

# Principles of war by the hezbollah politics essay



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While delving into the application of 4GW as used by the Hezbollah, the four facets of 4GW ; military, political , social and economic shall be used as foundation on which the Hezbollah has conducted 4GW. From a rag tag guerrilla organisation in the eighties, to the most well organised 4GW organisation, Hezbollah has been the model for others to follow. It would be impossible to talk about the facets independently as they are enmeshed and entwined. One cannot survive without the other, in fact, each strengthens the other. Facets covered in Chapter Two, shall not be repeated as the reader is now well versed with the outline organisation and structure of Hezbollah.

## Military

2. Suicide Bombing. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1980 to drive out PLO from South Lebanon, little did they realise that they had sown the seeds for an organisation that will wage war against the Israeli state like no other. The group, then known as Islamic Jihad, grabbed the headlines with a tactic that has become the standard for terrorist organisations worldwide, the suicide bomber. On 18 April 1983, they bombed the US Embassy in Beirut and on 23 Oct 1983, they launched a multiple suicide truck bombing against Multi National Force (MNF) centers in Beirut. Just over a week later, on 4 Nov 1983, the same group would use a suicide bomber to blow up an Israeli intelligence centre in Tyre. Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of the group, would write a year after the attacks , “ Civilization does not mean that you face a rocket with a stick or a jet-fighter with a kite, or a warship with a sailboat. . . . One must face force with equal or superior force. If it is legitimate to defend self and land and destiny, then all means of self-defense are legitimate”.

[i]The very nature of asymmetric warfare was forever changed by one act of suicide bombing.

3. Principles of War. Initially, Hezbollah fought poorly. The Israelis were better equipped, Night Vision devices giving them the edge in combat. The Hezbollah were fast learners though, and by the end of 1983 were changing tactics rapidly to better the IDF. Suicide assaults on IDF positions gave way to sophisticated, coordinated, and timed attacks as Hezbollah became more and more effective. Syria allowed Iran to establish 2,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards in southern Lebanon. They helped the Hezbollah in the way of weapons and tactics, slowly eroding the advantage the IDF held.

[ii]The Hezbollah's sophistication as an 4GW entity is demonstrated by its 13 principles of warfare:

- (a) Avoid the strong, attack the weak-attack and withdrawal.
- (b) Protecting our fighters is more important than causing enemy casualties.
- (c) Strike only when success is assured.
- (d) Surprise is essential to success. If you are spotted, you have failed.
- (e) Don't get into a set-piece battle. Slip away like smoke, before the enemy can drive home his advantage.
- (f) Attaining the goal demands patience, in order to discover the enemy's weak points.
- (g) Keep moving; avoid formation of a front line.

- (h) Keep the enemy on constant alert, at the front and in the rear.
- (i) The road to the great victory passes through thousands of small victories.
- (j) Keep up the morale of the fighters; avoid notions of the enemy's superiority.
- (k) The media has innumerable guns whose hits are like bullets. Use them in the battle.
- (l) The population is a treasure-nurture it.
- (m) Hurt the enemy and then stop before he abandons restraint.[iii]

4. Civil Population. Hezbollah fighters are indistinguishable from the population. There is no uniform and since 1983, they have used this as an advantage. It is impossible to distinguish an ordinary citizen from a Hezbollah fighter until he or she carries a weapon. After attacking a target, they would quickly melt into the population, leaving a very confused and frustrated IDF in the hunt. This was used to great advantage in firing rockets towards Israel. The entire process was to take less than 28 seconds with many of the rocket squads riding bicycles to the launch location.[iv] This cut down the risk of being caught as often the first group did not know the second and the second the third. Hezbollah soldiers were indistinguishable from the remainder of the population, causing arrests of innocents in large scale raids by the IDF. They also use the civilian population as an effective shield. Any reprisal by the IDF inadvertently killed civilians rather than Hezbollah fighters. This caused huge media backlash internationally on the

Israelis while alienating the civilian population, bringing them closer to the Hezbollah.

5. Rocket Attacks. What was started by the PLO in South Lebanon, is perfected as a tool of terror by the Hezbollah. It fired rockets not only at the IDF , but at the civilian population. The Hezbollah wants the Israeli population to throw up their hands in despair and pressurise their political leadership to accede to their demands. Thus, it is the battle of the mind that Hezbollah intends to win over the Israeli population. The sheer simplicity of assembling and firing the rocket from a distance, coupled with a quick getaway has proved a most effective method of fighting Israel by the Hezbollah. It is difficult to pinpoint a rocket firing location and even harder to intercept it mid flight. But perhaps the most important effect of the rocket has been on the Israeli psyche. Each Israeli government has struggled to end the nightmare of the rockets. In 1992, Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's Secretary- General Abbas Mussawi, which killed not only him but also his wife and children, resulted in the wholesale rocketing of northern Galilee, sending the entire Israeli population into bunkers. By July 1993, the cycle of effective rocket attacks and ineffective Israeli responses led Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to decide to eradicate the Hezbollah threat once and for all by launching ' Operation Accountability' Over the years , the rocket arsenal has increased in sophistication and range, bringing more Israeli cities into the firing line[v]. The vicious cycle of Hezbollah rocket attacks, Israeli casualties, IDF response, Lebanese casualties and finally more rocket attacks have actually helped Hezbollah portray Israel as an aggressor who cares nothing

for the civilians while driving the South Lebanese population en masse into the folds of Hezbollah.

6. New Age Weapons. What started with the favourite weapon of the guerrilla, the AK-47, now commands an arsenal which includes:-

ROCKET INVENTORYRockets[vi]

ATGM INVENTORYATGM[vii]

Anti Aircraft. The inventory includes SA-18 , SA-7 , ZU-23 and SA-8 AA missiles[viii]. After the Afghan Mujahidin, this is the only group to have AA missiles in its inventory in large numbers. This is a potential game changer as it forces the IDF aircraft to fly higher, making them less effective.

Anti Ship Missiles. On 14 July 2006, Hezbollah forces fired an Iranian-made C-701 electro-optically guided anti-ship missile, at the Israeli corvette INS Hanit, killing four sailors and inflicting substantial damage. It emerges that the Hezbollah has a weapon signature in all three realms i. e. air , land and sea.

UAVs. Iran has supplied Hezbollah with Mohajer-4 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's)[ix]. During the 2006 Lebanon War three UAV's were deployed while two were shot down by the IAF. It is in the aspect of surveillance and the fact that it deployed these hi-tech weapons in combat against Israel that it differs from other organizations. While HUMINT is the major source of intelligence, Hezbollah used UAVs to seek, plan and execute operations against the IDF. An unconventional force using conventional platforms to render unconventional effects.

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7. Tactics Constantly evolving from the 1980s , Hezbollah reached the peak of their powers in 2006. Matt Matthews , in his paper We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War[x], states “ Hezbollah was convinced that, in any future war, Israel would rely heavily on air and artillery precision weapons and limit its use of ground forces. These operational hypotheses were based on Hezbollah’s experiences in its first long war with Israel. It was confident that Israel would have no stomach for casualties in any future conflict and would conduct the majority of its operations using standoff-based firepower. Available historic evidence appears to indicate this rationale was crucial as Hezbollah began its operational and tactical planning.” This gave rise to the following:-

(a) Rocket Units This was done to strike deep into Israel with impunity at its civilian population and the military. These rocket units were well organized and scattered all over South Lebanon along the Litani River. The rocket units were organized into small and medium range units. In order to protect its rocket systems, it was essential for Hezbollah to delay any Israeli ground attack aimed at taking out the launch sites. These were protected by ground units armed with RPG, ATGM and mines.

(b) ATGM Units Hezbollah utilized the ATGMs in an unconventional manner. Hezbollah enjoyed considerable success with the Russian Kornet E and Matis M Antitank third generation guided missiles that were fired in swarms, both against the Israeli Merkava tanks and infantry. These “ missile swarm tactics” separated the Israeli tanks from the infantry and severely disrupted the synergy of the Israeli combat teams. Israel lost a total of 20 Merkava Tanks.[xi]

(c) Engineering And Logistics. Hezbollah made elaborate bunkers and tunnels to support its fighters, stocking food, ammunition and supplies months in advance. Matt Matthews quotes Alastair Crooke and Mark Perry in their article, “ How Hezbollah Defeated Israel,”[xii]as describing the defensive system as ‘ extraordinary’. The description identifies bunkers with air-conditioning and even deception to fool the Israelis as to the exact location of the bunkers. The bunkers were dug up to 60 meters deep in the mountains. Based on the cell structure, no more than three to four persons knew of the exact location of these bunkers which housed weapons, ammunition and supplies.

8. What is laid out above is not the modus operandi and arsenal of a terrorist organization. It is a well structured, well armed and well educated (In the ways of modern warfare) armed force. Adapting quickly to changing environment and tactics of its adversaries, it has been able to blunt the Israeli attacks each time with a mix of brilliant adaptation and use of terrain, weapons and employment of the weapons. What is astounding is the ability to gain from each conflict and use the knowledge to better its adversary each time. A structured army , which fights in a conventional yet diffused manner, uses low signature weapons , melts into the countryside when required and stalls in the urban terrain by holding ground using the terrain as a friend , is not a guerilla army , it is an army for the future for this kind of conflict.

Political



9. Legitimacy is the bedrock for any organization of the stature of Hezbollah to survive. The Hezbollah entered politics in 1992 at the behest of its backer, Syria. It won all twelve seats it contested from, with blessings from Iran. It won seven seats in 1996 and in a joint venture with Amal in 2000, won all 23 seats of South Lebanon. Today, it holds 14 seats on its own and has two members in the Lebanese Government. It has constantly changed its goals and election platform. From "liberation from Zionist occupation, abolishment of political sectarianism, ensuring political and media freedom" in 1992, to "Resisting the occupation" in 1996, it has understood and adapted to the political landscape. It has majority following among the Shia populace. It is smart enough to understand that the population demographics of Lebanon would not allow it to achieve its dream of "ruling Lebanon in accordance with Islamic law"[xiii], hence is gently pushing for electoral reforms to amend this. To put this in perspective, a perceived terrorist organisation with a well organised political structure, clearly defined goals, forming part of the ruling government is something that the world has never seen. Hezbollah realised early on that political recognition would give it standing in the regional and international forum, besides progressing its internal agenda. It is perhaps due to this that Hezbollah has not been categorised as a terrorist organisation by the UN.

10. Social. The population is the centre of gravity of any sub conventional conflict. One could argue whether Israel Lebanon conflicts are sub conventional in its true sense, however, it is in the zone of sub conventional realm that is treated, Hezbollah being an organisation and not a state. Hezbollah, with its agenda of being the voice of the Shia population of

Lebanon, have understood the importance of the local population in a sense that perhaps no other organisation has. Traditionally, the Shiite neighbourhood that Hezbollah represents is devoid of any form of government aid. Schools, sanitation, public health and other benefits were nonexistent. Hezbollah has stepped into the vacuum and delivered efficient and timely services to its people. And they have been rewarded with a mass base and votes that see them sit in the ruling government.

11. Shawn Teresa Flanigan and Mounah Abdel-Samad , in their essay Hezbollah's Social Jihad: Non profits as Resistance Organisations[xiv]state that Hezbollah has a highly organized system of health and social-service organizations comprising of a Social Unit, the Education Unit and the Islamic Health Unit. Many of Hezbollah's service organizations are legally registered with the Lebanese government as NGOs, a status that provides certain legal protections and eases collaboration with other organizations. The Social Unit is an umbrella for four organizations: the Jihad Construction Foundation, the Martyrs' Foundation, the Foundation for the Wounded and the Khomeini Support Committee. The Jihad Construction Foundation, Jihad El Binaa, has become one of the most important NGOs in Lebanon. This institution is responsible for infrastructure construction and, in the early 2000s, delivered water to about 45 percent of the residents of Beirut's southern suburb. Following the Israeli aerial bombardment of Lebanon in summer 2006, the Jihad Construction Foundation became indispensable, assessing damage and paying reconstruction compensation to residents of southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburb. Also under the umbrella of the Social

Unit, Hezbollah's Martyrs' Foundation provides aid to those adversely affected by Hezbollah's continuing military struggle with Israel.

12. Hezbollah's Islamic Health Unit operates three hospitals, 12 health centers, 20 infirmaries, 20 dental clinics, and 10 defense departments. Hezbollah's Education Unit provides another indispensable service to the Shiite poor. By September 2006, Hezbollah reportedly had spent \$281 million for rehabilitation and compensation following the 2006 Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

13. Funding Hezbollah's income comes from donations by Muslims. Hezbollah receives substantial amounts of financial, training, weapons, explosives, political, diplomatic, and organizational aid from Iran and Syria. The US estimates that Iran has been giving Hezbollah about US\$60-100 million per year in financial assistance. Hezbollah has relied also on funding from the Shiite Lebanese Diaspora across the world. Bayt al-Mal is a Hezbollah-controlled organization that performs financial services for the terrorist organization. Bayt al-Mal operates under the direct supervision of Hezbollah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah. As Hezbollah's main financial body, Bayt al-Mal serves as a bank, creditor, and investment arm for Hezbollah.[xv]

14. Media. Today, Hezbollah has exploited its privileged position in Lebanon to create a mass media outlet, the al Manar TV station, with global reach. With funding from Iran, the station has grown by leaps and bounds from a clandestine, ramshackle operation to a comprehensive satellite station. The significance of the station is regional and even global, one could argue.

Calling itself the “ station of resistance” (qanat al-muqawama), al-Manar has become an integral part of Hezbollah’s plan to reach the entire Arab and Muslim worlds. It has become a potent instrument , keeping the Arab world focused on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.[xvi]Al-Manar was designated as a “ Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity,” and banned by the United States in December 2004. Hezbollah learned and utilised the power of media and exploits it fully by the use of its own media tools.

### **Summary Of the Chapter**

15. It is but evident from the above that the Hezbollah is very organized political , social and military entity. It is a virtual state in itself which has given a true structure to the 4GW entities across the world to emulate. The intertwined political , social and military structures , along with an amazing capacity to adapt to changes, has made it a force to reckon with. The funding apparatus and use of media is not only credible, but is actually a force multiplier in its quest to be a very powerful commodity in Lebanon , and even the Middle East.