when the new Israeli government led by Ariel Sharon tried to escalate the battle by targeting Syrian radar position in Dahr al-Baydar on April 15, 2001,⁶⁶ killing three Syrian soldiers in retaliation for an April 14 attack by Hezbollah, and then Israel repeated the tactic in June, bombing an anti-aircraft site in the Bekaa Valley, “Hezbollah counterretaliated almost immediately with a heavy mortar bombardment of Israeli outposts in the Shebaa Farms,” notes Blanford. “Hezbollah’s leadership recognized that it could not afford to let Israel set a new precedent of destroying Syrian positions every time the Islamic Resistance launched an operation in the Farms. The mortar shelling focused on the ‘Radar’ outpost on a sharp mountain peak opposite Shebaa village. It was the first time that the compound, which actually lay just north of the Shebaa Farms area, was struck, and it was deliberately selected because of its equivalence to the bombed Syrian position in the Bekaa Valley. RADAR FOR RADAR ran a headline in Lebanon’s *Al-Mustaqbal* newspaper a day after the attacks. The Israelis refrained from further retaliation. The ‘balance of terror’ had held.”⁶⁷

“The immediacy and strength of Hezbollah’s tit for tat response indicated that it had been planned in advance and was probably meant to convey a very strong message to the Israelis about the new Sharon policy,” notes Harik. “A joint communique by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa and his Lebanese counterpart, Mahmoud Hammoud, suggested why Hezbollah had responded to the attack by emphasizing the foreign policy

⁶⁶ Brent Sadler, “Israel strikes strategic targets in Lebanon,” *CNN.com*, April 16, 2001, <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/meast/04/15/israel.lebanon.02/>

⁶⁷ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 309.

coordination between the two governments. The communique warned that the episode jeopardized the stability of the entire region.”⁶⁸ House Speaker Nabih Berri, the leader of Amal, the Shi’ite party closely tied to Syria who also joined in many resistance operations in South Lebanon with Hezbollah, is quoted by Harik as stating that “the resistance had established a new policy and that from now on any attack against the Syrians, in Lebanon or *in Syria*,” would be viewed “as aggression against Lebanon” and adding that, “This gives us the right to respond *against all Israeli settlements*. These are the new rules of the game and the time when Israel can impose its own rules on us is over.”⁶⁹

The Al-Aqsa Intifada, 9/11, and the Iraq War

“While Hezbollah’s main focus between 2000 and 2006 was on building its military capabilities in Lebanon and waging its campaign of brinkmanship along the Blue Line,” writes Blanford, “the organization also played a support role in the Palestinian Al-Aqsa intifada. The destruction of Israel and the liberation of Jerusalem remain core ideological goals for Hezbollah. But the party tempers such ambitions by declaring that although it is willing to lend assistance when possible, the Palestinians must take the lead in securing their own emancipation from Israel.”⁷⁰ Harik notes that Hezbollah “began turning its attention towards what it could do to assist the Palestinian uprising when it began in September 2000” and that Hezbollah’s TV station, al-Manar, “started coverage of the conflict by using Palestinian correspondents and cameramen who were on the scene” with a threefold goal: to bring live coverage of “the struggle that was taking place

⁶⁸ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 156-57.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁰ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 351.

in historic Palestine into homes and offices right around the Arab and Muslim world,” and also to “mobilize widespread support for resistance efforts,” while sending “a message of faith and hope to those engaged in the struggle against Israel based on their organization’s own successful struggle against the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon. Those specifically targeted for assistance were the fundamentalist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad” as “these Palestinian groups share the Party of God’s firm conviction that the only way to deal with the Israelis and return all of historic Palestine to the Muslims, is by militant jihad.”⁷¹

Hezbollah’s “support role” for the Palestinians also included facilitating the smuggling of arms by sea and tunnels to Gaza until the capture of fifty tons of Iranian-supplied weapons by Israel on board the *Karine-A* cargo ship in January 2002, after which Hezbollah found it “more expedient to provide funds with which the Palestinians could procure arms themselves.”⁷² Hezbollah’s media organizations devoted large amounts of time to covering the intifada, such as Al-Manar television, which by early 2001 “was broadcasting via satellite 24 hours a day,” notes Blanford.⁷³ “Through propaganda clips, nonstop updated news developments relayed by Palestinian reporters on the ground, interviews and discussion panels, Hezbollah relentlessly hammered home its message that resistance was the only path for the Palestinians to regain their homeland,” writes Blanford. “And the Palestinians were listening.”⁷⁴ Hezbollah’s flags started showing up besides those of Palestinian groups “at funerals and demonstrations in the occupied territories” where “tapes of Nasrallah’s speeches were listened to avidly.

⁷¹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 160.

⁷² Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 351.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Occasionally, the Hezbollah leader addressed Palestinian audiences from Beirut, more than 130 miles to the north, his words relayed to the crowd by cell phone and loudspeaker.”⁷⁵

However, around the time of the first anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2001, the global agenda shifted violently as the United States prepared to retaliate against the terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda. “Hezbollah had just begun implementing its military plans in South Lebanon and the Palestinian territories when nineteen young Arab men hijacked four airliners and flew three of them into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001,” writes Blanford, noting that “until then, Hezbollah had stood accused of killing more Americans than any other militant group. Now, the party found itself elbowed off the top of the list by al-Qaeda, but still very much in the crosshairs of President George W. Bush’s newly declared ‘war on terrorism.’”⁷⁶ Leaders from Lebanon’s Shia community strongly condemned the Al Qaeda terrorist attacks, with the leading Shia cleric in Lebanon, Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah describing the 9/11 attacks as a “terrible deed” that was “impermissible and disapproved by all religions.”⁷⁷ Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah also condemned “all killings of innocent civilians all over the world” while asserting that his party “would remain true to its agenda regardless of the U.S. war on terrorism.”⁷⁸

Hamzeh notes that, in the post-9/11 period of the U.S. war on terror, Hezbollah was “pushed further into a strategy of calculated response regarding the new political stage created by the United States in the region” but that this strategy was “not

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 353.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

completely new nor does it contradict the party's modes of action – militancy and pragmatism” wherein the party became “more aware of not risking its survival.”⁷⁹ Moreover, in response to U.S. allegations, Lebanese officials denied any links between Al Qaeda and Hezbollah, with then Lebanese President Emile Lahoud dismissing such reports as “Israeli-sponsored propaganda” and Lebanese officials “defiantly rejected U.S. demands that they freeze Hizbullah’s assets in the country.”⁸⁰

Harik notes that the Lebanese authorities “were well aware that there was a lot at stake in this diplomatic stand-off” and so they “made strong efforts to cement public and international support for their position that Hezbollah was a resistance movement rather than a terrorist group and therefore could not be touched.”⁸¹ Harik argues that the U.S. “was essentially trying a new version of the failed Israeli policy” of “leaning on Beirut to stop Hezbollah” and that the Lebanese officials “were taking the same steps to counter that policy” by “rallying citizens’ support of the official line,” however, “this time they had to reassure the Lebanese public that their position on Hezbollah as resistance organization could stand up to America’s pressure rather than Israel’s and that no negative repercussions would befall Lebanon as a result of this stance on the terrorism vs. resistance controversy.”⁸²

Harik notes that President Emile Lahoud met with members of the Maronite Christian League in early November 2001 to reassure them that “just as national unity had brought about the liberation of South Lebanon from Israeli occupation, solidarity would now protect Lebanon from the upsets registered in many countries after the

⁷⁹ Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 135.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁸¹ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 179.

⁸² *Ibid.*

September 11th attacks. Lebanon was able to face the developments taking place on the international scene with immunity, he said, since the policy adopted toward the resistance by Lebanon had been consistently pursued for years and was nothing new.”⁸³ Lebanese President Lahoud’s “appeal for national unity yielded important results,” writes Harik, noting that “Religious dignitaries and politicians of all stripes got on the bandwagon to defend Lebanon’s right to resist occupation,” including important Christian leaders such as Maronite Cardinal Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, and former president Amin al-Gemayel, who “described the branding of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization as ‘heresy.’”⁸⁴

Similarly, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri undertook “shuttle diplomacy” to “European, Arab and Muslim capitals” and “some of his efforts were rewarded” at the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) meeting in Doha in October 2001 where the foreign ministers “crafted a final resolution deploring the terrorist attacks in the USA and agreeing that ‘any attempt to link Islam with terrorism, and any confusion of terrorism with the right of peoples – notably the Palestinians and Lebanese – to legitimate defense and resistance to Israeli occupation is totally rejected,’” writes Harik, noting that the message to the U.S. government from the OIC was, “that members of the world’s largest faith were on the resistance side of the controversy and if the Muslim governments represented at the conference were to remain in the coalition against terrorism, America would have to think twice about any action designed to cripple Arab resistance groups. The Arab and Muslim ‘streets’ would not tolerate a passive position on the part of their governments if American actions against those groups took place.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 179-80.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 180.

⁸⁵ Harik, *Hezbollah*, 180-81.

But the renewed U.S. focus on combating terrorism also provided the leadership in Iran with a unique opportunity to shape the region in its favor – by offering sympathy and some support to the U.S., either directly or through its partners.⁸⁶ The Iranian government could now hope to get rid of its enemies on two fronts: the Taliban in Afghanistan,⁸⁷ on Iran’s eastern border; and possibly also get rid of the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq,⁸⁸ on Iran’s western border. In order to facilitate these developments, the government of Iran worked to minimize its own exposure for its support to Hezbollah and Hamas, while at the same time working through various partners to facilitate the U.S. action against Afghanistan and Iraq. In future years, however, when geopolitical challenges required action, Hezbollah operatives used their network among the global diaspora of Shia emigrants as well as Iranian diplomatic networks, to offer aid to its allies in the region such as assisting the Iraqi Shia insurgents⁸⁹ and, more recently, deploying to defend the Bashar al-Assad regime by fighting ISIS on the ground in Syria.⁹⁰ But in the time period following the 9/11 attacks and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Hezbollah negotiated these changing dynamics of international affairs carefully, while remaining engaged in its “balance of terror” with Israel.

⁸⁶ See, for example: “Ahmad Chalabi and His Iranian Connection,” *Stratfor Worldview*, Feb. 18, 2004, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/ahmad-chalabi-and-his-iranian-connection>

⁸⁷ See, for example: “Iran Gave U.S. Help On Al Qaeda After 9/11,” *CBSnews.com*, Oct. 7, 2008, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-gave-us-help-on-al-qaeda-after-9-11/>

⁸⁸ See, for example: “Iran’s Involvement in Iraq,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 3, 2008, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-involvement-iraq>; and Suzanne Maloney, “How the Iraq War Has Empowered Iran,” *Brookings.edu*, March 21, 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/how-the-iraq-war-has-empowered-iran/>

⁸⁹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 357.

⁹⁰ Yasser Okbi, “Hezbollah Leader Boasts: We Defeated ISIS in Syria,” *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 12, 2017, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/ISIS-Threat/Hezbollah-leader-boasts-We-defeated-ISIS-in-Syria-504896>

In March 2002, as the level of violence in the Al-Aqsa intifada claimed the lives of 135 Israelis and 230 Palestinians – the highest monthly toll yet – Beirut hosted the Arab League summit, during which Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah put forward a proposal, subsequently known as the Arab Peace Initiative, that offered “full normalization and security [for Israel] in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territory occupied since 1967, the creation of a Palestinian state, and the return of Palestinian refugees to their original homes,” writes Blanford, noting that while twenty-two members of the League endorsed this plan, including Syria “with reluctance,” it was ignored by the Sharon administration in Israel that, in reaction to a Hamas suicide bombing in Netanya that killed 30 Israelis, decided to send the army back into the West Bank “in a massive punitive offensive.”⁹¹ Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah then reportedly told Syrian President Bashar Assad “that Hezbollah could not stand idly by while the Palestinians were being slaughtered in the West Bank and recommended a controlled escalation along the Blue Line,” writes Blanford, noting that Syria, “fuming over the Arab Peace Initiative” decided that “a controlled escalation along the Blue Line could be useful.”⁹² Hezbollah launched its attacks starting March 30, 2002, and “settled into a routine” firing hundreds of mortars, missiles and rockets at Israeli positions in the Shebaa Farms, but when “unidentified militants began staging attacks across the Blue Line directly into Israel,” notes Blanford, Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah, “sensing that the situation was growing unpredictable,” decided “to ease tensions by announcing that widening the conflict with Israel ‘all the way from the [Mediterranean] sea to Mount Hermon’ would not take place at this time. The option, he said was being held in reserve

⁹¹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 311-12.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 312.

in the event that Israel expelled the Palestinians from the occupied territories.”⁹³ After two weeks, Blanford notes, the offensive had played its course and all sides began to de-escalate.⁹⁴

Over the coming years, while the Shebaa Farms area remained “the designated ‘hot’ zone for combat operations, Hezbollah constantly devised new tactics to keep the Israelis on edge elsewhere along the border,” writes Blanford. “These tactics were sufficiently subtle and low-key to stay within the rules of the game and prevent an unwanted escalation while at the same time robust enough to reinforce Hezbollah’s deterrence posture and preserve the ‘balance of terror.’ The tactics were steadily refined between 2000 and 2006 as the rules of the game evolved.”⁹⁵

Hezbollah also expanded its intelligence-gathering on all aspects of Israeli military, government and industrial centers, using a network of Israeli Arab agents, with “the favorite location for exchanging drugs, information and cash” being along weak spots on the border, such as the divided village of Ghajar, but trained Hezbollah officers also “traveled abroad seeking to recruit university-educated Israeli Arabs attending conferences and even the annual pilgrimage, or Hajj, when the Muslim faithful travel to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.”⁹⁶

“Besides initiating various ploys to needle the Israelis,” notes Blanford, “Hezbollah also used the Blue Line as a locus of retaliation in which eye-for-an-eye tactics were deployed as a response to Israeli actions in Lebanon and further afield.”⁹⁷

⁹³ Ibid., 312-14.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 314; also see - Harik, *Hezbollah*, 188-90.

⁹⁵ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 321-22.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 315-16.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 326.

Blanford notes numerous incidents over 2002, 2003 and 2004, wherein Hezbollah attacked Israeli troops along the Blue Line border in retaliation for Israeli attacks in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories or Syria.⁹⁸ Hezbollah's justification for these retaliation attacks was that it created deterrence against Israel, as stated by the head of Hezbollah Executive Council Sayyed Hisham Safieddine:

The resistance movement will always be ready and on alert in order to consolidate the equation: security for security and economy for economy and aggression for aggression. . . . In other words, deterrence for the enemy.⁹⁹

It is this "balance of terror" and "deterrence" attacks escalation that would spiral in 2006 and lead to the next Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In the meanwhile, Hezbollah was building up its secret network of bunkers and tunnels and observation posts and firing positions in the areas near the border, wherein it "used the bunker-and-tunnel system to strengthen its defensive posture in the border district in the event of an Israeli ground invasion, while constructing the facilities in total secrecy and limiting their size to retain the element of surprise," notes Blanford.¹⁰⁰ In this same time period, Hezbollah also built a "new and more advanced communications and signals intelligence (SIGINT) infrastructure" that would be resistant to electronic jamming by Israel, while its communications unit devised codes for the unit commanders and fighters that would be difficult for Israel to understand, and at the same time Hezbollah also brought on fluent Hebrew speakers among its SIGINT personnel to monitor Israeli communications traffic, and "even the individual cell phones of Israeli military commanders were tapped by the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 326-27.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 327.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 329-36.

SIGINT specialists, thanks to Hezbollah's network of spies in northern Israel passing on lists of the phone numbers," notes Blanford.¹⁰¹

Also in this time period, Blanford writes, Hezbollah systematically built up its weapons reserves, noting that "the arms floodgate to Hezbollah opened after Bashar al-Assad became president of Syria," and the Hezbollah-Syria "relationship grew more strategic, with greater quantities of weapons and more advanced systems dispatched across the border into Hezbollah's arms depots."¹⁰² Hezbollah's leader Nasrallah said in a speech in May 2006:

We have the power to destroy important and sensitive targets in northern occupied Palestine. The resistance now has over thirteen thousand rockets. All of north occupied Palestine is within our firing range. This is the minimum range. As for the range beyond the north . . . it is best to be silent.¹⁰³

'Mowing the Lawn' in Lebanon¹⁰⁴

In keeping with Hezbollah's success in the Lebanese parliamentary elections of 2000, the 2004 Municipal Elections across Lebanon "showed more clearly that Hizbullah was not only a first-class pragmatic player but also a dominant political force within the Shi'ite community," writes Hamzeh, noting that Hezbollah won over Amal the vast majority of the municipal seats in the Beirut southern suburbs and Mount Lebanon (Hezbollah ninety-eight seats, Amal ten seats) and in the provinces of Nabatiyyah, South Lebanon and Biq'a (Hezbollah 1,653 seats, Amal 643 seats).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 341-44.

¹⁰² Ibid., 337.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 339.

¹⁰⁴ Yoni Dayan, "Mowing the Lawn," YnetNews.com. Nov. 27, 2012, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4312017,00.html>

¹⁰⁵ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 131-33.

“Hizbullah’s sweeping victories in the 2004 municipal elections did not come as a surprise,” writes Hamzeh, noting that “the party won major victories in 2004 for several reasons, most of its own making and having nothing to do with Syria and Iran.”¹⁰⁶ Hamzeh notes these reasons for Hezbollah’s 2004 electoral successes to be Hezbollah’s social welfare services that “helped the party build a solid constituency and expand its patronage”; Hezbollah’s “ongoing successes” building from the liberation of South Lebanon to “securing the release of Lebanese and Arab detainees from Israeli prisons”; Hezbollah leaderships “close connection” to its base that “has translated into political momentum on the ground”; and Hezbollah’s “pragmatic approach to municipal elections, particularly its emphasis on economic, social, and developmental imperatives.”¹⁰⁷

Moving forward from its successes in the 2004 municipal elections, in the run-up to the 2006 conflict, Hezbollah navigated through two years of tremendous political shifts in Lebanon with respect to its relationship with Syria – the first major challenge was posed by the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1559 in September 2004 “which called for a ‘free and fair’ presidential election; for ‘all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon,” a reference to the fifteen thousand Syrian troops still on Lebanese soil; for the “extension of the control of the government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory,” which chiefly meant the deployment of Lebanese troops up to the Blue Line; and for ‘the disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.’ The last clause referred to Hezbollah and Palestinian armed groups,” notes Blanford.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 134.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 134-35.

¹⁰⁸ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 362.

Resolution 1559 “helped deepen the political rift” in Lebanon “between supporters and opponents of the Syrian-backed regime and complicated [Lebanese leader] Hariri’s hope that the relationship with Damascus could be modified from one of dominance and subordination to a mutually respectful partnership,” writes Blanford,¹⁰⁹ noting that the former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri and the Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah “struck up a secret and close relationship” in mid-2004, and that they “met at night at least twice a week at different secure locations” and the conversations “included regional issues such as the unfolding chaos in Iraq, worsening Sunni-Shia tensions, and the plight of the Palestinians.”¹¹⁰

Hariri used his influence with French President Jacques Chirac “to keep Hezbollah’s name off a European list of terrorist organization” in January 2005, writes Blanford, and Nasrallah “reciprocated by promising to broker a secret meeting in Damascus between himself, Hariri and Bashar al-Assad to resolve their differences. A senior Hezbollah figure was in Damascus making the arrangements on the morning of February 14, 2005, the day that Rafik Hariri died, along with twenty-one other people, when a massive truck bomb ripped through his motorcade on the seafront corniche in downtown Beirut.”¹¹¹

Syria was “instantly blamed for Hariri’s murder” and his supporters and allied anti-Syrian protesters gathered in a series of demonstrations that “peaked on March 14 when some one million people gathered in Martyr’s Square,” writes Blanford, noting that the large demonstrations in Beirut coupled with international pressure “brought down the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 363.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 360-61.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 363-64.

pro-Syrian government and forced Damascus to withdraw its troops from Lebanese soil” thus depriving Hezbollah “of the political cover it had enjoyed since 1990.”¹¹²

With the Syrian military presence in Lebanon gone, “Hezbollah was compelled to take another step into the morass of Lebanese politics,” writes Blanford. “It consolidated an alliance with the Amal movement, its erstwhile rival for the Shia vote, and in February 2006 signed a memorandum of understanding with Michel Aoun, a once-vociferous anti-Syrian Christian leader who spent the 1990s in exile in Paris before returning to Lebanon in the wake of the Hariri assassination.”¹¹³ Aoun, Blanford notes, “had his eyes on the presidency” in Lebanon but was “shunned by the newly formed March 14 coalition” of the anti-Syrian parties, and so Aoun had “calculated that allying with Hezbollah could bolster his presidential hopes.”¹¹⁴

While the May-June 2005 general election was “dominated by the March 14 bloc” the electricity portfolio in the new government was handed to Mohammed Fneish, who became the first cabinet minister from Hezbollah in Lebanon under the new government headed by Fouad Siniora.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the period after Hariri’s murder and the onset of a UN investigation into the crime was “a profoundly unsettling period for Hezbollah, and especially for Syria’s staunch allies in Lebanon, who kept low profiles in the aftermath of the Beirut Spring,” writes Blanford, noting that in South Lebanon, however, “the Islamic Resistance diligently pursued its war preparations irrespective of the seismic shift in Beirut.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid., 364.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 364-65.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Hezbollah had won a significant victory in January 2004, when Israel had released four hundred Palestinian prisoners and twenty-three Lebanese detainees, including Mustafa Dirani and Sheikh Abdel-Karim Obeid, in return for the infamous Israeli reservist Col. Elhanan Tannenbaum and the bodies of the three Israeli soldiers captured by Hezbollah in the Shebaa Farms ambush in October 2000. However, notes Blanford, “the swap deal included a follow-up component” wherein in exchange for concrete information relating to the whereabouts of missing Israeli aviator Ron Arad, Israel “would release the last Lebanese detainees” – and by April 2005, “fifteen months after the prisoner exchange, no progress had been made in concluding the second part of the deal” and Hezbollah’s leader Nasrallah declared that “If we fail in the negotiations, the result of which, no matter what, will be known very soon . . . we will have only one option,” referring to kidnapping more Israeli soldiers.¹¹⁷

According to Blanford, a Major General Alain Pellegrini, a French officer who commanded UNIFIL, had attended a meeting in Jerusalem with senior Israeli military staff where he was told that if there were another Hezbollah kidnapping along the Blue Line, “Israel would set ‘Beirut on fire.’ This was a real red line for Israel,” Pellegrini told Blanford.¹¹⁸ On November 21, 2005, Hezbollah launched a “coordinated multipronged assault against Israeli positions in Ghajar village and the adjacent Shebaa Farms” but the Israelis “had received intelligence of an impending kidnapping operation and had redeployed the troops in Ghajar,” notes Blanford.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 365.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 366.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

The Israeli military had, in fact, been preparing for a major assault on Lebanon and was waiting for a Hezbollah provocation that would justify the political action of approving another major invasion and bombardment of Lebanon, as news reporting after the conflict discovered. However, they did not take action until July 2006.

“On July 12, 2006, Hizbollah captured two Israeli soldiers on the Lebanese Palestine border in the hope that the Party could exchange them for Lebanese prisoners being held by Israel despite attempts to gain their release through political channels,” notes Naim Qassem, a senior leader of Hezbollah. “Using the liberation of its soldiers as a pretext, Israel launched an all-out war on Hizbollah, which it subsequently called ‘The Second Lebanese War’. The thirty-four-day-long conflict was called ‘The True Promise’ by Hizbollah.”¹²⁰

According to Qassem, Hezbollah “did not expect the capture of the soldiers to result in a full-scale war, though it had been prepared for possible Israeli reprisals on Lebanon before or after the incident.”¹²¹ Hezbollah’s assumptions, to a large part, were based on Israel’s prior behavior over the last two decades, with respect to the taking of Lebanese prisoners, dead or alive, and holding them for negotiated exchanges of prisoners over several years. “Detainees were distributed amongst Israel’s forty prisons and the al-Khiam prison in South Lebanon, the latter holding hundreds of prisoners, many of them female” writes Qassem, adding that “Hizbollah found that the issue of captives could only be resolved through an exchange of war prisoners with Israel.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Naim Qassem, *Hizbollah: The Story From Within* (Beirut: Saqi, 2010), 35.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 246.

According to Qassem, the “Two Captives” or “Kounin operation was the “first such successful mission” on February 16, 1986, when Hezbollah fighters ambushed “an Israeli secret service patrol in the South Lebanon village of Kounin” and captured two squad members, who were then used in “two separate exchange deals” – the first in 1991, resulting in the release of ninety-one Lebanese detainees including ten women and “the remains of nine resistance fighters,” and then again in 1996, when forty-five detainees were released from al-Khiam prison, including three women, “and the remains of 123 martyrs.”¹²³ As gory and ghoulis as it may sound, Israel held on to the Lebanese resistance fighters’ corpses after battles, and then eventually exchanged them for the corpses of its own soldiers. In June 1998, in the next round of exchanges for the remains of Israeli soldiers from the “Ansaria operation of 1997,” Israel released sixty captives along with the remains of forty resistance fighters.¹²⁴

Among the high profile Israeli operations, Qassem notes, Israeli commandos captured Sheikh Abdelkarim Obeid “from his house in Jibsheat on the night of July 28, 1989,” and then a few years later Israeli commandos captured “Hajj Mustapha al-Dirani on the night of May 31, 1994 from his home in the Bekaa town of Kasr Neba,” with both operations being carried out for the goal of “the exchange of the Israeli pilot Roan Arad whose plane had crashed in the Sidon region of South Lebanon while engaging in an air raid in 1986.”¹²⁵

While the captives held in al-Khiam were liberated during the May 2000 Israeli withdrawal, as noted previously, Obeid and Dirani were kept imprisoned within Israel.

¹²³ Ibid., 246-47.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 247.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 248.

“The conviction settled in that nothing would serve to free these prisoners except the capture of a number of Zionists,” writes Qassem.¹²⁶ This was the background to the October 2000 Hezbollah operation to capture three Israeli soldiers, discussed previously from Blanford’s reporting, which led to the January 2004 agreement brokered by Germany, wherein Israel agreed to release 400 Palestinians, twenty-three Lebanese captives, five Syrians, three Moroccans, three Sudanese, one Libyan and one German “as per a declaration made by the U.S. embassy in Israel” wherein Israel “further undertook to deliver information on the fate of twenty-four missing individuals, and the return of the remains of fifty-nine fighters killed during Israel’s occupation of South Lebanon.”¹²⁷

While the prisoner exchange was the first phase of the agreement, according to Qassem, a second phase consisted of working out the details for the release of another high profile detainee, Samir al-Kuntar, and the formation of two committees. Hezbollah and German delegates would form a committee “whose mission was to investigate the whereabouts of the disappeared Israeli pilot Ron Arad using all data,” while a second committee of Israeli and German delegates was to work on “unveiling the fate of the four Iranian diplomats kidnapped in East Beirut’s al-Barbara checkpoint during the Israeli invasion of 1982.”¹²⁸

“The historical exchange brought a sense of triumph to Lebanon,” writes Qassem, noting that the Lebanese President, Prime Minister, Parliament’s Speaker, and Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, along with the families of the detainees, all gathered on January 29, 2004, for the reception of the freed captives at Beirut airport. “The

¹²⁶ Ibid., 249.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 254.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 255.

remains of the martyrs were received on January 30, 2004, in Naqura” where Qassem himself represented Hezbollah as its Deputy Secretary General.¹²⁹

“The scene was imbued with a sense of victory, a second conquest won after the land liberation of May 2000,” writes Qassem, noting that “this so-called ‘Second Victory’ had many repercussions”, given that only eleven of the 435 detainees released were Hezbollah members, with the rest being mainly Palestinians, “this served to elevate Hizbullah’s standing in both Lebanon and the region.”¹³⁰

Additionally, the exchange “played a pivotal role in gathering Lebanese support around the Resistance,” writes Qassem, noting that a poll conducted by the Beirut Research and Information Center between January 31 and February 4, 2004, on a sample of 1,200 respondents, found that “70 per cent of the Lebanese population supported continued resistance for the sake of liberating the Shebaa Farms.”¹³¹

“Land liberation came without any liberation of captives” in May 2000, writes Qassem, “and this issue only surfaced after Hizbollah succeeded at capturing three Zionist soldiers followed by Elhanan Tannenbaum. Steadfast efforts by the Resistance during its jihad against Israel were rewarded. Were it not for the successive and painful military operations against the Israeli army and its collaborators, Israel would still be occupying Lebanon today.”¹³² Qassem also notes, from Hezbollah’s perspective, that “we witnessed international attention to Israel’s concern, and international protection of Israel’s operations irrespective of individuals rights. Only force, the steadfast adherence

¹²⁹ Ibid., 257-58.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 258.

¹³¹ Ibid., 259.

¹³² Ibid.

to it, sacrifice and patience could bear any fruit in a world where diplomacy has become a tool in the service of the oppressors.”¹³³

“In a region where sour events took their toll on the populace, the exchange deal served to lift crushed spirits,” writes Qassem, noting that after the September 11, 2001, attacks, “which were followed by the occupation of Afghanistan and subsequently of Iraq” along with the “daily unceasing attacks against Palestinians in occupied Palestine” and the “continued menacing remarks by the U.S. and Israel targeting Lebanon, Syria, Iran and other countries in the region” – against this backdrop, “the liberation of captives came as a bright steps.”¹³⁴

Given this analysis of its successes from the previous prisoner exchanges, Hezbollah’s operation to capture Israeli soldiers in 2006 was carried out “in the hope that the Party could exchange them for Lebanese prisoners,” as previously mentioned, but Qassem argues that the fighting escalated due to U.S. pressure. “The decision to go to war was taken by the U.S. and implemented by Israel,” writes Qassem. “American and Israeli statements, informed press reports and the Israeli-commissioned Winograd Report inquiring into the 2006 war have subsequently made clear that the U.S. put pressure on Israel to rush into war even though at least another two or three month were required to get ready.”¹³⁵

Qassem argues there were several reason for the U.S. taking this step – it had “failed to secure Hizbullah’s disarmament politically through Resolution 1559” and the U.S. “also realized that any hopes it had of pitting the Lebanese Army against the

¹³³ Ibid., 259-60.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 35-36.

resistance were doomed to failure given the sectarian composition of the army and its anti-Israel stance, formed according to the political reality in Lebanon.”¹³⁶

Reporting on the war for the August 21, 2006 issue of *The New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh wrote:

According to Richard Armitage, who served as Deputy Secretary of State in Bush’s first term—and who, in 2002, said that Hezbollah “may be the A team of terrorists”—Israel’s campaign in Lebanon, which has faced unexpected difficulties and widespread criticism, may, in the end, serve as a warning to the White House about Iran. “If the most dominant military force in the region—the Israel Defense Forces—can’t pacify a country like Lebanon, with a population of four million, you should think carefully about taking that template to Iran, with strategic depth and a population of seventy million,” Armitage said. “The only thing that the bombing has achieved so far is to unite the population against the Israelis.”¹³⁷

“The July 2006 attack was the start of a global war against Hizbullah and its supporters, carried out by Israel with the backing of many leading countries,” writes Qassem, noting that “it is impossible to describe the brutality of the Israeli attacks and the widespread killing of Lebanese people that took place during the conflict. About 1,000 people were martyred and 3,000 people wounded; houses and buildings, particularly in the south and the southern suburbs of Beirut and the Bekaa, were destroyed. Israel dropped more than 4 million cluster bombs. But the resistance wing of Hizbullah survived; not only did it prevent an Israeli advance on land, but its equipment and soldiers also inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, perhaps most prominently on August 12 [2006] when more than thirty-nine tanks and bulldozers were destroyed, killing more than twenty Israeli officers and soldiers and wounding more than 110 in what was

¹³⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹³⁷ Seymour M. Hersh, “Watching Lebanon: Washington’s interests in Israel’s War,” *The New Yorker*, August 21, 2006, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/08/21/watching-lebanon>

described as a ‘tank incineration’ in the region of Wadi al-Hajir, in southern Lebanon. By the time the ceasefire came into effect, at 8 AM on August 14 (as a result of Security Council Resolution 1701), Israel had suffered a heavy defeat both morally and militarily, instead of the victory it had hoped to achieve. Its failure was further compounded by the fact that it was unable to enter villages or outposts on the border such as Bint Jubail, Aita al-Shaab and al-Khayam.”¹³⁸

In justifying the Israeli invasion and air assaults on Lebanon on July 12, 2006, the *Washington Post* reported:

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel held Lebanon for the responsible for the Hezbollah raid and promised a “painful and far-reaching response,” a threat that recalled broad Israeli offensives in southern Lebanon in 1993 and 1996. “The murderous attack this morning was not a terrorist act, it was an act of war,” Olmert said in Jerusalem.¹³⁹

From the beginning of the hostilities up to the day of the Qana incident, President George W. Bush “said the United States remained steadfast in its support of Israel's right to defend itself against cross-border attacks by Hezbollah militants.”¹⁴⁰ More civilians were killed each day that the cease fire was delayed.

As had happened in the previous Israeli attacks on Lebanon, it took rising civilian casualties, peaking with a tragedy in Qana (as in 1996) to turn the momentum away from the U.S. and Israeli news narrative. As Robert Fisk reported in a series of polemic dispatches for *The Independent*¹⁴¹ during the conflict:

Qana again. AGAIN! I write in my notebook. Ten years ago, I was in the little hill village in southern Lebanon when the Israeli army fired artillery

¹³⁸ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 37-38.

¹³⁹ Anthony Shadid and Scott Wilson, “Hezbollah Raid Opens 2nd Front for Israel,” *Washington Post*, July 13, 2006.

¹⁴⁰ John M. Broder, “Bush Calls Attack on Qana ‘Awful,’ but Refrains From Calling for Immediate Cease-Fire,” *New York Times*, August 1, 2006.

¹⁴¹ Robert Fisk, “Slaughter in Qana,” *The Independent*, August 6, 2006, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-slaughter-in-qana-6232087.html>

shells into the UN compound and killed 106 Lebanese, more than half of them children. Most died of amputation wounds - the shells exploded in the air - and now today I am heading south again to look at the latest Qana massacre.

Fifty-nine dead? Thirty-seven? Twenty-eight? An air strike this time, and the usual lies follow. Ten years ago, Hizbollah were “hiding” in the UN compound. Untrue. Now, we are supposed to believe that the dead of Qana – today’s slaughter - were living in a house which was a storage base for Hizbollah missiles. Another lie - because the dead were all killed in the basement, where they would never be if rockets were piled floor-to-ceiling. Even Israel later abandons this nonsense. I watch Lebanese soldiers stuffing the children’s corpses into plastic bags - then I see them pushing the little bodies into carpets because the bags have run out.

But the roads, my God, the roads of southern Lebanon. Windows open, listen for the howl of jets. I am astonished that only one journalist - a young Lebanese woman - has died so far. I watch the little silver fish as they filter through the sky.

On my way back to Beirut, I find the traffic snarled up by a bomb-smashed bridge, where the Lebanese army is trying to tow a vegetable-laden truck out of a river. I go down to them and slosh through the water to tell the army sergeant that he is out of his mind. He's got almost 50 civilian cars backed up in a queue, just waiting for another Israeli air attack. Leave the lorry till later, I tell him.

Other soldiers arrive, and there is a 10-minute debate about the wisdom of my advice, while I am watching the skies and pointing out a diving Israeli F-16. Then the sergeant decides that Fisk is not as stupid as he looks, cuts the tow-rope and lets the traffic through. I am caked in dust, and Katya Jahjoura, a Lebanese photographer colleague, catches sight of me and bursts into uncontrollable laughter. “You look as if you have been living in rubble!” she cries, and I shoot her a desperate look. Better get out of this place, in case we get turned into rubble, I reply.

Monday, 31 July

Benjamin Netanyahu tries another lie, an old one reheated from 1982, when Menachem Begin used to claim that the civilian casualties of Israel’s air raids were no different from the civilians killed in Denmark in an RAF raid in the Second World War. Ho hum, nice try, Benjamin, but not good enough.

First, the story. RAF aircraft staged an air raid on the Nazi Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen, but massacred more than 80 children when

their bombs went astray. The Israelis are slaughtering the innocent of southern Lebanon from high altitude - high enough to avoid Hizbollah missiles. The reason the RAF killed 83 children, 20 nuns and three firemen on 21 March 1945 was that their Mosquitoes were flying so low to avoid civilian casualties that one of the British aircraft clipped its wing on a railroad tower outside Copenhagen central station, and crashed into the school. The other aircraft assumed the smoke from its high-octane fuel was the target.

Interesting, though, the way Israel's leaders are ready to manipulate the history of the Second World War. No Israeli aircraft has been lost over Lebanon in this war and the civilians of Lebanon are dying by the score, repeatedly and bombed from a great height.

Tuesday, 1 August

Electricity off, my fridge flooded over the floor again, my landlord Mustafa at the front door with a plastic plate of figs from the tree in his front garden. The papers are getting thinner. However, Paul's restaurant has reopened in East Beirut where I lunch with Marwan Iskander, one of murdered ex-prime minister Rafiq Hariri's senior financial advisers.

Marwan and his wife Mona are a source of joy, full of jokes and outrageous (and accurate) comments about the politicians of the Middle East. I pay for the meal, and Marwan produces - as I knew he would - a huge Cuban cigar for me. I gave up smoking years ago. But I think the war allows me to smoke again, just a little.

Wednesday, 2 August

Huge explosions in the southern suburbs of Beirut shake the walls of my home. A cauldron of fire ascends into the sky. What is there left to destroy in the slums which scribes still call a "Hizbollah stronghold"?

The Israelis are now bombing all roads leading to Syria, especially at the border crossing at Masna (very clever, as if the Hizbollah is bringing its missiles into Lebanon in convoys on the international highway). Then the guerrilla army, which started this whole bloody fiasco, fires off dozens more rockets into Israel.

I put my nose into the suburbs and get a call from a colleague in South Lebanon who describes the village of Srifa as "like Dresden". World War Two again. But the suburbs do look like a scene from that conflict. My grocer laments that he has no milk, no yoghurt, which - as a milkoholic myself - I lament.

Thursday, 3 August

More friends wanting to know if it's safe to return to Lebanon. An old acquaintance tells me that when she insisted on coming back to Beirut, a relative threw a shoe and a book at her. What was the book, I asked? A volume of poetry, it seems.

Electricity back, and I torture myself by watching CNN, which is reporting this slaughterhouse as if it is a football match. Score so far: a few dozen Israelis, hundreds of Lebanese, thousands of missiles, and even more thousands of Israeli bombs. The missiles come from Iran - as CNN reminds us. The Israeli bombs come from the United States - as CNN does not remind us.

Friday, 4 August

The day of the bridges. Abed and I are up the highway north of Beirut with Ed Cody of The Washington Post (he who reads Verlaine) and we manage to drive on side roads through the Christian Metn district, which has inexplicably been attacked (since the Christian Maronites of Lebanon are supposed to be Israel's best friends here). "You cannot believe how angry we are," a woman says to me, surveying her smashed car and smashed home and shattered windows and the rubble all over the road. A viaduct has fallen into a valley, all 200 metres of it, though another side road is left completely undamaged, and we cruise along it to the next destroyed bridge. So what was the point of bombing the bridges?

We drive back to Beirut on empty roads, windows open and the whisper of jets still in the sky. I go to the Associated Press office, where my old mate Samir Ghattas is the bureau chief. "So how were the bridges?" he asks. "I guess you were driving fast." He can say that again.

I do an interview with CBC in Toronto and talk openly of Israeli war crimes, and no one in the Canadian studio feels this is impolitic or frightening or any of the other usual fears of television producers, who think they will be faced with the usual slurs about "anti-Semitic" reporters who dare to criticise Israel.

I turn on the television, and there is Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbollah's boss, threatening Israel with deeper missile penetrations if Israel bombs Beirut. I listen to Israel's Prime Minister, saying much the same thing in reverse.

I call these people the "roarers", but I leaf through my tatty copy of King Lear to see what they remind me of. Bingo. "I shall do such things I know not, but they shall be the terrors of the earth." Shakespeare should be reporting this war.

Saturday, 5 August

Lots of stories about a massive Israeli ground offensive, which turn out to be untrue. The UN in southern Lebanon suspects that Israel is manufacturing non-existent raids to pacify public opinion as Hizbollah missiles continue to fly across the frontier. But a friend calls to tell me that Hizbollah might be running out of rockets. Possibly true, I reflect, and think of all the bridges which haven't yet been blown to pieces.

More gruesome photographs of the dead in the Lebanese papers. We in the pure "West" spare our readers these terrible pictures - we "respect" the dead too much to print them, though we didn't respect them very much when they were alive - and we forget the ferocious anger which Arabs feel when these images are placed in front of them. What are we storing up for ourselves? I wrote about another 9/11 in the paper this morning. And I fear I'm right.¹⁴²

As was the case in 1996, the killing of civilians in Qana resulted in an immediate international outcry, as was reported by CNN:

A deadly Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese town of Qana provoked stiff and swift condemnation across the globe Sunday as the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon showed little sign of ending.

Denunciations spread across the Arab and Muslim world, with citizens decrying the attack that killed civilians and diplomats reproaching the Israeli act as unacceptable at a time the world wants to find a solution to the 19-day crisis.

"In view of this horrendous crime the atmosphere now is very, very, very tense," said Lebanese Justice Minister Charles Rizk.

In an impassioned television address, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said: "We scream out to our fellow Lebanese and to other Arab brothers and to the whole world to stand united in the face of the Israeli war criminals."

But Western reaction showed a split, with many calling for an immediate cease-fire, but the United States and Britain stopping short of supporting such calls.

¹⁴² Robert Fisk, "Slaughter in Qana," *The Independent*, August 6, 2006, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-slaughter-in-qana-6232087.html>

The U.N. Security Council met Sunday in emergency session, with Secretary-General Kofi Annan reiterating his call for an immediate cessation of violence.

More than 60 bodies have been pulled from the rubble in Qana, the Lebanese representative to the U.N., Nouhad Mahmoud, said Sunday. Lebanese internal security officials said 37 of the dead are children.

A Red Cross official said the Qana airstrikes hit a residential building that housed refugees. Israel said the building was near Hezbollah rocket launching sites.

Israel later agreed to halt airstrikes on southern Lebanon for 48 hours to investigate the raid, a U.S. State Department spokesman said.

“This was a mistake, and we will have a full investigation,” Israeli government spokeswoman Miri Eisen told CNN.

“Hezbollah has chosen this as their launching ground for their attacks on us, intentionally endangering their civilians because they know that something like this is liable to happen,” said Israel Defense Forces spokesman Jacob Dalal.

However, the Arabic-language news networks showed scenes of the strike’s gory aftermath, and many in the Arab and Muslim world didn’t appear to be buying Israel’s argument.

Mohamed Chatah, senior adviser to Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, said on ABC’s “This Week,” that the “Lebanese people are justifiably outraged at what’s happened.”

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called the Qana attack “an ugly massacre” and called for Israel to stop its attacks “for the protection of civilian life.”

The Syrian Arab News Agency reported that Syrian President Bashar Assad called Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, expressing “shock and sorrow” over the attack and saying it showed Israel’s “barbarism.”

“President Assad assured the Lebanese president again of full Syrian solidarity with Lebanon and its readiness to help,” according to a SANA report.

Hundreds of protesters angry about the Qana attack stormed the United Nations compound in Beirut, shattering the glass walls protecting the U.N. building and climbing inside the inner courtyard.

In Gaza City, Palestinian security forces on Sunday ejected about 2,000 demonstrators who had stormed the U.N. compound protesting the Qana attack.

Iran's state-run Islamic Republic News Agency on Sunday reported Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi's condemnation.

"Certain U.S. officials should go on trial for crimes being committed in Lebanon," Asefi was quoted as saying. "U.S. schemes are not limited to just one country but cover the entire region. Washington wants the regional governments to be its puppets."

Jordan's King Abdullah said the strike was an "ugly crime" that was a "gross violation of all international statutes."

EU official pushes cease-fire

President Bush said Sunday the United States "mourns the loss of innocent life" and that all parties with a stake in the Mideast conflict "must work together to achieve a sustainable peace."

Bush said he spoke twice Sunday with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who is in the region.

The Bush administration has refused to call for an immediate cease-fire, with officials saying they first want to create conditions for a lasting peace. However, the Qana strike complicated U.S. diplomatic efforts, prompting Siniora to cancel a meeting with Rice.

Bush told reporters the United States is resolved to work with members of the U.N. Security Council to draw up "a resolution that will enable the region to have a sustainable peace."

Bush said he also spoke with British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

During a visit to California on Sunday, Blair expressed optimism that a lasting solution could be achieved.

"What has happened at Qana shows that this is a situation that simply cannot continue," he told reporters after making a series of calls to other leaders, including Siniora.

“I think there is a basis for an agreement that would allow us to get a U.N. resolution, but we have to get this now,” he said.

He said the situation in Qana is “absolutely tragic,” but added that negotiations should “lead to a general cessation of hostilities in a way that allows us to put an end to them for good.”

Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said he spoke to Siniora and “expressed profoundly dismay and deep sorrow.”

“Nothing can justify that. I have transmitted to him that the EU is continuously working to reach an immediate cease-fire.”

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Union external affairs commissioner, said the “attack on the city of Qana means an escalation of violence that is unjustifiable at a time when the international community is jointly working to find a solution.”

Calling for an immediate halt to violence, Ferrero-Waldner said the “killings of innocent people, particularly of children, must stop now.”

In Madrid, the Spanish Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing its “deepest consternation and condemnation” of the Qana bombing and called for an immediate cease-fire. The Spanish government also extended its “deepest sympathy” to the victims and the Lebanese government.

In Paris, French President Jacques Chirac’s office issued a statement saying “France condemns this unjustifiable action, which shows more than ever the need to reach an immediate cease-fire.”

U.S. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns on Sunday rejected suggestions that Israel’s actions amount to war crimes.

“We believe that every country has a right to defend itself,” Burns told ABC. “But we also believe that this type of fighting has to come to an end.”

He said the United States and other countries believe “Israel has a right to its own self-defense. Israel was attacked two weeks ago. It had rockets fired in its territory. It had soldiers abducted.”

But American Muslims expressed outrage. The Council on American-Islamic Relations, an American advocacy group, said the killing of civilians by Israel amounts to state terror.

“Whenever civilians are attacked to achieve a political goal, the charge of terrorism must be applied,” said CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper in a written statement.¹⁴³

“Lebanon was united in the face of Israeli aggression,” writes Qassem, noting that the Lebanese Army “came out in support of the resistance, and many of its soldiers died as martyrs or were wounded” while people “who bore the brunt of the war” expressed “their support for the resistance under the most difficult circumstances.”¹⁴⁴ Qassem argues that Hezbollah “successfully prevented Israel from achieving the two main objectives of its second war against Lebanon” as detailed by the Israeli leadership – “the return of Israeli soldiers” and “the disarming of Hizbullah” – while “any hopes Chief of Staff Dan Halutz has of ‘eliminating the missiles and stopping the people from launching them’ were dashed as the Party continued to launch as many missiles as previously, right up to the moment when the ‘ceasefire’ came into effect, after the implementation of UN Resolution 1701.”¹⁴⁵

“Secretary of State Rice, who had rejected calls for a ceasefire on the ninth day of the war, justifying the vicious attacks on Lebanon as ‘the birth pangs of a new Middle East in Lebanon’, was also disappointed,” writes Qassem, “as this ‘new Middle East’ failed to materialize. Since this notable strategic victory, the first of its kind in the history of the Arab-Israeli struggle, the Party has become an inspirational force for the peoples of the region.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ “Qana Attack Stirs Worldwide Outcry,” *CNN.com*, July 30, 2006, <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/30/qana.reaction/>

¹⁴⁴ Qassem, *Hizbullah*, 38.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

The 2006 military conflict ended on August 12, as Lebanon and Hezbollah accepted the United Nations cease-fire deal, and the Israel government accepted it on August 13.¹⁴⁷ According to figures calculated by Reuters and released a year after the end of the conflict, the casualties in Israel included “158 dead, most of them soldiers killed in Lebanon and including 43 civilians killed by Hezbollah rocket attacks. About 1,500 people were wounded in rocket attacks in Israel, and 450 soldiers were hurt in the fighting in Lebanon,” while on the Lebanese side, Reuters calculated the casualties to be “nearly 1,200 dead and 4,400 wounded, mostly civilians. The dead include about 270 Hezbollah fighters and 50 Lebanese soldiers and police, as well as five U.N. peacekeepers.”¹⁴⁸

As mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation, the attempts by the Israeli military in “mowing the lawn” in Lebanon in 2006 in the Second Lebanon War were subsequently “widely perceived as a failure by the Israel public, and confirmed as such by the government-appointed Winograd Commission.”¹⁴⁹

In their news reporting of the 2006 conflict, the *Times* and the *Post* had the historical lessons of numerous previous Israeli attempts to use military force to compel political action in Lebanon against Hezbollah, none of which had succeeded – and yet in the “Push” of the news coverage, both newspapers reverted back to Indexing and Propaganda patterns, providing immense coverage to U.S. and Israeli voices pushing for

¹⁴⁷ Molly Moore and Edward Cody, “Israel Accepts U.N. Deal; Both Sides War Of More Fighting,” *Washington Post*, August 14, 2006.

¹⁴⁸ “FACTBOX: Costs of war and recovery in Lebanon and Israel,” *Reuters.com*, July 9, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-war-cost/factbox-costs-of-war-and-recovery-in-lebanon-and-israel-idUSL0822571220070709>

¹⁴⁹ Dayan, “Mowing the Lawn,” <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4312017,00.html>

the military conflict and resisting calls for an early cease fire, which could have prevented numerous civilian casualties each day that the cease fire was delayed.

Findings

A content analysis of the 171 *Washington Post* and 207 *New York Times* articles from July through August 2006 showed that the Hezbollah had become less prominent in the sourcing of the two newspapers from the 2000 reporting, accounting for 352 attributions but averaging less than one source paragraph per news story (as opposed to March-April 1996 when it was one of the least reported sources with a total of forty-four attributions, averaging less than one source paragraph for every two news stories in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*.) This decrease in Hezbollah source paragraphs from the 2000 coverage is consistent with the Propaganda Model, and also consistent with Strobel's "Push" effects¹⁵⁰ argument, wherein opposition groups get less traction with the press in times when the U.S. government is prepared for an escalation in a conflict in collaboration with its ally (Israel). Meanwhile, Israeli sources still topped the overall total count with 2,170 attributions, averaging about 5.7 source paragraphs per news story (higher than the March-April 1996 study wherein Israeli sources accounted for about four attributions in every news story). This is also consistent with the Indexing hypothesis for use of government and allied sources, and also with Strobel's findings, as the number of U.S. sources accounted for 1,650 attributions, averaging 4.36 attributed source paragraphs per news story (up from the March-April 1996 study when they also dominated the news coverage, averaging about three attributions for every news story

¹⁵⁰ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

filed). Non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant coverage, with 1,760 attributions, averaging 4.65 source paragraphs per news story (much higher than March-April 1996 when non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources averaged about 2.7 attributed paragraphs per news story). The overall distribution of the top five sources is shown in Table 6.1 in comparison with the rankings of the 1996 results.

Table 6.1 Sources by Nationality (2006, 2000 & 1996)			
Nationality	2006 Attributions	2000 Attributions	1996 Attributions
Israel	#1. 2170/7348 (23.95%)	#1. 332/764 (43.45%)	#1. 413/1170 (35.29%)
Lebanon (non-Hezbollah)	#2. 1760/7348 (23.95%)	#2. 130/764 (17.01%)	#3. 276/1170 (23.58%)
United States	#3. 1650/7348 (22.45%)	#3. 86/764 (11.25%)	#2. 306/1170 (26.15 %)
Hezbollah	#4. 352/7348 (4.79%)	#4. 80/764 (10.47%)	#5. 44/1170 (3.76%)
United Nations	#5. 294/7348 (4.00%)	#5. 59/764 (7.72%)	#4. 82/1170 (7%)

Hezbollah accounted for less than 5 percent of the attributed source paragraphs in the “Push” effects scenario of the 2006 conflict coverage, significantly lower than the May 2000 “Pull” effects scenario when it had more than double the percentage of source paragraphs, accounting for 10.47 percent, as compared to the March-April 1996 “Push” effects news coverage wherein Hezbollah accounted for less than 4 percent of all source paragraphs in the content. Israeli source paragraphs outnumbered Hezbollah source paragraphs by a margin of more than 6 to 1 in the 2006 “Push” effects news coverage, as compared to 9 to 1 in the entire “Push” effects” news coverage in March-April 1996, while in the May 2000 “Pull” effects news coverage the Israeli advantage had dropped to a little more than four-to-one in the published sourced paragraphs.

The similarities in the “Push” effects news coverage from March-April 1996 to July-August 2006 for the distribution of the various source paragraphs was noted in both the newspapers source paragraphs, as is shown in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2 Sources by Nationality in Each Newspaper (2006 &1996)	
1996 Washington Post (Source tally, Rank)	2006 Washington Post (Source tally, Rank)
(%age of total of 566 source paras)	(%age of total of 3707 source paras)
Israel (169, #1)(29.85%)	Israel (996, #2)(26.86%)
United States (169, #2)(29.85%)	United States (898, #3)(24.22%)
Lebanon (115, #3)(20.31%)	Lebanon (1043, #1)(28.13%)
United Nations (53, #4)(9.36%)	United Nations (140, #5)(3.77%)
Hezbollah (23, #5)(4.06%)	Hezbollah (225, #4)(6.06%)
1996 The New York Times (Source tally, Rank)	2006 The New York Times (Source tally, Rank)
(%age of total of 604 source paras)	(%age of total of 3641 source paras)
Israel (243, #1)(40.23%)	Israel (1174, #1)(32.24%)
Lebanon (161, #2)(26.65%)	Lebanon (717, #3)(19.69%)
United States (137, #3)(22.68%)	United States (752, #2)(20.65%)
United Nations (29, #4)(4.80%)	United Nations (154, #4)(4.22%)
Hezbollah (21, #5)(3.47%)	Hezbollah (127, #5)(3.48%)

As can be seen in Table 6.2, both newspapers had awarded Hezbollah less than 5 percent of the total number of source paragraphs in their news reporting in the 1996 “Push” into the conflict, even though the conflict, and the accompanying government narrative, was aimed at the Hezbollah. However, by 2000, the share of the news paragraphs sourced from Hezbollah had risen to over 10 percent, indicating some support for Strobel’s “Pull” effect hypothesis. In a further demonstration of the “Push” effect, the

share of Hezbollah’s attributed news paragraphs fell significantly, down to less than 4 percent in the *Times*, and about 6 percent in the *Post*.

For the most part, both newspapers’ news coverage showed similarities, in Table 6.3, in the means of news source paragraphs categories across the news coverage of the conflicts for 1996 and 2006:

Table 6.3 Means of Source Paragraphs in Each Newspaper (2006 & 1996)	
Washington Post 1996-2006	The New York Times 1996-2006
Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.98-3.03	Lebanese Civilian (1) = 0.88-1.59
U.S. Government (1) = 2.90-2.84	U.S. Government (1) = 2.48-2.03
Israel Military (1) = 0.88-2.43	Israel Military (1) = 0.83-2.04
Israel Government (1) = 2.06-1.67	Israel Government (1) = 2.71-1.90
Lebanese Government (1) = 0.76-1.12	Lebanese Government (1) = 0.92-0.67
Israel Civilian (1) = 0.16-0.98	Israel Civilian (1) = 0.56-0.85
United Nations (1) = 0.88-0.7	United Nations (1) = 0.54-0.68
Hezbollah (2) = 0.29-0.81	Hezbollah (2) = 0.33-0.40

The overall tally showed that the U.S. government (1) category dominated the sources used in the coverage of the July-August 2006 conflict, just as it had in the March-April 1996 crises, but Israeli Government (1) sources, who were at the top of the tally in the May 2000 news coverage in the two newspapers, slipped to fourth in 2006, as shown in Table 6.4:

Table 6.4 Sources by Nationality, Profession and Disposition (2006, 2000 & 1996)		
Type of Source	Number of sources (% of total)	Overall Rank [1996-2000-2006]
U.S. Government (1)	271 (23.1%)-71 (9.2%)- 906 (12.3%)	1-3-1
Lebanese Civilians (1)	94 (8.3%)-63 (8.2%)- 847 (11.5%)	3-4-2
Israeli Military (1)	86 (7.3%)-79 (10.3%)- 838 (11.4%)	4-2-3
Israeli Government (1)	242 (20.6%)-165 (21.5%)- 678 (9.2%)	2-1-4
Israeli Civilian (1)	37 (3.16%)-49 (6.41%)- 343 (4.6%)	8-6-5
Lebanese Government (1)	85 (7.2%)-32 (4.1%)- 331 (4.5%)	5-9-6
United Nations (1)	71 (6.0%)-59 (7.7%)- 260 (3.53%)	6-5-7
Hezbollah (2)	31 (2.6%)-33 (4.3%)- 222 (3.02%)	9-8-8
Hezbollah (1)	13 (1.11%)-45 (5.89%)- 109 (1.48%)	14-7-15

As Table 6.4 shows, in some important categories the distribution of sources was just as lopsided in 2006 as it had been in 1996. American and Israeli sources dominated the news reporting in 2006, with overall direct criticism of U.S. or Israeli policy, coded as (2), accounting for 954 out of 7,348 source paragraphs - less than 13 percent of all news content – this provides considerable support to Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda model,¹⁵¹ wherein sources that did not oppose U.S. or Israeli policy made up for more than 87 percent of all quoted materials in the news reporting.

There were few U.S. Government sources quoted in the news reporting that opposed the U.S. policy in the 2006 news reporting, generating fifteen US2 attributed news paragraphs out of 7,348, while Israeli Government sources quoted in the news reporting that opposed the Israeli policy in the 2006 news reporting accounted for two

¹⁵¹ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

IS2 attributed news paragraphs out of 7,348 published attributed news paragraphs - these circumstances point to strong support for Bennett's Indexing Hypothesis,¹⁵² wherein reporters for both newspapers gravitated toward the majoritarian consensus view of the U.S. and Israeli government officials they interviewed.

As was the case in 1996 and 2000, over the course of the 2006 conflict, Lebanese government sources (404/7,348 source paragraphs) and UN personnel sources (294/7,348 source paragraphs) each got less than 6 percent of overall news coverage, even though they had an important say in the conflict. Similarly, the Syrian government (fifty-nine/7,348 source paragraphs), which was an important player in the conflict due to its military and political influence in Lebanon, got less than 1 percent coverage, even though American government sources regularly berated Syrian policies in the region. France (111/7,348 source paragraphs), which had added important clauses and amendments to the U.S. cease-fire agreement in April 1996, got less than 2 percent coverage, most (ninety-seven/111) of it unopposed to the U.S, with exactly seven attributed news paragraphs critical of U.S. and Israeli policies published in both the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* in the 2006 conflict, effectively underrepresenting to their readers any knowledge of the French efforts to end the conflict.

Lebanese civilians (980/7,348 source paragraphs) got about 13 percent of the coverage, with less than 2 percent of it (133/7,348 source paragraphs) critical of the Israeli and/or U.S. policies, while Lebanese Experts got 144 source paragraphs in the news coverage, of which nine were critical of U.S./Israeli actions, while Israeli experts

¹⁵² W. Lance Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

got 191 source paragraphs, of which only eight were critical of the conflict. Lebanese NGOs, as health workers and emergency relief personnel, could have played an important part in the news gathering and fact checking process – they accounted for 153/7,348 source paragraphs, (about 2 percent of attributed source news coverage), which was an improvement from March-April 1996 when they had received only eight source paragraphs out of 1,170.

The 2006 news coverage, which was based around the conflict between the Israelis and Hezbollah, saw slightly more Hezbollah views presented to counter the Israeli claims and allegations as compared to the March-April 1996 news coverage, 4.79 percent of overall attributed Hezbollah source paragraphs in 2006, as opposed to 3.76 percent in 1996. Given that both of these conflicts were “Push” initiatives for military action, these low numbers contrast with the “Pull” news coverage of 2000 when Hezbollah got more than 10 percent of the attributed news coverage, thereby providing some support for Strobel’s “Push-Pull” theory.¹⁵³

While Israeli Government (1) sources’ narrative of its actions (678/7,348 source paragraphs) accounted for about 9 percent of all source paragraphs published, Hezbollah (2) sources’ criticism of these actions (238/7,348 source paragraphs) accounted for about 3 percent of the source paragraphs in 2006, a slight improvement over March-April 1996 news coverage when they accounted for less than 3 percent of the source paragraphs. Arguments presented by the Hezbollah (1) sources (114/7,348 source paragraphs) that did not address merely the U.S. policy on Israeli action but spoke of broader issues was 1.55

¹⁵³ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-164.

percent of the overall attributed news paragraphs in 2006, comparable to March-April 1996 when it also got less than 2 percent of source paragraphs.

The U.S. Government (1) sources that were 23 percent of the March-April 1996 coverage had declined to about 9 percent of source paragraphs (seventy-one/764) in May 2000 news coverage, but rebounded to 906/7,348, about 12 percent in the 2006 news coverage – this overall increase in source paragraphs for U.S. Government (1) sources paragraphs from 9 percent to 12 percent, accompanied by a decrease in Hezbollah sources paragraphs from 10 percent to less than 5 percent from the 2000 to 2006 news coverage also provides support for Strobel’s “Push” effects hypothesis.

As was the case in 1996 and 2000, the two newspapers also did not differ significantly on their datelines – or the place stories were filed from – in the 2006 conflict’s reporting, as shown in Table 6.5:

Table 6.5 Datelines of News Reports (1996-2000-2006)		
Origin of Story	Washington Post	New York Times
Israel	11-13-44	25-15-59
Lebanon	25-11-56	21-11-57
USA	7-5-56	2-4-52

A chi-square test of the two newspapers’ Datelines crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper’s distribution of Datelines for their news reporting on the 2006 conflict, just as was the case in the 2000 and 1996 conflict news reporting. A means comparison of length, page number, and source

paragraphs for the news content from the three major datelines for the two newspaper in the 2006 conflict showed interesting results, as shown in Table 6.6:

Table 6.6 Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (2006)						
<i>Variable Measured</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>Washington Post</i>		
Dateline(#of reports): Israel(59) Lebanon(57) U.S.(52)	Israel(44) Lebanon(56) U.S.(56)					
Length (number of words)	1246	1037	976	1288	1521	943
Page Number	5.56	7.02	5.52	5.68	5.25	8.91
#1 Source mean	MilIS1(5.2)	CivLB1(5.3)	GovUS1(4.5)	MilIS1(6)	CivLB1(8.7)	GovUS1(5.6)
#2 Source mean	GovIS1(4.4)	MilIS1(1.6)	ExpertUS1(1.9)	CivIS1(3.6)	MilIS1(2.6)	CivUS1(1.8)
#3 Source mean	CivIS1(2.6)	GovLB1(1.4)	CivUS1(1.3)	GovIS1(3.3)	GovLB1(1.8)	NgoUS1(1.2)
#4 Source mean	ExpertIS1(1.7)	CivLB2(1)	GovIS1(1.2)	ExpertIS1(1.2)	HB2(1.7)	ExpertUS1(0.9)
#5 Source mean	GovUS1(1.4)	GovIS1(0.9)	UN1(1.1)	GovUS1(1.2)	GovIS1(1.6)	GovLB1(0.7)

A t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed that the *Washington Post's* news reports from Israel (mean = 1,288.75 words) were given less news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 1,521.02 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -3.094$, $df = 98$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003). *The New York Times* reversed this difference, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 1,246.02 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 1,037 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.548$, $df = 114$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.012). This difference in news coverage advantage for mean news copy length from Israel and Lebanon between the two newspapers pointed to the possibility of differences in editorial or reporting activities between the *Times* and the *Post* – this difference across the *bylines* of the journalists is examined a little later in this section.

If one looks at the top source paragraph means in Table 6 for news reports from the dateline of Israel for the *Times* and the *Post*, we see a strong propaganda and indexing effect – the most source paragraphs are given to Israeli and U.S. sources that are unopposed to the Second Lebanon War. The 2006 population of Israel still included Arab citizens, including members of the Knesset, and also Palestinians living in Israeli-controlled territories – the Israel dateline news reporting provided very low reporting from these sources with the source paragraph means for Palestinian voices critical of Israel’s actions usually running less than 0.1 mean source paragraphs across the *Times* and the *Post* news coverage from Israel. Similarly, Israel has non-governmental organizations, including liberal pro-peace groups – none of these show up in the news coverage from the Israel dateline for both newspapers, as was the case in 1996.

If one examines the Lebanon dateline news reports, the *Washington Post’s* top source paragraph means now included Hezbollah (2) sources critical of the Israeli attack, but it should be noted that the bulk of these critical voices, sixty of the ninety-seven source paragraphs, were published in the “Pull” period after July 30, as civilian casualties were on the rise, thereby giving support to the “Push” and “Pull” news reporting theory, wherein voices critical of the conflict are given more news coverage once the conflict starts to worsen.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, *The New York Times* news reports from Lebanon had Lebanese Civilians (2) source paragraphs show up in their top five means, but it should again be noted that the bulk of these critical voices, forty of the fifty-eight source paragraphs, were published in the “Pull” period after July 30, as civilian casualties were on the rise, giving support to the “Push” and “Pull” news reporting theory.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-164.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

It is also important to note here that the U.S. Datelines set for the 2006 conflict was significantly larger – fifty-two domestic news reports by the *Times* and fifty-six domestic news reports from the *Post* focused on the Lebanon conflict. However, the top source means again reflected a strong propaganda and indexing function, with all top source paragraphs means reflecting U.S., Israeli, Lebanese or UN sources that supported the conflict, or were unopposed to it.

When the entire data were tested for a t-test comparison of the means for Datelines for the news reports filed from Israel, Lebanon, and the U.S. to compare their mean story length, mean page numbers, and mean source paragraphs, the following findings were reported, as shown in Table 6.7:

Table 6.7 Total Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (2006)				
<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports):	Israel(103)	Lebanon(113)	U.S.(108)
Length (number of words)		1264.27	1276.87	959.03
Page Number		5.61	6.14	7.28
#1 Source mean		MillIS1(5.6)	CivLB1(7)	GovUS1(5.1)
#2 Source mean		GovIS1(3.96)	MillIS1(2.13)	CivUS1(1.58)
#3 Source mean		CivIS1(3.09)	GovLB1(1.68)	ExpertUS1(1.41)
#4 Source mean		ExpertIS1(1.54)	GovIS1(1.29)	NgoUS1(1.12)
#5 Source mean		GovUS1(1.37)	HB2(1.13)	GovIS1(0.92)
Gov Lebanon sources2		0.1	0.28	0.26
Hezbollah sources1		0.15	0.78	0.01
Hezbollah sources2		0.69	1.13	0.11
Civilian Lebanon sources2		0.09	1.07	0.01

A t-test comparison of the 2006 news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed some statistically significant differences in the 2006 conflict news reporting in the newspapers' coverage – as could be expected, news reports filed from Israel showed statistical significant higher means for Israeli sources, while those filed from Lebanon showed statistically significant higher means for Lebanese sources, but news reports filed from Israel also showed statistically significant higher means for U.S. Government (1) sources (1.37 per news story) as opposed to news reports from Lebanon (0.75 per news story), indicating that reporters filing from Israel will more likely to quote U.S. Government (1) sources than those filing from Lebanon ($t = 1.897$, $df = 214$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.059).

The mean length of the stories from Israel in 2006 was 1,264.27 words, while those from Lebanon was 1,276.87 words - this difference was not statistically significant in the t-test. Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were not given significantly more news copy than those filed from Lebanon in 2006 in the overall news data. The mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports in 2006 was 5.61, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 6.14. This difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the stories filed from Israel in 2006 were not featured more prominently in the newspapers as compared to those originating from Lebanon. The lack of a statistically significant difference in any measures of comparison of the Datelines between Lebanon and Israel in the 2006 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis, given that Israel-based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length. This raised the question as to whether a “Pull”

effect was somehow evident in the 2006 news reporting after the early “Push” phase of the conflict – perhaps the “Push” phase lost steam around the time period of rising civilian casualties in Lebanon, and then a “Pull” effect took hold? In order to test for this, the 2006 data were coded into two segments – one running up to July 29, 2006, and accounting for 195 news reports, and the second running from July 30, 2006, the point from which civilian casualties in Lebanon started rising, and accounting for 183 news reports till the cessation of the conflict. When the data were analyzed by a t-test of means for the 195 news reports in the “Push” phase versus the 183 news reports in the “Pull” phase, the comparison of means showed that there was a statistically significant increase in the number of source paragraphs from a variety of Lebanese sources during the “Pull” phase:

There was a statistically significant increase in the Lebanese Military (1) sources means, from 0.07 to 0.20 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -2.284$, $df = 376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.023$).

There was a statistically significant increase in the Hezbollah (1) sources means, from 0.14 to 0.44 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -2.333$, $df = 376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.020$).

There was a statistically significant increase in the Lebanese Government (1) sources means, from 0.66 to 1.10 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -2.050$, $df = 376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.041$).

There was a statistically significant increase in the Lebanese Government (2) sources means, from 0.11 to 0.28 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -2.423$, $df = 376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.016$).

There was a statistically significant increase in the Lebanese Expert (1) sources means, from 0.10 to 0.63 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -3.053$, $df = 376$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002).

There was a statistically significant increase in the French Government (1) sources means, from 0.12 to 0.40 attributed source paragraphs ($t = -2.691$, $df = 376$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.007).

All these findings point to a shift in the news coverage from the period up to July 29, 2006 (accounting for 195 news reports), to the second period from July 30, 2006, the point from which civilian casualties in Lebanon started rising (accounting for 183 news reports till the cessation of the conflict).

As was found in the 1996 analysis, it could be assumed that news reports from Israel in 2006 would carry more Israeli sources and those from Lebanon would carry more Lebanese sources, and this was established in the t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the means for Israeli and Lebanese sources in the two different datelines. It was also interesting to note the similarities in the means of source paragraphs that did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Hezbollah (2) sources was 0.69 in news reporting from Israel, and 1.13 in news reporting from Lebanon – implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to underrepresent Hezbollah sources quoted as critical of U.S. and Israeli policy as was the American news reporting from Israel, where no Hezbollah sources were present.

As was the case in the 1996 news coverage analysis, when the data were correlated for copy length with the page numbers in the 2006 news coverage, the page

numbers exhibited an inverse correlation with story length that was statistically significant (Pearson Correlation = -0.397, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This indicates that as stories progressed from the front page to further back in the newspaper they got smaller, which is largely representative of news judgment in editorial thinking – more important news reports are closer to the front page and usually given greater copy length.

Significant positive correlation was found between a variety of prominent source paragraphs and copy length – as the copy length increased, the following categories of source paragraphs also increased with statistical significance: Israel Military (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.404, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Israel Government (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.414, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Hezbollah (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.226, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Hezbollah (2) (Pearson Correlation = 0.319, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Lebanese Military (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.156, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002), Lebanese Government (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.241, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Lebanese Government (2) (Pearson Correlation = 0.183, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), United Nations (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.117, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.023), Lebanese NGO (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.130, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.011), Lebanese Expert (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.114, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.026), Lebanese Civilian (1) (Pearson Correlation = 0.264, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), and Lebanese Civilian (2) (Pearson Correlation = 0.211, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

Significant negative correlation was found between some prominent source paragraphs critical of U.S. policy and copy length – as the copy length increased, the following categories of source paragraphs decreased with statistical significance: U.S.

Government (2) (Pearson Correlation = -0.106, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.039), U.S. Civilians (2) (Pearson Correlation = -0.169, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001). This is interesting as it points to a tendency to provide lesser copy length to news reports featuring U.S. government or civilian views critical of the government's policy in the conflict.

When data were correlated with page numbers, the following prominent source categories showed statistically significant inverse correlation with page numbers, meaning that these sources were more likely to appear in pages closer to the front of the newspaper (Front Page = 1):

Israel Military (1) (Pearson Correlation = -0.249, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Israel Government (1) (Pearson Correlation = -0.235, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), Hezbollah (1) (Pearson Correlation = -0.108, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.036), Hezbollah (2) (Pearson Correlation = -0.201, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000), and Lebanese Civilian (1) (Pearson Correlation = -0.119, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.021). While this inverse correlation with page numbers for Israeli sources points to evidence for the Propaganda Theory, the similar prominence for Hezbollah and Lebanese civilian sources also gives some support to the "Pull" hypothesis for the 2006 conflict.

When the data were analyzed over the passage of time, with a value of 1 assigned to July 13, the first day of news reporting on the conflict in each newspaper in 2006, and subsequent days added to the variable of "Conflict Days" (growing from 1 to 34) as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the months of July and August 2006, the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

Lebanese Military (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant correlation with the “Conflict Days” (Pearson Correlation = 0.145, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.005), as did Hezbollah (1) sources (Pearson Correlation = 0.156, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002), and Lebanese Expert (1) sources (Pearson Correlation = 0.136, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.008) - implying that Lebanese Military (1), Hezbollah (1), and Lebanese Expert (1) source paragraphs increased over the duration of the conflict days - this is another interesting development that gives some credence to the Strobel’s “Push” versus “Pull” hypothesis.¹⁵⁶

The t-test comparisons for the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon in 2006 showed the *Washington Post*’s news reports from Israel (mean = 1,288.75 words) were given less news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 1,521.02 words), a difference that was statistically significant (t= -3.094, df = 98, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003). *The New York Times* showed this differently, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 1,246.02 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 1,037.00 words), a difference that was statistically significant (t= 2.548, df = 114, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.012). This stands in contrast to the 1996 findings wherein both newspapers had statistically significant longer news copies from Israel than from Lebanon, and raises the question of whether journalists at the *Post* had some differences with those from the *Times* in 2006 that didn’t exist in 1996.

In 1996 and 2000, the t-test comparison of means of the source paragraphs in the news reporting of the two newspapers showed no statistically significant difference in their use of the major news sources. This indicated that journalists for both newspapers in

¹⁵⁶ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-164.

May 2000 were following near similar routines of news reporting and editing, with no significant difference in the number of source paragraphs in the two newspapers, just as was the case in March-April 1996. However, in the 2006 news reporting, statistically significant difference emerged in the news reporting between the *Times* and the *Post*.

The only statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the two newspapers in May 2000 was that the *The New York Times* published the news reporting on this conflict more prominently, with the mean page number for their thirty-three news reports being 6.79, while the *Washington Post* had a larger mean page number, 17.31, for their twenty-nine news reports on the conflict, thereby publishing the news reports less prominently ($t=5.005$, $df = 60$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). This was, again, remarkably similar to the 1996 analysis, where the only statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means between the two newspapers was that *The New York Times* published the news reporting on this conflict more prominently, with the mean page number for their fifty-two news reports being 6.08, while the *Washington Post* had a larger mean page number, 16.86, for their forty-nine news reports on the conflict, thereby publishing the news reports less prominently ($t=6.584$, $df = 99$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

However, in the 2006 conflict's news coverage, statistically significant differences emerged between the news coverage of the *Post* and the *Times* in the t-test comparisons:

The *Post* news coverage had a higher mean word count (1,218.20) for its 171 news reports than that of the *Times* (1,069.78) across its 207 news reports, a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 3.318$, $df = 376$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001).

The *Post* news coverage had a higher mean for Hezbollah (2) source paragraphs (0.81) than that of the *Times* (0.40), a difference that was statistically significant ($t=2.435$, $df=376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)}=0.015$), implying that the *Post* provided more coverage to Hezbollah (2) sources in the conflict than the *Times*. The *Post* news coverage also had a higher mean for Lebanese Government (1) source paragraphs (1.12) than that of the *Times* (0.67), a difference that was statistically significant ($t=2.083$, $df=376$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)}=0.038$), implying that the *Post* provided more coverage to Lebanese Government (1) sources in the conflict than the *Times*. In order to check for reasons for this discrepancy in the means of the *Post* and the *Times* coverage, a more focused t-test was conducted on data only from the Lebanon dateline news reports, given that both newspapers had published a similar number of news reports from Lebanon – fifty-six for the *Post*, and fifty-seven for the *Times*. The t-test comparison of means for the two newspapers reporting from Lebanon demonstrated even more interesting differences in their coverage:

The *Post* news coverage from Lebanon had a higher mean word count (1,521.02) for their fifty-six news reports than that of the *Times* (1,037.00) across their fifty-seven news reports, a difference that was statistically significant ($t=6.391$, $df=111$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)}=0.000$).

The *Post* news coverage from Lebanon had a higher mean for Hezbollah (2) source paragraphs (1.73) than that of the *Times* (0.54), a difference that was statistically significant ($t=2.488$, $df=111$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)}=0.014$), implying that the *Post* provided more coverage to Hezbollah (2) sources in the conflict reporting from Lebanon than the *Times*. The *Post* news coverage also had a higher mean for Lebanese Civilian (1) source

paragraphs (8.75) than that of the *Times* (5.33), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.412$, $df = 111$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.018), implying that the *Post* provided more coverage to Lebanese Civilian (1) sources in the conflict in its reporting from Lebanon than the *Times*.

As discussed previously in the Literature Review, Shoemaker and Reese noted how the news reporting patterns of journalists can also be affected by their nationality:

The influence of backgrounds may be most obvious when demography is related to expertise, as in the changing nature of foreign correspondents. Scott Shuster (1988), a former freelance foreign correspondent, says that budget trimming among U.S. media is making it more practical to hire foreign journalists as “foreign” correspondents than to send American journalists abroad. “There is an army of foreign journalists out there, ready to put an end to the ancient and ridiculous practice of sending speak-only-English American reporters halfway around the world to pretend to be experts on places they have never seen before.” . . . And, fiscal responsibility aside, these foreign journalists can probably do a better job: Because they know more about the local environment, they “should be able to depict foreign reality more accurately than a ‘parachuting’ foreign correspondent.”¹⁵⁷

In order to decipher the differences between the news reporting from Lebanon by the *Post* and the *Times*, the bylines for the news reports were examined and categorized into Western or Middle Eastern (Arabic or Persian) names categories in order to also explore Uwe Krueger’s findings related to social networks of journalists,¹⁵⁸ to test whether the news reporting patterns of journalists with Western¹⁵⁹ names could possibly show any statistically significant differences in their news source paragraphs than those

¹⁵⁷ Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message* (New York: Longman Publishers, 1996), 76-77.

¹⁵⁸ Uwe Krueger, “Manufacturing Consent through Integration: Social Networks of German Journalists in the Elite Milieu and Their Effects on Coverage,” *European Journal of Communication*, 30, no.2 (2015): 152-70.

¹⁵⁹ For example, Lebanon bylines coded as Western names included: Sabrina Tavernise, Edward Cody and Molly Moore.

news stories filed by journalists with Middle Eastern¹⁶⁰ names, given that journalists with Arabic or Persian names may be first-generation or second-generation American immigrants, or foreigners employed by American newspapers, and might have different social networks by virtue of their extended family, friends, and peer networks in the Middle East. This analysis was not statistically feasible in the 1996 study as only four news reports had a Middle Eastern name byline in that coverage, while in the 2000 study only one news report carried a Middle Eastern byline – numerically, these were too few a data set to conduct reliable data analysis to check for significant differences among the different byline variables. In 2006, among the 113 news reports filed from Lebanon, 100 had bylines with a single journalist's name, and among these the *Post* had twenty-two news reports by Western names as opposed to thirty by Middle Eastern names, while the *Times* had twenty-five news reports by Western names as opposed to twenty-three by Middle Eastern names, therefore the *Post* had had three fewer news reports by Western names and seven more by Middle Eastern names when compared with the *Times* news reporting from Lebanon. Nevertheless, the entire data set was now large enough to conduct statistical analysis comparing the Middle Eastern byline news reports with those of the Western bylines.

A t-test comparison of the forty-seven Western and fifty-three Middle Eastern byline news reports from the Lebanon dateline revealed the following statistically significant differences:

The Western byline news reports from Lebanon had a higher mean value for Israel Military (1) source paragraphs (3.30) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports

¹⁶⁰ For example, Lebanon bylines coded as Middle Eastern names included: Hassan M. Fattah, Anthony Shadid and Nora Boustani.

from Lebanon (0.91), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 3.879$, $df = 98$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The Western byline news reports from Lebanon had a higher mean value for U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs (1.04) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (0.19), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 3.013$, $df = 98$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003).

The Western byline news reports from Lebanon had a higher mean value for Israel Government (1) source paragraphs (1.83) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (0.42), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 3.750$, $df = 98$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The Western byline news reports from Lebanon had a lower mean value for Lebanese Civilian (1) source paragraphs (5.13) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (10.15), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= -3.364$, $df = 98$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001).

When the bylines analysis was conducted across the entire data set for all the July and August 2006 news reports, a t-test of 297 news reports with Western bylines with sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports revealed that:

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for Israel Military (1) source paragraphs (2.30) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (0.80), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 2.405$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.017).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs (2.85) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news

reports (0.20), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 4.616$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for Israel Government (1) source paragraphs (1.95) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (0.38), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 3.859$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for Israel Expert (1) source paragraphs (0.61) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (0.00), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 2.324$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.021).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for U.S. Expert (1) source paragraphs (0.60) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (0.02), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 2.229$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.026).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a higher mean value for Israel Civilian (1) source paragraphs (1.14) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (0.00), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= 2.761$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.006).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a lower mean value for Lebanese Government (1) source paragraphs (0.65) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (1.35), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= -2.622$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.009).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a lower mean value for Lebanese NGO (1) source paragraphs (0.20) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (1.43), a difference that was statistically significant ($t= -5.965$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a lower mean value for Lebanese Expert (1) source paragraphs (0.19) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (1.17), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -4.065$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a lower mean value for Lebanese Civilian (1) source paragraphs (0.93) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (9.12), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -12.933$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

The 297 Western byline news reports had a lower mean value for Lebanese Civilian (2) source paragraphs (0.17) than the sixty Middle Eastern byline news reports (1.18), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -6.088$, $df = 355$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000).

Therefore, one characteristic that made the 2006 conflict news reporting different to that of the 1996 conflict was the number of news reports by writers with Middle Eastern bylines that provided statistically significant higher means for source paragraphs from Lebanese sources in their news reporting, as compared with the news reporting under Western bylines that contained statistically significant higher means for source paragraphs from U.S. and Israeli sources, a development that provides some support to the arguments relating to the social networks of journalists presented by Uwe Krueger.¹⁶¹ None of the news reports from Israel, for example, was attributed to a Middle Eastern name byline.

¹⁶¹ Krueger, "Manufacturing Consent through Integration," 152-70.

In their study of Israeli journalists during the period of conflicts, Motti Neiger, Eyal Zandberg, and Oren Meyers noted that “journalists covering their own nation should be conceptualized as professionals trapped between nation and profession. On the one hand, the values of the professional community call on journalists to tell a story that is factual or appears to be factual and objective. . . . On the other hand, the national-cultural community calls on journalist to take part in the conflict, to be a weapon in the battleground of images, and thus to tell a story that is neither balanced nor objective.”¹⁶²

When the journalists reporting for the *Post* and the *Times* in the U.S., Israel, and Lebanon, reporters and editors, looked into the conflict in Israel’s Second Lebanon War in 2006, which national-cultural community called on them to take part in the conflict, to be a weapon in the battleground of images, and thus to tell a story that is neither balanced nor objective? The statistical differences in the 2006 news reporting from Lebanon with Western and Middle Eastern bylines raise interesting issues with respect to these questions, which are discussed in Chapter 8.

Conclusions

The 2006 news reporting by the *Times* and the *Post*, therefore, showed support for the Herman and Chomsky Propaganda theory¹⁶³ in its underrepresentation of source paragraphs critical of the U.S. and Israel; and it also showed support for Bennett’s Indexing theory¹⁶⁴ in the manner of over representation of government, elites, and allied sources. The 2006 news coverage by the *Times* and the *Post* also showed some support

¹⁶² Motti Neiger, Eyal Zandberg and Oren Meyers, “Communicating Critique: Toward a Conceptualization of Journalistic Criticism,” *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 3, (International Communication Association, 2010): 377-95.

¹⁶³ Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*.

¹⁶⁴ Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States,” 103-25.

for Strobel's "Push" and "Pull" Effects theory in the differences in pre-July 29 and post-July 30 rising civilian casualties effect on news source paragraphs; and the 2006 news coverage also showed some support for Uwe Krueger's Social Network theory,¹⁶⁵ in terms of how the source paragraphs of reporters with Middle Eastern names differed from that of news report by reporters with Western names in the bylines.

¹⁶⁵ Krueger, "Manufacturing Consent through Integration," 152-70.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

Research Questions for Quantitative Content Analysis

1. *Which sources, by nationality and profession, were dominant in the news coverage of the newspapers? Did the overall news reporting over-represent or under-represent any particular nationalities central to the news? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?*

A total of 101 news reports were coded for the time period of **March-April 1996**. They yielded 1,170 source paragraphs, providing more than 80,000 words of news coverage. A content analysis of the forty-nine *Washington Post* and fifty-two *New York Times* articles showed that the Hezbollah was one of the least-quoted sources in news reports, averaging less than one attribution for every two news reports in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Meanwhile, Israeli sources topped the total count, averaging about four attributions in every news report. Similarly, U.S. sources dominated the news coverage as well, averaging about three attributions for every news report filed. It should be noted that non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant news coverage, averaging about 2.7 attributions per news report, but most of the times they were asked to comment on aspects of the effects of the conflict, and not the politics of the conflict and the U.S. policy of supporting Israel. The Iranian government, arguably the dominant source of influence on Hezbollah, got zero source paragraphs in the two newspapers coverage of the conflict.

A content analysis of the twenty-nine *Washington Post* and thirty-three *New York Times* articles from **May 2000** showed that the Hezbollah had become more prominent in the sourcing of the two newspapers, accounting for eighty attributions and averaging 1.29

attributions per news story (as opposed to March-April 1996 when it was one of the least-reported sources with a total of forty-four attributions, averaging less than one attribution for every two news stories in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*.) This increase in Hezbollah source paragraphs is consistent with Strobel's "Push" and "Pull" effects argument, wherein opposition groups get more traction with the press in times when the U.S. government is unprepared for a surprise or sudden setback in foreign policy. Meanwhile, Israeli sources still topped the total count with 332 attributions, averaging about 5.35 attributions per news story (higher than the March-April 1996 study wherein Israeli sources accounted for about four attributions in every news story). Most remarkably, and consistent with Strobel's findings, U.S. sources accounted for only eighty-six attributions, averaging 1.38 attributed source paragraphs per news story (significantly down from the March-April 1996 study when they dominated the news coverage, averaging about three attributions for every news story filed). Non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant coverage, with 130 attributions, averaging 2.09 source paragraphs per news story (a little lower than March-April 1996 when Lebanese sources averaged about 2.7 attributions per news story).

A content analysis of the 171 *Washington Post* and 207 *New York Times* articles from **July-August 2006** showed that the Hezbollah had become less prominent in the sourcing of the two newspapers from the 2000 reporting, accounting for 352 attributions but averaging less than one source paragraph per news story (as opposed to March-April 1996 when it was one of the least reported sources with a total of forty-four attributions, averaging less than one source paragraph for every two news stories in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*.) This decrease in Hezbollah source paragraphs from the

2000 coverage is consistent with the Propaganda Model, and also consistent with Strobel's "Push" effects argument, wherein opposition groups get less traction with the press in times when the U.S. government is prepared for an escalation in a conflict in collaboration with its ally (Israel). Meanwhile, Israeli sources still topped the overall total count with 2,170 attributions, averaging about 5.7 source paragraphs per news story (higher than the March-April 1996 study wherein Israeli sources accounted for about four attributions in every news story). This is also consistent with the Indexing hypothesis for use of government and allied sources, and also with Strobel's findings, as the number of U.S. sources accounted for 1,650 attributions, averaging 4.36 attributed source paragraphs per news story (up from the March-April 1996 study when they also dominated the news coverage, averaging about three attributions for every news story filed). Non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources were given significant coverage, with 1,760 attributions, averaging 4.65 source paragraphs per news story (much higher than March-April 1996 when non-Hezbollah Lebanese sources averaged about 2.7 attributed paragraphs per news story), as shown in Table 7.1:

Table 7.1 Sources by Nationality, Profession and Disposition		
Type of Source	Number of sources (% of total)	Overall Rank [1996-2000-2006]
U.S. Government (1)	271 (23.1%)-71 (9.2%)- 906 (12.3%)	1-3-1
Lebanese Civilians (1)	94 (8.3%)-63 (8.2%)- 847 (11.5%)	3-4-2
Israeli Military (1)	86 (7.3%)-79 (10.3%)- 838 (11.4%)	4-2-3
Israeli Government (1)	242 (20.6%)-165 (21.5%)- 678 (9.2%)	2-1-4
Israeli Civilian (1)	37 (3.16%)-49 (6.41%)- 343 (4.6%)	8-6-5
Lebanese Government (1)	85 (7.2%)-32 (4.1%)- 331 (4.5%)	5-9-6
United Nations (1)	71 (6.0%)-59 (7.7%)- 260 (3.53%)	6-5-7
Hezbollah (2)	31 (2.6%)-33 (4.3%)- 222 (3.02%)	9-8-8
Hezbollah (1)	13 (1.11%)-45 (5.89%)- 109 (1.48%)	14-7-15

Significant support was found in the data analysis in these studies for both the Propaganda Model and the Indexing theories, which stipulate that the American news coverage relies heavily and predominantly on information and opinions of sources from the U.S. government and its allies – in all three studies, as illustrated in Table 1, the U.S. Government (1), Israeli Military (1) and Israeli Government (1) sources made up the bulk of the attributed source paragraphs, with other uncritical sources making up for most of the news content. The voices critical of the Israeli and U.S. policy, noted as Hezbollah (2) sources, accounted for less than 5 percent of all news source paragraphs in all three studies, thereby presenting a propaganda effect, whereby the vast majority of the information provided to the readers by the *Post* and the *Times* was uncritical of Israeli or U.S. policies in all three conflicts. Overall Hezbollah source paragraphs accounted for less than 5 percent of all source paragraphs in 1996 and 2006 news coverage, but rose to more than 10 percent of news source paragraphs in the 2000 news coverage of Israel’s

withdrawal from Lebanon, thereby providing some support to Strobel’s “Pull” effects argument.

2. *Which country datelines did most of the news reporting come from? Did reporting from a certain country change the length and positioning of the story? Did it change the distribution of types of sources? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?*

Israel, Lebanon and the U.S. accounted for the vast majority of datelines for the reporting on the three conflicts, as can be seen in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2 Datelines of News Reports (1996-2000-2006)		
Origin of Story	Washington Post	New York Times
Israel	11-13-44	25-15-59
Lebanon	25-11-56	21-11-57
USA	7-5-56	2-4-52
Other/Unknown	2-0-8	2-3-12

There was a significant amount of redundancy and repetition of source content in the news reporting from these three datelines – almost all news reporting from the U.S., Israel and Lebanon prominently featured the information and opinions of U.S. and Israeli leaders, while voices critical of Israeli and U.S. policies were just as likely to be under-represented in news stories filed from U.S. and Israel as they were in the news reporting from Lebanon itself – when news reports from Lebanon were compared with news reports from Israel many of the leading source categories showed no statistically significant difference in the data analysis. A significant portion of news reporting by

foreign correspondents was, therefore, not foreign at all and often just a repetition of news source content from Washington, D.C., demonstrating support for the Propaganda Model and the Indexing theories.

A chi-square test of crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper's distribution of datelines for their news reporting on **the 1996 conflict**, and a t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed that the *Washington Post's* news reports from Israel (mean = 1,068.82 words) were given more news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 716.24 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.169$, $df = 34$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.037). *The New York Times* also showed this difference, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 956.24 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 653.90 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.676$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.010). In addition to this, *The New York Times* also gave the Israeli news reports more prominence (mean page number = 4.64) than those from Lebanon (mean page number = 8.19), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -2.829$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.007).

When the entire **1996** data were tested for a t-test comparison of the means for datelines for the news reports filed from Israel and Lebanon to compare their mean story length and mean page numbers, the following findings were reported:

The mean length of the stories from Israel was 990.64 words, while those from Lebanon was 687.78 words. This difference was statistically significant in the t-test ($t = 3.323$, $df = 80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001). Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were given more news copy than those filed from Lebanon.

Also, mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports was 7.33, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 13.3. This difference was statistically significant ($t = -3.048$, $df = 80$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003). This finding indicates that the stories filed from Israel were featured more prominently in the newspapers and closer to the front page, whereas those originating from Lebanon were published less prominently by being pushed further back in the newspaper.

While it may be assumed that news reports from Israel will carry more Israeli sources and those from Lebanon will carry more Lebanese sources, and this was established in the t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the means for Israeli, U.S. and Lebanese sources in the two different datelines, it was interesting to note the similarities in the means of source paragraphs that did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Hezbollah (2) sources was 0.39 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.37 in news reporting from Lebanon – implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to underrepresent Hezbollah sources as was the American news reporting from Israel. Similarly, Lebanese Government (2) sources critical of the U.S. and Israeli policies also did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Lebanese Government (2) sources was 0.25 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.24 in news reporting from Lebanon – implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to underrepresent Lebanese Government sources critical of the U.S. and Israel as was the American news reporting from Israel.

A chi-square test of this crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper's distribution of datelines for their news reporting on **the 2000 conflict**, just as was the case on the 1996 conflict. A t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed no statistically significant differences in the **May 2000** conflict news reporting in either newspaper – this was an interesting development compared to the t-test comparisons for the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon in March-April 1996 wherein the *Washington Post's* news reports from Israel (mean = 1,068.82 words) were given more news copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 716.24 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.169$, $df = 34$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.037). *The New York Times* also showed this difference, wherein its news reports from Israel (mean = 956.24 words) were given more new copy than those from Lebanon (mean = 653.90 words), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = 2.676$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.010). In addition to this, *The New York Times* also gave the Israeli news reports more prominence (mean page number = 4.64) than those from Lebanon (mean page number = 8.19), a difference that was statistically significant ($t = -2.829$, $df = 44$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.007). The lack of a statistically significant difference in any measures of comparison of the datelines between Lebanon and Israel in the May 2000 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis, given that Israel-based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length.

When the entire data were tested for a t-test comparison of the means for datelines for the news reports filed from Israel and Lebanon in March-April 1996 to compare their mean story length and mean page numbers, the following findings were reported:

The mean length of the stories from Israel in March-April 1996 was 990.64 words, while those from Lebanon was 687.78 words. This difference was statistically significant in the t-test ($t= 3.323$, $df= 80$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.001$). Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were given more news copy than those filed from Lebanon. **In May 2000**, the mean length of the stories from Israel was 935.36 words, while those from Lebanon was 855.54 words – this difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were not given significantly more news copy than those filed from Lebanon in May 2000.

The mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports in March-April 1996 was 7.33, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 13.3. This difference was statistically significant ($t= -3.048$, $df = 80$, $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0.003$). This finding indicates that the stories filed from Israel in 1996 were featured more prominently in the newspapers and closer to the front page, whereas those originating from Lebanon were published less prominently by being pushed further back in the newspaper. **In May 2000**, the mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports was 10.82, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 12.11. This difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the stories filed from Israel **in May 2000** were not featured more prominently in the newspapers as compared to those originating from Lebanon. Again, the lack of a statistically significant difference in any measures of comparison of the datelines between Lebanon and Israel in

the May 2000 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis, given that Israel-based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length.

As was found in the 1996 analysis, it may be assumed that news reports from Israel **in May 2000** would carry more Israeli sources and those from Lebanon would carry more Lebanese sources, and this was established in the t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the means for Israeli, U.S. and Lebanese sources in the two different datelines, it was interesting to note the similarities in the means of source paragraphs that did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Hezbollah (2) sources was 0.61 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.55 in news reporting from Lebanon – implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to underrepresent Hezbollah sources as was the American news reporting from Israel, where no Hezbollah sources were present. Similarly, Lebanese Government (2) sources critical of the U.S. and Israeli policies also did not show a statistically significant difference in the t-test comparison of means – the mean number of source paragraphs for Lebanese Government (2) sources was 0.11 in news reporting from Israel, and 0.27 in news reporting from Lebanon – implying that American news reporting from Lebanon was just as likely to underrepresent Lebanese Government sources critical of the U.S. and Israel as was the American news reporting from Israel, where there were no Lebanese government leaders.

A chi-square test of the two newspapers’ datelines crosstabulation showed no statistically significant difference between the two newspaper’s distribution of datelines

for their news reporting on **the 2006 conflict**, just as was the case in the 2000 and 1996 conflict news reporting.

A t-test comparison of the news reports filed from Israel with those filed from Lebanon showed some statistically significant differences in **the 2006 conflict** news reporting in the newspapers' coverage – as could be expected, news reports filed from Israel showed statistical significant higher means for Israeli sources, while those filed from Lebanon showed statistically significant higher means for Lebanese sources, but news reports filed from Israel also showed statistically significant higher means for U.S. Government (1) sources (1.37 per news story) as opposed to news reports from Lebanon (0.75 per news story), indicating that reporters filing from Israel will more likely to quote U.S. Government (1) sources than those filing from Lebanon ($t = 1.897$, $df = 214$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.059).

When the entire data were tested for a t-test comparison of the means for datelines for the news reports filed from Israel and Lebanon **in 2006** to compare their mean story length and mean page numbers, the following findings were reported:

The mean length of the stories from Israel **in 2006** was 1,264.27 words, while those from Lebanon was 1,276.87 words – this difference was not statistically significant in the t-test. Therefore, the news stories filed from Israel were not given significantly more news copy than those filed from Lebanon in 2006 in the overall news data. The mean page number for the Israel dateline news reports in 2006 was 5.61, whereas the mean page number for the news reports filed from Lebanon was 6.14. This difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the stories filed from Israel in 2006 were not featured more prominently in the newspapers as compared to those originating from

Lebanon. The lack of a statistically significant difference in any measures of comparison of the datelines between Lebanon and Israel in the 2006 conflict in both newspapers provides some more support for the Strobel “Pull” hypothesis, given that Israel based news reporting lost its 1996 advantage in more prominent placement by page number, and more news copy by word length.

3. *How did the length of the stories, their positioning and the nature of sources change over the period of each crises, from its beginning to the end? Did any particular sources show a correlation with the passage of time, as the crises intensified and then dissipated? Did the statistics differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?*

When **the 1996 news reporting** data were analyzed over time, with a value of 1 assigned to the first day of news reporting in each newspaper in March and subsequent days added to the variable of “Conflict Days” as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the months of **March and April 1996** (with the beginning of the Israeli Operation on April 11 and the peace agreement on April 27), the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

The length of the news reports correlated with the passage of time (increase in the value of the “Conflict Days” variable), indicating that news reporting got intensive as the conflict progressed (Pearson Correlation = 0.371, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). However, the page numbers decreased, implying that the news coverage moved further back into the newspaper pages over time (Pearson Correlation = -0.358, N = 101, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000). Also, U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant correlation with the “Conflict Days” (Pearson Correlation = 0.226, N = 101,

Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.023), implying that U.S. Government sources increased in the news coverage over passage of time, even as the conflict grew worse, and kept dominating the news narrative albeit with a shift in the stated U.S. policy goals now of seeking an immediate cease fire. The strong correlation between the U.S. Government (1) source paragraphs and the passage of time in the conflict supports both the Propaganda Theory and also the Indexing hypothesis.

When **the 2000 news reporting data were** analyzed over the passage of time, with a value of 1 assigned to the first day of news reporting in each newspaper in May and subsequent days added to the variable of “Conflict Days” as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the month of **May 2000**, the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

Israeli Military (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant negative correlation with the “Conflict Days” (Pearson Correlation = -0.362, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.004), while Hezbollah (1) sources showed a statistically significant positive correlation with “Conflict Days” (Pearson Correlation = 0.256, N = 62, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.045) – implying that Israeli Military sources decreased in the news coverage over passage of time in the **May 2000** conflict, while Hezbollah (1) sources increased. This is another interesting development that gives some credence to the Strobel’s “Push” versus “Pull” hypothesis.¹

When **the 2006 news reporting data were** analyzed over time, with a value of 1 assigned to July 13, the first day of news reporting on the conflict in each newspaper in

¹ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

2006, and subsequent days added to the variable of “Conflict Days” (growing from 1 to 34) as the news reporting progressed and the conflict grew across the months of **July and August 2006**, the following trends were noted to be statistically significant:

Lebanese Military (1) source paragraphs showed statistically significant correlation with the “Conflict Days” (Pearson Correlation = 0.145, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.005), as did Hezbollah (1) sources (Pearson Correlation = 0.156, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002), and Lebanese Expert (1) sources (Pearson Correlation = 0.136, N = 378, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.008) – implying that Lebanese Military (1), Hezbollah (1), and Lebanese Expert (1) source paragraphs increased over the duration of the conflict days. This is another interesting development that gives some credence to the Strobel’s “Push” versus “Pull” hypothesis.²

There was some support, therefore, in the overall data analysis for the “Push” versus “Pull” effect in the three conflicts, wherein the climax of international outrage over civilian casualties tended to change the make up of the news sources in the reporting – while early conflict reporting was dominated by government and military sources, post-civilian massacre news reporting picked up more civilian voices, heightening the need for a cessation of military hostilities.

Research Questions for Qualitative Content Analysis

4. *In what manner did the reporting of the American newspapers, as opposed to that of other journalists in the region, ignore or avoid certain facts or opinions that, in historical terms, proved to be important to the conflict and its resolution? Did the “Propaganda Model” and/or “Indexing” effect demonstrate that American readers of*

² Ibid.

these two newspapers received an incomplete, if not flawed, representation of the crises and its resolution? Did these aspects of the news coverage differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies, in support of the “push” and “pull” effects hypothesis developed by Strobel?³

The news reporting of two British journalists cited in this dissertation – Robert Fisk of *The Independent*, and Nicholas Blanford of *The Daily Star* – illustrate the manner in which American foreign correspondents often reported on developments in the conflict with a tendency to over-represent the U.S. and Israeli point of view, and undercut or under-represent the voices of those opposed to these policies in Lebanon. This becomes fairly obvious when one considers certain rules by which news judgments are inherent in the writing of journalists – what information or facts get placed higher in the news report, whose facts and opinions get more prominent coverage in terms of word counts, and how do the reporter’s own words frame the news. Provided below are two news reports placed side by side for comparison, one by Fisk and the other by the *Post* correspondent reporting on the artillery attack on Qana in 1996, with some adjectives, adverbs, facts and sources noted in **bold** font for comparison of the two texts:

<p>Robert Fisk, “Massacre in Sanctuary,” <i>The Independent</i>, April 18, 1996.</p> <p>It was a massacre. Not since Sabra and Chatila had I seen the innocent slaughtered like this. The Lebanese refugee women and children and men lay in heaps, their hands or arms or legs</p>	<p>John Lancaster, “Israeli Shells Kill 90 in Lebanon Camp; U.N. Site Struck; Peres Offers Truce to Guerrilla Group,” <i>Washington Post</i>, April 19, 1996.</p> <p>Israeli artillery shells, fired in retaliation for a rocket barrage, slammed into a U.N. compound filled with hundreds of refugees near Tyre in southern Lebanon today, killing about</p>
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³ Ibid.

missing, **beheaded** or **disembowelled**. There were well over a hundred of them. A **baby** lay without a **head**. The **Israeli shells** had **scythed** through them as they lay in the United Nations **shelter**, believing that they were **safe** under the **world's protection**. Like the **Muslims of Srebrenica**, the **Muslims of Qana** were wrong.

In front of a burning building of the UN's **Fijian** battalion headquarters, a **girl held a corpse in her arms**, the body of a grey-haired man whose eyes were staring at her, and she rocked the corpse back and forth in her arms, keening and **weeping and crying** the same words over and over: "My father, my father." A **Fijian** UN soldier stood amid **a sea of bodies** and, without saying a word, **held aloft the body of a headless child**.

"The Israelis have just told us they'll stop shelling the area," a **UN soldier** said, **shaking with anger**. "Are we supposed to thank them?" In the remains of a burning building - the conference room of the **Fijian** UN headquarters - **a pile of corpses** was burning. The roof had crashed in flames onto their bodies, **cremating** them in front of my eyes. When I walked towards them, I **slipped on a human hand**.

So why did the Israelis kill all these **refugee civilians** - more than 70 at the latest count - and **go on sending 25 shells into the survivors and the bodies around them for up to 10 minutes** after the first round had landed? A **Fijian** soldier, looking at a dead woman lying at his feet, **her neck encircled with blood**, said simply: "The guerrillas fired six Katyushas from near our position. The shells came in two minutes later. **But the Israelis know we're here**. This has been a UN battalion headquarters for 18 years. **They knew we had 600 refugees here.**"

90 people, **many of them women and children**, and **wounding** at least 100.

The **blasts** of **several** 155mm artillery shells turned the shelter into **a bloody nightmare of dismembered bodies**. **Lebanese** camera teams recorded **gruesome** images of **dead children** being **zipped into body bags**, **grief-stricken parents**, and **hospital floors slick with blood**. U.N. relief workers **cried and hugged each other** for support as they went about their tasks.

An **older man pounded his temples and wailed**, "God, why did they do this to us? Why did they do this to us? Oh my God. Oh my God."

"**I couldn't count the bodies**," Mikael Lindvall, a **U.N.** official who visited the compound shortly after the attack, said in an interview. "There were **babies without heads**. There were **people without arms and legs**."

The attack marked **a turning point in Israel's eight-day-old air and artillery campaign in Lebanon**, which until now has **enjoyed** nearly **unbridled support** from the **Israeli public** as well as from the **Clinton administration** in Washington.

President Clinton, on arrival in St. Petersburg, Russia, called on both sides to **observe an immediate cease-fire**, saying it has become "**painfully clear**" the border conflict must end. **U.S. officials** announced **Secretary of State Warren Christopher** will travel to the Middle East on Saturday, breaking off from Clinton's traveling party in Russia in **a peacekeeping attempt**.

Indeed they did. The **Israelis** know that **5,200 penniless civilians** - too poor to flee to Beirut - are crowded into the compounds of the 4,500- strong UN force. The **Fijian** battalion headquarters is **clearly marked on Israel's military maps**. The UN buildings were plastered with white and black UN signs. They are lit up at night. Not a soul in southern Lebanon is ignorant of their location. Nor is the **Hizbollah**. It is not the first time the guerrillas have fired their missiles at Israel from beside a UN building; when a **Fijian** officer tried to prevent the Hizbollah from firing rockets close to his position on the coast road two days ago, a **Hizbollah man shot him in the chest**.

But does a Hizbollah target of opportunity justify the nightmare scenes which confronted us yesterday? Are **Lebanese civilians** worth so little on the immoral scales of war that armies can write them off as "collateral damage" while following the hopeless goal of eradicating "terrorism" by gunfire and blood? True, the **Hizbollah should bear a burden of guilt**, though they will refuse to do so.

But **Israel's slaughter of civilians** in this terrible 10-day offensive - 206 by last night - has been so **cavalier, so ferocious**, that **not a Lebanese will forgive this massacre**. There had been the **ambulance attacked** on Saturday, **the sisters killed in Yohmor** the day before, **the 2-year-old girl decapitated** by an **Israeli missile** four days ago. And earlier yesterday, the **Israelis had slaughtered a family of 12** - the youngest was a **four-day-old baby** - when **Israeli helicopter pilots fired missiles into their home**.

Shortly afterwards, **three Israeli jets dropped bombs** only 250 metres from a UN convoy on which I was travelling,

Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel, responding to Clinton's call in a CNN interview, said **Israel is ready to implement a cease-fire** immediately if **Hezbollah** also agrees to **halt its rocket attacks** against **Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon** and towns in Israel. "I think we can **negotiate a solution** or an **agreement** without **shooting** at each other," Peres said. "**There is no need for fire** in order to reach an agreement."

There was **no immediate response from Hezbollah**, the **Iranian-backed political party and militia** that draws most of its membership from **Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims**.

The shelling of the U.N. installation instantly compounded the **price Lebanese civilians have paid** during **Israel's intensive wave** of assaults, **designed to punish Hezbollah guerrillas for their attacks on Israeli troops** in an **Israeli-occupied portion of southern Lebanon** and their **cross-border rocketing** of towns in **Israel's northern Galilee region**.

In a separate incident this morning near the southern Lebanese market town of **Nabatiyah**, an **Israeli air attack killed 11 people, including a mother, her 4-day-old baby and six other children**, according to **Lebanese news reports**. The **death toll** from the **Israeli campaign** now stands at **about 150, most of them Lebanese civilians**, according to **unofficial U.N. and Lebanese estimates**. The **guerrilla rocket attacks** have **injured about 50 Israelis**, but **no one has been killed in Israel**.

Israeli officials expressed regret for today's shelling **but blamed the**

blasting a house 30 feet into the air in front of my eyes. Travelling back to Beirut to file my report on the Qana massacre to the Independent last night, I found **two Israeli gunboats firing at the civilian cars** on the river bridge north of Sidon.

Every foreign army comes to grief in Lebanon. The **Sabra and Chatila massacre of Palestinians by Israel's militia allies** in 1982 doomed Israel's 1982 invasion. Now the **Israelis are stained again by the bloodbath** at Qana, the **scruffy** little Lebanese hill town where **the Lebanese believe Jesus turned water into wine**.

The **Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres** may now wish to end this war. But the **Hizbollah** are not likely to let him. Israel is back in the Lebanese **quagmire**. **Nor will the Arab world forget yesterday's terrible scenes**.

The **blood of all the refugees ran quite literally in streams** from the shell-smashed UN compound restaurant in which the **Shi'ite Muslims** from the hill villages of southern Lebanon - **who had heeded Israel's order to leave their homes** - had **pathetically sought shelter**. **Fijian and French** soldiers **heaved** another group of dead - they **lay with their arms tightly wrapped around each other** - into blankets.

A **French UN trooper muttered oaths** to himself as he opened a bag in which he was **dropping feet, fingers, pieces of people's arms**.

And as we **walked through this obscenity**, a swarm of people burst into the compound. They had driven in wild convoys down from Tyre and began to pull the blankets off the **mutilated corpses** of their **mothers**

tragedy on guerrillas from **Hezbollah**. In **Jerusalem, officials said Israeli gunners were trying to hit Hezbollah fighters** who moments earlier had **fired Katyusha rockets toward Israel** from a position estimated by U.N. **spokesmen as lying 350 to 400 yards** from the compound.

"We don't want to see any woman, or child or Lebanese civilian killed, but they are the victims of Hezbollah," Peres told reporters.

U.N. **spokesman Lindvall** estimated the **number of dead at 94**. Other accounts from **Lebanese rescue teams and police** around Tyre ranged from 75 to more than 100. The precise total was difficult to establish because **bodies**, many of them **in pieces**, were taken to several hospitals.

U.N. **officials accused the Israeli gunners of disregarding the safety of the refugees** and noted they had **repeatedly protested** to the **Israeli army** in recent days after **incidents** in which **Israeli shelling imperiled civilians and U.N. personnel**.

After a **surge in Hezbollah attacks** on the **Israeli-occupied border strip** and northern Israel in recent months, **Israel** began its **offensive** April 11 in an effort to **force the Lebanese and Syrian governments to rein in Hezbollah guerrillas**. **Hezbollah** says it is **fighting to drive Israeli troops from the Lebanese territory** they occupy as **what Israel calls its "security zone."**

Syria keeps 35,000 troops elsewhere in Lebanon and **exercises decisive influence** on important government decisions here. In addition, **Israeli and**

and sons and daughters and to shriek “Allahu Akbar” (God is Great”) and to **threaten** the UN troops.

We had suddenly become not UN troops and journalists but **Westerners, Israel's allies, an object of hatred and venom.** One **bearded man with fierce eyes** stared at us, his **face dark with fury.** “You are Americans,” he screamed at us. “**Americans are dogs. You did this. Americans are dogs.**”

President Bill Clinton has allied himself with **Israel** in its war against “**terrorism**” and the **Lebanese**, in their **grief**, had not forgotten this. **Israel's official expression of sorrow** was **rubbing salt in their wounds.** “I would like to be made into a **bomb** and **blow myself up amid the Israelis,**” one old man said.

As for the **Hizbollah**, which has **repeatedly promised** that **Israelis** will **pay for their killing of Lebanese civilians**, its revenge cannot be long in coming. **Operation Grapes of Wrath** may then turn out then to be all too **aptly named.**⁴

U.S. officials have said Hezbollah **supplies from Iran** pass through **Syria** and on to southern Lebanon through **Syrian-controlled areas** in the Bekaa Valley.

Since **warning** residents of southern Lebanon to leave, **Israel has pounded towns and villages with 3,000 to 4,000 artillery shells and 50 to 100 airstrikes a day, according to U.N. estimates.** Although **most residents of southern Lebanon have heeded the warning, some have stayed behind in their homes or sought refuge nearby in U.N. compounds** manned by **peacekeeping troops.**

In addition to **attacking the sources of Hezbollah fire, Israeli warplanes and helicopter gunships have destroyed Lebanese infrastructure, including two major electric power stations for Beirut, and blasted Hezbollah offices and residences in the capital's Shi'ite-inhabited southern suburbs. Israeli warships have blockaded major Lebanese ports, searching arriving ships in a blow to the country's commerce and to its hope of recovering from a long civil war and previous Israeli invasions.**

Israel has said it is trying to avoid civilian casualties while reserving the right to strike Hezbollah targets wherever they reveal themselves. On Saturday, **an Israeli helicopter rocketed what Israeli officials said was an ambulance** used by Hezbollah for military operations, **killing two women and four children, including a 2-month-old baby.** The driver and father

⁴ Robert Fisk, “Massacre in Sanctuary,” *The Independent*, April 18, 1996, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/massacre-in-sanctuary-1305571.html>

of **three of the dead children denied** any **Hezbollah** connection.

The **U.N. compound** hit in today's incident sits in the village of Qana, about six miles southeast of the port city of Tyre. The **compound** serves as the battalion headquarters for **Fijian** peacekeeping troops in southern Lebanon. Since the offensive began, it also had become a **refuge for about 400 civilians**, many of whom were staying in an **open-sided thatch-roofed hut** normally used as a **recreation hall**, according to Lindvall.

Briefing reporters in **Israel** tonight, **Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak** said the **exchange** began at 1:55 p.m. local time, when the **guerrillas** launched several **Katyusha rockets and mortar rounds** from their **hiding place** outside the U.N. compound. **Using sophisticated "counter-battery" radar, the Israelis** identified the origin of the incoming fire, then **responded** with a **barrage of five shells**, he explained.

Several "**overshot the mark**," in Shahak's words, and **slammed** into the **heart** of the **compound**.

The **dead and wounded** were **evacuated** by ambulance to hospitals in Tyre, Sidon and Naqurah, site of the **U.N.** force's headquarters, according to Lindvall. Several **Fijian** peacekeepers were reported **hurt**.

Despite the presence of **refugees** in the **compound**, **Israeli officials insisted** their **gunners had acted properly**. "The **right to defend ourselves is not dependent** on anyone's **permission**," **Peres** said. "The **Hezbollah hides**

	<p>behind the backs of the civilians of Lebanon, and that is why we asked the Lebanese civilians to evacuate. They are not our enemies.”</p> <p>While acknowledging that Hezbollah guerrillas often fire on Israeli targets from near Lebanese civilian areas, U.N. officials have grown increasingly concerned at the forcefulness of Israel's response.</p> <p>They say there is no evidence that Israeli shelling has killed any guerrillas since the campaign began.⁵</p> <p>-----</p>
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Most of Fisk’s reporting is a narrative of the facts and opinions as presented by people, and his own observations, at the scene of the attack in Qana, while most of Lancaster’s reporting is a narrative of the Israeli explanation for their actions. Certainly, Fisk’s narrative style – providing accurate representation of the grief and anger of the victims - is jarring to American ears, but setting aside the personal or polemic materials, Fisk manages to inject more challenges to the U.S./Israel narrative in his reporting, while the *Post* seems largely tied down by its tendency to report the narrative constructed by Israeli and U.S. officials, which largely absolves Israel of blame for the killing and injuring of the civilians who had evacuated their homes as per Israel’s orders, and sought refuge inside a Fijian UN camp in April 1996.

One might possibly argue that the British style of journalism, and the manner of teaching journalism, is somehow different from that of the U.S., thereby leading to different approaches in news reporting, writing and editing. But what then of Canadians?

⁵ John Lancaster, “Israeli Shells Kill 90 in Lebanon Camp; U.N. Site Struck; Peres Offers Truce to Guerrilla Group,” *Washington Post*, April 19, 1996.

Canadian journalists have fairly similar educational and training programs as Americans, and yet when we compare a news report from the same day from Lebanon, April 19, 1996, we find differences, as shown below with some adjectives, adverbs, facts and sources noted in **bold** font for comparison of the two texts:

<p>Norma Greenaway and Katherine Wilton, “Bloodbath in Lebanon: UN calls for ceasefire after Israeli shells kill 101,” <i>The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)</i>, April 19, 1996.</p> <p>Israeli shells slammed into a UN peacekeeping camp sheltering hundreds of Lebanese civilians yesterday, turning it into an inferno of burning flesh and limbs.</p> <p>Security sources said at least 101 people were killed and 104 wounded. A UN spokesman said four Fijian members of the UN force were also wounded.</p> <p>Israel admitted an “unfortunate mistake” in the bloody assault but defended it as retaliation for rocket attacks into northern Israel from a nearby Hezbollah guerrilla post.</p> <p>Lebanese leaders called the shelling “the mother of all atrocities” and a new page in “the annals of terror.”</p> <p>The United Nations Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire, without singling out either side for condemnation. The vote in the 15-country council was unanimous. It followed the defeat of a tougher Arab sponsored resolution that would have condemned “Israeli aggression.”</p>	<p>Douglas Jehl, “Death in Lebanon: Israeli Barrage Hits U.N. Camp in Lebanon, Killing At Least 75,” <i>The New York Times</i>, April 19, 1996.</p> <p>The Israeli Army fired an artillery barrage into a United Nations peacekeeping camp today, killing at least 75 Lebanese civilians and wounding more than 100. The attack, which Israel said came in response to rocket and mortar fire by guerrillas near the base, was by far the deadliest yet in the eight-day-old offensive in southern Lebanon.</p> <p>The civilians were among hundreds of local people who had taken refuge in the camp, the headquarters of a Fijian infantry battalion. Most died when the shells set a recreation center and two prefabricated buildings ablaze.</p> <p>Israel said the attack on the base was a grave error. It prompted worldwide outrage and a rapid intensification of diplomatic efforts to bring a halt to the conflict.</p> <p>For hours after the midafternoon attack, smoke and smoldering flames continued to pour from the shattered camp, and Fijian officers who pulled the dead and wounded from the wreckage described a scene of carnage, with many dismembered bodies.</p>
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Canada earlier **condemned the bombing** and **demanding a ceasefire**. U.S. President **Bill Clinton** ordered Secretary of State **Warren Christopher** to the region to **mediate**.

In **Qana**, **screaming, crying men, women and children** fled the scene in **panic and anger**. Many **shouted** their **outrage** at **Israeli** Prime Minister **Shimon Peres**. Others **vented** their **rage** at **Clinton**, **whom they blame** for **providing military aid and hardware to Israel**.

UN soldiers and **rescue workers** struggled to **pull the dead and wounded** from two shelled buildings at the camp, **home** to 150 Fiji **peacekeepers**. It was the **bloodiest day** yet in the 8-day-old **assault** by **Israeli** forces against **Iranian-backed Hezbollah**.

Earlier yesterday, an **Israeli attack** on a **house** in the Hezbollah stronghold of Nabatiyeh in South Lebanon **killed a mother, her five children and two other relatives**.

Peres said he **regretted** the **death** of Lebanese **civilians**. But he laid the **blame** squarely at **the feet of Hezbollah** guerrillas, who, he said, **had fired Katyushya rockets** into northern Israel from a point only 300 metres from the UN camp. "If our citizens and soldiers are fired on, we will return fire," he said, adding that Israel had warned civilians to clear out of South Lebanon for their own safety.

Peres said Israel was open to a negotiated settlement of the hostilities, but the country has no intention of halting its military offensive to crush Hezbollah's ability to fire rockets into Israel.

Israel had warned **civilians** here and across much of southern Lebanon to flee or risk being caught up in its attacks. A **United Nations spokesman** said **Hezbollah** guerrillas had **launched Katyusha rockets** and mortar rounds toward **Israel** from a site near the camp only minutes before the **Israeli bombardment** began.

But the spokesman, **Mikhal Lindvall**, said **he could see no excuse** for hitting the well-marked United Nations compound, **where officers fired red warning flares in vain** before taking shelter when the shells began to fall about 2 P.M.

"I never thought I would see a **massacre** like this," Mr. Lindvall said today in Tyre. "It's bad enough when it takes place in a Lebanese village, but to see it in a United Nations camp is **truly a tragedy**."

Fijian officers said many howitzer shells landed in or near the base over a period of about 90 minutes. That attack was among **dozens of strikes** that **Israel** launched today in its bid to **suppress** the **guerrillas of Hezbollah**, or Party of God, whose **rocket attacks on northern Israel** have **left thousands of settlers there in a state of terror**.

One **Israeli air strike** today in the village of Nabatiye al-Fawqa **tore** into an apartment building and **left 11 Lebanese civilians dead, including a 4-day-old infant and 6 other children**, according to the **Lebanese Army**.

Shelling from **offshore Israeli warships** at targets nearer to the coast shut down most of the remaining traffic on the all-but-deserted highway along the Mediterranean, even as **ambulances**

Hezbollah guerrillas are leading the **fight to evict Israel** from a narrow strip of land it **occupies** in southern Lebanon as a so-called security zone.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri made no secret of his disgust with Peres's response to what **many Lebanese are calling a massacre**. "I'm really surprised," Hariri said. "I thought that Mr. Peres would have the courage to say they made a terrible mistake."

The strike followed days of **fruitless diplomatic manoeuvring by the United States**, France, Israel, Lebanon and Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, to bring about a ceasefire.

The UN camp on the outskirts of **Qana**, about 15 kilometres southeast of Tyre, was a temporary home to about 850 Lebanese from surrounding villages. They had sought refuge there thinking they would be protected from the fallout of the brutal fighting.

"I believed Israel would not strike at the United Nations," **said Ali Deeb, 28**, as he arrived **stunned and weeping** at a nearby hospital with his injured sister.

"I thought I was safe," agreed 30-year-old Mohammed Ismaine Burger, who said **most of his 25-member extended family had been killed or wounded**.

The **civilians** had been **told to take cover because** the UN soldiers **expected Israel to respond** to Katyushya rocket attacks. Most crowded into the two main buildings, made of aluminum and wood, because the camp's 10 small bomb shelters hold only about 150 people. Most of the 150 soldiers from Fiji based at the

screamed southward from Beirut to assist in evacuating the victims from Qana. The village of Qana sits atop rock-strewn hills about five miles east of the Tyre, Lebanon's southern port.

At the city's largest hospital, where the wounded were taken by ambulance, United Nations helicopter and private vehicles, **blood spattered the entryway and emergency-room floors**. Doctors who had worked through Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its offensive here in 1993 said they had **never seen so much suffering**.

"I saw **my sister burning with her child in her arms**," said Laila Atwe, a 22-year-old woman who survived the attack but **said she had lost 12 family members, including her parents, grandparents and uncles**.

There were various accounts of the number of civilians killed and wounded in the attack. **Fijian** officers said **45 Lebanese had died at the camp** itself, while others died on their way to hospitals or while being treated there.

None of the **Fijian** peacekeepers were killed, and only four were wounded. Many were out on patrol; the remainder were in underground bunkers that they shared with some of the refugees. But officers said the bunkers were too small to allow most of the **850 civilians** in the camp to take **shelter**.

Maj. Joseph Sabua, second in command of the 500-man battalion, said many of those **killed and wounded** had fled instead to the prefabricated buildings and to the recreation center, a 45-by-90-foot wooden structure built in a traditional Fijian design.

camp and several dozen civilians crowded into the bomb shelters. None of them was injured in the shelling.

At Nazam Hospital in nearby Tyre, **medical workers and volunteers silently unloaded the bodies** that were rushed there, wrapped them in clear plastic bags and piled them in a basement room. **Many were toddlers, their clothes and faces caked in blood.** Less than three hours after the attack, all the dead and wounded had been evacuated from the camp, leaving solemn UN soldiers to sift through the smoldering wreckage.

The Israeli foreign minister, Ehud Barak, called the attack on the base an “unfortunate mistake.”

In Moscow, where he was attending a summit of the world's top industrialized countries, **Prime Minister Jean Chretien deplored the attack.** “This cannot continue,” he said.

In **Montreal**, the **president of the Canadian Arab Federation** called the killings a “terrible tragedy” and **denounced Israel for committing “violent acts against humanity.”**

John Asfour said Israel should stop bombing Lebanon and withdraw immediately from its territory.

“They must stop the killing of innocent women and children,” he said. “We are calling on all Jews, especially the Jewish community here in Montreal, to condemn this act.”

Yesterday afternoon, **Canadian Jewish Congress president Goldie Hershon** released a statement saying she felt “deep

Major Sabua and other witnesses described their shock at emerging from their bunkers at about 3:30 P.M. to find the buildings ablaze and **dead bodies littering the ground.**

“To tell the truth, most of us now believe it is time to go home,” the Fijian officer said of his battalion, which is part of the 4,500-member United Nations interim force in Lebanon that was set up in 1978 as a buffer between the two countries.

“We don’t think we are of any use here after what happened today,” the officer said.

Across southern Lebanon, as many as 5,000 civilians are now encamped in United Nations compounds, **United Nations officers said.** Scores of thousands of other Lebanese have heeded the Israeli warnings and fled the region altogether. United Nations spokesmen said that many of those who sought refuge at the base had done so because they feared that they had waited too long to leave the area safely.

Qana was all but deserted tonight, but the bright headlights of white United Nations armored vehicles illuminated the posters of proclaimed Hezbollah martyrs that are displayed along the streets. They vividly illustrate the sympathies of a population that like that in the rest of southern Lebanon is overwhelmingly Shi’ite Muslim.

“My neighbors were all killed,” said Moussa Haidar, **a middle-aged man** who survived the attack from inside the camp and **was walking the streets in a daze.**

<p>sorrow and pain over the loss of life in Lebanon.”</p> <p>“It is always heart-rending to see civilians caught in the middle of such a conflict,” she said.</p> <p>However, Hershon added that “every government, including Israel's, has a right and a duty to protect its citizens and Hezbollah terrorists must cease their attacks on Israel.”⁶</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Behind the high gates and barbed wire of the United Nations compound, Fijian troops wore expressions of shock. Many sang mournful hymns at a nightly chapel service that had assumed a very somber air.</p> <p>“It was chaos,” said Capt. Blake Tuitubou, the battalion's engineering officer. “Everything was haywire.”</p> <p>A few miles down the hill in Tyre's hospitals tonight, some of the wounded lay awake in shock, their limbs broken, bandaged or severed. Still others had suffered severe burns to their bodies or faces. Doctors said that about half of the wounded were children, some of whom lay in bed moaning softly for their parents.</p> <p>Among them was Ibrahim Ismael, a 7-year-old whose arm had been fractured and who had suffered severe burns on his face, neck and ears. “He keeps asking for his mother,” a nurse by his bedside said. “I told him, ‘Don’t worry, she’s coming, she’s coming.’”</p> <p>The nurse later said privately that the boy, along with at least a half dozen other children in the hospital, had been orphaned in the attack.⁷</p> <p>-----</p>
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While both the Canadian and *Times* news report provide details of the incident in Qana, and Israel’s blame shifting, and narratives of civilians suffering, the *Times* and

⁶ Norma Greenaway and Katherine Wilton, “Bloodbath in Lebanon: UN calls for ceasefire after Israeli shells kill 101,” *The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)*, April 19, 1996.

⁷ Douglas Jehl, “Death in Lebanon: Israeli Barrage Hits U.N. Camp in Lebanon, Killing At Least 75,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1996.

Post news coverage doesn't have any quotes condemning the Israelis or the U.S. for the attacks – how can it be that reporters from England and Canada and the Associated Press and Reuters found civilian victims in Qana that they quoted as laying blame on Israel and the U.S., but somehow no civilian victims interviewed by the *Times* or the *Post* seem to have anything to say about Israel or the U.S.?

The same pattern of differences in news content continued into the 2006 conflict news reports. Here is Blanford's 2006 news report on the Israeli attack on Qana, provided side by side with the *Times* news report from the same day, with some adjectives, adverbs, facts and sources noted in **bold** font for comparison of the two texts:

<p>Nicholas Blanford, "Qana relives 1996 massacre as air strike kills at least 60 civilians," <i>The Daily Star</i>, July 31, 2006.</p> <p>The bodies were carried into daylight one by one, all gray-skinned with dust, one small boy his mouth stuffed with dirt, a stiffened arm pointing accusingly into the air. Wasps and flies buzzed with greedy excitement around his face and blood-sodden hair. "It's Ali Shalhoub," muttered an onlooker as the child was placed on a stretcher and carried away.</p> <p>Ten years after Israeli forces slaughtered more than 100 civilians sheltering in a United Nations base in Qana, mass death has visited this straggly hill village once again.</p> <p>"Where is the humanity? Why are these massacres being committed against civilians?" asked Naim Raqa, the head of the Lebanese Civil Defense unit in the nearby village of Jawaya, who was assisting in the rescue operation.</p>	<p>Sabrina Tavernise, "Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers," <i>The New York Times</i>, July 31, 2006.</p> <p>The dead lay in strange shapes. Several had open mouths filled with dirt. Faces were puffy. A man's arm was extended straight out from his body, his fingers spread. Two tiny children, a girl and boy, lay feet to head in the back of an ambulance, their skin like wax.</p> <p>In the all-day scramble to retrieve the bodies from the remains of this one house -- backhoes dug for hours at the site after an early-morning airstrike -- tallies of the dead varied, from as many as 60 to 27, many of them children.</p> <p>This was the single most lethal episode in the course of this sudden war. The survivors will remember it as the day their children died. For the village, it is a fresh pain in a wound cut more than 10 years ago, when an Israeli attack here</p>
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There were dozens of people drawn from **two extended families sleeping on the ground floor** of an unfinished house when **an Israeli jet dropped two bombs on them**, destroying most of the building and **crushing at least 60 victims under rubble and dirt**. Only **eight people managed to survive the massive double blast** and haul themselves from beneath the debris.

It was the **bloodiest** moment so far in **Israel's 19-day onslaught** against **Lebanon**.

The **half-finished three-story house belonged** to Abbas Hashem and lay at the end of **a narrow lane that winds** down a hillside **flanked by olive groves and small tobacco patches**.

The Hashem family and their close neighbors, the Shalhoub, had moved onto the ground floor 10 days earlier, **hoping** that a large pile of dirt and sand for construction would help **protect** them from the **heavy artillery bombardments** and **repeated air strikes** in and around Qana.

Although most residents of this village of some 12,000 people had already **fled** to Tyre, 10 kilometers to the west, or headed further north, the Shalhoub and Hashem families had found themselves **cut off**.

"We couldn't get out of our neighborhood because there are **only two roads** leading out and **the Israelis bombed them** both several days ago," said Mohammad Shalhoub, a **disabled** 41-year-old who was recovering in Tyre's government hospital.

killed more than 100 **civilians**. Many of them were **children**, too.

The **Israeli government apologized** for that airstrike, as it did for the one here on Sunday. It said that **residents had been warned to leave** and should have already been gone.

But **leaving** southern Lebanon now is **dangerous**. The two extended **families** staying in the house that the **Israeli missile** struck -- the Shalhoub and the Hashims -- had discussed leaving several times over the past two weeks. But they were **poor** -- most worked in tobacco or construction -- and the **families** were big and many of their members **weak**, with a 95-year-old, two relatives in **wheelchairs** and dozens of **children**. A taxi north, around \$1,000, was **unaffordable**.

And then there was the **risk** of the road itself.

Dozens, including 21 refugees in the back of a pickup truck on July 15, have been **killed by Israeli strikes** while trying to **evacuate**. Missiles hit **two Red Cross ambulances** last weekend, wounding six people and **punching** a circle in the center of the cross on one's roof. A **rocket** hit the **ambulance** convoy that responded in Qana on Sunday.

"We heard on the news they were **bombing the Red Cross**," said Zaineb Shalhoub, a 22-year-old who **survived** the bombing. She was **lying quietly** in a hospital bed in Tyre.

"What can we do with all of our **kids**?" she asked. "There was just no way to go."

They had moved to the house on the edge of a high ridge, which was dug into the

Both **families** were **asleep** when the two bombs dropped hit the building **in rapid succession** at 1 a.m.

“I felt the **blast** throw me across the room. I was **buried** under the rubble along with the **martyrs**,” Mohammad said.

Mohammad’s **wife**, Rabab, hauled him clear of the debris and **rescued** their son, Hassan, 4, but his **daughter Zeinab, 6, was left dead** under the rubble. He also lost his **sister**, Fatmeh, and **brother**, Tayseer.

Further air strikes and heavy artillery bombardments during the night - which **destroyed** at least four other houses in the **neighborhood** - meant that it was another six hours before the **rescue** services could reach the **stricken** village.

The Hashem house leaned at a perilous angle, threatening to collapse at any moment, as **Civil Defense workers** climbed **gingerly** into the building to **recover the dead**. Two soldiers used spades to carefully dig away at a pile of dirt under which most of the **victims** were buried.

A kitten **mewed** as it **scampered** over the **ruins** of its **dead owner’s home**. On a patch of land beside the house, **tobacco leaves threaded on wires dried to a wrinkled brown** in the sun. Beside the partially demolished house was a **deep crater**, a **familiar** sight in **South Lebanon**, where hundreds of buildings have been **flattened** by **powerful aerial bombs**.

Throughout the morning under a **blazing** sun, **sweating rescue workers** removed **bodies** from the house. **Most** of them were **children under 12**, all **coated in**

earth. They thought it would be safer. The position helped **muffle the sound of the bombs**.

But its most **valuable asset** was **water**. The town, **mostly abandoned**, had **not had power or running water** in many days. A **neighbor** rigged a pumping system, and the Shalhoub and Hashims ran a pipe from that house to theirs.

Life had taken on a strange, stunted quality. In a crawl-space basement area near the crushed house, five mattresses were on the floor. A Koran was open to a prayer. A school notebook was on a pillow. Each morning, the **women** made breakfast for the **children**. Ms. Shalhoub gave lessons. And they all **hoped for rescue**.

The first missile struck around 1 a.m., **throwing** Mohamed Shalhoub, one of the relatives who uses a **wheelchair**, into an open doorway. His five **children**, ages 12 to 2, were still inside the house, as was his **wife**, his **mother** and a 10-year-old **nephew**. He tried to get to them, but minutes later another missile hit. By morning, when the **rescue workers** arrived, all eight of his **relatives** were **dead**.

“I felt like I was turning around, and the earth was going up and I was going into the earth,” said Mr. Shalhoub, 38, **staring blankly** ahead in a hospital bed in Tyre.

Israeli military officials said the building did not collapse until the early morning, and that **“munitions” stored in the house might have brought it down**. But the house appeared to have been hit from above, and residents said the walls and ceiling came down around them immediately after the first bomb.

gray dust, some with **mouths, eyes and ears clogged with dirt**. They showed little signs of injury, however, despite having been sleeping just meters from where the bombs struck.

“They **suffocated** under the dirt,” said Sami Yazbek, head of Tyre's **Lebanese Red Cross unit**.

Kamil Sleiman, 35, and Ibrahim Skayki, 38, from the neighboring villages of Ain Baal and Biyada, said they heard the news on television and **had come to help**. They squatted against a stone wall for a cigarette break, their arms smeared with sweat and dust.

“We lost seven people in Ain Baal,” Skayki said, adding that his carpentry **business** was **destroyed** in the first of many air raids on the village since the war began on July 12. “I lost my work and I had debts to pay, but it's a **sacrifice** for the **resistance**.”

An earth-mover ground down the lane and began **clawing chunks of concrete** away from the building. Even as the rescue team toiled to recover the dead, **Israeli jets continued to roar overhead and the thump of air strikes and exploding artillery shells** reverberated around the steep valley.

Amid the despair and the grim task of removing the victims, **there was deep anger** at **what they regarded as the callous indifference of the West to their suffering**. “We will **never** wave the **white flag**. We **won't retreat**,” said Mohammad Shalhoub. “I say to the West, this is **not the kind of freedom and democracy we want**.”

“My mouth was full of sand,” Ms. Shalhoub said. She said doctors had told her **family** that those who died had **been suffocated and crushed to death**.

“They died because of the sand and the bricks, that’s what they told us,” she said.

At least eight people in the house **survived**, and told of a long, **terrifying** night. **Some remained buried** until morning. Others **crawled** free. Ms. Shalhoub sat under a tree with Mohamed Shalhoub, without his wheelchair, and three others, listening to the planes flying overhead in the dark.

“You couldn't see your finger in front of your face,” said Ghazi Aidibi, a **neighbor**.

Ms. Shalhoub said she tried to help a **woman** who was **sobbing** from under the wreckage, **asking for her baby**, but she could not find the **child**. A **neighbor**, Haidar Tafleh, said he heard **screaming** when he approached the debris, but that bombing kept him away.

“We tried to take them out, but the bombs wouldn’t let us,” Mr. Tafleh said.

The area took several more hits. A house very close to the Shalhoub's was **crushed**. A giant crater was **gouged** next to it. **Residents** said as many as eight buildings had been **destroyed** over two weeks.

Collapsed buildings have been a **serious problem** in southern Lebanon. **Dozens of bodies** are still stuck under the **rubble**. The **mayor** of Tyre, Abed al-Husseini, estimated that about 75 bodies were still buried under rubble in Slifa, a village on the border.

Mohammad's phone rang constantly as **friends** and **family** asked about him and his **relatives**. One woman, her voice tinny but audible over the cellphone's loudspeaker, introduced herself as a friend of Tayseer.

"I am his brother," Mohammad told her.

"How is he?" she asked.

"May God have mercy on him," he replied gently.

The **woman began to sob, moaning**: "no, no."

Another phone call and Shalhoub reeled off a list of names of people who **died** or **survived**. "Najwa was **injured**, Zeinab was **martyred**," he said. On mentioning the name of Zeinab, his daughter, **he choked up and began weeping** while a **woman placed a comforting arm** across his shoulder.

In a neighboring bed lay Noor Hashem, **13**, a **niece** of Abbas Hashem, in whose house she was **sheltering**. In a shy **tremulous** voice, Noor said her **mother** pulled her free from the rubble along with her older **sister**, Zeinab, and took them to a neighboring house. Her mother returned to try and find Noor's three brothers.

"They haven't come to the hospital yet and my mother hasn't returned," **she said, and began crying**.

Her **three brothers are dead, the youngest only 10 months old**, but no one at the hospital **had the heart** to break the news to Noor.

A **grocer**, Hassan Faraj, stood outside his shop, near a monument to those killed in the 1996 attack. He said that **Hezbollah fighters** had not come to Qana, but that **residents supported** them **strongly**.

There was little evidence of fighters on Sunday, but Hezbollah flags and posters of Shi'ite leaders trimmed the streets. "They like the **resistance** here," he said.

He cautioned people not to stand in the street in front of his shop, because that was where the **ambulance convoy** was **hit** in the morning.

At the Hakoumi Hospital in Tyre, Mr. Shalhoub sat in bed. **His face was slack, stunned**. His relatives poured him **spicy coffee**, and the room filled with its **scent**. The **survivors** spoke of their **faith** as a **salve**. The **children**, Mr. Shalhoub said, were in **paradise** now.

But 24-year-old Hala Shalhoub, whose **two daughters, ages 1 and 5, were killed**, was **moaning and rocking slightly** in her hospital bed.

"I want to see them," she said slowly.

"I want to hold them."

A **relative** said, "Let her cry."

Zaineb Shalhoub, in the next bed, **rested quietly**.

"There's nobody left in our village," she said. "Not a human or a stone."⁹

⁹ Sabrina Tavernise, "Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers," *New York Times*, July 31, 2006.

In April 1996, during another attempt by **Israel** to **crush Hizbullah**, more than 100 civilians were killed when **Israeli artillery shells** struck the headquarters of the **Fijian** UN peacekeeping battalion in Qana, just five minutes' walk from the Hashem house. The **international outcry** over that first **Qana massacre** forced **Washington** to begin **urgently negotiating a cease-fire agreement** to halt the **bloodshed**.

But even as **Israeli troops** mounted a new **incursion** into Lebanon faced **stiff resistance** from Hizbullah fighters, residents of this tragic village **feared the worst**.

“When **Israel** is feeling **weakened**,” said Ghazi Idibi, 38, a neighbor of Abbas Hashem, “**it commits bigger and bigger massacres**.”⁸

Blanford’s style is more in keeping with the desired objectivity in American news reporting, wherein his personal opinion is not as directly entering into the news report’s copy as Fisk’s 1996 article, but note that Blanford and the *Times* correspondent in this 2006 news incident have both reported the story from Qana based on information gathered from similar sources, and yet, again, the *Times* news report manages to provide a far more fatalistic picture of the attack on the civilians, as if they were the victims of an earthquake or a flood, as opposed to a deliberate military attack, while Blanford’s report focuses on the narrative of the victims.

⁸ Nicholas Blanford, “Qana relives 1996 massacre as air strike kills at least 60 civilians,” *The Daily Star*, July 31, 2006, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2006/Jul-31/41732-qana-relives-1996-massacre-as-air-strike-kills-at-least-60-civilians.ashx>

Again, one might possibly argue that the British style of journalism, and the manner of teaching journalism, is somehow different from that of the U.S., thereby leading to different approaches in news reporting, writing and editing. But, as discussed previously, Canadian journalists have fairly similar educational and training programs as Americans, and yet when we compare a news report from the same day from Lebanon, July 28, 2006, we find differences, as shown below with some adjectives, adverbs, facts and sources noted in **bold** font for comparison of the two texts:

<p>Mark Mackinnon and Carolynne Wheeler, “They just don't care’ about UN force; Israeli military's recklessness, not malice, to blame for strike, ex-mission staffer says,” <i>The (Toronto) Globe and Mail</i>, July 28, 2006.</p> <p>The Israeli shelling that killed four United Nations peacekeepers, one of them Canadian, in South Lebanon was likely the result of recklessness rather than deliberate action, a former top member of the UNIFIL mission said yesterday.</p> <p>Timur Goksel, a veteran peacekeeper who spent years acting as a liaison between the UNIFIL observer mission in South Lebanon and the Israeli army, said he was angered but unsurprised by the incident on Tuesday. He said it fit a long pattern of irresponsible behaviour by the Israelis that frequently put UN peacekeepers in the line of fire.</p> <p>“The Israelis just don’t care. I don't call it deliberate, that's just too harsh,” he said. “This was totally unnecessary. There’s no reason to drop this bomb on a UN base that's been there for 50 years.”</p>	<p>Sabrina Tavernise, “Christians Fleeing Lebanon Denounce Hezbollah,” <i>The New York Times</i>, July 28, 2006.</p> <p>The refugees from southern Lebanon spilled out of packed cars into the dark street here Thursday evening, gulping bottles of water and squinting in the glare of the headlights to find family members and friends. Many had not eaten in days. Most had not had clean drinking water for some time. There were wounded swathed in makeshift dressings, and a baby just 16 days old.</p> <p>But for some of the Christians who had made it out in this convoy, it was not just privations they wanted to talk about, but their ordeal at the hands of Hezbollah -- a contrast to the Shi’ites, who make up a vast majority of the population in southern Lebanon and broadly support the militia.</p> <p>“Hezbollah came to Ain Ebel to shoot its rockets,” said Fayad Hanna Amar, a young Christian man, referring to his</p>
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The UN says the **Israeli** army was **repeatedly warned** over the course of a **six-hour bombardment** that they were **shelling** close to a **UNIFIL** observation post **before** the **fatal** shell struck. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the attack was “apparently **deliberate**,” but later accepted an **apology** from **Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert**.

Mark Regev, a **spokesman** for the **Israeli Foreign Ministry**, said yesterday that there was “**very authentic and sincere regret** at this **tragedy**” in Israel. He said there would be a thorough investigation, adding that there had previously been Hezbollah activity in the area.

The Israeli army said in a statement that it “would **never intentionally target** any **UN** facility or personnel,” but refused to comment further.

Mr. **Goksel**, who spent 24 years working with **UNIFIL**, first as a press spokesman and later as a senior adviser and trainer, also **dismissed** the **possibility** that it was Lebanon's **Hezbollah** militia that had placed the UN position in **danger** by using the area around the Khiyam observation post to fire rockets into Israel.

He said that since **UNIFIL's mandate** is to **immediately** report any cross-border military activity, firing from near Khiyam would result in **Israel immediately** knowing where **Hezbollah** was firing from. **UNIFIL**, or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, was created in 1978 after an Israeli incursion into Lebanon to oust guerrillas from the Palestine Liberation Organization. Its mandate is due to expire at the end of the month.

village. “They are shooting from between our houses.”

“Please,” he added, “write that in your newspaper.”

The **evacuation** -- more than 100 cars that followed an **International Committee for the Red Cross rescue convoy** to Tyre -- included Lebanese from several Christian villages. In past wars, **Christian militias were close to Israelis**, and **animosity** between Christians and Shi'ites lingers.

Throngs of refugees are now common in this southern coastal town, the gateway to the **war** that is **booming** just miles away. The **United Nations** has estimated that **700,000 Lebanese**, mostly from the southern third of the country, have been **displaced** by the war.

But thousands of people have been left behind, residents and the Red Cross say.

What has prevented many from fleeing is a **critical shortage of fuel**. Roland Huguenin-Benjamin, a **spokesman for the Red Cross** who accompanied the convoy to Tyre, said Red Cross officials had offered to lead out any people who wanted to drive behind, but many **did not have enough gasoline** for the trip.

Those who did get out were **visibly upset**. Some **carried sick children**. A number **broke down it tears** when they emerged from their cars here.

“People are dying under bombs and crushed under houses,” Nahab Aman said, sobbing and hugging her young son. “**We're not dogs!** Why aren't they taking the people out?”

Clearly upset, Mr. Goksel went on to list a series of incidents in which Israeli troops had fired at or near the UNIFIL mission. Most infamously, in 1996, during another Israeli operation to uproot the Hezbollah militia that controls the area, several Israeli shells fell on a UN base in the southern Lebanese town of Qana. About 800 people had taken shelter in the basement, and 102 were killed.

"I never said that was deliberate either," Mr. Goksel, who was with UNIFIL at the time, said. "I know what happened that day. The officer knew he might kill the UN guys and the civilians, and he was warned by his superiors. He just didn't care."

He said the most unique thing about the shelling of the Khiyam observation post was that the Israelis had quickly apologized this time.

Another UNIFIL veteran, former U.S. army officer Augustus Richard Norton, said the Israeli army has long regarded peacekeepers with hostility and contempt.

"There is a pattern here of Israelis attempting to suppress UN observation posts and the activity of UN peacekeepers," Mr. Norton said. "Often they distrust the observers."

He said the Israelis regard the UN observers' reporting of military activity as a serious intelligence breach, given that Hezbollah could be monitoring the radio waves. "One motive for them attacking the post could be to stop reporting in the open, which might be available to others who are monitoring those bands," said

Many Christians from Ramesh and Ain Ebel considered Hezbollah's fighting methods as much of an outrage as the Israeli strikes. Mr. Amar said Hezbollah fighters in groups of two and three had come into Ain Ebel, less than a mile from Bint Jbail, where most of the fighting has occurred. They were using it as a base to shoot rockets, he said, and the Israelis fired back.

One woman, who would not give her name because she had a government job and feared retribution, said Hezbollah fighters had killed a man who was trying to leave Bint Jbail.

"This is what's happening, but no one wants to say it" for fear of Hezbollah, she said.

American citizens remain in some southern villages. Mohamed Elreda, a father of three from New Jersey, was visiting relatives in Yaroun with his family when two missiles narrowly missed his car, while he was parking it in front of his family's house. His 16-year-old son Ali was sprayed with shrapnel and is now in a hospital in Tyre.

"I have never seen anything like this in my life," said Mr. Elreda, who arrived here on Thursday morning. "They see civilians, they bomb them," he said, referring to the Israelis.

"We had to move underground like raccoons."

He said a person affiliated with the United States Embassy arrived in Yaroun and shouted for everyone to join a convoy that the Israelis had promised safe passage.

Mr. Norton, who now studies Middle East peacekeeping at Boston University.

Mr. Goksel said that while UNIFIL had **good relations** with **senior Israeli officials**, who saw the international force as providing a “**free service**” by **monitoring Hezbollah** activities, that **respect didn't filter down the ranks**. “The **young soldiers** on the ground don't know the politics, **they don't know** that their commanders like dealing with us. They just think, ‘Who gives a damn? **I will not be asked to account for what I did.**’”

There is **historic tension** between **Israel** and the **UNIFIL** mission. Some **Israeli** media **accused UN peacekeepers** of **complicity** after a **Hezbollah kidnapping** of **three Israeli combat engineers** who were working near the border in October, 2000. A **UN investigation** subsequently **found no evidence to support the allegation**.

Yoram Dinstein, a **professor of international law in Tel Aviv**, said UNIFIL had long ago **ceased to play a useful role**, and the **mission should be brought to an end**. “What were they doing in **Lebanon** now, excluding **becoming cannon fodder?**” he asked. “The moral of the story is very simple. Pull them out, out of harm's way, because they are not doing anything.”¹⁰

He left in such haste, he said, that he had pulled on his wife's sweatpants (they had a pink stripe running down the length of each leg). **His son's blood still stained his shoes.**

He said Yaroun had been **without electricity and clean water for more than a week**, and he had stirred dirty clothes in a pail of water and bleach **to make bandages** for his son's wounds.

The village is largely **Christian**, but has **Muslim** pockets, and Mr. Elreda said he walked at night among houses to the Christian section, where a friend risked his life to drive his son to Tyre, while Mr. Elreda stayed with the rest of the family.

On Thursday he joined his son at the hospital.

“He's my son,” he said, standing at the foot of the boy's bed. “I just can't see him like this.”¹¹

¹⁰ Mark Mackinnon and Carolynne Wheeler, “‘They Just Don't Care’ about UN Force; Israeli Military's Recklessness, not Malice, to Blame for Strike, ex-Mission Staffer Says,” *The (Toronto) Globe and Mail*, July 28, 2006.

¹¹ Sabrina Tavernise, “Christians Fleeing Lebanon Denounce Hezbollah,” *New York Times*, July 28, 2006.

Here we see how different news content is deemed newsworthy between the Canadian newspaper and the *Times* for the same day's reporting out of Lebanon – *The Globe and Mail* reporter is keen on following up on the story of Israel's attack that killed four UN peacekeepers, seeking details on the UN peacekeepers' narratives from Lebanon. While the *Times* reported on the killing of the UN peacekeepers in a separate news report, published on page 14, from the UN in New York on July 27,¹² which focused on the U.S. diplomatic efforts to stop Israel from being blamed and rebuff calls for an immediate cease fire, the subsequent July 28 news report from Lebanon focused instead on the civilians who blame Hezbollah for the violence, and the follow up on the dead UN peacekeepers from Lebanon was not reported.

5. *In what manner did the content of the reporting of the American newspapers' journalists based in the United States (domestic dateline in news report) differ from that of the same newspaper's foreign correspondents (international dateline in news report)? Did these aspects of the news coverage differ significantly from the findings of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 studies?*

In the time period of Operations Grapes of Wrath in 1996, the news reports published in the *Times* and the *Post* with a domestic dateline gave zero source paragraphs for Hezbollah sources, and Lebanese Government sources (2) critical of the U.S. or Israeli policies received 0.11 mean source paragraphs of coverage. For the most part, anyone reading the domestic news in the *Times* or the *Post* on the conflict in Lebanon in April 1996 would have experienced a news coverage that was largely supportive and

¹² Warren Hoge, "U.N. Says It Protested to Israel for 6 Hours During Attack That Killed 4 Observers in Lebanon," *New York Times*, July 27, 2006.

uncritical of the U.S. and Israeli policies. Given that Washington, D.C., and the United Nations in New York provide many opportunities to interview diplomats from around the world, and that Human Rights organizations as well as academics that are critical of U.S. and Israeli policy are all well within reach, it takes a deliberate approach in reporting to not include any of those critical voices in any significant way in the domestic news reporting of an international conflict backed by the U.S. government. The distribution of datelines is shown in Table 7.3:

<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports):	Israel(36)	Lebanon(46)	U.S.(9)
Length (number of words)		990.6	687.78	780.11
Page Number		7.33	13.3	16.78
#1 Source mean		GovIS1(4.8)	CivilianLB1(2.04)	GovUS1(6)
#2 Source mean		GovUS1(3)	GovLB1(1.41)	GovIS1(1.44)
#3 Source mean		MilIS1(1.44)	UN1(1.33)	NgoUS2(1)
#4 Source mean		ExpertIS1(1.08)	GovIS1(1.02)	ExpertUS1(0.89)
#5 Source mean		CivilianIS1(1)	GovUS1 (0.65)	NgoUS1(0.67)
Gov Lebanon 2		0.25	0.24	0.11
Hezbollah sources1		0.17	0.15	0
Hezbollah sources2		0.39	0.37	0

As noted in Chapter 4, the U.S. datelines set for the April 1996 news reporting on Lebanon was small – only nine news reports, of which seven were published in the *Washington Post*, and the reason NGO-US2 is ranked third in the U.S. dateline quote paragraphs means in Table 1 is because the *Post* published a single news report on April

24 containing nine source paragraphs reporting that: “Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan last night criticized President Clinton for not speaking out firmly against the Israeli assault on Lebanon, calling it symptomatic of the ‘madness’ that will eventually destroy America.”¹³ It is debatable whether Farrakhan has any serious political influence on the *Post*’s readers, or whether his criticism of Israel only serves to bolster Israel’s supporters in the U.S. As noted later in this section, April 24 also falls into the “Pull” phase of news reporting, given that civilian casualties in Lebanon started to rise from the time period after April 12, 1996, thereby giving some support to the “Push” and “Pull” news reporting theory.¹⁴ The overall content of the average domestic dateline news report, though, remained largely within the theoretical assumption of the Propaganda and the Indexing theories – U.S. Government (1) sources dominated the news content, and were not contradicted by other sources.

During the time of Israel’s withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000, the news reports published in the *Times* and the *Post* with a domestic dateline gave zero source paragraphs for Hezbollah sources, and Lebanese Government sources (2) critical of the U.S. or Israeli policies received zero source paragraphs of coverage. This is notable, especially as the May 2000 Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon was a “Pull” phase of news reporting¹⁵ during which Hezbollah and Lebanese government sources critical of the Israeli and U.S. policies found their way into the source paragraphs of news reports

¹³ Michael A. Fletcher and Hamil R. Harris, “Farrakhan Attacks Clinton on Lebanon; President Must Condemn Israel, Minister Says,” *Washington Post*, April 24, 1996.

¹⁴ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

filed from Israel and Lebanon, but not so in the U.S. dateline news reports. This is illustrated by the data in Table 7.4:

Table 7.4 Total Datelines and Means of Length, Page and Attributed Source Paragraphs (2000)				
<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports):	Israel(28)	Lebanon(22)	U.S.(9)
Length (number of words)		855.54	935.36	684.56
Page Number		12.11	10.82	15.22
#1 Source mean		GovIS1(4.8)	CivilianLB1(2.5)	GovUS1(6.2)
#2 Source mean		MilIS1(2)	HB1(1.7)	MilUS1(1)
#3 Source mean		CivIS1(1.4)	GovLB1(1.3)	UN1(1)
#4 Source mean		UN1(0.8)	UN1(1.1)	France1(0.56)
#5 Source mean		HB2(0.6)	GovIS1 (1)	EU1(0.33)
Gov Lebanon 2		0.11	0.27	0
Hezbollah sources1		0.04	1.73	0
Hezbollah sources2		0.61	0.55	0

Some attention was paid to organizations that are critical of U.S. and Israeli policy: NGO U.S. (1) sources received a mean of 0.11 source paragraphs, while NGO U.S. (2) sources, critical of U.S. and/or Israeli policies, received a mean of 0.22 source paragraphs. The critical views were awarded two source paragraphs in a single news report in the *Washington Post* on May 26, 2000:

Ken Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, urged the United States Wednesday not to proceed with the proposed sale to Israel of new air-to-ground missiles until Israel gives assurances the missiles will not be used in attacks on civilian targets in Lebanon. The Pentagon announced the potential sale of 41 U.S. AGM-142D missiles, which the U.S. manufacturer “explicitly promotes . . . as effective against power plants.”

Israeli warplanes have attacked Lebanese electrical stations three times in less than a year, said Roth. “This is clearly the wrong sale at the wrong time,” he added. In at least one case, the May 5 attack on the Bsalem power station, near Beirut, U.S.-supplied Hellfire air-to-ground missiles were reportedly used to attack a civilian facility, Human Rights Watch said. On Tuesday, the group called on armed forces on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanese border to refrain from attacks on civilian targets.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the overall content of the average domestic dateline news report remained largely within the theoretical assumption of the Propaganda and the Indexing theories – U.S. Government (1) sources dominated the news content, and were not contradicted by other sources. For the most part, anyone reading the domestic news in the *Times* or the *Post* on Lebanon in May 2000 would have experienced a news coverage that was largely supportive and uncritical of the U.S. and Israeli policies. Given that Washington, D.C., and the United Nations in New York provide many opportunities to interview diplomats from around the world, UN, French, and EU diplomatic sources were given some source paragraphs in the domestic news coverage, but all of it was uncritical of the U.S. and Israeli policies.

The content of the domestic dateline news reports in the 2006 conflict reverted back to the “Push” phase,¹⁷ wherein the push into the conflict from Israel, backed by the U.S. government, demonstrated a Propaganda and Indexing effect that consistently over-represented the sources in favor of the Israeli and U.S. policies, awarding them a mean of at least one source paragraph per news report. As shown in Table 3, sources that were critical of the U.S. policies were under-represented, getting mean source paragraphs per news report values of under 0.4, and most of these source paragraphs appeared in news

¹⁶ Nora Boustany, “A Hint of Hope for the War-Wearied Sudanese,” *Washington Post*, May 26, 2000.

¹⁷ Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

reporting after July 30, 2006, the time period of the “Pull” effect as the civilian casualties started to rise, as was the case with Civilian U.S. (2) sources, critical of the conflict, who received 0.39 mean source paragraphs, but were largely quoted from an anti-war rally that took place in the second half of the conflict on August 12, 2006.¹⁸ The news report about the protest was published on page 22 of the *Times*, while the *Times* published a front page news report that same day headlined, “Israeli Seeks Hint of Victory,”¹⁹ demonstrating the editorial decision making in publishing government and allied sources on Page 1, while publishing critical voices in the back pages. The 2006 datelines data is shown in Table 7.5:

<i>Variable</i>	Dateline(#of reports): Israel(103)	Lebanon(113)	U.S.(108)
Length (number of words)	1264.27	1276.87	959.03
Page Number	5.61	6.14	7.28
#1 Source mean	MillIS1(5.6)	CivLB1(7)	GovUS1(5.1)
#2 Source mean	GovIS1(3.96)	MillIS1(2.13)	CivUS1(1.58)
#3 Source mean	CivIS1(3.09)	GovLB1(1.68)	ExpertUS1(1.41)
#4 Source mean	ExpertIS1(1.54)	GovIS1(1.29)	NgoUS1(1.12)
#5 Source mean	GovUS1(1.37)	HB2(1.13)	GovIS1(0.92)
Gov Lebanon sources2	0.1	0.28	0.26
Hezbollah sources1	0.15	0.78	0.01
Hezbollah sources2	0.69	1.13	0.11
Civilian Lebanon sources2	0.09	1.07	0.01

¹⁸ Robert Pear, “Rally Near White House Protests Violence in Mideast,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2006.

¹⁹ Steven Erlanger, “Israeli Seeks Hint of Victory,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2006.

A comparison of the news reports filed with U.S. domestic datelines versus those from international datelines showed that U.S. and Israeli dateline news reports featured a heavy emphasis on U.S. and Israeli sources, while Lebanese dateline stories tended to provide more narrative from Lebanese sources, especially as the conflicts became worse in 1996 and 2006 and the civilian casualties, especially of women and children, grew in number. The domestic dateline news reports showed little effort to include any aspect of the foreign conflict – taken by themselves, the domestic dateline news reports are effective displays of propaganda, with overwhelming representation of official U.S. government and allied sources who were supportive or uncritical of the Israeli and U.S. policies for most of the 1996, 2000, and 2006 conflict in Lebanon.

Examining the domestic versus international datelines news reports of the *Times* and the *Post*, it is often a wonder if the Washington, D.C., reporters read their own newspaper's international news pages, as the domestic dateline news reports seem often disconnected from the occasional contrary facts and opinions reported by their foreign correspondents. This disparity was most significantly at display in 2006, especially when journalists of Middle Eastern descent were reporting from Lebanon, as opposed to the Western byline news reports from Washington, D.C., as illustrated below in the two news reports filed in the *Times*, the first from Lebanon on July 31, and the second from Washington on August 1, 2006:

Sabrina Tavernise, “**Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers,**” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2006.

The **dead** lay in **strange shapes**. Several had **open mouths filled with dirt**. Faces were **puffy**. A man’s arm was extended straight out from his body, his fingers spread. **Two tiny children, a girl and boy**, lay feet to head in the back of an ambulance, their **skin like wax**.

In the all-day **scramble** to retrieve the bodies from the remains of this one house -- backhoes dug for hours at the site after **an early-morning airstrike** -- tallies of the dead varied, from as many as 60 to 27, many of them children.

This was the single **most lethal episode** in the course of **this sudden war**. The **survivors** will remember it as **the day their children died**. For the village, it is **a fresh pain in a wound** cut more than 10 years ago, when **an Israeli attack** here **killed** more than 100 **civilians**. Many of them were **children**, too.

The **Israeli government apologized** for that airstrike, as it did for the one here on Sunday. It said that **residents had been warned to leave** and should have already been gone.

But **leaving** southern Lebanon now is **dangerous**. The two extended **families** staying in the house that the **Israeli missile** struck -- the Shalhoub and the Hashims -- had discussed leaving several times over the past two weeks. But they were **poor** -- most worked in tobacco or construction -- and the **families** were big and many of their members **weak**, with a 95-year-old, two relatives in **wheelchairs**

John M. Broder, “**Bush Calls Attack on Qana ‘Awful,’ but Refrains From Calling for Immediate Cease-Fire,**” *The New York Times*, Aug. 1, 2006.

President Bush used the word “**awful**” to describe the **lethal Israeli air attack** on an **apartment building in Qana**, Lebanon, that **killed** dozens of **civilians** over the weekend, **but he continued to resist** calling on **Israel to accept an immediate cease-fire**.

Facing one of the **most awkward moments** in recent relations with **Israel**, he described the current Middle East crisis as part of a **larger struggle between the forces of freedom and the forces of terror**. He said the United States remained **steadfast** in its support of **Israel's right to defend itself** against cross-border attacks by **Hezbollah militants**. But he also said the administration was **working urgently** through the **United Nations to fashion** what he called a “**sustainable**” cessation of **hostilities**.

He sought to **broaden the context** of the current **fighting**, saying that **Iran and Syria must end** their support of **terrorism** in the Middle East and beyond.

“For **decades**, the **status quo** in the Middle East **permitted tyranny and terror to thrive**,” Mr. Bush said at an appearance before members of the **Coast Guard in Miami**. “And as we saw **on Sept. 11**, the status quo in the Middle East led to **death and destruction** in the **United States**, and it had to **change**.”

He did not refer directly to the **airstrike** on the **village of Qana** in his public appearance in Miami, but in a later interview with **Fox News Channel**, he said

and dozens of **children**. A taxi north, around \$1,000, was **unaffordable**.

And then there was the **risk** of the road itself.

Dozens, including 21 refugees in the back of a pickup truck on July 15, have been **killed by Israeli strikes** while trying to **evacuate**. Missiles hit **two Red Cross ambulances** last weekend, wounding six people and **punching** a circle in the center of the cross on one's roof. A **rocket** hit the **ambulance** convoy that responded in Qana on Sunday.

"We heard on the news they were **bombing the Red Cross**," said Zaineb Shalhoub, a 22-year-old who **survived** the bombing. She was **lying quietly** in a hospital bed in Tyre.

"What can we do with all of our **kids**?" she asked. "There was just no way to go."

They had moved to the house on the edge of a high ridge, which was dug into the earth. They thought it would be safer. The position helped **muffle the sound of the bombs**.

But its most **valuable asset** was **water**. The town, **mostly abandoned**, had **not had power or running water** in many days. A **neighbor** rigged a pumping system, and the Shalhoub and Hashim ran a pipe from that house to theirs.

Life had taken on a strange, stunted quality. In a crawl-space basement area near the crushed house, five mattresses were on the floor. A Koran was open to a prayer. A school notebook was on a pillow. Each morning, the **women** made

that he wanted to see the **killing** in southern Lebanon end.

"And look, it's a **terrible situation** when **innocent people lose** their lives," Mr. Bush said. "And yesterday's **situation** was **awful**. We, I understand that. But it's also **awful** that a **million Israelis** are **worried** about **rockets** being fired from their, from their **neighbor** to the **north**."

Mr. Bush has not spoken directly with **Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister**, about the Qana **bombing** and did not plan to do so, a **White House spokesman** said Monday.

Support for Israel remained **strong** in **Congress** but as the military and civilian crisis grew, **Senator Chuck Hagel**, Republican of Nebraska, said that American **friendship** with Israel had to be **balanced** by **concern** for relations with **Muslim nations**. He **urged** Mr. Bush to become **more deeply engaged** in the region and **broker** an end to the **fighting** quickly.

"The **sickening slaughter** on **both sides** must end now," Senator Hagel said in a floor statement. "President Bush must call for an immediate cease-fire. This **madness** must stop."

White House officials said they believed that the president was **not** yet **facing serious erosion** of domestic **political support** for his **approach** to the Middle East, but that they hoped the administration's **diplomacy** would **bear fruit** over the next few days.

If the White House seemed **shaken** on Sunday, by Monday it had **turned back forcefully** to the **line** it had held since the **crisis** began nearly three weeks ago.

breakfast for the **children**. Ms. Shalhoub gave lessons. And they all **hoped** for **rescue**.

The first missile struck around 1 a.m., **throwing** Mohamed Shalhoub, one of the relatives who uses a **wheelchair**, into an open doorway. His five **children**, ages 12 to 2, were still inside the house, as was his **wife**, his **mother** and a 10-year-old **nephew**. He tried to get to them, but minutes later another missile hit. By morning, when the **rescue workers** arrived, all eight of his **relatives** were **dead**.

“I felt like I was turning around, and the earth was going up and I was going into the earth,” said Mr. Shalhoub, 38, **staring blankly** ahead in a hospital bed in Tyre.

Israeli military officials said the building did not collapse until the early morning, and that **“munitions” stored in the house might have brought it down**. But the house appeared to have been hit from above, and residents said the walls and ceiling came down around them immediately after the first bomb.

“My mouth was full of sand,” Ms. Shalhoub said. She said doctors had told her **family** that those who died had **been suffocated and crushed to death**.

“They died because of the sand and the bricks, that’s what they told us,” she said.

At least eight people in the house **survived**, and told of a long, **terrifying** night. **Some remained buried** until morning. Others **crawled** free. Ms. Shalhoub sat under a tree with Mohamed

“In terms of the overall outlines of the **strategy**, they are the same,” Tony Snow, **Mr. Bush’s spokesman**, said in a telephone interview. “Nor are you going to change your approach to what you think a **real effective solution** to the **problem in Lebanon** is, which is to **have Hezbollah cease operating** as an **independent** force.”

President Bush told **Fox News** that one element of the **emerging** plan for a cease-fire was to **restore Lebanese military control** over its southern border with **Israel**, which the **nascent** government in **Beirut** had **essentially ceded** to armed **Hezbollah** fighters.

“We want that **young democracy in Lebanon** to succeed,” Mr. **Bush** said. “And one way to **help it succeed** is to **help the Lebanese Army** move to the south, and then, with **help** from **forces from elsewhere**, begin to bring some **security** to the region, **for the sake of the Lebanese people** and the **Israelis**.”

President Bush planned to meet with Secretary Rice and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on Monday night to **discuss strategy for dealing** with the **crisis**.²¹

²¹ John M. Broder, “Bush Calls Attack on Qana ‘Awful,’ but Refrains From Calling for Immediate Cease-Fire,” *New York Times*, August 1, 2006.

Shalhoub, without his wheelchair, and three others, listening to the planes flying overhead in the dark.

“You couldn’t see your finger in front of your face,” said Ghazi Aidibi, a **neighbor**.

Ms. Shalhoub said she tried to help a **woman** who was **sobbing** from under the wreckage, **asking for her baby**, but she could not find the **child**. A **neighbor**, Haidar Tafleh, said he heard **screaming** when he approached the debris, but that bombing kept him away.

“We tried to take them out, but the bombs wouldn’t let us,” Mr. Tafleh said.

The area took several more hits. A house very close to the Shalhoub's was **crushed**. A giant crater was **gouged** next to it. **Residents** said as many as eight buildings had been **destroyed** over two weeks.

Collapsed buildings have been a **serious problem** in southern Lebanon. **Dozens of bodies** are still stuck under the **rubble**. The **mayor** of Tyre, Abed al-Husseini, estimated that about 75 bodies were still buried under rubble in Slifa, a village on the border.

A **grocer**, Hassan Faraj, stood outside his shop, near a monument to those killed in the 1996 attack. He said that **Hezbollah fighters** had not come to Qana, but that **residents supported** them **strongly**. There was little evidence of fighters on Sunday, but Hezbollah flags and posters of Shi’ite leaders trimmed the streets. “They like the **resistance** here,” he said.

He cautioned people not to stand in the street in front of his shop, because that

<p>was where the ambulance convoy was hit in the morning.</p> <p>At the Hakoumi Hospital in Tyre, Mr. Shalhoub sat in bed. His face was slack, stunned. His relatives poured him spicy coffee, and the room filled with its scent. The survivors spoke of their faith as a salve. The children, Mr. Shalhoub said, were in paradise now.</p> <p>But 24-year-old Hala Shalhoub, whose two daughters, ages 1 and 5, were killed, was moaning and rocking slightly in her hospital bed.</p> <p>“I want to see them,” she said slowly.</p> <p>“I want to hold them.”</p> <p>A relative said, “Let her cry.”</p> <p>Zaineb Shalhoub, in the next bed, rested quietly.</p> <p>“There’s nobody left in our village,” she said. “Not a human or a stone.”²⁰</p> <p>-----</p>	
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The *Times* news report from Washington, noting President Bush’s reaction and published a day after the news report from Lebanon on the Qana attack, is shorter (645 words) and pushed further back in the newspaper (page 8) – why? The news report provides almost all source paragraphs to U.S. officials, with no opposition from domestic or foreign voices provided to challenge or offer any different facts or opinions – this disconnect from the espoused journalism practice of balance, with the tendency for Washington dateline news reports to practice more stenography than journalism, is not an

²⁰ Sabrina Tavernise, “Night of Death and Terror for Lebanese Villagers,” *New York Times*, July 31, 2006.

exception, and lies at the heart of the findings of Propaganda and Indexing routines against the Washington news coverage of foreign conflicts.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The findings of the analysis of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* news coverage of the three Israel-Hezbollah conflicts in Lebanon show support for Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda theory,¹ especially in the "Push" phases of the 1996 and 2006 Israeli military assaults on Lebanon, wherein the two newspapers' journalists followed news reporting and editing routines that favored U.S. and Israeli sources that supported the conflict, while underreporting and downplaying sources that were opposed to it. Even in Israel's "Pull" from Lebanon in May 2000, U.S. and Israeli sources continued to enjoy dominance in the overall news media coverage. The Propaganda theory is somewhat undermined in the "Pull" phases, after rising civilian casualties in Lebanon in 1996 and 2006 prompted a shift in the news coverage toward sources more critical of the Israeli military assaults.

The findings of the analysis of the *Post* and *Times* news coverage of the three Israel-Hezbollah conflicts in Lebanon also show strong support for Bennett's Indexing theory,² wherein the vast majority of the sources used by the *Times* and the *Post* in their news coverage of the three periods belong to an index of official and official-friendly sources, with notable changes in the source patterns coming mostly after the rise of civilian casualties. Even then, the critical voices often come from the same index of sources – they just happen to have something different to say in the face of rising

¹ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 18-25.

² W. Lance Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," *Journal of Communication*, 40, no. 2, (1990): 103-25.

violence, especially against women and children, as the number of victims starts escalating.

And, complementing the Propaganda and Indexing theories, the findings of the analysis of the *Post* and *Times* news coverage of the three Israel-Hezbollah conflicts in Lebanon also show support for Strobel's Push-Pull effects theory,³ wherein the journalists are likely to follow official and official-friendly sources in the "Push" phase of the conflict, but often revert to covering critical sources, especially civilian victims and local leaders, when mounting casualties and setbacks add up to a "Pull" phase on the news reporting of the conflict.

After the 2006 conflict, Nubar Hovsepien edited and published a collection of articles by thirty-two leading academics, political activists, editors, writers, researchers, and economists whose work and lives focus on the Middle East.⁴ The *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* also published a collection of articles in the summer of 2006 that focused on this conflict.⁵ These collections of articles help illustrate the issues that were underreported, downplayed, or misreported, because of the reporting and editing patterns demonstrated by the *Times* and the *Post*, especially in the "Push" phases of their news reporting.

"Indeed, there was a far better comprehension of the reality of this war in the Israeli elite than among the blindly pro-Israeli ranks of the Bush administration, the U.S. Congress, and many Washington 'think tanks,' and much of the U.S. media," noted

³ Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 127-64.

⁴ Nubar Hovsepien, Ed., *The War on Lebanon: A Reader*, (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2008).

⁵ *The Sixth War: Israel's Invasion of Lebanon*, The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies, 6, (Summer 2006), <https://dome.mit.edu/handle/1721.3/177978>

Rashid Khalidi, the Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University's department of history. "Thus officials, politicians, and commentators in the United States urged a continuation of the futile Israeli air campaign, and the even more futile ground offensive, long after serious Israeli observers were questioning the sense in continuing a war that was going so badly for Israel militarily and in terms of international perceptions, and that had no visible effect on Hizballah's ability to fight on the ground or to fire rockets into northern Israel. The Bush administration was egregious not only in pushing for a continuation of the Israeli offensive, but in preventing international action at the United Nations or elsewhere to halt it, well after it had become apparent to all but the most addled Washington neocons that the war was massively counterproductive for both Washington and Tel Aviv by any rational criteria."⁶

"While Israel appears to be counting and assessing its losses purely in terms of ill-conceived military tactics and shoddy preparation by Israeli generals, Hizballah has gained tremendously in symbolic capital, both by reinvigorating its armed resistance agenda and by mustering public support beyond its narrow Shi'ite constituency, in Lebanon and the region at large," noted Reinoud Leenders in the summer of 2006, adding that "by bombing Lebanon into submission, what one ends up with is a revitalized, armed resistance movement that previously could only pose a dormant 'deterrence' that was no real or existential threat to anyone."⁷

Another important issue was whether Israel's actions against Lebanon in the 2006 conflict, and the U.S. support for them, were consistent with international law.

⁶ Rashid Khalidi, "Foreword," *The War on Lebanon*, xix.

⁷ Reinoud Leenders, "How the Rebel Regained His Cause: Hizballah and the Sixth Arab-Israeli War," *The Sixth War*, 51-52.

“Since the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, there has been on average one Israeli violation of the Blue Line per day,” noted Yasser Munif in the summer of 2006,⁸ referring to the border between Lebanon and Israel that was verified by the United Nations in 2000 and since known as the Blue Line. Munif cited the January 2006 UNIFIL report noting that the “Israeli Air force violated Lebanese airspace on many occasions” and the August 2006 Human Rights Watch Report accusing Israel of war crimes, noting that “those reports never make it to the pages of the NYT [*New York Times*] and journalists rarely refer to international law to assess Israel’s actions.”

“In the summer of 2006, two border incidents were invoked by Israel, with strong U.S. diplomatic support and material assistance, to justify a prolonged military offensive in Gaza and a crushing ‘shock-and-awe’ assault on Lebanon,” noted Richard Falk and Asli Bali.⁹ “The main international response, effectively orchestrated by Washington, was built around the bland assertion that Israel has the ‘right to defend itself.’ Of course it does. But in the summer the unasked questions were ‘how,’ ‘with what limits,’ and ‘by what means?’”

Indeed, in the news reporting by the *Post* and the *Times* in the “Push” duration of the 2006 conflict, these questions received little attention by reporters in their news coverage from Lebanon and Israel, even though the Geneva Conventions were routinely in the news due to another story – the controversy over the interrogation methods used by the Bush administration on terror suspects held by the United States.¹⁰ The news media,

⁸ Yasser Munif, “Media is the Continuation of War With Other Means: The New York Times’ Coverage of the Israeli War on Lebanon,” *The Sixth War*, 130-31.

⁹ Richard Falk and Asli Bali, “International Law at the Vanishing Point,” *The War on Lebanon*, 208.

¹⁰ Kate Zernike, “White House Prods Congress to Curb Detainee Rights,” *New York Times*, July 13, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/13/washington/13gitmo.html>

in that case, behaved consistent with the Indexing hypothesis,¹¹ wherein leading voices in the U.S. Congress, with Senator John McCain at the forefront, had pushed publicly back against the Bush administration's enhanced interrogation program, and the news media had followed its index of covering their important official voices, albeit now critical of the administration. Similarly, this period in 2006 can arguably be associated with a "Pull" effect¹² in the U.S. Congress over the Bush administration's failures in Iraq, thereby leading to more critical news coverage of the administration on those issues.

However, as the Israeli assaults and Hezbollah rocket fire escalated over July 2006, little news coverage was offered on the issue of whether the attacks on civilians violated the international legal conventions. While the *Times* did publish a news report on July 20, 2006, noting that the "United Nations' top human rights official said Wednesday that the killing and maiming of civilians under attack in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza and the West Bank could constitute war crimes,"¹³ it also noted:

But John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, said the notion that a cease-fire would solve the problem was "simplistic." "Among other things," he said, "I want somebody to address the problem how you get a cease-fire with a terrorist organization."

"This is a different kind of situation," he added, "and I'm not sure that sort of old thinking, conventional thinking, works in a case like this."¹⁴

The *Times* news report raising and dismissing the international law concerns was 508 words long, and published on page 11. That same day, a front-page news report in the *Times* noted that "Israeli weaponry rained down on Lebanon throughout the day and into the night, killing 63 people by nightfall, Lebanese authorities said. Most of the dead

¹¹ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," 103-25.

¹² Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*, 127-64.

¹³ Warren Hoge, "Attacks Qualify as War Crimes, Officials Say," *News York Times*, July 20, 2006.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

were said to be civilians; one Hezbollah fighter was killed, apparently in the Naqura firefight,” and the news report described the Lebanese prime minister as “desperate.”¹⁵ It also noted that:

At the United Nations the Americans, who have signaled that they will give Israel more time to continue the bombardment of Lebanon to weaken Hezbollah’s military power, opposed a French proposal for a Security Council resolution calling for a lasting cease-fire.

“It is very hard to understand from the people calling for a cease-fire how you have a cease-fire with a terrorist organization like Hezbollah,” John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, told reporters.¹⁶

On July 25, 2006, the *Post* published an Op-ed by Eugene Robinson describing Israel’s actions in Lebanon as “a sustained bombing campaign that has killed hundreds of civilians and can only be seen as collective punishment” and calling them “utterly disproportionate” and “counterproductive,” but he did not raise the question of whether they violated international law.¹⁷ The *Post* also published an Op-ed supporting Israel on the same page that day,¹⁸ and on July 26,¹⁹ and on July 28.²⁰ Then, on July 30, 2006, Israel’s assault on Qana in Lebanon killed fifty-seven people, thirty-seven of them children,²¹ an event that is identified by the researcher as the beginning of the “Pull” phase, with the subsequent *Post* news report published on July 31 on page 1.²² There was a marked change in tone the next day, with an August 1 Op-ed by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who wrote:

¹⁵ Jad Mouawad and Steven Erlanger, “Death Toll Rises in Mideast Fight; Bunker Bombed,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2006.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Eugene Robinson, “It’s Disproportionate . . .,” *Washington Post*, July 25, 2006.

¹⁸ Richard Cohen, “No, It’s Survival,” *Washington Post*, July 25, 2006.

¹⁹ David B. Rivkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey, “Israel Is Within Its Rights,” *Washington Post*, July 26, 2006.

²⁰ Charles Krauthammer, “‘Disproportionate’ In What Moral Universe?” *Washington Post*, July 28, 2006.

²¹ Anthony Shadid, “A Refuge That Became a Place of Death,” *Washington Post*, July 31, 2006.

²² *Ibid.*

It is inarguable that Israel has a right to defend itself against attacks on its citizens, but it is inhumane and counterproductive to punish civilian populations in the illogical hope that somehow they will blame Hamas and Hezbollah for provoking the devastating response. The result instead has been that broad Arab and worldwide support has been rallied for these groups, while condemnation of both Israel and the United States has intensified.

Israel belatedly announced, but did not carry out, a two-day cessation in bombing Lebanon, responding to the global condemnation of an air attack on the Lebanese village of Qana, where 57 civilians were killed this past weekend and where 106 died from the same cause 10 years ago. As before there were expressions of “deep regret,” a promise of “immediate investigation” and the explanation that dropped leaflets had warned families in the region to leave their homes. The urgent need in Lebanon is that Israeli attacks stop, the nation’s regular military forces control the southern region, Hezbollah cease as a separate fighting force, and future attacks against Israel be prevented. Israel should withdraw from all Lebanese territory, including Shebaa Farms, and release the Lebanese prisoners. Yet yesterday, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected a cease-fire.²³

The issue of international law was finally brought to the U.S. readers’ attention on August 9, 2006, well into the “Pull” phase of the conflict with rising civilian casualties in Lebanon, when Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora put forth his plea in an Op-ed published in the *Post*.²⁴

A military solution to Israel’s savage war on Lebanon and the Lebanese people is both morally unacceptable and totally unrealistic. We in Lebanon call upon the international community and citizens everywhere to support my country’s sovereignty and end this folly now. We also insist that Israel be made to respect international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, which it has repeatedly and willfully violated.

As the world watches, Israel has besieged and ravaged our country, created a humanitarian and environmental disaster, and shattered our infrastructure and economy, putting an intolerable strain on our social and economic systems. Fuel, food and medical equipment are in short supply;

²³ Jimmy Carter, “Stop the Band Aid Treatment,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 2006.

²⁴ Fouad Siniora, “End This Tragedy Now; Israel Must be Made to Respect International Law,” *Washington Post*, August 9, 2006.

homes, factories and warehouses have been destroyed; roads severed, bridges smashed and airports disabled.

The damage to infrastructure alone is running into the billions of dollars, as are the losses to owners of private property, and the long-term direct and indirect costs due to lost revenue in tourism, agriculture and industrial sectors are expected to be many more billions. Lebanon's well-known achievements in 15 years of postwar development have been wiped out in a matter of days by Israel's deadly military might.

For all this carnage and death, and on behalf of all Lebanese, we demand an international inquiry into Israel's criminal actions in Lebanon and insist that Israel pay compensation for its wanton destruction.

Israel seems to think that its attacks will sow discord among the Lebanese. This will never happen. Israel should know that the Lebanese people will remain steadfast and united in the face of this latest Israeli aggression – its seventh invasion – just as they were during nearly two decades of brutal occupation. The people's will to resist grows ever stronger with each village demolished and each massacre committed.

On July 25, at the international conference for Lebanon in Rome, I proposed a comprehensive seven-point plan to end the war. It was well received by the conference and got the unanimous and full backing of the Lebanese Council of Ministers, in which Hezbollah is represented, as well as of the speaker of parliament and a majority of parliamentary blocs. Representatives of diverse segments of Lebanese civil society have come out strongly in favor, as has the Islamic-Christian Summit, representing all the religious confessions, ensuring a broad national consensus and preserving our delicate social equilibrium.

The plan, which also received the full support of the 56 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, included an immediate, unconditional and comprehensive cease-fire and called for:

* The release of Lebanese and Israeli prisoners and detainees through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

* The withdrawal of the Israeli army behind the "blue line."

* A commitment from the U.N. Security Council to place the Shebaa Farms and Kfar Shouba Hills areas under U.N. jurisdiction until border delineation and Lebanese sovereignty over them are fully settled. Further, Israel must surrender all maps of remaining land mines in southern Lebanon to the United Nations.

* Extension of the Lebanese government's authority over its territory through its legitimate armed forces, with no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese state, as stipulated in the Taif accord. We have indicated that the Lebanese armed forces are ready and able to deploy in southern Lebanon, alongside the U.N. forces there, the moment Israel pulls back to the international border.

* The supplementing of the U.N. international force operating in southern Lebanon and its enhancement in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operation, as needed, to undertake urgent humanitarian and relief work and guarantee stability and security in the south so that those who fled their homes can return.

* Action by the United Nations on the necessary measures to once again put into effect the 1949 armistice agreement signed by Lebanon and Israel and to ensure adherence to its provisions, as well as to explore possible amendments to or development of those provisions as necessary.

* The commitment of the international community to support Lebanon on all levels, including relief, reconstruction and development needs.

As part of this comprehensive plan, and empowered by strong domestic political support and the unanimous backing of the cabinet, the Lebanese government decided to deploy the Lebanese armed forces in southern Lebanon as the sole domestic military force in the area, alongside U.N. forces there, the moment Israel pulls back to the international border.

Israel responded by slaughtering more civilians in the biblical town of Qana. Such horrible scenes have been repeated daily for nearly four weeks and continue even as I write these words.

The resolution to this war must respect international law and U.N. resolutions, not just those selected by Israel, a state that deserves its reputation as a pariah because of its consistent disdain for and rejection of international law and the wishes of the international community for over half a century.

Lebanon calls, once again, on the United Nations to bring about an immediate cease-fire to relieve the beleaguered people of Lebanon. Only then can the root causes of this war – Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories and its perennial threat to Lebanon's security, as well as Lebanon's struggle to regain full sovereignty over all its territory – be addressed.

I believe that a political resolution rooted in international law and based on these seven points will lead to long-term stability. If Israel would realize

that the peoples of the Middle East cannot be cowed into submission, that they aspire only to live in freedom and dignity, it could also be a stepping stone to a final solution of the wider Arab-Israeli conflict, which has plagued our region for 60 years.

The 2002 Arab summit in Beirut, which called for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the principle of land for peace, showed the way forward. A political solution cannot, however, be implemented as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab land in Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and the Syrian Golan Heights and as long as it wages war on innocent people in Lebanon and Palestine. As Jawaharlal Nehru said, “the only alternative to coexistence is co-destruction.”

Enough destruction, dispossession, desperation, displacement and death! Lebanon must be allowed to reclaim its position in this troubled region as a beacon of freedom and democracy where justice and the rule of law prevail, and as a refuge for the oppressed where moderation, tolerance and enlightenment triumph.²⁵

The August 9, 2006, Op-ed by Siniora, published during the “Pull” phase of the conflict with casualties approaching one thousand dead in Lebanon, is provided here in its entirety because the news coverage by the *Post* and the *Times* had effectively undermined this narrative for most of the period of its news reporting in July 2006, but the Lebanese prime minister’s Op-ed leaves little room for pretending that the logic underlying the conflict as devised by Israel and the United States had any legitimacy in historical or contemporary facts. By this time, in early August 2006, the “Pull” phase was demonstrable with numerous commentators now questioning Israel’s attacks on Lebanon. Nevertheless, on August 13, 2006, the *Times* published an Op-ed by William Safire defending Israel:

With the world’s newspapers and TV screens filled with pictures of subsequent widespread Lebanese civilian suffering and deaths, Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations declared that the airstrikes at bridges and power stations, which Israel explained was to interdict the flow of ammunition and communication to the terrorists, was “a

²⁵ Fouad Siniora, “End This Tragedy Now; Israel Must be Made to Respect International Law,” *Washington Post*, August 9, 2006, 17.

disproportionate use of force.” In *The Washington Post*, under an “It’s Disproportionate” headline, the columnist Eugene Robinson viewed the response as “collective punishment” and wrote: “Of course Israel has the right to defend itself against Hezbollah’s rocket attacks. But how can this utterly disproportionate, seemingly indiscriminate carnage be anything but counterproductive?”

In an adjoining column, Richard Cohen countered that for Israel, “proportionality is madness It is not good enough to take out this or that missile battery. It is necessary to re-establish deterrence: you slap me, I will punch out your lights.” Next day in *The Post*, under a “Disproportionate in What Moral Universe?” headline, the columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote: “The word that obviates all thinking and magically inverts victim into aggressor is ‘disproportionate.’ . . . When one is wantonly attacked by an aggressor, one has every right - legal and moral - to carry the fight until the aggressor is disarmed and so disabled that it cannot threaten one’s security again.”

From these usages, it is evident that the current meaning of disproportionate in this legal/diplomatic context is not “asymmetrical, unbalanced,” which aims to state an objective fact, but is “excessive, uncalled for,” which makes a subjective judgment. But that meaning raises the question: “excessive” in relation to what? (I’m a pro-Israel hawk but here in On Language am determined to stick to semantics.)²⁶

Safire’s assumptions of the necessity and honorable intent of Israel’s conduct were, of course, not new, nor unique – these had been the talking points of the U.S. administration for years, and now they were being utilized to dismiss questions about international law. On August 12, Lebanon and Hezbollah had accepted a United Nations cease-fire deal, and the Israel government accepted it on August 13,²⁷ and U.S. President Bush then declared victory on August 14, 2006:

President Bush asserted yesterday that Hezbollah was defeated in its month-long conflict with Israel, casting the fighting that killed hundreds of Lebanese and Israeli civilians as part of a wider struggle “between freedom and terrorism.”

²⁶ William Safire, “Proportionality,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2006.

²⁷ Molly Moore and Edward Cody, “Israel Accepts U.N. Deal; Both Sides War Of More Fighting,” *Washington Post*, August 14, 2006.

As a U.N.-imposed truce seemed to be holding yesterday, Bush made clear that he blames Hezbollah and its patrons, Iran and Syria, for igniting the conflict. “We recognize that the responsibility for this lies with Hezbollah,” Bush said. “Responsibility lies also with Hezbollah’s state sponsors, Iran and Syria.”

Bush warned Tehran to stop backing militias in Lebanon and in Iraq, where U.S. officials have long accused Iran of feeding the sectarian violence that is threatening to erupt into a full-scale civil war.

“In both these countries, Iran is backing armed groups in the hope of stopping democracy from taking hold,” Bush said. “The message of this administration is clear. America will stay on the offensive against al-Qaeda. Iran must stop its support for terror, and the leaders of these armed groups must make a choice. If they want to participate in the political life of their countries, they must disarm.”

Bush’s comments came at the close of an Israeli military campaign aimed at ending Hezbollah attacks and crippling the radical Shi’ite militia. The campaign did not go as well as the United States and Israel had expected.²⁸

According to figures calculated by Reuters and released a year after the end of the 2006 conflict, the casualties in Israel included “158 dead, most of them soldiers killed in Lebanon and including 43 civilians killed by Hezbollah rocket attacks. About 1,500 people were wounded in rocket attacks in Israel, and 450 soldiers were hurt in the fighting in Lebanon,” while on the Lebanese side, Reuters calculated the casualties to be “nearly 1,200 dead and 4,400 wounded, mostly civilians. The dead include about 270 Hezbollah fighters and 50 Lebanese soldiers and police, as well as five U.N. peacekeepers.”²⁹ In addition to that, Reuters noted that, “The United Nations says at least 929 Israeli cluster bomb strikes contaminated an area of 37 million square meters (400

²⁸ Michael A. Fletcher, “Hezbollah the Loser In Battle, Bush Says; President Cites Plans for Lebanese Control,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 2006.

²⁹ “FACTBOX: Costs of war and recovery in Lebanon and Israel,” *Reuters.com*, July 9, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-war-cost/factbox-costs-of-war-and-recovery-in-lebanon-and-israel-idUSL0822571220070709>

million square feet) [in Lebanon]. The cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance have killed 30 people and wounded 209 since the war [in Lebanon].”³⁰

On January 30, 2008, the Israeli Winograd Commission Report was made public, and it noted that:

Overall, we regard the 2nd Lebanon war as a serious missed opportunity. Israel initiated a long war, which ended without its clear military victory. A semi-military organization of a few thousand men resisted, for a few weeks, the strongest army in the Middle East, which enjoyed full air superiority and size and technology advantages. The barrage of rockets aimed at Israel's civilian population lasted throughout the war, and the IDF did not provide an effective response to it. The fabric of life under fire was seriously disrupted, and many civilians either left their home temporarily or spent their time in shelters. After a long period of using only standoff fire power and limited ground activities, Israel initiated a large scale ground offensive, very close to the Security Council resolution imposing a cease fire. This offensive did not result in military gains and was not completed. These facts had far-reaching implications for us, as well as for our enemies, our neighbors, and our friends in the region and around the world. . . .

The overall image of the war was a result of a mixture of flawed conduct of the political and the military echelons and the interface between them, of flawed performance by the IDF, and especially the ground forces, and of deficient Israeli preparedness. Israel did not use its military force well and effectively, despite the fact that it was a limited war initiated by Israel itself. At the end of the day, Israel did not gain a political achievement because of military successes; rather, it relied on a political agreement, which included positive elements for Israel, which permitted it to stop a war which it had failed to win.³¹

“In the case of Israel’s summertime conflicts on its southern and northern borders, the international community, again led by Washington, swiftly condemned the actions of Israel’s ‘extremist’ adversaries, and acquiesced in the tightening of existing sanctions upon them by legal and other means,” noted Falk and Bali.³² “Yet although Israel’s

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report,” *nytimes.com*, Jan. 30, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html>

³² Falk and Bali, “International Law at the Vanishing Point,” *The War on Lebanon*, 208.

actions in both Gaza and Lebanon were plainly unlawful by international legal standards, there was less condemnation and no material sanction imposed upon Israel, least of all by the chief arbiter of international peace and security, the UN Security Council. The imbalance in the international response has gravely undermined the credibility, and, ultimately, the enforceability of international legal norms, which are only norms to the degree that they are enforced without fear or favor.”

Falk, who at the time was the Milbank Professor of International Law emeritus at Princeton University, noted, “More than international law is at stake here. To validate the Israeli responses to the Palestinian and Hizballah raids is to defy the rule of reason, which underpins world order and international law in crucial respects. It takes only a modest imagination to envision regions in flames if incidents of this, or even greater, magnitude were to be seized upon by the targeted country as occasions for general war.”³³

The U.S. supported Israel’s military actions against Lebanon in 2006, and the leading U.S. newspapers underreported and downplayed the voices questioning the legal implications in the “Push” phase of the military action, and their readers were thus denied an opportunity to address these issues. It can be argued that our inability to preserve the boundaries of international law in the service of our government and allies, as a democracy with a free press, might have well served to make international law itself weak – Russia, for one, mimicked such flouting of international law with its own armed incursions into neighboring countries under the guise of national security in the years after 2006.

³³ Ibid., 210.

As mentioned previously in this dissertation, Motti Neiger, Eyal Zandberg, and Oren Meyers noted in their study of Israeli journalists during conflicts that “journalists covering their own nation should be conceptualized as professionals trapped between nation and profession. On the one hand, the values of the professional community call on journalists to tell a story that is factual or appears to be factual and objective. . . . On the other hand, the national-cultural community calls on journalist to take part in the conflict, to be a weapon in the battleground of images, and thus to tell a story that is neither balanced nor objective.”³⁴

When the journalists reporting for the *Post* and the *Times* in the U.S., Israel and Lebanon, reporters and editors, looked into the conflict in Israel’s Second Lebanon War in 2006, the statistical differences in the 2006 news reporting from Lebanon with Western and Middle Eastern bylines were significant: A t-test comparison of the forty-seven Western and fifty-three Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon revealed that the Western byline news reports from Lebanon had a higher mean value for Israel Military(1) source paragraphs (mean=3.30) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (mean=0.91); had a higher mean value for U.S. Government(1) source paragraphs (mean=1.04) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (mean=0.19); had a higher mean value for Israel Government(1) source paragraphs (mean=1.83) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (mean=0.42); and had a lower mean value for Lebanese Civilian(1) source paragraphs (mean=5.13) than the Middle Eastern byline news reports from Lebanon (mean=10.15).

³⁴ Motti Neiger, Eyal Zandberg and Oren Meyers, “Communicating Critique: Toward a Conceptualization of Journalistic Criticism,” *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 3, (International Communication Association, 2010): 377-95.

Therefore, the 2006 conflict news reporting demonstrated that number of news reports by Middle Eastern bylines provided statistically significant higher means for source paragraphs from Lebanese sources in their news reporting, as compared to the news reporting under Western bylines that contained statistically significant higher means for source paragraphs from U.S. and Israeli sources, a development that provides some support to the arguments relating to the social networks of journalists presented by Uwe Krueger,³⁵ and also seem to reinforce the “national-cultural community” influence on journalists “to take part in the conflict, to be a weapon in the battleground of images, and thus to tell a story that is neither balanced nor objective.”³⁶

As discussed earlier in this dissertation, the American journalists’ normative principles of applied ethics, as outlined in the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics,³⁷ set the broadly accepted standards of the American journalism industry and are taught in journalism schools across the country, and some of these are most relevant to the news reporting of conflicts:

Journalists should - Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.

Journalists should – Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.

Journalists should – Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.

Journalists should – Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government.

³⁵ Uwe Krueger, “Manufacturing Consent through Integration: Social Networks of German Journalists in the Elite Milieu and Their Effects on Coverage,” *European Journal of Communication*, 30, no.2 (2015): 152-70.

³⁶ Motti Neiger, Eyal Zandberg and Oren Meyers, “Communicating Critique: Toward a Conceptualization of Journalistic Criticism,” 377-95.

³⁷ The SPJ Codes of Ethics are available on its web site, <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Journalist should – Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.

Journalists should – Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.³⁸

The news reporting of the *Times* and the *Post* across the three conflicts in Lebanon examined in this dissertation frequently failed to meet these codes of ethics. In effect, there seemed to be a particular failure to ask certain questions from the sources interviewed in the countries where the military action was being carried out.

In the News Media Ethics course that I have taught for several years, I recommend that students pay attention to these types of failings, and suggest the following:

Three Questions Foreign Correspondents (and Editors) Should Ask Their Sources:

1. *What do you think the U.S. is trying to do in your country?*

The U.S. media do a good job of acting as an echo chamber for official U.S. policy statements coming out of the White House, State Department, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Congress. However, foreign correspondents often fail to ask their sources abroad as to how they perceive the U.S. policy. Asking this question can expose serious differences in how the stated U.S. policy is being interpreted in a foreign country. Editors should also remind foreign correspondents to seek out the answer to this question, if the correspondent's news reporting fails to address it.

2. *Do you think the U.S. policy will work?*

The U.S. media do a good job of acting as a reinforcer for official U.S. statements coming out of the White House, State Department, Department of Defense, and the U.S.

³⁸ The SPJ Codes of Ethics are available on its web site, <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Congress that are often over confident, if not hubristic, in their self estimation of the predicted success of their stated policies and actions. However, foreign correspondents often fail to ask their sources abroad as to how they perceive the effectiveness of the U.S. policy – asking this question can expose serious shortcomings in how the stated U.S. policy is being enacted in a foreign country, and whether it might fail or do more harm than good through unforeseen blowback or collateral damages. Editors should also remind foreign correspondents to seek out the answer to this question, if the correspondent’s news reporting fails to address it.

3. *What do you think the U.S. should be doing in your country?*

This crucial question can help illustrate how people on the ground in foreign countries best understand their own conflicts or problems. Their suggestions for desired U.S. actions in their countries are often a missing component of the diversity of voices that journalism ethics demands be included in the American media, so that they can in turn inform the American public about the choices for other options in U.S. policy. Editors should also remind foreign correspondents to seek out the answer to this question, if the correspondent’s news reporting fails to address it.

If reporters, and editors, keep these three questions in mind and add them to as many of their interviews with foreign sources as possible, they might find the answers that help inform the American public, and the American government, of different perspectives on U.S. policy, as well as satisfy the requirements of the SPJ Codes of Ethics.

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Appendix: Coding Sheet / 1996, 2000, 2006 Studies

Article Title/Case no. _____ ---

Newspaper _____ --

1= The Washington Post 2=New York Times

Date (Month-Day-Year) _____ / ____ / ____

Story length (Total words, should be mentioned in article) _____

Page number (If mentioned, otherwise 99 for missing) _____

Story Dateline (Filed From) – _____

1=Israel 2=Lebanon 3=Middle East (Egypt/Syria/Jordan/Turkey) 4=U.S.A. (Washington D.C./UN/New York etc.)

5=Can't Say/Don't Know 6=Other (write in)

Byline: 1-Western name, 2- Middle Eastern name _____

Sources – (U.S., UK, Israeli – IS, Lebanese – LB, Hizbollah – HB, Russian- RU, French-FR, Palestinian- PA, Iran – IRN, Iraq - IRQ, Saudi – SA, USSR for foreign source working in U.S.) (1= Unopposed, 2=Opposed)

Military _____

Government _____

Non-Governmental Organization _____

Expert _____

Opinion Polls _____

Ordinary person _____

Other Media _____



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