Six Days, Fifty Years

The June 1967 War and its Aftermath

Gabi Siboni, Kobi Michael, and Anat Kurz, Editors

Memorandum
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INSS
המכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי
THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY אוניברסיטת תל אביב

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INSS Institute for National Security Studies

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Introduction

Fifty Years since the Six Day War: A Retrospective

There is a broad consensus that the Six Day War of June 1967 was a formative event for the State of Israel and the Middle East as a whole, evidenced by the numerous academic, public, and political events held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the war. Likewise at INSS, much thought and research were devoted toward a better understanding of this landmark episode. Various aspects of the war and its results, both short and long term, are discussed at length in this collection's essays. In addition, INSS held a one-day conference in collaboration with Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, which included the presentation of some of the essays compiled here. The collection is therefore a contribution by INSS to the public discourse following the fiftieth anniversary of the war, which too often reflects a common tendency to emphasize one of two opposing viewpoints on this significant occurrence: superlative evaluations of the war itself and its immediate political and territorial outcomes; or a critical view of Israel's political and military leadership prior to and during the war, and the war's consequences in subsequent decades.

The State of Israel and Israeli society have changed dramatically since the Six Day War. The results of the war not only tripled the territory under Israel's control and strengthened the image of the IDF in Israeli society, in the international community, and within the military itself; they also all at once bolstered the sense of security among the Israeli public and the self-confidence of its political leadership and its military, to the point of euphoria and intoxication.

Alongside Israel's territorial achievements and upgraded regional and international status, the results of the war created a deep political rift in

Israeli society. They also shaped military and political thinking for years to come. Furthermore, there has been a change in the nature of IDF activity as a result of the tremendous resources it was forced to invest in policing operations in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria. Likewise over the past five decades, the Palestinian national movement grew rapidly, and this translated into greater international pressure on Israel to soften its opposition to the national claims of the Palestinians. The State of Israel became increasingly perceived in the international arena as an occupying force—a kind of "David turned Goliath."

A historical perspective facilitates a critical examination of events and their results that is as balanced as possible, but it can nonetheless be misleading. The tendency to ascribe various trends and developments to the Six Day War and its aftermath can be problematic, since some of the developments attributed might have occurred in other historical contexts as well. Nonetheless, it appears that this war created four main conflict arenas and affected their respective developments in subsequent years: the internal Israeli arena; the Israeli-Palestinian arena; the regional arena; and the international arena as it relates to Israel. These arenas, of course, overlap and influence one another. The connection between them is reflected in many of the essays in this collection, which have been divided into three sections by subject: security-political issues, military dimensions, and civil-military relations.

This introduction discusses issues that appear in many of the essays and in all three sections: the military-security challenge facing Israel, as it developed since the Six Day War and against the background of the war's political and territorial outcomes; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which joined the regional and international agendas as a result of the war, and became the center of discourse and debate in Israeli society itself; and questions on relations between the socio-political and military leaderships that arose following the war and remained of vital importance in subsequent decades.

The Military Challenge and the Paradox of Power

Prior to the Six Day War, the State of Israel lived under the shadow of the Arab military threat. Although the military leadership conveyed a sense of confidence in the ability of the IDF to defeat the Arab armies despite its numerical inferiority, this was conditional on a preemptive strike. In contrast, the political leadership did not share this level of confidence, and then-Prime Minister Levi Eshkol asked that all political possibilities be pursued on the

international level in order to avoid war. The waiting period significantly heightened the anxiety among the Israeli public while disrupting economic activity, due to the large scale mobilization of reserves.

The outcome of the war changed the atmosphere all at once, and the sense of achievement and euphoria in Israeli society may have reduced the motivation to learn and internalize the lessons of the war. As a result, military thinking froze, and this in turn affected IDF operations up to the Yom Kippur War (October 1973). The territory appended to the State of Israel not only solidified the sense of self-assurance but also led to the neglect of thinking about defense and to only partial internalization of the geostrategic implications of the added territory.

The Six Day War itself can also be interpreted as the erosion or even failure of Israeli deterrence. The military achievement and impressive victory were meant to revalidate and reinforce Israel's deterrence, and indeed the feeling after the war was that the magnitude of the accomplishment, the clear-cut victory, and the shock experienced by the Arab leaders and their military commanders would deter the Arab countries from any further military action against Israel and would postpone the next war well into the future. However, Israeli deterrence did not pass the test and the War of Attrition began shortly after the Six Day War. It continued until the summer of 1970 and exacted a high number of causalities. Israeli deterrence again failed the test when the Yom Kippur War broke out only three years after the end of the War of Attrition. The Egyptian success in the early stages of the 1973 war and the cost in soldiers' lives to Israel can also be attributed to rigid military thinking and the euphoria among some of the IDF commanders following the spectacular victory of the Six Day War.

Despite the problem of deterrence, the power of the IDF and the spirit of its commanders and soldiers sustained the State of Israel during the War of Attrition and to an even greater extent during the Yom Kippur War. The IDF found itself in an inferior position in October 1973 but was able to recover and finish the war with an impressive military achievement. The shock of the Yom Kippur War led to an accelerated—and some would say excessive—buildup of force, when in fact it was the last war in which the IDF fought regular armies (apart from a limited number of skirmishes with the Syrian army in 1982, in what became known as the First Lebanon War). The impressive achievements of the IDF in the Yom Kippur War became a significant component in the State of Israel's deterrent ability and encouraged

the conclusion among the Arab leaders that they were unable to defeat Israel on the battlefield.

Another result of that war, also relevant to the issue of deterrence, was the transformation of Israel into a strategic asset for the United States and the development of the "special relationship" between the two countries. Israel and the United States drew closer already in the early 1960s, and this process accelerated following the embargo imposed by President Charles de Gaulle on weapons shipments to the IDF during the Six Day War. Israel, for its part, replaced its strategic orientation to Europe with an orientation toward the United States, in recognition of its decisive role in the international arena. For many years, the United States has been Israel's strategic patron and also the IDF's main source of weapons.

In the decades following the Yom Kippur War, terrorism and high-trajectory weapons replaced conventional weapons as the main security threats facing the State of Israel. In addition, the opponents facing the IDF were now non-state organizations. The prolonged presence of the IDF in Lebanon following the First Lebanon War, the first Palestinian intifada (1987–1993), the suicide terror attacks in the 1990s against the background of the attempt to implement a political process based on the Oslo accords, the second intifada (2000–2005), and the Second Lebanon War (2006), as well as the three rounds of conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip (2009, 2012, and 2014) all served to expose the paradox of power that limits the IDF's freedom to operate. Thus, the characteristics of the war against the IDF and the citizens of Israel, waged by non-state forces that blend into the civilian population and operate within it, do not enable the IDF to bring to bear its capabilities as a powerful and well-equipped army. The terror organizations that operate in the Palestinian areas use the population as human shields, and have upgraded their ability in the use of high-trajectory weapons. They are thus able to drag the IDF into prolonged conflicts, which in their view constitute a war of attrition against a modern Western society that finds it difficult to endure low level conflict over time and is concerned about casualties. From their point of view, their methods of warfare emphasize the paradox of power, whereby a conventional army, due to normative, legal, and political constraints—rather than military—considerations, it in effect prevented from manifesting its full force. Essentially, the power of the IDF became weakness in many cases, while the military weakness of the non-

state players, including Hamas in the Palestinian arena and Hezbollah in Lebanon, translated into power because they operate in populated areas.

The occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in the Six Day War exposed Israel and the IDF to direct and immediate contact with a large Palestinian population. After the shock of defeat, this population experienced an economic boom as a result of access to the Israeli economy and labor market. At the same time, Israel became a protected and convenient space for the activities of the Palestinian terror organizations. In the early 1970s, Israel embarked on a large scale effort in Gaza to destroy the terror infrastructure and managed to improve its control on the area and to reduce terror attacks, though they were not completely halted. Until the outbreak of the first intifada in December 1987, the IDF limited itself to a small presence in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The first intifada was the turning point in relations between Israel and the Palestinians. The level of friction between the sides increased significantly and the violent confrontations with the Palestinian population exposed the IDF to the limits of power and operational capability to deal with this new type of threat. The army found itself facing a violent grassroots uprising and had to reinforce its forces on the ground, modify its operational methods, and develop non-lethal means for crowd control. From this point onward, the IDF began to operate in the format of demanding policing tasks, which required specific adaptations. The nature of IDF activity in the territories required it not only to change its modus operandi but also to make structural and organizational changes. In this context, two new territorial divisions were created (the Judea and Samaria division and the Gaza division), as well as special units, such as undercover units and the Kfir Brigade, and in addition, Border Patrol forces were more deeply integrated within military activity.

The prolonged duration of the intifada undermined the confidence of Prime Minister and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the ability of the IDF to meet the challenge. Arguably, this was one of the reasons for his support of the dialogue, which was concurrently held in Oslo behind the scene between Israelis and Palestinians in an effort to formulate understandings expected to lay the ground for a peace talks (which until May 1993 was under the auspices of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who also took a leading role in advancing the process).

Since the late 1980s, Hamas (much like Hezbollah) has increased in strength organizationally, and alongside its control of population and territory has

fought Israel using terror tactics and missile and rocket fire. Hamas' activity and increasing strength, and in particular the warfare waged in urban areas, have required the IDF to upgrade its operational capabilities on an asymmetric battlefield. The second intifada, which began in September 2000, also led to comprehensive change in the IDF's operating methods, in part with the aim of dealing with suicide terrorism. It broke out in a new political reality, in which the Palestinian Authority had already been established by the Oslo Accords. However, when the violence began, the PA security forces took a leading part in the confrontation.

In comparison to the situation prior to the Six Day War, when Israel faced an existential military threat, Israel's economy and society are currently much larger and much stronger, and Israel is economically and technologically prosperous. Israeli society is characterized by a modern Western lifestyle, and the economy, which is far more powerful than all of the neighboring economies combined, is admired as one of the strongest in the world. However, it is exactly these sources of strength that make it more sensitive to terrorist assaults as well as to rocket and missile fire.

Furthermore, the sensitivity to casualties, both civilian and military, limits the freedom of action of both the IDF and the government. At the same time, the struggle against non-state actors places the IDF in problematic situations in which civilians are harmed, despite the efforts to minimize this phenomenon as much as possible. The contemporary battlefield, where the media command an extensive presence and the social media broadcast live and with manipulative bias, has led to a situation in which IDF operations are subject to harsh international criticism. Against this background, the IDF and the State of Israel are exposed to international legal proceedings and delegitimization campaigns.

The Challenge of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank changed the Israeli-Palestinian reality overnight. Less than a year after the cancellation of military rule over the Arab population within the State of Israel (in 1966), which was imposed immediately following the War of Independence (1948), Israel found itself in direct control over a Palestinian population significantly larger than the Arab population within Israel's previous borders.

The government of Israel did not define strategic goals with regard to the occupied territories, and the burden of governing the Palestinian population

fell on the IDF, which became the sovereign in the territories due to their international status as territory under military occupation. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was the main political authority involved in the administration of the territories and the day-to-day lives of the Palestinian population. He even defined policy guidelines, though they were not discussed in any comprehensive way by the government and did not lead to any decisions in this context, apart from the general and vague intention that the territories would be kept in reserve as a bargaining chip for use in any future peace negotiations. Essentially, the principle of "land for peace" was not defined officially and publicly by the government of Israel but rather was a byproduct of UN Security Council Resolution 242.

In order to implement Dayan's policy, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) was created. COGAT, which reported to the Minister of Defense, was responsible for administering the daily lives of the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank. This was accomplished by means of military governors who were appointed in the various districts of Gaza and the West Bank. Later, COGAT's responsibility was extended to include the Jewish population in the settlements established in the territories. Following the peace agreement with Egypt (in 1979), the military government in the territories was replaced by the Civil Administration, in an effort to give Israeli control of the territories a more civilian flavor, although this change proved to be largely cosmetic.

Following its establishment, the Palestinian Authority received some of the powers of the Civil Administration. The Israeli disengagement from Gaza in 2005 further reduced the area under the Civil Administration's control to Area B (where control is coordinated between Israel and the PA) and Area C (under full Israeli control) in the West Bank. Since then, the main activity of the Civil Administration has been in Area C and in civilian and security coordination with the PA.

The discussion of the Palestinian issue and the partition of the Land of Israel prior to the Six Day War remained theoretical and superficial, and barely took place on the political level. The territorial results of the war intensified the discussion and injected new content into it, and the Israeli settlement enterprise in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank kept the debate alive. The future of the territories became a watershed in Israeli politics. It is the main issue distinguishing right from left, and since the Oslo Accords has also served to divide between those demanding a new Israeli deployment in the

territories, including a withdrawal that would enable the implementation of the "two states for two peoples" idea, and those demanding Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank, whether for reasons of security or ideology.

The years following the Six Day War saw the rapid development of Palestinian nationalism and the consolidation of the PLO's status as the exclusive representative of the Palestinian people. However, ironically, the outcome of the war, which, according to many in Israel, returned parts of the historic Jewish homeland to the State and facilitated a revival of Zionism, strengthened Palestinian nationalist sentiments. There are even those who view the results of the Six Day War as a replay of the dynamic that spurred the development of Palestinian nationalism prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. From this point of view, the Six Day War, which eliminated the existential threat to Israel from its Arab neighbors, returned the State of Israel to a period prior to its establishment, in which the partition of the Land of Israel and sovereignty over it were the subject of public discourse.

The Effects of the War on Israeli Society

The debate over the future of the territories deepened rifts in Israeli society and even created phenomena that pose a threat to the State's democratic-liberal values. Fifty years after the war, the argument focuses primarily on the threat that in the long run the control over another people will not only undermine Israel's international standing but is also liable to challenge the Zionist enterprise as a whole, as manifested in the vision of a Jewish democratic state.

The complexity and importance of civil-military relations in the State of Israel have also become evident from the immediate and long term outcomes of the Six Day War. The IDF's control of disputed territory places it in sensitive and problematic situations. Among the most serious challenges is that in many cases, professional recommendations presented to the government are viewed through ideological lenses, although the senior military commanders are committed to a broad and holistic view of the reality in the territories and beyond. Therefore their insights and proposals are primarily based on an analysis of regional and international implications; the media and PR environment and legal ramifications; and an in-depth familiarity with the population in the territories and its way of life. Thus, more than once the army has been the one to advocate the limited and measured use of military force, with the goal of separating between those who pose a security threat

and the civilian population at large that desires stability. The government's difficulty in deciding the future of the territories—as a result of the complexity of the negotiations and the prolonged impasse in the political process, as well as the belief that it will be difficult to gain broad public support for a peace plan that requires far-reaching concessions—has created a situation in which, at the end of the day, the IDF finds itself at the center of the public and political debate.

The current chief of the General Staff, Gadi Eisenkot, has sought to change this reality. This can be seen in the *IDF Strategy*, which was also released to the public in Israel. This document lays out the military doctrine for the use of force in various scenarios, as derived from policy decisions and the clear definition of goals by the government. It includes a call to upgrade the level of discussion between the military and the government. The document distinguishes between two main types of dialogue, clarification and learning, and emphasizes the need to define objectives regarding the future of the territories.

Although the Six Day War is perceived as an impressive achievement for the IDF and the State of Israel, its results were not aligned with the relatively limited goals of the government prior to the war. The exploitation of the military victory on three fronts was not the result of instructions issued by the government; rather, in most cases, the course of the war was determined by military commanders under pressure from commanders in the field, without the government advising on the possible outcomes and implications for the future.

The euphoria of the military success, the territorial gains, and the sense of release from the anxiety that prevailed prior to the war allowed the public and the government on the one hand and the military on the other to postpone the debate on war and society's goals. Unlike the Sinai Campaign a decade earlier—which involved clear goals that were pursued by the army—the disrupted connection between war and its long term outcomes in the Six Day War has, to a large extent, determined the problematic nature of civil-military relations in Israel and the lapses in the interface between the political and military echelons, primarily in the context of the reluctance of the former to establish clear goals in a war.

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Gabi Siboni, Kobi Michael, and Anat Kurz

Political-Security Perspectives

Where Would Israel Be if the Six Day War Had Not Happened?

Udi Dekel

The results of the Six Day War substantially changed Israel's strategic situation. Prior to the war, Israel was a small democracy with Western values. The Israeli economy was in a recession due to the ideological positions of its socialist leadership, which was slow to adapt a modern economy to the rapid growth in the private sector. The country identified as part of the Western world, and its hostile Arab neighbors had not accepted its existence as a Jewish state in the heart of the Arab-Muslim region. Israel was secular in character but respected its religious sectors.

The war broke out on the morning of June 5, 1967, following a gradual process of deterioration on three fronts. On the Syrian border, territorial issues and the struggle over water sources had been left unresolved since 1948, together creating mounting tension. In the West Bank, which was under Jordanian control and responsibility, hostilities with Palestinian Fedayeen—guerilla fighters who operated against the Israeli territories—were increasing and reached a peak with the IDF retaliation operation in Samu in November 1966. On the southern front, Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser—then considered the leader of the Arab world—had threatened to close the Straits of Tiran. The rapid process of deterioration caused the Israeli public and its leadership to have a renewed sense of an existential threat.

The success of the Israeli air force's preemptive aerial strikes on the air bases of the Arab countries neighboring Israel, especially Egypt, in Operation Moked marked the beginning of unprecedented military successes leading

to a decisive simultaneous victory on three fronts and within only six days. At the end of the war, the State of Israel had tripled in size and included all of the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, as well as the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. The war moved Israel to the top of the global agenda and strengthened its image as a regional military superpower. From a small democracy fighting for its existence and its freedom, Israel had become the regional Goliath.

Israel's success in the Six Day War led to a feeling of military superiority, fixed conceptual thinking, and an underestimation of the enemy's military capabilities. This was the main reason for the surprise of the Yom Kippur War, a little more than six years after the spectacular victory of 1967. Alongside the strategic and military changes as a result of the war, Israel underwent a different kind of transformation when it became an occupier and ruler of the Palestinian population. Only the Interim Agreement with the PLO (1995) and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria in 2005 transferred control of more than 95 percent of the Palestinian population to the Palestinian Authority (although the daily routine of most of the Palestinians in the territories is still affected by Israeli rule).

Over the years, many books and articles have been written about the young State of Israel's military success in the Six Day War. Many discuss Israel's situation prior to the war and the events leading up to it. Some of them deal with the results of the war and the narratives that have become rooted in Israeli society and in the international community. This essay is unique in that it attempts to hypothesize where Israel would be today, and, in particular, what its strategic situation would have been had the Six Day War not occurred. Since science has not yet found a way to examine "what would have been," this essay is a conceptual exercise and focuses on three main strategic factors during the last fifty years: the relations between the State of Israel and the Palestinians, the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, and the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan.

The Lack of a Strategic Plan for the Day After

The euphoria following the victory in the Six Day War was combined with perplexity. This was reflected in the lack of thinking about the possible implications of the war's results, whether expressed in government deliberations or in statements by Israeli leaders. General Aharon Yariv, then head of the Intelligence Directorate, described a "historic discussion" that

was held in the office of Defense Minister General Moshe Dayan on June 12, 1967, two days after the war. The topic was "How to organize things now?" The guidelines were as follows: "expanding the territory of the state, ensuring the status of a Jewish Jerusalem, routine security activity, protection of water sources, additional living space if possible—without any addition, or a minimal one, of Arabs." According to Yariv, another principle that was discussed was "peace and direct negotiations, [which was] a tactic but not a goal" because "at that time, we already said that there would be no peace."[1]

According to Yariv and others, there was essentially no strategic plan for the day after the war. The political leadership did not succeed in translating and promoting the impressive military win into advancing peace agreements, and the IDF was given the main role of administering the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ("the territories"), without examining in-depth the significance and the consequences of the encounter between an army and the Palestinians under occupation. The statements of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol reveal the euphoria following the capture of parts of the Land of Israel that had been cut off from the state since 1948 and, in parallel, the desire not to close the door on the chances of peace by creating permanent facts on the ground. Eshkol was also concerned about the issues relating to Israel's international status ("We do not operate in a vacuum"), the demographic danger—which dictated that the proportion of Arabs in the population of the state should not be increased—and Jerusalem ("For Jerusalem, we are ready to die").[2] The duality in his words is symbolic of the lack of clarity that characterized Israel at the time vis-à-vis its achievements in the war and how to leverage them to strategic assets.

At the government meeting held on June 18–19, 1967, Tourism Minister Moshe Kol disagreed with the chairman of the Ministerial Defense Committee, Prime Minister Eshkol, who proposed that the Jordan River would be Israel's security border. Kol claimed that no such decision had been reached and

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1 "The Six Day War, testimony of the Head of the Intelligence Directorate, General Aharon Yariv," January 1, 1972, IDF, History Department, IDF and Defense Archives, [Hebrew], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-z1DlVC2Cow.

2 Yemima Rosenthal, ed., *Levi Eshkol, the Third Prime Minister—A Selection of Documents from his Life (1895–1967)* (Jerusalem: Israel State Archives, 2010), p. 5 [Hebrew], http://www.kotar.co.il/KotarApp/Viewer.aspx?nBookID=95199637#604.223.6.default.

that it would lead to the creation of a binational state.[3] The determined opposition of some of the ministers to returning any territory on the one hand and the desire among the others to avoid having to rule over one and half million Palestinians on the other hand, placed the government in a state of disagreement regarding the content of the territorial proposal to be submitted to Jordan. In the end, the government chose not to make any decisions regarding its future policy and decided, as an interim stage, to establish an occupation regime until a decision was reached regarding the future of the West Bank territories.

In contrast, the government decided in a vote of ten to nine that Israel would not annex the Golan Heights and Sinai and instead stated that "Israel proposes peace agreements with Egypt and Syria, which will include security arrangements, based on the international border and the security needs of Israel."[4] The government discretely conveyed its decision to the United States, which passed it on to Egypt and Syria; however, they did not respond positively. At the end of August 1967, the leaders of the Arab nations met in Khartoum in Sudan for a summit meeting. On September 2, they passed a resolution that came to be known as the "Khartoum no's": No to negotiations with Israel, no to peace with Israel, and no to recognition of Israel. This resolution led to a change in Israeli policy and reduced its willingness to show flexibility and concessions based on the formula of "land for peace" and security arrangements in Sinai and the Golan Heights.

Peace with Egypt: A Strategic Achievement

The Six Day War generated conceptual and practical processes of change in Egypt, as it had an intensifying and conflicting effect on its approach to the conflict with Israel. On the one hand, the war helped to strengthen the Arab-Israel conflict and its centrality. The reality that developed as a result of the Arab defeat enhanced Egypt's engagement with the conflict; it reinforced the Egyptian citizens' connection to the conflict and strengthened the feeling that their cause was a just one. The new reality also deepened Egypt's commitment to continue the struggle against Israel, bolstering its refusal to accept the

3 Government meeting, June 18, 1967, Paragraph 553, Israel State Archives, 8164/7-A [Hebrew].

4 Government meeting, June 19, 1967, paragraphs 561 and 563, Israel State Archives, 8164/8-A [Hebrew].

existence of the State of Israel and nurturing its animosity and desire for revenge while fueling the demonization of the Jews and the Zionists. At the same time, the war also led to self-criticism and accelerated the decline of the pan-Arab ideology—which had prevailed during Nasser's regime—due to having totally failed to realize the objectives that it set for itself and its accompanying hopes. These developments led Egypt to reexamine its fundamental uncompromising approach to the conflict with Israel, which, in the end, resulted in exchanging land for peace as the preferred route to take. This policy was implemented only after the Yom Kippur War.[5]

The processes of conceptual change following the Six Day War as well as the results of the Yom Kippur War were basically components of the same process. Together, they had a major impact upon the considerations behind Egypt's decision to sign a separate peace agreement with Israel. Thus, in regards to territory, Egypt sought to regain control of the territories it had lost in the Six Day War, especially the Sinai Peninsula with its oil resources and tourist sites. From an economic perspective, the war with Israel had exhausted the Egyptian economy, while a peace agreement was perceived as a necessary condition for shifting the national resources toward rehabilitating Egypt and constructing it as a thriving and advanced country. From a military position, the achievements of the Egyptian army in the Yom Kippur War—of surprising the IDF and crossing the Suez Canal in the order of battle of two armies, which were recognized as having erased the humiliation of the 1967 defeat—bolstered the public support of President Anwar Sadat and enabled him to initiate path-breaking political processes. At the same time, the combination of the Egyptian defeat in the Six Day War, together with Israel's rapid recovery on the battlefield in the Yom Kippur War, reinforced Egypt's realization that continuing the military struggle against Israel had no benefit. Finally, on the political level, Sadat's desire to improve relations with the United States, in the hope that it would force Israel to withdraw to the 1967 borders and would provide Egypt with economic assistance, strengthened his resolve to achieve a peace agreement. The desire to strengthen cooperation with the United States rendered the

5 Yehoshafat Harkabi, ed., *The Lesson of the Arabs from their Defeat* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1972), pp. 12–17, 35 [Hebrew]; Yossi Amitai, *Egypt and Israel—A View from the Left* (Haifa University and Zmora-Bitan, 1999), p. 163 [Hebrew]; Shimon Shamir, *Egypt under Sadat: The Search for a new Orientation* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1978), pp. 188–189.

goal of peace with Israel, its closest ally, more attractive and even a vital national necessity from Egypt's perspective.[6]

It can be said that peace with Egypt—the leader of the Arab world—was made possible only after it had restored its self-respect following the "October 73 victory" and President Sadat became determined to reach an agreement with Israel in order to achieve the more important goal of returning Egyptian territory captured in 1967. Therefore, it is difficult to assume that Egypt would have chosen a strategy of peace with Israel without the continuum of events that began with the Six Day War, continued with the Yom Kippur War, and culminated with the signing of the peace agreement twelve years later.

Since the signing of the peace treaty with Egypt, Israel has experienced two wars in Lebanon, two Intifadas, and a series of military confrontations in the Gaza Strip, in addition to the two Gulf wars and the Arab Spring revolution at the regional level. These developments all have led to a prolonged lack of stability. In addition, Egypt and Israel both experienced domestic shocks as a result of the assassination of President Sadat in 1981 and Prime Minister Rabin in 1995 respectively. Despite these events and their implicit dangers, the peace treaty between the two countries has persisted, primarily due to Egypt's understanding that it does not have a military option against Israel. This understanding is rooted first and foremost in the results of the Six Day War.

Peace with Jordan: An Achievement and a Missed Opportunity

The direct diplomatic contacts between Israel and the Hashemite family began at the end of the First World War, continuing through the British Mandate period, and after Israel and Jordan's independence. The contacts even continued during the War of Independence. Some of the channels of communication were secret while others were public and took place under the auspices of the UN.

Prior to the Six Day War, King Hussein was forced to close ranks with the Arab world and join the Arab coalition against Israel led by Egypt's

6 Shamir, *Egypt under Sadat*, pp. 77–79; Avraham Sela, *The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Middle East Politics and the Quest for Regional Order* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 153; Neill Lochery, *The Difficult Road to Peace: Netanyahu, Israel and the Middle East Peace Process* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2000); Yoram Meital, *Egypt's Struggle for Peace: Continuity and Change 1967–1977* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 133–134.

President Nasser.[7] Following the war, the Jordanian strategy focused on the return of control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Hashemite Kingdom. At the same time, the war accelerated the rise of the Palestinian national movement, which became a threat to both the Hashemite royal family and the State of Israel vis-à-vis Jordan's status in the West Bank and Jerusalem as well as the very legitimacy of the Hashemite Kingdom's rule and the stability of Jordan as a state.[8]

The "Jordanian option" was especially relevant at that time, particularly following the expulsion of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) from Jordan after the Black September events in 1970 and the federation plan of King Hussein in March 1972, which was designed to strengthen the Jordanian connection to the West Bank and Jerusalem at the expense of the PLO. However, the Israeli government, then led by Golda Meir, did not respond favorably to the strategy.[9] After the Yom Kippur War, the "Jordanian option" was removed from the agenda for all practical purposes, following the decision of the Arab Summit in Rabat in October 1974, recognizing the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and in 1977 when the Likud attained power, which strengthened the belief of Greater Israel and the claim that "Jordan is Palestine." Jordan and the PLO for their part tried to advance a "framework for common action" based on the principle that the Palestinians would realize their right to self-definition as part of a confederation with Jordan, but after these efforts failed, King Hussein announced in a speech in February 1986 that cooperation with the PLO had terminated.[10]

In 1987 King Hussein and the Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres attempted to revive the "Jordanian option." In a secret meeting that took place in London, the two signed an agreement that the Palestinians would achieve self-determination within a Jordanian framework. The underlying

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7 Zeev Bar Lavi, *The Hashemite Regime 1949–1967 and Its Status in the West Bank* (Tel Aviv: The Shiloh Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1981) [Hebrew].

8 D. Dishon, ed., *The Middle East Record, 1969–1970* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1977).

9 Announcement of Prime Minister Golda Meir in the Knesset, *Divrei HaKnesset* (1972), p. 294 [Hebrew].

10 M. Klein, *The End of Dialogue: Jordan-PLO Relations 1985–1988* (Jerusalem: Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 29–66 [Hebrew].

idea behind the agreement was that Jordan would again rule the Palestinian population in the West Bank in some format while in parallel it would sign a peace agreement with Israel. Furthermore, it was agreed between King Hussein and Foreign Minister Peres that the Jordanian delegation would represent the Palestinian issue at an international summit and PLO representatives would not participate. Peres, who initiated the summit, received approval from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of the National Unity Government, but Shamir ultimately objected to its results, for fear that an international conference would impose a solution on Israel that was contrary to its interests, as he saw it.

The withdrawal of Israel from the London agreement, the Palestinian threat to the regime of the Jordanian royal family, and especially the outbreak of the first intifada (December 1987) led King Hussein in 1988 to revoke the proposal for connecting the two banks of the Jordan and to announce the severing of ties between them. This also included retracting the demand for Jordanian sovereignty in the West Bank and dissolving any legal or administrative ties between Jordan and the PLO. In doing so, King Hussein expressed Jordan's wish not to pay the price for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and essentially stated Jordan's support for creating an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank. The signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in 1993 enabled King Hussein to reveal the secret meetings he had held with Israel and to open the way to achieving a formal peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, which was signed in October 1994.

Israel's relations with the Hashemite royal family were independent of the results of the Six Day War, since they had existed before the war and continued to exist afterwards, although undoubtedly the Palestinian issue directly influenced them. The Six Day War, however, led to a series of developments that eventually enabled a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan. Israel, however, had missed an opportunity—even before the Six Day War, but also immediately following it—to recognize Jordanian sovereignty in the West Bank and thus to create the conditions for realizing the "Jordanian option," as part of fulfilling the Palestinians' national aspiration in a confederation, federation, or any other political framework upon which the two sides decided. Nonetheless, the results of the Six Day War placed the Palestinian problem and the Palestinians' right to self-determination squarely in the focus of the international arena. In this new situation that

had been created, the Palestinians presumably would not have agreed to a deal that would have realized the Jordanian option without their approval.

The Palestinian Problem: The Worsening "Entanglement"

In order to hypothesize about what would have been the fate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the Six Day War had not erupted and ended the way it did, it should be asked whether the Palestinian problem would have received as much attention as it did if it had not been for the war and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Another question in this context is whether Israel would have entered talks and negotiations with the Palestinians if it had not been for the war and its territorial outcome.

Would the Palestinian problem have received its current level of attention if not for the occupation of the West Bank? All of the territory that makes up Israel/Palestine, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River, came under Israeli control as a result of the Six Day War. In the Palestinian narrative, this situation exacerbated the historical problem, since the entire territory of Mandate Palestine had fallen under control of the State of Israel. At the same time, overnight, Israel began to administer directly and independently the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. From Israel's point of view, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip became the potential address for a future peace treaty.

In the early days following the war, the Israeli government created an inter-ministerial committee for political contacts in the occupied areas (the Committee of Four) and also the West Bank Committee (whose members were the heads of the Mossad and the Israel Security Agency, IDF generals, and senior officials from the foreign ministry). In July 1967, the members of the Committee of Four stated in a report that an agreement with King Hussein was possible, and they urged the Israeli government to prioritize and reach a peace treaty with Jordan without delay. They recommended that until the signing of an agreement with Jordan, Israel should administer the West Bank as a separate administrative and economic unit. In August 1967, the West Bank Committee submitted a number of options to the government, from annexing the West Bank to various types of arrangements with Jordan, and ending with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Neither these measures nor a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian

people were included among possible initiatives prior to the Six Day War, and those discussed after the war were not adopted by the government.[11]

Officials who were involved in formulating the aforementioned ideas claim that they contended with a policy determined by Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, based on firmly holding onto the territories without giving up any of it and without agreeing to anything but direct negotiations with the Arab countries for a permanent status agreement, which would include peace. In practice, the government rejected any serious efforts to advance a settlement and clearly preferred continuing the current situation rather than taking any sort of initiative, out of a sense of comfort and a lack of pressure as a result of the sweeping victory. There are those who believe that Israel hung onto various excuses (such as the negative position of the Arab countries at the Khartoum summit) and did not leverage its military triumph into a political achievement.[12]

The protocols of government meetings during that period show that holding onto the territories from the beginning resulted from a lack of consensus within the Israeli governments as to the future of the territories and the map of the state's final borders. This was due to the weakness of the leaders who were unwilling to make difficult decisions, for political and ideological reasons, and also because of the feeling of achievement and euphoria following the 1967 war. A short while after the Six Day War, the government adopted the approach that security would take precedence and that it was not peace but rather the strategic depth of the territories and the power of the IDF that would guarantee Israel's national security.

The Six Day War reinforced the broad opposition to recognizing the Palestinians' right to self-determination and separate political rights and solidified the feeling that establishing an independent Palestinian entity in the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was not justified. During the two decades after the war, the Palestinian national movement operated in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia, while the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip remained outside the circle of political thought and action. The continuing occupation, however, led to a grassroots uprising of the

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11 Shlomo Gazit, *Suddenly in a Trap—30 Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories* (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1999), pp. 142–143 [Hebrew].

12 Tom Segev, *1967—Israel Changes its Look* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), pp. 538–547 [Hebrew].

Palestinians in the territories in December 1987. The first intifada, which started from below and was unconnected to the PLO, changed the reality. It essentially caused Israel and the international community to realize that the state of occupation without a political plan could not continue and a few years later—following the victory of the regional and international coalition over Saddam Hussein's Iraq—led to a regional peace process and the adoption of the "land for peace" formula (the Madrid Conference, the multilateral talks, and the talks in Washington with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation).

It can be assumed that if Israel had not captured the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the situation that preceded the war would have continued. In other words, Jordan and Egypt would have controlled these territories and the Arab-Israeli conflict would have centered around the fundamental questions that were created in 1917 and reshaped in 1948; that is, the status of the land of Palestine as a whole, the international recognition of the right of the Jewish people to a national home in the Land of Israel and the existence of the State of Israel ("a representative of Western colonialism"); Israel's control of territory as a result of the War of Independence, which well exceeded the borders of the UN Partition Plan of 1947; and the future of the Palestinian refugees in the Arab countries. This means that the Palestinian problem would have existed in a similar degree to the way it developed, although perhaps it would have taken different directions.

There are two main implications in the Palestinian context that can therefore be attributed to the Six Day War: the transformation of the Palestinian issue from a problem of the Arab world to one that should be solved by Israel; and the understanding that the territorial solution applies only to the territories that Israel captured in 1967.

Would we have reached a peace process with the Palestinian people if not for the Six Day War? The Palestinian leadership was shattered and dispersed in all directions after 1948. Only a decade later did young Palestinians start to organize within the framework of various organizations (such as the Fatah movement and the organizations that later constituted the PLO). These demanded a solution of the Palestinian problem and searched for ways to persuade the Arab leaders "to liberate Palestinian land by force from the Zionists." In 1964, at the first summit meeting of the Arab leaders, the PLO was established as a political umbrella with the goal of keeping Palestinian politics and all that was related to the Palestinians under the firm control of

the Arab states, primarily Egypt. In 1969, following the Six Day War and the occupation of the West Bank, the Fatah organization, then headed by Yasser Arafat, took control of the PLO and has led it since.

It can be assumed that even if the Six Day War had not occurred, the Palestinian problem would not have vanished. The PLO would have gained in strength and also would have used every possible means (including engaging in terror activity and dragging the Arab countries into a war with Israel) in order to keep the issue on the agenda of the Arab world and the international community. The existence of the Palestinian refugee camps in the Arab countries did not allow the Arab leaders to ignore the problem. The refugee camps themselves served as a point of recruiting young Palestinians to the terror organizations, which for their part challenged the stability of the Arab regimes—such as Jordan and Lebanon—and also maintained the hostility toward Israel and threatened its security. In the geopolitical circumstances that prevailed in Israel before 1967, it is difficult to assume that Israel, the Palestinians or the Arab countries would have initiated a process to resolve the conflict between them, since the discussion at that time centered on the 1948 issues, and Israel did not, in that reality, have any strategic assets with which to negotiate (such as "land for peace"). Only in 1988—twenty-one years after the Six Day War—at the meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers, and after the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan (in 1970) and from Lebanon (in 1982), did the organization accept the formula that any talks with Israel would be based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which meant that talks would be limited to negotiating on the territories captured in 1967.[13]

If, prior to 1967, conditions had developed for a peace agreement that would have led to the creation of a Palestinian state, this would not have been the result of a bilateral process (Israeli-Palestinian) but rather a multilateral one, with the participation of Egypt and Jordan—perhaps even as the leading participants—and with the backing of the Arab world. The likelihood that a peace process of this type would have happened was low, however, due to the feeling of security at that time within the Arab world even before the Six Day War, and due to Israel's feeling of being under existential threat within its then narrow borders. It is also assumed that Egypt and Jordan would have preferred to maintain control over their territories. Egypt would

13 *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 188 (November 1988): 2-6 [Arabic].

have wanted to continue to pose a threat to Israel and to keep the Palestinian problem on the margins, while Jordan would have wanted to ensure its control over the Palestinians in a way that would have prevented any shocks to the Kingdom, given the demographic reality and primarily to ensure control over the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif), which has been the most important religious asset of the Hashemite dynasty.

It can also be assumed that the status quo that took shape after the UN Partition decision would not have endured over time if the Six Day War had not occurred. This was due to the inability to reach an agreement between Israel and the Arab world in general and with the Palestinians in particular and also because of the increasing burden of the Palestinian problem facing the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes, given the popular support for Palestinian rights to self-determination in the Arab world. Therefore, it can be assumed that sooner or later a war would have broken out against Israel, as indeed occurred in 1967.

The conditions that arose following the Six Day War and the increasing burden of the occupation on Israel, as well as the developments in the regional and international spheres, created a framework for mutual recognition between the State of Israel and the PLO. This was implemented in the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles, and at a later stage in the interim agreements and in the attempts to reach a permanent status agreement between Israel and the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people. The basis for negotiation for all of these attempts was the territories captured by Israel in 1967, and not the territories of Mandate Palestine.

Conclusion: The Time was not Ripe to Exploit the Strategic Opportunity

It is difficult to guess what Israel's situation would have been if the Six Day War had not occurred. Undoubtedly, the war elevated Israel's status to that of a regional military superpower and led to the recognition that Israel could not be defeated militarily by an Arab coalition, which was reinforced by the Yom Kippur War. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that the infrastructure for Israel's economic, scientific, and technological achievements was already in place prior to the Six Day War and continues to be the platform that will carry Israel into the future.

The result of the war created strategic opportunities for Israel that had not previously existed, primarily the chance to sign a peace treaty with Egypt, the leader of the Arab world. In the longer term, these opportunities also provided the foundation for the signing of a peace treaty with Jordan, which, together with Israel, shares the "burden" of the Palestinian problem.

It is reasonable to assume that the conditions that prevailed prior to the war would have led to a large-scale military confrontation whose results would not necessarily have resembled the situation on June 11, 1967. The outbreak of war with a different timing and less optimal conditions for Israel and without carrying out a preemptive strike could have presented a major military challenge to Israel (such as the country being cut in two or the capture of parts of its territory). The Six Day War provided Israel with strategic depth that enabled it to handle even the surprise attack of the Yom Kippur War.

The Six Day War gave added momentum to the Palestinian liberation movement, which took the reins from the Arab countries in the struggle against Israel and located itself at the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict, until it was transformed into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From Israel's point of view, its feeling of power following the war and its possession of the entire Land of Israel caused its governments to refrain from exploiting strategic opportunities in order to resolve the Palestinian problem within the context of the "Jordanian option," which theoretically would have existed even without the Six Day War but became more practical following it. In addition, the way in which Israel managed the conflict after 1967 anchored the idea that Israel is responsible first and foremost for solving the Palestinian problem and that any Israeli-Palestinian agreement would be solved within the boundaries of the Land of Israel, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. Israel did not succeed at expanding the circle of responsible partners nor the territorial expanse for solving the Palestinian problem in the peace treaties that it signed with Egypt and Jordan and in its actions following them.

If Israel had not captured the territories as it did in the Six Day War, and if the territories had not remained under Israel's control for many years, in addition to the accompanying developments—in particular the creation of the settlements—it is reasonable to assume that Israel's status would be more stable than it is today. It would not be negatively branded as an apartheid state that violates human rights and blocks Palestinian rights to

self-determination, while the issue of Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish state would be of less concern.

If Israel continues to hold on to the territories captured in 1967, while maintaining a lack of clarity of its intentions in the future and its indecision to solve the Palestinian problem, Israel will miss the strategic opportunities standing before it to consolidate its position in the world as a technological superpower in the areas of defense, hi-tech, and cyber. Holding onto the territories would also undermine Israel's ability to fortify its regional status and to achieve recognition as a democracy with the ability to maintain constructive relations with its neighbors in the Middle East.

From the internal-social perspective, the religious, socioeconomic, and ethnic polarization assumingly would have developed in Israel even without the Six Day War. Nonetheless, it likely would have been less pronounced that it is today, as it is fed by the negative byproducts from ruling over another people and the ideological polarization with respect to the future of the Palestinian problem and the territories.

Fifty years after the Six Day War, the time has come to dispel the ambiguity regarding the State of Israel's intentions of how to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the future of the occupied territories. Furthermore, Israeli society needs to determine the rules of the game about strategic decision making regarding the main issues on the agenda: separation from the Palestinians, a two-state solution, or annexation of the territories and the establishment of a one-state reality.

The Renewed Debate Over Partition: The Effects of the Six Day War on Israeli Politics and Israel's International Status

Shlomo Avineri

The Six Day War dramatically transformed the State of Israel's strategic position in the Middle East. From a small country just able to protect itself and maintain its existence despite the dangers from all its neighbors—who enjoyed Soviet support and petroleum wealth—Israel became a regional superpower with undeniable military superiority. The war made it clear to the Arab world, although not always explicitly, that it was not capable of destroying the State of Israel. Even the difficulties Israel encountered in the Yom Kippur War did not fundamentally change this fact. The Six Day War put Israel on the map; it provided Israel with strategic depth, breadth for maneuvering, and a status that it previously did not have within world opinion, nor among international policy makers and the world's Jewish communities. This nonetheless came with a price—the severing of diplomatic relations with the Soviet bloc, followed by the African countries—but the benefits far outweighed the costs according to any measure.

Apart from these elements, discussed in dozens, if not hundreds, of books and articles published in Israel and abroad, the Six Day War and its results had far-reaching implications for Israel's political discourse and internal structure, as well as its international status. Although it was not Israel's intention, the war resulted in reigniting the discussion of partitioning Palestine. Partition was a main point of disagreement in pre-State Israel and within the Zionist

movement during the critical years between the recommendations of the Peel Commission (in 1938) and the partition decision of the UN General Assembly on the November 29, 1947. A high level of apprehension on the eve of the Six Day War followed by the extent of the subsequent victory distracted the Israeli public from this process, whose significance gradually became clear and was not completely internalized.

The Question of Partition after the War of Independence

The debate over partition, which had divided the Zionist movement, culminated with the War of Independence in practice if not in theory. The need to defend the young and weak country, the challenge of mass aliya, and the ingathering of the Jewish communities pushed the argument to the sidelines of the political discourse. Even those who opposed partition, particularly the Revisionist Right, accepted the reality created by the War of Independence as a historical verdict, which had favored the Jewish people after the horrors of the Holocaust. The public pushed aside the geographic concept of Mandatory Palestine to which Zionism aspired, in favor of the concept of the State of Israel, which symbolized the renewal of sovereignty in the historical homeland of the Jewish people.

The supporters of partition at the time used two opposing arguments to justify their support: universalist principles on the one hand and realpolitik considerations on the other. In the universalist context, they claimed that the demand for a state was based on the Jewish people's right to self-determination and that when they sought that right, they could not deny it to others, specifically the Arab population in Palestine. In the realpolitik context, the establishment of a Hebrew state would clearly only be possible with international backing—political, diplomatic, legal, and even military—which would not have been provided had the Zionist movement demanded sovereignty over all of Palestine and over the then Arab majority. These two types of justifications tipped the balance of the debate within the Zionist movement. The achievement of independence in 1948, as well as the results of the war, confirmed—after the fact—the pre-State Jewish community's willingness to agree to a compromise.

The Revisionist Right never formally approved a decision that violated its support for Greater Israel, but its political behavior in practice demonstrated that it also viewed creating a state in the partitioned Palestine as a tremendous historical achievement for the Jewish people. Between 1949 and 1967, none

of the political parties on the right in Israel sought to change the ceasefire lines by launching a war to liberate the territory of Mandate Palestine that remained under Arab control. Neither was there any demand to liberate the Old City of Jerusalem or the Western Wall, Hebron and the Tomb of the Patriarchs or Jericho and Nablus, even though Jordan did not fulfill its commitments to provide free access to the holy places or to Mount Scopus. Menahem Begin did not make a single speech demanding this, and the Herut movement, which led mass protests often verging on violence against the reparations agreement with Germany, never demonstrated in favor of liberating parts of the homeland that remained outside the borders of the State of Israel. The existential and international struggle, the need to maintain a hold on the territory, even just West Jerusalem, and the challenge of the ingathering of the exiles overshadowed the aspirations that assumingly the Herut movement had never abandoned; nonetheless, the issue was not a focus of political disagreement during the first nineteen years of the State's existence.

Furthermore, it can be assumed with a degree of certainty that if the Arab countries had been willing to convert the ceasefire agreements (which were temporary by their nature and language) into a permanent peace agreement with the State of Israel on the basis of the 1949 demarcation lines, a majority of the public and the Knesset would have agreed and would have viewed this as the second most significant achievement of Zionism, after the creation of the state itself. Apparently, the Herut movement would have voted against such an agreement, which would have been accompanied by fiery speeches, or perhaps it would have abstained (since it is difficult to vote against a peace agreement that would have made permanent the existence of the Jewish state and its legitimacy). In any case, such an agreement would have been accepted as the historic approval of Israel's victory in the War of Independence. In other words, the internal debate over partition reached its end, and moreover, the geographic and demographic outcomes of the War of Independence were more convenient for the State of Israel than the borders delineated by the UN Partition Plan.

The Six Day War and Its Effects

All this changed following the Six Day War. Immediately after the war, the public as well as the policy makers expressed two opposing viewpoints. On the one hand, it was believed that after such a decisive victory, the Arab

world would begin to understand that it was unable to defeat Israel and would be willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel; on the other hand, given what occurred after the Sinai Campaign in 1956, many believed that international pressure would force Israel to return to the ceasefire lines without a peace agreement.

Neither of the two scenarios were realized and over the years, a new status quo became increasingly permanent, even though within Israel and the international community, this status quo has not been considered stable or even legitimate. Nonetheless, Israel's control over the territory of Palestine created a new reality, changing the consciousness and the political discourse of the state. It took time until the public realized the significance of the new situation and revived the debate over partition, even though the conditions were completely different than those of the pre-1948 debate. Israel now controlled all of the territory of Palestine, and it became clear that a vast difference existed between demanding territory that a country does not control and the readiness to give it up when it is already under that country's control.

The debate over partition was renewed this time from a position of strength. Revival of the debate began with a seemingly technical question: Are these occupied territories or liberated territories? The question took on a deeper meaning when the West Bank became Judea and Samaria, names that had not been used during the period of the British Mandate, which were then referred to as "the triangle," i.e., Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem, and Mount Hebron.

There were not only terminological arguments. The excitement after June 1967 that encompassed all sectors of the Israeli public and the emotional encounter not only with the Old City, the Western Wall and the Tomb of the Patriarchs but also with what was historically the birthplace of the Jewish people left its mark on politics as well. The Herut movement, whose representatives sat in the National Unity Government prior to the Six Day War, discovered that their positions—which would have been anachronistic and even eccentric if expressed before 1967—had become reality. The Western Wall, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, and Jericho, which were barely present in Israeli consciousness between 1949 and 1967 (except in Bible or history classes), had become physically accessible and real.

This began the political upheaval that rejuvenated the Right and helped it to gain power and remain there over time. As mentioned, there is a major difference between not launching a war in order to liberate the Western

Wall or the Tomb of the Patriarchs and not being willing to give them up once they are already under one's control. In the reality of 2017—fifty years and two generations after the Six Day War—giving up parts of the historic homeland of the Jewish people as opposed to making do with a state in only part of Palestine, as was the reality prior to 1967, are two completely different issues.

At the same time, the parties of the Left, which since 1967 expressed their willingness for a territorial compromise and subsequently also agreed to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, gradually and unintentionally transformed their image among a significant segment of the public. Mapai, which was established as the union of three workers' parties and was succeeded by the Labor party, had identified since 1948 with the establishment of the state and with its defense, as well as the impressive achievement of mass aliya (with all of its flaws). David Ben-Gurion was perceived, sometimes in almost messianic terms, as embodying the Israel's independence and its sovereignty as well as the concern for the security of the state and its citizens. In the new post-1967 reality, as the parties of the Left fashioned a two-state policy, they came to be perceived—though not all at once—as not being particularly patriotic, while the Right, which prior to 1967 was considered irrelevant, became the main flag bearer of Zionism and representative of political realism.

The change that occurred after 1976 in the political orientation of the National Religious Party (NRP) should also be noted. The NRP always had moderate and prudent political positions and therefore was a convenient coalition partner for Mapai. When the activism of Ben-Gurion clashed with the relative moderation of Moshe Sharett, the NRP generally supported Sharett and was always cautious not to identify the State of Israel with realizing the messianic vision, which remained for the foreseeable future in the hands of God.

The exhilaration following the Six Day War gradually transformed the NRP and particularly its younger generation into the vanguard of the political right. Gush Emunim became the symbol of settlement in Judea and Samaria and of the determination to not give up territory that is part of the homeland, which now also took on a clear aura of messianic redemption. Thus, the NRP and its successor, HaBayit HaYehudi party, became the natural partners of the Likud and eventually its most radical partner in realizing the vision of Greater Israel.

The Effects of the War on the International Community

Just as the new post-1967 reality gradually changed the political discourse in Israel to the Right's advantage, it also affected Israel's international image and the perception of the Arab-Israeli conflict among the public and policy makers. Israel's spectacular victory in the Six Day War received almost unanimous support in the democratic West. The fact that the Soviet Union backed the Arab countries only strengthened the support for Israel, which was perceived as threatened by both the Arabs and the Soviets. The Western media reported sympathetically and sometimes emotionally about the unification of Jerusalem, because of its historic and religious dimension. Israel's readiness for peace and the adamant Arab refusal to negotiate, which was manifested by the "three no's" at the Arab summit in Khartoum (no to peace with Israel, no to recognition of Israel, and no to negotiations with Israel), only reinforced Israel's support and the understanding of its policies, while criticizing Arab aggression. Moreover, even though the UN Resolution 242 declared explicitly that the acquisition of territory by force was not acceptable, Israel's occupation of territory in 1967 was perceived as a temporary situation until conditions for a peace agreement would ripen. The fact that Israel did not annex the territories (apart from East Jerusalem) was also perceived as an implicit Israeli agreement to the provisional nature of the occupation, until peace could be achieved and the issue could be decided through negotiations between the sides.

The status quo, however, became increasingly permanent as Jewish settlement in the territories expanded and Palestinian opposition to continued Israeli control intensified. As a result, the way that the conflict was perceived in the democratic West gradually shifted, particularly with respect to its Israeli-Palestinian component. The repeated victory of the Right in the elections in Israel, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the coming to power of parties and movements that opposed the Oslo Accords reinforced the perception that Israel's occupation of the territories was not, in fact, temporary and was not motivated only by security considerations; on the contrary, continuing the occupation of the territories and their Palestinian inhabitants was driven by fundamental ideological reasons.

The governments and public opinion in the West condemned Palestinian terrorism against Israel, but countries such as Britain and France, which had suffered from terrorism in their colonies—Kenya and Cyprus and in Algeria and Indochina, respectively—and in the end gave up their control,

viewed the situation in the territories occupied by Israel as being similar to their own experiences. There is also no doubt that the accelerated settlement effort in the territories reinforced the tendency of these countries to see the situation as analogous to their own colonial history.

At the same, the support for Israel in Western public opinion began to diminish, which to some extent was the result of the media. If prior to the Six Day War the West had been subjected to Arab claims that Israel would soon be destroyed and its inhabitants thrown into the sea, decades of media exposure to events in which Israel appeared as a strong military superpower ruling over a civilian Palestinian population suffering under military occupation had reversed the equation of David and Goliath. In other words, the inter-state struggle between tiny Israel threatened by an alliance of Arab countries had transformed into a conflict between Israel, perceived as an occupying superpower, and the weak Palestinian people who were being denied the right of self-determination.

The parallel sometimes drawn between Israel and South Africa was not at first widely accepted, except on the extreme margins of the radical Left. However, the reality in which different laws apply to Israelis than to Palestinians in Judea and Samaria could not be accepted over the long run even by Israel's strongest supporters. In contrast to the claims sometimes made by Israeli officials, there is no delegitimization of Israel in Western public opinion nor among policy makers; nonetheless, there is no consensus about the legitimacy of continued Israeli rule over millions of Palestinian nor does public opinion in the West indicate any support for the growing settlement enterprise or the massive construction in the territories.

In contrast to its image of the underdog in the past, Israel is now increasingly perceived as a violent bully. The international fight against terror, which Israel is part of, cannot ignore the fact that there is a difference between a terrorist in London or Paris, who is sometimes a full citizen in his country, and a Palestinian, who, along with his family and his people, is under Israeli rule. While there is no support for terror in the West, the values of Western democracies do not allow them to espouse continued Israeli rule in the territories. The fact that the anti-Islamic Far Right or even semi-fascist groups in the West sometimes defend Israel only exacerbates the gap between Israel and the Western democracies.

This situation, of course, has far-reaching strategic implications. Israel is without a doubt the strongest power in the Middle East. Despite the

challenge of Palestinian terror and in contrast to the situation prior to 1967, there is currently no existential Arab threat to Israel. Nonetheless, the view that the Palestinians are an oppressed people and that Israel is the oppressor has implications for Israel's international standing, particularly among intellectual circles in the West (which, unlike the general public, are interested in international issues).

Undoubtedly, many Jews, and especially young ones, who support the State of Israel and its existence find it difficult to identify with a policy of continued rule over the Palestinians and sometimes choose to cut their ties with Israel and without any public criticism of its policies. In this way, the important political asset of diaspora Jewry, especially in the United States, of lending support for Israel has weakened as a component in Israel's strategic resilience and its power.

Israel's peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, which have survived despite the upheavals in the Arab world, and the weakening of enemies, such as Syria and Iraq, have led to the current situation in which danger of a military confrontation with an Arab army no longer exists. At the same time, the continued occupation of the territories and the construction of settlements have led to the loss of support for Israel in the West. Although Israel as an isolated fortress can defeat its enemies, one of the values of Zionism is to be part of the family of nations. This value will be compromised if an armed confrontation develops in the future and the support for Israel in the West remains only lukewarm. This is in contrast to the sweeping support it received in 1967, which constituted a major strategic asset for Israel in its presentation of the Arab countries as the aggressor.

Attempts to boycott Israel by the BDS (Boycott, Delegitimization, and Sanctions) movement, for the most part, have failed and will continue to do so in the future. Nonetheless, their very existence and the attention they receive harms Israel. Although some of the groups active in the boycott movement do not distinguish between Israel's policies and occupation in the territories and the existence of the State of Israel and deny the validity of both, in general, the boycott movement focuses on Israel's control of the territories, rather than on the existence of the state. Moreover, a unanimous condemnation of the settlements by the UN Security Council perhaps does not have any immediate operative effects, but it undoubtedly causes harm to Israel. Connecting this phenomenon to anti-Semitism is, of course, absurd, since it does not explain why Israel enjoyed widespread support in 1967,

while today it is widely criticized even by its friends. It is doubtful that there is more anti-Semitism today than in 1967, and even if the number of reported anti-Semitic incidents has increased, this reflects the overt manifestations of it and do not necessarily imply a change in its nature or scope.

This situation involves a cruel paradox: On the one hand, the Six Day War led to the renewal of the internal debate in Israel over the partition of Palestine and strengthened the opponents of partition and the believers in Greater Israel. It also brought them to power and enabled them—almost without any internal opposition—to continue the multipronged settlement effort in the territories. On the other hand, that same reality weakened Israel's international position, while the support it received in 1967 was replaced by criticism, even among its friends.

In addition, an internal development, which has external implications, is the significant change in the character of the IDF—due to the continued Israeli occupation of the territories—from an army that defends the homeland to one in which most of its soldiers are involved in policing in the territories. Prior to 1967, the number of conscientious objectors was miniscule, and the army learned to deal with these few cases wisely and with understanding. The current reality is different, and the number of conscientious objectors who refuse to serve in the territories is rising (as is the number of conscientious objectors on the Right who oppose the evacuation of settlements). The legal and administrative answer to this phenomenon has not totally met the challenge since it does not relate to its public aspect and the ramifications of such cases in Israel and abroad. As occurred in the United States during the Vietnam War, the refusal to serve in the army undoubtedly undermines the country's national resilience and strategic power. Moreover, what happened in the trial of Elor Azariah, who was accused of killing an already neutralized terrorist, is the result of the continued Israeli occupation and points to the dilemma of a country whose army not only defends it against external enemies but also must cope with the friction resulting from daily contact with a civilian population that wishes to be liberated from the occupation.

Conclusion

The Six Day War was clearly a defensive war. In 1967, Israel went to war to defend itself against Arab armies, led by Nasser's Egypt, which threatened its very existence. The war was not meant to occupy territory or to liberate parts of the homeland that remained under Jordanian or Egyptian control

after the War of Independence. But like any other historic process, the Six Day War was accompanied by unexpected and unplanned consequences, which dialectally changed the balance of power and the way in which it is perceived both in Israel and abroad. Israel emerged strengthened from the war and the Arab dream of destroying it was shattered. But the results of that war, whose effects continue to be felt fifty years later, changed the landscape and the political discourse in Israel, brought to power individuals, movements, and ideologies that were marginal up until 1967, and presented a serious challenge to Israel's international position.

Political Infighting and Its Effect on Deterrence: The Eshkol Government prior to the Six Day War

Zaki Shalom

In mid-May 1967, massive Egyptian forces began entering the Sinai Peninsula, a blatant violation of the understandings reached under the auspices of the US administration after Operation Kadesh. The core of the understandings was that Sinai was to remain a demilitarized zone, in which UN forces would be stationed in order to separate between Israel and Egypt. President Gamal Abdel Nasser went even further than deploying his army in Sinai and at the same time ordered the UN forces to leave Sinai and Gaza. He claimed that Egypt was free to do as it pleased in these territories since they were under Egyptian sovereignty. UN Secretary U Thant acceded to his demand.

Egypt continued to escalate the tension with Israel when it announced the blocking of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, with the clear knowledge that Israel would view this as a casus belli and with the understanding that the blocking of the straits would put Israel in an untenable economic and strategic situation, since the vast majority of its oil supply arrived from Iran by way of the Straits of Tiran.[1]

These moves by Egypt signaled the collapse of the deterrence that Israel had achieved in its conflict with the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, following the War of Independence and even more so after Operation Kadesh.

1 Zaki Shalom, *Diplomacy in the Shadow of War: Constraints, Appearances and Yearnings on the Way to the Six Day War* (Tel Aviv: INSS, 2007), pp. 197–250 [Hebrew].

The phenomenon of infiltrations into Israel, which was particularly frequent during the 1950s, was first and foremost an expression of the Arab states' assessment, following the War of Independence, that they could not defeat Israel in an all-out war. But since they refused to end the fighting with Israel, as they had promised in the Armistice Agreements, they chose a "mini war" as a way of perpetuating the hostilities, without giving Israel justification to initiate an all-out military campaign against them.

It was clear to Israel's leadership that the Arab countries were refraining from an all-out war, given the potential outcome of such a strategy. They were willing to admit to their obvious military inferiority vis-à-vis Israel, rather than risk another defeat at the hands of Israel. Moshe Dayan, then the chief of the General Staff, stated in this context that, "if there was an Arab country that had the capability to defeat us, it would not hesitate to command its forces to cross the border and attack Israel. Since that Arab states demonstrate obvious reluctance to do so, the meaning of this for the Arab world is that they are well aware of their weakness and their inability to confront Israel."[2]

Operation Kadesh highly enhanced the assessment regarding the Arab states' strategic weakness vis-à-vis Israel. However, at a certain stage, in particular following Ben-Gurion's resignation from office (June 1963), we can see a gradual erosion in Israel's deterrence vis-à-vis the Arab world. Two speeches given by President Nasser over a period of several years reflected the rapid weakening of Israeli deterrence with respect to Egypt. In a speech prior to the Six Day War (May 26, 1967) delivered to his troops in Sinai, Nasser sounded certain of himself and his ability to defeat Israel: "Recently, we have come to feel that our forces are sufficient to confront Israel, that if we go into battle, we will be victorious, with the help of God . . . We are ready to initiate all-out war against Israel . . . The war against Israel will be all-out and its basic objective will be to destroy Israel. I could not have said such things five years ago or even three years ago. Today I say such things because I am sure of what I am saying."[3] This Egyptian assessment shortly before the outbreak of the Six Day War stands in sharp contrast to the Egyptian assessment in December 1963. At the conference of Arab

2 Moshe Dayan. "Military Activity in Times of Peace," *Maarachot* 118–119 (Nissan 5719): 54–61 [Hebrew].

3 Shalom, *Diplomacy in the Shadow of War*, p. 266. Footnote 38.

chiefs of staff in Cairo in December 1963, Nasser made it clear to the Arab countries why he could not dare to initiate a war against Israel at that time: "One holocaust which we have gone through in 1948 is enough . . . We must realize where we are headed when we say 'return to Palestine.' It will be a bloody return . . . If Syria is attacked, will I be obligated to attack Israel? . . . It [Israel] attacks one or two Syrian bulldozers and you expect me to attack Israel the next day. Are these words of wisdom?"[4]

Numerous studies have reviewed in detail Egypt's acts of provocation, which in the end led to the outbreak of the Six Day War. There is no doubt that Nasser was directly responsible for these actions and, as a result, for the outbreak of the Six Day War. The provocations on the one hand, and Israel's continuing restraint on the other, gave Israel a highly important political asset—recognition that it was fighting a just war of self-defense. Little attention has been given to the reasons that led Nasser to conclude that benefit expected from his provocations was greater than the price he would have to pay. In other words, the focus of this article is on the question: What caused the collapse of Israel's deterrence during the period prior to the war? What were the causes for the cracks that appeared in Israel's powerful image and in its determination to use that power during that period?

A country's image of strength has many components: military, political, economic, and technological power, internal resilience, stability of its government, a national consensus, and so forth.[5] This essay will focus on the Israeli leadership's image of power as a component in shaping the state's image of deterrence.

Churchill's words in the British Parliament that the weakness of Prime Minister Chamberlain and his policy of appeasement had encouraged Hitler to go to war are highly relevant to our discussion in this article.[6] Following the Yom Kippur War, the testimonies of members of the Israeli leadership before the Agranat Commission about the dismissive Israeli attitude toward Anwar Sadat and its implications on formulating the assessment that the

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4 "Nasser: We will Delay the Diversion until We are Ready to Defend it," *Monthly Review*: *Periodical for IDF Officers* (May 1967): 6–8 [Hebrew].

5 For further details on deterrence, its components, and characteristics, see Zaki Shalom and Yoav Handel, *Let the IDF Win: The Slogan that Fulfilled Itself* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2010), pp. 80–95 [Hebrew].

6 Winston Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons, February 22, 1938, Statements on Appeasement, https://goo.gl/sP4f8f.

probability of war was low in 1973 must also be remembered. In one of the discussions about the reasons that Israel was surprised by the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Professor Shimon Shamir stated as follows: "The status of Sadat in this period [during the years prior to the Yom Kippur War] was problematic. He had a low image. He became president not as a result of his strong position but the opposite: because the 'power centers' had relied on his weakness and were convinced that the real power would remain in their hands and that they would be able to easily remove him if they wished. When Sadat was conferred as president, his image was somewhere between foolish and ludicrous. The Intelligence Directorate/Research Department felt that Sadat had an image of weakness and a lack of ability."[7] Consequently, he believed that such a leader lacked the courage and the personality to initiate a war against Israel.

It is also worth mentioning the words of Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, regarding the weakness of the leadership in Israel which led him to initiate provocative acts against Israel, in the assessment that the Israeli leadership would lack the courage to engage in a major confrontation with Hezbollah. A few days after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, he gave the "spider webs" speech in Bint Jbeil:

> We are here today free and safe. The enemy's air force would not dare to fly over us. The Israelis are scared and terrified of every miniature toy-like installation and every Katyusha launcher. They are scared enough to refrain from attacking you today . . . Ehud Barak's government had no choice but to withdraw from the soil of Lebanon . . . The miniature government of Israel withdrew with haste, with the soldiers leaving tanks, artillery, and a great deal of military equipment in the field. Thus, it is clear that this was a defeat for Israel . . . My brother the Palestinians, Israel has nuclear weapons and the strongest

7 Shimon Shamir, "The Situation of Egypt prior to the Crossing," *Intelligence in the Yom Kippur War, 1973—Forty Years Later*, ed. Effy Meltzer (Ramat Hasharon: Center for Heritage of the Intelligence Corps and Effy Meltzer Publishing, 2013) [Hebrew].

> air force in the region, but they are more vulnerable than spider webs. I swear this to you.[8]

On the day that the Second Lebanon War broke out, Nasrallah referred to the power of the leadership in Israel, which was then headed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Minister of Defense Amir Peretz, and Chief of General Staff Dan Halutz. All of them, he claimed, lacked any significant political or military experience and therefore would be reluctant to engage in military confrontation with Hezbollah:

> The Israeli leaders in government right now and those who are responsible are new. Olmert is a new prime minister and there is also a new minister of defense. Therefore, I would like to advise them, before they meet tonight at 8:00 PM to decide on Israel's response to the abduction of the Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, that they had better seek counsel from previous prime ministers and other former ministers about their experiences in Lebanon. When someone new is in charge it is still possible to mislead him. Therefore, in order not to be misled, they should ask, check, and make sure before they make any decisions.[9]

As part of the discussion of the collapse of deterrence prior to the Six Day War, it can be claimed that the status, authority, and power of Levi Eshkol, then the prime minister and minister of defense, had deteriorated prior to the outbreak of the Six Day War. This was a result of his personality, his declarations, and the bitter political disagreements, particularly with his predecessor David Ben-Gurion, who successfully undermined Eshkol's legitimacy. In our view, the weakening of Eshkol's position during the years which preceded the war, most probably harmed the state's deterrence and thus contributed to Nasser's decision to provoke Israel, which eventually led to war.

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8 Nasrallah's Spider Web speech, http://breakingthespidersweb.blogspot.co.il/2011/05/nasrallahs-spider-web-speech.html.

9 Quoted by Eyal Zisser, "Hezbollah: The Battle over Lebanon," *Military and Strategic Affairs* 1, no. 2 (October 2009): 52.

The Political Situation prior to the War

On June 16, 1963, David Ben-Gurion surprisingly announced his decision to resign from the government. The official announcement stated that the decision was the result of "personal needs that are not related to any government problem or specific event."[10] Several years later, in a letter to Golda Meir, Ben-Gurion wrote that he had resigned in order to write the history of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel.[11] This message was unlikely to convince the Israeli people in its sincerity. Ben-Gurion was then seventy-seven years old and still in good physical condition. He was a highly ambitious statesman, who believed he knew more than any other person about Israel's needs and interests. It was unlikely that he would resign from office just for the sake of writing an historical essay, with all the importance he attached to it. Consequently it seems fair to assume that Ben-Gurion did not leave office of his own free will, just because he wished to write his memoirs. In fact, we suggest that that he was forced to resign for two main reasons: First, he came to realize that his political position and his authority had been undermined due to the bitter internal disputes around the Lavon Affair, among other things. Secondly, as a result of the brutal pressure applied by President Kennedy regarding the Dimona Project, he concluded that the majority of the ministers would accept the American demands that would necessarily lead to the abolishment of the Israel's nuclear project, to which he was vigorously opposed.[12]

Nonetheless, and despite his resignation from the leadership, Ben-Gurion's public standing was stronger than any other leader at that time. During his political career, he successfully waded through crises and major decisions that no other political figure during that period had faced. His name was strongly identified with the creation of the State of Israel and its electoral institutions, constitutional framework, and security and defense institutions.

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10 Press release from the Prime Minister's Office, June 16, 1963 (General Chronological Documentation, David Ben-Gurion Archives) [Hebrew]. See also National Archive, *50 Years since the Resignation of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and the Establishment of the Levi Eshkol Government* [Hebrew].

11 Letter from Ben-Gurion to Golda Meir, January 29, 1969, correspondence file, Ben-Gurion Archives [Hebrew].

12 Zaki Shalom, "The Resignation of Ben-Gurion from the Government, (David Ben-Gurion's diary, June 16, 1963, Ben-Gurion Archives)," *Studies in the Establishment of the State of Israel* 5 (1995): 608–614 [Hebrew].

Israel's victory over the Arab states in the War of Independence, which Ben-Gurion documented in great detail in his diary and many articles, glorified his image and perpetuated his unquestioned authority in matters of foreign policy and security.[13]

Operation Kadesh further consolidated his leadership. Subsequently, no political figure could seriously challenge his leadership. Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, who opposed Ben-Gurion's security policies toward the Arab states, had been expelled from the leadership several months before Operation Kadesh and was no longer in political life.[14] Levi Eshkol, Pinhas Sapir, and Golda Meir, who were more or less the same age as Ben-Gurion, had not acquired anywhere near his level of political experience, nor did they did have the public support he enjoyed, and it is doubtful whether they had wanted to lead the government at that time. In the mid-level echelons, the two former high-ranking military officers, Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, battled one another for the future leadership. Ben-Gurion very much admired Dayan and his abilities in military and security matters. However, he opposed the idea that a military officer would become defense minister, perhaps because this could lead to a militarization of Israel's politics. Therefore, after Dayan left the General Staff, enjoying great popularity in Israel's public, Ben-Gurion nominated him as minister of agriculture, excluding him from any formal engagement in security issues.[15] At the same time, Ben-Gurion repeatedly criticized Yigal Allon for "deficient performance" during the War of Independence. More specifically, he viewed Allon as being partly responsible for the fact that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) did not capture additional territory in the war, which could have given Israel far more

13 For Ben-Gurion's documentation of the war, see Zaki Shalom, "Ben-Gurion's Diaries as a Historic Source," *Cathedra: The History of the Land of Israel and Its Settlement* 56 (1990): 136–149 [Hebrew].

14 See Zaki Shalom, "The Resignation of Sharett from the Government (June 1956)—Personal, Party and Political Aspects," *Zionism—Collection on the History of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Settlement in the Land of Israel* 20 (1996): 259–289 [Hebrew].

15 Following the resignation of Ben-Gurion from the government, Moshe Dayan requested that Levi Eshkol, his successor, give him the defense portfolio. Eshkol refused. See National Archive, *50 Years since the Resignation of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion*. In a cabinet meeting on November 9, 1962, Ben Gurion stated that he opposed the nomination of a military personnel as a defense minister. Cabinet Meeting November 9, 1962, File 573, Ben-Gurion Archives.

geostrategic depth and greater security as a result. In general, Ben-Gurion did not have faith in Allon's abilities as a military commander. Furthermore, he feared Allon's tendency to introduce political considerations into military decision making. In any case, neither Allon nor Dayan posed a risk to his leadership at that point in time.[16]

The period following Operation Kadesh also consolidated Ben-Gurion's position. The dramatic reduction in the infiltrations by the *fedayeen* (terror organizations) in the Negev, even though the southern border remained largely open after Operation Kadesh, confirmed Ben-Gurion's assessment prior to the operation. According to Ben-Gurion, the *fedayeen* operated not as an independent entity, as the Egyptian regime claimed, but rather as agents of the Egyptian regime. By encouraging their violent operations against Israel, President Nasser sought to maintain a state of war against Israel within the consciousness of the Arab world and the international community, while at the same time refraining from undertaking responsibility for the *fedayeen's* actions. Ben-Gurion, together with Chief of General Staff Moshe Dayan, repeatedly emphasized that the infiltrations could be stopped by extracting a high price from the Arab states supporting their operations. In their opinion, the leaders of these countries were the ones who needed to fight the *fedayeen*, not out of a "love of Zion," but rather because they would pay a high price if the attacks continued. According to Dayan, the Arab leaders knew how to stop the infiltrations much better than Israel did, since they were familiar with the reality within which the *fedayeen* operated and because they had no moral constraints in dealing with them.[17] The calm along the border with Gaza and Egypt following the Kadesh Operation was perceived as proof of the validity of this thesis.

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16 Zaki Shalom, "Transcript of a Conversation between Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion and General Yigal Peikowitz (Allon), June 16, 1948," *Studies in the Establishment of the State of Israel* 12 (2002): 657–678 [Hebrew]. Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary during the War of Independence that "there was a failure in the South . . . I am concerned that Yigal Allon is not able to command such a broad front." See Ben-Gurion's Diary, Ben-Gurion Archives. Years later, Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "No one can compete with Yigal Allon's capacity for demagoguery. There is not much distance between him and Menachem Begin, I am sorry to say." See Ben-Gurion's Diary, May 21, 1959, Ben-Gurion Archives.

17 Dayan, "Military Activity in Times of Peace."

Ben-Gurion's leadership was also strengthened by the fact that Operation Kadesh had led the superpowers to de facto recognize the armistice borders and remove from the agenda the various peace plans particularly with Egypt, which included a massive Israeli withdrawal, mainly from the Negev. Most prominent was the Alpha Plan, which called for Israel to return almost one-third of the Negev to Egypt, in exchange for Egypt's agreement to a state of non-belligerency. The superpowers, led by the United States, threatened to impose sanctions and even an economic embargo if Israel rejected their proposals. The Alpha Plan eventually fell by the wayside due to the opposition by Egypt's president. The withdrawal of the superpowers from such "peace plans" after the Kadesh Operation meant that they accepted the Israeli position that adhered to the principle of continuation of the territorial status quo, which was based on the Armistice Agreements.[18]

Another achievement of Operation Kadesh, which was, to a large extent, credited to Ben-Gurion, relates to the shift of the national agenda, which had been dominated by security-military issues, to a focus on civilian issues for much of the period following the operation. Among other things, the public and the press directed its attention to civilian and socioeconomic issues, such as the economic and social gaps between ethnic groups in Israel, relations between religion and state, and in that context, the question of "who is a Jew," the economic recession, and so forth. This phenomenon, in which the national agenda marginalized security-military issues, has not reoccurred in the history of the state and accurately reflected the high threshold of deterrence achieved by Operation Kadesh.[19]

At the same time, Ben-Gurion exploited the period after Operation Kadesh to create a nuclear option, in the belief that it could serve as Israel's insurance policy for generations to come. He believed that structural asymmetry existed in the balance of forces between Israel and the Arab countries and that Israel would never be equal to the Arab world in terms of territory and population. Furthermore, there was a huge chasm between Israel and the Arab world in terms of their society's values, particularly their attitude toward the sacredness of human life. Ben-Gurion believed that the Arab world wished

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18 Zaki Shalom, "The Forgotten War: Operation Kadesh and its Political and Strategic Effects," in *The Thunder of Engines: 50 Years Since the Sinai War*, ed. Hagai Golan and Shaul Shai (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 2006), pp. 279–305 [Hebrew].

19 Ibid.

to destroy the State of Israel. He used to mention the tragic experience of the Holocaust. Many political leaders, he stated, did not believe that Hitler was serious in his call to eliminate the Jewish people. Unfortunately his plans became reality. Similarly, the call of Arab leaders to destroy Israel, Ben-Gurion contended, was not "lip service" but rather a concrete plan of action. Under these circumstances, he claimed, Israel's security would be ensured only if the Arabs were convinced that Israel's destruction would lead to their own.

For years, Ben-Gurion worked to develop the Dimona Project, even though he knew that many in the government establishment were vehemently opposed to it. Large segments of the security, political, and academic establishment viewed the project as a reckless adventure, described as a bizarre endeavor whose scope was too grand for Israel. They claimed that it would likely lead to a rift with the United States, Israel's only ally, and with the world and would push Egypt to also seek nuclear capability. These developments and others, so it was claimed, would endanger the very existence of the state. Nonetheless, Ben-Gurion advanced the project with determination and perseverance. During the years prior to the Six Day War, both Ben-Gurion and his rivals realized that the project had made significant progress and had become a revolutionary strategic reality.[20]

In the final reckoning, it can be said that during his years as prime minister and minster of defense, David Ben-Gurion created for himself the image of a leader that the State of Israel would find difficult to replace. Attesting to this fact, on the day of his resignation from the government, two generals—Yitzhak Rabin, then the head of the Operations Directorate, and Meir Amit, then the head of the Intelligence Directorate—informed him that they viewed his resignation as a "disaster." Rabin said that "the next three years would perhaps be the most critical. It is possible that the Arabs will unite and we will be faced with a war that threatens our existence." According to Ben-Gurion, Rabin feared that "without me, the army would have a difficult time."[21]

For some reason, Ben-Gurion was not angered by the involvement of such senior officers in sensitive political issues. Recall that in the War of Independence, Ben-Gurion was on the verge of dismissing Rabin from the

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20 Zaki Shalom, *Between Dimona and Washington – The Struggle over the Development of Israel's Nuclear Option 1960–1968* (Tel Aviv: INSS, 2005), [Hebrew].

21 Ben-Gurion's Diary, June 16, 1963, Ben-Gurion Archives.

army for participating in a meeting of Palmach members which Ben-Gurion saw as an inappropriate mixture of politics in the IDF. This time Ben-Gurion was not at all bothered and even wrote in his diary that "his [Rabin's] words touched my heart and I was hardly able to hold back my emotions and tears."[22] The poet Anda Pinkerfeld Amir also urged Ben-Gurion to withdraw his resignation and wrote the following emotional words to him: "Please listen to the voice of anxiety that exists certainly not just within me, but in thousands of others that value the state more than their own lives."[23]

Under these circumstances, Levi Eshkol who replaced Ben-Gurion as prime minister and defense minister in June 1963, knew very well that any decision and any action he would make would always be compared to similar acts and decisions of Ben-Gurion. He thus would have to work hard to fill Ben-Gurion's shoes. Until that time, he had served as the minister of finance, and before that he had been primarily involved in economic and social issues. Eshkol rarely made statements on foreign and defense policy. He always supported Ben-Gurion, who played a highly dominant role in the political-security domain while in office and even after resigning from the government.

Under these circumstances, there was no escaping the oft-made comparisons between Eshkol and Ben-Gurion, who would never favor Eshkol. Ben-Gurion was perceived as a leader with authority who had the ability to make bold decisions and function in a state of crisis. He implemented an activist policy of deterrence toward the Arab world and led the IDF in two major military confrontations with Arab states, which were perceived as highly successful for Israel. In contrast, Eshkol created for himself a different image that was much more moderate. He consulted with anyone that he viewed as relevant to the issue at hand. He also hesitated before deciding on a matter. His reactions to the provocations against Israel and especially his well-known statement following Arab acts of terror against Israel, that "the notebook is open and things are being written down" were interpreted as reflecting an overly hesitant and weak personality.[24] Furthermore, at least during the early part of his tenure as prime minister and minister of defense, Eshkol

22 Ibid.

23 State Archive, *50 Years since the Resignation of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and the Establishment of the Levi Eshkol Government*.

24 Ami Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order—The IDF and the Israeli Government on the Way to the Six Day War, 1963–1967* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 2005), p. 153 [Hebrew].

himself made clear to all that he suffered from "fear of public speaking" and that there were better-suited candidates for the position of Israel's prime minister than him.[25] These statements clearly evidenced that Eshkol himself was daunted by the tremendous challenge he faced. Thus, already early in his tenure, he himself had compromised his authority as prime minister and minister of defense.

Ben-Gurion did not need Eshkol's remarks in order to make it clear that his resignation did not mean that he had entered the "political desert" and had detached himself from engagement in Israel's political life. Soon after his resignation, he conveyed clear messages to Eshkol that he had been responsible for his appointment as prime minister and therefore he expected Eshkol to stick to the path that he (Ben-Gurion) had prepared for him: "I thought that he [Eshkol] agrees with my policies . . . and would implement them as a leader of the State of Israel . . . And indeed the members of the coalition and the president [accepted my recommendation] and designated him as the person who would form a new government. Indeed the new government, according to its composition and platform, reflected my assessment that it would continue to implement the policies of the previous one."[26]

To many, these statements confirmed that Ben-Gurion had not really left the leadership and, to a large extent, they were right. They believed that, in fact, he would seek to return to the government at some stage, as he did following his first resignation in 1953, or at least would try to become a dominant figure in in shaping government policies.

Ben-Gurion himself did not bother to deny these suspicions; on the contrary, a short time after his resignation from the government, Ben-Gurion outlined the guidelines he expected Eshkol to follow. According to Ben-Gurion, in what appeared to be a veiled threat, Eshkol "should not always prefer compromises, but rather be determined in his decision making."[27] Ben-Gurion knew that this demand was not realistic in the case of Eshkol, a leader for whom compromise was embedded deeply in his character and behavior. Under these circumstances, the rift between Ben-Gurion and Eshkol was inevitable.

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25 Meeting of the Mapai Central Committee, June 18, 1963, Labor Party Archives [Hebrew].

26 Letter from Ben-Gurion to Golda Meir, January 29, 1969 [Hebrew].

27 Meeting of Mapai Central Committee, June 18, 1963, Labor Party Archive [Hebrew].

The tension between Ben-Gurion and Eshkol existed on a number of levels: in Eshkol's efforts to exclude Ben-Gurion and his supporters from the inner circle of political-security decision makers;[28] in the controversy surrounding the Lavon Affair;[29] and in Ben-Gurion's criticism of what he called the "security failure," which he believed endangered the future of the state.[30] For many, this criticism reflected Ben-Gurion's disappointment with the ways and means that Eshkol was advancing Israel's nuclear option. Without getting into a detailed discussion of these issues, it can be said that the disagreements led Ben-Gurion to initiate an unprecedented campaign to delegitimize Eshkol and his leadership. His criticism went far beyond disagreements on certain policies that Eshkol adopted. Ben-Gurion was obsessed with the necessity to prove to the Israeli public that Eshkol simply lacked the suitability to lead the State of Israel.

In September 1965, Ben-Gurion expressed his unambiguous opinion of Eshkol in very clear words: "I want to confess to one of the most serious mistakes that I have made since the creation of the State of Israel. This relates to my recommendation, on my resignation from the government in June 1963, that Levi Eshkol replace me as prime minister. I should add that I did not realize my grave mistake all at once . . . I knew that Eshkol does not have the necessary qualities to be prime minister and he has characteristics that are not suitable for a prime minister . . . The best thing he can do for the state is to leave his position as soon as possible."[31] Ben-Gurion repeated this position in various forms throughout the period: "I see disaster in Eshkol's leadership of the country,"[32] he said in a conversation with one

28 Ben-Gurion demanded, among other things, that Eshkol leave Shimon Peres—a Ben-Gurion supporter—in the position of deputy minister of defense. See the farewell ceremony of Ben-Gurion from Ministry of Defense employees, file of meeting transcripts, June 28, 1963, Ben-Gurion Archives [Hebrew].

29 Zaki Shalom, *Like Fire in his Bones—The Path of Ben-Gurion and his Struggle over the State's Image 1963–1967* (Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel, Midreshet Ben-Gurion, 2004), pp. 42–61 [Hebrew].

30 Ibid., pp. 74–103.

31 Ben-Gurion diary, September 17, 1965, Ben Gurion Archives.

32 Conversation with Avraham Wolfenson, Ben-Gurion diary, June 20 and 23, 1965, Ben-Gurion Archives.

of his supporters, and on another occasion he complained of the "moral destruction that Eshkol and his supporters" were causing in the country.[33]

Eventually, the tension with Eshkol led Ben-Gurion to resign from Mapai, his mother party, which he had created. "The Israel Workers' Party, which I have been a member of since its creation," he wrote in his diary, "no longer exists. This is a party in which there is no comradeship, there is no free discussion, there is no real willingness to listen to the opinions of the members of the party."[34]

Under these circumstances, taking into account Ben-Gurion's dominant position in Israel's politics, Eshkol had no chance of maintaining his status and authority. He also lacked the political stamina and abilities that would enable him to withstand Ben-Gurion's attacks. His political status and authority gradually weakened.

Eshkol's weakened position was mainly reflected in his authority as defense minister. Eshkol had the misfortune of serving as defense minister while Yitzhak Rabin, a dominating figure with extensive military experience, was the chief of the General Staff. It was clear that Rabin would seek to fill the vacuum created by Eshkol's lack of knowledge and experience. Yitzhak Leor, Eshkol's military secretary, would later say that "the strongest man in the IDF was, without a doubt, Yitzhak Rabin . . . the chief of the General Staff, a strong individual who entered the vacuum created when Ben-Gurion left and Eshkol came in . . . the appointment [of Eshkol] as prime minister found him almost unprepared for this huge task, especially with respect to defense matters."[35] Eshkol's efforts to limit Rabin's power at the beginning of his tenure were unsuccessful. Throughout his tenure, Rabin openly expressed his positions on clearly political issues, to the chagrin of Prime Minister Eshkol.[36]

Conclusion and Lessons to be Learned

The State of Israel is a democracy characterized by numerous internal disagreements. These controversies naturally pose difficulties for the prime minister to fulfill his policies. However, in a broader view, these disagreements

33 Ben-Gurion diary, February 21, 1967, Ben-Gurion Archives.

34 Ben-Gurion diary, April 13, 1965, Ben-Gurion Archives.

35 Eitan Haber, *The Day the War Broke Out* (Tel Aviv: Idanim, Yedioth Ahronoth, 1987), pp. 41–42 [Hebrew].

36 Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, pp. 152–153.

are the source of Israel's strength: They ensure that strategic decisions would be undertaken in the broader possible consensus. They also give expression to its democratic and liberal character in the eyes of the entire world. At the same time, it should be remembered that when these disagreements go beyond a certain threshold, the scope of which is difficult to assess, they also affect the state's foreign policy-strategic position and its deterrence image, especially in the eyes of its enemies. Adversaries and enemies are liable to interpret internal disputes as an expression of weakness. This would necessarily lead to the erosion of Israel's deterrence. Eventually, its enemies might conclude that aggression against it could be worthwhile.

The period prior to the Six Day War was characterized by highly intensive internal infighting within Israel. The most prominent conflict was that between Ben-Gurion and Eshkol, which led to an irreparable rift between these two individuals who had worked together for so long as part of the national leadership of the State of Israel. In the end, that infighting led to the breakup of the Mapai party and the establishment of the new Rafi party by one of the first founders of Mapai, David Ben-Gurion.

The tension between Ben-Gurion and Eshkol assumed the character of a battle to delegitimize Eshkol's suitability as prime minister and defense minister. Eshkol's statements reinforced his undermining and damaged his image of authority. In particular, the erosion of Eshkol's authority was reflected in his inability to create an image of control over the IDF's General Staff and the person heading it, Yitzhak Rabin.

There is no doubt that the Egyptian leadership was familiar with the internal situation in Israel. We assume that this was a major component leading to the erosion of Israel's strategic deterrence among Arab world in general and the Egyptian leadership in particular. We believe this was one of the factors that likely contributed to President Nasser's decision to provoke Israel, with the clear knowledge that he risked an escalation toward war, which indeed was the result.

Junction '67: A Turning Point in the History of the Palestinian National Movement

Anat Kurz

The Six Day War created a new reality in the Middle East, particularly in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. Already in the years before the war, there were defined Palestinian organizational frameworks, foremost among them Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). However, it was the military, territorial, and political outcome of the war and its complex and long term implications for relations between the Arab states and Israel that shaped the conditions for the growth of the Palestinian national movement. The strength of the movement since the Six Day War has fluctuated, seeing highs and lows; nonetheless, it evolved to become firmly established as a key actor in the politics of the Middle East in general and in the relations between Israel and the Palestinians in particular, first under the leadership of the PLO, led by Fatah, and later under the Palestinian Authority (PA).

This essay surveys the primary motifs—by topics and themes, more than chronologically—in the development of the Palestinian national movement during the fifty years since the Six Day War. These motifs are directly and indirectly related to Israel's military achievement in the war and in particular one of its most dramatic outcomes—the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Before the War

The political impact of the various Palestinian bodies, organizations, and factions in the Middle East during the two decades between the War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 on the one hand, and the war that erupted in 1967 on the other hand, was marginal. These bodies were the embodiments of ideological currents and movements in the region, some of which were Arab-particularist while others were based on universal ideas. The change in the Palestinian political map, which at the time was largely unnoticed, occurred in 1959, with the establishment of Fatah. This was a delayed reaction to the Arab-Israeli wars in 1948 and 1956, in which the Arab armies suffered severe military defeats. The Six Day War strengthened the impression left by these downfalls on the founders of Fatah, who organized secret activity in the name of self-determination and national liberation, as part of a "strategy of entanglement." This strategy centered on planning a direct confrontation with Israel by means of a series of armed attacks, intended to heighten the tension along the borders and fan the flames of confrontation between Israel and the armies of its neighboring states.

Fatah's sparse resources meant that its operational plans remained in the theoretical/declarative stage until 1964, when the PLO was established. The PLO, founded by the Arab states as part of their inter-state contest for control of the Palestinian issue no less than as a means of confronting Israel, threatened to undermine Fatah's efforts to mobilize political-institutional and popular support for itself. Reacting to this challenge, Fatah began to launch terror attacks against Israel across its borders. Although these assaults were few in number and left few marks, they raised the awareness of the organization and its message among the residents of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan and over time became recognized as the first milestones in the process leading to the recognition of Fatah as the leader of the Palestinian national struggle for independence.

Fatah adopted a credo of "independence of decision," and its activity, as well as that of the other Palestinian factions over the years, for the most part went against the wishes and interests of Arab states. The regional states would have preferred an organization under their control that lacked its own ability to spark military provocations or such that operated according to their explicit policy. Fatah thus operated against all odds, particularly in view of its inferiority in the balance of power vis-à-vis Israel, and it was consistently

in need of logistical assistance and political support, which were provided by states in the Middle East and beyond that sought thereby to promote their own goals. Nonetheless, it was neither the external assistance—which in any case was conditional on avoiding activities that were liable to realize the "strategy of entanglement"—nor the organization's operational persistence that built Fatah. Rather, Fatah's historic opportunity to penetrate the regional and international spheres came with Israel's conquest and occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The organization exploited that opportunity to the fullest.

The Day After (1967–1969)

The results of the Six Day War confirmed the premise underlying the establishment of the PLO, namely that the Arab states were not capable of restoring their sovereignty over the territory of the State of Israel by military means and certainly would not try to do so in the name of the Palestinian people. This inevitable conclusion—following three military defeats (in 1948, 1956, and 1967)—shifted attention from conventional military strength to an alternative mode of activity, namely, an "armed struggle" consisting of terrorist activity. Furthermore, the Fatah leadership saw the West Bank and Gaza under the control of Israel as a "natural" arena for popular guerilla warfare. Although the population in the territories was not overly eager to join the struggle against Israel, the potential of the territories as a platform for the struggle, which would enjoy local grassroots legitimacy, in addition to regional and international legitimacy, remained. This was demonstrated when the popular uprising—what became known as the first intifada—erupted in the West Bank and Gaza some two decades later.

The poor response among the Palestinian population to recruitment efforts, together with the Israeli counter-activity, resulted in the transfer of the Fatah headquarters from the West Bank to Jordan. At that point, Fatah and other Palestinian factions started establishing themselves in the refugee camps of the kingdom and there assumed a "hybrid" nature, i.e., control by a non-state entity of populated territory and involvement in both military and civil activity. Attacks perpetrated against Israel by Fatah across the Jordanian-Israeli border led to a determined Israeli response (Operation Karameh in 1968), yet the very fact that the organization faced the IDF improved its standing in the Palestinian arena. The number of activists who joined Fatah's ranks grew dramatically, as did the popular support, while at

the same time its core leadership began to take shape. As a direct outcome of this development, Fatah was able to take control of the PLO leadership in 1969, proving that it had become the leading actor among the factions within the Palestinian national movement.

The Subsequent Decades (1967–2017)

The '67 Lines as the Basis for an Agreement

The Yom Kippur War (1973) brought the Arab-Israeli conflict to a new stage, characterized by an emphasis on its territorial dimension, rather than on the more far-reaching denial of the very existence of the State of Israel. Egypt went to war in 1973 in order to advance a process that would restore its sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula; Syria sought to restore its control over the Golan Heights; Jordan, for its part, made do with an expeditionary force that fought on the Syrian front. After the war, Egypt and Israel reached a peace agreement, subject to the return of Sinai to Egypt (excluding Gaza). The agreement also granted legitimacy to an Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement that was signed 15 years later. This occurred after a popular uprising began in the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan cut its ties with the West Bank, and direct negotiations began between Israel and the PLO. The dispute between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights has persisted.

Against this background, a regional and international consensus developed on a territorial aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and with it, the borders of an eventual agreement. The '67 lines (or "based on them") were established as the basis for discussion, whether this involved support for political-territorial separation and a two-state solution or full or partial rejection of this option, be it by Israel or the Palestinians.

Upgrade of the PLO Status

"The armed struggle sows and the political struggle reaps," according to Hani al-Hassan, advisor to Yasir Arafat and later the interior minister of the PA. In this slogan, al-Hassan captured the efficacy of the Palestinian strategy. For many years the violent struggle, which was at the center of the policy adopted by Palestinian organizations, including the "mainstream" Fatah-led PLO, scored major achievements. It is this strategy that propelled the Palestinian issue to the headlines and consolidated the PLO's status as the

official Palestinian representative among the Palestinians, throughout the Middle East, and internationally.

When Fatah assumed control of the PLO, the organization was freed of its original status as an agent of the Arab countries. This newly-established independence—however limited due to its need for external support—reinforced the organization's demand to be recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a goal that was reached in 1974 following the Yom Kippur War. The inability to liberate the territories captured by Israel in 1967 by military means led some of the Arab countries to deal with the challenge posed by Israel politically (and economically). The PLO was assigned a role at the forefront of the struggle, as representing an issue whose resolution is a necessary condition for regional peace. However, as per the positions of the Arab countries regarding the Palestinian struggle since its inception, this recognition did not reflect enthusiasm for the activity of the Fatah-led PLO but rather instrumental considerations. Thus, the members of the Arab League exploited the Palestinian issue as the spearhead of their struggle against Israel while competing with one another. At the same time, their recognition of the PLO as representing the Palestinian issue reflected their distinction between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, even though this distinction never developed into a full break. This development was the culmination of a significant stage in the history of the PLO, which began with the end of the Six Day War. Since then, progress toward an Israeli-Palestinian agreement has remained a necessary prerequisite for upgrading the relations between Israel and the more pragmatic Arab states.

Also in 1974, Yasir Arafat, founder of Fatah and Chairman of the PLO, was invited to speak before the UN General Assembly. This invitation signified a trend in the development of the Palestinian national movement that over the years became known as "internationalization." Eventually, this term came to describe the PA's orchestrated diplomatic activity against the background of an ongoing deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian political process, which was intended to mobilize international support for a two-state solution.

Geographic Movement and Strategic Diversification

The enhanced status of the PLO generated a change in the balance between the diverse courses of Fatah's activities. In the late 1980s, cost-benefit considerations led the organization to halt terror activities in the international

arena and focus on violent activity in arenas that were considered legitimate—Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as the borders of Israel. At the same time, activities not directly related to the military infrastructure but that nonetheless earned support for the organization by building up grassroots support gained in importance. In Jordan, and at a later stage in Lebanon, the PLO became the actor primarily responsible for education, employment, and social infrastructure among the Palestinians, certainly much more than other Palestinian organizations. This joined Fatah's military strength, which was superior to that of all the other Palestinian factions combined. Belonging to a Palestinian organization, and in particular Fatah, became the norm in these territorial strongholds, whether out of ideology or due to the circumstances of the reality.

Since the mid-1970s, the PLO has invested much in diplomatic activity with the intent of ensuring its relevance in any potential peace process between Israel and the Arab states. The growing emphasis on social activity and in particular the growing importance of political activity was not echoed by organizations that were part of the opposition to Fatah. The terrorism activity perpetrated by these factions, particularly in the international theater, was often meant to torpedo the PLO's efforts to consolidate its position as the legitimate national representative of the Palestinians and to halt its rise in status in Jordan and Lebanon. These opposition factions scored significant accomplishments as their armed assaults, carried out against the backdrop of local antagonism to the increasingly defiant Palestinian presence, generated a chain of response and counter-response that finally led to the expulsion of the PLO and Fatah from their strongholds in Jordan (in 1970) and Lebanon (in 1982).

Jordan expelled the PLO (and the other Palestinian organizations) following an increase in terror attacks launched from its territory that created a direct threat to the regime and at the same time revealed the limit of the PLO's control over the other Palestinian factions. The immediate motive for the expulsion was the landing of hijacked airplanes in Jordan. This dynamic repeated itself in Lebanon, where the Palestinian organizations relocated after their expulsion from Jordan. Based on the Jordanian experience, these groups, led by Fatah, sought to integrate within the highly factionalized Lebanese political framework and to that end allied themselves with local political bodies and militias. This led to fierce opposition to their presence in the country on the part of Syria, Lebanese Christian factions, and Israel.

The Israeli invasion in 1982, which aimed to dismantle the administrative and military infrastructure of the Palestinian organizations in Lebanon, expel their headquarters from the country, and destroy the political legitimacy of the PLO in the regional and international arenas, put an end to their presence in Lebanon as well. In this case, the immediate trigger for the invasion was the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London by a group belonging to the opposition to Fatah.

The Palestinian attempts to find a replacement for the lost Lebanese stronghold included political coordination with Jordan and even a renewed presence in Lebanon. However, these ventures failed and Fatah again turned to the West Bank. The realization that there was little chance of building a military infrastructure there led the organization to focus on establishing a network of political and social institutions, and its impact on the West Bank population then was greater than that of competing Palestinian factions that were involved in similar endeavors. Nonetheless, at that time it appeared that Fatah's sphere of influence was exhausted and that its development had reached an impasse: Israel and the United States still refused to recognize it and as a result it was left out of the dialogue between Israel and Egypt, even though it included understandings with respect to the Palestinian issue.

This period came to an end in 1987, with the outbreak of the popular uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, which eventually became known as the first intifada. Fatah did not initiate the uprising; on the contrary, in part, it reflected a protest against the PLO for its failure to make progress in ending Israel's control of the territories, no less than the accumulated frustration with the ongoing occupation.

The Political Process Gains Momentum

Toward the end of the first year of the uprising, when the population in the West Bank and Gaza began to exhibit signs of fatigue, the PLO responded to the challenge with a dramatic declaration that enabled the start of a dialogue with the United States—the renouncement of the armed struggle and recognition of the UN partition plan (Resolution 181, passed in 1947). This declaration, in November 1988, essentially diminished the relevance of its traditional objectives, as listed in the 1974 Ten-Point Program, which called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in any part of Mandatory Palestine to be liberated, alongside the denial of Israel's right to exist.

Even then, the erosion of the PLO's status continued, and the fact that it supported Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War lowered its prestige even further. Against this background, the organization agreed that representatives from the territories would join the Jordanian delegation to the talks with Israel as part of the international initiative under American sponsorship for the restabilization of the Middle East—the multilateral talks that followed the Madrid Conference in 1991).

Concurrently, Israel, which was tired of coping with the uprising, arrived at the conclusion that it was no longer possible to keep the Palestinian issue at the margins of public discourse and agreed to allow a delegation from the territories to participate in the regional talks as part of the Jordanian delegation. As a result, and in order to prevent competition from within the territories, the leadership of Fatah/PLO approved a direct dialogue between its representatives and those of Israel, although at this stage it would only be on an informal basis.

In September 1993, after the talks between Israel and the PLO in Oslo became official and public, the two sides reached agreement between them on the principles of an idea that was essentially amorphous, namely the establishment of mutual trust that would make it possible, within five years, to reach agreement on the issues at the core of the conflict. These included borders, including the future of Israeli settlements in the territories and the future of Jerusalem; the Palestinian refugees and their demand for the right of return; security arrangements; and division of resources. The principles that were agreed upon at Oslo formed the basis for the creation in May 1994 of the PA, which was, to a large extent, an organizational transformation of the PLO, since it was based on the founding generation of Fatah. The Oslo Agreements also included the gradual transfer of territories to Palestinian control.

The Oslo understandings reflected a quantum leap in the history of the Palestinian national movement and the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, starting from this point, which was the peak of the process of legitimization of the Palestinian national movement, the trend began to reverse course. The peace negotiations between the sides were drawn out and did not produce significant tangible results; Israel's settlement activity in the territories continued, practically relentlessly; and Palestinian violence led to a delay in the transfer of territory to control of the PA. For its part,

the PA claimed that it was difficult to stop the violence due to the Israeli military and civilian presence in the territories.

In 2000, the second intifada broke out, following the failed effort by the US administration to skip the interim stages of the negotiations between the sides and reach an agreement that would include Israeli-Palestinian understandings regarding the core issues of the conflict. The Israeli demand that the Palestinian representatives agree to an end to the conflict and an end of claims was rejected. The demand that the Palestinians recognize the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people was also refused outright.

The rounds of talks between Israel and the PA emphasized the gaps between the two sides, which if not bridged would prevent the formulation of a peace agreement. As a result, public opposition grew among both the Palestinians and the Israelis to concessions on the conceptual, practical, and security levels that would have both an immediate impact and historical significance. One of the expressions of that opposition was the assassination of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by an Israeli right wing extremist, who sought to protest a policy that involved giving up territory that is part of the land of Israel.

The Palestinian leadership sensed—not unjustifiably—Israeli reluctance to support territorial concessions. After the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, this fear became focused, and is still focused, on Israeli reluctance to carry out a unilateral redeployment in the West Bank. As a result, the motivation and even ability of the PA to enforce a ceasefire among militant factions seeking to block any possibility of a breakthrough in the political process were significantly reduced. The Israeli policy, for its part, has since then been informed by the (likewise justifiable) fear of committing to an agreement with such a high price to Israel and doubt as to whether the PA will be able or willing to fulfil it, particularly its security aspects.

Enter Hamas

Like "independent decisions," the other slogan that underlined unity of the ranks was nothing but an aspiration among the PLO leadership. The Palestinian national movement was never united. The Palestinian militant opposition (which was also factionalized) was determined, out of loyalty to its principles, to block any progress in the peace negotiations between Israel and the PA. This is especially true in the case of the Islamic opposition movement Hamas, which was created in the early days of the first intifada on

the basis of the social-conceptual infrastructure of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip.

The Oslo Accords, which specified the respective commitments of Israel and the PA, essentially defined for the internal Palestinian opposition the domains in which their activity could derail the peace process and immobilize the PA. Hamas therefore began to carry out terror attacks that provoked a massive military response from Israel and thus in effect co-opted it into its campaign against the peace process and against the PA.

The failure of the mainstream Palestinian movement, i.e., the PLO and the PA, to realize the potential inherent in the Oslo Accords weakened its influence. At the same time, the status of Hamas, which sought an "Islamic" solution to the Palestinian plight, strengthened. Following the military takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 by Hamas forces and the expulsion of Fatah personnel from the area, the ideological-strategic gap between the two Palestinian camps expanded into an internecine conflict and a blatant political rift. These developments, which occurred following the Israeli military response to the second intifada, enhanced the weakening of the PA, both on the sociopolitical level and with respect to security. Moreover, the unilateral withdrawal by Israel from Gaza (including the evacuation of settlements) had removed the barriers to the military buildup of Hamas in the region. Furthermore, Hamas won the general elections in the territories in 2006, which were held by the PA in an attempt to restore its public legitimacy.

Since the Hamas takeover of the Strip, the Palestinian political arena has been divided between two different authorities with a clear geographic division: the PA, which controls the West Bank, and Hamas, which controls Gaza. Accordingly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has split into three distinct spheres of dispute: between Israel and the PA, between Israel and Hamas, and between the PA and Hamas.

The Palestinian national movement, and in particular the camp that seeks an agreement with Israel, faces a complex challenge. The internal Palestinian rivalry plays a decisive role in the dynamic of the conflict. Thus, the three rounds of fighting between Israel and Hamas (in 2009, 2012, and 2014), which resulted in a large number of casualties, most of them Palestinian, have left the civilian infrastructures in Gaza in ruins and have demonstrated the potential of violent escalation. At the same time, they have clearly showed the limited control of the PA in the Palestinian domain.

Peace initiatives introduced by Israeli, Palestinian, or international leading figures and institutions have focused on a process that will facilitate a discussion on the core issues or on the principles and content of an agreement. Most of them have minimized the weight of an evident structural characteristic of the Palestinian national movement, i.e., the division in its ranks. Other initiatives have been based on the belief that momentum and progress in the peace process will help stabilize the Palestinian arena. However, efforts to generate a breakthrough in the peace process have failed, in part as a result of the internal Palestinian tension and infighting, which has always included the competition for prestige in the violent struggle against Israel. Moreover, the test of loyalty to the "Palestinian cause" has been the insistence on maximalist demands and objectives. Still, it is highly likely that the lack of progress toward the disengagement between Israel and the Palestinians and the continued Israeli control of the territories cultivates these phenomena further.

From Israel's perspective, both among the public and among decision makers, the intra-Palestinian rivalry, and in particular the ongoing armed struggle, provided legitimacy and opportunities to defer a concrete discussion of the possibilities for a peace agreement. At the same time, the rifts in the Palestinian arena led to a deferral of the discussion in Israel of the social, security, and demographic implications of the political-territorial reality in the sphere of conflict over time.

Fifty Years Later

Fifty years after the Six Day War, the Israeli-Palestinian political process is locked in an extended period of stagnation. Neither the political conditions in the Palestinian arena nor those in Israel encourage any progress toward a dialogue on a settlement, even though there is a clear convergence of interests between Israel and the PA, most of all with respect to security, and in particular with respect to the struggle against Hamas.

Since the PA cannot abandon the two-state idea, which is the political and legal foundation for its existence (Israel cannot abandon its obligations to it either), it has turned to the international theater in an effort to advance Palestinian independence on a path that avoids direct dialogue with Israel. At the same time, an achievement in the international arena could help the PA restore its position at home, in view of the domestic criticism it has received for poor governance, as well as its failures over many years to

reach the ultimate goal of independent statehood. The PA's international efforts have yielded some significant accomplishments, even if they were primarily symbolic, since they have not as yet brought about a situation that will force Israel to relax its positions and/or withdraw from the territories. However, the name of the game is still "two states for two peoples," and in contrast to the political reality prevailing in 1948, the Palestinian issue is currently represented by a national authority. Despite its many weaknesses and its limited control of the territories in dispute with Israel, the PA has fostered a broad regional and international consensus regarding its political and territorial demands.

Alongside the declared commitment to the two-state vision, both sides are contemplating steps, whether temporary or permanent, reflecting the existing reality of non-separation, the inability to return to the negotiating table, and the doubt as to the possibility of implementing an agreement if and when it is reached. In Israel, proposals to improve management of the conflict have been considered, until conditions are ripe for the renewal of negotiations or even thereafter. In this context, proposals have been sounded for independent measures that will lighten the military and political-diplomatic burden of control of the West Bank. Alternatively, there have been proposals for the annexation, at least partial, of territory. On the Palestinian side, alongside the opposition to the two-state idea that is led by Hamas, there is renewed thinking among the mainstream polity in the direction of one state in the whole of the territory of Mandatory Palestine. This echoes the PLO's original strategic objective, in place until its declared recognition of the UN partition plan.

The current political-territorial situation, in particular as background to the annexation of territory to Israel that is proposed by some, and alternatively to a Palestinian abandonment of the two-state solution, may be a sign of historic regression, whose endpoint is the blurring of the 1967 lines and a renewed discourse on the boundaries of the conflict arena, as they were until the end of the 1948 war. This possibility constitutes a major challenge to Israel and its commitment to the vision that led to its creation—a Jewish and democratic state.

Military Perspectives

The Six Day War: The Victory that Spurred a Fixed Mindset

Moshe (Bogie) Ya'alon

Background

The period immediately prior to the Six Day War was marked by anxiety over the State of Israel's ability to survive a war in which it was attacked by the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian militaries, assisted by reinforcements from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and possibly Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. There was a sense of an existential threat to the state, whose narrowest point at the Tulkarm-Netanya line was not more than 14 kilometers wide, and as a result the Israeli leadership attempted repeatedly to avoid the war by diplomatic means. When efforts to do so were exhausted, the IDF launched a preemptive air attack (Operation Moked) against Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq and achieved air superiority, which was a decisive factor in the Israeli victory.

The spectacular and quick victory led to the expansion of Israel's borders to the Jordan River, the liberation of Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, the removal of the Syrian threat from the Golan Heights and the Egyptian threat from the Sinai Peninsula, and the deployment of the IDF on the banks of the Suez Canal. All this contributed to a sense of exhilaration and even euphoria among Israeli society, the IDF command, and the political leadership. The expanded State of Israel after the war hardly resembled the tiny state prior it.

The status of the IDF in the eyes of the Israeli public peaked following the war, to the point that its commanders were idolized and considered "gods." The sense of security among much of the public grew and inspired

the belief that this would be the last war, since it seemed logical that after such a victory the Arabs would not again challenge Israel, and if they did, they would suffer another defeat. This feeling was expressed by General Ezer Weizman, who was the head of the Operations Directorate during the Six Day War:

> I think that the Arabs have a lot of positive characteristics . . . but with respect to their military abilities—that is something else. I am sure that in their education and way of living and in the mentality of their leadership, the time has come that they understand that war is not for them . . . When we are positioned today on the Jordan and on the Suez and on the Golan Heights—I think that for the first time war is preventable . . . It is appropriate to say that peace is a great thing, but the problem is not peace or war, but what do we want in this country? . . .We have never been in such a positive security situation, and the IDF's capability was not diminished in the war, but already today you see Jews here and there who are afraid of other nations. For once we need to stop being afraid of other nations and start to understand that the world is more scared of us, because it recognizes our greatness even more than we do.[1]

This essay argues that the victory in the Six Day War and the subsequent sense of security led to a degree of stagnant political and military thinking in Israel, which later led to the failure of early warning and the military-strategic and operational strategy in the Yom Kippur War. Of the numerous studies and books written about the war, many have dealt with the intelligence surprise, with emphasis on the "conception" that became embedded in the minds of the analysts. Others have related to the "political conception," and some have examined the "military-operational conception."

To anyone who has been involved in war, and certainly anyone who has commanded military battles, it is clear that the conception is a vital component in achieving a common language between the government and the military, and between the military-strategic echelon and the operational and tactical echelons. The complexity of managing a battle, in which there are

1 Ezer Weizman, head of Operations Directorate during the war, interviewed by Geula Cohen, *Maariv* July 14, 1967 [Hebrew].

some ten levels (from the cabinet down to the individual soldier), including coordination and synchronization, is a major challenge that cannot be met without a shared conceptual language. The development of a conception is a crucial means of managing a war event.

At the same time, someone who is involved in the management of a war event must be aware of the very existence of the conception and the imperative to evaluate it constantly, to determine whether its basic assumptions and underlying conditions have changed. This includes, for example, the enemy's order of battle, its abilities, its interests, its goals, and its view of the existing situation. If these have changed, then changes must be made to the conception, sometimes to the point of developing a new one.

There is naturally a reluctance to reexamine the conception, since habit provides a feeling of certainty and confidence. Therefore, it is also difficult to digest information that contradicts the conception and, all the more so, to criticize it or abandon it. Indeed, it is the experience of the old and the familiar that becomes "like riches kept by the owner to his detriment" (*Ecclesiastes* 5:12).

The conception alone is not sufficient to explain the deficiencies that surfaced in the Yom Kippur War. Nonetheless, the blind adherence to the conception illustrates the fixed mindset that prevailed throughout the political and military leadership of Israel before the war. Thus, it was, in fact, the euphoria of the spectacular victory in the Six Day War that led to the cognitive stagnation on the political, military-strategic, and military-operational levels and in turn to the surprise of the Yom Kippur War.

Fixed Political Thinking

There is no doubt that the decision of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat to go to war in 1973 was the result of his understanding that there was no chance of regaining Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula through political means. His attempts to launch a political process with the United States in order to achieve this goal (by means of US Secretary of State William Rogers and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger) failed. Some have claimed that as a result of infighting in the US administration between the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State, the United States did

not give sufficient priority to the Egyptian initiatives.[2] On the other hand, some claim that the political domestic circumstances in Israel did not allow Prime Minister Golda Meir to respond to the Egyptian proposals.[3]

Even today, the question of the Israeli government's responsibility for the fixed mindset is the subject of controversy. In her speech to the closing session of the Knesset some ten weeks prior to the Yom Kippur War, Prime Minister Meir claimed:

> During all the years of my service in the government we did not miss or reject any possibility of serious contact with our neighbors on the issue of peace and the path to achieve it. We made proposals and inquiries about open contacts and even secret contacts, which for obvious reasons I will not describe in public. We responded to every reasonable proposal, even if it had little weight behind it. I will not list the proposals that we responded to until it became clear that they were not serious, that they were like lights going on and off that turned out to be false signals.[4]

Between February and April 1973, there were failed attempts to launch a peace process. Some believed that Israel's military superiority would deter Egypt from going to war even in a situation of no progress toward peace negotiations. Moreover, the Israeli leadership was sure that even if war broke out, Egypt would be so badly defeated that it would subsequently not be able to demand the return of the Sinai.[5] Meanwhile, it was clear among the Israeli leadership that the failure of a peace process would likely lead to war, even if the result would be an Egyptian defeat and important achievements for Israel.[6] Similarly, many senior political and military figures in Israel of

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2 Boaz Vanetik and Zaki Shalom, *The Yom Kippur War: A War that Could Have Been Prevented* (Tel Aviv: Ressling, 2012) [Hebrew].

3 See, for example, Yossi Beilin, *The Price of Unity: The Labor Party up to the Yom Kippur War* (Tel Aviv: Revivim, 1985) [Hebrew].

4 Knesset Records, July 25, 1973, p. 4275 [Hebrew].

5 Sharon Mankovitz, "Political Responses to Peace Initiatives: Israeli Policy toward Egypt, 1969–1973," (PhD thesis, Haifa University, 2005), pp. 147–159. [Hebrew]

6 Uri Bar Yosef, "Historiography of the Yom Kippur War: A Renewed Discussion of the Operational and Intelligence Failure," *Studies in the Establishment of Israel* 23 (2013): 1–31 [Hebrew].

that period felt that a war would look like the "seventh day" of the Six Day War, a prime example of the fixed mindset, or in other words, "preparing for the previous war."

Fixed Military-Strategic and Military-Operational Thinking

In retrospect, and as someone who has tried to "prepare for the next war," I have no doubt that the symptom of preparing for the previous war was prevalent among the IDF leadership in the years following the Six Day War. The spectacular military victory of June 1967 led the military leadership to think in terms of that war and even plan to recreate a similar victory in the next event. The fixed military mindset and the preparation for the last war were reflected in the underestimation of the enemy; in the lack of revision to the security concept and IDF tactics in accordance with the changes on the ground as a result of the Six Day War, first and foremost, Israel's strategic depth and the change in thinking among the Arab armies; and in the translation of the policy of not returning captured territory into a military strategy, thus leading to many unnecessary casualties among the regular army, which had to ensure that the "point of contact was where the enemy was stopped."

A prime example of the attempt to win the next war in the same way that victory was achieved in the Six Day War can be seen in the desire of the IDF leadership to recreate the success of Operation Moked. However, after the Six Day War, there were operational changes in the Egyptian and Syrian militaries, such as the acquisition of effective anti-aircraft systems. These undermined the superiority of the Israeli Air Force and its freedom of action. It appears that there was also a political constraint that did not allow for a preemptive strike similar to that of the Six Day War. At the same time, the ground-to-air missiles in Egypt and Syria and the anti-tank weapons acquired by Egypt were known to Israel and the lacuna was not on the intelligence-technical level but rather in the lack of an up-to-date combat doctrine in the IDF and the neglect of intelligence information on the force buildup.[7]

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7 Gideon Hoshen, "Intelligence for the Development of Weaponry," in *Intelligence and National Security*, ed. Zvi Ofer and Avi Kober (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1987), pp. 527–534 [Hebrew].

Uri Bar Yosef described how before the Yom Kippur War, IDF commanders viewed the success of Operation Moked as follows:

> [It was] an event that more than any other affected the way of thinking in Israel and Egypt regarding the next war. During the subsequent five years, the two sides would view the achievement of Egyptian capability to attack Israeli air bases from the air as the main litmus test—for several analysts in Israel the only one—in assessing the likelihood of an Egyptian initiative to capture the Sinai. [However,] the Egyptians stopped thinking in those terms in the autumn of 1972 and decided to try to offset their air inferiority by other means, primarily the limiting of their territorial objectives. The assessment of the Intelligence Directorate, on the other hand, remained unchanged, and it was convinced that the Egyptians would not go to war unless they achieved the capability to attack deep inside Israel or at least the ability to limit the IDF's freedom of action in the skies of Egypt.[8]

The fixed military mindset was clearly reflected in the IDF's defense concept and in its tactical thinking early in the war. These were appropriate for the border prior to the Six Day War and ignored the most important strategic and operational change from Israel's perspective as a result of that war, namely the creation of strategic depth. The offensive approach, whereby the fighting must be taken to the enemy's territory as quickly as possible while the enemy advances are blocked until the mobilization of reserves (which in part involves preemptive attack), was developed by David Ben-Gurion in order to deal with the IDF's numerical inferiority and the lack of strategic depth. Therefore, it was to be expected that as a result of the change in Israel's borders after the Six Day War, a new defensive strategy would be developed that would exploit the strategic depth in order to withdraw to the extent necessary to control positions in order to halt the enemy attack. Such a defensive doctrine was not developed, and instead "forward defense" was adopted. The policy of no territorial concessions on the political level was translated into its military counterpart, namely "the front line is where the enemy must be stopped." This led to many casualties among the regular

8 Uri Bar Yosef, *The Watchman Fell Asleep* (Lod: Zmora-Bitan, 2001), p. 28 [Hebrew].

army, which, instead of exploiting the strategic depth in order to absorb the Egyptian penetration and reorganize on a new line, had to prevent the penetration or the crossing of the border itself.

The feeling among the IDF leadership that the intelligence early-warning capability could be relied upon and the reserves could be called up in time (as in the Six Day War) also illustrates the lack of understanding of the intelligence and logistics implications of the new strategic depth. The ability to provide early warning was now more limited, since as a result of the proximity of the new border to the enemy's cities its forces were deployed along the border permanently, and in contrast to the period prior to the Six Day War, it was no longer possible to rely on the massive movement of Arab forces from the rear to the front as an indicator of early warning. At the same time, from a logistical viewpoint, there was, in fact, a need to increase the lead time of a warning, since the large amount of captured territory significantly lengthened the supply lines to the front and the time needed to call up the reserves was much longer than in 1967.[9]

Added to the fixed conceptual, strategic, and operational mindset is the underestimation of the fighting ability of the Arab soldier, which was demonstrated again by the performance of the Egyptian and Syrian soldiers during the Six Day War. This assessment was proven wrong in the Yom Kippur War. Henry Kissinger recounted that he heard Defense Minister Moshe Dayan say that he was surprised by "the fanaticism of the Arab fighting" in the Yom Kippur War, which reminded him of "jihad fighters."[10]

The self-confidence of IDF commanders was also reflected in the words of Ariel Sharon, commander of the Southern Command until not long before the Yom Kippur War. Two and a half months prior to the war, he was asked in an interview whether he accepted the opinion of foreign military experts that Israel was a mid-size superpower in global terms. In his answer, Sharon described Israel's military power on the same level as Britain and France. As to the price that Egypt would pay if it started a war, Sharon answered: "A terrible price—terrible! A price that Egypt will not be able to endure. During the Six Day War, Egypt had where to withdraw to—namely, the

9 Hanan Shai, "It is Not the 'Conception': Why did the IDF Fail in the Yom Kippur War?" *Mida*, September 21, 2015, http://goo.gl/s6PIFv [Hebrew].

10 Shlomo Aronson, "The Yom Kippur War – American Documents" in *40 Years After*, ed. Yoram Dinstein and Avraham Zohar (Tel Aviv: Institute for the Study of Israel's Wars, Contento De Semrik, 2013), p. 74 [Hebrew].

Canal. In the next war, the line of retreat will be Cairo. They have no other line. And that will involve terrible destruction in Egypt. Total destruction. That is unnecessary in my view. We don't need this. But we will never go back to the War of Attrition, even though we won it. The Egyptians will receive a terrible blow."[11]

General (res.) Meir Amit claimed after the Yom Kippur War that the roots of the failure early in the war were a result of the fact that "all of us built for ourselves a situation or stance or approach of exaggerated self-confidence, of a feeling of power, of 'me and nothing else.'"[12] A similar conclusion was reached by Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, who claimed that an atmosphere of exaggerated self-confidence—the rotten fruit of the Six Day War—caused the military and political leadership in Israel not to understand correctly the significance of the changes that occurred in the Egyptian and Syrian armies between the wars. This created the conceptual deficiency in the understanding of the significance of the balance of forces on the frontline prior to the Yom Kippur War.[13]

The premise that the IDF leadership thought of the next war as the "seventh day" of the Six Day War is apparently correct. This was a convenient approach, and it made it easy to ignore the development of the Arab armies and their arms buildup, particularly in the case of the Egyptian army, as well as the development of military thinking on the other side and Sadat's adoption of a strategically limited war whose goal was to initiate a peace process.

Naturally, all this had an effect on the intelligence assessment as well. Nonetheless, the surprise of the Yom Kippur War should not be viewed only as an intelligence failure but also a strategic and operational failure that was the result of the fixed conceptual mindset, which was undoubtedly rooted in the spectacular victory of the Six Day War. After that victory, the necessary lessons were ignored and there were no revisions of the security concept and IDF tactics. The lack of the necessary intelligence-operational discourse encouraged adherence to an outdated offensive strategy and emphasis on

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11 Ariel Sharon in an interview with Dov Goldstein, *Maariv*, July 20, 1973 [Hebrew].

12 Quoted from Hanon Bartov, *Dado – 48 Years and 20 Days* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 2002), p. 247 [Hebrew].

13 Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), pp. 124–125.

a preemptive strike like Operation Moked, which proved irrelevant in the unique circumstances of the Yom Kippur War.[14]

The problem of deficient planning was made clear by Mordecai Gazit, the Director of the Prime Minister's Office during the Yom Kippur War. He claimed that the IDF's operational premise—whereby it would be able to repel or at least stop any attack, even on two fronts such as Egypt and Syria, and even if the attack was simultaneous and a surprise—rested on the feeling of depth that the post-Six Day War borders had created.[15] This planning assumption was proven wrong in the Yom Kippur War, in part as a result of the fact that the policy of no territorial concessions and a forward defense line essentially neutralized the structural advantage provided by the strategic depth of the new borders. Colonel (res.) Yaakov Hasdai, who was a researcher in the Agranat Commission, believed that the deficiencies of the IDF in the Yom Kippur War were not, in fact, the result of the surprise (which was due to the intelligence failure) but rather the reduced standard of military thinking.[16]

Conclusion

Against the background of the conceptual failures that led to the intelligence, strategic, and operational surprise in the Yom Kippur War, it is, in fact, the Israeli victory of the 1973 war that stands out. This victory can be attributed to the bravery, determination, and professionalism of the fighters on the battlefield. Nonetheless, several important lessons from this bitter experience remain:

a. There is a need to avoid euphoria and complacency after a victory.
b. There is a need to avoid a fixed mindset as a result of success, which is liable to lead to "preparing for the previous war." Instead, attention

14 Itai Brun, *Intelligence Research—Understanding Reality in an Era of Change* (Glilot: Israeli Intelligence Heritage Center, The Institute for Study of Intelligence and Policy, 2015) [Hebrew].

15 Mordecai Gazit, "Was it Possible to Prevent the War?" in *The Yom Kippur War: A New Perspective*, ed. Haim Ofez and Yaakov Bar Siman Tov (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, The Public Relations Center, 1999), p. 12 [Hebrew].

16 Yaakov Hasdai, *Truth in the Shadow of War* (Zmora-Bitan Modan, 1978), pp. 10–23 [Hebrew].

should be devoted to studying and revising the security concept and IDF strategy in view of the changing reality and its characteristics.

c. There should be ongoing discourse between the government and the military and within the military establishment, as well as between the various hierarchical levels, while always questioning the familiar and entrenched conception, based on the knowledge that the only thing in life that does not change is that things change.

A reality of frequent changes on the various levels—geopolitical, economic, social, and technological—requires conceptual renewal, the encouragement of a critical organizational culture, and the challenge of what is familiar and accepted at all levels, as well as encouragement of creative thinking in both the government and the army. Such an organizational culture has the power to prevent failures, such as that in the early stages of the Yom Kippur War, and to ensure the achievement of goals in every battle, as in the Six Day War.

The Effect of the Six Day War on Arab Security Concepts

Ephraim Kam

Background

The Six Day War ended with a resounding military defeat for the Arab states. Indeed, in Israel's War of Independence, the Arab armies failed in their efforts to stop the creation of the State of Israel, which at the end of the war held a larger area than it had been allotted by the UN Partition Plan. However, the Arab armies at that time were weak, and the lack of agreement among the Arab countries, which were ruled by the old regimes, prevented effective cooperation between them. In the 1956 Sinai Campaign, the Egyptian army was defeated and the entire Sinai Peninsula fell to the IDF within four days. Yet in all fairness to the Egyptian army, it was forced to fight simultaneously against British and French forces that had penetrated into the northern Suez Canal.

In contrast to these two conflicts, the Six Day War was a total military failure for the Arabs. Within six days, the three most powerful Arab armies were defeated; the IDF captured large expanses of territory from three Arab countries; and the State of Israel now possessed natural borders—the Suez Canal, the Jordan River, and the Golan Heights—while creating a threat to the strategic depth of the Arab countries. This time there were no justifications for defeat: The Egyptian army was a product of the Free Officers Movement; the Egyptian and Syrian armies were equipped with up-to-date Soviet weapons; and since 1964, there was a joint Arab command and initial cooperation between the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, with

an Egyptian commander in charge of the eastern front. Although in both 1949 and 1956 Israel captured Egyptian territory, these areas were returned to Egypt within a few months. This time, it would take years (and the Yom Kippur War) until the Sinai Peninsula was returned, and until today the Golan Heights and the West Bank remain under Israeli control.

This time, the Arab leadership did not try to embellish the reality. The shock of the defeat in the Six Day War forced the leaderships of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan to admit their failure and reexamine their security concepts; consider how they were applied before and during the war; and reevaluate their attitudes to Israel, the Arab world, and the superpowers. Common to the three countries were two main changes in their security concepts. First, in their view, the results of the war increased the Israeli threat, particularly in light of the surprising speed of the Israeli victory on the three fronts; Israel's air superiority, which left the Arab armies unable to respond and saddled them with a sense of helplessness; and the new deployment of the IDF forces, which reduced the Arab threat against Israel, gave Israel strategic depth, and increased the Israeli threat against Arab strategic targets. The second change was that Arab leaders were convinced that Israel had achieved overall military superiority over every Arab country and over every relevant coalition of Arab states. This sense, which began to form already in the 1950s following the Sinai Campaign, became even stronger as a result of the growing commitment of the United States to the existence and security of Israel, which since the early 1960s was also reflected in the supply of American weaponry. This understanding led to a less ambitious Arab objective with regard to Israel. Thus, whereas until the mid-1960s Arab leaders defined their objective as the "elimination of the 1948 outcome," i.e., the destruction of the State of Israel, after the Six Day War, their defined objective was the "elimination of the 1967 outcome," or in other words, the return of the territory captured by Israel in that war.

This essay seeks to examine the effects of the Arab defeat in the Six Day War on the security concepts of the three main countries that took part in the war: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The focus is on changes that occurred in their perception of the Israeli threat; in the definition of their strategic objectives, primarily with respect to Israel; and in the response that they sought to construct with respect to Israel, including their ability to rely on the Arab world and the superpowers.

The Implications for Egypt's Security Concept

Egypt suffered the worst defeat in the Six Day War, the second war in which the entire Sinai Peninsula had been captured by Israel. However, while in 1956 international pressure led to a rapid resolution whereby Sinai was returned to Egypt in exchange for its demilitarization, in 1967 it was not possible to reach such a resolution. Israel was prepared to withdraw from Sinai only in exchange for a peace agreement, and the United States refrained from pressuring Israel to make concessions, since it was Egypt that undermined the previous arrangement. Other channels were likewise closed to Egypt: Its army was not prepared for an all-out war against Israel with the goal of forcing it to withdraw from Sinai, or even for a limited engagement.[1] On the other hand, Nasser had ruled out making peace with Israel, and it was clear that this option could not be considered after such a humiliating defeat. Yet as leader of the Arab world, Nasser could not allow himself to refrain from any type of military confrontation with Israel, as Jordan and Syria did during the initial period following the war.

Nasser was forced to choose a way that was summed up as "what was taken with force will be returned by force." The statement ruled out both a negotiated solution with Israel and a policy of passivity. However, any military option had to overcome serious problems. The Egyptian army had lost much of its weaponry in the war; it suffered extensive casualties; and no less important, its fighting spirit was broken. The Egyptian leadership had also lost much of its potency: Nasser after 1967 was not the same Nasser; his minister of war committed suicide; and senior officers were put on military trial for their behavior during the war. Another major problem facing Egypt was that any military effort to capture Sinai, or parts of it, would involve crossing a major water barrier, i.e., the Suez Canal, a feat that even more experienced armies would find difficult and at this point was beyond the capability of the Egyptian army.

These considerations led the Egyptian command to decide on a limited military move, which would not require crossing the canal, but would begin to rebuild Egyptian military power, renew the Egyptian army's fighting spirit, and wear down the IDF. The operation had four stages: (a) the "firm stance" stage (June 1967–August 1968), during which the Egyptian army

1 Saad al-Din el Shazli, *Crossing the Canal* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1987), pp. 11–17 [Hebrew].

aimed to restore its capability and strengthen the defensive positions on the west side of the Suez Canal, while in general maintaining quiet on the front; (b) the "active defense" stage (September 1968–February 1969), in which the Egyptian army opened fire from across the canal in order to cause IDF casualties; (c) a war of attrition (March 1969–August 1970), which aimed to cause heavy IDF casualties and strengthen the Egyptian army's fighting spirit and its self-confidence; and (d) preparations for war (August 1970–October 1973), in which the Egyptian army would prepare for crossing the canal and destroying the Bar Lev Line.[2]

There was disagreement among the Egyptian leadership as to the value of the War of Attrition, primarily since Israel had, during the war, managed to surprise the Egyptians by attacking deep within its territory. This changed the balance of power and forced Egypt to request the Soviet Union to send squadrons of fighter aircraft and air defense systems manned by Russian teams in order to bolster the defense of the Egyptian rear. Others in the Egyptian leadership viewed the War of Attrition as essential since it demonstrated Egypt's determination and made a critical contribution to the preparation for war in 1973.[3]

The Six Day War was an important contribution to Egypt's realization of the problematic nature of military cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Arab world. Egypt's military reliance on the Soviet Union began in 1955 and ended in 1974 when Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, began moving toward the United States as part of a comprehensive strategic policy change. The turn westward was seen more clearly after the Yom Kippur War, but its origins can be found already in the Six Day War. The Soviet Union was unable to deter Israel from going to war against two of its allies, Egypt and Syria; it was not able to prevent the defeat of the two Arab armies during the war; and it did not make any real effort to have the captured territory returned to Arab hands. Egypt still maintained a close military relationship with the Soviet Union until after the Yom Kippur war, since it needed Soviet military assistance in order to rehabilitate its army, but when that need became less important, it made the final turn toward the United States.

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2 Abed al-Ghani el-Gamasi, *The Memoir of el-Gamasi: The October War 1973* (Internal Publication, Intelligence Corps, IDF, 1994) [Hebrew].

3 Ibid., pp. 97, 105.

The Six Day War also affected Egypt's view of its role in the Arab world. Since 1964, Egypt had tried to build a pan-Arab military coalition, led by a joint command, with the objectives of fostering cooperation, division of efforts, and coordination between the Arab armies against Israel. The test of this coalition was the Six Day War, and it failed. Although toward the Yom Kippur War, another effort was made to carry out a coordinated military move against Israel on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts (during the war, Iraqi and Jordanian forces reinforced the Syrian front when it was in need), during the war, however, the lack of coordination, the conflicting interests, and the lack of trust between the Arab armies was evident. This cooperation, with all of its shortcomings, was the last sign of the joint pan-Arab effort, and no such attempts have been made since.

There were several reasons for the failure of the collective Arab effort since the Six Day War: the crushing defeat of the Arab armies during the war; the lack of a joint military command for the three fronts before and after the war; Nasser's loss of prestige in the Arab world following the war; the separate efforts by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan to regain their territory;[4] Jordan's lack of interest in another war against Israel; the preoccupation of Iraq in the war against Iran starting in 1980; and above all Egypt's change in strategy under Sadat in the conflict with Israel, which in the end led to the signing of a bilateral peace treaty.

There were several motives behind Sadat's decision to abandon the path of war and to sign a peace treaty, which had to do with his personality and his world outlook. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize the contribution of the two wars—the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War—to his decision. The Six Day War convinced Sadat that Israel's military and technological superiority prevented the Arab armies from defeating it on the battlefield, while the Yom Kippur War convinced him that even a limited military campaign, under the best possible conditions, could produce only limited success (the Syrian effort in that war was a complete failure). Nonetheless, the Yom Kippur War restored Egypt's self-respect, which had been lost in the Six Day War, and enabled it to make peace with Israel not from a position of humiliation.

4 Ibid., pp. 112, 140.

The Implications for Syria's Security Concept

For Syria, the Six Day War caused a major reversal. Until the war, the Syrian deployment on the Golan Heights presented a threat to northern Israel, which involved both the threat of invasion in time of war and the threat, sometimes realized, of artillery fire on the northern settlements. This situation also limited the ability of the IDF to threaten Syria and to deter it from aggressive moves. Israel's capture of the Golan Heights not only removed the Syrian threat from the north of Israel but also created an Israeli threat to Damascus and its environs.

Israel's ability to deter Syria as a result of its control of the Golan Heights was reflected in Syrian policy. Like Egypt under Nasser, Syria advocated a military solution to the conflict with Israel and ruled out any negotiated settlement. However, the weakness of the Syrian army did not allow it to recapture the Golan Heights by military means, and Syria never went to war against Israel without Egypt.

Until early 1969, the Syrian border was quieter than Israel's other borders, and the primary military activity on the Golan Heights involved infiltrations by terrorists from al-Saiqa, a Palestinian organization connected to the Syrian regime. The Syrian army was mainly occupied with rebuilding its defensive ability around Damascus and launching the development of an offensive ability. From early 1969, there were increasing numbers of terrorist attacks on the Golan Heights, and from the summer of that year, the Syrian army also started to heat up the border, following a decision made at a meeting of the Arab chiefs of staff.[5]

When Hafez el-Assad came to power in November 1970, Syria took a new approach, which mainly involved the creation of a pan-Arab front for war against Israel. In this framework, the Syrian army became much stronger, including with the large scale acquisition of arms from the Soviet Union and assistance from Soviet advisors. In parallel, it began preparing for war. Thus, in 1971 plans began for a joint Egyptian-Syrian attack, on the basis of a coordinated effort on two fronts. The planning led to the decision of

5 Moshe Dayan, *Milestones* (Jerusalem: Idanim, Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1976), p. 549 [Hebrew].

both countries, in February 1973, to carry out a coordinated attack, where Syria's goal was to regain all of the Golan Heights.[6]

While Egypt began to change its strategy after the Six Day War and completed the change after the Yom Kippur War, Syria did not follow suit. Its military weakness and the Israeli threat to the Damascus environs led it to the conclusion that it would be better not to act alone in order to recapture the Golan. Nor did the Syrian regime limit its relations with the Soviet Union, essentially until the Soviet collapse in 1989–1991, even though the Soviet Union opposed any Arab military move to regain Arab territories captured in 1967 and refused some of the Arab requests to purchase arms.[7] Furthermore, Syria refused to join Sadat's peace initiative in 1977. Only in the 1990s, after Syria found itself without any Arab or superpower allies, did it show any willingness to negotiate with Israel for the return of the Golan. However, this effort did not lead to the closing of the gaps between the sides, primarily regarding the future border between them.

The Implications for Jordan's Security Concept

Jordan was dragged into the Six Day War against its will and against its own interests, as a result of pressure from Nasser, the fear of internal unrest, insufficient understanding of the critical situation on the Egyptian front, and a mistaken assessment of the military balance with Israel and the IDF's operational possibilities on the Jordanian front. The immediate objective of the Jordanian regime at the end of the fighting was to regain the West Bank. However, from the outset, it was clear to Jordan that the return of the West Bank by military means was not practical, neither in the short run nor in the long run, not by a pan-Arab effort, and certainly not an operation by Jordan alone, after Israel had just demonstrated its military superiority. Based on this assumption Jordan occupied itself in rehabilitating its army for defensive purposes, in part in view of the fear in Amman after the war that Israel would try to capture additional territory in the Kingdom on the east side of the Jordan and primarily in the northern part of the East Bank. At the same time, Jordan needed to improve its ability to deal with Arab enemies,

6 Danny Asher, ed., *The Syrians on the Fences* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 2008), pp. 17–18, 22 [Hebrew].

7 Gamasi, *Memoirs of el-Gamasi*, p. 121.

mainly Syria and Palestinian organizations that had set up strongholds in various regions of the Kingdom since 1967.

Thus, Jordan never attempted to construct a military offensive option in order to regain the West Bank, nor was it asked to do so by Egypt or Syria. The relations between King Hussein and Nasser, which were tense before the Six Day War, improved to a great extent subsequently, since Nasser was grateful to the king for joining him in the fighting on the morning of June 5 and having paid a high price for doing so. The Egyptian respect for Jordan's participation, which also contributed to Jordan's status in the Arab world, alongside recognition of the Jordanian army's weakness, led to the situation in the autumn of 1973 in which Egypt and Syria refrained from putting pressure on Jordan to join them in the Yom Kippur War.

In view of the lack of a military option, King Hussein tried to promote a negotiated settlement that would return most of the West Bank to Jordan. The effort relied on three elements: American mediation; Egyptian support; and the secret diplomatic channel that existed with Israel. Hussein's proposal was to create an arrangement based on the return of the West Bank, with small modifications of the border made on a mutual basis. In the end, this effort failed since the gap between Jordan and Israel remained too large.

As time passed, a number of developments led Hussein to understand that the West Bank would not return to Jordanian control: The Jordanian regime increasingly lost the support of the traditional power brokers in the West Bank for continuing the relationship with Jordan; the Palestinian organizations, led by Fatah, gained power on both sides of the Jordan River and competed with Jordan for stature; and there was growing influence among the Jordanian leadership of individuals who, in contrast to the king's opinion, preferred to give up the West Bank and build a more homogeneous kingdom on the East Bank. These developments compounded the fact that the Arab world never supported the rule of the Hashemite Kingdom in the West Bank. Hussein tried again in 1972 to propose a plan for Jordanian-Palestinian federation, but it did not gain the support of the Arab world or the Palestinians. In July 1988, the king came to the conclusion that he must abandon the West Bank and declared the end of Jordan's responsibility there.

The loss of the West Bank in the end was outweighed by the benefit in terms of security and internal stability. This is primarily due to the fact that its annexation in 1949 was a burden on the Hashemite Kingdom, and the addition of its population—all of it Palestinian—to the Kingdom upset

Jordan's demographic balance. The increasing strength of the Palestinian organizations from 1965 endangered the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom, and had it continued to rule the West Bank, it was not guaranteed that Jordan could have held on to it over time. Its participation in the Six Day War and its separation from the West Bank helped improve the Kingdom's position in the Arab world, and after 1967 the charge that Jordan is an artificial creation without any inherent right to exist was sounded less often. Furthermore, the presence of the Jordanian army in the West Bank until 1967 contributed to recurring confrontations with the IDF. The end of its presence in the West Bank, and subsequently the repression of the Palestinian organizations in Jordan in late 1970, led to peaceful coexistence between Jordan and Israel, which was highlighted by King Hussein's decision in 1994 to follow in the footsteps of Egypt and sign a peace agreement with Israel.

The Pan-Arab Coalition

The Six Day war led to two additional changes in Arab strategy. The first was the role of pan-Arab unity in the conflict with Israel. After the Arab world failed in its efforts to prevent the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Egypt tried in the 1960s to build a pan-Arab alliance under its leadership that would provide a response to Israel's capabilities. This attempt essentially met with failure in the Six Day War, and even in the Yom Kippur War, its success was limited primarily to the war's opening stages. Subsequent to 1973 (and until today), there were no further attempts to build a united pan-Arab coalition against Israel.

The Six Day War contributed to the disillusionment of the Arab countries with the superpowers' willingness to assist them in the struggle against Israel. This was specifically the result of the Soviet Union's limited willingness and ability to provide assistance to Egypt and Syria during the war, in part because events proceeded too quickly for it to intervene in the conflict beyond the supply of arms. Presumably the Soviet Union was hesitant to become overly involved in the Six Day War in order to avoid a confrontation with Israel and perhaps even the United States. Only later, during the War of Attrition of 1969–1970, did the Soviet Union expand its intervention to assist Egypt by sending fighter squadrons and air defense systems manned by Soviet teams in order to protect the Egyptian home front. Yet even these efforts were insufficient in Sadat's view, and as a result he decided to remove the Soviet presence from Egypt in the summer of 1972. Following

the short-lived fighting in the West Bank, Jordan also came to realize that while it was in conflict with Israel, the United States would refrain from intervening against Israel.

Conclusion

A war is one of the prime reasons for important changes in strategy among the sides in a conflict and among other relevant actors, and all the more so in the case of the Six Day War, which had such dramatic outcomes, both for Israel and the Arab participants. Since the war ended in a crushing Arab defeat, which even the Arab leaders acknowledged, they understood that the Arab pre-war security concept was lacking and misdirected, and therefore its main components had to be changed.

The Six Day War led to major changes in the strategies of the three main Arab participants. Of the two most important changes, the first is the Arab recognition of Israel's military and technological superiority over the Arab countries, which prevents them from destroying it. This recognition finally led Egypt and Jordan to sign peace agreements with Israel, which also required significant revisions of their strategies. The crushing defeat in the Six Day War and the willingness of Egypt and Jordan to change their relationship with Israel led Syria to also change its strategy. Thus, particularly after the Yom Kippur War, Syria maintained quiet on the border with the Golan Heights and later even tried to arrive at a negotiated settlement with Israel.

The second change in the strategies of the Arab countries was a result of the loss of territory in the Six Day War. Egypt lost the Sinai Peninsula and only regained it through a peace agreement with Israel; the Golan Heights remains under Israeli control even after fifty years, and it is questionable under what conditions it might be returned, if at all; and the West Bank will not return to Jordanian control even if its fate is settled in a negotiated settlement, since the Kingdom relinquished its responsibility for the West Bank in 1988. Clearly, the states that lost territory in the war have been forced to reexamine their security concepts, just as the peace treaty with Egypt forced it to reconstruct its security concept.

Thus in examining the evolution of the Arab security concepts, it is not correct to consider the effects of the Six Day War on their own. The war initiated a continuum of major developments, which continued for more than two decades and influenced the evolution of Arab strategy. Among these were two additional wars, two peace processes, and changes in the Arab

world and the involvement of the superpowers in the Middle East. Even after these events, additional waves of events influenced the Arab security concepts, such as the rise of the Iranian threat, the three wars in the Gulf, and the upheaval that began with the Arab Spring. Nonetheless, among all these, the Six Day War was undoubtedly fundamental in determining the security concepts of the Arab states that were involved in it, as well as that of Israel.

IDF Force Buildup since the Six Day War

Gabi Siboni and Gal Perl Finkel

Background

In 2004, Moshe Ya'alon, then chief of the IDF General Staff, commented that "the processes of force buildup and operation are interconnected, both in day-to-day activity and in preparing the response necessary for the long term. The IDF must address the difficulties inherent in the need to develop multidimensional capabilities, in view of the multiple scenarios that it must be prepared for at any given moment (fighting on a number of fronts, a limited confrontation, the threat of high-trajectory fire, non-conventional threats, cyber threats, and other relevant threats). A process of force buildup that is not useful in day-to-day warfare but only in the long term reduces the IDF's ability to develop an effective response to tasks that it must carry out in the present."[1] This principle also applies today. However, it appears that in recent years the process of force buildup has focused more on the development and acquisition of weapons and technological abilities and less on the intellectual development of fighting doctrines that are based on creativity, stratagem, and daring.

1 Yaakov Zigdon, *Studies in the Theory of Military Force Buildup* (Holon: IDF Command and Staff College, 2004), p. 11 [Hebrew].

Military Force Buildup

The main challenge in force buildup is to create a military response to current and future threats, where the greatest challenge is the need to characterize future threats and, in turn, the manner in which to apply the necessary force. The starting point of military force buildup must be based on the national security strategy and the national security policy, from which the IDF strategy is derived. It is this strategy that governs the force buildup in light of the operational needs in the various theaters. The force buildup is a prolonged and continuous process and is based on the structure and capabilities of the existing army (both for reasons of cost efficiency and because the use of that force can also occur during the buildup). It is undertaken with awareness of opportunities, threats, and political risks and considers budget constraints (a good example is the peace agreement with Egypt, which made it possible, over the long run, for the IDF to significantly cut its forces). The endpoint of that process is, of course, the use of that force.[2]

Six principal elements characterize force buildup: combat doctrines and concepts; weapons; manpower; organization of the fighting force; military infrastructures; and training, preparation, and exercises.[3] As technology developed, armies found themselves relying more heavily on technological means. Nonetheless, according to Douglas Macgregor, an American military theoretician who served for many years in the Armored Corps of the US army, the changes in military force and their modification to meet new challenges "are not the result only of technology; they are the result of joint development of new systemic thinking, new organizational structures, and new leadership behavior, accompanied by this new technology."[4]

The Six Day War offers a unique perspective on the IDF's force buildup prior to 1967 and the way that force was used during the war. The IDF has changed dramatically since then, and deciding on the direction force buildup should take, in view of the changing threats, constitutes a major challenge. Therefore, it is worthwhile examining what can be learned from the force buildup that preceded the Six Day War.

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2 Ibid., pp. 33–37.

3 Allon Claus, "The IDF's Force Buildup: Transition to Planning Initiative," *Maarachot* 461 (June 2015): 19 [Hebrew].

4 Douglas Macgregor, *Transformation under Fire* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2011), pp. 48–49 [Hebrew].

General Rupert Smith, who served in the British Parachute Regiment and commanded an armored division in the 1991 Gulf War, wrote that "armies do not prepare for the last war, but usually prepare for the wrong war." Smith based this claim on the willingness of governments to allocate resources only to meet the principal threat, while the nature of the enemy is to identify the opponent's weak points and avoid contact with its strong points.[5] Smith contends that the IDF's high level of preparedness for the Six Day War is an exception to the rule, since the buildup of force before the war correctly anticipated its characteristics and the needs of the army during the war.[6]

Force Buildup prior to the Six Day War

The buildup of land forces that preceded the Six Day War was initiated primarily by the General Staff as part of its responsibility for the operation of land forces, and was influenced by the lessons learned from the Sinai Campaign in 1956. These lessons were examined by a committee headed by General Haim Laskov, who concluded that "in the future, the IDF's main destructive power should be composed of armored brigades . . . The days in which paratroopers and infantry fight alone are apparently over."[7] As a direct extension of this, in 1960, General Yitzhak Rabin, then head of the Operations Directorate, concluded that the commanders of the armored corps should be educated to become dynamic leaders who take initiative and are less dependent on their superiors in deciding a course of action.[8]

One of the main changes in the force buildup process had to do with the concept of operational plans. In the years before the Sinai Campaign, the IDF did not connect the operational plan directly to force buildup. This was due to many factors, including budget constraints, purchasing sources and manpower considerations, restrictions on acquisitions from various countries, and a lack of calm in the security situation.[9] The change in approach occurred

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5 Rupert Smith, *Utility of Force* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot Publishing, 2011), p. 10 [Hebrew].

6 Ibid., p. 227.

7 Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Ben Shemen: Modan and Maarachot, 2015), p. 164 [Hebrew].

8 Ibid., p. 165.

9 Zeev Elron, *Toward a Second Round* (Ben Shemen: Modan and Maarachot, 2016), pp. 385–393 [Hebrew].

in early 1960, when Rabin decided that "there was a need to formulate an operational doctrine that would shape the force structure."[10] From that point onward, it appears that the IDF's force buildup was derived from the operational plans. However, the first signs of this were already evident in the Bnei Yaakov multi-year plan in 1958, which characterized the next war as one that would be over quickly and would require the IDF to achieve a rapid and decisive victory, with an early switch from defense to attack (involving a calculated risk). In doing so, the IDF would exploit its advantage by means of speed and concentration of power. This plan required intense development of the air force's attack capabilities, the armored corps, and the airborne infantry.[11]

In 1964, Rabin was appointed chief of staff. Upon his appointment, he began to accelerate force buildup, equipment, and training, with the goal of preparing the IDF for the next war. Under his leadership, the General Staff attributed much importance to direct involvement in the preparation of the fighting force. Therefore, and as part of the force buildup, the IDF's Instruction Directorate, headed by General Zvi Zamir, worked to revise the training of units according to the operational plans. This occurred after intelligence information led to the understanding that the Egyptian and Syrian armies had switched to defensive formations based on the Soviet doctrine, a development that required a revision of IDF strategy. Although these changes were opposed by some IDF field commanders, due to the central role played by the General Staff in determining the framework of training and in particular the Instruction Directorate's control of training budgets, the necessary changes in training were successfully instituted.[12] The revision of the combat doctrine according to the strategy of the Egyptian and Syrian armies likewise continued during the tenure of General Ariel Sharon as head of the Instruction Directorate.[13]

The buildup of force essentially had two components: the buildup of power, which consisted of the acquisition of equipment and the training of

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10 Yitzhak Rabin and Dov Goldstein, *Service Record* (Bat Yam: Sifriat Maariv, 1979), p. 101 [Hebrew].

11 Yitzhak Greenberg, *Budgets and Power* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1997), pp. 103–104 [Hebrew].

12 Zvi Zamir and Efrat Mass, *With Open Eyes* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 2011), pp. 46–52 [Hebrew].

13 David Landau, *Arik* (Or Yehuda: Dvir, 2015), p. 53 [Hebrew].

the forces on the fighting platforms; and the development of commanders and of strategic thinking, i.e., the ability of the commanders to plan and carry out maneuvers while using strategies of "indirect approach" and undermining the equilibrium of the enemy. The IDF at that time was based primarily on the reserve forces as its main destructive power, while the regular army was intended primarily for ongoing security tasks, and more importantly, the training of the reserve forces in military skills. Since the IDF is not a professional army but rather is based on conscription and reserves, it did not then have a well-developed framework for training its officers. Therefore, the combat experience obtained by the commanders in the War of Independence and the Sinai Campaign played an essential role in the preparation for the next war.

The main effort was focused on the buildup of armored and mobile forces, particularly by increasing the number of tanks, especially those from France and Britain (but also those from the United States). In addition, it was decided to increase the size of the airborne units, which were viewed as a high quality force even when not airborne. According to Rabin, the forces were in practice divided "into two types: defensive and offensive, which are differentiated qualitatively by the allocation of manpower and resources to each."[14] With respect to the ground forces, emphasis was placed on training in an integrated format: armor, engineering, infantry, and artillery.

During the years prior to the Six Day War, the Paratroopers Brigade under the command of Rafael (Raful) Eitan held numerous integrated exercises together with armored forces, in which they trained for fighting deep in enemy territory, along the lines of the Sinai Campaign. According to Eitan, there was an effort to "nurture [in the Paratroopers Brigade] resourcefulness in situations when units are completely alone and cut off, since they are the paratroopers and that is their mission. They parachute in or are landed from the sea behind enemy lines, and are sometimes completely cut off from other forces, are cut off from any supplies of equipment and food, and must fight to achieve results even under these difficult conditions."[15] There was also emphasis on the development of commanders at all levels and training for

14 Rabin and Goldstein, *Service Record*, pp. 131–132.

15 Rafael Eitan and Dov Goldstein, *Story of a Soldier* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Maariv), pp. 84–97 [Hebrew].

command over fighting formations, including brigades and divisions.[16] Rabin, as a veteran of the Palmach, emphasized the importance of "quick decision-making and the ability to plan and execute orders on the move—capabilities required for mobile warfare and commanding a mission."[17]

The air force, for its part, prepared to attain air superiority quickly, so that it could support the land and naval forces as soon as possible. Already in 1951, David Ben-Gurion, then prime minister and minister of defense, wrote to Chief of General Staff Yigal Yadin that the air force "immediately, with the start of fighting, had to be able to deal a decisive blow to the enemy where it is concentrated, and first and foremost its air bases."[18] The air force began preparing for an attack as part of the preparations for Operation Kadesh, but Ben-Gurion decided not to carry it out. In 1962, the air force prepared a report that concluded that Israel could not allow itself to sustain a major air attack, and therefore in the case of an escalation in the security situation it must launch a preemptive attack to eliminate the ability of the enemy to do so. On the instructions of General Ezer Weizman, then commander of the Air Force, a plan was put together for a preemptive strike that would paralyze the enemy's air forces and focus on attacking their air bases. This plan, which eventually became known by its code name, "Moked," was the blueprint for the air force's force buildup. The air force determined which pilots were most suited to participate in the attack, and during their training emphasis was placed on air battles and attacks on airports.[19] In addition, the air force received French fighter aircraft, including the Mirage.

The buildup of the air force focused on the need for multi-tasking, since the pilots would have to attack runways deep in enemy territory and then return to base to quickly rearm and support the ground forces. The air force's ground crews were put together and trained accordingly, so that they could rapidly arm and equip a plane. Giora Romm, a fighter pilot, recounted that

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16 From an interview with General Yeshayahu Gavish, INSS, Tel Aviv, September 3, 2015.

17 Eitan Shamir, *Commanding a Mission* (Modan and Maarachot, 2014), p. 100 [Hebrew].

18 Amir Oren, *Leader of the Air Force: Ezer Weizman and the Way to "Moked"* (Kinneret Academic College, 2015) [Hebrew].

19 Ibid., pp. 20–23.

"although the enemy aircraft on paper had numerical superiority, in practice we could put more planes in the air."[20]

The IDF's preparations bore fruit during the Six Day War, when it became clear that the forces were well prepared for the missions they had been assigned. A good example is Operation Moked, the successful attack by the Israeli air force on the air forces of Egypt and Syria.[21] During the war, the air force for the first time fulfilled its designated mission when it decisively destroyed the enemy air forces and thus "brought the war to the threshold of a decisive victory and provided the ground forces with the freedom of action to achieve a decisive victory on land."[22]

The war was decided essentially in a series of land battles, particularly in the south, in which all of the IDF's firepower and maneuvering ability were put to use. For example, in the battle of the breakthrough in Rafiah, General Israel Tal's division, which included the 7th and 60th armored brigades and the regular army Paratroopers Brigade, encountered serious opposition from the Egyptian army that was positioned in fortified positions and built-up areas.[23] An even better example of the level of preparedness is perhaps the combined divisional attack to capture Umm Katef and Abu Ageila on the main road in Sinai, which was carried out by the 38th Division under the command of General Ariel Sharon. "The Egyptian force at Umm Katef found itself under attack starting at midnight from several directions: Danny Matt's paratroopers who attacked the artillery batteries in the rear of the complex, the 14th Armored Brigade which attacked from the front, the 99th Brigade from the northern flank, and the 63rd Battalion which attacked from the rear."[24] The battle lasted all night, and on the second day of the war, at dawn, the Egyptian formation and organization began to collapse.[25] The

20 Steven Pressfield, *The Lion's Gate* (Rishon LeZion: Yedioth Sfarim, 2017), p. 44 [Hebrew].

21 Yiftah Spector, *Loud and Clear* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2007), pp. 106–107 [Hebrew].

22 Avi Kober, *Decisive Victory* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1996), p. 269 [Hebrew].

23 Eitan and Goldstein, *Story of a Soldier*, p. 84.

24 Yeshayahu Gavish, *Red Blanket* (Or Yehuda: Zmora-Bitan, 2015), pp. 181–182 [Hebrew].

25 Kober, *Decisive Victory*, p. 271.

victory in the battle eventually came to be attributed to military thinking, and it is taught around the world as a model of an integrated battle.[26]

Yet although the force buildup prior to the Six Day War could likely have been improved, an examination of the military outcome shows that the process was highly successful. Since then, there have been key changes in the nature of IDF force buildup. The first was the acceleration of the process following the Yom Kippur War and the increased priority it received, primarily in the form of larger scale acquisition of weapons. The General Staff took the leading role in the planning process, and all the corps took part.[27] The acquisitions following the Yom Kippur War were primarily motivated by the disturbing images of long lines of tanks assaulting the country's borders. The creation of the GOC Army Headquarters and, at a later stage, its assigned responsibility for building up the ground forces was the beginning of a slow but uninterrupted process that removed the General Staff from involvement in that buildup. This process was later initiated in the other IDF entities involved in force buildup and thus led to the completion of the process to decentralize force buildup in the army as a whole.

Force Buildup in the IDF Today

Starting in 2000, the conventional threat to Israel from the armies of the Arab states began to recede, accompanied by the growing non-conventional threat from military organizations, such as Hezbollah and Hamas and other terror organizations. The threat of a large-scale invasion of Israel, which was real in 1967, became almost anachronistic. In contrast, there was an increased threat from non-state military organizations, which accumulated significant quantities of arms and primarily various types of high-trajectory weapons.

The changing threat to Israel required an ability to deal with conventional threats, i.e., classic threats from armies; sub-conventional threats, i.e., from military organizations and terror organizations; non-conventional threats, i.e., nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; and cybernetic threats, i.e., attacks on computer systems and communication networks.[28] As a result, the IDF's force buildup over the last two decades to some extent lacked

26 Pressfield, *The Lion's Gate*, p. 239.

27 Interview with General Herzl Shafir, December 15, 2016.

28 *IDF Strategy* (IDF: Office of the Chief of the General Staff, August 13, 2015).

an overall perspective and was clearly biased toward technology and the acquisition of weapons, with only limited oversight by the General Staff.

The Locker Committee, which examined the process for constructing the defense budget and its management on a national level, concluded in its report of 2015 that the process is flawed at all levels and in several dimensions and that it unfolds without any overall management. According to the members of the committee, long-term planning has been replaced by a continuous battle over the size of the budget, which does not include an organized process to plan the long-term force buildup but rather involves patchwork solutions sewn together according to immediate need.[29] Moreover, it appears that the system has chosen, time after time, to rely on technological solutions rather than developing doctrine, tactics, and operational knowledge.

Despite the evolving threats, the General Staff has become increasingly less involved in force buildup. On the level of the General Staff, this process has become a collection of projects, initiated by the various branches of the IDF and the bodies involved in the force buildup. Since the General Staff Branch of the IDF was dissolved, the Planning Directorate has essentially become the army's project manager. Furthermore, the General Staff, which was always responsible for the activities of the land forces, has abandoned this role, and it was given to the GOC Army Headquarters.[30] In addition, the exaggerated reliance on technology and the neglect of "intellectual effort" led to a dramatic increase in investment in high precision firepower and intelligence and the persistent neglect of ground maneuvering. The flaws in this approach became particularly evident during the Second Lebanon War.[31]

With the appointment of Gadi Eisenkot as chief of staff in 2015, this trend changed direction. Since then, emphasis has been placed on the element of ground forces maneuver, with respect to both acquisition of equipment and training.[32] Nonetheless, the main flaw, i.e., that the General Staff is cut off from the ground forces, has yet to be rectified. In order to deal with

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29 *The Report of the Committee to Examine the Defense Budget* (the Locker Committee), June 2015, p. 11.

30 Ofer Shelah, *The Courage to Win* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2015), pp. 183–185 [Hebrew].

31 Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *Spider Webs* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2008), pp. 76–85 [Hebrew].

32 Gal Perl Frankel, "Chief of the General Staff Eisenkot and the Next War," *Walla News*, January 18, 2016 [Hebrew].

this problem, the chief of staff decided in early 2017 that the General Staff would itself draw up a doctrine for ground tactics and would also oversee the buildup of ground forces, while its execution would continue to be the responsibility of the GOC Army Headquarters. This undoubtedly constitutes progress on the way to reducing the scale of the problem, although the picture will not come full circle for some time.

To meet its specific needs and challenges, the IDF has acquired hi-tech capabilities, such as high precision guided weapons, advanced control and command systems, and state-of-the-art aircraft (both manned and unmanned). In contrast, the army has not invested effort in reshaping its forces to meet the continually evolving challenges.[33] An even more serious problem relates to the element of manpower, its level of quality, and its development. Thus, "the element of quality established by Ben-Gurion as the essential foundation of the IDF began to be identified with technological superiority more than quality of thinking, creativity, and military doctrine. Furthermore, the loss of operational experience acquired by IDF commanders on the battlefield, with the cessation of 'regular' wars, contributed to widening the gap that opened in the doctrinal-professional domain."[34]

In contrast to the IDF, the US army, which found itself at the end of the Vietnam War in a serious organizational crisis ("the hollow army"), chose to deal with the problem by means of force buildup that began with long-term planning based on an appropriate doctrine. To this end, the Training and Doctrine Command was established (headed by William DePuy and Donn Starry). It developed the air-ground battle doctrine,[35] but did not stop there. Inter alia, the US ground forces created the 75th Ranger Regiment, an elite infantry brigade for complex missions, upgraded the professional level of non-commissioned officers ("the backbone of the army"), and created advanced schools for teaching the profession of war and centers for combat training, such as that at Fort Irwin.[36] This process reached its peak in the

33 Shelah, *The Courage to Win*, pp. 161–162.

34 Yuval Bazak, "The Shaping of the IDF's Buildup of Force: Past, Present and Future," *Bein Haktavim* 9 (December 2016): 71 [Hebrew].

35 Elwin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War* (Or Yehuda: Sifriat Maariv, 1994), pp. 20–41 [Hebrew].

36 Robert Skyles, *Certain Victory in the Desert* (Or Yehuda: Doctrine and Training – History Department, 1997), pp. 20–41 [Hebrew].

success of the 1991 Gulf War, which included the particularly successful combination of command control technologies, firepower, and ground tactics.[37]

The IDF chose to imitate the American model in the acquisition of technological abilities but invested much less in developing the doctrine that would define their use.[38] A perusal of the doctrinal document drawn up in recent years by the Training and Doctrine Command of the US ground forces shows that even now it is clear to its commanders that there are limits to technology and that it alone cannot solve the complex problems on the battlefield. Furthermore, the American doctrinal document claims that technology also constitutes a risk, since America's enemies are developing the means to disrupt it. The solution, according to this document, involves the development of a comprehensive operational concept.[39]

Over the last two decades, the IDF has given preference to the buildup of firepower at the expense of ground tactics. Thus, without the IDF senior command being aware of the problematic nature of this approach, the IDF's ground forces have been neglected and since then are perceived as part of the problem rather than the solution. The preference for firepower is primarily manifested in the buildup of the air force and intelligence (which is needed to create the target bank in support of air force operations). This preference is due to the air force's availability for immediate and defined use (which can be stopped at any time), with almost no significant logistic effort. This activity is carried out far from the public eye, without requiring the initiation of an actual war. Airpower also makes it possible to exploit technological and military superiority and to use precision guided weapons, which reduce the risk to IDF forces and non-combatants.[40] This is in contrast to the use of ground forces, which requires time and involves risks to those forces, the most serious of which is the risk of prolonged fighting, as in the case of the Iraq War (2003–2011).

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37 Herbert Raymond McMaster, "Company E in the Gulf War," *Maarachot* 346 (February 1996): 26–39 [Hebrew].

38 Ofer Shelah, *The Tray and the Silver* (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2003), pp. 38–44 [Hebrew].

39 *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), October 31, 2014, pp. 8–9.

40 Gershon HaCohen, *What is National in National Security?* (Moshav Ben Shemen: Modan and Ministry of Defense Publications, 2014), pp. 95–97 [Hebrew].

The problem is that the enemy facing the IDF in recent years, i.e., non-state organizations, has not adopted this approach but rather operates from within crowded population centers and ignores the norms of international law. Thus, it operates in tunnels, while using high-trajectory weapons on a large scale, which enables them to deal with the air threat and to lengthen the fighting.[41] This is apparently the reason that technologically based aerial warfare with non-state entities usually lasts longer, is more expensive, and is also more frequent, though less efficient.[42]

A document written by a commander in the IDF in 2005 claims that the main lesson is that "firepower abilities from the air or from afar have not provided a fully effective solution to the challenge of short-lived targets, which often are hidden under bushes or fired from the opening of a shaded cave. The ability to switch between firepower on the one hand and ground tactics and close combat on the other is a condition for decisively defeating Hezbollah's guerilla force. Hezbollah cannot be defeated without close contact."[43] Nonetheless, various considerations, including also the preparedness of the forces and, as a direct result, the fear of casualties have led Israel's political and military leaders to prefer, both in the First Lebanon War and thereafter, warfare that is based more on firepower and less on tactics. Tactics have been employed on a limited scale, if at all, and often hesitantly and not in full.[44]

Conclusion

The buildup of ground forces prior to the Six Day War was carried out directly on the instructions of the chief of the General Staff and the Instruction Directorate and in coordination with them. The separation of the General Staff from its role as the supreme command for the use of ground forces and the decentralization of the buildup of force from it to the GOC Army Headquarters, along with the hesitant use of ground forces in the confrontations over the last thirty years, have created a feeling among decision makers that

41 Amos Harel, "Putin Fans the Flames in the Middle East in Order to Conceal his Domestic Problems," *Haaretz*, December 24, 2016 [Hebrew].

42 Aharon Haliva, "More of the Same," *Bein Haktavim* 9 (December 2016): 17 [Hebrew].

43 The document was written by Lt. Col. Amir Baram, commander of the elite Maglan unit. See Harel and Issacharoff, *Spider Webs*, p. 116.

44 Shelah, *The Courage to Win*, pp. 28–53.

the ground forces are less relevant to the challenges facing the IDF both in the present and in the future, in contrast to the air force and intelligence. The IDF has invested increasingly in these branches, and as a result, the ability of the ground forces to carry out large-scale maneuvers on the front and deep in enemy territory has been reduced, as is also the case with the reserve forces.

The IDF's operations ethos has emphasized the spirit of its fighters, the tactical ability of its commanders to destabilize the enemy, and the drive for contact without compromise until complete victory. It appears that during the fifty years since the Six Day War, the IDF has shifted focus to physical power and weaponry, while searching for a technological response to operational problems. It is sufficient to look at the structure of the General Staff today in order to see the neglect of intellectual effort in the IDF. Thus, the Instruction Directorate was dissolved and replaced by the Doctrine and Training Division, which itself has been reduced over the years to dimensions that put the relevance of doctrine in the IDF into doubt. In contrast, the frameworks that are technologically oriented (and those involved in technologically based intelligence) have experienced an unprecedented expansion.

The *IDF Strategy* document, which was published in 2015, signaled the beginning of a change, such that the centrality of ground tactics was again emphasized in response to the evolving threats. At the same time, processes were initiated in the IDF to restore the responsibility of the General Staff, in its role as the supreme command, for the use of ground forces. Despite these steps, the continued reliance of the IDF on technological abilities on the one hand and the relatively low weight (in terms of resources and high quality manpower) given to the development of intellectual effort on the other perpetuates the major gap in the IDF's overall response capabilities. Moreover, technological solutions are not applicable to all of the operational problems faced by the IDF.

Thoughts on Deterrence: Lessons from Israel's Wars since 1967

Shlomo Brom

The Six Day War, the War of Attrition, and the Yom Kippur War led to a new understanding of deterrence and its place in Israel's defense policy. Deterrence has been one of the main components in Israel's defense policy since its independence. The nascent state emerged from the War of Independence understanding that it was only the first stage in the Arab world's attempts to destroy it. The humiliating defeat of the Arab coalition in the War of Independence and the Arab countries' recognition of a clear asymmetry between them and Israel, which lacked in territory, population, resources, military forces, and diplomatic power, clearly would lead to additional rounds of war led by the Arabs. Israel assumed that these wars were inevitable and therefore the goal of deterrence was to increase the time between them until—in the spirit of Jabotinsky's idea of an "iron wall"—the Arabs would give up trying to destroy Israel by military means or, in the language of deterrence, until Israel's deterrence would convince the Arab world to seek negotiated solutions.

In the Israeli perception, the Six Day War broke out supposedly due to a failure in deterrence. Operation Kadesh in 1956 and the defeat of the Egyptian army in Sinai had strengthened Israeli deterrence, after Israel demonstrated its ability to defeat the Egyptian army within one week of fighting and the effectiveness of integrating the maneuvering of its ground forces with its air force. Britain and France's participation in the fighting in the area around the Suez Canal, however, reduced the effect of Israel's deterrence since the

Arab side attributed Israel's success partly to the involvement of the two superpowers. In any case, that war resulted in an eleven-year period of quiet on the Egyptian front, due to both the Israeli deterrence and the negotiated understandings that led to the stationing of UN forces in Sinai.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to view the Six Day War as a total and unambiguous failure of Israeli deterrence. There is no proof of an Arab initiative to start a war against Israel or even to provoke it until several weeks before the Six Day War started. Although neither side wanted it, the Six Day War essentially was the result of escalation and miscalculation by both sides as well as by the international community. It began with an escalation on the Syrian front after a long period of border incidents resulting from differing interpretations of the armistice agreement and the "war over water." It continued with the Egyptian aim (partly the result of exaggerated Soviet intelligence reports) to pressure Israel in order to reduce the burden on Syria. This was in addition to the misguided decision of the UN Secretary to remove the UN forces from Sinai, which resulted in Egypt's leaders' euphoria leading to deployment of its military forces in the peninsula in violation of post-1956 war arrangements and then the blocking of the Straits of Tiran.

In the end, Israel was the one that launched the war, which, from its perspective, was both a preventative war and a preemptive strike.[1] It was a preventative war because Israel sought to thwart any continued attacks against it as a result of the growing sense of power in Egypt and the Arab world and to open the Straits of Tiran, in addition to being concerned about the price of continuing to hold its military forces in the state of high alert and the need for an ongoing high level of preparedness due to the deployment of Egyptian forces in Sinai. It was a preemptive strike because Israel increasingly felt that an existential threat was taking shape and feared that it had undermined the deterrence vis-à-vis Egypt because it had failed to respond to the Egyptian moves. Israel was also concerned that Egypt would exploit its improved strategic position following the deployment of its forces in Sinai, its military coordination with Syria and Jordan, and its growing confidence in its military power to launch a war against Israel. In retrospect, even after Israel's military victory, no evidence was found of any concrete Egyptian intention to do so.

1 Michael Oren, *Six Days of War* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 2004), pp. 79–211 [Hebrew].

Lessons from the Six Day War

The direct lesson learned from the Six Day War is that even when credible Israeli deterrence exists, a new strategic situation could emerge and increase the Arab side's motivation to act against Israel. Even if the deterrence is sufficiently strong to prevent the other side from launching an all-out war, it may not prevent actions that are below the threshold of war; such actions can escalate to war since they create an intolerable situation for Israel.

Seemingly, the spectacular Israeli victory in the Six Day War against three Arab countries and additional expeditionary forces should have strengthened Israel's deterrence and—according to the then prevalent defense strategy—should have ensured quiet and extended the duration between the rounds of fighting. It is no wonder that then Interior Minister Moshe Haim Shapira stated at the government meeting on June 7, 1967 that, "We have defeated them and now they will think a hundred times whether it is worthwhile renewing the struggles against us in the coming years."[2] In actuality, the opposite occurred. Israel's victory shortened the time between the next rounds of fighting. While eleven years separated the Sinai campaign from the Six Day War, less than two years passed between the Six Day War and the War of Attrition in 1969—and even during this period, numerous shooting incidents occurred—and only six years ensued until the Yom Kippur War in 1973. In contrast, the Yom Kippur War was the last war with Egypt, since it led to a series of negotiated interim agreements and finally to a peace treaty signed between the two countries.

Between the Defense Policy and Reality

How can the difference between reality and the basic assumptions of Israel's defense policy be explained? Deterrence is an effort to persuade one side to not take action against the other by threatening that the price paid is much higher than the benefit gained. The tendency is to focus on the threat and to try to increase both the price paid and the credibility of the threat in order to achieve greater deterrence. But deterrence is a complicated equation made up of two parameters: On one side is the threat, namely the price the adversary will pay, and on the other side is the adversary's motivation to take action; that is, the benefit expected from that action. The goal of the

2 Shimon Shiffer and Yoav Keren, "50 Years since the Six Day War—the Secret Transcripts are Revealed," *Yedioth Ahronoth*, May 18, 2017 [Hebrew].

adversary is usually to change the status quo. If the adversary finds the status quo intolerable, the benefit from altering the status quo is almost infinite. It is difficult to create a threat whose price is sufficiently high enough for creating effective deterrence. Therefore, in order to create deterrence, both sides of the equation must be dealt with: making a strong and credible threat, while also reducing the adversary's motivation.

In a similar context, the difficult present situation in the Gaza Strip—one that could reach a point where Israel's deterrence of Hamas will collapse when Hamas considers the situation to be intolerable—has been the focus of discussion in Israel and it is understood that this situation was the reason for the round of violence that broke out between Israel and Hamas in 2014 (Operation Protective Edge), contributing also to its long duration and the difficulty in ending it. A similar situation occurred during May–July 2018 ending a period of almost total quiet and stability since "Protective Edge." Once again the connection between the new flare-up and the intolerable situation in the Gaza Strip was evident.

The Six Day War was a spectacular victory for Israel and a humiliating defeat for Egypt and Syria. Apart from the damage done to their military forces, which was reparable, they also lost important territorial assets. Egypt lost control of Sinai and also the ability to operate the Suez Canal and the maritime oil fields adjacent to Sinai, while Syria lost the Golan Heights, putting Israel in close enough proximity to Damascus to pose a threat to the Syrian capital. Therefore, the Israeli victory actually strengthened the motivation of these two countries to seek to recover these territories and restore their honor through the use of force. And indeed, already in 1969, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser declared: "What was taken by force will be returned by force."[3]

In this situation, any Israeli threat, whatever it may be, could not have deterred Egypt and Syria. On the contrary, instead of refraining from actions against Israel, they sought to bypass the sources of Israel's military strength and concluded that they must launch a war with limited objectives in which they would pay a much lower price. Egypt did this by means of a well-considered operational plan that aimed for partial military achievements that

3 Ktziah Avieli-Tabibian, "Time Travels: Building a State in the Middle East," (Tel Aviv: Center for Technological Education, 2009), p. 188 [Hebrew], https://bit.ly/2ud6Zvk.

would lead to a political process in which Egypt would achieve its goals. Syria sufficed with a plan to capture the Golan Heights without penetrating into Israel's territory. To this end, the two countries built an air defense system, anti-tank capabilities, and a force of ballistic missiles, and finally launched a surprise attack against Israel. All this enabled them to blunt the IDF's main capabilities and to reach partial achievements.

In contrast to the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War did not end in a spectacular and decisive victory for Israel; Israel paid a heavy price in the war while Egypt and Syria had important achievements at the first stage of fighting and throughout the war posed serious challenges to the Israeli Defense Forces. Egypt and Syria's launching of the war restored the Arabs' honor and thus created an opportunity for Egypt and Syria to use diplomatic means and US mediation to recover territories they had lost in 1967. The results of the war also affected their motivation to start new wars, making a diplomatic process possible, which culminated in a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt and a separation of forces agreement between Israel and Syria, leading to stability and quiet on the Golan Heights that has lasted until today, despite the recent undermining of the foundations of the Syrian state.

Between Decisive Victory and Deterrence

The lessons learned from this analysis is that an overly decisive victory does not necessarily contribute to overall deterrence and sometimes even achieves the opposite result. Therefore, it is important to make the other side aware of the price of launching a war, while at the same time not creating any new motivations that could undermine the effect of the threat. One way of doing so is to initiate a serious negotiating process in the wake of the military confrontation.

At the end of the Six Day War, Israel refrained from embarking on a negotiating process and sufficed with "waiting for a telephone call from the Arab side."[4] The Arab leaders gave three negative responses in August 1967 in Khartoum, Sudan—no to peace with Israel, no to recognizing Israel, and no to negotiating with Israel. A speculative analysis of events that did not happen is difficult to carry out and back up; nevertheless, a determined Israeli initiative to launch a peace process with Egypt, Syria,

4 Yitzhak Rabin, "Gentlemen, the Arabs' Telephone is Ringing," speech at the Knesset, October 3, 1994 [Hebrew], http://www.rabincenter.org.il/Items/01842/14k.pdf.

and Jordan—with the support of the interested superpowers and with their mediation—presumably could have changed the course of history. However, Israel quickly fell in love with the occupied territories, which prevented such initiatives and neutralized those of others, even when it became apparent after the Khartoum decisions that there would not be any phone call from the Arabs, as they were focused instead on their feelings of humiliation and wish of retribution.

Strategic Deterrence and Its Implications

Although one might conclude from the above discussion that the Six Day War did not achieve any results in terms of contribution to strategic deterrence, on the contrary, it can be argued that the limited Arab goals in the Yom Kippur War were the result of the two components of Israeli deterrence: Israel's capabilities in a conventional war—as proven in the Six Day War—and the belief that Israel had nuclear weapons. The Arab side abandoned the goal of destroying Israel—at least in the planning for the 1973 war—and sufficed with the goal of recovering the territories captured in 1967, although Israel did not understand this in real time during the 1973 war, causing Israel to interpret the war as an existential threat. In addition, the peace process that developed with Egypt after 1973 reflected Sadat's strategic decision to accept Israel's existence, which was only possible after Egypt had restored its honor and could recover the territories that it had lost. The Arab world as a whole reached this decision only in the 1990s, during the Madrid and Oslo processes as manifested by the Arab peace initiative in 2002, which expressed a pan-Arab willingness (at the government level) to accept the existence of the State of Israel in complete contrast to the Khartoum declarations.

Another one of Israel's achievements in terms of deterrence, as a result of its success in the Six Day War (and the effect of the War of Attrition), was the decision of Egypt to refrain from specific military actions out of the fear that the price paid would be too high. Thus, during the Yom Kippur War, Egypt chose not to strike deep inside Israel's territory with ballistic missiles and its air force, recognizing that the Israeli air force could retaliate and cause extensive damage within Egyptian territory, as it did during the War of Attrition. Instead, Egypt chose the path of mutual deterrence. It armed itself with Scud missiles that could reach deep inside Israel's territory and would deter Israel from attacking strategic non-military targets within Egypt. This mutual deterrence was indeed successful. Even Syria refrained from

attacking non-military targets in Israel, and when Syrian Frog-7 missiles landed in Migdal Haemek, it was only because of its proximity to the Ramat David airbase and the limited precision of the Frog missile. The conclusion is that even in situations when it is impossible to realistically deter the other side from taking aggressive actions, it is possible to use deterrence to limit those actions and to influence their character.

Deterring Non-State Organizations

The Six Day War, followed by the Yom Kippur War, and the subsequent peace processes significantly reduced the threat of countries in the region launching a war against Israel. Israel is now in a situation where the main threat to it originates from non-state organizations or hybrid organizations (organizations with non-state characteristics that control territory and population and therefore also have some of the characteristics of a state). Deterrence of non-state organizations is more complex than that of states, which Israel put to the test in the Six Day War, the War of Attrition, and the Yom Kippur War. This situation raises the question whether the lessons learned in deterring states are relevant against the threats facing Israel in the twenty-first century.

It is commonly assumed that deterrence is a more effective measure as long as the violent actions to be deterred are more extreme, thus justifying communicating an even more severe threat in order to dissuade the other side. Thus, for example, when the goal is to deter an enemy with nuclear capability, which by nature poses an existential threat, the counter-threat is more effective when the message is that even if the adversary successfully carries out his existential threat, the other side will still have second-strike capability, which will cause existential damage to him as well. In contrast, in the case of a lower level threat, the deterrent threat must be proportionate in order to be credible. For example, no one will believe that the United States would drop an atomic bomb on Yemen in response to a terror attack by the al-Qaeda branch in Yemen, even if the United States should make such a declaration. The analysis shows that the violent actions at a low threshold—for example, terror attacks—are more difficult to deter.

In the past, it was commonly assumed in Israel that terror organizations could not be deterred[5] and that it was only possible to strike at them and limit

5 See, for example, Hanan Alon, "Can Terrorism be Deterred? Some Thoughts and Doubts," in *Contemporary Trends in World Terrorism,* ed. Anat Kurz (New York: Praeger, 1987), pp. 125–130.

their ability to carry out terror attacks. The development of the understanding of Israeli deterrence, which began even before the Six Day War, reveals that the subject is more complex and more ambiguous and that even terror organizations can be deterred in certain situations. First, it is possible to limit their means. Thus, for example, even though there is the possibility of terror organizations using weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and biological weapons, such attacks have almost not occurred; these organizations may understand that the response would be severe relative to the expected benefit of using this type of weapon. This understanding is dependent, of course, also on the character of the organization. An organization such as al-Qaeda is less likely to be deterred because it does not have any territorial assets that can be threatened by a similar response. However, a terror organization, which has acquired tangible assets that could be harmed, could be greatly deterred from executing terrorist acts, at least for a limited time.

Second, a terror organization is, in most cases, the military arm of a political movement. Such a movement needs public support, and if it believes that its acts of terror and a subsequent response will harm its support, it will refrain from undertaking them. Furthermore, usually terror organizations have a centralized decision-making mechanism, making it easier to decide to desist from terror activities.

This understanding can be used to calibrate tools of deterrence and to make them more efficient. This is all the more so in the case of hybrid organizations that control territory and population and administer them at least as a de facto government. In this case, threats to their assets—especially if such threats cause them to lose public support among the population under their control and from other supporters—could deter them from launching terror attacks.

The relations between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip illustrate this well. The takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 was a major achievement for Hamas, and it now possesses tangible assets and relies on the public support in the territory under its control. In the past decade, Israel deterred Hamas from carrying out terror attacks against Israel for significant periods of time because Israel threatened to harm its assets. This deterrence collapsed when the two sides could not control the escalation as a result of internal political considerations or when the socioeconomic situation inside the Gaza Strip became intolerable, and Hamas felt that it could not function as a government

and therefore would anyway lose public support. When Hamas lost its assets that could be threatened, the deterrence collapsed.

Conclusion

The fifty years since the Six Day War have taught us that deterrence is a highly effective tool for various levels of warfare, including conventional war and terror and guerilla war. However, the effectiveness of deterrence is conditional on understanding the complexity of this tool and the correct analysis of the two sides of the equation: On one side is the threat and the way it is used against the assets of the other party, and how it is perceived; on the other side is the motivation of the party to be deterred and the recognition that deterrence is impossible in a situation where there is nothing to lose. Accordingly, when a threat has been credible and impressive, but at the same time its past realization increased the other side's motivation to undermine the status quo, that same threat does not necessarily serve the purpose of mutual deterrence.

From Civilian Protection to a Civilian Front: The Triple Paradox

Meir Elran and Carmit Padan

This essay examines how the State of Israel has provided for its civilian population in the face of the evolving array of threats to the civilian front (otherwise known as the "home front," or the "rear") since the Six Day War. The article presents a three-dimensional strategic paradox that has challenged the State of Israel over the last five decades. The first dimension is that as the traditional threat from the Arab states diminishes, the perceived threat to the population of Israel increases; the second suggests that despite Israel's strategic might and its unequivocal advantage over its non-state adversaries at all levels and in all aspects, Israel finds it difficult to dispel the growing, persistent threat that its adversaries present to the civilian front; and the third is that through its official reaction to the nature and scope of the threat to the civilian front, the government of Israel contributes to the reverberations created by these threats, and consequently amplifies them in the public domain. All of these have direct and negative implications for Israel's perception of the security threat and, in turn, for its perception of the military conflict with its adversaries.

The essay discusses the essential manifestations of the transformation of the threat to Israel's civilian front, from what historically was a relatively passive and marginal level to the contemporary active and central role. The article also looks at the gap between the weight of the current threats and the responses to them and presents necessary recommendations for narrowing

this gap on the strategic level. The analytical prism used here is the trifold paradox and its negative implications for Israel's threat perception.

The Trifold Paradox of Israel's Civilian Front

Israel's defense of the civilian population following the War of Independence was based on keeping the military confrontation far from the country's borderlines. This was the main lesson learned from that war, which reflected one of the most important components of Israel's traditional security doctrine, known as "strategic depth." This was the state of affairs during the Sinai War, the Six Day War, the War of Attrition, and the Yom Kippur War, in which the Israeli rear was protected and passive, and its primary function was to support the IDF from afar. This was a highly successful strategy.

As long as Israel fought against state entities with powerful regular armies—at least from a quantitative perspective—the IDF managed to provide victories and protect the civilian population. However, presently, when Israel is engaged in recurring low intensity confrontations with non-state entities and terror, and when the threat to its existence and its sovereignty as a state is limited, the civilian front has become far more prominent. It is threatened and challenged to a much greater extent than in the past. The experience of the confrontations since the 1991 Gulf War, and mainly those of the last generation—generally referred to as "low intensity war" or "hybrid war"[1]—shows that in contrast to what was the case fifty years ago, the core of the security threat has shifted to the civilian front. However, while Israel knew how to provide appropriate and successful strategic responses to the challenge of the traditional military-to-military wars, it continues to struggle to design a full strategic response to the current confrontations. This, in a nutshell, is the paradox that Israel must confront.

The contention here is that the strategic paradox of the State of Israel in the context of the civilian front comprises three layers: First, as the military threat to Israel from the Arab countries diminishes, the popular perception of the severity of the security threat increases; second, despite its strategic might and its clear-cut advantage over its non-state adversaries, Israel finds it difficult to remove the persistent threat to the civilian front; and third, in its official and public statements the State of Israel itself contributes to

1 Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, Virginia: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007), pp. 5–65.

the broad resonance of the threats and consequently amplifies them in the public domain.

This complex paradox invites two fundamental questions. First, what is it that enables Hezbollah and Hamas to create the image of such a threatening enemy that can effectively deter Israel? Second, why is Israel, in 2018, unable to meet the threat and defeat two moderately powerful organizations, whereas it met the threat against the Arab armies so successfully in 1967 and in 1973? The tangible damage to the civilian front in the Second Lebanon War (2006) and even more so in the three rounds of fighting in the Gaza Strip since 2008 was at most low to moderate. In each of the rounds, Hezbollah and Hamas managed to launch not more than an average of about 120 rockets per day. More than half did not even come close to actual civilian targets, or did not cause significant damage. If so, what is the real reason for the anxiety that prevails in Israel regarding the threat of high-trajectory weapons, and recently, with increased intensity, the threat of the offensive tunnels on the border with the Gaza Strip (and in the north of Israel, where there is no evidence of their existence)?

We are not underestimating the severity and magnitude of the threat. It is indeed neither normal nor acceptable for the daily routine of a civilian population to be interrupted, usually unexpectedly, and for civilians to find themselves under attack from the air, with their routines disrupted, while drumrolls are sounded in the media, and a sense of helplessness complements uncontrollable fear. Still, it seems that the somewhat hysterical response to the threat, primarily when it materializes, raises questions concerning both its source and the reactions of the Israeli establishment.

Our claim is that more than a significant physical threat, the phenomenon is first and foremost an exaggerated reaction to psychological warfare initiated and directed by Hezbollah and Hamas, which is a function of their perception that the struggle against Israel will be decided in the domain of public awareness.[2] In other words, Israel faces a complex convergence of growing risks that are reinforced by an amplified cognitive effort by the enemy, which in turn is augmented by Israeli self-perception.

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2 This is essentially a strategy of perceptual defeat rather than a real defeat. See Uzi Rubin, "The Civilian Front and the Component of National Endurance," ed. Efraim Inbar, *Studies in Middle East Security* 128 (Ramat Gan: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2017), pp. 73–91 [Hebrew].

The role of psychological warfare is to sow fear among the civilian population. This is similar to the fundamental objective of every act of terror, designed to generate anxiety and demoralization among the civilian public, as the weaker link in a system targeted by terror. Can Israel not respond successfully to such psychological provocations in an effective manner? And furthermore, is it possible that Israel itself contributes to the messages that sow fear among its citizens? The offensive tunnels, which were cast as a hair-raising story narrated with panic by politicians and the media and became a core issue of Operation Protective Edge (2014), provided a recent worrisome example of this dynamic.

It can be posited that the government in Israel, including those who are directly responsible for the security of the civilian front, is reluctant to develop means of securing its citizens from the enemy's psychological warfare and essentially is fanning the flames by transmitting messages that inspire more fear than reassurance. Thus, for example, in engaging with the Israeli public, the establishment sends out the following three-pronged message, which is presented repeatedly during the rounds of conflict: a) the Israeli public is steadfast; b) it can successfully deal with the attacks; and c) in this way Israeli society supports the IDF. Such a message places the burden of support for the IDF on the public, more than it emphasizes the natural expectation that the IDF will protect them. These messages are highly questionable, particularly in times of emergency, when the citizens expect the state and its systems, and the IDF in particular, to provide them with necessary protection.

Even Iron Dome, the active defense anti-rocket system that to no small extent imparted a sense of security to the public, in view of its impressive successes in the last round of fighting with Hamas, is presented as limited in its operational capacity in extreme scenarios of all-out attacks on urban areas.[3] In fact, there is no increase in the number of Iron Dome batteries that will provide an adequate response to the expanding array of threats to the civilian sector, critical infrastructure, and IDF bases.

The inability to successfully address the psychological warfare waged against the civilian front raises doubts as to the level of understanding among

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3 Meir Elran, Yonatan Shaham, and Alex Altshuler, "An Expanded Comprehensive Threat Scenario for the Home Front in Israel," *INSS Insight* No. 828, June 15, 2016.

the decision makers in Israel regarding the importance of reassuring the public during a conflict. Is the government not interested in mitigating the sense of danger or victimization of the public? This question is central to the strategic discourse and is intertwined with questions relating to Israel's capacity to defeat its enemies and the IDF's ability to win wars. Thus, the projected image is complex, suggesting that the IDF can possibly produce a military victory, in the technical sense of the term, but the psycho-political environment, both within Israeli society and in the international context, makes such an achievement less accessible or requires a major investment that is beyond what the Israeli public is willing to make. According to this logic, the difficulty in achieving a decisive military offensive victory in a short time necessarily means difficulty in fully protecting the civilian front or at least in shortening the time span that the public is subject to major disruptions by the enemy.

It can be expected that likewise in the next round with Hezbollah or Hamas, Israel will encounter similar political and psychological constraints that are liable to dictate restrained military actions. For the civilian front, this primarily means a long(er) period of rocket attacks, primarily (though not exclusively) against civilian targets. Serious damage to essential infrastructure, such as the electricity system, would be severely disruptive for the population, as would be the consequent emergency routine. The military buildup of Hezbollah, and to a lesser extent Hamas, will make such a confrontation more severe and perhaps also longer, which might inflict more damage than in the past. The entry of enemy countries, such as Iran and others, into the circle of confrontation, if the regional strategic circumstances change, will no doubt present much more difficult challenges for the civilian front, which will require an "outside the box" reexamination of the necessary responses.

Does the solution lie completely in the military domain? It appears that the answers are to be found, and to a greater extent than in the past, in the political and psychological domains. There is a need to strengthen the defensive capacities of the civilian front through the enhancement of "soft" traits, which have the potential to reduce the harmful effect of the enemy's psychological warfare, improve the ability of the Israeli public to deal successfully with the exposure to threats, and boost the societal resilience of the public, augmenting its ability to bounce back quickly following disruptions. Progress in these directions will strengthen the public's capacity to meet the challenges facing the civilian front, which for its part is meant to

project confidence in the efficacy of the military and the civilian leadership to deal successfully with non-state foes.

From Home Front to Civilian Front: Framing the National Capacity to Defend the Population

The defining event in Israel's history where the civilian home front was broadly and intensely involved in the fighting was the War of Independence.[4] Between November 1947 and March 1949, 1,162 civilians were killed in Israel. They accounted for about 20 percent of the total number of Jews killed in the war.[5] In Tel Aviv alone eighteen people died on a monthly average, which would represent a rate of some 180 casualties a month in the current population. This led to the establishment of the Civil Defense in 1951,[6] and more importantly, served as the basis for Israel's security concept. The lessons of the War of Independence shaped the principle of "strategic depth," as an objective to distance the enemy from the civilian rear and to protect the population from a major disruption.

Since the end of the War of Independence, the Israeli civilian rear has enjoyed a relatively high level of security. Thus, the Sinai War (1956), the Six Day War (1967), the War of Attrition on the Suez Canal (1968–1970), and the Yom Kippur War (1973) were fought exclusively on the military front, without any harm to the civilians. Although in the period before the war in 1967 there was a fear of mass casualties on the home front given possible air attacks by the Arab forces, this scenario was not realized, as a result of the destruction of the Arab air forces and their air bases by the Israeli air force.

These wars were fought between regular armies, at a great distance from Israeli population centers, which remained unharmed.[7] To a large extent

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4 Mordechai Bar On and Meir Hazan, *The People of War: Civilian Society in the War of Independence* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, The Institute for Zionist Heritage, and the Center for Defense Studies, 2006) [Hebrew].

5 Mordechai Naor, *On the Home Front: Tel Aviv and the Recruitment of the Population in the War of Independence* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi and the Center for Defense Studies, 2009) [Hebrew].

6 The Civil Guard Law, 5711-1951, Security – Civil Protection, https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/Law01/125_001.htm#med1 [Hebrew].

7 Uzi Rubin claims that the watershed in the characteristics of Israel's wars was the Yom Kippur War. Until then, and in general, Israeli wars were primarily army against

this pattern shaped the Israeli perception of the nature of the conflict and influenced the framing of its security mindset. This was reinforced primarily among the senior military command, which saw itself, and also presented itself, as capable by means of its sheer power to produce spectacular victories and clear strategic achievements, even when the state is faced with severe challenges, as was the case in 1967 and again in 1973. Moreover, the high level of IDF capacities proved themselves, from the Israeli viewpoint, not only as a lever for defending the state's primary interests and providing security to the civilian rear but also for advancing strategic objectives, such as the peace with Egypt, its oldest and most powerful enemy.

The Strategic Transition: Stages in Structuring the Civilian Front

This picture changed dramatically with the missile attacks from Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War,[8] which began with a round of six Scud missiles launched from western Iraq toward Tel Aviv on January 17 and 18, 1991 and continued with subsequent attacks until February 28. While the attacks caused negligible damage to property and people, they were met with confusion and civil and political demoralization. Most importantly, this was the defining beginning of a new era in Israel's security reality, an era of security threats from high-trajectory weapons of various types. Although in previous years short-range rockets were launched at Israel (Katyushas of various types, primarily from Lebanon, before the First Lebanon War), these were primarily tactical weapons that constituted little more than a local nuisance.

Israel needed some time to internalize the significance of the new threat. It may be that the full national integrated response to the high-trajectory weapons threat is still evolving, with lessons learned gradually, following each new round of hostilities. This ongoing process takes place in the shadow of an incoherent concept of prioritizing the security threats, which leads to a somewhat confused approach to the promotion of the necessary responses. An example of this unfortunate state of affairs is the prolonged zigzag with regard to the means of protection against chemical weaponry,

army and attack on the home front was perceived by both sides as secondary in the military effort. See Rubin, "The Civilian Front and the Component of National Endurance."

8 Joseph Alpher, *War in the Gulf, Implications for Israel* (Tel Aviv: Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1992).

first from Iraq and later from Syria.[9] Thus, the response to the Iraqi chemical threat in 1991 was hesitant and contained. Israeli anti-missile defense was at the time very limited, and Israel had to rely on direct, though marginal American assistance. The United States flatly rejected the offensive option to the Iraqi challenge, given its interests in the war with Iraq. Likewise, the civilian responses were few and primitive and consisted primarily of gas masks and improvised sealed rooms. The early warning system was rudimentary, as was the distribution of information to the population. The basic assumption was then, as it is today, that "the home front is called to stand up to the challenge." All of this resulted in panic and disorganization among the civilians, who found themselves subject to "World War II standards" from both the conceptual and practical viewpoints.[10]

In at least the organizational domain, this historical chapter was an important turning point. About a year after the Gulf War, in February 1992, the Home Front Command was established[11] by the decision of Defense Minister Moshe Arens, despite the opposition of the IDF.[12] The military's objection lay primarily in its longstanding reluctance to incorporate the defensive component and civil defense concept within its strategy and force buildup. The decision to revise the outdated military structure of civil defense was essential, but its implementation was slow and lacking. This was primarily due to the low preference given by the General Staff to the newly established Home Front Command. This state of affairs continued until the next upheaval caused by high-trajectory weapons in the Second Lebanon War.

The Second Lebanon War (2006) as a Turning Point

Like many of Israel's wars, the Second Lebanon War came as a surprise to both sides following uncontrolled escalation. The Israeli side was clearly not ready for it, particularly as far as the civilian home front was concerned.

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9 Meir Elran and David Friedman, "Gas Masks: Toward the End of the Line?" *INSS Insight* No. 487, November 24, 2013, https://bit.ly/2wcBrWA.

10 Tomer Sidon, "Viper – Always in the Home Front, Interview with General (ret.) Zeev Livne," *Ready*, October 24, 2011, http://ready.org.il/2011/10/israelihomefrontevolution/ [Hebrew].

11 Meir Elran, "The Israeli Home Front Command in Israel: Missions, Challenges, and Future Prospects," *Military and Strategic Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2016): 59–74.

12 Sidon, "Viper."

Hence, in this realm it turned out to be a total fiasco.[13] The level of the preparedness of the civilians and the organs that were responsible for the necessary response could not prevent the systemic collapse. Years of neglect of the home front were well apparent in face of a relatively limited strategic threat, which included about one thousand rockets that landed within population centers (about one-quarter of the total launches) over a period of 33 days, which resulted in 39 civilian deaths.

This is not the place to analyze this multifaceted failure. However, unlike the failures during the attack on the home front in the 1991 Gulf War, the Second Lebanon War failure resonated in a way to prompt the introduction of in-depth processes, epitomized by the transition from the concept of "rear protection" to "civilian front." So as to explain the essential difference between these terms, consider that within the security heritage of the State of Israel, the perception of the civilian rear represents an attitude of low priority, lower standing, and primarily passivity. The home front was traditionally perceived as a sector that absorbs blows from the enemy and whose function is to support the army, which is responsible for the fighting. In contrast, the civilian front is a modern concept, which is meant to project responsibility, active response, and participation together with the military forces regarding the fate of the public in an emergency. Thus, it was finally recognized that the civilian front is no less important than the military one in the context of military conflicts that involve the civilian population. The military front and the civilian front are meant to face the threat together and demonstrate functional synergy. The success of the military front is to be reflected in part through the social resilience of the public; the endurance of the civilian front (or lack thereof) for its part is perceived to affect the achievements of the military front. Together they are meant to provide an adequate strategic response to the contemporary military threat.

According to various reports, the number of civilians who evacuated their homes in northern Israel during the Second Lebanon War is estimated at about one third of that region's population. The effect on the population and the helplessness of the local authorities and many of the residents of the

13 State Comptroller, *The Preparation of the Home Front and its Performance in the Second Lebanon War*, July 2007 [Hebrew]; Meir Elran, "The Civilian Front in the Second Lebanon War," in *The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives*, ed. Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2007), pp. 103–119.

north came as a shock to the decision makers, at least for a while. This was the background for several major decisions that were designed to transform the framework. The damages caused by the second intifada, which ended not long before, killing 743 civilians in terror attacks, lent further sensitivity to the fate of vulnerable civilians in peril, which led to the realization of a genuine issue of personal security and hence a need to create new mechanisms for the protection of civilians under attack. However, the mechanisms put into place since then have not provided an integrative strategic response that can solve the fundamental problem. Among these mechanisms:

a. On the conceptual level, the traditional approach that grants priority to the offensive dimension and deterrence, which is intended to lengthen the periods of lull between military confrontations, has been called into question. The inclusion of the component of defense as an essential fourth pillar in the defense doctrine (alongside early warning, deterrence, and decision) was recognized by the Meridor Committee in 2006[14] (though not by the government). This constituted an important stage in this rather hesitant process. Nonetheless, the IDF continued to have reservations about the increasing emphasis on defense, in part in view of its fear that over-investment in defense would be at the expense of budget allocations for the components of the offensive forces.
b. On the military level, the IDF gradually began to revamp the Home Front Command on the basis of lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War. The main change was reflected in the expansion of the Command's roles, from an agency that focuses on rescue missions to one that is focused on strengthening the capacity of the civilian population to deal with a variety of threats, security-related and others, e.g., earthquakes, and primarily with the effects of high-trajectory weapons. In this context, an updated operational doctrine, based on the principle of cooperation with the population, and primarily with the local authorities, was formulated, practiced, and implemented.[15]

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14 Shay Shabtai, "Israel's National Security Concept: New Basic Terms in the Military-Security Sphere," *Strategic Assessment* 13, no. 2 (2010): 7–18.

15 *The Theory of Population Behavior in Emergencies* (IDF, Headquarters of the Home Front Command, Population Department, Behavioral Science Branch, 2011); *The Behavior of the Population during Military Conflict (War and Limited Conflict) and the Principles of Intervention* (IDF, Headquarters of the Home Front Command, Population Department, Local Authorities Branch, 2007) [Hebrew].

c. On the technological level, the process of creating defensive capability was accelerated. This took the form of a rapid process to develop and operationalize the Iron Dome active defense system, as part of the three-tiered defense concept. Here too the IDF hesitated regarding the decision of the government, which was more sensitive to the anxiety of the population and the need to provide it with suitable protection. Nonetheless, the Israeli budget for the development of the system is limited even today, since it is almost completely financed by American resources, which diminishes the ability to build up the force to the required levels.
d. On the national organizational level, the need to integrate between the various government ministries in all aspects of effectively operating the home front public systems has been understood. To this end, a National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established, although its progress in developing capabilities has been slow due to numerous bureaucratic barriers.

The Rounds of Conflict with Hamas: "More of the Same"

At the time of writing, it appears that the strategy of deterrence, based on the offensive doctrine, creates longer periods of relative stability between the rounds of hostilities between Israel and its adversaries, primarily in the north (Hezbollah), and to a lesser extent in the south (Hamas). This success has many advantages, mostly with regard to the civilian front. This strengthens the claim of those—within the IDF, for example—that priority should be given to the dimension of offense over elements of defense.[16] Yet even if this is correct, the gap between the national investment and the military responses in the offensive domain and those in the defensive realm (including in the protection of the population) is unreasonably large.

This assertion was proved correct in the three rounds of fighting with Hamas in the Gaza Strip: Cast Lead (2008–9), Pillar of Defense (2012), and most of all, Protective Edge, which lasted for more than seven weeks in the summer of 2014 and ended without a decisive victory and with damage to the civilian front.[17] The rounds of fighting in the Gaza Strip,

16 Meir Elran, "The IDF Approach to its Role in the Civilian Front," in *IDF Strategy in the Perspective of National Security*, ed. Meir Elran, Gabi Siboni, and Kobi Michael (Tel Aviv: Institute of National Security Studies, 2016), pp. 129–38 [Hebrew].

17 Meir Elran and Alex Altshuler, "The Civilian Front in Operation Protective Edge," in *The Lessons of Operation Protective Edge*, ed. Anat Kurz and Shlomo Brom

which followed the Second Lebanon War, reflected the understanding of the non-state adversaries that Israel's weak spot is the civilian front. In four rounds of conflict they focused on attempts to strike civilian targets using high-trajectory weapons as the preferred means. This approach can be seen in their quantitative effort to build up their forces, with the primary goal of creating a statistically accurate disruptive challenge to the civilian routine. At the same time, both Hezbollah and Hamas have made significant qualitative progress, including the introduction of more precision weaponry, which already brought them, according to the former commander of the Home Front Command, to the level that "0.9 percent of what lands on the State of Israel will be accurate."[18] This complements the development of larger, longer range warheads, which cover most of the populated areas of the State of Israel. In addition, the sub-state enemy is developing capabilities in offensive drones and underground and sea infiltration.

All this intensifies the threat and requires new and innovative responses. Does Israel possess them? The State Comptroller's report on the preparedness of the home front, dated December 2016,[19] provides a negative answer. Similarly, evidence by two of the heads of the agencies responsible for the civilian front reveals insufficient levels of preparedness on the civilian front. Thus, on May 29, 2016, the Head of the National Emergency Authority warned that the level of preparedness of the home front in Israel is "medium plus" and much work remains.[20] The previous commander of the Home Front Command stated that the preparedness of the home front is better than what people think, but still lacking: "There is more than a half-full cup, although it should be clear: the next war will be a totally different experience, more challenging, with serious disruption of functioning, but it will be possible to

(Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2014), pp. 121–27.

18 Yoav Limor, "'Iron Dome Encouraged Complacency,'" interview with General Yoel Strook, outgoing commander of the Home Front Command, *Yisrael Hayom*, February 9, 2017, http://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/451059.

19 State Comptroller, *Special Audit Report on the Preparations for the Protection of the Home Front against the Threat of Missiles and Rockets* (Physical Fortification, Warning and Evacuation of the Population), (2016), https://bit.ly/2N82cmw [Hebrew].

20 Reshet Gimmel of Kol Yisrael, Brig. Gen. (res.) Bezalel Trieber, former head of NEMA, http://www.iba.org.il/bet/?entity=1162227&type=1&topic=0&page=0 [Hebrew].

deal with if we move in the right direction."[21] This is not a very encouraging picture, if one takes into consideration that this evidence comes from people who were heads of the two chief organizations responsible for the welfare of the civilian front.

Conclusion

Alongside the "traditional" Palestinian terror that occasionally reemerges in prominent fashion, the threat to the civilian front is the most pressing military challenge facing Israel today. This threat is manifested primarily in the massive potential use of high-trajectory weapons and replaces the past threat from the Arab armies, which represented Israel's strategic order of priorities from its independence until the Yom Kippur War.

Today's wars do not resemble the wars of the past.[22] This can be seen along two axes. The first is the transition from military threats originating from nation states, which jeopardized the sovereignty and security of Israel, to that of risks from non-state entities, with relatively limited military capacity, which can mainly cause disruption and annoyance to the civilian population of Israel. The second axis is represented by the transition from virtually total success in the past in protecting the Israeli population against the adversaries, to a state in which the public is continuously threatened and becomes the main target for repeated kinetic attacks.

This change in the level and character of the threat should have led to a totally revised defense doctrine and to different responses, military and diplomatic, against Israel's new foes. It could be expected that Israel, with its advanced military, political, and economic robust resources, would have produced strategic circumstances that would represent its clear superiority over its relatively weak adversaries. These new manifestations would have been designed to limit significantly the military threat to the state and its citizens, or at least to diminish the perception of the threat and the ensuing sense of anxiety. This is seemingly not the case, for various reasons, primarily psychological. The impression is that among the Israeli public, the political leadership, and perhaps even the senior military ranks, there is a common

21 Limor, "Iron Dome."

22 Uri Ben Eliezer, *Israel's New Wars – a Sociological-Historical Explanation* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publications, 2012), pp. 426–427 [Hebrew].

belief that Israel is limited in its military-political efficacy to achieve a decisive victory over its enemies, despite the strategic gap that exists between them.

Unlike the perception in the past, when Israel faced major state military threats but succeeded in developing a clear sense of military efficacy (sometimes perhaps in an exaggerated manner), today the general mindset seems more frail. The prevailing perception is that the IDF does not exercise its full potential to provide the necessary strategic responses to the contemporary threats, which are clearly on a lesser scale. External and internal political considerations limit capacities, particularly in the realm of the IDF's ground forces to fully and rapidly implement their maneuvering capacity against Hezbollah and Hamas, at a reasonable cost and casualties. Furthermore, the ongoing public debate regarding the expected casualty level among the soldiers of the ground forces, which sometimes resonates more than the discourse regarding the expected number of civilian casualties, undermines the military efficacy and spawns fear and weakness. This feeling is also connected to the political and legal constraints imposed on the military power. The net result is that the Israeli deterrence is challenged and the needed defense of the civilian front is repeatedly questioned. This results not only in less effective military robustness but also in a broadened sense of apprehension on the civilian front.

The home front in Israel needs a strong and effective military to not only defend it from its weaker adversaries but also to further its own resilience to stand up to the growing challenges, which are expected to become more severe in the foreseeable future. The nexus and interdependency between the military front and the civilian front is more prominent than any time since the War of Independence. This calls not only for understanding but also for taking concrete measures to enhance the capacities of the civilian front.

The Six Day War: The Intelligence Assessments on the Road to War

David Siman-Tov and Shmuel Even

> "We must remember, the changes in our region can be very rapid and if you do not quickly ride on the wave of history, you can miss it."
>
> Head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, General Aharon Yariv, 1967[1]

Prior to the Six Day War, the intelligence assessments shifted drastically. The basic approach initially claimed that Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser would not dare to act against Israel while his army was involved in the fighting in Yemen. The assessment then claimed that the Egyptian army was deployed in Sinai for defense and deterrence. The final assessment was that Nasser was prepared for a confrontation with Israel.

This essay describes the strategic assessments of the Military Intelligence Directorate before the outbreak of the war, examines their changes, and presents possible lessons for today's intelligence establishment, such as how to deal with the challenge of preventing escalation to war.

1 General Aharon ("Aharele") Yariv served as head of the Intelligence Directorate in the General Staff Headquarters from January 1964 to October 1972.

Assessment of the Intelligence Directorate until mid-May 1967: "War is not Expected"

In the mid-1960s, the Intelligence Directorate believed that war between Israel and the Arabs would not take place before 1970.[2] The assessment then was that the Palestinians and the Syrians were trying to draw Egypt into war by means of carrying out terrorist acts against Israel, but that Egypt had no interest in being pulled into such a war, particularly when it was already involved in a war in Yemen. The Military Intelligence Directorate believed that an Israeli strike against Syria would likely force Egypt to take steps to preserve its reputation but that it was not prepared for a confrontation with Israel and would seek to restrain Syria.[3] In this context, it was believed that the Egyptian army was not competent enough[4] and would refrain from attacking without a united Arab front.[5]

In February 1966, Syria underwent a military coup and its regime was seized by Salah Jadid, who until then had ruled behind the scenes. Nureddin al-Atasi was appointed president and Hafez al-Assad (father of Bashar al-Assad) as defense minister. The new regime was hostile toward Israel and maintained a violent campaign against it by supporting Palestinian terror activity, attempting to divert the sources of the Jordan River, and vying for control over the demilitarized areas along the border between Syria and Israel. Israel reacted with force; for example, in July 1966, the IDF attacked engineering equipment and destroyed the canal that Syria had constructed in order to divert the sources of the Jordan River. Following this incident, at a discussion held at General Headquarters on August 8, 1966, the head of the Intelligence Directorate assessed that a broad confrontation with Syria to the

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2 Aharon Yariv in the investigation of the war; interview given to the officers of the IDF History Department, February 15, 1970, IDF Archive, File 1135-1784-192 (herein: "Investigation of the War") [Hebrew].

3 Yariv at the meeting of the General Staff, May 24, 1965 in Ami Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order* (Tel Aviv: Department of Defense Publications, 2004), p. 108 [Hebrew].

4 According to a survey of the Research Department of the Intelligence Directorate published about a year before the war, as quoted in the book by Shlomo Gazit, who served during that period as head of the Research Department. See Shlomo Gazit, *At Decisive Junctures* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth, 2016), p. 142 [Hebrew].

5 General Staff Situation Assessment, October 22, 1964: Amos Gilboa, *Mr. Intelligence* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth, 2015), p. 151 [Hebrew].

point of undermining the regime in Damascus—without getting involved in a war with Egypt—was an option for the IDF.[6] On November 4, 1966, Egypt and Syria signed a defense pact. The Intelligence Directorate did not foresee the Jadid coup nor the Egyptian-Syrian defense pact, and even after these events, it did not change its assessment regarding the feasibility of a regional war.[7]

At the beginning of 1967, the tension mounted between Israel and Syria. In February 1967, in a discussion at the General Headquarters, the head of the Intelligence Directorate stated that "only a major military strike will teach the Syrians a lesson and will stop the grassroots war [Palestinian terrorist activity encouraged by Syria]."[8] On April 7, 1967, the IDF and the Syrian army engaged in battles following an attack on Israeli farmers who had been working the land near the demilitarized areas. During the battles, six Syrian fighter planes were shot down, two of them over Damascus. The incident, which occurred on the celebrations of the ruling Ba'ath party, was a serious blow to the prestige of the Syrian regime. According to Yitzhak Rabin, then chief of the General Staff, the Israeli action was intended to harm the Syrian regime and perhaps even to topple it and to send a strong message to the Arab countries to put an end to any thoughts of militarily challenging Israel.[9]

Following the Israeli action, Syria demanded that the Egyptian president fulfill the defense pact between the two countries. The Syrian foreign minister warned against "Israeli aggression, which is seeking to topple the revolutionary regime in Syria," and the Syrian representative at the United Nations declared that Israel was preparing a large-scale attack on his country.[10] On May 11, 1967, the head of the Intelligence Directorate said in a press briefing that if the terror attacks from Syria continued, Israel would take limited military action with the objective of toppling the Syrian regime or inducing Egypt

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6 Yariv in a General Staff meeting, August 8, 1966 in Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, pp. 145–146.

7 Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, p. 156.

8 Yariv at a General Staff meeting, February 17, 1967, in Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, p. 185.

9 David Barkai, "Who is Responsible for the Outbreak of the 1967 War? Jordan and the Six Day War," *Studies in the Establishment of Israel* 9 (1999): 246–279 [Hebrew].

10 Ibid.

to persuade Syria to cease its support of the terror activity.[11] It should be mentioned that during this period, the IDF spokesperson was part of the military intelligence.

At the General Staff meetings prior to May 15, 1967, the question whether Nasser would continue to sit idly by if fighting developed between Israel and Syria was asked many times. According to the commander of the Southern Command at the time, Yeshayahu (Shaike) Gavish, the head of the Intelligence Directorate believed that the mutual defense pact between Egypt and Syria signed in November 1966 was "just a piece of paper which implies only moral support from Egypt." According to Gavish, Aharon Yariv, the head of the Intelligence Directorate also believed that Egypt, which was up to its neck with the fighting in Yemen, would not rush to evacuate its forces from there and given this situation would not want to get involved in another war. When Gavish asked, "How are you certain that war will not break out before 1970?" Yariv responded that "clearly there is a possibility of deterioration before then."[12]

The Soviet intervention in the crisis by means of deception was a major step toward war. In the second week of May 1967, the Russians sent a biased and false report to Syria—and apparently also to Egypt—about the concentration of significant IDF forces near the Israeli-Syrian border.[13] During the examination of the lessons of the intelligence, after the war, the head of the Intelligence Directorate explained that the Russians had believed that the Syrians would not cease their support of terror activities, and in order to save the regime in Damascus, which was their ally, they turned to Egypt to exert pressure on Israel by reporting that Israeli forces had concentrated at the border. Based on his assessment, the Russians had lost control of the matter.[14] According to Yariv, the statements of Chief of Staff Rabin to the media about possible IDF actions against Syria, should the terror attacks

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11 Yariv at a briefing of military correspondents, May 11, 1967 in Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, p. 213.

12 Shaike Gavish, *Red Sheet* (Kinneret Zmora-Bitan, 2016), pp. 102–103 [Hebrew].

13 Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, p. 204.

14 *Investigation of the War*; see also Eyal Zisser, "Between Israel and Syria—The Six Day War and its Aftermath," *Studies in the Establishment of Israel* 8 (1998): 205–252 [Hebrew].

against Israel continue, were perceived in Syria and Egypt as a threat to the regime in Damascus.[15]

Yariv claimed that the "true situation" was that the IDF did not concentrate its forces on the northern border and did not have any intention of acting against Syria.[16] An incorrect intelligence picture had taken shape, which relied mainly on Soviet deception, Israeli declarations that sought to deter Syria from carrying out terrorist acts against Israel, and the sharing of information and messages between Syria and Egypt.

In contrast to the assessments of the Intelligence Directorate, Egyptian forces had begun to move into Sinai on May 14, 1967 and received wide media coverage. Yariv stated after the war that even if the Egyptian move had not received media coverage, the Intelligence Directorate would have identified the entry of Egyptian forces into Sinai by the following day, because of two confidential reports, one that arrived in the morning and the other, which clarified the situation, arriving in the afternoon.[17]

On May 16, the Egyptian media reported that the Egyptian army had declared an emergency due to the tension between Israel and Syria. *Al-Ahram* newspaper, the regime's mouthpiece, even reported that "Egypt will go to war with Israel if Syria is the target of aggression that threatens its territory or its security."[18]

The Intelligence Directorate Warns Against Egyptian Escalation

At first, the Intelligence Directorate believed that the entry of Egyptian forces into Sinai was for defense and deterrence,[19] but on May 19, after the UN forces evacuated from Sinai due to Egyptian pressure, the Intelligence Directorate changed its assessment. In a General Staff meeting on that day, Yariv said that "it is not clear to us today whether there was an Egyptian

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15 *Investigation of the War*.

16 Aharon Yariv, "Intelligence in the Six Day War," *Prudent Assessment* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense–Publications, 1998), p. 161 [Hebrew]. This essay is based on a lecture he gave at a gathering of lieutenant colonels on July 12, 1967.

17 Ibid., p. 162.

18 Major Yona, "The Background to the Six Day Way from the Arab Perspective," *Maarachot* 191–192 (June 1968): 37 [Hebrew]. Major Yona Bendeman served at that time as a section head in the Egypt Branch of the Research Department of the Intelligence Directorate.

19 Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order*, p. 220.

intention from the start to escalate or that they intended to achieve a more limited goal of achieving prestige . . . In any case, they are ready for a military escalation, as a result of an intended or unintended provocation." Chief of General Staff Rabin said that "Aharele [General Aharon Yariv] has analyzed the possibilities. The reality will prove which is correct. I will now discuss the possibilities not according to their likelihood but according to their danger." Rabin added that "we need to make all the preparations for war. We are finished with the issue of intentions, rather we are now working on possibilities."[20]

On May 23, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli vessels, a move that the Intelligence Directorate had already considered several days earlier on May 19 and even before. Nonetheless, it appears that the timing of the event was unexpected.[21] The army and the Israeli public perceived this measure as an Egyptian declaration of war.[22] The Israeli leadership, however, was unable to quickly respond. According to Gavish, after the closing of the straits, "Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin had a nervous breakdown and disappeared for two days,"[23] while Prime Minister and Defense Minister Levi Eshkol hesitated in responding, out of fear that Israel would be perceived as the aggressor and would damage its international relations all while maintaining hope that the United States would resolve the crisis.

In the meantime, the Egyptian forces continued to flow into Sinai, but their intentions were still unknown. Gavish claimed that the Egyptian deployment at the end of May 1967 pointed to the following possibilities: They could carry out an all-out attack in the direction of Ashkelon and Beersheba and south of Mitzpe Ramon in order to cut off the Negev; they could wait for an Israel to attack in order to halt it at the defense lines in Sinai; or they could remain in Sinai in order to exhaust the State of Israel without a war.[24]

On May 28, Yariv stated at a General Staff meeting that

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20 Yariv, *A Prudent Assessment*, p. 40.

21 According to Yariv, "On the 22, prior to the closing of the straits, we reduced the likelihood of this possibility somewhat, following information that we had received." See Ibid., p. 163.

22 Gluska, *Eshkol, Give an Order,* p. 268.

23 Gavish, *Red Sheet*, pp. 115, 124.

24 Ibid., pp. 117–119.

> Nasser has changed his mind in principle . . . For two weeks, Intelligence has tried to clarify Nasser's intentions. He is changing his intentions like suits . . . We are also checking the activity of the superpowers which has implications for Egyptian actions . . . As head of the Intelligence Directorate, I have failed; I did not expect the possibility that this would happen . . . We have discovered that this is not the Nasser we knew in the past. In the past he did not want to get entangled. Today he is willing to do so and even willing to initiate the entanglement . . . Given the fact that Nasser is willing to attack, we must get ready.[25]

The situation deteriorated even further by May 30. King Hussein of Jordan signed a defense pact with Nasser in Cairo. The Intelligence Directorate estimated that Hussein signed the pact based on his assessment of Israel's weakness. Yariv viewed King Hussein's action as dangerous and unprecedented, giving impetus to the deteriorating situation. According to Yariv, "I had a disagreement with the Foreign Ministry and the director of the Prime Minister's Office. I told them, you do not understand the significance of the alliance between Egypt and Jordan. This is dangerous for us. They said that this has already happened in the past . . . I said not in this configuration. Hussein did this because he understood that things are deteriorating."[26]

An intelligence review dated May 31 and carried out by the Research Unit within the Intelligence Directorate discussed the implications if the decision to attack was to be delayed by two to three weeks and determined that Israel would "not benefit from a standstill in the situation."[27] At the military level, it was expected that the existing alignment would coalesce and be reinforced and consolidated, inter alia, by additional forces, such as those from Yemen, and toward the end of the period, equipment purchased from the Soviet Union would arrive (albeit in an improvised manner). In addition, the passage of time would enable the Egyptian air force to prepare and increase its offensive capability and its ability to absorb an attack.

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25 General Staff discussion, May 28, 1967, IDF Archive, file 1974-192-1176 [Hebrew].

26 Ibid.

27 Survey of the Research Department of the Intelligence Directorate, "The Significance of a Standstill in the Situation for 2–3 Weeks," May 31, 1967, IDF Archive, file 1974-192-1176 [Hebrew].

According to the assessment, every day that passed reduced Israel's chances of achieving air superiority in the war.

On the political level, the Intelligence Directorate believed that continuing the crisis would damage Israel's prestige and the creditability of its deterrence. It predicted that the United States would be completely alone in the international arena and that its willingness to act on behalf of Israel would diminish. Furthermore, the Intelligence Directorate perceived the nationalist enthusiasm that had swept the region as constituting a danger to King Hussein's regime. In addition, the Research Unit estimated that Syria had an interest in encouraging terror activity that would keep Egypt entangled. It was likely that the Egyptians would continue to restrain terror activities from their territory for the short term; in the long term, however, it was impossible to know how they would operate. In summary, the documents stated that "this is the big moment for Egypt—a wave of uninterrupted achievements by Egypt is liable to give its leaders the feeling that they can continue to exploit the success in order to carry out further actions."[28] Therefore, it was concluded that waiting was not in Israel's interest. The survey of the Research Department should be seen not only as an intelligence assessment but also as reflecting a strategic position, according to which Israel needed to carry out a preemptive attack. This position was also consistent with that of most of the IDF generals.

On June 1, a national unity government was established, and Moshe Dayan was appointed as minster of defense. The following day, the head of the Intelligence Directorate presented the survey of the Research Department ("The Significance of a Standstill in the Situation for 2–3 Weeks") at a meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Defense Matters, attended by the General Staff. The head of the Intelligence Directorate rejected the expectations of the political leadership that the United States would work to remove the closure of the Straits of Tiran. In conclusion, Yariv said that Israel should not perceive the United States "as a barrier to determined and rapid action by the IDF."[29]

At the government meeting on June 4, the head of the Intelligence Directorate reported that Egypt believed that a military confrontation with Israel was inevitable, commando forces had arrived in Jordan, and expeditionary

28 Ibid.

29 Gazit, *At Decisive Junctures*, p. 144.

forces had moved from Iraq to Jordan. Defense Minister Dayan added that Egypt sought to involve Jordan in the military operation and that obvious preparations were being made for an immediate offensive attack on Israel. In this context, the government decided by a majority (according to the proposal tabled by Dayan) "to engage in military action that will liberate Israel from the stranglehold tightening around it and prevent the imminent attack." The government empowered the prime minister and the defense minister to allow the chief of staff to begin the operation. It began on the morning of June 5, 1967.[30]

Did the Assessments of the Intelligence Directorate Pass the Test?

A few days after the end of the war, Defense Minister Dayan appeared before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset and spoke about the assessments given prior to the war. According to the defense minister:

> First, our assessment of the response to our action against Syria, against Fatah. Our assessment in this matter was incorrect. We did not correctly assess the extent to which Egypt would view itself as committed or obligated to react and to participate in the fighting. We all thought that Egypt was busy in Yemen and was unable to disentangle itself. We got stuck on the idea that Nasser had abandoned the Syrians by saying that he would not go to war with Israel over this or that explosion. Perhaps he himself did not realize it. However, the ball kept rolling . . . I do not know if the Egyptians really believed that we were about to attack Syria. But even if they had other considerations, the fact is that the issue of Syria was the main factor in Egypt's active response. And what is important to us is that we did not predict indeed what would happen. A second assumption that was wrong was that the entry of Egyptian forces into Sinai was just for show . . . A third assumption that was incorrect was that it would be difficult for the Egyptians to remove the UN forces from Sharm el Sheikh . . . It became clear that this mechanism was not hard to get rid of.

30 Ibid., pp. 172–173.

In Dayan's opinion, these mistaken assumptions led Israel to adopt an erroneous policy in its responses to Egypt's actions. For example, he claimed that Israel had erred in its decision to not respond to the closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships, which was essentially the first shot of the war.[31]

Shlomo Gazit, the head of the Research Unit of the Intelligence Directorate at that time, later wrote in his autobiography that "the Research Department did not foresee the war. Although it identified the process of escalation, the shift to war came as a surprise."[32] According to Gazit, the Arab countries, which did not want war, were no less surprised.[33] Similarly, in a lecture given on July 12, 1967 at a gathering of intelligence officers, Yariv stated that, "As head of the Intelligence branch I could not know, on Thursday or Friday (May 11–12, 1967) that Egypt was going to act—that Egyptian forces were going to enter Sinai, since I knew that we were not going to act [against Syria]. When I saw the information that Syria had reported to Egypt that it had information that the Jews had concentrated forces and they were about to act, we did not get excited, and rightly so, since such things had happened in the past."[34] Yariv later made similar statements, saying "We related to this move within the context of the information that we were going to attack Syria, when we knew that we were not going to do so . . . Therefore, we were not concerned about this move."[35] According to these statements, the Intelligence Directorate had projected its assessment of the situation (which included the real data on Israel's forces) onto the intelligence picture that was forming in Egypt and Syria, and that was a mistake.

After the war, Yariv spoke about Egypt's intentions after it had deployed its forces in Sinai, admitting that "until today it is still not clear to us whether Egypt intended from the beginning to escalate toward a confrontation" or whether Egypt had intended to only show a demonstration of force in order to offer help to Syria and to achieve prestige. However, given the way the

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31 Testimony of Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, transcript of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, June 13, 1967, G.M. A-8161/7, in Zaki Shalom, "War and Diplomacy," *Studies in the Establishment of Israel* 16 (2006): 195–242 [Hebrew].

32 Gazit, *At Decisive Junctures*, p. 144.

33 Ibid., p. 157.

34 Yariv, *Prudent Assessment*, pp. 161–162.

35 Rafael Cohen-Almagor, "The Six Days War Interviews with Prof. Shimon Shamir and General (res.) Aharon Yariv," *Social Issues in Israel* 15 (Winter 2013): 181 [Hebrew].

war developed, the Egyptians seemed prepared for military escalation, whether the result of an initiated or inevitable provocation.[36] That is, even after the fact, determining Egypt's intentions is very difficult; nonetheless, the presentation of the threat by the Intelligence Directorate was relevant to the decision making, since each of these two possibilities constituted a serious threat to Israel. This threat led Chief of Staff Rabin to prepare the army for war and led the government to agree to initiate a preemptive strike. The assessment of the Intelligence Directorate that the United States would acquiesce to the Israeli attack was also correct.

Implications and Lessons

The Egyptian decision to stand by Syria and to send its forces into Sinai on the evening of May 14, 1967, prior to the outbreak of the Six Day War, was the first surprise for the Intelligence Directorate. The second surprise was Nasser's willingness to escalate after his army had entered Sinai. The Intelligence Directorate changed its assessment following the evacuation of the UN forces from Sinai. The basis for these surprises apparently was the Intelligence Directorate's difficulty in estimating the extent to which Nasser was prepared to go to war so that he could consolidate his status as leader of the Arab world and Egypt's position as leading the struggle against Israel. Nonetheless, in the circumstances of May to June 1967, Israel did not find itself the victim of a surprise attack and had enough time to prepare for an all-encompassing war, which it won.

From a historical perspective, the surprise that occurred before the Six Day War was one more in a series of intelligence failures regarding Egypt's intentions and actions. Thus, during the 1950s, the Intelligence Directorate failed to predict both the Czech-Egyptian weapons deal and Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal,[37] which led to Operation Kadesh in 1956. In 1960, the entry of the Egyptian army into Sinai (the Rotem affair) surprised the Intelligence Directorate.[38] The gravest event of all took place six years after the Six Day War, when the Intelligence Directorate failed to warn of a surprise Syrian-Egyptian attack in the Yom Kippur War, for which Israel

36 Yariv, *Prudent Assessment*, p. 163.

37 Shaul Avigor, "Memorandum of the Intelligence Community in Israel," IDF Archive 144/1/2002, appearing as Appendix C in Yigal Shefi, *A Test of Deterrence* (Tel Aviv: Department of Defense Publications, 2008) [Hebrew].

38 Ibid.

paid a heavy price. The underlying factor of all these events was that the Intelligence Directorate had underestimated the Egyptian regime's willingness to take military risks for achieving its goals.

The Six Day War was a result of escalation, and most of the parties involved did not want to engage in war. Beyond the root cause of the Arab world's rejection of the existence of Israel and the hostilities against it, one of the main reasons for the outbreak of the war was the gap in information, the failures in intelligence assessments, and miscalculations[39] among the players involved, including Israel. Contributing to this was the Soviet deception that had lost all control. If the players had possessed accurate intelligence, it is doubtful that the war would have broken out. The Intelligence Directorate, however, did not consider this possibility, since it believed that Israel's enemies would act according to a familiar paradigm, although, in fact, they had formed a different paradigm. These events illustrate the challenge facing intelligence in the process of escalating to war, during which rival parties, who theoretically act rationally, commit all their forces to war when they do not intend to do so. This is an insight that is still relevant today and is an important lesson in intelligence: The main challenge facing intelligence researchers is not just to present the situation of the enemy forces but also to assess the enemy's perspective of Israel's forces, even if it is erroneous. Formulating such a perspective is essential for assessing their readiness and, in some cases, will prevent a military confrontation.

An analysis of the events that preceded the Six Day War can explain why messages of deterrence can lead to unexpected outcomes and how, in some cases, revealing true information is the way to stop escalation. The role of intelligence in the context of preventing escalation is to understand how the enemy and other players view Israel's capabilities and intentions and, in particular, to understand how Israel's messages and positions are being interpreted. Furthermore, intelligence can recommend messages and actions to the government that will reduce the tensions on the other side.

The case of the Six Day War also illustrates the challenge of dealing with a rapidly changing reality. On this matter, Yariv stated the following in a

39 Miscalculations is defined as a situation in which the players attribute malicious intentions to each another because the information they posses is deficient or mistaken. As a result, they arrive at incorrect conclusions, are dragged into escalation, and find themselves in a situation in which they did not want to be.

lecture after the war: "There were those in our corps who did not exactly understand what was going on, who continued to live according to the pace and psychology that prevails in periods of calm, at a time when the pace was starting to become one of war . . . The problem was the very rapid changes in the situation and that people did not understand these changes, which also required changes in the overall perception. And for someone who had a particular viewpoint it was not so easy for him to change it given the rapid changes taking place." According to Yariv, the lesson to be learned was that "the changes in our region can be very rapid and if you do not quickly get on the wave of history, you will miss it."[40]

40 Yariv, *Prudent Assessment*, p. 163.

The 1967 War Model: Changes and Challenges

Avi Kober

Background

More than just another war, the Six Day War was a major turning point in Israeli history. This essay does not discuss the war's significance or its particular implications, such as the internal debate in Israel over the political, ideological, and strategic importance of the territories, alternative models of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians, or the ideological activism that developed within the religious Zionist movement after 1967. Rather, it will look at a number of turning points that occurred in the military-strategic domain following the war and the differences in circumstances between 1967 and today.

The first part of the essay presents three turning points generated by the Six Day War: the beginning of the era of firepower, which subsequently became increasingly dominant and had implications for the relative weights of defense and offense and the prospects for battlefield decision; the negative impact of the spectacular success on the battlefield, the euphoria, and the subsequent complacency on Israeli military thought; and the first Arab-Israeli war conducted under the nuclear shadow.

The second part of the essay discusses some of the differences between 1967 and today, which have led to military-strategic challenges that likely did not even occur to anyone in 1967. The first is derived from the change in non-state actors, and in particular, the introduction of hybrid actors. The second arises from post-modern reality and constraints, among them: post-

heroic warfare, with its two main rules of avoiding casualties to one's own troops, and avoiding the killing of enemy civilians; cyber warfare, which at the moment exists alongside conventional warfare but has revolutionary potential; strategic thinking that has abandoned the imperative to achieve battlefield decision via physical means and instead emphasizes the image of decision; and the gradual transformation of the IDF from the modern army of 1967 to a post-modern army.

Turning Points Generated by the Six Day War

Transition from the Era of Maneuver to the Era of Firepower

War has always been characterized by dialectic relations between firepower and maneuver and between defense and offense.[1] When firepower became dominant, usually defense did as well, and when maneuver gained in influence, so did offense. Only by offensive means can battlefield decision be attained, and on the strategic and operational levels land maneuvers usually precede actual battle. This equation reached its zenith in the Six Day War. It was accompanied by the respective defense and offense derivatives, and was reflected in the IDF force buildup and operational concept. These put excessive emphasis on the tank as the dominant weapon system of the land forces at the expense of other elements and cast aircraft as a weapon system that could create favorable conditions for the achievement of battlefield decision.

Since 1967, this equation has not been fully duplicated, as the dialectic began to undermine it. First, the enemy, which had identified the IDF's strong and weak points in 1967, as well as its own, came to realize that it could confront Israeli maneuvering on the battlefield using ground-to-air missiles and anti-tank weapons. Second, the battlefield became saturated as a result of the excessive amount of forces relative to the battlespace.[2] Third, political constraints did not allow Israel to capture additional territories over those captured in 1967. Fourth, peace processes began that made confrontations like 1967, and offense in particular, unnecessary, which further weakened the relevance of offense and the move of the war to the enemy's territory.

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1 Michael Handel, *Clausewitz in an Era of Technological Change* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1988), pp. 60–61 [Hebrew].

2 Avi Kober, *Battlefield Decision in the Arab-Israeli Wars* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1995), pp. 365–369 [Hebrew].

The offshoots of offense and defense changed after 1967. Thus, there was more direct and less indirect approach; there was more concentration of fire rather than concentration of force; warfare along internal and external lines became far less relevant; there was greater emphasis on absorbing a first strike and then counterattacking, as opposed to a first strike; attrition carried more weight than *blitzkrieg*; and the IDF's command and control, which had favored mission-oriented command, became less relevant with the diminishing importance of maneuver and offense (although the IDF continued to pay it lip service). The negative outcome of this process was the weakening of the art of war.[3] Nonetheless, the emphasis on longer range, more precise, and more destructive firepower than in the past had and still has several additional positive aspects, such as the possibility of attack and the transfer of the fighting to the territory of the enemy using firepower instead of maneuver, the option of using firepower to reopen the possibilities of maneuver, and the possibility of reducing the number of casualties to one's own forces and to non-combatants on the enemy's side.

Seeking Battlefield Decision from the Air and via Firepower, and Nostalgia for 1967

Prior to and during the Second Lebanon War, there was a debate in the IDF on the feasibility of achieving decision from the air. One of the proponents of this approach was Lt. Gen. Dan Haloutz, who had been the commander of the IAF and later the chief of the General Staff. Head of the Intelligence Directorate during the Second Lebanon War, Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin, like Haloutz, believed in the combination of air attack and raids by special forces, and during most of the war advocated this combination. Yadlin changed his mind during the course of the war, concluding that stopping the katyushas in this way was not feasible. Ironically, it was the "blue uniforms," i.e., Maj. Gen. Ido Nehushtan and Yadlin, who reached the conclusion that the 1967 model was the preferred way of ending the war. According to Yadlin: "With respect to the katyushas, we need to show that we can win here . . . It seems possible to do so only on the ground . . . Our predecessors captured

3 Avi Kober, "The Rise and Fall of Israeli Operational Art," in *Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, ed. Martin van Creveld and John A. Olsen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 166–194.

the Arab lands in six days, and we are unable to go in with two divisions and finish south of the Litani?"[4]

Until today no battlefield decision over a whole army, i.e., a strategic decision, has been achieved from the air. Hiroshima and Nagasaki or Kosovo were not battlefield decisions, but rather grand-strategic ones. This kind of decision is based on destroying counter value targets, which consist of population centers and economic infrastructure not located on the direct battlefield. Battlefield decision from the air was almost achieved following the preliminary air attacks during the 1991 Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein agreed to withdraw from Kuwait. However, the US decided not to trust him and preferred a decision on the ground.[5]

In 1967 the IAF fulfilled a key role in destroying the Egyptian army in the territory between Gidi Pass and Mitla Pass on the one hand and the Israel-Egypt border on the other, but it was a divisional land force that blocked the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces westward. This event was not forgotten by Sadat, who in 1973 sought to stop the fighting before "85 to 90 percent of our weapons [are destroyed], as in 1967" and sent a message in this spirit to his partner Hafez Assad.[6]

If a battlefield decision via firepower alone is ever achieved, it will be interesting to see what proportion of forces must be destroyed in order to achieve this outcome. In 1967, deep in the era of maneuver that bore significant psychological weight, it was necessary to destroy 40 percent of the enemy's tank force in the Egyptian theater in order to achieve a battlefield decision.[7] What percentage of destruction by firepower will be required for this in the age of firepower?

1967 and Its Negative Effect on Israeli Military Thinking

In Israel's early years, there was a hard core of officers with a high level of intellectual thinking. These officers brought knowledge with them from the foreign armies in which they had served, spoke foreign languages, and were well versed in military history and theory. This diminished over time as the founding generation gradually disappeared. After the spectacular victory in

4 Ofer Shelah and Yoav Limor, *Prisoners in Lebanon* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2007), pp. 205, 212–213 [Hebrew].

5 Shmuel Gordon, *The Bow of Paris* (Tel Aviv, Poalim, 1997), p. 226 [Hebrew].

6 Kober, *Battlefield Decision*, p. 348.

7 Ibid., p. 437.

the Six Day War, Israel was swept by a wave of euphoria, which translated into *hubris* and arrogance. The cult of the offensive became increasingly influential, while the gradual ascendance of firepower on the battlefield at the expense of freedom of maneuver was ignored. Inspired by the wars that preceded the Six Day War, and primarily the Six Day War itself, it was the experience-based intuition of the IDF's commanders, their initiative, and their ability to improvise that was now admired. This came to justify the lack of interest in the intellectual element of military thinking, whose core was the study of military history and military theory.[8] Gen. Avraham Rotem has said in this context that "of all places, Israel, which allegedly has great military power and strength, is plagued by complacency, and a lack of daring and clarity of thinking."[9] If the IDF was so successful on the battlefield, what point was there in investing in thinking, learning, innovation, or change?

It appears that if the intellectual element had been treated more seriously, this could have contributed to improved IDF performance. The example most relevant to the 1967 context was the lack of sufficient awareness among a large proportion of the officer corps of the fire/maneuver-defense/attack dialectic described above, which might have helped the IDF adapt to the maneuver-limited battlefield after 1967. The neglect of the theoretical element of the military profession continued to accompany the IDF in subsequent years and hindered the IDF's performance. For example, greater familiarity with the principles of fighting in mountainous terrain would have certainly improved the performance of IDF forces in the central zone of Lebanon in 1982; familiarity with civil disobedience in India under Mahatma Gandhi would have improved the handling of the civil grassroots revolt during the first intifada; and awareness that a battlefield decision had not been achieved from the air or by firepower would have lowered expectations of such a decision in the Second Lebanon War. The conclusion, according to Martin Van Creveld, is as follows: "In retrospect, the smashing victory of 1967

8 Avi Kober, *Practical Soldiers* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 59–61, 115–123.

9 Avraham Rotem, "A Small and Smart Army," in *The Security Fabric: Issues in the Security of Israel in the Sixth Decade of its Existence*, ed. Hagai Golan (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 2001), p. 92 [Hebrew].

was probably the worst thing that ever happened to Israel."[10] Nietzsche had already made a similar point: "War makes the victor stupid."[11]

Almost the First Instance of Israeli Nuclear Deterrence

During the years following independence, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was deeply pessimistic as to Israel's ability in the long run to keep up with the Arabs in the conventional arms race. His pessimism sometimes bordered on existential anxiety. As part of his efforts to compensate for the Israeli inferiority in the quantitative balance of forces, Ben-Gurion tried to join a Western defensive alliance such as NATO or a pro-Western regional alliance, but his efforts were unsuccessful. The alternative options were an alliance with a great power and self-reliance by way of acquiring what would be cast by various reports as nuclear capability, which would constitute a final option, or the "doomsday device," namely an option for extreme scenarios that involve an existential threat.

These two tracks converged when France became Israel's patron during the 1950s. When Israel joined the British-French coalition prior to the Sinai War in 1956, France agreed to provide it with a nuclear reactor, which from the outset was thought of in terms of military nuclear capability. The French too had an interest in the Israeli alleged military track, since at that time they lacked such capability. On the eve of the Six Day War, the Israeli nuclear program came to fruition and Israel already possessed one or two bombs.[12] Brig. Gen. (ret.) Yitzhak Yaakov, former head of the IDF weapons research and development program, defined according to foreign reports what Israel held as a "primitive crude device" designed to deter the Arabs and calm Israeli fears.[13]

This occurred almost in parallel to events that required a forceful response by Israel, i.e., the restriction of its freedom of navigation, the danger that the reactor in Dimona would be bombed, and the concentration of Egyptian forces

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10 Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive* (Tel Aviv: Public Affairs, 1998), pp. 198–199.

11 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 163.

12 Avner Cohen, "Cairo, Dimona and the June 1967 War," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 2 (1996): 190–210.

13 Yossi Melman, "The Nuclear Program's Man of Secrets," *Walla*, March 28, 2013, http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2628836 [Hebrew].

in Sinai along the border with Israel.[14] These *casus belli*, together with the threats of destruction coming from Egyptian president Nasser and the image of the Israeli government among the public, the political system, and senior IDF officers as indecisive and under pressure, led to existential anxiety in Israel. This anxiety was reflected in part in the ordering of about 10,000 body bags and the preparation of public parks for use as temporary cemeteries.[15]

Against this background and in view of the high probability of war, Member of Knesset Shimon Peres of the Rafi faction put forward a proposal that a General Staff reconnaissance unit penetrate into Sinai and place a nuclear device on top of one of the high mountains in the Sinai Peninsula. When detonated, it would deter the Egyptians from starting a war. The proposal was conveyed to Moshe Dayan, the newly appointed minister of defense, who was his friend and a member of the same political party. The proposal was rejected,[16] apparently to a great degree because of the uncertainty regarding the reactions of Egypt and the superpowers and, in particular, the Soviet Union, which might have decided to provide Egypt with a nuclear umbrella and to confront Israel.[17] Whatever the case, this was the first appearance of the nuclear shadow over the Arab-Israeli wars, at a time when according to various reports, Israel already possessed nuclear capability of its own. Later episodes occurred in 1973 and perhaps also in 1991.

The 1967 War Environment vs. Today's War Environment

The Asymmetric War

Hybrid actors. The more that confrontations in the Arab-Israeli conflict moved away from the 1967 model, the more asymmetric they became. Non-state actors are not a new phenomenon; they were part of the Arab-Israeli conflict already in the early decades of the state, although then they were

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14 Micha Bar, *Red Lines in the Israeli Deterrence Strategy* (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1990), pp. 77–101 [Hebrew].

15 Tom Segev, *1967: Israel*'s *Change of Face* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), pp. 246–358 [Hebrew].

16 Ibid., pp. 347–348; Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace: Memoirs* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995, pp. 166–167; Yossi Sarid, *Therefore We have Called This Meeting* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2008), p. 194 [Hebrew]; Melman, "The Nuclear Program's Man of Secrets."

17 Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 276–275.

overshadowed by state confrontations and were inferior to state actors in numbers, and even more so, in quality. In contrast, non-state actors have in recent decades begun to utilize advanced technology, which has become a force multiplier. As a result, the lines between state and non-state actors and between conventional and non-conventional have become blurred, and war has become "hybrid war," in which the weak non-state party has military and non-military capabilities that in the past were only available to the stronger party. The combination of these abilities with fanaticism (usually Islamic) has transformed them into an unprecedented threat.[18] This threat, alongside those from state actors in the region, first among them Iran, is responsible to a large extent for the proposal to add a fourth leg, namely defense, to the triad that for many years, including in 1967, comprised Israel's security concept: deterrence, early warning, and battlefield decision. This addition reflects and explains the huge investment in passive and multi-layered active defense against missiles and rockets in recent decades and the reduced traditional commitment to offense and battlefield decision.

A concept that was meant to introduce a new theory of asymmetric conflict, but has not been adopted by a critical mass of researchers, is "fourth generation warfare."[19] This theory, like hybrid war, is simply another version of low intensity conflict, which recognizes the importance of force multipliers such as the use of advanced technology by the weak player and in turn, its ability to convey different messages to different audiences simultaneously—the home audience, the enemy audience, and the international community—attributed to Hezbollah, among others, in the Second Lebanon War.

*Emphasis on the difficulty to deter and to achieve battlefield decision***.** In recent years, numerous statements by senior IDF officers, such as Moshe Ya'alon, then commander of the Central Command, Gadi Eisenkot, when head of the Operations Directorate, and Amir Eshel, former head of the Planning Directorate, expressed the widespread skepticism in the IDF regarding the prospects of deterrence and battlefield decision in low-intensity conflicts. Such positions were completely foreign to what was accepted wisdom during the era of symmetric war and reflect a major deviation from the reality and

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18 Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007).

19 Terry Terriff, Aaron Karp, and Regina Karp, eds., *Global Insurgency and Future Warfare: The Debate on Fourth Generation Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

thinking of 1967 and from the basic expectations of a commander to seek a battlefield decision over the enemy.[20] It appears that these officers tended to ignore the fact that in 1982 the IDF defeated the PLO in Lebanon and that the IDF was also successful in Operation Defensive Shield during the second intifada. These events prove that success is also possible in an asymmetric conflict, on the condition that there is willingness to pay the price in casualties (see the discussion below of post-heroic warfare).

Operating on the two extremes of the levels of war and tolerance for the cost of war. In wars between state actors, such as in 1967, military activity is spread out over the entire continuum of the levels of war: tactical, operational, strategic, and grand-strategic. In asymmetric wars, in contrast, the main activity is on the two extreme levels—tactical and grand-strategic. This is mainly because the non-state actor identifies these two extreme levels as having the potential to offset the advantage of the strong party on the operational and strategic levels. Decision in such conflicts, if it is achieved, tends to be grand-strategic, namely one that is achieved as a result of the damage done to the resilience of the enemy's societies and economies and less on the basis of events on the battlefield, and includes a strong element of attrition. In the past, attrition was considered to work in favor of the weak and against the strong, but this is no longer necessarily so if the superiority of the strong party in destructive power is also accompanied by higher tolerance for the cost of war.[21] In contrast to conventional thinking—namely, that Israel has trouble dealing with non-state actors since attrition works in favor of the weak party—Israel has, in fact, demonstrated over the years a high tolerance for the cost of war.[22]

Post-modern Challenges

In recent decades, the environment of war and strategy has changed dramatically, as a result of both the end of the Cold War and other factors. This environment is far removed from the 1967 model.

Post-heroic warfare. War in the past, and particularly in 1967, was considered to be a unique social phenomenon, in which people kill and are

20 Kober, *Practical Soldiers*, p. 81.

21 Steven Rosen, "War Power and the Willingness to Suffer," in *Peace, War and Numbers*, ed. Bruce Russett (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1972), pp. 167–183.

22 Avi Kober, *Israel's Wars of Attrition: Attrition Challenges to Democratic States* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

themselves killed. The behavior of the Western democracies following the Cold War led Edward Luttwak to coin the term "post-heroic warfare." In this new type of warfare, there are two overriding rules: do not get killed and do not kill non-combatants on the enemy side.[23] The new model of warfare was the result of a synthesis of the following factors: the change in the nature of the conflicts, in which asymmetric confrontations are more common, alongside those that in general do not involve the vital interests of the country and as a result also reduce the willingness of Western democratic actors to sacrifice; precise long-range weapons that are fired from distant and unmanned platforms and reduce casualties; and the increasing authority of ethical and legal rules that obligate Western democracies to avoid using excessive force and killing non-combatants as much as possible.

On the one hand, this model reduces the willingness to enter into a confrontation in order to avoid casualties, which has in some cases made the number of casualties a more important consideration than the need to achieve operational effectiveness and reduces the possibility of achieving decision. On the other hand, it has, in fact, lowered the threshold for entering into a conflict or for perseverance in a conflict, due to the possibility of fighting while paying a relatively low price. This is the dominant philosophy and method of waging war in Israel since the Second Lebanon War, which are in stark contrast to the heroic war of 1967.[24]

Cyber warfare. Cyber warfare takes place in the virtual domain of computer networks and is directed against infrastructures, software, and actors. Cyber warfare is an entirely new element from the environment of the Six Day War. In theory, this is a development with revolutionary potential in the world of warfare, since each of the revolutions in the modern era has been the result of an encounter between two deep processes—one social and the other technological. Modern war and the nuclear revolution were born this way, and this may also occur with cyber warfare. Thus, cyber warfare has made possible, for the first time and at least in principle, the use of technological means in order to eliminate the ability of an entire society and army to operate, without using the traditional weapons of war, such as land, air, and

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23 Edward Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 3 (1995): 109–122.

24 Avi Kober, "From Heroic to Post-Heroic Warfare: Israel's Way of War in Asymmetrical Conflicts," *Armed Forces & Society* 41, no. 1 (2013): 1–27.

naval forces, and while ignoring geographic boundaries. Although cyber warfare and the traditional concepts of war and strategy have a number of common denominators (both include defense, attack, intelligence, deception, espionage, and the like), their application differs.

There is apparently a long way to go before the revolutionary potential implicit in cyber warfare is realized, and therefore the 1967 model will remain relevant in the future. Cyber warfare cannot capture territory, hold it, and achieve a battlefield decision, which requires boots on the ground. Furthermore, notwithstanding the promise of cyber warfare, it may become clear that it has low effectiveness against both a very primitive enemy and a very sophisticated one. Some believe that cyber weaponry will be used in the future alongside—rather than in place of—conventional weaponry, as in the wars in Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2015, the Iranian cyber attacks during Operation Protective Edge, and others.

Control instead of capture of territory and a victory photo instead of a physical victory. The Six Day War was a classic case of a physical decision that was achieved by destroying the enemy's forces and capturing territory. In the Second Lebanon War, two trends came to light that challenge this classic model: the first is "control" of territory by means of observation and fire as a substitute for boots on the ground, as in air or naval warfare. The report by the commander of the 91st Division during the Second Lebanon War that they had control of Bint Jbeil created the mistaken impression that IDF forces had captured the town.[25]

The second trend, which has similarities to the first, is the tendency, which at the moment characterizes only a small number of senior commanders, to believe that the physical dimension of a decision has lost some of its importance and that an image or a photo of victory is more important than physical victory. This was the opinion of then Chief of Staff Dan Haloutz[26] or then head of Strategic Planning Eival Giladi.[27] This idea was demonstrated

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25 Edward Cody and Scott Wilson, "Israelis, Hezbollah Keep Up Attacks," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, July 28, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/27/AR2006072700714.html; Hanan Greenberg, "IDF in Control of Bint Jbeil," *Ynet*, July 25, 2016, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3281031,00.html; "Transcripts," *CNN*, July 26, 2006, http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0607/26/lol.03.html.

26 Dan Haloutz, lecture at the National Security College, January 28, 2001 [Hebrew].

27 *Yedioth Ahronoth,* Shabbat section, September 19, 2003 [Hebrew].

by the events at Bint Jbeil, since there were those who believed that planting the flag at the former government building from which Nasrallah had given his "spider web" speech, distributing a photo of the newly planted flag, and holding a victory procession there would be enough to create the impression that the town was in IDF hands.[28] In this way, battlefield decision becomes a fiction.

A post-modern army. The IDF of 1967 belonged to the category of a "modern army." It was a large army; most of its enemies were regular armies; the main threats it had to deal with constituted severe dangers for the country; its commanders were for the most part combat officers; the women serving in it were in a separate corps; the army did not think in terms of outsourcing; and the relations between it and the media were unidirectional in the sense that the media was dependent on the information provided by the army, which opened the way for manipulation by the army.

In recent decades the IDF has become a different army and to a great extent has become a "post-modern" army, a term coined by Charles Moskos.[29] Thus, the new IDF seeks to become a "small and smart" army, at a time when a "large and smart" army is, in fact, necessary for achievements on land in asymmetric confrontations; most of its enemies are hybrid actors; many of the soldiers and commanders in the IDF are what is called "technological soldiers" who operate hi-tech weapons, often far away from the direct battlefield; there are "manager commanders," who operate according to managerial logic and not necessarily according to the operational logic that requires the capabilities of a military leader; there is also the "statesman soldier" in the IDF, who is known in Israel as the "strategic corporal" who must be aware of the consequences of activities at the tactical level on the high military level and/or at the government level; and in the IDF it is also possible to find "cyber soldiers." Moreover, an increasing proportion of IDF aircraft are unmanned, and are controlled far away from the direct battlefield; women are now integrated throughout the IDF, without any designated framework, and many more women fill operational and technological positions; the IDF makes abundant use of outsourcing; and it is the player often chasing the media rather than the other way around. This is due to the massive amount

28 Shelah and Limor, *Prisoners in Lebanon*, pp. 192–193.

29 Charles Moskos, "Toward a Post-Modern Army?" *Democratic Culture* 4–5 (2001): 213–232 [Hebrew].

of information possessed by the media, which the IDF needs (the "Carmela Menashe phenomenon"). None of this existed in 1967.

Conclusion

Despite the turning points and the importance of the Six Day War as a watershed, neither the war nor the subsequent periods should be viewed as a revolution in the world of war and strategy. Even if features of war have changed since 1967, there has been no change in the nature of war. The basic characteristics of war and strategy existed before 1967 and continued to exist subsequently, despite the dynamic changes in the military domain. The dialectic between firepower and maneuver and between defense and offense, the tension between the intellectual and practical elements of the military profession, and the nuclear shadow over conventional war are familiar phenomena from other periods and contexts. This is also the case for most of the challenges that appeared after 1967. Low intensity conflicts, which are problematic from the point of view of deterrence and decision, were familiar to the IDF already before 1967. Even the allegedly new phenomenon of "fourth generation warfare" is nothing but asymmetric warfare, and the concept of "hybrid actors" reflects the well-known and more general phenomenon of non-state actors who seek force multipliers of every possible type.

It has already been understood that strategic decision from the air or by firepower has low feasibility and that a photo of victory cannot serve as a substitute for a physical decision, something that was entirely clear in 1967. The considerations surrounding the size of the army and its structure, the place of women in the army, army-media relations, the appearance of relatively new technologically related functions and professions, the mutual relations between the tactical and grand-strategic echelons, and other topics have always been relevant issues for discussion among military and security experts.

The challenges are ostensibly more serious in two domains. The first is post-heroic warfare, which has become the dominant manner of managing war in the IDF since Operation Litani in 1978, and even more so since the Second Lebanon War. The second is cyber warfare, which in theory constitutes a revolution in the world of war, although at the moment it cannot achieve decision due to its inability to capture territory.

Civil-Military Perspectives

The Watershed Moment: The Influence of the *Soldiers' Talk* and the Movement for Greater Israel on Israeli Discourse[1]

Omer Einav

The *Soldiers' Talk* and the Movement for Greater Israel were both born during the period following the Six Day War. Even when examined in their early stages of development, both illustrate the different viewpoints of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that have existed from then until today. In order to support this claim, this essay compares the characteristics of the discourse represented by these two opposing pillars, which originated during the shock of the 1967 victory. This is done by analyzing texts that appeared immediately after the war in response to the way the war ended.

Such a comparison between *Soldiers' Talk* and the Movement for Greater Israel has not yet been carried out, and it will depict the beginning of a process of significant and far-reaching change in Israeli society, particularly within the Labor movement and religious Zionism. Prior to the Six Day War, fundamental disagreements about the character of the State of Israel and its relations with its neighbors were marginalized and, for the most part, remained only theoretical in nature. However, the decisive victory of the war, as well as the resulting territorial and demographic expansion, forced Israeli society to face complex issues. The various responses to these issues

1 Thanks are due to Professor Motti Golani for his comments and guidance, which helped greatly in the research process and the writing of this article.

reshaped the political movements in Israel, and over time they dichotomously divided most of Zionist society.

The Ideological Currents—What Connected and Separated Them

Comparing texts that were written during the first three months after the war—the *Soldiers' Talk* and those connected to the Movement for Greater Israel—is an attempt to investigate the initial and authentic emotions that immediately followed the shock of the Six Day War victory as a basis for understanding the deep-seated ideological currents in Israel that have developed since 1967. The emotional and intellectual expression after the victory created several currents of thought, which reflected attempts to process the intensity of the events and shaped Israeli society and politics in the years that followed.

The immediate expression of these ideological currents included a collection of articles published as *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,*[2] the founders' meeting of the Movement for Greater Israel and its first manifesto, as well as the book, *Soldiers' Talk.* First published in September 1967, *Soldiers' Talk* was based on discussions held after the war with kibbutz members and moderated by a group of young intellectuals also from the kibbutz.[3]

The Movement for Greater Israel and the group behind the *Soldiers' Talk* shared a lot of common characteristics. Most prominently, they both were formed during the "shock of victory." This shock was created by the sudden transition from anxious waiting in the weeks prior to the Six Day War to the euphoric release following it. The existential anxiety that characterized this waiting period was the combined result of still-fresh Holocaust memories in the collective consciousness;[4] the fear of Egypt, which was at the forefront of the Arab struggle against Israel; and the lack of confidence in the Israeli

2 Aharon Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* (Tel Aviv: Madaf, 1967) [Hebrew].

3 Avraham Shapira, ed. *Soldiers' Talk: Chapters of Listening and Looking* (Tel Aviv: A Group of Friends from the Kibbutz Movement, 1968), p. 243 [Hebrew]; The English translation was published in 1971 *as Seventh Day: Soldiers' Talk about the Six Day War.*

4 Ibid., pp. 160–161.

leadership, led by Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Levi Eshkol, who was portrayed as a hesitant decision maker.[5]

The war generated a sudden transformation of consciousness: from the image of a weak and persecuted people to one of a strong and victorious people; from a narrow and besieged state to a state that had tripled in territory and removed the threat to its existence. Following years in which the Zionist movement had adopted the ethos of "the few against the many," the State of Israel suddenly became a regional superpower.[6] Although "we did not return from battle with the shock of victory"[7]—the opening sentence of *Soldiers' Talk*—and it was not manifested by rejoicing, the term "the shock of victory" accurately captured the time period and the spirit of this collection as well.

This shock was caused also by the encounter with new territories that Israel held as a result of the war,[8] as well as the realization that Israel had taken control of a large population that was not previously counted among its inhabitants.[9] Another shared source of the shock was the Zionist foundation: Both the Movement for Greater Israel and those behind the *Soldiers' Talk* opposed the victory photo albums that appeared after the war. Rather, they suggested an updated agenda which dealt with the new challenges faced Israel after the war, in a way that would ensure a stable, moral, Jewish and

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5 Alon Gan, "The Dying Dialogue? 'The Culture of Dialogues' as an Attempt to Create a Unifying Identity for the Second Generation on the Kibbutzim," (PhD diss., Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002), pp. 65–72 [Hebrew].

6 Haim Gouri expressed this approach well when he coined the term "the besieged and the just." See Haim Gouri, *The People of Poetry and Time: Pages from a Literary Autobiography* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 2008) [Hebrew]. The myth of "the few against the many" has been debunked more than once. See, for example, *The Few Against the Many? Studies in the Quantitative Balance of Forces in the Battles of Judah Maccabee and in the War of Independence,* ed. Alon Kadish and Benjamin Zeev Kedar (Jerusalem: Magnes Publications, 2005) [Hebrew].

7 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk*, p. 5.

8 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* pp. 66–67. The term used in this article is "Judea and Samaria," due to its frequency of use by the writer. The term that is more common in the Arab countries and the West is the "West Bank" while the term commonly used in Israeli terminology after 1967 was "Judea and Ephraim."

9 As a result of the war, Arab populations remained in the Golan Heights and Sinai but their size and the challenge of dealing with them were marginal from the Israeli perspective.

democratic state. In the foreword to *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* Aharon Ben Ami, the editor of the collection, referred disdainfully to these albums, writing that it was worthwhile to ask serious questions about the future, should a lack of alertness lead to the loss of the great achievements, which would leave them with only nice pictures on paper.[10] In the invitation to the discussions sent by the editors of *Soldiers' Talk* to the kibbutzim, Amos Oz, who wrote the text, emphasized that it was "not a victory album and not a collection of heroic exploits, but rather sessions of listening, conversation, and reflection."[11]

Another commonality between the Movement for a Greater Israel and the *Soldiers' Talk* group was that both had strong intellectual bases. About half of the signatories of the declaration establishing the Movement for Greater Israel were authors or academics.[12] Similarly, the organizers, editors, and some of the participants of *Soldiers' Talk* were members of the Shdemot group—led by Avraham Shapira (Pachi)—comprised of the middle generation of the kibbutzim, who looked up to the pioneering generation of their parents and the 1948 generation and who were involved in academic and educational endeavors.[13] Furthermore, both the Movement for Greater Israel and those behind *Soldiers' Talk* had ties to the Labor movement and, in particular, the kibbutz movement. Although the Movement for Greater Israel was pluralistic, members of the Labor movement played an important role in the ideas it spread.[14] *Soldiers' Talk* began at first as an internal kibbutz discourse, in an attempt to provide a place where the kibbutz members who had returned from battle could express their emotions and thoughts, and initially, the intent was to publish the discussion as an internal booklet for the kibbutzim. However, it was the composition of speakers and initiators who turned it into the voice that represented the views commonly held in the kibbutz movement and in the Labor movement.[15]

Nonetheless, the two movements were very different. The Movement for Greater Israel unambiguously opposed returning the territories that

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10 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, p. 5.

11 Gan, *Dying Dialogue,* pp. 84–85.

12 Dan Miron, *Interested Party: Essays on Literature, Culture and Society* (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1991), p. 345 [Hebrew].

13 Gan, *Dying Discourse,* pp. 150–154.

14 Miron, *Interested Party*, pp. 345–346.

15 Gan, *Dying Discourse,* pp. 87–88.

Israel had captured during the war. This was the message conveyed in the collection of articles *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* at the movement's founding meeting, and in the manifesto of the movement. Its members constituted a mosaic of all parts of the political spectrum in Israel: from Aharon Amir, a secular intellectual, to Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, the spiritual leader of religious Zionism; from Moshe Shamir, a Palmah veteran and member of the socialist Mapam, to Shmuel Tamir from the Free Center Party.[16] In comparison, *Soldiers' Talk* represented the opposite. It was a platform for viewpoints that were not necessarily consistent with one another.[17] A later attempt to paint *Soldiers' Talk* as a collection with a single voice was way off the mark.[18] In contrast to the diversity of voices in *Soldiers' Talk,* the background of the speakers—both editors and interviewees of *Soldiers' Talk*—was homogenous: The organizers of the discussions who were documented in the book, the editors, and the participants were all secular kibbutz members, with the exception of members of the religious Kibbutz Tirat Zvi.[19] A discussion held at Merkaz Harav Yeshiva between kibbutz members and followers of religious Zionism was another exception, although it was not included in the book. The editors, as mentioned, came from the Shdemot group of intellectuals, and in that sense, *Soldiers' Talk* represented a very defined segment within Israeli society and even within the Labor movement.[20] While the Movement for Greater Israel presented a uniform message by a heterogeneous group, *Soldiers' Talk* offered a non-uniform message by a homogenous group.

The difference between the two camps could also be seen in the literary structures of the two publications. *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* constituted a collection of opinion pieces, most having been published in major newspapers in Israel, including *Maariv*, *Haaretz*, and *Davar*, as well as the *Lamerhav* magazine of Ahdut HaAvoda.[21] All the

16 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, p. 5.

17 Gan, *Dying Discourse,* p. 91.

18 Ibid., pp. 124–127; Mor Loushy, "Censored Voices," Germany and Israel, 2015.

19 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk,* pp. 100, 228–230.

20 "Conversation at the Rav Kook Yeshiva," *Shdemot: Platform for Labor Movement Education* 29 (Spring 5728–1968): 15–27 [Hebrew].

21 Exceptions were the speech given by Rabbi Kook on Independence Day 1967, which was published verbatim, and an interview by Geula Cohen with General Ezer Weizman, then head of the Intelligence Directorate.

articles were written during the two months following the war and Aharon Ben Ami, the editor, gathered them together as a collection with a uniform message. In contrast, the conversations were published almost unedited in *Soldiers' Talk,* in order to express the thinking and the atmosphere that prevailed at the time. Another difference is the contrast between the use of exclamation marks in *Everything:The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* and the question marks in *Soldiers' Talk*. From its inception, the Movement for Greater Israel made policy recommendations. Thus, the articles in *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* and the speeches made at the movement's founding meeting emphasized holding on to the territories. In contrast, *Soldiers' Talk* was characterized by uncertainty and did not pretend to provide answers but rather expressed doubts.

The two ideological camps also had a generational divide, and each represented a different and distinct age group. In the Movement for Greater Israel, many of the representatives were from the Second and Third Aliyah (Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, Yitzhak Tabenkin, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, and Shai Agnon), among the founders of Hebrew culture (Natan Alterman, Haim Hazaz, and Yaakov Orland), and from the 1948 generation (Moshe Shamir, Haim Guri, and Zerubavel Gilead). These individuals saw the victory of the Six Day War as the historic unification of the Jewish people with the Land of Israel, which heralded a new era.[22] In contrast, the basis of the group that formed the *Soldiers' Talk* hailed from the middle generation, who had been too young to fight in 1948 and had first witnessed fighting in the war of 1956 or 1967. The book's editors belonged to the generation that came of age after the establishment of the state, except for Abba Kovner who was older. Dan Miron analyzed this phenomenon twenty years later when he wrote about the difference in outlooks between individuals who were already adults in pre-state Israel and saw the creation of the state as insignificant in relation to the great victory of 1967 and the return of Greater Israel versus those who had experienced the establishment of the state as children or youth, and for whom it was a historic moment that was not diminished even by the achievements of the Six Day War.[23]

The two groups also had different perspectives on the outcome of the Six Day War. The Movement for Greater Israel adopted the nationalist

22 Miron, *Interested Party*, pp. 367–368.

23 Ibid., pp. 337–338.

agenda with all its intensity and passion. The publishing of *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* which preceded the establishment of the Movement for Greater Israel and the publishing of the manifesto that followed its formation placed the future of the Jewish people, the State of Israel, and the Land of Israel at the forefront of the discourse. The signatories of the manifesto and the writers of *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, none of whom were at the frontline of the war, had nationalist viewpoints and initially were apolitical, as they did not have any party identity in the early stages of the movement. In contrast, *Soldiers' Talk* expressed a personal experience that lent to the creation of a nationalist perspective. The interviewees and also many of the editors of the book had fought in the war. Although issues on the national agenda dictated the framework of the book, many of the testimonies were in the first person rather than in the collective "we."[24]

Another distinction between the two camps is that the Movement for Greater Israel expressed an abstract intellectual spirit while *Soldiers' Talk* relayed a discouraging reality. The Movement for Greater Israel, even if it relied on facts and a reality as experienced in the war, was born out of a need to express a political outlook using intellectual tools. In contrast, *Soldiers' Talk* grew out of the horrors of the battlefield. This chasm between a motivation based on a political dimension versus one based on combat experiences informs the comparison between the two ideological currents—their formation, their character, and their legacy.

The Watershed Moment

Up until the Six Day War, the political camps in Israel clashed over questions of economic and social policy while issues related to the conflict with the Palestinians remained mainly theoretical in nature. The war was a watershed moment and divided the public as the dilemma had become concrete: whether to hold on to the occupied/liberated territories or return them? The answer to this question split Israeli society into two and continues to constitute the main stumbling block in the conflict with the Palestinians.

The decisiveness and certainty of the Movement for Greater Israel, in contrast to the doubts and questions expressed in *Soldiers' Talk,* can explain to a large extent the slow decline of the Labor movement and the Israeli Left

24 Gan, *Dying Discourse,* p. 85.

and the parallel rise of the "New Right," which merged from the fragments of the stricken Labor movement. The ability of the camp that advocated for a Greater Israel to staunchly maintain its principles was reinforced by religious faith and its firmly based ideology. These helped it overcome the ethical dilemmas related to holding on to the territories captured in 1967. In contrast, the Labor movement and the Israeli Left found it difficult to justify their position. This is well illustrated by the discourse on four issues: existential security, the transition from strong to weak, the Palestinian population in the territories, and the ethical context.

Existential Security

One of the main claims of *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* is that prior to 1967, the State of Israel was small and under threat. Indeed, the state and its army were established in 1948, but the feeling that it was under existential threat and that additional territory and secure borders were needed was pervasive. In this context, Yitzhak Tabenkin commented as follows on the Six Day War: "It was not a war of conquest . . . but a war that was forced on us, accompanied by a threat to destroy us . . . for us this was a war over our very existence . . . Therefore, there is nothing more just than our victory, by which we removed the sword of destruction that was hanging over us."[25] Zvi Shiloah and Azaria Alon reinforced the arguments that the Partition borders had no importance (nor did borders in general in the Middle East) by claiming that they were the arbitrary doodles of the colonial powers. This was an accurate illustration of the compelling desire for security, even if it came at the price of international condemnation.[26] Almost all of the adherents to this approach belonged to the Labor movement. Their conclusion was that the borders of the State of Israel from 1948 to 1967 did not provide the desired feeling of existential security, and therefore, Israel should not give up the new territories, as they promised a guarantee of security.

Soldiers' Talk also highlighted the feeling of an existential threat before the war, primarily during the waiting period, although it also expressed voices that did not feel threatened. In response to Abba Kovner's question of the threat of destruction hanging in the air prior to the war, Yishai Amrami of

25 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* pp. 123–124.
26 Ibid., pp.151–150 , 166–167.

Ein HaHoresh claimed that he never used the term "destruction" and that he felt like a member of a normal people living on its land. He stated that after the war he found it hard to justify the existential value of fighting for places like Nablus, Ramallah, or Hebron.[27] Another speaker even felt that enlarging Israel's size had, to some extent, tarnished the small and beautiful country that he had known before the war.[28]

This chasm between feeling under threat and having a basic lack of security within the borders of the existing state on the one hand and doubting the need to expand its territory in order to achieve more security on the other has been at the heart of the debate surrounding the territories. Should they be kept or returned?

From Weak to Strong, from Persecuted to Occupier

For the first time since the Jewish people had returned to their land, their country had tripled in size within less than a week as a result of the Six Day War. This fact led to two opposing reactions: The first viewed the transformation of the status and image of the Jewish people and the State of Israel as completely natural, while the second found it difficult to accept and searched for a rationale that would provide clarity.

A recurrent theme in *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel* was internalizing the change in Israel's status and the demand to solidify its power as a factor that must be considered in the region and beyond. Eliezer Livne claimed that it was no longer possible for the superpowers to make any move in the Middle East without Israel's agreement, whose position was now equal, at least, to that of Turkey's.[29] The perception of Israel's explosive strength emerged like a cannonball, largely as a counterreaction to the feelings of persecution and weakness that were until then embedded in the Jewish ethos.

The perspective reflected in *Soldiers' Talk* differed with respect to both the fighting and the emotions created by it. Shai from Kibbutz Afikim, for example, told how many soldiers were unable to rejoice following the conquests and the victory, due to their concern for the wounded and

27 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk,* pp. 162, 171–172.
28 Ibid., pp. 172–173, 180.
29 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, p. 41.

their sorrow for the dead.[30] One of the major causes of discomfort for the speakers in the book was their kibbutz education, as one of its pillars was pacifism. The kibbutz movement had created a paradox for itself, which it did not know how to resolve. It had taught its youth the love of mankind, equality, and pacifism, even though the military service—an instrument of nationalism and militarism for all intents and purposes—was the main criterion for contributing to the state and society.[31]

The Population

The issue of the Arab population in the territories, mainly in Judea and Samaria, was peripheral to the discussion of security, power, and peace and remains so. The interaction with the population during the fighting and primarily in the day-to-day routine that developed after the war forced Israeli society to reflect on how it would adjust—practically and conceptually—to the situation and how it would address the charged issues of ethics in war, Jewish identity, and demography.

Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel was greatly concerned with the question of the Arab population, especially the Palestinians in the territories. The starting point was that the Palestinians should remain under Israeli rule. Although the adherents of the Greater Israel camp were divided in their positions, it is still possible to extract from their ideas a general formula for dealing with the population in the territories: a solution for the Palestinian refugees, granting of equal rights to all new citizens, massive Jewish aliyah from the West in order to solve the demographic problem, settlements in the territories, and encouraging Israelis to move to those settlements. In retrospect, it is perhaps surprising to learn that the Movement for Greater Israel sought almost total Israeli responsibility for the Arab population in the territories. Natan Alterman, who represented the humanistic philosophy along with Yuval Ne'eman and Meir Bareli, claimed that "we must deal with the resettling and rehabilitation of the refugees—those who remained in our jurisdiction—whether or not the Arabs agree to peace talks."[32] Zvi

30 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk*, pp. 54–55.

31 Ibid., p. 274.

32 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, pp. 34–35, 56, 216.

Shiloah proposed resettling the refugees in Syria and Iraq, as a precondition to any future negotiations.[33]

With respect to the status of the Palestinians in the State of Israel, the commonly held view was that they should be included in the state and granted equal civil rights. In theory, this logic violated the goal of preserving the Jewish character of the State of Israel. However, the supporters of this policy, including Moshe Tabenkin, Amnon Rubinstein, Yitzhak Tabenkin, Shmuel Tamir, and Aharon Tamir, felt that this should be done nonetheless and not out of any love for the Arabs. They believed it was preferable to grant the Palestinians rights and to deal with them within Israel's borders rather than return the territory to an Arab country, thus placing the Palestinians behind a border where their hatred of Israel would smolder and they would wait for the day they could destroy it.[34] Palestinian self-determination hardly received any attention then, and when it was mentioned it was usually done disparagingly, as expressed by Yisrael Eldad.[35] Nonetheless, some views did consider the Palestinians' desires in proposing solutions to the issue. For example, Rachel Saborai expressed the idea of partitioning Israel into cantons and Yuval Ne'eman suggested the granting of Palestinian autonomy within the State of Israel.[36]

The broadest consensus in the Movement for Greater Israel centered around the call for mass aliyah, the movement of population to the new territories, and the creation of new settlements. Whether agreeing with Yitzhak Tabenkin's outlook on settlement or reinforcing Natan Alterman's criticism of diaspora Jewry, either way the call for aliyah was at the core of the movement's ideology and was a direct extension of the Zionist vision of Jewish immigration from before the establishment of the state.[37]

In contrast to the ideological and constructive discourse in *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, doubt and ambivalence regarding the population in the new territories characterizes *Soldiers' Talk*. The direct encounter of its editors and speakers with this population already during the war, sometimes in less than humane situations, provided the book with an important and unique context. Much of *Soldiers' Talk* deals with the ethical

33 Ibid., pp. 144–146.
34 Ibid., pp. 108, 113–114, 117, 127.
35 Ibid., pp. 121–122.
36 Ibid., pp. 34–35.
37 Ibid., pp. 42–43, 49, 61, 125–126, 132–133, 181, 188, 212, 229, 251–252.

elements of warfare, including the treatment of captured soldiers and the civilian population in occupied territories.

In the conversations in *Soldiers' Talk,* a distinction is made between the Syrian residents of the Golan Heights, whom the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers loathed, and the Palestinians, whom they viewed with more sympathy and more compassion.[38] In a stormy session at Mishmar HaEmek, participants argued about holding on to the territories and its ethical aspects, as one of the concerns mentioned was the demographic threat of absorbing the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.[39] One of the participants in the discussion at Kibbutz Yifat suggested that the Palestinians should be given the choice to which country they wanted to belong, apparently reflecting a desire to avoid friction.[40]

Already at this stage, one could discern the signs of dilemmas in managing the conflict, which would become evident in coming decades. In the discussion at Kibbutz Gat, one speaker emphasized the policing tasks and friction with the population, for which they were not prepared.[41] The sense of foreignness that Amos Oz felt in Jerusalem as he expressed in *Soldiers' Talk* was shared by other soldiers in the Palestinian cities of Judea and Samaria, which seemed to them as occupied rather than liberated.

Is the Jew Different?

The last issue that split the discourse between the two movements related to one of the most sensitive topics in Israeli society—Judaism and its many interpretations and variations. The Six Day War was a foundational moment in the Jewish context; many experienced the capture of the Western Wall, the Old City, and Judea and Samaria as a euphoric spiritual uplifting. The State of Israel in general and the IDF in particular—which until then had been identified more with the national-secular component—suddenly became part of the chronicles of the Jewish religion, no less than the Jewish nation. Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of the IDF, played an important role in this context. He was present at the various fronts and worked intensively to fan the religious emotions among the soldiers who arrived at the Old City. His

38 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk,* pp. 105, 129.
39 Ibid., pp. 108–109.
40 Ibid., pp. 123–124.
41 Ibid., pp. 118–119.

mass prayers created waves of Jewish euphoria, which even penetrated the "protective layer" of the non-religious.

The two currents, one represented by the Movement for Greater Israel and the other by *Soldiers' Talk,* rested on a secular Zionist foundation; yet, both returned to Jewish motifs—religious, national, and cultural. The return to the historic and biblical Land of Israel, and in particular to the Old City in Jerusalem and the Western Wall, focused attention on the Jewish context. Questions of Jewish ethics in warfare also were raised. Unlike on previous matters, both movements gave representatives of the national-religious sector a voice on issues related to Judaism.

Although the Movement for Greater Israel was almost entirely secular and even had a partially anti-religious background, the results of the war led its members to connect closely with Jewish sources. The movement's texts contain actual messianic and spiritual elements, apparently the result of having undergone a genuine religious experience. At the same time, the movement used religion to justify its political and security interests, which implied clear dissent from the source of democratic authority. The movement's manifesto—which was its founding document—states as follows: "and just as we do not have the right to make concessions with respect to the State of Israel, so we are commanded to preserve what we have received from it: the Land of Israel."[42] The use of the word "commanded" provided the text with a religious connotation. And indeed in *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* the writers (all of whom were secular, apart from Rabbi Kook and Rabbi Y. L. Rabinowitz) did not hesitate to use messianic rhetoric. Thus, Moshe Shamir described the Temple Mount as being "wrapped in tongues of fire and red skies, as in the days of the Zealots, as the first hour of 'Paratrooper' Jerusalem."[43] Ezer Weizman, who was completely secular, felt that this was "the war to establish the Third Temple."[44]

In *Soldiers' Talk,* the attitude to Judaism was more complex. Since kibbutz society at that time did not accept any kind of religious association, it was unconventional to exhibit any such connection in public, even if it existed. With their developed Jewish consciousness, the members of Shdemot—who

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42 Aharon Ben Ami, *The Book of Greater Israel* (Tel Aviv: The Movement for Greater Israel, 1977), p. 10 [Hebrew].

43 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel*, pp. 24–27.

44 Ibid., p. 35.

moderated the discussions and who also edited them—offset somewhat the antagonism to religion, which was characteristic of many of the participants. The discussions show that some of the speakers found it difficult to feel a special connection to the Holy Land or the momentousness of the events. Rather, some were bothered by the military missions carried out in the war and the mental anxiety of battle.[45] Others did not view the religious sentiments as part of the war experience and their experience was nationalistic rather than religious.[46] An exception in this context was the attitude to Jerusalem, which evoked stronger Jewish emotions than other places with historical-religious significance.[47]

The contribution of the religious participants in both movements provided an added value to the discussion in the context of the secular connection to Judaism and to religion. In *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* it was the contribution of Rabbi Kook and Rabbi Rabinowitz while in *Soldiers' Talk,* it was the members of Tirat Zvi and the students at the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva. The religious public in Israel at that time was relatively marginal as an independent political force, and its voice on questions of policy and security was weak relative to the Labor movement, the Free Center, and the Herut movement. The approach of Rabbi Kook and his students, which shocked the participants from the kibbutzim, was a precursor to the division between the Gush Emunim movement and the Zionist Left in the subsequent decades.[48]

Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel includes the text of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook's speech on the nineteenth Independence Day of the State of Israel, a few weeks before the war. In it, Rabbi Kook spoke to his students of his yearning for Hebron, Nablus, and Transjordan, which had been cut off from the State of Israel in 1948, and emphasized the connection between the Jewish religion and the Jewish state. A contemporary interpretation of Rabbi Kook's speech would view it as a challenge to both the secularism of the State of Israel and to its borders, which he perceived as temporary.[49] The messianic rhetoric, alongside increasing integration of the religious public within Israeli society and its belief that it is possible to

45 Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk*, p. 13.
46 Ibid., pp. 230–231, 234.
47 Ibid., pp. 77–78.
48 Gan, *Dying Discourse*, pp. 109–112.
49 Ben Ami, *Everything: The Peace Borders of the Land of Israel,* pp. 66–72.

consider the big picture following the exalted achievements of the war, are the key to understanding this sector's influence on the trends and processes in the Israeli public domain and particularly in the Movement for Greater Israel, which over the years assumed a clear national-religious tone.[50]

The morality of the war also created another gap between the national-religious participants and the kibbutz members. In all aspects related to the ethics of warfare and avoiding harm to civilian populations, it appeared that the two sectors had shared values and believed it was important to behave humanely.[51] They were divided, however, in the discussion of priorities. Thus, national-religious individuals from Merkaz Harav emphasized the defense of the Jewish people from its enemies as more important than behaving ethically in war.[52] In contrast, the representatives of the secular kibbutz approach found it difficult to accept the tension between Judaism's love of mankind and the universal morality of the sanctity of human life.[53] This disagreement, which took place at the margins of the discourse of the Movement for Greater Israel and *Soldiers' Talk,* over time moved to the core of the ideological discourse.

Conclusion

The difference in positions on the four issues analyzed above—security, Israel's strength, the attitude toward the occupied Palestinian population, and ethics—is what caused the Movement for Greater Israel and *Soldiers' Talk* to embody the ideological split in the public discourse as well as the political discourse in the State of Israel after the Six Day War. These issues also related directly to the core disagreements at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—borders, refugees, and Jerusalem.

Five decades after the 1967 War, the public in Israel is divided, although not equally, in its views on whether to return the territories occupied by the IDF during the six days of war. These are the lines drawn by the Movement for Greater Israel and those behind *Soldiers' Talk,* while they were still catching their breath following the shock of victory. Their influence was

50 Ibid., p. 17.
51 Ibid., p. 21, 25; Shapira, *Soldiers' Talk*, p. 100.
52 "Conversation at the Rav Kook Yeshiva," p. 22.
53 Ibid., pp. 20, 23.

not felt at the time, but the reality that developed steered the discourse back to the foundations they had laid.

Since 1967, the policy of the government of Israel essentially has been to not adopt either of these approaches: Israel has not returned the territory of Judea and Samaria and at the same time it has not given its residents equal rights. The debate between the successors of these two camps—the settlement movement and the Zionist Left—has become even more vociferous. The debate that continues between them expresses the contemporary relevance of the dilemmas that already arose in the initial months after the Six Day War. It also conveys the difficulty in bridging the gap between the two camps or decisively adopting one or the other.

Conclusion

War and Peace: Thoughts on Israel's Security Concept from a Perspective of Fifty Years

Amos Yadlin

Background

The Six Day War was a formative event in the history of the State of Israel. From the perspective of fifty years, it is clear that many of the lessons to emerge from the war are multi-faceted, and many are fraught with tensions and complexities that deserve close analysis. This essay focuses on the effects of the war and its outcomes on Israel's geostrategic position in the Middle East, its status with respect to the superpowers, and its national security policies. While there are issues that are as valid today as they were in 1967, there are others that, somewhat ironically, have virtually "changed direction" or become irrelevant; some issues must be examined today from a perspective different than that of fifty years ago.

The events of that fateful week in June 1967 appeared akin to a biblical miracle. Large segments of the public believed that these were the six days of creation of the new State of Israel, and that the seventh day would bring the longed-for peace. But the seventh day never arrived, and a few weeks after the spectacular victory, the long and difficult War of Attrition began, which would cost more lives than the Six Day War itself. Six years later, in 1973, the Yom Kippur War broke out. The contrast between the two wars—between the preemptive strike of the Six Day War, which was preceded by the sense of an existential threat and encompassing anxiety on the one

hand, and the baseless over-confidence six years later, which resulted from the strategic depth that Israel acquired in the Six Day War and the devout, unquestioning belief in IDF superiority on the other—is a main component of any historical and strategic analysis of Israel's national security.

With the hindsight of five decades, it seems appropriate to relate to the period between 1967 and 1973 as a kind of "seven years' war." From a historical perspective, this war removed the external existential threat to Israel from the Arab countries and even generated a process that eventually led to peace between Israel and two of its neighbors: Egypt, the largest Arab country and at the time leader of the Arab world; and Jordan, the neighboring country with the longest border with Israel. Since then, Syria too has come to no longer represent an existential threat, a result of the civil war raging in the country. Thus, three Arab countries whose armies confronted Israel in 1967 are no longer a military and strategic threat. Against this background, one can analyze the strategic changes that have occurred in Israel's environment on a number of levels: the security-military dimension; the regional balance of forces; Israel's international status; and the opportunities that have replaced the existential threat facing Israel in 1967.

The Security-Military Dimension

Israel's "classic security concept" was implemented perfectly in the Six Day War. It suited Israel's geostrategic situation, and therefore the classic principles of war, as well as Israel's classic security concept, were successfully implemented in the war's planning and execution: preemptive strike, tactical surprise, initiative and stratagem, shifting the war to enemy territory, short duration, and decisive victory. Israel relied on superior technology and manpower, the creation of a strong strike force in the form of airpower to achieve air superiority, which is a necessary condition for victory in the modern era, and armored forces for targeted, in-depth maneuver. Dominating everything else was airpower, which decided the outcome of the war within only three hours.

The importance of air superiority in force buildup and the use of this platform have guided Israel since the Six Day War. Apart from the Yom Kippur War, which was a lesson in the limits of airpower and the need always to be on the forefront of technology and operational thinking, airpower has remained the key component in Israel's security. With respect to other components, the classic security concept has become less relevant than in 1967. In 1973, the

IDF relied on strategic depth and refrained from a preemptive strike or the mobilization of reserves. However, the Yom Kippur War itself was neither short nor yielded a clearly decisive victory. In effect, the advantages of the classic security concept were neutralized by the Egyptian and Syrian armies.

The intelligence failure in the Yom Kippur War is seared into Israel's collective memory. But it is important to remember that also prior to the Six Day War, Military Intelligence did not correctly predict the timing of the war. There was a commonly-held presumption at that point as well (what became known as the "conception" following the Yom Kippur War) whereby Egypt would not initiate an all-out confrontation with Israel as long as it was fighting in Yemen. The IDF prepared for war based on the assessment that it would not occur before 1970, and in May 1967 was caught by surprise by the actions of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and his army. This surprise was evidence of the limits of intelligence forecasts and the ability to understand the enemy's intentions. These limitations, which continue to exist, must be offset by means of pluralistic assessment systems and continual reexamination of working assumptions, as well as an appropriate level of operational readiness.

In addition, the Six Day War broke out following unintentional escalation; in other words, neither Egypt nor Israel planned or intended to launch a war. What led to a war that no one wanted was the tension with Syria, which was exacerbated by the pronouncements of Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin concerning the intention to bring down the Syrian regime; Fatah terrorist activity; incorrect information conveyed to Egypt and Syria by the Soviet Union; Nasser's decision to send his army into Sinai and block the Straits of Tiran; and the unnecessary and hasty acquiescence of the UN to the Egyptian demand to evacuate the observer force from Sinai. Since the Six Day War, Israel has been involved in two additional wars that neither side wanted: the Second Lebanon War (in 2006) and Operation Protective Edge against Hamas (in 2014). The lessons of these wars dictate that Israel must develop mechanisms for controlling unwanted escalation. These lessons are also valid for ending wars that are already in progress.

The Six Day War demonstrated that the translation of a military victory into a political achievement is a difficult and complex challenge, and that military victory is sometimes an expendable asset, which works against the interests of the victor. Paradoxically, the military standoff at the end of

the Yom Kippur War, the mutual attrition, and the heavy price of the war provided fertile ground for compromise and peace agreements.

Furthermore, the Six Day War was the last instance of all-out war (fighting on three fronts—Egypt, Syria, and Jordan) that enjoyed comprehensive Arab support, including military support from Iraq, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia. The fact that since 1973 —a war fought on two fronts, Egypt and Syria—Israel has managed to limit the rounds of fighting to only one front should not be taken for granted. It is incumbent on Israel to build up its forces and know how to use them based on the assumption that in the future an all-out war may occur again. A simultaneous conflict with Hezbollah and Hamas and at the same time an uprising in Judea and Samaria, as well as the direct or indirect involvement of Iran is not an impossible scenario. The threats by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah that the next war will involve hundreds of thousands of Shiite fighters (based on an Iranian strategy of sending Shiite militias to Syria, Iraq, and Yemen) signal that this scenario could become reality, and therefore they demand attention rather than a simple dismissal as propaganda and psychological warfare.

The Regional Balance of Forces

The Six Day War was a milestone in the decline of pan-Arabism. The military defeat of the Arabs, and in particular the defeat of the Egyptian army, was a major blow to Arab socialist nationalism, led by President Nasser. The Arab world, disappointed by Western modernity and the ideas that underscored the gap in its own development compared with the West, was in search of a different political philosophy. Against this background, the defeat in the Six Day War became a milestone in the growth of political Islam in the Arab world and led to the transformation of fundamental Islam into a dominant ideology. The entire Middle East, including the Arab world, lives today under the shadow of this development. The intensifying Sunni-Shiite conflict and the internal conflict between various Sunni denominations became clearly visible in 2011, and they are underway with even greater intensity and almost without interruption, with no end in sight, in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq.

An outcome of this development is the marginalization of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the agenda of the Arab countries. Furthermore, the "seven years' war," from 1967 to 1973, led to a dramatic change in the nature of relations in the region that affects Israel directly: from a comprehensive Arab-Israeli conflict prior to 1973 to a conflict that revolves around the Israeli-Palestinian

issue. After 1967, the Arab countries focused on the territories captured in the war. As a result of the peace agreement with Israel, Egypt regained the Sinai, and in 1988, following the outbreak of the first Palestinian intifada in late 1987, Jordan renounced its claim to the West Bank. Syria for its part did not manage to achieve strategic balance with Israel (and against the background of the civil war there, later ceased to function as a state). Thus, the Arab-Israeli conflict de facto came to an end. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 led to a conflict of a different sort—between Israel and Iran—and against this background, Iran too became involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lebanon, which did not take part in the Six Day War, is currently home to the most serious threat to Israel, i.e., Hezbollah, which has become a frontal stronghold for Iran against Israel.

In addition, Israel has become a regional superpower, in contrast to the period before 1967 when it suffered from extreme asymmetry in territory, population, and resources. Since then, Israel has been a major symmetric actor in Middle East events. It played a principal role in rescuing Jordan in 1970 (from the threat posed by Syrian and Palestinian organizations); it has enjoyed a stable peace with Egypt since 1979; in 1981, it attacked the Iraqi nuclear reactor; and in 1982, it failed in its effort to dictate the composition and nature of the regime in Lebanon. Currently, Israel is a strong regional superpower and recognized as such by its neighbors and by many important actors in the international community.

Israel's International Status

As a result of the Six Day War, Israel has evolved from a small and fragile country that is dependent on the superpowers, into a strong nation with strategic, military, and intelligence capabilities that constitute an asset to its allies. It is a country with an air force, armored corps, and infantry that have the ability to defeat the regional clients of the former Soviet Union and to provide its allies with intelligence information, technology, and strategic strongholds. In particular, Israel has become an asset for the United States, and the alliance between the two countries has become the basis of Israel's national security and the regional balance of forces in the Middle East.

At the same time, any alliance has its limits. In the moment of truth, as was proven in 1967, Israel can rely only on itself. The promises of President Eisenhower following the Sinai Campaign proved worthless in 1967 when the United States, then entangled in Vietnam, was in no rush to fulfill them

and thus open another front with the Communist bloc. France, which was Israel's main ally until then, not only turned its back on Israel but even imposed an embargo. The rest of the world did not go beyond declarations of neutrality or support for Israel that did not require taking any action. This was a complicated reality for Israel, which realized that it can rely only on itself, and that it is not interested in having a foreign army shed blood on its behalf. This conclusion does not contradict the need for Israel to strengthen any alliance that it can. It must therefore find some balance between these two principles.

This is also why international legitimacy is important for Israel. The "waiting period" that was forced on it in the three weeks prior to the Six Day War, due to the request of its allies for an opportunity to find a political solution to the crisis, was perceived by Israelis as highly risky. During that period, in which Israel's leadership projected weakness, concern, and a lack of decisiveness, it appeared that time was not in Israel's favor. Its enemies reinforced their armies along the borders, and proposals for compromise grew increasingly problematic. In retrospect, the "waiting period" was actually in Israel's favor since it provided time to call up reserves, ready its forces, update operational plans, and above all seek legitimacy—both internal and external—for military action. The solidarity that appeared in Israeli society, the sense that there was no alternative and the understanding that this is a war to defend the homeland formed the foundation of the unique fighting spirit that was a significant ingredient in the victory.

On the international level, the fully charged "battery of legitimacy" gave Israel military and political freedom of action that it has not enjoyed since 1967. Although it was Israel that in the end initiated the war through a preemptive strike, the legitimacy it had achieved provided it with international support and the ability to translate the military victory into a political process, which after long and difficult negotiations led to peace with Egypt and Jordan. Likewise today, the component of legitimacy requires careful management and balance with the use of force and military actions, and its inclusion within overall strategic considerations is more important than ever before.

From Existential Threat to Existential Opportunities

The "waiting period" that preceded the Six Day War was accompanied by a feeling among the people of Israel and its leaders that the Zionist enterprise was in danger of annihilation. This was grounded in the strategic reality that

indeed constituted a grave threat to Israel's existence. Since the victory in that war, Israel has not had to face another existential threat. The IDF is the strongest military in the region; two major Arab countries have signed peace agreements with it and maintained their commitments; and the armies of Iraq and Syria are no longer a threat. Even in 1973, the Arab objectives in the war were limited, while from Israel's perspective, the Sinai and the Golan Heights provided strategic depth that enabled it to halt the surprise attack. If such an attack had been carried out from the 1967 border, it could have destroyed Israel. The only potential existential threat is the Iranian nuclear threat, which at this stage has not been realized.

The most dramatic change as a result of the political and territorial outcomes of the Six Day War was the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an issue that is at the core of Israel's existence. The Six Day War highlighted the Palestinian issue as a singular conundrum, with territorial and national dimensions that were mostly ignored prior to 1967. The war made it possible to classify and compartmentalize the Palestinian issue as a separate problem, rather than as part of the conflict between Israel on the one hand and Jordan and Egypt on the other. This process began in 1967, continued first with the recognition by the Arab countries of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians in 1968, and later with the severance of Gaza from Egypt in the peace agreement with Israel in 1977, and peaked with Jordan's renunciation of claims to sovereignty over Judea and Samaria in 1988. The Palestinian problem became Israel's responsibility. The negative significance of this development is the diminished ability to arrive at a solution to the issue at the initiative of the Arab countries.

Nonetheless, the current reality also offers a historic opportunity to achieve peace that did not exist fifty years ago, when the Khartoum summit of Arab leaders prevented the war's outcomes from evolving into a peace process and historic reconciliation. The sides needed the Yom Kippur War, the "seventh year of the war," in order to underscore that peace is preferable to war and show willingness to move in the direction of compromise.

Currently, Israel is a regional superpower surrounded by a divided Arab world, and it has a historic opportunity to reach an agreement with the Palestinians. Such an agreement will bring it closer to the Sunni Arab world, which desires it as an ally against the Iranian threat. The key to forming an alliance with the Sunni Arab world against the Iranian efforts to achieve hegemony and nuclear capability is to resolve the conflict with

the Palestinians, or at least exhibit a genuine desire, backed up by action, to move toward a negotiated solution. The correct approach to the Palestinians can lead to a peace agreement, even if only a partial one, which will avoid another round of war and the need to pay a moral price that violates Jewish and Zionist values.

Conclusion

Already from the final stages of the War of Independence, and likewise since the Six Day War, Israel's society and its leadership have debated the character and borders of the state. There is irreducible tension among the five main components of Israel's national security DNA: the ancient right to the Land of Israel and the right of the Jews to a state; maximum security as a response to the existential fear among the Jewish people; the demographic factor and the reluctance to rule over another people; an understanding of the importance of international legitimacy; and an uncompromising desire for peace.

David Ben-Gurion clarified the issue by pointing to two elements that will ensure the existence of the State of Israel: "strength and the justice of its claim." Since the Six Day War, Israel has become stronger, but its claim has become less just. Fifty years after the war, Israel has an opportunity that should not be missed: to arrive at a more optimal balance of the five components of national security and to reinforce the integration of its strength and the justice of its claim. The reformulation of an updated security concept is a necessary step in this direction. Alongside the traditional pillars of its security policy—deterrence, early warning, decision, and defense—it is essential that Israel likewise include legitimacy and peace.

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wars, establishing the Operations Division in the Military Intelligence Directorate and creating the IDF's Cyber Command. In recent years, he served as a researcher in the IDF's Institute for Intelligence Research and co-authored (with Shay Hershkovitz) a book about the Intelligence Corps in the 1950s and articles on the history of the intelligence community in the journal *Studies in the Establishment of Israel* [in Hebrew]. He authored (with Shmuel Even) the INSS memorandum *Cyber Warfare: Concepts and Strategic Trends*, and wrote an article on a new approach to intelligence (Intelligence 2.0). Siman-Tov also serves a civilian consultant in the field of security.

Amos Yadlin

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin is the Executive Director of INSS. During his 40 years of service in the IDF, he was a pilot and commander of the Israel Air Force and served for eight years as a member of the General Staff. From 2006–2010, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yadlin served as the IDF's chief of Military Intelligence. Prior to that, he served as the IDF attaché to the United States. He earned a BA with honors in economics from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and an MA in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon

Lieut. Gen. (ret.) Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon is a former defense minister and chief of general staff. He served in numerous key positions in the IDF, including commander of the Paratroopers Reconnaissance Brigade, commander of the 890th Battalion, and commander of Sayeret Matkal, Israel's most distinguished special forces unit, and commander of the Paratroopers Brigade. Lieut. Gen. (ret.) Ya'alon also served as commander of the Judea and Samaria Division, head of the Military Intelligence Directorate and General of the Central Command. During his tenure as Israel's chief of General Staff, the IDF successfully dealt with the Palestinian terror of the second intifada.

INSS Memoranda, January 2018–Present

No. 184, November 2018, Gabi Siboni, Kobi Michael, and Anat Kurz, eds., *Six Days, Fifty Years: The June 1967 War and its Aftermath*.

No. 183, October 2018, Meir Elran, Carmit Padan, Roni Tiargan-Orr, and Hoshea Friedman Ben Shalom, eds., *The Israeli Military Reserves: What Lies Ahead?* [Hebrew].

No. 182, August 2018, Dan Meridor and Ron Eldadi, *Israel's Security Concept, The Committee Report on Formulation of the Security Concept* (Meridor Committee), Ten Years Later [Hebrew].

No. 181, August 2018, Avner Golov, *The Israeli Community in the United States: A Public-Diplomacy Asset for Israel*.

No. 180, August 2018, Gabi Siboni and Ido Sivan Sevilla, *Cyber Regulation* [Hebrew].

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No. 178, July 2018, Carmit Padan and Meir Elran, *Communities in the Gaza Envelope – Case Study of Social Resilience in Israel* (2006-2016) [Hebrew].

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No. 174, April 2018, Avner Golov, *The Israeli Community in the United States: A Public-Diplomacy Asset for Israel* [Hebrew].

No. 173, March 2018, Meir Litvak, Emily B. Landau, and Ephraim Kam, eds., *Iran in a Changing Strategic Environment*.

No. 172, February 2018, Meir Litvak, Emily B. Landau, and Ephraim Kam, eds., *Iran in a Changing Strategic Environment* [Hebrew].

No. 171, January 2018, Carmit Valensi, Udi Dekel, and Anat Kurz, eds., *Syria – From a State to a Hybrid System: Implications for Israel*.

No. 170, January 2018, Doron Matza, *Patterns of Resistance among Israel's Arab-Palestinian Minority: A Historical Review and a Look to the Future*.

The Six Day War, which broke out on the morning of June 5, 1967, was a formative event that changed the face of the State of Israel and, to a large extent, the entire Middle East. Prior to the war, Israel had been under existential threat and in six days, the Israel Defense Forces succeeded in removing the threat by achieving a decisive military victory and positioning Israel as a significant force in the region. This victory was accompanied by new complexities, and fifty years after the war, some of its implications still remain as heavy dilemmas, which the Israeli public and the state institutions must address.

Five decades later, the events directly related to the war and its long-term implications can be examined more broadly and more rationally than was possible in the period immediately after the war. The study of the past and the drawing of insights from the war and its results enable us to analyze the complex security, political, and social challenges currently facing the State of Israel, as well as assess those inherent in future scenarios.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the war, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) chose to publish this book devoted to the war and its lessons, which was written by researchers from the institute and outside of it. Together these articles present a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the Six Day War, its results, and its implications.

Dr. Gabi Siboni is a senior research fellow at INSS and director of the Military and Strategy and Cyber Security research programs at the institute. He is the founder and editor of the journal *Cyber, Intelligence, and Security*.

Dr. Kobi Michael is a senior research fellow at INSS and formerly the deputy director general and head of the Palestinian Division in the Ministry of Strategic Affairs. He was also a faculty member at Ben-Gurion University and Ariel University, as well as a visiting professor at Northwestern University in the United States.

Dr. Anat Kurz is the research director and senior researcher at INSS. Her research focuses on processes of institutionalization of social movements and popular struggles, the Palestinian national movement, and the Israeli-Palestinian political process.

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