

Hezbollah and Israel: Deterrence in the Face of Mutual Hate

Marques Watson

The Middle East is rife with conflict between a legion of different religious and secular groups, each vying for either power, territory, or simply the destruction of their enemy. One of the longer rivalries in the region pits the nation of Israel against the Shiite Muslim organization known as Hezbollah. Operating throughout Lebanon, Hezbollah has grown to become a quasi-governmental organization. Thus, fighting, deterring, and negotiating with Hezbollah is different than doing so with most other groups viewed as terrorist organizations. Hezbollah's close proximity to Israel also complicates Israeli strategy for handling the group. From the perspective of Hezbollah, Israel's vastly superior military forces prohibit the organization from accomplishing one of its primary goals, which is the destruction of the state of Israel. Consequently, for over three decades, Israel and Hezbollah have been locked in a state of mutual deterrence, with the exception of the war fought in 2006. There are a number of factors that could potentially impact the nature of the deterrence status quo between Hezbollah and Israel in the future. General consensus is that Hezbollah is the most powerful guerilla group in the world yet it remains unable to truly confront Israel. The deterrence status quo that currently exists is already very fragile, with each side conducting limited operations against the other. It is buoyed by Hezbollah's ability to skillfully conduct a guerilla warfare campaign in areas which the majority of the civilian population

fervently supports them, and by Israel's strategic and political binds. Improvements in Hezbollah's capacity would disturb this deterrence status quo by either emboldening Hezbollah to escalate low-level conventional operations or provoking Israel into conducting more aggressive preemptive actions against Hezbollah, opening the door to full-on war. It seems that a stronger Hezbollah armed with the capability to deal greater damage to Israel would truly be the death knell for the current stand-off between the Israeli state and the "Party of God." If this happens, what is Israel's recourse? There are many academic and journalistic works which highlight the complexity of asymmetric deterrence in which one actor possesses nuclear weapons and the other does not. Thus, the question must be asked: Have the post-2006 growth and development of both the IDF and Hezbollah established a reliable culture of deterrence between the two actors? Although Israel maintains an absolute advantage over Hezbollah with regards to conventional force, if this changes and Hezbollah's unconventional abilities improve drastically, the deterrence structure between the two will crumble. As of now, Hezbollah has directed much of its focus to the civil war in Syria, but when that conflict ends and the group shifts back to Israel, the gains in experience, weapons, and continued support from Iran will push Israel and Hezbollah towards war once again.

The nation of Lebanon has experienced a great deal of conflict since its independence and many times Israel has been involved in the fighting. The Muslim political groups and militias in Lebanon have generally been in opposition to the state of Israel and have been willing to conduct terrorist attacks and other violent operations against the much more powerful Israel. At times, this has led to an escalation in violence. During the Lebanese Civil War, the Lebanese-based Palestinian Liberation Organization undertook a number of cross-border attacks into Israel which resulted in Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978. In 1982, Israel used the allegations of an assassination attempt against an Israeli ambassador by a different Lebanese terrorist group as justification for another invasion of Lebanon. Israel managed to force the PLO out of Lebanon, but the group was soon replaced by Hezbollah. Hezbollah was established to resist Israeli occupation in Lebanon and to bring about the destruction of the state of Israel. In 2006, following the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah operatives, Israel launched a campaign of air and ground strikes against Hezbollah in what is known as the Hezbollah-Israeli war. Later, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert admitted that the Israeli government had drawn up plans for an offensive against Hezbollah prior to the kidnappings and used them as justification for the war.ⁱ Each of these conflicts and the continued minor operations between Hezbollah and Israel demonstrate the tension between the two actors. There have not been any major conflicts between them since the 2006 war. Why have the Israeli state and Hezbollah not engaged in another large-scale

war, given that each side has vowed to completely destroy the other? Israel possesses a vastly superior military in terms of manpower and quality of materiel. Hezbollah has made the claim that they can attack any urban center in Israel, which has been backed up by Israeli officials.ⁱⁱ The nature of the deterrence status quo between Hezbollah and Israel is such that neither side has the capability to destroy or damage the other without inflicting massive physical and/or political damage to themselves. In essence, Hezbollah's prowess at asymmetric warfare and its proximity to and use of Lebanese civilians acts as an equalizer to Israel's military strength.

Being a non-state organization without the benefit of wide-scale taxation, conscription, and a legal place in the international weapons trade, Hezbollah must rely on a number of tactics that are generally considered unconventional. During the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war, Hezbollah received a greater share of the casualties, both military and civilian, but is widely considered to have been victorious both militarily and politically. This is because the group was able to force a ceasefire against a much larger and more sophisticated fighting force. The Israeli Defense Force had defeated the national militaries of numerous Arab countries before, yet were unable to sweep Hezbollah from the cities of Lebanon. Hezbollah's proficiency in urban guerilla combat and asymmetric warfare made Israel's invasion a nightmare and relayed to Israeli military planners and policymakers the difficulty of dealing with Hezbollah in any future engagements.

Hezbollah's Rocket Corps

Possibly the most notorious aspect of Hezbollah's offensive capabilities is their arsenal of rockets, primarily their short-range Katyusha rockets and medium-range Fajr rockets. During the 2006 war, Hezbollah launched approximately 4,000 rockets into Israel. The Katyusha rockets are a minor concern for the Israelis as their short range ensures that their operators must be in territory that is easy to counter-strike. The far greater concern for Israel is the Fajr rockets. Their longer range makes them a much more effective weapon against Israeli civilians and population centers. The Fajr is an Iranian-designed projectile with a range between 25 and 45 miles. This extends Hezbollah's range beyond the Israeli cities of Haifa and Nazareth. Although the rockets are notoriously inaccurate, barrage fire of these weapons creates a psychological effect against the Israeli population. Israel estimates that Hezbollah possesses over 100,000 total rockets.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition to the Fajr rocket, Hezbollah has also stockpiled Zelzal medium rockets and even SCUD missiles. Since the 2006 war, Iran has ramped up production and delivery of these weapons, expanding Hezbollah's arsenal. Hezbollah has also reportedly acquired a number of more sophisticated air-to-air guided missiles which would threaten Israeli aircraft conducting airstrikes in Lebanon. This is in 2014. In 2006, Hezbollah was a much weaker opponent with much less sophisticated weaponry and still inflicted enough fear in the Israeli society to force a million citizens into or near bomb shelters.^{iv} Southern Israel typically deals with rocket attacks from Hamas, but a rocket campaign from the modern Hezbollah would be far more devastating and would inflict far worse

damage on the Israeli homefront than it did 4-1/2 years ago," according to an ex-Israeli Army general Giora Eiland.^v This is an instance where Hezbollah's status as a terrorist organization works to its advantage. Hezbollah's barrage of attacks, regardless of the number of civilians killed, would be seen in a much different light than the Israeli government conducting World War II-style carpet bombing over Lebanon, especially because Hezbollah currently represents a small minority of the recognized Lebanese government. Israel would risk international condemnation, something much more damaging for a state integrated into the international order than a terrorist organization. This is a situation which the asymmetry between Israel and Hezbollah and the complexity of their positions in the international community have created a "deterrence trap" for Israel.^{vi} Currently, Israel is on the receiving end of rocket attacks from HAMAS in the Gaza Strip. In response to these unsophisticated and militarily ineffective strikes, the Israeli military performs actions that are often viewed as disproportionate to the activities of HAMAS. A similar situation exists in the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. This is further complicated by the fact that Hezbollah resides in another sovereign and recognized state, Lebanon. Hezbollah typically deploys its rocket and missile launchers near apartments, homes, and administrative buildings that also serve legitimate non-military purposes in Lebanon. This means that any Israeli airstrikes would likely cause a great deal of civilian collateral damage. Not only would the strikes kill a large number of Lebanese civilians, the devastation to Lebanese infra-

structure would be appalling to the international community considering Israel would ostensibly be retaliating or attacking a specific organization rather than declaring war upon the entire country. Hezbollah understands how important their rocket corps is to their existence and the deterrent effect that it has on the Israeli state. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a report in 2009 showing Israeli concern over Hezbollah's growing rocket and missile capabilities:

"Today, Hizbullah is estimated to have an arsenal of more than 40,000 rockets.

This being the case, if war breaks out, Hizbullah will be able to launch between 500 and 600 rockets at Israel every day."^{vii}

Hassan Nasrallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, has claimed in a 2007 interview that the group possesses rockets that can "absolutely reach any corner and any point" in Israel.^{viii} The Israeli Defense Force confirmed that assertion by releasing a graphic showing the various rockets/missiles believed to be in Hezbollah's possession and their ranges:



IDF Blog visual depiction of Hezbollah Rocket Ranges.^{ix}

The expanding range and amount of missiles in Hezbollah's arsenal presents a threat not only to Israeli lives, but the infrastructure and economy as well. ---The range of Hezbollah rockets now extends further into the sea as well. US intelligence officials believe that Hezbollah has acquired twelve Yakhont anti-ship missiles from Syria.^x These missiles are

almost unstoppable and would present a problem for the Israeli navy if they can be made operational. In addition to simply bolstering their numbers and variety of rockets, Hezbollah has worked to obtain capabilities that would make their current weapons much deadlier. Iranian-supplied unmanned aerial vehicles have been seen and confronted over

Israeli territory.^{xi} These drones would likely be used by Hezbollah to better calibrate its weaponry making even the most rudimentary unguided rocket a much more effective weapon. Thus, even if Israel's impressive military advantage would allow them to squash Hezbollah over the course of an extended conflict, the damage that Hezbollah's massive rocket arsenal could deliver is not worth starting this war. A large-scale campaign to eliminate Hezbollah would be answered with tens of thousands of rockets falling on almost any Israeli population center of choice. These rockets struck fear into the hearts of Israelis in 2006 and Hezbollah has only bolstered its repertoire over the last eight years.

Hezbollah's Guerilla Warfare Advantage

A campaign to eliminate Hezbollah would require much more than simple airstrikes against their rocket corps. In order to rout out Hezbollah from Lebanon, IDF commandos and ground units would need to combat Hezbollah operatives in close quarters combat and urban warfare. The necessity of having "boots on the ground" in Lebanon acts as another force maintaining the deterrent structure between Israel and Hezbollah. While Israel's military is one of the best trained in the world and has defeated other national militaries multiple times throughout its history, the conflict in Lebanon would present a very difficult problem for the Israelis. IDF forces are used to fighting the much weaker and less-disciplined Hamas forces in the Gaza Strip and simply demolishing Palestinian structures in the West Bank. Hezbollah is a much more dangerous foe in a ground war. The Israelis learned this the hard way in 2006. During the Hezbollah-Israeli war, the

IDF were largely successful against Hezbollah fighters in a conventional sense. They lost fewer fighters and killed more enemies. But many historians and scholars view the fact that a non-state group was able to harass and damage the superior Israeli military into a ceasefire as a political victory for Hezbollah. Since the 2006 war, Hezbollah has become much stronger in terms of both materiel and personnel. Hassan Nasrallah recently announced that Syria would be providing Hezbollah with "special weapons it never had before."^{xii} This announcement came amid reports of Israeli airstrikes in Syria to destroy weapons shipments into Lebanon. While Nasrallah's lack of specificity may lend to skepticism, Hezbollah has dealt damage to Israeli ground forces using other less sophisticated weapons. In 2006, a majority of the ground casualties sustained by the IDF were a result of Hezbollah's use of anti-tank weapons such as the RPG-29 rocket launcher.^{xiii} During this conflict, Hezbollah ground operatives also reportedly acquired ground-to-air missiles from Iran. Even with little information on the scale of weapons transfers to Hezbollah since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, it is safe to assume that both Syria and Iran have provided Hezbollah with a great deal of anti-armor and anti-aircraft weapons. The civil war in Syria and the confusion of moving frontlines and supplies could provide Hezbollah with the windfall of weaponry that Libyan militias and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb were blessed with after the fall of Muammar Gadhafi. Thus, Hezbollah will be receiving arms from Syria in some form, whether transported out by the Assad regime or taken by Hezbollah if the regime falls. The disadvantage that Hezbollah

has in that it does not have the consistent weapons trading market that a nation like Israel does is mitigated by the illegal shipping of weapons from Iran and Syria. The Israeli Defense Force was unprepared for the realities of fighting on the ground during the 2006 war. They had to rely too heavily on air power and were plagued by poor leadership in their ground campaigns. Ultimately, Israel had set forward a number of lofty goals which, due to their underestimation of the capabilities of Hezbollah, they were unable to attain. War seemed like a good strategy because Israel did not see any form of balance between itself and Hezbollah. Israel believed that it could force Hezbollah to disarm as a group by strong-arming the weak Lebanese government into confronting Hezbollah while the Israeli and Lebanese Armies destroyed the group's capabilities. Instead, Israel strengthened Hezbollah's resolve and was forced into a ceasefire which has since only served to strengthen the group.^{xiv} This time around, Hezbollah's strength as a fighting force is well known and Israel's weakness in fighting the type of urban warfare that this war would comprise. The IDF ground forces were woefully unprepared for ground warfare during 2006 war and the modern IDF is still not properly trained for war with Hezbollah.^{xv} This is especially an issue if the goal is to wipe the group out. Another war with Hezbollah would be a massive undertaking for Israel. Undertrained Israeli tank drivers would have to contend with combat-seasoned Hezbollah fighters using more advanced anti-tank weaponry. Israeli helicopter pilots, used to conducting attacks against vastly under-armed Palestinians in Gaza would face Syrian and Iranian anti-air

missiles over the skies of Lebanon. IDF commandos would be forced to hunt down Hezbollah operatives on the streets of majority-Shia territory throughout Lebanon. None of this is appealing to Israel, which is why it has maintained a policy of launching isolated strikes against high-value targets as well as targeted killings. Israel understands that Hezbollah does not want to engage Israel currently, thus it is able to use violent "triggers" without expecting any real escalation of the conflict.^{xvi}

Israel's Tied Hands

The final aspect of the standoff between Israel and Hezbollah that bolsters the deterrence status quo is the impact of the views of the international community. Hezbollah is regarded as either a terrorist organization or a resistance movement, depending on what state you ask. Either of these designations provides Hezbollah with a greater level of political room to work with when considering strategy and operations. Israel, on the other hand, often has its hands tied in terms of the kinds of operations and strategies it can employ. Attempting to deter suicide bombers, Israel began a policy of demolishing the homes of families of suicide bombers. The policy was met with international condemnation and scorn and was said to simply be creating more suicide bombers. This is one example of the differing levels of responsibility each group must take for their actions. Israel is well-integrated into the international system, thus it cannot carry out operations or plans which could possibly lead to international condemnation. In the case of the Hezbollah-Israeli conflict of 2006, the difference in the number of Israeli and Lebanese non-

combatant citizens killed caused some entities such as the EU and Brazil to decry Israel's "disproportionate use of force."^{xvii} Thus, there are limits to the types and levels of force that Israel can use in this conflict. In addition, any campaign, outside of a committed war of attrition, would likely fail to destroy Hezbollah and would provide the group with legitimacy, support, and sympathy from the Lebanese civilianry. There is also the risk that a war against Hezbollah could trigger a larger, much more destructive conflict involving what's left of the Syrian regime as well as the Iranian military. Hezbollah understands the political difficulties that Israel would face if they were to engage in contact with one another again. This is one of the primary reasons that Hezbollah has built so many facilities to house their weapons near populated civilian centers. Israel's intelligence and air power, as impressive as they are, cannot limit the explosive damage of airstrikes to a level safe for Lebanese civilians.

All of these factors considered, the deterrent status quo between Hezbollah and Israel has never been strong, yet there are a number of signs that it is weakening and will inevitably collapse, dragging the two entities into a bloody war with one another. It seems as though Israel and Hezbollah have become engaged in an asymmetric arms race. As Hezbollah seeks to master new missile technology and grow its already humungous stockpile, the Israelis are consistently attempting to buy American missile defense systems as well as build their own. This asymmetric arms race is similar to a conventional arms race in that it inevitably places one of the actors in a position in which it must consider striking while it maintains an advantage. If

Hezbollah is truly being provided with "game-changing" weapons, Israel must continue to build defenses against them, however, if their defenses can not match up with the offensive capabilities of Hezbollah, then Israel will need to destroy those capabilities before they grow. Hezbollah's current rocket/missile arsenal is estimated to be anywhere from 60,000 to 100,000 pieces of ordnance. Hezbollah will be able to launch more than 400 of these weapons every day if a war were to break out. The vast majority are short to medium range rockets which can be fired in heavy barrages which would cause even the most sophisticated missile defense system difficulties. The Iron Dome missile defense system currently fielded by the Israelis has proven to be extremely effective in destroying rockets launched from the Gaza Strip.^{xviii} The problem is that all of the currently operational Iron Dome systems are located in Southern Israel to protect against strikes from HAMAS. In addition to this, the missile defense system has been plagued with issues in its guidance system, causing the projectiles to engage rockets at a less-than-optimal angle. The result is a destroyed Palestinian rocket, but an intact warhead that can still explode once it reaches the ground.^{xix} HAMAS is a much weaker fighting force than Hezbollah and their rocket arsenal pales in comparison to that of the Lebanese group. HAMAS is said to wield a depository of approximately 10,000 rockets. These range from homemade mortar and pipes with fins to sophisticated rockets provided by Iran.^{xx} HAMAS' firing capabilities are also vastly inferior to those of Hezbollah. Security officials in Israel and Lebanon believe that Hezbollah would be able to launch "four times" more rockets per

day than HAMAS.^{xxi} This means that a Hezbollah rocket campaign would likely overwhelm the Iron Dome systems unless a much larger number of them can be placed in the north. The Iron Dome currently costs Israel \$50,000,000 per unit and \$100,000 per missile. Hezbollah receives many of its rockets as support from its allies and if the low estimate of even 40,000 is correct, then the group would have little trouble maintaining a constant barrage of rockets as it did during the 2006 campaign. Thus, even if the system can deal with many of the rockets, Israel would be facing both falling rockets that slip through the cracks as well as falling warheads from destroyed rockets. The longer range missiles would be able to strike anywhere in Israel. Due to their scarcity, these strikes would likely not be barrage-style, but Iranian and Syrian assistance has helped Hezbollah engineers and rocket operators hone their aim, making these weapons an intimidating tool in Hezbollah's arsenal. As both sides seek to reinforce and strengthen their capabilities, it seems as though one side will eventually realize that preemption is better than losing any advantage. If Israel is willing to foot the bill on their own Iron Dome systems and Hezbollah believes that its rocket arsenal may become ineffective, it may seek to launch offensive operations before the Israelis can finish deploying them. In what could be an attempt to establish credibility for a first-strike, Hezbollah has begun acknowledging Israeli airstrikes on their facilities in Lebanon and suspected weapons shipments coming in from Syria. Although it is unlikely that Hezbollah will retaliate against Israel over these airstrikes, given their current entanglement in the Syrian conflict. This does

give Hezbollah a *raison d'être* for future rocket attacks or other forms of violence against Israel. One of the main reasons that the deterrence status quo has remained intact is Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian Civil War. When that conflict comes to a close and Hezbollah re-prioritizes its battles in the region, Israel will likely be at the top of the list. Israel knows this and has used this time of relative peace to plan for Hezbollah's eventual focus on Israel. Another noteworthy concern for Israel is the potential for chemical weapons from Syria being transported into Lebanon. Although Hassan Nasrallah has stated that "the use of chemical weapons is forbidden in Islam"^{xxii} and Iran's Khomeini has issued a statement in opposition to the use of all WMD,^{xxiii} the possibility that chemical weapons could have been transported out of Syria for Hezbollah is a real one. Although they are merely rumors, there have been reports from defectors from the Assad regime claiming that chemical weapons were sent to Lebanon for Hezbollah, either as a means for Syria to save them from destruction or for Hezbollah's use. Both defected General Zaher al-Sakat and Free Syrian Army General Ibliss Salim have asserted that Bashar al-Assad has been transporting chemical weapons from his stockpiles to Lebanon and Iraq.^{xxiv} While these claims cannot be confirmed, their lack of certainty is part of why these claims are so important. In a normal deterrence structure, the capabilities and the credibility of each actor must be known by the other or else one group may seek to preempt the other. In this case, there is no assurance to Israel that Hezbollah does not possess the chemical weapons in question. Also,

there is no method for verifying that Hezbollah does not possess these weapons. If they do have them, they would likely hide them in secret facilities far away from the Lebanese-Israeli border, with their long range missiles. These locations are impossible for an Israeli airstrike to be effective against and as Hezbollah expert Timur Goskel notes: "If Israelis want their hands on the long-range missiles, they have to march in and get them. It would be a very risky and very costly operation."^{xxv} Thus, Israel and Hezbollah are slowly moving away from the deterrence status quo that has impeded the explosion of another war like the one that ravaged Lebanon in 2006. Hezbollah's capabilities are growing, as are Israel's anti-missile capability, and the question of chemical weapons must be considered, given Hezbollah's close links to the Assad regime, Hezbollah fighters' presence in Syria, and the long-range missile capabilities of the Lebanese fighting group. So the question is: How can Israel and Hezbollah avoid the seemingly inevitable conflict?

In order for Israel to avoid having to confront Hezbollah and its massive arsenal of rockets and missiles, Israel must undertake a number of policy changes:

- Improve military strategy and training.
- Speed production and installation of missile defense systems.
- Lower the barriers to war.

Improve Military Strategy and Training

The first must focus on improving its military strategy towards Hezbollah. This means investing more in the training of armored vehicle drivers and infantry. The military strategy that dominated the 2006 war was characterized by a preoccupation with air dominance,

which Israel can easily assert over Lebanon and Hezbollah. As a result, Israeli tanks and armored vehicles were driven by inexperienced drivers in a foreign terrain that the enemy knew much better. Hezbollah's anti-tank weaponry was able to do considerable damage to Israeli armor, mitigating the advantage that possessing such weapons would typically give Israel. Today, Hezbollah likely owns a larger stockpile of more advanced anti-armor weapons which they can bring to bear upon Israeli armor. If IDF armor operators are as ill-prepared for Hezbollah as they were in 2006 and Hezbollah knows this, it will embolden the group. Hezbollah does not want to fight Israel now and would not be served well if it decides to engage Israel anytime in the near future. Improved training of IDF armor drivers combined with military exercises designed to demonstrate their capabilities to Hezbollah while the group is in a strategic disadvantage, given its involvement in Syria. This would send a strong message to Hezbollah that the IDF is much better prepared for war in Lebanon than during the 2006 fight. Israel conducts many military exercises, such as Juniper Cobra with the United States,^{xxvi} yet the majority of the exercises are directed at missile defense preparedness and air dominance training directed at Iran. Israel needs to show Hezbollah that it is prepared for more than simple airstrikes on rocket sites.

Speed Production and Installation of Missile Defense Systems

Much has been made about the cost of missile defense systems such as the Iron Dome. While the platforms may be costly, the damage that Hezbollah could bring down upon Israeli cities is much pricier. According

to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an eight-day rocket campaign by Hezbollah in 1996 caused \$20 million USD in direct damage and indirect economic loss (due to decline in tourism, etc.).^{xxvii} This damage was caused by only 489 rockets. In addition to the monetary damage, thirty-one Israeli civilians were wounded. Iron Dome has proven itself effective against HAMAS rocket attacks, but Hezbollah's massive arsenal could potentially overwhelm a missile defense system that is not prepared for it. Most of the Iron Dome systems are located in Southern Israel to protect against the less impressive but more regular HAMAS attacks. Israel needs to station more defense systems in the North to at least mitigate any Hezbollah attack. Also, by bolstering a credible and capable defense system, the Israelis can ensure that they will not be forced into a conflict with Hezbollah. If the group launches a small number of rockets into Israel but they are shot down, there will be lower demand for retaliation and the risk of escalation into full-blown war.

Lower The Barriers To War

When Israel launched the last campaign against Hezbollah in 2006, even Hezbollah spiritual leader Hassan Nasrallah was surprised by the size, precision, and intensity of the Israeli reaction.^{xxviii} Thus, Hezbollah leadership understands that, although the group is much stronger than it was in 2006, so is the Israeli military and the destruction that the IDF can bring upon Hezbollah sites likely concerns them. Israeli officials have already stated that in any future conflict with Hezbollah, all of Lebanon would be considered acceptable to target.^{xxix} This will encourage Lebanon to place more pressure on the group and make Hezbollah think twice

about even conducting low-scale attacks against Israel. By engaging in brinkmanship, Israel will force Hezbollah to cease rocket attacks or potentially start a war that would cost hundreds of thousands of Lebanese civilians their lives. By threatening a greater response to even lower-level rocket attacks by Hezbollah, while also limiting the possibility of any attempts being successful (through missile defense systems), Israel would essentially give Hezbollah red line that the group could not cross without committing to intentionally starting a war. If only a large barrage of rockets can penetrate Israel's missile defense system, any isolated small-scale rocket launches will be non-consequential.

Assist Syrian Rebels on Lebanese Border

Hezbollah has been able to grow its rocket and weapons arsenals since 2006 because of the generosity of Iran and Syria. Syria has allowed weapons to be trafficked into Lebanon for Hezbollah's use. The Syrian Civil War has been a blessing and a curse for Israel. The blessing is that it has helped disrupt some of the shipments of weapons going into Lebanon. The curse is that the war will eventually end. Israel should assist Syrian rebels in taking all of the territory bordering Lebanon to ensure that any weapons are either identified as enemy shipments and destroyed or are used by the Syrian rebels in their fight against Assad. There are groups in Syria that would cooperate with Israel. The Free Syrian Army, although weak, is solely an insurgent group without an Islamist ideology, thus they would accept Israeli assistance without being able to actually turn the tide of the war. In addition to the FSA, the Islamist Yarmouk Brigades has stated that it does not have any agenda to attack or destroy Israel.

They have stated that they seek the assistance of Syria in their battle against Assad.^{xxx} Whether or not this statement is sincere, it does seem that this group's main concern is the battle against Assad. Short-term cooperation between Israel and these groups would help provide greater intelligence and access to areas where Hezbollah weapons and fighters would travel into and out of Lebanon. The Syrian Civil War will end eventually and when it does, no outcome will be "good" for Israel, but mitigating the growth and sophistication of Hezbollah's arms will help to keep the group from engaging in risky violence against Israel.

Lebanon's "Party of God" and the nation of Israel are virulent enemies, yet it has been eight years since the Hezbollah-Israeli war. Israel maintains an asymmetric military advantage, yet the country has not launched another campaign to end the group. Hezbollah's massive rocket arsenal and penchant for guerilla warfare have caused the Israelis to respect this enemy more than in 2006. In addition to that, Israel faces many political consequences that would come from invading Lebanon again and launching what would have to be an extremely violent campaign to stop Hezbollah. Hezbollah and Israel will fight again, this is inevitable. The bungling of the 2006 war enabled Hezbollah to grow into a much stronger and more audacious organization. The nature of the tension in Israel and Lebanon will lead to more aggression. This does not mean that there are no measures that Israel can take to limit the scope and scale of this aggression as well as push it down the road until other solutions can be devised. Part of the reason Israel fared so poorly in the 2006 war was the inadequate preparation of

armored vehicle drivers and bad strategy for conducting the ground war. With a new focus on these aspects of the IDF's military strategy as well as exercises to train their soldiers and signal their expertise to Hezbollah, Israel would discourage Hezbollah from provoking more conflict. Hezbollah's most important weapons are its rockets and Israel is developing methods to negate the impact of these projectiles. It must commit to a much larger force of missile defense batteries in the north in order to adequately protect northern cities from Hezbollah's short to medium range rockets. Israel has noted that a war against Hezbollah will be a war against Lebanon. This should force the Lebanese to pressure Hezbollah into relative passivity, but low-level attacks by Hezbollah will still occur because Israel has not specified how this war would begin. By lowering the level of provocation necessary for war while also lowering the chances that an attack attempt will be successful, Israel can trigger more internal pressure from the Lebanese on Hezbollah while also avoiding the problematic red line. These measures will combine to keep the two actors from engaging in another war that neither of them truly want to fight.

- ⁱ Orquhart, Conal. The Guardian. "Israel planned for Lebanon war months in advance, PM says." <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/mar/09/syria.israelandthepalestinians>
- ⁱⁱ Knutset, Elise. The Daily Star. "Israel military says it will 'flush out' Hezbollah, not 'turn Lebanon to dust.'" <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2013/Dec-04/239840-israeli-military-says-it-will-flush-out-hezbollah-not-turn-lebanon-into-dust.ashx#axzz31uMwGb6q>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Adam Entous, Charles Levinson, Julian E. Barnes. Wall Street Journal. "Hezbollah Upgrades Missile Threat To Israel." <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304361604579290613920542386>
- ^{iv} Rubin, Uzi. "Hizballah's Rocket Campaign Against Northern Israel: A Preliminary Report." <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief006-10.htm>
- ^v Reuters. "Israeli can't defeat Hezbollah: Israeli expert." Dec. 16, 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/12/16/us-israel-lebanon-idUSTRE6BF20L20101216>
- ^{vi} Adler, Emanuel. "Complex Deterrence in the Asymmetric Warfare Era." p.87. University of Chicago Press.
- ^{vii} IDF Spokesperson. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Hizbullah Located in 1,000 Facilities in Southern Lebanon." March, 31, 2011. http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Hizbullah/Pages/Hizbullah_1000_facilities_southern_Lebanon_31-Mar-2011.aspx
- ^{viii} Nasrallah, Hassan. Al Jazeera Interview. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfe386PtbeU>. 2007. Web.
- ^{ix} IDF Blog. "Hezbollah Missile Threat." <http://www.idfblog.com/hezbollah/files/2013/07/Hezbollah-map-en-2-21.jpg>
- ^x Zayyat, Mahmoud. Foreign Policy. "Why Hezbollah's New Missiles are a Problem for Israel." http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/01/03/why_hezbollahs_new_missiles_are_a_problem_for_israel
- ^{xi} Kershner, Elizabet. New York Times. "Israel Shoots Down Drone, Possibly Sent By Hezbollah." <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/26/world/middleeast/israel-downs-drone-possibly-sent-by-hezbollah.html>
- ^{xii} Associated Press. CBS News. "Hezbollah says it's getting 'Game-Changing' weapons from Syria." <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hezbollah-says-its-getting-game-changing-weapons-from-syria/>
- ^{xiii} Schiff, Ze'ev. Haaretz News. "Hezbollah anti-tank fire causing most IDF casualties in Lebanon."
- ^{xiv} Inbar, Eifram. Middle East Quarterly. "How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanese War." Summer 2007. pp. 57-65. <http://www.meforum.org/1686/how-israel-bungled-the-second-lebanon-war>
- ^{xv} Harel, Amos. Haaretz News. "Israel is not prepared for another war." June 29, 2012. <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/east-side-story/israel-is-not-prepared-for-the-next-war-1.447178>
- ^{xvi} Leng, Russell. International Studies Review. December 2004. Vol. 6. Issue 4. "Escalation: Competing Perspectives and Empirical Evidence."
- ^{xvii} Haaretz. "Russian defense minister says Hezbollah uses 'terrorist' tactics." July 13, 2006. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/russian-defense-minister-says-hezbollah-uses-terrorist-methods-1.192915>
- ^{xviii} Thompson, Mark. Time Magazine. "Iron Dome: A Missile Shield That Works." November 19, 2012. <http://nation.time.com/2012/11/19/iron-dome-a-missile-shield-that-works/>
- ^{xix} Talbot, David. MIT Technology Review. "Israeli Rocket Defense System is Failing at Crucial Task, experts say." July 10, 2014. <http://www.technologyreview.com/news/528916/israeli-rocket-defense-system-is-failing-at-crucial-task-expert-analysts-say/>
- ^{xx} Ginsburg, Mitch. The Times of Israel. "From 'sewage pipes with wings' to sophisticated missiles." November 21, 2012. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-arsenal-from-sewage-pipes-to-sophisticated-rockets/>
- ^{xxi} Fassih, Farnaz. Wall Street Journal. "Gaza Fight Hints At Hezbollah Arsenal." December 4, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324784404578141240450216114>
- ^{xxii} Dziadosz, Alexander. Reuters. "Hezbollah denies receiving chemical weapons from Syria."

September 23, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-syria-crisis-hezbollah-idUSBRE98M10420130923>

^{xxiii} Dziadosz, Alexander. Reuters. "Hezbollah denies receiving chemical weapons from Syria." September 23, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-syria-crisis-hezbollah-idUSBRE98M10420130923>

^{xxiv} Krever, Mick. CNN. "Assad will never give up chemical stockpile, defected Syrian General al-Sakat tells Amanpour." October 1, 2013. "<http://amanpour.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/01/assad-will-never-give-up-chemical-stockpile-defected-syrian-general-al-sakat-tells-amanpour/>"

^{xxv} Fassihi, Farnaz. Wall Street Journal. "Gaza fight Hints at Hezbollah Arsenal." December 4, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324784404578141240450216114>

^{xxvi} The Tower. "U.S., Israel Team Up for Biannual 'Juniper Cobra' Military Exercise." May 18, 2014. <http://www.thetower.org/0349-us-israel->

[team-up-for-biannual-juniper-cobra-military-exercise/](http://www.thetower.org/0349-us-israel-team-up-for-biannual-juniper-cobra-military-exercise/)

^{xxvii} Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Summary of Katyusha Attacks-21-apr-96" April 21, 1996. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/hizbullah/pages/summary%20of%20katyusha%20attacks%20-%2021-apr-96.aspx>

^{xxviii} Zisser, Eyal. Middle East Quarterly. "Nasrallah's Defeat in the 2006 War." Winter 2009. Volume XVI (16): Number 1. "<http://www.meforum.org/2054/nasrallahs-defeat-in-the-2006-war>"

^{xxix} Williams, Dan. Reuters. "Hoping to deter Hezbollah, Israel threatens Lebanese civilians." January 29, 2014. "<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/29/us-israel-lebanon-hezbollah-idUSBREA0S1PS20140129>"

^{xxx} Ben Zion, Ilan and Rafaeli, Agam. The Times of Israel. "We have no beef with Israel, Syrian Islamist rebel groups says." July 1, 2013.