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The purpose of *Strategic Assessment* is to stimulate and enrich the public debate on the issues that are, or should be, on Israel's national security agenda.

Strategic Assessment is written by INSS researchers and guests and is based, for the most part, on research carried out under INSS auspices. The views presented here, however, are those of the authors alone.

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Editors' Note

This edition of *Strategic Assessment* goes to press during a transitional period for the Center for Strategic Studies, established in late 1977 and later known as the Jaffee Center. Following fruitful years rich with hundreds of publications, seminars, and conferences on Israel's national security, the Center now becomes the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). We will also soon be parting from the Center's home of nearly thirty years – the Gillman building on the Tel Aviv University campus – the fertile ground where the late Maj. Gen. (res.) Aharon Yariv, the first head of the Center, planted the first seeds of research in strategic studies in Israel. It is our hope that under the new name and in the new location, we will grow into a flourishing new institute, known for illustrious research and expanded contributions in our current and future areas of research activity.

Among the topics covered by the Center during its thirty years of existence are the Lebanon War, the Gulf War, and the Iraq War. This edition once again covers a war, the second Lebanon War, or more precisely, the initial post-war thoughts, comments, analyses, and criticism. The previous edition of *Strategic Assessment*, of August 2006, looked at the war as it was unfolding. This edition presents eight articles that chronologically speaking bridge the end of the fighting and the long term insights that will come from greater perspective. This gray area of the intermediate period will disappear over time, and the insights to be gleaned from the war will multiply and become clearer. So too, the commission investigating the war – government or state – will have its say.

The first three articles of the current edition are written from a broad perspective. In the opening article

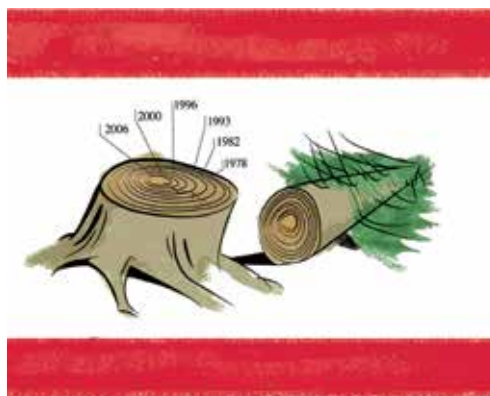
Ofer Shelah argues that the second Lebanon War was a post-modern war, not merely because each side can claim victory once it is over, but because the very use of force, the advantages of weapons, and the validity of traditional ideas about the value of war have been called into question. In addition, Israel's preoccupation with deterrence drew it into a war with a guerilla organization where classical ideas of deterrence are not relevant. In the second article, also authored by a guest writer, Ron Tira claims that the failure of the campaign in Lebanon stemmed from the deterioration in Israel's approach to military force buildup and application. As a result of this deterioration, Israel became entangled in a military conflict that from the outset it had little chance of winning. The author suggests that Israel's failure in the war should serve as a wake-up call in advance of the next – inevitable –

round of fighting. In contrast to these two critical articles, Dr. Roni Bart of INSS surveys the accomplishments of the war. These indeed do exist, and even if they are overshadowed by the lapses of the war, a balanced review of the war requires delineating the positive outcomes along with the negative results.

The following two articles, by INSS researchers Noam Ophir and Gabriel Siboni, deal with the IDF's confrontation with the rocket threat, specifically as it uses the aerial and ground measures available to it. Ophir's article looks at the performance of the Israeli air force during the second Lebanon War, underscoring the air force's abilities and limitations in grappling with Katyusha fire. Ophir's argument is that the air force drew almost in full on its ability to confront surface-to-surface rocket launchers, and therefore in the foreseeable future and under similar circumstances, it is likely that aerial force cannot achieve much more than what was achieved in this war. In his article, Siboni examines the different tactics required by the military for effective opposition to the threat of Qassam rockets launched from the Gaza Strip. Basing his analysis on the realistic objectives that the IDF has, given the prevailing set of limitations and constraints, Siboni analyzes the essence of the operational challenge and the optimal methods to combat this threat.

The next two articles look at Hizbollah – the first, at its performance during the war, by Amir Kulick, a researcher at the Institute; and the

second, at Hizbollah under the new circumstances created in the war's aftermath, by Dani Berkovich, a visiting researcher at INSS. Kulick claims that Hizbollah had long prepared for this campaign governed by two principal assumptions: the weakness of Israeli society, and the IDF's reliance on a precision firepower campaign. The organization's primary operational objective was to wage a war of attrition on Israel's home front, attacking as deeply as possible within Israel and for as long as possible, even in the face of massive bombard-



ment and ground operations by IDF forces. The author analyzes the organization's behavior during the war and sketches its preparations, based on lessons gleaned from this war, for the inevitable next campaign. In his article, Berkovich looks at the potential dynamic between Hizbollah versus the Lebanese army, which, as the major executive arm of the Lebanese government, bears the brunt of implementing Security Council resolution 1701. There is a wide gap between a UN resolution and actual steps towards disarming Hizbollah. Nonetheless, argues Berkovich, the

deployment of the Lebanese army lays the foundation for trends that if realized have positive implications for Israel's security and for reinforcing Lebanon's sovereignty and authority within its own territory. Berkovich also contends that from Israel's viewpoint, the very launching of such a process is in itself an achievement of the war.

The final article in this edition examines the sensitive subject of tactical intelligence during the second Lebanon War, whose achievements fell short of what was expected. The author, Yoaz Hendel, a doctoral student at INSS, focuses on understanding the reasons for the disparity between the real and the ideal at the tactical intelligence level, as manifested during the ground forces fighting. The article reviews the shortcomings that were manifested in three major areas: intelligence gathering, intelligence assessment, and information dissemination. Hendel offers a possible explanation for these shortcomings and proposes two recommendations for improving the current state of affairs.

This edition is likely not the last to examine aspects of the war of July-August 2006. It is also likely that the Institute for National Security Studies will, in the future, open its doors to guest authors who wish to express their opinions on strategic issues at hand. In addition, readers' comments on articles published in the editions of *Strategic Assessment* are most welcome, and may be published in future editions at the discretion of the editors.

Anti-War

Ofer Shelah

In interviews he gave before Rosh Hashanah, which are in effect the first draft of his testimony to the government investigation commission he appointed, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, “The results of the second war in Lebanon will look better with time.” Like most of the comments on the thirty-three days of war, this sentence can be interpreted in different ways. The dwindling number of Olmert supporters consider this a great truth that reflects how short-sighted the public is, and how it is influenced by the populist media. Opponents will argue that Olmert is trying to turn black into white and convince himself and the entire nation that what the eye sees and the heart feels is simply not true.

This debate will ultimately be decided on the streets and at the voting booth. However, the very fact that the debate exists attests to the nature of the battle. The second Lebanon War (a name that in itself is controversial – there are grounds to the claim that the term “war” is a bit grandiose for the hostilities) was a post-modern war. This is not only due to the fact that after it ended both sides could parade proudly and claim victory, but also because the very use of force and the traditional importance of arms to ideas about the value of war were cast in doubt.

In this regard, the fighting in Lebanon could be classed with the second intifada: two post-modern conflicts, beyond the “new wave” and the “revolution in military affairs” that were the subjects of so much discussion in the 1990s. To borrow a well-known term, albeit with a somewhat different meaning than the one given by Alvin and Heidi Toffler in a book they published over a decade before June 12, 2006, Lebanon War II was Israel’s first anti-war.¹

A Farewell to Arms

The first sentence any Israeli soldier learns in an officer’s course comes from Carl von Clausewitz: war is the continuation of policy by other means. The significance of this sentence, particularly to a country that feeds off its anxieties and instinctively inclines to

response, retaliation, and obsessions with deterrence, has been applicable for over fifty years and is seemingly clear: before you take up arms, know what policy you are looking to implement. Looked at from a different angle, the success of a war can be judged by the subsequent political results.

We now know that Anwar Sadat based Egypt’s military move of October 1973 on a clearly defined policy designed to ultimately regain the Sinai Peninsula through an agreement

– which is in fact what occurred before the end of the decade. Victory on the battlefield, about which there is still a debate whether it was achieved on a purely military level (if such a level actually exists), was secondary to achieving the political objective – even though the military achievement of the initial days, limited as it was, was essential to attaining the political objective. Israel, on the other hand, responded to the threat as it saw it rather than to the actual

1. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Making Sense of Today’s Global Chaos* (New York: Warner Books, 1993).

Journalist and commentator, Channel 10.

threat. It perceived an Arab attempt to destroy it, which was not at all part of Sadat's plans (typically, Israel had intelligence information to that effect, but the country's leadership ignored it) and in the absence of any defined policy, it did not eventually score a victory. What would have happened had Israel been prepared for the war and had the Egyptian and Syrian forces been dealt a decisive blow on October 6, 1973 is of course a moot point, but there are grounds for arguing that in that case Sadat would not have achieved his political objective.

However, in July 2006, the fighting took an amazing turn: the political results of the war were entirely unconnected to the events on the battlefield. The IDF's fumbling moves on land could have succeeded or failed; the aerial bombardments could have been accurate or have missed their targets; Israel could have reached the Awali River and even Beirut or have stayed south of the international border. The military moves that Olmert is trying to lean on, which may ultimately generate a better security situation than existed on July 11, could have unfolded in any manner. Moreover, there are grounds to the claim that the main moves were made before the shooting started, and even led Hassan Nasrallah to opt for the kidnapping that sparked off the hostilities.

What exerted pressure on Hizbollah was not Israel's military might. In fact, the situation was the opposite – this strength was almost the only asset Nasrallah had. That, and the in-

ability to use it to achieve a tangible achievement, were the basis for the declaration (and the pervading sense in the Arab world, as well as in Israel itself) that Hizbollah earned its victory by virtue of the fact that it was still on its feet after thirty-three days of fighting, and even launched over 200 Katyusha rockets at Israel on the last day of the war. Had Israel not been so strong and had the post-modern war not been fought in such a manner, whereby this strength did not come into play and did not influence the outcome of the battle or impact on what emerged from the hostilities, Nasrallah's losses would have been more prominent.

One could expand this line of thinking further: in the second Lebanon War, the party that had weaponry and used it lost, and the side that desisted from war gained. Hizbollah sustained a physical blow (albeit one from which it will quickly recover, as physical destruction does not impact on a guerilla organization in the same way it impacts on a country); its standing within Lebanon is uncertain; and relations with its Iranian patron have worsened as, in Iranian eyes, Israel's unexpected response damaged a strategic asset Iran had been building up for years.

Israel's situation did not improve either: the threat to the north of the country was not removed. It is clear to everyone that Hizbollah can drive out an international force at will – it did so back in 1983, when it carried out a series of terror attacks that led to the hurried exit of the US marines

and the French army from Lebanon. For its part, the Lebanese army will stay stationed along the border only as long as Hizbollah wants it to, as it does not have the strength or the will to confront the Shiite organization. Hizbollah's arsenal of rockets still poses a threat to northern Israel, and the fighting proved that it can continue shooting, paralyze the north of the country for a long period of time, and, in a sense, force Israel to blink first. Other elements in the region got a better idea of how to confront Israel's strength and gained insight into the cracks in the decision-making level, even in the IDF itself.

On the other hand, one of the people who gained most from the war (in the meantime, as the long term results of the war are not entirely clear) was the person who suffered the most losses without firing a single shot: Fouad Siniora, the Lebanese prime minister. The empathy aroused by the severe Israeli attack, which caused many civilian casualties – in Israel the sense was that the IDF fired selectively and with great restraint, yet the overwhelming majority of fatalities were innocent Lebanese civilians – together with international fears over the future of Lebanon as an independent entity, helped Siniora adopt the status of a victim and a representative of the great hope. He used his image to portray Lebanon as looking to escape the clutches of Hizbollah and stop serving as the battlefield where regional forces conduct their wars. Siniora came out of the war in a stronger political position.

Third party countries that did not take up arms also gained, or may gain from the war. In an attack meant to obstruct the smuggling of arms to Hizbollah, the air force killed several dozen Syrian farmers. It is easy to imagine what Israel would have done in a similar situation: it would have launched a heavy bombardment against the aggressor. Syria, which knows Israel well and understands the true balance of deterrence

proxies, came out of the war with an opportunity to improve their positions. The statements made by President Bush indicate the shortcomings of taking a military option against Iran, and the Iranians themselves, now that the general enthusiasm for confrontation has lessened, are likely to achieve better results from the complicated game of poker they are playing with the West over the matter of their nuclear capability. Thus,

the raised hammer was far more significant than the actual pain of the blow when the hammer was lowered.

In contrast to the common assumptions and the populist observations in the media, Israel did not ignore Hizbollah's stockpile of arms. There were initial reports of the growing, substantial arsenal before the withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 and, over the years, the intelligence corps made sure the rising figures were leaked to the media. Every Israeli knew that Nasrallah had more than 10,000 warheads aimed at Israel; everyone knew that Haifa Bay and areas beyond it were within the target range. Over the years (in fact, long before the withdrawal, as even when the IDF was in southern Lebanon there were clear instructions to the Northern Command "to do everything to prevent Katyusha attacks") the raised hammer hampered Israel's freedom of movement, heightened the sense of threat and the anxiety of residents in the north of Israel, and played on the already strained nerves of the IDF leadership. Amazingly, Nasrallah's big mistake was to implement his threat.

This does not in any way imply a cavalier dismissal of the suffering of the residents of the north during the fighting, the economic damages, or the human casualties, and certainly not the deaths of dozens of civilians in the Katyusha rocket attacks. However, on the macro-national level, 4,000 Katyusha rockets were fired on Israel and their damage was shown to

Force is no longer the continuation of policy by other means. In fact, the situation has been reversed: the side that uses force has a greater chance of losing.

between them, opted for restraint. However, Bashar Asad, who was driven out of Lebanon a few months earlier, found a loophole in the war that he may be able to use to remove his state from the list of the West's most detested countries. He may even be able to initiate a process that could ultimately help him realize his father's dream and regain the Golan Heights through negotiations with Israel. It is not clear if Asad either understands the opportunity he has or is able to seize it. However, it is clear that had he mobilized his army, even for a limited response, he would have come out of the war as a big loser, and may even have been ousted as president.

Likewise, Iran and the US, two rivals who both viewed the war as a kind of confrontation between their

while it is too early to predict how the Iranian affair will play itself out, and notwithstanding the nascent post-war stage, it is not too early to determine the first anti-war rule: force is no longer the continuation of policy by other means. The Clausewitz connection between the two has been severed, the ability to achieve political gain through a military operation has almost completely dissipated, and, in fact, the situation has been reversed: the side that uses force has a greater chance of losing.

At the systems-tactics level, the fighting in Lebanon displayed another anti-war paradox: almost every weapon lost its significance and effectiveness as soon as it was used. All deterrents lost their power as soon as the threat was translated into reality. The expected pain from the blow of

be minimal – despite the lack of preparation by the government, and despite the terrible shortcomings in the protection, evacuation, and financial support measures. Israel's GDP will suffer minimally, if at all, residents of northern Israel (if the government acts wisely) can receive full compensation for their financial losses, and the Katyusha rocket has lost its status as a threat, as someone made the mistake of using it to such an extent that the significance of the rocket fire completely eroded. A rocket cannot bring a country to its knees, certainly not a country with economic and organizational strength – relative to its enemies – such as Israel. As such, the potential rocket is far more effective than the rocket that has actually been fired.

By the same token the IDF's enormous strength has also lost its significance, as it was used against an enemy it could not overcome. The air force bombardment was successful in destroying Hizbollah's mid and long range rocket arsenals. However, beyond the claim (which has also yet to be proven) that this prevented the organization from firing at areas much further south than Haifa – even the air force does not claim that it destroyed the last rocket, yet Hadera was hit by only one rocket throughout the war – this was the extent of the effectiveness of the IDF's most successful corps in the war.

The ground forces incursion had absolutely no effect on the progress of the war, a result that the IDF knew from the outset. Even killing, the ba-

sic activity of the war, had no impact at all. Hizbollah made almost no effort on behalf of its soldiers trapped in the area controlled by Israel, and their death had no influence on the continued Katyusha rocket fire – which, ultimately, brought Israel to the end of the conflict in a state of exhaustion – and naturally did not influence the decisions of the Hizbollah leadership.

During the war the IDF fired 130,000 shells and carried out ten thousand air sorties. Some of its basic ammunition was used so extensively (and uncontrollably) that stocks were exhausted and immediate supplies were required from within and outside Israel. A confrontation with around 1,000 men (we will probably never know exactly how many Hizbollah personnel were actually armed during the war), in a limited arena of less than ten kilometers in depth, without an enemy tank or jet, and with an adversary that barely launched any attacks (throughout the fighting Hizbollah initiated a single attack only, on paratroopers at Bint Jbail, which ended in decisive success for the IDF) brought Israel to a state reminiscent of the need for the airlift during the Yom Kippur War. There is nothing more anti-war than that.

The Preoccupation with Deterrence

Another interesting outcome of the anti-war relates to deterrence, one of the known obsessions of the IDF and the Israeli public. The concept of the old war is still embraced: decisive

victory, preferably in every battle, generates an image of strength and deterrence. This mentality has not changed despite the historical facts showing otherwise for some time: the Six Day War, which ended in a crushing victory, did not deter the Egyptians from embarking on the War of Attrition just two years later, and the Yom Kippur War three years after that.

Israel turned a localized incident into a war in order to consolidate its deterrence. The political and military leadership did not recognize that with an organization like Hizbollah, there has never been, will not be, and cannot be any deterrence – as it is not a state that takes responsibility and it does not have a backbone that can be crushed. On the other hand, even failing on the land-based battlefield and in creating the image of victory did not essentially change the deterrence towards Syria: Bashar Asad may engage in highbrow talk, but out of a sense of weakness and recognition of Israeli supremacy, he decided not to respond to the damage inflicted on his citizens and sovereignty.

The conclusion that Asad will draw from the fighting in Lebanon relates to his perception of defense: it should be more similar to that of Hizbollah, be entrenched on the ground, and create dispersed low profile positions with as few as possible heavy control facilities that can be struck and incapacitated. On the other hand, he should know that an attack on Israel will end in failure. If Syrian tanks move from their bases towards the

border, it is highly unlikely that they will get there.

This is another anti-war turnaround, which was framed by theoreticians, particularly in the US, over twenty years ago: the old approach, according to which offensive initiative is an advantage, has been overturned. Israel would have difficulty attacking Syria on the ground, as the area between Kuneitra and Damascus has not been used for maneuvers for some time. Despite the fact that its absolute air supremacy would enable it to destroy control systems and targets in the field and inflict far greater damage on the Syrian leadership than the damage caused to the diffuse Hizbollah organization, moving into Syria is liable to entangle the forces in something similar to Lebanon. The IDF reached this conclusion fifteen years ago, but as mentality always overcomes insight, it did not even apply this in Lebanon.

"Out of twenty-three days of this war, twenty-one days were completely superfluous." This remark, made in the middle of the fourth week of the war by one of the people who know Prime Minister Olmert best – and who, at the time, did not know that Israel was facing another ten days

of death and failure – touches on the main conclusion to be drawn from the second Lebanon War: in anti-war, the real wisdom is not to know how and when to use force, but how and when not to use it.

Government ministers, senior officers, and commentators – in fact, almost everyone not called Olmert, Peretz, or Halutz – are united after the event in the opinion that few held in real time: Israel achieved very little after July 14, at a cost that does not justify the gains. Almost all the results in which the prime minister glories were achieved in the first two days of the war, before all the damage was caused – particularly the deep inner rift in the IDF that will fester for some time.

Israel would have been in a better situation had it defined the event as a punitive operation rather than a war, without mounting a land operation, and without using its enormous reserve forces, whose strength was wasted like a heavyweight boxer punching air. Hizbollah would have gained had it launched far fewer Katyusha rockets – fifteen a day would have achieved the same result in wearing down the Israeli home front and in generating the sense that

the IDF did not achieve its objectives, and the deterrence of the enormous number of unfired rockets would have been maintained – and if it had implemented a unilateral ceasefire at various exit points. In anti-war the right question is not how much time there is to fight but when should fighting stop.

Had the Israeli leadership recognized this fact before the anti-war, it would have set objectives that could have been attained by an extensive aerial punitive operation – and, again, these objectives were by no means small and local. The continued fighting that no one had planned, and even those who ordered it did not believe would yield benefits, stemmed from a well-established mentality and from an adherence to the axioms of the old war according to which more time and more force produce more gains. This cost the lives of over 100 soldiers and civilians.

Those responsible are paying and will pay the price. However, the real conclusions are no less important. In other words, it is not clear how long the prime minister, minister of defense, and chief of staff will remain in office, but the anti-war will be with us for a long time.

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Breaking the Amoeba's Bones

Ron Tira

While the list of lapses in the second Lebanon War is long, the root cause of the failure on the battlefield stems from the deterioration in the Israeli approach to the buildup and use of military force. This deterioration has resulted partly inadvertently and partly from staunch adherence to preexisting concepts. Reviewing the deterioration in the approach to force buildup and the use of force, this article will examine the changes in buildup and the approach to force application during the period that preceded the war, and will look at the operational concepts adopted for the war that emerged from these changes. It will examine the inadequate results of force application during the war, discuss the alternative strategies for the use of force (if at all) available to Israel after the kidnapping of its two soldiers on July 12, 2006, and look at possible future directions.

Before the War: Three Levels of Deterioration

The first level of deterioration stems from the view adopted over the past decade that the probability of war with countries that share a border with Israel ("the first tier") is low, and the main threat comes from countries like Iran ("the second-third tier") and from the Palestinians ("the inner tier"). As such, resources, military training, and approaches to the use of force were diverted from the first tier to the second and inner tiers. Thus, one regular division and several reserve divisions were dissolved, procurement plans were withdrawn, and reserve units were not trained in

high-intensity scenarios. In fact, some reserve units encountered first tier operational scenarios in the war after a lapse of four and even six years without relevant training.

The second level of deterioration stems from the thinking that if, nevertheless, first tier war erupts, Israel would be interested only in preventing change, not in effecting it. In such a case, Israel could make do with stopping the enemy at the borders with accurate firepower, and the importance of territory and ground maneuvers deep into enemy territory would lessen. Paraphrased, "a border patrol force rich in precision weapons" would suffice, and the need for armored formations moving heavily towards enemy towns would diminish. This approach is also reflected in a report prepared by a committee appointed by the minister of

defense and headed by Dan Meridor to examine Israel's security concept. The committee submitted its findings earlier this year. However, security, a term taken from the world of warfare, is a continuation of policy using other means and intends at times to impose change or generate a political result. Those interested only in destroying approaching enemy tanks engage in guarding the borders, but not in the country's security.

The precision firepower-oriented approach, in practice (if not in theory) foregoes taking the initiative to dictate political objectives, as it is doubtful whether firepower-based operations alone can in all cases unsettle an enemy and cause it to experience distress and defeat to the extent that it seeks a ceasefire or surrenders. Moreover, negating the ability and the concept of transferring the war to the enemy's

Formerly the head of a unit in Israel Air Force intelligence ("Lahak"). An abridged version of this article was published in *Haaretz*, September 15, 2006.

territory in many cases is liable to obviate achieving victory even in wars designed to prevent change. It may result in an inconclusive ending to the fighting or, at least, prolong the war far beyond the length of the wars Israel has experienced to date, with all the implications this would have for the Israeli economy and society.

the system has critical junctions; and third, there is sufficient familiarity with the enemy's system and its critical junctions.

Against the background of these ideas, a flawed approach was adopted by some who believed that it is possible to wage a war with minimal friction and at a low cost, and the

late the nature of the second Lebanon War, and adopted operational concepts that were destined to fail.

The orders given for Operation Change of Direction (the Israeli military name for the second Lebanon War) indicate that Israel designed its operations in the campaign around two themes. The first was to conduct a standoff firepower-based war against the Lebanese Republic so as to push it to dismantle Hizbollah for us. Indeed, at the outset of the war Israel declared that the Lebanese government was responsible for the kidnapping of the two soldiers, and struck targets such as Lebanese air force bases, Lebanese oil refineries, petroleum and gas facilities, bridges inside and around Beirut, and so on. However, it soon became apparent – what should have been understood beforehand – that even if motivated by Israel, the Lebanese government did not have the political force to confront Hizbollah and its patrons, Iran and Syria. Conversely, pressure on Siniora's government could lead to its collapse and harm Israeli interests in sowing the seeds of pro-Western democracy in Lebanon. Siniora, al-Hariri junior, and their Sunni colleagues were indeed motivated to weaken Hizbollah well before the war, in the wake of the Hariri assassination and the Cedar Revolution. But they had reached the limit of their political powers and against their will were forced to accept representatives of Hizbollah into the government.

This campaign theme was rejected by Israel's American and European

Even if motivated by Israel, the Lebanese government did not have the political force to confront Hizbollah and its patrons, Iran and Syria.

The third level of deterioration in the Israeli concept of employing military force was the over-zealous embrace of the American effects-based operations (EBO) idea. EBO's aim is to paralyze the enemy's operational ability, in contrast to destroying its military force. This is achieved by striking the headquarters, lines of communication, and other critical junctions in the military structure. EBO were employed in their most distinct form in the Shock and Awe campaign that opened the 2003 Iraq War. However, the Americans used EBO to prepare the way for their ground maneuvers, and not as an alternative to them. Notwithstanding their mastery of EBO, the Americans adhered to a balanced mix of forces and operational approaches. Moreover, even Col. John Warden (US Air Force), author of *The Enemy as a System*, in which the idea of EBO was first formulated, claimed there are three basic preconditions for EBO use: first, the enemy has a system-like structure; second,

IDF entered the second Lebanon War imbued with the three levels of deterioration. However, in contrast to all preconceived notions, this war was waged in the first tier; it attempted to effect change in Lebanon; and it was fought against guerilla forces, which not only do not have a system-like structure or critical junctions, but whose structure Israel barely understands.

Misconceptions about Using Force

Clausewitz argued that the second most important undertaking of the political and military echelons in any war (after defining its political objective) is to understand and formulate its unique nature, as no two wars are identical. The main question that the politician and general have to ask themselves is, how does the impending military campaign differ from campaigns that preceded it? Due to the three levels of deterioration, Israel failed to understand and formu-

allies, which blocked a larger scale offensive against Lebanese infrastructures. The use of force against the Lebanese Republic also damaged the sympathy of Lebanese Christians and Druze with Israel's drive to disarm Hizbollah. Moreover, after the Israeli soldiers were kidnapped, the Saudis, Egyptians, and other Sunni countries spoke out against the Shi'ite Hizbollah, described it as a destabilizing element, and agreed, in fact, with Israel's campaign aims. However, the damage subsequently inflicted on Lebanon represented the conflict as an Israeli-Arab conflict, and the Sunni countries backtracked from their previous position, at least publicly. As a result, Israel quickly abandoned the idea of a firepower-based operation against the Lebanese Republic, even if it did not declare this openly and the official orders did not reflect this.

The second campaign theme that Israel adopted was to conduct an operation that involved as little friction as possible and applied intensive precision firepower against Hizbollah, based on the Shock and Awe and EBO ideas. However, a guerilla outfit comprises the least successful example of a systemic structure and critical junctions suitable for EBO, and collecting intelligence on its structure is far more complex than collecting information about the chain of command in a regular army. Hizbollah has a relatively flat and decentralized organizational structure, and comprises a network of territorial units operating almost autonomously and, generally, without the need for ma-

neuvering forces or transporting supplies. The fighters, weapons, and supplies are deployed in the field in advance and blend in easily within the civilian population or in "nature reserves" (concealed bunker systems in valleys). On the other hand, Hizbollah does not have an operational center of gravity whose destruction would lead to the collapse of the organization's other organs and obviate the need

without Israel's being able to hit most of the launchers with standoff fire. Accordingly, there was no reason to believe that Israel would achieve better results, using a firepower-based operation only, against Hizbollah's light and medium surface-to-surface rocket launchers deployed dozens of kilometers inside Lebanon, in forested and populated mountains.

The idea of a firepower-based op-

Hizbollah does not have an operational center of gravity whose destruction would lead to the collapse of the organization.

to destroy them individually. The attempt to apply the Shock and Awe concept and the EBO approach against a guerilla organization like Hizbollah is therefore similar to trying to break an amoeba's bones – using force irrelevant to the circumstances, to the facts, and to the nature of the war.

Theoretically, the use of an EBO approach that paralyzes the enemy might have relieved the need to seek out each individual surface-to-surface rocket launcher, but in practice, due to the decentralized and autonomous nature of Hizbollah's rocket units, this became a primary task. However, Israel knew that IDF intelligence and firepower formations (air force and artillery) had for some years failed to obliterate Qassam rocket launchers near Beit Hanoun, where the theater is limited and accessible, and the terrain is flat. Indeed, just prior to the second Lebanon War, hundreds of Qassam rockets landed in the western Negev

operation also failed in terms of destroying the enemy (BDA – Battle Damage Assessment), namely, in terms of success of the firepower and in cost effectiveness, whereby over 15,000 air force sorties and 150,000 shells fired by the artillery corps achieved the destruction of only several dozen high value targets, and killed about 200-300 Hizbollah fighters (not including Hizbollah killed in ground battles). Due to the nature of the operation against a guerilla organization, which is generally not distinguished by clusters of intelligible targets, the vast majority of air strikes and the shells fired were not effective. This picture emerged early on in the campaign and it was possible to halt and reexamine the operational design after a week or two, after, say, 3,000 air strikes and 30,000 shells. It is not clear why the same operational concept continued to be adhered to if it was obviously not yielding effective results.

The idea of an operation based solely on firepower and without land maneuvers is still unproven and unfounded, and to date has scored just one success – in Kosovo. However, circumstances indicated that the second Lebanon War was very different from events in Kosovo, where the Americans engaged a sovereign country and its army. In Lebanon, however, the antagonist was a low-signature guerilla organization with relatively little sensitivity to damage inflicted on its host country. Israel also knew, or should have known,

factor in Kosovo, where the US employed its forces for almost 80 days until firepower accumulated to the critical mass required to achieve the campaign's political goals.

The Absence of a Coherent Operational Concept for the Ground Forces

Too little, too late: Israel introduced ground forces into the fighting in Lebanon belatedly, indecisively, and above all, without a clearly defined operational concept. If anything, how the ground forces were used

efficient enough to repel a short range surface-to-surface rocket or achieve any significant political effect.

Hizbollah used only several hundred fighters in southern Lebanon and thus would not have been able to withstand a sustained effort over a number of days in several locations, even if only due to the inability of a few fighters to cope with the lack of sleep and manage a broad front. However, Israel played into the hands of Hizbollah by introducing the ground forces gradually and in a step-by-step manner, allowing Hizbollah to rest, regroup, assume the initiative, and surprise the IDF. In general, most of the IDF forces were deployed in a plain and predictable maneuver, from south to north. Hizbollah may have been surprised by the cause over which Israel waged war, but once it began, the IDF used its forces in ways foreseen by Hizbollah (except for the airborne flanking just prior to the end of the fighting, which was more symbolic than efficient).

The type of combat Hizbollah prepared for was to allow IDF troops to pass its fighters hiding in "nature reserves" and other places, and then continue surface-to-surface rocket fire into Israel and guerilla operations against rearguard forces. Thus, any Israeli movement deep into Lebanese territory had to include a thorough sweep to secure all the built up and open areas taken by the IDF. It is highly doubtful whether the forces that were mobilized were sufficient for this task as well as for maintain-

Israel played into the hands of Hizbollah by introducing the ground forces gradually and in a step-by-step manner.

that killing several hundred Hizbollah members and damaging some of the organization's storage and other facilities would yield only limited leverage on decision-makers in Damascus and Tehran. Indeed, to date it does not appear that the war produced a fundamental change in the positions and strategy of Damascus and Tehran towards Hizbollah and Lebanon. Moreover, the Americans operated in Kosovo free of counterattacks, whereas Hizbollah fire on towns in northern Israel turned the blows into a reciprocal affair, what helped make Israel just as vulnerable to the continuation of the fighting. It is also difficult to make a comparison between the diplomatic circumstances in Lebanon versus in Kosovo, as well as the insensitivity to the time

was a compromise of sorts between a school of thought calling for the non-use of ground forces and a school of thought calling for a massive deployment of ground forces, resulting in the use of limited ground forces. This poor compromise led to casualties among troops, yet from the outset it was evident that it could not achieve any campaign effect at all. Indeed, it is unclear what campaign effect was expected from using battalion-sized forces in the Lebanese border towns of Bint Jbail or Maroun a-Ras, sending brigade-sized forces just 2-3 kilometers over the border to destroy abandoned Hizbollah positions, or eventually using division-sized forces 10-15 kilometers over the border and across only part of the front. This sort of force application is not even suf-

ing reserves that would be required if the war spread to other fronts.

The oddest deployment of ground forces took place in the last sixty hours of the fighting. The ground forces were deployed after the political campaign ended (Security Council resolution 1701); in other words, the deployment was not intended to achieve any political objectives. The forces were deployed without the area being cleared of enemy combatants, i.e., the aim was not to search, destroy, and inflict damage on Hizbollah's firing capacity or its forces. When the ceasefire came into effect, IDF forces were interspersed with the enemy forces, and hence there were difficulties with land and air supplies (as the area had not been secured). In the words of Casper Weinberger about Vietnam, Israel too only asked its soldiers "to be there," but not to win. It should be stressed that the act of crossing into Lebanon, which involved passing through the kill zones prepared by Hizbollah, was therefore very dangerous and exacted a high price in the number of soldiers killed; thus, it was essential that there be a clear understanding of this offensive's objective. Moreover, the duration of the deployment in southern Lebanon and the exit strategy were not dependent on Israel, rather on the "good will" of Hizbollah to reach agreement on the conditions for deploying the Lebanese army and UNIFIL in the south.

In this war, the IDF thought in terms of targets and firepower, and

did not use its ground forces dynamically in ways that had bought it its previous victories: identification of enemy weaknesses, surprise, deception, deep maneuvering, pushing the enemy out of balance, exploiting successes, and maintaining pressure. Undoubtedly, one cannot compare operations against regular armies with action taken against a guerilla orga-



nization built of autonomous cells and lacking an operational center of gravity, and in the case of a guerilla organization, cutting supply lines or encircling the forward operational level is almost inconsequential. However, all organizations – even guerilla – have their weak points.

The Chinese strategist Sun Tzu claims that a military leader's objective is to dictate to his enemy the nature of a war in which he has a relative advantage, and he should not be

drawn into a type of war in which the enemy has a relative advantage. If this is not possible, said Sun Tzu, fighting should be avoided. For Clausewitz, in war one should attack the enemy's plans. Israel played into Hizbollah's hands, and conducted the campaign in accordance with Hizbollah's plans and strengths and, as such, from the outset there was almost no chance of victory.

The Results of the Inadequate Use of Force

It is too soon to assess the long term political results of the war and gain the necessary perspective to appreciate if Israel stirred undercurrents in Lebanon that may produce benefits in the future. Ultimately, Lebanon experienced political and social traumas whose fallout cannot yet be assessed. However, the way the operation ended has severe ramifications, which can be divided into two types: the direct results of how the military force was used, and the indirect results.

The direct upshot of the deterioration in the IDF force buildup and in the operational design, and the consequent adoption of particular campaign themes, was the failure to destroy, repress, or even to substantially impinge on enemy activity according to the primary parameters of Hizbollah's operational design. Indeed, towards the end of the war, Hizbollah fired more than 200 rockets per day into Israel, while at the start of the war around 100 rockets

were launched per day (even if the mixture shifted during the war toward short range surface-to-surface rockets). Hizbollah's fighting forces continued operating while inflicting damage on the IDF, and even in most of the ground battles that they lost, they did not collapse or

of the past, and that the Israeli (and, in generally, the Western) soldier is weaker and finds it difficult to deal with the difficulties of battle. It is hard to overestimate the importance of this perception, if it takes hold. Since 1967 the Middle East has operated under the perception that the

in guarantees, the best arms available, and a political umbrella.

However, the manner in which the second Lebanon War was conducted and the way in which it is viewed may affect the perception of Israel's military superiority and, as such, may impact on many aspects of the reality in which Israel has existed since 1967. It is very difficult to foresee future political intent and to assess the probability of war; however it seems that in the wake of the second Lebanon War, at least some of the relevant parties may believe they can do battle with Israel and emerge from the fighting with the upper hand. As such, it appears that the obstacles to another war in the Middle East have been lowered.

Hizbollah designed a war in which presumably Israel could only choose which soft underbelly to expose.

retreat. Hizbollah's command and control echelon continued to function throughout the war. Its fighting spirit for the most part stayed strong, and currently there are no signs that its political will has been irreversibly impaired. While Hizbollah preferred to arrive at a ceasefire, this was based on a justifiable wish to "lock in its profits" (i.e., to stop the fighting at a stage where its force was maximizing its achievements and was perceived as the victor) and not because it was in distress or on the verge of collapse. In Hizbollah's eyes, and in the view of some Arab onlookers, Hizbollah won the battle.

Moreover, the fact that several hundred Hizbollah fighters faced up to four Israeli divisions and the Israel Air Force, and ended the war standing up after inflicting significant damage on IDF forces, may also generate indirect results that are at best problematic. Some of the parties that followed the progress of the war may conclude, correctly or otherwise, that the IDF of today is not the IDF

Israeli military enjoys absolute superiority and thus, since 1967, Israel has not been seriously challenged. In 1973, the Egyptians and Syrians set themselves modest operational objectives (penetration of about 10 km), and when they achieved their objectives, they halted at their own initiative. This allowed Israel to regroup, launch a counterattack, and win the battle. Since 1973 Israel has not been challenged in an all-out war. The perception of Israel's military superiority was responsible for generating the requisite conditions for the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, the peace process with the Palestinians, and thirty-three years of quiet on the Golan Heights. It allowed Israel to sustain a peacetime economy and a society of plenty and wellbeing, despite the absence of peace. And due to the perception of its military superiority, Israel became an American strategic asset that justified the investment of an aggregate amount of about \$100 billion and the provision of dozens of billions of more dollars

How Could the Force Have Been Used?

In order to analyze what kind of war and what operational concept Israel should have adopted following the kidnapping of its soldiers on July 12, 2006, we have to reexamine Hizbollah's approach to force buildup and force application, and the operational design it chose. Hizbollah established two parallel formations: the first, a decentralized and autonomous low-signature rockets formation devoid of a center of gravity that on the one hand applied pressure on Israeli towns and forced it to act immediately. On the other hand, certainly the short range rockets formation could not be neutralized, suppressed, or destroyed by standoff firepower within a reasonable period of time, but only by seiz-

ing the area from which it operated and by systematic destruction of each and every launcher.

However, a fighting formation was established alongside the rockets formation that was also decentralized, autonomous, and lacking an operational center of gravity, composed of both fortified as well as low-signature guerilla forces. These fighting forces were deployed to make both the act of taking and securing the south of Lebanon as well as the act of remaining in occupation and maintaining supply lines exhausting and costly in terms of human life. The two formations were designed to operate clandestinely through selective engagement with the Israeli ground forces, allowing Israeli forces to pass them, and continuing their operations in the rear of Israeli lines. Thus, any Israeli movement into Lebanon could not be based on seizing only select dominant points while avoiding entering populated pockets and "nature reserves," rather had to involve a thorough sweep of the area.

Hizbollah designed a war in which presumably Israel could only choose which soft underbelly to expose: the one whereby it avoids a ground operation and exposes its home front vulnerability, or the one whereby it enters Lebanon and sustains the loss of soldiers in ongoing ground-based attrition with a guerilla organization. Hizbollah's brilliant trap apparently left Israel with two undesirable options.

Any operational model that Israel should have formulated on July 12,

2006 had, therefore, to take into account Hizbollah's force buildup and its mode of operation, and the nature of the resultant war. Taking this view, Israel had four alternatives with their own inherent logic, even if each had some basic deficiencies as well. The first was restraint, i.e., making do with a symbolic retaliation to the Hizbollah attack. Even if the kidnappings were not coordinated with Iran and did not result from a premeditated intent to escalate the situation to a war, the second Lebanon War was liable to slow down and complicate the international campaign against Iran on the nuclear issue and against Syria and Hizbollah with regard to the Hariri assassination and Security Council resolution 1559. It was thus not wise to rewrite the international agenda and have it led by an Israeli-Lebanese war. The main arena is, of course, with Iran, whence derives the confrontation between the West

declaring war, the second option was to refuse to walk into the brilliant trap set by Hizbollah but instead to opt for an operational model of exerting pressure on Asad's regime and, through this, on Hizbollah and Iran. It was entirely feasible to inflict significant damage on the assets of the Alawi regime, even through the relatively sterile model of Shock and Awe and EBO. Syria is Iran's strategic asset and Hizbollah's patron, and when Asad's foothold is precarious it is convenient for Israel and the US to negotiate a settlement in Lebanon, and more convenient for the Americans to negotiate with Iran on the nuclear issue. The disadvantage of this alternative is, of course, the disproportion between the incident of the soldiers' kidnapping and the Israeli reaction, and the danger of uncontrolled regional escalation.

A third option was to forego an all-out war with Hizbollah, to adopt

If Israel insisted on a full scale confrontation with Hizbollah, this demanded full awareness of the trap set by Hizbollah, and instant, swift implementation, with full IDF power.

and Iran and Syria over hegemony in Lebanon, with the conflict between Israel and Hizbollah only a secondary offshoot. Thus, it was possible to wait for the American measures against Iran to be fully realized, and wage war with Hizbollah at a more convenient time once suitable preparations were made.

If, nonetheless, Israel insisted on

more modest political objectives, avoid the trap set in southern Lebanon, and to stage a daring, consciousness-oriented operation that goes beyond Hizbollah's expectations such as, for example, a large scale special operation in the heart of Lebanon or in the Beka'a Valley.

And if, nonetheless, Israel insisted on a full scale direct confrontation

with Hizbollah, this could only be done with full awareness of the trap set by Hizbollah and implemented instantly, swiftly, and with full IDF power. In addition, this should have been carried out through Hizbollah's backdoor and not in an offhanded maneuver from south northward. As

lead to the collapse of the organization, there is no alternative to systematic face-to-face confrontation at each of Hizbollah's fortified positions.

Honest Conclusions and Preparations for the Future

In order to win the next war Israel

It is dangerous to allow temporary or reversible circumstances to divert attention from the professional-practical necessity of preparing for the worst case scenario.

such, the fourth alternative was to utilize maximum friction and military forces – in all their forms – and in the shortest amount of time. This alternative required immediate mobilization of reserve units sufficient to achieve deep penetration of several dozens of kilometers, and to sweep and secure southern Lebanon. Force should have been used in a surprising way, including flanking the kill zones near the border, progressing continuously along unexpected routes, undertaking massive operations deep in Hizbollah's strategic rear, and pushing it out of balance. However, this alternative incurs two inherent drawbacks: first, it does not offer a successful exit strategy and involves a protracted occupation, since withdrawal would be liable to restore the situation to its pre-war status. Second, it would be costly in terms of human life, since at the end of the day, due to Hizbollah's decentralized and autonomous nature and the lack of a critical operational core whose destruction would

must conduct an investigation of what actually happened in Lebanon, take a sober look at reality – as it has changed for the worse in the wake of the war – and take immediate action to correct the situation and prepare for the next confrontation. If we just cover over our tracks, if we allow time to take its course and blunt the sharpness of failure, we will not learn, we will not improve, and we will lose the next war too.

First, Israel must retain the ability to fight based on the classic principles of war, whereby force buildup and utilization must reflect an ongoing balance between the various branches of the military and a balance between firepower, maneuvering, and protective gear. Once again Israel must lend appropriate consideration to territory, both in defensive and offensive terms. The world is undoubtedly changing, as is military force buildup and force application, but it is very risky to implement dramatic changes based on theories that have yet to be validated.

Examples of force buildup based on unproven theories include the American approach of the 1950s, whereby there was no need for a strong conventional army in the era of nuclear arms – an approach proven mistaken in the 1960s; the American idea that in an era of air-to-air missiles, there is no longer a need for guns on fighter aircraft or a need to train pilots to engage in close aerial combat – what resulted in the loss of hundreds of pilots and aircraft in the early years of the Vietnam War; or the approach that was supported by many in Israel after 1967 that argued that in an era of mobile tank battles, there was no more need for an infantry corps, and that the air force could serve as airborne artillery – an approach proven incorrect in 1973.

It is also very dangerous to allow temporary or reversible circumstances, or for that matter political views, to divert attention from the professional-practical necessity of preparing for the worst case scenario. In the words of Ben Gurion: "Let us assume that our peacemaking efforts will bear fruit and most or even all the Arab countries will sign peace and friendship treaties with us. Even then we should be wary of the dangerous illusion that peace will maintain our security. Even after peace is written and signed between us and all our neighbors, and the signatures are made and ratified by the UN, security will always be our main concern."

Israel's classic security concept was based on what in the 1950s and 1960s was known as "the case of

everything”: buildup of the IDF to achieve victory even in the worst case scenario in which the Arab countries join forces and surprise Israel with an all-out war. Yet preparing for “everything” demands vast resources; neither is it clear if the challenge was met even when this was official policy. However, we must at least be able to cope with the full spectrum of threats, and likewise with some of them simultaneously. We should not confuse the scenario that we cast as likely or unlikely with the need to be able to deal with the full range of threats and the full capabilities of the enemy, whatever the probability of its political intent to use them according to our current assessment. The enemy’s capabilities are given while its political intentions are liable to change, and we ourselves might err in our assessment of them.

While Hizbollah occupies a significant role in the spectrum of threats, we need to look beyond it at the wider picture. Hizbollah is a hybrid. Part of it is a genuine grassroots Lebanese phenomenon and part is an Iranian-Syrian proxy. However, there is no doubt that Hizbollah acts as a part of a broader effort that Iran is waging against Israel, which also includes the missile project and the nuclear project and, to a lesser degree, several Palestinian terror groups. On the other hand, Israel is not fighting back against Iran. Iran has managed to craft an asymmetrical conflict with

Israel: using its proxies it has created a de facto shared border with Israel (something it also learned from Israel, with regard to the Kurds in Iraq). However, Israel does not have a common border with Iran, and so Israel has to invest thought and resources in dealing with this lack of symmetry and strive to achieve strategic parity with Iran at the low-medium intensity conflict. On a wider perspective, Israel has to formulate a comprehensive, proactive strategy on Iran and not make do with passing the problem over to the Americans.

Maintaining the ability to handle the full spectrum of potential threats requires a force buildup and an operational concept based on the ability to engage in an all-out war in Syria, a war against Hizbollah, and a war on the Palestinian front, while maintaining strong strategic reserves in the case of escalation on another front. At the same time, this also requires deterring Iran and, if the deterrence fails, achieving a clear advantage in exchanging blows with Iran and creating a strategic balance with Iran in low-medium intensity conflicts. The timetable until the next war may be short and thus it is incumbent on Israel to act rapidly, diligently, and thoroughly while increasing the defense budget by billions of shekels.

The second Lebanon War did not add to Israeli-US relations, to say the least. First, despite the fact that the US had a clear interest in dam-

aging Islamic terror, Syria, and Iran, and despite the window of time and political umbrella the US offered, Israel did not deliver the goods, and its image as a regional military superpower was diminished. Second, it may very well be harder for the Americans to exert leverage against Iran after the precision firepower-based campaign the American proxy conducted proved inefficient against the entrenched and obstinate Iranian proxy. Thus, Israel’s standing in the US needs urgent repair work. The Americans don’t buy spins and in order to preserve strategic relations, Israel must tell the truth, submit a serious plan for restructuring, and work industriously to implement it.

To a large degree, the second Lebanon War was our Vietnam. Like the US in Vietnam, we tried to overcome guerillas with firepower but without massive maneuvering, force was put into use in rolling gradualism, the enemy leaned on a strategic rear in a neighboring country that was not attacked, and we did not engage in battle wholeheartedly and with a full commitment to victory. The bad news from the second Lebanon War is that we failed. The good news is that our regular and reserve forces are solid and committed; the problem is that they were assembled and deployed incorrectly. There is also good news in the fact that we received a wake-up call, and a second chance to learn and improve.

The Second Lebanon War: The Plus Column

Roni Bart

The public discourse on the campaign in Lebanon has focused almost exclusively on the war's negative aspects, while the professional post-mortems are dwelling on what must be inferred and learned from the war's failures and lapses. Yet a balanced review of the war requires delineating the positive outcomes along with the negative results. Indeed, as we expound on the minuses of the war, it is important to remember that the plus column of the balance sheet is neither blank nor, for that matter, even sparse. What follows, therefore, is a brief overview of the positive outcomes of the war in Lebanon.

The military blow to Hizbollah.

Hundreds of Hizbollah fighters were killed and injured. Their tactics were exposed; the organization's physical infrastructure in south Lebanon, Beirut, and Baalbek was substantially damaged; the line of military outposts running along the border was totally destroyed after it failed to inflict heavy IDF losses; large quantities of ammunition were depleted and destroyed; and above all, apparently only few of the organization's array of medium and long range rockets remain.

Hizbollah's status. Hizbollah's status weakened vis-à-vis Lebanon's non-Shiite elements, headed by the "March 14 camp." This has been made clear by the escalation of tensions between the organization and the Siniora government. The organization failed not only to deter Israel, but

also to defend Lebanon against its southern neighbor; therefore its very *raison d'être* has been undermined. That being the case, the issue of disarmament – even if far from being resolved – has become more poignant, evidenced by Hizbollah's consent not to bear arms publicly. Also, there are potential challenges within the Shiite community itself, should reconstruction not progress with due speed and/or if the Shiite enclaves in the south and in the Dahiya area suspect that Hizbollah's operations are liable to generate another round of hostilities at their expense.

At the very least it can be stated that Hizbollah's image as "guardian of Lebanon" is less founded after the war than it was before it. As for Hassan Nasrallah, one of Hizbollah's bastions of strength, he has been exposed as less familiar with the Israel mindset than he has consistently boasted. Today he is forced to live in hiding and command his organization from a bunker.

Security Council resolution 1701.

The Lebanese army has deployed in southern Lebanon for the first time in forty years. Accompanying it is a multinational force whose scope and composition enable more effective action than demonstrated by UNIFIL; this force is apparently backed by greater international resolve than in the past. Much attention is being devoted by Lebanon's security apparatus as well as by the international community to blocking routes (sea, air, and land) that could enable the flow of illegal arms from Iran and Syria to Hizbollah. All this strengthens Lebanon's sovereignty at the expense of Hizbollah and makes it difficult for the organization to rehabilitate itself militarily (with equipment, force buildup, and training).

International response. The international community – especially prominent European countries as well as Arab-Sunni axis countries (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia) – has evinced

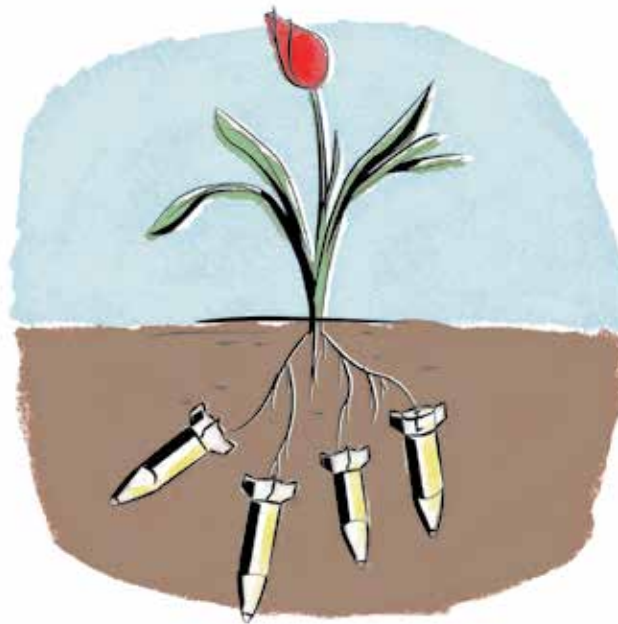
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greater awareness of the danger embodied by Hizbollah as a destabilizing element connected with Iran. This awareness translated into relative patience towards Israel during the war and support for the implementation of resolution 1701; it is also likely to be evident in future issues that concern Iranian involvement in Lebanon. In addition, vigorous US support for Israel was forthcoming not only from President George Bush and his supporters, but also from the entire political spectrum.

Syria. For the first time in approximately thirty years, Syria has been unmasked as an almost irrelevant player in Lebanon. In previous rounds of conflict the key to any resolution was sought first in Damascus. This time, too, there were those in the European arena who thought Syria played an influential role, but in practice this was not the case. True, Syria did transfer weapons to Hizbollah, but its impact on what actually occurred was marginal. Moreover, the Syrian weaponry used by Hizbollah focused international attention on the negative role Syria plays and has played in Lebanon (following a long list of crimes that have originated in Damascus, including the murder of Hariri). The Syrians did not like resolution 1701, but were forced to accept it. After the war Syria was compelled to announce (or at least pay lip service to) its support for supervision of the Syria-Lebanon border to prevent the supply of illegal arms.

Israel's deterrence. Deterrence is a multidimensional phenomenon (i.e., regarding "what" and "against whom"). Israel's deterrence ability will be strengthened on three levels. First, in regard to long range rockets, Israeli intelligence and the air force demonstrated extremely impressive capabilities and achievements. Second, notwithstanding Nasrallah's spi-

of destroying the threat. Third, by Nasrallah's own admission, he was surprised by how Israel "went haywire." It is difficult to deter, or plan to deter, an opponent who is perceived as irrational or at least unpredictable. After Israel set such a disproportionately high price tag, it is most likely there will be a lengthy respite from Hizbollah provocations.



der web analogy, Israel demonstrated its readiness to enter into a broad confrontation in order to put an end to provocations. The country proved it is prepared to endure extended rocket fire on its home front as the price of achieving objectives or of continued resistance. The combination of these two levels constitutes a strategic problem for Syria and Iran vis-à-vis plans to attack Israel with long range missiles. Israel has proved, on the one hand, that this threat does not deter it, and on the other, that it is capable

Timing and the future. Israel unintentionally benefited from the timing of the war. First, if Iran had planned to involve Hizbollah in an anti-Israel or anti-America/West context, its "vanguard" absorbed a first blow that both exposed and weakened it. Second, it was preferable that Israel manage this conflict before Iran attains nuclear military capability. Third, even if Israel scraped by with a marginal victory only or else fought merely to a draw (i.e., failure), this was a poor dress

rehearsal only, a failed mini-war, as it were, in a partial yet not critical test. Correcting the lapses in the military field (a buildup of ground forces not exclusively for curbing terror, upgrading the military reserve apparatus, and so on) and drawing the necessary conclusions in the area of strategic-political planning will improve Israel's future capabilities in confronting existential threats. It is almost as if Israel should thank Hizbollah for the wake-up call.

Look Not to the Skies: The IAF vs. Surface-to-Surface Rocket Launchers

Noam Ophir

During Operation Change of Direction in Lebanon, the Israel Air Force (IAF) recorded numerous achievements against Hizbollah's medium range and long range surface-to-surface rocket launchers. In contrast, the results against short range rocket launchers were disappointing, particularly since the air force nearly maximized its ability to deal with targets of this type. In the absence of foreseeable significant improvements in this area, the future solution to the short range rocket threat lies on the ground, not in the air.

On Friday, August 11, 2006, three barrages of medium range surface-to-surface rockets were fired towards Haifa and the northern suburbs from the vicinity of Tyre in Lebanon. In each of these cases the launcher was destroyed within minutes of the launch. In some cases secondary explosions were clearly visible, indicating that the launcher was probably attacked before it had fired all its rockets.¹ The process of locating, identifying, attacking, and destroying the three launchers was completed in record time. In approximately one hour Hizbollah lost a significant portion

of what remained of its heavy rocket arsenal. However, on a day when more than 120 rockets hit northern Israel and caused dozens of casualties of varying degrees of seriousness, it is hard to be impressed with the destruction of three launchers. The air force's successful morning in terms of hunting down surface-to-surface launchers was largely irrelevant. This frustrating situation repeated itself both before that day and after.

The story of that Friday, which marked the end of the first month of the fighting in Lebanon, depicted one of the important aspects of Operation Change of Direction. The IDF managed, mainly by virtue of the air force, to record some impressive achievements against surface-to-surface rocket launchers. At the same time, the IDF reached almost the full extent of its air-based ability to deal with the problem of surface-to-surface rocket launchers and similar targets. In the foreseeable future and under similar

circumstances, it is unlikely that any air-based capability will achieve better results.

The potential implications of this claim are far from simple. If the IAF reached something akin to the best result it could possibly achieve and despite this Hizbollah succeeded in firing approximately 3,970 rockets during the hostilities – an average of 120 rockets a day – Israel faces a difficult problem.² In other words, Operation Change of Direction has shown that anyone who thought that air power alone could remove the threat of rockets to Israel is mistaken. In fact, the lessons of the campaign underscore that at least in the coming years, that type of success for the air

1 "Attacking a Katyusha Launcher which Fired on Haifa," IDF website, August 11, 2006, http://www1.idf.il/SIP_STORAGE/DOVER/files/0/56510.wmv.

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2 According to official Israeli police force figures, forty civilians and twelve soldiers were killed by rockets in the war, and about another 2,400 suffered various degrees of injury. Army figures indicate forty-two civilians killed and about 4,300 wounded.

force is far from a viable scenario. At the same time, the war demonstrated significant progress in an air-based approach to deal with complex objectives of locating and attacking targets such as surface-to-surface rocket launchers. This progress may play a central role in dealing with similar targets of greater significance, such as surface-to-surface missile launchers.

Contending with Surface-to-Surface Rocket Launchers

Surface-to-surface rocket launchers refer to a wide range of configurations rather than a specific model of weapon, and the differences between the launchers affect the challenge in dealing with them. Surface-to-surface rocket launchers can generally be classed by two parameters: the size of the rocket, usually noted by its diameter, and the method of launching. The various sizes of surface-to-surface rockets translate into different ranges and weight of the warhead. Hizbollah, for example, has rockets with different sizes and performance levels.³ While short range rockets can be launched from a solitary launcher, which may not be more than a barrel on a stand, the larger rockets require a more complex launching system. In general, this is a standard truck carrying a number of cylindrical containers in the back, each with a rocket inside. Long range rockets generally

need a custom-built truck that carries a single rocket. In all cases, the truck acts as both carrier and launcher.

Contending with launchers can occur in two different stages: before the launch and during/after the launch.

The Pre-Launch Stage

It is best to locate and hit the launcher before it fires its load of rockets.

The problem is that at this stage it is hard to distinguish the launcher from the innocuous objects around it.⁴

The most effective way to hit launchers and their rockets prior to launching is by attacking the places where they are stored. The crux is accurate intelligence, yet such intelligence does not always exist. Intelligence about the location of storage facilities, for example, does not supply air power capability with information as to what lies inside the facilities or how the facilities are used. Furthermore, the enemy will likely make every effort to keep the existence of such sites secret and will position them in places that are hard to

strike, such as civilian buildings in the heart of a densely inhabited area and bunkers that are hard to penetrate. At the same time, it may be assumed that the enemy will not concentrate its assets in a few locations; rather it will prefer to spread them out so that even if some are located and success-

Anyone who thought that air power alone could remove the threat of rockets to Israel is mistaken.

fully targeted this will not neutralize all its firing ability, or even a significant part of it.

Attacking sites suspected of serving as storage depots for launchers and rockets can be complemented by operating in places suspected of being launch sites. First, certain operations can make it difficult to use the area. For example, mines can be dispersed in advance from the air, the territory can be exposed in various ways, and continuous obtrusive air presences can be maintained in the hope that this will deter the enemy from using the location. Second, one can define loose criteria of incrimination so that any vehicle moving in a suspicious area that meets a certain description relating to its dimensions will be attacked even if it is not possible to ascertain that it is a launcher.

The chance that these steps will lead to a significant reduction in the enemy's launch potential, except for successful destruction of the rocketry while it is still in storage, is doubtful. These approaches mainly make it difficult for the enemy to operate and as

3 For details of Hizbollah's rocket arsenal, see the table in Yiftah Shapir, "Artillery Rockets: Should Means of Interception be Developed?" *Strategic Assessment* 9, no 2 (2006): 8.

4 Operation of the launcher is not preceded by identifying activity prior to the launch. The launcher does not need to transmit, and its heat radiation is no different from that of a regular truck. This means that devices used to locate targets, such as thermal imaging systems, radar, and signal intelligence devices (SIGINT) find it hard to locate and identify launchers of this type.

a result may reduce the volume of the rocket fire and, in particular, have an adverse effect on the accuracy of the rocket fire. However, as long as the rockets fired into northern Israel are the type that lack accurate precision, if the rockets hit land and not the sea it is likely that something will be damaged.

The Launch/Post-Launch Stage

The chances of locating and identifying a launcher change at the moment when the launcher goes into action and starts to fire rockets. In general, all the launcher has to do is to reach a launch location (which may or may not be predetermined), straighten the rocket containers to a vertical position, launch the rockets, and then vanish back into the surrounding area. All this takes little time.⁵

5 The type of rocket and launcher determines how difficult it is to contend with the launcher. The smaller the rocket, the less need there is for a special launcher, and a single barrel, which can hardly be identified in advance, is all that is required. On the other hand, the larger the rocket, the larger the launcher required and, in the case of particularly heavy rockets, a special vehicle is needed that is different from a civilian truck. In other words, the launcher signature is greater the larger the rocket, but also greater the number of rocket containers. Similarly, the larger the weapon, the longer the launcher appears in the open. A barrage of rockets fired from a number of containers lasts appreciably longer than the launch of a single rocket. In the case of medium range rockets and even more so in long range rockets, the launching opera-

Several segments of the launch brand the launcher's signature. First, the actual launch immediately differentiates the launcher from other trucks. Second, the launcher can be located according to the amount of heat it gives off, the smoke trail of the rockets, and the movement of the rockets through the sky. Most of these changes can be discerned regardless of the time of day.

The air force's ability to contend with short range launchers was limited and did not materially affect Hizbollah rocket capability.

In order to identify a launcher during or after the launch, surveillance devices or sensors are needed over the enemy's territory on an ongoing basis. They must identify the launch and its source, and guide attack systems or "shooters" that strike the launcher. This process, which is called "closing the loop," must occur within minutes of the event. If it takes too long the launcher is liable to relocate. Moreover, the enemy generally fires off a heavy barrage from a large number of launchers, which means that several launch positions have to be dealt with simultaneously. If there are sufficient solid intelligence means in place, all the targets can be dealt with at the same time. Without this ability, however, a decision must be made as to which launch sites to target.

tion is longer. However, here too the whole operation takes no more than a few minutes.

What Did the Air Force Achieve in Lebanon?

Israel scored much success in contending with launchers at the pre-launch stage, particularly vis-à-vis medium and long range launchers. An Israeli defense source was quoted as saying that in the first two days of Operation Change of Direction the air force destroyed around 80 percent of Hizbollah's medium and long range

rocket capability.⁶ This success can be attributed to the intelligence community more than to the air force.

As was expected, the greatest challenge was in contending with the launchers that were not destroyed in the opening stages of the campaign. Estimates indicate that overall the IDF and particularly the air force destroyed over 125 surface-to-surface rocket launchers,⁷ and hit more than 250 targets suspected of being launchers and hundreds of sites where launches were carried out. Without an exact figure for the scale of the

6 Steven Erlanger, "Israel Committed to Block Arms and Kill Nasrallah," *The New York Times*, August 20, 2006. According to another report, in the first thirty-nine minutes of the war fifty-four long range surface-to-surface rocket launchers were destroyed, Ben Caspit, "Amateurism," *Maariv*, August 18, 2006.

7 Yossi Yehoshua, "The Military Action," *Yediot Ahronot*, August 15, 2006.

Hizbollah rocket arsenal prior to the fighting as well as a breakdown of the various types of launchers, including those that were destroyed, it is hard to assess the air force's success. But two main points can be highlighted.

First, monitoring the IDF's reports during the fighting indicates that on many occasions when medium range rockets were launched – i.e., 220 mm and 302 mm rockets⁸ – particularly towards the Haifa region, the air force succeeded in destroying the launchers within a short time of the launch. The figure of between 45 seconds and one minute as the time that elapsed between locating the launchers and attacking them sounds overly short,⁹ but what is important is that almost all such launchers were identified and attacked, sometimes before they had completed firing all the rockets they carried. There was no report of how many such launchers Hizbollah had prior to the war, but it appears it was a small number ranging from isolated launchers to several dozen, so that any strike on such launchers was significant. There were days on which a number of such launchers were destroyed, for example, on August 11, when the three launchers were destroyed, and two days later,

on the last day of the fighting, when seven were destroyed.

Second, it seems that the IAF achieved a shorter time span for closing the loop, shorter than the entire rocket launch process. No less important is the fact that the air force demonstrated this ability day after day for over a month of fighting: the ability to maintain continuity in intelligence gathering and attacks over a wide area of enemy territory with ongoing command and control alongside other air force activities, such as attacking infrastructure targets, providing close air support for the ground forces with assistance, and gathering other intelligence. In addition, Hizbollah's launch records indicate there were days when no medium range rockets were launched, despite the ongoing short range surface-to-surface rocket fire. It is hard to determine if the lack of launches stemmed from a conscious decision due to political considerations, or was based on a wish to maintain the launch ability for later stages of the hostilities – or a future confrontation – and not to continue it as a one-time device.¹⁰

In contrast with this success, the air force's ability to contend with short range launchers was far more

limited and was not reflected by changes to Hizbollah rocket capability. During the fighting Hizbollah fired close to 4,000 rockets, whereby the rate of firing not only did not decrease but peaked at over 200 rockets a day in the last days of the fighting. It is also hard, based on data currently available, to identify substantial damage inflicted on the accuracy of Hizbollah fire.

The Recurring Picture

The primary achievement of the air force's success in Operation Change of Direction lay in proof of its ability to focus on low-signature time sensitive targets. A combination of advanced technological means in the area of intelligence gathering and attack, partly the result of innovative advances by the Israeli defense industries, allowed the air force to close the attack loop in an amount of time that until Change of Direction was considered far-fetched. It is highly possible that had the fighting continued much longer Hizbollah would have had difficulty in continuing to launch medium range rockets, even without the presence of ground forces in the launching areas. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the relatively small number of barrages fired at Haifa was a direct result of the air force's achievements.¹¹

8 The 320 mm rockets were dubbed by Hizbollah Haiber 1. According to IDF figures, sixty-four 220 mm rockets and twenty-eight 302 mm rockets hit Israel. An unknown quantity of these types landed in the sea. Amir Buhbut, "Hizbollah United, We Less So," *NRG*, September 18, 2006.

9 Erlanger, "Israel Committed to Block Arms."

10 It is also difficult to determine if long range rockets were not launched during the fighting, despite threats made by the Hizbollah leader, because most of the capability was destroyed at the start of the fighting, because of other operations carried out by the air force, or due to a political decision not to use this weapon in the current confrontation.

11 Based on Israeli police figures, ninety-two rockets landed in Haifa (thirty-two in inhabited areas), seven in Afula, six in Beit Shean, two in Tirat HaCarmel, two near Hadera, and one near Zikhron Yaakov. Two rockets landed in Judea and Samaria. By way of com-

In the absence of precise figures it is hard to determine whether the attack loop can be narrowed further or the air force's performance improved. However, the impression is that the air force realized close to its full potential. The main improvement that can be anticipated is more intelligence gathering means with an eye to greater coverage, although with-

The air force did not succeed in contending with short range surface-to-surface rockets because of any failure or error in judgment. It is simply not capable of doing this well.

out further information it is hard to determine whether this would have allowed narrowing the attack loop and the destruction of additional launchers.

Despite all the justified praise heaped on the air force, the bottom line cannot be erased. The air force did not succeed in stopping the short term rocket attacks on northern Israel. Even if the air force did hit launchers and launch units, the damage was insufficient. The air force's actions may have reduced the number of launches somewhat; however, it does not really matter whether Hizbollah fired only 200 rockets a day and not, say, 300, which it could have launched without the air force.

Why did the air force not succeed? Each surface-to-surface rocket launch-

er was a difficult target, but even more complicated is that most of the rockets were launched from single launchers dispersed across the terrain.¹² These targets pose a formidable challenge to the air force. Indeed, the IDF, including the air force, has encountered similar difficulties in recent years in contending with Palestinian Qas-sam rockets, despite the fact that the

launching areas are more limited and the launches are relatively fewer.

Even in those cases

when the launcher was identified after the launch, in itself a complicated operation – particularly when dozens of such launchers operate simultaneously in a large area – the question arises whether there was any point in attacking. A launcher of this sort is largely a one-time device. Hizbollah has a limitless supply of these launchers and in contrast with larger launchers stationed on a truck, they are relatively easy to improvise, even in the middle of a war. Was it right to invest resources and effort in attacking a barrel that had already launched its load, and was unlikely to be used again by the enemy? The answer is no.

Did the air force, before the war, promise it would stop the threat of

surface-to-surface rockets entirely, including short range surface-to-surface rockets? It is highly likely that the answer to this question will surface in one of the commissions of inquiry called on to investigate the war. On the other hand, it is questionable whether someone who understands the abilities and limitations of an air-based force can make such a promise. The air force did not succeed in contending with short range surface-to-surface rockets – when not carrying out a preventive strike when the rockets were still in storage – because of any failure or error in judgment. It is simply not capable of doing this well.¹³ However, the impression during and after the war is that many in the political and defense echelons (and as a result, many members of the public) expected the air force to be able, almost single-handedly, to bring about a significant reduction and possibly even a cessation of rocket fire on northern Israel, including short range rockets. Since this goal was not

13 It is hard to determine the accuracy of a report according to which Intelligence was in possession of information that, if it had been passed on to the air force, could have helped the air force contend with short range surface-to-surface rockets: information that would have facilitated attacks on launchers prior to launching. In any case, however, this would not entail an improvement of the air force's ability to deal with surface-to-surface rockets but its accurate guidance by Intelligence. See Ze'ev Schiff, "How We Missed Destroying the Short Range Rockets," *Haaretz*, September 3, 2006.

12 The air force succeeded in hitting a large number of multi-barrel launchers of short range surface-to-surface rockets installed on trucks.

parison, the Kiryat Shmona area was hit by 1,102 rockets, Nahariya – 808, Maalot – 642, and Tzfat – 471 rockets.

achieved, and particularly following the significant increase in Hizbollah fire in the last days of the war, the dominant impression was that the air force failed in its mission. For many, the air force's performance against the surface-to-surface rocket launchers is one of the most striking failures of Operation Change of Direction. The fact that these targets were not achievable became irrelevant.

There are a number of questions that merit a cautious attempt at an answer. If fighting recurs in the north, would the air force achieve better results in contending with surface-to-surface rockets? Similarly, what can be learned from confronting surface-to-surface rockets in the Lebanese arena apropos surface-to-surface rockets and surface-to-surface missiles, for example, in Syria?

Based on experience acquired in Operation Change of Direction and information on the means under development to confront a threat such as surface-to-surface rockets, no significant improvement in the air force's ability to deal with surface-to-surface rockets is expected, at least in the coming years. In absence of new detection technology that will allow early location of launchers, the air force will – in the future too – have to deal with launchers mainly after they have started firing rockets. In this context, advances may occur on two main levels: simultaneous handling of a larger number of launch-

ers, and striking at launchers at an earlier stage of the launch process, so that they will be able to launch fewer rockets before being destroyed.

This is true particularly vis-à-vis medium range and long range launchers. The encouraging point here is that the capabilities that were demonstrated in Lebanon indicate that the air force has good – and to an extent unparalleled – abilities in dealing with other targets such as surface-to-surface missile launchers, particularly in the Syrian arena. It is safe to assume that this message has been received by the other side. On the other hand, in Operation Change of Direction, the air force operated in almost optimum conditions. The aircraft operated without being exposed to airborne threats, and there were relatively few land-based threats. The weather in the fighting arena was good and the distance between the air bases and the area of operation was short, what allowed the continuous presence of aircraft over the fighting arena round the clock.

It is unclear whether in fighting scenarios with different basic parameters the air force would be able to repeat its achievements in Lebanon, particularly during the early stages of the fighting. Potential enemies will also learn from the current hostilities and will try to use their rockets in new ways and provide a solution for the air force's operations. With regard

to short range launchers, and particularly those based on nothing more than a barrel, the solution will not be provided by the air force. At this stage it is hard to think of a technological means or a fighting technique that will allow substantial and serious improvement of the aerial ability to deal with this threat.

In view of the fact that Israel continues to live under an extensive threat of surface-to-surface rockets – from the Lebanese arena, from Gaza, and possibly from the West Bank – a solution is necessary to counter the threat of short range surface-to-surface rockets. In addition to possible means of intercepting the rockets in flight, which have not been addressed by this paper, the air force's ability to deal with the launchers must be enhanced. However, the air force cannot be the sole or even main actor in this effort. The struggle to deal with the threat of short range surface-to-surface rockets requires significant use of land-based means, including special forces and artillery. Despite the desire to avoid using land forces, due to the high cost they incur, politicians and military personnel would do well to remember that as long as the threat of surface-to-surface rockets remains substantial – and the last war in Lebanon proved this even to skeptics – this cannot be avoided. As far as short range rocket launchers are concerned, the sky is not the limit.

The Operational Aspects to Fighting the Qassam

Gabriel Siboni

The primary manifestation of Palestinian terror from the Gaza Strip is Qassam rocket high-trajectory fire, supplemented by attempted fire with Grad-model Katyusha rockets. Although the rocket fire has not yet caused much loss of life, its impact, both in terms of emotional wear and tear on the local residents and in terms of public opinion, is considerable. Once the fighting in Lebanon ended, the focus of IDF activity returned to terrorist activities from Gaza and, in particular, efforts to curb rocket fire as much as possible. Interestingly, the Gaza arena, with its continued firing of Qassam rockets, is perceived as a more acute locus of terror than Judea and Samaria: even though terror emerging from Judea and Samaria in 2006 has claimed a not insignificant number of casualties, the Israeli public senses that this area is under control. In contrast, the firing of Qassam rockets from the Gaza Strip generates a sense of helplessness and lack of control. Analysis of this phenomenon is not the subject of this paper, but it provides the reader with a relevant context.

Much has been written about ways to stop the Qassam rocket fire. In an effort to provide a quick solution, various parties (including in the defense establishment) have occasionally offered ideas such as incursions into the Gaza Strip for an extensive ground operation, ranging from reoccupation of parts of the Strip to prolonged stays in Gaza of various durations. The questions regarding the objectives of such a campaign and how it could impact on Qassam rocket fire over time are far from answered and remain open. At the same time, the

calls to focus on combating the Qassam with standoff fire continue, and this summer's fighting in the north provided a relevant platform for both supporters and opponents. Former air force commander Maj. Gen. (res.) Eitan Ben Eliyahu, in an article¹ written after the assassination of Jamal Abu Samhadna (some argue his death was unintentional), suggests focusing on long range precision standoff fire. He argues that targeted strikes from the air, over time and in a systematic manner, will eventually destroy no less (!) than the will of terrorist elements to fight, or will cause

it to subside to a level that will lose its political significance. Clear and penetrating words, indeed. However, in his article Ben Eliyahu does not refer to the depth of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the extent of the enemy's will (and ability) to harm Israel, and the need to harness substantial Israeli resources for targeted killings of a large number of targets. Ze'ev Schiff,² who wrote about the cumulative failure of Israeli deterrence against Qassam rocket launches, correctly foresaw the situation. His prediction with regard to the rocket fire is not optimistic: "Sooner or later the Palestinians will improve the range, or will succeed in

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1 E. Ben Eliyahu, "The Assassinations Will Win the War," www.ynet.co.il, June 9, 2006.

2 Z. Schiff, "The Qassam Strip," *Haaretz*, December 31, 2005.

smuggling long range Katyusha rockets from the Sinai Peninsula. Then we will see Ashdod within firing range.” If that is true, what can the IDF do in the face of such a gloomy forecast?

This paper will try to examine different aspects of the military-operational fight against the Qassam threat. First, it presents some basic assumptions that place the operational challenge in the context of realistic aims and clear constraints. Guidelines derived from the basic assumptions are followed by an initial analysis of the operational problem and the methods best suited to dealing with this challenge.

Basic Assumptions

- *Palestinian terror will continue on varying levels and over time.* Palestinian terror is not expected to disappear. The confrontation with the Palestinians is a national-religious conflict whose end is not in sight. Terror, including Qassam fire, will continue at different levels of intensity.
- *The fight against Qassam fire is designed to limit the rocket fire.* One cannot completely eradicate the Qassam threat: there will always be some element that manages to fire the rockets.
- *One should expect an enhancement of terror methods, including in Qassam rockets.* The Qassam represents a range of high-trajectory firing abilities (such as the Grad missile). Terror elements invest ongoing efforts in enhancing the effectiveness of the rocket fire, its range, accuracy, and the amount of damage it can inflict.

- *Israel's war on terror from the Gaza Strip is subject to international political constraints.* Following the withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip, the IDF's operational conditions have changed and must be considered in any operational solution.

- *Anarchy in Gaza is not in Israel's interests.* Every effort should be made to resist dragging the Gaza Strip into a state of anarchy, mainly because in such a situation the organization's splinter groups and their extremism will increase, as will their motivation to use all kinds of terror against Israel.

The Operational Challenge

The operational challenges of fighting Qassam fire are only part of the war on terror, but given the special situation of the Gaza Strip they can be isolated from other components. A key element to the challenges posed by the Qassam is that high-trajectory

that drive and activate the wider picture of terror.

The main challenge to combating the Qassam is the intelligence challenge – the need for accurate operational intelligence is a condition of any effective operation. The raw materials supply processes, manufacturing processes, transportation, launch, and escape of the launch unit are all links in the chain of the threat. Identifying the different physical locations that are part of this chain requires the collection of high-quality accurate intelligence information. In addition, generating quality intelligence regarding the people involved in the process and the facilities, vehicles, and other infrastructures will allow more effective operational activity. The other operational challenge relates to the ability to strike accurately at any stage without harming innocent civilians. Inflicting damage on the elements that comprise the Qas-

There will always be a terror element that fires Qassam rockets that will not be deterred. The assumption is, however, that the greater the overall effectiveness of the operational solution, the more the deterrent will increase.

fire is targeted easily at Israel without the need for much complicated preparation. Thus the operational challenge can be divided into two basic components: challenges connected to the processes of production and firing of the Qassam rocket; and challenges connected to the processes

sam threat can be carried out by various methods that generally belong to two operational classes: standoff fire – accurate fire from a distance, and direct contact strikes.³

3 For an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches,

The operational challenges connected to the wider terrorism picture concern the need to provide targets that will harm the terrorist elements in general, and in particular their motivation to resort to terror. One example of this operational challenge is

al approach: the most effective operational solution⁴ is the one that strikes against the sources of the threat. The further away the operational solution is from the sources, the more the overall effectiveness decreases. Protecting civilian infrastructures brings

and artillery fire. The comprehensive operational solution, however, demands that a range of operational capabilities be examined against the operational challenges, in order to arrive at a balanced and effective combination of fighting means. The ideal solution should utilize the full range of IDF and security forces operational abilities. The components of this approach to warfare include:

- *Creating quality intelligence.*

The existence of a sustained quality intelligence effort involves the use of a wide range of tools, including SIGINT technological abilities, forecasting abilities, and various sensing means. These tools offer an advantage by virtue of the ability to use them from a distance, and they are critical to the intelligence effort, even if it is difficult to create a complete quality picture on their basis alone. The intelligence effort also requires direct access to human intelligence sources and interrogation of involved parties. These two elements were substantially impaired with the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Thus, the intelligence authorities must create means that will enhance their ability to obtain such intelligence. Restoring the ability to arrest individuals involved in terrorist activity or wanted for interrogation should not be underestimated. Creating the ability to carry out arrests, both in terms of the quality and quantity required, justifies rapid force assembly processes for appropriate units. The ability to carry out a large number of arrests in urban areas of the Gaza Strip also has sub-

Experience in combating terror proves the inaccuracy in thinking that it is possible to create an effective solution by a one-dimensional operational solution.

the ability to identify quality targets that will allow a retaliation of sorts for Qassam fire, even if these targets are not directly related to the specific firing chain. The goal is to create an effective deterrent to the Qassam rocket launchers and their operators. In order to generate ongoing response ability, there is a need for both intelligence and strike ability that can be activated within a short time frame against suitable targets. True, there will always be a terror element that fires Qassam rockets that will not be deterred. The assumption is, however, that the greater the overall effectiveness of the operational solution, the more the deterrent will increase.

The question of civilian defenses arises here as well, i.e., protection of houses and civilian facilities against direct Qassam damage. The following equation is relevant to any operation-

the operational solution to its lower limit whereby the cost effectiveness is the smallest. If the funding for civilian protection resources comprises civil resources, it is better to allocate them to improving the quality of residential life rather than building protective measures that offer little in the way of benefit.

The Operational Perception

The operational military solution to Qassam rocket fire requires a comprehensive approach. Experience in combating terror proves the inaccuracy in thinking that it is possible to create an effective solution by a one-dimensional operational solution. One can find recent examples of seeking such a solution in redirecting the multi-faceted operational solution to specific strikes, standoff fire,

see: G. Siboni, "The Military Battle against Terrorism: Direct Contact vs. Standoff Fighting," *Strategic Assessment* 9, no 1 (2006): 42-47.

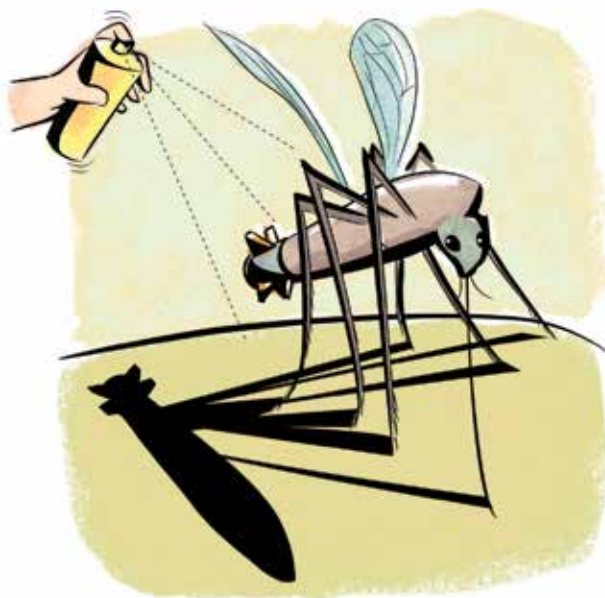
⁴ An effective operational solution is defined as a solution that offers high cost effectiveness, in other words; a good operational result is achieved with a low investment in resources.

stantial impact on the overall deterrence balance.⁵

- *A balance of standoff attack and direct contact.* The last few years of fighting have given rise to a fighting concept in the Gaza Strip based on two assumptions: the first is based on deploying armored and protected forces to enter the field and carry out strikes against terror elements while providing maximum protection for IDF forces; the second is based on standoff fire against terrorist parties through the use of precision strikes, generally from the air. The ability to carry out armored operations was limited by the withdrawal from Gaza, and the solution that remained was based mainly on carrying out specific strikes and using standoff fire. Over time, the nearly exclusive dependence on this means resulted in its erosion. The need to build an effective ability to strike against terror elements in the Gaza Strip requires improving the ability to act directly in this arena.

One example of such activity is the operation where an IDF ground force succeeded in carrying out a strike against a Qassam rocket launch unit before the launch. The IDF must have a substantive ability to act through direct contact in the field. The operational units must be able to achieve penetration in the field, carry out intelligence-based ground strikes, carry out ambushes in expected areas of ac-

tivity, and conduct arrests for investigation and preemptive purposes. Assembling such a capability to the required extent (several operations per night) is essential, but is not simple and requires time. While employing forces deep inside the Gaza Strip involves numerous risks, some can be overcome by developing a suitable operational approach, through



training, technological support, and a strong support system. Standoff activity will not become redundant but will be reserved only for cases in which direct contact operations cannot be carried out to prevent an immediate attack (the ticking bomb scenario).

- *Limited incursions.* The IDF has to maintain the freedom to operate in different fields in the Gaza Strip through limited incursions. The essence of incursions is the ability to

penetrate hostile territory, carry out disruptive, punitive, and retaliatory activity, and return home. This operational tool is very important, and the ability to execute it within short time spans should be maintained. These incursions can vary in nature – secret low-profile incursions or massive armored operations. The incursions should have a defined short time frame (hours, days) and the temptation to leave forces in the field over time should be avoided.

- *Selecting targets and objectives.* The IDF must have the ability to carry out ongoing strikes on the force build-up processes of the involved organizations. Inflicting ongoing damage on these processes (training, equipment, smuggling weapons, and procurement) even if they are not directly connected to the source of fire will support the overall combat effort. The IDF must create continuous quality intelligence that will enable it

to build the most effective balance of deterrence. In this way it will also determine the retaliation for a specific rocket attack, part of the overall response to any Qassam fire. Deferring use of this response will erode its potential. The defense system must generate an operational format that does not require the ongoing ritual of lengthy situation evaluations at the end of which the response loses some of effectiveness, and its use occasionally becomes irrelevant.

⁵ See note 3.

- *Systems for intercepting airborne missiles.* The assumption is that the Qassam rocket will not be completely eradicated, and it will continue to be used on various levels of intensity. Nevertheless, all technological

artillery fire for deterrence purposes and, in certain cases, the attempt to target a specific site after the rockets were launched. Use of this fire is a component of total warfare, and the abilities it offers should be maxi-

Israel should concentrate on implementation of the existing standards for civilian protection and not make significant financial investments in additional protection means whose effectiveness is unclear.

and operational abilities should be harnessed in order to limit the phenomenon as much as possible. The maturation of various technologies allows development of systems that intercept and strike missiles of different kinds. Due to the fact that this threat exists not only in Gaza but also in Lebanon, one can assume that the threat of high-trajectory fire will spread to Judea and Samaria. Thus, the defense authorities must aim to find technological means designed to strike rockets or divert them from their trajectory or, alternately, to achieve an immediate strike on the source of the fire (seconds after the launch). A sustained and continuous technological effort is required in order to utilize fully these abilities within total warfare activities.

- *Use of artillery fire.* The predicament that forced the IDF to provide an immediate deterrent solution to the Qassam fire prompted the use of

mized. Without another solution, this type of fire is highly effective, and experience shows that it is capable of reducing and disrupting rocket launches.

- *Defensive effort.* The existing protection standards in Israel provide the best possible solution for civilian protection requirements. Thus, Israel should concentrate on implementation of these standards and not make significant financial investments in additional protection means whose effectiveness is unclear.

- *Concept of command and control.* A balanced offense against the Qassam requires the support of an organized command and control approach, to allow integrated military activity between the various IDF corps and the involvement of other parties, such as the General Security Service (GSS) and the Israeli police. This is a specific requirement for the fight against terror from the Gaza

Strip, including the Qassam, but also represents general sustained efforts at operational effectiveness. An optimal command and control structure is needed in order to support processes of cooperation at all levels of warfare, especially at the operational levels where unity of objective and the required operational focus foster a basis for impressive cooperation. At the same time, a basis for inter-corps and inter-organizational cooperation should be created by sharing resources and information, and utilizing the relative advantages of each party.

Conclusion

The range of operational elements requires an ongoing total combative effort over time, incorporating the full range of components available to the IDF. Any single approach should not be expected to be capable of eradicating the threat in one fell swoop. Israel cannot allow itself to accept Qassam fire at the level it has witnessed in recent months or be maneuvered into operational paralysis. Anyone who neglects ongoing operational activity will ultimately be forced to carry out a massive ground operation in Gaza, even if this does not serve the overall security interests of Israel.

This paper has not touched upon other important components of warfare relating to the use of diplomatic, economic, political, and other means. The importance of these components is clear, and should be addressed by other frameworks.

Hizbollah vs. the IDF: The Operational Dimension

Amir Kulick

The IDF's Combat Approach vs. Hizbollah

If one were to generalize, one might say that since the War of Independence the IDF has been perceived by Arabs as a maneuvering army, that is, whose military operational doctrine centers on firepower and rapid maneuvers of large forces. And indeed, until the 1990s the major campaigns and operations waged by the IDF (except for the 1969-70 War of Attrition) were based on large scale maneuvers of ground forces. From the 1956 Sinai Campaign to the first Lebanon War in 1982, IDF infantry and armored forces operated deep in enemy territory at the early stages of fighting. The air campaign was perceived at first as mere assistance, and later as a parallel effort aimed at achieving air superiority, destroying enemy anti-aircraft installations and surface-to-surface missiles, and finally assisting ground forces. This perception has been evolving since the 1990s. The air campaign waged by the US in Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War and the campaign waged by NATO member states in Kosovo presented a different model of fighting, which centers on an air campaign. It seems that from this point, the weight the IDF assigned to air and artillery firepower began to shift. The low number of casualties in this brand of fighting, the hi-tech style of war, and the ability to rely on Israel's technological advantage all promoted this combat approach.

This style of fighting, whose core is the "fire-intense effort," was waged successfully against Hizbollah in 1993 during Operation Accountability. Hizbollah was highly surprised by this mode of warfare. The Shiite fighters had prepared for a ground campaign and for face to face fighting with the Zionist enemy. Instead, they encountered a very different campaign, one waged mostly in the space outside of their reach – from the air, from the border, and from within IDF strongholds in the security zone in Lebanon. From this campaign Hizbollah reached the requisite conclusions and came to the next confrontation much better prepared. Thus, during Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, the organization relied primarily on Katyusha rockets that it launched towards northern settlements close to the border.

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Nonetheless, the IDF persisted in its line of thinking that centered on intense firepower, and thus most of the IDF fighting in the 1996 operation relied on the air force and artillery. Ground operations were few, limited mostly to special forces operations in launch site areas. These forces were sent into battle only after the IDF had essentially failed to reduce the volume of rocket fire into Israel's territory. In any event, as far as Hizbollah was concerned and regardless of the political outcome of the confrontation, the clashes of 1996 ended with relative success at the operational level. There were many lessons to be learned in the area of logistics (weapons shortages) and in aspects of command and control, but as a rule the organization was successful in launching Katyusha rockets into Israel up until the ceasefire.

Hizbollah's Operational Preparation for Lebanon War II

From the end of the 1996 campaign and up to 2006, Hizbollah prepared for the next confrontation. Aided closely by Iran, it based its preparations on several assumptions derived from previous rounds of fighting, as well as from military and political developments of recent years. At the center was the organization's assumption that Israeli society is weak and cannot stomach a large number of casualties. In Hizbollah's eyes, this weakness induced the IDF withdrawal from the Lebanon security zone, and Hassan Nasrallah flaunted this ostensible frailty in his victory

speech of May 26, 2000 in the border town of Bint Jbail, soon after the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon, where he claimed that Israeli society is as weak as a spider web.

On the operational level it seemed that Hizbollah decision-makers grasped that IDF fighting in the future would also be based on massive use of the air force and artillery. This realization was reinforced by minor intermediate rounds of the conflict in Lebanon as well as by IDF operations in the early years of the intifada, namely, the reluctance to deploy massive ground forces (at least until Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002) and reliance on the air force and limited use of special forces.

Based on these assumptions (the weakness of Israeli society and the IDF's reliance on a firepower campaign), Hizbollah proceeded with its force buildup. The recent round of fighting demonstrated that the organization's primary operational objective was to wage a war of attrition against Israel's home front. Thus at the center of the organization's combat approach was the need to strike within Israel's borders, as deeply as possible and throughout the fighting, even in the face of massive bombing or ground operations by special forces. On this basis, Hizbollah put in place three or four major fighting formations:

- A short range artillery array relying primarily on Katyusha rockets. This array was to bear the burden of striking within Israel's borders.

- A mid-range artillery formation, set up south of the Litani River. This formation launched most of the rockets that hit deep into Israel (the Haifa area and southward). It included 220 mm Syrian rockets and extended range Katyusha rockets.

- Two additional long range rocket formations (up to 250 km) set up in the area between the Litani and Beirut (seen, for instance, when the air force attacked the Zelzal launcher in Beirut). These two formations were intended as strategic weapons of deterrence to allow Hizbollah to deal blows of varying intensity to Israel's soft underbelly – the area between Haifa and Tel Aviv.

Alongside these three or four rocket formations was a ground array created south of the Litani based on underground tunnels and bunkers, explosives-ridden areas, and anti-

Hizbollah's primary operational objective was to wage a war of attrition against Israel's home front.

tank units. This array was intended to confront ground forces to a limited extent, to stall ground incursions, and to inflict as many casualties as possible, which would wear out IDF forces, slow down their progress, and allow continued rocket fire into Israel. This operational infrastructure was apparently intended to form a basis for continued fighting by the organization, should the IDF reoccupy parts of southern Lebanon (the less

likely but more dangerous scenario in Hizbollah's view).

On the tactical level, in order to face the IDF's expected fighting mode, the organization chose three principal tactics:

1. Saturating the area with (short range) rockets, and therefore over recent years Hizbollah stockpiled thousands of Katyusha launchers and rockets. The goal was to ensure a situation whereby Israel's destruction of multiple launchers, even dozens of them, would not inhibit Hizbollah's ability to sustain firepower. Thus, the launchers were spread out both in villages and in open areas, and indeed, the organization managed to maintain this formation and continue generating massive fire into Israel (an average of over 100 Katyusha rockets every day) throughout the war.

2. Mobility. Based on different reports, it seems that most of the mid-range rockets fired into the Haifa, Afula, and Beit Shean areas were fired from mobile launchers (launchers installed on vehicles). Apparently these launchers were intended to allow Hizbollah fighters to launch the rockets and hide before air or artillery fire was directed at the launch site. To a large degree, this method failed. According to Israeli air force reports, almost any mid-range launcher that fired into Israel was destroyed.

3. Advance preparation of a ground and logistics infrastructure for waging a prolonged campaign. This infrastructure included many weapons repositories south of the Litani River as well as an extensive

ground infrastructure of bunkers and shelters. These were intended to help fighters survive in the face of aerial and artillery attacks and allow them to maintain operations for extended periods.

The organization has created a hybrid command and control model.

The cornerstone of its operational layout is a strict hierarchical organizational structure, with Nasrallah and the Jihad council (Hizbollah's "general staff") at the top of the pyramid. Below them are well formed units and formations. This structure enabled the organization to control – throughout the fighting – the amount of fire ("the height of the flames"), the firing units, and the strike range inside Israel. The organization chose to activate its mid-range fire array (south of the Litani) only after several days of fighting, while the long range rocket formation was not activated at all. Similarly, Hizbollah was able to hold its fire during the 48-hour truce during the fighting and renew the rocket attacks shortly afterwards. In the same vein, once the ceasefire came into effect, this command structure ensured that the fighting halted in all areas.

It is likely that with a looser organizational model, Hizbollah would not have succeeded in controlling the massive fire formations it created. Moreover, the organization's investment in a modern command and control infrastructure (such as

the advanced control rooms discovered during IDF action in Bint Jbail) is evidence of its ambition to conduct the fighting in an orderly, well-timed

Alongside the hierarchical command structure it seems that Hizbollah ground forces were given considerable free reign.

manner. At the same time, alongside the hierarchical structure it seems that the ground fighting forces were given considerable free reign. There are two main reasons for that: one reason is the secondary role assigned to this formation – slowing down the ground campaign and inflicting casualties. The second reason is the estimation of the Hizbollah leadership, namely, that during an IDF large scale ground operation Hizbollah would not be able to control a large number of tactical events (whose importance for the overall campaign is in any case insignificant).

The IDF withdrawal from Lebanon facilitated Hizbollah's military buildup. The low operational activity along the Israel-Lebanon border over the years allowed Hizbollah to allocate most of its operational resources to preparing its units for the next campaign with no interference. Without the IDF present south of the Litani, Hizbollah was able, unhindered, to build a wide-ranging infrastructure a short distance from the international border. Moreover, its presence on the border line likely en-

abled it to gather high-quality target intelligence regarding targets deep inside Israeli populated areas using advanced observation devices such as those discovered by the IDF in different villages in southern Lebanon. In addition, Hizbollah also operated

that has evolved in previous years, especially in the recourse to Effects Based Operations, but with firepower remaining its dominant component. Within the framework of this approach, the methodology for confronting Hizbollah's rocket array has

While IDF fire may have disrupted Hizbollah operations, it did not significantly undermine the operational logic that dictated Hizbollah activity – waging a prolonged rocket campaign against Israel's home front.

agents within Israel, such as the two brothers from the village of Rajar who were arrested in late 2003 for collaborating with Hizbollah. Other examples are Ahmed al-Heib, arrested in November 2004, and Lt. Col. Omar al-Heib, arrested in February 2002, both suspected of providing information to Hizbollah.

In addition, the short range rocket array deployed on the international border enabled the organization to extend the range of Katyusha rockets to many urban areas in Israel that were out of Hizbollah's reach before the IDF withdrawal, for example, Safed and Tiberias and even Haifa, which was targeted by mid-range Syrian rockets of 220 and 302 mm caliber, as well as by Katyusha rockets whose new range extended to 27-35 kilometers.

IDF vs. Hizbollah in the Recent Campaign

The IDF thus entered the recent confrontation with a combat approach

not changed, nor has it been upgraded since Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996, relying mainly on pre-launch preemption and destruction of the launcher afterwards. It is safe to assume that certain technological innovations have been introduced and were of some benefit during the July-August war. Nevertheless, IDF operations vs. Hizbollah continued to be based on air and artillery firepower, and while IDF fire may have disrupted Hizbollah operations, it did not significantly undermine or impair the operational logic that dictated Hizbollah activity – waging a prolonged rocket campaign against Israel's home front. Thus the numerous bombardments in Beirut and in the Beka'a seem to have hurt the organization, but they did not substantively change the battle plan it planned to pursue. And indeed, throughout the fighting the IDF could not reduce the volume of rocket launches by even a narrow margin, although it was successful in targeting the mid-range rocket array

deployed south of the Litani.

Ground forces were deployed after several days of air strikes, and only to a limited extent, on the front lines and in a narrow area (e.g., Maroun a-Ras). This situation left IDF soldiers facing an entrenched and well-prepared ground formation; furthermore, the IDF concentration in a narrow sector allowed Hizbollah to reinforce its troops in the area and send in fighters from adjacent sectors. This mode of operation not only caused many IDF casualties, but also allowed Hizbollah to continue firing its daily quota of rockets into Israel. Possibly the massive ground force operations of the last days of fighting may have surprised Hizbollah, but it seems to have been too late to damage its operational infrastructure significantly. Furthermore, the ceasefire apparently left a major part of the organization's capabilities intact (mainly in the region beyond the narrow strip where the IDF was concentrated for most of the ground combat). Thus in the absence of a sound combat approach, the IDF's combat achievements on the operational level were fairly limited.

Nevertheless, at the strategic level and regarding the domestic Lebanese arena, several achievements may be credited to the Israeli architects of the campaign, first and foremost uprooting Hizbollah's basic strategic assumption that Israel's home front is incapable of sustaining prolonged damage or a large number of casualties (military and civilian). In addition, the organization's deterrence ca-

pability, based in recent years on the threat of rocket fire, was damaged. The recent campaign also exposed and jeopardized one of the pillars of Iran's security concept – Hizbollah's long range fire capability, and this at a time when Iran may need the organization's deterrence capabilities. Furthermore, the destruction and ruin in traditional Shiite strongholds in southern Lebanon do not contribute to Hizbollah's stature. Domestic criticism of Hizbollah and its leader by various figures outside and even within the Shiite community are additional results of the recent war.

Hizbollah's Preparations for the Next Campaign: Initial Conclusions

It may be possible to sketch in general terms Hizbollah's expected preparations in the coming years for the next round of fighting. It seems that these preparations will be centered around artillery and rocket arrays, with most of the organization's fighting concentrated into attacks on Israel's home front, though at longer range and more intensively than before. In view of the considerable operational success of the short range rocket array, this formation is likely to be reinforced. The IDF's systematic elimination of mid-range rocket launchers in the region south of the Litani and the (somewhat more limited) damage to the long range rocket array north of

the river may push Hizbollah to build a massive infrastructure for arrays north of the Litani, possibly even in Beka'a and north of Beirut. The objective will be to saturate the area with rockets (based on the same logic that has guided Hizbollah in setting up the short range rocket array) in order to compel the air force to operate in multiple areas and thereby increase the array's survivability.

It is likely that from Hizbollah's perspective the mid-range rocket array did not achieve the optimal

From the command and control aspect, the massive bombardment of the Dahiya quarter of Beirut where, according to IDF reports, Hizbollah command posts were centered, may prompt Hizbollah to disperse its offices and operational command posts across different areas of Beirut and outside Beirut (for example, in Christian quarters that from an international standpoint may be more difficult to attack).

It is too early to assess the full potential for operational change that the

The psychological effect of rocket attacks in Haifa and further south did not materially alter Israel's conduct.

result. The psychological effect of rocket attacks in Haifa and further south did not materially alter Israel's conduct. From here the organization may draw two operational conclusions: one, to abandon the long range rocket array and focus on the short range rockets; the other, more likely conclusion is that Hizbollah leaders may decide that in order to obtain the desired effect in the future, they should significantly expand and fortify the mid- and long range rocket arrays. The goal of the next campaign would be to launch intensive volleys towards Tel Aviv and its surroundings, which Hizbollah perceives as the nerve center of the Zionist entity.

organization may undergo, since such change depends to a large extent on several factors that are as yet not sufficiently clear. These include the ability / willingness of the multi-national force to prevent Hizbollah from restoring its operational infrastructure in the south; the ability to prevent continued arms transfers from Syria and Iran to Hizbollah; and the internal dynamics that will unfold in Lebanon in the near future. Nonetheless, one question dominates all others, namely will Israel be able to act, both internally and internationally, to disrupt Hizbollah's rearmament, in order to ensure a different outcome for the next campaign whenever it will occur.

Hizbollah's Primary Agent of Change: The Role of the Lebanese Army

Dani Berkovich

UN Security Council resolution 1701 stipulates deployment of the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon, disarming the region of any non-government-held weapons, and prevention of hostilities. It places the major burden of implementation on the shoulders of the Lebanese army, as the principal executive arm of the Lebanese government, a situation that implies potential friction with Hizbollah. However, in terms of actual steps to disarm Hizbollah, there is a long way from theory to practice. The Lebanese government, led by Fouad Siniora, has no intention of acting against Hizbollah, since it is well aware that this will jeopardize the fragile domestic stability in the country.

Nevertheless, deploying the Lebanese army lays the foundation for trends that, if actualized, will have a positive impact on Israel's security, including instilling the concept of the Lebanese state and reinforcing its authority, sovereignty, and responsibility; and on the opposite side, gradual containment of Hizbollah as a military organization. This is a complex and arduous process that Israel should support and Hizbollah is bound to try to sabotage, and its success depends not only on the capabilities of the Lebanese army but also on the government's determination to advance it. But in any case, the very launching of this process is one of the recent war's achievements.

The Lebanese Dilemma: Hizbollah's Weapons

In early October 2006 the Lebanese army, with much media fanfare, completed its deployment in most areas south of the Litani River in accordance with Security Council resolution 1701. This move was accompanied by statements from senior Lebanese figures about the army's determination to confiscate illegal weapons, to prevent attacks from Lebanese territory, and to protect the country against

Israeli attacks and acts of aggression, but not to disarm Hizbollah.¹

This move is apparently a major achievement for Siniora's government, as since the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005 it has faced mounting pressure

from Israel and the international community to implement resolution 1559 on disarming the militias and, as a first step, to deploy its army in the south and assume responsibility for terrorist organization activities from its territory. However, it appears that no one inside or outside Lebanon has any clear idea how to disarm Hizbollah without causing a domestic crisis or, for that matter, regional escalation. The expectations created in Israel and in the international community (as well as among more than a few Lebanese) that the IDF would be able to

¹ See, for example, Prime Minister Siniora's statement that emphasized that "the expression 'disarmament' is absent from our vocabulary," *Daily Star*, October 9, 2006; as well as remarks by the commander of the armed forces General Michel Suleiman, speaking at a ceremony in southern Lebanon, www.naharnet.com, October 2, 2006.

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do that with a swift, decisive military campaign have been shattered in the aftermath of the recent war.

The international community is not enthused with brute force solutions, and no one regards the rein-

lah weapons is no longer theoretical, but has moved to center stage and demands immediate action, even at the risk of friction with Hizbollah. Those in charge of translating resolution 1701 into concrete measures and

The Lebanese national ethos perceives the army as an organization of the republic that rises above sectarian divisions.

forced UNIFIL troops, sent to assist the Lebanese army in implementing resolution 1701, as a force that will act to disarm Hizbollah. On the contrary, the international community has reverted to its pre-war position, namely, that disarming Hizbollah is an internal Lebanese matter, to be handled politically rather than militarily. This approach is common in Lebanon as well, voiced in the extensive domestic public discourse that began before the war on the future of Hizbollah weapons. This discourse reflects the clash between two opposing ideological approaches: the “resistance” embodied by Hizbollah, built on the idea of ongoing confrontation with Israel with the goal of its destruction, versus the “March 14 camp” (which also represents the majority party in government and in parliament), which strives to establish a new order in Lebanon, based on the resolution of domestic and external conflicts by political means.

In the new reality created in Lebanon following the adoption of resolution 1701, it is amply clear to Siniora’s government that the issue of Hizbol-

enforcing the government’s authority over Hizbollah are Lebanon’s security organs, led by the army. By merely deploying in the south, the Lebanese army has already taken the first step in this direction.

Can the Lebanese Army Do the Job?

The challenge of a sovereign state facing an armed organization that is active within its territory and rebuffs its authority recurs in multiple places around the world, and is no stranger to Lebanon. In fact this has been the status quo since the 1970s, especially in the south of the country (which has metamorphosed from “Fatah-land” to “Hizbollah-land”). Yet the circumstances that fostered such a situation have changed – Syria no longer runs Lebanon’s domestic affairs, the Lebanese army is deployed, de facto, almost throughout the country, Lebanon as a sovereign state is determined to bring about change, and the international community is willing to assist the Lebanese government in exercising its responsibility.

Under these circumstances, is the

Lebanese army able to impose governmental authority on Hizbollah, to the point of its complete disarmament? This complex challenge is influenced by certain critical factors:

- **Balance of power – quantitative but not necessarily qualitative advantage.** The Lebanese army, which was rehabilitated under Syrian patronage after the end of the civil war and the Ta’if accord of 1989,² has more soldiers than “Hizbollah’s army.” It numbers about 50,000 troops³ and purportedly has means not available to Hizbollah (armored vehicles, helicopters, patrol craft) as well as a commando unit considered the elite

2 The Ta’if accord was ratified on October 22, 1989 by the Lebanese parliament, marking the conclusion of the civil war and the establishment of a new order in Lebanon, under Syrian auspices. The accord required all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias to be disarmed and surrender their weapons to the state within six months, and mandated that the Lebanese army and homeland security forces be reinforced. Based on this agreement, the Syrians allowed Hizbollah’s existence as an armed organization under the pretext of continued confrontation with Israel.

3 Data published by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies in late 2005 has the Lebanese army numbering about 61,400 (<http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/balance/Lebanon.pdf>), but in fact the number is closer to 50,000, following the new draft law of May 4, 2005, whereby the compulsory service was reduced from two years to six months, after which army service is voluntary. In addition, there are tens of thousands of reserve troops.

of this army. In contrast, Hizbollah numbers several thousand well-equipped combatants, well-trained in guerilla warfare, with the proven ability to confront armies stronger than the Lebanese army.⁴ Moreover, the Lebanese army lacks significant combat experience, having thus far

lacked.⁵ This does not mean that in a confrontation with Hizbollah Shiite soldiers would desert en masse – as Hizbollah might wish – but the army command is highly unlikely to walk the tightrope and test sectoral loyalties.⁶

- **Hizbollah-Lebanese army rela-**

Hizbollah seems to believe its power of deterrence in the domestic arena remains unscathed.

acted mostly in domestic security assignments. It lacks professionalism and proficiency, and its equipment is faulty in most of its units: it is still awaiting the generous aid packages promised by different countries. Therefore, the army is unable to pose any formidable challenge to Hizbollah.

- **The Shiite component in the army.** Since the Ta'if accord a special effort has been made to blur the army's sectarian composition. Although in the spirit of the sectarian division that reigns in Lebanon the army commander is always Christian, today, unlike in the past, an effort is made to maintain an ethnic balance in different army formations. The army has a fairly high percentage of Shiites – about 30-35 percent, proportionate to their percentage in the general popu-

tions: co-existence and sharing the burden. Since the Ta'if accord, the existing status quo in Lebanon – under Syrian auspices – endowed Lebanon with two armies: the Lebanese army, as a formal army in charge of domestic security and stability (in which capacity it acted to disarm sectarian militias in the early 1990s), and Hizbollah, which was in charge of the conflict with Israel, even after the IDF

withdrawal from Lebanon. Over the years, Hizbollah has amassed considerable strength with aid from Syria and Iran, and the weak Lebanese government has had to acquiesce to its special status in southern Lebanon and in southern Beirut (Dahiya). Both parties have forged a system of understandings and accommodation, whereby the state, represented in the south by only a token security presence, does not confiscate Hizbollah's arms, does not arrest its personnel, and turns a blind eye to its armament efforts and its military/ terror activities.

Following the deployment of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces south of the Litani River as part of the implementation of resolution 1701, a new system of understandings was created between the Lebanese army and Hizbollah based on the principle of (in)visibility. Hizbollah combatants will maintain a low profile, will not circulate in uniform, and will not openly display their weapons.⁷ In contrast, the Lebanese army flaunts its presence and may confiscate arms carried in public and arrest anyone in uniform. So far, except for minor incidents, this new arrangement has been observed.⁸

- **The Lebanese army as a symbol of fragile unity.** The Lebanese national ethos perceives the army as an organization of the republic that rises above sectarian divisions, notwithstanding the trauma of the civil

4 Beyond Hizbollah's combatant nucleus, the organization can also call upon Palestinian terrorist organizations active in bases within Lebanon (i.e., thousands of additional armed personnel) and arm pro-Syrian militias.

5 According to Oren Barak, the percentage of Shiite officers in the Lebanese army stood at 27.2 percent in 1991-2004. The total percentage of Muslim officers (including Sunni, Shiite, and Druze) was 52.9 percent. The share of Christians was 47.1 percent. See Oren Barak, "The Transformation of the Lebanese Officer Corps since 1945: Towards a Representative Military?" *The Middle East Journal* 60 (winter 2006): 89.

6 Barak notes that the increase in the number of Shiite officers in the Lebanese army may indicate a process of greater identification of Shiites with the Lebanese state (beyond perceiving military service as a means of social mobility); Barak, p. 91.

7 Nasrallah interview with *al-Safir*, September 5, 2006

8 AP agency, September 27, 2006.

war and the deep political-sectarian rifts that beset Lebanon. The army has earned this status with the efforts of its commanders, who since the end of the civil war have avoided any involvement in domestic political-sectarian disagreements in Lebanon's fragile system of balances, and have generally demonstrated sensitivity in times of political stress.⁹

• **Hizbollah's central position in Lebanon's political system.** Hizbollah enjoys considerable political clout in Lebanon by virtue of its being the largest Shiite party (at the expense of its rival, Amal) and its military might. The organization's presence in government and parliament, the support accorded to it by pro-Syrian president Emile Lahoud, and the support of Syria and Iran combine to make Hizbollah a full-fledged partner, whose consent is required in the decision-making process on major issues in the country, including the decision to deploy the Lebanese army to the south.

Hizbollah's Perspective

Hizbollah rejects any scenario of voluntary disarmament or any other creative solution proposed to it whereby Hizbollah submits to the government's authority (e.g., incorporation of its units or combatants within the Lebanese army).¹⁰ On multiple occa-

sions Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has presented the organization's (clearly impossible) conditions for discussion of disarmament: removing the Israeli threat to Lebanon (i.e., destruction of Israel's existence) and establishing a strong state with a strong army, capable of deterring Israel from attacking Lebanon.

To be sure, the situation created in southern Lebanon, with the deployment of the Lebanese army and reinforced UNIFIL troops, requires Hizbollah to adapt to the new circumstances, which are less convenient than in the past. Yet even under these

reason why Nasrallah agreed to the deployment of the Lebanese army to the south of the country as part of resolution 1701, though he had opposed it since the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon. From his vantage, this is a calculated risk, since he already knows how to cope with the Lebanese army and also has means to put pressure on Siniora's government should it exceed the scope of the understandings regarding acquiescence to Hizbollah's covert presence in southern Lebanon.

As early as September 2006 Nasrallah outlined the "do's and don'ts"

The resistance has not disappeared and it will be present, according to Nasrallah, to assist the Lebanese army covertly and unofficially.

circumstances Hizbollah does not see any real option whereby the Lebanese army, as the executive arm of the government, will proceed to disarm it. On the contrary, Hizbollah seems to believe its power of deterrence in the domestic arena remains unscathed, with the Lebanese army not posing a significant threat to it, rather, at most an inconvenience. On more than one occasion Nasrallah has referred to the Lebanese army in a patronizing and scornful manner.¹¹ This was also the

governing Hizbollah and the Lebanese army under the new conditions. According to these rules, the Lebanese army is tasked with responding to any Israeli violation (as Hizbollah did in the past). But – and there's the rub – the resistance has not disappeared and it will be present, according to Nasrallah, to assist the Lebanese army covertly and unofficially. As for the "don'ts," Nasrallah clarified that the army may not disarm the resistance, spy on it, or raid locations where Hizbollah stores its arms.¹² Later, for the sake of clarity, Nasrallah conveyed a message (to the state as well) accompanied by a

9 For example, during the mass protests in Lebanon following the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri (February 14, 2005).

10 This proposal has been made in the past by different politicians in Lebanon, and was recently raised once

more by Defense Minister al-Murr. See www.naharnet.com, September 23, 2006.

11 For instance, after the Lebanese government agreed to deploy the army in the south, Nasrallah explained that thus far Hizbollah has opposed such a move because of its "concern" for the

Lebanese army, *al-Manar*, August 8, 2006.

12 *Al-Safir*, September 5, 2006.

threat, which said that no army in the world could disarm Hizbollah.¹³

Nonetheless, Hizbollah has cause to worry due to two perilous trends: the focus in Lebanon's domestic discourse on the future of Hizbollah's arms and the continuous erosion in the legitimacy of its bearing arms; and the resolve shown by Prime Minister Siniora in promoting, via the Lebanese army, processes aimed at revoking Hizbollah's prerogative to "defend Lebanon" from Israel.

Therefore, Hizbollah leaders have clarified in a series of defiant statements that not only will the organization maintain its covert presence in the south (as Nasrallah underlined) but it will also renew attacks against Israel should it violate Lebanon's sovereignty at sea, on land, and in the air.¹⁴ In any case, at this stage it would seem that Hizbollah prefers to avoid friction with the army, and aims its criticism at Prime Minister Siniora and at the "March 14 camp."

The Lebanese Army: An Agent of Change, not Disarmament

Since its establishment (August 1, 1945), the Lebanese army, along with other state security organs, has fulfilled an important role in safeguarding domestic stability, and the state of

the army has largely mirrored Lebanon's stability, sovereignty, and independence. It seems that following the recent war, the Lebanese army has again assumed a significant position as the executive arm of the Lebanese state.

Under the current circumstances it is unlikely that the Lebanese government will instruct its army to disarm Hizbollah, and it is highly doubtful if the Lebanese army – with or without assistance from UNIFIL troops – will act on the full implementation of resolution 1701, especially vis-à-vis disarming the area south of the Litani of all non-government arms. Nevertheless, the deployment of the Lebanese army to the south of the country cultivates two emerging trends that, if realized, will have a positive impact on Israel's security and match the strategic objectives of Siniora's government:

- Reinforcing the idea of the Lebanese state with all that implies for establishment of central government authority, gradual realization of state sovereignty throughout its territory, and responsibility for hostile activities in and from its territory.
- Containment of Hizbollah, as part of the attempt to revoke its unauthorized power to manage conflicts with Israel and to use force against it. Even at this early stage this is expressed by the increased involvement of Siniora's government in issues at stake with Israel: Shab'a Farms, the prisoners, and the readiness to defend Lebanon against Israeli operations.¹⁵

¹⁵ See, for example, Lebanese defense minister Elias al-Murr, who said

The primary condition for these trends is a strong Lebanese army, effectively deployed (alongside a reinforced UNIFIL) along the border with Israel and thereby rising to the challenge that Nasrallah posed to the state with regard to establishment of a strong, capable army as a prerequisite to discussing disarmament. Such an army will not only serve as a clear state-level address for Israel in any case of security deterioration, but may even serve as a deterrent in the domestic arena against Hizbollah.

Nevertheless, realization of these trends is not merely a function of military might – improved as it may be – under the authority of the Lebanese government, but primarily the resolve of this government to use the Lebanese army to promote its strategic goals and its ability to surmount the many obstacles facing it from within and without. It is, indeed, likely that Hizbollah and its patrons in Damascus and Tehran will object to attempts at weakening the organization's status in Lebanon and at revoking its "legitimate right to fight against Israel" by bolstering an already emergent effort to weaken

that the Lebanese army needs anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank missiles, and helicopters for deterring Israel, *Daily Star*, September 25, 2006. Elsewhere the defense minister mentioned that the government has already decided to acquire such equipment in order to preempt Hizbollah's argument that the army is incapable of protecting Lebanon, www.naharnet.com, September 23, 2006.

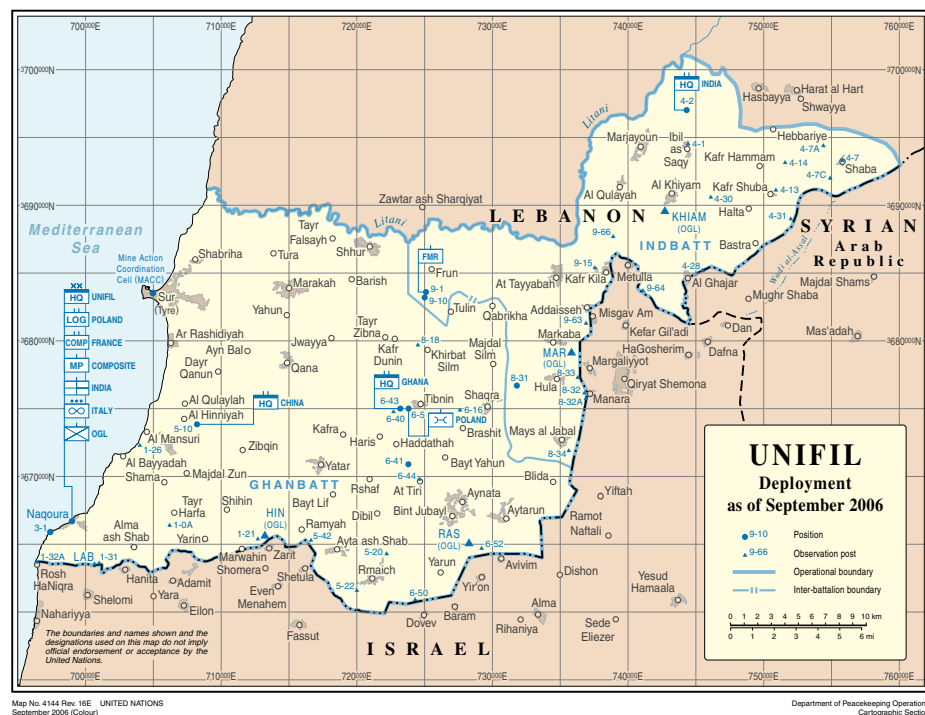
¹³ See Nasrallah's "victory speech" of September 22, 2006 (English version) at: http://www.moqawama.org/english/_amen222.php?filename=20060926170043026.

¹⁴ Attributed to organization senior activist, Sheikh Hassan ez al-Din, www.naharnet.com, October 2, 2006.

Siniora's government and thereby undermine Lebanon's domestic stability.

Accordingly, international commitment and assistance to Siniora's government at the practical levels is highly important, including aid to upgrade the Lebanese army and promote its ability to fulfill its complex tasks, both internally and along the borders with Syria (to preventing arms smuggling) and with Israel. Yet the real tests, those for the Lebanese government, still lie ahead, and its resolve will be tested when the first terror attack is launched from Lebanese territory.

This long and complex process is not enough to forcefully disarm Hizbollah or to convince it to willingly disarm, but this process may, over time, reduce the organization's ability to maneuver. As far as Israel is concerned, it is precisely the lack of an effective, available military solution to the problem of Hizbollah's arms that dictates a clear interest in encouraging such processes centered on the Lebanese army. The idea of a Lebanese army, equipped with advanced means and deployed along the border, may raise some objections within Israel, especially in view of the unsuccessful precedent of providing arms to the Palestinian Authority (though the two cases are distinctly different). Yet here Israel should in fact wager on the Lebanese army (ostensibly under UNIFIL observation): it should not object to providing it



UNIFIL Forces Deployment – September 2006

Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/dpko/unifil.pdf>

with advanced weapons (although each case should be reviewed on its own merits) and perhaps it should even covertly encourage countries such as the US and France, already involved in plans for upgrading the Lebanese army, to increase their aid. The alternative may be a weakened, ineffective Lebanese army with an unmotivated UNIFIL, while Hizbollah rebuilds its status in the south as “the protector of Lebanon,” thereby nullifying resolution 1701.

But in any case, the physical presence of Lebanese soldiers in the south is not enough, and the state should inject practical content into restor-

ing its status, effectively applying its sovereignty, and creating an attractive alternative to Hizbollah. This is true not only at the security level, but also at the social level. For example, government institutions should be upgraded to overshadow Hizbollah institutions and become the preferred associations for south Lebanon inhabitants with regard to their social needs, particularly regarding all that relates to reconstruction of the south. In any case, even in the initial period, this nascent trend of creating alternatives to Hizbollah should be deemed one of the significant achievements of the recent war in Lebanon.

Failed Tactical Intelligence in the Lebanon War

Yoaz Hendel

The recent confrontation in Lebanon forced the State of Israel, once again and after many years, into a military confrontation on two fronts – in the south against Hamas and in the north against Hizbollah. In both cases it was Israel that decided to escalate in response to the attacks against IDF troops and Israeli civilians. In both cases the campaign was launched based on the assumption that the army was capable of victory.

The decision on intensive military action in Gaza was made following the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit. The underlying idea was to react forcefully to the abduction, which the Israeli public, already incensed by the ongoing flow of Qassam rockets into Israel, perceived as crossing a red line. Despite the surprise attack, the IDF was ready shortly after the government decided to escalate activities. Once the go ahead was given, the IDF took decisive action, utilizing its evident relative strength.

That Hizbollah might attempt action on the northern front was indeed discussed by decision-makers¹ who estimated that should this occur the incident would be well under control. When the campaign against Hizbollah was launched following the abduction of the two soldiers, it seemed that the IDF was once again demonstrating the same control and relative advantage of a regular army vs. guerilla combatants. Hizbollah infrastructure and weapon stores were destroyed, and it seemed that the strategic intelligence obtained prior to the war had served its purpose.² As the war progressed, however, battles in Lebanon claimed more and more lives, gaps emerged between expectations and abilities, and substantive weaknesses made it difficult for the IDF to claim victory and defeat its adversary in the north as it had done in the south. The reasons for these gaps and weaknesses are numerous, ranging from IDF capabilities to the opponent's capabilities.

This article focuses on understanding the gap between ideal and reality vis-à-vis intelligence on Lebanon at the tactical level, as evidenced during the ground forces fighting. The article reviews the shortcomings of the intelligence as manifested on the northern front in three major areas: intelligence gathering, intelligence assessment, and information dissemination to the requisite parties. It concludes by positing an explanation for these weaknesses and recommends two corrective measures.

1 S. Kadmon, "Looking for the Guilty Party," *Yediot Ahronot*, September 8, 2006.

2 Yossi Melman, "Israeli Intelligence: A Positive Surprise," *Haaretz*, July 24, 2006.

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Obstacles in Intelligence Gathering

The impressive intelligence gathering capabilities demonstrated by the General Security Service (GSS) and the IDF in confronting Palestinian terrorism over recent years were not manifest on the northern front.³

Whether it was due to ranking Hizbollah lower on the intelligence gathering agenda; budget cuts for intelligence gathering in Lebanon; or obvious formidable challenges in agent infiltration⁴ into Hizbollah, the gathering capabilities that Israeli intelligence had with regard to the organization, its activities, and deployment were significantly curtailed. The lack of human contacts to provide real time intelligence prevented Israeli intelligence from producing a viable product at the tactical level. Thus, for example, the short range missile launchers remained active, with the IDF unable to inflict significant damage to them.⁵

A similar lapse was felt regarding preemption means (e.g., operating an interceptive system), in contrast with GSS output in Judea and Samaria and in Gaza.⁶ In Gaza the use of human sources has essentially become a necessity for supplying bombardment

aircraft with their target; in Lebanon apparently no opportunity arose for forging such connections. Not intended here is any minimizing of the real difficulties facing those who handle agents remotely, especially in view of the especially suspicious and sensitive environment during war time. Nonetheless, Israel has in the past exhibited creativity even in the face of similar obstacles.

Finally, the SIGINT output, intended to control enemy communications, was problematic. Hizbollah, fearing Israeli eavesdropping, rigorously maintained a high level of security and encryption, as announced by Nasrallah in a speech in May.⁷ Despite extensive war time activity, penetrating Hizbollah's communication systems proved a formidable challenge to Israeli intelligence.

Hurdles in Assessment

Military Intelligence's Research Division and Northern Command Intelligence are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating Hizbollah capabilities. The evaluation is intended primarily to provide state leaders with information to support their decisions. No less important is the role

to provide troops with accurate information about the enemy. Apparently in several areas both Military Intelligence and Northern Command's Intelligence misevaluated Hizbollah capabilities.

- *Weapons.* Intelligence failed⁸ in monitoring the weapons shipped from Iran and Syria to Hizbollah prior to the war, which therefore left many unknowns about the type and quality of weapons available to the organization. Reasons for the lapses include the nature of the transfer and supply routes, geographic distances, and the strict adherence to communication security demonstrated by Iran and Hizbollah. These constraints apparently rendered the material gathered by the intelligence community information of merely limited value.

- *Forces and Command.* In preliminary assessments conducted prior to the war, the IDF had only a fuzzy picture of Hizbollah's size and troop numbers. The figures ranged from 2,000 active combatants (the figure of a decade ago) to 8,000 members in the organization as a whole. Today, with post-war hindsight, the assumption is that the organization still has more troops available than those numbers indicate, despite the significant casualties inflicted on it. Another critical lapse lay in mapping and gaining familiarity with the command chain. Hizbollah has maintained secrecy re-

3 Y. Halevy, "Summary of Interviews with Intelligence Officers," News First Class website, July 20, 2006.

4 Kadmon, "Looking for the Guilty Party."

5 Ze'ev Schiff, "How We Missed Destroying the Short Range Rockets," *Haaretz*, September 3, 2006.

6 Schiff, "How We Missed Destroying the Short Range Rockets."

7 See Nasrallah's speech of May 23, 2006 on Hizbollah website, www.moqawama.org: "Israelis use codes and closed circuits in communicating among themselves. We have no need for those. If our neighborhood and village folks hold conversations, no machine and no electronics wizard can decipher the hints and symbols used by our people. This is the popular essence of our warriors."

8 Ze'ev Schiff, "The Slap in our Face," *Haaretz*, August 11, 2006; Amos Harel, "We Did Not Know Enough about Border Activities," *Haaretz*, September 19, 2006.

garding its commanders, their roles, and whereabouts. Thus only the most senior among them, who in any case have been exposed to the media and were well known, including Nasrallah and Imad Mughniyeh,⁹ are “available” to figure at the top of the hit list.

- *Combat and Defense Tactics.* The IDF, whose combat training is rooted in familiarity with the enemy and whose modern training facilities are based on models grounded in reality, found itself fighting in Lebanon in an unfamiliar “work environment.” The camouflaged “nature reserves” (Hizbollah’s underground system of tunnels and fortifications), the vertical bunker systems, and wireless launching units posed a strong challenge to the IDF. By way of comparison, on the Palestinian front the intelligence corps was able to supply accurate information about the opponent’s combat and defense tactics, and the fighting units were trained in “authentic” combat scenarios.

Failures in Dissemination

One of Intelligence’s major roles in all its units is to provide current, valuable information to fighting forces in order to generate a relative advantage and to reduce the threat level they encounter.

Upon mobilization of ground forces in Lebanon and the addition of other units, a shortage of current in-

formation emerged. Moreover, where such information existed, it did not reach those who needed it, remaining untapped. For example, the sealed boxes prepared in advance by Intelligence that included relevant information for ground forces remained unused, while the “obsolescence” of aerial photos, dating back to 2002, featured prominently on the list of complaints raised by reservists. Information that was available did not reach its target due to inefficient information pipelines.

This shortcoming stands out in

The preconception of the second Lebanon War began with the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000. Overwhelming international pressure and wishful thinking within the Israeli public became the cornerstones of a policy that eventually turned out to be Israel’s honey trap. On the one hand, Israel publicly acknowledged that after evacuating the security zone, it no longer had any contest with Lebanon and therefore what occurred north of the border was Lebanon’s concern. On the other hand, then-prime minister

The preconception of the second Lebanon War began with the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000.

contrast to the impressive achievements of the IDF and GSS in recent years in knowledge management and in ensuring that information flow is a reliable electronic resource. If indeed Intelligence’s claims¹⁰ about existing knowledge of Hizbollah’s tactical combat level are accurate, this is yet another failure in disseminating information.

Possible Causes: Preconception and Prioritization

Two terms from the past – preconception and prioritization – have reappeared in Israeli discourse as possible explanations for the tactical intelligence failure.

Ehud Barak declared that any attack on Israel’s sovereignty would entail a response of previously unknown severity.

Prioritization dictated the allocation of resources to urgent tasks on the Palestinian front rather than to future (latent) ones on the Lebanese front – be this an error originating within the IDF or the outcome of a political decision, derived directly from government policy that contended that the constant threat posed by Hizbollah notwithstanding, the potential for conflagration is low. Decision-makers believed that it would be possible to contain the fire in case of a conflict in the north,¹¹ and in case of deteriora-

9 Yossi Melman, “Argentina Officially Accuses Iran as Responsible for Terrorist Attacks,” *Haaretz*, March 11, 2003.

10 G. Weitz, “All the Way to Beirut, if Necessary,” *Haaretz*, August 11, 2006.

11 Moshe Arens, “Most of the Answers are Known,” *Haaretz*, August 22, 2006.

tion there would be sufficient time to bridge the gaps that had been created by the emphasis on the Gaza Strip.

In actuality, several months after the withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, the intelligence corps discovered that Iran and Syria started shipping massive weapon shipments and transferring instructors to Hizbollah, and that the guerilla organization that the IDF had confronted in the years when it was present in southern Lebanon was about to change. Even though presumably Barak and Sharon possessed this information, no action was taken on this matter. Indeed, an attack by Israel on Lebanon in order to prevent this process of arming would have been denounced internationally, severely impairing the credit Israel earned following the withdrawal. The Palestinian front, which heated up in October 2000, required intensive Israeli effort in both the military and diplomatic arenas. It is likely that the aversion to military action was due to tolerant political preference rather than to misunderstanding the dangers inherent in Hizbollah's accelerated arms race. But in taking this passive position, the seeds of the "risk of convenience" were sown, which slowly led from a policy with a clear rationale to a policy of turning a blind eye.

The real problem with the political world view that claimed that "in the north you should sleep with one eye open but without rising" is its negative effect on the military, including the intelligence corps. In wishing to

avoid crossing the border and causing provocations, and in the drive to exercise patience, low-altitude photo reconnaissance missions for intelligence gathering were curtailed, as were missions by field intelligence gathering units¹² and other operations that might have been perceived as aggressive.

While 2005 was declared by the intelligence corps as "Lebanon Year" and a multi-year plan was formulat-



ed with regard to Hizbollah, in fact the IDF continued devoting most of its resources to facing the immediate threat – the Palestinian front. The defense establishment's comptroller's report, published in March 2006,¹³ a

period where the northern border seemed quiet, indicated, "severe gaps exist in combat intelligence on the northern front." This report mandated that a defined work plan be put in place to close those gaps, but as with the handling of other weak spots, reality trumped the implementation of this report.

Conclusion

On the one hand, Israel realized in a timely manner the wide strategic picture, and this was indeed conveyed to decision-makers. On the other hand, gaps emerged between what was known and what unfolded, and tactical intelligence bears the burden of responsibility. These gaps affected IDF actions and possibly also political decision-making.

While evaluation of the war's success requires a perspective over time, the evaluation of the weak spots of tactical intelligence operations necessitates immediate investigation in order to repair the problems as soon as possible. In this context one should ensure that the prioritization within the IDF – as existed up until the war – will change, and that the necessary resources be allocated to the intelligence corps.¹⁴ One should also ensure immediate implementation of all capabilities available to the intelligence community, for use in Lebanon as well as elsewhere.

12 A. Eichner, "Intelligence Corps Commander: Palestinians Attempt to Imitate Lebanese Model," *Yediot Achronot*, September 11, 2006.

13 Ze'ev Schiff, "Everything Had Been Put in Writing," *Haaretz*, August 31, 2006.

14 A. Buchbut, "Significant Increase in Intelligence Budget," *Maariv*, September 4, 2006.

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