

Chapter 20: Culture and Community in the Global Age: 20-3e Hezbollah and Hamas
Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition
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20-3e Hezbollah and Hamas

Iran's challenge to America's hopes for a democratic reshaping of the Middle East took a step forward in 2005 when the Lebanese Shi'ite movement Hezbollah captured 23 out of 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament and in 2006 when the militantly anti-Israeli Hamas movement won an absolute majority of the vote in elections for the Palestine Governing Authority. Both groups were firmly allied with Iran. Attacks launched by Israel against both Hamas and Hezbollah in response to kidnappings of Israeli soldiers in 2006 further heightened tensions between Israel and Islamic movements in the region. These ongoing conflicts suggested that Arab world democratization would be difficult to achieve in the future, regardless of American preferences. Hezbollah also followed Iran's lead in sending fighters to Syria in support of Bashar al-Assad.

In 2007 the elected Hamas government succeeded in driving its Palestinian rivals out of the Gaza Strip. During the following months, largely inaccurate rocket barrages launched from there against Israel became a major factor in Israeli politics. The first stages of a planned 403-mile-long security barrier built on the West Bank had almost eliminated attacks by Palestinian suicide bombers, but the rockets provoked public outrage even though the number of casualties was small. At the end of 2008 the Israel Defense Force launched aerial bombardments and ground force incursions in the Gaza Strip that left over a thousand Palestinians dead. However, there was no sign that Hamas had been seriously harmed as a political organization. Indeed, in 2012 a renewed exchange of Hamas rockets and Israeli air strikes showed the persistence of the stalemate in Gaza.

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