



Nasrallah and the compromise and rehabilitation of Hizbullah's reputation

By David Wilmsen

January, 2009. A speech by Hizbullah Secretary General Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah is always an event. In Lebanon's sectarian media environment, newspapers and television stations reflect the views of the religious factions and political parties to which their owners belong. Sectarian considerations affect which news is reported and, generally, speeches of most leaders are broadcast only when the message is convenient to a particular station's agenda. Yet every station in Lebanon carries Nasrallah's speeches live, and every newspaper reports his words, emphasizing this or that point depending upon their stance toward him or his party. Not all Lebanese are in his thrall, but Hizbullah's prodigious military capabilities and growing power within the country's political system means that Nasrallah's words bear more portent than anyone else's for the future of the country—both immediate and long term.

The stance that any particular media outlet expresses or person adopts often maps the political factions in the country. Attitudes run from ecstatic support for Nasrallah and Hizbullah to the barest tolerance for and the most meager acknowledgement of any contribution that he or his party might offer the state. These attitudes, especially at the ends of the spectrum, also reflect sectarian affiliations in rough outline, with Hizbullah members and supporters, mostly Shiite, displaying the greatest enthusiasm and Maronite nationalists, who are only willing to make alliances with Muslim parties out of pure convenience,¹ voicing open skepticism about the party and its aspirations.

Between the two extremes are some who, recognizing the demographic realities of the sectarian balance in Lebanon, have decided that the better part of valor lies in alliance with Hizbullah as representatives of the largest single bloc amongst all confessions.² Others are alarmed at the rise of an overtly religious political party; that Hizbullah represents a faction that has generally comprised the underclass in Lebanon makes the idea all the more unpalatable. In this middle range of opinions the sectarian lines are somewhat blurred. Sunni factions are generally uncomfortable with the Islamic credentials of Hizbullah, and so are some of the Druze; meanwhile a fair percentage of Christians see the inevitable and recognize the need to make their peace with the dominant Shiite party. Those uncomfortable with the idea of Shiite ascension are generally referred to as the March 14th movement, named after the huge anti-Syrian demonstrations that broke out in Beirut in 2005 after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri. March 14th enjoys, if that is the word for it, a bare

parliamentary majority, even though their supporters are probably less than 50% of the population. These are the government loyalists. They look set to take losses in the parliamentary elections planned for early June of 2009. As it happens, the opposition are called March 8th, after the equally huge pro-Syrian demonstrations held in the wake of the Hariri assassination.

Political alliances are constantly shifting within Lebanon, but as they stand now, the largest Maronite bloc, the Free Patriotic Movement headed by former Lebanese army commander Michel Aoun is aligned with the March 8 opposition. The loyalists of the March 14 movement are comprised of several large blocs: the mostly Sunni Future Movement, headed by Saad al-Hariri, son of the late prime minister; the Maronite party the Phalange, led by former president Amin Gemayel; the Lebanese Forces, also Maronite, with Samir Geagea in the lead; and the mostly Druze Progressive Socialist Party, led by Walid Jumblatt.

But even amongst Hizbullah's loyalist opponents, there are political lines that cannot be crossed. The reddest of these is resistance to Israel. Lebanon's political orthodoxy obliges citizens to support resistance to Israel as a sacred cause. The other, perhaps the only other, is support for the Lebanese armed forces—the only truly non-sectarian institution in the country—as a symbol of national unity. By inclination, Hizbullah hews to both these lines—a very comfortable position to hold. By contrast, the loyalists find it difficult to support both resistance and the armed forces: they do not relish a Shiite ascendancy yet cannot gainsay the basis of the main Shiite party's sources of legitimacy in its private army, outside patrons, and record of military success against Israel. No leader amongst the loyalists has the political ability to reconcile opposition to Hizbullah and its allies with support for the army and for resistance to Israel. Because of this, the anti-Hizbullah pronouncements of any of the factional leaders of the loyalists smack of hypocrisy, especially those whose parties in the past have been openly or surreptitiously allied with Israel – those being at various times both the Phalange, under Amin Gemayel's brother Bashir, and the Lebanese forces, now commanded by Geagea.³ In Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, however, the opposition has a leader and spokesman adroitly able to articulate the goals of the resistance in the most inclusive and nationalistic tones.

High-stakes political poker

It is in this complex milieu of attitude, identity and allegiance that Hizbullah, compelled by circumstance, took a political gamble and won. How it managed to recoup much of the political capital it had expended in solidifying its goals is what we shall be examining here. The expenditure and the rehabilitation have been accomplished to the accompaniment of media events. As is often the case, these involve the charismatic presence of Hassan Nasrallah. This paper looks at three such media events in 2008, a crucial year in which Hizbullah was able to strengthen its position in the Lebanese government through a combination of adroit political maneuvering and, at times, physical force.⁴ The first is the press conference in which Nasrallah effectively declared a defensive war on the loyalist faction in the government, which culminated in several days

of running street battles in Beirut. At the time, this constituted a significant expenditure of political capital because it again raised the specter of civil strife and shifted public attention to Hizbullah's sectarian Shiite identity at the expense of its desired image as a protecting force for all of Lebanon. The second event is Nasrallah's public appearance at the daylong ceremonies celebrating the latest prisoner exchange between Israel and Hizbullah, an emotional event that helped the group recoup some of its lost political capital. In a grand media spectacular, Hizbullah reestablished its stature as a defender of all the Lebanese by securing the release of prisoners of all confessional affiliations. Finally, Nasrallah's speech on Martyr's day, 11 November 2008, shows the party back to the business of operating in the local political arena. In typical fashion, Nasrallah embeds his discourse in the rhetoric of resistance and martyrdom while also addressing issues of immediate local concern, especially as they related to participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections; here we see the consolidation of gains.

First some background. In May of 2008 it seemed for a few days as if civil war would once again seize the streets of Beirut. Lebanon had been muddling along for more than five months without a head of state because none of the sides could agree upon a successor to the outgoing president, Emile Lahoud, upon the expiration of his term at midnight 23 November 2007. Without a president, Lebanon was effectively without a government; minimal governing functions were being overseen by the rump cabinet of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, whose legitimacy had been contested ever since the opposition withdrew its members from government in November 2006.⁵

Without a government, the state, already somewhat unresponsive to its citizens' needs, was unable to cope with the brewing international economic crisis then manifest in a dramatic rise in the price of basic commodities. Desperate, state employees held a daylong strike to demand a raise in salary. This was not the most politically opportune time for the government, such as there was, to choose to move against Hizbullah. But move it did, with Druze chieftain Walid Jumblatt claiming that the party was illegally conducting camera surveillance of the airport and that it was operating a communications system of its own outside of state control. Hizbullah did not deny the charges, neither of which was viewed as particularly alarming except by those making the charges. That Hizbullah operated a communications system was old news in 2008, and the airport surveillance was being conducted from private land overlooking the airport. The airport head of security, a high-ranking, well-respected officer in the armed forces, did not find it to be a threat.⁶ In essence, the loyalists were attempting to tip a standoff between them and the opposition in their favor by voting to move against the communications network and by removing the head of airport security. Hizbullah could not afford not to respond.⁷

It was announced that Nasrallah would hold a press conference to clarify the situation, and at the hour of the press conference, his voice could be heard coming from every open door or window in Beirut. He explained that the communications network was an essential tool of the resistance, more basic even than weaponry itself, for without it, an effective defense against an invader could not be mounted or maintained. The loyalists

by pressing for the disarmament of Hizbullah were denying the legitimacy of the resistance while tacitly acquiescing in the de-legitimization of the armed forces. They were, in fact, attempting to implement American and Israeli policy of weakening Hizbullah that those two governments had been unable to achieve. Hizbullah was having none of this, and Nasrallah promised that anyone reaching his hand out to touch the weapons of the resistance would draw back a nub. Hassan Nasrallah is nothing if not a man of his word. If he said Hizbullah would resist being disarmed, it would.

Video 1: Anatomy of a political gambit

[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCIPp6enPug>]

Since the start of the 2006 July War, Nasrallah usually makes his public appearances by video feed from an undisclosed secure location. If not he, then his security detail fears an Israeli attempt on his life, and they are taking no chances. The last time he appeared in public was in January 2008, on the Shiite high holy day of Ashoura, when the martyrdom of Hussein is celebrated. Nasrallah unexpectedly appeared in the midst of the throngs of people in the streets of the Shiite southern suburbs of Beirut, the Dahiya, surrounded by bodyguards, greeting the observant. From the screen, the force of his charismatic personality is perhaps a bit blunted, but his well-known speaking style is still very much evident even when mediated by the camera lens, and his familiar charisma crosses the digital divide. His press conference was delivered to a live audience of reporters and questions were entertained, even though the party leader was not actually in attendance.

He began with his usual invocation and greetings in a florid and highly stylized formal Arabic. But in quite an unusual turn, his preliminary invocation was uncharacteristically brief, and after stating the reason for holding the press conference, he immediately lapsed into vernacular Lebanese Arabic, and remained therein throughout the press conference, only breaking into formal declamation when asserting important or non-negotiable points. In his many speeches and in appearances with the press over the years, he almost always holds forth in elegant formal Arabic, even when speaking extemporaneously. His style is rhetorically effective but not overly ornate, through its elegance and formality asserting the pan-Arabist underpinnings of his narrative while at the same time with its straightforward delivery giving the impression of seriousness of thought and purpose. The combination is stylistically polished and emotively powerful.

His choice to conduct the press conference in the vernacular, then, carried with it its own emotive impact precisely because he was not addressing his audience in his usual style. It lent genuine urgency to the situation and gave added expressiveness to the contempt he voiced for what he saw as an illegitimate government selling the nation to its enemies for the sake of personal gain. This becomes especially pronounced when he gives the background of talks with the government, quoting from government officials and party negotiators (In the section of the translation of the press conference entitled "Communications Network: Well known, Well Discussed") or when calling Druze leader and Progressive Socialist Party boss Walid Jumblatt a liar, thief, and murderer:

Let's look into it and see who is compromising sovereignty, and who is breaking the law, and who is threatening public funds. Who? It is very unfortunate that the man heading the government of ours in Lebanon today is a thief. He admits it...Mr Jumblatt admitted on television that he is a thief. He is a liar—for twenty-five years he has been admitting it—and a killer by his own admission. Today, the one ruling the country and demanding that the religious and secular leaders of all confessions follow his project is a liar, a thief, and a murderer.⁸

When making the key announcement of the press conference, he shifts the register to a more formal style of Arabic declamation, a commonly used rhetorical device.⁹ Listing the party's interpretation of the cabinet decision in four points, he raises his register to that of formal pronouncements, commenting upon them in the vernacular, and ending by stating formally and bluntly, "I [have] said with the greatest of clarity the hand that reaches for the arms of the resistance, no matter whose it is and no matter where it comes from, we shall cut it off. Today is the day for honoring that decision."¹⁰ When stating the party's stance toward the security of the airport, and loyalist attempts at placing one of their own as head of security, he states in formal Arabic: "In all honesty, we are not able to tolerate on our border and right next to us a base for the CIA and the FBI and the Mossad." Again, toward the very end of his statement, he returns to pure formal Arabic to state his ultimatum:

And I declare that after that night [of the rump cabinet decision], things are different from the way they were before. That is the end of the matter. We will not be killed in the streets after today. We will not accept being shot at under any circumstances. We will not accept any designs on our weapons. We will not accept any gainsaying of our existence and our legitimacy. Come all of the armies of the world. That is the decision of today!¹¹

Following quickly upon this pronouncement was Nasrallah's third and final point, stating the way out of the crisis, also delivered in formal Arabic: "To all of those inciting trouble, two words: rescind the illegitimate decisions of the illegitimate Walid Jumblatt government, one; two, fulfill the former request of the speaker of parliament Nabih Berri for a national dialogue. [Returning to the vernacular] There it is. That is the way out."

The rhetoric was effective; the intention clear; the effect immediate. Just as soon as the conference was concluded, street fighting broke out in earnest. There had been some shooting incidents in the vicinity of the strikes, but such things are expected as part of the game of politics in Lebanon, and all day long, there were intermittent reports of gunfire from the street protests. But as soon as the secretary general announced that Hizbullah arms were off limits, the sound of shooting changed its tone, becoming regular and reciprocal. Even so, as unsettling as it sounded to those near at hand, the fighting was light as such things are measured, and it was over within a few hours with Hizbullah

and allies sweeping the field. The disorganized elements opposing Hizbullah were fighting an organization that in 2006 had faced off against the most powerful army in the region and survived. The Lebanese army, ever cautious to avoid taking factional sides, stayed out of the fighting. So who was shooting? The Hizbullah station al-Manar was soon airing footage of captured loyalist militia members admitting to having been brought in to fight, complete with shots of their weapons and supplies, including much alcoholic drink, stored in loyalist party headquarters.

The outcome could never have been in doubt, so much so that in retrospect it became clear what a supremely maladroit bungle the loyalists had committed in thinking that they might prevail. Once the shooting stopped and speaking resumed, the cabinet, in statement after statement, sometimes leaked beforehand, climbed down, humiliated, from its decisions of only a few days before.

Having captured the field, the opposition then turned it over to the Lebanese army and withdrew. In so doing it accomplished several things: it demonstrated that it was not intent upon taking power by force, thereby immediately refuting by its actions the loyalist charge brought against it that it had effected a coup. It put paid to the notion that it was the only functioning militia in post-civil-war Lebanon. It demonstrated that it was the most powerful force within the country and that its demands must eventually be met. This last point was symbolically made when all major parties in the dispute flew to Doha to work out an agreement, to allow the government to proceed. The agreement answered all of the demands that the opposition, with Hizbullah in the lead, had been pressing for the previous eighteen months, since opposition ministers had quit the cabinet and the parliament. Principle among these was that the opposition would hold one third of cabinet seats, granting it veto power over government decisions.¹² This guaranteed that no government decision could be taken respecting the Hizbullah arsenal without opposition approval.

In May 2008, the parliament finally met to elect Michel Suleiman as a compromise figure to the presidency, and agreed to revisit the election laws—a step that, if implemented, would redound to the opposition's favor in subsequent parliamentary elections. Hizbullah and its allies in the opposition won their eighteen-month standoff with the loyalists and their allies, achieving most of their demands. Nevertheless, the party had paid a price in taking to the streets of Beirut: it provided its critics the opportunity to claim that Hizbullah had finally shown its true face by turning its weapons on the very citizens it claimed to be defending. Hizbullah achieved all of its stated goals, but at the price of losing some popularity within Lebanon. The party has since then been attempting to recover its carefully cultivated image as a patriotic defender of all the Lebanese. In that, it has been largely successful.

Video 2: The road to rehabilitation

[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZQ2am5jumc>]

A Hizbullah-orchestrated prisoner swap with Israel on 16 July 2008, barely two months after the street clashes, went a long way toward rehabilitating the party's image as working in the interests of all Lebanese citizens. In exchange for the bodies of two Israeli soldiers taken in July 2006, Israel released several Lebanese prisoners, foremost among which was Samir Qantar, now in his forties, who had been held in Israeli prison since he was sixteen, accused of killing an Israeli man and his infant daughter – a charge he confessed to and later retracted. Hizbullah had been agitating for years to gain his release, and, to its great fortune, that release happened at a time when its nationalist credentials had been tarnished.¹³ By continuing to work toward the release of Qantar, a member of the Druze community, Hizbullah was able to demonstrate that it was acting on behalf of all Lebanese, regardless of their confession. This was more than political grandstanding. Hizbullah maintains that resistance to Israel is a project undertaken on behalf of all Lebanese, and it recognizes the actions of any Lebanese citizen who engages in resistance to Israel. Samir Qantar was an ideal symbol for this; he was captured in a 1979 raid inside Of Israel's borders as he and two comrades from the Palestine Liberation Front were attempting to kidnap Israelis for use as bargaining chips in an eventual prisoner exchange. Thirty years later, here was Hizbullah, a Shiite organization that had not even come into existence when he was jailed, now working across sectarian lines to spring him from captivity.

There are media events and there are huge media events, and Hizbullah's al-Manar television played the exchange as an all-day extravaganza, with live broadcasts from the border with Israel. Breathless announcers awaited the arrival of the prisoners, reporting from along the festooned highways of southern Lebanon as the returnees made their way to the Prince of Martyrs Arena in the Dahiya, the Hizbullah staging ground for all of its grand events, where there were aerial shots of the flag-waving crowd and close-ups of its photogenic members. Shots cut to smaller parties that had been underway all day long along the route, interviews with family members and shots of tearful reunions with mothers, wives, and siblings. The government, now fully operative with Suleiman as president, declared the day a national holiday, and all state functionaries were on hand to greet the returning prisoners. While Hizbullah was welcoming its returning heroes, it was being welcomed into the national narrative again, with its political opponents pressed to grudgingly celebrate another patriotic victory for the resistance.

The culmination of the celebration was a surprise speech from occultation by Hassan Nasrallah. Singing an anthem with lyrics blending religious and patriotic themes, the Hizbullah men's choir ushered him to the stage amid wild cheering. Nasrallah addressed the crowd in vernacular Arabic:

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful, I won't be speaking from here, because I've only got five minutes. But I wanted to greet you and to congratulate you on the victory and for all the boys. As we said in

the year 2000: the days of defeat are over, and the days of victories have come! This people and this nation and this country has given a clear image to the world today, to friend and enemy, that it cannot be overtaken by defeat! I wanted to come close and to greet you, and now I guarantee that the boys will speak and we'll hear the anthem, and I'll speak from the screen. And I promise you that though I usually take my time on the screen, an hour, an hour and a quarter, an hour and half; but tonight I won't take too much of your time. Many happy returns! Peace be upon you! [Lebanon's national anthem, "We are all for the homeland" plays as Nasrallah exists]

Although there remain among the Lebanese people those wary of Hizbullah's intentions for the long run (and they fear that the long run may be near), the return of the prisoners with the State in attendance and the fanfare of the public spectacle rehabilitated Hizbullah, permitting it to return to the muddy arena of Lebanese local politics as a full participant.

Video 3: High-ground regained

[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8gtwmyNJ38>]

By the end of 2008, then, Hizbullah had recovered most of the political capital it expended in solidifying its position within the country and its government. Nasrallah's addresses reflect this in that he has returned to discussing practical issues in his perorations. This is nothing new. He is known as a pragmatist, and for his plain speaking, such that even his critics and opponents take his pronouncements at face value. In his characteristic speaking style, he breaks his remarks into a list of points, reinforcing the impression of a series of logical premises leading to a necessarily valid conclusion. Gone is the confrontational tone of the pronouncements made during the crisis in May, in what linguists refer to as "performative utterances," precipitating the crisis through their very pronouncement. Gone, too, is the ironic, mocking tone in speaking of the opposition's rivals in the political arena. Even when criticizing, Nasrallah wields the staid language of formal declamation and strikes a conciliatory tone:

It is not necessary that we all praise one another, and it is not forbidden for one of us to criticize the political stance of another; but were we to observe the principles of politic good manners, I think every party could express its convictions and views and practice its policies without harming others and without creating an atmosphere of tension.¹⁴

As always, Nasrallah wields the imagery of patriotism and resistance to Israeli aggression and to the designs of its allies, addressing his imagery and rhetoric first to the Shiite

community, but extending it to all of the Lebanese people. The occasion of Martyrs Day is the perfect opportunity for this, because of the association of the Shiites with martyrdom, and in remembrance of the many fallen in the Lebanese struggle for national self-expression.

[Martyrdom] has deep roots in our culture, our faith, our civilization, our thought, our emotions, and in the history of our nation. Perhaps our faith in the rank of martyrdom and the stature of the martyrs in the eyes of Allah the Exalted, and the sacred position of martyrdom in our thought, and perhaps in our yearly commemoration throughout the centuries of the most exalted act of martyrdom in human history, Karbala [on the day of Ashoura], we find an interpretation for this profound connection we have to martyrdom¹⁵

Even here, at its most stylized and formulaic, the rhetoric is embedded in the wider discourse on martyrdom in Shiism. Nasrallah uses the Arabic word *istishhad*, often rendered into English as “suicide bombing,” but a better translation might be “self-immolation or “voluntary martyrdom.” Both of these more accurately convey how Nasrallah connects the contemporary tactics of Muslim resistance movements with the discourse surrounding the cult of martyrdom, which carries particularly strong historical resonances in Shiism.¹⁶ Nasrallah has always defended the tactic:

[The 1982] act of martyrdom of Ahmad Qasir...the first act of martyrdom...gives expression to the early arising of Lebanese youth in resistance to occupation; because it is the cry of the people and the nation resonating in the present, future, and in history; and because it is the founding step along the long road of acts of martyrdom and of the sacred struggle of resistance—aware, planned, thought out, goal-directed, cautious, on guard, committed.¹⁷

Here Nasrallah asserts that the resistance belongs to all Lebanese youth, not only Shiites, and that, despite their youth, they undertake their actions in complete self-awareness, without coercion, and free of any mental imbalance. In a single statement, he is justifying for all Lebanese the legitimacy and rationality of their resistance to Israel as a defining characteristic of the people and their state while at the same time claiming the individual fallen as sons of the Shiite community. In a nation that defines itself by its martyrs, and demarks the boundary lines of its communities with shrines to their memory (at the centre of Beirut is Martyrs' Square commemorating martyrs hanged for their opposition to Ottoman rule, where the remains of the 'martyred' prime minister Rafik al-Hariri lie in state; close by is Samir Qasir park, commemorating the 'martyrdom' of Samir Qasir, journalist and historian, a Christian, assassinated in a car bomb, presumably for his outspoken opposition to Syrian domination), he is engaging in the most Lebanese of discourse.

Conclusion

The attempt to disable the Hizbullah communications network was a ploy to sideline the party or to knock it out of action altogether. This was never realistic. The Shiite militia-come-political party enjoys the support of large segments of Lebanese society, and cannot simply be swatted aside. Ultimately, Hizbullah outmaneuvered its opponents by force of arms on the streets of Beirut – a form of ‘politics by other means’ sadly familiar to Lebanon’s history. But, throughout, Hizbullah’s skillful staging of media events to showcase the charismatic personality of Hassan Nasrallah was crucial to translating its military prowess into political success – both inside Lebanon and across the Arab World. In so doing, Hizbullah has proved, for anyone who may have thought or wished otherwise, that it is firmly at the center of Lebanese politics.

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¹ For a brief but comprehensive analysis of Maronite attitudes toward alliances with Muslim parties, see Meir Zamir. 1999. “From Hegemony to Marginalism: The Maronites of Lebanon,” in Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, eds. *Minorities and the State in the Arab World*, Boulder, London: Lynne Reiner Publishers, pp. 111-128.

² Exact numbers are not known, as the government has not conducted a census since 1932; nevertheless, estimates are that in a total population of about four million, Shiites number between thirty-five to forty percent of all Lebanese; Christian groups together make up something under one third, with Maronites, the largest Christian grouping, representing slightly less than a million. The Druze constitute about one tenth of the population. It is assumed that the population as a whole is about seventy percent Muslim. The Shiite population is the fastest growing, and the Christian population is declining both proportionally and in real terms owing to emigration. Nevertheless, the old power-sharing arrangement, wherein the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian, the office of prime minister for a Sunni Muslim, and that of speaker of parliament to a Shiite remains in place, despite the Taif agreement to end the sectarian system of government. Christians are also accorded a five-to-four balance in the parliament (and other government offices), and the electoral laws are characteristically rewritten with each new parliament to favor this imbalance.

Estimates of actual population figures are reported here:

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=84917

³ Zamir, op cit, pp. 121—123. See also George Emile Irani, “Failed Alliances” review of *My Enemy's Enemy: Lebanon in the Early Zionist Imagination, 1990-1948* by Laura Zittrain Eisenberg. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 112-114; and Kirsten E. Schulze, “Perceptions and Misperceptions: Influences on Israeli Intelligence Estimates During the 1982 Lebanon War” *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. XVI No. 1, Spring 1996, available at <http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/bin/get.cgi?directory=S96/articles/&filename=schulze.html>

⁴ All the videos discussed in this article were obtained from the al-Manar website available here: <http://www.almanar.com.lb/newssite/VideoItems.aspx?language=en>

⁵ *The Economist*, 1 December 2007, “In search of a government; Lebanon”

⁶ “Government to launch probe into Hezbollah communications network” *Now Lebanon*, 6 May 2008: <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=41124>

⁷ *The Economist*, 10 May 2008, “Lebanon: Moment of truth”

⁸ Communications Network: Legal Action

⁹ I have discussed the motivations for switching into and out of formal Arabic declamation in David Wilmsen. 1996. “Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Borrowing in the Spoken Arabic of a Theatrical Community in Cairo,” in Mushira Eid and Dilworth Parkinson (eds.). *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics IX*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Johns Benjamin, 69—92

¹⁰ Communications Network: Hizbullah Reaction

¹¹ Point 3: Solution to the Crisis: Hizbullah Counter Demands.

¹² *The Economist*, 22 May 2008, “Lebanon: Peace for a while”

¹³ *The Guardian*, 17 July 2008, “Prisoner swap: Last act of a needless war”

¹⁴ On the Parliamentary Elections

¹⁵ The Invocation

¹⁶ Martin Kramer. 1991. "Sacrifice and 'Self-Martyrdom' in Shi'ite Lebanon," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 30-47. Available at <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/Sacrifice.htm>

¹⁷ The Invocation