



Resistance beyond time and space: Hezbollah's media campaigns

By Pete Ajemian

May, 2008. The February 2008 assassination of paramilitary mastermind Imad Mughniyeh and the July War of 2006 presented challenges to Hezbollah's capacity as a military organization.¹ Yet the group has attempted to use its media capabilities to translate the two events into political capital in Lebanon and the wider Arab World. While the reach of Hezbollah's media apparatus has grown with its integration into Internet-based platforms, the group has also become adept in the creation and presentation of its political media content. Hezbollah's media responses to these specific incidents demonstrate how the group has become skilled at framing key episodes of political violence against the backdrop of historical themes that resonate with the group's domestic and regional constituencies.

With a narrative that transcends and conflates time and space, the group's media aim to cultivate Hezbollah's image as being the vanguard of resistance against perceived Israeli and Western domination. In commemorative videos produced by Al Manar in response to Mughniyeh's death, this narrative is largely derived from the group's own unique political culture of militancy and Shiism, while aspects of the group's prolific media response to the July War of 2006 also incorporate broader nostalgic themes of pan-Arabism. Thus, the group has sought to utilize these events to further reinforce its image of defiance by tapping into themes of revisionism that have timeless currency with its local Shia and greater Arab audiences.

The development of Hezbollah's media apparatus

Hezbollah's use of websites as a platform for streaming audio, videos, articles and RSS feeds means that the group is no exception to the wider wave of media format convergence that has accompanied the rise of the internet.ⁱⁱ This technological enhancement in media has corresponded with Hezbollah's gradual expansion of its political reach from a Lebanese resistance organization to an Arab nationalist movement with a regional agenda.ⁱⁱⁱ

Between its inception in the mid 1980's and the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah's media apparatus grew from an unlicensed radio station and newspapers, into several websites and the satellite station Al Manar which had existed as a terrestrial broadcaster since 1991.^{iv} Since the 2006 conflict, the group's Internet presence has expanded to over fifteen affiliated websites.^v Before its embrace of new media Hezbollah initially relied on journals to propagate its message. Its first journal, *Al Ahd*, was founded in the mid 1980s and was soon followed by other weekly journals.^{vi} Print media was followed by three radio stations, which were eventually eclipsed by Al Manar.^{vii} More recent advancements in internet technology and production capabilities have allowed for the integration of Nour Radio, Al Manar and its print media through many of the group's websites,^{viii} providing a convergent platform to what was already a robust media presence.

The political goals of Hezbollah's media program have also evolved over the years. After Al Manar's inception in 1991, the station enabled Hezbollah to mobilize its local Shia constituency and to erode Israeli support for the occupation of south Lebanon.^{ix} Hezbollah also aimed to nationalize its efforts by using its media outlets to appeal to other Lebanese sectarian groups.^x The airing of combat on the station and websites amplified the effects of Hezbollah's attrition campaign against the IDF by broadcasting Israel's battlefield losses on the Internet and television, thus tilting Israeli public opinion towards withdrawal from south Lebanon.^{xi}

With the broadening of Hezbollah's constituency in the Arab world, Al Manar's broadcasts have evolved in reaction to trends within the local, regional and international contexts.^{xii} The increase in Al Manar's broadcast capability from a local TV station to an international satellite station in May of 2000 coincided with Israel's withdrawal from

south Lebanon.^{xiii} During the second Palestinian Intifada in the fall of 2000, Hezbollah sought to capitalize on Al Manar for its newfound regional agenda by declaring that it would provide direct assistance to the Palestinian resistance.^{xiv} The goals of Al Manar's coverage of the Intifada were to bring live coverage of the conflict to Arab households around the world, mobilize widespread support for resistance efforts and, not least, to link Palestinian struggles against Israel with Hezbollah's own success against the occupation of south Lebanon.^{xv}

Subsequently, Al Manar's popularity amongst the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories has come to rival that of Al Jazeera.^{xvi} This enabled Hezbollah to co-opt the Palestinian struggle into its media campaign with Al Manar producing several dramatic documentaries depicting the daily suffering of Palestinians at the hand of the Israelis, including the torturing of Palestinian prisoners.^{xvii} Beyond Palestinians, however, Al Manar has only managed to reach out to a niche audience compared to stations like Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya.^{xviii}

Hezbollah's integration of its media with internet technology in recent years has enhanced its ability to reach multiple constituencies.^{xix} This is because the presentation of media through convergent platforms allows individuals to access a wide reservoir of content from anywhere at any time, thereby increasing the accessibility of the group's media.^{xx} Additionally, the gradual integration of Hezbollah's media into platforms such as YouTube also suggest that structural factors inherent to new media convergence, namely the overlap of networks and media spheres, are also facilitating this process.^{xxi}

Yet while internet technology has broadened the reach of an already robust media apparatus, scope alone is not sufficient to significantly boost the political utility of Hezbollah's media. The true cornerstone of Hezbollah's media strategy is content which frames political violence within a narrative that has currency with both domestic and regional audiences – that of resistance. I will argue that by integrating contemporary events with historical images, sounds and discourses of resistance derived from Shia Islam and pan-Arabism, Hezbollah has capitalized on political violence to advance its political and military goals.

‘Resistance’ as a timeless narrative

Hezbollah has developed politically in both domestic and regional terms since its formative years as an armed resistance to Israel’s occupation of south Lebanon in the 1980s and 90s. As the group has gradually been integrated into mainstream Lebanese politics since entering the parliamentary process in 1992, it has attained influence as a regional player by portraying itself as a pan-Arab resistance, and increasingly so after Israel’s withdrawal in 2000.^{xxii} While Hezbollah’s early rhetoric emphasized its roots within Lebanon’s Shia constituency, much of the group’s discourse since the second Palestinian Intifada has contained both Arab nationalist overtones and Lebanese proto-nationalism.^{xxiii} Subsequently, the group’s political platform has broadened, allowing it to adapt to the shifting landscape of regional politics.^{xxiv}

Hezbollah has consistently positioned itself as a force resisting the actions of Israel and the superpowers, to which they attribute the subjugation and oppression of the Third World.^{xxv} Accordingly, Hezbollah’s discourse remains constructed around the notion of resistance that largely stems from its fight against the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanese territory. This ideal of defiance against oppressive forces has remained central to Hezbollah’s self-proclaimed mission even after the Israeli withdrawal.^{xxvi} The group has adopted Shebaa Farms and other territorial disputes along the Lebanese-Syrian border into its list of grievances to maintain the pretext for armed resistance since Israel’s military presence inside Lebanon has all but vanished.^{xxvii} But beyond the territorial disputes, the foundations of Hezbollah’s revisionism can be traced to its Shia-influenced political culture where militancy and religiosity are closely interlinked.

Defiance of oppression in Shia doctrine is an ideal that transcends both time and space as embodied in the story of the death of Imam Hussein Ibn Ali in 680 AD at Karbala. According to Shia interpretations, when given the choice of either submitting to the demands of then Ummayyad Caliph Yazid and his army at Karbala, or resisting and suffering imminent death, Hussein chose to fight, even after the loss of his companions and family to Yazid’s army.^{xxviii} As a result of his sacrifice, a sense of righteousness is

attributed to those who follow in the footsteps of those martyred at Karbala and partake in the symbolic struggle for justice against oppression.^{xxix} Slogans derived from the story of Karbala that have become definitive of Shia political Islam such as, “every day is Ashoura and every land is Karbala” and “humiliation is far from us,” suggest that the political ideal of resistance is also an expression of faith that transcends both time and space.^{xxx}

The martyrdom of Imam Hussein at Karbala is a reference point around which Hezbollah has framed contemporary issues and events. For example, in his elegy to former Secretary General ‘Abbas al-Mussawi in February of 1992, current Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah compared the assassination of Mussawi and members of his family to that of Hussein and his family at Karbala stating, “As if your bombed and destroyed cortege were Hussein’s tents burning in the desert, as if you were that same Hussein, the commander on the battlefield, Hussein the rebel in the face of oppression and despotism... you, my master, epitomize all that Karbala represented.”^{xxxi} More recently, videos broadcast on Al Manar and websites in commemoration of Mughniyeh’s death use imagery from Karbala, where Mughniyeh is referred to as a “Knight of Hussein” arriving on his horse from Karbala to join previous high-profile Hezbollah martyrs in paradise.^{xxxii}

The framing of resistance in this manner extends to both Hezbollah’s domestic and regional dealings. For example, during his speech to supporters on Ashoura of 2008, Nasrallah referred to Karbala as an eternal lesson in history, applying it to current domestic and regional political challenges.^{xxxiii} He declared that the threat posed by the U.S. and Israel to Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon was like what Hussein faced at Karbala against the followers of Yazid. According to Nasrallah, the Lebanese and the region, like Hussein, find themselves between two choices: to fight and confront the enemy or to give in and surrender to their demands. He asserted their response to this demand today is the same as that of Hussein on the field of Karbala, and as it was in response to the Israeli incursions in 1982 and 2006, “*Heyhat mina azzila*”, or humiliation is far from us.^{xxxiv}

[Video: Nasrallah’s speech from the day of Ashoura - January 19, 2008].

Accordingly, the juxtaposition of the imagery and language of Karbala with that of the

modern Hezbollah resistance is evident in the some of the group's media. For example see: [\[Video: Karbala then and now: Hayat mina zila\]](#)

In addition to being a reference point for understanding the religious aspects of Hezbollah's defiance, Karbala has helped shape a political culture of resistance that often relies upon framing contemporary events against a backdrop of images, messages and lessons from the past. This technique has been applied to the group's media efforts that aim to preserve and advance its image of resistance at the organizational and regional levels.

Imad Mughniyeh joins the caravan of martyrs^{xxxv}

Hezbollah's media inspired by the death of Imad Mughniyeh show how the group has employed its resistance media to maintain its image of defiance in the eyes of its predominantly Lebanese Shia support base. Indeed, the mystery surrounding Mughniyeh's life and activities provided a blank slate for Hezbollah's media apparatus to mold the myth of Mughniyeh through ceremony, discourse and imagery that frames his death, not as a defeat, but as an omen of victory that is part of a greater history of defiance. This builds on narratives of Hezbollah as a movement based on the sacrifice of martyrs, and the imagery and language that embody the group's form of political Shia Islam and revisionist militancy.

Imad Mughniyeh, a man whose life remained a mystery following his implication in several terrorist attacks during the 1980s and 1990s, is now being celebrated as "The Backbone of the Resistance" who commanded successful military campaigns for Hezbollah in the July War of 2006 and operations that led to an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000.^{xxxvi} Accordingly, his place within the history of the organization has been equated to the group's founding fathers: Spiritual leader Sheikh Ragheb Harb and the group's first Secretary General 'Abbas al-Mussawi.^{xxxvii} Mughniyah's image has subsequently been framed alongside these two previously assassinated leaders, and has been described by some as joining the caravan of these martyrs.^{xxxviii}

One factor that has facilitated this depiction of Mughniyeh is the fact that his death came shortly before Hezbollah's own Islamic Resistance Week holiday. Held in

February, Islamic Resistance Week is when Hezbollah mourns its previous founding leaders: spiritual guide Sheikh Ragheb Harb and former Secretary General ‘Abbas al-Mussawi, both of whom were assassinated by Israel.^{xxxix} While ceremonies commemorating this week have traditionally taken place on February 16th, the date of Harb and Mussawi’s assassinations in 1984 and 1992, this year the event was held on the 22nd to apparently accommodate Mughniyeh’s inclusion into the festivities.^{xl} Al Manar’s coverage of the ceremony closing Islamic Resistance Week, dubbed the “The Omen of the Decisive Victory,” in reference to Mughniyeh’s death, best exemplifies the thematic elements of Hezbollah’s resistance culture. In addition to the imagery depicting Mughniyeh as one of a line of martyrs,^{xli} Nasrallah in his speech described Mughniyeh as constituting a key stage of the resistance that followed previous stages embodied by Harb and al-Mussawi. Banners and artwork representing a lineage of martyrs, from Harb to Mughniyeh, were complimented with speeches by the sons of the martyrs, representing the link between the current members of the resistance and the departed.

Perhaps most dramatic was the appearance of Imad Mughniyeh’s alleged son, Jihad, who addressed the crowd dressed in military garb. A teenager, Jihad stated that this was the first time that he has publicly appeared as the son of Mughniyeh. He then addressed Nasrallah stating, “By your name oh father, I say to my father of the martyrs his eminence the Secretary General of Hezbollah, we are with you, we are your children as all children of the martyrs we go along with you wherever you go we will not leave the march, we will not leave our weapons... I am at your service oh Nasrallah!”^{xlii} The physical demonstration of the resistance maintaining its course would later appear in the group’s media.

The themes that underscored the Islamic Resistance Week ceremony and Mughniyeh’s funeral service are illustrated in mini-documentaries and video clips aired by Al Manar between programs. One thirty-minute program entitled, *Bushra al-Nasr*, or “The Omen of Victory,” explains the significance of the month of February to Hezbollah’s struggle against Israel.^{xliii} In particular it reminds the viewer how the assassinations of Sheikh Ragheb Harb and ‘Abbas al-Mussawi were followed by revenge attacks in the month of February. According to the narrator, this includes the capturing of two Israeli soldiers in 1986, the collision of two Israeli helicopters in 1997 and the 1999

assassination of IDF General Erez Gerstein. After mentioning Mughniyeh's death in February of 2008, the viewer then hears an excerpt of Hassan Nasrallah's speech at Mughniyeh's funeral stating how the shedding of Mughniyeh's blood will lead to the eradication of the state of Israel, just as the blood of Harb and Mussawi led to previous Israeli defeats. Thus, the narrative of resistance as a timeless struggle is evoked by integrating the images and sounds associated with Mughniyeh's death with those of Hezbollah's other leaders. Allusions to coming retaliatory strikes project this narrative into the future.

Other commemorative clips follow this narrative and demonstrate Al Manar's dexterity in interlinking lyrical and visual themes. A short music video entitled "They will not sway us..."^{xliv} depicts Mughniyeh as a representative of a greater ongoing struggle, which Hezbollah will not to be swayed from. The message is enhanced by synchronization between the lyrics and imagery in the video. The song's chorus, which states that Hezbollah's course and determination will never be abandoned, corresponds with stock footage of Mussawi and Harb and shots of Hezbollah fighters and supporters. This is followed by the lyrics, "we are all Imad... we are all Radwan," at which point the image of Mughniyeh is seen against the backdrop of Hezbollah supporters and soldiers saluting.^{xlv} **[Video: They will not sway us [from our course... our determination]]**

Longer video segments commemorating Mughniyeh often present the visual of funeral processions of coffins draped in Hezbollah flags spliced or superimposed with scenes of Hezbollah fighters marching forward in the field, thus maintaining the image of resistance as an ongoing struggle. One such clip entitled, "We swear we will not let them sleep" builds on the idea of Mughniyeh's death being part of an ongoing battle that will not be abandoned, and stresses the significance of martyrdom and sacrifice to the advancement of the resistance.^{xlvi} Here Mughniyeh is referred to as the military planner of the resistance and the leader of every martyr and resistance fighter. He is described as among the greatest of men, and as one who has joined the ranks of Harb and al-Mussawi among the caravan of martyrs. The narrator proclaims that the men of Hezbollah are "lovers of resistance and martyrdom," and reminds the viewer that the spirit cannot die, and in fact, it is martyrdom of leaders that brings life to movements and nations. **[Video: We swear we won't let them sleep]**

Other videos that feature intricate eulogies to Mughniyeh utilize similar imagery but go farther to portray Hezbollah's own militancy in terminology more specific to Shia Islam.^{xlvii} This is accomplished by linking Mughniyeh to the epic of Karbala with imagery and language derived from the story along with modern day depictions of the Hezbollah resistance. In "Radwan...Paradise blooms with his [arrival]," Mughniyeh is referred to as a rider on Hussein's horse from Karbala coming to join the other leaders of the caravan in paradise, namely Sheikh Ragheb Harb and 'Abbas al-Mussawi.^{xlviii} This is accompanied by imagery taken from the epic, such as the narrator claiming that he can hear the neighing of a horse returning from the Euphrates river, a reference to the actions of Hussein's brother 'Abbas at Karbala. This is followed by contemporary shots of Hezbollah fighters appearing both vigilant and pious, in prayer and poised for battle.

[Video: Radwan... Paradise blooms with his [arrival]]

Similarly, in "You have dismounted oh knight of Hussein," Mughniyeh is not only identified as the commander of all those engaged in the resistance, but also as a departing knight of Hussein whose "sword illuminated a revolution." Further developing the symbolic value of a knight on his steed, the narrator states that Mughniyeh has dismounted from "the saddle of triumph to retire to the saddle of martyrdom." The eulogy concludes with the narrator addressing Mughniyeh stating, "Here [in] *Dahyieh*, her heart beats with its longing to meet [you] in the ceremonies bidding [you] farewell."^{xlix} Thus, as a character Mughniyeh is used to bring together the imagery of Karbala with that of Hezbollah's support base in south Beirut. **[Video: You have dismounted oh Knight of Hussein]**

Al Manar's response to Mughniyeh's assassination demonstrates that, within a relatively short amount of time, it has been able to execute a prolific media campaign that utilizes intricate themes and presentations of Mughniyeh's life, death, and newfound importance to reinforce the group's greater narrative of resistance. This integration of past and present, then, is a key technique for suggesting that Mughniyeh's sudden death is in fact a harbinger of impending victory. While Hezbollah's media use a narrative derived from its own political culture to maintain its image in the eyes of its Lebanese constituency, aspects of the group's media response to the July War of 2006 also appeal to a broader historical narrative of Arab defiance aimed at a wider Arab audience.

The July War of 2006: “The Victory of the Arabs”^l

While much of Hezbollah’s media campaign surrounding the July War of 2006 targeted its local constituency by portraying itself as the ‘protectors’ of all Lebanon,^{li} perhaps the most interesting development surrounding the conflict was the group’s efforts to reach a broader Arab audience. This was done by framing and celebrating the conflict as an Arab victory, and interweaving images of Hezbollah’s armed resistance with nostalgic sounds and images of Arab nationalism. A significant part of Hezbollah’s media effort in the aftermath of the war was aimed at maintaining the momentum of a media campaign that galvanized audiences from across the Arab world, allowing the group to garner support beyond its domestic Shia constituency.^{lii} Political outcomes, such as how public support in the region for Hezbollah forced Saudi Arabia and the Gulf regimes into reversing their stances on the group’s actions, provided incentive to maintain this image.^{liii}

Playing upon venerable pan-Arab themes, Al Manar repeatedly aired music videos featuring montages of Hezbollah fighters in action synchronized to the original recordings of Nasserist anthems from the 1950s and 60s such as, “Keep the Weapons Ready”^{liv} and “God is Great.”^{lv} Sung by the legendary Egyptian singer Abdel Halim Hafez in the 1960s, “Keep the Weapons Ready” calls on an audience of revolutionaries to remain steadfast and ready with their weapons – day and night – against the constant threat of a ‘treacherous enemy.’ Throughout the video, Hezbollah soldiers are shown preparing their weapons and taking their positions, concluding with a pair of soldiers manning an anti-aircraft gun awaiting an enemy air attack. Thus, Hezbollah’s rendition combines images of its own vigilance against a lyrical backdrop that harkens back to the days of Egyptian-led Pan Arabism. [\[Video: Keep the Weapons Ready!\]](#)

The anthem “God is Great,” made famous during the Suez Crisis of 1956,^{lvi} contains similar language and imagery declaring that God is one who comes to the aid of the oppressed and his power is greater than the “deceit of the aggressors” and their weapons.^{lvii} In Al Manar’s video adaptation of the anthem, Hezbollah fighters are first depicted parading in sequence to the beat and are then shown in action firing rockets and

engaging the ‘enemy.’^{lviii} This is followed by images of wounded Israeli soldiers being carried away from battle. Over an instrumental break in the music, one sees video footage of a speech made by Hassan Nasrallah following Israel’s withdrawal from south Lebanon in May of 2000 stating, “[we] confirm here anew that here blood triumphs over the sword, and has indeed triumphed over the sword and defeated it. Here too, blood has broken the chains that bind us, and has humiliated despots and arrogant men.”^{lix} Here we see a figurative and literal integration of a pivotal moment in Hezbollah’s history into a greater historical narrative of Arab resistance. [\[Video: God is Great\]](#)

The response of Palestinian writer Rashad Abu Shawar to this aspect of Al Manar’s wartime media campaign suggests that this depiction of the conflict resonated throughout a region that has historically been on the receiving end of defeat. In an editorial for the Pan Arab *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* daily following the conflict, Abu Shawar described how Al Manar’s use of these anthems spoke to a collective Arab sentiment and memory, and intensified Arab conviction in the belief that Lebanon represented the “first line of defense” of a common nation against a common enemy.^{lx} In contrast to the July War, he suggests that previous setbacks for Israel during the Yom Kippur War of ’73 and its withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 were insufficient to discourage what he describes as Israeli oppression, arrogance and greed for Arab territory. He argues that Hezbollah’s armed vigilance – embodied by “Keep the Weapons Ready!” – is what enabled them to defeat the ‘enemy’. Abu Shawar’s commentary demonstrates how, in the aftermath of its ‘victory,’ Hezbollah was presented with an opportunity to further build upon its Arabist credentials.

Continuing with this theme, Al Manar has also produced an hour-long program entitled “A Resistance speaking to the Resistance from an Egyptian point of view.”^{lxi} The documentary frames the July War as an Arab triumph by having individuals within Egyptian society reflect upon and praise the group’s proclaimed victory. It begins with interviews with Egyptian leaders and fighters from the 1973 Yom Kippur War set against the backdrop of Suez City, a key port city sought by the IDF in its counterattack against Egyptian forces in the conflict.^{lxii} Sheikh Hafiz Salama, a leader of the popular resistance in Suez City at that time, praises Hezbollah’s unprecedented military achievements during the war after boasting of his own resistance’s alleged refusal to accept then

General Ariel Sharon's demands for their surrender at the time of the IDF's siege of the city. Fighters that partook in the city's defense then recount their ability to withstand an attack from a much larger Israeli force, and praise Hezbollah's 2006 victory whereby one of the men states that the Lebanese force taught Israel "a lesson that it will never forget." Later news coverage of demonstrations in Egypt from the time of the war is shown, with people praising the accomplishments of Hezbollah and declaring them their brothers, and pledging their solidarity to Hassan Nasrallah and Hezbollah.^{lxiii} This is followed by more recent interviews with residents and religious figures of the Imam Hussein neighborhood in Cairo, and Egyptian and Syrian film and television personalities, such as Raghda and Samih al-Sariti, all giving similar commentary. [\[Video: A Resistance Speaking to the Resistance from an Egyptian Point of View\]](#)

Hezbollah's desire to maintain this image as the leader of Arab resistance well after the end of the conflict is apparent in a music video produced by Al Manar to celebrate the first anniversary of the July War entitled, "The Victory of the Arabs."^{lxiv} The video, featuring music performed by the Hezbollah-inspired group *Firqat al-Wilaya*,^{lxv} involved an extensive production period lasting several months.^{lxvi} Actors from Syria, Lebanon and Egypt were involved with the project that was filmed in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Qatar. Representative of the director's intention to portray an Arab celebration of Hezbollah's victory, set designs and backdrops used for the video included those depicting the Syrian front during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Pyramids and the Nile of Egypt, as well as landmarks in Lebanon.^{lxvii} The video begins with Nasrallah referring to the group's victory during the July War stating, "As I have always promised you victory, I promise you victory anew,"^{lxviii} which is followed by scenes of men, women, and children singing along to the music, and carrying the flags of various Arab states and holding up pictures of Nasrallah. [\[Video: The Victory of the Arabs\]](#)

This post-conflict media effort has been aided by a significant upgrade in the internet capabilities of Hezbollah, including the addition of new websites in the wake of the conflict.^{lxix} Much of the content that appeared during the war and produced in its aftermath has since been integrated into Hezbollah's newer and most popular websites, whose audiences are located primarily in other Arab states.^{lxx} Much of this content has also appeared on YouTube as well. Overall, much of Hezbollah's media effort in the

aftermath of the July War can be seen as a way for Hezbollah to capitalize upon its increased credibility in the Arab world as a result of its military victory. The group has used its transnational satellite and online media outlets to project pan-Arab styled materials in an effort to boost its appeal to the wider Arab audience.^{lxxi} Hezbollah's fusion of historic sounds and images of the Arab nationalism with their resistance narrative reflects the group's development into a regional political actor.

Conclusion

Hezbollah's media responses to the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh and the July War of 2006 illustrate the group's desire to advance its image as the vanguard of resistance. The various framings of these two events by Hezbollah's media demonstrate a flexibility that at times portrays the group as a pan-Arab resistance organization, while at others emphasizes the group's Lebanese Shia history and political culture. The increasing sophistication in situating incidents of political violence within narratives that have domestic or regional political currency is the most significant qualitative achievement of Hezbollah's resistance media to date. Online distribution, whether on Hezbollah-run websites or hosts such as YouTube, has further enhanced the reach of content made by Al Manar's production team. While the assassination of Mughniyeh and Israel's campaign against the group in the July War of 2006 aimed to diminish Hezbollah as a military threat, the group is expanding its ability to tailor its message to various audiences, deliver it on a wider scale, and turn military setbacks into propaganda victories.

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ⁱ Regarding Mughniyeh's assassination, note that Israel has so far denied partaking in the act, despite Hezbollah's accusing it of undertaking the operation. Furthermore, the results of a Syrian-led investigation into the matter have yet to be disclosed. For more on this and Imad Mughniyeh see, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7242383.stm, and http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7246715.stm.

ⁱⁱ Rohozinski, Rafal, "Bullets to Bytes: Reflections on ICTs and 'Local' Conflict", in R., Latham (ed.), *Bombs and bandwidth: the emerging relationship between Information Technology and security*, New York: New Press, 2003, pg. 222. The best examples of this in the group's websites are www.wa3ad.org and www.bintjbeil.org. These websites feature various print media, links to *Al Nour* streaming radio, links to *Al Manar* streaming satellite television, various audio/video libraries, and RSS feeds.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dallal, Jenine Abboushi, "Hizbullah's Virtual Civil Society," *Television & New Media*, Vol. 2 No. 4, November 2001, pg. 367.

^{iv} Wehrey, Frederic, "A Clash of Wills: Hizbullah's psychological Campaign Against Israel in South Lebanon", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 13, No. 3. (Autumn 2002), pg. 65.

^v See, "The Internet as a battleground used by the terrorist organizations: How Hezbollah and Hamas exploit the Internet in the battle for the hearts and minds, and how to combat them'," *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at (IICC)*, 1 August 2007, pg. 4.

^{vi} For example see the journal *Al-Intiqad* available online at: <http://www.alintiqad.com/>.

^{vii} Schleifer, Ron, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2006, pg.13.

^{viii} For example see www.wa3ad.org. This website was created after the outbreak of the July War of 2006 on 21 July 2006 according to <http://www.alexa.com/data/details/main?q=&url=www.wa3ad.org>, accessed July 31, 2007.

^{ix} Wehrey, pg. 65.

^x Ibid. pp. 53, 58.

^{xi} See, Ibid, pp. 64-66. Note that Al Manar also broadcasted in Hebrew.

^{xii} Baylouny, Anne Marie, "Al-Manar and Alhurra: Competing Satellite Station and Ideologies," *CSRC discussion paper 05/49*, September 2005, pg. 6.

^{xiii} Ibid, pg. 4.

^{xiv} Harik, pg. 161.

^{xv} Ibid., pg. 160.

^{xvi} Wehrey, pg. 69.

^{xvii} Schleifer, pg. 15.

^{xviii} Lynch, Marc, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, pg. 45.

^{xix} See, "The Internet as a battleground used by the terrorist organizations: How Hezbollah and Hamas exploit the Internet in the battle for the hearts and minds, and how to combat them'," *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at (IICC)*, August 1, 2007, pg. 4.

^{xx} See, Berenger, Ralph D., "Introduction: War in Cyberspace", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12 (2006), pg. 180.

^{xxi} See, Anderson, Jon W., "Convergence, Next Phase of the Information Revolution," *Working Papers on New Media & Information Technology (NMIT) in the Middle East*, 2006, pg. 5, Accessed from: http://nmit.georgetown.edu/papers/recon_anderson.htm, May 20, 2007.

^{xxii} For Hezbollah's integration into Lebanese politics see, Harik, Judith Palmer, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2004, pg. 47. For Hezbollah's self-portrayal as a Pan-Arab resistance see, Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal, *Hizb'ullah: Politics & Religion*, London: Seattle; Pluto Press, 2002, pg. 78.

^{xxiii} For Hezbollah's initial anti-confessional stance see, Harb, M. and Leenders, R., "Know thy enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2005, pg. 179. For Hezbollah's Lebanese Shia support base see, Norton, Augustus Richard, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007, pg. 33. For the group's Arab nationalist overtones and Lebanese nationalism see, Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal, pp. 78, 82.

^{xxiv} Norton, pg. 45.

^{xxv} Ibid., pg. 38.

^{xxvi} Harb, and Leenders, pp. 180-181.

^{xxvii} For more information on the issue of Shebaa Farms and other territorial disputes see, Norton, Augustus Richard, "The Role of Hezbollah in Domestic Lebanese Politics", *International Spectator*, 42:4, 2007, pp. 476-9.

^{xxviii} For a detailed account of this story see, Aslan, Reza, *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, Random House, 2005, Ch. 7.

^{xxix} See, *Ibid*, pg. 178. Note that some argue that the concept of Hussein embodying defiance gained political currency during the Iranian revolution. For analysis on this see, Aysha, Emad El-Din, "Foucault's Iran and Islamic Identity Politics Beyond Civilian Clashes, External and Internal", *International Studies Perspectives*, (2006) 7, pg. 382.

^{xxx} The slogan "every day is Ashoura and every land is Karbala" was first made popular during the Iranian Revolution. See, Poulson, Stephen C., *Social Movements in Twentieth-century Iran: Culture, Ideology, and Mobilizing Frameworks*, Lexington Books, 2005, pg. 44. It also appears in coverage of an Ashoura procession in south Beirut (1983) in the Al Manar documentary, "The Proud Suburb", (author's translation), which is accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhPeL0Y_CGw. The slogan *heyhat mina azzila* can be loosely translated as, "Humiliation is far from us". It is believed to have been uttered by Hussein at Karbala when he was asked to submit to Yazid's demands. Thus, in this context it can be seen as representing choosing martyrdom over the humiliation of subservience. The slogan continues to appear to this day written on Hezbollah paraphernalia, and continues to be utilized in the group's discourse and media.

^{xxxi} Translation of Hassan Nasrallah's speech according to Khouri, Ellen, "Elegy for Sayyed 'Abbas Mussawi: February 18, 1992", in N., Noe (ed.), *Voice of Hezbollah: the statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, Verso: London; New York, 2007, pg.52.

^{xxxii} Author's translation of video, "Radwan... Paradise bloom with his [arrival]" accessed from: http://www.almanar.com.lb/Video/HajRedwan/Redwan_Tazhou.wmv. Author's translation of video "You have dismantled oh knight of Hussein", accessed from: <http://www.almanar.com.lb/Video/HajRedwan/TaragaltYaFares.wmv>.

^{xxxiii} Author's translation of Al Manar's coverage of Ashoura entitled, "The Day of Ashoura 1429", accessible from: <http://www.wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=407>.

^{xxxiv} Author's translation. Note that in this context, the term "humiliation" would be the result of subservience and submitting to the 'enemy's' demands as it was for Hussein at Karbala.

^{xxxv} See, Hussein, Muhammad, "El-Hajj Imad Mughniyeh is amongst the caravan of martyred leaders after a quarter century of jihad and resistance", *Al-Intiqad*, February 15, 2008, accessible from: http://www.alintiqad.com/__print.php?filename=200802150943100.

^{xxxvi} See Hezbollah's English translation of Nasrallah's Islamic Resistance Week speech at: <http://english.hizbollah.tv/essaydetails.php?eid=2450&cid=231>. Note that 'backbone' is a derivation of Mughniyeh's first name Imad meaning 'pillar'. It can also mean 'general' in a military context.

^{xxxvii} Author's translation of, "The Sayed Nasrallah swears to the leader Mughniyeh: Your blood will not go in vain", *Al Manar*, February 22, 2008, accessed from: <http://www.wa3ad.org/index.php?show=news&action=print&id=17443>.

^{xxxviii} See, Hussein.

^{xxxix} For more detail on Islamic Resistance Week see Author's translation of, Ameen, Manhal, "In the week of the Resistance: some of the two epics of Harb and Mussawi", *Al-Akhbar*, February 21, 2008, accessible from: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/ar/node/64487/print>.

^{xl} For coverage of previous Islamic Resistance Week ceremonies see, "Sayed 'Abbas al-Mussawi's speech during Islamic Resistance Week and on the martyrdom of Sheikh Ragheb Harb in Sahmar 2-16-1991", accessible from: http://www.moqawama.org/_leabbaskhitab.php?filename=200511261216334. Also see video archive covering last year's Islamic Resistance Week on February 16, 2007, "The speech of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah in the Islamic Resistance Week and the anniversary of the martyrdom of General Secretary 'Abbas al-Mussawi and the Shiekh of the Martyrs Ragheb Harb in audio and video", accessible from: <http://www.shiaweb.org/hizbulla/video/moqawama/index.html>.

^{xli} For example, see preceremonial coverage in *Al Intiqad* at: <http://www.alintiqad.com/bar/newsdetails.php?id=123767>.

^{xlii} Author's translation, "The statements of the families of the martyred leaders in the festival pledging allegiance to the martyrs", *www.wa3ad.org*, February 22, 2008, accessible from: <http://www.wa3ad.org/index.php?show=news&action=print&id=17449>. Al Manar's coverage of the event

can be seen at, <http://www.wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=419>. Video footage of Jihad Mughniyeh's speech from the event is also accessible from:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9v6WniPGvs>.

^{xliii} Author's translation, Al Manar satellite broadcast via streaming video from:

<http://www.bintjbeil.org/plusweb/indexmanar.htm>, February 28, 2008, 1820 EDT. This short documentary, which first aired on February 27, 2008 at 21:30 (EEST), was also reported on by *As-Safir* daily. See, "'The Omen of Victory' on 'Al Manar'", *As-Safir*, February 27, 2008, accessible from:

<http://www.assafir.com/Windows/ArticlePrintFriendly.aspx?EditionId=874&ChannelId=19741&ArticleId=2993>.

^{xliiv} Video accessible from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8zYhNsqtTU>. The music is performed by the Hezbollah-inspired musical group *Firqat al-Wilaya*. The music from this segment also appears as part of an album comprised of songs commemorating Mughniyeh available for download at:

<http://www.wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=423>.

^{xliv} "Radwan" is part of the affectionate alias, "El-Hajj Radwan", that was bestowed upon Imad Mughniyah.

^{xlvi} Author's translation of video first viewed on Al Manar via internet feed at:

http://wmtvs.com/asx/live_TV_online_59498.asx, February 20, 2008 at 1326 EDT. It is accessible at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VA3trVqTQTE&feature=related>.

^{xlvii} Author's translation of video, "Radwan... Paradise bloom with his [arrival]" accessed from:

http://www.almanar.com.lb/Video/HajRedwan/Redwan_Tazhou.wmv. Author's translation of video "You have dismounted oh knight of Hussein", accessed from:

<http://www.almanar.com.lb/Video/HajRedwan/TaragaltYaFares.wmv>. Also available on YouTube at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0_g8FQ7TU4.

^{xlviii} Note that this video was produced within hours of Mughniyeh's death. Author's translation of an excerpt from Al Manar coverage posted on YouTube on February 13, 2008. View the video starting at (4:39), accessible from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5Sn-emr934&feature=related>.

^{xlix} *Dahyieh*, which translates literally as "suburb", are the southern suburbs of Beirut known for being Hezbollah's primary support base in the area.

¹ This is the title of a music video produced by Al Manar in celebration of the first anniversary of the July War commemorating the 'victory' as one on behalf the entire Arab world. A version can be viewed online at: <http://wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=364>.

ⁱⁱ For example, one clip that Al Manar aired stated that, "The protection of the resistance is the protection of Lebanon", author's translation, viewed at <http://www.wa3ad.org/live-manar.html>, August 8, 2006.

Another clip that aired in the conflicts aftermath stated, "we are the liberation of Shebaa Farms, Talal Kafr Shuba, and every inch of land in our beloved Lebanon", author's translation, viewed at <http://www.wa3ad.org/live-manar.html>, August 20, 2006.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, Pintak, Lawrence, "Reporting a Revolution: The Changing Arab Media Landscape", *Arab Media & Society*, (February 2007), pg. 3.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{liv} Author's translation of video footage first viewed online during Al Manar live web broadcast at

<http://www.wa3ad.org/live-manar.html>, August 21, 2006. It is available for download at:

http://www.wa3ad.org/video/anasheed/5alli_ilsila7_9a7i.wmv. Note a literal translation of the title would be "Keep the Weapons Awake". Both of these videos are also available on YouTube. For "Keep the Weapons Ready", see, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NROft02SpzE&feature=related>, and for "God is Great" see, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pONbPfccAaY>.

^{lv} See, Abu Shawar, Rashad, "Keep the Weapons Ready", *Al Quds Al Arabi*, August 23, 2006, accessible from: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/index.asp?fname=2006/08/08-23/z19.htm&storytitle=ff%CE%E1%F8%ED%20%C7%E1%D3%E1%C7%CD%20%D5%C7%CD%Edff>

f. Al Manar's version of the video "God is Great" is accessible from:

http://www.wa3ad.org/video/anasheed/allah_akbar.wmv.

^{lvi} Ibid.

^{lvii} Author's translation.

^{lviii} For sample translation of this anthem see, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahu_Akbar_%28anthem%29.

^{lix} Translation of Hassan Nasrallah's speech on May 26, 2000 according to Khouri, Ellen, "Victory", in N., Noe (ed.), *Voice of Hezbollah: the statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, Verso: London; New York, pg. 233.

^{lx} Author's translation of Abu Shawar.

^{lxi} Author's translation of video accessed from:

<http://wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=368>, August 5, 2007.

^{lxii} For more on combat in Suez City see, Jordan, Maj. Michael C., "The 1973 Arab-Israel War: Arab Policies, Strategies, and Campaigns", Marine Corps University Command and Staff College, 1997, accessible from: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1997/Jordan.htm>.

^{lxiii} Author's translation of video. "A Resistance Speaks to the Resistance from an Egyptian Point of View".

^{lxiv} Author's translation of video that originally aired on Al Manar on July 20, 2007. Note that *nasr* in its Arabic title, *Nasr al-Arab*, could be interpreted as having two meanings. Literally it means victory, but it can also be seen as a play on the first part of Hassan Nasrallah's last name, and thus emulating his status as an Arab leader. The video was accessed from:

<http://wa3ad.org/index.php?show=sounds&action=play&id=364>, August 4, 2007.

^{lxv} The group's website can be seen at: www.welaya-hlb.com.

^{lxvi} Qubaysi, Fatin, "'The Victory of the Arabs' Al Manar's second clip for the anniversary of the oppression[of 2006]", *As-Safir*, January 31, 2007, accessible from:

<http://www.assafir.com/Windows/ArticlePrintFriendly.aspx?EditionId=703&ChannelId=15586&ArticleId=3324>.

^{lxvii} See, Ibid. Also see Al Manar's documentary on the project accessible from: <http://www.welaya-hlb.com/video/naser.wmv>.

^{lxviii} Author's translation.

^{lxix} "The Internet as a battleground used by the terrorist organizations...", *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at (IICC)*, pg. 4.

^{lxx} Based upon data on www.wa3ad.org, and www.almanar.lb.com from,

http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=www.wa3ad.org, and

http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=www.almanar.com.lb, accessed July 31, 2007.

^{lxxi} See, the role of multiple channels of communication in soft power in, Nye, Joseph S. Jr., "The Information Revolution and Soft Power", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2002, pg. 70.