

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

HIZBALLAH'S STAYING POWER: AN ASSESSMENT

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Featured Speaker:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Saban Center at Brookings. I think you all probably know that the protocol here is to eat while we talk, and so I invite you to enjoy your lunch.

It's a real pleasure for us today to host Judith Harik. She is a New Yorker by background, educated at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, and at the University of Iowa where she earned her M.S. and Ph.D. in political science. She joined the political science faculty at the American University of Beirut in 1981, and since then she has had a front row seat at all of Lebanon's many conflicts, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian one that's played it so far in

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Lebanon in those years.

When Hizballah came on the scene in the 1980s, she began to focus her research on the organization strategies and the way in which they managed to develop this port, in particular, within the Lebanese Shi'i community. She taught at AUB until 2003 when she retired and joined Beirut's Matn University as its president. She's written extensively on Hizballah.

Judith is the author of *Hizballah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* which was published in 2004, and has a whole host of general articles on Hizballah, Syria, and Lebanon to her name.

Judith is going to give us today an assessment of Hizballah's staying power and the way that it functions. It is very much a first-hand report as an observer of Hizballah the many years now, and we're very excited to have an opportunity to hear from her.

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Responding to her presentation will be Dan Byman, whom we can now call our very own since he's graduated to becoming a Senior Fellow at the Saban Center at Brookings. He's also Director of the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University. He doesn't need a lengthy introduction since I think you all know him well for his expertise on terrorism, in particular. His last book was *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*. We were very glad that Dan has been able to join us today to act as the respondent.

Judith, welcome. The floor is yours.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Thank you very much. Thank you, Professor and Ambassador Martin Indyk, and hello to all friends, new friends, and some old friends here. I'm very happy to be here with you today and to give you some ideas about what's going on in Beirut at this moment and other parts of the country.

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The political impasse that has paralyzed Lebanon for almost five months is the result of a confrontation between two coalitions: one, the March 14th Movement backed by the United States and its European allies was able to name the Prime Minister Fouad Siniora after success in the parliamentary elections of 2005; the other, calling itself the Rainbow Coalition to emphasize its ethnic and political diversity, is spearheaded by Hizballah and its coalition partners. Hizballah, an Islamic organization designed by Hafez al-Assad and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1980 to fight Israel is the spearhead of that coalition, and Hizballah and its partners are firmly camped on their political positions and on prime downtown property in a tense city. And they are not budging.

The leader of the Party of God, Hassan Nasrallah, drove that point home in a speech made on Easter Sunday

in which he said, quote: "The doors are completely closed to further dialogue, and Hizballah is ready to confront attempts to change Lebanon's identity, presumably from Arab to Western, for the next 50 years." For its part the cabinet dominated by March 14th members is equally unwilling to give an inch in its effort to erase purported Syrian influence from Lebanon, and that, of course, includes the Party of God's fighting wing.

Hizballah's capacity to stay the course it is pursuing is the question at hand today. To be able to do that, it must continue to foil all efforts by the March 14th Movement and its external allies, to disarm its gorilla cadres and, if possible, eliminate that threat completely. I will address this issue by first examining the geopolitical factors involved in Hizballah's emergence and the present crisis. I will then describe the power assets generated by Hizballah

over the years and at hand today, explaining how those assets are being used to achieve the organization's strategic goals in the Lebanese political arena. This will include a look at what I call this year's crisis: The upcoming presidential elections.

In this discussion I will present the constitutional requirements of the election and discuss the tactics that might be used by the March 14th and rainbow coalitions to achieve their goals. From this discussion I will then project three probable electoral outcomes and draw from them their implications from Hizballah's staying power, the state's viability and continuity, and for the external actors backing both sides of the confrontation.

So first I want to very quickly look at the external actors and their plans for Lebanon. I won't dwell on the manner in which Hizballah was designed by Assad and Khomeini or the division of labor undertaken

by the partners to produce and maintain a gorilla army that would serve their common goal. I will just say that their objective in forming Hizballah was to oppose U.S. hegemony in the Middle East and end Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

Of course, each of the sponsors also wishes to derive specific gains from their creation, and Syria, who became the game maker in the Lebanese war theater, wishes to recover the Golan Heights through a surrogate military force. Assad's plan was to keep the, quote "land for peace" negotiation idea on the front burner with Israel through manipulating this Lebanese fighting force while asserting every other effort possible to exclude Israeli and American influence from Lebanon during the civil war and afterwards. Its geographical location besides Syria and Israel has always made Lebanon a strategic prize to be won or held onto, as the case may be. It was

Syria's prize until 2005 when Damascus' troops evacuated Lebanon, and then it became the United States' contested trophy.

The stalemate now in process can thus be explained rather simplistically as Damascus' effort to regain its former influence by backing the opposition coalition spearheaded by Hizballah and Christian former General Michel 'Aoun's free patriotic movement and America's resolve to keep that from happening by throwing all its support behind the March 14th Movement and its allied government officials.

An important point about the present government is that it enjoys recognition by the international community as well as considerable popular support. Nevertheless, with the resignation of Shiite ministers to be discussed later, it no longer satisfies the condition of constitutionality set out in the preamble of the Constitution.

Now I'd like to just run down quickly Hizballah's power resources, military weight. The summer war between Hizballah and Israel has proven that the Party of God is a very tough nut to crack. Having fought the Israeli army and its surrogate force in Lebanon, South Lebanon, for more than 25 years using classical gorilla tactics and with weaponry supplied by Syria and Iran, Hizballah was very well prepared for last summer's war. Three to four thousand well-prepared gorilla fighters, according to Israeli estimates, succeeded in standing off an air, land, and sea onslaught in which 30,000 Israeli troops participated while causing more than two million Israeli citizens to seek shelter from constant rocket attacks for 33 days, not to mention the Lebanese citizens who also were forced to be displaced and who sustained many casualties.

Knowledgeable U.S. Marine commanders with

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whom I recently spoke affirm that Israel will not have a defensive system that can deter the medium and long-range katyusha rocket systems used in the summer war for at least five years. When one estimates that Syria must have at least 10 times the number of these weapons that Hizballah has, caution on the part of Israel is definitely advised.

Moreover, immediately after the war and despite all efforts by local and international forces using land, sea, and air assets to deny the Party of God weapon shipments from Syria, Hizballah began replacing and, some say, upgrading its depleted weapons stocks in preparation for the next round of fighting that could occur at any time. The facts are that at present Hizballah cannot be disarmed. The Lebanese army whose troops are 60 percent Shiite, according to Defense Minister Elias al-Murr, is impotent in this regard. Asking the army to challenge Hizballah is

calling for its disintegration, much as had happened during the civil war.

UNIFIL, as we know, is not charged with the Party of God's disarmament. It is also doubtful that Israel or any other armed force -- Arab League, NATO, U.S., whatsoever -- would risk involvement in another battle of Beirut that would in all probability far outstrip the one that took place in the early 1980s. In this respect, there is no doubt that a formidable Arab army, quote the equal of special force brigades in either the Syrian and Iranian armies, is in place. Thus it is very difficult if not untenable for Lebanon to fulfill any U.N. security resolution that alludes to or specifies Hizballah's disarmament at this point.

Now, more importantly, I want to look at the Party of God's political weight. A more important asset is that Hizballah, during the long years of its struggle with Israel, has created a resistance culture

within the Shiite community and a sizable proportion of the non-Shiite Lebanese population that has to date denied all efforts, including last summer's dramatic aerial bombardments, to shake its allegiance to the Party of God. The Party's public and social delivery networks are the key element in this support, and their depth and breadth are surely familiar to most present here today.

However, the delivery of medical services, electricity, and drinking water are the mere tip of the iceberg. The following service that had grown over the years since 1984 to become a behemoth will prove my point.

I'm referring to Qard al Husn. This means an ethical loan. This is the micro credit department by itself that is with no support from either any country or any outside group and through meticulous planning and the intervention of the most sophisticated financial

techniques of actuarial science has accumulated a loan fund in excess of a billion U.S. dollars that is available for micro credit purposes, not limited -- very important point -- not limited to the Shiite community.

This money has been accumulated over the last 22 years to a simple and very popular system of public participation quite similar to a mutual fund. It has grown from a mere 25 persons in 1984 to 57,000 participants and contributors at the end of 2006. I, personally and presently, am studying the details of these institutions and its processes.

As interesting as these facts are, however, it is the political impact that interests us here. From them we see that Hizballah is much more financially independent than was previously thought and that this project, in effectively responding to the further needs of the Shiite community and others,

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further strengthens the vital patron-client bond between the Islamic organization and its grass roots. Having learned the details of the Qard al Husn Project, I'm convinced that no effort to break this bond will succeed. Bolstered by ideology, institutional outreach, and more than two decades of trustworthy performance, not to mention the charisma of leaders, the ties that bind Hizballah to the grass roots remain very firm. These factors provide Hizballah with the popular support or political weight that allows it to sustain the present campaign of civil disobedience undertaken by the so-called rainbow coalition.

Now, I have to add to that very quickly that Hizballah over the years has also gained a certain measure of legitimacy in Lebanon, and mainly that was handed to it by the Israelis in 1982 when occupation of Lebanon provided a right of resistance. As noted above, the Party's performance of that role combined

with the social services delivery and the capacity of the leadership to transform the organization into a mainstream party in 1990 provided Hizballah with a legitimacy both at home and abroad that has helped to preserve it from external and internal threats.

The last power asset I have to mention is, of course, the support given Hizballah by transnational actors Iran and Syria. The willingness of Syria and Iran to continue to support an organization that projects their own power into the Middle East conflict arena -- a point made very well by you in your [Dan Byman's] book -- also furthers their capacity to interfere in the Palestinian/Israeli war theater is pretty obvious in the rhetoric of leaders and actions taken and needs no substantiation by me. In terms of continued support for Hizballah and looking specifically at Syria's interests, it cannot be assumed that these interests are any less important to Damascus

now than they were in 1970s when the civil war was beginning to get underway. The stakes for Syria remained the same. True, the risks are higher. The U.S. military is now next door. On the other hand, Damascus bets on the fact that Israel does not want to face a two-front war in which it would face weapon systems already demonstrated in 2006 and assuredly multiplied.

This is the political and military landscape of the opposition forces in Lebanon. These realities must be faced by the United States and its allies as the Lebanese confrontation goes on.

Now I want to turn quickly to Hizballah's postwar political strategy and tactics. Hizballah and the opposition were campaigning for a national unity cabinet before the summer war broke out, and they continued after the cease fire. Hizballah already had several ministerial portfolios but hoped that, by

applying political pressure opposition, partners could obtain additional portfolios that would add up to a third of the seats or a total of 11 for the opposition and 19 for the March 14th forces. That would allow opposition ministers to block any measures they considered detrimental to their interests such as ending President Lahoud's term of office and other issues, in particularly Hizballah's disarmament.

Since this objective could not be reached, Hizballah ministers left the cabinet in early November 2006 and a strategy of civil disobedience then became the order of the day. That strategy drew upon Hizballah's major asset, its massive popular support, and the leadership's capacity to bring a million or more folks out into the streets in a 24-hour notice -- or by a snap of the fingers, actually.

By December 15th the downtown area of Beirut was deluged by a truly vast number of opposition

supporters. Hundreds of tents went up so as to maintain a permanent tent-in protest -- and, by the way, they're installing air-conditioning in some of them -- and they now extend far beyond the original campground that was established beneath the fortress-like government house. In that house, that's where the Siniora cabinet has been hunkered down behind barbed wire since mid-December.

An important part of the strategy of peaceful disobedience is, of course, to make sure it stays peaceful, to avoid any communal violence whatsoever. All opposition leaders have counseled their partisans that no participation in any kind of a skirmish will be tolerated. The aim here is to hold the democratic high ground. Hizballah wants to remain a national resistance for all Lebanese. Leaders of the opposition, in fact, remind the public that Hizballah never participated in the civil war struggle as

"government militias have done." This is a reference to the militias mobilized during the civil war by Christian leader Samir Ga'ga' and drew strong man Walid Jumblatt.

Militants in the Lebanese forces of Samir Ga'ga' and Jumblatt's progressive socialist part carried out tit for tat kidnappings and massacres of civilians throughout the Shouf and Matn districts of Lebanon during the 1980s; yet despite opposition attempts to keep the confrontation peaceful during a general strike held on January 23rd of this year, partisans of the Lebanese forces and of former President Amin Gemayel's Phalangist Party, fought 'Aoun's free patriot members leaving a number of youths dead and more than 150 wounded. A rumble between Sunni and Shiite students at Arab University occurred two days later resulting in the deaths of four Shiite students.

And this is a sad part of that to me in addition to the lives lost was to see the Lebanese army. The Lebanese army tried to separate the battling youths but had no crowd control preparation or equipment; thus they were caught on TV ducking the stones students were throwing at each other and the bullets of prepositioned snipers who opened fire on the demonstrators and the army. Why this was said to me was that I saw this kind of confrontations on the AUB campus during the civil war where the military several times used real bullets which ricocheted, hurting some of my own students.

Anyhow, after these incidents in public speeches opposition leaders stressed that they were willing to accept any kind of human loss but would not retaliate in kind or allow the political confrontation to degenerate into civil strife. As the confrontation goes on, however, there is no guarantee that various

breaches of security will not take place here and there as a means of underlining the hazards of the continued stalemate.

Now, future prospects of the standoff. Will Hizballah and other opposition leaders keep to the strategy described above in the foreseeable future? And are tactics likely to change? According to Nasrallah's Easter speech on April 8th, more of the same is in store. At that time the Hizballah leaders stated that this party has given up trying to push the March 14th Movement to form a unity cabinet and will essentially allow events to take their course. He said, "Only a national poll on what the people want or early parliamentary elections can end the impasse. The idea of a national unity cabinet," he said, "is finished."

Hizballah and the opposition coalition apparently believe that there is nothing further to be

done than to rely on the weight of numbers to continue to paralyze Lebanese political, economic, and administrative life. They seem to believe that denying the government's legitimacy and basically ignoring it will eventually lead to the March 14th coalition caving in to the opposition's demands despite the strong support offered it by the United States and its European allies. In other words, there is no end to present crises envisioned as things stand.

Let us see how this strategy of continued stalemate might be practiced when time comes for the presidential election, as I said before, this year's looming crisis. The electoral period begins in July and parliament is formally seized of the issue from September 25th to November 23rd when a president must be elected. Nevertheless, an argument is already shaping up between the opposing coalitions over the meaning and correct interpretation of Article 49,

Section 2 of the Lebanese Constitution. This article stipulates: "The president of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. After first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient, i.e. 50 percent plus one."

A legal expert I consulted advised that according to this article, two-thirds of the 127-member House must indeed be present to hold the election. Interestingly, this requirement was included in the Constitution as a safeguard for the Christian community. It ensures that Muslims with a few Christians cannot jeopardize or disregard the interests of the mainstream Christian folks.

So now House Speaker Nabih Berri, whose Amal Movement is part of the Lebanese resistance, has firmly stated that as far as he's concerned he's going to convene the parliament every single day. There will

be no chance that the parliament is not going to be convened, in other words, although he doesn't convene it now. And that means that the 57 opposition deputies are not likely to appear; therefore, the two-thirds quorum will not be achieved, and a president will not be able to be elected according to constitutional regulations.

On the other hand, Article 73 indicates that should the chamber not be convened for the purposes of electing a president, the chamber must meet automatically on the 10th day preceding the expiration of the sitting president's term of office and proceed to apply the constitutional requirements in electing a new president. By constitutional requirements, we assume the application of the rule concerning the two-thirds quorum being present to begin the election. It does not refer to any other electoral requirements or machinery that are stipulated in Article 49, however.

It seems that the March 14th Movement to this date is interpreting this article as follows: Since no numbers or specific quorum is mentioned, a simple majority plus one will do to hold the presidential election. Now, of course, will Christian members accept this is a very important question. The bottom line seems to me to be this: If the opposition has its way, there will be no election. If the March 14th Movement has its way, there will be an election in which a specific parliament with all 57 opposition deputies absent will select a specific president to serve the specific political agenda of the March 14th Movement and its western supporters.

The president elected will most likely be recognized by most of the international community, but will this president be able to assume the presidency in the seat of office in the presidential palace at Baabda? That's the interesting question. I suggest

the most likely scenarios to take place if there's such an election or no election are the following:

A) the sitting president, Emile Lahoud, on the 23rd day of November on the 23rd hour will issue a presidential decree declaring the nonexistence of a legitimate government since November 2006 when the ministers left, when Hizballah ministers left the cabinet. He will then proceed to form a caretaker government turning over the presidential palace to it in accordance with Article 79 of the Constitution which says failing a presidential election for any reason whatsoever, the cabinet takes charge.

This is what Amin Gemayel did in 1988 when he handed power to General Aoun, who proceeded to form a cabinet composed of military officers. The existing government headed by Salim al-Hoss remained functional at Government House in West Beirut, and we had two impotent governments.

B) The second scenario. The opposition could proceed to the election of a president in the same manner the March 14th coalition might; that is, without two-thirds of the deputies present. They would call for a presidential election session and elect a president who would then commission a new government that would assume the seat of power in Baabda, (inaudible) held last week, which I'd like to report to you some of my faithful people reported this to me.

In this meeting the Maronite Patriarch met in Bkerki and Orthodox Bishop Aoudi met in Beirut with Christian politicians from the March 14th Movement, some who were serious candidates for the presidency under consideration. During both meetings, there was a unanimous opinion that under no circumstances should a president be elected without two-thirds of MPs present.

The clause was specifically included, as I said before, to protect the Christian community where as

fear that a few Christian MPs along with Muslims could elect a president of their own choosing.

Now, at the meeting that they were talking about in Bkerki, they recalled at Bkerki the election of the Bashir Gemayel, and this was discussed at that time in the early 1980s by a meeting which took place there at the presidential palace between President Sarkis Kamil al-Assaad, who was the speaker and MP Rene Mouawad. The discussion oriented around how to elect Bashir Gemayel as he indicated he may not be able to deliver two-thirds of the MPs then alive. What would be a way out if he couldn't?

Both Sarkis and Assaad answered by saying under no circumstances should a president be elected unless there was a two-thirds quorum. Bashir Gemayel then sent military units here and there to pick up MPs who were refusing to attend the electoral meeting. They were then driven to a certain location and kept

there where they were called upon later to a meeting to elect the president.

I vividly remember, myself, how MP Abdul Noor had to be stuffed into the trunk of a car to get him across the green line in order to present the two-thirds quorum. So it seems to me, referring to that and recollecting all that -- it seems to me that the March 14th idea of electing with only a simple majority plus one may not be viable and will probably have to be rethought. At the time I came it was still part of the scenario, so I'm about to conclude by giving you another scenario here that I think would probably be the worst case scenario for American foreign policy, and that would be a Syrian dream come true.

Here the opposition, while challenging the electoral results essentially lets things slide considering that the Lebanese army or internal security forces will not be able to enforce any directives or

laws made by the March 14th government or its president through fear of the desertion of troops loyal to opposition leaders. In this case, the regions or locales of the opposition leaders simply revert back to the cantons of the civil war days except for the South and the Biqa'a which would simply go on being governed and serviced by Hizballah and Amal, as they are today and for the last years.

Ga'ga' and Christian strong man Sleyman Franjieh from the North will probably confront each other in the North sooner or later and Aoun and Ga'ga' may well pick up where they left in 1990 when they fought each other to exhaustion using tanks and heavy artillery. Other than an inter-Christian struggle, I don't see much other violence happening between the other communities. State failure will then occur along with disintegration in this scenario, which would be a dismal outcome for the United States and Israeli

objectives.

Had the summer war been won by Israel, things would look different now, but Israel flubbed the chance to put a spanner in Syria's wheel and give the March 14th Movement a gift by its failure to eliminate Hizballah as a major player in the Middle East peace war equation. Thus the results of that war all but guaranteed Hizballah's staying power and therefore the continued weakness and perhaps even the abject failure of the Lebanese state. If events continue to evolve in the same manner as they have during the last eight months, we may be witnessing a check of the current American initiative in Lebanon by Syria.

I thank you.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Well, thank you, Judith, although you don't bring much good news from Beirut.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: No, I'm not a happy person

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here. I realize I'm spoiling people's lunch, probably.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: But we'll give Dan a chance to respond, and then I'm sure there will be a lot of questions. Thank you.

DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN: I usually rely on Judith to read her stuff and hear what she has to say to inform me of what's going on with Hizballah within Lebanon. The unfortunate thing today is I have to admit to you all that I have to rely on Judith, so I cannot pass on her thoughts as my own as I usually like to do.

I'm going to instead really focus on Hizballah outside Lebanon. I think that the movement is even stronger, perhaps far stronger externally, than it is internally. It always had a very strong position externally, in particular after it forced Israel out a while back, but it's changed -- it's going even more after the conflict with Israel in July 2006. It's

worth pointing out, and the first thing I want to talk about is the potential for renewed conflict with Israel.

It's worth pointing out that the hindsight record to me seems relatively clear that the conflict last year was a mistake on Hizballah's part. It was unintentional escalation, and there were indicators at the time, but they seem even stronger now. And you can have, you know, rather open Nasrallah statements saying that no intention of provoking this massive a crisis, and a lot of what they were doing beforehand suggests that's true.

That said, there's a question which is, could this happen again? And this sort of miscalculation could easily happen again. That sort of thing isn't shocking. But there are a couple of reasons I could see that Hizballah might provoke this: I would say, they're unlikely events, but nevertheless plausible.

One is an effort to disarm Hizballah, and I think, as Judith has pointed out, that's a nonstarter within Lebanon, so I can't imagine any Lebanese faction or government trying it, seriously. But nevertheless that would, I think, lead the organization to be willing to throw the cards up again.

The other issue which is quite different is a strong and openly anti-Syrian government within Lebanon where I think that movement towards that was leading Hizballah to be more likely to provoke. But many crises in thought, and I could see should the stars magically be aligned within Lebanon which, as Judith suggests is a highly unlikely right now, but should that happen I could see the movement being willing to cause problems again.

But all this is worth pointing out that there's a incredible debate in the Israeli security community about the viability of the Israeli

deterrents. And Israel's deterrents, to me, are actually, I think, stronger than most Israelis think it is. That's not much comfort to the Olmert government which -- what time is it now? -- was still there; but, nevertheless, I think that the incredible damage Israel inflicted on Lebanon and the political hits Hizballah took in the first several days of the conflict -- after that it flipped the tables and grew politically -- but the idea that Hizballah or other parties are willing to risk this, it's quite dangerous.

As I said, I don't think it's impossible, and I don't think Israel's deterrents is absolute, but this idea that Israel's failure last year -- and I think "failure" is the right word -- against Hizballah eliminates Israel's deterrents, I think is realistic. I think most political actors in the region recognize Israel's prowess militarily, especially conventionally, but even substate actors that have constituencies like

Hizballah recognize that the stakes are very high if they're going to provoke Israel.

So I don't say the deterrence is as strong as it was, you know, decades ago or even quite recently, but still is quite strong, I think, even in Lebanon.

A second issue which is quite different are the events in Iraq. I don't need to tell this audience about the growth in Shia/Sunni tension there, and also the long-standing Hizballah ties to individuals and groups within Iraq that these are numerous, overlapping, they're family connections, there are educational connections, and, of course, there are political connections that are truly stunning, actually.

All that said, again what's happening in Iraq is causing some tension. The thing that's most important to point out right now is the bitter, bitter rivalry and anger between most of the jihadists in Iraq

and Hizballah. Yes, there is a common anti-Americanism to them and when Hizballah is killing Israelis there's a certain happiness in jihadist circles, and when jihadists are killing Americans, I suspect many Hizballah members are not terribly upset, but that's a far cry from commonality there.

The divisions -- let me talk about them briefly, Shia/Sunni. Of course, you can have tactical cooperation that bridges this divide, and, of course, that's occurred. But this is far, far more emotional and far more salient, politically, than it was even a year ago. And we're seeing some of the spillover in this in Lebanon even as we speak this week, as we've seen some spillover of this. And, in general, this idea that a lot of the Sunni jihadists are not about killing Americans or not just about killing Americans, but they're much more after the Shiite community is felt quite deeply among many Shia.

And the constant videos, the constant reports of atrocities from Iraq which are quite gruesome and are widely shared reinforces within these communities that the other one really is an enemy and an abhorrent one as well, not an honorable one.

Even outside that emotional issue, these are groups that are rivals for money and prestige, that Hizballah's snatching of the leader of the Arab world last summer so effectively by stalemating the Israelis was seen by many jihadist groups as quite negative; that (inaudible) said this: We are supposed to be the leaders of the anti-Western, anti-American cause, and this is being taken from us. And, in particular, there's a fund-raising concern when this happens as well.

For many years, as well, Hizballah apparently stopped Al Qaeda members from attacking Israel from Lebanese territory; that basically there was, if you're

going to attack Israel from that border, it was an attack that Hizballah is either doing itself or it's a Palestinian group Hizballah is sponsoring. And the idea that people who are not linked to this (inaudible) movement are going to do it on a free lance basis, Hizballah being the law. It's what you get when you have a strong government. In this case the government was a substate group, but it's what a strong government can bring. And there's a lot of resentment in Sunni Jihadists circles over that.

And there's a question right now which is, will Hizballah stop this (inaudible) at some point, but I think that the ongoing Shia/Sunni tension in general is going to keep this policing effort alive even though this is growing somewhat. And as a result I think that significant violence, but of a very different sort than what we've seen in the past, is possible in Lebanon. Again, I don't want to say "likely," but possible.

If you look at -- this is far afield -- but if you look at Northern Ireland, it was technically Catholic versus Protestant violence, but it wasn't that the Catholics were fighting to have more masses or something like that, you know. That's not what this war was about, and in Lebanon you have Shia groups and Sunni groups, but they weren't fighting over, you know, veneration of Imam Ali or anything like that. It was very much in power terms, very much in community terms, and what we're seeing -- and even Hizballah never represented itself as a Shia movement but much more as an Islamic organization, a revolutionary organization, but those sectarian divides are coming much sharper, and I could see violence flaring up along those lines. Let's hope eliminate it, if it does, but quote plausible.

A third shift externally is Hizballah's relations with its state's sponsors. Let me commend to

you all Emile El-Hokayem sitting right across from me, his article in the latest *Washington Quarterly*, which is a superb piece on how Hizballah's relationship with Syria has changed in the last few years. And if I'm paraphrasing right, the basic argument is that Hizballah has gone from partner -- or, excuse me, from proxy to partner. And I think that's absolutely correct, that you're seeing an equality of the relationship here because of the Syrian withdrawal, because of the overall decline in Syrian influence, and at the same time the expansion of Hizballah's influence.

This has huge implications, though, beyond this immediate relationship. One of the biggest is that Syria is much more vulnerable. There's less benefit to the United States engaging Syria; there's less benefit to Israel engaging Syria. Why should you bother to engage a country if the goal is in part to

stop it from supporting terrorist movements if it can't? If it is unable to crack down on Hizballah and as a result why should you, how much should you sacrifice to do this? If Israel wants to give the Golan back, is there a guarantee --

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that Hizballah attacks are going to stop? And the answer, maybe no. It's an open question, but it's far more certain than it was five, six years ago where when Syria had a lot of control.

And the last thing I'll close with because we want to get to your questions is the question of the decline in U.S. position vis-a-vis Hizballah. One of the biggest, of course, is Iraq. Hizballah's influence in Iraq, its ties to groups there, its ability to even send a limited number of fighters there means that the United States is exceptionally vulnerable, given the precarious nature of the surge, given the problems in

reconstruction, even the addition of a couple hundred trained fighters can take a situation that is really bad and make it -- truly shove it into the abyss. And the potential is there.

But it also means that Hizballah and Lebanon, in general, are less of a priority. A question Lebanese friends are always asking me is, frankly, will the United States sell out Lebanon to get Syrian support in Iraq, to get Iranian support in Iraq? I don't know. I wasn't at the last inter-agency meeting the Bush administration called on the subject, but it's certainly plausible to me that you prioritize in foreign policy, and Iraq should be if not the top near the top of U.S. foreign policy issues in the Middle East. And Lebanon never has been, and I think it's probably less so than in the past so that risk is there.

The issue of the decline in Syrian strengths

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relative to Hizballah has huge implications, as I mentioned, for any renewal in Middle East peace negotiations. It suggests, as well, that if Hizballah is seen as part of this equation, and Israelis seem to go back and forth on this, but if Hizballah is part of this equation, you might need to buy a few Iranians because the external power that has influence with Hizballah is much more around than Syria.

And, needless to say, that poses a host of difficulties. And even ignoring the general problems the United States has with Iran, the United States has other priorities with Iran. There is the nuclear program, and there is Iraq. And again, Lebanon is third, so -- maybe fifth, I'm not sure, but it's not in the top two -- so huge problems as well.

The last thing I'll add by way of conclusion is that Hizballah's popularity gives it the ability to influence the legitimacy of Arab governments, and this

is something that we saw early on in the Palestinian movement where the heroism of the movement in contrast with the feckless nature of many of the governments around there meant that the movement's ability to denounce states gave it influence over those states. It could affect their legitimacy with key supporters.

I'm a general believer that most Arab governments are actually relatively strong, so the idea that Hassan Nasrallah denouncing the government of Saudi Arabia, or Jordan, or Egypt, doesn't send me into fears for that government's stability, but it is a factor. And it is something that governments are quite concerned over; if they're not, they should be quite concerned about because this is a leader who has popular legitimacy unlike their own governments. And they, I think, would be reluctant to openly go against it, especially after the disaster that happened in July 2006 where they condemned the movement rather harshly

by the standards of the region, and then it seemed to have little effect.

Over time, Hizballah was emerging as the champion, and Israel and the United States -- really as a line I like to use is that it was both cruel and weak. And that's a very bad combination to be, and that the United States was encouraging bloodletting and at the same time unable to stop it. And this is something that Hizballah can play on, and I think that regional governments will be reluctant to try to work with the United States openly against the movement, should there be a future crisis.

I'll stop there.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Great. Thank you.

We have a rubics cube in terms of the complications that you both outlined very ably, and maybe you can hope give us as guide to how to deal with this. Just one quick comment: Neither of you mentioned, but it

seems also that Hizballah, as a result of the war has a large number of Italian, French, and Spanish troops simply hostage, or vulnerable to hostage-like situation in Southern Lebanon. And, certainly, those European governments are very much aware of it, and it affects their attitude towards pressing Iran on the nuclear farce. So Hizballah also has some leverage in that regard.

And, Judith, I had a question for you, having laid out these fairly gloomy scenarios for a crisis which is about to be on us. And given the stakes, as you pointed out, that the United States has, having committed itself to the March 14th Movement, do you have any suggestion for the way that Washington should handle the presidential contest?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Well, that's the key -- the key question, and I wish I did have a really clear answer there. It just seems like a losing proposition,

and what with the support that the United States has given to the Siniora government and the lack of alternatives that I now see -- of course, remember I did mention that there might be other clauses of the Constitution that could be reinterpreted somehow or another -- but nevertheless it's going to be a very difficult situation at that time. And I really don't - - I'm quite imagining a two-government, a two-government situation again which would continue the American support of the president, or the one that would be elected at that time. And where is that going to go? I can't really see where that's going to be.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: So there's no good option.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: You know, I'm not seeing a good option, and, specifically, because of the vulnerability of the Lebanese army. I mean it is known to be fragile. There's been some incidents in the past

10 years where the army has refused to carry out various missions for sectarian reasons. And I don't believe there's anybody that would rely on the army, given its Shiite component, if ordered to take steps against the opposition forces or against Hizballah, specifically.

And one of the best examples of that is this long-term paralysis of the downtown area where the merchants are in total despair. There isn't a tourist coming or willing to make a reservation in this very classy restoration because of those tents there. And because it is a civic disobedience thing, it continues.

It's very hard to undercut it somehow. So I'm not able to see that, Ambassador, very much.

But I do want to make a comment, just very briefly, on what you said about the UNIFIL in the South. Over the last months since the war, various intelligence officers have been coming to see me in my

Beirut apartment just to get a lay of the land. They come to see a number of different people in the area, and they pass by me, mainly are people from the French contingent and Belgian contingence. And what's been interesting to me about that -- of course, I try to get a little information from them, naturally -- but, anyhow, what's been interesting is that they're not at all worried about Hizballah; what they're worried about is an attack by Al Qaeda because Hizballah isn't right around there. So this is very interesting to me.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: An attack on Israel.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: An attack on them, on the UNIFIL. They see themselves as really vulnerable out there. You know, what I mean, when you imagine what the kind of things that Al Qaeda can do and has done, they are pretty vulnerable. So that was a very interesting part to me, and beyond that they do meet

with Hizballah leaders down there, these different contingents, simply because the Hizballah are in that area and they've told me, well, why not? And, you know, that gives Hizballah a little perk, internationally, as well, when they meet with these people.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Okay. Robin Wright from the *Washington Post*.

ROBIN WRIGHT: I have two questions: First of all on the Al Qaeda issue, have it moved beyond the Palestinian camps? Does it have a real base of support inside Lebanon now? Is it something more than a foreign entity imposed in refugee camps, you know, and how viable is it, you know, as a threat to --

DR. JUDITH HANIK: Sure.

ROBIN WRIGHT: -- whether it's UNIFIL or any western interest.

And, secondly, the United States has invested

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or is in the process of investing quite a lot of money in rebuilding the army, training the army, providing equipment along with its European allies. Can either of you give us an assessment of where that stands? I think they were going to use some foreign contractors, so they didn't get into the same position they were in the early '80s and ended up having to withdraw along with the Marines. It was an independent army operation.

I mean, is that making any headway? Is it helping, or does it have the potential, even, of helping the army?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Okay, well, on the first part, to my information the Al Qaeda presence seems to be in the North, and has been in some of the Palestinian camp up there. But this is definitely not in Syria's interest to let them cross because they are, you know, one of those uncontrollable elements in a

situation that Syria really loves to control as much as possible. So we all know that over the last years since 2001 Syrians have cooperated pretty well with the United States in terms of catching and turning over Al Qaeda people. So I think this is what is happening at this point. My knowledge is only general, though, it's not specific.

ROBIN WRIGHT: These are Lebanese entities, or is it a Palestinian entity?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: It's a Palestinian entity, as I understand it.

ROBIN WRIGHT: (Inaudible)

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Yeah, this is how I understand it, but I can do more on that one for you, if you'd like later, or send you something on that, or look into it more, yeah.

The other one about the army, I don't realize much coming through right now to the army. Recall that

this army doesn't have any fixed-wing aircraft. I mean the last airplane they had I think was flown to Cyprus, and the guy took refuge there, and the plane disappeared somehow. So what they have is aged helicopters, very aged helicopters.

And I'm just wondering, you know, about fully rearming that army in a modern sense. It's a very small country, very small army, and the country is unstable, and the militias can easily call recruits back. And if this army is fully modernized, that equipment may go back with the militias, you know. This is something that has not been, in my estimation, fully laid to rest there. That's what I say when we really can't depend on the Lebanese army, there's a major problem there. And would the United States be willing to give modernized aircraft and so on?

Now, there is some hint, probably more than a hint, that an air base will be going up in the Akkar

area of Lebanon. And this air base may be a NATO training base for Air Force people and military men, Lebanese military men, and maybe even a rapid deployment force for the United States in the region. I don't have hard information, but it's a very intriguing rumor.

And it tends to make a little sense to me because a friend and former politician, Issam Fares, whom I'm sure you all know of, has been buying a lot of land around the Air Force base that is there. And since he's the hot-shot business person as well as closely connected to the Bush family, I tend to pick up my ears a little bit when I hear that. So that would be interesting, and then on another side, do recall that the proposed pipeline, oil pipeline that's supposed to be towards Haifa comes right past the Lebanese coast there. So these are a few goodies to investigate further or just, you know, keep in the back

of your mind as things progress here.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Dan?

DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN: Just to briefly add, I think rather we've seen fairly recently an increase in Lebanization, if you will, of some of the jihadist movement that goes beyond the Palestinians, and that there are a number of sheikhs who are Lebanese, there are a number of individuals who are Lebanese. It's still extremely small, but it's real. And this movement, in general, the number of kind of hard core people is actually rather limited, and I think there has been a shift.

There is, actually --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Lebanization of Al Qaeda?

DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN: Right, exactly. I don't want -- it isn't, you know, comparable to what we see in Saudi Arabia, for example, but that there are Lebanese members, non-Palestinian Lebanese who are -- I

don't want to say Al Qaeda, I'd rather say Sunni jihadists, because the question of have they sworn by Attah, bin Laden, and are they directly involved is one I don't know the answer to, let's put it that way.

But, nevertheless, in tune with this (inaudible) movement, I think that's been a shift. Let me commend to you -- I'm not sure if it's on the Brookings website, Bilal Saab, who's sitting right over there, has done work on the subject as well trying to look at the changes within this community. And it's quite depressing but interesting.

Very, very briefly on the national army, as you know, there's a tremendous tension when you're trying to do a national army where the goal of the political system is to avoid having a strong national system whatsoever. And to me it's fundamentally doomed in Lebanon. The idea of that, you could have a strong national army because the national army will inherently

pose a threat to any community, and since the political system is designed that way and the idea that somehow you can have a military immune from politics, especially in the Middle East, is patently absurd.

The only exception to this, ironically, might be if you had a government that was strong and had Hizballah in it, such an army might actually succeed because then it could be used against the small jihadist fringes and others where there is unity. But for this army that could be used in the situation where unity is lacking, to me is something that's going to be difficult if not impossible.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Can I just comment there?

One thing that Hassan Nasrallah has said recently was that when the state became strong, that will be the only time they'll lay down their arms. They will not lay down their arms until the state can face external aggression, care for its population and so on. Then it

goes along with what you just said.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Okay. Terree?

TERREE: I wanted to ask you a further question on your early topic on Hizballah's power resources, the sort of drivers of the organization. You mentioned the political support that they have and some of the military advantages that they have. But, of course, a lot of groups around the world do these things with varying degrees of success. Is there any things that you can think of that's unique or special to Hizballah as an organization that might explain further how it's so effective in these areas?

You mentioned leadership, charismatic leadership is one, possibly. I've also heard people talk about the degree of centralization versus decentralization, or discipline in the organization. Are there things like that, other factors?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Do you want to answer?

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Certainly. Certainly, discipline is amazingly -- amazingly kept. This goes back to my notion of a militarized grass roots. The community, I think through long experience with the leaders who themselves are very straight-dealing people and very noncorruptible types, have actually put their trust in those leaders more so than probably we can imagine.

This goes back to the incident, for example, when Hassan Nasrallah's son was killed fighting the Israelis as a common foot soldier along the southern border. I mean that very much galvanized the entire Lebanese population that any Lebanese leader's son would engage in a battle like that. After all, the Lebanese leader's sons are running around in Hum-Vs and what have you. And so that made a huge impact on most people in Lebanon at that time and is very characteristic of the kind of the derivation of that

charisma.

I mean, in other words, the charisma is not only the personal performance, the personal religious standards, et cetera, of the leaders, but also their absolute willingness to sacrifice. This is a very, very important part, I think, of their hold and of their ability to mobilize people along the same lines.

I was mentioning just prior to our meeting that during the 2006 war, the head of the Social Services and also of this Qard al Husn program whose name is Hajj Hussein al-Shami, recently put on the U.S. terrorist list, his sons did not tell him anything about what they were going to do. Two of them are lawyers and one of them is a prosperous businessman, and they all went South and fought. One of them was wounded, and he told me he wouldn't have stopped them, but he would have been really nervous if he'd know they were going.

He lost a personal friend and three of his sons. The friend was his own age, which is I think about 60, 59 or 60. The father and the three sons went, and two sons were killed, and those were -- this was a family of professional contractors. Now, these are not your expectancy of lower class, ordinary militants; these were professionals who simply saw that they had to get down there and do their thing.

So I do believe -- I have not in my reading of other movements -- I've not seen that level of devotion, which is, I think, possibly unique to Hizballah because of the long years of this conflict with Israel during which their performance everywhere was trustworthy, you know. It's very hard to beat that. I've never spoken to a Lebanese -- and believe me, I ask taxi drivers and everybody I meet -- generally, what do you think of Hizballah, just to get an idea? There has never been anybody who did not

respect them.

They may hate them for their social backwardness and some Christians, especially, however the universal comment is they wish the Lebanese government was a little bit more like them.

SCOTT HAROLD: Scott Harold, Brookings. I just want to thank you, Dr. Harik, for an excellent presentation, and ask you, if I'm not mistaken, I recall Nicholas Blanford in his book on Rafiq Hariri's assassination was saying that just before he died, Hariri had been attempting to build a pan-national coalition and that there were quiet talks that he was holding with Hassan Nasrallah. And I'm just wondering if there's any prospect -- I believe, if I'm not mistaken, his approach was to say in essence: Let Hizballah be a problem that the Lebanese deal with. We'll treat it as an internal problem, and let's not try and deal with that in 1559.

Is there anyone in Lebanon of the stature to approach that level of resuming dialogue? You said that Nasrallah had said, well, dialogue is absolutely off the table. Is there no prospect at all?

DR. JUDITH HANIK: Well, I'm not seeing much prospect right now, given the level of vituperation from Hariri's son and other members of the March 14th Movement. But Bilal Saab has told me that in the past days -- because he's following what's happening in Lebanon and I haven't been -- that Walid Jumblatt has kind of toned down his rhetoric and so on after the kidnapping and deaths of two young men that were killed apparently in a revenge killing for what happened during February, as I mentioned to you. You know, the thought of this going back and forth again, these tit-for-tat kidnappings and killings, is pretty sobering.

So, you know, given that and this kind of possibility, there may some possibility, but I remember

reading just before I came in the *L'Orient Le Jour* a list of topics that they would have to agree on in order to get any kind of dialogue going again. And they were so mutually opposing it was very hard to see how this could happen. I mean the very notion of Emile Lahoud, a loyal and steadfast Syrian supporter, being or not being involved in one issue that they can never agree on.

I mean there are several issues that it just seems impossible to agree on as things are now. Now if some struggle appears over there, it might soften up some people pretty quickly, but I'm not really envisioning, certainly, no sectarian conflict. So, I'm sorry.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Bilal.

BILAL SAAB: Judith, how do you see Hizballah without Hassan Nasrallah's role? Is it the same organization without the secretary general?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Oh, I'm pretty sure, yes. Hassan's role is very important, and people cry and scream when he appears and so on. However, do not forget that these people also have a younger generation of young people that speak all the time, are given the stage. You know, it's not as if Hassan Nasrallah usurps everything, and don't forget that they have Sheik Naim Kassem. Sheikh Naim Kassem, to me, is more important than Nasrallah. Why? Because he's really the strategic and intellectual person in the organization, and he is basically in control of the downtown situation. That's what they call it, "the downtown situation," or they call it "the government team," or "the team in the Government House." He's the, as I said, the strategist, and he's very eloquent. And when he speaks the Lebanese pretty well across the board tune in, also.

So, you know, basically, these people have

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two very important leaders. One goes there's the other one, and then there are, you know, a range of other younger personalities who are also making their mark. So I don't see whereby they would be drastically affected in their foreign policy or domestic policy by this. I think they can go on with that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, either one of the speakers, could you address the issue of possible prisoner exchange and especially the report in the Israeli press that the two Israeli soldiers may no longer be alive? Do you know anything about that?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: I don't know anything about that. I'm following it very closely. The last thing I read was that steps for the exchange were going on, which gave me some hope that these people were alive. But I don't have anything more specific than what I can read on *Ha'aretz* because the Hizballah people are not putting out anything on that subject.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But what would be the effects of, if there is an exchange, if they get out people, including Palestinians, what would be the effect on Lebanon?

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Well, it would be on that part -- if they exchange those two soldiers for who they want to exchange them for, then, of course, they're going to be heroes again, as they were during the last exchange. In the last exchange they traded Tanenbaum and maybe one other person -- I can't remember -- but, anyhow, they traded them for lots of people, maybe 300, and a lot of martyrs, a lot of dead bodies were returned.

And I vividly remember how they used those dead bodies. They commissioned about 40 joint container trucks and replaced the containers with glass, and they had these martyrs in their coffins with a Lebanese flag on them, and these huge container

trucks then drove from the South all through the country with people coming out to see the martyrs passing, one to a truck.

And again, as Shimon Peres once said, Hizballah is a very dramatic terrorist organization. They take advantage of whatever they do in an excellent public relations campaign always. And that was very, very effective. I mean people came out along the roads and threw flowers, and they wound through the southern district, and there was a huge, huge turnout for that. So if this happens again, one imagines that will be the result.

DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN: Let me just briefly add that Hamas has long followed this closely, in part because Hizballah endlessly exhorts to follow this closely. And it's a pretty clear message, which is kidnapping Israeli soldiers is a very effective tactic.

I mean there is just no question about that. I mean

if you look at the empirical records, so when Israel does assent, I understand the need to get your people back in these Arab -- you know, innocent people who have been kidnapped, but it is creating the precedent for doing it again. And this is something that western countries went through in the 1970s where you make these exchanges. It happens more and more. And it's very hard to stop, politically, but the cost will be paid six months down the road or a year down the road by someone else.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Let me just inject two words here that nobody's mentioned. Sheba'a Farms. How does this play, Judith, does it have any function in the balance of power there?

DR. JUDITH HANIK: Actually, okay, the Sheba'a Farms seems to me to be being remarked upon more often now by the U.N. since it's, I guess, been seen that settling that area once and for all is one

way of dampening Hizballah's resistance image. I mean you take away the Sheba'a Farms, there may not be something to resist. So plans seem to be going forward to look into the Sheba'a Farm situation.

But one of the big problems there is that if you know that little corner of the world, all the boundaries come together in this little piece, and the area cannot be demarcated by Syria and Lebanon at this point because the Israelis are on that area. So this is going to hold it up, and I'm sure that makes Syria and Hizballah fairly happy since that is a continued resistance objective then.

But I should also point out that in 19- -- no, in 2001 -- 2000, the then UN spokesman delineated about 14 areas along the border that were controversial where the border ran through and separated people's farmlands and so on. And then there's the Seven Armistice Villages of Lebanon that went across the

border in 1948, I guess, and which Lahoud has said Lebanon should also get them back.

So I think there's an unlimited number of resistance opportunities as I said in my book. But I do still believe that the major one, the major issue here is the Golan Heights. I still believe that if there's any kind of negotiation between Syria and Israel that's serious on the Golan Heights, the Syrians will stop Hizballah like that. And I still believe that they're capable of doing that. So I've always thought that that is the most promising way to end at least one of these Middle East conflicts that are so outrageously continuing over the years and killing lives on both sides of borders.

DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN: On Sheba'a Farms I'll just echo Judith's point. When Sheba'a Farms became an issue, you know, people had to look it up again in terms of, you know, what was Hizballah talking about

because it was, you know, it was a Syrian issue, it wasn't a Lebanese issue, and then, magically, became a Lebanese issue when Syria needed Lebanon to have something -- or needed Hizballah to have something to keep fighting over.

I think Judith is absolutely right that the list of provocations that can be generated if you really wanted to is quite large. And Sheba'a Farms to me is actually the example that proves this where it's, to me, an imaginary grievance in contrast to something like the, you know, zone that Israel occupied for many years in Lebanon which, to me, is, you know, quite a real grievance.

I will -- I guess just an interesting area of differences, I'm more skeptical over whether Syria can shut Hizballah down if there were (inaudible). I agree that Hizballah would be very reluctant to openly go against Syria. I mean that would not be lightly done.

But the actual question, could it shut Hizballah down?
I don't know.

And in particular you get the things like, you know -- I'm just trying to imagine to spin the situation now -- you get Hizballah training various Palestinian groups, and their being active against the Israelis. The Israelis would then complain to Syria, and Syria would say, you know, we can't do anything about this. And would this mess up the terms of the agreement? What would be the expectation of the Israeli/Syrian deal for the Golan? And I'd be surprised if it didn't include some measure of shutting down what's going on in Lebanon, but I'm not quite sure Syria can do that, practically.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Well, the reason I say that I'm pretty sure they can do it is because that's where the arms comes from. The arms are coming from Syria, there's no doubt about it. And all they have to

do is just close that border themselves and plus their vaunted Mukhabarat, their secret agents and, you know, intelligence officers there. They're feared and they have always been feared. I think that they can do it.

I do -- I do agree with Daniel, though, that Hizballah has become much more independent. He mentioned that in his book, and I took that as a very important piece in his book as well. They certainly are more of a partner now. There has to be some talk with Hizballah, but nevertheless I think what the Syrians want they probably can get in that respect.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK: Yes, of course, that may be the case, but there's a price, and the Syrian price is not the Golan Heights, it's Lebanon.

Judith, thank you very much for a fascinating presentation.

And, Dan, thank you again for your always important interventions. You've informed, you've both

educated us in an immensely complicated situation, and we're very grateful to you.

DR. JUDITH HARIK: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

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