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ASSESSING EFFECTS OF U.S. SANCTIONS ON HEZBOLLAH'S *JIHAD AL-BINA'*

by

Aaron Pilkington

December 2018

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Afshon P. Ostovar
Glenn E. Robinson

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**ASSESSING EFFECTS OF U.S. SANCTIONS ON HEZBOLLAH'S
*JIHAD AL-BINA'***

Aaron Pilkington
Captain, United States Air Force
BA, American Military University, 2009
MS, National Intelligence University, 2012

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December 2018**

Approved by: Afshon P. Ostovar
Advisor

Glenn E. Robinson
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the United States designated the *Jihad al-Bina'* organization in 2007 and its postwar recovery project *Wa'ad* in 2009 for its relationship with, and activities supporting, Lebanese Hezbollah. Because of this designation, *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* became subject to sanctions which, in theory, should have undermined their ability to support Hezbollah's strategic objectives by denying *Jihad al-Bina'* access to necessary resources and funding to execute projects. This thesis examines *Jihad al-Bina'*s projects from 1988–2018 to determine how *Jihad al-Bina'* contributed to Hezbollah's strategic objectives. It also examines how U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and its *Wa'ad* project in 2009 affected their ability to carry out that work. In detailing *Jihad al-Bina'*s activities and projects during this time period, this thesis compares the number, nature and scale of projects executed by *Jihad al-Bina'* prior to and following U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and 2009, respectively. This thesis found that these 2007 and 2009 sanctions were ineffective in the near- and long-term. The sanctions failed to deny *Jihad al-Bina'* resources necessary to conduct immediate postwar reconstruction and recovery. Moreover, *Jihad al-Bina'* expanded the size and scope of projects, and grew in size and legitimacy in the postwar era between 2009 and the present.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMIA	Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina
D&D	Denial & Deception
CEDRE	Paris Economic Conference for Development (translated French Acronym)
EO	Executive Order
EU	European Union
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HIFPA	Hizbullah International Financial Prevention Act
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICMMS	Iraq Child and Maternity Morality Survey
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRP	Islamic Republic Party
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps
JBDA	<i>Jihad al-Bina'</i> Developmental Foundation
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LF	Lebanese Forces, Phalange Militias or Kataeb
MP	Member of Parliament
MRL	Multiple Rocket Launcher
NBC	Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
SSNP	Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party
QF	Qods Force
SLA	Army of Southern Lebanon
SMT	Social Movement Theory
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UGF	Underground Facility
UN	United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSC-WA	United Nations Social Commission for West Asia
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

The construction and developmental wing of Lebanese Hezbollah, *Jihad al-Bina'* or Construction Jihad, has been instrumental to Hezbollah's growing popularity and political power in Lebanon. Just as Hezbollah grew from the seeds sown by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, *Jihad al-Bina'* was purposefully seeded within Shiite Lebanon by its Iranian progenitors for the purpose of bolstering the Islamic revolution in Iran and strengthening its patronage network in Lebanon. *Jihad al-Bina'* was modeled after *Jehad-e Sazandegi*, its Iranian parent organization.

Jihad al-Bina' is a crucial part of Hezbollah's multi-faceted power consolidation strategy by playing a key role in Hezbollah's social outreach and development in Lebanon. Hezbollah is most recognized for its military prowess and Iranian patronage; however, like its military wing, its less prominent construction and social services branch challenges the competency and capability of the state. The synergistic effects of Hezbollah's various activities and sub-organizations helped transform the organization from a non-state client group to a politically powerful and legitimate apparatus within the Lebanese state.¹

Since its establishment in 1988, *Jihad al-Bina'* bolstered and brokered Hezbollah's influence first among Lebanon's Shia communities in Southern Lebanon, the Bekaa valley, and the Shiite suburbs of Beirut. With Iranian training, assistance, and funding, *Jihad al-Bina'* and other Hezbollah-affiliated non-governmental organizations (NGO) provided severely needed social and utility services, critical housing, medical facilities, and infrastructure construction and repairs following damage sustained throughout the civil war, in multiple conflicts with Israel, and most recently following attacks by Sunni extremists. By focusing its efforts in Shia territories and neighborhoods, *Jihad al-Bina'* ensured and promoted a loyal political constituency, and established itself as the predominant provider of public goods in lieu of a weakened and seemingly incompetent

¹ Eric Lob, "*Jihad al-Bina'*: State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories," *Third World Quarterly*, May 3, 2018, 1–2.

state. Effectively, these actions boosted Lebanese Shia support for Hezbollah at the expense of Lebanon's alternative Shia political party, Amal, and the state.²

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

In the wake of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the United States designated *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 for its relationship with and activities supporting Lebanese Hezbollah—a designated terrorist group. Because of this designation, *Jihad al-Bina'* became subject to secondary sanctions which, in theory, should undermine its ability to support Hezbollah's strategic objectives by denying the organization access to necessary resources and funding to execute projects. This thesis will examine and characterize *Jihad al-Bina'*'s actions from 2000 to 2018 to determine how *Jihad al-Bina'* contributed to Hezbollah's strategic objectives, and how U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 affected its ability to carry out its work. In detailing *Jihad al-Bina'*'s activities and projects during this time period, this thesis will attempt to characterize and qualify the scope and scale of collective projects executed by *Jihad al-Bina'* prior to and following the 2007 U.S. sanctions. This analysis will determine if and how the sanctions obstructed the organization from achieving its objectives. It will also attempt to characterize if and how Hezbollah maneuvered to mitigate the effects of these sanctions, and evaluate to what degree Hezbollah succeeded in this regard.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The United States has enduring interests in Lebanon and the Middle East. Because of Lebanon's weak government and military, and its precarious location on the borders of Israel and Syria, it has been the battleground of multiple conflicts involving the United States' friends and enemies. It is also a battleground of political influence between regional adversaries; namely, the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia against Iran and Syria. Lebanon is the arena in which the external battle for regional influence in the Middle East between Iran and its adversaries—primarily, the United States—began. And Iran is winning.

² Lob, "*Jihad al-Bina'*: State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories," 2–3.

The United States' strategy in the Middle East for decades includes curtailing the spread of Iranian influence in the region. U.S. National Defense Strategies from 2008 and 2018, as well as the National Military Strategy from 2015 all purport that Iran's sponsorship of terrorist organizations and proxy wars in the Middle East destabilize the region and constitute challenges of strategic importance.³

Since the 1979 revolution, Iran seeks to promote its security goals: establish, secure, and strengthen an ideal and self-sufficient Islamic state by way of perpetual revolution at home and abroad. The primary theater where the revolution takes place is the Middle East. The United States is the primary threat to achieving Iran's security goals. Iran achieves its security goals by undermining U.S. interests in the region. Iran carries out its regional policies via the IRGC Qods Force (IRGC-QF), primarily through its like-minded proxy groups. Iran supports and sometimes is directly integrated with Houthi rebels in Yemen, various *Hashd al-Shaabi* groups in Iraq, Shia minorities in Kuwait and Bahrain, and Shia militias in Syria. However, Iran pragmatically also works with other non-Shia groups—Sunnis and Christians—as long as their interests and goals align.

The United States sees Iran as “the most significant challenge to Middle East stability.”⁴ The United States government considers countering Iran's policy of exporting the revolution via its network of proxies and state-sponsored terrorist groups a top priority.⁵ The archetype for Iran's successful revolution exportation policy in the region is the diffusion and ascension of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Shortly after Israeli forces invaded Beirut in 1982, the IRGC capitalized on standing relations and networks between Iranian and Lebanese activists, clergy, and militants to form the basis of what evolved into the

³ Jim Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy,” 2018, 2; Robert M. Gates, “2008 U.S. National Defense Strategy” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, June 2008), http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nds/2008_NDS.pdf?ver=2014-06-25-124535-363, 4; Joint Chiefs Of Staff Washington Dc, “The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015: The United States Military's Contribution to National Security:” (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, June 1, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA619156>, 2.

⁴ Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy.”

⁵ Mattis, 2, 9.

Lebanese Shiite resistance organization, Hezbollah.⁶ From its inception, Hezbollah followed the lead from its Iranian leadership and adopted a stark anti-American, anti-Western stance.⁷ Hezbollah leaped to the forefront of American consciousness following the killing of hundreds in the 1983 U.S. and French barracks suicide bombings in Lebanon, the 1984 U.S. embassy bombing in Beirut, and a slew of highly publicized kidnappings, torture, and murder of Americans.

This seemingly backwards and barbaric organization that emerged from the violence in the 1980s evolved into the most capable military and political force in modern day Lebanon. In many ways, Hezbollah's military force is more powerful than the regular Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Estimates regarding the strength of Hezbollah's fighting force are broad and inconsistent. The Dubai-based Gulf Research Center estimated Hezbollah's full-time fighters were approximately 1,000 with another 6,000—10,000 volunteers.⁸ Iranian Fars News Agency states that Hezbollah has 65,000 fighters,⁹ while Israeli Haaretz news service estimates Hezbollah's current strength at 45,000 of which 21,000 are full-time fighters. It also estimates Hezbollah's rocket stockpile to have increased from the 2006 war at 12,000-14,000 rockets to approximately 120,000 rockets at the present time.¹⁰ Speaking to Hezbollah's capabilities as a formidable adversary, Israeli Brigadier General Gui Zur described Hezbollah as "by far the greatest guerilla group in the world."¹¹

Hezbollah also forms the backbone of one of the major political blocs in Lebanese politics. Hezbollah first made the decision to participate in Lebanese elections in 1992 in which it won 8 of 128 parliamentary seats, 27 of which are designated for Shia candidates.

⁶ Afshon Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 112–113.

⁷ "The Hizballah Program - An Open Letter," August 21, 2006, https://web.archive.org/web/20060821215729/http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/Hiz_letter.htm.

⁸ Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 140.

⁹ "No One Can Fight a 65,000 Combatant-Strong Hezbollah," January 15, 2013, <http://www.farsnews.com/news/13911026001114>.

¹⁰ "Hezbollah: Not a Terror Group but a Midsized Army," accessed May 25, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/st/c/prod/eng/2016/07/lebanon2/>.

¹¹ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story*, 140.

From that time, it consolidated political power in the Shia community—the largest religious bloc in Lebanon. Throughout and following the Lebanese civil war, Lebanese political alliances were divided along pro- and anti-Syrian lines; Hezbollah fell clearly into the pro-Syrian camp. Following the withdrawal of Syrian forces in 2005, the pro-Syrian groups coalesced around Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) in the shape of the March 8 alliance. During the years that followed, Hezbollah effectively collapsed the government in protest to government and international efforts to investigate and prosecute the assassination of former prime minister, Rafik al-Hariri, which likely would have implicated Syrian government leadership and Hezbollah members. In the subsequent government, Hezbollah maneuvered its way into holding key cabinet positions and won additional seats in the 2009 elections. New proportional representation electoral laws implemented prior to the 2018 elections led to dissipation of the March 8 alliance.¹² The resultant alliances led to Hezbollah and Hezbollah-friendly representatives from Amal and the FPM to gain over a third of the seats in parliament. This represents the largest portion of political representation and influence Hezbollah accrued to date.¹³

Despite Hezbollah's rise in prominence, the violence that characterized the emergence of Hezbollah in its early years remains a permanent fixture in the way the American government perceives the organization today. Hezbollah is by far the most prominent face of Iran's revolution abroad. Since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, the United States strives to contain the spread of Iranian influence across the Middle East. The United States unabashedly led a broad company of international support for Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war from 1980–1988. More recently, U.S. forces clashed with IRGC-led proxies throughout the second Iraq war.

Given the strategic importance the United States places on stopping the spread of Iran's influence and the growth of Hezbollah, this paper will analyze the effects of U.S. efforts in Lebanon in this regard. Since 2005 and the withdrawal of Syrian forces from

¹² “New Vote Law Leaves Lebanese Perplexed | News , Lebanon Elections | THE DAILY STAR,” accessed May 25, 2018, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Mar-07/440551-new-vote-law-leaves-lebanese-perplexed.ashx>.

¹³ “Results of the 2018 Lebanese General Elections,” accessed May 25, 2018, <http://www.interior.gov.lb/AdsDetails.aspx?ida=281>.

Lebanon, the United States invested more than \$1.4 billion in the LAF.¹⁴ This was in part to maintain some parity with Hezbollah's increasing capability. However, these investments did little to curb Hezbollah's growth as Hezbollah does not rely on the Lebanese government for funding. In fact, since its withdrawal from Lebanon following the Marine barracks and embassy bombings, the United States' half-hearted policies in Lebanon have done little to contain the military or political growth of Hezbollah.

Moreover, the United States did little to support the Lebanese government or rival political groups at the level necessary to counter Hezbollah's growing influence throughout Lebanon. Hezbollah's growing popularity in the Shia-dominant areas of Southern Lebanon, the Bekaa valley, and the Shia suburbs of Beirut was not a given nor is it a mystery—it provided services in the areas neglected by the government. In these areas, Hezbollah invested heavily through its social and construction sub-organizations, such as *Jihad al-Bina'* and other Hezbollah-affiliated NGOs. Specifically, *Jihad al-Bina'* provided essential services, utilities, vocational training, medical services, financial assistance, and rebuilt many of the facilities damaged during Israeli attacks and during the Lebanese civil war.¹⁵ Effectively, *Jihad al-Bina'* ensured the concentration of Lebanon's Shia populations remained in place and provided a Hezbollah-friendly population from which the organization could draw recruits and rely upon during elections.¹⁶ To counter Hezbollah, the United States placed sanctions on *Jihad al-Bina'*. This paper will examine if these sanctions had their desired effect.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Little scholarly literature focusing on the effectiveness of sanctions targeting *Jihad al-Bina'*, Hezbollah, or Hezbollah's affiliates could be located. However, there is no shortage of literature on the Hezbollah organization as a whole. Within that body of literature, certain works constitute the baseline pseudo-cannon on Hezbollah and

¹⁴ "Cuts to U.S. Aid Will Affect Support to Lebanese Army | Nicholas Blanford," AW, accessed May 28, 2018, <https://thearabweekly.com/cuts-us-aid-will-affect-support-lebanese-army>.

¹⁵ Eric Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)" (Princeton, 2013), 266.

¹⁶ Eric Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*," 152.

continually inform further, more detailed research. These authors explain the emergence, growth, and development of Hezbollah and form a body of literature focusing on the Iran-Lebanon nexus and Shiite transnationalism. Naim Qassem and Augustus Norton both detail the political history of Lebanon, as well as the social history of Lebanon's Shia community within this political context.¹⁷ Both describe Hezbollah's evolution from a fledgling guerilla fighting force to a complex resistance organization with an essential and growing military force, a strong political presence, and a successful social development branch.¹⁸ As Eric Lob points out, each of these scholars acknowledged that Hezbollah's social welfare and development services helped gain popular support and attract recruits. However, none of them articulate the U.S. policy response to these organizations, nor the effects of the U.S. response.¹⁹

Like Qassem and Norton, Judith Harik's works focus on Hezbollah's transformation. However, she highlights the instrumentalism of Hezbollah's social services and public works in this transformation. Her nuanced works challenge the United States and Israel's position that Hezbollah is unequivocally a terrorist organization, but rather a legitimate political and religious force, and most importantly, a resistance movement. She highlights that Hezbollah's military actions are for the most part limited to legitimate military targets or are responses in kind.²⁰ Because many states including U.S. allies favor Harik's nuanced characterizations of the Hezbollah organization and designate its separate branches independently, her works shed light on complexities related to acquiring a consensus on the legitimacy Hezbollah's actions.

The literature on Hezbollah's identity and ideology focuses on the justifications and mechanisms the organization utilized to transform from a seemingly uncompromising

¹⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story*; Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: A Story from Within*, Third (London: Saqi Books, 2012).

¹⁸ Sami Hermez, review of *Review of Hezbollah: A Short History*, by Augustus Richard Norton, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 1 (2009): 148–49.

¹⁹ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina*': From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)."

²⁰ Robert Brenton Betts, "Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism," *Middle East Policy*; *Washington* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 160–62; Judith P. Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London - New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

dogmatic group to a politically savvy pragmatic one. Hamzeh's foundational work on Hezbollah attempts to reconcile the group's terrorist past and militant character with its emergent political role in Lebanon. He characterizes how the group's religio-political ideology informs and guides its military, political, and social initiatives. Hamzeh believes Hezbollah follows a "gradualist-pragmatic" approach en route to its ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon.²¹ This pragmatism enables the group to work within a political and sectarian plurality. Because this pragmatism allows Hezbollah to stray from or pause its quest toward a new Islamic state, Hamzeh advocates for domestic and international policies that integrate Hezbollah more organization rather than isolate it, as sanctions would. Similarly, Joseph Alagha determined that "[Hezbollah] changes as circumstances change." Alagha argues that Hezbollah altered its power-building strategy from a less-effective one centered on military force to its current and ever-adapting political strategy which enabled it to maintain its independent military and grow more powerful than the government.²² While both authors point to Hezbollah's social service organizations as evidence of their pragmatic metamorphosis, their significant writings related to *Jihad al-Bina'* and the Al-Shahid Foundation predate or ignore U.S. sanctions.

Harik's characterization of Hezbollah agrees with, if not informs another thin body of literature which attempts to explain the growth of Hezbollah in the face of sanctions. These authors articulate how even amongst allies a lack of consensus within the international community on what constitutes a terrorist organization is driven by domestic political necessity and may render sanctions useless. Peter Margulies writes that the European Union's reticence to designate the entirety of the Hezbollah organization as terrorist—instead of just the military wing—allows the organization to channel fungible money through its political apparatus to the military wing.²³ Some states are hesitant to blacklist the entire organization because of the expansiveness of its operations and the

²¹ Ahmad Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, First (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 112.

²² Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Identity Construction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Joseph Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

²³ Peter Margulies, "Terrorist Sanctions: The Clash in U.S. and EU Approaches," 2016, 3.

avenue it provides foreign governments to work within Lebanon. This provides Hezbollah with additional avenues by which it may circumvent U.S. sanctions. However, no detailed scholarly work in this regard could be located.

The literature which focuses on Hezbollah's social organizations and work is Danawi's foundational work focuses on Hezbollah's social institutions—*Al-Shahid* and *Jihad al-Bina'*—and organizational strategies that propelled the organization to prominence in Lebanon and the region. Her work brings to light how the efficiency with which these organizations operate directly correlates to Hezbollah's military and political successes. These organizations have tied it to the fabric of Lebanese society

Eric Lob authors the most congruent body of scholarly literature dedicated to *Jihad al-Bina'* in Lebanon, as well as its Iranian parent organization, *Jehad-e Sazandegi*. Lob focuses on the mechanisms of social movement theory (SMT) that shed light on the diffusion of *Jehad-e Sazandegi* into Shiite Lebanon; these are, mobilizing structures via activist networks, political opportunity (political instability and military conflict), and culture framing on a common ideology.²⁴ His works detail *Jihad al-Bina'*'s role in Hezbollah's consolidation of power in Lebanese politics through provision of services, post-war reconstruction, and by strengthening and combining the religious and political identity of Lebanese Shiite citizens.²⁵ However, Lob only mentions in passing U.S. efforts to counter Hezbollah's utilization of *Jihad al-Bina'* by enplacing sanctions in 2007 but offers no elaboration.

Most of the literature focusing on Hezbollah and sanctions are policy recommendation pieces. Nearly all of these pieces are written prior to sanction implementation, and those that follow often advocated for further sanctions without reviewing the effectiveness of previous sets of sanctions. Matthew Levitt authors a broad and extensive body of literature on terrorist group finances and policy recommendations, including advocating a policy of sanctions against various Hezbollah affiliates. In his book

²⁴ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)."

²⁵ Lob, "*Jihad al-Bina'*: State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories," 1.

Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God, he characterizes Hezbollah as Iran's junior partner. It is not only a group that emerged and vies for power in Lebanon; Hezbollah also does the bidding of its Iranian senior partner and is committed to operational terrorism in the Levant, and a worldwide clandestine campaign of counter-US and Israeli propaganda and illicit fundraising.²⁶ More broadly, Dr. Levitt authors a rich body of research which exposes funding activities of terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah. Hezbollah's fundraising activities are often illegal and may circumvent state-level sanctions due to their very nature. These illicit or otherwise difficult-to-track activities include Iranian state sponsorship, a global network of foreign expatriate remittances, charities and front organizations, criminal enterprises such as drug trafficking, and deceptive solicitation and financing.²⁷ Dr. Levitt also details how terrorist organizations attempt to evade the negative effects of sanctions by setting up parallel organizations other than those sanctioned which perform the same functions under a new name. This forces governments into a metaphorical game of whack-a-mole in that each time an organization is sanctioned, another pops up in its stead. He also finds that terrorist organizations obfuscate their illicit activities by engaging in legitimate, even philanthropic activities to reinforce a benign character of the organization.²⁸ However, like many authors that address sanctions against Hezbollah, Levitt's policy papers and sanction writings are limited to recommending sanctions to spread the growth of the organization but stop short of reviewing the effects of these sanctions later on. The implication from these collective works is that, in short, sanctions work.

Indeed, sanctions may accomplish their limited goals. For example, Lob states that Hezbollah's *Jihad al-Bina'* likely did not play a prominent role in post 2006 war

²⁶ Thomas F. Lynch, "Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God," *Prism : A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations*; Washington 5, no. 1 (2014): 132–35.

²⁷ Matthew Levitt and Michael Jacobson, "The Money Trail: Finding, Following, and Freezing Terrorist Finances," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, no. Policy Focus #89 (November 2008), 57–59.

²⁸ Matthew Levitt, "Hiding Terrorist Activity," Blog, *Middle East Strategy at Harvard* (blog), January 6, 2009, <https://blogs.harvard.edu/mesh/2009/01/hiding-terrorist-activity/>.

reconstruction, “perhaps as a result of U.S. sanctions”²⁹ implemented in 2007. He then points out that Hezbollah passed this responsibility to a new affiliated construction organization, *Wa’ad*. The *Wa’ad* project then became subject to sanctions in 2009 for its affiliation with Hezbollah.³⁰ Levitt advocated for both sets of these sanctions and more.³¹ However, while much has been written about the Hezbollah organization as a whole, there is not a body of literature dedicated to analyzing the effects of U.S. sanctions targeting the organization.

The preceding review started by addressing academic literature explaining the emergence of the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon. It then covered authors who focus on Hezbollah’s ideology, and its transformation from a militant to political group. Lastly, the review covered authors that analyze Hezbollah’s finances and support organizations, such as *Jihad al-Bina’*. While much has been written about Hezbollah’s social and political history and Shiite transnationalism, little scholarly research has been conducted on U.S. efforts in Lebanon to counter Hezbollah’s *Jihad al-Bina’* organization, or other Hezbollah-affiliated NGOs. Much of the research touching upon this subject relates to terrorist financing and advocates policies, such as sanctions, to target and dry up Hezbollah’s global finance network. However, most of these papers advocate new policies without reviewing the effectiveness of previously-implemented sanctions. Most recently, some scholarly research detailed how *Jihad al-Bina’* in Lebanon supports Hezbollah’s strategic objectives. However, no research could be located which dives into the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions on *Jihad al-Bina’*’s ability to support Hezbollah’s strategic objectives.

²⁹ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina’*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 174.

³⁰ “Treasury Designates Hizballah’s Construction Arm,” accessed May 24, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp271.aspx>.

³¹ Matthew Levitt, “Attacking Hezbollah’s Financial Network: Policy Options,” § Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives (2017), <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20170608/106094/HHRG-115-FA00-Wstate-LevittM-20170608.pdf>.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis seeks to determine if U.S. sanctions which targeted Hezbollah's *Jihad al-Bina'* organization were effective. In the years since its foundation in 1988, *Jihad al-Bina'* served as Hezbollah's official reconstruction and development organization and shaped the organization's evolution from fledgling violent insurgent group to legitimate political party in Lebanon. It supported Hezbollah by consolidating a social and political base in Lebanon's Shia territories. Apart from conducting post-war infrastructure and housing renovation and reconstruction, *Jihad al-Bina'* conducted counseling, finance, and assistance services to promote self-sufficiency and income generation. *Jihad al-Bina'* attracted recruits, compensated the families of Hezbollah fighters killed in battle, and secured votes during elections.³²

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, *Jihad al-Bina'* is a conduit for terrorism financing due to its ties with Hezbollah. Specifically, the organization was officially sanctioned for its activities following the 2006 war with Israel. Hezbollah used *Jihad al-Bina'* to raise funds and bolster Hezbollah's standing through construction projects in southern Lebanon. It sought funding for these projects by employing "deceptive means [and] . . . practices, applying in the name of proxies not publicly linked to [Hezbollah]." *Jihad al-Bina'* became subject to secondary sanctions on February 20, 2007.³³ This thesis argues that while the specific sanctions implemented likely stifled *Jihad al-Bina'*'s activities and consequently its ability to support Hezbollah, they likely did not obstruct Hezbollah's growing popularity among Lebanon's Shia nor the growth in political power of the organization. To test this, I advance the following two hypotheses.

1. FIRST HYPOTHESIS

U.S. sanctions placed against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and thereafter did not curb the organization's activities. *Jihad al-Bina'* effectively circumvented the effects of sanctions

³² Lob, "Jihad al-Bina': State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories," 10.

³³ "Treasury Targets Hizballah Construction Company," accessed May 8, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1341.aspx>.

with the help of foreign funding, by channeling funding from other non-sanctioned entities, and by setting up new organizations with parallel functions.

2. SECOND HYPOTHESIS

US sanctions helped to reinforce Hezbollah's resistance identity and spurred Hezbollah's consolidation of influence and power in Lebanon's Shia communities. Because *Jihad al-Bina'* provides critical services to Lebanon's Shia territories, the U.S. narrative of Hezbollah's terrorist classification did not resonate. Moreover, U.S. sanctions likely played into the anti-American, anti-Israeli resistance narrative Hezbollah maintains and helped Hezbollah gain sympathy and support away from Amal, which is more closely integrated into what is perceived by the Shia community as a weak state apparatus that does not have their interests in mind.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis will be comprised of a comparative case study of *Jihad al-Bina's* projects and activities primarily in Lebanon's Shia territories of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa valley, and Beirut's Shia suburbs before and after U.S. sanctions were emplaced on the organization starting in February 2007. The purpose of this study is to characterize and qualify the scope and scale of *Jihad al-Bina's* collective projects executed between 1988 through mid-2007 when the group was designated by the U.S. Treasury, against projects conducted from mid-2007 to the present. Although sanctions were first implemented mid-2007, the first case study will take into account data from projects through 2008 because some of these projects would have been funded prior to sanction implementation in mid-2007. Where contradictory data is found, that project's data will be placed in the appropriate case study—pre or post-sanctions. To test the hypotheses listed above, this study will determine if and how U.S. sanctions affected *Jihad al-Bina's* planned and executed projects, operating budget volumes, as well as overall costs of these projects where this data is available.

Research for this thesis will include primary source literature and media reporting in Arabic. Secondary sources will include government reports, non-governmental organization (NGO) reports, books, journal articles, and scholarly discourses about

relevant topics. Primary sources will include news reports from both Western and Middle Eastern media, foreign government websites, statements, and propaganda. This case study will focus on scholarly publications and books detailing *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities during these time frames. It will also utilize primary sources in English and Arabic published by *Jihad al-Bina*' and the Lebanese government. Notably, this study will build upon research conducted on *Jihad al-Bina*' by Eric Lob and Matthew Levitt. Lob's research includes much of, but is not an exhaustive source of available data on *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities since 1988. Moreover, his research is not set up comparatively pre and post-2008. Levitt's works detail Hezbollah's illicit financial networks and funding operations and inform this paper on U.S. government justifications and pretexts for placing sanctions on *Jihad al-Bina*'. However, as previously highlighted, Levitt's works don't include post-sanction analyses on the results of sanctions. In other words, Levitt's papers don't shed light on whether or to what extent stifling *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities also stifled Hezbollah's consolidation of power in Lebanon. Research will include works primarily in English or Arabic and limited French translated to English.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis will comprise five chapters. The first chapter will contain the introduction and literature review. The second chapter will consist of the case study of *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities as described above between 1988 through 2008. Although sanctions were first imposed mid-2007, most projects completed through 2008 would have been funded prior to sanctions in early 2007. Data to the contrary will be highlighted. The third chapter will elucidate *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities and projects in the post-sanction time period. The fourth chapter will provided a comparative analysis of the pre and post sanction time periods and present findings. The final chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications of thesis findings to scholarly debates about the effectiveness of U.S. efforts to curb the growth of Hezbollah, and to a greater extent, the spread of Iranian influence in the Middle East. Lastly, in this chapter I will suggest focus areas for additional research.

G. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the research question, presented the relevant authoritative literature on Hezbollah, Hezbollah's ideology, and its shifting identity. It also covered the literature which focuses on Hezbollah's social service institutions and how those organizations helped Hezbollah rise to power and prominence in Lebanon. Lastly, it presented the rich but small body of literature that covers Hezbollah's financing and U.S. sanctions. No literature yet exists that assesses the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions against Hezbollah. For the purposes of this thesis, the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions will be determined by assessing if and how they accomplished their intended results: to stifle *Jihad al-Bina*'s operations, and to counter Hezbollah's consolidation of power in Lebanon. With effectiveness defined, the following question was put forth: were U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina*' effective? The existing body of literature cannot answer this question. To answer the research question, two hypotheses were presented. First, U.S sanctions placed against *Jihad al-Bina*' in 2007 and thereafter did not curb the organization's activities; second, U.S. sanctions helped to reinforce Hezbollah's resistance identity and spurred Hezbollah's consolidation of influence and power in Lebanon's Shia communities. The research presented in this thesis find that U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina*' and its *Wa'ad* projected implemented in 2007 and 2009 were ineffective. The sanctions failed to prevent the organizations from accessing domestic and international funding, nor did sanctions prevent *Jihad al-Bina*' from executing projects. Moreover, *Jihad al-Bina*' expanded operations and further integrated with the Lebanese government and international organizations in the post-2006 war era.

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II. *JIHAD AL-BINA*’ FROM 1988 TO 2007

A. INTRODUCTION

This section will examine data on early activities of Lebanese Hezbollah’s *Jihad al-Bina* Development Foundation from its inception to the time shortly after the United States first imposed sanctions on the organization in 2007. This chapter will show how *Jihad al-Bina*’ activities helped Hezbollah consolidate power and influence through mid-2007. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact time period when U.S. sanctions began impacting *Jihad al-Bina*’ operations, this section will present projects through mid-2007, after sanctions took effect, because most projects conducted through this time period would likely not have been affected by sanctions. To assess the effect sanctions had on the organization’s activities, the next chapter will discuss and evaluate data on *Jihad al-Bina*’s activities following the sanctions. At the end of this chapter, I will present an assessment of the organization and its overall activities from the data available.

Data on *Jihad al-Bina*’s activities is limited. Official data from Hezbollah’s Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation was available to researchers until 2010. The data acquired on *Jihad al-Bina*’s activities through researchers is most often presented in aggregate form covering a span years. It is unclear if Hezbollah’s Consultative Center provided annual reports on *Jihad al-Bina*’ activities to researchers or in aggregate form. To accurately capture the pace—acceleration or deceleration—of *Jihad al-Bina*’s activities, this information would ideally be available in annual format. After the Arab Spring in 2011, Hezbollah stopped releasing data or even speaking to foreign journalists and researchers.³⁴ In general, official data on *Jihad al-Bina*’s activities after this time period is difficult to acquire. The available aggregate data in this chapter will be presented in the format presented by original researchers.

Official data presented in aggregate form will be supplemented by information located by scouring hundreds of open source media reports from 1988 to 2008. In the

³⁴ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina*’: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 122.

absence of clear and concise annual reports or aggregate data, open source news reports are the best publicly available data on *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities pre and post-US sanctions. At times the information provided by news reports supplements aggregate data; at times it is the only available information where aggregate reports on *Jihad al-Bina*' activity leave information gaps for certain time periods. Much of the information located in open source reporting comes directly from *Jihad al-Bina*' leadership, engineers, or other credible representatives.

Lastly, this study builds on the work of previous scholars whose focused works on *Jihad al-Bina*' and Hezbollah's reconstruction and social works are foundational to this topic. Dima Danawi's book, *Hizbullah's Pulse* details *Jihad al-Bina*'s social service activities from its inception through the late 1990s. Hana Alamuddin documented the destruction that occurred in Lebanon during the 2006 war with Israel, as well as the monumental reconstruction and recovery efforts delegated to *Jihad al-Bina*'s *Wa'ad* Project from 2007 to early 2010. Ahmed Hamzeh's work on Hezbollah's transformation includes official data on *Jihad al-Bina*'s activities from its inception until 2004. Judith Harik's works include information on *Jihad al-Bina*'s funding and social services in Lebanon's Shiite territories acquired from contemporaneous open source news reports until Hezbollah's entry into politics in 1992. Eric Lob's work is informed by data and insights from these authors and incorporates first-hand research and interviews conducted with Lebanese citizens—Hezbollah members, supporters, and non-supporters—to describe the transfusion of Iranian construction and development organizations to Lebanon through 2012. Lob's works constitute the most current research on *Jihad al-Bina*. In this chapter, the sum of *Jihad al-Bina*'s collective actions between 1988 and 2008 based on all available information will be analyzed.

B. IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY FOREIGN POLICY AND THE FORMATION OF HEZBOLLAH

1. The Islamic Revolution and Iran's Revolutionary Ideology

The 1979 Islamic revolution and actions of the resultant government were guided by a revolutionary ideology developed and popularized by religious sociologist and

philosopher Ali Shariati and Khomeini in the 1960s and 1970s. Shariati taught that God intended Islam to help the Muslim community (*umma*) become a classless utopia. This could be achieved only under a government system which places primacy on God's laws over man's and corrupt systems such as capitalism or Marxism. Shariati described the transition process as a "liberation struggle," or *jihad* that Iranian society must pursue to transform from the sad state under the Shah to a state of "social solidarity." He advocated for armed resistance against the Pahlavi regime. The clergy should be the natural leaders to guide the process; however, Shariati claimed that the Shia clergy's political reticence caused religious stagnation in Iran—what he termed "black" Shiism. To establish an Islamic utopia in Iran, intellectuals and clerics needed to "rediscover and revitalize the original meaning of revolutionary Islam,"³⁵ or "red" Shiism. Shariati hoped his writings and teachings would initiate this revitalization.³⁶

The Shah's crackdowns in the early 1960s radicalized and aligned many in the clerical class with revolutionary ideology—chief among them, Khomeini. The Shah enacted a number of social reforms which the clergy opposed—women's suffrage, for example—and land reforms which angered the landowning class, many of whom were clergy. Under the premise of abolishing feudalism, the government forced landed elites to sell land to the government which it then sold to peasants for below-market value prices. Moreover, the reforms caused "rents from an estimated 10,000 villages [which] helped finance the clerical establishment [became] eligible for redistribution," according to Sandra Mackey.³⁷ The Shah's reforms were met with voices of opposition and discontent from the typically quietist clerics. In response, the Shah violently squashed protests led by cleric activists. The tipping point that radicalized many of the clergy was the government's violent crackdown during a protest at the Fayziyyeh theological school in Qom on March 22, 1963. Armored police killed clergy members and students, throwing their bodies from

³⁵ Ervand Abrahamian, "The Islamic Left," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left* (London - New York: Routledge, 2004), 269. Cited in Ostovar, 35.

³⁶ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 35–36.

³⁷ Sandra Mackey, *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation* (New York: Dutton, 1996), 221.

the school roof.³⁸ In June, Khomeini gave a speech at the Fayziyyeh School in which he accused the Shah of being “fundamentally opposed to Islam . . . and the existence of the religious class.”³⁹

As clashes between the Shah’s forces and clerics grew more intense, Khomeini left Iran in 1964 but grew in prominence, solidifying his role as the father of the Islamic revolution. From abroad, Khomeini continued elaborating and propagating his revolutionary ideology. His revolutionary political thought, what Ostovar calls Khomeinism—“radical anti-imperialism, economically conscious Shiite populism, and Islamic government under clerical rule”⁴⁰—resonated with millions of disenfranchised Iranians and set him apart from his contemporaries. Like Shariati, Khomeini taught that to establish an ideal Islamic society, the state should be rid of Western influence. Further, a true Islamic government should be under the guardianship (*velayat*) of a senior cleric (*faqih*) or a committee of senior clergy. By the time the Pahlavi dynasty crumbled in 1979, Khomeini was the clear favorite to lead the emergent Iranian government.

Following the revolution, Iranian clerics drove the formation of the new government and shaped it after the revolutionary model envisioned by Ayatollah Khomeini. Two bodies were appointed by Khomeini to manage the post-revolution transition period. The first was the Provisional Government led by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan. Under the Pahlavi government, Bazargan led the pro-democratic Liberation Movement of Iran. After the revolution, Bazargan represented a body of non-clerical provisional government members appointed by Khomeini which had experience in the previous government, but who also supported the Islamic revolution. Though these political appointees likely never had the clout to resist the power and influence of the Khomeinist clerics involved in forming the new government, they formed the portion of the body that may have still valued semblances of secularism. Although previous

³⁸ Mohsen Milani, *The Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 91; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran’s Revolutionary Guard*, 37.

³⁹ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 37.

⁴⁰ Ostovar, 38.

experience in governance qualified these non-clerical members for appointment to the Provisional Government, their association with the Pahlavi government and non-clerical status placed them in a position of inferiority to the clerics. The Provisional Government was subordinate to the second body—the Revolutionary Council. This body was led by Khomeini and consisted of a number of anonymous clerics.⁴¹ Moreover, as the Khomeinists grew more powerful clerics from the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) pressured Bazargan to appoint four IRP clerics to his cabinet. Khomeinist clerics also swept the election for the Assembly of Experts which was charged with drafting the new Republic's constitution.⁴² After a photograph of Bazargan shaking hands with an American diplomat in Algeria became public, Iranian outrage and fear of the return of American influence drove pro-Khomeini activists to storm the U.S. embassy in Tehran. Bazargan appealed to Khomeini to denounce the embassy takeover, but he refused. In protest Bazargan resigned and the Provisional Government subsequently dissolved. The clerics then faced little real opposition to forming the new constitution and government after Khomeini's "guardianship of the jurist" design.⁴³

The success of the Islamic revolution in Iran encouraged its leaders to replicate the movement abroad. As they saw it, Muslims around the world faced the same oppression Iranian's suffered under the Shah from other imperialist and Western-backed non-representative governments. Moreover, if Iran did not export the revolution it would be threatened by neighboring states and Western imperialism which formed the greatest threat to Iran. Iran's revolutionary leaders advocated for exporting the revolution to the Levant, Afghanistan, Eritrea, the Philippines, and Bahrain.⁴⁴ Many of these leaders were seasoned guerilla fighters who gained experience fighting alongside PLO militants against Israel, as well as with Lebanese Shia groups during the civil war.

⁴¹ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 42.

⁴² Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 49.

⁴³ Ostovar, 61.

⁴⁴ Ostovar, 105.

Some of the most vocal proponents for revolutionary internationalism and intervention were within Khomeini's inner circle. Ayatollah Hosayn-Ali Montazeri, an extremely influential cleric who was at one point Khomeini's successor preached that Muslims must not only support oppressed Muslims in southern Lebanon in word, but in deed.⁴⁵ For his son Mohammad—one of the founding fathers of the IRGC—mustering Iranian support for the anti-Israeli resistance in Lebanon was a top priority. Directly following the success of the Islamic revolution, Mohammad advocated for sending IRGC members to Lebanon to assist Palestinian refugees and guerillas, as well as to burgeon Shiite resistance efforts. Though Montazeri senior's interventionism provided the ideological momentum for the IRGC's actions abroad throughout the 1980s, Iranian leaders were initially focused on defending the revolution at home following the Iraq invasion on September 22, 1980.

2. The Iran-Iraq War

At outset of the war, Iranian leadership was preoccupied with threats to the homeland rather than foreign operations. At home, Khomeinists faced violent attacks from various opposition groups including leftists, nationalists, liberals, students, and some senior clergy.⁴⁶ To put down opposition violence, Iranian authorities and particularly the IRGC jailed, tortured, and executed thousands between 1980 and 1983. Iranian in-fighting during the early years of the Iran-Iraq war led to thousands of Iranian deaths.

During the same time period, Iraqi troops initially invaded and captured oil-rich Iranian territories around Khorramanshar and Shatt al-Arab. Regular and IRGC units were overwhelmed fighting Iraqi forces along Iran's western borders. However, by the spring of 1982 Iranian forces recaptured much of this territory, dealing significant defeats to Iraqi forces. Rather than pursue a peace agreement, Iranian leaders felt confident their troops could make further gains and decided to conduct a counter-invasion and spread the revolution to the people of Iraq. Though Iranian leaders were confident in their righteous

⁴⁵ "Ayatollah Montazeri Notes Political Nature of Islam" (Tehran Domestic Service, September 28, 1979), cited in Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 106.

⁴⁶ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 72.

cause, they failed to foresee the lopsided support Iraq would receive from the international community. Rather than negotiate a peace deal after retaking territory along the Iran-Iraq border, the decision to launch a counter-invasion lengthened the war another six years, and led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Iranians.

3. Exporting the Revolution to Lebanon

The confidence that fueled Iran's decision to invade Iraq also encouraged its leaders to expand the revolution elsewhere. The first and most pressing issue was to defeat Saddam because as Iranian leaders often stated, "the road to Jerusalem runs through Karbala."⁴⁷ However, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 provided the justification and pretext Iranian's interventionist leaders needed to send IRGC guardsmen to Lebanon to support the cause of Palestine. Iran's campaign in Lebanon was seen as a second part of a two-part Iranian strategy to liberate Jerusalem and to export the revolution. With the approval of Khomeini, members of the IRGC 27th Brigade who distinguished themselves in the reconquest of Khorramanshar only two weeks prior arrived in Syria on June 11th with members of the regular army's elite 58th ranger division. This special unit was combined and sent to Lebanon under the name "Forces of Muhammad the Prophet of God."⁴⁸ Their experience in guerilla and conventional fighting tactics demonstrated Iran's initial commitment to exporting the revolution abroad and to promoting the cause of oppressed Muslims everywhere.

However, the revolutionary fervor and Pan-Islamist sentiments of Iran's interventionist leaders did not align with Syria's ambitions in Lebanon. The guardsmen were received coldly by the Hafez al-Assad government which was reluctant to allow Iranian influence grow in Lebanon. Upon arrival, IRGC fighters were placed in barracks that resembled shantytowns and were left without provisions for meals nor hygiene. Syrian officials did not allow fighters to do anything more than reconnoitering operations on the Lebanese border. When Rifaat al-Assad, Hafez's younger brother came to visit the

⁴⁷ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guards*, 78, 99.

⁴⁸ H. E. Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (Oxford: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 213–214.

guardsmen, he repeatedly drew attention to the Israeli cease-fire which began the day the guardsmen arrived in Syria.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Syrian leaders feared Iranian presence in Lebanon would weaken Amal. Amal was a close ally of the Syrian government and supported Syria's intervention into the Lebanese civil war and politics. On June 25th, Iran's top military officials counseled Khomeini that Israel's attack in Lebanon was meant to distract Iran and that with Israel's victory complete, there was little to gain by keeping Iran's elite troops in Syria and out of the fight with Iraq. Stating that the road to Jerusalem passed through Karbala, Khomeini ordered the redeployment of Iranian troops immediately. Shortly thereafter, the Iranian embassy in Beirut became surrounded by Israeli and Lebanese Forces, or Phalange militia fighters. Fearing infiltration, the Iranian military attaché in Damascus, Ahmad Motevasselian traveled to Beirut under diplomatic cover with the Iranian charge d'affaires in Beirut to destroy sensitive documents. On their way, they were kidnapped by Lebanese Forces and never seen from again.⁵⁰ It was later revealed that they were immediately executed on the orders of Lebanese Forces intelligence chief, Elie Hobeika⁵¹ who was likely working as an agent for Syrian intelligence.⁵² On Khomeini's orders, only a few hundred guardsmen with the assistance of clerics from the IRGC's Cultural Unit were sent to the Bekaa valley to set up training centers.⁵³

a. Amal

During the IRGC's early years in Lebanon, its work focused on building up Palestinian and Lebanese resistance against Israel. IRGC guardsmen and clerics capitalized on two main political networks fostered by Iranian activists with Palestinians and Shiites in Lebanon that predated the revolution. One of the most important Iranian-Lebanese

⁴⁹ Chehabi, 214–215.

⁵⁰ Chehabi.

⁵¹ *Agence France Presse*, April 2, 1997, consulted at www.farsinet.com/news/apr97b.html, cited in Chehabi, 215.

⁵² "Elie Hobeika's Assassination: Covering Up the Secrets of Sabra and Shatilla," accessed October 9, 2018, <http://www.jcpa.org/art/brief1-17.htm>.

⁵³ Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," 216.

relationships to the Islamic revolution as well as the Lebanese resistance existed between Mustafa Chamran and Musa al-Sadr. During the Lebanese civil war, Mustafa Chamran helped establish the Lebanese Resistance Regiments (the Amal militia) to help protect Shia interests in southern Lebanon along with the Amal Movement's primary founder, cleric Musa al-Sadr. Chamran and al-Sadr were both active leaders and protest organizers in the lead up to the Islamic revolution. Speaking to the duo's crucial role, Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, Muhammad 'Ali Sobhani once stated, "Musa Sadr and Chamran were the backbone (*jism al-asaasi*) of the Iranian Revolution and how one cannot speak of the Iranian revolution without mentioning these two people."⁵⁴ After the revolution, Chamran was appointed first Defense Minister of Iran and maintained close ties with Amal's leadership. Chamran was the primary conduit of Iranian funding for Amal, and the linchpin that temporarily coupled Amal's interests with Iran's until his death in June 1981.⁵⁵

The relationships fostered in the second primary Iran-Lebanon network flourished into the organization that eventually became Lebanese Hezbollah. This network also has roots with the Amal movement, but its leaders who had strong ties with low-level clergy in Shia territories in Beirut and the Bekaa valley. These clergy and other Islamists felt that Chamran and Amal were not doing enough to support the Palestinian resistance.⁵⁶ This group officially split from Amal sometime after Amal's Chairman, Nabih Berri agreed to be the Shi'i voice on the five-member Committee of National Salvation. The committee's charge was to conduct negotiations with Israel on behalf of all Lebanese communities—these negotiations would be mediated by an American diplomat.⁵⁷ Musa Fakhr Rowhani, the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon asked Berri to resign, calling the group an "American committee." Moreover, Amal's representative in Iran, Sayyid Ibrahim al-Husayn al-Musawi along with a number of other Islamists condemned Berri's acquiescence. Despite

⁵⁴ Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shi'ite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 118.

⁵⁵ Judith P. Harik, "Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran," in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (London: I.B. Tauris and St. Martin's Press, 2006), 269; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 113.

⁵⁶ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 114.

⁵⁷ Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," 216.

fierce Iranian and Lebanese Shiite opposition, Berri remained on the committee which negotiated a peace plan with Israel in which PLO fighters would be forced to leave Lebanon.

b. Islamic Amal to Hezbollah

Berri's participation in the peace negotiations and warming relations with the Lebanese government caused a rift in Amal. The Islamists led by Amal deputy secretary general Husayn al-Musawi accused Berri of abandoning the Islamic revolution championed by Musa al-Sadr and as defined by Iranian leadership and claimed Berri's actions were illegitimate. Some Amal leaders refused to recognize the peace with Israel and continued fighting Israelis. The Islamists, led by al-Musawi appealed to the Iranian ambassador in Damascus, Ali-Akbar Mohtashemi for arbitration over, effectively, continued revolution or the legitimacy of the peace deal. Mohtashemi ruled in favor of al-Musawi. Berri refused to recognize the decision. Al-Musawi immediately departed Iran for his native area in the Bekaa valley and announced the creation of a new organization called Islamic Amal and invited all Muslim "brothers" to do join him.⁵⁸

Berri's actions and the subsequent split between Islamic Amal and Amal revealed a rift in Lebanon's Shia community. Berri's actions caused many Shia to see him as soft on Israel and corrupt. Berri's decision to abandon revolutionary principles and integrate into the state committee was extremely unpopular. The committee included Bashir Gemayel, a senior leader of the Christian Phalange party and militia which formed the backbone of the Lebanese Forces and Southern Lebanese Army, both allied with and supplied by Israel. The Lebanese Forces evicted Shiites from their homes in the *dahhiya* during the civil war, and the Southern Lebanese Army was effectively Israel's proxy army in Lebanon which fought against the PLO, Amal, and eventually Hezbollah as well. Although most Shiites detested Berri's association with the committee, the outrage was felt most fiercely amongst Shia communities in the Bekaa and southern Beirut. The Shia communities of southern Lebanon were desperate to be rid of Palestinian refugees and

⁵⁸ Chehabi, 217.

fighters whose actions sparked off the 1982 war with Israel and who bore the brunt of Israeli actions. Berri was most concerned about halting the dire circumstances for Shiites in southern Lebanon who were most susceptible to Israeli attacks. As Chehabi states, “[t]hose in the Bekaa did not share the Southerners’ exasperation with the Palestinians.”⁵⁹

The peace deal reached between the Committee of National Salvation and Israel led to the expulsion of PLO fighters, the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, and accelerated the growth of Islamic Amal. Islamists, revolutionary supporters, and militant Shiites in southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs opposed to the deal flocked to the Bekaa valley. There IRGC guardsmen instructed them in religion, revolutionary Iranian Shiism, and guerilla fighting. Delegates from the different groups formed a nine-man committee to establish a new organization dedicated to Israeli resistance and following Khomeini’s guardianship of the jurist system. Al-Musawi requested that Iranian leadership provide leadership, guidance, and ultimately sponsorship of the organization. Khomeini approved the formation of a Council of Lebanon which held its first meeting in 1983. Shortly thereafter, the Council of Lebanon evolved into Hezbollah.⁶⁰

4. Hezbollah and the Lebanese Civil War

a. Violent Beginnings

Hezbollah’s violent actions during the early 1980s of the Lebanese civil war characterized the group and its Iranian patrons as uncompromising, anti-Israeli/Western, ruthless revolutionaries. After congregating in the Bekaa valley, IRGC-trained Islamic Amal fighters returned to Beirut’s southern suburbs and southern Lebanon, spreading Khomeini’s posters and ideology wherever they settled. Despite falling out with Amal, Hezbollah fighters participated in uncoordinated operations against Israeli fighters with Amal and Palestinian fighters. These groups formed what became to be known as the “Lebanese National Resistance.”⁶¹ Hezbollah suicide bombers attacked the American embassy in April 1983, and most notoriously the U.S. and French barracks on October 23,

⁵⁹ Chehabi, 217.

⁶⁰ Chehabi, 218.

⁶¹ Chehabi, 220.

1983, killing more than 300 people. Hezbollah fighters repeatedly attacked Lebanese Forces in the Bekaa valley in attempt to drive them out of the region. On November 23, 1983 they attacked the Shaykh Abdallah Barracks in Baalbek, which became the headquarters of the guardsmen in the Bekaa valley. The Lebanese government reacted by officially cutting diplomatic ties with Iran. Between 1984 and 1988, dozens of Americans and Europeans were kidnapped, tortured, and some killed by militants closely associated with Hezbollah.⁶² Though Iran denied involvement in any of these cases, some abductees were transported to and released by Iran, and Iran actively participated in release negotiations.⁶³ To Western nations, the ruthlessness with which Hezbollah conducted operations in Lebanon was attributed to Iran and its radical revolutionary ideology. Ultimately, the violence that Hezbollah directed towards Westerners in Lebanon led to American and French withdrawal by mid-1984.

b. Syria and Iran's Proxy War for Influence in Lebanon

After 1985, Hezbollah and Amal—funded by Iran and Syria, respectively—took part in a fierce competition for territory, power, and influence over the future of Lebanon. Though Syria supported Iran in the war against Iraq, its leadership was wary how the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in Lebanon might curb its influence. Syria sponsored the Syrian Social Nationalist Party's (SSNP) attempts to curb Hezbollah growth in the Bekaa valley as serious fighting broke out between the two groups in 1986. In 1987, Syrian troops directly intervened when Amal fighters were on the verge of defeat against PLO fighters in west Beirut, killing 23 Hezbollah fighters in the process. Iran, still bent on establishing an Islamic republic in Lebanon invested heavily in laying the groundwork for that purpose. In 1986, Lebanese and Iranian clerics drafted a constitution in Tehran in the style of the new Islamic republic in Iran's system in which clerics reigned supreme. Nabih Berri and Amal would not support this system and advocated for a majority democracy system. By 1987, armed clashes between the two groups broke out in Beirut and southern Lebanon. In February 1988, clashes erupted into a large-scale intra-Shiite war in Beirut's southern

⁶² Chehabi, 221–222.

⁶³ Chehabi, 222.

suburbs and in the south over the abduction of the American U.N. representative William Higgins. Amal condemned the kidnapping and rounded up suspected Hezbollah members. Amal fighters won in southern Lebanon, but with IRGC assistance, Hezbollah routed Amal fighters in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Fearing complete takeover of Beirut's suburbs by Hezbollah, Syria threatened to intervene. Iranian leaders could not afford to lose Syria as an ally, especially as Iraqi troops made gains against Iran throughout the year. In the end, Iranian leaders compromised and Syrian forces assumed control of the southwestern suburbs.⁶⁴

Iran's need to maintain Syria as an ally in and following the Iraq war forced Hezbollah to negotiate a peace deal with Amal. In January 1989 a truce between Amal and Hezbollah was signed in Damascus. Amal's hegemony over the south was recognized while Hezbollah was permitted to conduct social and political activities, and to continue operations against Israeli occupation. To maintain stability and ensure Syria's influence in Lebanon, Syrian troops would occupy the Beirut *dahhiya*. Fighting still occurred occasionally between Hezbollah and Amal fighters until a second peace deal was signed on November 5, 1990. Militant clashes between the two groups ceased when Amal disarmed along with other Lebanese national and non-national militia groups following the Taif agreement signed on October 22, 1989.⁶⁵ However, Hezbollah managed to maintain its arms by rebranding itself as a resistance force against the Israeli occupation in the south, rather than a militia. According to Magnus Ranstorp, Hezbollah was not able to maintain its arms because of its political astuteness in negotiations; rather, it was because the group still had control over a large number of Western hostages which gave it leverage with Syrian and Lebanese leaders trying to end the violent, long-drawn civil war and return Lebanon to a state of normalcy.⁶⁶ Though violent clashes between Amal fighters and Hezbollah fell to a minimum after 1989, the two organizations still competed for territory,

⁶⁴ Chehabi, 226–228.

⁶⁵ Chehabi, 228–229.

⁶⁶ Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1997), 105.

influence, political power, and Shi'i constituents in other ways as will be discussed later in the chapter.

c. Softening the Image

Iran's revolutionary ideology and uncompromising foreign policy in Lebanon extended its involvement in the Iran-Iraq war and left it isolated diplomatically. Throughout the Iraq war, Iran's revolutionary ideology, threatening rhetoric associated with exporting the revolution, and counter-invasion into Iraq alienated the country from potential allies and severely needed military equipment. The Islamic revolution was seen as a virus that if not contained would infect the entire region. Western and regional powers alike invested heavily to bolster up Iraq and increase its chances of defeating Iran. The United States pressured its allies to withhold business and resources from Iran during the war. The United States understandably ceased equipment and replacement part sales to Iran, making obsolete much of Iran's military equipment acquired prior to the revolution. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formed in 1981 to counter the revolution's spread. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait granted up to \$50 billion in war loans and grants to Iraq. Egypt and Jordan also provided Iraq with military weapons and supplies.⁶⁷ Though the Soviet Union sold military equipment to both nations, it heavily favored Iraq. Between 1984 and 1987, the Soviet Union sold \$11.5 billion in military equipment to Iraq and only \$5 million to Iran. France also sold and subsidized loans to assist Iraq's military acquisitions. Iran was forced to seek support from those few fringe nations willing to buck Western pressure to support Saddam, such as Syria, Libya, Algeria, North Korea, and some Eastern European Soviet bloc states, and China.⁶⁸ Iranian leaders realized that lopsided international support for Iraq inflicted unsustainable costs and loss of life upon Iran and ultimately forced the nation to accept a peace agreement with Iraq in August 1988.

Following back-to-back conclusions of the Lebanese civil war and the war with Iraq, Iran opted for a softer approach to foreign policy. Exhausted from nearly eight years

⁶⁷ Anthony H Cordesman and Abraham Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War, Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 5, cited in Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 81.

⁶⁸ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 82.

of war with Iraq, more pragmatic elements with the Iranian regime advocated the end of the war. Led by Rafsanjani, the Iranian government accepted UN Security Council Resolution 598 bringing the long war to an end. In August of that year, IRGC elements withdrew from the Bekaa valley back to Iran. In the years that followed, Iran began negotiating and leveraging its influence over Hezbollah for the release of Western hostages captured in Lebanon throughout the civil war.⁶⁹ Lebanese radicals felt betrayed that the Islamic republic seemingly abandoned its ambitions of establishing another Islamic republic in Lebanon.⁷⁰ While Iran may have temporarily abandoned its vision of copying the Islamic republic in Lebanon, it did not compromise its commitment to leading the resistance against Israel and its Western patrons. But to manage the resistance in a post-civil war context, it needed to take on new forms.

To help mitigate Iran's isolation after nearly a decade of revolutionary and interventionist foreign policies, Iranian leaders leveraged *Jehad-e Sazandegi*, or the Ministry of Construction Jihad. According to Lob, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* was instrumental to Khomeini and the IRP's consolidation of power over their post-revolution domestic opponents, "namely, leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements along the country's rural periphery."⁷¹ *Jehad-e Sazandegi* was formed in parallel to other important revolutionary organizations which influenced political and socioeconomic developments across Iran. In addition to *Jehad-e Sazandegi*, these organizations included the IRGC, the Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled, Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee, and the Housing Foundation. One former *Jehad-e Sazandegi* member attested that from the organization's inception, Khomeini charged it with "a clear, political mission: to win the hearts and minds of villagers through rural development and other activities, and to counter similar efforts by leftists and ethnic groups that were against Khomeini and his clerical faction."⁷² Most

⁶⁹ H.E. Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon after Khomeini," in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (London - New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 290–291.

⁷⁰ Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," 230.

⁷¹ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 29.

⁷² Interview with a former *Jehad-e Sazandegi* member in Iran on March 15, 2011, in Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 40.

literature on the Iranian revolution focuses on how the post-revolutionary government consolidated power through violence and coercion. However, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* employed a varied repertoire of non-coercive actions, including patronage, indoctrination, cooption, covert action, and logistical support (see Table 1).⁷³ According to Lob,

“[p]atronage” is the allocation of state resources or rents to reward individuals or groups for their political allegiance and support. “Indoctrination” constitutes the authoritatively imparting of a political and/or religious ideology to members of society. “Cooptation” refers to the absorption of “new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence.” “Covert action” occurs when agents, their actions, or the purposes of their actions are intended to be unknown to the general public. “Logistical support” is the provisioning of training, personnel, equipment, and facilities in support of military campaigns and operations.⁷⁴

Khomeini often told *Jehad-e Sazandegi* members that “they had a short timeframe to complete their work and that they had a lot to accomplish (e.g., building roads, bathhouses, mosques, clinics) because [Khomeini] felt tremendous pressure and a sense of urgency to amass support in the countryside.”⁷⁵

Table 1. *Jehad-e Sazandegi’s* action repertoire⁷⁶

Concepts	Actions
Patronage	Rural and agricultural services, inputs, and credit for allegiance and votes
Indoctrination	Libraries, schools, and mosques; books, film, and radio; prayer, sermons, and study
Cooptation	Islamic councils
Non-Routine Contention	Demonstrations, rallies, and protests
Covert Operations	Cultivating informants; surveilling and denouncing dissidents, insurgents, and smugglers
Logistical Support	Engineering; recruits, funds, and supplies; emergency medical; indoctrination and moral support

⁷³ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 73–74.

⁷⁴ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad,” 34–35

⁷⁵ Interview with a former JS member and Ministry of Agricultural Jihad official on April 23, 2011, in Lob, 40.

⁷⁶ Lob, 57.

Quickly after its establishment in June 1979, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* expanded its operations throughout Iran. Between 1980 and 1983, the organization built up to 25,000 Islamic councils in half the country's villages which extended Khomeini's and the IRP's administrative capacities throughout the rural areas.⁷⁷ Prior to the revolution, approximately 8,300 rural villages had access to piped or potable water. Only 8,000 km of roads extended to these rural areas, and only 4,500 rural villages received electricity. By 1989, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* extended or renovated water pipe networks, organized water delivery systems, or set up powered irrigation wells, providing water to approximately 29,500 rural villages. The organization more than tripled overall road distances to rural areas, and brought electricity to an additional 4,500 rural villages. The organization also built rural libraries, distributed millions of books to villagers, established Islamic councils and religious schools, held lectures and exhibitions across the country, and distributed millions of publications, posters, photos, and other propaganda to help enfranchise Iran's rural populations in favor of Khomeini and the IRP.⁷⁸ The organization held demonstrations and rallies in favor of candidates as well as to counter rallies organized by leftist, ethnic, and Sunni movements.⁷⁹ Moreover, the organization played a crucial logistical role for Iranian forces fighting against Iraqi invasion.⁸⁰

Of the actions that contributed to Khomeini and the IRP's power consolidation, patronage played a crucial role. The IRP relied upon *Jehad-e Sazandegi* to mobilize voters and secure votes during the first post-revolution parliamentary elections in 1980. The organization rewarded or withheld goods and services based on the political allegiance of individuals and organizations.⁸¹ Between 1980 and 1983, it also engaged in covert action to denounce and thwart political dissidents, armed insurgents, and weapons and drug traffickers supporting Khomeini and the IRP's rivals.⁸² Lob asserts that *Jehad-e Sazandegi*

⁷⁷ Lob, 63.

⁷⁸ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 293–294.

⁷⁹ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad," 64.

⁸⁰ Lob, 29.

⁸¹ Lob, 61.

⁸² Lob, 83.

played no small role in the IRP's domination of the 1980 parliamentary elections and ultimate consolidation of power in 1983; not coincidentally, the organization became official cabinet-level ministry when the new Iranian parliament passed a bill creating the Ministry of Construction Jihad on October 31, 1983.⁸³

After consolidating power, the Islamic Republic turned its attention to improving its foreign diplomatic relations to counter its growing isolation following the counter-invasion of Iraq. To motivate the ministry's members who were sent overseas and to provide a higher-sense of purpose to their mission, the government openly framed their actions as part of Iran's exporting the revolution policies. However, as Lob claims, the primary purpose of *Jehad-e Sazandegi's* overseas operations was "to mitigate Iran's diplomatic and economic isolation and expand its influence by establishing bilateral relations centered on rural and agricultural development."⁸⁴

To this end, the government utilized the new ministry to build and improve economic relationships abroad. Though this thesis will focus on the nearly identical organization set up in Lebanon by *Jehad-e Sazandegi*—Hezbollah's *Jihad al-Bina'*—the majority of the organization's efforts abroad prior to 1988 were focused in Sunni-majority countries of Albania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Tanzania. As Lob's research reveals, the ministry entered into numerous official agreements with representatives of these countries to "provide agricultural and rural development, technical support, economic assistance, and investment in infrastructure (e.g., power plants) and industry (e.g., production and processing units)."⁸⁵

Jehad-e Sazandegi's efforts yielded some economic and diplomatic ties, as well as the opportunity for exporting Iran's revolutionary story. From the mid to late-eighties, many of the Sunni-majority governments with whom *Jehad-e Sazandegi* collaborated granted Iran rights to broadcast radio and television documentaries about the Islamic

⁸³ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 83.

⁸⁴ Lob, 128.

⁸⁵ Lob, 133.

revolution in their countries. They also signed trade agreements favorable to Iran and Iranian private ventures, and purchased agricultural and technological goods and services from Iran's state and parastatal companies.⁸⁶

C. CREATION OF *JIHAD AL-BINA'*

1. Jihad-e Sazandegi's Transfusion

Jihad-e Sazandegi's greatest successes abroad, however, took place in Lebanon. In the late 1980s, Ayatollah Khomeini blessed establishing *Jihad al-Bina'* in Lebanon and stated that its mission was to "embrace the oppressed" and "lead them to Islam."⁸⁷ Rather than simply send official *Jihad-e Sazandegi* Ministry representatives to further Iran's interests in Lebanon, they created a near-identical yet Lebanese organization after the Iranian model. Hoping to replicate what *Jihad-e Sazandegi* did for Khomeini and the IRP following the Islamic revolution, Iran established *Jihad al-Bina'* to solidify Iran's influence in Lebanon and to strengthen Hezbollah. Moreover, this move reinforced the government's strategic decision to soften the face of Iran's revolutionary foreign policy.

The transfusion of *Jihad al-Bina'* from Iran into Lebanon reflects a shift in Iran's policy to protect the revolution at home by exporting the revolution abroad. During the early 1980s, the Iran's revolutionary policies abroad were accompanied by hardline ideological narratives focusing on "recognizing, attracting, educating, and organizing the destitute of the masses . . . in the fight against the arrogance of imperial powers."⁸⁸ The IRGC helped form Hezbollah by capitalizing on well-established connections within Lebanon's Shia communities, as well as on a common resistance ideology within other Lebanese and Palestinian groups fighting against Israeli aggression. The resultant Party of God, or Hezbollah, emerged as a blatant, uncompromising militant organization. The violent resistance identity of Hezbollah during its formative years reflected the way the

⁸⁶ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 129-130, 133.

⁸⁷ Dima Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, First (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2002), 94.

⁸⁸ "The Ten-Year Performance Record of the *Jihad al-Bina'* from 1979 until 1989" (Publications and Press Office, 1991), 187, cited in Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 123.

IRGC saw international relations—through a lens of conflict.⁸⁹ However, as the Iran-Iraq war dragged on, Iran’s revolutionary policies left it with few diplomatic and economic partners abroad. Iran’s need for international support caused it to soften its ideological discourse associated with exporting the revolution.

2. Foundations of *Jihad al-Bina’*

Jehad-e Sazandegi capitalized on pre-existing networks of Lebanese activists with experience in social welfare provision to launch its new Lebanese subsidiary. Iran sent clergy to Lebanon to work with members of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Lebanon, and the Association of Scholars of Jabel Amel which both ran education and charitable organizations, schools, cultural centers, clinics, and orphanages throughout the Lebanese civil war. These organizations were headed by Lebanese Shia clergy with close ties to Iran, including one of Hezbollah’s most influential spiritual leader, Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah.⁹⁰ Additionally, Iran worked with former members of Amal’s Council of the South which orchestrated relief efforts following Israeli incursions into southern Lebanon after 1978. These efforts included providing social assistance to the needy, providing medical care to fighters and civilians, supplying piped water, and rebuilding roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and homes.⁹¹ In collaboration with these local organizations, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* launched the *Jihad al-Bina’* developmental foundation (JBDA) on September 12, 1988. Between 1988 and 1992, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* members opened, directed, and managed *Jihad al-Bina’*’s headquarters and offices, and helped set up training programs for Hezbollah members in welfare program management.⁹²

Jihad al-Bina’ became the umbrella organization for a number of Hezbollah service committees that predate the *Jihad al-Bina’* Developmental Foundation (*Jihad al-Bina’*). For example, between 1983 and 1987 Hezbollah’s Health Committee founded one hospital,

⁸⁹ Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran’s Revolutionary Guard*, 103.

⁹⁰ Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” 265–266, cited in Lob dissertation, 135.

⁹¹ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina’*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 136.

⁹² Dima Danawi, *Hizbullah’s Pulse*, First (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2002), 94.

eight infirmaries (health clinics), two dental clinics, three pharmacies, and three civil defense centers in Beirut's southern suburbs. In the Bekaa Valley, it opened one hospital and three infirmaries. In Shia areas of southern Lebanon, the Health Committee opened six infirmaries and three civil defense centers.⁹³ Interestingly, the Health Committee built civil defense centers, which is outside the purview of what would be expected of a health organization. In many ways we see that Hezbollah's Health Committee is the predecessor of *Jihad al-Bina'*.

3. Objectives

As part of its new strategy to deemphasize its armed interventionist policies abroad, the Islamic Republic's *Jihad al-Bina'* (*Jehād-e Sāzandegī*) established its Lebanese counterpart, *Jihad al-Bina'* on September 12, 1988.⁹⁴ In this way, the face of Hezbollah's resistance movement in Lebanon shifted from a purely militant one to include humanitarian services and social development aspects. Hezbollah's purpose and mission expanded from one of fighting aggression and oppression to include repairing physical and psychological damage caused by that aggression. In a brochure published by the *Jihad al-Bina* Development Association in 1998, the organization's listed objectives included:

1. To establish many construction and humanitarian projects such as hospitals, schools, cultural centers and public clinics in order to raise the social level of population in Lebanon.
2. To dig and install artesian wells; to construct water tanks and towers, and to install water networks, irrigation canals, and sanitary sewers.
3. To construct housing developments to accommodate orphans and war casualties.
4. To help farmers with different development and extension methods to properly use land and increase production levels and incomes.
5. To install electrical networks and generators in rural villages.
6. To construct many education and training institutions, mainly for orphans and poor people.

⁹³ From reports about Hezbollah's Islamic Health Committee published by *Al-'Ahd* (Beirut) August 1, 1989, found in A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation," *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (January 1993): 321–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599308420327>.

⁹⁴ "Jihad Al Binaa - Lebanon - Al Mashriq," accessed August 28, 2018, <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/jihad-el-binna/>.

7. To help refugees find shelters during war crises.⁹⁵

Between 1988 and 1992, *Jehād-e Sāzandegī* opened *Jihad al-Bina*'s headquarters and satellite offices and trained local Hezbollah members on how to administer welfare programs. In addition to the above listed objectives, *Jehād-e Sāzandegī* provided training to its Lebanese counterpart in areas of service provision, conducting training programs, indoctrination, and proselytizing.⁹⁶

Jihad al-Bina was founded during the latter years of Lebanon's civil war by Shiites for Shiites and played a crucial role in Hezbollah's competition for popular Shia support with other Lebanese Shiite organizations. From its inception, the organization's purpose was to provide relief and improve the quality of life in the areas known as the "doomed areas" or "misery belts."⁹⁷ These areas were those most vulnerable to Israeli air strikes and shelling—the Bekaa valley, Southern Lebanon, and the predominantly Shia suburbs in South Beirut known as *al-dahhiya*. *Jihad al-Bina*'s headquarters is located in the *Haret Harik dahhiya* and its satellite offices are located throughout these "doomed areas" which Hezbollah refers to as the forgotten or neglected areas⁹⁸—referring to the state's disregard for Lebanon's Shia communities.

4. Symbolism

Jihad al-Bina' appropriated symbols and slogans from its parent organizations to reinforce a theme of resistance while highlighting its development, welfare, and relief mission. The foundation's logo is an open hand grasping wheat, symbolizing both method and goal of the organization's efforts—resistance and prosperity through farming, building, and development toward a better life through physical effort and struggle (*jihad*). Their motto "Together we build, Together we resist," and sometimes, "Together we resist, Together we build," is often accompanied by the closed fist found on Hezbollah's flag and serves as a reminder that their mission is resistance, and to support the parent organization.

⁹⁵ "Jihad Al Binaa - Lebanon - Al Mashriq."

⁹⁶ Lob, 124.

⁹⁷ Dima Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, First (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2002), 70.

⁹⁸ Danawi, 69–70.

The strand of wheat is also found on Hezbollah's flag, signifying growth and social services provided by the organization.⁹⁹ As *Jihad al-Bina'* is one of these social services that specializes in agricultural projects, among others, it is appropriate that wheat is a central characteristic of *Jihad al-Bina'*'s logo (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. *Jihad al-Bina'* logo¹⁰⁰



Figure 2. Hezbollah flag

⁹⁹ Nour Halabi, "The Contingency of Meaning to the Party of God: Carnavalesque Humor in Revolutionary Times," *International Journal of Communication*, no. 11 (2017): 4035.

¹⁰⁰ Images from <http://www.tarmeem.org.lb/datapages/intro/intro.htm> and <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah/jihad-el-binna/JBDA-jbaa-09.JPG>

Both Hezbollah and *Jihad al-Bina'* borrowed the strand of wheat from their Iranian progenitors—the IRGC and *Jihad-e Sazandegi*, respectively (see Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 3. IRGC logo and the seal of Iran's *Jihad-e Sazandegi*

The title of the *Jihad al-Bina'*'s regular publication “All Together” pays homage to its Iranian progenitor.¹⁰¹ During a speech given by Ayatollah Khomeini on June 16, 1979, he established *Jihad-e Sazandegi* and encouraged all Iranians to join its ranks and efforts. To instill a sense of individual and collective purpose, Khomeini leveraged strong cultural symbols. He likened the “self-sacrifice” of joining the organization to the martyrdom of one of Twelver Shi'a Islam's most revered figures, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, Husayn, and his sacrifice at Karbala, Iraq. Also in his speech, Khomeini used the phrase “all together [toward construction]” which *Jihad-e Sazandegi* adopted as its official slogan and continues to be used on Iranian Ministry of Construction Jihad buildings and publications.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ “The Official website of Jihad Al Bina Foundation,” accessed October 22, 2018, <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/catessays.php?cid=694&pid=199>.

¹⁰² Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 47–48.

5. Hierarchy and Structure

Though there is some uncertainty regarding Hezbollah's exact organizational structure, *Jihad al-Bina'* was likely directly subordinate to the politburo at the time of its inauguration in 1988 to 1992 when Hezbollah entered Lebanese electoral politics (see Figure 4). The Politburo is not a decision-making apparatus but a supervisory one that coordinates and guides *Jihad al-Bina's* activities. *Jihad al-Bina'* is divided into eight committees which provide services to Hezbollah party members, new recruits, and party supporters. Services include financial aid, health services provision, housing, and utilities. Services provided by the committees will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter. Some committees, such as the Financial Aid Committee work closely with other Hezbollah social service groups, such as the Al-Shahid (Martyrs) Foundation. For example, financed directly by Iran, the Financial Committee spent over \$90 million on dependents of killed or wounded fighters from 1982 to 1986. A Technical and Administrative Committee oversees the work of all committees to ensure operations are executed efficiently and benefit the most impoverished parts of Hezbollah's constituency.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah," 328.

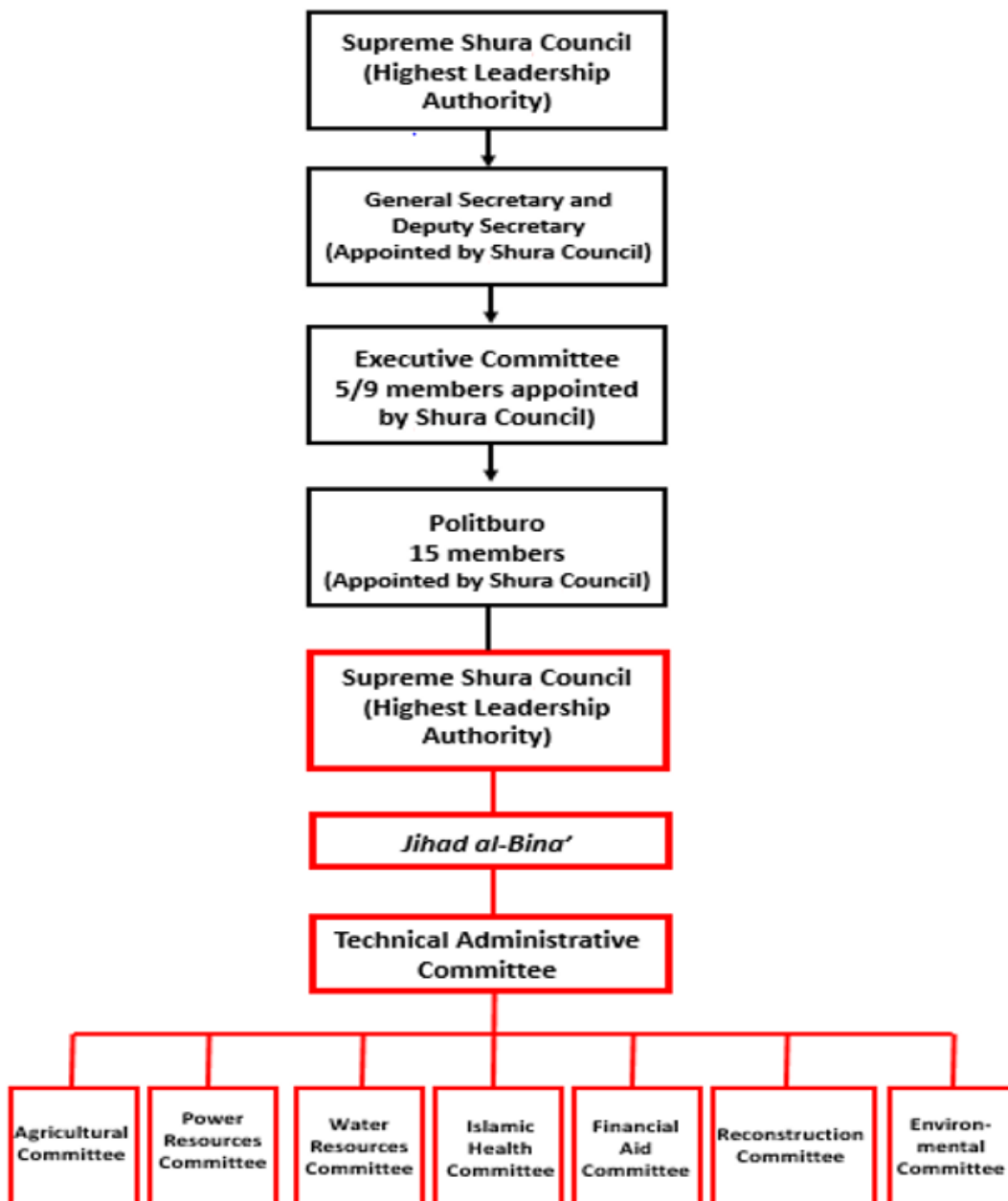


Figure 4. *Jihad al-Bina'* subordination to Hezbollah¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ As reported by Al-'Ahd between 1988 and 1992, red outline added by author, adapted from Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah," 326.

D. JIHAD AL-BINA' DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES 1988 TO 2008

1. Initial Operations Repertoire during the Civil War

After *Jihad al-Bina'* was established in 1988, it focused its efforts on elevating the quality of life for Shiites in areas neglected by the state and Amal. To initiate and professionalize operations, it recruited engineers and social workers by offering attractive salaried positions, paying them almost double (about \$1,500) over the going rate with a private company.¹⁰⁵ As previously discussed, Amal focused its operations in areas that bore the brunt of Israeli incursions, primarily southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Because of the fighting in these areas, Shiites fled en masse to the *dahhiya* which quickly became overwhelmed and overpopulated. One of the most visible evidences of neglect was the mounting garbage in Beirut. Between 1988 to 1992, *Jihad al-Bina'* took it upon itself to collect refuse on a daily basis until the state's Council for Development and Reconstruction received international aid and began managing or subcontracting sanitation and public works.¹⁰⁶

Jihad al-Bina' also continued and expanded its basic repertoire of service provision its members conducted while serving in the Council of the South, and other Shiite humanitarian organizations. It also worked to improve living conditions in war-torn parts of the country to curb mass migration of Shiites from the Bekaa valley and southern Lebanon to the capital. The organization's dug wells, built water tanks, laid water pipe networks, dug irrigation canals and sanitary networks, built electrical networks, and installed generators. It rebuilt homes and other buildings damaged or destroyed from civil war violence or conflict with Israel. It also pledged to increase literacy rates within Lebanon's Shiite areas to help combat poverty. *Jihad al-Bina'* set up schools, cultural centers, and training programs to help residents learn skills necessary to provide for themselves and their families.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 70–71.

¹⁰⁶ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad," 137.

¹⁰⁷ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*.

2. Post-civil War Service Provision as a Territoriality Expansion and Power Consolidation Mechanism

Throughout the Lebanese civil war, and in the absence of state control, militias battled for control over sections of Beirut and were forced to take on social service roles previously held by the government. The competitors were primarily the Maronite Christian Lebanese Forces and its Phalange/Kataeb militias led by Bashir Gemayel; the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) led by Kamal Jumblatt; various Sunni groups; and the previously-discussed Shi'i group dynamics between the Amal Movement led by Musa al-Sadr and Nabih Berri, and later its competitor Islamic Amal/Hezbollah formed by Husayn al-Musawi in collaboration with Iran. Violence amongst these groups led to massive population shifts and the formation of sectarian enclaves throughout Lebanon (see Figure 5) and in Beirut—it also led to a disruption of social services. Government jobs, including social provision workers—water and electric utilities, refuse removal, firefighters, etc.—were allocated by law according to sect and area. When Maronites fled western Beirut, for example, garbage collection jobs could not be filled according to the law. As factions took over sections of Beirut, they became responsible for service provision in these areas.¹⁰⁸ The areas controlled by these groups were delineated by “green lines”—natural foliage that grew due to violent, uninhabitable conditions along the territorial margins—and were protected by snipers. Hezbollah and Amal fought over Shia territories. Danawi describes the hostility with which the militia leaders governed these territories as a “Machiavellian policy of ‘better to be feared than loved.’”¹⁰⁹ After the war, militia leaders became politicians and competed for popular support with a carrot-and-stick approach rather than through fear. Now, instead of competing for territory with Amal on the battlefield, Hezbollah now competed with Amal for influence. One of the main

¹⁰⁸ Judith Harik, “The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias,” in *Papers on Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1994), 1–54, <https://lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/6ea83fe14.-The-Public-and-Social-Services-of-the-Lebanese-Militias.-Judith-Harik-1994.pdf>, 13–14.

¹⁰⁹ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 84.

mechanisms by which warlords vied for popular support was through social service organizations.¹¹⁰



Figure 5. Hezbollah checkpoint in Beirut in 1988¹¹¹

Jihad al-Bina's activities between 1988 and 1992 helped Hezbollah consolidate power over Amal and the state, and prepared the group for political participation. As violence subsided and reconstruction efforts increased following the civil war, people returned to the previously uninhabitable green line areas that demarcated Hezbollah from Amal territory. Where overgrown green lines once clearly defined territorial boundaries, *Jihad al-Bina'* embarked on mosque construction and renovation projects to lay claim to public. Moreover, *Jihad al-Bina'*-constructed mosques were a key element to Hezbollah's indoctrination via proselytization strategy to win over constituents from Amal.¹¹²

Jihad al-Bina's water tanks also served dual purposes: they provided potable water and served as markers for Hezbollah territory. Hezbollah territories were clearly marked

¹¹⁰ Danawi.

¹¹¹ Ramez Dagher, "The War Files (Part XII) – Amal, Hezbollah, Syria: Yes, They Were At War," *Moulahazat* (blog), April 12, 2015, <https://moulahazat.com/2015/04/12/the-war-files-part-xii-amal-hezbollah-syria-the-clashes-that-preceded-the-alliance/>.

¹¹² Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 151.

with Hezbollah flags, slogans from the revered Imam Husayn, pictures of Khomeini, and other pro-Iranian pictures and slogans.

Amal territories similarly displayed stencils and flags containing its own logo, as well as Syrian leaders and pro-Syrian propaganda. During the civil war, the organization placed and filled more than 100 water tanks in the *dahhiya* suburbs of south Beirut which were targeted by Amal snipers from behind their own demarcation lines. Following the war, these tanks were utilized similarly to flags, posters, and emblems to clearly demarcate Hezbollah territories.¹¹³

In the early 1990s, *Jihad al-Bina's* assertiveness during political crisis enabled the group to establish a permanent foothold in social service and utility provision within the *dahhiya*. *Jihad al-Bina'* provided emergency relief to the half-million people living in the *dahhiya* whose well-being was seemingly dismissed by the Aoun administration. The administration cut off water and electricity to the *dahhiya* due to continued fighting between Hezbollah and Amal. With financial assistance from Iran, *Jihad al-Bina'* built 4000-litre water reservoirs in each district of the *dahhiya*, and circulated water tanker trucks to fill them five times daily. Additionally, lorry trucks rotated from building to building to provide power needed to pump water (see Figures 6 and 7). Although the government partially restored services later that year, the source of 40-percent of the area's water was lost due to war-related damages, and compromised after a number of UNICEF wells failed. *Jihad al-Bina'* continued as the main provider of drinking water for most of *dahhiya's* residents. In lieu of the state, it also continued repairing electricity, sewer, and water systems in the southern suburbs for the next two decades.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Danawi, 80, 85–86; Judith P. Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (London: I.B. Tauris and St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 273; found in Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011), 152.”

¹¹⁴ Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” 273–275.



Figure 6. Jihad al-Bina' water trucks¹¹⁵



Figure 7. *Jihad al-Bina'* water tanks similar to those used to demarcate territory¹¹⁶

Jihad al-Bina''s performance in these times of crisis brought normalcy to afflicted residents and elevated Hezbollah's status in the eyes of its constituents and in contrast to the government and Amal's perceived ambivalence. In truth, Amal didn't have the resources to focus on the *dahhiya*. After the death of Mostafa Chamran in 1981, Amal lost its primary source of Iranian patronage. After Islamic Amal split from Amal in 1982, most

¹¹⁵ "Jihad al-Bina': A Pillar of Victory and Liberation in Development and Giving," April 24, 2018, <https://alahednews.com.lb/163562/222>.

¹¹⁶ "Jihad al-Bina': A Pillar of Victory and Liberation in Development and Giving."

sources of Iranian funds earmarked for Amal nearly disappeared and the group was forced to focus its efforts within its stronghold of southern Lebanon. After abiding by the terms of the Taif agreement in 1989 and more closely integrating into the government, Amal became subject to the lackadaisical pace of Lebanese state operations and depended mostly on government distribution of funds to start projects.¹¹⁷

Of the competing groups, Hezbollah led the transition from rule by fear to one of popularity by addressing the needs of members in “doomed areas”—the *Dahhiya*, the Bekaa valley, and southern Lebanon. In the late eighties and early nineties while still engaged in clashes with Amal, *Jihad al-Bina’* asked residents to pledge allegiance to Hezbollah in exchange for goods, services, advice, money, and generally improving their quality of life. According to Danawi, these favors and support “reinforced Hezbollah’s popularity and established its territoriality” . . . “[and] expanded [Hezbollah’s] hegemony and popularity beyond its territory.”¹¹⁸ After Hezbollah decided to enter electoral politics in 1992, *Jihad al-Bina’* modified its quid pro quo arrangement with constituents—it now asked recipients to cast ballots in favor of Hezbollah candidates or risk termination of *Jihad al-Bina’*-provided services and social alienation.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, at the al-Rasul al-’Azam hospital built by *Jihad al-Bina’* in the *dahhiya* which services all residents—Shi’i or not—there is a shuttling service run by Hezbollah volunteers that takes patients and staff to the voting polls on election days.¹²⁰

a. Home and Building Reconstruction

Although Amal similarly transitioned and set up social service organizations, compared to *Jihad al-Bina’* Amal’s capabilities in the years following the civil war were embryonic,¹²¹ particularly with regard to reconstruction efforts. For Hezbollah, *Jihad al-*

¹¹⁷ Harik, 269.

¹¹⁸ Danawi, *Hizbullah’s Pulse*, 85.

¹¹⁹ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 152.

¹²⁰ Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” 275.

¹²¹ Danawi, *Hizbullah’s Pulse*, 86; Al-Bilad News, February 6, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990210000628#index=2&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10.

Bina’ is the metaphorical maid that cleans up after the organization’s military wing makes a mess, i.e., initiates or engages in conflict which triggers an Israeli response. During the 1990s, *Jihad al-Bina*’ reportedly repaired more than 6,000 houses damaged from fighting in southern Lebanon.¹²² In 1993, *Jihad al-Bina*’ reportedly rebuilt 4,700 homes destroyed by Israel.¹²³ Within a month after Israel’s “Grapes of Wrath” campaign in 1996 after Hezbollah launched a number of Katyusha rockets into Israel, *Jihad al-Bina*’ rehabilitated 2,800 structures damaged from Israeli strikes in 106 locations in the south.¹²⁴ In 1998, continued Hezbollah fighting against the Israeli-backed Southern Lebanese Army prompted the Israeli Air Force to conduct mock raids over Beirut’s southern suburbs. The planes flew at high speed and low altitude, creating sonic booms and likely causing damages to windows in the area.¹²⁵ *Jihad al-Bina*’ engineers began inspecting and repairing damaged homes as quickly as the day after the damage occurred.¹²⁶ The group’s official numbers show that by 2002 it rehabilitated 9,640 homes in the “doomed areas.”¹²⁷ The organization prioritized fixing houses in the south so refugees who previously fled to Beirut suburbs could return and cast votes in its favor¹²⁸—although this didn’t happen by 1992.

¹²² Reuters, February 18, 2003, found in Daniel Sobelman, “New Rules of the Game: Israel and Hizbollah after the Withdrawal from Lebanon” (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, January 2004) 123, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_0_43/content/Display/3837556/GMP20040227000055001.pdf.

¹²³ “Washington’s Weird Way of Trying to Make Friends in Lebanon,” *The Daily Star*, February 22, 2007, sec. Editorial, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2007/Feb-22/113295-washingtons-weird-way-of-trying-to-make-friends-in-lebanon.ashx>.

¹²⁴ *Orient-Le Jour*, June 13, 1996, in Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and social Services and Iran,” 278.

¹²⁵ “BBC News | Middle East | Israeli Planes Create Sonic Boom Confusion over Lebanon,” accessed October 25, 2018, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/231406.stm.

¹²⁶ Al-Shira’ News, March 30, 1998, retrieved July 11, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19980331001486?returnFrame=true.

¹²⁷ Figures from *Jihad al-Bina’: It’s Twelfth Spring: 1988–2000* (Beirut: Jihad al-Bina’, 2000) and from unpublished 2002 reports provided by *Jihad al-Bina*’ to Ahmad Hamzeh; Ahmad Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, First (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 50–1.

¹²⁸ Harik, 269.

b. Water and Electric Services

Jihad al-Bina' also established itself as the primary water and electrical services provider to millions in Shiite territories. *Jihad al-Bina'* launched the Al-'Abbas drinking water project "with a generous initiative from the Islamic Republic of Iran" in 1988.¹²⁹ In 1989, the group built at least 100 water tanks, providing potable water to more than 500,000 people in *dahhiya*. By 1996, *Jihad al-Bina'* built fifty seven wells, four water reservoirs, hundreds of meters of distribution pipes, and placed at least four hundred potable water tanks in the three primary Shia-dense territories,¹³⁰ including Amal's territories. *Jihad al-Bina'* also built 23 power stations, and routed wires and stabilizers to extend electricity to regions which never before received it.¹³¹

c. Religious Indoctrination and Education

Jihad al-Bina''s early projects also reflect Hezbollah's focus on reinforcing Islamic norms in the "doomed areas" via proselytization and indoctrination, as well as promoting Hezbollah's distinct Shia character. Prior to 1982, there were only three theological schools in Shi'i areas;¹³² between 1988 and 2002, *Jihad al-Bina'* built seven social, cultural, and education centers, and 29 religious centers (*husayniyyat*), and one sculpture of Ayatollah Khomeini.¹³³ Between 1988 and 1996, *Jihad al-Bina'* constructed, rebuilt, or renovated 33 schools in the Bekaa valley, the *dahhiya*, and southern Lebanon.¹³⁴ By 2008, the number of schools constructed grew to 66, and the renovation of mosques to 73¹³⁵—most

¹²⁹ "Water Projects Brief," *Jihad Al-Bina' Official website*, accessed November 1, 2018, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=4934&cid=734#.W_WjL-hKiM8.

¹³⁰ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 85; Lob dissertation, 137.

¹³¹ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 80.

¹³² Harik, "Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran," 282.

¹³³ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 77–79.

¹³⁴ Danawi, 77.

¹³⁵ Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilisation et Pouvoir*, 159. Translated by Eric Lob. See also Ministry of Jihad-i Sazandigi, *Ten-Year Performance of Jihad-i Sazandigi*, 188; Iravani, *Institutionalism and Jihad-e Sazandegi*, 262; Taremi, "At the Service of Hizbollah," 260; and *Jihad al-Bina'* website August 27, 2009, www.jbf-lb.org; located in Lob, "*Jihad al-Bina'*: State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories," 12.

of these projects in the south and the Bekaa Valley.¹³⁶ Under the direction of Hezbollah, *Jihad al-Bina'* also provided low-cost primary and secondary education which followed the national curriculum, and was supplemented with several hours of religious study each school day.¹³⁷ To distinguish its efforts and identity from Amal, and to claim Baalbek as a Hezbollah haven, *Jihad al-Bina'* placed giant portraits of Khomeini, Khamenei, and Husayn al-Musawi, as well as a large model of the Dome of the Rock at the entrance of the city.

d. *Agriculture in the Rural Areas*

The lion's share of *Jihad al-Bina's* attention during its early years was dedicated to developing the forgotten areas' agricultural sector upon which 60% of the people—some 80,000 families—relied on for their income and livelihood.¹³⁸ Starting with a gift of 30 tractors from Iran, *Jihad al-Bina'* developed and continues to execute a sophisticated agricultural development program. *Jihad al-Bina'* Agricultural Cooperatives often distributed gifts to Lebanese farmers on behalf of the Islamic republic. One such delivery in 2002 from the Iranian Agricultural Jihad Ministry included 500 pesticide sprayers, two tractors, a 4,000 liter water tanker, two water engines, a packaging machine, and 56 barrels of milk. *Jihad al-Bina'* made the equipment and supplies available to more than 1,300 farmers in the area.¹³⁹

Between 1988 and 1996, *Jihad al-Bina'* built seven agricultural centers or cooperatives distributed throughout the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon. These centers provided farming supplies such as fertilizer, pesticides, and seeds at “reasonable prices,”¹⁴⁰ and training sessions in farming techniques and crop cultivation by qualified engineers at

¹³⁶ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 79.

¹³⁷ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian Construction Jihad: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 150–151.

¹³⁸ “Jihad Al Binaa - Lebanon - Al Mashriq.”

¹³⁹ Tehran IRNA News, July 19, 2002, retrieved July 1, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/IAP20020719000029

¹⁴⁰ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 81; Harik, “Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran,” 278.

no charge.¹⁴¹ After 1992, *Jihad al-Bina'* launched agricultural extension services and established an Agricultural Committee when the government banned the cultivation of hemp and poppy seeds. These services were designed to help farmers replace the banned cash crops first with potatoes, and later it offered training sessions on how to grow tobacco and citrus.¹⁴² The Agricultural Committee also sent inspectors to consult for farmers facing crop disease, and offered courses on bee farming.¹⁴³ The foundation also sent farmers to Iran for advanced six-month training programs,¹⁴⁴ which included pilgrimages to holy sites and tours of model farms to learn advanced farming techniques.¹⁴⁵ In 1996, *Jihad al-Bina'* held 35 agricultural training sessions which attracted thousands of participants.¹⁴⁶ Many of its training sessions were openly funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran who issued graduation certificates in the name of the state.¹⁴⁷ In 1999, *Jihad al-Bina'* opened the Seasons (*Fusul*) [Company] for Agricultural Projects and Services, and an Agricultural Credit Company in the northern Bekaa valley town of al-Nabi Othman.¹⁴⁸ These organizations helped farmers by giving guidance, supplies, and loans—providing services

¹⁴¹ Harik, 278.

¹⁴² Al-'Ahd News, February 25, 2000, retrieved June 29, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20000229000117#index=9&searchKey=30137741&rpp=10; Al-'Ahd News, March 20, 1998, retrieved July 11, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19980324001226?returnFrame=true

¹⁴³ Al-'Ahd News, March 20, 1998, retrieved July 11, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19980324001226?returnFrame=true

¹⁴⁴ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 82.

¹⁴⁵ Lob, "An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011)," 163–164

¹⁴⁶ Danawi, 80–82.

¹⁴⁷ Al-'Ahd News, October 29, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19991115000992?returnFrame=true; Al-Manar News, October 16, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19991115001440?returnFrame=true

¹⁴⁸ Al-Manar News, February 6, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990208001134#index=1&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10

to around 7,000 additional families in the area.¹⁴⁹ *Jihad al-Bina's* Agricultural Committees consisted of engineers who traveled to farms to inspect the health of crops and consult for farmers.¹⁵⁰ Its extension centers in the Bekaa Valley have on-site demonstration plots, greenhouses, a dairy farm, and pathology and soil testing laboratories.¹⁵¹

Jihad al-Bina's agricultural development included general infrastructure development in rural areas which improved quality of life and expanded Hezbollah's visibility and influence. Between 1988 and 1995, it built a network of roads, 15 water canals, and 12 new irrigation canals in southern Lebanon, and two new veterinary centers in Nabatiya and Sohmur (Bekaa Valley) to help farmers.¹⁵² It dug water wells throughout the Bekaa Valley and the south, including one well in the village of Libaya which had no water source of its own for 20 years. In May 1990, the organization built modern agro-technical center and a school in Hawsh Barada, and it started building a large polyclinic medical center in Hermel. In 1992, the organization provided free transportation from Baalbek and isolated villages, and set up numerous establishments that provided free food and services to the poor such as a restaurant, pharmacies, medical and dental clinics, and a chain of its own supermarkets.¹⁵³ In 1992, *Jihad al-Bina'* built a resort-like complex of bungalows in the town of Taybi, five kilometers from Baalbek, to house youth participating in Hezbollah cultural and recreational encampments and events sponsored by Hezbollah.¹⁵⁴ *Jihad al-Bina'* also offered technical training programs in computer proficiency, electrical

¹⁴⁹ Al-Bilad News, February 6, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990210000628#index=2&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10

¹⁵⁰ Al-'Ahd News, March 20, 1998, retrieved July 11, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19980324001226?returnFrame=true

¹⁵¹ Harik, "Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran," 279.

¹⁵² Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 81–82.

¹⁵³ Al-'Ahd News, August 1, 1989, in Harik, 278.

¹⁵⁴ Harik, "The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias," 38.

work, tile, sanitation, bee keeping, fish breeding, animal husbandry, and carpentry to help farmers expand and to supplement their incomes.¹⁵⁵

3. *Jihad al-Bina'* and Hezbollah's Entry into Politics

Through social service provision, reconstruction, education, and agricultural development, Hezbollah expanded influence and popularity beyond its territories, and increased membership for the party. Harik states that the motivation behind these actions is clearly political—the intent “is to keep the Shia on their land and induce those who left to return.”¹⁵⁶ Lob provides a more nuanced characterization of *Jihad al-Bina'* efforts in that they curbed migration from rural areas of the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon “to prevent depopulation” and to uphold “a critical mass of recruits and constituents . . . [and] gain popular support” upon which Hezbollah's military wing could draw recruits, and to amass votes during elections.¹⁵⁷ As validation, Hezbollah dominated Amal in its first entry into Lebanese parliamentary elections in 1992—it won eight seats to Amal's four.¹⁵⁸

Hezbollah's entry into politics also greatly affected *Jihad al-Bina'*. First, it forced *Jihad al-Bina'* to institutionalize, to highlight its intrinsic Lebanese character, and to take on a veneer of officialdom. When Hezbollah made the decision to run candidates, it made the decision to work within the system of Lebanese politics. To support this transition, *Jihad al-Bina'* trained its employees to abide by government laws, and according to Lob, “encouraged beneficiaries, as the new electorate” to vote.¹⁵⁹ Where *Jihad al-Bina'*

¹⁵⁵ Al-'Ahd News, October 29, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19991115000992?returnFrame=true; Al-'Ahd News, September 17, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990917001306#index=17&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10; Al-Diyar News, September 15, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990920000268#index=16&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10

¹⁵⁶ Harik.

¹⁵⁷ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 152.

¹⁵⁸ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 86.

¹⁵⁹ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina'*,” 153.

required allegiance from recipients of goods, funds, and services between 1988 and 1992, in the electoral period allegiance equated to voting in favor of Hezbollah candidates.

Jihad al-Bina' also helped Hezbollah to take on a more Lebanese identity void of Iranian patronage in the run up to elections. Shortly before the elections the Iranian members of *Jehad-e Sazandegi* that helped establish *Jihad al-Bina'* offices and operations in Lebanon over the previous half decade returned to Iran.¹⁶⁰ When addressing social work and reconstruction efforts in Lebanon, Hezbollah and *Jihad al-Bina'* leadership often downplayed the organization's Iranian heritage and patronage, and particularly its financing. While there is little doubt about the real benefits provided to Lebanon's Shiite communities through *Jihad al-Bina'*s efforts, the Iranian origin of Hezbollah's benevolence at times casts a shadow on the organization's work and a sense of suspicion upon its motives.

Second, Hezbollah's entry into politics opened the door for collaboration with various Lebanese state agencies on multiple projects—even more greatly legitimizing *Jihad al-Bina'* and its parent group within Lebanon. Despite the antagonistic rhetoric and relationship between the Lebanese state and Hezbollah, the state licensed and at times funded Hezbollah's social welfare foundations—as will be demonstrated—which eased the organization's entry into politics.¹⁶¹

Emerging crises within Lebanon often exposed state ineptitude and provided space for *Jihad al-Bina'* to highlight its capabilities in contrast to the state. Secretary Nasrallah often promises that “*Jihad al-Bina'* will reconstruct whatever Israel destroyed in cooperation with government and non-government organizations.”¹⁶² Moreover, Hezbollah has various media platforms, such as Al-Manar television on which to showcase its multiple projects—often conducted at a greater speed and responsiveness than the state.

¹⁶⁰ Danawi, 94, found in Lob dissertation, 153.

¹⁶¹ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 87.

¹⁶² Al-Safir Newspaper, April 27, 1996, retrieved July 11, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/FTS19960427000303?returnFrame=true

By 2000, *Jihad al-Bina'* developed a good reputation for efficiency within Lebanon and internationally. United Nations representatives often attend opening ceremonies of new *Jihad al-Bina'* initiatives,¹⁶³ and praised the group for its responsiveness and capabilities. According to a representative from the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNSC-WA), *Jihad al-Bina'* “is one of the best-equipped social organizations” in the region.¹⁶⁴ An example that highlights the organizations responsiveness occurred on January 22, 2003. At 9am, Israeli troops in the Shebaa farms area fired three 122mm artillery shells on the village of Birket al-Naqqar on the eastern outskirts of Kfar Shuba. *Jihad al-Bina'* representatives responded within hours to inspect damages of approximately one dozen houses and began repairs.¹⁶⁵

4. Funding

a. Iran

Iran is the primary source of funding for the *Jihad al-Bina'* Development Foundation. However, this is difficult to confirm as *Jihad al-Bina'* rarely releases official budget reports and Hezbollah’s leaders alter responses from admission, to obfuscation, to flat out denial regarding Iranian money. According to Danawi, without cash *Jihad al-Bina'* “would be building and reconstructing castles in the sand.” In 2002, *Jihad al-Bina'* reportedly worked on an operating budget of \$5 million per year.¹⁶⁶ The cash is very real, but Danawi asserts that it is not at all clear where it comes from.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Al-Manar News, February 6, 1999, retrieved July 12, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FTS19990208001134#index=1&searchKey=30436565&rpp=10.

¹⁶⁴ Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah*, 50.

¹⁶⁵ Sobelman, “New Rules of the Game: Israel and Hizbollah after the Withdrawal from Lebanon,” 123; The Daily Star News, January 23, 2003, retrieved July 1, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20030123000028

¹⁶⁶ L.E. Bissat, “The Role of Civil Society in Rural Community Development: Two Case Studies from Lebanon” (UN House, Beirut: Joint ESCWA-World Bank Capacity Building Workshop on Rural Development in the Middle East, June 3, 2002), 7, cited in Lob, “Construction Jihad: state-building and development in Iran and Lebanon’s Shi’i Territories,” 11.

¹⁶⁷ Danawi, *Hizbullah’s Pulse*, 74–75.

However, some information—with discrepancies—regarding *Jihad al-Bina's* budgets and expenses exist. For example, *Jihad al-Bina'* cited discrepant sources of funds in two published prospectuses: one in Arabic published in 1992 and another in English from 1996. The Arabic publication cites the “Islamic Republic of Iran” as the primary donor to the organization’s budget, in addition to funds received from *Khums*, Islamic donations and charities. The English version, however, states that its budget is made up of donations from its members, charitable donations, and government aid.¹⁶⁸ Either Iran stopped funding *Jihad al-Bina'* after 1992 or this is an intentional omission. According to Danawi, it is likely that Hezbollah’s leadership was sensitive to the fact that its Arabic-speaking constituents would be less averse to Iran as a source of funds than its English readers.

Whether omitted, denied, or obfuscated, there are few that were unaware of Iran’s role in setting up and funding *Jihad al-Bina's* operations—and Hezbollah’s leaders were sensitive to this. As previously presented in this thesis, Iran openly donated supplies, materials, support, and funds to establish *Jihad al-Bina'* and sustained its construction and development efforts. In 1989 Al-Nahar Arab News reported that Iran’s annual allocation to Hezbollah was approximately \$140 million.¹⁶⁹ According to Taremi, the Iranian embassy in Damascus funneled *Jihad al-Bina'* \$220,000 to \$440,000 per year between 1988 and 2001.¹⁷⁰

Opponents of Hezbollah accused it of being a pawn of Iran, of undermining Lebanese sovereignty, or of creating and expanding a Shiite state-within-a-state by directly financing *Jihad al-Bina's* reconstruction efforts and land acquisitions.¹⁷¹ Despite these accusations, *Jihad al-Bina'* remains an officially licensed Lebanese charitable association

¹⁶⁸ Danawi, 75.

¹⁶⁹ Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” 281.

¹⁷⁰ Kamran Taremi, “At the Service of Hizbollah: The Iranian Ministry of Construction Jihad in Lebanon, 1988–2003,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 16, no. 2–3 (April 3, 2015): 248–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2015.1080164>, cited in Lob, “Construction Jihad,” 9.

¹⁷¹ Marcelle Ghanim, “Lebanon: Jumblatt Interviewed on Attitudes to Hizballah, Syria, U.S. Visit, Tribunal,” Interview, *Kalam Al-Nass* (Beirut: LBC Europe Satellite Television, February 22, 2007), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070226611001#index=45&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

and Islamic welfare agency.¹⁷² As such, *Jihad al-Bina'* can perform projects with foreign donations without violating laws, although it must deal with complexities of public perception. Through *Jihad al-Bina'*, Iran repaired “bridges, roads, mosques and schools . . . [and] repaired electrical, telecommunication, road, and water problems as well as compensating the peoples for the loss of their houses.”¹⁷³ Following the 2006 war, wealthy Shi'a businessman, 'Ali Tajedinne affiliated with *Jihad al-Bina'* was accused of utilizing Iranian funds to buy lands from poor Druze and Christian landowners at up to four times the going rate as part of a Hezbollah-sponsored land-grab and resettlement program. Mr. Tajedinne and other Shia businessmen purchased at least 200 to 300 acres each in Christian and Druze villages of Chbeil and Al-Sreiri. They built dozens of apartment buildings, supermarkets, and started moving in Shi'i families. Druze Politician Walid Jumblatt also pointed to a four-lane highway constructed to connect Hezbollah stronghold Nabatiya in the south with the Bekaa valley as part of this conspiratorial effort. The road was lined with banners that proclaimed the source of the road's funds: “510km of new roads paid for by the Iranian Organization for Sharing in the Building of Lebanon.”¹⁷⁴

Israel made it clear they knew of and disapproved Iran's patronage when they struck a number of banks suspected of transferring Iranian funds to Hezbollah in 2006. On August 11, French newspaper *La Tribune* reported that *Jihad al-Bina'*'s interests were hit very hard following Israeli strikes on at least one dozen banks suspected of being used by Hezbollah “for transferring funds from abroad,” alluding to Iran. The goal of the strikes was to make it difficult for the organization to sustain social assistance services conducted by *Jihad al-Bina'*, and to pay salaries of its employees. Israel also wanted to send a message to financial institutions that they should not work with Hezbollah. According to Israeli intelligence,

¹⁷² Harik, 273, 284.

¹⁷³ Dneshjoo News, November 3, 2006, retrieved July 5, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/IAP20061106339005?returnFrame=true

¹⁷⁴ Charles Levinson, “Hizbollah Buys Frontier Land to Attack Israel,” *The Telegraph*, August 12, 2007, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1560119/Hizbollah-buys-frontier-land-to-attack-Israel.html>.

Hezbollah received \$50 million a year during “normal times” and as much as \$280 million in recent years.¹⁷⁵

Despite direct targeting efforts such as these, *Jihad al-Bina*’s resources were not obviously impacted. The organization reportedly enjoyed redundant streams of continuous revenue from multiple international sources. By the end of 2007, it was reported that Iran invested up to \$381 million into Lebanon since the end of the 2006 war,¹⁷⁶ the lion’s share of which was likely channeled to Hezbollah. It is nearly impossible to confirm amounts Hezbollah or *Jihad al-Bina*’ receives from Iran; Hezbollah leadership sporadically alternated from openly admitting to obfuscating Iran’s contributions. Their reluctance to divulge amounts received from Iran likely stems from not wanting to tie what might be perceived as radical or at least partisan goals with charitable works.

b. The United States via Lebanon

Interestingly, *Jihad al-Bina*’s greatest source of revenue through mid-2007 other than the Iranian government might possibly be the unwitting United States government. As an official social service organization, *Jihad al-Bina*’ received funds directly from the Lebanese government to assist in relief and reconstruction efforts following various conflicts. Following the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, *Jihad al-Bina*’ was the primary reconstruction management agency in the *dahhiya* and received \$400 million from the Lebanese government to rebuild destroyed homes and buildings.¹⁷⁷ Hezbollah members and sympathizers are members of municipal councils which have a hand in allocating U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)funds¹⁷⁸—since 2001, the lowest annual amount donated to Lebanon by USAID was \$12 million in 2002, and the

¹⁷⁵ La Tribune, August 11, 2006, retrieved July 3, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/EUP20060811338010?returnFrame=true

¹⁷⁶ Shim’on Shapira, “The Nexus between Iranian National Banks and International Terrorist Financing,” *The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, December 19, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080218739007.

¹⁷⁷ Lob, “An Institutional History of the Iranian *Jihad al-Bina*’: From Inception to Institutionalization (1979-2011),” 267.

¹⁷⁸ Harik, “Hezbollah’s Public and Social Services and Iran,” 281; also in Lob, 156.

highest was \$194 million in 2008 to help with the war recovery. The USAID amounts marked for Lebanon in 2017 and 2018 are \$116 and \$106 million, respectively.¹⁷⁹ Notably, six former members of Hezbollah's Politburo of the early 1990s—when it provided guidance to the Health Committee that later became *Jihad al-Bina'*—were elected to Lebanon's parliament in subsequent elections.¹⁸⁰

c. Other Sources

Jihad al-Bina' also enjoys financial access from international sources other than Iran and the unwitting United States. In 1992, Hezbollah sought out a medicine donation from Italy and since that time has been a regular recipient of international aid designated for Lebanon's Shi'i community. Lastly, Hezbollah's NGOs—including *Jihad al-Bina'*—borrowed 25 percent of all Lebanese NGO loans extended from the Ministry of Social Affairs and international donors such as the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the UN Development Program (UNDP), and the E.U. This totals 7,500 loans annually at a value of \$4.5 million in 2001 alone.¹⁸¹

Jihad al-Bina' also receives some external aid through fundraising and local donations. For example, local villagers raised \$18,000 of the \$120,000 needed to add a clinic and dig a well for the *husayniyya* in Libaya and contributed \$6,000 in labor. According to *Jihad al-Bina'*'s director in 1992, Sultan As'ad, approximately 20 percent of *Jihad al-Bina'*'s budget comes from religious donations (*zakat*) from Lebanon and abroad.¹⁸² Hezbollah also received individual and business donations, and revenue from its private investments. The organization continued finding housing for displaced persons, rented cars to replace those destroyed by Israel, and accelerated reconstruction operations

¹⁷⁹ "US Foreign Aid by Country," accessed September 22, 2018, <https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd>.

¹⁸⁰ Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah," 327.

¹⁸¹ Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, 92, also in Lob.

¹⁸² Director's Report, General Survey of School Needs in the Southern *Dahiyya*, (Beirut, February 1992), in Harik, "Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran," 280–282.

“with an efficiency that is rarely seen in Middle East administrations,”¹⁸³ according to one journalist from *Le Figaro*.

These revenue streams independent of the state allowed *Jihad al-Bina'* to move forward on projects in a way competing groups could not. For example, although Israel primarily targeted Hezbollah buildings and institutions during its 2006 34-day campaign in Lebanon, the government—already with a reputation for tremendous neglect and indolence—became paralyzed. Government agencies or parties intertwined in the bureaucracy were slaves to the unimaginative and seemingly unconcerned pace of government operations. Almost a month after cessation of hostilities, while the government was still working with the UN Developmental Program (UNDP) on reconstruction strategies and procedures, *Jihad al-Bina'* had already commenced its parallel reconstruction and recovery efforts. By September 6, 2006, *Jihad al-Bina'* already established the extent of destruction and had developed a plan to begin reconstruction. Moreover, the organization already distributed \$150 million to help people pay rent while the organization rebuilt their homes,¹⁸⁴ even before receiving the \$400 million later approved by the state.

Moreover, Hezbollah's prior political maneuvering allowed it to maintain its special status as a “resistance organization” as well as a legitimate political party. Therefore, it was able to retain its arms and independent funding streams, in addition to funds received through the state. This gave Hezbollah an advantage over competing sectarian groups. For example, when the Lebanese government passed laws in 1990 to disarm all militias, Druze, Maronite parties, as well as Amal lost significant funding cuts when their militias were disarmed. To boot, when the Lebanese Army began exercising authority in previous Amal enclaves, they lost revenue streams from previous independent taxation of the population. However, Hezbollah's revenue stream was supplied primarily

¹⁸³ Adrien Jaulmes, “Hizballah Propaganda in Full Swing in Lebanon,” *Le Figaro*, August 23, 2006, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_0_0_43/content/Display/EUP20060823338003?returnFrame=true.

¹⁸⁴ Milan II Sole 24 Ore News, September 6, 2006, retrieved July 1, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20060906058005

by the Iranian government and religious groups. The available revenue gap between Hezbollah and Amal expanded exponentially from that time forward. Hezbollah was able to utilize its steadily swelling budgets to continue and expand projects and services.¹⁸⁵

E. THE 2006 WAR WITH ISRAEL AND WA'AD

1. How it Began

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah's actions triggered an escalatory response from Israel and a devastating 34-day conflict. Hezbollah and Israel more or less abided by unofficial "rules of the game" developed in the 1990s during Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon which lasted until May 2000. During Israel's occupation of the south, Hezbollah fighters led the resistance against Israel and its proxy Southern Lebanese Army (SLA). Small exchanges often escalated into fierce conflicts, resulting in the slaughter of Lebanese civilians, garnering international attention, and ultimately, intervention. In 1996, both sides agreed to rules brokered by the United Nations—these rules specified that armored groups would not launch attacks against Israeli territory; that Israel would not bomb civilians or civilian targets; and that both sides would commit to avoid attacking civilians and launching attacks from within civilian areas. However, nothing in the agreement prevented the right to self-defense. For the most part, responses to aggression were proportionally in-kind. A UN monitoring group made up of US, French, Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli observers would oversee implementation of the agreement. This body also mediated between the two groups over prisoner exchanges and releases, return of corpses, and served as the forum where the groups could admit fault, submit a complaint or apology, and deescalate tensions.¹⁸⁶ Adherence to the rules brought relative peace to the security zone established by Israel, and Israeli popular opinion built in favor of a full Israeli withdraw from the occupied territory in southern Lebanon in May 2000. Though occasional fighting broke out between Hezbollah and Israeli forces in the border areas, the six year period between Israel's withdrawal and the start of the 2006 war was marked with relative quiet.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Harik, "Hezbollah's Public and Social Services and Iran," 280.

¹⁸⁶ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story*, 85–86, 88.

¹⁸⁷ Norton, 90–91.

Respect for the “rules of the game” waned on both sides in the time leading up to May 2006. In November 2005, Hezbollah attempted to kidnap several Israeli soldiers in the border village of Ghajar, which straddles the Israel-Lebanon border to secure the return of a few Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. In May 2006, Hezbollah fired on an Israeli border post and injured one Israeli soldier. According to the “rules,” an expected response would have been to shell a few Hezbollah positions and command centers. However, Israel shelled twenty Hezbollah positions, destroying a few. Hezbollah again escalated the back-and-forth exchange by launching eight Katyusha rockets at the Israeli army northern HQ at Safad, damaging an antennae farm nearby. In June 2006, Israeli leadership received reports by respected analysts which revealed a Hezbollah plot to develop a “first strike” capability to launch a massive, preemptive rocket attack. Moreover, Israel intercepted communications between Nasrallah and a member of HAMAS in which Nasrallah encouraged his counterpart to “hang tough” in negotiations with Israel over a prisoner exchange and in which he referred to Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Peretz as weak. Finally, on July 12, 2006, Hezbollah fighters ambushed an Israeli patrol inside the northern Israel border. The operation led to the death of five Israeli soldiers, the destruction of a new Merkava tank, and the capture of two soldiers.¹⁸⁸ Hezbollah’s leadership knew the response would be harsh, but greatly underestimated the gravity of Israel’s response.

2. Extent of Damage

Hezbollah’s actions triggered a massive Israeli offensive intent on ridding the region of the “cancer” of Hezbollah, resulting in huge material and economic losses, as well as lives lost (see Figure 8). The Israeli strategy was to hold the Lebanese government responsible for not controlling Hezbollah, and to punish Hezbollah by inflicting violence on their strongholds.¹⁸⁹ At the beginning of the conflict, Israel released approximately 3,000 bombs, rockets, and artillery rounds per day; by the end of the war, it released 6,000

¹⁸⁸ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story*, 134–135.

¹⁸⁹ Howayda Al-Harithy, “The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction,” in *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London - New York: Routledge, 2010), 73.

per day.¹⁹⁰ During the 34-day conflict, approximately 500,000 people were evacuated from northern Israel, and almost 1 million from southern Lebanon. 43 Israeli and 1,109 Lebanese civilians were killed. 118 Israeli and 28 Lebanese soldiers, and approximately 200 Hezbollah fighters died in the fighting. Approximately 900 Lebanese factories were struck and 1,500 homes damaged or destroyed, resulting in the displacement of nearly 15,000 families. In the south, 89,442 dwelling units were destroyed, as well as schools, hospitals, and other public and private structures.¹⁹¹ Material losses in Lebanon were estimated at \$4 billion, undoing fifteen years of post-war reconstruction efforts.¹⁹² When including loss of wages, the Lebanese government estimated costs of war near \$10 billion.¹⁹³ Moreover, the war devastated one of Lebanon's greatest national sources of revenue, tourism. The war sabotaged the summer tourism season, representing a single year loss of approximately \$2 billion in revenue, in addition to diminished tourism into future years while reconstruction efforts were underway—following the war, the effort was expected to take at least two years.¹⁹⁴ The war was particularly damaging to rural livelihoods as well—orchards, agricultural crops were damaged or left unusable, and livestock killed. Unemployment estimates in southern Lebanon prior to the war were at 9–11 percent; due to the war, that number rose to around 20 percent as a result of direct and indirect losses.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Jala Makhzoumi, "Marginal Landscapes, Marginalized Rural Communities: Sustainable Post-War Recovery in Southern Lebanon," in *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London - New York: Routledge, 2010), 132–133.

¹⁹¹ Makhzoumi, "Marginal Landscapes, Marginalized Rural Communities," 131.

¹⁹² "Middle East Crisis: Facts and Figures," August 31, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5257128.stm.

¹⁹³ Patricia Karam, "Opening Remarks: Reconstruction in Lebanon," § U.S. Institute of Peace (2006), <https://www.c-span.org/video/?194097-1/reconstruction-lebanon>.

¹⁹⁴ Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short Story*, 152.

¹⁹⁵ Makhzoumi, "Marginal Landscapes, Marginalized Rural Communities," 131.

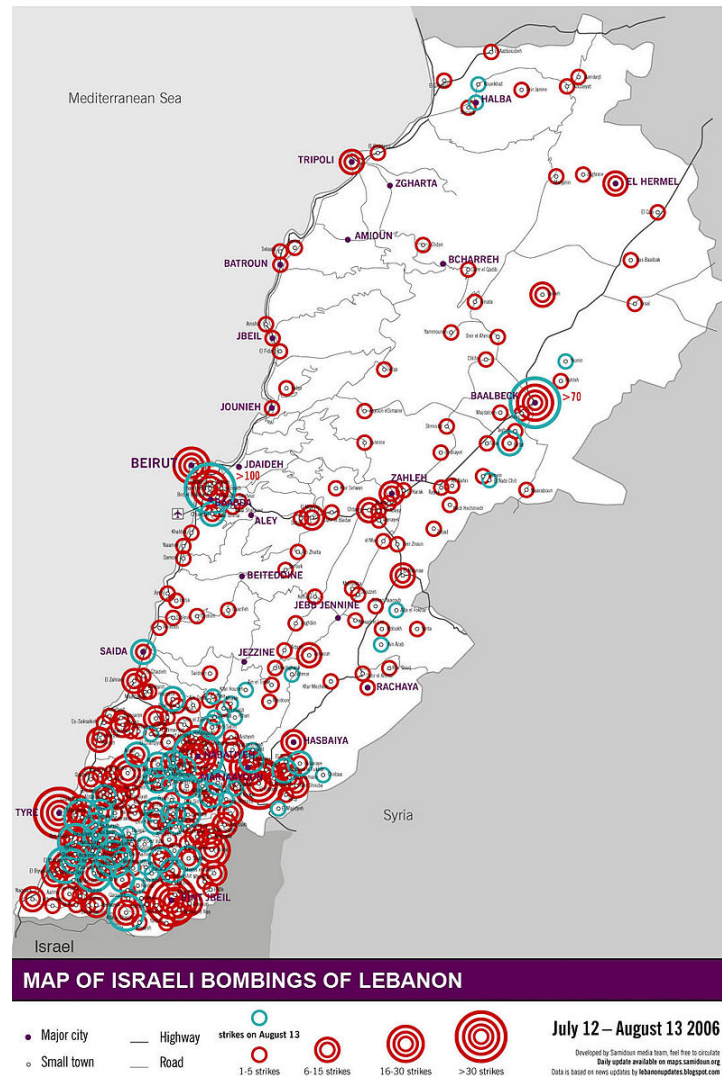


Figure 8. Map of Israeli bombing of Lebanon July 12–August 13, 2006¹⁹⁶

Nine months after the 2006 conflict—for which Hezbollah was largely blamed as the instigator—Hezbollah’s leaders launched reconstruction and relief efforts throughout Lebanon. However, Hezbollah emphasized its *Wa’ad* project (meaning pledge, in Arabic) in the *dahhiya*. In the *dahhiya*, the affected sectarian and political community were almost entirely Shi’i Hezbollah members. The damage included 1,232 buildings that housed

¹⁹⁶ *Map of Israeli Bombing of Lebanon July 12 - August 13, 2006*, accessed July 20, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Lebanon_War#/media/File:Locations_bombed_Aug13_no_fact_box.jpg.

30,000 residential and 1,600 commercial units. Of those damaged, 951 were partially destroyed, the rest completely.¹⁹⁷ The Lebanese government's approved decision 146/2006 issued on October 31, 2006 was to provide financial compensation to residents of destroyed domiciles, rather than to rebuild them. Each owner would receive payment of 80 million Lebanese pounds (\$53,333 USD) per house or apartment in two installments, with an extra 50 million Lebanese pounds (\$33,333) for common areas.¹⁹⁸

3. *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad Project*

However, the project's progression was at the mercy of a laggard seven-stage bureaucratic process. Hezbollah's top priority was to expeditiously return people to their homes. Residents of destroyed or damaged *dahhiya* buildings were given the option to collect compensation from the government and rebuild their homes on their own, or to delegate *Jihad al-Bina'* to collect compensation and take care of the rebuilding processes on their behalf. *Jihad al-Bina'* also promised to pay for any costs not covered by the government allocation. An initial meeting was held with 5,000 residents to present these options, 70 percent accepted *Jihad al-Bina's* services with more signing on as the work progressed. For this purpose, *Jihad al-Bina'* set up the *Wa'ad* (promise in Arabic) Project.¹⁹⁹

F. THE 2007 U.S. SANCTIONS AGAINST HEZBOLLAH'S *JIHAD AL-BINA'*

Before the *Wa'ad* project officially began in the spring, the United States Treasury designated its directing organization *Jihad al-Bina'* for secondary on February 20, 2007.²⁰⁰ In 2015, these sanctions became pursuant to the Hezbollah financial sanctions regulations

¹⁹⁷ "Hizbullah Spends Millions to Rebuild Southern Suburbs," *The Daily Star*, March 24, 2009, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20090324966009.

¹⁹⁸ Hana Alamuddin, "*Wa'ad: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut*," in *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London - New York: Routledge, 2010), 52.

¹⁹⁹ Alamuddin.

²⁰⁰ "Treasury Targets Hizballah Construction Company"; "Sanctions List Search" (Office of Foreign Asset Control, February 20, 2007), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=1565>.

when the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act was passed.²⁰¹ The reasons listed for the designation are that the organization receives direct funding from Iran and because it is overseen and run by Hezbollah. The release also points out that *Jihad al-Bina'* used deceptive means to solicit funding from international development organizations, such as applying for funding under names of proxies to obfuscate the direct link to Hezbollah. The release also states that Hezbollah directs *Jihad al-Bina'* for “its own construction needs as well as to attract popular support through the provision of civilian construction services.”²⁰² Implied in this statement is that the United States recognizes the effect of *Jihad al-Bina's* targeted reconstruction efforts in Lebanon—the consolidation of political power at the expense of the state.²⁰³ Given the antagonistic relationship between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government, and particularly with the Siniora government in 2006 and 2007, there is reason to believe the Siniora administration supported and possibly requested that the United States sanction the organization.²⁰⁴ The sanctions froze any U.S. assets held by *Jihad al-Bina'* and outlawed U.S. nationals or entities from dealing with the organization. Moreover, the intent of the sanctions was to “amplify [the effect] of primary sanctions [on Hezbollah, and] put pressure on third parties to stop their activities with . . . [*Jihad al-Bina'*] by threatening to cut off the third party’s access to the sanctioning country”²⁰⁵—the United States. It is unclear if and how many assets *Jihad al-Bina'* held within the United States. According to *Wa'ad* director, Hassan Jeshi, the organization has no holdings in the United States.²⁰⁶ If true, the sanctions may not be much more than a

²⁰¹ “Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015,” Pub. L. No. 114–102, USC 1701 50 (2015), <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/hifpa.pdf>.

²⁰² “Treasury Designates Hizballah’s Construction Arm.”

²⁰³ Danawi, *Hizbullah's Pulse*, 85.

²⁰⁴ Khadir Awakirah, “Al-Sanyurah Reported Asked U.S. to Target Hizballah Institutions,” *Sham Press*, February 23, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070224644001#index=49&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁰⁵ Ole Moehr, “Secondary Sanctions: A First Glance,” Atlantic Council, accessed September 21, 2018, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/ole-moe-hr-3>.

²⁰⁶ Thair Abbas, “Lebanon: Hizballah’s Wa’d Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb,” *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, September 13, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070913825004#index=8&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

symbolic gesture or strategic messaging to third party observers. However, the details of Jihad al-Bina's *Wa'ad* Project and the effect of sanctions will be discussed in chapters to follow.

G. CONCLUSION

Jihad al-Bina' was an enabler for Hezbollah's transition from militant group to socially-oriented political powerhouse in Lebanon. The organization assisted in this process by focusing on the forgotten Shia territories in the Bekaa Valley, southern Lebanon, and Beirut's southern suburbs—the *dahhiya*. *Jihad al-Bina'*s activities included providing healthcare, housing, reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing, agricultural development, education, utilities including water and electrical services during peacetime and crisis, and promotion of religious norms. Unfettered access to funds from Iran and the international community via the Lebanese government financed the spectrum of *Jihad al-Bina'*s social welfare and reconstruction programs. The cumulative effect of *Jihad al-Bina'*s activities is that it maintained concentrations of Hezbollah-friendly populations upon which the organization could draw from for recruits and rely upon in elections. This popularity propelled Hezbollah onto the Lebanese political stage where it politically maneuvered to maintain autonomy at the expense of the government and its political rivals. It also garnered the attention of the United States who designated *Jihad al-Bina'* in acknowledgement of its key role in supporting Hezbollah's strategic objectives—to grow in power and influence in Lebanon and the region. The next chapter will examine *Jihad al-Bina'*s activities in the post-sanction time period to assess sanction effectiveness. In sum, the next chapter will determine if the sanctions emplaced in 2007 and 2009 on the *Wa'ad* Project stifled their efforts and to what degree.

III. *JIHAD AL-BINA* ' FROM 2007 TO 2018

The United States designated *Jihad al-Bina* ' for secondary sanctions at a critical time for the organization. Following cessation of hostilities on August 14, 2006, regional and international observers marveled at Hezbollah's professionalism and competence demonstrated in combat versus Israeli forces. This newfound notoriety helped divert public attention away from its miscalculations which tipped off the war and devastated Lebanon. Analysts struggled to explain how this seemingly militarily unsophisticated guerilla organization thwarted Israel's technologically superior military from achieving its goal of wiping out Hezbollah from Lebanon. Hezbollah leadership reveled in the astonishment and the West's reluctant acknowledgement of Hezbollah's military significance. But in Lebanon, people surrounded by rubble were less enthusiastic about Hezbollah's military prowess.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah looked to *Jihad al-Bina* ' to help salvage its reputation following the massive destruction of the 34-day conflict with Israel. The war left at least 1,109 Lebanese dead,—mostly civilians—approximately 4,400 injured, and an estimated 1,000,000 displaced. In addition to the massive physical destruction which left the *dahhiya* in ruins, and thousands of residences (approximately 89,000) throughout southern Lebanon, the Bekaa valley, and elsewhere were completely destroyed—340 homes in Srifa; 215 homes in Siddiquine; 180 homes in Yatar; 160 in Zebqine; 750 more in 'Aita al-Cha'b; between 800 and 2,800 homes in Bint Jbeil's old town²⁰⁷—considered the capital of Hezbollah's resistance; and 140 homes in Taibe.²⁰⁸ The outrage against Israel was salient, but also expected—Hezbollah shouldered much of the blame for instigating the conflict. Fearing public backlash, Hezbollah leaders tasked *Jihad al-Bina* ' to expeditiously clean up the mess and pledged to make the destroyed area "more beautiful than it was." In addition to putting up a stiff military resistance, Hezbollah needed fast reconstruction

²⁰⁷ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction," 77.

²⁰⁸ "Why They Died - Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War," Human Rights Watch, September 5, 2007, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/09/05/why-they-died/civilian-casualties-lebanon-during-2006-war>.

efforts to convey resilience. Given the scale of this endeavor, *Jihad al-Bina'* set up the *Wa'ad* Project in the *dahhiya*, and began working to rebuild damaged Shia areas elsewhere in Lebanon.

The United States government understood *Jihad al-Bina'*s importance to Hezbollah at this crucial moment. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the organization possessed the technical and administrative expertise to carry out large-scale projects, and a seemingly bottomless cash cow in Iran to fund its initiatives, as well as other redundant streams of revenue. Together, these potentially enabled Hezbollah to emerge from the 2006 crisis with reputation unscathed, and perhaps elevated. The United States decided this was the moment to designate the organization for its terrorist ties for two reasons: first, to go after its access to money necessary for workers, equipment, and supplies; and second, in attempt to preemptively dissuade international partners from working with or providing resources to the organization.

A. U.S. SANCTIONS, HEZBOLLAH'S *JIHAD AL-BINA'*, AND IRAN

1. A Brief History on Sanctions against Iran

The history of U.S. sanctions against Iran goes back to the Islamic revolution. After Iranian students took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took Americans hostage, the United States banned imports from Iran and froze over \$12 billion in U.S.-based assets. In 1984, the United States designated Iran a state-sponsor of terrorism. This designation imposed a long list of sanctions pursuant to section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act, section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act, and section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act; including, a ban on arms-related exports and sales; prohibitions on economic assistance; U.S. opposition to World Bank and other intergovernmental organization (IGO) loans; lifting of diplomatic immunity which opens the door for civil cases against the sponsor state; prohibition of U.S. citizens or corporations from engaging in financial transactions with the sponsor state; and limitations on visas and immigration, among others.²⁰⁹ In 1992, U.S. congress solidified its concerns on Iran's nuclear, biological, and

²⁰⁹ "State Sponsor of Terrorism," U.S. *Department of State*, accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>.

chemical (NBC), and advanced conventional weapons development ambitions when it passed the Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act.²¹⁰

The United States' efforts to muster international consensus to thwart Iran's nuclear program and terror sponsorship came to a head in 1996. Because proliferation challenges Iran presented were similar to those of Iraq and Libya in 1990 and 1992, respectively, the United States wanted the UNSC to pass similar strong comprehensive sanction packages against Iran. UN sanctions passed against Libya ultimately convinced Muammar Ghaddafi to abandon Libya's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) materials and programs, allowing a team of U.S. and British experts to dismantle Libya's WMD program and infrastructure by 2004. Moreover, Libya formally accepted responsibility for its sponsorship of terrorism and role in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, and paid \$2.7 billion in compensation to families of victims. Strong UN sanctions against Iraq likewise convinced Saddam Hussein to abandon his WMD program, although this was not clear until after the 2003 U.S. campaign in Iraq.²¹¹

2. The UN Loses Gusto for Sanctions

Though the UN sanctions were successful in a non-proliferation sense, the perception of hardships imposed on innocent Iraqis tainted the effort and turned Security Council members off to the idea of repeating a similar package in Iran. The sanctions cut off Iraq from international supplies—food and medicine—which undoubtedly caused tremendous suffering for innocent people. One Harvard study concluded that the sanctions imposed “suffering of tragic proportions,” particularly on Iraq's children.²¹² After 1995, a number of studies cited that UN sanctions may have contributed to an increased rate of death among children, attributing approximately 500,000 child deaths to the sanctions. Most damning of these was the Iraq Child and Maternity Mortality Survey (ICMMS)

²¹⁰ Ashish Kumar Sen, “A Brief History of Sanctions on Iran,” Atlantic Council, accessed November 8, 2018, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/a-brief-history-of-sanctions-on-iran>.

²¹¹ Orde F. Kittrie, “New Sanctions for a New Century: Treasury's Innovative Use of Financial Sanctions,” *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* Spring, no. 789 (2009): 790–791.

²¹² Tim Dyson and Valeria Cetorelli, “Changing Views on Child Mortality and Economic Sanctions in Iraq: A History of Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics,” *BMJ Global Health* 2, no. 2 (July 1, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2017-000311>.

conducted by UNICEF. The survey found that children in central and southern Iraq were dying at a rate double that of the rate 10 years earlier. Results from subsequent studies based on the ICMMS data were even more troubling; one determined that the death rate per 1,000 births in Iraq rose from 56 between 1984 and 1989 to 131 between 1994 and 1999 as a direct result of sanctions.²¹³ It was later discovered in the early 2000s that these studies included inaccurate, irrelevant, “rigged” data within the ICMMS, and even falsified data manipulated by the Saddam Hussein regime.²¹⁴ By the late 1990s, it did not matter if the data supporting the international community’s collective guilt over Iraq sanctions was proven invalid—Security Council members were unwilling to levy any sanctions against Iran for the next decade.

In 1996, the United States attempted its own set of sanctions against Iran and called for the UNSC to follow suit, but they refused. The United States passed the Iran Sanctions Act which sought to deny Iran funds necessary to further its nuclear program by sanctioning any entity that invested more than \$20 million a year in Iran’s oil or gas sector.²¹⁵ By this time, US-Russia relations were souring, economies of European states were deeply intertwined with Iran’s, and European countries were heavily dependent upon Iran for energy needs. These new U.S. sanctions would require European countries to greatly curtail their dealings with Iran and go elsewhere to satisfy their energy needs. As described, the Iraq sanctions in the early 1990s—though successful—were perceived to have caused tremendous suffering among the innocent civilian populace and no one was eager to repeat this travesty elsewhere. For these reasons, the United States was never able to get the UNSC to back another set of comprehensive sanctions. The best the Clinton administration could do at the time was to sign a series of executive orders prohibiting the bilateral exchange of goods and services between the United States and Iran.²¹⁶

²¹³ Dyson and Cetorelli, “Changing Views on Child Mortality and Economic Sanctions in Iraq: A History of Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics.”

²¹⁴ Dyson and Cetorelli; Liz Sly, “Iraqis Think the U.S. Is in Cahoots with the Islamic State, and It Is Hurting the War,” *Washington Post*, December 1, 2015, sec. Middle East, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraqis-think-the-us-is-in-cahoots-with-isis-and-it-is-hurting-the-war/2015/12/01/d00968ec-9243-11e5-befa-99ceebcbb272_story.html.

²¹⁵ Sen, “A Brief History of Sanctions on Iran.”

²¹⁶ Sen.

3. The U.S. Goes it Alone: An Innovation in Sanctions

The type of sanctions implemented against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and *Wa'ad* in 2009 were unique and had been recently developed by the U.S. Treasury to isolate and pressure Iran. Faced with the dichotomous task of stifling Iran's nuclear program and the UNSC's unwilling to pass strong sanctions, between 1996 and 2007 the United States used three innovative initiatives to place economic pressure on Iran. Two of these initiatives involved divesting state and local government pensions from companies who did business with Iran,²¹⁷ and pressuring companies who supplied gasoline to Iran to halt gasoline sales.²¹⁸ The third initiative—the type that was levied against Hezbollah and *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* starting in 2007—was what Kittrie refers to as “the Treasury Department's new breed of financial sanctions,” orchestrated by America's first Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Stuart Levey. The U.S. Treasury began deploying this new breed of sanctions in 2005. Kittrie describes the goal and intended effect of these new sanctions in that they “persuade[d] specific third-country companies to stop doing business with the targeted rogue state (Iran), including by putting those third-country companies to a choice between the U.S. market and that of the rogue state.” Of these three initiatives, the United States had the most success in gaining leverage over Iran's decision-making process with regard to its nuclear program and terrorism financing through the Treasury Department's financial sanctions.²¹⁹

Iran's state-owned banks are highly integrated into the global financial system. They utilized deceptive practices to fund acquisition of items for its nuclear program and to fund Hezbollah. Deceptive practices utilized by Iranian banks include the use of front companies or intermediaries, and having financial institutions remove the name of Iranian banks when processing transactions to obscure Iran's role in funding terrorist groups.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Julie Kosterlitz, “Squeezing Iran,” *National Journal* 39, no. 35 (September 1, 2007): 22, cited in Kittrie, “New Sanctions for a New Century: Treasury's Innovative Use of Financial Sanctions,” 792.

²¹⁸ Kittrie, “New Sanctions for a New Century,” 793.

²¹⁹ Kittrie, 789, 793.

²²⁰ Kittrie, 796.

Iran's integration into the global financial system and use of deceptive practices allows it to covertly support its nuclear program and terrorism funding activities.

Starting in 2005, the United States unleashed a multifaceted strategy of financial sanctions against Iran. As Kittrie states, this strategy included “direct outright to individual private financial institutions, aggressive use of financial authorities to pursue political goals, and effective development and harnessing of intelligence about global financial transactions.”²²¹ Effectively, what this meant was that the United States had to convince companies and banks to stop doing business with Iran. When Levey pitched the idea of this new form of sanctions to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, he argued that banks needed to be convinced that they were only as reputable as their clients' practices, and that banks that served Iran risked their reputations as long as Iran financed terrorism and pursued nuclear and advanced missile programs. Banks also needed to understand the impact on their credibility if they complied with Iran's less-than-transparent requests, such as when Iran asked banks to remove traces of Iran's involvement in a transaction. Levey proposed that the United States press banks to stop working with Iran until they conformed to accepted international standards. The proposal was accepted by the State Department.²²²

The United States' efforts successfully garnered support from individual foreign governments and American and non-American companies to support Iran's alienation from the global financial system. During the early years of his tenure, Stuart Levey embarked on more than 80 foreign visits to over five dozen banks where he presented U.S. intelligence on Iranian illicit activities. For example, Iran's state-owned Saderat Bank with over 3,400 branches worldwide funneled approximately \$50 million dollars to Hezbollah and Palestinian fighters through its branches in Lebanon. Prior to 2005, sanctions focused on leveraging the benefits associated with trade. The United States embargoed Iranian imports, placed restrictions on travel, and even sanctioned the IRGC. But Iran always found ways around these sanctions—China purchased massive amounts of Iranian oil, and Iran

²²¹ Kittrie, “New Sanctions for a New Century,” 799.

²²² Robin Wright, “Stuart Levey's War,” *New York Times*, October 31, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/02/magazine/02IRAN-t.html>.

found other partners with whom it could trade and other places to travel.²²³ Moreover, despite the financial clout of the United States, the U.S. Treasury was hesitant to “mess around with the international financial system,” as put by former Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, Robert Einhorn.²²⁴

The United States’ frustrations with the UN led it to innovate and utilize its financial muscle to halt Iran’s nuclear program and to defund Hezbollah. In 2006, the U.S. Treasury blacklisted Iran’s top banks including Saderat Bank, Bank Sepah, and Melli Bank. When Iran’s Export Development Bank took over Sepah Bank’s accounts, the U.S. Treasury blacklisted it as well. The European Union, Australia, and others soon followed suit. Big banks in the United Kingdom, the rest of the EU, Japan, and some Muslim countries such as Bahrain and Malaysia curbed their business dealings with Iranian companies. Most surprisingly, even Chinese banks cut off many business dealings with Iranian companies.²²⁵

The success of innovative U.S. financial sanctions independent of the UN had a tremendous impact on Iran’s ability to utilize the international financial system. By 2008, more than 80 banks curtailed business dealings with Iran. Some banks who handled hundreds of millions of dollars in Iranian accounts cut them off completely. Iranian leaders fiercely denied involvement in any illicit activities and accused the United States of “financial terrorism,” and submitted formal complaints to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Moreover, Iran was dealing with its own financial crisis which started in 2005—soaring inflation and prices—compounding the problems associated with the United States’ new sanction repertoire.²²⁶

Between 2006 and 2010, the U.S. Treasury began upping pressure on Iran by sanctioning organizations other than banks inside Iran and abroad. The Treasury sanctioned Iran’s national shipping company and affiliates in at least ten countries for falsifying

²²³ Wright, “Stuart Levey’s War.”

²²⁴ Kirtzie, “New Sanctions for a New Century,” 800.

²²⁵ Wright, “Stuart Levey’s War.”

²²⁶ Wright.

documents and for transporting on behalf of sanctioned entities for their ties to WMD development. The Treasury also sanctioned insurance companies, science and technology research firms, and mining and machinery companies, among others.²²⁷ The Treasury's sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in early 2007 and *Wa'ad* in 2009 were part of a series of these new innovative sanctions against non-financial institutions that supported Iran via Hezbollah.

4. The UN Comes Around

Finally, after nearly a decade of no new sanctions, the UN could no longer ignore Iran's advancing nuclear program. The UN finally responded to U.S. promptings in 2006 when the UNSC passed resolution 1696 in July demanding that Iran suspend all enrichment and reprocessing activities or risk sanctions—Iranian leaders scoffed. On December 23rd, the UNSC unanimously passed resolution 1737, which mandated the same stipulations in UNSCR 1696 and demanded entry for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts to ensure compliance. UNSCR 1696 also implemented sanctions, albeit weaker and less comprehensive than those implemented in Iraq in the 1990s and earlier. The sanctions banned supplies of nuclear-related materials and technology and froze assets of individuals and assets related to Iran's nuclear program.²²⁸ The UN Security Council upped the ante as Iran continued to ignore its demands by passing UNSCR 1747 on March 24, 2007 which imposed an arms embargo and expanded the freeze on Iranian assets to more individuals and entities. On March 3, 2008, the UNSC passed resolution 1803, extending the asset freeze, expanding prohibitions on trade of sensitive equipment and materials related to Iran's program, called upon states to monitor more closely the activities of Iranian banks and to inspect all ships and aircraft suspected of transporting materials related to Iran's

²²⁷ "An Overview of O.F.A.C. Regulations Involving Sanctions against Iran" (Office of Foreign Asset Control), accessed November 10, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/iran.txt>.

²²⁸ "UNSCR 1737" (2006), <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/s/res/1737-%282006%29>.

nuclear program. Lastly, UNSCR 1803 banned travel by certain sanctioned individuals and called upon governments to monitor the movement of key individuals as well.²²⁹

5. Sanctioning the Iran-Lebanon Nexus

2006 and 2007 was a watershed moment wherein multiple sets of sanctions were deployed against the Iran-Lebanon nexus to thwart Iran's support of Hezbollah. Immediately following the war in September 2006, the U.S. Treasury designated two Hezbollah-controlled financial institutions, Bayt al-Mal (The House of Money) which operated as Hezbollah's bank, creditor, and investment arm. It also designated the Yousser Company for Finance and Investment which secured loans and finance business deals for Hezbollah's companies.²³⁰ As stated, the U.S. Treasury designated *Jihad al-Bina'* in early 2007 for its support to Hezbollah, and likely in anticipation of its role in helping Hezbollah salvage its reputation following the 2006 war. Under Executive Order (EO) 13224, the U.S. Treasury also designated the IRGC-QF in October 2007, for "provid[ing] material support to the Taliban, Lebanese Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command."²³¹ IRGC-QF was also later sanctioned for providing \$100-\$200 million a year to Hezbollah and for rearming the group in violation of UNSCR 1701. Moreover, EO 13224 designated Iranian state-owned Saderat Bank, Melli Bank, Mellat Bank, and others "used by the Government of Iran to channel funds to terrorist organizations, including Hizballah."²³²

²²⁹ "Security Council Resolution 1803 - UNSCR," accessed November 13, 2018, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1803>; Gary Samore, "Sanctions Against Iran: A Guide to Targets, Terms, and Timetables," Addendum to Decoding the Iran Nuclear Deal (Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, June 2015), <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/Iran%20Sanctions.pdf>, 7.

²³⁰ Levitt, "Hiding Terrorist Activity."

²³¹ Executive Order No. 13224, 66 Fed. Reg. 49,079, 49,080, (Sept 23, 2001), cited in Kittrie, 808.

²³² Kittrie, "New Sanctions for a New Century," 809; "Fact Sheet: Designation of Iranian Entities and Individuals for Proliferation Activities and Support for Terrorism," accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp644.aspx>.

a. Financial Institutions

The U.S. Treasury targeted Iran's national banks because they were a critical node between Iran and its external proxies. Most Iranian funding to Hezbollah comes through Bank Melli and Bank Saderat. During the 1990s, the IRGC's activities and support to Hezbollah were financed through a branch of Bank Melli in Baalbek. One month prior to the 1994 bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building in Argentina, the alleged mastermind and then Iranian Cultural Ambassador, Mohsen Rabbani received approximately \$150 million transferred into his Deutsch Bank account which originated from Bank Melli. In September 2006, the U.S. Treasury revealed that Iran's central bank utilized Bank Melli and Bank Saderat branches in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria to fund Hezbollah, as well as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.²³³ Moreover, Bank Saderat was blackballed from the U.S. financial system in 2006 for transferring "tens of millions of dollars through branches in Europe to Lebanon's Hezbollah," according to Matthew Levitt.²³⁴

b. Hezbollah's Jihad al-Bina'

The United States sanctioned *Jihad al-Bina'* in early 2007 and *Wa'ad* in 2009 as part of its overarching, comprehensive strategy to weaken Iran. Top-down sanctions over the previous decade targeted Iran's sources of revenue to pressure the regime and influence its decision-making processes. Middle-man sanctions against Iran's financial institutions and banks sought to deny transfer of Iranian funds to support institutions seen as critical to external operations—i.e. Hezbollah and other proxy groups. Designation of *Jihad al-Bina'* was a bottom-up approach of stifling the support organizations' efforts which were seen as critical to Hezbollah—and ultimately Iran's—strategic purposes. By blackballing *Jihad al-Bina'*, the U.S. Treasury theorized that it would deny the organization access to necessary funds and would therefore be unable to execute operations. If the organization could not execute operations, it would fail to repair the damage which resulted from the 2006 war

²³³ Shapira, "The Nexus between Iranian National Banks and International Terrorist Financing."

²³⁴ Matthew Levitt, "Making Iran Feel the Pain," *Wall Street Journal*, July 2, 2007, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/308702259?accountid=12702>.

and extend the state of chaos and misery in the *dahhiya*. In theory, if the sanctions worked, *Jihad al-Bina'* would be unable to execute operations. How long would it take for the sanctions to go into effect? The following section examines *Jihad al-Bina'*s operations to determine if and how the sanctions and designations had the desired effect.

B. POST-2006 WAR *JIHAD AL-BINA'* RECONSTRUCTION

1. The *Wa'ad* Project—Hezbollah's Pledge in Beirut's Southern Suburbs

Haret Hreik—the location of Hezbollah's headquarters—was the epicenter of Israel's 34-day bombing campaign, and consequently the focal point for *Jihad al-Bina'*s initial post-war reconstruction efforts. Approximately one-third of Israel's estimated 12,000 air strikes targeted the *dahhiya*.²³⁵ And within the *dahhiya*, Haret Hreik bore the brunt of the offensive due to its strategic importance to Hezbollah.²³⁶ One Democracy Now! reporter described the physical state of Haret Hreik following the conflict to “the aftermath of September 11th, but . . . 100 times over.”²³⁷ Within the *dahhiya*, 1,200 buildings were damaged and 282 were completely destroyed.²³⁸ However, even before the bombing campaign concluded, *Jihad al-Bina'* already prepared survey forms and base maps to begin damage assessments and start recovery efforts. Hezbollah's intent was not solely to reconstruct the physical damage in the *dahhiya*, but to reinforce a ‘Resistance Society’ at the Party's core. Reconstruction in Hezbollah's population centers was considered an act of defiance just as critical to the Resistance as direct fighting against Israeli soldiers, and just as necessary to the survival of the Party in the postwar aftermath.²³⁹

²³⁵ Alamuddin, “Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut,” 46.

²³⁶ Mona Harb and Mona Fawaz, “Influencing the Politics of Reconstruction in Haret Hreik,” in *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London - New York: Routledge, 2010), 21–22.

²³⁷ “Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy” (Democracy Now, August 2, 2007), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szyA8-VER1g>.

²³⁸ “AFP: Hizbullah Spends Millions to Rebuild Beirut Stronghold,” *Paris AFP (North American Service)*, March 23, 2009, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20090323522001#index=10&searchKey=30286397&rpp=500.

²³⁹ Harb and Fawaz, “Influencing the Politics of Reconstruction in Haret Hreik,” 24.

Jihad al-Bina' also prioritized Haret Hreik because of its strategic importance as the Party's headquarters. The headquarters building where many official functions were held, was completely destroyed. Secretary General Nasrallah often held important meetings, televised speeches, and hosted visiting dignitaries at Hezbollah's offices here. Israeli strikes also destroyed numerous hospitals and schools in the surrounding areas. Prior to the strikes, Hezbollah's security services and critical facilities were located underground in Haret Hreik. As part of the Party's reconstruction, it decided to move all of its civilian institutions underground as had been done with its security service offices.²⁴⁰ Notably, he also downplayed rumors that the project constructed suspicious tunnels, passages, or shelters in the security quarter of Haret Hreik.²⁴¹

In stark contrast to state processes in Lebanon's Shia areas, swift reconstruction was a defining feature of *Jihad al-Bina's* contribution to the resistance. It would be more than two weeks after the UN Security Council adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 1701 calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities that the Lebanese government appointed a firm to study the removal of debris, to survey damage, and discuss reconstruction in the *dahhiya*.²⁴² Hezbollah, however, needed work to start immediately for four reasons: first, to highlight the state's ineptitude and/or ambivalence; second, to promote the Party's resistance identity by demonstrating its resilience; third, to eliminate evidence of its miscalculation which tipped off the war; and fourth, to quickly alleviate suffering of its constituency.

To support these goals, *Jihad al-Bina'* went to work immediately. The two weeks between the cessation of hostilities on August 14th and when the government began acknowledging its intent to help rebuild in the *dahhiya* on August 31st were critical to *Jihad*

²⁴⁰ Thair Abbas, "Report on Plans to Rebuild Hizballah-Controlled Southern Suburb in Beirut," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, August 24, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070824825002#index=11&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁴¹ "The Presidential Election: A Race between the Parliamentary Quorum and the Quorum of the Remaining Booby-Trapped Vehicles," *Al-Anwar*, September 24, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070925611001#index=7&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁴² "Security Council Calls for End to Hostilities between Hizballah, Israel, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1701 (2006) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>.

al-Bina'. The organization wasted no time in putting workers and volunteers to work. Hundreds of architects, engineers, and volunteers responded to *Jihad al-Bina*'s call to action and started work on August 12th, two days before the resolution went into effect. *Jihad al-Bina*' also set up an executive committee to begin damage estimates, rent heavy machinery, and begin removing debris. *Jihad al-Bina*' surveyed and subdivided the *dahhiya* into clusters in which buildings were classified as partially or heavily damaged, or completely demolished.²⁴³ Though the damage was monumental, Secretary General Nasrallah promised to repair or reconstruct every house damaged in the war.²⁴⁴

In addition to initiating preliminary steps for reconstruction, *Jihad al-Bina*' began relief efforts as well. It formed teams to help displaced people find a place to stay, it brought in water tanks so people had access to potable water supplies, and it transported and sprayed insecticides on salvageable critical produce. *Jihad al-Bina*' also coordinated with international organizations to secure food and medicine supplies.²⁴⁵

Jihad al-Bina' was able to get a jump start on the state's recovery efforts in great part because of its readily-available supplies of money. While the Fuoad Siniora administration was still mulling over reconstruction strategies with the UNDP, by September 6th *Jihad al-Bina*' already distributed \$150 million provided by Iran to enable people to pay for rent while their homes were being rebuilt.²⁴⁶ Each displaced family was moved from the public gardens or schools used as shelter during the war and was given

²⁴³ Alamuddin, "Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut," 49.

²⁴⁴ "Almost Two Years After War, Displaced Residents of Beirut's Southern Suburbs Return," *The Daily Star*, April 30, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080430966002#index=12&searchKey=30216768&rpp=500.

²⁴⁵ Fatin Al-Qubaysi, "Report on Hizballah's Jihad Al-Bina' Foundation's Services to Citizens," *Al-Safir*, June 17, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080618351001#index=33&searchKey=30224729&rpp=500.

²⁴⁶ Ugo Tramballi, "Lebanon: Italy 'Country of Preference' for Reconstruction, Commencing with Army," *Milan II Sole-24 Ore*, September 6, 2006, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20060906058005; "Almost Two Years After War, Displaced Residents of Beirut's Southern Suburbs Return."

\$12,000 to provide for rent and furniture for one year.²⁴⁷ During the same time frame, there was relatively little government presence in the *dahhiya*.

2. *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad* Takes the Lead in Reconstruction

The government was initially slow to start reconstruction and recovery efforts in great part because it lacked what *Jihad al-Bina* possessed—money and a plan. On August 31st, Prime Minister Siniora finally announced the establishment of a new committee tasked with planning reconstruction of the *dahhiya*. Three weeks after cessation of hostilities, Siniora was able to successfully secure nearly \$1.2 billion in recovery aid donations at a Sweden donor's conference held the first week of September. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar pledged an additional \$800 million as a token of Arab solidarity.²⁴⁸ It would be an additional three weeks later when the newly established committee would meet to propose rebuilding strategies for the southern suburbs.

The committee considered four proposals. First, to set up a public authority to plan and execute reconstruction. The authority would confiscate private lands and building properties, execute planning and reconstruction, and hand the properties back to owners following completion. This was rejected outright by politicians and municipal leaders because a similar project had been approved in the *dahhiya* before but never completed. The second proposal called for the establishment of a real estate company under which owners of various lots pool their ownership, plan and execute reconstruction according to their own volition, as had been done with a previous project in downtown Beirut. This was rejected because owners of original properties felt that the value of their ownership post-project execution was much lower. The third proposal called “Re-Parcelization” or the Large Projects Law permitted the establishment of independent planning for any land over 20,000 square meters. The pools could be set up by individuals, or individuals pooling together their parcels. This would be complicated as many of the buildings in the devastated areas were multi-level residential buildings, which would require lengthy and complicated

²⁴⁷ Alamuddin, “Wa’d: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut,” 49.

²⁴⁸ “Donors Make Huge Lebanon Pledge,” *BBC News*, September 1, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5303410.stm.

negotiations to satisfy multiple unequally-vested owners. Lastly, the committee proposed the option to leave reconstruction of buildings to individual owners while the government would rebuild infrastructure. Prime Minister Siniora approved this last option with a compensation plan under which individuals would receive the value of individual owned units within a building. Some ministers protested to this plan because the government still had not paid compensations approved for the displaced from the civil war which ended 15 years prior. However, a minister from Hezbollah reminded the government that the costs associated with the 2006 war recovery would come from money donated by Arab countries and the international community, not the Lebanese government's budget.

Finally, on October 31st—six weeks after cessation of hostilities—the government approved a plan to compensate owners. Each owner would receive payment of 80 million Lebanese pounds (\$53,333 USD) per house or apartment in two installments, with an extra 50 million Lebanese pounds (\$33,333) for common areas. But it would be up to owners to go through the painstaking bidding and contracting process to rebuild their domiciles.²⁴⁹ Given the demand for construction contractors, the task would be daunting. With an approved plan in place, however, all that remained was to secure money to begin the process. Given the government's past performance with post-war reconstruction and compensation, many were skeptical.

Wa'ad was established as a non-profit management project—not an institution—to take the burden of the reconstruction processes off legal owners and to facilitate a speedy, minimally cumbersome process. Initially, *Jihad al-Bina'* estimated that Israel inflicted about \$370 million in damages on the *dahhiya* alone. The *Wa'ad* project employed 20,000 technicians, engineers, and laborers which reflected an administrative cost of over \$6 million.²⁵⁰ Once owners delegated *Jihad al-Bina'* as their surrogate representative, the organization fronted funds necessary to start the reconstruction process immediately rather than waiting on government funds. One resident of Beirut's southern suburbs, Zaynab,

²⁴⁹ Alamuddin, "Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut," 51–52.

²⁵⁰ Abbas, "Lebanon: Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb."

recounted her experience with *Jihad al-Bina's* representatives in the days after the government plan was approved:

[Hezbollah] officials contacted us and said they were planning to establish a company to rebuild the homes. They asked us to sign pledges that we would give them the money that we got from the Lebanese state and in exchange they would build us houses within one and a half years. I accepted this arrangement because it is difficult for the residents of an entire apartment building to agree on one rebuilding method. Additionally, [Hezbollah] usually fulfills its obligations.²⁵¹

Jihad al-Bina' also deployed experts to carry out project bids and to supervise the building process. Perhaps most appealing for potential constituents was that if the government-designated amount for home reconstruction was not sufficient, *Jihad al-Bina'* vowed to pay for excess costs. Hezbollah also offered to pay excess construction costs to those who opted not to designate *Jihad al-Bina'*. Initially, 70 percent of *dahhiya's* residents opted to let *Jihad al-Bina'* manage reconstruction affairs on their behalf, as stated in the previous chapter. This meant that from the outset, *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad* project took on rebuilding 196 of the 264 buildings destroyed in the *dahhiya*.²⁵² By July 2009, another 25 percent of owners opted to turn over responsibility—and their government-allotted funds—to *Jihad al-Bina'*.²⁵³

The government likely permitted *Jihad al-Bina'* to take lead on *dahhiya* reconstruction for five reasons. First, the Lebanese government had a history of incompetence. As previously stated, by the start of the 2006 war, the government still did not follow through on many of its post-war compensation and recovery commitments made after the end of the civil war 15 years prior.²⁵⁴ The state apparatuses responsible for reconstruction were neither capable, ready, nor ambitious to take on this new effort. Second, Hezbollah was undoubtedly the instigator of the war, and consequently, their areas

²⁵¹ "Hizbullah, State, Arab Donors Help in Reconstruction of South," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, July 16, 2007, <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/>; https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070716825005#index=18&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁵² Abbas, "Lebanon: Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb."

²⁵³ Alamuddin, "Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut," 52.

²⁵⁴ Alamuddin, 67–68.

were hit the hardest. Effectively, the government's message to Hezbollah was: you broke it, you fix it. Third, because the country was in ravages following the ceasefire, the anti-Hezbollah portion of the government was likely keen to watch Hezbollah flail while undertaking the seemingly insurmountable task of reconstruction and die a slow public relations death. Fourth, Hezbollah made it clear that they were willing to lead reconstruction efforts including taking on whatever costs were not covered by the government. Effectively, *Jihad al-Bina'* inadvertently placed a cap on the amount the government would disperse to its citizens. Moreover, the government stood ready to receive nearly \$2 billion in international reconstruction donations. The reconstruction effort in the *dahhiya* alone was originally estimated by *Jihad al-Bina'* at approximately \$370 million,²⁵⁵ and later adjusted to \$600 million.²⁵⁶ While Hezbollah's pledge to quickly pay for and execute construction projects comforted its Shiite constituency, it also likely incentivized the government to withhold funds allocated for reconstruction projects in the areas covered by *Jihad al-Bina's* *Wa'ad* project. Notably, by the time the *Wa'ad* project nearly completed work in the *dahhiya*, the government had only distributed 27 percent of promised reconstruction costs to citizens, showing no signs that it would follow through distributing the rest. This was likely because *Wa'ad* had already paid for the reconstruction and was waiting on the government to provide reimbursement.²⁵⁷ Lastly, even if the government was determined to take lead on reconstruction in the *dahhiya*, it lacked the organizational coherence and funds to beat *Jihad al-Bina'* to the project. Ali al-Amin from Sada al-Balad news described the postwar environment in Lebanon as a new war over construction between Hezbollah and the Lebanese state. He added that no one "expect[s] Hizballah's leadership to allow the government to manage the reconstruction, and for purely political reasons that have nothing to do with security or technical considerations.

²⁵⁵ Abbas, "Lebanon: Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb."

²⁵⁶ Abbas, "Report on Plans to Rebuild Hizballah-Controlled Southern Suburb in Beirut."

²⁵⁷ Amin Mustafa, "Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Reconstruction Efforts, Qatari Funding," *Al-Watan Online*, April 20, 2009, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20090422054003#index=12&searchKey=30286397&rpp=500.

It is simply not just a reconstruction process but an issue of political exploitation.”²⁵⁸ In a speech in early May 2007, Prime Minister Siniora reciprocated this sentiment when he openly criticized people for paying Hezbollah via *Wa’ad*, stating that residents in the southern *dahiyya* were somewhat responsible for the chaos that occurred in their area because of their support for Hezbollah. According to Ibrahim al-Amin, chairman of al-Akhbar newspaper, Siniora criticized *dahiyya* residents for paying *Wa’ad* and enabling Hezbollah to “[steal] people’s money.”²⁵⁹ If Prime Minister Siniora held such disgust for *Jihad al-Bina’* and *Wa’ad*, he likely would not have supported the organization taking lead on reconstruction unless the government was powerless to prevent this.

3. U.S. Sanctions and the Isolation of *Jihad al-Bina* and *Wa’ad*

Though the government was initially willing to delegate reconstruction authority to *Jihad al-Bina’*, U.S. influence caused Lebanese ministries to back pedal on cooperation with the organization. *Jihad al-Bina’* and *Wa’ad* generally had cooperative relationships with municipality leaders and faced little obstacles in implementing projects in their areas. However, when it came to dealing with official government institutions that needed to approve release of rehabilitation funds, the government was extremely uncooperative.²⁶⁰

Despite the government’s unwillingness to cooperate, Hezbollah’s need to quickly move on projects and its readily-available funds from Iran allowed it to innovate contracts with *dahiyya* residents. *Jihad al-Bina’* fronted the funds and paid for excess costs as the legal representative of a damaged or destroyed domicile. Under this agreement, *Jihad al-Bina’s Wa’ad* would legally collect funds from the government once released. However,

²⁵⁸ Ali Al-Amin, “The Construction Battle Has Officially Begun,” *Sada Al-Balad*, May 8, 2007, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070508611001#index=38&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁵⁹ Ibrahim Al-Amin, “The International Tribunal and the Current Lebanese Situation,” *Talk of the Hour* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV), accessed June 23, 2018, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070520668003#index=34&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁶⁰ Yasir Al-Hariri, “Wa’d Company Chairman on Progress of Reconstruction in Southern Suburb,” *Al-Diyar Online*, August 2, 2010, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20100808610002#index=19&searchKey=30986546&rpp=10.

many within the government—still angry at Hezbollah for its impudence that led to the war—refused to cooperate with *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad*. Moreover, they suspected that Hezbollah's benevolence by offering to pay costs and represent owners was a front. For this reason, government institutions in charge of distributing designated funds refused to do turn them over to *Jihad al-Bina'* or *Wa'ad* though they possessed power of attorney their contracts with constituents were legal.²⁶¹ These powers of attorney permitted the organization to manage citizen reconstruction projects, contracting and supervision of the work, and follow-up with private and governmental entities for all legal, financial, technical, and administrative matters.²⁶² When pressed on why Lebanon's official institutions would not cooperate with the organization, *Wa'ad* director Hassan Jeshi chalked it up to “the general political decision,” or “political stupidity.” He implied that hindering the distribution of funds to *Wa'ad* was the government's futile attempt to delay reconstruction and drive a wedge between the people and the Resistance (Hezbollah).²⁶³

The government had valid reasons to suspect Hezbollah's benevolence. While advocating for building and residential unit owners meant accepting potential excess building costs, it might also gave *Jihad al-Bina'* the opportunity to pocket excess funds if building costs fell below the amount given to owners from the government and subsequently signed over to *Jihad al-Bina'*. Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Druze PSP, confirmed these suspicions when he accused *Jihad al-Bina'* of appropriating private lands and funds for its own allegedly nefarious purposes. He accused *Jihad al-Bina'* of illegally asking the Lebanese Ministry of the Displaced for compensation for buildings *Jihad al-Bina'* claimed it owned in the *dahhiya*, Baalbek, and al-Hermel—effectively, Jumblatt accuses the organization of confiscating property that was not theirs. As of February 2007, the ministry would not turn funds over to *Jihad al-Bina'* though its constituents already designated the organization—the ministry would only turn funds over directly to legal owners. Jumblatt expressed his belief that *Jihad al-Bina'* pursued such a policy in attempt to force Lebanon's Shia into a dependent relationship with Hezbollah in which they lose

²⁶¹ Abbas, “Report on Plans to Rebuild Hizballah-Controlled Southern Suburb in Beirut.”

²⁶² Al-Hariri, “Wa'd Company Chairman on Progress of Reconstruction in Southern Suburb.”

²⁶³ Abbas, “Lebanon: Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb.”

their assets, become impoverished, and are forced to rely on the organization.²⁶⁴ Jumblatt furthered his accusations against *Jihad al-Bina'* by characterizing it as part of an Iranian conspiracy. Jumblatt stated that *Jihad al-Bina'*'s recent land acquisition was "part of a plan that seeks to change the Lebanese configuration" . . . "[into] a certain state that will be a pro-Iranian state at the expense of the Lebanese, and specifically at the expense of the Lebanese Arab Shiites."²⁶⁵

The post-2006 war reconstruction efforts in Lebanon also served as a forum of competition over resources between Hezbollah and the state. As stated, the *Wa'ad* project signed legal contracts and obtained power of attorney for many constituents who were entitled to compensation from the state. Most of the state-allocated funds came from international donors who pledged recovery assistance at Sweden. Some of the gulf nations willing to donate funds to Lebanon's recovery overtly insisted their money be funneled to and utilized by state institutions,²⁶⁶ perhaps fearing U.S. accusations of defying its new unilateral sanctions against Hezbollah's construction organizations. However, many of these international donors—Arab states and Islamic figures—had more faith in *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* than the state in safe-handling of funds and execution of projects. To simultaneously ensure their money went to effect reconstruction while avoiding the disdain of the United States, some Arab states and Islamic figures donated directly to *Jihad al-Bina'* anonymously.²⁶⁷ In some cases, Arab states opted to avoid the political fray and directly conduct reconstruction efforts independent of the Lebanese state and Hezbollah. For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) opted to carry out direct reconstruction work when it repaired schools and hospitals, and removed mines in southern Lebanon.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Ghanim, "Lebanon: Jumblatt Interviewed on Attitudes to Hizballah, Syria, U.S. Visit, Tribunal."

²⁶⁵ "Walid Jumblatt Holds News Conference, Discusses Situation in Lebanon," News Conference (Dubai: Al-Arabiya TV, January 22, 2007), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070122632001#index=55&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁶⁶ Karam, Opening Remarks: Reconstruction in Lebanon, minute 6:05.

²⁶⁷ Abbas, "Report on Plans to Rebuild Hizballah-Controlled Southern Suburb in Beirut."

²⁶⁸ "Hizbullah, State, Arab Donors Help in Reconstruction of South."

4. *Wa'ad's* Resistance Public Relations Campaign

Hezbollah expertly capitalized on international media attention, and continued deploying its own media outlets to highlight the plight of its constituents, its philanthropic acts, and the government's incompetence or apathy. Al-Manar displayed steady streams of funeral processions in southern towns and villages straddled by reports on *Jihad al-Bina's* reconstruction efforts. Reports also focused on the government's noticeable absence in the devastated areas and failure to initiate cleanup efforts well after hostilities ended. Its news reports also highlighted civil frustration with the government while praising Hezbollah and *Jihad al-Bina*'.²⁶⁹ As one resident of the *dahhiya* stated a few weeks after hostilities ended:

The Lebanese state has not come here to ask us what we need after all of this destruction. They are quite non-existent on the scene. All of the work here is being done by the residents—by volunteers and by Hezbollah. We ask the government to come and look at us. So far, no one from the government has come here to see how they can help us in the immediate.²⁷⁰

Shaykh Qodr Nordon from Hezbollah's political council also commented on the government's apparent ineptitude in the *dahhiya* following the war. Though he struggled to speak in English, the effort reflects his intent to capture the attention of a broad audience:

We have about 7,000 families homeless today and winter will be after two months . . . and we have a bad state for our people here. We don't like to replace government here, but if the government will not do anything we will start rebuilding after removing rubble which we have [been doing] [sic].²⁷¹

Nasrallah also called out the government's seemingly purposeful inaction during a one year anniversary "Victory Party" after the end of the 2006 war. He stated that even after a full year following the allocation of over \$1 billion in recovery funds, the government has not

²⁶⁹ "Hizballah's Al-Manar Satellite TV Behavior" (Open Source Center, August 19, 2006), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20060819647006#index=19&searchKey=30138243&rpp=10.

²⁷⁰ "Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy."

²⁷¹ "Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy."

released funds while Hezbollah doled out \$380,900,000,²⁷² implying that the government was in no rush to reconstruct damaged Shia areas. In speeches, he places the people at odds with the government by stating that the \$1 billion is “the right of the people” and withheld by the government.²⁷³

Jihad al-Bina' also ran a successful public relations and advertisement campaign to support its recovery efforts—especially the *Wa'ad* project—and to salvage the Party's reputation. Throughout 2006, Al-Manar television broadcast public announcements encouraging viewers whose homes were damaged or demolished as a result of “US-Zionist aggression against Lebanon in summer 2006” to document the damage and to keep records of maintenance and repair work bills so the organization could compensate them. *Jihad al-Bina'* also advertised phone numbers for anyone who was not included in the organization's initial damage assessment process. They encouraged viewers to assist *Jihad al-Bina'* by volunteering or donating a place for displaced people to stay. Al-Manar also broadcast advertisements for a call-in phone number and encouraged anyone willing to offer financial or in-kind donations to do so. Through its al-Manar advertisements, *Jihad al-Bina'* also encouraged people to call in and register for compensation (see Figures 9, 10, and 11).²⁷⁴ Similar advertisements requesting donations continued through 2009.

²⁷² “Nasrallah Warns Israel of ‘Big Surprise,’” *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, August 14, 2007), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/FEA20070815279912#index=12&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁷³ “Nasrallah on ‘Victory’ Anniversary, Warns of ‘Big Surprise’ If Attacked,” *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, August 14, 2007), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070814632002#index=13&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.

²⁷⁴ Al-Manar Television, September 8–9, 2006, retrieved July 3, 2018 from https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20060909642001#index=8&searchKey=30138243&rpp=10 and https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20060908638003#index=10&searchKey=30138243&rpp=10



Figure 9. *Jihad al-Bina'* advertisement run on Al-Manar television in 2006 asking for volunteers and donations with call-in phone numbers²⁷⁵



Figure 10. Screen shot of Al-Manar report on launch of *Wa'ad* project in Beirut's southern suburbs aired on May 17, 2007²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ "Hizbullah's Al-Manar Satellite TV" (Al-Manar TV, August 18, 2006), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20060818638005#index=20&searchKey=30138243&rpp=10.

²⁷⁶ "Lebanon: Advertising for Promise Project to Reconstruct Southern Suburbs Starts" (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, May 17, 2007), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20070517637003#index=35&searchKey=30158129&rpp=500.



Figure 11. Al-Manar News screenshot of *Jihad al-Bina'* banner hung on completed building in the *dahhiya* reads, “USA destroyed and *Jihad al-Bina'* built. Restoration Project. July 2006 Aggression.”²⁷⁷

Jihad al-Bina' also placed over 300 posters across the southern *dahhiyya* in the days following cessation of hostilities to reassure residents and remind them of Hezbollah’s pledge.²⁷⁸

Because Hezbollah’s credibility was at stake, Nasrallah was likely the greatest cheerleader and advertiser of *Jihad al-Bina's* and *Wa'ad's* postwar efforts. In his weekly addresses in the year after the end of the war, Nasrallah gave regular accountings of the organization’s efforts, expenditures, and likely hyperbolized effects. At the “Victory Party” held in August 2007, Nasrallah stated that in contrast to the government who kept hold of the people’s rightful compensation money, Hezbollah provided almost \$381 million. Moreover, Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah did not distribute compensation; rather, the organization offers “help and assistance to treat painful wounds ... that a brother normally gives to his brother without any legal or official responsibilities ... according to the Sharia.” Nasrallah then summarized *Jihad al-Bina's* and *Wa'ad's* recovery efforts in the first year:

²⁷⁷ “Interview with Jihad Al-Bina’ General Director Qasim Al-Aliq,” *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, June 14, 2008), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080614644001#index=32&searchKey=30224729&rpp=500.

²⁷⁸ “Lebanon: Advertising for Promise Project to Reconstruct Southern Suburbs Starts.”

first, the organization saved 28,300 families from having to live on the streets by providing \$135 million for “secure homes” and furniture. Second, *Jihad al-Bina*’ repaired 113,820 housing units at a cost of \$190.7 million in all of the Shia territories with the exception of four towns for which Nasrallah thanked the state of Qatar who executed reconstruction projects there. Third, Hezbollah provided assistance to 12,500 economic and commercial establishments who suffered at a cost of \$30 million. This included 3,300 cases of agricultural assistance to help overcome damage to crops and livestock valued at \$5 million; 2,300 cases of assistance to owners of vehicles for the benefit of the public—buses, taxis, excavators, etc.—at a cost of \$4 million; and also \$3 million to support afflicted villages enduring “harsh conditions.” *Jihad al-Bina*’ also provided \$700,000 to compensate 3,500 cases of afflicted fishermen. Nasrallah also reported that after one year of reconstruction, Hezbollah’s *Wa’ad* had paid approximately \$14 million toward reconstruction thus far. Lastly, Nasrallah recommitted to paying one more year of rent for those still waiting to be able to return to their homes, promising that no one would be homeless.²⁷⁹

5. Results of the *Wa’ad* Project

By most accounts, the *Wa’ad* project was a tremendous success. The project’s success was contingent upon the organization’s ability to return people to their homes as quickly as possible. In September 2007, only four months after the *Wa’ad* project was launched, the first building was handed over to residents. By January 2008, *Jihad al-Bina*’ already renovated 174 of 210 demolished or damaged buildings in the southern *dahiyya* and was working on an additional ten more in the city of Tyre.²⁸⁰ In January 2009 the U.S. Treasury decided to also designate *Jihad al-Bina*’s *Wa’ad* project under EO 13224 for utilizing “deceptive tactics to support [Hezbollah’s] military and terrorist apparatus.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ “Nasrallah on ‘Victory’ Anniversary, Warns of ‘Big Surprise’ If Attacked.”

²⁸⁰ Hasan Jishi, *Wa’d Project Manager: Southern Suburb Reconstruction Going According to Schedule*, Al-Intiqad, December 22, 2007, <http://www.alintiqad.com>; https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20071223611004#index=9&searchKey=30205106&rpp=500.

²⁸¹ “Treasury Targets Hizballah Construction Company,” accessed July 26, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1341.aspx>.

The U.S. Treasury asserted that *Wa'ad* attempted to mask its affiliation with Hezbollah and helped *Jihad al-Bina'* circumvent sanctions placed in 2007.²⁸² However, by the time the U.S. Treasury placed sanctions on *Wa'ad*, it was in the finishing stages of its project. By July 2009 only ten of the 102 projects from the initial design phase were not yet completed.²⁸³ As 2009 ended, more buildings than initially planned were added to *Wa'ad's* portfolio. By October 2010, *Wa'ad* completed 143 buildings, including 3,019 apartment units. By 2011 all work was declared complete and buildings were handed back to owners. In all, *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad* project completed 268 buildings in the *dahiyya*, including 4,000 residential apartments and 1,700 commercial establishments.²⁸⁴

While most buildings were completed by 2009 as promised, the project remained engaged because the government failed to follow through on its commitments to rebuild the infrastructure and roads around the newly rebuilt facilities. For example, in 2008 the government failed to rehabilitate two squares in the *dahiyya*. In response to government neglect, *Jihad al-Bina'* organized numerous sit-in protests to bring attention to the government's absence and unfulfilled promises and decided to rehabilitate the square gardens and plant saplings.²⁸⁵ Regarding building reconstruction, *Wa'ad* guaranteed its work to owners, promising to return to fix any flaws found within one year of turning the buildings back to their rightful owners. In a closing ceremony held in the *dahhiya* in 2012, Nasrallah "sealed" the project when he stated that "the divine promise [made by Hezbollah]" was finally fulfilled six years after the "divine victory" over the Israeli enemy. He highlighted the project's purpose and victory by pointing out that it enabled people to "remain invincible in their land and homes, to prove to themselves and the world [that] they are not afraid to prove their loyalty to their country."²⁸⁶

²⁸² "US Goes after Hizbullah's Waad Rebuilding Effort," *The Daily Star*, January 11, 2009, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20090111966010.

²⁸³ Alamuddin, "Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut," 67.

²⁸⁴ Siraj Kobeissy, "'The Most Beautiful Promise' Is Fulfilled, People Return Home with Dignity," *Al-Moqawama.Org*, May 12, 2012, <http://www.waad.org.lb/pressinformation.asp?id=150&catid=28>.

²⁸⁵ Al-Qubaysi, "Report on Hizballah's Jihad Al-Bina' Foundation's Services to Citizens."

²⁸⁶ Kobeissy, "'The Most Beautiful Promise' Is Fulfilled, People Return Home with Dignity."

The project was also a success in that it helped the organization save face and credibility at a critical moment. *Jihad al-Bina*'s quick and efficient work distracted many from Hezbollah's obvious miscalculation that tipped off the war. Even while Israel was in the middle of its July-August campaign against Lebanon, many politicians were calling for Hezbollah's disarmament. Accusations of Hezbollah acting as an Iranian pawn grew louder, particularly when the disaster of the 2006 war was framed as the result of an external power's interests by senior Lebanese politicians.²⁸⁷ Despite fierce opposition and the devastation which resulted from Hezbollah's actions, *Jihad al-Bina*'s projects helped Hezbollah grow in popularity. A 2008 poll conducted in Lebanon found that following the 2006 crisis, only 9% expressed sympathy with the majority governing coalition while 30% sympathized with the opposition led by Hezbollah.²⁸⁸ The survey also showed that amongst Lebanon's Shia population, 68% had a more positive attitude towards Hezbollah following the war while only 2% conveyed a more negative one.²⁸⁹

6. Southern Lebanon

Southern Lebanon was the most severely targeted area by Israel during the 2006 war.²⁹⁰ Moreover, it was the battlefield where ground-fighting between Israeli and Hezbollah forces took place. However, reconstruction efforts were initially hindered because of the state's stretched resources. Thankfully, numerous international donor-states took lead in reconstruction efforts in the south.

Jihad al-Bina' was not the primary orchestrator of reconstruction efforts in southern Lebanon as it was in Haret Hreik. Rather, the reconstruction of the south was directly sponsored by various Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, and Bahrain.²⁹¹ However, *Jihad al-Bina*' was active wherever it could improve

²⁸⁷ Alamuddin, "Wa'd: The Reconstruction Project of the Southern Suburb of Beirut," 68.

²⁸⁸ Shibley Telhami, "2008 Annual Arab Public Opinion Poll," Survey of the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development (University of Maryland, 2008), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/0414_middle_east_telhami.pdf, 2.

²⁸⁹ Telhami, "2008 Annual Arab Public Opinion Poll," 60.

²⁹⁰ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction," 74.

²⁹¹ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Post-War Reconstruction in Lebanon: An Introduction," 4.

livelihoods of its southern Lebanese constituents. For example, once aggression in the south stopped, *Jihad al-Bina'* began removing rubble immediately and building sand roads as alternative routes to bridges destroyed by Israeli air strikes in the south. It also distributed donations and formed teams from over 3,000 volunteer specialists from various sects and Arab states.²⁹²

While *Jihad al-Bina'* did not lead reconstruction in the south, Hezbollah's volunteer coordinators and *Jihad al-Bina'* workers led the initial recovery and relief efforts. The first stage included distribution of financial aid to help people acquire housing, and necessary goods and food. The second stage included an effort to clear debris and rubble in cooperation with local municipalities. These volunteer coordinators' efforts were critical because while the destruction in southern Lebanon was proportionally just as severe as in the *dahhiya*, the lion's share of bulldozers were dedicated to Lebanon's urban areas to clear debris. In southern Lebanon, most debris was cleared manually and pushed to the sides of the road to form fences and property markers.²⁹³

As was the case in the *dahhiya*, *Jihad al-Bina'* deployed volunteers, as well as professional architects and engineers immediately after hostilities ended to initiate relief and reconstruction efforts (Figure 12). *Jihad al-Bina'* inspectors went from house to house and inspected each private domicile and prepared a damage assessment for each unit.

²⁹² Al-Qubaysi, "Report on Hizballah's Jihad Al-Bina' Foundation's Services to Citizens."

²⁹³ "Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy."



Figure 12. The yellow uniformed *Jihad al-Bina'* inspector conducts initial postwar damage assessments in the border town of 'Aita al-Cha'b in southern Lebanon 2006²⁹⁴

Once turned in, the local *Jihad al-Bina'* representative determined how much compensation would be necessary for the resident to rebuild their home or repair the damage. If houses needed to be rebuilt, *Jihad al-Bina'* reassured residents that they would take on all aspects of the reconstruction process.²⁹⁵ As was done in the southern *dahiyya*, *Jihad al-Bina'* promised residents to pay for temporary housing for one year.²⁹⁶

(1) Tactical Tunnels and Underground Facilities

Tactical tunnels and underground facilities (UGF) built by *Jihad al-Bina'* in southern Lebanon were crucial to Hezbollah's successes during the 2006 war. It is unclear when Hezbollah's tactical tunnels and UGFs were built—or rebuilt—in southern Lebanon,

²⁹⁴ "Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy."

²⁹⁵ "Reconstruction of Lebanon's Economy."

²⁹⁶ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction," 78.

but they were likely constructed by *Jihad al-Bina* throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.²⁹⁷ According to UNIFIL observers in southern Lebanon, they “never saw them build anything,” referring to Hezbollah’s construction arm.²⁹⁸ Israeli analysts also failed to detect Hezbollah UGF construction as it was likely conducted under the guise of *Jihad al-Bina*’s road and infrastructure work.²⁹⁹ This was certainly by design but also astounding as the group reportedly has over 1,000 UGFs in southern Lebanon.³⁰⁰ In 2015, As-Safir Newspaper broadcast a Hezbollah tour of tactical tunnels utilized during the 2006 war, as well as additional secret tunnels built more recently in preparation for an eventual future conflict with Israel. The report noted that “construction was said to be continuing around the clock, using primitive means rather than advanced machinery in order to avoid detection by Israeli surveillance.”³⁰¹ *Jihad al-Bina*’ builders likely received training and guidance from its Iranian counterparts, as well as UGF construction experts from North Korea under the auspices of a front company, the Korea Mining Development Corporation.³⁰²

These UGFs were utilized by Hezbollah as a form of tactical denial and deception (D&D) to avoid Israeli detection and targeting. In addition to tunnels, *Jihad al-Bina*’ also constructed other UGFs which would have been difficult to detect because of their locations although they were within just a few kilometers of the Israeli border.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ “Lebanon’s Hizballah Reportedly Preparing Attacks on Israel,” *Intelligence Online*, sec. July 22, 2010, accessed November 19, 2018, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20100721177004#index=14&searchKey=30986546&rpp=10.

²⁹⁸ “Iran Week: Hezbollah’s Environmental Warriors,” *Tablet Magazine*, June 27, 2017, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/238801/hezbollahs-environmental-warriors>.

²⁹⁹ “Lebanese Hezbollah: A Profile,” Federal Research Division (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, April 2012), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_0_43/content/Display/26508343/CTTSO-FRD-Hezbollah_Final_Report_Apr%202012-r.pdf, 124.

³⁰⁰ Nicholas Blanford, “Lebanese Hezbollah Offers a Glimpse of Its Firepower,” Atlantic Council, accessed November 21, 2018, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/lebanese-hezbollah-offers-a-glimpse-of-its-firepower>.

³⁰¹ Itamar Sharon, “Hezbollah Shows Off ‘Advanced Tunnel Network’ on Israeli Border,” *The Times of Israel*, May 23, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-flaunts-advanced-tunnel-network-on-israeli-border/>.

³⁰² “Lebanese Hezbollah: A Profile,” 108.

³⁰³ “Lebanese Hezbollah: A Profile,” 47.

Underground bunkers, storage rooms, barracks, and booby traps were connected by an elaborate network of tunnels among the forested areas and hillsides of the south.³⁰⁴ Moreover, the organization constructed concealed underground storage for rocket launchers whose openings could quickly open to launch a surprise attack, and in-mountain drive in shelters from which vehicle-mounted multiple-rocket launchers (MRL) could emerge.³⁰⁵ According to Israeli Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser, Hezbollah fighters effectively used tactical tunnels to their advantage. They would quickly emerge to launch a man-portable anti-tank missile only to disappear again. The General described Hezbollah's tunnels when he stated, "We know what they have and how they work, but we don't know where the tunnels are. So they can achieve tactical surprise."³⁰⁶ *Jihad al-Bina'* reportedly continued constructing UGFs and tactical tunnel networks for Hezbollah through at least 2012.³⁰⁷

b. *Bint Jbeil*

In addition to Hezbollah's Beirut suburbs, reconstruction in Bint Jbeil was a top priority for Hezbollah, but *Jihad al-Bina's* actions would not reflect this. The remote southeastern Lebanese town was of little strategic or military importance to Hezbollah, but it was targeted by Israel as part of its collective punishment strategy and for its cultural and historic value to Hezbollah.³⁰⁸ Municipal leaders, private home and building owners, and external donors—primarily Qatar—wanted to begin reconstruction efforts immediately, but disagreed on a reconstruction plan. Initially, *Jihad al-Bina'* conducted a damage assessment in parallel with one commissioned by the government-approved engineering firm Khatib & Alami and managed by the Council of the South. *Jihad al-Bina's* survey

³⁰⁴ "Iran Week: Hezbollah's Environmental Warriors."

³⁰⁵ "Lebanese Hezbollah: A Profile," 73, 111.

³⁰⁶ Steven Erlanger and Richard A. Oppel Jr., "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics, and Weapons," *New York Times*, August 7, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07hezbollah.html>.

³⁰⁷ "Hizbullah Upgrades Tunnel Networks in Southern Lebanon," *Intelligence Online*, April 5, 2012, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20120404177008#index=1&searchKey=31020339&rpp=10.

³⁰⁸ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction," 76–78.

would serve as the basis for initial compensations to be handed out to displaced residents to secure housing. The Council of the South's survey would serve as the basis for rebuilding financed by the government of Qatar who pledged \$300 million for postwar reconstruction in Khiam, 'Aita al-Cha'b, Bint Jbeil, and 'Ainata.³⁰⁹ *Jihad al-Bina*' handed over a reconstruction plan and strategy to municipality leadership who were Hezbollah members and left the managerial and execution responsibilities in their hands.³¹⁰

Municipal leaders attempted to implement a plan which improved public spaces and roadways, but at the expense of landowner rights. Moreover, the municipality was eager to turn Bint Jbeil into a new modern landscape in stark contrast to the ancient town destroyed by Israel. Effectively, the plan appropriated property and gave the municipality freedom to shape Bint Jbeil in a way of its choosing and to compensate owners based on its own calculations.³¹¹ This plan entailed bulldozing large swaths of Bint Jbeil's old town, including traces of the town's architectural and cultural heritage. The Hezbollah representative in southern Lebanon at the time, Shaikh Nabil Qaouq later described the municipality's plan as a "completion of Israel's unfinished work [by] erasing the memory of the town." Such action would run counter to Hezbollah's system of heritage conservation which stands in resistance against Israel.³¹²

The municipality's reconstruction plan was opposed by a coalition of landowners, the Council of the South headed by Nabih Berri, and members of the reconstruction unit from the American University of Beirut. Each of these had different interests to oppose the plan but little power to put a stop to it. The government had little interest in reconstruction plan details and was primarily concerned with the distribution of approved compensation to those who lost their residences. But the government would not even manage the

³⁰⁹ Al-Harithy, 77–79.

³¹⁰ Habib Debs, "Reconstruction of Bint Jbeil and Social Representations of the Urban Space," in *Lessons in Postwar Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 106.

³¹¹ Debs, "Reconstruction of Bint Jbeil and Social Representations of the Urban Space," 104–105.

³¹² Debs, 107.

distribution of compensation; for that, it empowered the Council of the South.³¹³ To halt the plan, the coalition needed the support of Hezbollah.

When the coalition's protests fell on deaf ears, Hezbollah intervened on behalf of landowners and other vested parties against municipal leaders from its own party. Hezbollah's representative in the south ensured the municipality's plan was abandoned and that owners' property rights would be upheld. Moreover, Hezbollah's intervention resulted in the formation of a cooperative planning committee to oversee the approved reconstruction plan implementation.³¹⁴ The Hezbollah executive officer in charge of reconstruction consulted with trusted urban planners, including Hassan Jeshi, the Director of *Wa'ad*, and Muhammad Haidar, a Hezbollah Member of Parliament (MP). Both were involved in the historic preservation of the city of Saida and supported the vision of the coalition to conduct reconstruction in way that preserves the historic culture of Bint Jbeil.³¹⁵

7. Northern Lebanon

Very little information on *Jihad al-Bina's* postwar reconstruction projects north of Beirut could be located. However, while decrying the U.S. designation of *Jihad al-Bina'* as a terrorist organization, Director General of *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2008, Qasim al-Aliq stated that the developmental organization initiated reconstruction in "all areas" affected by Israeli aggression and Lebanese government neglect. These areas included "the north, the Bekaa, the south, and Beirut." In this interview, al-Aliq stated that *Jihad al-Bina'* constructed 600 houses in the north and Kasrawan,³¹⁶ located approximately 20 kilometers north of Beirut.

³¹³ Debs, "Reconstruction of Bint Jbeil and Social Representatinos of the Urban Space," 103–106.

³¹⁴ Debs.

³¹⁵ Al-Harithy, "The Politics of Identity Construction in Post-War Reconstruction," 92.

³¹⁶ "Interview with Jihad Al-Bina' General Director Qasim Al-Aliq."

C. THE 2008 LEBANESE CONFLICT AND HEZBOLLAH'S FORCED INTEGRATION

In 2008, *Jihad al-Bina'* found itself at the center of an internal Lebanese crisis between Hezbollah and the state. In early 2008, the Lebanese Ministry of Information, Ghazi al-Aridi revealed the existence of an independent fiber-optic telecommunications network set up by *Jihad al-Bina'* utilized by Hezbollah for monitoring state communications and activities. According to al-Aridi, the network was discovered in April 2008 at a *Jihad al-Bina'* roadway construction site just north of the Litani river. For kilometers along the road, *Jihad al-Bina'* placed posters of its ongoing and recently-completed projects—27 educational establishments, 25 medical centers, 170 kilometers of secondary roads, 510 kilometers of main roads, and 75 kilometers of road enhancements. Every few meters, *Jihad al-Bina'* touted its accomplishments on lamp posts collocated with Iranian flags. When the Ministry discovered Hezbollah's communication network extended to *Jihad al-Bina'*'s project site in that area, the government declared it illegal and demanded it be shut down.³¹⁷

Lebanese communications experts also asserted that the network enabled Hezbollah to tap Lebanese, US, and Israeli communications throughout the country.³¹⁸ According to Lebanon's Telecommunications Minister, Marwan Hanadeh, the network began in the suburbs of Beirut, circled the airport and extended approximately 25 kilometers south to Sidon and then to Naqoura, the location of UNIFIL headquarters near the Israeli border. The network then ran east along the border and turned north toward Nabatiya, Hezbollah's capital in southern Lebanon. The network then extended to Jezzine through the Bekaa valley with lines extending to Palestinian bases, pro-Syrian Palestinian camps, and farther north to al-Hermel, then northwest to the Christian areas around Mount

³¹⁷ Rolla Scolari, "Lebanese Minister Details Hizballah's Telecommunications Network," *Il Foglio*, May 18, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/EUP20080520029007#index=27&searchKey=30224729&rpp=500.

³¹⁸ "Jumblatt, Ja'ja Cooperate with Israel to Kill Hizballah Figure, Gen Awn," *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, May 5, 2008), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080505640004.

Lebanon. The minister also stated that additional excavations were under way, allegedly to extend the network toward Syria. He stated that the network was built with help from Iranian engineers and “from the Iranian organization supporting the reconstruction of Lebanon and *Jihad al-Bina*, ”³¹⁹ likely referring to *Jehad-e Sazandegi*.

The government also accused *Jihad al-Bina*’ of setting up and operating a camera system for Hezbollah utilized to monitor traffic to and from Beirut’s international airport and flights on one of its runways. Members of the Lebanese army on patrol around the airport discovered the cameras and monitoring equipment affixed to shipping containers owned by *Jihad al-Bina*’ (Figure 13). Walid Jumblatt called for removing the cameras and for banning Iranian airlines from landing in Beirut because they likely smuggle in weapons and cash into the country, circumventing sanctions.³²⁰



Figure 13. Al-Manar TV news broadcast screen shots of *Jihad al-Bina*’ containers with cameras overlooking Rafiq al-Hariri International Airport in Beirut³²¹

Ultimately the government decided to move to dismantle Hezbollah’s communication system. The system violated UNSCR 1701 which precipitated the 2006 war’s conclusion, but also reiterated previous resolutions’ call to disarm all non-governmental militias in Lebanon, primarily Hezbollah. Minister Al-Aridi called

³¹⁹ Scolari, “Lebanese Minister Details Hizballah’s Telecommunications Network.”

³²⁰ “Interview with Lebanese Experts on Hezbollah’s Telecommunications Network,” *Inside Story* (Beirut: Al-Jazeera English, May 7, 2008), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW8JFfr_E68.

³²¹ “Interview with Lebanese Experts on Hezbollah’s Telecommunications Network.”

Hezbollah's telecommunication system "an illegal and illegitimate action [which] poses a threat to the sovereignty of the country." He also stated that the government would hand over all documents to the Arab league which would prove Iran's hand behind the network and meddling in Lebanon's affairs.³²² Once the government discovered the cameras at *Jihad al-Bina's* airport site, it fired the airport head of security who was a close associate of Hezbollah.³²³

Hezbollah would not tolerate the dismantling of its telecommunications network nor the dismissal of the airport security chief. Nasrallah called the government's decision to move against Hezbollah an act of war and stated that the network was as vital to the resistance as the AK-47, the centerpiece of Hezbollah's and its Iranian progenitor's symbols.³²⁴ Hezbollah's military leader at the time, Naim Qassim vehemently opposed the state's position when he stated that the communications system was "tantamount to [the Party's] arms, and those who are taking aim at the telecommunications network are targeting our weapons—they are calling on us not to fight Israel."³²⁵ When the government announced its intent to shut down the telecommunications network, fighting broke out between pro-Hezbollah and opposition fighters against pro-government fighters. Hezbollah captured portions of western Beirut and shut down the airport. The conflict resulted in at least 62 deaths on both sides, but ultimately Hezbollah prevailed. The government capitulated to Hezbollah's demands, leaving the telecommunications network intact and reinstating the dismissed airport chief of security. Moreover, the government was forced to bend to Hezbollah's political demands, including granting Hezbollah veto power over any cabinet decisions.³²⁶

Hezbollah emerged from the 2008 crisis with military ambition unhampered, more politically powerful than before, and poised to more closely integrate with the legitimate

³²² "Interview with Lebanese Experts on Hezbollah's Telecommunications Network."

³²³ Scolari, "Lebanese Minister Details Hizballah's Telecommunications Network."

³²⁴ Scolari.

³²⁵ "Interview with Lebanese Experts on Hezbollah's Telecommunications Network."

³²⁶ Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri, "Deal for Lebanese Factions Leaves Hezbollah Stronger," *The New York Times*, May 22, 2008, sec. Middle East, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/22/world/middleeast/22lebanon.html>.

government apparatus. In stark contrast to the post-2006 war environment, the taboo of cooperating with *Jihad al-Bina* efforts started to dwindle with Hezbollah's putsch against the government. The 2008 conflict revealed the Lebanese government's military impotence compared to Hezbollah, and the government all but abandoned its UN charge to prevent Hezbollah from rearming. Though some government personalities were indignant—chief among them Walid Jumblatt—the government was forced to abdicate. From this time forward, *Jihad al-Bina* faced less government as well as UN resistance and enjoyed more formal acknowledgement and cooperation.

D. POSTWAR NORMALIZATION

While reconstruction absorbed most of *Jihad al-Bina*'s time, attention, and funds after the war, the organization also sustained and returned to many of its steady-state developmental and social welfare operations. Moreover, it attempted to portray its Lebanese character by promoting projects for the benefit of all Lebanese. In 2007, the organization launched its “Good Tree” project was part of an environmental initiative to reforest green areas burned in the 2006 war and combat desertification by planting trees.³²⁷ As part of this project, *Jihad al-Bina* set a goal of planting 5 million trees within five years.³²⁸ According to a Hezbollah official, *Jihad al-Bina* imported approximately “one million nursery plants from Syria and distributed them to all societies that requested them,” regardless of political or sectarian affiliation.³²⁹ By October 2007 the organization distributed 1.7 million trees throughout Lebanon to combat desertification, worked with farmers to promote organic farming, and set up seasonal farmers markets to disconnect farmers from distributors. The organization also set up the “Farmer's Relief Project” which

³²⁷ Lob, “Construction Jihad: State-Building and Development in Iran and Lebanon's Shi'i Territories,” 9; Mohammed Zaatari, “AUB Project Aims to Instill Sense of Appreciation for Biodiversity,” *The Daily Star*, January 19, 2010, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20100119966040#index=3&searchKey=30986546&rpp=10.

³²⁸ Al-Qubaysi, “Report on Hizballah's Jihad Al-Bina' Foundation's Services to Citizens.”

³²⁹ “Hizbullah Official on Surveillance Cameras, Communications Network,” *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, May 7, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20080507825001#index=19&searchKey=30216768&rpp=500.

included awareness courses to help farmers overcome “fear of adopting [unfamiliar] activity such as the cultivation of alternative crops,” according Adil al-Haj Hassan, *Jihad al-Bina’s* media officer in 2008. In October 2010, Hasan Nasrallah with the Lebanese Minister of Agriculture and a Hezbollah member of parliament (MP) planted the 1 millionth tree that year near his residence in the Haret Hreik (Figure 14). Together, Hezbollah and the Lebanese government publicly commemorated the simultaneous benchmark accomplishments of *Jihad al-Bina’s* reconstruction and developmental efforts.³³⁰



Figure 14. Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, Lebanese Minister of Agriculture Dr. Hussein Hajj Hassan, and MP Ali Ammar plant the 1 millionth tree of 2010 near Nasrallah’s residence in Haret Hreik under *Jihad al-Bina’s* “Good Tree” project³³¹

The relief project also included goat breeding assistance, and medicine distribution for livestock and bees. *Jihad al-Bina’* tried to demonstrate national rather than sectarian

³³⁰ “Nasrallah to Deliver Speech on Latest Developments,” *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, October 9, 2010), https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/GMP20101008700008#index=27&searchKey=30986546&rpp=10.

³³¹ “Nasrallah to Deliver Speech on Latest Developments.”

solidarity by promoting its Farmer's Relief and Good Tree projects "on behalf of the country's oppressed." To this end, *Jihad al-Bina'* expanded agricultural and craft seminars in Rumaysh, Al-Arqub, and Jubayl which did not have Shia majorities.³³²

E. *JIHAD AL-BINA'* 2011 TO 2018

1. Sunni Extremist Backlash to Hezbollah's Pro-Assad Activities in Syria

Hezbollah faced serious political and military backlash at home after intervening in the Syrian civil war to uphold the Assad regime. The Syrian civil war marked the first time the organization openly fought in an offensive outside Lebanese borders. Moreover, this time the organization's actions defied its pro-Lebanese, cross-sectarian rhetoric. Rather than fighting against Zionist-crusader aggression, it was now targeting fellow Arabs and Muslims—specifically, Sunni Muslims—on behalf of a brutal Shia (Allawi) dictator.

Hezbollah's cost-benefit analysis led it to operate along sectarian lines in Syria. However, it is unclear if Hezbollah's leaders understood the extent or magnitude of the costs it would come to bear. First, Hezbollah's intervention severely damaged the Pro-Lebanese cross-sectarian identity it fervently strives to maintain. To reinforce its image as the strong vanguard of Lebanon's territorial integrity, Hezbollah worked with multiple Sunni and Christian militant and political groups over the years, in and outside Lebanon. As described in the previous chapter, Hezbollah simultaneously attempted to maintain a broad-based protector image and project a strategic message and identity of resistance on behalf of all Lebanese citizens, not just Shia Muslims. Hezbollah's sectarian actions to uphold President Bashar al-Assad undermine its pan-Islamic, pro-Lebanese (non-sectarian) messaging and identity.

Second, Hezbollah's intervention in Syria sparked a Sunni extremist backlash that would be felt in Hezbollah's strongholds in Lebanon. Although the organization's covert activities in Syria go back to the 2011 uprisings, the organization openly fought on behalf

³³² Abbas, "Lebanon: Hizballah's Wa'd Director on Plans, Problems to Rebuild Southern Suburb"; Maha Zaraqit, "Jihad al-Bina': Restoration of 940 Buildings and Planting 1.7 Million Trees," *Al-Akhbar*, June 25, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_0_43/content/Display/9332595/V-GMP20080626611001001.htm.

of Assad in May 2013 at Qusayr³³³—the extremist response was immediate. Beginning in August 2013, Hezbollah’s actions in Syria faced retaliation through a series of attacks and bombings against its Lebanese territories. The following is a list of alleged attacks against Hezbollah’s strongholds in Lebanon between 2013 and 2014:³³⁴

- August 15, 2013—Ruweis Bombing—27 killed, 336 wounded—claimed by “external operations” arm of Battalions of Aisha Um al-Mu’mineen
- November 19, 2013—Iranian Embassy bombing in Bir Hassan—23 killed—claimed by Abdullah ‘Azzam Brigades (Al-Qa’ida affiliated)
- January 2, 2014—Haret Hreik bombing—6 killed, 66 wounded—unknown assailants
- January 21, 2014—Second Haret Hreik bombing—4 killed, 46 wounded—claimed by Jubhat al-Nusra
- February 19, 2014—Twin blasts in south Beirut near Iranian cultural center—5 killed—claimed by Abdullah ‘Azzam Brigades
- September 20, 2014—Hezbollah Checkpoint bombing in Khreibeh—at least 3 killed

a. Damage Control: A Two-Part Strategy

Hezbollah implemented a two-pronged strategy to downplay the obvious sectarian nature of its participation in the Syrian conflict and to sway public perception away from the consequences of its actions. The first was a well-articulated public relations campaign that framed Hezbollah’s participation in the Syrian civil war as the natural next step in

³³³ Ali Harb, “‘A Regional Power’: How Fighting Assad’s War Transformed Hezbollah,” *Middle East Eye*, October 9, 2017, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/regional-power-how-syria-civil-war-changed-hezbollah-lebanon-israel-1187885930>.

³³⁴ Daniel Byman and Bilal Y. Saab, “Hezbollah in a Time of Transition” (Brookings Institution Center for Middle East Policy, November 2014), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Hezbollah-in-a-Time-of-Transition.pdf>, 3.

Hezbollah's never-ending campaign against U.S. aggression. To this end, Hezbollah's leaders utilized contrasting narratives intended for different audiences.

To the Lebanese population as a whole, Hezbollah's narratives focused on Syria's role in the resistance against Israel, and the necessity for Hezbollah to engage to protect Lebanese towns and territory. From its inception, Hezbollah's security strategy inside and outside of Lebanon was driven by anti-Western, anti-Israeli ideology. This ideology drove Hezbollah to work with various Sunni militant groups such as the PLO, the PIJ, and HAMAS. In most domestic and security policy respects, Hezbollah equates anti-American with pro-Lebanese, or at least pro-Hezbollah ideals for Lebanon. For Hezbollah's leaders, the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon upholds morally superior ideals which are antithetical to Western influence, imperialism, and oppression which corrupted and subjugated Iranian Muslims until the Islamic revolution, and continues to oppress Palestinians and Muslims worldwide. Hezbollah leadership believes that the United States is constantly scheming to topple its power structures, including its link to Iran via Syria. Moreover, the West wants to attack Islam. By supporting the Assad regime in Syria, Hezbollah undermines the United States' plans to weaken the resistance organization, and portrays itself as the defender of Lebanese sovereignty.

To Lebanon's Shia community the narrative carried strong sectarian overtones. For example, Nasrallah pulled on Shia emotional heartstrings by stating that the organization was obliged to intervene to protect sacred Shia symbols and sites in Syria. The most important of these was the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab bint 'Ali in Damascus—one of the Prophet Muhammad's granddaughters and sister to the revered hero-martyr of Shiism, Imam Husayn. He also instilled a sense of urgency for potential recruits when he stated that Sunni extremist groups announced their intent to destroy the shrine once reached.³³⁵ Framed in this manner, Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian civil war was not just a sound security strategy, it held religious prudence and exigence. Underlining Hezbollah's unabashed sectarian motivations in Syria, many Hezbollah fighters reportedly dawned

³³⁵ Harb, "'A Regional Power.'"

headbands with “O Husayn” in printed script.³³⁶ In the Shia areas of Southern Lebanon, the Bekaa valley, and Shia suburbs of Beirut, Hezbollah regularly and publicly displays pictures of its martyrs killed in Syria and honors their deaths as fulfillment of sacred “jihadist duties.”³³⁷ The contradiction is lost on no one, but Hezbollah leadership works hard to obfuscate it.

The second part of this strategy focused on eliminating signs of suffering. As it had done over the previous three decades, *Jihad al-Bina’* responded immediately to begin reconstruction efforts to areas damaged by Sunni extremism. For example, within 24 hours after the explosion in the Ruwais neighborhood, *Jihad al-Bina’* architects began to assess damage and immediately started clearing debris. The assessment team determined that 13 buildings needed reconstruction and reinforcement, all of which was projected to be concluded within two months. Moreover, *Jihad al-Bina’* determined that 193 cars were damaged in the explosion.³³⁸ However, it is unclear but likely that the organization took all costs and reimbursements upon itself. It is also likely the organization performed similar reconstruction and recovery activities following the other bombings, though no associated publications could be located to confirm this.

2. Current Operations

The *Jihad al-Bina’* Developmental Foundation’s contemporary repertoire of social welfare and development projects rings true to its historical roots. *Jihad al-Bina* is first and foremost Hezbollah’s construction wing. *Jihad al-Bina’* conducts construction both for Hezbollah and to support Hezbollah’s objectives. As previously demonstrated, the most publicized of *Jihad al-Bina’s* construction endeavors are post-conflict recovery projects such as *Wa’ad*. Contrarily, Hezbollah does its best to keep *Jihad al-Bina’s* involvement in its tunnel construction projects out of the public eye for security reasons. Apart from

³³⁶ “Hezbollah, the Lebanese Sectarian State, and Sectarianism,” Middle East Institute, accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.mei.edu/content/map/hezbollah-lebanese-sectarian-state-and-sectarianism>.

³³⁷ Sullivan, “Hezbollah in Syria,” 12.

³³⁸ “Restoration of Damage Caused by Ruwais Explosion,” translated by author, *Jihad Al-Bina’ Official website*, accessed November 21, 2018, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=7744&cid=714#.W_WDXOhKiM8.

construction, current website displays the organization's operational interests and areas of focus: the environment, agriculture, vocational training, and its various cooperatives. The organization views itself as the holy vanguard of Lebanon's environmental resources which are constantly under threat from abroad, and which are at risk due to "the absence of integrated local environmental rights management and protection."³³⁹

Although *Jihad al-Bina'* is still capable of operating independent of the state as it did through post-2006 war reconstruction, it now also publicly integrates with and at times prods state efforts. The organization has been involved in drafting environmental laws, regulations, and systems. It also promotes and initiates multiple environmental programs, such as the Good Tree project, the 'Abbas Water project, and the Lands Market (farmers market) project. Lastly, *Jihad al-Bina'* pursues an ongoing public relations campaign to further polish its veneer officialdom whenever possible. For this purpose, *Jihad al-Bina'* annually organizes scores of graduation ceremonies, ribbon cuttings, anniversary celebrations, and official announcements with government officials as often as possible.

a. Construction

Although little information on Hezbollah's tunnels is available, *Jihad al-Bina's* tactical tunnel construction also expanded with Hezbollah's operations into Syria. In preparation for ongoing conflicts along Syria's eastern border, *Jihad al-Bina'* constructed a sophisticated tunnel network in the Qusayr area of Syria similar to that used during the 2006 war with Israel. The tunnel network was equipped with an unspecified protection system, air conditioning, lighting, communications equipment, and sleeping quarters. The tunnels extend from Syria "deep into Lebanese territory" to secure safe routes for Hezbollah's fighters.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ The Environment, "The Official website of Jihad Al Bina Foundation," translated by author https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=31&cid=614#.W_S2QuhKiM8.

³⁴⁰ "Hezbollah Mobilizes for Decisive Qalamoun Battle | News , Lebanon News | THE DAILY STAR," accessed May 23, 2018, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Mar-25/292077-hezbollah-mobilizes-for-decisive-qalamoun-battle.ashx>.

b. Agriculture

The organization continues to focus on agricultural development in Lebanon's Shia territories to improve the livelihood and maintain a base of constituents. From its three agricultural centers—the Shahid Al-Sayyed 'Abbas al-Mousawi Center for Agricultural Development in Baalbek founded in 1999; the Al-Jawad Extension Center for Agricultural Development in Al-Hermel, also founded in 1999; and the Abu Dharr al-Ghifari Center in Derdghaiya in southern Lebanon, founded in 2004—*Jihad al-Bina'* conducts agricultural tours, demonstrations, and inspections on farms and livestock. It also conducts numerous seminars and classes to educate thousands of farmers and breeders, and administers thousands of vaccines (see Table 2). The centers also rally agricultural workers, beneficiaries, and activists to demonstrate for or in opposition of political interests. *Jihad al-Bina'* also regularly publishes "Green Bulletins" with tips on how to cultivate various types of plants and produce.³⁴¹

Table 2. Average number annual of all *Jihad al-Bina'* agriculture center activities since foundation³⁴²

Workshops	Demonstrations	Veterinary Field Visits	Agriculture Field Visits	Courses Held	Seminars Hosted	Vet. Vaccines Administered
2	3	2,350	5,350	165	120	115,000

c. Water

Jihad al-Bina' also continues the al-'Abbas water project in the *dahhiya* whose beginnings coincide with the organization's in 1988. The object of the project is to ensure hundreds of thousands of residents can access clean potable water whether or not the city's public water systems are functioning. Through at least 2015, *Jihad al-Bina's* six lorry

³⁴¹ "Jihad Al-Bina' Green Bulletins," *Jihad Al-Bina' Official website*, accessed November 1, 2018, <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/catessays.php?cid=937&pid=444>.

³⁴² "Agriculture Profile," *Jihad al-Bina' Official website*, accessed November 21, 2018, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=9&cid=574#.W_S4WOhKiM8, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=281&cid=734#.W_W05_ZFytU.

tankers transferred water to 135 tanks and 30 drinking set up in “all areas of the suburb” for free. It also carried out maintenance, cleaning, laboratory inspections, and sterilization on all of the tanks.³⁴³ The effects of the al-’Abbas project were felt most during and following conflicts when reliable sources of public water could not be counted on.

Jihad al-Bina’ also utilizes its water campaign to reinforce its Shia sectarian identity. Starting in 2014, the organization launched the “Labayk” water campaign. Foundation volunteers pasted *Jihad al-Bina’* logos with “Labayk ya Husayn” printed on thousands of bottles of water to be handed out to the thousands of funeral procession marchers during the commemoration of Ashura held in the *dahhiya* (Figure 15). The organization announced it would carry on the tradition into future years.³⁴⁴



Figure 15. *Jihad al-Bina’* volunteers affix logos and Shia slogans to bottles of water to be distributed to Ashura commemoration mourners³⁴⁵

³⁴³ “Water Projects Brief.”

³⁴⁴ “‘Labayk’ Water Project,” *Jihad Al-Bina’ Official website*, 2014, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=13785&cid=734#.W_W1GvZFytV.

³⁴⁵ “‘Labayk’ Water Project.”

d. The Good Tree Project

Starting in 1992, *Jihad al-Bina'* undertook an anti-desertification campaign for a duality of purposes. First, *Jihad al-Bina'* wanted to reforest much of the vegetation burned and lost from multiple conflicts and lack of appropriate government support and irrigation in agricultural areas in southern Lebanon. Second, as Hezbollah entered electoral politics, *Jihad al-Bina'* helped the organization soften its image by initiating public good projects. In 2007, the initiative was formalized as the “Good Tree” project which distributed nearly 9.5 million trees by 2015.

In more recent years, Hezbollah has increasingly publicized and relied upon *Jihad al-Bina's* good-works campaigns such as the Good Tree project to counter additional rounds of U.S. sanctions. The Good Tree project is one of *Jihad al-Bina's* most successful public awareness and participatory campaigns.³⁴⁶ Each year the organization holds a highly-publicized opening ceremony with the Ministry of Agriculture to launch the project and advertise its annual goals. It is also able to muster large numbers of volunteers—school teachers and children, girls and women’s organizations, the Imam Mahdi Scouts (similar to Boy Scouts), local religious leaders, and community members—to distribute and plant trees throughout southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. *Jihad al-Bina'* increasingly publicized civil and particularly younger generation involvement following a new round of sanctions targeting Hezbollah in 2015 (Figures 16 and 17). The aim of this new emphasis was to characterize the United States’ sanctions as evil, as they took aim at pure good will, charitable acts, and innocent segments of society. The Good Tree project continues executing scores of public awareness campaigns through today.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ “Jihad al-Bina’: Good Tree Project Archive,” *Jihad al-Bina’ Official website*, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/catessays.php?cid=744&page=1>.

³⁴⁷ “Jihad al-Bina’: Good Tree Project Archive.”



Figure 16. Imam Mahdi Scouts hand out saplings to drivers on the streets of Baalbek in 2018³⁴⁸



Figure 17. A local religious figure plants a tree with school children wearing *Jihad al-Bina*'s volunteer garb in a school in 2016³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ "Distribution of Trees in the City of Baalbek," *Jihad al-Bina*' Official website, April 2, 2018, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14497&cid=744#.W_mzr-hKiM8.

³⁴⁹ "Cultivation of 1500 Forest and Fruit Trees in Jihad al-Bina' Aforrestation Campaign," *Jihad al-Bina*' Official website, March 31, 2016, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14176&cid=744#.W_m4COhKiM8.

e. *Jihad al-Bina' Cooperatives*

The objective of *Jihad al-Bina's* various cooperatives is to achieve greater legitimacy and influence through inter-organizational outreach and integration—cross-sectarian, governmental, and intergovernmental. According to *Jihad al-Bina'*, the efforts of its cooperatives were beneficial to society in various ways: first, they develop regional awareness and concern for the livelihoods of fellow countrymen who support society; second, they allow citizens to develop their abilities and become self-reliant; third, new investment opportunities are created by promoting local agriculture and industry; fourth, cooperative programs reduce unemployment; lastly, their training programs enhance the quality of local products, thereby improving quality of life for the consumer and producer.

Under this construct, the developmental foundation is also able to influence policies affecting various parts of government and society. That is not to say that all of the foundation's efforts have a dual nefarious purpose; rather, it demonstrates the extent and mechanisms by which *Jihad al-Bina* can support Hezbollah's political objectives. From 2011 at least onward, *Jihad al-Bina'* cooperatives conducted numerous coordination seminars with government ministries, municipality directorates, counterpart organizations in other political parties, and intergovernmental organizations (IGO). As previously discussed, *Jihad al-Bina'* has already drafted environmental policy legislation. *Jihad al-Bina'* also holds regular cooperative workshops where it informs and trains other cooperatives. For example, in 2017 it held a "Workshop of Cooperatives" with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Amal Movement's agricultural cooperative to discuss joint projects and funding in Baalbek and al-Hermel. 21 regional cooperatives attended the workshop who learned about sterilization methods and the importance of preserving food products. To incentivize participation, *Jihad al-Bina'* handed out 21 steel tanks to cooperatives that attended.³⁵⁰ In 2015, *Jihad al-Bina'* set up a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Mount Lebanon Cultivation Authority at the Ouzai Fishing Port. The meeting, which was attended by numerous fishers and fishing cooperatives, dealt with the "licensing of

³⁵⁰ "Joint Cooperatives Workshop Held in Baalbek," *Jihad al-Bina' Official website*, February 3, 2017, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14356&cid=504#.W_W7tvZFytV.

transport vehicles dealing with fish and fishing equipment.” The goal of the meeting was to finalize a policy recommendation to the Ministry of Agriculture.³⁵¹ Because *Jihad al-Bina’* is almost universally seen as a technically and administratively competent organization, its training sessions for other cooperatives are held often and attended by numerous cooperatives and project managers.³⁵² To promote a sense of unity amongst the various cooperatives, *Jihad al-Bina’s* agricultural cooperative and the Amal movement host an annual luncheon with guests that include municipal and government leaders, as well as UN leaders on the banks of the Litani river.³⁵³

After the 2008 crisis and signing of the Doha agreement, *Jihad al-Bina’* is also gaining credibility in the international community. Although cooperating with the organization in the wake of U.S. sanctions placed in 2007 and 2009 was taboo, the stink of working with the organization seems to be wearing off. As previously demonstrated, the organization exhibited world-class technical and administrative expertise by executing the lion’s share of postwar recovery and reconstruction in the most damaged territories in Lebanon. The UNDP has showed support for *Jihad al-Bina’* by participating in numerous collaborative workshops aimed at developing Lebanese municipalities.³⁵⁴

(1) Vocational Training

Jihad al-Bina’ conducts numerous vocational training courses with a similar outreach goal as that of its cooperatives, but with a difference. *Jihad al-Bina’s* vocational training programs reinforce its patronage system with its Shia constituents. They also accomplish cross-sectarian outreach by providing a non-threatening forum where any willing participant may receive training. *Jihad al-Bina’* regularly holds training workshops

³⁵¹ “The Ministry of Agriculture and Jihad al-Bina’ Organize a Meeting at the Port of Ouzai on Sea Fishing,” *Lebanon Files*, June 4, 2015, <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/893106>.

³⁵² “Jihad Al-Bina’ Cooperatives Archive,” *Jihad Al-Bina’ Official website*, 2018, <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/catessays.php?cid=504&pid=464>; “Workshop on Project Management in Hermel,” *Jihad al-Bina’ Official website*, May 3, 2014, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=11764&cid=504#.W_XD7ehKiM8.

³⁵³ Mohamed Qutish, “Agricultural Cooperative - Annual Luncheon Held in Nur Astraha on the Banks of the Litani River,” *Ya Sawr*, May 7, 2017, <http://yasour.org/2016/list.php?go=fullnews&newsid=105653>.

³⁵⁴ “Jihad al-Bina’: Directorate of the South Participates in ‘Nabatiya Municipality Development’ held at Parliament,” *Al-Wadi News*, January 23, 2018, <http://wadipress.com/?p=1353889>.

for thousands of participants covering various topics. For example, one workshop held for various women's organizations focused on how to make decorations with fruit and vegetables. While slightly chauvinistic in its characterization, *Jihad al-Bina'* and the Municipality of al-Bekaa also held "simplified workshops in cooperation with women's organizations" to help them develop artistic skills and experience in leather, wood, and wool burning, as well as in making sweets and pastries and crochet.³⁵⁵ Projects like these were part of *Jihad al-Bina'*'s overarching vocational training and rehabilitation program which also set up artisan markets—and farmer's markets—where the women could try to eventually sell the crafts with skills developed thanks to *Jihad al-Bina'*. *Jihad al-Bina'* also held multi-session training workshops for managers and workers of cooperatives that focused on raising cattle in the Baalbek-Hermel region, covering topics such as cooperative financing, management, and livestock diseases.³⁵⁶ Among other workshops and vocational trainings held between 2011 and 2018 by *Jihad al-Bina'* were courses for workers in the food industry, plastic shaping, labor development, decorating, chocolate casting, computer programming and maintenance, and on the modern applications of smart phones.³⁵⁷

(2) Jihad al-Bina' Markets

Jihad al-Bina' cooperatives also set up a number of fixed and mobile markets to reinforce a "culture of local consumption" and to improve the economic and social status of its constituents. Through its various cooperatives and cooperative networks, *Jihad al-*

³⁵⁵ "A Ceremony Honoring 320 Mothers of Martyrs and Conclusion of a Crochet Course in Yunin," *Jihad*, April 1, 2017, <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14388&cid=774#.W--McOhKiM9>; "The Conclusion of a Sweets and Pastries Course in Al-Rum," *Jihad Al-Bina' Official website*, October 28, 2017, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14461&cid=544#.W_XAJ-hKiM_; "A Series of Simplified Workshops in Cooperation with Women's Organizations," *Jihad Al-Bina' Official website*, March 11, 2016, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14166&cid=544#.W_XFWuhKiM8; Ghassan Qansou, "Jihad Al-Bina' Courses in Hermel and the Northern Bekaa," *Al Hermel Blog* (blog), February 20, 2011, http://alhermel.blogspot.com/2011/02/blog-post_20.html.

³⁵⁶ "Jihad Al-Bina' Cooperatives Archive"; "Workshop on Project Management in Hermel."

³⁵⁷ "Graduation Ceremony for Training Courses Held in Hermel," *Jihad Al-Bina' Official website*, November 28, 2017, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=14475&cid=544#.W_XAG-hKiM_; "Olive Cooperatives: Modern Application of Smart Phones," *Al-Manar News TV* (Beirut: Al-Manar TV, September 17, 2015), <http://mail.almanar.com.lb/programs/pdetails.php?did=1074181&pid=3647&eid=162732&wid=4420>.

Bina' heavily promoted numerous direct-to-consumer art, craft, and farmer's markets so local producers could stop relying on distributors and to create a bond to their fellow countrymen. In 2002, *Jihad al-Bina'* first opened a local artisan and farmer's market and exhibition in the western Bekaa town of Mashgara entitled "Bounties of the Land" where local producers and artisans could sell their products. Its success prompted *Jihad al-Bina'* to continue the exhibition annually in Mashgara and expand elsewhere. Hoping to replicate its success, *Jihad al-Bina'* expanded the construct to Bint Jbeil in 2010.³⁵⁸ In 2014, the organization expanded the project with a slightly altered focus on women. In cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Hezbollah's women's organization, *Jihad al-Bina'* opened the five-day "Bounties of My Nation" agricultural and handicraft exhibition in the Khalde area south of Beirut.³⁵⁹ At these exhibitions, agricultural cooperatives tried to help small farmers by providing an opportunity to sell their products locally, and to improve product marketing by adjusting to consumer demand.³⁶⁰

F. HIZBALLAH INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL PREVENTION ACTS (HIFPA)

To put additional pressure on Iran and to isolate Hezbollah, the U.S. Congress passed the HIFPA on December 16, 2015, and renewed with additional stipulations in July 2017. The purpose of the new policy was to "prevent Hizballah's global logistics and financial network from operating in order to curtail funding of its domestic and international activities . . . [and] to block that organization's ability to fund its global terror activities."³⁶¹ The 2017 version allows the president to impose secondary sanctions on any person he determines provides "significant support" to Hezbollah entities, of which *Jihad al-Bina'* is specifically named. The amended version includes a language which narrows

³⁵⁸ "'Bounties of the Land' in Bint Jbeil and Mashgara," *Jihad al-Bina' Official website*, September 2010, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=424&cid=504#.W_XZDfZFytV.

³⁵⁹ "Agricultural and Handicraft Cooperatives Participated in 'Bounties of My Nation' Exhibition in Khalde," *Jih*, October 20, 2014, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=13654&cid=504#.W_XD5OhKiM8.

³⁶⁰ "Cooperative Sector and Local Consumption Culture," *Jihad al-Bina' Official website*, September 11, 2009, https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=197&cid=504#.W_XP4ehKiM8.

³⁶¹ Edward R. [R-CA-39] Royce, "Hizballah International Financial Prevention Act of 2015," Pub. L. No. 114-102 (2015), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/2297>.

those the sanctions could affect follow concerns expressed by the Lebanese banking sector that the 2015 version could exclude large portions of Lebanon's Shia population from its banking system.³⁶²

This new round of sanctions was very likely imposed on Hezbollah because despite sanctions passed in 2006 to prevent Hezbollah from funding *Jihad al-Bina's* reconstruction efforts, reconstruction progressed virtually unhindered. Despite U.S. sanctions designed to prevent international financing dedicated to recovery efforts from reaching Hezbollah, Hezbollah financed reconstruction. *Jihad al-Bina's* efforts overshadowed the government and boosted the Party's image domestically and internationally. The United States and its European allies plan to rally support for their political allies in Lebanon by attracting international investments and bolstering the LAF to counter Hezbollah's power. To this end, the Paris Economic Conference for Development (CEDRE) was held in April 2018. This meeting generated \$11.8 billion in significant loans and pledges from the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, as well as from state governments including Saudi Arabia, France, Qatar, and the United States.³⁶³ The HIFPA in combination with international financing is designed to enable to Lebanese state to wrestle loyalty away from Hezbollah by financing its own infrastructure and economic development; to bolster its image as *Jihad al-Bina's* recovery and developmental efforts have done for Hezbollah; and to isolate Hezbollah from its financial lifelines so that the government might stand out in contrast. However, it will not be possible to measure the effects of this latest round of sanctions without getting a detailed look into Hezbollah's coffers, or analyzing its activities through the coming years. What is clear, however, is that previous attempts to cut off *Jihad al-Bina'* from funding lifelines through at least 2015 were unsuccessful.

³⁶² Carl E. Humud, "Lebanon," Congressional Service Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, June 19, 2018), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1075866/download>, 29.

³⁶³ Humud, "Lebanon," Congressional Service Report," 23.

G. CONCLUSION

Jihad al-Bina' markedly increased the scope and scale of its operations between 2007 and 2018. Despite U.S. sanctions targeting *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* in 2007 and 2009, respectively, the organizations expertly executed reconstruction of destroyed areas following the 2006 war in the southern *dahhiya*. Moreover, these organizations helped manage reconstruction and recovery efforts elsewhere independently and in collaboration with state and international entities. While completing postwar reconstruction, *Jihad al-Bina'* also expanded social welfare and development activities through its numerous cooperatives in the Bekaa valley and southern Lebanon, including the 'Abbas water project, the Good Tree project, and the Lands market and other artisan and cultural events. Funded directly by Iran, *Jihad al-Bina'* built and rebuilt roads and waterways, and other infrastructure projects neglected by the state. Lastly, *Jihad al-Bina'* conducted numerous military-related construction projects throughout southern Lebanon, north of the Litani river, and along the Syrian border including UGF bunker and tunnel construction, as well as Hezbollah's dedicated telecommunication system.

Jihad al-Bina' did not apparently face difficulty funding its reconstruction activities following the 2006 war, nor its developmental and social welfare projects through 2015 when the HIFPA was passed. Following 2007–2009 U.S. sanctions, the Lebanese government only turned over a small portion of the funds designated to citizens represented by *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* for reconstruction. Additionally, foreign persons and governments anonymously donated to *Jihad al-Bina'* to simultaneously support reconstruction while defying U.S. efforts to thwart Hezbollah. Lastly, although it is unclear if the U.S. Treasury's designation of Iranian banks utilized to transfer money to Hezbollah were effective, Hezbollah undoubtedly received millions in support directly from Iran. Even if sanctions against banks took effect, there is evidence to support that Iran flew in cash directly as alleged by Walid Jumblatt and the large amounts of cash-on-hand distributed by *Jihad al-Bina'* to its constituents.

Because *Jihad al-Bina'* was able to fund and continue operations in the face of sanctions, it helped Hezbollah dodge negative public perception from its actions that kicked off the 2006 war and even bolstered Hezbollah's reputation. Hezbollah ran an extremely

successful public awareness campaign to promote its reconstruction activities—in contrast to the government’s incompetence—through various media outlets, but primarily through Al-Manar. Moreover, because U.S. sanctions targeted *Jihad al-Bina’s* seemingly philanthropic efforts following Israel’s blatant targeting of civilian locales, Hezbollah emerged as the champion of the oppressed. Defiance and resistance characterized its speeches, its efforts, and its identity. As demonstrated, Hezbollah’s popularity grew exponentially following the war, in no small part due to the works of *Jihad al-Bina’*.

IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to determine if U.S. sanctions imposed against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and its *Wa'ad* project in 2009 had their desired effect. Specifically, this thesis attempted to determine: first, if and how U.S. sanctions affected *Jihad al-Bina'*'s ability to carry out its work, primarily in the post-2006 war aftermath, but also through the present time; and second, if the sanctions obstructed *Jihad al-Bina'* from supporting Hezbollah's strategic objectives. To answer these questions, two hypothesis were initially presented: (1) U.S sanctions placed against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and thereafter did not curb the organization's activities. *Jihad al-Bina'* effectively circumvented the effects of sanctions with the help of foreign funding, by channeling funding from other non-sanctioned entities, and by setting up new organizations with parallel functions; and (2) U.S. sanctions helped to reinforce Hezbollah's resistance identity and spurred Hezbollah's consolidation of influence and power in Lebanon's Shia communities. Because *Jihad al-Bina'* provides critical services to Lebanon's Shia territories, the U.S. narrative of Hezbollah's terrorist classification did not resonate. Moreover, U.S. sanctions likely played into the anti-American, anti-Israeli resistance narrative Hezbollah maintains and helped Hezbollah gain sympathy and support away from Amal, which is more closely integrated into what is perceived by the Shia community as a weak state apparatus that does not have their interests in mind.

This chapter summarizes the research presented in this thesis, compares *Jihad al-Bina'*'s activities in two case studies pre- and post-US sanctions in 2007 and 2009, tests the latter study against the two hypotheses, and presents the final argument. This thesis argues that U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and against *Wa'ad* in 2009 failed to cut off either group from funding necessary to accomplish activities in the postwar aftermath. It also argues that the sanctions were ineffective at stifling *Jihad al-Bina'* from advancing Hezbollah's power consolidation and growing popularity through 2015. *Jihad al-Bina'* effectively circumvented U.S. sanctions through deliberate measures, such as soliciting donations from domestic and foreign individuals and organizations. It also funneled significant funding from the Lebanese government through its constituents that designated

the group as their legal representative for reconstruction. *Jihad al-Bina'* also received funding directly from foreign governments, primarily Iran, but also from other foreign governments who wished to support Lebanon's recovery through *Jihad al-Bina'* anonymously. The unexpected enabler for *Jihad al-Bina'*'s anonymous foreign funding was the Lebanese government which was perceived as largely corrupt and incompetent. The Lebanese government was notoriously sluggish, in part due to its confessional government system whose decisions often came to a deadlock. This environment led to multiple unfunded or incomplete post-civil war reconstruction projects even as the 2006 war kicked off more than fifteen years later. This demonstrates that even though foreign donors understood the importance of avoiding U.S. ire by giving money to or working with *Jihad al-Bina'*, they placed a premium on furthering postwar recovery, even if that required working with the newly designated terrorist subsidiary. Ultimately, in the choice between an ineffective legitimate government and an effective blackballed organization, the government lost out. For U.S. sanctions to have been effective, more viable alternative options for collaboration should have been available to foreign donors.

A. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Chapter I presented the research question and a body of authoritative literature on Hezbollah's social service organization history. It also presented a limited but rich body of research that focused on *Jihad al-Bina'* from its founding in 1988 through the late 2000s. The literature review revealed two gaps in the body of research on *Jihad al-Bina'*: first, none of the research explored whether U.S. sanctions targeting the organization had their intended effect; and second, no scholarly research documented the organization's activities in great detail after 2010. With this need for research identified, the research question was posed: what effect did U.S. sanctions emplaced on *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and 2009 have on the organization's ability to execute projects and support Hezbollah's strategic objectives? To answer this question, this thesis examine *Jihad al-Bina'*'s collective works from its inception through 2018.

Chapter II presented the first case study on *Jihad al-Bina'* from 1988 through 2006. The chapter started with a discussion on Iran's revolutionary ideology which was based on

fierce anti-Western imperialism and Zionism. This ideology fueled the Islamic revolution of 1979 and helped the Khomeinist clergy consolidate power in Iran. It then laid out Iran's "revolution exportation" policy initiated as a result of the Iran-Iraq war but which found the most success in Lebanon where Hezbollah formed. Under this policy, Iran seeded and nurtured copies of Iranian military, political, and social service institutions within Hezbollah, such as *Jihad al-Bina'*. Additionally, this chapter presented information on *Jihad al-Bina's* objectives, structure, and funding.

After a discussion on the founding of *Jihad al-Bina'*, the chapter primarily focused on the developmental foundation's social service activities in Lebanon's Shia territories which suffered from multiple conflicts and government neglect. These activities included public service provision, education, welfare distribution, and construction through 2006. This chapter demonstrated that *Jihad al-Bina's* activities clearly helped Hezbollah consolidate power over the state and from Amal after the organization entered electoral politics. The chapter concluded by discussing the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the extent of the damage, the creation of the *Wa'ad* project, and U.S. justifications for sanctioning *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007.

Chapter III presented the *Wa'ad* project's postwar reconstruction and *Jihad al-Bina's* social welfare and development activities from 2007 through 2018. The chapter opened with an overview on sanctions against Iran. Misperceptions associated with UN sanctions against Iraq following the first Gulf War drained the international community's will to impose similar sanctions against Iran to curtail its nuclear program. In response, the United States innovated an independent system of sanctions which pressured international banks to stop doing business with Iran. Although the UN eventually implemented sanctions against Iran, the United States continued and expanded its unilateral sanctions against Iranian and Hezbollah institutions such as those imposed on *Jihad al-Bina'*.

Even in the face of U.S. sanctions, *Jihad al-Bina's Wa'ad* project was a tremendous success. U.S. sanctions imposed difficulties on *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad*, but did not stifle project pace nor completion. The bulk of the recovery projects were completed in the promised two year time frame and full project completion was achieved by 2012. Although *Jihad al-Bina'* and *Wa'ad* were legal construction and real estate entities outlined in the

Lebanese postwar recovery plan, U.S. sanctions stigmatized association with Hezbollah's subsidiaries, resulting in denial of government funds. However, Hezbollah still received funds necessary to cover costs of projects from Iran, private donors and organizations, as well as some money through Lebanon's reluctant government.

Beyond postwar recovery, *Jihad al-Bina'* expanded operations between 2009 and 2018. *Jihad al-Bina'* returned its focus to social welfare and development activities through its numerous cooperatives in the Bekaa valley and southern Lebanon. These projects included the 'Abbas water project, the Good Tree project, and the Lands market and other artisan and cultural events. *Jihad al-Bina'* also built and rebuilt roads and water systems, and other infrastructure projects neglected by the state. Lastly, *Jihad al-Bina'* conducted numerous military-related construction projects throughout southern Lebanon, north of the Litani river, and along the Syrian border including UGF bunker and tunnel construction, as well as Hezbollah's dedicated telecommunication system.

B. FINDINGS

This thesis examined *Jihad al-Bina's* activities pre and post 2007 and 2009 U.S. sanctions. From 1988 through 2006, *Jihad al-Bina'* helped Hezbollah consolidate power and territory by providing much-needed services to its Shia constituency in the southern suburbs of Beirut, southern Lebanon, and the Bekaa Valley. *Jihad al-Bina'* excelled at provisioning services such as providing potable water, collecting garbage, repairing and extending new electric systems, and building schools, mosques, hospitals, commercial and residential buildings. The organization also invested heavily in agricultural development programs including vocational training to raise the standard of living in Shia areas, and to help rural residents become self-sufficient. Perhaps most significantly, *Jihad al-Bina'* expertly and swiftly rebuilt homes in Shia territories following damage sustained in the Lebanese civil war, and from multiple conflicts with Israel including the occupation of Lebanon, the 1993 bombing campaign, and the 1996 the Grapes of Wrath campaign. These reconstruction projects allowed people who fled war torn areas to return to their homes, bolstered popular support and affinity for Hezbollah, and promoted a grassroots base upon whom Hezbollah could draw for political support and military recruits. Following the end

of the civil war and again after Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, *Jihad al-Bina'* helped Hezbollah assert control over its territories.

This thesis finds that *Jihad al-Bina's* service provision contributed to Hezbollah's consolidation of power at the expense of Amal through 1992. Following the split in the early 1980s, Hezbollah's relationship with Amal was mostly antagonistic and at times violent through 1990. In large part due to its access to Iran's finances, *Jihad al-Bina'* outpaced Amal's developmental activities and social service provision which nudged popular and political support toward Hezbollah in the 1992 general elections. Hezbollah's entry into politics also forced *Jihad al-Bina'* to downplay its Iranian connection and professionalize. Political legitimization and professionalization facilitated *Jihad al-Bina's* integration with state organizations.

However, this thesis also finds that *Jihad al-Bina's* service provisions lack explanatory power for Hezbollah's performance in subsequent elections compared to Amal. There is likely greater explanatory power for Amal's resurgence in subsequent elections related to Syria's influence. Amal overtook Hezbollah in the 1996 general elections, winning eight seats to Hezbollah's seven. As discussed in chapter II, relations between Amal and Hezbollah normalized after the civil war. Syrian troops occupied Lebanon for the next 15 years, and the Syrian government had great influence in Lebanese politics and elections. While this thesis did not closely examine Syria's influence into Lebanese politics, it finds that factors other than service provision accounted for a slight dip in Hezbollah's electoral performance. Between 1992 and 2005, *Jihad al-Bina's* expanded post-conflict reconstruction and social service provision. While this did not translate into increased electoral performance in 1996, it undoubtedly won Hezbollah public support which helped the organization reinforce its resistance identity. Moreover, the organization further expanded its independent operations in Shia territories, strengthening its patronage networks. Lastly, *Jihad al-Bina'* built up the professional and administrative capacity during these years which far outpaced the state. This capacity was a key factor for post-2006 war reconstruction.

This thesis finds that the 2007 and 2009 U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* and its *Wa'ad* project were ineffective in the short and long term. The United States understood the role of *Jihad al-Bina'* in supporting Hezbollah's strategic objectives, including fostering a loyal base of constituents upon whom the Party could rely on for political support and military recruits. The United States overtly stated that its goal behind sanctioning *Jihad al-Bina'* was ultimately to cut off support for Hezbollah's terrorist activities. The timing of these sanctions—in between cessation of hostilities and the start of postwar reconstruction—indicates that the near-term goal was to deny *Jihad al-Bina'* all sources of funding necessary to conduct reconstruction. These sources included Iranian funding, donations from private donors, and money pledged by the international community for postwar reconstruction.

The 2007 and 2009 U.S. sanctions failed to hinder *Jihad al-Bina's* postwar reconstruction. In order to front the funds necessary to execute projects from 2006 to 2012 under the *Wa'ad* program, *Jihad al-Bina'* needed access to nearly \$1 billion. Although the Lebanese government reimbursed the organization a fraction of what it was owed, *Jihad al-Bina'* was able to pay out readily-available money to constituents and contractors for reconstruction projects even while the government refused to turn over money. While some constituents complained that what *Jihad al-Bina'* turned over was not enough, this had nothing to do with the organization's lack of funds, rather the skyrocketing prices of housing and goods in the postwar aftermath. No sources could be located which complained of *Jihad al-Bina'* failing to make payments for projects performed. Additionally, while U.S. sanctions prevented individuals and organizations from contributing to *Jihad al-Bina'* overtly, it did not deny anonymous donations. Some countries who might otherwise have collaborated with *Jihad al-Bina'*, such as Qatar and the UAE decided to directly fund reconstruction projects likely as a result of U.S. sanctions.

This thesis also finds that a weak, incompetent, and unsympathetic Lebanese central government enabled *Jihad al-Bina'* to circumvent the sanctions' financial ramifications, and led to the failure of U.S. sanctions' intent to defame and alienate the organization. By the time the 2006 war kicked off, the Lebanese government still had not fulfilled, nor did it appear intent on fulfilling post-civil war recovery commitments. When it finally

approved its post-2006 war recovery plan, the government made it clear that it had no intention to perform reconstruction; rather, it decided to hand money and responsibility to citizens take care of the arduous task of reconstruction themselves. Moreover, the government appeared more concerned with blaming Hezbollah for the war than it did helping its citizens recover. This provided a monumental opportunity for *Jihad al-Bina'*. Had the Lebanese state moved with a similar sense of urgency as *Jihad al-Bina'* in performing damage assessments, requesting bids, and executing contracts, the public's attention might have focused more on Hezbollah's faults than its postwar recovery accomplishments. However, even if the government showed concern, its lack of ready-funding and administrative capacity would have encumbered its efforts. Ultimately, the government's inability to execute postwar recovery left it with few options besides releasing funds to *Jihad al-Bina'*, although slowly and much less than what it owed to the organization.

In the long term, 2007 and 2009 sanctions also failed to curtail *Jihad al-Bina's* token social service provision, developmental projects, and dedicated construction projects. Following postwar reconstruction, *Jihad al-Bina'* continued and expanded existing agricultural development and vocational training throughout southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. *Jihad al-Bina'* also further integrated with governmental organizations and IGO's for Lebanese development through its numerous cooperatives. It also helped Hezbollah prepare for the next conflict by constructing dedicated military-related UGFs and facilities.

US sanctions targeting *Jihad al-Bina'* likely prompted the organization to emphasize its philanthropic character, particularly as the United States implemented the HIFPA and renewed sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2015 and 2017. Increasingly since 2010, *Jihad al-Bina'* professionalized its website and began publicizing its communal integration, particularly with school-aged children through the Good Tree program. Moreover, the organization expanded the 'Abbas water project and Lands markets to improve lives and livelihoods in rural areas.

However, is not quite as clear if 2007 and 2009 sanctions hindered *Jihad al-Bina's* ability to execute major projects to the scale of the *Wa'ad* project in the long term. The

renewal and expansion U.S. sanctions in 2015 and again in 2017 provides some evidence that the United States is trying to block all avenues to financing upon which *Jihad al-Bina'* and Hezbollah relied upon to circumvent sanctions in 2007 and 2009. It will not be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of these new sanctions until Lebanon is again ravaged by war.

Jihad al-Bina' also supported Hezbollah's strategic objectives by spurring its popularity, despite instigating the war and resultant devastation. Because *Jihad al-Bina'* was able to fund and continue operations in the face of sanctions, it helped Hezbollah dodge negative public perception from its actions that kicked off the 2006 war and even bolstered Hezbollah's reputation. Hezbollah ran an effective public relations campaign to promote its reconstruction activities. Moreover, amongst Lebanon's citizenry U.S. sanctions had the opposite of their intended effects. Sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* were cited as proof of the organization's resistance identity and moral superiority. The United States backed Israel which devastated Lebanon. Hezbollah stood toe-to-toe with Israel militarily and eliminated signs of its aggression philanthropically. Both crucial capabilities helped Hezbollah rise in prominence and popularity through 2018.

C. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

This thesis argues that 2007 and 2009 sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* were ineffective. The first hypothesis contended that U.S sanctions placed against *Jihad al-Bina'* in 2007 and thereafter did not curb the organization's activities. It also argued that *Jihad al-Bina'* effectively circumvented the effects of sanctions with the help of foreign funding, by channeling funding from other non-sanctioned entities, and by setting up new organizations with parallel functions. Further, this thesis argues that U.S. sanctions that target *Jihad al-Bina'* will be ineffective unless the following conditions are met. First, U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* must be proactive, not reactive. The U.S. accused *Jihad al-Bina'* of setting up *Wa'ad* to solicit funding and circumvent sanctions. However, the *Wa'ad* project was announced in 2006 prior to sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* and operating for two years before 2009 sanctions were implemented. Had the 2007 sanctions included *Wa'ad*, they might have had a greater impact on the project. Second, sanctions cannot be effective while Hezbollah maintains access to foreign funding. Third, unless the

US-friendly portions of the Lebanese government possess the political will, administrative capacity, and funding to perform timely, meaningful developmental projects during peacetime, and immediate, competent postwar recovery, sanctions will be perceived to be counterproductive to Lebanon's interests, not just Hezbollah's. This thesis advances the first hypothesis to advance the primary argument.

The second hypothesis argued that U.S. sanctions had the opposite of their intended effect to Hezbollah's resistance identity, and that they bolstered rather than damaged Hezbollah's reputation. Hezbollah's reputation should have suffered a massive hit for bringing great destruction to Lebanon in 2006. Instead, it emerged from the crisis as the model of anti-Israeli, anti-American resistance and responsible administration. When the United States labeled *Jihad al-Bina'* a terrorist group, Lebanese citizens scoffed. *Jihad al-Bina'* was the most visible and hard-working recovery organization in areas most devastated by Israel. This classification reinforced in the minds of many Lebanese citizens the antithetical nature of U.S. policy to the well-being of those who suffered in the war. The second hypothesis also argued that U.S. sanctions against *Jihad al-Bina'* helped Hezbollah win sympathy away from Amal. The thesis found that Hezbollah's leadership was primarily focused on contrasting its own actions against the Lebanese state, and highlighting the evil behind coordinated Israeli actions and U.S. policy. Hezbollah leaders did not denounce or try to win over Amal constituents. By the time the 2006 war kicked off, Hezbollah and Amal's political interests were fairly aligned and both groups formed the backbone of the March 8 Alliance, the pro-Syrian bloc of Lebanese politics. Moreover, in the postwar aftermath, Amal and Hezbollah's new Loyalty to the Resistance Party lead the government opposition movement together, and split seats nearly evenly in the 2009 and 2018 elections. Therefore, this thesis advances the first half of the second hypothesis to advance the principle argument, but finds no evidence to support that U.S. sanctions helped Hezbollah wrestle loyalty away from Amal.

D. IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Did the U.S. designation of *Jihad al-Bina'* as a terrorist organization prevent the organization from executing projects and supporting Hezbollah? The research presented

in this thesis suggests that U.S. sanctions did not have their intended effect and were counterproductive. *Jihad al-Bina'* successfully executed postwar reconstruction and expanded developmental activity with greater governmental and intergovernmental cooperation through 2018. Moreover, its activities in contrast to the state bolstered Hezbollah's popularity. Lastly, *Jihad al-Bina'* adapted the nature of its projects and its image so that future U.S. sanctions against the organization will further polarize its constituency against the United States making it more difficult for the US-friendly portions of the Lebanese government to check Hezbollah's power in Lebanon.

While conducting research for this thesis, numerous underexplored topics for potential research became apparent. As it did in Lebanon during the civil war, the IRGC is cloning Iranian institutions in the midst of the chaos in Syria, Yemeni, and Iraq. For example, *Jehad-e Sazandegi* is currently active in Syria, assisting the Assad regime rebuild following eight years of civil war. Before his death in Syria in 2015, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Hamedani stated, "Construction Basij (*Basij-e Sazandegi*) has been established in Syria."³⁶⁴ The model of Iran's revolutionary exportation is being copied in these areas; specifically, the cloning of Iran's revolutionary institutions which helped the Khomeinists consolidate power in Iran. This thesis recommends a focused research effort to discover how and which institutions Iran is exporting.

As discussed in this thesis, the United States implemented the HIFPA in 2015 which were renewed in 2018. U.S. Congress is currently putting together a new set of anti-Hezbollah sanctions in coordination with its reimplementing of sanctions against Iran. These sanctions specifically call out *Jihad al-Bina'* in attempt to further curtail its current and future operations. Observers of the United States' anti-Iran policies should focus on the Lebanese government's ability to manage future postwar reconstruction and recovery

³⁶⁴ Tony Badran, "Exporting the Islamic Revolution," *NOW Lebanon*, March 11, 2015, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/LIR2015031166027379#index=3&searchKey=31020006&rpp=10; <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentary/564933-exporting-the-islamic-revolution>; "Syria: Sources Say Hizballah Establishes New Headquarters, Deploys Elements in Eastern Dayr Zawr," *Dubai Orient News Online*, August 8, 2018, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/IMR2018081124401951#index=17&searchKey=31020325&rpp=10.

in this environment of new and more comprehensive anti-Iran and anti-Hezbollah sanctions. Future research should seek to answer if the Lebanese government is prepared, willing, and competent to take on the roles previously shirked and championed by *Jihad al-Bina'* following the 2006 war with Israel.

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