



Understanding Political Influence in Modern-Era Conflict: A Qualitative Historical Analysis of Hassan Nasrallah's Speeches

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Abstract

This research examines and closely analyzes speeches delivered by Hezbollah's secretary general and spokesman, Hassan Nasrallah. We reveal that several significant political phenomena that have occurred in Lebanon were impacted by the intensity of speeches delivered by Nasrallah; these three events being the 2006 War, the Doha Agreement, and the 2008 prisoner exchange. Nasrallah's speeches with significant key words and themes, that are reflective of the three selected events, have been collected from various transcribed news media sources and analyzed using a qualitative historical approach. Finally, the research study uses latent analysis to assess Nasrallah's underlying implications of his speeches by identifying key words and themes that he uses to influence his audience

Introduction

“The present globalization of extremist discourse and its impact on international relations as a whole have historical precedents.[1] Whether it's print media, television, the internet, or any other form of communication, charismatic leaders of influential organizations have led their audience to believe in certain ideologies that are deemed hopeful and powerful, all through their emotional and authoritative speeches. One such leader is Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary general. Nasrallah has been an influential leader of Hezbollah, inspiring his supporters and engaging them at an emotional level to garner more support of his actions. Through his rhetoric, he has been able to relate to his audience, in particular the majority of the Shi'a community in Lebanon and those who are in opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestine; all with a strategic strength to gain their commitment of his broad and open pleas. While Hezbollah was initially identified as a religious revolutionary movement in the 1980s, it has since transformed into a more politically motivated organization, holding seats in Lebanon's Parliament, and having membership in the Resistance and Development Bloc, a ruling coalition of different political parties in Lebanese government. Hezbollah has been cited by Daniel L. Byman as “the most powerful single political movement in Lebanon.”[2] This transformation became known as the *Lebanonization* of Hezbollah.[3]

This research study first outlines how Hezbollah gained power as an influential political and religious resistance movement. Second, the study uses a qualitative historical approach to identify repeated and emphasized key words in Nasrallah's speeches that he uses to gain more support for his cause. Finally, the research study examines Nasrallah's speeches' main themes by focusing on three different but interconnected events: the 2006 War, the Doha agreement, and the prisoner exchange.

Background



Speeches have often served as precursors to momentous and profound events, with Nasrallah's influence on Lebanon being but one example.[4] Research consistently indicates that powerful speeches have the impact to sway the masses politically and socially;[5] leaders with enough charisma are masters at popularizing their cause to attract followers.”[6]

Increasing amounts of research have been generated in the past decade examining the rise of Hezbollah,[7] the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon in 2000,[8] the 2006 War,[9] and the ascent of Hezbollah to become an important political power in Lebanon.[10] The rise of Hezbollah following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982,[11] has also been extensively studied. Perhaps most studied of all is how issues and conflicts in the Middle East are interrelated on different levels of government. One very significant issue in this regard is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,[12] which many of Nasrallah's speeches focus on.

When words are not enough to gain the support and outcomes he desires, Nasrallah is willing to use violence. Hezbollah's turning point to gaining popular support came in 2000, when Israel withdrew from Lebanon, after twice invading and occupying the region (in 1978 and 1982). May 24, 2000, became a day of celebration in Lebanon, particularly in the south, where Nasrallah gained much praise from the populace for his role in driving Israel from Lebanon.[13] As late as 2008, Nasrallah was still characterizing the withdrawal as “a brilliant victory for Lebanon...and a brilliant defeat for Israel,” failing to acknowledge any other cause for the withdrawal in his speeches other than the “steadfastness” of the resistance. Despite the heavy losses on both sides, Nasrallah once again claimed victory in a May 26, 2008 speech: “We feel that we won; Lebanon won; Palestine won; the Arab nation won, and every oppressed, aggrieved person in this world also won.”

Nasrallah continued to warn Israel subsequent to Olmert's remarks about attacking Lebanon without any restrictions if Lebanon in fact becomes a Hezbollah state. While Israel refrained from attacking Lebanon as a State in its past wars and conflicts, becoming a Hezbollah state would mean attacking integral parts of Lebanon's infrastructure, including roads, water plants, and Lebanon's main international airport (which was attacked by Israeli military during the 2006 war).

Furthermore, Nasrallah became enraged when the Lebanese government imposed limits on Hezbollah's communication network, and sought to fire Beirut's International Airport Security Chief, Walid Shukair, a close supporter of Nasrallah.[14] He feared that these actions were precursors to a total disarmament of Hezbollah under the provisions of the UNSCR 1701. On May 9, 2008, Nasrallah ordered Hezbollah militants to seize control of portions of the capital and Druze territory,[15] stating that “We have the right to defend our existence from whoever declares and begins a war on us, even if they are our brothers”.[16] Within one month, Hezbollah was successful in producing a new head of state, gaining veto power in the cabinet, and successfully reinstating the parliament, all under the auspices of the Qatari government and the Doha Agreement.[17]

During the political unrest in 2007, many Lebanese feared that Hezbollah would gain control of the government,[18] but Nasrallah denied these allegations and promised to work for a national unity government, stating “it is not permissible to use the resistance weapons for political gains...” Research has indicated that as Hezbollah becomes more powerful, it may seek to focus more intently on Lebanese politics to reduce its international profile and remove itself from needing any assistance from supporting nations, such as Iran.[19]

A Qualitative Historical Analysis

To illustrate Hassan Nasrallah's political and social influences through his rhetoric, this study selects 28 speeches delivered by Nasrallah (see Table 1) during three specific events; the 2006 War,



the Doha Agreement, and the 2008 prisoner exchange between Israel and Hezbollah. The lack of complete databases made it necessary to select speeches from multiple news sources; including Al-Manar, Al-Jazeera, BBC, and others. Of the selected speeches, 10 covered the 2006 War, 9 covered the Doha Agreement, and 9 covered the 2008 prisoner exchange incident; all with respect to specific time frames and relevancy to the selected incidents. Additional speeches given by Nasrallah during each of the three time frames were not included if they lacked relevance to either the 2006 War, Doha Agreement, or prisoner exchange.

To overcome translation biases from Arabic to English, speeches that share a common pattern in translation were selected. However, due to the lack of complete databases, researchers were forced to select some speeches that may not share a common translation. This bias in translation was validated by the primary author of this article, who is a native Arabic speaker.

A qualitative historical analysis was used in this study to examine Nasrallah's speeches. The study first examines the themes of Nasrallah's speeches, evident through his repeated use of selected key words. Second, the study identifies the frequent use of words used by Nasrallah to emphasize his cause (as seen in Table I). Third, the study indicates how Nasrallah, through his speeches, managed to gain some support from the majority of the Shi'a community in Lebanon as well as the economically and socially deprived that are hopeful for change in their current living situations as well as Nasrallah's promise for the destruction of Israel. This study argues that charismatic leaders use public speeches to express ideology and legitimize and rally support for a cause. In this case, Hassan Nasrallah's speeches on the three selected incidents provide a portrait of Nasrallah's ideology and the methods he uses to legitimize his cause. Finally, the analysis of news sources and scholarly works emphasize the effects of Nasrallah's ideology.

Analysis

The 2006 War

The 2006 War between Hezbollah and Israel, which pitted a vocal, militant movement against a powerful military state, quickly provoked a global reaction. While the US gave Israel some military support during the conflict, Iran aligned itself with Hezbollah and condemned Israel. The Arab League supported Lebanon but condemned Hezbollah.

Hezbollah *admittedly* designed and executed the plot to attack and abduct the Israeli soldiers which directly led to the 2006 conflict.[20] Nasrallah and Hezbollah's popularity declined during the conflict and many Lebanese condemned Nasrallah for the violence and destruction wrought by the war.[21] Ignoring this, Nasrallah spoke to the Lebanese People immediately after the conflict began, claiming that national polls indicated a majority of the people believed and trusted him.[22] However, public resentment remained strong, and Nasrallah faced the difficult challenge of selling the righteousness of his cause to Lebanon.

Nasrallah approached this challenge by focusing on two main themes in his speeches: the perceived US/Israeli Zionist plot to destroy Lebanon and the spirit of steadfast resistance. Nasrallah purported that the war was "born of a plot between US and Israeli Zionists." [23] Nasrallah claimed that Israel's strong response was the Zionism's attempt to "clear its account with Lebanon." [24] On July 25, Nasrallah referred to the war as part of a "Middle East Plot" devised by the US and Lebanon Zionists to control the Arab world.[25] By labeling the Israeli military response a Zionist plot, Nasrallah could encourage "steadfast resistance" against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). This second theme of resistance allowed Nasrallah to portray Hezbollah's violence as an ideological



struggle against Israel. Resistance was Nasrallah's persistent theme; a cry of opposition to Zionism and western influence. Nasrallah praised the "resistance combatants [who] are enduring heroic battles" and the "martyrs" who died in the struggle. On September 22, he stated that, "Resistance dealt a blow to the New Middle East plan." Nasrallah frequently coupled the concepts of "steadfast" and "resistance" to sustain the resolve of the Lebanese against the Israelis. At the outbreak of war, Nasrallah praised the "steadfastness of this proud nation... that is nearing the level of a miracle." Nasrallah encouraged the population to "maintain steadfastness... [and] further steadfastness" for the conflict ahead. During his victory speech on September 22, Nasrallah claimed that steadfast resistance "was the secret of victory we are now sharing today...."

The "Zionist" theme provided the foundation to legitimize Hezbollah's war with Israel. Nasrallah built on the 2000 Israeli withdrawal and labeled the 2006 War on Israel as "revenge and reprisal for May 15, 2000." [26] He claimed that the 2006 War would be a "historic opportunity to accomplish a great victory" against Israel, building on widespread Arab hatred of Israel, Zionism, and the humiliation suffered by shocking Israeli victories in 1967 and 1973. Nasrallah argued that Israel and the US had premeditated an invasion and sought a motivation to attack. [27] Nasrallah claimed the kidnapping of the soldiers was only one catalyst that could have triggered the invasion, but later admitted that he would not have kidnapped the soldiers had he known war would ensue. [28]

Portraying the war as a Zionist movement to conquer Lebanon garnered support for Hezbollah's resistance. [29] Nasrallah's speeches during the 2006 War show strong arguments for the continuation of violence against Israel, consistently encouraging the Lebanese people to adopt a plan of "resistance" against the "Zionist invaders."

Hezbollah "surprised the Israelis with its resistance." [30] Many Lebanese rallied in the streets in support of Nasrallah, despite lingering resentment over the violence. Hezbollah was able to withstand the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for 34 days without being destroyed. The media's depiction of Nasrallah as a symbol of resistance against the Israelis sustained Hezbollah's campaign and gathered an impressive amount of support. [31] It is unlikely that Hezbollah could have sustained its operations without the support of friendly media. [32] When the fighting ended, Nasrallah immediately proclaimed victory, stating, "We are today celebrating a big strategic, historic, and divine victory." [33] Many Lebanese rallied in the streets, waving banners of Nasrallah as a "symbol of resistance," and most newspapers printed declarations of "victory." [34] Many news sources, including Al-Jazeera, reveled in the apparent "defeat" of Israel and published articles labeling the 2006 War the end of the "Israeli military myth." [35] Shai Feldman notes that Nasrallah won the "war of narratives," portraying Hezbollah as the savior of Lebanon and the antagonist of Israel. [36]

Nasrallah used his speeches to encourage Islamic resistance in the Arab world. Radical Islamic sects believed in Hezbollah's resistance, especially Palestinian organizations, [37] including Hamas and the PLO. [38] Nasrallah called for the "oppressed" Arab people, especially those in Palestine, to resist the Zionists, and warned that if the "resistance should fail in Lebanon... the Palestinian cause would be shrouded in humiliation." [39]

Support for Hezbollah was not unanimous. While some of the Arab public may have shown support to Nasrallah through their street protests and rallies, the Egyptian and Jordanian governments, in addition to the Arab League, condemned Hezbollah's antagonistic actions and refused to support Lebanon. Many Arabs did not see the survival of Hezbollah as a cause for victory celebrations. [40] Egypt and Jordan refused to recognize a true victory, and Saudi Arabia actually portrayed a defeated Hezbollah. [41] While Hezbollah may have benefited from Syria and Iran as its main regional allies (transporting arms to Hezbollah and financial support), Saudi Arabia, a strong U.S. ally, is strongly



connected to Lebanon's Sunni community as well as Saad Hariri, the son of the former assassinated prime minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri. Additionally, Hezbollah's political position in Lebanon weakened because of hostility over their aggressive actions against Israel.[42] The war also set the stage for the violence surrounding the Doha talks in 2008. Nasrallah succeeded in legitimizing the war to radical groups and state supporters of terrorism, but he failed to generate unanimous Arab and Lebanese support for Hezbollah's fight against the "Zionists." Even some of Hezbollah's high-ranking members expressed discontent with Nasrallah's reliance on military force.[43] Nasrallah may believe the 2006 War was a victory for Hezbollah, but as many Lebanese believe that "nobody won." [44]

The Doha Agreement

The end of the 2006 War marked the beginning of a conflict that gradually led to the Doha talks in 2008. This evolved from the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701, which primarily focused on resolving the 2006 Israel-Lebanese conflict by emphasizing, among other things, the disarmament of all armed-groups in Lebanon; one of which being Hezbollah. Nasrallah quickly stated that this matter required future attention, but on August 14, scathingly asked, "Who will defend Lebanon, if Hezbollah is disarmed?" The Lebanese Defense Minister Elias Murr quickly responded on the same day that the Lebanese military would not disarm Hezbollah.[45]

During his victory speech on September 22, Nasrallah stated that "no army in the world can make us lay down our arms." By November 2006, polls indicated that 51% of Lebanon supported disarming Hezbollah, and 47% believed Hezbollah fighters should be disarmed and integrated into the Lebanese military.[46] Nasrallah stubbornly resisted disarmament and largely ignored the provisions of the UNSCR 1701. Furthermore, the 2006 War split Lebanon politically, and Nasrallah seized this division to demand a "national unity government" on August 27, 2006.[47] Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah should be granted veto power in the cabinet, to prevent any government attempt to disarm the organization. Hezbollah's refusal to disarm, coupled with Nasrallah's aggressive attitude, weakened the Lebanese Government's sovereignty.[48] Washington, Riyadh, Amman, and Paris pressured the Lebanese Government to adopt a harsher stance towards Hezbollah, but "prospects for disarming the Shi'a group were dimmer than ever." [49]

On May 8, Nasrallah stated, "any hand that reaches for the resistance and its arms will be cut off." [50] Nasrallah labeled the Siniora Government an "unconstitutional gang" and declared the need for "self defense." Violence erupted in Beirut, and Hezbollah rapidly overran the Sunni neighborhoods of west Beirut and seized control of the area, demonstrating to Lebanon that it possessed greater power than the current government.[51]

Nasrallah legitimates his actions to his supporters by focusing on the theme of self-defense. On May 8, Nasrallah raged against the government's stance on Hezbollah's communications network, stating, "I am declaring oppression and self-defense,"... "and we have a right to defend our existence." [52] Hezbollah fighters immediately launched a campaign that seized control of western Beirut, the Druze section of Mount Lebanon, and a Damascus highway.[53]

On May 13, Nasrallah offered a more rational explanation for Hezbollah's "self-defense." He argued that "communications" are the most important part of the resistance, and that if the government seized control of the network, Hezbollah would no longer be able to "defend Lebanon against Israel." [54] Thus, from Nasrallah's perspective, "self-defense" in the form of *violence* was necessary to preserve the organization's existence.



The second theme of an “unconstitutional gang” provided further material for Nasrallah to defend his actions. He claimed that the Lebanese Government was part of a “Zionist conspiracy” designed to overthrow Hezbollah. Nasrallah saw the attempted replacement of Walid Shuquair (former Security Chief of Beirut airport and a close friend to Hezbollah) as a threat to Hezbollah’s security and as a movement by the government to allow foreign intelligence services into Lebanon. In a May 8 speech, Nasrallah stated that the “gang” was serving US interests by attempting to disarm Hezbollah. The government, he said, is a “pro-American subsidiary serving committed party that is implementing a scheme that America and Israel have failed to impose, which is the disarmament of resistance [Hezbollah’s] arms.”[55] Since 2008, research has indicated that much of the Lebanese population distrusted Nasrallah, but Nasrallah believed his assertions were accurate.[56]

Throughout this conflict of words and violence, Nasrallah emphatically declared that it was not the intent of Hezbollah to instigate a civil war or coup. He stated several times that “we [Hezbollah] are not competing for power.”[57] Nevertheless, the struggle between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government gravitated around power. Hezbollah immediately resorted to violence in response to the revolved declarations of war against it as well as a plan for its disarmament. The violence ended only when the Government suspended the declarations and offered to negotiate with Hezbollah.

These “negotiations” comprise the final elements of Nasrallah’s speeches. The Doha speeches reveal a pattern of progression, from claims of “self-defense,” to condemnation of the “gang government” regulated by “Zionists,” to, finally, the offer of a “settlement.” This was important particularly due to the fact that it would put an end to the political crises in Lebanon and prevent another future civil war. On May 13, Nasrallah claimed, “We are a people of negotiation and solving issues,” and, “whoever wants a settlement will find the doors to [a] settlement wide open.”[58] Interestingly, Nasrallah called for a settlement only after demonstrating the military power of Hezbollah. The Doha settlement was signed on May 21, and produced a new head of state, amended the election process, and successfully reinstated the parliament. Nasrallah’s greatest victory was gaining veto power in the Lebanese Cabinet. Now it is possible for Hezbollah to veto any attempt to disarm the organization. The Doha Agreement includes a vague article on disarmament and fails to mention Hezbollah by name.[59] Hezbollah’s negotiations ended in an unprecedented political power increase for the organization. Nasrallah termed the Doha Agreement a “victory,” not just for Hezbollah, but “a victory for all Lebanese.” Nasrallah claimed responsibility for the agreement, declaring, “I promised you victory...as on May 25, 2000, as in July 2006, as in Doha.” Hezbollah emerged as the winner in the Doha negotiations; chiefly because disarmament is now only a vague possibility.

While Nasrallah has failed to garner a majority support for his actions from the Lebanese community at large, including the Sunni Muslims, he resorted to the Shi’a community, one that has been alienated and marginalized due to Nasrallah’s efforts in making it more powerful. In fact, Hezbollah supporters and the Shi’a population have further rallied to support Nasrallah’s vision of a “unity” government. However, the Sunnis, Druze, many Christians, and other sects condemned Hezbollah’s actions. Hezbollah’s popularity fell to a new low, and many Lebanese believed Nasrallah purposefully used intimidation to force government change.[60] Nasrallah claimed Hezbollah’s violent actions were not for political gain, but that is exactly what he achieved. Still, he reaffirmed the Doha Agreements clause banning the use of weapons for political gains, stating, “the resistance’s arms are to fight the enemy, liberate lands and prisoners, and defend Lebanon – and for nothing else.” Only time will indicate whether the remainder of Lebanon will accept Hezbollah as a legitimate political power.



The 2008 Prisoner Exchange

In 2008, Hezbollah rejoiced in the return of its long lost compatriots, dead and alive. Israel was also excited at the return of its soldiers, but felt humiliated by bargaining with its bitter enemy. The prisoner exchange allowed Hezbollah to “bolster its domestic position and to rebuild its reputation in Lebanon.”[61] Nasrallah also pointed to his success in returning Samir Kuntar to Lebanon, though this success was disproportionate to the havoc of the 2006 War.

The Israeli capture and imprisonment of Samir Kuntar along with other Lebanese prisoners was a lingering humiliation for Hezbollah. Hezbollah declared 2006 to be the “year of retrieving the prisoners.”[62] On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regeve. Hezbollah hoped to negotiate an exchange by kidnapping the Israel soldiers, but instead brought a destructive war upon Lebanon. Nasrallah clearly stated that the kidnapping operation in 2006 was “in order to liberate the rest of the prisoners in the Zionist prisons,” and had this failed, “it [Hezbollah] would have abducted more Israeli soldiers.”[63] The negotiations lagged for 2 years, until Israel and Hezbollah agreed on an acceptable deal in 2008. On July 16, the IDF bodies returned to Israel, and Kuntar and other Lebanese prisoners to Lebanon. Nasrallah rejoiced, stating that “the prisoner deal validated the victory of 2006,”[64] and telling the Lebanese people that “no one should feel defeated...[this] victory is theirs.”[65]

Nasrallah did not need to legitimize the exchange; the new Lebanese President Sleiman approved the deal and welcomed Kuntar with open arms.[66] Rather, the theme of Nasrallah’s speeches was to legitimize the 2006 War. On February 7, 2008, Nasrallah stated, “The [2006] operation was conducted for the sake of his [Kuntar’s] release.”[67] After Kuntar’s release, Nasrallah offered a detailed explanation for the 2006 kidnapping:

On the 12th of July year 2006, a group of resistance fighters implemented an operation which led to the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. This was in order to liberate the rest of the prisoners in the Zionist prisons... we must look back at those who fought in that battle, those who were on the front line, those who were martyred, those who were injured, those who challenged the enemy... [their] perseverance, this victory is the main factor, the biggest factor which contributed in achieving this prisoner swap, this victory.[68]

Nasrallah hoped that the anger directed at Hezbollah for the devastating 2006 War would dissipate because of “his victory” in bringing the Lebanese prisoners home. He stated, “I congratulate all the Lebanese on this victory... I hope that they consider this achievement and victory theirs...an opportunity for the Lebanese to come together again...”

Nasrallah clearly stated that a “bitter hostility” continued to exist between Hezbollah and Israel, despite the exchange.[69] On July 17, during the celebration rally in honor of Kuntar’s release, Nasrallah called the swap a “defeat of Israel.”[70]

Eyal Zisser notes that Hezbollah seized Israel’s apparent willingness to negotiate as an opportunity for it to redeem its image in Lebanon.[71] Nasrallah hinted that if Hezbollah had failed in the negotiations, “Lebanon would have lost and the whole region would have lost.”[72]

While Hezbollah celebrated, some news sources labeled the swap a “shameful exchange.”[73] Norton writes, “One may easily imagine Israelis seething at the spectacle of Kuntar being greeted by the Lebanese government with fanfare and acclaim, as though he were a national hero.”[74]



Nasrallah labeled Kuntar “a very rich national treasure,” while American media termed him “a strange kind of hero,” and emphasized Kuntar’s history of murder and mayhem.[75]

Nasrallah proclaimed his victory for keeping his word to returning Samir Al-Kuntar in what he referred to as *Freedom for Samir Al-Kuntar and His Brothers*, later named *Operation Truthful Promise*. Nasrallah stated, “This victory is for every resistance movement and every noble and free person in the Arab world.” Nasrallah also used this incident to once again garner support for the Palestinian cause, stating that, “the release of Palestinian detainees is symbolic and marks great importance from the angle of our common cause and struggle.”

Conclusion

The revolutionary inspiration of Nasrallah and his use of oral political rhetoric to frame events as “victories” are sometimes difficult to dispute, as seen in the outcomes of the 2006 War, the integration of Hezbollah into Lebanese politics, and the exchange of prisoners with Israel. Nasrallah used his speeches during these events to legitimize his cause. Each event necessitated new themes; Nasrallah legitimized the 2006 War through claims of Zionist conspiracies and steadfast resistance; the Doha Agreement by claiming self-defense and unconstitutionality; and the prisoner exchange by stating that the return of Kuntar justified the 2006 War. Nasrallah also used two constant themes throughout his speeches. First, he focused extensively on the future liberation of the Palestinians from Zionist oppression, and, second, he constantly called for resistance against what he perceives as injustice and tyranny. On May 27, 2008, he stated, “we owe all [these victories] to the resistance martyrs.” These two themes are constantly interwoven into his speeches, and provide a framework for Nasrallah to maintain his role as leader of Hezbollah.

Closely examining speeches delivered by politically influential leaders, such as Nasrallah, is only one possible way future inflicted damages may be prevented or even minimized. For instance, perhaps the Israelis could have prevented the July 12 kidnappings had they taken Nasrallah’s threats to make “2006 the year of retrieving the prisoners,” more seriously. Perhaps the Lebanese Government could have delayed Hezbollah’s seizure of power had they listened to Nasrallah’s threat to “cut off the hand” that attempts to interfere with Hezbollah. In his speeches, Nasrallah also focused on the destruction of Israel, the freeing of the Palestinians, and imperviousness to whatever losses needed to achieve these results. Nasrallah continues to use his speeches to underscore his ideologies and present future ambitions. To neglect these statements is to imperil the regional security of Lebanon and a volatile area in the Middle East. Misjudgment of Hezbollah and Nasrallah’s speeches has already created serious problems for U.S. and Israeli foreign relations.[76]

Recent research indicates that the Shi’a community within Lebanon continues to increase in population and power.[77] Other research indicates that the Doha Agreement, along with popular support for Hezbollah, has made it virtually impossible for the Lebanese Government to disarm or control Hezbollah.[78] Additionally, the possibility exists that Hezbollah will attempt either to seize national power or establish an independent state.[79] These forewarnings are amplified by the rise of Hezbollah, under Nasrallah, as a powerful political party.[80] Other scholars contend that Hezbollah under Nasrallah is a “threat” to Lebanese security.[81]

Since Nasrallah became Hezbollah’s secretary general in 1992, Hezbollah has demonstrated a very active resistance movement. Within the past decade, Israel withdrew from Lebanon twice, negotiated a prisoner exchange deal, and watched Hezbollah rise to unprecedented heights in the Lebanese Government. By the use of speeches and strategic uses of aggression, Nasrallah has



legitimized his politics, encouraged his followers, and exacerbated the violence in the Middle East. Hezbollah, under Nasrallah's leadership, is currently strong, but it is far from invulnerable.

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Notes:

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- [9] Dalia Gavriely-Nuri, "The 'Metaphorical Annihilation' of the Second Lebanon War (2006) from the Israeli Political Discourse," *Discourse Society* 19 (2008): 5-20; Shai Feldman, "The Hezbollah-Israel War: A Preliminary Assessment. *Crown Center for Middle East Studies Publication* 10 (2006).
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- [13] Augustus Richard Norton, "Hezbollah and the Israeli Withdrawal From Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 4 (2000): 22-35.



- [14] Saab, "Rethinking Hezbollah's Disarmament," 93.
- [15] Bilal Saab, *Rethinking Hezbollah's disarmament* (Middle East Policy, 2008), 93-106.
- [16] Hassan Nasrallah, Speech given on May 8, 2008.
- [17] Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster, *Hezbollah, History of Hezbollah, South Lebanon Conflict* (New York: Alphascript Publishing, 2009); Bilal Saab, "Rethinking Hezbollah's Disarmament," *Middle East Policy* 15 (2008): 93-106.
- [18] Augustus Richard Norton, "The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Domestic Politics," *The International Spectator* 42, no. 4 (2007): 475-491.
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- [21] Feldman, "The Hezbollah-Israel War," 2.
- [22] Hassan Nasrallah, "July 15, 2006 Speech," *Al-Manar TV*, <http://www.aimislam.com/forums/index.php?p=2932&showtopic=457&st=0> (accessed August 24, 2010).
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- [25] Nasrallah, "July 25 Speech."
- [26] Nasrallah, "July 15 Speech."
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**Appendix 1****Table 1. Events, Key Words, and Sources**

Event	Key Words	Date and Source of Speeches
2006 War	Resistance, Steadfast, Zionist, Enemy, Victory	July 15, 2006 – Al-Manar TV July 17, 2006 – Al-Manar TV July 20, 2006 – Al-Jazeera July 25, 2006 – Al-Manar TV July 29, 2006 - BBC August 3, 2006 – Al-Manar TV August 9, 2006 - BBC August 12, 2006 - BBC August 14, 2006 – Al-Manar TV Sept 22, 2006 – Al-Manar TV
The Doha Agreement	Self-defense, Gang, Communications, Rafik Airport, Government, Settlement	August 3, 2007 – Al-Alam August 14, 2007 – Al-Alam October 5, 2007 – Al-Manar TV January 15, 2008 – Al-Manar TV May 7, 2008 – Al-Alam May 8, 2008 – Ya-Libnan May 13, 2008 – Al-Manar TV May 26, 2008 – Al-Manar TV May 27, 2008 – Shi'a TV
The 2008 Prisoner Exchange	Victory, Negotiations, Prisoner Swap	September 22, 2006 – Al-Manar TV August 19, 2007 – Al-Manar TV October 16, 2007 - BBC February 7, 2008 – Al-Manar TV May 26, 2008 – Al-Manar TV May 27, 2008 – Shi'a TV July 3, 2008 – Hezbollah Website July 17, 2008 – Iranian Press TV July 22, 2008 - BBC