

# Hizballah at War:

## A Military Assessment

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Dec 21, 2006

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**H**izballah's thirty-three-day fight against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) this summer offered a number of disturbing precedents. Political implications and strategic goals aside, the "July War" showcased Hizballah's evolution into an adaptive, skillful, cohesive fighting force capable of registering some measure of success on the battlefield against a much larger and better-equipped enemy. How did Hizballah's tactics differ from those the IDF has faced in the past? And what can U.S. military planners and policymakers learn from the conflict?

In this new Washington Institute Policy Focus, Soref fellow Andrew Exum offers a "nuts and bolts" overview of Hizballah's military performance leading up to and during the July War. Drawing on his own extensive experience -- including interviews with combatants and politicians on both sides during a recent research trip to the region, as well as his service in Afghanistan and Iraq as a decorated officer in the U.S. Army Rangers -- he examines the group's prewar preparations and tactics under fire. Given that enemies of the United States will likely emulate Hizballah's efforts in the near future, U.S. strategists need to begin developing the best means of countering them. After all, America's robust military presence in Iraq may be coming to an end, but the lessons learned there and in Afghanistan may not apply to the next conflict.

• **24 pages**

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