

# The 1967 War Model: Changes and Challenges

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## **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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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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?"<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.”<sup>9</sup> 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

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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.”<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche had already made a similar point: “War makes the victor stupid.”<sup>11</sup>

### ***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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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,<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.”<sup>19</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

### ***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

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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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

*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 91<sup>st</sup> Division during the Second Lebanon War that they had control of Bint Jbeil created the mistaken impression that IDF forces had captured the town.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> or then head of Strategic Planning Eival Giladi.<sup>27</sup> 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/lo1.03.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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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

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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.