Point of View

COPYRIGHT © 2005 The Re'ut Institute

# The Hizbullah Precedent

Prior to the electoral victory of Hamas, Ismail Haniyya compared the status of Hamas in the PA to that of Hizbullah in Lebanon (Rubinstein, **Ha'aretz**, 1/6/06). US ambassador to Israel, Richard Jones, stated that "we maintain contacts with the Lebanese government, but not with Hizbullah ministers, and a similar mechanism can be created for the PA as well" (Benn, **Ha'aretz**, 1/24/06).

On 1/24/06, UN Security Council reiterated its demand from the Lebanese government to implement Resolution 1559, calling for the disarmament of militias in Lebanon.

The Re'ut Institute argues that the fastest way to disarm Hamas may go through the previous disarmament of Hizbullah.

## What is the Issue?

- What is the "Hizbullah Precedent"?
  - A terror organization enters the political system through the parliament and the government;
  - The Organization continues to sustain a militia which does not obey the central government and continues to take military actions against Israel;
  - *Yet*, the international community, including the US, continue to conduct contacts with the Lebanese government, including the ministries under Hizbullah control (though the US avoids direct contacts with the ministers themselves).
- What is the relation between Hizbullah and Hamas?
  - Both Hizbullah and Hamas negate the Jewish people's right to self-determination; do not recognize Israel; promote the use of terror; and develop an independent system of social welfare.
  - Hamas is a declared terrorist organization by the US and the EU. Hizbullah was declared as such only by the US. Both organizations are facing an international demand to disarm and dismantle their terrorist infrastructure (within the Roadmap and Resolution 1559 respectively).
- The main difference between Hamas and Hizbullah is that **Hamas is expected to take over the PA**, while **Hizbullah is a marginal participant** in the Lebanese government.

## Why is this Important? Why Now?

- In light of Hamas' victory, Israel is trying to establish an international coalition that would sustain the PA's effective governance, assure the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure and promote the annulment of the Hamas charter.
- Hamas wishes to rely on the "Hizbullah precedent" and maintain its military wing alongside its majority in the Legislative Council and its likely control over the government.

Brought to you by:

REUT ראות

The Re'ut Institute from Vision to Policy מכון ראות מחזון למדיניות

14 HaOmanim St. Rose House, Tel-Aviv 67897 | Tel: +972-(0)3-6247770 | Fax: +972-(0)3-6247771

www.reut-institute.org info@reut-institute.org

Point of View

COPYRIGHT © 2005 The Re'ut Institute

**Policy Options**

- The simultaneous occurrence of Hamas' electoral victory in the PA (1/25) and the reiteration of Resolution 1559 regarding Hizbullah in the UN Security Council (1/24), raises the need to create a coherent policy regarding terror organizations' attempts to enter formal political systems while refusing to disarm.
- In light of Hamas' victory, it seems that Abu Mazen will not be able to keep his promise to the US administration regarding the disarmament of Hamas.
- *However*, on the issue of disarmament (unlike on the issue of Hamas charter), Israel should consider the option of raising international support and turning the "Hizbullah precedent" into a double-edged sword for Hamas. This may be done through pressure on Lebanon to **disarm Hizbullah**, in light of Syria's withdrawal, Mehlis report, Lebanese internal political pressure and Resolution 1559.
- Such a policy may create a new "Hizbullah precedent" based on the disarmament of a terror organization that entered the political system.

For additional sources see the Re'ut Institute website: www.reut-institute.org

End.

Brought to you by:

REUT ראות

The Re'ut Institute from Vision to Policy מכון ראות מחזון למדיניות

14 HaOmanim St. Rose House, Tel-Aviv 67897 | Tel: +972-(0)3-6247770 | Fax: +972-(0)3-6247771

www.reut-institute.org info@reut-institute.org