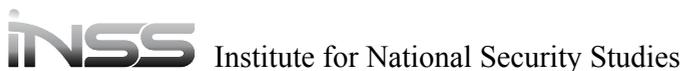


The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives



The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), incorporating the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, was founded in 2006.

The purpose of the Institute for National Security Studies is, first, to conduct basic research that meets the highest academic standards on matters related to Israel's national security as well as Middle East regional and international security affairs. Second, the Institute aims to contribute to the public debate and governmental deliberation of issues that are – or should be – at the top of Israel's national security agenda.

INSS seeks to address the strategic community in Israel and abroad, Israeli policymakers, and opinion-makers, and the general public.

INSS publishes research that it deems worthy of public attention, while it maintains a strict policy of non-partisanship on issues of public policy. The opinions expressed in this publication are the authors' alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute, its trustees, boards, research staff, or the organization and individuals that support its research.

The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives

Edited by
Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran

מלחמת לבנון השנייה:
השלכות אסטרטגיות

עורכים:

שלמה ברום ומאיר אלרון

English editor: Judith Rosen
Graphic design: Michal Semo-Kovetz
Cover design: Yael Kfir
Printing: Meah Productions
Cover photo: GettyImages/Imagebank

Institute for National Security Studies
40 Haim Levanon Street
POB 39950
Tel Aviv 61398
Israel

Tel. +972-3-640-0400
Fax. +972-3-744-7590

E-mail: info@inss.org.il
[http:// www.inss.org.il](http://www.inss.org.il)

© 2007

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-965-7425-02-2

Contents

Introduction	7
--------------	---

Part I: Israeli Dimensions

Chapter 1: Political and Military Objectives in a Limited War against a Guerilla Organization Shlomo Brom	13
Chapter 2: The Decision Making Process in Israel Giora Eiland	25
Chapter 3: Deterrence and its Limitations Yair Evron	35
Chapter 4: A Test of Rival Strategies: Two Ships Passing in the Night Giora Romm	49
Chapter 5: The Military Campaign in Lebanon Gabriel Siboni	61
Chapter 6: Intelligence in the War: Observations and Insights Aharon Ze'evi Farkash	77
Chapter 7: Israeli Public Opinion and the Second Lebanon War Yehuda Ben Meir	87
Chapter 8: The Civilian Front in the Second Lebanon War Meir Elran	103

Part II: Regional Dimensions

Chapter 9: “Divine Victory” and Earthly Failures: Was the War Really a Victory for Hizbollah? Yoram Schweitzer	123
Chapter 10: The Battle for Lebanon: Lebanon and Syria in the Wake of the War Eyal Zisser	135
Chapter 11: After the War: Iranian Power and its Limitations David Menashri	151

Chapter 12: July-August Heat: The Israeli-Palestinian Arena Anat Kurz	163
Chapter 13: The Regional Setting: Statehood vs. Anarchy Asher Susser	175
Chapter 14: Regional Implications: From Radicalism to Reform Yossi Kuperwasser	187
Chapter 15: The Impact of the War on Arab Security Concepts Ephraim Kam	197
Chapter 16: The International Dimension: Why So Few Constraints on Israel? Mark A. Heller	209
Appendices	
<hr/>	
1: Shab'a Farms Amos Gilboa	215
2: Observations on Hizbollah Weaponry Yiftah Shapir	223
3: UN Security Council Resolution 1701, August 11, 2006	233
Contributors	238

Introduction

The Second Lebanon War embodied a type of military confrontation different from the many other clashes that Israel has engaged in since its establishment. This confrontation belongs to the category of asymmetrical wars involving rival entities endowed with inherently different and unbalanced attributes. In the 2006 Lebanon war, Israel, a sovereign state with a strong, organized military, faced Hizbollah, a sub-state organization that operated from within a failed state while controlling a relatively small guerilla force. Size notwithstanding, the force boasted considerable military abilities and was well deployed for this type of confrontation. Hizbollah presented Israel with a stiff challenge that, built on years of painstaking preparation and close Iranian support, displayed a strategic concept that maximized its abilities and compensated for its weaknesses in the face of a stronger rival. Although in this kind of confrontation it is difficult to identify victor or victory definitively, it is clear that in view of the expectations, the perception in Israel, the Arab world, and the global community is that Hizbollah scored prominent and tangible achievements, while Israel emerged from the confrontation bruised and disappointed.

Beyond the military aspect, the war between Israel and Hizbollah reflected a number of strategic processes essential to understanding the general regional picture: the strengthening of Islamic radicalism and its evolution into an active anti-status quo power; the weakening of the Arab states; the growth of non-state actors that exploit the weakness of the state system; and the difficulties faced by the international community, led by the United States, in coping with these processes.

Among the Israeli public, the Second Lebanon War was grasped as an event with crisis proportions, and the war and its results are still the subject of intense public debate. Fundamental questions revolve around the weaknesses of high level decision making exposed in the war, civil-military

relations, the role of the IDF in Israeli society, the transformation of the home front into a battlefield, and Israel's approach to regional processes. Israel's management of the war, both on a military and a political level, has yet to be judged definitively by the final report of the Winograd Commission, the government-appointed investigative committee mandated to study the 2006 conflict. The Commission is due to release its full report by the end of 2007, yet the findings that have been published thus far, particularly in the commission's partial report released in April, shed incriminating light on various aspects of Israel's conduct. This perspective is shared by a number of books on the war.

The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives explores various dimensions to the confrontation initiated by Israel on July 12, 2006 in response to Hizbollah provocation. The war received an unprecedented amount of media exposure in real time, largely because the media has come to assume a strategic role in modern day wars. The present collection of essays, however, adopts a different stance from other coverage and offers a strategic overview of the war. It provides an analytical and conceptual view of the war, on the basis of which relevant conclusions can be drawn on the national level. The essays compiled here delve into different aspects of the war: its background, its implications, and the lessons that can be inferred. The essays do not tell the actual story of the war. They are, rather, an academic attempt to explain the rationales and forces underlying this violent clash, with a clear focus on the strategic perspective. Significantly, some of the essays published here posit conclusions and perspectives that do not tally entirely with the party line assessments of various aspects of the war.

Part I of this collection examines internal Israeli perspectives and comprises three sets of essays. The opening set studies strategic dimensions that underlay the war. Shlomo Brom views the war as a model of a limited confrontation with a non-state actor operating from within a failed state, and notes the ensuing difficulty in defining – and achieving – political and military objectives in this type of confrontation. In the essay that follows, Giora Eiland looks at the decision making system in Israel and suggests how inadequate civil-military relations and lapses in the inter-echelon dynamics led to failures in the way the war was waged. Yair Evron then offers an in-depth analysis of the impact of the war on Israeli deterrence

and draws unorthodox conclusions that depart from the popular tendency to extract hasty, conventional assessments from a military campaign involving Israel.

The second set of essays dwells on military aspects of the war from the Israeli standpoint. Giora Romm examines some of the leading operational approaches in Israel that impacted on how the war started and their contribution to the achievements and failures of the war. His principal argument is that the war revealed adversaries with rival strategies that did not intersect during the war. In his essay, Gabriel Siboni focuses on an area that became a main target of criticism during the war – the IDF's ground forces and their performance against Hizbollah. Aharon Ze'evi Farkash then looks at the role of Israeli intelligence during the war on a strategic and tactical level, and claims significant achievements in the former area, which contrast with deficiencies in the latter.

In this war, the civilian front played a central role, and the third set of essays addresses this arena. Yehuda Ben Meir presents the development of public opinion during the war, its impact on the progress of the war, and its attitudes after the war. Meir Elran examines the civilian front, which was Hizbollah's principal target of the war, and draws system-wide conclusions, both with regard to the robustness of the Israeli public and the performance of the home front defense systems.

Part II of this collection examines regional and global aspects of the war. The first set of essays in this section includes four essays about main regional actors that took part directly or indirectly in the confrontation and were affected by it and its ramifications. Yoram Schweitzer analyzes Hizbollah's balance sheet and suggests that its post-war minus column is quite extensive. In his essay Eyal Zisser examines the war in the context of long term processes in Syria and Lebanon, and considers the ramifications of the war for Lebanon and Syria in their interaction with Israel. David Menshari analyzes the role played by Iran in the war as part of the process whereby Iran has become a dominant actor in the region. Finally, Anat Kurz contends that the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian were driven by their own independent dynamic, and were not a function of the war in Lebanon.

The second set of essays in this section addresses the wider regional implications of the war, which far exceeded the states that participated

directly in the confrontation. Asher Susser sketches a panoramic picture of the Middle East, and places the war in the wider context of the prevailing regional trends. Yossi Kuperwasser ties the war to the problematic question of the Arab state as a responsible political element. Ephraim Kam assesses the possible impact of the war on the Arab security doctrines and differentiates between the public perceptions of the war on the Arab street, and the impact of the war on the Arab defense establishments and the ensuing conduct of the Arab states. The final essay of Part II, by Mark Heller, analyzes the involvement of the international community in the war and the relative freedom of action it granted Israel during the weeks of the confrontation.

Three appendices complete the collection of essays. The first, written by Amos Gilboa, tells the fascinating story of Shab'a Farms, cast by Hizbollah as a main reason for the continued conflict with Israel. In the second appendix, Yiftah Shapir reviews the rocketry and other weapon systems used by Hizbollah in the war that proved the main component of its operational capability. The third appendix is Security Council resolution 1701, which was adopted at the end of the war.

Most of the essays presented here were written by members of the research staff of the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS); others were written by leading academic experts. INSS engages in practical and theoretical research on strategic issues, aiming to contribute to Israel's public debate and offer recommendations for policymakers. Predictably, then, this publication bears a similar nature: it combines analyses of the war's strategic issues with insights that can serve as a basis for discussion and future thinking on the processes that are taking shape in Israel and the region – and Israel's role in these latter processes. This idea is based on the assumption that as in the Second Lebanon War, in the future too, Israel and its policies will play a crucial role in defining the contours, topography, and relief of the regional map.

Part I

Israeli Dimensions

Chapter I

Political and Military Objectives in a Limited War against a Guerilla Organization

Shlomo Brom

The discrepancy between expectations and reality led to the strong sense of disappointment and frustration that was evident in the Israeli public following the war in Lebanon. At the start of the war there was an expectation, nurtured by the political leadership, that the IDF would defeat Hizbollah and rescue the hostages; the aim of disarming Hizbollah was presented as a realistic objective.¹ The expectations outlined by the Israeli leadership were shared by parties in the West, particularly the US administration, which viewed the war both as an opportunity to settle accounts with one of the parties positioned on the “axis of evil” and as a battle in the war on international terror. However, the war continued for over one month, and up to the last day of the war Hizbollah continued to launch a large number of rockets towards population centers in the north of Israel. Moreover, at the end of the war it was clear that the organization was still standing and would not be disarmed, certainly not as a direct result of the war. The ensuing sense of dissatisfaction in Israel and other interested parties ranged from a general undercurrent of malaise to public expressions of disappointment.²

Yet in a sense, the disappointment was inherently misplaced, as it seems that the expectations and the post-war reactions resulted from a basic misunderstanding of the special nature of the war the IDF waged in Lebanon: a limited war of a state against a non-state actor operating from the territory of a failed state that does not control its own territory. The non-state player fought as a guerilla force, though in some areas it possessed

state-like capabilities, acquired from supporting states. For example, Hizbollah had various kinds of guided missiles: anti-tank, anti-aircraft, and land-to-sea missiles as well as assault UAVs, and had the ability to strike deep in Israel's home front. In recent years Israel has already faced this model of struggle with non-state actors, albeit in less pressing conditions, in its confrontation with the Palestinians. This model was applied more dramatically and extensively in the Second Lebanon War, and offered a better understanding of its potential implications. Such an understanding may help formulate a realistic definition of war objectives, and achieve better preparation for a confrontation of this sort and improved management of the war. As a result, future gaps between expectations and reality may be narrowed, thereby diminishing the foreign policy and domestic political ramifications of such gaps.

Fighting a Guerilla Organization

Hizbollah operated its military power in Lebanon as a guerilla force embedded within a civilian population, and it used the local population as a human shield. Hizbollah's command positions were established in bunkers built underneath residential buildings in the Dahiya quarter of Beirut. The local and regional headquarters were likewise located in residential buildings in towns and villages in southern Lebanon, and large quantities of weapons, including short range rockets, were dispersed in villages and towns in the area. Hizbollah also utilized the topography and vegetation cover of southern Lebanon to build a system of bunkers and tunnels where it stored munitions, labeled "nature reserves" by the IDF.

It is very important that a guerilla force preserve a supportive civilian environment as its main asset. It is important primarily from a political viewpoint insofar as the military force serves a political movement – in this case, Hizbollah, which has defined political objectives. However, the importance also stems from the military viewpoint, as support of the population provides it with freedom of action, or in an image used by Mao Tse-tung: these are the waters in which the fish (i.e., the guerilla force) swim.³

Hizbollah's operational principle as a guerilla force is also based on its awareness of the superiority of Israel's military force, and its understanding

that in any direct confrontation it will eventually be defeated. Thus, when it encounters a stronger enemy, it disperses and finds cover within a civilian population or in a natural environment to allow it to re-emerge and strike at its enemy under more convenient conditions. The guerilla force is not meant to defeat the state military force. Its aim is to survive and continue striking its enemy at painful points, thereby generating a perception of failure by the enemy. This is achieved by various methods, including intelligent use of the media.

In warfare with a guerilla foe, traditional concepts relating to conventional wars between state armies lose their original significance. Of major importance is the perception of concepts such as victory and defeat. In classical wars defeating an enemy does not mean the physical destruction of all its military force, or even most of it. Defeat of a rival is achieved when the enemy loses its will to fight because it has arrived at the conclusion that it will not gain anything from continuing to fight and the price it will pay for fighting will increase. In a war between states, this kind of victory is achieved by destroying the military assets of the enemy through firepower and by maneuvering to bring the enemy to a position whereby it realizes it is unable to continue, or by exacting a high price from the enemy. The costs can be reflected in occupying territory or damaging strategic assets, for example, national infrastructure.

However, it is particularly difficult using only military means to bring a guerilla force to the point where it loses its will to fight, and it is clearly impossible to achieve this through a short military campaign. This is even more problematic when the guerilla force does not operate from the territory of the state against which it is fighting, but uses the territory of a failed state as a platform for carrying out attacks on a neighboring state. On the one hand, the force cannot be pushed into decisive battles that would result in its losing its ability to operate and continue inflicting damage in sensitive areas, and it will prefer to vanish into the civilian environment where it can consolidate and preserve its strength. On the other hand, the guerilla force does not have the responsibility of a state, and thus damaging the state's strategic infrastructure does not cause the organization to lose its will to fight. It is the state, helpless against the guerilla force and unable to restrain it, that suffers from these strikes. Inflicting damage on state assets can often even help the guerilla organization gain more support from the public

by creating the image that the rival military is incapable of contending with it, and as an alternative it inflicts damage on an innocent civilian population. Such an argument, if accepted by the population that suffers the damage, can even serve as further leverage for achieving political power and popular support.

Nor does seizing territory bring about a loss of will to fight. Here too, conquering territory often increases a will to fight, as the war then becomes a struggle against the occupying force and a fight for national liberation. A good example of this is the American intervention in Iraq: Iraq's military force was defeated with relative ease by the US military, but when the war became a war of liberation from a foreign occupier, the Iraqi insurgency was able to wage and sustain effective guerilla warfare against the large and powerful American armed forces.⁴ In this situation, contending with a guerilla force requires a long term presence in the occupied territory and demands a high price of the occupier in terms of image, as well as casualties and military and political resources. In such cases too, a decisive end is attained, if at all, not through pure military means but mainly through non-military means designed to sever the guerilla force from its supportive civilian host environment. It is no wonder, therefore, that in Iraq too – whose sectarian society, divided into rival communities, is similar to that of Lebanon – the US has invested significant efforts in reconstruction efforts and actions on a political level alongside the military effort.

Modern technology can afford advanced armed forces such as the IDF the ability to defeat regular enemy militaries with relatively few casualties. On the other hand, it also provides the guerilla force – and particularly if it enjoys extensive support from patron states that provide it with funding, arms, and training – with an ability to strike at its adversary in painful places. This is primarily reflected in portable weapon systems, such as advanced anti-tank arms that can be used effectively against modern tanks, and rockets that offer the possibility of hitting populated areas from significant ranges. Since technology offers the ability to operate also at low signature, guerilla units are able to avoid direct confrontations with the regular army, which limits their vulnerability to the enemy's superior technological abilities.

Formulating Objectives

The conclusion here is that in a war such as the short campaign in Lebanon, it was wrong from the outset to adopt the unrealistic objective of defeating Hizbollah by destroying its military capability and disarming it. The realistic objective of the short term confrontation should have been to *contain* Hizbollah, in other words to create a situation in which its ability to harm Israel would be significantly reduced. From the start, it should have been recognized that at issue was a guerilla force acting from within a neighboring failed state. Engaging in a war of this nature is very much like treating a chronic ailment that cannot be cured definitively, though many of the symptoms can be treated. A situation can be reached whereby the patient carries on as usual hoping that in the long term, a cure for the ailment will be found – in the context at hand, primarily if and when the political situation changes.

In many cases, the suppression of guerilla organizations is a result of political processes that address the root causes of their activity. Therefore, in the long term, wars against guerilla organizations are designed to allow and even help the development of political processes that will address the root causes. There is a connection between the definition of appropriate objectives in the short term and the long term objective. *Containing a guerilla organization* generates a situation in which the organization may gradually understand that it is unable to achieve its objectives through military means, as its rival can accommodate and adjust to them. This recognition occasionally leads to a search for other ways to contend with the problems that generated the military action in the first place.

In the case of Hizbollah the root causes that enable it to operate are on the one hand, the weakness of Lebanon as a state due to the sectarian structure and the resulting political system, and on the other hand the exploitation of this weakness by countries with a different agenda than Lebanon's that operate forces in Lebanon that serve their particular interests. Before the war, the Lebanese political system was undergoing a process that aimed to reform the political system and eradicate intervention by foreign countries. In conducting the war Israel should have set out to encourage rather than disturb the continued development of this process, which was a positive one as far as its own interests were concerned.

One approach to achieving this objective was to avoid direct confrontation with Hizbollah in Lebanon while trying to punish the states that cultivate the organization through military means or political means, or a combination of the two. Though Israel has done this in the past, the Israeli government this time opted against this alternative, not believing it would be adequate, due to the apparent limited ability of Bashar Asad's regime to influence Hizbollah after the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. It is also possible that Israel did not want to expand the war. Bashar's willingness to take risks, as reflected in part by his policy of taunting the United States, suggests that the exertion of effective pressure on him requires extensive military action, with clear risks of escalation. After this possibility was rejected, the only alternatives left were refraining from a response or a direct confrontation with Hizbollah.

Due to the complexity of the campaign in Lebanon, it was possible to advance Israel's interests only by a combination of military and political means and not by military force only. This combination involves paying a price as the political means generally impose restrictions on exercising military force and, occasionally, the military force operates in a manner that does not seem optimal due to political constraints.

According to this approach, it appears that the short term objective of containing Hizbollah could be translated into three secondary objectives: rehabilitating Israel's deterrence vis-à-vis Hizbollah; limiting Hizbollah's ability to deploy in southern Lebanon and operate against Israel from there; and limiting its ability to build up a military force anywhere in Lebanon by imposing restrictions on the provision of armaments from the supporting countries. Israel could try to achieve the three objectives through military means, by inflicting a heavy blow on Hizbollah's forces and exacting a heavy price from it and from the public that supports it, by occupying southern Lebanon and driving Hizbollah out of the region, and also by imposing an ongoing blockade on Lebanon and acting forcefully against any attempt to smuggle arms into the country. The pure military option would clearly exact from Israel a very high cost in casualties, image, and renewed entanglement in Lebanon. Hizbollah's use of civilian shields made it very difficult to strike it directly and increased the chance of causing extensive collateral damage, which would harm the legitimacy of Israel's operation. Taking over southern Lebanon, particularly ridding it

of Hizbollah, demands extensive forces, much time, and a high number of casualties. However, this was not the only or main problem. The IDF would have had to continue controlling the occupied territory in order to prevent Hizbollah from re-establishing itself there. This means that Israel would have, once again, found itself in a situation of an occupying force controlling a hostile population over time, without an end in sight. The option of forcefully preventing arms smuggling into Lebanon also involves serious difficulties. It is questionable whether it can be implemented by a military force operating from a distance due to the long land borders between Lebanon and Syria. Israel certainly could not maintain a ground presence along these borders as this would involve occupying Lebanon in its entirety. The international community would not have permitted any long term blockade of Lebanon, a theoretical impossibility proven after the war.

The objective that could have been achieved – even partially – by purely military means and in a campaign such as the one that took place in Lebanon was restoring deterrence. In this regard there is no better proof than that provided by Hizbollah's leader, Nasrallah, himself, who admitted that had he known that kidnapping the soldiers would lead to such a war he would not have ordered the operation.⁵ However, this statement acknowledges one of the main problems of deterrence, namely, the tendency to failure due to miscalculation of the enemy. If restoring deterrence was the only objective, the war could have ended after the first three days of aerial attacks, which inflicted the thrust of the damage on Hizbollah. However, even after deterrence was restored it is likely that Hizbollah would again test the boundaries of Israeli deterrence by gradual escalation of its operations, a process ever vulnerable to mistaken assessments and calculations. Only the achievement of the other two objectives, limiting the armed presence of Hizbollah in the south and restricting the flow of arms to it, could generate a more robust mechanism for containing the organization.

The conclusion is that the objectives that would lead to effective containment of a Hizbollah that is less vulnerable to calculated mistakes could only have been achieved, and even then likely not entirely, by combining political and military means, in other words by motivating the Lebanese government and the international community to take action that would limit Hizbollah over time and strengthen the central government in

Lebanon. Such activity includes the deployment of the Lebanese army and a supporting international force in southern Lebanon, so that they control the region and prevent the armed presence of Hizbollah there, together with international supervision of Lebanon's borders. If this had been the objective the military steps would have been designed to serve the political objective of galvanizing the Lebanese government and the international community, and every military operation would be addressed in view of the impact on the achievement of this objective.

The Need for Political Intervention

The main problem with conducting the war in Lebanon derived from setting unrealistic objectives at the outset and creating the illusion that they were achievable by military means and at a low price; hence the decision to use mainly the air force, which incurs a low casualty rate, and use it to inflict heavy damage on Hizbollah. The first phase of the war was successful in military terms, but it was not clear what mechanism, according to the thinking of the Israeli political and military leadership, was supposed to translate these military achievements into the ambitious goals set at the start of the war. Was it the thinking that Hizbollah would succumb and agree to disarm? Or, possibly, that the Lebanese government would decide to disarm Hizbollah following the success of this operation? If so, these considerations were unrealistic; the first because it should have been clear that at the end of the aerial combat, even if Hizbollah sustained heavy damage, the organization would still be on its feet and have the ability to hit Israel, particularly through short range rockets. Second, it was not realistic because of Lebanon's weakness as a sovereign state.

During the war it gradually became clear to the Israeli leadership that more modest – but attainable – goals should be adopted, and that the way to achieve them was through the international community and the Lebanese government. The delay in defining these objectives led to a situation in which the war continued for another three weeks after the first phase, without any clear logic how to translate the political aims to military objectives, and to formulate military action that would ensure the attainment of the military objectives in the most effective way and at the lowest cost.⁶

There was misunderstanding in Israel also with regard to the significance of time. Had Israel adopted the approach of a short campaign based mainly on the air force, with its objective to spur the international community and Lebanon to create a situation in which Nasrallah would be bound to accept restricting dictates, the initial basic concept of the campaign would have been logical. It would have been possible to assume that the air campaign would achieve these results. It would have been logical to assess that the main threat of Hizbollah in such a situation was its ability to hit cities deep inside Israel and thus it was important to neutralize this threat. This could have been achieved by the IDF, which in fact did so successfully.⁷ While in this scenario Hizbollah would have maintained its ability to launch a large number of short range rockets at targets in northern Israel, due to the expected short duration of the fighting inherent in this approach one could assume that the Israeli home front would have been capable of withstanding this sort of disruption of routine life. The prolonged continuation of the war changed the basic parameters of the situation. A state cannot tolerate a situation in which the everyday life of its population is disrupted so badly in such a wide area and for so long. In the absence of another solution for stopping the short range rocket launches it was to be expected that Israel would be drawn into attempts to occupy territory even though it was clear that this does not serve the main and realistic objectives of the war. The contradiction between understanding that ground operations are costly but contribute only little to achieving the war objectives, and the pressure to put a stop to the rocket fire is probably one of the reasons why the ground operations were partial and disjointed, performed hesitantly, and seemingly as if the IDF was dragged into them unwittingly.

As to the long term objective of promoting political processes for neutralizing Hizbollah inside Lebanon with the help of the international community, it seems that a military campaign could help, given certain conditions: first, when it demonstrates to the Lebanese public the heavy price exacted once it entrusts its fate and its decision making powers to Hizbollah, an organization that also serves foreign interests. The second condition is when a campaign does not generate a situation whereby the Lebanese public embraces Hizbollah as the only power capable of protecting it from Israeli aggression. The third condition is when the campaign ultimately limits Hizbollah's ability to act.

In order to achieve the objectives of the war, it was important in the long term that Lebanon pay the price as a state without Israel exceeding the rules of international law and the war norms, and without the result being prolonged occupation of Lebanese territory that would enable Hizbollah to present itself as a movement resisting foreign occupation. It seems that Israel managed to comply with these conditions, albeit perhaps unintentionally. The price paid by Lebanon was generally an incidental result of military considerations relating to an effort to inflict direct damage on Hizbollah, and not the result of planning that sought to exact a reasonable price from Lebanon without exceeding the above conditions. Examples of this are the strikes on Lebanon's transportation infrastructure that were designed to limit the transfer of supplies and reinforcements to Hizbollah, the damage caused to the Dahiya district of Beirut, which was designed to hit the Hizbollah headquarters, and the massive expulsion of population from southern Lebanon, designed to separate the civilian population from Hizbollah and to facilitate engaging it in war.

It is, therefore, highly likely that eventually the realistic objectives were achieved by the end of the war, although the partial and belated understanding of these objectives apparently prolonged the war unnecessarily,⁸ whereby after the first week it was conducted indecisively and with superfluous casualties. At the root of the problem was a lack of understanding of the special nature of the war with the Hizbollah organization and very partial adjustment to the change that occurred in the nature of the wars in which Israel may be involved in the current era. This change is largely the result of Israel's success in achieving conventional military supremacy over the regular armies of the neighboring Arab states. As a replacement for conventional regular militaries Israel's enemies are looking for asymmetrical solutions, and guerilla warfare is one the effective answers to Israel's military superiority. There is particular difficulty with contending with a guerilla force operating from the territory of a failed state while it enjoys the support of foreign states. This situation is not rare in the Middle East, and Israel may in the future have to face similar situations in the Lebanese and other arenas. In this respect the war in Lebanon was a wake-up call to Israel to develop the strategy, military doctrine, and forces needed to deal with such scenarios.

A major lesson learned from the war in Lebanon is that because of the importance of the perception of reality and expectations in wars of this type, it is not only the decisions taken that are important but also the way they are presented to the public. It may be assumed that a not inconsiderable number of parties in the Israeli administration understood that defeating Hizbollah is not a realistic war objective and that a political exit strategy is required to achieve the realistic objectives.⁹ Nonetheless, the Israeli leadership chose to present the defeat of Hizbollah as a realistic and attainable objective, whether it believed this was possible or it thought that this was the right way to enlist the public's support. The discrepancy that emerged between the expectations and the reality became a major influence on the development of the campaign. It generated public and media pressure on the decision makers, who in turn were pushed toward problematic decisions during the course of the war, particularly with regard to all aspects of the ground operations.

Notes

1. Aluf Benn and Akiva Eldar, "Looking for the Endgame," *Haaretz*, October 1, 2006.
2. See Charles Krauthammer, "Israel's Lost Moment," *Washington Post*, August 4, 2006.
3. Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, in Maoist Documentation Project (2000); Mao Tse-tung Reference Archive (marxists.org) 2000, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/1937/guerrilla-warfare/ch06.htm>.
4. See, for example, details of the deterioration of the security situation in Iraq in the periodic report of the US Defense Department submitted to Congress, published on September 1, 2006: *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, August 2006, Report to Congress in accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2006* (Section 9010).
5. Yoav Stern, "No Kidnap had I Known Extent of IDF Response, Says Nasrallah," *Haaretz*, August 28, 2006.
6. This was mainly reflected in the numerous ground movements chosen for particular reasons that were detached from the planning and wider context. An example of this is the decision to take Bint Jbail, deemed significant as the place where Nasrallah had made his "spider web address." See Amos Harel, "Senior General Staff Officer: The Battle Occurred Earlier than we'd Planned," *Haaretz*, August 27, 2006.
7. Ze'ev Schiff, "The Rocket Fire: No Change in Strategy," *Haaretz*, August 7, 2006.
8. See, for example, a description of the development of the understanding of the nature of the campaign by Benn and Eldar, "Looking for the Endgame."
9. Benn and Eldar, "Looking for the Endgame."

Chapter 2

The Decision Making Process in Israel

Giora Eiland

Introduction

The Lebanon War exposed, and not for the first time, severe deficiencies in matters concerned with strategic decision making in Israel, specifically, the conduct of the political echelon and the relationship of the political leadership with the military. Unlike other matters and contrary to popular opinion, the ability to change the situation and correct these flaws is not conditional on any political price or confrontation with the defense establishment. Nor will changing the situation incur an economic or organizational expense. If this is true, then why does the flawed situation continue? This essay focuses on defining the problem and describing its manifestations in the Second Lebanon War, and concludes with a proposal on what can be done.

Defining the Problem

There are two reasons for the weakness of the decision making framework in Israel. The first is connected with Israel's political structure and the second stems from the prominent absence of an ordered system.

Israel's electoral system and the manner in which governments are set up and then fall create a permanent state of political uncertainty. In my two years serving as head of the National Security Council during Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's term of office, I can point to a mere three weeks in which the coalition was stable and the viability of the government was assured. Within this kind of reality, a prime minister spends most of his time

trying to ensure his political survival. We can visualize the prime minister as a person not only required to make the most important and difficult of decisions, but forced to do so while balancing on a log. Clearly most of his attention is focused on trying not to fall. Moreover, the ministers who are supposed to be helping the prime minister are also his rivals, whether closet rivals who are members of his party, or open rivals who are heads of competing parties. This phenomenon induces the prime minister to adopt three modes of conduct:

- Discretion, which leads not only to compartmentalization, but also to forgoing any attempt to conduct businesslike deliberations for fear of leaks.
- Preferring considerations of loyalty over other considerations. For specific discussions or important political tasks the prime minister will prefer an individual whose loyalty (political or personal) he views as beyond question over someone else who is clearly more professionally qualified and proficient.
- Preferring that obligatory formal discussions, governmental meetings for example, deal only with less important issues or with matters that guarantee broad agreement. This way a semblance of governmental regularity is preserved while almost all political risk is avoided.

Even under these restrictions dictated by the political structure, however, it is possible to work differently. Nahum Barnea noted, correctly,

When all these allegations [against the political system] were voiced after the Second Lebanon War, they contained no small measure of presumptuousness. Throughout the war Olmert enjoyed total freedom of action: his hands were not tied by coalition partners. The right wing opposition in the Knesset backed him. Public opinion was behind him. All of the decisions reached were his own. Olmert was lacking for no power during the war, but rather the opposite was lacking: someone with knowledge and experience who could warn him of rash and untimely decisions.¹

The absence of a proper administrative system in the office of the prime minister manifested itself in two dimensions: the lack of staff and the absence of appropriate processes. Who constitutes the prime minister's staff? Seemingly it is the government itself. Ministers are in

charge of particular areas, and all bear shared responsibility. In a simplistic analogy to a military body, one could argue that the prime minister is the “commander,” the minister of health is the “medical officer,” the minister of education is the “education officer,” and so on. But clearly this is not the situation. Rather, in the same analogy, it would be more precise to liken the prime minister to a division commander and his ministers to brigade commanders, each in charge of a particular sector. True, they are generally committed to the “division” (the government), but surely they do not constitute the commander’s “staff officers.”

Who, therefore, constitutes the prime minister’s staff? On the one hand, the prime minister has no staff at all, yet on the other, he has two partial staffs, both of which are handicapped. One “staff” is composed of the prime minister’s personal aides, three or four officials in charge of particular areas: a military secretary, a political advisor, an intelligence expert, and occasionally an additional person, for example, the head of a political-security branch under Prime Minister Ehud Barak, or Dov Weisglass, who, without any formal title or office, advised Prime Minister Sharon on major political matters.

The advantage of this staff is that its members are close to the prime minister, from a physical standpoint and also as full partners in his deliberations. The drawback is that this staff is smaller than a battalion staff (an operations officer also has operations sergeants). There is no way that three or four individuals, qualified as they might be, can constitute the strategic headquarters of the Israeli government. The pace of events in Israel and the country’s constant state of political delirium create a situation in which the prime minister needs these individuals urgently several times each day. They become his “emissaries,” surely unable to simultaneously conduct methodical staff work.

The second “staff” is the National Security Council (NSC). Its advantage lies in its relative size and its ability to conduct methodical processes. The drawback is the inadequate connection between the NSC and the prime minister. Moreover, between these two partial staffs, advisors on the one hand and the NSC on the other, there is not enough coordination – certainly no arrangement that determines which person is in charge of what. For that matter, it would be a mistake to think it is possible to split staff work into two parts, one entity in charge of routine matters and the other in charge of

working on infrastructure. It would also be mistaken to think it is possible to divide up the work so that one body produces position papers and the other is in charge of their implementation.

The lack of a viable staff leads to a situation where basic processes are not conducted. There is no procedure for timely situation assessments. The nature of strategic changes is that they occur within a cumulative process. When there is no system in place for a periodic methodical examination of fundamental assumptions, a dangerous opportunity for surprises is created. In addition, there is no procedure for the suitable preparation of deliberations with the prime minister. In the best case, the right discussion is held with the right people, and is focused on the right issue. But beyond the technical convening of the meeting, who is the prime minister's person in charge of staff work prior to the discussion? Who conducts a preliminary discussion that can help to maximize the main deliberations? Who prepares alternatives and then checks the implications of each? The answer in most cases is . . . no one! The instances where the NSC has initiated and insisted on spearheading an issue are far more the exception than the rule.

A good example of this concerns the village of Rajar. At the end of 2005 a working meeting was held between the prime minister and the head of the General Security Services (GSS). Due to the security problem in the village (whose northern section, according to the Blue Line, is in Lebanon and its southern section in Israel), the GSS recommended that Israel erect a wall between the village's two sections. Not only did the prime minister agree; he was angry it hadn't yet been done, as he had decided on this measure two months prior. But who knew about this? Who was supposed to make sure that others also knew? Who was responsible for implementation? By chance, the issue came to the attention of the NSC and it was determined that erecting a wall in the middle of the village would have far reaching implications. In the legal area, for example, it turned out it would be necessary to change the Golan Heights Law and enact a new "evacuation-compensation" law or, alternatively, change Israel's citizenship law. Thus staff work proved, to the security systems as well, that erecting a wall in the middle of the village would not be the correct action. This is an example of the exception that proves the rule. And the rule is there are no rules.

Implications

Four outcomes result from this lack of an appropriate staff and the absence of methodological systems. They can be illustrated with the experience of the Second Lebanon War.

The first lapse concerns the lack of alternatives. In the government meeting held on July 12, 2006, immediately after news of the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbollah, the IDF presented its recommendations. Government ministers were placed in a situation where they had only two options: either approve or reject the military's proposal. Non-approval meant not doing anything, something which on that day was perceived as impossible. The outcome was clear.

What should have happened at the discussion? A representative of the government staff – a mythical position, in Israel's current reality – should have presented the government with at least three alternatives, namely:

- An air force retaliatory action aimed at choice Hizbollah targets (long range missiles whose locations were well known) and at the Lebanese infrastructure. This action would last 24-48 hours and then conclude because the international community and Hizbollah would ask for a ceasefire. This limited action would neither bring back the kidnapped soldiers nor destroy Hizbollah, but it would punish the aggressor, strengthen deterrence, and probably make it more difficult for the organization to act in the future.
- A limited war with more numerous objectives, including dealing a severe blow to Hizbollah's military capability, particularly its rocket launching capability. An action such as this obliges an extensive ground operation lasting several weeks.
- A strategic decision on a limited war, but postponement of action until a later opportunity, thus allowing the army several months to prepare.

Of course there were no such deliberations over alternatives, since there was no one to initiate or prepare them.

The second lapse concerns the ignoring of reality. The correct management of any business or organization obligates set procedures that are independent of isolated large, one-time events. When such procedures, including their review process, are not maintained, the organization/business functions in a situation whereby only crises are responded to. If

this holds true for a business, then it is certainly valid for a state. When the government convened at that same meeting on July 12 following the kidnapping, not one minister including the prime minister had any notion of the IDF's level of preparedness. This situation could still have been tolerated if the government had a staff branch well versed in the subject; but no such branch exists and consequently there were no routine procedures that regularly examined the IDF's level of preparedness.

In March 2003, the IDF finalized its newest multi-year plan (the "Kela" plan). Construction of the plan was based partly on two events that transpired a short time earlier. The first was Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002, where the IDF reoccupied the cities of the West Bank and placed the Muqata compound in Ramallah under siege; despite grave reports (of the Jenin "massacre" and the collapse of the Palestinian Authority), the Arab world remained indifferent. The conclusion was that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, severe and crisis-ridden as it might be, does not factor into the Arab states' deliberations as to launching a war against Israel, either individually or jointly. The second event was the war in Iraq and with it came the sense that as long as there is a strong American presence in the region, no Arab state will want to wage war against Israel.

The general conclusion was that since there is no entity in the Arab world interested *at present* in a war with Israel (including Hizbollah!), then a war that would erupt between Israel and one of its neighbors would result from one of two situations: either subsequent to a strategic change (a change of regime in one of the neighboring states, an American exodus from Iraq, or a change of similar magnitude), or a war launched by Israel.

Common to both situations is that Israel would have strategic warning of at least several months. This point became critical when the average yearly defense budget stood at about NIS 2.5 billion less than the Kela plan's base budget. In this situation the military rightly decided it would be correct that risk-taking be mainly in the area of war preparedness (inventory levels, technical competence, training levels). Since this area, unlike others, is given to changes and improvement within several months from the issue of a warning, everyone was convinced that enough lead time would be available. It can therefore be said that the government's July 12 decision to go to war "surprised" the army, as decision makers were naturally unaware of the above.

The third implication involves the division of responsibility. Even when the government convenes at the right time, discusses the right issue, and reaches the right decision, “someone” is still needed to translate those decisions into real actions and decide who does what. Consider the home front, for example. Who held ministerial responsibility for the home front? The government could ostensibly decide on one of three reasonable alternatives:

- The Ministry of the Interior: since the main onus for dealing with the home front is on the regional councils and these are under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior, it is natural for the minister of the interior to manage this area, with additional functions added to his authorities, including command of the home front.
- The Ministry of Internal Security: this is doubly logical. We are dealing with a true problem of internal security (missiles fired on the home front); moreover the police force, which is the main executing body in this case, is already subject to the minister of internal security.
- The Ministry of Defense: the logic behind this alternative is that the ministry has a staff body (“Melah” – Israel Emergency Economy), has a large organizational apparatus, and is in charge of the Home Front Command.

Each of these alternatives is far preferable to what actually ensued, where no one was assigned responsibility. In this kind of situation responsibility goes to the prime minister. This results in a big delay in the commencement of action, with a great deal of time elapsing until the director general of the prime minister’s office realizes that in the absence of any other responsible party *he* is responsible. A further outcome is inefficiency. The prime minister’s office, in contrast with the other three alternatives, is not built to serve as an executive body. Why does all this happen? Because there is no staff body to make recommendations on the necessary division of responsibility.

The fourth lapse concerns planning. Strategic initiatives, whether for war or political moves, demand planning. Correct planning must occur in five stages:

1. An analysis of assumptions, which in fact is a description of reality. If we skip this stage we create a hazardous tendency to work under

hidden and unchecked assumptions, some of which are liable to be fundamentally wrong.

2. An analysis of Israel's interests and what it wants to achieve; setting priorities.
3. An analysis of the comprehensive map of interests; this stage is vital when multiple players are involved. In the Lebanon arena there were several interested and influential players.
4. Defining the required achievement: what is realistically achievable in light of the above. What is required, what is possible, and how much interface is there?
5. Tactics: what must be done; what should be announced (and what not), and in what order?

A government in its entirety cannot manage such a procedure. Such a procedure requires a staff body. When no such body exists, action usually begins at the last stage (and in this context, consider the disengagement and convergence plans).

What Must Be Done

An analysis of the present situation and a depiction of its inherent weaknesses were submitted to Prime Minister Sharon. To his credit, he agreed to listen to very tough language in an extremely limited forum. But the prime minister, even if convinced, was not ready for change. It was hoped that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would be more receptive to a new path, but unfortunately this was not so. Olmert did indeed make a change, yet one whose correctness is highly in question. Ofer Shelah wrote:

[The NSC] will ultimately and officially become a long range planning body, an Israeli code name for the production of paperwork, which will be handed over to the head of staff for review – in the small amount of time left to him from working with government ministries. . . . It is not an exaggeration to say that transferring the Council to Jerusalem would only save transportation costs to its final and inevitable destination – the paper shredder in the boss's office... More important is the fact that in a domain that needed real change, Olmert and Turbowitz opted for cosmetics.²

What is truly needed is a change that is relatively easy to effect but whose contribution would be immense. The prime minister must organize his office and decision making apparatus in this way: choose an individual he considers trustworthy in political and security matters, putting twelve employees at his or her disposal. This new body would be called the political-security staff. All of the existing functionaries, first and foremost the NSC, would be cancelled; the roles of political advisor to the prime minister and of the military secretary would be cancelled as independent positions. From this moment forward, this new staff would be the *sole* body responsible for political-security activity in the prime minister's office, the government, and the security cabinet. If any deliberation is held but not properly prepared, the head of staff is responsible; if a deliberation is prepared properly and decisions are made, the head of staff is responsible for translating these into operative steps and following up on their implementation.

This head of staff will be required to conduct timely situation assessments; officially formulate Israel's position on matters in his purview; supervise and approve various actions of the IDF, Ministry of Defense, the Mossad, the Foreign Ministry, and so on (naturally in correct proportions). He will have to prepare a yearly plan for cabinet discussions, conduct preparatory discussions, and be the sole party that presents alternatives to the government.

In this way a proper dialogue will be created between the political and military echelons. It is unwise to begin drafting the structure and nature of such a dialogue only upon the outbreak of a crisis, when highly urgent meetings are required. But most importantly, this staff will be responsible for initiating or examining various political options, not only in real time when a response to an event is demanded, but prior to that time. It is clear that in order to perform his job faithfully, the head of the political-security staff must work closely with the prime minister, be a partner in his meetings with foreign leaders, and be his main emissary for meetings with foreign elements. For the head of staff to successfully carry out his duties, his field of activity must be focused and directed, as is customary in other countries. This simple change does not require any political compromises, nor does it involve a supplement to the budget (actually the opposite is true). And, as

opposed to what is commonly thought, it would not lead to a confrontation with security forces.

The sole difficulty is a difficulty of culture, and here is the main question: can the prime minister of Israel – any prime minister – admit that his knowledge and experience are limited, and that he needs to institutionalize a share of the processes and set up an ordered working method?

Notes

1. *Yediot Ahronot*, September 18, 2006.
2. *Yediot Ahronot*, May 15, 2006.

Chapter 3

Deterrence and its Limitations

Yair Evron

Long term effects of the 2006 war in Lebanon cannot yet be determined. International, Arab, and Israeli observers were quick to make predictions about the future of Israeli deterrence, but these appear to be quite premature. What can already be done, however, is to apply parts of the analytical framework of deterrence theory to the current situation, and on this basis assess the deterrence equation between Israel and its adversaries, in particular Hizbollah, before and after the war, and consider the possible outcomes of the war in these terms.

The Meaning of Deterrence

Deterrence is a highly complex process comprising the threat to use force to deter the opponent (the “challenger”) who aims to change the status quo from resorting to violence. Deterrence threats are of two modes: first, an obstructing measure to deny the challenger its goals, i.e., defeating its armed challenge (deterrence by denial); second, a punitive measure, i.e., punishing its assets, including civilian targets, beyond the battlefield (deterrence by punishment). However, the success of deterrence is contingent on an intermixture of political, strategic, and psychological factors. The greater the relative denial/punitive capability of the deterrer, i.e., military advantage, the more effective are the deterrent threats. On the other hand, the greater the frustration of the challenger with the political reality, the greater is its willingness to challenge the status quo. In addition, there is the resolve factor, in other words, the readiness of the deterrer to exercise its threats. The latter dimension is difficult to pinpoint and has complex ramifications.

Demonstrations of resolve might establish the “reputation” of the deterrer and strengthen deterrence. At the same time, as extensive studies have showed, “reputation” does not in all circumstances necessarily enhance the effectiveness of deterrence.¹ Moreover, demonstrations of resolve by the use of military force might lead to escalation rather than deterrence.

Deterrence threats can be communicated in various ways: declarations; “silent” moves, for example the movement of military forces; and occasionally even limited military action whose purpose is to deter a more extensive war that might be initiated by the challenger. Conversely, while deterrence focuses on dissuading the opponent from military action, compellence threats aim at effecting the challenger’s submission to the compeller’s demands. In this sense, compellence (or “coercion,” to some) has an offensive nature and its success requires the leveling of significant pressure on the opponent. Deterrence threats achieve their goals more easily than coercive threats.

Overall, deterrence is to a certain extent an elusive posture. There are no exact and well-defined formulas for assessing the strength of a deterrent posture. The ultimate proof of deterrence success is when an explicit deterrent threat has caused the challenger to abandon a specific decision to initiate hostilities. Yet even then, the reasons for such a decision might be multi-faceted.

Deterrence is not the ultimate factor in conflict management: it is one strategy among several designed to stabilize conflict relations. It occupies the center ground between appeasement and concessions on the one hand, and deliberate military escalation on the other. Moreover, it is not a substitute for political accords. Its role is to stabilize the military relations during conflict, and provide support for a political agreement when conditions are ripe for its evolution.

Israeli Deterrence Against State and Non-State Actors

Due to its clear military advantage and the peace agreements it has with Egypt and Jordan, and coupled with the lack of a basic state interest among the other Arab states – with the possible exception of Syria – in an armed conflict with Israel, since the mid 1970s Israel has enjoyed an effective

and stable deterrence against all-out or even limited war vis-à-vis all the regional states.

Deterrence can generally be effective – all else being equal – when the challenger is a state with a formal decision making center that controls the state's elements of armed power. Deterrence against sub-state actors is much more complicated. When the sub-state actor (guerrilla or terrorist organization) acts against the will of the government from whose territory it operates, military retaliation against the state can push it to impose restrictions on the sub-state actor. This is a form of third party deterrence that occurred several times in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, primarily in regard to fedayeen operations from Jordan during the 1950s and again in the late 1960s, and subsequently from Lebanon.² Israeli retaliation led to Jordanian actions against the fedayeen, but largely failed in the case of Lebanon because of the weakness of its government. Success of retaliation as a third party deterrence mechanism depends on the domestic strength of the government.

Deterrence can also be achieved against sub-state elements that operate inside a state or in no-man's land. Thus, for example, the deterrence equation with the Palestinians has been affected by two main factors: the level of political goals the Palestinians expect to achieve, and their consequent level of frustration in the absence of political progress and heightened Israeli military activity. The more intense this frustration, the higher the likelihood is that deterrence would fail. Conversely, the harsh Israeli response to terror and guerilla activity during the intifada, which caused extensive and cumulative damage to Palestinian society, contributed to the acceptance of the *hudna* (or *tahdiya*) in early 2005 and the overall low level of violent activity since then by the various Palestinian organizations, primarily Fatah and Hamas. At the same time, the acceptance of the *hudna* was also predicated (at least on the part of the Palestinian Authority) on the assumption that the political process would be renewed. Thus, the two factors interface, and in the absence of political progress, it is likely that Palestinian violence would recur. Strong Israel military reactions are necessary to signal the high costs involved in violence, thereby strengthening deterrence.

It is possible to create a limited deterrence balance between states or between a state and a sub-state actor that is not related to the entire conflict

but is confined to specific aspects within it. Such balances at times require “reinforcement,” either by means of political settlements or through the use of limited force.

The Israeli-Hizbollah Deterrence Equation

In May 2000 Israeli forces (along with forces of the South Lebanese Army) withdrew from southern Lebanon. This withdrawal was recognized officially by the UN and enjoyed the support of the international community, including the Lebanese government. Nonetheless, Hizbollah sprang into action after the withdrawal and launched its first attack on Mount Dov, and thereafter launched assaults every few months from the eastern sector. Over time these attacks became something of a regular ritual: opening fire on Israeli positions and (in general) avoiding attacking civilian settlements. The IDF responded by firing on Hizbollah positions and for the most part, the clashes were of short duration.

It seems that this mode of behavior generated a set of rules of the game for the north. These served Hizbollah’s aims inside Lebanon and, apparently, they also served the interests of Syria and Iran. While they were inconvenient for Israel, they did not disrupt civilian life in the north of the country. Rather, civilian life in the north was rehabilitated after years of disturbances and the economy there flourished. Against this backdrop, there was nothing to be gained by reacting with major escalation to Hizbollah provocations. Moreover, from 2005 there were initial inklings that the political system in Lebanon would change for the better, and especially with the withdrawal of Syrian forces, there was some basis of hope for a modification of Hizbollah’s autonomous military standing.

In practice, these rules of the game were the result of a mutual mini-deterrence balance. Israel deterred Hizbollah from resuming extensive strikes on civilian populations, while Hizbollah deterred Israel from launching a general assault aimed at destroying the organization. This mutual deterrence was based on the reciprocal punitive military threat on the one hand and socio-political elements on the other. Hizbollah was aware of the costs that would be borne by its political constituency – the Lebanese in general, but particularly the Shiites – if it breached the rules

of the game. For Israel, it was beneficial to avoid being dragged into wider action that would disrupt life in its northern region.

Thus, despite Hizbollah's being a sub-state actor, deterrence threats could still be leveled against it. The paradox is that because Hizbollah has become an active political player in Lebanon that is looking to increase its political power, it is driven in two opposite directions: within the domestic Lebanese political arena it is constantly forced to demonstrate its unique ability to act as a "shield" against Israel, and therefore has had to resort to its repertoire of violent provocations. Conversely, its role as a Lebanese player has forced it to guard against sparking a large-scale Israeli offensive.

In its July 12 action Hizbollah did not completely break the rules of the game, but it did significantly breach them. It shot at civilian targets (which it had done previously but on a more limited scale). It operated in the border's western sector, and along a wider area. Finally, it carried out the kidnapping, a provocation it had been unable to stage since the October 2000 abductions. The combination of all these factors ultimately violated Israel's deterrence threshold and prompted the heavy Israeli reaction. Since Hizbollah apparently believed that it had not violated the rules of the game, it did not anticipate a massive Israeli response.

Solid deterrence posture is based ultimately on the relationship between the political interests to be defended, and the intensity of military response exercised in case deterrence fails. Usually, responses to violations of deterrence thresholds should be roughly proportionate to the damage caused by the violations. However, at times, restoration of deterrence thresholds, especially in mini-deterrence relationships, requires a disproportionate response. This is primarily the case when repeated limited challenges are initiated by the challenger, hoping that these would be ultimately "accepted" by the deterrer and gradually foster new rules of the game. In July 2006, the extent of the Israeli response would necessarily be disproportionate regarding the specific provocation of Hizbollah.

At the same time, however, in order to restore and maintain the specific deterrence balance towards Hizbollah, it was sufficient to mount an intensive but limited military operation. The destruction of the Hizbollah arsenal of long and medium range missiles at the very beginning of the campaign, an uncharacteristically heavy response, would itself have served the purpose of restoring Israel's deterrence and creating a new balance of deterrence

vis-à-vis Hizbollah. Moreover, the destruction of the Dahiya quarter in south Beirut – the center of Hizbollah’s headquarters and the residence of many of its operatives and supporters – certainly served as a major signal of Israel’s ability and resolve to punish the organization, thus further strengthening Israel’s deterrence vis-à-vis Hizbollah. The continuation of the campaign beyond that point was not necessary for deterrence purposes. The definition of the war’s objectives that called for a change in the internal political order of Lebanon, namely, enforcing the dismantling of Hizbollah as a military organization and deploying the Lebanese army in the south, while justified in international legal terms (specifically, implementation of UN resolution 1559) and reflective of a real desire of a large portion of the Lebanese polity, went beyond the restoration of a solid and stable balance of deterrence.

Overall, the wide scale Israeli response appears to have indeed strengthened Israeli deterrence against Hizbollah – seen precisely from the declarations by Hizbollah leaders who admitted they did not expect the Israeli harsh response; otherwise, they would not have authorized the July 12 operation. On the other hand, during the campaign Hizbollah succeeded in demonstrating its ability to continue harassing the Israeli population in the north with its short range rockets. This presumably would constrain Israel from launching massive operations against Hizbollah in the absence of the latter’s provocations. There is no doubt that Israel could conduct a large scale operation against Hizbollah, with due preparations (including proper training of the assigned ground forces) and advance planning. Israel was right to avoid it during the last campaign because of the burden of a long and costly counterinsurgency campaign, but it might opt for it were Hizbollah to provoke it.

The New Israel-Hizbollah Balance of Deterrence

The radical escalation contained in the Israeli response to the July 12 operation both shocked Hizbollah and demonstrated that consistent violations of Israeli deterrence thresholds would not be tolerated. Moreover, through its air bombardment of Lebanon, Israel inflicted extensive damage on the civilian infrastructure of Hizbollah in Beirut and southern Lebanon. This punishment apparently caused Hizbollah considerable political

damage in Lebanon, evident in the various statements of Nasrallah himself and Hizbollah's intensive efforts to compensate members of the Shiite community that suffered most from the campaign. One of the interesting implications of Hizbollah's acknowledgment that it did not expect Israel to respond so forcefully is the organization's explicit recognition of the said rules of the game and the existing balance of deterrence before the war. It only hoped to reap as much gain politically and strategically while operating from within the general framework of these rules – and at the same time while gnawing away at them.

After the war Hizbollah leaders talked about defeating the Israeli army for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But an analysis of the campaign leads to a different conclusion. During the campaign, Hizbollah fighters demonstrated skill and determination in their encounters with Israeli forces, but the Israeli army did not in fact – because of political and military considerations – even begin to tap its complete arsenal of capabilities. While it is possible to destroy a guerrilla organization as Hizbollah, this would require a long and costly counterinsurgency campaign, which would exact a heavy price of the civilian population. Israel learned that lesson in its long stay in Lebanon and had no desire to try it again, especially when no vital national security interests were involved. This in fact was the main reason why Israel hesitated in its strategic decision to employ ground forces in the campaign and penetrate deeply into Lebanon. Note that this rational calculation created the contradiction between the definition of one of the objectives of the war, i.e., “disarmament of Hizbollah,” which was unattainable unless Israel became fully immersed in a long and thankless ground operation, something that Israel was understandably reluctant to do, and the actually military operations conducted during the campaign.

The cautious mode of behavior Hizbollah adopted at the end of hostilities and its ostensible readiness to accept UN resolution 1701, including the two important clauses on stationing the Lebanese army in the south and deploying the UN peacekeeping force, point to Hizbollah's understanding that provoking Israel in the way it did over the previous six years was counterproductive. Since the war, the organization has directed much of its activity to the domestic-political scene inside Lebanon. It has sought to frustrate the government's attempt to implement resolution 1701, and as such, avoid its disarmament. By keeping its arms Hizbollah would be

able to maintain its special position within Lebanon. At the same time, Hizbollah has sought to change the Lebanese political system, thereby earning greater power for the Shiite community and its allies. It is too early to conclude whether Hizbollah and its allies will be able to modify the Lebanese political system and acquire a stronger position. It appears likely that some compromise will be reached that would allow Hizbollah and its allies some political gains but deny them their overall objectives. Paradoxically, precisely by becoming more involved in the struggle to change the Lebanese political system, Hizbollah would also be more constrained by the Lebanese body polity (notwithstanding its factional nature) from provoking further escalation with Israel. It is important to note in this context that though according to different estimates the Shia community in Lebanon comprises 30-40 percent of the population, it is itself divided, and the alliance with part of the Christian sector is opportunistic and fluid. Consequently, Hizbollah will find no partners in trying to impose its political-ideological principles inside Lebanon or form a political coalition seeking to challenge Israel militarily again.

Deterrence against Syria

Israeli deterrence against the Arab regional states has been stable since the 1970s thanks to the combination of the balance of political interests and the balance of military power. Indeed, over the years, the coincidence of political interests, and even some convergence of interests, has been gradually enhanced. The main exception has been Syria, with which several attempts to reach a peace accord have failed due to the positions of both Israel and Syria.

A brief review of Syria's strategic behavior since 1973, when it initiated war along with Egypt, demonstrates its acute awareness of the political and military factors in its environment. Although Syria considers the return of the Golan Heights to Syrian sovereignty as a central objective of its foreign policy, it has correctly assessed that politically and militarily the likelihood of its return by force is nil. Moreover, Syria was ready to cooperate tacitly with Israel in Lebanon in the 1970s, has been careful since the 1970s not to violate the Golan Heights agreement, and in the 1982 war in Lebanon limited itself to a defensive posture, fighting only to protect its position in

the Beqaa and the link to Beirut. Later, it was ready to participate in the cultivation of the “rules of engagement” with Israel in Lebanon during the 1980s.³ Finally, during the 2006 campaign in Lebanon, it was very careful not to provide Israel with any pretext to attack it (not that the Israeli leadership was seriously considering it in any event). This consistent pattern of behavior has demonstrated the continued Syrian awareness of the strategic environment in which it operates.

But has the Lebanese campaign affected the Syrian leaders’ perceptions concerning its geo-strategic context? This is a difficult question, and there is no solid methodology to rely on. The ultimate answer will come only in the future, but a rational analysis of the factors affecting Syria’s behavior might provide some clues.

An assessment of the military dimension of the Lebanese campaign could yield some of the following conclusions: first, the campaign was not against a regular army but was a version of a counterinsurgency operation coupled with limited tactical encounters with Hizbollah fighters operating as regular army units. In many of these encounters these fighters demonstrated high proficiency and courage. However, these brief encounters are very different from major campaigns conducted by regular armies in which large units rely on the combination of armor, air force, and artillery, and in which firepower, made up increasingly of various precision systems, is involved. The latter is precisely the type of campaign that would take place were Syria to initiate hostilities against Israel on the Golan Heights. What happened in Lebanon is therefore hardly an example of what might happen in an Israeli-Syrian campaign.

After the war the Israeli military was severely criticized on several grounds (and inside Israel probably more so than by outside observers). Several dimensions of the army’s operations have been analyzed in depth by many official teams composed of retired Israeli officers, and some of them produced highly critical assessments of the conduct of the ground forces. It can be assumed that many of the military’s problems that surfaced during the campaign will be corrected, such as improving training, refurbishing supplies, and instituting various organizational changes. What also emerged was that the army did not properly prepare itself for the campaign and “slipped” into it (something that certainly can be remedied before future military confrontations take place). However, all these problems cannot

hide the basic picture of continued significant Israeli superiority vis-à-vis the Syrian forces.

In a major campaign that involves all branches of the military, Israel's overwhelming air force superiority would have a decisive impact on the battlefield. As the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 demonstrated, in a campaign between regular armies the role of a modern air force is critical and decisive. The Revolution in Military Affairs that is increasingly shaping the battlefield affords Israel a clear advantage over all the armies in the region and certainly vis-à-vis the Syrian forces.

In Lebanon the Israeli air force yet again demonstrated its capabilities. In the absence of any defense against it, its test lay not in its ability to suppress its opponent's air defenses and air assets (that did not exist) but in its ability to strike at targets with high accuracy and deliver a high volume of ordnance. This it demonstrated effectively. Its failure to preempt the launching of the various missiles and rockets against Israel was not surprising and in fact was to be expected. Thus, a Syrian rational assessment of the results of a major encounter with Israel could lead only to the same conclusions that directed Syrian strategic behavior in the past and which have been enumerated before.

Beyond that, the Syrian regime is isolated in the Arab world. Its ability to mobilize Arab political support before involving itself in a military adventure with Israel is very limited. It can expect Iranian support, but this would encounter considerable logistical problems and could therefore be limited only to transfer of supplies and the like. The situation might change were Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, a situation that lies in the future and is beyond the scope of this discussion.

Finally, the persistent Syrian efforts to engage Israel diplomatically and its repeated proposals to open peace negotiations between the two countries do not signal a change in Syria's assessment of the strategic environment. While it is true that the intensity of the Syrian peace signals are partly the result of current international and regional difficulties, they also indicate Syria's interest in a change to its status in the Middle East, and its realization that the return of the Golan Heights to Syrian sovereignty can come about only through peaceful negotiations.

Related Deterrence Considerations: The Palestinians and Beyond

The success of Israeli deterrence against Palestinian violence has depended on the level of Palestinian political aspirations (and conversely, frustration) on the one hand, and the level of Israeli military activity on the other. A third critical factor is the existence of a Palestinian central political authority that is able to impose its will over the various armed militias operating in the Gaza Strip and to a lesser degree in the West Bank. What has changed since the parliamentary elections that brought Hamas to power, along with the gradual deterioration in Palestinian social and political coherence, has been the inability of the two parties to settle their differences and create a stable center of decision making that could impose its control on all the armed organizations. In its absence it is difficult to apply an efficient deterrent posture vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Only a significant political change in Israeli-Palestinian relations coupled with the formation of an effective decision making center could create a constructive context for the application of effective deterrence. In the meantime, both Fatah and Hamas appear to be interested, each for its own reasons, in maintaining a ceasefire with Israel, and Hamas is capable of enforcing it in the Gaza Strip, which it controls effectively. For the short term, therefore, a limited ceasefire is possible if Israel so chooses. However, the more chaotic the situation in the Palestinian territories becomes, the more likely is the erosion of the ceasefire. Similarly, in the absence of political movement and the absence of a central strong Palestinian authority, Israeli deterrence would ultimately weaken.

It has been argued that Hizbollah's success in launching its rocket arsenal against Israel provides an example that would encourage Palestinian extremists to imitate the same tactics. This might suggest the weakening of Israel's deterrence, and it is apparent that Hamas is currently investing an effort in building up its short range rocket capability. Whether it would use it is primarily a political consideration. Overall, Palestinian strategists should consider two additional lessons that could be drawn from the Lebanon campaign: first, the Israeli air force (and artillery) was able to cause extensive destruction to Lebanon, and secondly, the international community was ready to tolerate this Israeli retaliation. The potential costs

to the Palestinians could be as harsh if not more so were they to launch an extensive campaign of missiles attacks. In addition, already in the past Israel proved that in the face of severe Palestinian provocations, it would ultimately resort to extreme measures.

Regarding the greater region, Israeli deterrence against initiation of wars by regional states has been stable since the 1970s. Given that the political dimension has such an impact on the success of deterrence, recent developments have combined to further solidify the stability of the deterrence equation. The increased prominence of Iran and its possible nuclearization has created additional converging interests between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel. Based on this political background, the “language” of interaction between Israel and these Arab states is already – and should become even more – political and less based on the mode of deterrence.

Finally, the Lebanese campaign left the Israeli public and political elite with deep feelings of frustration and a very critical view of the performance of the army. The criticism of various aspects of the military activity presented by many of the professional military teams appointed by the chief of staff added considerably to the overall distrust of both the political and military leadership. All this affected the internal public debate in Israel about deterrence, and the refrain of both the media and many in the public debate is that Israel’s deterrence has been considerably damaged. But deterrence is not a quantity that can be measured exactly, certainly not by the deterrer. Israeli deterrence is based not on Israeli self-criticism, but on the constant factors of political interests of the challengers, coupled with the basic fundamentals of military power. Those have not changed as a result of the campaign in Lebanon. And to the extent that deterrence depends on demonstrations of resolve (though usually this factor is of much lesser centrality than that of the other factors), the quick Israeli readiness to punish Lebanon extensively and its not being censored by the international community only served to signal resolve.

There is, however, a danger in the loose public discussion of deterrence. Traditionally, Israeli strategic thinking overemphasized demonstrations of resolve by the use of military force as necessary to strengthen future deterrence. Therefore, a notion might develop that in order to strengthen deterrence Israel has to demonstrate its real military capabilities. This

combines with doomsday prophecies about various Iranian-Hizbollah–Syrian plans for future aggression against Israel. Thus, the (il)logic of preventive war might join mistaken perceptions about Israeli deterrence and lead to unnecessary escalation.

Notes

1. See, for example, Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), and Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).
2. Similar operations from Egypt in the 1950s were sanctioned by the government.
3. On the 1970s and 1980s tacit and/or indirect Israeli-Syrian understandings see Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

Chapter 4

A Test of Rival Strategies: Two Ships Passing in the Night

Giora Romm

The purpose of this essay is to analyze several prominent military aspects of the war in Lebanon and derive the main lessons from them. The essay does not deal in historical explanations of what caused any particular instance of military thinking or any specific achievement. Rather, the analysis points to four main conclusions: the importance of clear expression at the command level to reduce the battle fog; the phenomenon of military blindness with respect to the role played by short range rockets (Katyushas) in the overall military campaign; the alarming performance of the ground forces; and the critical importance of an exit strategy and identification of the war's optimal end point from the very outset of the war.

The War and its Goals

The 2006 Lebanon war began on July 12 and continued for thirty-three days. The event began as a military operation designed to last one day or a few days. As matters dragged on and became more complicated, more vigorous terms were used to describe the fighting. Several months after the campaign, the government officially recognized it as a "war."

This was a war in which the political leadership tried to define political goals before the war and in the opening days of the fighting, something that did not occur in most of Israel's wars. This attempt was unsuccessful, however. What appeared to be the political goals changed in the course

of the fighting, at least judging by speeches made by the senior political leadership during the conflict.

The Israel Defense Forces was the entity that proposed the list of political goals to the government. The following objectives were presented to the prime minister and the cabinet on the night of July 12:

1. To distance Hizbollah from the border with Israel.
2. To strike a significant blow against Hizbollah's military capability and status, and thereby put an end to terrorism originating from Lebanon.
3. To strengthen the deterrence vis-à-vis Hizbollah and the entire region.
4. To correct the prevailing system in Lebanon, based on an effective enforcement mechanism that is supported by international involvement (this was later changed to "have the Lebanese government use the Lebanese army to impose its sovereignty over its entire territory").
5. To foster auspicious conditions for freeing the kidnapped IDF soldiers.
6. To accomplish these ends while keeping Syria out of the war.

These goals were dictated by the definition of the "strategic purpose" as presented by the IDF. The concept of "strategic purpose" was added to the IDF lexicon in recent years and is designed to be a platform proposed by the military to the political leadership (because the political leadership has long refrained from defining goals to the army), from which the campaign's goals are to be derived. These goals should guide all government agencies, not just the military. Notably absent from the strategic purpose was any reference to Israel's home front.

Definition of the goals changed during the fighting, in an effort to adapt them to the emerging situation. More importantly, however, statements by political figures, and sometimes also by senior military officers, employed careless and populist language. These statements created expectations among the public that did not match the discourse between the military and the civilian leadership. In addition, the goals ignored one of the fundamentals of Israel's security doctrine: any war initiated by Israel should have a defined and short timetable.

The political goals were translated into a list of missions for the operational headquarters. These amounted to extensive strikes by the air force against Hizbollah deep within Lebanon while isolating Lebanon from Syria, together with a series of ground operations in the Northern Command's theater that would not drag the IDF into implementing its entire ground operations plan for southern Lebanon. A long time passed before the prevention of short range Katyusha rocket fire appeared on the list of operational goals. This task was added to the list of goals at a later stage of the fighting, after the military command fully realized its significance.

What all these formulations had in common, from those made by the tactical command level to those by the political leadership, was the lack of simplicity and transparency necessary to make intentions clear. The former culture of structured communications – verification that both parties, those giving commands and those receiving them, understand things the same way, and the definition of achievable and measured missions – was abandoned.

Enemy Facts and Figures

Hizbollah began to establish itself as a military power in Lebanon in 1985. The hope that Israel's retreat from Lebanon in May 2000 would divert Hizbollah from the military course to the political sphere was not realized. Hizbollah indeed entered the political arena, but it also continued to strengthen itself militarily. The withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon in early 2005 was a turning point for Hizbollah. It appears that the full significance of the change in the internal balance of power in Lebanon was not appreciated in Israel. Neither the significance of the absence of Syrian power as a lever for Israeli pressure on Lebanon – and when necessary on Hizbollah – nor Hizbollah's concept of its role in the new balance of power was fully comprehended.

Hizbollah's military organization differs from the other Arab military forces in the area. It has the structure, organization, and capability of a regular army, the logic of a terrorist organization, and the modus operandi of a guerilla group. Hizbollah's power rested primarily on the following large and diverse three-pronged rocket array:

1. A unit of long range rockets with a range of 200 kilometers, deployed between Beirut and the Awali River. These rockets came from Iran.
2. A unit of medium range rockets with a range of 100 kilometers deployed south of the Awali. These rockets came from Syria.
3. A unit of short range Katyusha rockets with a range of 7-20 kilometers, and some rockets with a range of 40 kilometers. Thirteen thousand rockets of this type were deployed in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel.

In addition, Hizbollah was able to launch armed unmanned GPS-guided aerial vehicles (UAVs) – the Ababil.

Hizbollah had several thousand fighters trained in guerilla warfare, and was equipped with advanced anti-tank missiles. It prepared a broad system of bunkers and pits for the protection of its fighters. An effective and high redundancy communications system was also built, varying from landline communications to individual beepers. Although the system was repeatedly attacked, part of it survived to the end of the war, enabling Hizbollah to maintain control of its rocket system.

IDF Facts and Figures

The IDF entered the war from what was overall a routine situation. The immediate operational units at its disposal were the air force and the Northern Command.

During the fighting, the air force operated at almost full capacity. It succeeded in accomplishing most of the goals assigned to it. The air force put its “Mishkal Sguli” (“Specific Weight”) plan into operation on the night of July 13. Within thirty-five minutes, the vast majority of Hizbollah’s array of long range rockets and a large portion of the medium range rocket launchers were destroyed. In the course of the fighting, the air force destroyed all the medium range launchers from which rockets were actually launched (table 1).

In addition, the air force carried out the following missions:

1. Limited attacks on Lebanese ground targets and attacks on Hizbollah targets – these attacks were intended to affect Hizbollah’s ability to continue and renew the fighting. The effectiveness of these attacks is unclear.

Table 1. Success in Missions to Destroy the Various Rockets

Type	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Quantity	Result
122-mm Katyusha	7-40	7	13,000	Most of the rockets and launchers were not destroyed.
220-mm, 302-mm, Fadjr 5, 3	45-70	50-175	about 1,000	Most of the launchers were destroyed: half in the first attack wave, and half in search and destroy missions. Launchers from which rockets were launched were destroyed.
Zelzal 2	200	400-600	dozens	The vast majority was destroyed in the early days of the fighting. Not a single missile was launched.

2. It demolished the Dahiya neighborhood in Beirut, a closed quarter used by Hizbollah as both a residence and an operational control area.
 3. It intercepted and shot down the Ababil UAVs that Hizbollah launched towards Israel.
 4. During the fighting, together with other IDF units operating various radar devices, the air force created a system for detecting rocket launchings in order to provide advance warning to the home front.
 5. During the war, it executed approximately 120 rescue missions, nearly half of them in enemy territory. Three hundred sixty wounded soldiers were rescued in these missions. It also parachuted supplies to IDF fighting units.
 6. In the later stages of the fighting, the air force began operations against Katyusha deployment. The effectiveness of these attacks was limited, and this activity did not alter the rate of Katyusha fire against Israel.
- To attain these achievements, the air force consumed a large quantity of resources:
1. The total number of sorties during the fighting was only slightly fewer than in the Yom Kippur War.

2. The total number of attack missions flown during the fighting was greater than in the Yom Kippur War.
3. The total number of combat helicopter missions flown was double the number flown in the first Lebanon war, Operation Accountability, and Operation Grapes of Wrath combined.
4. The air force depleted its supply of certain types of armaments, resulting in a need for immediate stocks from overseas.

The marginal effectiveness of the air force combat missions declined steeply as the fighting progressed, mostly because of the unlikely ratio of the number of targets with any value whatsoever (which dropped sharply) to the forces available to and operated by designers of the aerial combat.

The Northern Command began the fighting with the Galil Division. Permission to call up one division was granted on July 13. Sixty thousand reservists were called up during the fighting, a force equivalent to four divisions.

The following principal stages occurred in the ground fighting:

1. A limited ground operation along the border aimed at destroying Hizbollah's infrastructure there began on July 18. To use the IDF's terminology, these were "fence-hugging" operations designed to deal with Hizbollah's low trajectory firepower.
2. Action by individual brigades in Maroun a-Ras and Bint Jbail began on July 22.
3. Ground operations were expanded on July 29 in order to create a security zone.
4. Operation Change of Direction 8, carried out from August 1 to August 10, saw brigade teams seize strategically commanding territory and attack terrorists.
5. Two helicopter landings near the Litani River took place on August 12 and 13 in order to give the IDF control of this region.
6. Regular and reserve infantry and armored forces entered the Katyusha zone during the fighting. They fought several battles, whose effect on the overall operational goals was marginal.

During the ground fighting, Israel's artillery fired over 180,000 shells and hundreds of MLRS rockets at the Katyusha zone. There is no indication that this ongoing artillery fire achieved any substantial achievements; it clearly did not affect the rate of Katyusha launchings.

In general, the system that should have laid out the general staff's operational plans for the forces' operating commands had difficulty doing so, which created a large and growing gap between the general staff and the Northern Command. The general staff was perceived as hesitant, while the Northern Command was perceived as lacking in performance capability. The result was an overall negative result in the ground fighting.

Despite partial successes, whose long term effect is unclear, both the civilian and the military leaderships appeared incapable of leading a clear and decisive military conflict. In addition to inadequate professional capability, one of the reasons for this was the leadership's overreaction to every incident in which the ground forces suffered losses, even when these were separate from the operational campaign itself (in the Kfar Giladi incident, for example, where twelve reservists not yet engaged in combat were killed by rocket fire).

In previous wars, the IDF chief of staff devoted most of his time to handling problematic points on the battlefronts, in order to both overcome difficulties and spot strategic possibilities (as did Moshe Dayan in the Sinai Campaign and David Elazar in the Yom Kippur War). The same is true in foreign armies. This was the greatness of Napoleon, MacArthur, Rommel, and others. In his absence, the commander's staff remained behind and was entrusted with managing the war. In the campaign in Lebanon, it appeared that the chief of staff did not apply enough personal influence to solve the problem of weakness in the Northern Command's ground operations, including drastic replacements of commanding officers, even though he visited the Northern Command almost every day.

A Test of the Enemies' Strategies

The strategies employed by the IDF and Hizbollah evolved over the thirty-three days of the conflict. The core of these strategies was the respective concepts that had developed over the previous six years, but these were adapted on a constant basis in response to the particular way that matters unfolded.

The IDF's strategy divided Lebanon into the theaters of responsibility of the Northern Command and the air force.

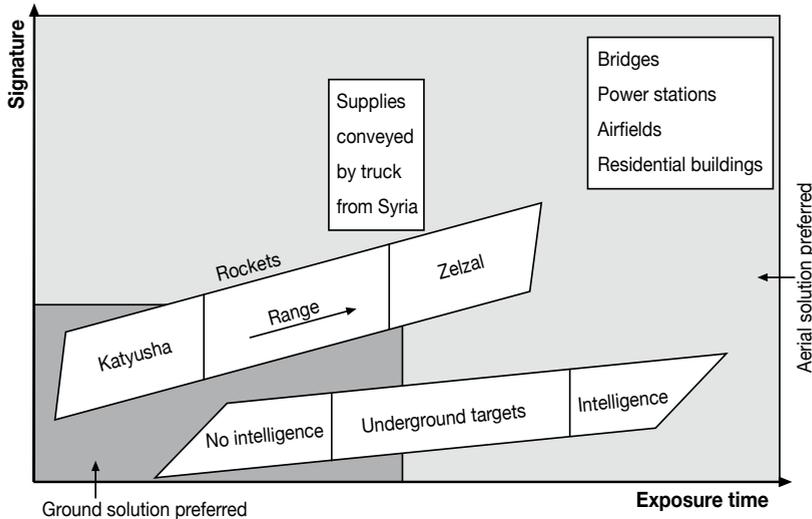


Figure 1. Targets and Means of Attack

1. Southern Lebanon – the region between the Litani River and the Israeli-Lebanese border – was already in the operative jurisdiction of the Northern Command before the war. As the fighting went on, the Northern Command was responsible for a smaller area.
2. The air force bore operational responsibility for all other Lebanese territory.

Along with the geographical division was an incomplete division of tasks. Here too, a lack of clarity in conducting the war was the result. In the air force's sphere of responsibility, i.e., the entire area of Lebanon except for the south, a clear attack strategy was used. The Northern Command exerted its influence in the phase directed towards pushing Hizbollah away from the area near the Israeli border. Beyond this, there were no significant plans at that stage for dealing with the Katyushas or for any other objective.

Hizbollah's assets ("targets" from an Israeli perspective) can be plotted on two-dimensional axes that rank them according to "signature"¹ and "exposure time"² (figure 1). The lower the signature and the shorter the exposure time, the less possible it is to deal with a target from the air. While the vast majority of targets can be dealt with from the air, short range Katyushas must be dealt with primarily through ground operations.

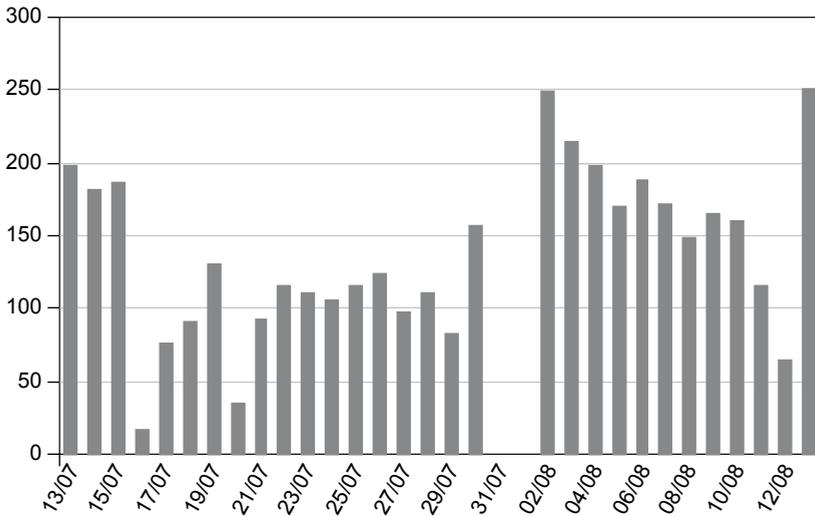


Figure 2. Number of Katyusha Rockets Fired during the War

The IDF's reluctance to conduct ground operations in southern Lebanon goes back many years. It reflects a belief that the threat (Katyusha fire against civilians) does not justify the price (the lives of combat soldiers), which means that the solution for this operational problem is to be found elsewhere. This belief greatly affected the readiness to enter a ground conflict and the way that IDF forces operated. It was assumed that heavy pressure and substantial achievement in the air force's theater of responsibility would also neutralize the threat of short range missiles from southern Lebanon. The IDF's assumption that the achievements in northern Lebanon would prevent the launching of Katyushas from southern Lebanon was proven highly mistaken: Hizbollah launched 100-200 Katyushas per day against Israeli communities (figure 2).

Only late in the conflict did the IDF comprehend the significance of its failure to stop the flow of Katyushas. The military leadership apparently felt that it was under no time pressure; the political leadership was responsible for this feeling, although time is a factor only partially subject to Israel's influence, if at all. Furthermore, the feeling of having all the time in the world may have been convenient for the political leadership, but it worked against the operational command. The military leadership can best achieve its objectives when it has a definite, fairly rigid time framework.

The IDF also failed to comprehend the Israeli public. The IDF may have evaluated the Katyusha phenomenon according to the number of civilian casualties. Indeed, in comparison with casualties from terrorist actions, such as suicide bombings, civilian losses in the war were few. It therefore seemed to the decision makers that it was possible to live with the Katyusha fire for an extended period. At a certain point in the war, however, and at least in part as a function of the ongoing rocket fire, the public's sense of accomplishment changed to a feeling of uncertainty regarding the campaign. This affected the degree of public support for the government with respect to the continuation of the fighting. Towards the end of the war, the fact that the Katyusha fire would be the criterion for determining who won the campaign was fully understood. The expanded ground operations were designed to deal with this bombardment, but were of no avail.

Hizbollah's strategy developed in response to Israel's measures. It strove to exploit its remaining military assets in an operational situation. The results of the Israel Air Force's attacks against Hizbollah targets in the early days of the war were a great shock to the organization's leadership. Hizbollah had no active tools (as opposed to passive tools) for dealing with the air force's operation in most of Lebanon's territory.

Hizbollah realized that the great hour of its Katyusha rockets had come, which was translated into the bombardment of Israeli communities in northern Israel and Haifa (due to the latter's greater strategic value in Israel's perception). In contrast to the initial concept of Hizbollah's Katyusha system as random (on both time and geographic axes) manually operated launchings, the system was organized and well prepared for firing in a regular military format. Many of the launching sites were planned and calculated in advance. Some of the sites were camouflaged and concealed to varying degrees, making it possible to use the launching equipment repeatedly. Hizbollah ground forces defended the launching area, helped by reinforced positions and bunkers prepared in advance. Anti-tank missiles and pits were used extensively. Hizbollah also developed a rapid response capability to IDF activity, based on eavesdropping on IDF communications. This gave them the upper hand in many of the clashes between IDF and Hizbollah ground units.

The way that the war was conducted reflected two strategies with practically no intersecting points. The IDF's strategy was based primarily on air superiority, while Hizbollah's strategy utilized the high degree of impregnability of its short range rocket system. During most of the fighting, both sides refrained from any attempt to challenge the other's strategy. Having no alternative Hizbollah refrained from defending its assets in the north, except for the defense of its senior command system and system of operational control. The IDF, on the other hand, deliberately refrained from stopping the Katyusha fire with ground forces, due to both the error in evaluating the operational significance of the bombardment and concern about a land entanglement. The IDF thus found itself executing a series of ground operations designed for other operational purposes. Utilizing a sophisticated theory of warfare to attack the Katyusha system was attempted, but it was too little and too late. Ground warfare, when it took place, occurred to a great extent according to rules dictated by Hizbollah. This greatly reduced the IDF's relative advantage as an army capable of operating very large and powerful structures. The IDF demonstrated a low level of military capability in the ground battles – both in planning the objective and in leadership to achieve the defined objective.

As a result, the war was waged most of the time like a football game between two teams playing against each other as if they were on separate playing fields, or like two ships passing each other in the night.

Conclusion

The principal lessons of the war are as follows:

- The political goals of the war, and even more so the operative military goals, should be formulated in clear language not subject to different interpretations. This allows evaluating the degree to which the goals can be accomplished. This was not the case with the war in Lebanon. The fact that wars in the Middle East are ultimately also used to advance the political goals of the international forces operating in the region should be taken into account in formulating political goals.
- A serious error occurred in understanding the significance of Hizbollah's Katyusha system, and in evaluating the way it was operated and its results. In consequence, the IDF delayed its response to the problem,

enabling Hizbollah to assume the appearance of a force whose operational capabilities were preserved up until the ceasefire.

- The ground campaign revealed serious problems in the level of planning and execution by IDF ground forces. It appears that the problem was not confined to technical aspects; it concerned fundamental aspects on which an effective military force should be based. Although the war was a limited one, it exposed the fact that there are two armed forces in the IDF: the air force and the ground forces. An attempt to explain the gap between the two forces solely in budgetary terms will not help restore the ground forces to their required performance level.
- The political and strategic consequences of the continuation of fighting beyond the first week were not completely understood. Likewise, the decisive importance of an exit strategy designed to identify the point of optimal achievement was not grasped. The political leadership surrendered to a feeling that “the world is on our side,” and was blind to the IDF’s clumsy operational performance.

Following the war, an atmosphere of feverish haste prevailed in drawing conclusions related to basic concepts in Israel’s security doctrine. These lessons concern matters such as the expected change in the character of the threat to Israel, the attempt to quantify Israel’s deterrent power, the change in building the IDF’s power, and so on. Nonetheless, crystallized opinions and the concrete measures to be based on them should not be derived prematurely.

Notes

1. Signature – information in the form of various wavelengths emitted by every object that makes it possible to track it.
2. Operational exposure time – the span of time during which it is possible to hit a target.

Chater 5

The Military Campaign in Lebanon

Gabriel Siboni

Introduction

The war in Lebanon exposed significant deficiencies in the IDF's level of preparedness for a wide scale military confrontation. These were particularly noticeable in view of the IDF's ongoing impressive ability to confront Palestinian terror. The discrepancy in the IDF's performance regarding these two different operational challenges – combating Palestinian terror and fighting the Hizbollah organization in Lebanon – raises numerous questions with regard to the way the forces are operated and justifies an examination of all the components that comprise the IDF system. Note should also be taken of the impact of processes launched in the IDF at the start of Dan Halutz's term as chief of staff, with regard to all aspects of the IDF's command and control concepts and organization of the IDF's headquarters.

This essay examines the IDF's performance in the war on two levels: force operation and the functioning concept of the General Staff. This involves scrutinizing the basic components at each level and understanding their impact on the IDF's performance in the war. Focusing on this specific dimension of the war, the essay does not look at naval combat, intelligence, home front operations, or logistics at the general staff level. Nor does it address the planning and objectives of the operations. These have been analyzed separately in other essays in this collection.

Hizbollah's Force Operation

The following analysis of Hizbollah's force operation in the war against the IDF is based on the organization's actual performance on the battlefield. This analysis draws only slightly from intelligence material or prior analysis of the organization's principles of force operation. Hizbollah's use of force incorporated a number of elements:

- *Standoff firepower* was the organization's principal means, whereby rockets with different ranges were deployed in a number of areas. The position of the launchers varied according to the rocket ranges. Short range rockets were launched primarily from the area south of the Litani River. Medium range rockets were launched from the Tyre area and from north of the Litani, and some attempts were made to launch rockets from an area even further north. Hizbollah likewise tried to operate a number of armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), without success. The organization's other standoff fire effort included firing surface-to-sea missiles on Israeli navy vessels. The main objective of Hizbollah's rocket force was to strike at civilian targets in Israel, in order to cause as many casualties as possible and disrupt civilian life. In general, the launches were executed in an organized manner, based on preplanned operational plans and apparently on good centralized control. This mode of operation continued throughout the war, thus reflecting Hizbollah's ability to maintain high level command and control during the fighting.
- *Wearing down the IDF forces*: the aim of Hizbollah's close battle efforts was to cause as many IDF casualties as possible. Hizbollah made an extensive use of anti-tank missiles and mortar fire, along with prepared obstacles, booby traps, and mines. There was almost no use of maneuver-based fighting other than localized reinforcement of forces in a handful of battles. The driving idea was to disrupt the operations of IDF forces and wear them down. In practice, the organization did not fight to keep territory, and in this context it operated like a typical guerilla force. It deployed in previously prepared fighting posts. The anti-tank and mortar fire used was based on prior analysis of the terrain, and it was directed towards anticipated routes of approach of the IDF troops. The system of obstacles, which included landmines and booby

traps, was also prepared based on this analysis of the terrain and of the IDF's expected approach routes. In most cases "counterattacks"¹ were not launched against the IDF forces. An extension of this effort was a Hizbollah effort to engage the IDF aircraft; however the flight profile of the Israel Air Force's fixed wing aircraft rendered the standoff fire against the aircraft ineffective. This was not the case with regard to engagement of helicopters and in fact, one heavy combat transport helicopter was shot down.

One can summarize by saying that Hizbollah's force operation was based on two principal efforts. These efforts took place in the area of the frontline and in the secondary line area that spread northward up to the Litani River, and in deeper areas where the organization's logistics, training, and command infrastructure was deployed. The IDF's operations against Hizbollah developed gradually. Only towards the end of the fighting was the IDF called on to provide a comprehensive response to the full range of Hizbollah threats and in particular to stop rocket launches against Israel.

IDF Force Operation

A range of IDF operational abilities was utilized during the fighting in Lebanon. This included the use of air assets, land firepower and maneuvers, naval forces, and special forces, as well as use of psychological warfare; Home Front Command rescue forces; and finally, other support capabilities, such as intelligence and logistics. This essay examines the use of air assets, land forces, and special forces.

Use of the Airpower

The air force operated in two different theaters: first, the air force was given command authority over the area stretching from the Litani River northward (the deep theater of operations). In the second theater, south of the Litani, the air force was tasked to support the Northern Command's operations and was controlled by the Command's command post. That included independent air missions serving the Northern Command's operations, as well as close support for the ground forces.

The deep theater of operations, namely, the missions and objectives that were to be achieved north of the Litani River included:

- *Striking the rocket launch capability.* Air force attacks were aimed at damaging Hizbollah's launching capabilities. Naturally mostly medium and longer range rocket were deployed in this arena and the attacks on them were very successful. The short range rockets deployed in the closer areas, however, posed a different challenge because of their low signature and great number, and the achievements in the attacks against them were insignificant. Some medium range rockets were launched from the area of Tyre that falls under the Northern Command's responsibility. Nevertheless, the air force was given the authority to operate independently against them and did so successfully.
- *Destroying Hizbollah's organizational and operational infrastructures.* From the first day of the fighting the air force tried to impair Hizbollah's organizational and operational infrastructures deep in this arena. Control centers, communications systems, and the Dahiya quarter that hosted the Hizballah HQ indeed were hit and suffered significant damage; apparently the greatest damages were inflicted on Hizbollah's organizational infrastructures and in the Dahiya quarter.
- *Isolating the war arena.* The air force operated to isolate the fighting arena by hitting the Lebanese transportation infrastructure, which likely contributed to the overall pressure on the Lebanese government.
- *Damaging national Lebanese infrastructures.* The air force was limited in damaging Lebanon's national infrastructures due to a government constraint imposed from the outset of the fighting.

Command of the Deep Theater of Operations

This is probably the first time the air force was given overall authority for a geographical theater. In order to apply this authority the air force had to implement a full command and control cycle. This included all the relevant processes involved, from receipt of the orders from the chief of staff, through operational planning, issuing command orders and sub-missions, controlling the implementation by the forces, and finally, reviewing achievement of the objectives and the missions. As part of this process, the theater command had to optimize force operation by identifying the best composition of the force for achieving the missions. This is the essence of integrated force operation. During the war the air force appears to have struggled to implement this authority fully, and thus in effect operated

more as a firepower and targets contractor. This may be the result of the operational culture of the air force and the manner in which historically it perceives its role in warfare. Developing the air force's capability to serve as an effective central command in a geographical operational combat theater requires its internalizing the different needs and processes and its implementing all the components of force buildup: training officers, developing doctrine, exercises, organization, and development of weapon systems. Given the challenges of future wars, whereby the air force will be called on to carry out similar missions, including command responsibility for other theaters of war, it will be required to generate such a process as quickly as possible in order to enhance the effectiveness of its theater command.

Air Force Support to the Northern Command Operations

The air force deployed a control facility at the Northern Command HQ to control airpower operations in the command's theater according to its tasking and priorities. In practice the link between this control facility and the Northern Command HQ failed to operate effectively. In addition, the air strikes against the short range rocket system were unsuccessful, mainly due to the fact that the rocket launches did not have an adequate signature that enabled the air force to complete attack cycles.²

The close air support proved inadequate. It was designed to enable commanders in the battlefield to direct attack helicopters and attack aircraft against specific targets, according to the battle needs and in real time. The use of air assets in the Northern Command theater failed to achieve its goals. It seems that the ability to use close air support has declined in recent years, largely due to the degeneration of the liaison system that was established in the past between the air force and the ground forces. The air support system has for all intents and purposes been terminated.

Ground Forces Operation

Four divisions operated in the Northern Command during the war. They were assembled incrementally during the course of the fighting, and were used in a major scale operation only in the last days of the war. The Northern Command operated these divisions for two main efforts:

- Frontline effort – At the beginning of the fighting the division that was already deployed along the borderline was given responsibility for all operations along the borderline. As the fighting developed the borderline was divided between two divisions and eventually a third division was deployed along the most eastern part of the border.
- Deep maneuvering effort – This was exercised only during the last days of the war and by one reserve division. This deep effort was designed to deal more effectively with Hizbollah's short range rocketry.

Various insights can be derived from the ground operations:

- Lack of professionalism – During the fighting with Hizbollah, inadequate professionalism of the forces and commanders in some of the combat units was observed. This was the case for regular as well as reserve units. Prior to the war most of the regular forces were engaged in combating Palestinian terror. When they were transferred to Lebanon, they were unfit to conduct combined forces battles integrating infantry, armored, engineering, artillery forces, and other support forces. In some instances, the units lacked both the skills and the necessary organic weapon systems required for this type of fighting. Under these circumstances units found themselves trying to adjust rapidly – often successfully – while engaged in fighting. The professionalism of the reserve troops was not better but for different reasons. It resulted from a years-long process during which the army reserves were neglected. The education and training of the officers were shown to be ineffective. The lack of practical training during reserve duty was evident, as was the lack of cohesion of the units, which had a detrimental effect on their operational capability.
- Combined forces warfare – This is a fundamental element of ground based fighting. Its nature stems from the combat force's ability to utilize the full range of combat capabilities: armor, infantry, reconnaissance, intelligence, engineering, artillery, standoff fire, electronic warfare, attack helicopters, and fighter bombers, as well as use of combat transport helicopter for deep operations in the enemy's rear and along the flanks. All these are supported by appropriate command and control abilities. The IDF's combat approach requires an integration of all abilities in order to create the best mix for engaging in combat within various arenas, to allow the achievement of the force's military

objectives. Neglecting the use of some of these basic elements results in dysfunction of the combined force and impacts on the force's ability to complete its missions. In the war in Lebanon two main phenomena emerged.

The first was command. Command of the battles in Lebanon was implemented by division commanders who had forces of various sizes under their command. Most of the commanders did not have the skills and training needed to operate a combined force professionally. A lack of knowledge in operating tank and infantry units was evident, and in some cases engineering forces were not directed according to the IDF's doctrine. The artillery forces fired mostly on pre-planned targets and provided only inadequate close support for the ground forces. The available logistical systems were used only partially by the commanders, and this created supply problems and sometimes required some units to exit the battlefield to obtain supplies. The lack of professionalism of some of the commanders in conducting combined forces battles ultimately led to situations in which units did not carry out their missions. This is a critical lapse that the IDF must correct quickly.

The second phenomenon was dysfunction of basic elements in the combined force battle. The field commanders were not solely responsible for the inadequacy in operating the full combined force. For example: one of the most important tools of the fighting force is the capability to use close aerial support. The essence of such support is the ability of the commander to enlist aerial fire against targets that were not pre-planned, in response to a changing operational situation. In practice, the air force approached this subject completely differently and interpreted the concept of close air support as another version of attacks on given ground targets. Another example of the failure to use combined assets was the lack of use of combat transport helicopters for transport of ground forces other than special operations. This means that an important maneuvering component was not used. In practice, the entire transport helicopter unit was set aside to serve the needs of special operations deep inside Lebanon, and did not at all support the division's maneuvering needs.

- Simplicity of the operational plans – The ability to formulate an operational plan that is clear and simple is a basic component of military art. Simplicity is a valuable element in a unit's ability to

understand and ultimately carry out its mission effectively. In many cases and particularly among the regular force units, unclear orders were issued that were not based on formal IDF doctrine and were worded in unclear terminology. The origin of this lapse lies in thinking that became common in the IDF that there is a “magical operational solution,” which once found and realized is bound to lead to victory. The main idea was to target the enemy’s consciousness in ways that will make it possible to avoid direct engagement of the enemy in difficult battles. Military history, however, has repeatedly shown that battles are actual physical occurrences, and ultimately do not take place in the enemy’s consciousness. In this Lebanese war theater and against this enemy, one has to achieve real results such as occupying territory, killing enemy fighters, blocking axes of movement, and so on.

- Frequent changes in the operational plans – This phenomenon occurred too frequently among the ground forces. Changes are part of the art of battle, yet their frequency often affects the capability of carrying out a mission. In the war in Lebanon numerous changes were made, both in the definition of missions and in the composition of the forces. These changes generated continual confusion at subordinate levels, which had a detrimental effect on the units’ abilities to conduct battles effectively and ultimately impacted negatively on their ability to fulfill the missions. One can assume that this phenomenon was a direct result of the lack of professionalism of some of the officers who while trying to achieve the “optimum” operational plan were not aware of the confusion caused by frequent changes that impairs execution of the mission.
- Continuity of fighting – An important principle of war, it entails maintaining ongoing contact with and engagement of the enemy to prevent the latter from recovering, regrouping, and improving its situation. During the fighting in Lebanon this principle was noticeably absent from the thinking of commanders, resulting in intervals in the fighting and boosting the ability of the Hizbollah fighters to regroup and act against the IDF forces. The common explanation that this phenomenon is an offshoot of years of combating Palestinian terror in which the principle of avoidance of losses was a major priority provides only a partial answer, as some of the reserve units did not

put this principle of war into practice despite not being involved in fighting Palestinian terror in recent years. One has to assume that this phenomenon was part of the broader lack of professionalism and training.

These insights relate mainly to the different higher echelons of command. In most cases in the lower regimental and company levels a good level of combat performance was demonstrated. The conclusion is that the IDF should principally focus on brigade and division command levels in order to trace the sources of these negative phenomena and to formulate a plan for improving command proficiency. In addition, the reserve forces require upgrading. These forces are highly motivated. Their motivation must be maintained but they should be also allowed to have sufficient training, taking into account the special needs of these civilian soldiers.

Special Forces Operations

Special operations are a significant tool available to military command, i.e., using a small force in order to strike the enemy deep in its rear. This is sometimes a clandestine operation, aimed at achieving an intelligence gathering objective, and sometimes it is a noisy raid. Using special forces deep in enemy territory is required on various levels in accordance with operational needs. It requires adequate professional skills, both of the operational force and of the commanding HQ.

The use of IDF special forces in Lebanon occurred mainly in the strategic depth of the enemy territory, and less in the areas closer to the battlefield. After the war broke out a post of coordinator for special operations was created in the Operations Branch of the General Staff for this purpose. The special operations activity in the Northern Command theater sector was scarce and this was apparently a result of the lack of proficiency of the territorial command in carrying out special operations while simultaneously managing fighting in the front. The strategic special operations cannot replace the ones that the command has to implement to support its operational needs.

Special operations deep in enemy territory are highly effective in operational terms. Realizing their potential requires enhancement of the command capability. In this context the IDF has to examine two main aspects:

- *The need to establish an operational command for special operations, under the authority of the chief of staff.* This command will operate in addition to the existing eight operation commands of the IDF. It will be able to enhance the chief of staff control of these operations as well as the flexibility of use of the special forces. The command has to be responsible for buildup of special forces capabilities as well as commanding them in war time.
- *Enhancing the capability of the regional command to carry out special operations.* This requires development of doctrine, organization, and training.

The IDF Functional Structure Concept

Prior to the war a new approach to the way the IDF operates was formulated. It determined the division of authority in the General Staff as well as the system of command and control by the chief of staff over the eight different commands (regional and functional). It also stipulated the responsibility for force operation and force buildup of the different organizations.

The war in Lebanon brought several issues to light that should be examined. The first addresses the division of the theater of war into several operational theaters (regional and functional). In the years prior to the development of this new concept, there was a tendency to adhere to an approach based on the idea of the operational theater as the central element in the management of war. The underlying idea refers to two basic elements: the first is that the operational theater incorporates *all* the fighting components of one's forces against *all* the fighting components of the enemy in the same theater. Thus, this approach holds that there is an "ideal" division into operational theaters that satisfies the above requirements. The second relates to the *command* of the theater – this approach determines that command of the operational theater has to be given to "an operator" who is the only party capable of coordinating all military activity in the theater, and he alone has the capability to formulate a systemic approach to conducting the campaign (in the IDF, this approach is called "the systemic idea"). The basic assumption of this approach is that because of this only the chief of staff is able to exercise actual command of the full operational

theater, as only he perceives the full systemic picture and thus he is capable of commanding all the IDF's operational theaters.

The new concept of command and control determined that the chief of staff is defined as the commander of the war theater, delegating operational authority to the different operational theater commanders, thus dividing the theater of war into several operational theaters. Defining these areas of authority requires the chief of staff to determine the following components for each operational theater:

- *Authority* – the chief of staff determines the identity of the commander who is to be given the authority for undertaking the missions of a particular operational theater.
- *Mission* – the chief of staff assigns missions to each commander.
- *Resources* – the chief of staff allocates resources to each operational theater based on his constraints and on the operational requirements for realizing the missions.
- *Planning and execution constraints and guidelines* – the chief of staff determines the planning and execution constraints for each commander as he sees fit.

Realization of the Concept in the War in Lebanon

The areas of authority in the Lebanon war were determined in accordance with this theoretical approach, starting with the *war theater*. The chief of staff, as the war theater commander, considered himself the commander of all the IDF's fighting arenas (north, center, south, air, sea, intelligence, home front, and logistics) and as the function required, he was to see the full picture of the war and to varying degrees the picture unfolding in each arena.

As to the operational theaters, the chief of staff ordered a division into a number of operational theaters, as follows: the southern operational theater – of the Southern Command, conducting the fighting with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and safeguarding the borders with Egypt and Jordan; the central operational theater – conducting the Central Command's battle against Palestinian terror in the West Bank. The northern operational theater was split between the Northern Command, which was given responsibility over the area south of the Litani River; the air force, which was given responsibility over the area north of the Litani; and the navy,

which was given the responsibility to conduct naval warfare, impose a naval blockade, and execute other missions in the naval arena opposite the Lebanon shoreline.

The extent to which the basic principles of this approach were implemented may be analyzed as follows:

- *Missions* – The orders issued by the General Staff had to define clearly the missions to be achieved in each operational theater. Generally missions were well defined.
- *Resources* – Examination of the allocation of resources to the missions and constraints leads to the conclusion that there was no lack of resources. In order to examine the suitability of the resources to the missions one can conduct a mental exercise comparing the missions and the resources available to the IDF Commands in the 2006 Lebanon war versus the missions and resources available to these Commands in previous wars, for example in the Yom Kippur War. Without engaging in complex bookkeeping exercises one can determine that the extent of the resources available to the Commands was adequate.
- *Authority* – The question here is whether the chief of staff defined the areas of authority among the various headquarters clearly and did not leave some undefined areas. The delegation of authority in the northern front by dividing the area into two operational theaters – controlled by the air force and the Northern Command – can be considered satisfactory.³
- *Planning and execution constraints and guidelines* – To a large extent these reflect the chief of staff's perception of the specific operational effort. The degree to which these guidelines were issued clearly and in accordance with the Command hierarchy should be examined. In many cases during the war in Lebanon orders included great detail on planning, implementation, guidelines, and constraints. The chief of staff has complete freedom and in many cases even an obligation to define planning implementation and guidelines constraints. These definitions, as detailed as they may be, are only a basis for operational planning and should not be used as an excuse for faulty operational planning.

The extent to which the IDF's operational effectiveness increased as a result of these new concepts should be evaluated. It seems that transferring

responsibility for operating forces deep in enemy territory to the air force ensured the required focus on this type of mission. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the air force succeeded in effectively realizing its authority over this operational theater. The air force operated over the years as a targets contractor or as the executer of an aerial campaign (such as destroying the airports in the Six Day War, or destroying the missile batteries in Lebanon during the first Lebanon war). Prior to the 2006 war in Lebanon the air force had never undertaken an operational theater command. Initial examination indicates that the air force has yet to realize this kind of command responsibility effectively. As to the performance of the Northern Command headquarters, which had to exercise its authority and operate land, air, and sea efforts, as well as special operations, examinations indicate that the Command had trouble with encompassing all the efforts and synchronizing them into a tangible and complete effort. Realization of the new approach required organization and training. These were lacking, mainly because the adoption of the new concept took place a short time before the war and the change process was supposed to take several years.

Conclusion

In order to allow improvement of the IDF's preparedness for future confrontations, it seems that more focus should be given to the area of ground warfare, which has a critical impact on the operational effectiveness of the IDF as a whole. In addition to the conclusions drawn above, other basic understandings can be derived, including:

- *Hizbollah's performance.* Hizbollah's operations against the IDF, focused on trying to inflict as many casualties as possible, were based on using pre-prepared fixed posts. This is probably one of the first times that such a scattered defensive tactic was used in a decentralized methodical manner. In most cases the organization's fighting force did not carry out operational maneuvers and in most cases, when IDF troops came into direct contact with Hizbollah fighters, the IDF gained the upper hand. The effectiveness of the use of anti-tank weapons by Hizbollah was not unusual compared to what could have been expected. The IDF's armored forces can contend with such

weapons successfully, by implementing their current weapon systems and doctrine. In addition, the underground fortifications and bunkers systems are mostly effective against approaching forces maneuvering in killing zones. Swift penetration into these Hizbollah posts and direct close range engagement of the enemy exposes the weakness of these deployments. Efforts should be made to develop tactics that utilize this weakness.

- *Coordinating force buildup by the General Staff.* The IDF's long term force buildup processes had enormous impact on the preparedness of the fighting forces. Such processes do not only relate to the IDF's weapon systems procurement, though this generally grabs most of the public's attention due to its budgetary implications. Force buildup, however, includes additional components of no less importance, such as: commanders selection procedures, training, and the development of proper doctrines. The military's branches and headquarters with authority for force buildup have to examine the lessons of the fighting in Lebanon and implement them through an integrated and comprehensive process. For example, the findings about the inadequate coordination between the air force and ground forces in the combined forces battle and in close air support demands thorough intervention by the General Staff in order to rectify it by making the necessary integration among the different services and branches. It must re-construct the interface lines among the different headquarters responsible for buildup processes to enable each to take into account the needs of the others.
- *Force buildup of the army (ground forces).* The negative phenomena observed in the army during the war resulted from processes that took place over many years, for example, the lack of professionalism of some of the forces in conducting combined force battles. Thus, the IDF in general and the army headquarters in particular must examine thoroughly the history of these processes and the reasons why they took place, and then try to offer ways to solve the root problems. Another key area that requires attention relates to the processes of selection, training, education, and instruction of the commanders.
- *The effectiveness of the independent ground forces headquarters.* This should be examined in view of the fact that the number of the army divisions has significantly decreased over the last decade, while

the resources for the ground forces headquarters has increased. The interface between the regional commands that actually command these fighting forces and the ground forces' headquarters that are responsible for the buildup of the force should be improved in order to better prepare the divisions' readiness for combat. The results of the different battles in this war showed that there is no correlation between the size of the ground forces' headquarters and the operational effectiveness of the fighting combat units.

- *Special forces.* The use of special forces in the war in Lebanon was not comprehensive enough. Their use in the deep fighting theater north of the Litani River as well as in Hizbollah's strategic rear were highly effective. However, the use of special operations by the Northern Command and even by the divisional level was inadequate. The IDF must try to improve its preparedness for the use of these forces at all levels, both through the establishment of a dedicated headquarters for the special forces and through improvement of regional and division commands capabilities to implement special operations.
- *The time dimension.* In this war the time dimension comprised an important parameter. The messages conveyed by the political leadership to the IDF indicated that Israel enjoyed legitimacy for its military operation, and therefore the IDF had no political time limit for realizing the operational objectives. This message penetrated through IDF command echelons and harmed the forces' ability to execute their missions effectively and vigorously based on the notion that one should not put the forces at risk to attain an objective that might be achieved later with fewer casualties. It should be remembered that shortening the duration of the fighting is an operational need of the fighting force. The erosion of the time constraints led eventually to a decline in the operational effectiveness of the forces. Despite the fact that the political leadership allowed the IDF a generous time frame, the IDF's forces had to understand that that it was incumbent on them to operate vigorously, aim to achieve their missions as quickly as possible, and shorten the duration of the war.

Observers of the war may have a sense of frustration emanating from the tension between the general positive political and strategic results of the war and the poor performance of some of the IDF's forces. In the interest of maintaining a sense of proportion it should be remembered that the IDF

operated several parallel efforts: aerial operations, naval activity, special operations, psychological warfare, and army operations. The first four were highly effective in carrying out their missions. Most of the lessons of war analyzed above relate to the ground forces operations, and in fact much improvement is required in this area. Alongside the problems and failures described in this essay one can determine that the war achieved a considerable number of strategic and political objectives, and that is in fact the supreme test of a military force in a war. The coming years will be able to demonstrate whether these achievements are robust enough by providing an answer to the main questions: Were the political objectives determined by the government eventually achieved? And, was Israel's strategic position ultimately improved?

Notes

1. According to military doctrine, a counterattack is an offensive response of the defending force that carries out an attacking maneuver outside its fixed positions. The use of standoff fire is not considered a counterattack.
2. An attack cycle is defined as a process of identifying the target, attacking the target, and examining the results of the attack.
3. Appointing the deputy chief of staff as the chief of staff's representative at Northern Command, even though this appointment is not defined in the command and control concept, did not have any effect on the authority of the head of the Command over utilization of the forces in the northern campaign arena. It seems that the difficulty with this appointment derives from a sense of lack of faith conveyed by chief of staff to the Command leader, and this filtered down through the ranks.

Chapter 6

Intelligence in the War: Observations and Insights

Aharon Ze'evi Farkash

In July 2006, after three failed kidnapping attempts, Hizbollah succeeded in kidnapping two Israeli soldiers and killing eight others. This successful operation by the Lebanese organization came on the heels of the kidnapping of the soldier Gilad Shalit by the Palestinians near the Gaza Strip border. These provocations, together with the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, lent the necessary legitimacy to the IDF's response, which developed into the Second Lebanon War.

The following essay probes the role of Military Intelligence, one of the elements that had a substantive influence on the war, beginning with the situation assessment as it was presented to the cabinet, including the prime minister, prior to the kidnapping in July 2006.

The Hizbollah Profile

Military Intelligence's organizational profile of Hizbollah, which was borne out in the 2006 war, was composed over several years. It reflects several formative influences, including the events of May 2000, when the IDF withdrew from southern Lebanon. This landmark event was followed by four additional processes of strategic importance that impacted on the organization, its aims, and its modus operandi:

- The death of Hafez al-Asad and the rise to power of his son Bashar, who opened the doors of the Alawi community in Syria to the Iranian-Shiite dawa.

- The outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada in September 2000.
- Developments in the Islamic Sunna, including the special status of al-Qaeda and the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.
- Critical developments in Iran regarding the infrastructure for the military nuclear program: first, the transition stage of converting lead metal to gas, and the stage of enriching uranium to produce fissile material that is essential for producing a nuclear bomb. Second was the announcement that the long range surface-to-surface missile system – the Shehab 3 – was operational and placed under the supervision of the Revolutionary Guards. Third, there was growing significant involvement by Iran, via Syria and Hizbollah, in Palestinian terror. This allowed Iran to implement a new defense concept, whereby Palestinian terror and Hizbollah's tactical abilities played a major role in deterring Israel from acting against the Iranian nuclear program.

Hizbollah's increased power, which reflected the interests of the organization itself as well as Iranian and Syrian policies, saw the establishment of a military system ready for the asymmetrical wars of the twenty-first century. A major component of the organization's military abilities is the multi-strata rocket array, built with Syrian and Iranian short range weapons of about 30 km to 40 km, medium range arms of about 50 km to 110 km, and weapons capable of long range strikes of 200 km or more.

At the time of the war, the geographic deployment of the rocket array was as follows:

- The operational core was in the area of Nabatiyah and south of the Litani River, where there were short range rockets and camouflaged "nature reserves" that hid advanced anti-tank weapons; where fortifications were built and explosives were laid; and where a logistical system for ongoing combat was prepared.
- The operational depth, which included the medium range rockets, such as the Fajr 3, Fajr 5, 220 mm rockets, and 302 mm rockets; this array was protected by shoulder-launched missiles, probably SA-18 missiles and other anti-aircraft weapons.
- Long range rockets, including Zelzal rockets, as well as accurate Ababil unmanned aircraft with a range of about 250 km.

This deployment was supported by an accurate and advanced intelligence system that was significantly upgraded in 2004-5 and provided the organization with a sharp intelligence picture of the IDF and its designs. Moreover, the organization was built on a dual operational approach of centralization and decentralization. Decentralized synchronized operation was made possible by a good understanding among Hizbollah's fighters of the organization's targets, objectives, and operational logic. The control positions were equipped with top level intelligence and communications means, and this, together with a mobile communications facility – including motorcycles – offered the force operational flexibility. The organization was thus able to choose when to surface and when to disappear in the urban and rural surroundings that were prepared in advance. Organized training of soldiers occurred over time in areas where surveillance was difficult, particularly in the Baalbek Valley, and special training was conducted in Syria and Iran. This special training was supplemented by the establishment of advanced professional deployments manned by those steeped in combat experience, prepared for engagement with the IDF.

Intelligence's Assessment before the War

Over time and with special intelligence gathering efforts, Israeli intelligence decoded Hizbollah and was able to decipher the organization's philosophy, as well as its operational logic and policy. Military Intelligence also provided the IDF, including the air force, with accurate intelligence important for combat. Numerous covert operations undertaken in recent years helped Israel foil the organization's aggression. These operations complemented significant developments taking place in Lebanon, including the resignation and assassination of Prime Minister Hariri, Security Council resolution 1559, and Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon.

With hindsight and based on what was discovered after the war, it seems that the IDF's intelligence corps prepared well for the war with Hizbollah in all matters related to understanding the organization, its deployment in the field, and its mode of operation. Moreover, in late 2005, Intelligence presented a special update to the General Staff and the minister of defense – and sent a letter to Prime Minister Sharon – painting the intelligence picture as it had developed in Lebanon and Syria during the second half

of 2005, with an updated assessment regarding 2006. It included the following:

- Iran is determined to maintain its nuclear weapons program.
- Arms that pose a threat to Israel are being amassed in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, and there are rockets in the Palestinian Authority. This subject was a recurring feature of intelligence reports from 2003 onward.
- Due to pressure exerted on Syria and Lebanon, the likelihood that strategic arms and standoff fire would be used increased. The high possibility of escalation in the form of a Hizbollah and Syrian initiative, due to their leaders' political status and the operational measures at their disposal, was stressed.
- In conclusion, it was noted that *the possibility of escalation on the northern border would increase during 2006.*

The implications of this intelligence assessment for IDF force buildup and operation highlighted three relevant points. The first was the need to improve the IDF's response to standoff fire, especially rockets, a need that was emphasized regularly in Military Intelligence's recommendations. Second was the need to prepare for possible escalation on the northern border and strengthen the deterrent force against Hizbollah, including the organization's kidnapping attempts. Third, the increase in the asymmetric threat obliged Israel to provide a solution by means of weaponry, an updated and revised combat doctrine, new standing directives for emergency and crisis situations, updated operational orders, and preparations for the home front. Particular emphasis was given to the preparedness required for the potential use of standoff fire in 2006 by Hizbollah as well as by others.

In this special intelligence assessment Military Intelligence provided the decision makers with the relevant national intelligence, and even provided a *strategic warning* about what to expect in 2006, a message extraordinary in and of itself. (A parallel to this occurred in the discussions of April 2002 during Operation Defensive Shield, when Hizbollah attempted to drag the IDF into an additional battlefield on top of the existing Palestinian front.) This warning prompted the accurate intelligence preparations required for combat, both for the air force and the ground forces. Targets for the air force were selected and conveyed to the squadron level, auxiliary means were prepared for the ground forces at the divisional level, and a system was devised that would ensure updates and availability as required for

emergency situations. These preparations were carried out by Northern Command in conjunction with the field intelligence of the ground forces command and Military Intelligence.

In addition, Intelligence took pains in all discussions to point out that it was unable to provide the combat forces with accurate intelligence regarding the exact location of Hizbollah's short range rockets. It was explained that any measure to deal with the short range rockets would have to be based on the understanding that Military Intelligence could not provide precise, detailed intelligence on the rocket sites – even though specific information was given about the “nature reserves” and their locations. At the same time, it is important to note the air force's impressive achievement at the start of the fighting, which was based on the targets provided by Intelligence as to the medium and long range rockets, communications and control centers, storage sites, and other important targets.

From 2003 steps were taken to ensure that intelligence, including the most sensitive information, was passed on, distributed, and assimilated by the combat forces, and was thereafter updated regularly; hence the intense efforts expended to prepare and update the database, so that should war break out only recent changes would have to be inserted. The last forecast database was updated to the summer of 2005. In any case, the arguments voiced during and after the fighting regarding the lack of accurate and updated intelligence indicate a serious flaw that requires examination and correction. There must not be a situation where intelligence exists but is not disseminated to the forces. The matter demands in-depth examination at the levels of the Northern Command, the Field Intelligence Corps, the ground forces command, and the relevant sections of Military Intelligence.

Intelligence Insights

The following are the principal insights on intelligence drawn from a review of the fighting in Lebanon, particularly its successes and difficulties:

- *Participation in decision making processes.* The intelligence corps must be involved in deliberations at the General Staff with the chief of staff, as well as with the minister of defense and the prime minister with regard to the anticipated combat, its targets, and its objectives. Intelligence's understanding of the enemy allows it to analyze the

opportunities and risks of a campaign or war, and this analysis should provide the country's leaders with an understanding of what to expect from the said campaign or war. Intelligence should present the implications of the IDF plan vis-à-vis the impact on the enemy, and its view of the plan's objectives and their realization: this should ensure that the campaign or war objectives are realistic in terms of the enemy's capabilities and preparedness. This process must respect the independence of the intelligence corps, which allows it to convey the intelligence picture and its implications to the General Staff as it best understands, as well as to the minister of defense, security cabinet, and prime minister for their situation assessments.

- *Intelligence assessment independence.* Given the current structure of the intelligence community in Israel, there is particular importance in ensuring the freedom of opinion of the head of Intelligence, his freedom to convey it to the government and the prime minister, and – a lesson learned from the Yom Kippur War – the ability to appear in front of the media and express his opinion openly to the public at large. This approach does not limit the responsibility of the chief of staff for carrying out situation assessments and formulating his stance. Intelligence must be ready to present the intelligence information to the leaders professionally and without extraneous considerations, as a kind of medical specialist about the enemy and adversary. The head of Intelligence should naturally also follow this approach in his interaction with the head of the research division, who is responsible for formulating the intelligence assessment and maintains his professional independence. This method ensures that all the decision makers and commanders can obtain the intelligence picture and assessment they require for formulating a decision.
- *Amassing and implementing information about the enemy.* Part of the intelligence information should be processed together with the IDF commanders and the political leaders. It is not sufficient just to convey the information and updates. Intelligence should learn what the particular leader requires: what he knows and which information is relevant for formulating correct decisions. Implementing this information is critical, both for the combat forces and for the country's leaders. It is important to find ways of conveying the threat and building

models to train the combat forces. Such a system was established, for example, at one of the IDF's training bases for reserve troops in order to demonstrate the complexity of Hizbollah's "nature reserves" and to practice the special fighting elements expected in the field.

- *Structure and organization.* Special attention must be directed to the problem of conveying intelligence to the combat forces, and the implications of subordinating the field intelligence corps to the ground forces command. Has this measure proven itself, or has it damaged Intelligence's ability to relay information to the field? It is clear that computerizing intelligence reporting as far as the brigade level, as is done in Intelligence, requires assistance from elements outside the intelligence corps, to enable ongoing updates to the forces through digital means rather than the old manual methods. In any case, Intelligence must be responsible for the ground intelligence at all levels, from the General Staff level to the combat forces. It is not right to divide this responsibility between two units and two commanders.
- *Work processes.* Constant attention is required to improve the organization and its work processes in order to ensure ongoing renewal, pluralism, and enhanced abilities to diagnose the surrounding reality. These processes are the basis for the work plan and for securing the sources needed to understand the complex reality of the asymmetrical war. Integration is the foundation of intelligence work, and it must occur both among the various gathering systems and between them and research. Thanks to these work processes Intelligence has significantly improved its capabilities in dealing with Hizbollah: cultivating new sources, enhancing accessibility to the organization and to Lebanon in general, and improving the ability of research to provide relevant intelligence information to all levels. Nevertheless, the multi-year plan for developing intelligence sources on Hizbollah, formulated in 2004, was only partially implemented due to the shortage of resources allocated to Intelligence. Now it is important to update the multi-year plan and to ensure the provision of more resources to improve the ability to address Hizbollah, Palestinian terror, and terror from al-Qaeda.
- *Intelligence warfare,* central in an era of asymmetrical war. This area has evolved greatly in recent years, and its importance increases particularly when it is difficult to legitimize an overt operation by the

IDF and the state in main areas of national security. In the asymmetrical struggle against military and terror organizations it is imperative to adapt the rules of the game of a democratic country – without harming its legal right to defend itself – to conduct covert warfare successfully. This involves improving the abilities of the IDF and its intelligence corps to act covertly and legally to achieve important objectives for the country and the IDF. These abilities are meant to instill fear into the relevant organizations, force them to continually change their behavior, and above all, boost Israel's deterrent capability.

- *The cognitive struggle/psychological warfare*, an area that has developed significantly in the era of electronic communications, the internet, the wide range of communications networks, and the importance of relaying information. The impact on the enemy's state of mind requires synchronized action on a national level, utilizing Intelligence's expertise against the enemy. Activity in this area requires studying and drawing conclusions in order to sustain ongoing improvement.
- *Field security against increasing transparency*. One must be aware that Israel, including the IDF, has become "transparent" to its enemies and rivals. This area requires constant attention in order to ensure that areas that are sensitive to Intelligence and security remain confidential. Transparency is a result of the ability to acquire satellite images from commercial sources, from improvements in forecasting and electronic intelligence abilities, and to a great extent from the open media and its modus operandi in the democratic world and in Israel. The clear and unambiguous message in this area is that Israel is transparent to its adversaries, enemies, and of course its friends. This transparency incurs a heavy cost in human lives, due to the enemy's ability to use gathered intelligence in real time and to be ready for the IDF's moves before they happen.
- *Censorship*. Exposure in the media and the inclusion of reporters in war rooms has caused severe and unnecessary damage. Important information was relayed to the enemy during the fighting and enabled it to harm Israel. Here Israel's behavior has damaged its deterrent ability. As such, it is important at the national level to formulate a censorship policy in asymmetrical wars, and to build a control and enforcement mechanism that will ensure policy implementation.

- *Intelligence's outside links* are particularly important in view of global threats, such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the escalation of international terror. It is hard for Israel to contend with global threats alone, and without cooperation with foreign intelligence organizations it would be hard to obtain relevant data for combating these threats. It is important to formulate coalitions for successful international action, based on accurate and updated intelligence submitted to the world's decision makers. Only international intelligence and political and defense cooperation can enable Israel to deal with the global threats successfully. In these areas it is best to maintain a low profile on Israel's actions, without reducing operational decisiveness.

The insights presented above can help analyze the war and understand the way in which it was run and, in particular, examine the effectiveness and impact of intelligence. When the professional investigations are completed it will be possible to outline the problems and how they were addressed, and to draw conclusions required for correct planning of the next war. War is a national effort that involves testing numerous systems: political, military, the home front, intelligence, foreign policy, and so on. As such, the investigations must be integrated, and not remain vertical and professional. In the modern world most areas are integrated and their impact on the enemy and adversary is cumulative. Thus, the lessons to be learned must produce cumulative results that improve Israel's ability to cope with future confrontations. The intelligence lessons, as with the conclusions of the air force, ground forces, home front, and the IDF as a whole, and those learned by the decision makers must all be integrated in order to ensure that Israel's potential is realized and that success is achieved in all future challenges.

Conclusion

Together with the work of the investigative commission appointed by the government and the investigations conducted by the IDF, it is important to carry out an up-to-date intelligence assessment that will examine the implications of the war and its ramifications on the circles around us: Hizbollah, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and the Palestinian Authority, as well as the countries with which Israel has peace agreements: Egypt and Jordan.

Conclusions are being drawn in the region, and in certain cases, states and organizations may change their policies and operations concepts. Updated and professional intelligence assessments will allow better definition of the preferred threat – the concrete threat to be selected from all the threats for which a suitable solution has to be devised – and to establish the basis needed for defining the preferred scenario. This process is essential for the General Staff situation assessment and for formulating an updated multi-year work plan from which it will be possible to produce annual work plans. This is the correct process that will lead to allocation of resources required for the IDF and correct preparation for the challenges of the future. In this regard Military Intelligence needs should also be updated and incorporated into the work plans of the GSS and the Mossad, from the perspective of the IDF's needs and national objectives. Discussion regarding the allocation of national resources for intelligence services must take place at the level of the prime minister in order to ensure that Intelligence's work is programmed in accordance with national criteria.

Chapter 7

Israeli Public Opinion and the Second Lebanon War

Yehuda Ben Meir

No war in Israel's war-filled history was accompanied by such extensive public opinion polling as was the Second Lebanon War. Indeed, more than by objective criteria, the course that the war took was determined to a large degree by the perceptions of the public on both sides. Perceptions do not necessarily reflect reality, but they have a power of their own. This essay, devoted to Israeli public opinion during and after the war, deals solely with perceptions. Closely intertwined with this phenomenon is the fact that Israeli media coverage of this war was all pervasive and unprecedented in extent. For the first time in Israel's history, the IDF published on a daily basis the number of soldiers killed in action on that day. The media gave extensive coverage to the casualties, coverage that included the name of each soldier killed in action, his picture, interviews with his family and friends, the time and place of his funeral, and in many instances, coverage of the funeral itself. Especially when the number of casualties was high, at least by Israeli standards, coverage of the casualties overshadowed that of the actual events on the battlefield. The particular media coverage in Israel had a major effect on the development of public opinion surrounding the Second Lebanon War.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the evolution in public opinion during and after the war, as well as to attempt to understand the factors underlying the changes in public opinion. It will attempt to assess the future ramifications of public opinion with regard to the war – both in Israel and in the region as a whole.

In order to appreciate and properly evaluate the evolution, causes, and consequences of Israeli public opinion during and after the fighting, one must understand the internal political context of this war. The war broke out a mere two months after the formation of a new government, pursuant to the general elections of March 28, 2006. The new government represented far more than a formal change in government – it marked the end of the Sharon era, inaugurated a new era in Israeli politics, and brought to the forefront a completely fresh and untried national leadership. The new prime minister, Ehud Olmert, had been acting prime minister since January 4, 2006 and had served as deputy prime minister since 2003. Although he had served in many governments and was a veteran politician, he had little if any experience in daily defense and security matters. The new defense minister, Amir Peretz, had no experience whatsoever in defense and foreign affairs. Not only had he never served as a minister in the government; he had never even been a member of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. The new foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, had also not been previously involved in foreign affairs in any significant way.

As is customary in Israel, the formation of the new government was associated with unsavory political negotiations, and thus in the weeks after its formation the government did not enjoy a high degree of popularity. The job approval ratings for the prime minister were around 40 percent, and those for the new and untried defense minister were especially low – in the mid-20s.¹ A majority of Israelis had grave doubts as to whether Mr. Peretz was indeed fit to be minister of defense. Towards the end of June 2006, only 32 percent rated his performance as defense minister as “good” vs. 62 percent who rated it as “not good.”² The unfavorable opinion of the government was aggravated by the events in Gaza and the increase in the Qassam rocket attacks against Israel, especially at the city of Ashkelon, and the abduction of an Israeli soldier on June 25, 2006 led to an even further decline in public support for the government. At the same time, support for the prime minister’s convergence plan also decreased, and by the beginning of July 2006, a majority of Israelis opposed it.³

Overall, the prevailing public mood was low and pessimistic. The sentiment in Israel was that the difficult disengagement from Gaza had not produced the desired results – by the end of June 2006, 50 percent of Israelis viewed the disengagement as a mistake vs. 46 percent who

said it was a correct move.⁴ The new government was considered weak, inexperienced, and indecisive, and Israel was perceived to have lost the initiative and to be losing its deterrence. The Hizbollah attack on July 12, 2006, which resulted in two kidnapped soldiers and eight others killed in action, came on the heels (two and a half weeks later) of the Hamas attack from Gaza where one Israeli soldier was kidnapped and two others were killed. As far as public opinion was concerned, a non-decisive response by the Israeli government to the Hizbollah attack would have had disastrous consequences.

It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which domestic factors influenced the government's response to the attack, although one can assume that they played an important role. In any event, within hours of the attack, the Israeli government decided on a dramatic response and unanimously approved the proposal of the prime minister and defense minister for a major military action against Hizbollah in Lebanon. The military action – ultimately called a “war” – commenced the night of July 12, 2006 and included air attacks on Beirut International Airport, which remained closed for the duration of the war; on all known Hizbollah long-range missile sites; and on other Hizbollah targets from the Israeli border in the south to the Syrian border in the Beqaa valley in the north.

The Israeli body politic is composed of Jews and Arabs. The breakdown between these two groups for the overall Israeli population is approximately 79 percent Jews and 21 percent Arabs. However, when speaking of the “adult Israeli population,” i.e., those eighteen years old and above, the breakdown for the two groups is 85 percent Jews and 15 percent Arabs. In normal circumstances, even considerable differences between the Jewish and Arab communities on any given issue will affect the overall result by only 3-5 percent. Thus, if 50 percent of the adult Jewish population and 80 percent of the adult Arab population support a given position (as may have been the case, at certain times, regarding disengagement) – the result of the overall Israeli sample would be 54.5 percent. In such situations, it is reasonable to relate to the Israeli sample as a whole. The story, however, is quite different in a situation where we find diametrically opposed attitudes and opinions between Jews and Arabs and near unanimity within each group. Thus, if 95 percent of Israeli Jews believe that the war against Hizbollah is justified but only 10 percent of Israeli Arabs are of that opinion, the result

for all Israelis would be 82.5 percent. In effect, however, this latter figure is meaningless and is no more than a statistical artifact. It represents a weighted average of two totally different communities as far as this issue is concerned and has little significance, if any. Under these circumstances, one must relate separately to the Jewish and Arab communities.

In fact, antithetical opinions were the case with regard to the Second Lebanon War. From the very first days of the war, the diametrically opposed positions among Israeli Jews and Arabs became clear to the pollsters. This clear split between Jews and Arabs is an important phenomenon in itself, and one negative result of the war was a deepening of the schism between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in Israel. A detailed discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this study, and cited here is the public opinion data for the Jewish population of Israel. Regarding the Jewish public, studies did not find any significant differences between the northern residents, i.e., those who were under Katyusha rocket attacks for the duration of the war and their counterparts elsewhere in the country.

From the outset, the military campaign enjoyed the near total support of the Jewish population, and there was almost no dissent over the government's decision to go to war. The Jewish opposition in the Knesset declared its full support for the government and committed itself to support the government as long as the fighting continued. The ten Arab members of the Knesset were the only ones to vote against the statement of the prime minister on July 17, 2006 on the initiation of hostilities in Lebanon against Hizbollah. Many key personalities of the Israeli left even went on record publicly in support of the war. The basis of this Israeli consensus was the fact that both attacks (Hamas, June 25, 2006 and Hizbollah, July 12, 2006) were unprovoked, were carried out on sovereign and undisputed Israeli territory, and originated from areas from which Israel had previously withdrawn unilaterally. Hizbollah was seen as a dangerous terrorist organization and as the long arm of Iran, both of which were committed to the destruction of Israel.

In his address to the Knesset and the nation on July 17, 2006, Prime Minister Olmert said that there comes a time in the life of a nation when it says in one voice, "enough is enough." And indeed, nothing can better capture the mood of Israel on July 12, 2006 than the sentiment that "enough is enough." A Dahaf poll taken on July 17, 2006, less than a week after the

war began, found that 86 percent of the Israeli adult population justified “the IDF operation in Lebanon against Hizbollah,” while only 14 percent claimed it was a mistake. Fifty-eight percent were in favor of fighting “until Hizbollah would be wiped out” and 23 percent “until Hizbollah would be distanced from the border,” vs. only 17 percent who supported a ceasefire and negotiations. Eighty-seven percent of the sample were satisfied with “the performance of the IDF in the war.”⁵ A poll taken by the Rafi Smith Research Institute on the same day found 75 percent support for continuing military action against Hizbollah vs. only 10 percent who favored entering into negotiations with Hizbollah and Lebanon.⁶

Concurrent with the almost unanimous support of the war was a dramatic improvement in the approval ratings of both the prime minister and the defense minister. The results from both Dahaf and Teleseker polls are shown in table 1. Given the fact that the numbers in both polls were for the overall Israeli adult population, one can safely assume that the numbers for the Jewish population were higher by between 5 and 10 percentage points.

Table 1. PM and DM Performance, 1 week into the war

	Satisfied with the prime minister's performance in the war	Satisfied with the defense minister's performance in the war
Dahaf,⁷ July 17, 2006	78%	72%
Teleseker,⁸ July 18, 2006	78%	61%

Initial civilian casualties from Hizbollah rocket attacks as well as initial army casualties from the ground fighting in southern Lebanon did not change the overall picture of massive support for the war, the IDF, the government, and the prime minister and defense minister. Two weeks into the war, the numbers remained steady. Results from two Teleseker polls of Israelis and from a Dahaf poll for the Jewish population are shown in table 2. An extensive survey undertaken by the Tami Steinmetz Research Center on July 31 and August 1, 2006 revealed similar results and also pointed

out the huge differences between the Israeli Jewish and Arab communities. Ninety-three percent of the Jews justified the war in Lebanon, as compared with only 17 percent among the Arabs; 91 percent of the Jews justified the air attacks on Lebanon and supported continued attacks by the air force vs. only 6 percent of the Arabs (where 79 percent claimed that the attacks were unjustified). Eighty-seven percent of the Jewish sample evaluated the combat ability of the IDF favorably and 78 percent rated the information given by the IDF as “reliable” or “highly reliable” vs. only 32 percent of the Arabs. Seventy-nine percent of the Jews supported the continuation of the fighting until Israel’s objectives were achieved vs. only 7 percent of the Arabs who supported this position.⁹ Results are summarized in table 3.

Table 2. War Objectives and Performance Levels, after 2-3 weeks

	Justified Israel’s and the IDF’s response in Lebanon	Continue the fighting until Hizbollah is distanced from border	Satisfied with prime minister’s performance	Satisfied with defense minister’s performance	Satisfied with IDF’s performance	Satisfied with political echelon’s performance
Teleseker, July 26, 2006¹⁰	95%	82%	77%	60%		
Dahaf, July 27 2006¹¹	92%	34% and “until Hizbollah is destroyed”: 55%	82%	71%	90%	
Teleseker, July 30-31, 2006¹²					85%	74%

Table 3. War Objectives, by Ethnic Breakdown

	Justified the war in Lebanon	Justified the air attack on Lebanon	Approved of the combat ability of the IDF	Information given by the IDF is reliable / highly reliable	Support the continuation of fighting until Israel’s objectives are achieved
Jews	93%	91%	87%	78%	79%
Arabs	17%	6%		32%	7%

Source: Tami Steinmetz Survey, July 31 and August 1, 2006

This highly favorable picture began to change during the last week of the war, and by the end of the war polls reflected a dramatic turnaround. Rarely does one see such far-reaching and dramatic changes in public opinion in so short a time (ten days to two weeks). By the end of the first week in August, there were clear signs of a disenchantment of the Israeli public with the results of the war, accompanied by a decrease in support for the IDF and especially for the political leadership (although some of the data was confusing and contradictory).

A Dialogue poll taken on August 9-10, 2006 found that only 20 percent of the overall Israeli sample felt that "Israel had won the war"; 30 percent felt that "Israel had not won the war"; and 43 percent said that "there is no winner and no loser." The approval ratings for the prime minister and defense minister returned to what they had been before the war – 48 percent were satisfied with the performance of the prime minister vs. 40 percent who were dissatisfied, while only 37 percent were satisfied with the defense minister's performance vs. 51 percent who were dissatisfied. Fifty-three percent said that if there had been leaders with military and security experience at the helm, the war would have been run better. Although a clear majority – 59 percent – were satisfied with the performance of the IDF, this was much lower than the numbers recorded in the first stages of the war. Interestingly, only 47 percent of the sample was satisfied with the performance of the IDF Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz.¹³ A Dahaf poll taken at the same time showed somewhat different results, although it also represented a decrease in many parameters. The poll found that 40 percent of the Jewish population believed that "Israel will win," 13 percent that "Israel will lose," and 42 percent that "there will be a draw." Eighty-seven percent continued to justify the war (75 percent of the overall Israeli sample) and 94 percent believed in the ability of the IDF to defend Israel. On the other hand, only 52 percent rated the IDF's combat performance in Lebanon as "good," vs. 41 percent who rated it as "not good," and 17 percent said that their faith in the IDF had been shaken as a result of the war in Lebanon. In this poll, approval ratings for the political and military leadership remained high – 73 percent for Olmert, 64 percent for Peretz, and 74 percent for Chief of Staff Halutz.¹⁴ The results are summarized in table 4.

Table 4. Perceptions of the War and Performance Levels, towards the end of the war

	Israel had won the war	Israel had not won the war	No winner, no loser	Satisfied with performance of PM	Not satisfied with performance of PM	Satisfied with performance of DM	Not satisfied with performance of DM	Satisfied with performance of IDF	Satisfied with performance of IDF's chief of staff
Dialogue, August 9-10, 2006	20%	30%	43%	48%	40%	37%	51%	59%	47%
Dahaf, August 11, 2006	40%	13%	42%	73%		64%		52%	74%

In the early morning hours of August 12, 2006 (Israel time), the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1701, which, inter alia, called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. On August 14, 2006, a ceasefire came into effect – a ceasefire that was scrupulously adhered to by all parties – and with it the Second Lebanon War came to an end. The disenchantment with the results of the war, which had surfaced in the final days of the war, now turned into an avalanche of frustration, dissatisfaction, and disappointment, and with a dramatic effect on public opinion. A poll taken on August 13, 2006 by the Rafi Smith Research Institute found that 58 percent of Israelis were of the opinion that Israel achieved only a small part, if any, of its objectives (compared to only 16 percent who held that opinion eleven days previously), whereas only 3 percent said that Israel achieved all or nearly all of its objectives (compared to 32 percent the previous week). Fifty-two percent said that the army did not succeed, vs. 44 percent who believed that the army had succeeded. A clue to one of the causes behind these numbers can be found in the fact that only 6 percent believed that resolution 1701 achieved most of Israel's objectives. Sixty-two percent did not approve of the way the prime minister conducted the war, and 65 percent were dissatisfied with the performance of the defense minister during the war. Forty-nine percent vs. 44 percent approved of the chief of staff's performance.¹⁵

Subsequent polls confirmed this picture of serious erosion in public confidence in the IDF and in the political leadership. Table 5 summarizes the results of a Dahaf poll and Teleseker poll of the Jewish population – both taken one day after the ceasefire went into effect. This negative picture did not change in the days and weeks following the end of the war. A series of polls taken towards the end of August all showed a dramatic decrease in public support for the two main coalition partners – Kadima (the prime minister’s party) and Labor (the defense minister’s party).¹⁶ A Dahaf poll taken towards the end of August found a total loss of public confidence in the government and in the political and military leadership. The numbers are astounding. Results from this poll for the Jewish sample are shown in table 6. A survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Research Center on September 4-5, 2006 confirmed the decrease in public confidence for almost all national institutions, including the IDF – although in absolute terms, the IDF still received the highest rating. Contrary to the findings in the past, only 31 percent believed that the unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000 “served Israel’s security interests” while 51 percent believed that “it did not serve those interests.”¹⁷

It is hard to put one’s finger on the exact turning point during the war with regard to public opinion. It is also quite difficult at this stage to determine what were the actual causes behind the dramatic shift in public opinion towards the end of the war and in its aftermath. A study conducted by the Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research at Tel Aviv University found a decrease in the approval rating of the government’s performance mainly as a function of the number of casualties. The first drop was recorded on July 27, 2006, the day after the battle at Bint Jbail, where the IDF lost eight soldiers and failed to take the village – from close to 80 percent to 60 percent, although within three days it rebounded to the 80 percent level. A second serious drop was recorded on August 9, 2006, one day after twelve reserve soldiers were killed by a Katyusha rocket at Kibbutz Kfar Giladi in northern Israel, close to the Lebanese border, and three civilians were killed that evening by a rocket attack in Haifa. From this point, the approval ratings continued to drop until the end of the war, with a significant drop recorded on August 11, 2006, the day after fifteen reserve soldiers were killed in the ground warfare in southern Lebanon.¹⁸

Table 5. Perceptions of the War and Performance Levels, at the end of the war

	Israel had won the war	Hizbollah had won the war	Neither side won	Support establishment of national inquiry commission	Israel should not have agreed to ceasefire without release of kidnapped soldiers	Olmert - performance	Peretz - performance	Halutz - performance
Dahaf, August 15, 2006 ¹⁹	30%	30%	36%	69%	70%	47% - good 51% - not good	36% - good 63% - not good	49% - good 47% - not good
Telesker, August 15, 2006 ²⁰	18%	15%	66%	67%	53% support continuing the fighting	40% approved	28% approved	44% - good 52% - not good

	Government - performance	Senior IDF officers - performance	Soldiers and commanders - performance	Call for resignation of PM	Call for resignation of DM	IDF overall performance
Dahaf, August 15, 2006	14% - good 84% - not good	61% - good 32% - not good	94% - good 2% - not good	57%	42%	81% - satisfied 18% - dissatisfied
Telesker, August 15, 2006						

Table 6. Jewish Public Perceptions of Performance Levels, two weeks after the war

	Resignation of PM	Performance of PM	Resignation of DM	Performance of DM	Olmert fit to be PM	Peretz fit to be DM	Resignation of Chief of Staff	Performance of Chief of Staff during the war	Depended on the ability of the IDF to defend Israel
Dahaf, August 25, 2006 ²¹	63%	74% - not good 26% - good	74%	79% - not good 20% - good	11%	3%	54%	63% - not good 35% - good	82%

On the basis of the available data, the following list of causes may collectively explain the dramatic shift in public opinion and the deep frustration of the Israeli public with the results of the Second Lebanon War:

1. Exaggerated expectations caused by the political and military leadership. Buoyed by the initial success, both in the air campaign and in the diplomatic arena, Israel's leaders, especially the prime minister and defense minister, set goals that were unattainable (including the demise of Hizbollah, destruction of the entire Hizbollah infrastructure, freeing of the kidnapped soldiers, and a dramatic change in the face of the Middle East). It was vis-à-vis these objectives that the Israeli public evaluated the results of the war.
2. The inability of Israel to stop or even decrease the volume of Hizbollah rocket attacks against cities, towns, and communities throughout the north of Israel. Never since the 1948 War of Independence had Israel's home front faced such a sustained attack. The government underestimated the cumulative effect of 150 rockets a day throughout the north of Israel for thirty-three days. The home front showed a great deal of resilience and was willing to suffer the rocket attacks for a given period. But the Israeli public was not ready to accept the fact that after thirty-three days of air and ground warfare, the IDF was unable to make even a dent in Hizbollah's capacity to attack Israel's civilian centers.
3. The number of casualties and the extensive coverage given to the casualties by the Israeli media, and particularly the electronic media. This was the first war in which the IDF gave daily information on its casualties. When there were limited achievements on the ground and the air campaign had more or less run its course, the Israeli public became obsessed with the casualties and with the media coverage of the casualties, which became a major source of demoralization. It remains an open question whether a democratic country with a free and open society can for any lengthy period continue to wage a difficult war, without incurring formative negative approval ratings within the public. Interestingly, close to 50 percent of the Israeli public were of the opinion that the Israeli media harmed the morale of the troops at the front and the civilians at home.²²

4. The lack of preparedness of the home front. The government failed to prepare adequately for a situation where over one million Israelis would be forced to spend many hours each day for over a month in shelters and closed rooms. In many communities, the state of the shelters was shameful and the government never even discussed the possibility of selective evacuation of the most hard-hit towns, such as Kiryat Shmona. The government did not succeed in properly coordinating the efforts of the various civil defense agencies. The ones who suffered most from this gross neglect were the weaker segments of the population – the elderly, the sick, single-parent families, the poor, and the disadvantaged. Seventy-six percent of the Jewish population rated the government's treatment of the residents of the north as "not good."²³ The effect of this gross mismanagement was similar to the political repercussions endured by President Bush following Hurricane Katrina of August 2005.
5. The bitter complaints of the reserve soldiers returning from battle. This certainly was one of the most damaging factors in terms of public opinion. The IDF mobilized close to 50,000 soldiers, all of whom were released within days of the ceasefire. Unlike the standing army or conscripts, these soldier-civilians have no qualms or constraints whatsoever in venting their frustration about ineptitude in the army and the conduct of the campaign. The reserve soldiers, including high-ranking officers, told grim tales of glaring mismanagement, confusion, and grave mistakes in the conduct of the ground warfare. The reservists complained bitterly of lack of proper equipment, lack of proper and updated intelligence, insufficient training, serious failures in the logistical support, and contradictory orders. While many of these lapses are endemic to armies and occurred in all of Israel's previous wars, in the context of inadequate military achievements, they take on greater significance. Had Israel succeeded in killing Nasrallah and seriously limiting the Katyusha attacks, the Israel public may have been much more forgiving regarding these lapses. As it was, however, this factor, taken together with all the other causes listed above, had a disastrous and perhaps long-lasting effect on public opinion.

Finally, there are the long range effects of the war on Israeli public opinion, and specifically on what remains the central issue – the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. It is of course still too early to assess fully the impact of the war on the basic attitudes of the Israeli public. More time and data are necessary to understand the lasting effects of the war on Israeli public opinion and the future course of events. For example, many observers believe that Israeli public opinion has taken a sharp turn to the right. Although there is considerable data to support this contention, it may very well be premature and should not be viewed as a foregone or permanent conclusion. There is reason to believe that the true picture is far more complex and that public opinion, as far as hard core issues are concerned, is in a state of flux and formation.

Most of the data regarding a shift to the right is in the realm of party politics. Almost all of the surveys show a continued drop in the approval ratings of the prime minister and defense minister as well as a sharp decrease in support for their respective parties, Kadima and Labor. A Dialogue poll taken on September 19, 2006 found that the approval ratings of the prime minister and the defense minister had plummeted to 22 percent and 14 percent, respectively, vs. 48 percent and 37 percent, respectively in the previous poll of August 11, 2006. If elections were to be held, the poll found a sharp and significant increase in the strength of the two main right wing parties (19 seats) at the expense of Kadima and Labor.²⁴ A Dahaf poll of the Jewish population taken a few days later recorded almost identical results.²⁵ It should be noted, however, that with time, the polls became less one-sided and less conclusive. A Rafi Smith Institute poll conducted towards the end of September 2006 found a major shift in support among Jewish voters away from Kadima and Labor – though not to the right wing parties, rather to the “undecided” and “not voting” categories. Close to half of those polled (48 percent) refused to say for which party they would vote.²⁶ Such a large floating vote is highly unusual in Israel and points to a confused electorate. A Teleseker poll, taken at almost the same time, found that under certain circumstances, Kadima would hold its own in an election, and the results would be very close between the right and the center-left blocs.²⁷

As far as the core issues are concerned, the situation is even more complex. The shift to the right is manifest mainly in the demise of unilateralism. Disillusionment with the disengagement from Gaza, which existed before the war,²⁸ became even stronger after the war. A Rafi Smith Institute poll

of Israelis taken on September 17-18, 2006 found that 55 percent “today oppose the Gaza pullout” vs. only 38 percent who “today support the Gaza pullout.”²⁹ In the Teleseker poll at the end of September, 2006, the same percentage – 55 percent of Israelis – said that the disengagement was “a mistake,” vs. 40 percent who saw the decision as “a correct one.”³⁰ The same holds true for the convergence plan. Support for convergence was down even prior to the war.³¹ By the end of the war, support for Olmert’s convergence plan had all but vanished, and the prime minister himself stated publicly that plan was at this time no longer on the public agenda. The Teleseker poll found that 60 percent viewed the prime minister’s decision not to implement the convergence plan as “a correct decision,” vs. only 20 percent who viewed this as “a mistake.”³²

Unilateralism, however, is not the only game in town. There are indications that more and more Israelis are coming around to view negotiations with the Palestinians as the only viable alternative to unilateralism. The Israeli public remains acutely aware of the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and of the need to find a solution, although the nature of such a solution remains unclear. Since Oslo in 1993 and throughout all the ups and downs of the ensuing years, including the most difficult periods of the second intifada, Israelis continued to support the principle of negotiations with the Palestinians. True, after the Hamas electoral victory of January 2006 there was a solid and strong majority against negotiations with Hamas, a position shared by the Israeli government and nearly the entire political establishment. At the same time, it seems that Israeli public opinion is continuing to search for possible avenues of negotiation.

The Dialogue poll of September 19, 2006 found the Israeli sample evenly split on the question, “Should Israel conduct negotiations with a Hamas and Fatah unity government”: 45 percent in favor, 46 percent opposed, and 9 percent undecided.³³ The Dahaf poll at the end of August found similar results, with 41 percent of the Israeli population supporting negotiations with Abu Mazan and Hamas.³⁴ A poll conducted by the Harry S. Truman Institute at the Hebrew University on September 10-19, 2006 found that 67 percent of the overall Israeli sample supported negotiations with a Palestinian national unity government “if needed to reach a compromise agreement.” Fifty-six percent of Israelis supported and 43 percent opposed talks with a Hamas government “if needed in order to reach a compromise

agreement with the Palestinians” (in June 2006, only 48 percent supported negotiations with a Hamas government under similar circumstances).³⁵

Thus while the war apparently soured Israelis on unilateralism, it did not affect their desire to search for some form of resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It may even have increased their readiness for negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. In general, one can say that Israelis have become more threat-oriented and manifest a growing preoccupation with security threats (especially from Iran). At the same time, the overall mood remains positive and optimistic.

One final point should be made, regarding international forces. Since the time when UN Secretary-General U Thant summarily removed the UN forces from Sinai and Gaza on the eve of the Six Day War, Israelis have had very little faith in international peacekeeping forces. This sentiment was exacerbated by the negative experience with UNIFIL and by the failure of the European monitors at the Rafah crossing. Success of the international force in southern Lebanon in implementing resolution 1701 may have interesting consequences for Israeli public opinion and open new possibilities. The Israeli public will be carefully watching the conduct of this force and especially the behavior of the European contingent. If French and Italian soldiers demonstrate a readiness to engage Hizbollah and open fire if necessary, Israeli public opinion might be ready to entertain the idea of stationing such forces in Palestinian areas. Already in the Tami Steinmetz Research Center study at the beginning of September 2006, 51 percent of the Israelis supported the adoption of an international force solution for the conflict with the Palestinians and expressed readiness for an IDF withdrawal upon the stationing of such a force.³⁶

Notes

1. Teleseker Poll published in *Maariv*, July 5, 2005.
2. Dahaf Poll published in *Yediot Ahronot*, June 30, 2006, Supplement, pp. 12-13.
3. Ibid; and Tami Steinmetz Research Center Poll in *Haaretz*, July 10, 2006.
4. Ibid.
5. *Yediot Ahronot*, July 18, 2006, p. 5.
6. Ynet Service, July 18, 2006.
7. See footnote 5.
8. *Maariv*, July 19, 2006.
9. *Haaretz*, August 9, 2006, Section B, p 2.

10. *Maariv*, July 27, 2006, p. 9.
11. *Yediot Ahronot*, July 28, 2006, p. 3.
12. *Maariv*, August 1, 2006, p. 2.
13. *Haaretz*, August 11, 2006, p. 9.
14. *Yediot Ahronot*, August 11, 2006, Supplement, p. 9.
15. *Globes*, August 14, 2006; Ynet Service, August 14, 2006.
16. *Jerusalem Post*, August 25, 2006, pp. 3, 21.
17. *Haaretz*, September 12, 2006, Section B, p. 3.
18. Shavit et al., "Perception and Opinion of the Public Regarding the Fighting in the North," *Public Opinion* 12, August 2006, The B. I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research.
19. *Yediot Ahronot*, August 16, 2006, p. 3.
20. *Maariv*, August 16, 2006, p. 4.
21. *Yediot Ahronot*, August 25, 2006, Supplement, pp. 1, 6-9.
22. *Haaretz*, August 31, 2006, p. 2.
23. See footnote 14.
24. *Haaretz*, September 21, 2006, pp. 1, 7.
25. *Yediot Ahronot*, September 22, 2006, Supplement, pp. 10-11.
26. *Jerusalem Post*, September 29, 2006, pp. 1, 9.
27. *Maariv*, October 1, 2006, Supplement, pp. 16-17.
28. See footnote 4.
29. *Jerusalem Post*, September 22, 2006, p. 1.
30. See footnote 27.
31. See footnote 3.
32. See footnote 27.
33. See footnote 24.
34. See footnote 21.
35. *Haaretz*, September 27, 2006, p. 12.
36. See footnote 17.

Chapter 8

The Civilian Front in the Second Lebanon War

Meir Elran

Introduction

The Second Lebanon War was waged simultaneously on two fronts: the military front in southern Lebanon, where IDF forces fought in Hizbollah strongholds, and the civilian fronts deep inside Lebanon and Israel, where civilians served as combat targets for both sides. This represented a new height in the trend that has been emerging for some time, whereby the focus of the fighting in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict transfers from a direct clash between armed forces to a mixed pattern, in which the role of civilians on both sides is increasingly central. The assumption underlying this trend is that in an asymmetrical war, in which one of the sides is militarily inferior to the other, striking against the civilian front has a major impact on the balance of power. The fact that this approach was embraced by the weak, in this case Hizbollah, is self-understood. Having no chance of defeating the clearly stronger side, it could only turn to exerting pressure on the civilian front, the one that has been perceived as the weak link. Interestingly, the stronger side too, in this case Israel, has followed suit, suggesting that military pressure on civilian targets is accepted as an important strategic lever.

It seems that both sides' assumptions regarding the benefits of using military means against civilian populations and infrastructures are questionable.¹ The heavy damage inflicted by Israel on the Lebanese home front did not bring the Lebanese citizens, and certainly not the Shiites, to sever their ties to Hizbollah, nor did the massive strikes against Israel's home front bear out Nasrallah's "spider web" theory. Israeli society did

not collapse under the barrage of rockets that fell daily on the towns and villages in the north of Israel.

This essay will look at the Israeli aspect of the civilian front and will focus on two main questions: (a) how did Israeli society withstand the ongoing intense Hizbollah attacks during the war? To what degree did Israeli society display resilience, and what enabled it to withstand the blows as it did? (b) To what extent was the home front prepared to deal with the difficult experience of the Hizbollah rocket barrages, and in particular, what lessons should be learned from the experience of July-August 2006, assuming that in the future Israel's enemies – in the first, second, and third circles – might well opt for short or long range, conventional or non-conventional rockets or missiles against the home front as a preferred target.

The Resilience of Israel's Home Front

During the thirty-three days of fighting, Hizbollah fired nearly 4,000 rockets (an average of 120 a day) towards population centers in northern Israel. While only 901 – less than a quarter – hit populated areas, they achieved substantive results: thirty-nine civilians were killed; thousands were injured, most (about 2,200) suffering from shock and anxiety and about 100 suffering from severe or medium-level injuries; and some 12,000 buildings were damaged, most suffering limited damage. These figures show only part of the picture. One can add the hundreds of thousands of people who left their homes for all or part of the war, under very difficult conditions, the emotional distress experienced by people in the north because of the sirens, rocket landings, and actual strikes,² the financial damage sustained by individuals and businesses, and the overall economic burden to the country, estimated at approximately NIS 30 billion.³

The configuration of Hizbollah's force buildup, with the massive support from Syria and Iran, reflected the true perception of the organization and its leaders. They understood that they could not stand up to the Israeli war machine in a direct, all-out confrontation. Rather, extensive and continuous strikes on the home front would possibly achieve the strategic balance by upsetting the social fabric in Israel. This was designed to exert political pressure on the government, which in turn might diminish its determination to confront the enemy in military and political terms. Supporting evidence

of this approach can be found in Nasrallah's speech of May 26, 2000, following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, in which he described Israeli society to be as flimsy as a "spider web."⁴ In other words, it was perceived to be far weaker than it looked, and hence, heavy strikes against it would perhaps yield the desired balance.

Is this really the case? The answer is not clear and depends on the point of view, be it Israel's or Hizbollah's. One may assume that Hizbollah emerged from the war with a positive view of the results, even if it did not fully realize its expectations. On the Israeli side, the question of national resilience, or the robustness of the Israeli public, is a complex issue that is difficult to assess.⁵ The notion of national resilience is based on a set of concepts taken from the discipline of psychology, which examine reactions of the individual, the community, and society as a whole to traumatic events. A major criterion would be the degree and speed that normal life resumes following a trauma. The assumption is that the more resilient individual, community, or public will respond significantly to the severity of the traumatic events, but will return to its normal pattern of life within a short space of time. Alternately, a low level of resilience may be defined in cases whereby the group, community, or entire society reacts in an extreme manner to traumatic challenges and finds it hard to return to routine life even after a considerable period of time.

The Israeli public associates national resilience with other values, such as the extent of cohesiveness and solidarity of society; the consensus regarding the main issues at a given time; the degree of support for the government and its policies, particularly during a time of crisis; support for national symbols, such as the IDF; and the way the Israeli economy functions.

The overall picture that emerges with regard to the resilience of the home front during the war is mixed. On the one hand, the most distinct dimension was the fact that many civilians left their homes for all or most of the war. Figures on the extent of the phenomenon, though incomplete and not reliable, indicate that around 120,000 of about 200,000 residents living close to the confrontation line left their homes,⁶ about 17,000 of the 24,000 inhabitants of Kiryat Shmona evacuated their town,⁷ and a similar proportion left other urban centers. Even if in fact the figures were lower, as suggested by a survey published on September 20,⁸ it is still clear that

there was a widespread pattern reflecting the war's impact on the home front. Two observations are relevant here:

- The traditional Israeli view considered civilians who left their homes as “deserters” reflecting a fundamentally negative approach, namely, a lack of roots and possibly even non-compliance with national expectations. Over the years the traditional perception has faded and been replaced, at least in part, by the recognition that leaving is a normal reaction, an appropriate, reasonable response to genuine threats in a time of distress. Shlomo Breznitz clearly expressed the current approach by saying that “one must be very careful when saying that people must not evacuate...I don't consider this running away. If someone lives in a region that is under threat...that is one of most rational courses of action. There should not be any social sanction associated with it. It should not be criticized. On the contrary, it should be encouraged.”⁹
- Most of those who left their homes did so on their own initiative and at their own expense. The state – intentionally – did not act in this regard until the end of the war. This was a very sensitive issue from the outset, both in domestic political terms and in terms of the projected national image as viewed by the enemy. According to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense subcommittee on the home front,¹⁰ no evacuation procedure – such as approved by the government in November 2001, whereby civilians are to be evacuated when “damage is inflicted on civilians by a missile attack” – was implemented. It was only on August 7 that a limited “refreshing” plan was put together by the prime minister's office for some of those living in bomb shelters in northern settlements. This was a short term evacuation of several tens of thousands of residents, with generous assistance from NGOs. The message was clear: the government avoided setting a policy on this complex matter, and in fact left the decision to the citizens and the implementation to NGOs.

Residents of the north returned to their homes as soon as the rocket fire ended and resumed their normal daily routine.¹¹ A considerable number of evacuees returned to work already during the war, even when absence was permitted (and paid for). A fortnight after the end of the hostilities the school year started as usual, including at all thirty-four schools that sustained damage. Prior to the autumn Jewish holiday season, six weeks

after the end of the war, internal tourism in the north had largely recovered. This distinct phenomenon of full and rapid resumption of normal life, particularly by the residents of the north, indicates a high degree of public resilience. This is supported by other evidence of normalization, including the limited willingness of the public to be involved in political protest against the government. This might suggest that for most Israelis, once the war ended it was time to get back to normal life, sooner rather than later.

The resilience of Israeli society at the time was also reflected by public opinion polls during the war. Full analysis is addressed by Yehuda Ben Meir in his article in this collection of essays; the picture is summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Public Opinion during and after the War

Date	Survey by	War justified	Satisfied with the prime minister	Satisfied with the defense minister	Satisfied with the IDF	Rely on the IDF	Public Mood
July 6	<i>Maariv</i>		43%	28%			
July 18	<i>Yediot</i>	86%	78%	72%	87%		
July 19	<i>Maariv</i>		78%	61%			
July 25	<i>Maariv</i>	95%	77%	60%			
July 28	<i>Yediot</i>	82%	74%	64%	80%		
August 1	Tami Steinmetz	93%			87%		2/3 good, 1/3 not good
August 3	<i>Globes</i>		71%	62%			65% feel secure
August 11	<i>Yediot</i>		66%	59%	48%	90%	55% not good, 45% good
August 11	<i>Haaretz</i>		48%	37%	59%		
August 16	<i>Maariv</i>		40%	28%		81%	
August 16	<i>Yediot</i>		47%	36%	61%	94%	
August 25	<i>Yediot</i>		26%	20%			
September 21	<i>Haaretz</i>		22%	14%			

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the figures:

- Throughout the war, almost until the very end, the Israeli public voiced its opinion, in consistently high percentages, that the war against Hizbollah was justified. According to the findings of a survey carried out at the end of July by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University, a few weeks into the war only 5 percent of those asked felt the war was unjustified. Ninety-one percent justified the air force attacks on Lebanon, even if they inflicted damage on civilian infrastructures and suffering on the civilian population there.¹²
- The degree of consensus is connected to the relatively high level of national resilience as perceived by the public. A survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center in the third week of the war indicated that 88 percent of the respondents thought that Israeli society was withstanding the burden of the war well or very well, and only 9 percent considered the resilience as poor or very poor. Fifty-five percent estimated the national mood at the time of the survey as good or very good, compared with 41 percent who said it was bad or very bad. Those conducting the survey noted that from the beginning of the war, there was a significant rise in national morale.
- While the fighting continued, most of the Israeli public demonstrated a high level of support for the government and the IDF, compared with the period before the war. Towards the end of the war and particularly once it ended, there was a clear change in public opinion and a sharp downturn in support and satisfaction with the political and military leaderships. A survey conducted by the Dahaf Institute in mid-November 2006 and published in *Yediot Ahronot* found that 71 percent of those asked felt that the chief of staff should resign (compared with 55 percent who were of this opinion in late September) and 72 percent felt similarly about the minister of defense.
- Despite the decline in political support, including the clear drop in support for the chief of staff, the public maintained confidence in the IDF, notwithstanding very severe criticism of the army's performance, including from within the army. This discrepancy was also demonstrated in a Dahaf Institute survey whose results were published in *Yediot Ahronot* on August 16, immediately after the end of the war, according to which 94 percent (!) of the public felt that the IDF soldiers and

their commanders had conducted themselves well during the fighting. A follow-up survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center in early September indicates a significant decline in the public's estimation of the IDF's performance. On a scale of 1-100 the IDF received a rating of 63, compared with 81 in 2001, although this is still far higher than the rating of the Supreme Court (48) and the Israeli government (28). According to the Dahaf survey from November, 78 percent of interviewees "rely on the army to protect Israel," compared with 22 percent who "do not rely" on the IDF. These figures reveal once again the unique position enjoyed by the IDF in Israeli society and the supportive feelings of the public, even when harsh criticism is expressed against it. Despite the operational failures during the war the IDF remained a valued national symbol.

- Most of the indexes indicate only small discrepancies between the response of residents of the north of Israel and those living in other parts of the country.

These figures shed light on Israeli's national resilience during the war. They indicate wide agreement on the objectives of the war and significant backing for the political leadership. This consensus is also indicated by the public's willingness to suffer the rocket attacks and sustain the fighting throughout the period. It explains the high response of reserve soldiers to mobilization orders. The fact that this consensus declined towards the end of the war and practically vanished after the war can reflect the rapid resumption of normal life and the familiar and generally divisive debates in Israeli society, and the public's progressing from a sense of obligation to the collective notions in times of need.

What are the possible explanations of this public rallying and strength during the war?¹³ First, it is possible that the public understood at an early stage that indeed there was a real threat that must be addressed, but that it was rather limited in terms of the damage it could inflict. The perception of the war as justified is a central factor. The fact that Hizbollah took the first step and kidnapped two soldiers, which hit a raw Israeli nerve (shortly after the kidnapping of the soldier Gilad Shalit on the Gaza border), and then targeted civilians in its attacks, helped to portray it clearly as a terror organization, an active member of the "axis of evil," which can only be obstructed by standing firm against it.

These explanations prompt the basic assumption that national resilience to external threats is a permanent characteristic of Israeli society. Contrary to the claims of many, Israeli society is capable of absorbing heavy blows by its enemies. Perhaps it is not taken for granted as much now as it was in the past, when Israeli society was thought to be ready to rally round for the sake of the collective. However, this attribute is still an important element of strength and reflects a high degree of balanced normalcy, much of which is the ability to address threats in the right proportions, not always necessarily as existential threats in any challenge that emerges.¹⁴

These encouraging attributes of national resilience do not eclipse the severe social problems that came to light during the 2006 war. It highlighted deep divisions and serious problems that have existed in Israeli society for some time. Particularly prominent are the feelings of estrangement, coupled with the severe social and economic gaps that exist between the center of the country and the periphery,¹⁵ between disadvantaged groups and those who are better off, and between Jews and Arabs (despite the assumption, which was largely dispelled, that as Hizbollah missiles do not differentiate between Jews and Arabs, there are grounds to expect unity in the face of a common enemy).¹⁶ There is nothing new here, nor was there any exacerbation of these issues during or following the war. The war did not change much, if at all, and probably will not change these familiar features of Israeli society.

Deployment of the Home Front

If the picture of Israeli national resilience during the war indicates a degree of optimism, the picture that emerges of home front preparedness is disappointing, particularly the performance of the government agencies. Many have defined it in harsh terms of neglect and abandonment; or to borrow from the imagery of the state comptroller, an eclipse of governmental function.¹⁷

The essence of the problem lies with the question of responsibility for the civilian front in time of war. In Israel there is no state entity with the responsibility to lead, integrate, coordinate, set long term policy, and build the required systems for the home front. There is no one body to define priorities and allocate funds, ensure implementation, and generate and

supervise the required changes according to the evolving circumstances. The legislature seemingly took care of this matter in the 1951 Civilian Protection Law that set “the means necessary to withstand any attack... on the civilian population.” The law established “the Civilian Defense, which was supposed to organize and manage the civilian home front... [and] coordinate the actions of the government ministries, the local authorities, and private facilities.”¹⁸ The Home Front Command, which was established in February 1992 following the 1991 Gulf War, legally assumed those responsibilities. However, the scope of responsibility and areas of operation granted to the Civilian Defense in the early 1950s are no longer relevant. In the 2006 war the issues at hand were far more complex and sensitive: it was necessary to care for hundreds of thousands of civilians who left their homes; to tend to those who stayed behind and spent weeks in dilapidated bomb shelters; to supply food and health, psychological, and social services; to furnish reliable timely information; and to provide many other necessary services required by civilians in stress. These are difficult issues with social and economic ramifications and to a great extent moral, ethical, and political implications. The Home Front Command, as a branch of the IDF, cannot and should not be responsible for these overwhelming tasks.

As opposed to the clear definitions of the responsibilities of the IDF for defense of the state against the enemy, the responsibilities for the Civilian Defense in the wider sense is not defined at all. In addition to the Israeli police force (which in accordance with a government decision from 1974 is responsible for internal security) and the IDF’s Home Front Command, government ministries (Welfare, Health, Education, Finance, and Internal Security) also function, each in its own field, along with many other organizations, such as Magen David Adom (the Israeli Red Cross), the fire departments, the Emergency Economy system (“Melah”),¹⁹ and the municipalities. The local authorities, at least the stronger among them, have in recent years gradually assumed more responsibility for the wellbeing of their residents, including in emergency situations.²⁰ The performance and success of the municipal authorities during the war was highly variable and depended on their strength, efficiency, and leadership. This caused major discrepancies between stronger and weaker municipalities.²¹ In some cases the government intervened directly by appointing senior

representatives to run the local authorities. However, this was far from sufficient to cover population needs, particularly in towns where large numbers of disadvantaged civilians or people with special needs stayed behind. Concomitantly, public NGOs and numerous philanthropic organizations worked tirelessly. As a result, in any given area there were numerous official – state and municipal – organizations working alongside unofficial bodies, often without adequate coordination between them, to produce highly variable results.

The issue of responsibility is not an isolated one. It reflects the deep-rooted and long-established defense concept in Israel, which is military and offensive in nature, and assigns to the IDF the nearly exclusive role in confrontations with the enemy. The basic assumption has been that due to its small size and the concentration of its population in limited areas, Israel, in all scenarios and as quickly as possible, should transfer the combat area to enemy territory. The offensive approach was consistently viewed as the basis of defense. The problem with this one-dimensional approach was exposed in the Second Lebanon War.²² To be sure, this was not the first time the home front was exposed to continuous attacks: in the War of Independence, the 1991 Gulf War, and the second intifada the civilian front constituted a major target. However, in 2006 the scope, persistence, and damage of the attacks were unprecedented. The assumption is that such a scenario might well materialize in future conflicts, possibly even to a greater degree.

As such, protecting the home front requires reexamination of the basic assumptions and priorities of Israel's national security concept. Defense of the home front, in all its aspects, must constitute a central component of the defense doctrine, with all that this entails in terms of the necessary investment and deployment. This does not just refer to technological solutions, such as defense systems against rockets and missiles. Assuming there is no comprehensive defense against high trajectory weapons launched in a concentrated manner and over time, an updated approach and deployment of the national systems dealing with the civilian population is essential.

It has been suggested that the conduct of the government during the war was also a product of the philosophy that the government should intervene less in its citizens' affairs and should allow public and private organizations

to take its place. Indeed, the weakening of the welfare state concept and practice in Israel and the privatization of public services, prevalent in education, welfare, health, and other sectors, was largely applied to the civilian front in time of war. In essence, the government abdicated, and encouraged the non-profit and charity organizations to take its place.²³ This philanthropic activity generated widespread solidarity among the Israeli public with the residents of the north. However, looking at this issue in a wider perspective, there are grounds to question the huge role of the NGOs vis-à-vis the problematic involvement of the state systems.

Another possible reason for the disappointing picture that emerged in relation to the system's handling of the civilian front stems from the fact that from the outset policymakers were not sure whether there was, in fact, a war that would persist for over a month.²⁴ For Israel, the confrontation began as a response to the kidnapping of the soldiers and developed in an unplanned fashion.²⁵ The government did not declare a state of war, with the ensuing legal, practical, and budgetary aspects, and sufficed with declaring "a special home front situation" in the north. One of the practical ramifications was that the Emergency Economy system was not activated, despite the fact that together with the Absorption and Deceased Authority ("Pesah") it is designed to deal with problems arising from an emergency situation.²⁶ The decision not to activate it reflects the decision makers' passive state of mind with regard to deployment of the home front.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is clear: the civilian front in the north and those charged with protecting it and addressing its needs were not prepared or ready for the war. However, the situation that emerged should not have come as a surprise. A special report issued by the state comptroller in 2001, which extensively reviewed the components of the civilian front in the north, concluded: "The settlements on the 'confrontation line' are not sufficiently protected in accordance with their needs."²⁷ Very little was done to correct the situation in the six years that followed this critique.

Conclusion

The two primary issues addressed in this essay are closely intertwined. National resilience is a central factor in the ability of Israeli society to withstand the challenges that confront it in time of war. National resilience

is contingent on the public's sense that its government is doing what it possibly can to provide it with a reasonable level of individual security and responds appropriately to its needs in emergency situations. In the Second Lebanon War the Israeli public demonstrated reasonable capacity to stand up to the Hizbollah attack, despite the failure of the central and local governments to attend to the needs of the civil population during the war. There is no guarantee that this will occur in the future. Therefore, a new approach must be adopted vis-à-vis civilian security as an integral part of Israel's defense doctrine.²⁸ The assumption must be that Israel's enemies, the Palestinians, Arab states, and Iran, presently possess and will in the future acquire more advanced military means that will pose a considerable threat to the Israeli home front. In any confrontation in the future it is reasonable to assume that the civilian population will be a preferred target for inflicting ongoing, continuous, and extensive damage. Compared with the current situation, in which the depth of the civilian home front was limited primarily to Haifa and northwards, in the future it is possible that all centers of population, or many of them, will simultaneously be within striking range of rockets or missiles. In such a situation, people whose towns or villages are threatened will not have anywhere to go. Without a significant change in civilian defense and deployment of the home front, the next round may generate far more difficult situations than those of the last confrontation. In such circumstances there will be special importance attached to more than just protection of civilians' lives or property. The question of national resilience and the ability of the Israeli public to withstand the traumas over time will be far more acute and might have serious strategic implications. This scenario requires an entirely different approach and deployment, one that will generate a reasonable military defense system against rockets and missiles, and will considerably upgrade the system of public bomb shelters and provide a suitable response to the needs of the individual, the community, and the public. The lack of suitable preparation may have a considerable detrimental effect on the Israeli public's robustness during an all-out protracted attack on the home front.

Within the framework of an updated concept it is imperative that a national system be established for the defense of the home front. Several points are in order here:

- The “National Authority for the Home Front” must be established sooner than later. It cannot and should not be a part of the Ministry of Defense (as was recently decided) or the IDF. It should be civilian in nature, and its responsibilities and status should be determined by legislation. It should be responsible for strategic and operative planning, for formulating a civilian defense concept, for setting standards and implementing them over time through the different agencies, and for supervision, allocations, and coordination.
- The operational aspects of the system should be carried out by the local authorities. Some are capable and already prepared for this responsibility. Others will be able to prepare themselves, certainly if they are given a proper framework and if the appropriate funding is provided. There are many municipalities that require direct and extensive help, possibly over a length of time. There is no way this can be avoided, despite the expected difficulties. There is no genuine alternative to the municipal system as a means of providing the civilian population with the needed help in time of war.
- The NGOs should also play an important role in caring for civilian needs in situations of distress and emergencies. They should be incorporated into the systems at the municipal level in advance, in accordance with the policies and standards determined by the government. However, the guiding line must be that the state and the local authorities have the responsibility and authority, while the NGOs should act as supportive elements.

Israel’s ability to improvise will be a major characteristic in future confrontations as well. However, improvisation by itself cannot suffice to provide suitable solutions for the huge challenges that the home front will confront. A full system-wide solution is required in order to limit the expected risks and to provide the civilians with the means to keep up their resilience in times of war.

Notes

1. Lt. Col. Nurit, “Enforcement from the Air – The Lessons of History,” *Maarachot* 408 (August 2006).
2. According to figures compiled by Prof. Mooli Lahad from Tel Hai Academic College and quoted in *Yediot Ahronot* on August 16, 2006, 16,000 children – 35 percent

of those who stayed in the north during the attacks – suffered from difficulties in concentration, nightmares, and increased bouts of crying. About 6,000 children continued to experience severe anxieties following the war. In July 2006, NATAL (an NGO that deals with victims of trauma) received around 5,000 telephone calls for help, double the number of calls received throughout the previous year (*Haaretz*, August 14, 2006). See also a special report by Yitzhak Gilat on initial findings on calls to ERAN (Emotional First Aid by Telephone) during the war in Lebanon, published on the association’s website, www.eran.org.il.

3. Sever Plotzker, *Yediot Ahronot*, August 24, 2006, quotes Dr. Yaakov Sheinin who estimated the production loss during the war at around NIS 9 billion, the damage to tourism from abroad at close to NIS 6 billion, damage caused to property in the north at some NIS 8 billion, and direct military costs during the war at approximately NIS 7 billion. This, he said, represents a loss of 2 percent growth over two years. According to *The Marker*, August 22, 2006, the Ministry of Finance estimated direct and indirect damage to the home front during the war at around NIS 6 billion, including a transfer of NIS 2 billion to the defense budget and another NIS 3 billion that was allocated to local authorities and government ministries during the war.
4. The exact quotation is, “Our brothers in Palestine: I want to tell you in God’s name that Israel, which has nuclear weapons and the strongest air force in the region, is as weak as a spider web.”
5. The issue of national resilience – its definitions and pertinent methodologies – has been examined in a number of papers and publications. See, for example, Meir Elran, *Israel’s National Resilience: The Influence of the Second Intifada on Israeli Society*, Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum no. 81, January 2006.
6. See the briefing by the director general of the prime minister’s office, *Haaretz*, August 10, 2006.
7. *Yediot Ahronot*, August 9, 2006. See also the article by Daniel Ben Simon, *Haaretz*, August 11, 2006, in which he claims that Kiryat Shmona had never experienced an evacuation on such a scale, even during previous clashes.
8. A survey conducted by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, published in several publications, including *The Marker* on September 20, 2006, indicates that 85 percent of male residents of the north did not leave their homes and 9 percent left for only a few days. About 66 percent of the women did not leave and 13 percent left for a short period. Around 90 percent of Arab inhabitants did not leave their towns and villages, compared with 66 percent of Jewish residents. There were also differences in levels of income: 77 percent of those who reported having a low income stayed in their towns, compared with 60 percent of residents with high incomes.
9. Interview with Shahar Ilan, *Haaretz*, July 20, 2006. Prof. Breznitz is a psychologist who specializes in stress situations and is also a member of Knesset.
10. *Yediot Ahronot*, August 22, 2006.
11. According to *Yediot Ahronot*, August 22, 2006, retail commerce resumed in full throughout the country two days after the ceasefire. The credit card business turnover

- on August 16 was 8 percent higher than before the war. There was also a 42 percent increase in shopping in the north in the days after the war.
12. Surveys of Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University, July-August 2006. See full details in *Haaretz*, August 9 and September 12, 2006, and on the Center's website.
 13. See article by Prof. Baruch Nevo, dean of the Safed Academic College, "We Stood Up Well," *Haaretz*, August 27, 2006.
 14. Evidence of this can be found in the Israeli economy, which managed to maintain relative stability during the war. Eighty-five percent of industrial plants in the north remained fully or partially operational, and about three quarters of their employees attended work every day. See the editorial in *Haaretz* from August 9, 2006. Additional evidence can be found in the figures relating to the level of faith of Israeli consumers in August 2006 published in *Globes*, which determined that the confidence index rose three points (to 83 points) in August after a one point drop in July and a two point rise in June. The increase was mostly generated by continued improvement in the assessment of the economy and an evaluation of the situation of the individual for the following six months.
 15. There was a prominent attitude that peripheral sections of society contribute to national security, while "the Tel Aviv bubble" relieves itself of rallying round for the good of the country. See, for example, the remark by Maj. Gen. Elazar Stern, head of IDF Human Resources, on Galei Tzahal radio and quoted by *Globes* on August 16, 2006: "I make condolence visits mainly to kibbutzim and Jewish settlements in the territories. I don't get to Tel Aviv much...there has been no bereavement there and there won't be...one should commend immigrants from the former Soviet republics and Ethiopia, who make up a higher proportion of the bereaved families." This aroused a wave of response in the media that dwelled much on what it termed as the grudge and suspicion felt by residents of the outlying areas of the country towards the complacent residents of Tel Aviv. See also the *Maariv* weekend magazine, August 11, 2006, and Avirama Golan in *Haaretz*, August 23, 2006.
 16. See a survey conducted by the Mada al-Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research, one week after the ceasefire began. The main findings of the survey, published in a number of publications including the Ynet website on August 29, 2006, indicated that: 32 percent of the Arab population of Israel believed that Israel was responsible for the outbreak of war, 75 percent felt that the IDF's operations in Lebanon were akin to war crimes, 52 percent thought that Israel mainly tried to achieve American objectives in the war, 32 percent claimed that the war caused a deterioration in relations between Arabs and Jews, two thirds expressed the feeling that the country did not help Arab citizens in the north as much as Jews, and 69 percent thought that the reason for the high number of Arab fatalities (one third of the total) was due the shortage of bomb shelters in Arab towns. Another survey conducted by the Dahaf Institute for the Knesset television channel (*Maariv*, August 25, 2006) revealed that 27 percent of Arab interviewees replied that they supported Israel during

- the war and wanted it to win, 36 percent did not support either side, and 18 percent said they supported Hizbollah.
17. Initial report issued by the subcommittee investigating the readiness of the home front for emergency situations for the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, September 12, 2006. The subcommittee, headed by MK Ami Ayalon, defined the government's handling of the home front as "leadership failure." See also the series of articles by Ruti Sinai and others in *Haaretz* on the role of the home front in the Second Lebanon War; an article by Daniel Ben Simon, "Betrayal of the State," *Haaretz* September 4, 2006, and remarks associated with the head of the GSS (*Haaretz*, August 24, 2006, based on Channel 2), according to which "during the war the government systems collapsed completely...the north was clearly abandoned." In an extensive Maagar Mohot survey, conducted among residents of northern Israel and published in *Haaretz* on September 12, 2006, Israelis gave the government's performance a rating of 2.1 on a scale of 1-5. For the government actions during the war see the government services and information portal at www.gov.il, in the file "Returning to Routine."
 18. Law Book 71, March 1951. The law that established the Civilian Defense System defined a long list of responsibilities in times of war and stipulated that it would be under the aegis of the minister of defense.
 19. The Israel Emergency Economy is an inter-ministerial body established by the Israeli government in 1955 and is responsible for the preparation of essential elements of the economy in emergency situations in order to avoid, as far as possible, disruptions and damage to the civilian economy in wartime and to allow civilian populations to maintain as normal a lifestyle as possible. The Israel Emergency Economy does not handle matters relating to civilian defense – bomb shelters, protective kits, rescue operations and guidelines on how to behave during emergency situations – topics that are under the aegis of the Home Front Command. The Israel Emergency Economy was not activated during the Second Lebanon War, "as the government decided to establish a command and control entity, under the director general of the prime minister's office, and there is no need for duplication." This was conveyed from the defense minister's office to the subcommittee of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which examined the issue of the readiness of the home front during the war. See www.nfc.co.il, from August 24, 2006.
 20. As background to examining this issue see Nahum Ben Elia, "The Fourth Generation: New Local Government in Israel," Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 2004. Much was written in the daily media on the conduct of some local authorities during the war. The criticism of the minister of the interior, who is responsible for local government, was particularly fierce. He claimed in the Knesset's Interior Committee: "I discovered serious flaws in certain towns...I was told that many of the municipal management – the elected figures and also the executive officers – had fled," *Haaretz*, August 29, 2006. In Safed, seven out of 350 municipal workers stayed to do their jobs.

21. On the IDF investigation into the Home Front Command, see *Haaretz*, October 3, 2006. The main flaw that emerged: despite the drills, the Command did not foresee the vacuum that formed because of the weakness of the authorities in the north. There are 107 authorities in the area that sustained damage; most worked well but some almost did not operate at all. In Safed a problem was identified and the Command sent hundreds of soldiers to distribute food to bomb shelters.
22. See, for example, Avi Bitzor, "The Civilian Home Front as a Crucial Front," Omedia website, August 2006; Yossi Melman, *Haaretz*, August 24, 2006.
23. The northern precinct of the Israeli police was particularly effective in its activities. See, for example, Ofer Petersburg, *Yediot Ahronot*, August 11, 2006.
24. The head of the Doctrine and Development department of the Home Front Command was quoted in *Haaretz* on August 11, 2006 as saying that the actual rocket attacks did not surprise the army but they did not foresee people sitting in bomb shelters for a month. "We had long-term plans, but we did not consider such a long time."
25. Chief of Staff Dan Halutz said in an interview to *Yediot Ahronot* on October 1, 2006, that: "that evening (July 12) we did not yet know we were embarking on a war with Hizbollah."
26. With regard to evacuation of towns in emergency situations, there is government decision 985 from November 11, 2001, that determines, inter alia, that "the Israeli government is authorized to declare 'evacuation time' and thereby issue a directive ordering the evacuation of residents (up to 25,000) and take them to absorption facilities... evacuation of more than 25,000 residents requires a declaration by the government of 'an emergency situation' or 'total war.'"
27. The state comptroller's report, September 2001, no. 52a, on the preparedness of settlements in the north following the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon.
28. Dan Meridor, who headed the committee charged in 2006 with formulating a defense concept for Israel, was quoted in *Maariv* on August 31, 2006, as saying: "The last war was a new type of war. A new cornerstone needs to be established, in addition to the components of deterrence, early warning, and victory. We must... take care of defense of the home front." He was also quoted in an interview with *Haaretz*, on October 3, 2006: "There is the security triad comprising deterrence (how to prevent war), warning (how to know, in time, that war will break out), and decision (how to win the war). In the new era, the triad becomes a tetrad, because it is augmented by the aspect of civil defense. This is a campaign that the army is not conducting."

Part II

**International
Dimensions**

Chapter 9

“Divine Victory” and Earthly Failures: Was the War Really a Victory for Hizbollah?

Yoram Schweitzer

The Second Lebanon War, the violent clash between Israel and Hizbollah of July-August 2006, ended indecisively and left Israel and Hizbollah to lick their wounds and draw respective relevant conclusions. While the Israeli public acquired an uneasy sense of despondency and resorted to introspective self-castigation as to why Israel was unable to achieve the quick and decisive victory that many expected, members of the Hizbollah organization and its supporters reveled in their joy, with mass victory gatherings held in Syria and Lebanon.¹

Hizbollah’s victory celebrations flaunted the organization’s ability to inflict continuous damage deep inside Israel and bring routine life in northern Israel to a standstill; kill Israeli civilians and soldiers; and maintain the ability to continue fighting, despite Israel’s massive attack on its activists and infrastructures. Yet as with other guerilla and terror organizations around the world, Hizbollah has in part earned an image of victory due to the difficulty in identifying the victors in confrontations that take place between states and sub-state organizations.²

This essay takes a critical view of the claim by Hizbollah and its supporters that it won the war, cites its achievements and failures, and examines them in the context of its specific identity: a multi-faceted organization operating from a failed state with the support of patron states. The article does not examine the contribution of Israel’s failings to Hizbollah’s achievements, significant though they were.

Hizbollah: A Multifaceted Proxy Organization

Hizbollah's ability to survive an asymmetrical conflict with Israel derives from its unique nature, unmatched by other terror and guerilla organizations in the world: a multifaceted organization operating in a failed state from within a civilian population, while enjoying intensive support from patron states. Established in 1982 by Lebanese Shiites with the help of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Hizbollah has from the outset been involved in a wide range of areas, principally welfare, culture, and religious activities. However, most of its fame came from showcase terror attacks carried out by its members in the eighties, particularly suicide attacks on foreign forces and kidnappings of Western civilians visiting Lebanon.³ Hizbollah later expanded and upgraded its armed operations: it extended its infrastructure and operations beyond Lebanon's borders, and it progressed from a small local armed militia to an organized hierarchical political and military organization that specializes in guerilla warfare and terror activities. It is led by the organization's secretary-general and supported by the Shura Council, which serves as a managing entity and form of government for the organization. Since 1992 the secretary-general has been Hassan Nasrallah, who enjoys considerable personal prestige.

Inside Lebanon, the organization worked to consolidate its civilian infrastructure and increased its involvement in the municipal and political spheres. Since 1992 it has been represented in the parliament, and it has been represented in the Lebanese government since 2005. This has afforded the organization a strong domestic social-political base that it relies on in times of crisis and distress. In the military sphere, Hizbollah has upgraded its capabilities, and with the help of its patrons, has trained hundreds of people in various methods of warfare, including terror and guerilla activities. It boasts an organized fighting force with regular organic units and reserve forces divided into "commands" led by local heads who answer to the military organizational head. In 2006 Hizbollah's "chief of staff" was Imad Mughniyah, a member of the Shura Council, who rose through the ranks of the organization's secret terror facilities in the eighties until he attained his position as head of the military pyramid. Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 led to a further upgrade of the organization's military capabilities, in part due to the absence of Israeli – or any other,

for that matter – supervision of its activities. It also helped to cultivate the organization's image as a successful "resistance movement." At the same time, Hizbollah lost much of its legitimacy for maintaining its armed militia in Lebanon and continuing its military activities against Israel, which was recognized internationally for its full withdrawal from Lebanon.

In the 2006 war, Israel thus found itself contending with an adversary that it cast as a terror organization, but which in practice was more like a trained, well-equipped, and skilled force operated by two countries – Iran and Syria. Iran has viewed Hizbollah as a proxy since it was established. Iran trained and armed the organization over many years, so that it could function as its promotional force in the struggle against its adversaries. For Iran, Hizbollah's importance as a deterrent factor has even increased in recent years, particularly in view of its potential confrontation with Israel or a Western coalition over the nuclear issue.

Along with Iran's backing of Hizbollah, Syria's support of the organization has been significantly heightened in recent years. In terms of its military supplies to the organization, Syria compares with – and even exceeds – Iran's long term support. Since Bashar Asad became president of Syria there has been a change in the relations between the Syrian ruler and Hizbollah. While during the days of Asad Sr. it was clear who the patron was, in Bashar's time Syria is largely dependent on the military ability and deterrence of Hizbollah as cover for its strategic inferiority to Israel – and in view of the threats against Syria from the United States. Syria has allowed Hizbollah to use its territory for transferring weapons from Iran to Lebanon, and allowed Hizbollah fighters to fly from the Damascus airport to take part in training and meetings in Iran. It has also become a central party in Hizbollah's armament with advanced missiles, which were a significant factor in Israel's losses during the last war.

There is no doubt that the armaments transferred to Hizbollah, in the form of Katyusha rockets and short, medium, and long range rockets, anti-tank missiles, intelligence and counter-intelligence equipment, and other sophisticated measures far exceed the level of routine equipment and training generally used by terror and guerilla organizations around the world. These had a telling effect on the results of the war in the north, and contributed greatly to the organization's achievements.

The Combat Arena and the Lack of Symmetrical Restraint

The fact that Israel met a serious challenge in Hizbollah did not ensue only from the organization's military capability or the training, discipline, and dedication displayed by its operatives. It also did not result from a sweeping Israeli intelligence failure as to the location of the organization's headquarters, the quality and quantity of equipment at its disposal, or an understanding of its combat methods. It seems that one of the main factors that prevented Israel from demonstrating its clear military advantage against Hizbollah stemmed from the civilian environment from which it fought, and the lack of symmetrical constraints as to attacking civilians. Israel imposed restraints on itself as to attacking civilian targets, but there were no such constraints for Hizbollah, which acted according to the familiar "philosophy" of terror organizations that target civilians. It launched thousands of rockets toward Israel with the intention of hitting clear civilian targets and with a view to killing Israelis indiscriminately, even when it was aware that Israel's response might cause casualties among the Lebanese population. Hizbollah took advantage of the civilian surroundings to conceal itself and stored weapons in people's homes. It fired rockets from or near inhabited civilian areas, assuming that Israel would take every precaution not to hurt civilians. While Israel bombed specific locations used as rocket launch areas after the inhabitants were cautioned to leave the area, Hizbollah exploited the instances in which civilians were hurt for propaganda purposes, such as the case of Kafr Kana (July 30, 2006),⁴ in order to sully Israel's name and present it as an aggressor with few of the fighting morals required of a democratic state.⁵ The fact that Hizbollah operated from a failed state, where the central government could not or did not have sufficient political will to impose its authority over the insurgent organization, allowed it to ignore the damage caused to the civilian and economic infrastructure of Lebanon.

Hizbollah's Achievements in the War in Lebanon

Hizbollah's apparent main achievement was in surviving the confrontation with the IDF and in managing to engage Israel for thirty-three days and inflict continuous damage deep inside Israel's sovereign territory up to the last day of the fighting, without Israel's military actions forcing it to

surrender or seriously damaging its motivation or fighting ability. This achievement earned Hizbollah the legitimacy to claim to its supporters that it had won the confrontation. This was even more pronounced in view of the results of previous clashes between the regular armies of Arab states against Israel, which generally ended with clear and significant military achievements by Israel. More than anything else, the fact that the Israeli military was unable to stop or greatly curtail Hizbollah's firing of short range rockets at Israeli towns both symbolized the organization's success and accentuated Israel's failure. This was naturally noted as an achievement by Hizbollah. The fact that Hizbollah leaders, particularly Nasrallah, and the senior officials of the organization in Beirut and the command areas in the fighting arena were not hurt, despite the attack being specifically directed towards them, also added to the organization's sense of victory, as expressed by its spokesmen and projected by al-Manar, its broadcasting station.

Similarly, al-Manar's ability to continue to broadcast to the world throughout the fighting, notwithstanding Israeli air strikes at its offices, and its successful ability to convey the organization's view both of the war and its results were also Hizbollah achievements. The al-Manar station undoubtedly constituted a central factor in establishing the myth of the victorious organization in the eyes of the Arab and Muslim public. In addition, the station's broadcasts were cited extensively in the Western media, and contributed to the positive exposure and successful image of the organization.

In the course of the war, Nasrallah – at least to his supporters and admirers – enhanced his image as a fighting Muslim leader (*mujahid*) who goes beyond the narrow borders of Lebanon and once again leads his organization in a successful battle against a superior Western army, in this case, Israel. The victory that in their mind was achieved due to their spirit and determination brought the organization widespread support and admiration in the Islamic world (occasionally in contrast to the position of the Islamic governments) in its struggle against Israel, and in what it presents as part of an all-out campaign of the Western world against Islam.⁶ Hizbollah succeeding in thwarting efforts to disarm it, and it retained hundreds of well-equipped fighting personnel, thousands of short range rockets, and possibly even some medium and long range

missiles. Israeli experts believe that shortly after the end of the war, Syria resumed delivering supplies of equipment that Hizbollah lost during the fighting.⁷ There were also reports that the Iranians had resumed provision of equipment and weapons to Hizbollah via the Damascus airport, and it appears that Hizbollah has essentially recovered to the level of arms it had before the outbreak of the hostilities.⁸

Another achievement by Hizbollah, albeit limited, is that during most of the fighting it managed to mitigate the criticism and even generate the image of popular Lebanese support, mainly through highlighting declarations of support and solidarity expressed by Lebanese leaders, principally President Lahoud, one of the strong supporters of the pro-Syria camp in Lebanon. At least in his view, the organization succeeded in retaining its deterrent ability towards Israel, as it managed to maintain its members' presence in Lebanon, including in the south, and their arms and equipment were not destroyed. Its personnel began to return to the south of the country despite the instructions to keep a low profile. Israel has also continued to behave cautiously toward Hizbollah, evidenced by the fact that Israel did not harm Nasrallah when he made his first public appearance in Lebanon following the start of the hostilities and gave a victory address at a mass gathering in Beirut in mid-September.⁹ Nasrallah, for his part, has continued to exercise caution, has continued to limit his public appearances, and has addressed his supporters surrounded by protective means or in taped broadcasts.

Hizbollah's Failures in the War in Lebanon

Hizbollah's most prominent failure in the war was its leaders' underestimation of Israel's reaction to the kidnapping of the soldiers and the rocket attacks on northern Israeli towns. Nasrallah himself admitted this mistake at the end of the war, a miscalculation that resulted in the extensive fighting. Nasrallah did not expect an Israeli response of this nature or degree, nor did he choose the campaign's timing.¹⁰

This mistake cracked the image of Nasrallah as a considered and pragmatic political leader. Many in the West and the Arab world had hoped that the militant and venomous content of his speeches notwithstanding, Nasrallah would join or at least not foil efforts to resolve the Israeli-Lebanese confrontation through political channels. Yet during the fighting his facade of always telling the truth was seriously punctured. Even more

critical, the image that he expressly helped create of one with a deep sense of Israeli society was damaged once his understanding was ultimately revealed to be limited. Specifically, Nasrallah failed in his inadequate assessment of Israeli resilience. Despite his claims of having an intimate understanding of Israeli society, which he compared to a "spider web," i.e., a weak society that is expected to snap under pressure, he learned that he had erred in his forecast of the Israeli home front's resilience, which turned out to be more robust than he anticipated.¹¹

Hizbollah managed to incite a Sunni Arab coalition against it and its Iranian patron. This coalition included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, which fear the increasing power of the Shiites. To many in the Arab world, Hizbollah's conduct in Lebanon accentuated the danger they face as a result of what King Abdullah of Jordan has called "the Shiite crescent," emerging from the Shiite majority in Iran and Iraq. As a result, leaders in the Arab and Muslim world marked Hizbollah as a dangerous enemy in a developing confrontation between Shia and Sunna, and not only as a local force in Lebanon that engages Israel in battle and perforce enjoys Arab support. Hizbollah was also considered by many Western leaders to be an extreme element serving foreign interests that could spark a regional war due its patrons' intentions or adventurousness.

In the internal Lebanese arena tensions between Hizbollah and the other forces there heightened greatly, and therein lies the main danger to Hizbollah's future. Immediately following the war, Hizbollah was subjected to fierce criticism of the disastrous escapade into which it dragged Lebanon, despite its having been previously warned regarding an independent policy that ignores the policy of the sovereign government.¹² There was also disappointment with Nasrallah's failure to conduct negotiations with Israel over the release of all the Arab prisoners in Israeli jails. The Palestinians, it seems, were not eager to accept Nasrallah's patronage, and conducted negotiations with Israel separately from Hizbollah. In the past Nasrallah has proudly displayed his ability to negotiate indirectly with Israel and achieve results, yet it appeared that any achievement from the war would be limited and not include Palestinians. Moreover, it is likely that Hizbollah wasted prematurely the strategic deterrence means given to it by Iran – its medium range and long range missiles – and exposed the potential damage to Israel and its allies that can be caused by short range

rockets in a way that enables them to take precautionary measures. These missiles were apparently designed, at least from Iran's point of view, to act as an advance strategic facility should there be a confrontation between Israel or the United States over the Iranian nuclear issue.¹³ Hizbollah also exposed the explosives-laden UAVs at its disposal as a secret weapon to be used to cause damage deep inside Israel. The UAVs failed to carry out their mission after the Israeli air force intercepted them – an impressive achievement for Israel compared with Hizbollah's operational failure.

Hizbollah and the Challenges of the Future

It is thus evident that Hizbollah scored both impressive achievements and notable failures, though these are often appraised differently by the respective sides. The balance between its successes and failures will become clearer with time, but the validity of the strong claims of victory by Hizbollah and its supporters should, at least, raise question marks.

It is clear that the post-war reality presents the organization with complex challenges in the internal socio-political domain in Lebanon, as well as in the military realm. At the epicenter of the internal socio-political arena in Lebanon, Hizbollah will want to convert its achievements into concrete political assets and limit the damage incurred by its failures as much as possible. First and foremost, the organization will strive to maintain its unique though controversial standing within Lebanon. To this end, it must work towards strengthening the support of the Shiite population, which is the basis of its power and support in Lebanon. Nasrallah, who strives to change the traditional governmental structure in Lebanon and gain control of the state based on Shiite majority, first needs the backing of most of the members of his own ethnic community. Nasrallah knows that despite the expression of support for the organization and the solidarity displayed by the Shiites towards the organization, the Shiite population in southern Lebanon, Beirut, and the Lebanese Valley (Beqaa) – which paid the heaviest price of the war – expects to receive suitable compensation for its suffering. Hizbollah will have to meet these expectations, in part perhaps through increased political power. Furthermore, not all members of the Shiite community support Hizbollah.¹⁴ Thus, Hizbollah's main effort has focused on rehabilitating Shiite areas and compensating their residents. Its success in repairing the destruction caused during the war and its victory

over the Lebanese government for the title of "the great rehabilitator" will help the organization consolidate its standing as the leading political, economic, and social element in the Shiite community, and will impact on its political future in Lebanon.

Another more complex challenge in the internal Lebanese arena with which the organization will have to contend is its ability to improve relations with rival ethnic communities, particularly the Sunnis, Christians, and Druze. It will be compelled to maneuver between them so that it can moderate their fierce and growing criticism of Hizbollah, due to the price that Lebanon as a whole paid for the July 12 kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers. In this area Nasrallah has attempted to change the political balance of power in favor of the Shiite community, which represents a growing percentage of the Lebanese population but has not earned commensurate political achievements. Nasrallah is aiming to change this situation as a means of enhancing his influence on political life in Lebanon.

On the military level the organization worked quickly to rehabilitate its units that sustained heavy casualties and equipment losses, to renew its strategic abilities, particularly medium and long range missiles, and to consolidate the units that operate the short range missiles, which proved to be the organization's most efficient weapon. It appears that both the organization and its patrons, Iran and particularly Syria, intend to continue cultivating – each for its own reasons – Hizbollah's military power, and to restore its deterrence capability towards Israel. Nasrallah's address in September 2006 suggested that he planned to enhance the organization's situation beyond its pre-war state, particularly in his arsenal of rockets. Subsequent statements suggested success.¹⁵ Nasrallah has also made clear his intention to preserve – and even enhance – the option of hitting the Israeli home front, while the organization increases its deterrent capability against Israel with the support of its patrons, primarily Syria. The deployment of the Lebanese army in the south of the country and of a reinforced multinational force in accordance with resolution 1701, which constitute an achievement for Israel and a thorn in the organization's side, may encroach on Hizbollah's freedom of movement, though it is doubtful if in the long term they will succeed in preventing its reorganization and upgrade of its military capabilities. Complicating Hizbollah's situation further are strengthened global jihad forces, which are apt either to launch

attacks against Israel independently, with no coordination or assent of rival forces, or to engage Hizbollah itself in a violent competition for power in Lebanon that is not at all connected to the conflict with Israel.

In view of the possibility that the organization's potential for maneuver in carrying out military activities has decreased, at least in the short and mid-term, it may look for alternative channels of action, the principal ones being enhanced operation of independent and Palestinian terror networks against Israel. Thus far, the organization has not paid any price for its active support of Palestinian terror activities against Israel that according to Israeli security officials comprise a significant part of all attacks on Israel in recent years.¹⁶ Another option available to Hizbollah is reliance on the operational infrastructure it maintains in arenas outside Lebanon for carrying out attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets abroad. Hizbollah manages this infrastructure through its secret channels, and also exploits its links with foreign Islamic terror groups that provide assistance in return for the aid that it and Iran have given them over the years. This option of terror activities in the international arena, however, may turn out for Hizbollah and its patrons to be a double-edged sword because of the general atmosphere of intolerance of international terror, and thus this option will likely be tapped only in dire straits, if at all.

Conclusion

At the end of the fighting it seemed that the clash between Israel and Hizbollah was temporarily suspended but not over. Despite failures in the military campaign, Israel can take satisfaction in the fact that Hizbollah positions on its northern border were destroyed and its armed and entrenched personnel were no longer in prominent and provocative positions along the border. The Lebanese army deployed forces in the south, thereby implementing UN resolutions 1559 and 1701, and a reinforced multinational force has been stationed in Lebanon near the border. On the other hand, Israel's faith in these forces' ability to restrain Hizbollah and prevent it from returning its personnel to villages in the south and rearming itself is highly limited.

Hizbollah can boast that the heavy losses it sustained did not prevent it from continuing to fight and strike at Israel, and in its view, it emerged from the war as the victor. Even though it was forced to agree to deployment of the Lebanese army in the south of the country and the presence of a

reinforced multinational force in Lebanon, to which it objected before the war, it considers this a tactical constraint and not a limitation that cannot be overcome if it decides to renew the confrontation with Israel. Hizbollah claims that its deterrence capability against Israel has not been damaged and may even have increased, as Israel discovered that in order to defeat Hizbollah it would have to pay a heavy price for any damage inflicted on the organization in the future. Accordingly, Hizbollah feels it has sufficient room in which to maneuver and exploit the lack of a decisive conclusion to the war, and thereby resort to military power in the future as it sees fit.

Thus in the post-confrontation reality, there is limited reciprocal deterrence between Israel and Hizbollah. This is based on the sides' understanding that a renewal of the hostilities now or in the near future is liable to demand of both parties a high and undesirable price, on the internal national level and international level. Israel will strive to ensure that Hizbollah is neutralized as an effective force next to its northern border, and will endeavor to limit its rearmament, despite its sense of the dubious success of this goal. At the same time, Israel will try through its partners in the international community to help bolster the pragmatic camp in Lebanon, which is interested in lessening Hizbollah's military and political strength and subordinating it to the sovereignty of the state. It seems that in this arena, the nature of the organization's activity will be determined with or without force.

Hizbollah has opposite aspirations. It will try to expand its political and military maneuvering ability in Lebanon, while exploiting the weakness and internal divide inside Lebanon to try to take control of Lebanon through political means and by virtue of its unique military position. It feels that its image as a powerful force, its determination, and the help it receives from its closer and more distant patrons may help it realize its political goals. Nasrallah has lofty aims and it may be assumed that he will eventually strive to change the historic system of government in Lebanon, which grants preference to Christian and Sunni parties in the country's leadership. It is possible that Nasrallah will ask for the senior position in the country's leadership, although in the meanwhile he may make do with anchoring himself on the political axis and acquiring major influence on central issues that determine policy in Lebanon's internal, foreign, and security affairs.

At this stage it is unclear if the reciprocal deterrence will suffice to prevent another military clash in the near future that – or so it seems – neither side is interested in. However, one of the clearest conclusions to be drawn from the 2006 war is that events of a localized and tactical nature and inaccurate assessments by both sides may cause the situation to deteriorate within a short time into another round of violence, even if the sides do not wish it.

Notes

1. Michael Slacker, "Lebanon Throng Hails Hezbollah Chief Who Calls Militia Stronger," *New York Times*, September 23, 2006; NRG, "The Lebanese Public: Hizbollah Won," August 23, 2006.
2. Yoram Schweitzer, "Guerilla Warfare and Terrorism: Blurring the Definition of Victor," *Tel Aviv Notes*, August 6, 2006.
3. Shaul Shay, *Terror in the Name of the Imam* (Herzliya: The Interdisciplinary Center, 2001).
4. Ali Wakkad and Hanan Greenberg, "Lebanon: Dozens Killed in Bombing on Kafr Kana." Ynet, July 30, 2006.
5. Martin Asser, "Qana Makes Grim History Again," BBC News, July 31, 2006.
6. Itamar Akhbari, "The Lebanese Public: Hizbollah Won," NRG, August 23, 2006.
7. Itamar Eichner, "Smuggling from Syria to Hizbollah has Resumed," *Yediot Ahronot*, October 6, 2006.
8. Yoav Stern, "Time Magazine: Hizbollah has Re-accumulated Half the Weaponry It Used During the War," *Haaretz*, November 26, 2006.
9. Nasrallah in a victory address in Beirut that was broadcast by al-Jazeera on September 22, 2006, www.memritv.org, clip 2282.
10. Itamar Akhbari, "We Were Surprised by the Scale of the Israeli Response," NRG, August 26, 2006.
11. Meir Elran, "The Civilian Front in the Second Lebanon War," in *The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives*, eds. Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2007).
12. Yoav Stern, "Nasrallah Declared to Hundreds of Thousands: We Have 20,000 Missiles," *Haaretz*, September 25, 2006.
13. From a lecture by Maj. Gen. (res.) Aharon Ze'evi Farkash at a seminar at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, September 20, 2006.
14. MEMRI, "Intra-Shi'ite Criticism: Hizbullah Didn't Ask the Shi'ites about the War," *Special Dispatch Series, No. 1266*, August 25, 2006.
15. "Nasrallah: Every Point in Israel is in Range," Ynet, July 23, 2007.
16. "Hezbollah Increases Involvement in Israel," *Middle East Newslines* 7, no. 14, January 11, 2005.

Chapter 10

The Battle for Lebanon: Lebanon and Syria in the Wake of the War

Eyal Zisser

Introduction

Immediately with the announcement of the ceasefire and the end of the fighting between Israel and the Hizbollah organization, both sides – as well as those who had observed from the sidelines – hurried to claim victory. Hizbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah declared that Hizbollah's victory in the war was an historic event, and possibly an historic turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹ Syrian president Bashar Asad, who had not involved his country directly in the war yet did not disguise his support of Hizbollah or conceal the fact that he provided the organization with arms and other means of warfare during the fighting, quickly assumed a victory over Israel for himself and for Syria.² The Lebanese government, led by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, also declared a victory for Lebanon and all Lebanese, and not just for Hizbollah.³ On the other side of the divide, victory was announced by Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, and the claim was echoed enthusiastically by Israel's ally, US president George Bush.⁴

It seems that those who rushed to revel in their ostensible victories chose to ignore both the golden rule of politics and the course of Lebanese history over the last thousand years, according to which all the struggles and even wars that have occurred in the region – and more recently, in the state itself – have ended with all those involved losing out. Put otherwise, as the Lebanese saying has it, “wars in Lebanon end without victors and

without vanquished,” meaning that all sides are completely exhausted and admit that the war did not reap any gains for any of them. At best, each side can console itself with the knowledge that at least the other side did not achieve its objective. This situation is of course an inevitable result of the reality of life in Lebanon, a multi-ethnic state characterized by division and conflict on a religious and communal basis and even more so, on a family basis. It is a state in which no ethnic group and certainly no outside force intervening in the country’s affairs has the ability to achieve any real victory.⁵ The only party that was capable of recognizing this fact was Hassan Nasrallah himself, who admitted in an interview shortly after the end of the hostilities and after declaring himself the victor that he would not have issued an order to kidnap the Israeli soldiers had he known it would lead to all-out war with Israel.⁶

However, as more time elapses since the end of the war and the dust of battle settles, the outcome of the war is becoming clearer, as is the state of reality in post-war Lebanon. It appears that Hizbollah was hit hard during the war, but the organization was not broken or overcome, at least militarily. Thus, the damage it sustained required the organization to invest great effort in rehabilitating its military infrastructure, and its organizational and civilian infrastructures even more so. This meant it had to maintain quiet along the border with Israel and within Lebanon itself; this did not mean the organization was about to undergo a real change, and certainly not a strategic change in its policy or in any aspects of its long term objectives. For its part, the Lebanese government came out of the war strengthened and sought to impose its sovereignty over the entire country and become an effective force, including vis-à-vis Hizbollah. Nonetheless, no achievement of the Lebanese government and the forces behind it is sufficient to change the reality in Lebanon. At the end of the day, the fundamental problem that Lebanon faces is not Israel, and not even the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hizbollah. The fundamental problem is the ethnic dynamic in the country, or more precisely, the challenge and the threat presented today by the Shiite community – which is both the largest communal group in Lebanon and accounts for nearly 40 percent of the population, if not more – to members of the country’s other communal groups.⁷ These groups, the Maronites, Sunnis, and Druze, actually joined forces in order to block the Shiite community and Hizbollah, its public representative. The so-

called Cedar Revolution, which took place in Lebanon in the spring of 2005 and led to the establishment of the current Lebanese government, can be seen as an attempt of the members of these communities to maintain the socioeconomic and political status quo that existed in Lebanon for many years and that, *inter alia*, marginalized the Shiites.⁸ Thus, the danger presented by Hizbollah is great, even after the war, particularly because it is the authentic representative of many Shiites who feel that the Lebanese political establishment systematically discriminates against the Shiites or at the very least does not grant them key positions and resources in proportion to their percentage of the population.

In this regard, “the struggle over Lebanon,” namely, over the country’s future and over control of the country, did not end with the ceasefire between Israel and Hizbollah, but in fact only started. In this battle the main players are supporters of the status quo in Lebanon, backed by the West, who are pitted against Hizbollah supporters, who enjoy Syrian and Iranian support. Hizbollah is conducting the battle through political means, based on the increasing demographic weight of the Shiite community in Lebanon. However, one day this group is likely to employ aggressive measures to promote its standing and its long term objectives in Lebanon.

With regard to Syria, Bashar Asad appears to believe that Hizbollah emerged the victor at the end of the hostilities in Lebanon. He hoped, therefore, to use this victory to enhance his standing both on the domestic and international stages. One may assume that Bashar is looking to resume a leading role in Lebanon, to play a regional and even international role, and ultimately to advance a political process and possibly a dialogue with Israel, but from a position of strength and power. However, in the months since the end of the war, Asad has seen that his hopes are not easily realized. He has remained outside the Lebanese arena, and is rejected by most of the international community and by most of the Arab world, including his former allies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. All he has left is the Iranian embrace, which for Syria may turn out to be a bear hug. The attempted terror attack on the American embassy in Damascus in mid-September 2006 was a reminder for Bashar of his domestic problems and more so of the fragile standing of his regime,⁹ a challenge he will struggle to confront by flaunting the ostensible achievements and victories of Hizbollah in Lebanon.

From the Cedar Revolution to the Second Lebanon War

The 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon was a kind of nightmare come true for many Lebanese, a bad scenario they had dreaded and warned of in recent years. It was feared that at the end of the day, the war might return the country to the days of the bloody civil war waged between 1975 and 1989, after which Lebanon arose phoenix-like out of the ruins. In 1989 the Ta'if agreement was signed in Saudi Arabia and both ended the war and launched a long process of rehabilitation and rebuilding of the Lebanese state.¹⁰ Ironically, the war between Israel and Hizbollah broke out just when it appeared that rehabilitation was proceeding well, and that Lebanon was standing more firmly on its own two feet than ever before. This was dramatized by the Cedar Revolution in Beirut in the spring of 2005, which was perceived as the climax of the rehabilitation and rebuilding underway in Lebanon since the end of the civil war, and possibly a dramatic historic turning point in the country's annals.

The Cedar Revolution was a response to the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri on the morning of February 14, 2005 in the heart of Beirut. Hariri's death stunned the Lebanese people. After all, more than any other Lebanese politician Hariri had been identified with the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the second Lebanese republic, the Ta'if republic.¹¹ Many inside and outside Lebanon had no doubt that behind the Hariri assassination lurked the Syrian regime, led by President Bashar Asad, and the Syrian-allied Lebanese government, led by President Emile Lahoud. There was an outcry for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, and for Lahoud, along with his supporters and Syrian loyalists holding key positions in the Lebanese government, to resign. Syria was hard pressed to withstand the mounting pressure in Lebanon for it to leave the country, particularly since this pressure was backed by the international community, led by the United States and France. On March 5, 2005, the Syrian president duly announced the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanese soil. Thus, Syrian intervention in Lebanon – involvement that began in the 1970s and peaked in the 1990s, when Damascus essentially ran the country – came to an end, at least for the time being.¹²

The withdrawal and possibly the expulsion of the Syrians from Lebanon did not end the stormy events in the spring of 2005, and they were followed

by a no less dramatic political turnaround. In the parliamentary elections of May-June 2005, about a month after the withdrawal of the Syrian forces, the opposition to the political leadership gained a sweeping victory. The opposition was led by Rafiq al-Hariri's son, Sa'ad al-Din al-Hariri, who was joined by Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and several leading figures from the Christian Maronite camp. Following the elections a new Lebanese government was established, led by Fouad Siniora, who is close to the younger Hariri. The new government adopted a pro-Western, anti-Syrian stance.¹³

The turnaround in Lebanon at the beginning of 2005 was the cumulative result of three factors: first, Syria's weakness, i.e., the weakness of its young and inexperienced president Bashar Asad, obvious to everyone inside and outside Syria; second, frustration and anger in Lebanon directed towards Syria, which escalated after the Hariri assassination; and finally and most importantly, shared American-French interest in settling an account with Syria and forcing it to end its involvement in Lebanon. The combination of all these factors turned out to be critical, as each in and of itself was not enough to bring about the dramatic events that took place in the first months of 2005. However, more than anything, this revolution reflected the emergence of a wide public consensus in Lebanon looking to rehabilitate the country and return it to the path it had pursued prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

The joy in Lebanon was short lived. Even before the eruption of the confrontation between Israel and Hizbollah in the summer 2006, the supporters of the Cedar Revolution realized that the reality in Lebanon remained as complex as before.

First, the elections to the Lebanese parliament in May-June 2005 yielded gains for the Hizbollah organization, as well as for other forces with an anti-Western outlook that were looking for opposite results to those sought by Sa'ad al-Din al-Hariri, Jumblatt, and their Cedar Revolution allies. These forces had public presence, standing, and political weight on the Lebanese street in general or, in the case of Hizbollah, on the Shiite street. Hizbollah's strengthened standing within the Shiite community in Lebanon has allowed it in recent years to advance the "Islamic Lebanon" option, i.e., turning Lebanon into an Islamic republic, even through democratic elections. This would be achieved by virtue of the demographic reality

in today's Lebanon, given that the Shiites account for almost half of the country's population.¹⁴

Second, the political forces behind the Cedar Revolution were far from a homogenous group and could certainly not be perceived as an actual "reformist camp." These forces essentially coalesced to preserve the basic principles of the Lebanese political system, even if in a new framework or under new auspices – Washington instead of Damascus. These are representatives of respected families, members of all communities that had overseen political, social, and financial aspects of life in Lebanon since the country was established, and even before. They had come to the end of their tether with the Syrians but were still interested in preserving their status and, most important, their privileges.

Lebanon after the War

The structural weakness of Lebanon, even after the Cedar Revolution, came to the fore in July 2006 when the clash between Hizbollah and Israel erupted in the wake of the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by the organization's fighters. The destruction and ruin that the fighting brought on Lebanon, and particularly, the communal, social, and political tensions that emerged during and after the war, revived doubts as to Lebanon's ability to become a stable and strong country with a democratic open system and a successful and prosperous economy. The results of the war inflicted heavy damage on the Lebanese economy, estimated at tens of billions of dollars, and according to Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora, the war set back the country's economy almost fifteen years.¹⁵

At the same time, Lebanon noted some gains from the war. First, Lebanese were encouraged by the cohesion displayed by many elements of society – Maronites, Sunnis, Druze, and even Shiites – and their desire to maintain coexistence at all costs, regardless of their differences of opinion and the tensions that came to the fore. Thus, the atmosphere in Lebanon during and after the war was not one of impending civil war, and there was no sense of a drive to dissolve the Lebanese state. On the contrary, there was a will to preserve and strengthen it. Second, one cannot ignore the fact that the Lebanese government came out of the war with an improved status thanks to the intelligent management of Prime Minister Siniora, who

was unquestionably one of the war's few winners. His tearful appearance at the meeting of Arab foreign ministers, during which he vehemently rejected accusations – particularly from Syria – that Lebanon had turned its back on the Arab world¹⁶ brought him support and recognition from many inside and outside Lebanon. His reinforcement constituted a bolstering of the Cedar Revolution coalition, notwithstanding its structural and intrinsic weakness. Third, Syria did not succeed, either during or after the war, in resuming its leadership position in the domestic Lebanese arena. The settlement that brought the hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah to an end was formulated without its input and earned wide international support, which has deterred Syria from attempting to puncture it. Fourth, the international community reaffirmed its commitment and even its willingness to help the Lebanese government enforce its sovereignty over the country. This international support, which appeared to decline in recent years, comprised an important addition to the determination shown by the Lebanese government to face up to its challenges, both inside and outside the country.

Hizbollah and the Lebanese Shiites: The Balance Sheet

At the end of the day, a primary factor in the Lebanese equation was and remains the Hizbollah organization. True, Hizbollah was not overcome and its military strength was not broken, as many in Israel had hoped at the beginning of the war, but there is no doubt that the organization sustained serious damage and will take a long time to rehabilitate itself.

In Israel, Nasrallah is largely perceived through a narrow prism as the leader of a terrorist militia with several thousand fighters and with over 15,000 rockets. Those who look at Nasrallah through that narrow prism would probably conclude that as Nasrallah continued firing rockets into Israel until the last day of the fighting, he can be seen as the victor in the confrontation.

However, Nasrallah is not only the leader of an armed militia. He himself does not see his organization as such, and in fact, since being appointed leader of the organization in 1992 he has dedicated his efforts towards turning his organization into something else entirely. As of July 11, 2006, Nasrallah was the leader of a political and social party with deep roots in

the Lebanese Shiite community. The party had fourteen representatives in the parliament, over 4,000 representatives in local councils in the country's Shiite villages and towns, an education system with dozens of schools with around 100,000 students, a health system with dozens of hospitals and clinics caring for half a million people a year, a banking system, marketing chains, and even pension funds and insurance companies.¹⁷ Nasrallah devoted much of his energies in the last decade to building up this party, or empire, as it were. He viewed the creation of such an empire as his life's work, which would take him far, possibly even to a contest over the control of Lebanon.

These Hizbollah achievements in recent years, which apparently accumulated with increasing scope and intensity since Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, gave the organization and its leader the confidence they needed to embark on a battle for Lebanon. This was a struggle designed to change the reality in Lebanon and enable the organization to assume control of the country via democratic elections or cross-ethnic consent based primarily on changing the political order in Lebanon in favor of the Shiite community. After all, members of the Shiite community, most of whom support Hizbollah, comprise close to half the Lebanese population, although they make up only one quarter of the parliament – the result of the communal political system in Lebanon. It is no surprise that in recent years, Hassan Nasrallah has frequently called for democratic elections to be held in Lebanon, which he hoped would give him and his organization political power in Lebanon. Alternatively, he asked for a change in the status quo between the ethnic groups in the country, including through dialogue and agreement.¹⁸

Israel damaged Nasrallah's efforts badly, and only those who have witnessed the destruction and ruin in Lebanon can comprehend just how severely the war affected the Shiites in general and Hizbollah and its leader in particular. One out of every two Shiites living in Lebanon became a refugee during the war, and most of the Shiite community returned to their homes in villages in southern Lebanon or the Shiite quarters of south Beirut to find they had lost their homes and their possessions.¹⁹

In essence, these Shiites have no choice but to gather around Hassan Nasrallah's flag. There is no one else in Lebanon who cares about them, not the UN or the international community, and not even the Lebanese

government whose leaders are focused on the interests of the Sunni, Maronite, and Druze communities, which barely suffered in the war. This is the nature and character of the Lebanese system in which each community cares for itself and is apathetic and uncaring towards the other sectors. As such, the members of the Shiite community continue to support Nasrallah. However, the damage inflicted on the Shiites clearly reduced Nasrallah's room for maneuver, as evidenced by his admission at the beginning of September, which undoubtedly was aimed at his supporters, that he did not correctly anticipate Israel's response to the kidnapping.²⁰

Hassan Nasrallah, therefore, needs time and mostly a period of quiet to rehabilitate his life's project and repair his organization's civilian infrastructure. The fact that he is still entrenched in a bunker or in a hideout apartment and is in fear of his life severely hampers him and makes it difficult for him to resume his operations and restore his organization's status in Lebanon. At the end of the day, his public appearances were like oxygen for him. Now that oxygen pipeline has been cut off because of Israel's threat that it will harm him if he leaves his hiding place. As a result, Nasrallah himself declared repeatedly that he was seeking quiet and would strictly honor the ceasefire.²¹

But Nasrallah, or more precisely the Shiites in Lebanon, are not going anywhere. Hizbollah will continue to occupy the region to the north of the Israeli border, and even if it maintains a low profile in the near future it will aim to rebuild its strength, rehabilitate its force, and return to its position of July 11, 2006. Moreover, within a few years the Shiite community will become the clear majority in Lebanon and then the Shiites will demand their due – a fairer division of power, and possibly even control.

Precisely because the Shiites will become the largest community in Lebanon within a few years, the power struggle between Hizbollah and the Amal movement for control of the sector is of the utmost importance. Surveys conducted in Lebanon shortly after the end of the war indicate extensive support of up to 65-70 percent among Shiites for Hizbollah under Nasrallah's leadership. However, these surveys also show that the hard core of the organization's supporters comprises no more than 25-30 percent of the community.²² This means that most of the members of the Shiite community are not necessarily in Nasrallah's pocket, and they might well transfer their allegiance from Hizbollah to Amal if the latter offers

them the same hope for the future that Hizbollah currently embodies. The Amal movement is a secular movement that believes in the integration of the Shiites in Lebanese life, while Hizbollah represents a radical outlook imported to Lebanon from Iran. Though the economic aid that Iran provided Hizbollah allowed the organization to become a leading force within the Lebanese Shiite community, this does not mean that an internal Shiite conflict between Amal and Hizbollah for the soul of the Shiite community has been averted.

This will probably constitute the principal challenge facing Lebanon and Lebanese society. In other words, the way in which Lebanon – the country, society, and the various communities – approaches the Shiite community, whether it supports the community and integrates it more fully in the Lebanese system, will determine the direction the community takes. The question remains if the Shiites will continue to adhere to coexistence with the other ethnic groups, or whether they pursue an aggressive and even violent struggle in order to achieve a decisive, controlling position.

Syria under Bashar's Leadership: Between War and Peace

Another question that has emerged in the wake of the war is where Syria is heading. Indeed, while during the war many in the Arab world did not hesitate to express their reservations over the Hizbollah organization, Bashar Asad was quick to align himself with the organization's interests, considerations, and policies, and even its political and strategic inclination, which is identical to that of Iran.

Immediately after the war Bashar Asad announced that he viewed the result of the hostilities as an important and even an historic victory for the organization. Moreover, he did not conceal his view that Syria should consider adopting Hizbollah's strategy of terror and guerilla warfare against Israel, which eventually forced it to withdraw unilaterally from southern Lebanon in May 2000. On a number of occasions Bashar even remarked that he was under increasing pressure from the Syrian public to desist from the "sit back and do nothing" policy that Syria adopted with regard to Israel on the Golan Heights front over the last decades, and to heat up the front.²³ Bashar apparently believes that just as Hizbollah's rocket array deterred Israel for several years from taking action against Hizbollah and

then inflicted serious damage when the war erupted – and in effect led to Israel's failure in the war – a Syrian rocket array would also deter Israel from attacking Syria should Damascus decide to act against Israel on the Golan Heights front. In a series of speeches and interviews Bashar Asad thus held a gun of sorts to Israel's head and attempted to put it in a position of no choice – to renew the peace process with Syria and sign a peace treaty that includes an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights up to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or alternatively to risk opening a new front on the Golan Heights, along the lines of the Israel-Hizbollah dynamic in Lebanon.

It is noteworthy that Nasrallah, who in the past has often demonstrated far greater political intelligence than Bashar, preferred to remain in hiding and even instructed his men to honor the ceasefire with Israel in southern Lebanon. In contrast, Bashar, who unlike Nasrallah did not experience the full weight of Israel's might, was quick to deliver victory addresses and even threatened Israel with an attack if it did not accept Syria's new proposal to enter a peace process based on its terms, if not outright dictates.

Bashar's threats, which began soon after the war and which seemed like a function of his perception of the war, should be taken seriously. At the same time, Syria is not only part of the problem on Israel's northern border, but is also part of the solution. Even in his most fiery speeches Bashar repeatedly noted that Syria, in contrast to Hizbollah and Iran, was interested in renewing the political process in the region and that Syria's ultimate objective was not the destruction of Israel but a peace treaty with it. As Bashar has taken pains to point out, it would be preferable for the Golan Heights to be given back in peace, as the adversaries engaged in war pay a heavy price that would be best to avoid, if possible.²⁴ Moreover, in the attack on the American embassy in Damascus in mid-September 2006 carried out by supporters of al-Qaeda, Bashar once again witnessed the fragility of his regime. At the end of the day, these Muslims extremists view Bashar and his regime as an enemy that must be fought.²⁵ Most of the Syrian population belongs to the Sunni community, home to these extremists, who in the name of religion seek to fight against the secular Alawi regime (as well as against Shiites). Bashar's problem, therefore, is not only the US and Israel but also the domestic reality inside Syria. At the same, there is nothing new in Asad's peace rhetoric: since he rose to power

he has taken almost every opportunity to declare that peace is the preferred option, as long as Syria's conditions were met. In this regard, it appears that the war did not change Bashar's basic approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict, an approach inspired by the heritage of his late father, Hafez Asad, who pursued the peace process with Israel in the early nineties.

Either way, Bashar's predicament, but especially his peace protestations, convinced no one in Jerusalem on the need to open peace negotiations with him, partly because these declarations were accompanied by deeds diametrically opposed to the rhetoric itself – providing advanced weapons to Hizbollah during the war in Lebanon and enhancing its strategic pact with Iran. Even the US, the object of some of Bashar's conciliatory rhetoric, remained skeptical regarding the Syrian president, whom it considers an adventurous and unreliable leader who bound his fate with Hizbollah and Iran.²⁶ It seems that Bashar's former allies in the Arab world, mainly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, believe that Syria's alliance with Iran, which will likely last as long as the Islamic regime in Tehran survives, has long moved from a pact of interests based on narrow political considerations to an intimate strategic pact that carries its own weight. The Saudi foreign minister, Saud al-Faisal, alluded to this when he criticized the "countries that operate in opposition to pan-Arabic interests," and that are leading "to the loss of the Arab identity in the Arab arena."²⁷

Is peace with Syria an Israeli interest? Few would suggest otherwise. Peace with Syria could bring quiet to the northern front, and most of all, block Iran's entry to this region whereby it finances and equips the Palestinian terror organizations and Hizbollah. This has special importance given Iran's nuclear pursuits. However, from here to achieving a peace treaty between Israel and Syria there is a long road to travel. It is hard to imagine that Bashar, who currently believes that he is in a position of strength, will be willing to start negotiations with Israel without being guaranteed in advance that he will repossess the Golan Heights. Bashar, like his father, does not consider confidence building moves that would help the Israeli leadership muster public support for a peace process with Syria. As such, it would be possible to talk to Bashar about closing the Damascus offices of the terror organizations only after a positive settlement on the return of the Golan is reached. The Israeli government is also not interested in discussing and settling the Golan issue now. Peace talks with

Syria are liable to arouse domestic criticism and shorten any government's term of office. Thus, due to short term internal political interests, the Israeli government chose to defer discussing a long term strategic interest for Israel. Finally, President Bush, a crucial partner in any future Israeli-Syrian dialogue, still views Syria as part of the "axis of evil," a state that should be resisted, not negotiated with. All this amounts to a long road on the way to Israeli-Syrian peace.

Conclusion

The "open war," as defined by Hizbollah general secretary Nasrallah,²⁸ which was waged for over a month between Israel and Hizbollah accentuated a major part of the dilemmas that Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and even Hizbollah have confronted in recent years. Among them, it highlighted the dilemma faced by Israel over how to respond to the threat posed by Hizbollah. At the same time, Hizbollah has been saddled with the dilemma of what its policy and mode of operation should be within the internal Lebanese arena and vis-à-vis Israel.

It appears that the war did not bring any real change to the status of Lebanon and the region. It weakened Hizbollah but did not shatter its power or defeat it. It strengthened the Lebanese government but not in a manner that allowed it to take on Hizbollah full force. It enhanced the provocative approach that Bashar adopted towards Israel and even towards the United States in recent years, but did not bring him to completely forsake the political policy of conciliation adopted by his father over fifteen years ago. The regional reality along Israel's northern border will, therefore, continue to be based on a triad of forces comprising first of all the Hizbollah organization – weaker than before, but still an element of considerable weight in Lebanon, by virtue of its being the authentic representative of the Shiite community. There are also two important corollaries, a coalition of Lebanese forces backed by international support that is striving to contain the Hizbollah organization and the Syrians, and Syria, led by Bashar Asad, which is caught between the "axis of evil," to which it is currently assigned, and potential affiliation with a moderate axis in the Arab world. All the while, in the background, are Iran, Israel, and the United States that in any

case are preoccupied with other challenges, from the Palestinian issue, to Iraq, and the Iranian nuclear threat.

Notes

1. For the declaration of victory by Hassan Nasrallah, see al-Manar TV, August 20, 2006.
2. For Bashar Asad's speech, Sana (Syrian Arab News Agency), August 15, 2006, *Tishrin* (Damascus), August 16, 2006. See also an interview given by Bashar Asad to the Abu Dhabi TV channel, August 23, 2006, and *al-Thawra* (Damascus), August 24, 2006.
3. See Lebanese News Agency, August 29, 2006.
4. *Haaretz*, August 28, 2006; Reuters, August 22, 2006.
5. For background literature about Lebanon, see Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (New York: Caravan Books, 1977); *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988).
6. Interview of Hassan Nasrallah with the Lebanese TV channel NTV, August 27, 2006.
7. For more on the Shiite community and Hizbollah organization, see Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizballah* (Syracuse University Press, 2004); Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah, the Changing Face of Terrorism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004); Eyal Zisser, "The Return of the Hizballah," *MEQ* 9, no. 4 (2002): 3-12. See also Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah, Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Vada Sharara, *Dulet Al-Hezbollah, Libnan - Mujtama Islami* (Beirut, 1996); see also Na'im Qasim, *Hizbollah: Alminhaj, Altajruba, Almustakbal* (Beirut: Daar Al-Hadi, 2002 [Arabic]); Eitan Azani, "The Hezbollah Movement – From Revolution and Pan-Islamism to Pragmatism and Lebanonism," PhD thesis (Hebrew University, 2005 [Hebrew]).
8. For more on the Cedar Revolution, see Eyal Zisser: "Lebanon – following the Cedar Revolution – Between Continuity and Change," *Orient* (forthcoming).
9. Reuters, September 12, 2006; *al-Hayat* (London), September 13, 2006.
10. For more on the Ta'if agreement, see William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1997), pp. 235-322.
11. See also on Rafiq al-Hariri, his official web site www.rhariri.com. See also Middle East Intelligence (Washington), http://www.meib.org/articles/0107_ld1.htm. On the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, see *al-Mustaqbal* (Beirut), February 15, 16, 21, 2005.
12. For Bashar Asad's speech, see *Tishrin* (Damascus), March 6, 2005.
13. For the results of the Lebanese parliamentary elections see *al-Safir* (Beirut), May 29, 30, 2005; Lebanese News Agency, June 5, 2005, *al-Mustaqbal* (Beirut), June 6, 2005, *al-Nahar* (Beirut), June 6, 2005, Radio Beirut, June 6, 2005.

14. For more about Hizbollah's support of Syria, see al-Manar television, March 8, 2005; *al-Intiqad* (Beirut) March 9, 2005.
15. See Lebanese News Agency, August 29, 2006; AP, August 31, 2006.
16. For Siniora's comments, see SILB, August 6, 2006.
17. See Qasim, *Hizbollah*; Azani, "The Hezbollah Movement."
18. See, for example, an interview given by Hassan Nasrallah to the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Ra'y al A'am*, December 27, 2004. See also *al-Safir* (Beirut), March 8, 2005.
19. See *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), August 12, 2006; AFP (French news agency), August 19, 2006.
20. See NTV television channel, August 27, 2006.
21. See interviews with Hassan Nasrallah to the al-Jazeera television station, September 12, 2006 and to *al-Safir* (Beirut), September 5, 2006.
22. See *al-Nahar* (Beirut), August 7, August 11, 2006.
23. See Bashar Asad's address, *Tishrin* (Damascus), August 15, 2006; clarifications of Syrian information minister, Damascus Radio, September 5, 2006; Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister, *al-Thawra* (Damascus), September 3, 2006.
24. See interview with Bashar Asad to Abu Dhabi television, August 23, 2006, and *al-Thawra* (Damascus), August 24, 2006.
25. See Sana (Syrian Arab News Agency), September 12, 2006.
26. For a discussion of the US policy on Bashar Asad, see: <http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/L/Joshua.M.Landis-1/syriablog/2006/09/news-round-up-2-september-2006.htm>.
27. For comments by the Saudi foreign minister, see Saudi News Agency, August 26, 2006.
28. See Hassan Nasrallah's address, al-Manar TV, July 14, 2006.

Chapter 11

After the Lebanon War: Iranian Power and its Limitations

*David Menashri*¹

Given the time that has elapsed since the ceasefire ended the Second Lebanon War, a full examination of the war's effects on both sides and on the entire region remains a challenge. However, it is clear that the processes that led to the war, the way the war was conducted, and the war's results will have a lasting impact on the region and beyond. While it is questionable if there is a "new Middle East," it is possible that we are witnessing significant changes such that the current Middle East is different in many ways from the one we knew before. Iran already looks like a regional power and its leadership position has strengthened since the wars in the Persian Gulf and the Fertile Crescent. For their part, the heads of the Islamic regime in Tehran are talking as if Iran is already a global power rather than a growing regional force. This essay will examine the way the Second Lebanon War has apparently contributed to Iran's standing and policies as can be seen in the period following the war.

Over the last three decades Lebanon has become a battleground for various foreign forces, including: the Palestinians, who established a stronghold there after the 1967 war; Syria, which introduced its forces there in 1975; and Israel, which launched several campaigns in Lebanon (particularly after 1982). In the 2006 war, Iran gained from Hizbollah's role, with the cost largely paid in "Lebanese currency." The United States, Europe, and Arab states anxiously followed the war's developments, concerned about the forces behind Hizbollah, especially Iran. Each has

subsequently considered what policy would best further its respective interests.

Lebanon is of particular consequence for Iran, and Tehran has a clear desire to maintain a Shiite stronghold in southern Lebanon, close to Israel's borders. Through Hizbollah, Lebanon provides Iran with a spearhead for disseminating the revolutionary message, a model of successful Islamic activity, and a means of reinforcing its regional and international position. The Palestinian issue, including Jerusalem, is a central element in Islamic solidarity, and Iran's active involvement in the arena – within movements such as Hamas, Hizbollah, and Islamic Jihad – is important to it, both in conceptual and practical terms. The Islamic Revolution, which has retreated from so many of the fundamental principles in its ideological manifesto, is struggling to demonstrate success in its main aims: improving the situation of Iranian society and proving that its ethos offers a cure for the ills of modern society. "Success" in Lebanon, however, is much-needed evidence of the revolution's importance, vis-à-vis domestic public opinion, the Islamic world, and the world at large. In terms of the initial idea of "exporting the revolution," Hizbollah is the flagship pioneer and the most prominent success story thus far, if not the only significant one. Iran is determined to maintain this asset.

Iran has solid links with the Shiites in Lebanon, dating back from long before the revolution in 1979. Revolutionary Iran has supported Hizbollah since its inception in 1982, and has lent it moral, ideological, political, and financial backing, in addition to providing it with military support, including training and weapons. While the Islamic regime in Iran has been forced to adopt a pragmatic approach for the better management of affairs of state in a growing number of areas, in Lebanon, Hizbollah, free of the responsibilities of executive office, can continue maintaining a higher level of ideological purity than even the Islamic regime in Iran. Tehran is proud of its support of Hizbollah, which recognizes the spiritual authority of Iran's supreme leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamanei) as expressed in the Hizbollah ideology and in the pictures of the ayatollah regularly held by protesters and displayed in the offices of the movement's leaders.

A number of developments reinforced Iran's regional standing before the war, and have bolstered it even further since. These enhancements,

however, now share the stage with certain challenges that arose following the war.

Advances for Iran

Extremism reinforced in Iran. The war broke out while the conservatives in Iran were gaining strength. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president in July 2005 following Mohammad Khatami's two terms as president (1997-2005), during which he strove, albeit with little success, to implement a relatively pragmatic policy. Ahmadinejad has pursued a far more extreme line. The pragmatic approach that started in the mid-nineties, whose most notable successes were the elections of Khatami as president, the victory in the municipal elections (1999), and the reform-supporting Majlis (parliament) of 2000, began to regress at the start of the third millennium. Following the advances of the mid-late 1990s, a crusade began against the reformers in Iran. The extremist pattern increased with the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada (September 2000) and the events of September 11, 2001. The United States policy in the region, and President Bush's inclusion of Iran on the "axis of evil" (January 2002) led to further escalation in Iran. Although Iran gained appreciably from the "the great Satan," as the US is known in revolutionary jargon, in its removal of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (2002) and the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq (2003), Iran did not express any gratitude for these "services" and did not seriously consider moderating its position (even if there were some voices that favored these ideas at some points).

Since then the conservative elements in Iranian politics have become stronger. In 2003 the conservatives won a clear victory in the local elections (after the victory of the reformists in 1999), in 2004 they won by a large margin in the Majlis elections (unlike the 2000 elections), and one year later Ahmadinejad, the most extreme of the presidential candidates, was elected. Soon after his election Ahmadinejad enhanced his international profile and became a renowned world leader who worked to consolidate his agenda. A number of developments worked in his favor. Domestic factors included the increase in the oil prices; the weakening of pragmatic groups; and his success in uniting the public on the issue of the Iranian nuclear program, which is viewed as a national interest. Outside the country, Iran's position

was strengthened by Saddam's downfall, the United States' complications in Iraq, the growing power of Shiite communities in the region, and the political vacuum left by the Arab states in Iraq and other places as well.

Iran's spearheading a clash of civilizations. Lebanon inauspiciously became a microcosm of a far more extensive struggle – a clash of civilizations on two parallel levels: Western culture versus Islam under the aegis of Iran; and within the Islamic world, the Sunni majority versus the emerging Shiite community, which Iran envisioned itself leading. Placing itself at the forefront of Islamist struggles is a clear ideological choice, aimed at bolstering Iran's position in the regional and global arenas. This is also a strategic decision of the Islamic regime, and Iran appears determined to further it.

Decline of Arab stature in the Middle East arena. The Arab world has changed and has reacted passively to momentous events in the region (in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian arena). This recurring pattern of behavior has had a significant impact on what is often called "the Arab Middle East." The emerging alternative is in fact the superiority of the non-Arab elements in the region, especially Iran, Turkey, and Israel. Alongside the weakening of the Arab power, repression of the Taliban, and the collapse of the Baath regime of Saddam Hussein on both sides of its borders, Iran was boosted by consolidation of its position in the Persian Gulf. The withdrawal of Israel (2000) and Syria (2005) from Lebanon presented an extensive potential area for activity in the Fertile Crescent. The growing popularity of Hizbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah and of Ahmadinejad among various sectors of the public in Arab states also emphasizes the gap between the public and the leaders of certain Arab states. Hizbollah's stalwart performance during the Second Lebanon War provides inspiration for radical movements in the moderate Arab states and bolsters the importance of Iran, which defines itself as "the academy of the Islamic revolution." Iran is happy to fill the vacuum left by Arab states, and this pattern is apparently progressing uninterrupted, unless real change occurs in the policies of the Arab states, principally Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Strengthening the Shiite standing in the Islamic theater. This emerging pattern changes somewhat the internal Islamic balance between the Sunni majority and Shiite minority (which even according to generous

assessments represents less than 15 percent of Muslims). True, the Shiite world is far from homogenous, and there are significant differences between Iraqi Shiites and Iranian Shiites. For example, the senior religious cleric in Iraq, Ayatollah Ali Sistani, himself of Iranian origin, challenges some of the basic principles in the teachings of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, including the principle of “rule of the jurisconsult”; during the Iran-Iraq War the Shiites in Iraq generally remained faithful to their country, just as the Arabs in Iran remained loyal to Iran when the Iraqi troops invaded Iran in 1980. In fact, even in Iranian Ithna-Ashri Shia, there are considerable ideological differences between the various senior religious leaders. At the beginning of the revolution a senior religious figure, Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari, was placed under house arrest, as was Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri more recently. It is also clear that Sunni Islam predominates throughout the Islamic world as well as in the Middle East, and Sunni leaders will fight to ensure that their views represent the Muslim world. Nevertheless, the rise in the Shiite standing constitutes a significant change in the Middle East. Other than Iran (which has a large Shiite majority), Iraq is the first Arab country where the Shiites (who account for about 60 percent of the population) are now in government, while in Lebanon the Shiites are currently the largest religious minority (rapidly approaching half of the population of Lebanon). The inferior standing of the Shiites (socially, economically, and politically) and their proxies now looks like part of the distant past. The Shiite banner, flaunted by Iran and spanning the area from Iraq to Lebanon (with important Shiite pockets in the Gulf emirates, and with Iran’s strategic ally Syria under Baath leadership), is an additional source of Iran’s sense of strength, as well as a matter of concern for Sunni Arab states.

Iran’s senior status in Lebanon. Iran has exerted its influence in Lebanon for a long time, and its position there was enhanced by the withdrawal of Israel and Syria from Lebanon. It was further bolstered by Hizbollah’s “victory” in the war with Israel, although the definition of victory or defeat in this kind of war is largely contingent on the approach of the individual party and on public consciousness. In many respects it is difficult to view the results of the war as a victory for Hizbollah (or for Iran). The heavy losses suffered by Hizbollah, the damage inflicted on its military and organizational infrastructure, and the fact that Nasrallah was forced into

hiding following the war do not indicate victory in the conventional sense. However, the public perception of victory in the Arab world propagated by Hizbollah and Iran (and Syria), in contrast with the gloom and the soul searching in Israel, fueled the sense that Hizbollah's approach is the way to contain Israel and the enemies of Islam both in the region and elsewhere. Iran clearly has the copyright on Hizbollah's steadfast resistance and its revolutionary thinking, and it has not disguised its delight.

Progress on the nuclear front. This is undoubtedly the most important issue for Iran, which thus far has shown no desire at all to retreat from its nuclear program. The war in Iraq has only increased Iran's motivation to maintain its program and it is striving to follow North Korea's lead, and not to expose itself to invasion, like Iraq. The difficulties the US has encountered in Iraq since the occupation, the fact that no "smoking gun" was found there, the eclipsed aim to "export" democracy to Iraq, the numerous problems confronting the US in applying its policy there, and the fierce internal debate contribute to Iran's initiatives and its sense of strength. The increase in oil prices has reinforced the sense of security and pretensions of the Islamic leadership, and the fact that other countries in the region have a nuclear capability has further encouraged its aspirations to join the elite nuclear club. The inconsistency in the Western position essentially allows Iran to continue with its program while standing firm against the West. China and Russia are not entirely supportive of strict sanctions on Iran, and the European position is not definitive. Even public opinion in the United States does not support significant measures against Iran, and certainly not before the diplomatic channel has been exhausted.

Finally, the successful art of Iranian diplomacy. Iran has rich experience in foreign policy, more than any other country in the region. Since the 1979 revolution the religious leaders have displayed great sophistication. They have successfully implemented a policy designed to divide the opposing camp, using double entendres and occasionally intentionally – and overtly – misleading the world. They have fully exploited the particular interests of the various actors (such as China and Russia) in order to buy time, improve their regional position, and continue with their nuclear program. They have both shut the door in the face of the West and at the same time opened a window. Their responses to the proposals made to them have been neither categorical rejections nor full-fledged endorsements. They veer between

“yes, but” and “no, however” and leave the US and its allies pondering the viability of solving the Iranian nuclear problem through diplomatic means. For now, the nuclear program clock continues ticking, and it is working in Iran’s favor.

Challenges to Iran

These advances are not insignificant achievements. However, even with these achievements, Iran is exposed to quite a few challenges, and some have also been exacerbated in the wake of the war in Lebanon. Moreover, while Iran’s gains pre-dated the war and were for the most part unrelated to it, the challenges are largely a direct result of the war. In this respect, the war damaged Iranian interests no less than it advanced them.

Domestic public discontent has increased, particularly due to economic difficulties and diminished civil liberties, and there are also complaints over assistance provided to distant movements, in other words, identification with radical movements at the expense of domestic investment. There are a significant number of Iranians who in the past have criticized support of radical movements outside the country, both for ideological reasons and on pragmatic and economic grounds. Iran’s clear identification with movements such as Hamas and Hizbollah is seen by many to damage Iran’s image. Others have complained about the financial aid given to these movements, which impinges on Iran’s domestic budget. During the war a famous Persian proverb was often heard: “If the lantern is needed at home, donating it to the mosque is *haram* [forbidden]”—i.e., even if supporting Hizbollah is a holy cause, “one’s own poor” should still be taken care of first.

Lebanon’s rehabilitation, particularly in southern Lebanon and parts of Beirut, is another issue. When the dust of the war settled, Lebanese citizens could see the extent of the destruction. Plainly, many blamed Iran. If Iran provides generous assistance, questions will be raised inside Iran (where some areas have not yet been fully rehabilitated following the long Iran-Iraq War). If Iran does not provide significant aid it will be held even more accountable by the Lebanese, at least the non-Shiite segments of the population. The rise in oil prices also has its drawbacks. The public may one day demand to know where all the money that the state earned from

the rising price of oil has gone (the price of oil has increased threefold in the last five years). History, of course, does not repeat itself, but the lessons to be learned from it should not be ignored either. Following the 1973 war there was a sharp rise in oil prices, increasing Iran's income significantly, and the Islamic Revolution erupted only five years later. Given the surge in oil revenue, probing questions are already surfacing in this context.

On the international front, the world became more aware of the challenges posed by Islamic radicalism fueled by Iran, and even Europe now seems more aware that the challenges presented by Iran are not in its interest. Following the war there was concern in Iran that pressure on it would increase (this was the case with the Security Council resolution of July 31 that for the first time threatened to impose sanctions on Iran if it did not change its nuclear policy). Even if these concerns have dissipated for the while, the impressions of the war, along with Iran's nuclear program, the rise of political Islam on "the Arab street," and the rise of Islamic extremism in European capitals are now being felt in Europe.

Tension between Iran and its neighbors is also increasing against the backdrop of Iran's policy in Iraq, in Lebanon, and on the Palestinian issue, the strengthening of Shiite Islam, and the nuclear challenge. Following the war, Sunni religious leaders made extreme statements against the Persian-Shiites. It is hard to believe that this is a temporary development. It seems to run even deeper than what appears on the surface. Leaders of the Arab states are also feeling the pressure, both from Iran and from radical elements in the various Arab countries.

The possibility of a peace initiative between Israel and Syria may also confront Iran with a considerable challenge. Much to Iran's undisguised displeasure, Syria engaged in negotiations with Israel a decade ago, and the Palestinians pursued a diplomatic course of their own with even greater intensity. Although Hamas is currently in government, if and when there is a change in the Palestinian Authority or in Hamas's policy preferences, or if a peace initiative develops between Israel and the Palestinians or between Israel and Syria, Iran may face a far more rigorous challenge.

The most serious factor for Iran is President Bush's determination to suppress the "axis of evil." Although the majority gained by the Democrats in both houses of Congress in the 2006 elections has weakened Bush's position, and while he has also left an opening for dialogue with the Iranian

leaders, viewed from Tehran President Bush still appears capable of taking stern action against them.

Iran heralds the war as a victory, and may have had its own interest in increasing tension on Israel's borders prior to the July 15 G-8 summit, where the main issue was Iran's nuclear program. On the other hand, it does not seem that Iran was interested in an Israeli reaction of such intensity, and the results of the fighting inflicted a heavy blow on its power bases in Lebanon long before Iran was interested in such an escalation.

These underlying factors help explain the unusual amount of time given to Israel by the United States and Europe (and, indirectly, moderate Arab states as well) to fight Hizbollah before calling for a ceasefire. At least for the United States, the Second Lebanon War was just one phase of a broader war against Islamic radicalism, with Iran as the primary country supporting it. Israel viewed the Second Lebanon War as its war, but also believed that the broader context of the Iranian challenge, principally the nuclear issue, should be addressed by the United States and its Western allies, and not by Israel.

Potential Sources of Change

The United States, European countries, China, and Russia. In the period since the ceasefire, it does not look like the world is ready to confront Iran. In practice, even the United States has sent hints of goodwill towards Iran, for example by allowing former President Khatami to visit the United States, and as reflected in President Bush's measured words in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in September. The Baker-Hamilton report on Iraq (released on December 6, 2006) furthered this trend. West European countries too do not seem overly enthusiastic about confronting Iran, and Russia and China have also publicly expressed more moderate positions towards Tehran. Nevertheless, there is still concern in Iran about a tough response from the United States, whether designed to strike at Iran or to extricate itself from the Iraqi morass.

Several steps taken since late in 2006 pressured Iran further. The Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on Iran, approved unanimously by all fifteen members, sent a stern message to Iran. Also, in December US forces arrested two Iranians in Iraq (two others with diplomatic immunity

were released). In January 2007, the United States announced the dispatch of additional forces to Iraq, and on January 11 US troops raided Iranian targets in the Kurdish town of Irbil. As such, the “American solution” appears possible based on two contradictory but apparently complementary trends: an initiative for dialogue to find an agreed solution, and drastic US action, preferably with a supporting coalition. It is uncertain whether an American initiative for dialogue will produce meaningful results. However, without it the US will have more difficulty implementing a more decisive policy, certainly in terms of China and Russia, but also with regard to European countries and possibly even in the context of US public opinion.

Arab states. A potentially important means of motivating a process of change would be an Arab-Israeli dialogue on the Palestinian issue. Galvanizing negotiations through moderate Arab regimes may provide a suitable solution for radicalization generated by Iran and the Islamic movements. This is a challenge that faces Israel and its Arab neighbors. Although the results of the war make it even harder to advance along this route, clearly the progress with the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians or with the Syrians (and certainly with both) may weaken Iran’s position in the arena.

A change of direction in Iran. Ultimately, there is the possibility of change within Iran itself. One possibility would be the present administration agreeing to change its policy, which does not look likely given the current political reality in Iran, although it is not entirely impossible; and another possibility would be internal change that forces the government to embrace a different policy.

In the last century, the Iranian public has demonstrated a high degree of political involvement and generated considerable change. The public continues to be alert and involved. The results of the December 15, 2006 elections to local municipalities and the Assembly of Experts reflect a considerable level of discontent with the president’s policies (and indeed, his rivals scored some noticeable gains). Even if it is difficult to discern a fundamental change in the political arena emanating from these elections, they express displeasure with domestic politics, though still within the narrow confines of the struggle between the movements inside the government establishment. More importantly, in the twentieth century Iran went through two large popular uprisings (the constitutional revolution of

1906, whose centenary was marked last year) and the Islamic Revolution, interspersed by the popular movement of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq (1951-53). Even after the Islamic Revolution, the youth movements, women's organizations, press, cinema industry, and extensive use of the internet amaze the foreign observer. Over the last twenty-eight years the Islamic regime has resisted the movements that have opposed it, both from within and outside the regime. Does the future offer other possibilities? It is hard to forecast.

It appears as if two processes are taking place in Iran simultaneously: a process of policy change and possibly even internal change, and a process of obtaining a nuclear capability. In the view of the free world, it would be better if Iran did not realize the nuclear option first, although reality does not necessarily support this preference.

Although the neo-conservatives are currently in government in Iran, it seems that the fight over revolutionary Iran's path has not yet been ultimately decided. Popular movements are difficult to foresee; as one Israeli song explains, "suddenly, a man gets up in the morning and feels he is a nation, and starts to move forward." Researchers of the past are unable to foresee the route the public will choose. If and when the public imposes its will, its position will not be contingent on the degree of reversion to Islam or Iran's influence in Lebanon, rather mainly on the extent to which the revolutionary regime satisfies the expectations that fueled the revolution's early days – the promise of a better life and greater freedom for the Iranian people, and proof that their slogan "Islam is the solution" actually provides a response to the citizen's expectations.

Ahmadinejad made generous Robin Hood-style promises that he would take from the rich and give generously to the poor, and he instilled new hope that his approach offers a solution to the problems of the modern era. The burden of proof now rests on him, and the battlefield is the Iranian domestic arena. This is not an easy task, and its achievement (or lack of achievement) embodies the main possibility for significant change in Iranian policy.

Note

1. For a detailed discussion on the domestic developments and Iran's regional policy in their wider historical perspective, see my *Post-Revolutionary Politics*

in Iran: Religion, Society and Power (London: Frank Cass, 2000). For Iran's regional policy see my recent article "Iran's Regional Policy: Between Radicalism and Pragmatism," *Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 2 (2007): 153-67.

Chapter 12

July-August Heat: The Israeli-Palestinian Arena

Anat Kurz

The escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation that coincided with the war between Israel and Hizbollah heightened the perceived threat to Israel inherent in the regional context, and in particular, the association between the arenas powered by Islamic forces. Indeed, for several weeks Israel was involved in direct confrontations both with the Lebanese Hizbollah and with Palestinian militant factions. Prominent among them were those that viewed the struggle against Israel as part of the drive toward regional Islamization. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the chronological coincidence, the escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian arena in the summer of 2006 was a separate event, propelled by its own particular circumstances.¹

On the Eve of the War

When the war broke out between Israel and Hizbollah, the Israeli-Palestinian arena was already engulfed in a process of escalation. Qassam rocket fire from the Gaza Strip on the western Negev, ongoing since the IDF withdrew from Gaza in August 2005, had increased with the Hamas movement's victory in the 2006 elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Factions that had established independent organizational frameworks, operational abilities, and political agendas during the intifada continued their violent campaign in order to embarrass the Hamas government and bring about an escalation in the confrontation. Israeli security forces

responded to the Qassam fire, terrorist attacks, and attempted assaults with pursuits of activists in the West Bank and Gaza, with artillery fire, and with aerial and naval attacks on rocket-launching areas in the Gaza Strip.

At the same time, Palestinian bipolar institutional tension increased between Hamas, which controlled the government and the PLC, and the presidency, held by Mahmoud Abbas. The friction paralyzed the ability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to function, and the political stagnation capped any potential interest within both Hamas and Fatah to contain the armed factions. The inter-organizational tension and the lack of central control were also reflected in sporadic clashes between members of various organizations, particularly Fatah and Hamas. These developments unfolded against the backdrop of an economic crisis that worsened due to the sanctions imposed by Israel, the European Union, and the United States against the PA in the wake of Hamas's electoral victory. The sanctions were intended either to encourage Hamas to change the basic guidelines of its government or, alternatively, to bring about its downfall. In an effort to boost the economic situation, lifting the closure was a key objective of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who in what became known as "the prisoners' document" proposed a basis for the government and the presidency to form a national unity government. On June 24, 2006, under public pressure to endorse the prisoners' proposal, Hamas and Fatah leaderships announced agreement on principles for establishing a coalition.² However, the escalation that erupted immediately thereafter in the Israeli-Palestinian sphere blocked the possibility of translating this agreement into any rehabilitation of the Palestinian political system.

On June 25 the IDF intensified its operations in the Gaza Strip following the infiltration into Israel near Kerem Shalom of operatives from the Army of Islam, a Hamas-aligned faction, and their kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Operation "Shalit Dromi" (Southern Shalit) was designed to generate public pressure on the Hamas government to work for his release and contain the rocket fire. On July 2, following the intensified rocket fire and the continued crisis in the wake of the kidnapping, the IDF's operation in the Strip was expanded. In the second phase of the operation, called "Gishmei Kayitz" (summer rains), ground forces entered the Gaza Strip and, backed by airpower, concentrated on destroying Hamas's civilian

institutions and the military infrastructures belonging to Hamas and other militant factions.

Following the upsurge in the crisis Hizbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah declared that releasing the soldier without obtaining something in return would constitute a failure and a blow to thousands of Palestinian prisoners. On July 13, the day after two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped by Hizbollah on the northern border – the climax of a series of incidents that led to the outbreak of war between Israel and Hizbollah – Nasrallah linked the two kidnapping incidents together and declared that he intended to advance the release of the three Israeli soldiers “in return for the release of Arab prisoners.”³

Operation Summer Rains

The political and media focus on the Lebanese arena both in Israel and around the world reduced interest in the events that were unfolding in the Palestinian arena, and helped to moderate criticism of the duration, extent, and intensity of the Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip. However, the limited coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian escalation was not the driving force behind the campaign, which was expanded significantly even before the outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon. In fact, the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation escalated and followed its traditional pattern, largely divorced from its Lebanese counterpart. The IDF maintained its persistent campaign against the militant infrastructure in the West Bank, and acted on land, by sea, and by air against the operational capability of armed elements in the Strip. Nevertheless, the Qassam rocket fire continued. In response to the continued militancy and the failure to achieve the release of the kidnapped soldier, the border crossings between Gaza and the outside world remained closed – barring occasional openings for food, medical equipment, and basic supplies – and hence the shortages and economic crisis in the Strip intensified dramatically. Meantime, alongside military measures, Israel continued arrests of senior Hamas officials.

Confronted by the pressure, Hamas called for a ceasefire in return for an exchange of prisoners and an end to the Israeli military activity in the territories. Prime Minister Haniyeh even urged activists in the field to stop the rocket fire. However, Hamas’s political wing in Damascus and the

local leadership closely aligned with it adhered to the hard-line position.⁴ Moreover, it is doubtful whether the Hamas government, President Abbas, and the PA's security forces would have been able to enforce a policy of relaxation even if it were announced. Abbas's plan to deploy the PA's security forces in the Strip was withdrawn following opposition by Islamic Jihad activists, the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Popular Front, and explicit threats by them to attack the forces.

The number of dead rose as the violence, environmental destruction, boycott, and economic and humanitarian crisis continued in the territories and, in particular, the Gaza Strip. These in turn sparked volatile protests on the Palestinian street,⁵ and ultimately the familiar grievances against Israel joined the anger prompted by the IDF's actions in Lebanon. The Palestinian protesters highlighted the link between the Palestinian struggle and the Lebanese struggle; repeated calls to Nasrallah to keep up the rocket fire on towns and cities in the north of Israel and to attack Tel Aviv; and expressed support for Nasrallah's demand that he himself conduct negotiations for the release of the three kidnapped Israeli soldiers. Criticism on the street, nourished by events in both the Lebanese and the Palestinian arenas, reinforced the concern in Israel, as well as among Fatah ranks and the Palestinian public in general, over the strengthening of the Islamic camp and of the militant factions in the territories. This concern was based on calls in the Palestinian media to escalate the struggle, inspired by the resistance demonstrated by Hizbollah during the war in Lebanon and the organization's proven ability to attack Israel's home front over a period of several weeks even while its forces were subjected to a concentrated and powerful Israeli attack.⁶ The apprehension that the war in Lebanon might become a model for the Palestinians grew with reports of the ongoing acquisition of smuggled arms by militant groups in the territories. The reports underlined increased efforts to transfer to the Strip via Egypt funds, guns, and munitions, as well as anti-tank missiles and rockets with longer ranges than the improvised Qassam rockets.⁷

At the same time, concern also surfaced that Israeli frustration at its evident inability to crush Hizbollah would be channeled toward the territories.⁸ This concern exerted a restraining effect on the Palestinians, which explained, at least in part, the fact that anger against Israel, like support for parties that actively opposed the IDF presence in the Strip and

the conditions presented by the Hamas government for solving the crisis, did not translate into ongoing escalation of the struggle. The damage that would be caused by continued Israeli military pressure, on top of the destruction that had already been caused to operational and civilian infrastructures, limited the militant impetus to escalate the violent provocations. Thus, in the middle of August, along with approval of UN Security Council resolution 1701, there was a sharp decline in rocket fire from the Strip.⁹ As the rocket fire lessened, the intensity of the IDF's counter operations subsided as well.

Back to the Future

The escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation fueled a renewal of Palestinian national dialogue, spurred new international efforts to bring Israel and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table, and removed the idea of a unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank from the Israeli agenda. The latter two developments were reinforced by the war between Israel and Hizbollah.

The confrontation in the Gaza Strip, which in part resulted from the loss of central rule in the territories, accelerated the process of disintegration in the Palestinian Authority. Prime Minister Haniyeh called for public deliberation of official dismantlement of the PA. Motivated primarily by Israel's mass arrest of Hamas leaders, the call was a de facto admission of the Hamas government's failure to establish law and order, the PA's helplessness in dealing with its internal and external challenges, and recognition of the fact that Hamas was about to lose its electoral achievements. At the height of the confrontation, efforts to save the PA by creating a national unity government ebbed. However, in view of the destruction of the institutional and civilian infrastructures in the territories, there were calls for stocktaking from Hamas as well.¹⁰ Even Khaled Masha'al moderated his position on the immediate crisis with Israel and expressed his willingness for a prisoner exchange and a mutual ceasefire.¹¹ In addition, the criticism towards the government by sectors of the public and organizations identified with Fatah, which subsided during the escalation between Israel and the Palestinians, reemerged with greater force once the confrontation had peaked. Widening cracks in the economic boycott against the PA allowed sporadic and partial

payment of salaries to civil servants, but the amounts transferred were not nearly enough to compensate the public at large for the damage of late, ensure regular payment of salaries, and thus help reduce the humanitarian crisis in the territories.¹² At the beginning of September, a general strike was organized in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by the unions affiliated with Fatah to protest the delay in salary payments. The strike, which was supported by the Fatah-controlled security apparatus of the PA, became something of a protest against Hamas and overshadowed the appeal to the international community to cancel the boycott of the Hamas government. Public opinion polls reinforced the impression that public support for Hamas was eroding.¹³

In view of the public protest and in the wake of threats by Abbas that he would dismantle the Hamas government and call for general elections in the territories, the national dialogue garnered new momentum. On September 11, Haniyeh and Abbas yet once more announced agreement on basic principles of a unity government, based on the prisoners' document, the Arab peace initiative from March 2002, and the UN resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Abbas for his part agreed that Haniyeh would continue to serve as prime minister. Representatives of the two movements embarked on ongoing discussions over the allocation of portfolios and the wording of the joint government manifesto. This progressed intermittently against a backdrop of fierce clashes between members of Fatah and Hamas, and attacks of government ministries and government institutions by Fatah members. By early October 2006 there was an atmosphere of impending civil war in the territories.

The weakness of the Palestinian Authority played a major role in reducing the prospects of regional and international efforts to renew the Israeli-Palestinian political process. Measures in this regard emerged in the wake of the war in Lebanon and the escalation on the Israeli-Palestinian front that, together and independently, demonstrated the unsettling potential of the direct confrontation between Israel and Islamic movements supported by the Iranian-Syrian axis. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice initiated a series of talks ahead of the regional summit meeting of the moderate states – led by Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia – where the revival of the Israeli-Palestinian political process would be discussed, along with examining ways of dealing with the Iranian nuclear program. British prime minister

Tony Blair declared at his farewell address to the British Labor Party conference on September 26 that he intended to devote the time he had left in office “to furthering peace between Israel and Palestine.”¹⁴

Meanwhile the diplomatic coordination between Israel and the United States continued in the background. This was designed to prevent dissolution of the international front against Hamas and in particular to offset the possibility that the European Union might see the manifesto of the planned unity government as a basis for establishing a channel of dialogue with the Hamas government. UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, in a joint statement with the Quartet foreign ministers, expressed hope that a Palestinian unity government would reflect the principles of the Quartet. This statement did not reiterate the accepted refrain, namely, that recognition of the Hamas government was contingent on its acceptance of the Quartet’s three demands: recognition of Israel, rejection of terror, and recognition of previous agreements.¹⁵ To avoid all doubt over possible loosening of the United States’ position towards Hamas, as one might have understood from the Quartet statement, President Bush emphasized in talks with Abbas at the White House in late September that the unity government would be recognized only if it accepted the three conditions. The American stance was bolstered by Prime Minister Haniyeh himself when he said that the decision by the Quartet constituted “a positive step.” However, he added that Hamas would not be part of a government that would recognize Israel.

In such circumstances, all that was left was to maintain and strengthen the position of President Abbas as a possible partner in future negotiations. Israel and the United States limited their ties to the PA to contact with President Abbas, though in actuality, these relations were more symbolic than practical. Abbas also won the backing of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which at the outbreak of the war in Lebanon fiercely criticized Hizbollah for inciting the arena and bringing disaster on Lebanon. Egypt continued its ongoing efforts to stabilize the Palestinian arena and even criticized the political wing of Hamas, particularly the obstacles placed by Khaled Masha’al on talks over the release of Gilad Shalit. By the end of September relations between Cairo and Masha’al’s office reached an open crisis.

Notably, the most significant development in the Israeli-Palestinian arena in context of the Second Lebanon War was the removal of the idea of

unilateral withdrawal ("convergence") from parts of the West Bank from the Israeli government's agenda. The rocket batteries deployed by Hizbollah following the IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon demonstrated the threat that was liable to form on the other side of any unilaterally-declared border with the Palestinians. The convergence plan would be a complex challenge in any case due to the difficulty in controlling the border, proven by the withdrawal from Gaza.¹⁶ The Second Lebanon War, along with the concurrent rocket campaign from the Gaza Strip, accentuated existing security concerns. During the war Prime Minister Olmert said that the IDF's achievements in Lebanon would help advance the convergence plan.¹⁷ In fact, the combination of Hizbollah achievements and inadequate IDF achievements in Lebanon, together with the increased security threat from the Gaza Strip, accelerated erosion of support for this idea.

Yet suspending the unilateral convergence plan did not enhance the chances of any bilateral alternative. A major obstacle to advancing an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, let alone securing its implementation, remained the absence of central authority in the Palestinian arena. However, the Fatah-Hamas power struggle was far from exhausted. In addition, even if a unity government were established, it would have to endorse a conciliatory approach to Israel so as to become a partner in the political process. In other words, Hamas would have to accept the terms set by Israel and the Quartet: recognition of Israel and of the agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians to date, and a commitment to reject terrorism. For its part, Israel insisted it would not recognize a government that included Hamas members as long as the movement did not recognize Israel's right to exist.

Non-recognition, however, proved to be a double-edged sword. The political stagnation along with the economic boycott accelerated the loss of support of whatever political legitimacy the Palestinian Authority had enjoyed prior to the PLC elections in January 2006. On the other hand, preventing Hamas from consolidating its government and gaining a positive governmental experience robbed Israel of a potential address on the Palestinian side for security coordination and possibly also political understandings. At the same time, the political divide relieved the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships alike from an immediate confrontation with weighty security, ideological, and domestic political issues. The escalation in the confrontation in the summer of 2006 conveyed the urgency of the need to

find an exit from the morass. Yet given the internal politics on both sides, along with the increased security threat to Israel due to collapse of the PA, few if any terms remained that would facilitate a compromise. As such, notwithstanding suspension of the Israeli idea of convergence, and the increased international encouragement to renew dialogue, once the storm abated Israel and the Palestinian Authority were left in the same sort of political dead end and on the same violent collision course that confronted them on the eve of the war.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Arab conflict has its own dynamic. Its expressions and patterns are not derived directly or necessarily from surrounding events. This feature was underscored in the summer of 2006 in light of the war between Israel and Hizbollah. The confrontation would have escalated as per the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian arena that preceded the fighting between Israel and Hizbollah, particularly, the kidnapping of a soldier on the Gaza Strip border. Regardless of the Lebanese arena, Israel's efforts to weaken the Hamas government would have continued, the economic and humanitarian crisis in the territories would have deepened, the Palestinian Authority would have continued losing its status and domestic authority, the inter-organizational power struggles would have continued; and ongoing efforts by militant elements to incite the confrontation would have been sustained.

One main effect of the war in Lebanon was the temporary lack of attention in Israel and the world at large to the Palestinian arena. For a while, this allowed Israel more freedom in its fight against the armed infrastructures, the Hamas movement, and the Hamas government. A clearer impact of the war in Lebanon on the Israeli-Palestinian arena was the slashed support in Israel for the idea of unilateral convergence in the West Bank, in view of the military arrays deployed by Hizbollah since the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon. In addition, after the end of the war, international efforts to stabilize the regional arena through returning Israel and the Palestinians to the negotiating table were renewed. Still, the Second Lebanon War only served to accelerate these developments. Their direct catalysts were

spawned both prior to and during the war in Lebanon in the immediate Israeli-Palestinian sphere.

Notes

1. The short lapse between the outbreak of the intifada in September 2000 and the IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon the previous May was widely interpreted as evidence of the connection between the Palestinian and Lebanese arenas, though relating mainly to the methods of struggle. The idea that the withdrawal from Lebanon was seen in the territories as an achievement to be duplicated through a direct struggle against Israel has both Israeli and Palestinian proponents. Hassan Nasrallah himself referred frequently to the link between the arenas, which was actualized in part by the substantial aid given by Hizbollah to Palestinian militant groups. How much the Palestinians lacked for inspiration to launch a new armed campaign – following the failed 2000 Camp David summit, years of a stagnant diplomatic process, the ongoing dysfunction of the Palestinian Authority, and years of struggle against Israel – is beyond precise measurement, and so the question of Lebanon-inspired motivation remains open.
2. The document called for the establishment of a national unity government based on implementation of decisions by the Arab summit that support “the Palestinian issue,” recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the inclusion of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the organization. It cites the right of the Palestinian people to focus on the struggle against Israel in the territories beyond the Green Line, alongside continuing political negotiations, and the realization of the right of return of Palestinian refugees. The document, which has no mention of Israel, underlines the call for the creation of a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, on land occupied since 1967. According to a public opinion survey published on June 19, 2006, 74 percent expressed support for the principles of the document, although only 47 percent said they would vote for the document if it were presented in a referendum. See *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Survey Research Unit*, Poll no. 20, June 15-18, 2006.
3. Times Online, July 13, 2006.
4. Rejecting the position of the Hamas leadership in the territories, which was willing to reach a separate agreement with Israel, Muhammad Nazal, Khaled Masha’al’s deputy, echoed Nasrallah’s line and demanded that the issue of the kidnapped soldiers in Lebanon be linked with the soldier kidnapped on the Gaza Strip border. See Avi Issacharoff and Michal Greenberg, “Hamas Senior Official Abroad: Hezbollah and Hamas to Cooperate on the Hostages,” July 26, 2006, Haaretz.co.il.
5. Between June 25, 2006 and the middle of September 2006, 227 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip (*Haaretz*, September 13, 2006).
6. Avi Issacharoff, “The Lesson of the Palestinians – More Missiles,” August 7, 2006, Haaretz.co.il; Ibrahim al-Hijaa, “The Victory in Lebanon Opens the Door for a Third Intifada,” *al-Rassalah*, August 4, 2006, translated from MEMRI: Middle East Media

- Research Institute, August 7, 2006; see also *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, August 12, 2006, August 31, 2006.
7. Figures of arms smuggling from GSS head Yuval Diskin, as reported in *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict News*, August 15-31, 2006, *Intelligence Heritage Center, Center for Data on Intelligence and Terror*.
 8. "Palestinian Officials Fear Israel to Shift 'Aggression' From Lebanon to PA Areas" in: *Dialogue: West Bank & Gaza Strip – OSC Report*, August 15, 2006.
 9. In June, 140 Qassam rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip, 191 in July, and 41 in August. That was the lowest number of rockets fired in any single month since October 2005. During September 45 rockets were fired from Gaza (*The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict News*, August 15-31, 2006, September 1-14, 2006), September 15-30, The Intelligence Heritage Center, Center for Data on Intelligence and Terror).
 10. "I want us to take a good look at ourselves in view of our mistakes... we have become accustomed to placing responsibility on others. The chaos...the pointless killings, land theft, family conflicts, what have all these to do with the occupation? ...We have worn ourselves down, time after time, with mistakes for which everyone is responsible...The question is, why did we not maintain Gaza's freedom? In the past we have repeatedly said that we support the liberation of every inch of land. Now we have thousands of inches of land...and, despite this, we have not managed to safeguard this valuable asset and we have begun to lose it...Since the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza 500 Palestinians have been killed and over 3,000 wounded...This is in addition to the destruction of infrastructures, bridges and electricity stations...Couldn't our losses have been limited if we had used our brains." From an article published by the Hamas government spokesperson, Dr. Jazi Hamad in the PA's bulletin *al-Ayam*, August 27, 2006, translated from MEMRI: Middle East Media Research Institute.
 11. Haaretz.co.il, July 3, 2006.
 12. The Stockholm Committee of the donor countries undertook to transfer \$500 million for investment in humanitarian projects. Saudi Arabia promised to provide \$250 million, and the European Union offered \$135 million to the PA over three years (Haaretz.co.il, September 3, 2006).
 13. In addition, according to a public opinion poll conducted by the Near East Consulting Research Institute (Ramallah, August 9, 2006), during the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation and the war in Lebanon, support for a peace treaty with Israel fell among the Palestinian public from 76 percent in June to 51 percent in August. Support recovered in September to 64 percent. The level of support, as measured in September, reached 77 percent among those who identified with Fatah, and 48 percent among supporters of Hamas "A poll conducted by a-Najahk University in Nablus indicates a change in Palestinian political stances...if elections were held today Fatah would receive 35 percent of the votes compared with 20 percent to Hamas," Ynet, September 10, 2006.
 14. Times Online, September 26, 2006.
 15. "The Quartet welcomes the efforts of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to form a government of national unity, in the hope that the platform of such a government

would reflect Quartet principles and allow for early engagement.” *The New York Times*, September 21, 2006.

16. “The Convergence is Disappearing,” by Aluf Benn, *Haaretz.co.il*, June 26, 2006; according to the peace index of July 3-4, 2006, only 46 percent said that disengagement from the Gaza Strip was a positive measure.
17. *Haaretz*, August 18, 2006.

Chapter 13

The Second Lebanon War: The Regional Setting

Asher Susser

The 2006 Lebanon War was not just another round of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Departing from the familiar pattern of classic warfare, this was a subconventional, asymmetric war between Israel and Hizbollah, a non-state, irregular force waging a guerilla war. However, and more importantly, this was not essentially an Arab-Israeli war in the traditional sense, rather an indirect confrontation between Israel and Iran through the latter's Shiite proxy in Lebanon – Hizbollah. For the most part, with the exception of Syria, the Arab Sunni Muslim countries played the part of passive bystanders. Some who had fought against Israel in the past even hoped that the war would lead to an Israeli victory over the Iran-Hizbollah alliance, which has also supported the Islamic revolutionary forces in the arena that threaten numerous Arab regimes.

The “new Middle East” of the last generation has experienced profound historical changes, and the Second Lebanon War was largely an expression of them. These include a relative weakening of the Arab states and the pan-Arab system; the relative empowerment of non-Arab Middle Eastern states; the bolstering of sub-state players in the arena; changes in the historic balance of power between the Sunnis and Shiites; and a change in the regional perception of the center and periphery.

The Weakening of the Arab States

For many years the terms “Arab world” and “Middle East” were considered to be interchangeable, based on the view that the Arabs were the main force setting the regional agenda. This is no longer true. When in April 2003 American forces took Baghdad, the glorious capital of the Abbasid Caliphate and one of the historic centers of Islamic and Arab culture, Arab states stood by and did nothing. When Israel fought Hizbollah for a month in the summer of 2006, the Arab states – with the exception of Syria, which helped Hizbollah – looked on passively. The Arab League has been impotent for some time and has been the butt of derision in Arab public opinion.

At the height of Egyptian president Abdel Nasser’s power, around half a century ago, the reality was different. Nasser was the unrivaled leader of all Arabs when he blocked attempts by the Western powers to establish an anti-Soviet defense pact; when he defiantly stood up to the West and nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956; and when he stayed in power following “the tripartite aggression” of France, Britain, and Israel. Nasser stood for Arab unity, Arab socialism, and an alliance with the Soviet Union in the Cold War as the assured path to modernity and renewed Arab power. However, Nasser was a false messiah and all collapsed in the Six Day War of June 1967. Today, there are those who compare Hassan Nasrallah with Abdel Nasser at his peak, yet the comparison is unfounded. Nasrallah indeed enjoys extensive public support in the Arab world, as someone who stood up to Israel in a war and even inflicted substantial damage on the country and its population. Yet Nasrallah is not president of the largest and most powerful Arab country, but leader of one ethnic community in a small and weak Arab state that is supported by Shiite Iran, with which many in the largely Sunni Arab world do not identify at all.

The collapse of the pan-Arab unity of Abdel Nasser left an ideological vacuum that was simultaneously filled by two contradictory processes: consolidation of the territorial state and Arab acceptance of the existing state order versus a radical Islamic revival that is challenging the Arab regimes and the state order. In the confrontations between the regimes and the Islamic movements, the Arab regimes have generally gained the upper hand. Yet even if the regimes have survived this challenge, they have had

less success with the challenges of modernity and globalization. The gaps between their countries and the countries of the Western world continued to grow. UN reports on the socioeconomic state of Arab countries in recent years depicted a pessimistic picture of countries with a high population growth rate compared with their rate of economic growth, and of countries submerged in an ongoing crisis. Even the sharp rise in oil prices did not help, and certainly not for the Arab countries that are not blessed with this natural resource. In general, in recent decades, the Arab countries have weakened, and each has lost whatever hegemony or leadership it once enjoyed.

Egypt of the post-Nasser period has become increasingly insular. This is reflected in the stable peace agreement with Israel and was highlighted afresh during the 2006 war in Lebanon, when President Mubarak explicitly stated that Egypt did not intend to become involved in outside conflicts. Despite Egypt's image as a leader in the Middle East, it is struggling increasingly to bridge the gap that exists between image and reality, and its ambition of yesteryear has faded significantly. Egypt is a relatively poor Third World country that is hard pressed to exert any influence on its neighbors. The Palestinians do not generally heed it, and Fatah and Hamas allow themselves to ignore Cairo. For some years genocide has been taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan. Egypt has no part in it, and it does not have any responsibility for events taking place there. But this also clearly reflects Egypt's new standing. Half a century ago, in the name of unity of the Nile Valley, Egypt claimed Sudan as part of its own sovereign territory. Today, it does not have the ability, or interest, to exert influence in Sudan to put an end to the horrors underway there.

Syria under Bashar al-Asad is but a shadow of the regional power it once was during the height of the reign of his father, Hafez al-Asad, when the Soviet Union provided it with superpower strategic backing. Syria is isolated and surrounded by forces of the United States and its regional allies, and was also recently ousted from Lebanon. It is supported by Iran and enjoys significant military strength, but its army has to contend with problems of modernization at a time that the national economy is in tatters. While in the past there was frequent discussion of rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi Baath regimes for hegemony in the Arab east, today that

is completely irrelevant. The Syrian Baath is no longer so important, even within Syria, and the Iraqi Baath party no longer exists at all.

Iraq is under American occupation and is in a state of chaos, possibly on the brink of total disintegration. In the absence of figures like Saddam Hussein or Hafez al-Asad, there is a distinct leadership void in the Fertile Crescent.

Saudi Arabia is not as rich as it once was, even though oil prices are soaring, and this is due to a particularly high population growth rate. The GNP in Israel is far higher than in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the Saudis have recently suffered from insecurity, due to internal terror and a less intimate relationship with the United States since the attack on the World Trade Center in September 2001, in which most of the terrorists were of Saudi nationality.

The Kingdom of Jordan, which was never a regional power, is in dire straits. It is under pressure from its western flank, due to the internal disorder in the Palestinian Authority and the elections there that brought Hamas to power in January 2006, while on the east there is the chaos in Iraq. These factors combine to imbue Jordan with a deep sense of concern and helplessness in view of these neighboring centers of instability, and without having the ability to influence either.

The Relative Strengthening of the Non-Arab States

The weakening of the Arab state system has led to a relative increase in influence on the regional agenda by the non-Arab countries, including outside players such as the United States and to a lesser degree the European Union. The United States' standing, diminished as long as it remains entrenched in the Iraqi morass, clearly still projects the image and exerts the influence of a superpower.

For the purposes of this analysis, the particularly important non-Arab countries are Iran, Turkey, and Israel. These three countries shape the regional agenda more than all the Arab states together. Iran's increased regional influence is evident and pervasive. The collapse of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which was the main obstacle to the increasing influence of Iran, and its evolution into a Shiite-dominated country, have afforded Iran the greatest level of influence in the Arab world it has ever had in the

modern era. The more the United States becomes enmeshed in Iraq and the higher the oil prices climb, the more Iran allows itself to confront the West and Israel with increased confidence. This pattern is not significantly affected by Israel's limited achievements in the war in Lebanon. It seems that Iran's determination to continue working towards achieving nuclear weapons and advancing its hegemonic aspirations has only grown.

Another non-Arab power that has achieved greater influence following the weakening of the Arab countries is Turkey. Turkey borders the Arab world in the Fertile Crescent as a giant country stretching from Greece in the west as far as Iran in the east. It controls the water sources of Syria and Iraq and has the largest and strongest army in the Middle East. Since November 2002 Turkey has been controlled by AKP (the Justice and Development Party), a conservative Islamic party that is increasingly interested in its Muslim hinterland in the Middle East. In recent generations Turkey turned its back on the Middle East as it strove to take its place in Europe. Now it is rediscovering the Middle East, in part due to domestic public opinion, particularly the public that brought the ruling party to power. This trend is also reinforced by the growing disappointment with Europe, which has stymied Turkey's attempts to join the European Union with endless delay tactics, and due to tension with the United States over the future of Iraq, where the continued development of the independence of the Kurdish region in northern Iraq is not at all to Turkey's liking. It is no exaggeration to say that Iran and Turkey have more influence over Syria and the future of Iraq than all the Arab states and possibly even the United States.

Third on this list of non-Arab regional powers is Israel. In military, technological, and economic terms, Israel is still superior to its neighbors. It is thought to have a nuclear capability, and while it has a population little more than 7 million, Israel's per capita GNP is higher than the per capita GNP of all its neighbors combined (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority), even though the neighboring countries have a total population of some 110 million people. Israel's per capita GNP is far higher than that of Saudi Arabia, despite the latter's oil reserves and the recent unprecedented high prices of oil.

The Rise of the Non-State Actors

Another side effect of the decline in the Arab states' power, besides the relative strengthening of the non-Arab countries, is the ascendance of the non-state players. While Arab countries have deteriorated into failed states, organizations such as al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hizbollah, and the groups represented by Zarkawi and his heirs in Iraq have gained in strength. Chaos in Iraq has reached such proportions that the country may be on the brink of disintegration into a Kurdish state in the north, a Shiite state in the south, and a Sunni state between them in the center. The disintegration of Iraq may have destructive implications for the entire region. Jordan is concerned about a flood of refugees from the poverty-stricken Sunni region (Iraqi oil reserves are located in the Kurdish north and Shiite south); Turkey fears subversive operations by a Kurdish state within the Kurdish community in eastern Turkey; and Iran may gain from having a small Shiite state that will be more dependent on it than a federative Arab-Kurdish Iraqi state. Hizbollah has established a pseudo state within a state in Lebanon that was already used to exert Iranian influence on the region, and the incipient Palestinian state led by the failing and corrupt PLO leadership has fallen into the hands of Hamas, only to sink deeper into the chaos of almost total disintegration.

Changes in the Historic Balance of Power between Sunna and Shia

In the eastern part of the Arab world, where the Baath regimes of Iraq and Syria once competed for control over most matters, there is now a leadership void that is gradually being filled by Iranian influence to a degree that is unprecedented in the modern era; it is backed by a sense of elevation and empowerment of all Shiites. The sense of self-confidence was evident in the arrogant deportment and speech of Iranian president Ahmadinejad as well as Hassan Nasrallah, at least until the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War, whose intensity, scale, and degree of destruction took Nasrallah by surprise. After hundreds of years since the beginning of Islam, in which the Shiites were "the downtrodden of the world" whose honor was trampled by the Sunnis, the Shiites became the controlling group in Iraq, the first Arab country under Shiite control. Over the past decades

they have become the largest group in Lebanon, accounting for around 40 percent of the population, long outstripping the Maronite and Sunni communities that were the largest groups when the Lebanese republic was established in 1920. The Shiite majority in Bahrain is also encouraged by developments in Iraq, as are the Shiite minorities in the eastern regions of Saudi Arabia, where the kingdom's major oil reserves are located. The concerns of the Sunni Arabs over this change are clear to all.

King Abdullah of Jordan defined the situation correctly back in late 2004 when he expressed his anxiety over the influence of "the Shiite crescent." This was followed in April 2006 when Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak suggested that most Shiite Arabs are more loyal to Iran than the countries in which they live (and, in so doing, unwittingly cast doubt on the cohesiveness of the heterogeneous Arab countries). This Shiite crescent stretches from Tehran through Iraq as far as Lebanon and beyond to the Palestinian Authority. Iran's influence extends as far as the West Bank and Gaza where Iran and Hizbollah have operational and financial links with various Palestinian organizations, including Fatah, Hamas, and of course, Islamic Jihad.

Irrespective of Iraq and rather as a result of the demographic and political changes in Lebanon in the last two generations, the position of the Lebanese Shiite community has strengthened significantly. The largest sector in Lebanon, the Shiites will undoubtedly become a majority in the not too distant future. They were supported by the militant Hizbollah organization, which gave them a distinct advantage over all the other communities that disarmed in accordance with the Ta'if agreement in 1989. Iran, with Syria's backing, helped the organization build a sort of Iranian "external outpost" to pose a threat to Israel and deter it with thousands of rockets aimed at Israel, from the north to as far as Tel Aviv and even further south. Iranian patronage, demonstrated over the years by political, military, and financial aid channeled through Syria, made Hizbollah a virtual state within a state. This "state" not only sported impressive military might but also boasted a no less impressive social welfare system for the Shiites in Lebanon, whose adulation provided Hizbollah with a strong base of public support. This was of crucial importance to enable it to continue fortifying its powerbase in the Lebanese arena.

For Iran and Syria, the arming of Hizbollah and its increase in power bolstered their line of defense (or offense) against Israel. A senior Iranian official said that Hizbollah was one of Iran's "strategic security pillars." The Shiite crescent thus became a clear indication of the error made by those who claimed that Israel had only what to gain from America's war in Iraq. Major Sunni Muslim Arab countries, like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, which are also concerned by the strengthening of Iran and the non-state players, have a common interest with Israel to block the progress of the Shiite crescent and even set it back. Israel certainly expects these Arab countries to display determination in their backing for Lebanese political forces represented by Siniora's government and the non-Shiite communities to contain and restrict the power of Hizbollah and its supporters in Iran and Syria.

The relative weakness of the Arab state system, the spreading of radical Islam, and the strengthening of primordial sub-state groups not only undermine the cohesiveness of some Arab countries; they also impact on the nature of inter-Arab relations. If in the past relations between Arab states were determined by dynastic lines (during the era of monarchies), then "progressive" and pro-Soviet republican regimes that opposed pro-Western "reactionary" monarchies (during the period of the Free Officers Revolution and the Cold War), today inter-state relations have become more primordial and ethnic-based: Sunnis versus Shiites and Arabs versus non-Arabs.

A Change in Perception of Core and Periphery

Given these new parameters, the old division of center and periphery in the Middle East requires reexamination. The Arab Sunni core, of which Egypt served as the geopolitical epicenter, is increasingly becoming the periphery compared with the periphery of Iran and Turkey of the past, which are now turning into the geopolitical core of the Middle East. This is relevant particularly with regard to the shift of the core to the east to a non-Arab and/or non-Sunni epicenter in Iran and in the new Iraq that is subject increasingly to Iranian influence, like the entire Gulf region. The Gulf is, after all, the "Persian Gulf" and not the "Arab Gulf," as the Sunni Arabs would prefer to see it.

Challenges for Israel

In this new Middle East it is no longer the conventional ground forces of the regular Arab armies that pose the most immediate threat to Israel. The range of threats to Israel is dangerous and worrisome, but these are not the familiar threats that focused on the overall conventional Arab military force, which has weakened in recent years. Largely due to the weakness of the Arab system, the traditional threats have been replaced by extra-conventional threats: the sub-conventional warfare of the non-state players; the non-conventional arms race; and the ramifications of the unconventional problem of demographics.

- The sub-conventional warfare of terror, guerilla activities, and war based on rocket and missile fire from the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon, used by non-state players such as Hamas and Hizbollah, is difficult to overcome.
- The Iranian nuclear threat, together with its regional hegemonic design, poses an explicit threat to Israel.
- The undermining of the cohesion of some Arab states may lead to chaos in the Fertile Crescent, resulting from the erosion of the internal unity of heterogeneous societies in countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. In the case of Iraq this is no longer an assessment, but already a fact.
- Demographic concerns exist on two levels: the domestic level, an issue to which Israel must relate in order to maintain its identity as the state of the Jewish people; and the regional level, where it is clear that the Middle East cannot sustain all of its population over time and millions will continue to migrate to Europe and change its image, a process already underway.
- Israel's international legitimacy is being undermined. In today's reality, whether we like it or not, it is the countries of Western Europe that determine the contours of international legitimacy. As an occupier, Israel does not meet their political-moral criteria. Thus, the continuation of the status quo not only tips the demographic balance against Israel but also erodes its legitimacy as an acceptable member of the family of enlightened nations.

In Israel there is a propensity to focus on each issue separately, and governments tend to shift their attention according to the circumstances at any given time – it can be Syria, the Palestinians, Hizbollah, or Iran. One of the apparent lessons from the Second Lebanon War is that this approach does not meet the needs of the dynamic reality, and resources and consideration should be given simultaneously to all challenges, without ever ignoring any one of them.

Ramifications of the War: Interim Assessment

The war did not shape the general regional patterns described above or the challenges that face Israel. To a great extent the war reflected and heightened awareness of them, across the Middle East and beyond. There now seems to be greater internal Lebanese, Arab, and international determination to adopt policies designed to block Iranian influence in the Shiite crescent and to contain Hizbollah. The deployment of the Lebanese army in the south of the country with an international force as support is a good indication of this new phenomenon. This comes together with domestic Lebanese political trends whereby the non-Shiite forces are trying to prevent Hizbollah from restoring the previous situation, which readily sacrifices Lebanon on the altars of Iranian, Syrian, and Hizbollah interests. The question is whether this is a transient or sustainable phenomenon that can withstand the constant pressure applied by Iran, Syria, and Hizbollah. For now, at least, Hizbollah is being contained in military and political terms and Iran's "external outpost" has been eroded, after it was exposed prematurely and with limited efficiency. On the other hand, the position of the international community – with the possible exception of the United States – is still one of indecision with regard to Iran and its nuclear program, what was already apparent before the war. One may assume that the limited success of Israel's military operation will not suffice to bolster the determination of the international community to act directly against Iran, through sanctions or in any other way.

Lebanon has become a test case in the confrontation between the rival camps in the new Middle East, with the Sunni Arab countries – Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia – seeking to stabilize the state order and to block Iran, the Shiites, and the non-state players that are upsetting the balance

of power. In practice, Israel belongs to the former camp and so, for the first time, Israel has become a member of one of the rival camps in the region and is not excluded based solely on the old definition of Israel as an outsider, an alien force that does not belong to any of the rival blocs within the Arab Middle East.

Lebanon itself is at an historical crossroads. Since its creation Lebanon has struggled with its identity, between the Arab and Western worlds, in terms of Lebanon as a mostly Christian country with close ties to France, or a country in which the Maronites and Sunnis, as the leading communities shared, a common goal of national stability as a part of the Arab – not Western – world. This issue was settled long ago with the decline of France and the Maronites, and Lebanon became a founding member of the Arab League and an Arab country in every respect. Now the question is whether Lebanon will remain an integral part of the Arab world, as the non-Shiite communities in Lebanon (Sunnis, Maronites and other Christians, and the Druze) wish, or will the power of the Shiites, who are by far the largest community and will become the majority in the foreseeable future, drag the country towards Iran and into the Shiite crescent? Israel and the Sunni Arabs now have a common interest to maintain Arab Lebanese sovereignty and weaken the Hizbollah state-within-a-state in Lebanon, and to see a decline in Hizbollah's capacity to erode Lebanon's sovereignty in the service of the interests of Iran and Syria.

The lessons learned by Syria and the Palestinians from the war are not clear cut, and stem from the complex assessment of Israeli deterrence after the war. Both in Syria and among the Palestinians there are those who, following the war, speak highly of the merits of waging a non-conventional struggle, like the one carried out by Hizbollah. The advantage of using rockets and missiles is obvious and they must therefore be acquired at all cost, and the more the better, for effective war to be waged against Israel. However, throughout the Arab world there was a lively debate and multifaceted analysis of the war and its results. Alongside those who saw just the benefits of using missiles and rockets and consider them the wave of the future, others argued that Hizbollah was defeated in an irresponsible war. Now is the time to contain and constrain Hizbollah within the Lebanese political center to prevent the repeated destruction of Lebanon through another escapade on behalf of Iran and Syria at the expense of

Lebanon and the majority of the Arabs. The failures of the IDF's operation notwithstanding, the mass destruction that resulted from the effective use of Israeli airpower was evident to all, as was the fact that during the war, there were hostilities in Gaza that inflicted very heavy losses on the Palestinians at very little cost to the IDF.

All these influence Syria's continued restraint, at least thus far, despite aggressive statements made immediately after the war. The Palestinians are, on the one hand, encouraged by the fighting success of Hizbollah – which is why they are looking to change their own tactics accordingly (more rockets, anti-tank missiles, and subterranean fortifications) in order to continue their struggle against Israel. On the other hand, there is the price paid by Lebanon, evaluated not only in terms of the enormous destruction sustained by the civilian national infrastructure, unprecedented in any of Israel's wars, but also the very extensive problem of refugees, although temporary in Lebanon's case. It is hard to believe that the Palestinians have missed this point.

Thus, they can also draw the conclusion that restraint might be in order. The Palestinians noted Hizbollah's relative efficiency resulting from the disciplined and unified organization of the Shiites in Lebanon, which contrasts sharply with their own total chaos. This may encourage renewed efforts to establish a national unity government that will work to restore law and order and return to the ceasefire agreement (*tahdiya*), and possibly even to engage in dialogue with Israel, and not just on the issue of prisoner exchange.

Israel has a vested interest in the "stateness" of its neighbors, for the sake of stability, security, and the obstruction of the non-state actors, who seek to wreak havoc. This is as relevant to Lebanon as it is to the Palestinian Authority, both in the interests of a regional settlement and the preservation of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, in terms of security and demography. The state-like nature of the neighborhood, in Lebanon and in a Palestinian state, is the only alternative to anarchy, which is hardly in Israel's best interests.

Chapter 14

The Regional Implications of the War in Lebanon: From Radicalism to Reform

Yossi Kuperwasser

From a military standpoint, the Second Lebanon War focused on exchanges of fire between Hizbollah and Israel. The war's political, strategic, ideological, and philosophical dimensions, both in Lebanon and throughout the region, were naturally influenced by events on the battlefield, but went far beyond them. Those who initiated the war essentially hoped to impact on these dimensions through the military factor, which subsequently assumed greater importance in and of itself, particularly in the internal Israeli context.

For some years, Lebanon has served as a microcosm of sorts of the regional theater, in which the regional camps compete with each other via their proxies in the hope of gaining political strength and validating their respective ideological and philosophical approaches. This experimental ground generally favored the radical camp, which channeled all its resources directly into the arena and managed to turn Lebanon into a model for forcing “the Zionist enemy” and the West to withdraw. The radical camp's stubborn fighting cleverly exploited the absence of an authoritative central government and the decline in the West's willingness to tolerate casualties in war for the sake of its security and values. One of the regional implications of the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 was the Palestinian terror campaign against Israel, which erupted a few months later and flourished at the expense of the pragmatic sector of the Palestinian camp while marginalizing the reformist elements. It is unclear how much these developments also encouraged global jihad forces that planned to

carry out large scale and prominent terror attacks, and how much, together with the lessons learned from other wars, they impacted on the opponents of the American campaign in Iraq.

However, in something of a dialectic process, the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon also became a catalyst for an attempt by the reformist stream to turn Lebanon into a means of advancing its philosophies. The principal agent here was the reformists' political representative, Rafiq al-Hariri, who was encouraged to shape Lebanon into a state that has the sole authority for the use of force within its borders, and to focus on improving the welfare of Lebanon's citizens rather than on a violent struggle with the West to restore lost Islamic pride. This attempt, whose climax was Security Council resolution 1559, naturally led to heightened tension between the camps in Lebanon that peaked with the assassination of Hariri in February 2005. The assassination highlighted both the potential for change and the depth of commitment of both camps to fight for their philosophies, as reflected in the large demonstrations that followed. The attempt by Hariri's successors in Lebanon, with aid from the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, and other parties, to further the work of the slain prime minister was partially successful, evidenced mainly by the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon and the increased pressure on Hizbollah to disarm.

This pressure was the factor that impelled Hizbollah to decide to kidnap Israeli soldiers, regardless of the consequences. Nasrallah assumed that this would enable him to demonstrate the importance of his organization in advancing Lebanon's national aims, as he defined them, and to prove once again the validity of his security ethos, whereby Israel could not respond forcefully against Lebanon to a serious provocation carried out against it, both because Lebanon is not responsible for the use of force from its territory and because Israel would not dare exercise its power in response and endanger its soldiers and citizens. Some time earlier, Nasrallah had abandoned the spider web image he had once attributed to Israeli society, but he seemed to prefer to ignore this revisionism when issuing an order to carry out the kidnapping.

The kidnapping, which took place shortly after the soldier Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by Hamas from inside Israel near the Gaza Strip border, and Israel's strong response and pronouncements about its intention to defeat Hizbollah led to a situation in which the war in Lebanon aroused

expectations on both sides of “a big bang,” in other words, of a formative event that would change the essence of the complex and undecided reality. In the United States, in the reformist camp in Lebanon, and even among reformist elements in other Arab countries, a long-held hope reemerged that Israel would do the work for them and would strike Hizbollah and those behind it. There was a sense of disappointment when Israel decided not to broaden the campaign to include Syria.

In practice, the war’s regional impact is still largely unclear because each side magnifies different aspects of the events and interprets them in its own way in order to advance its objectives. The reformists, with the support of the US administration and Israel, correctly note the international community’s efforts to use the war to generate a greater possibility of turning Lebanon into a responsible country, as indicated by Security Council resolution 1701. They also point to the enormous damage inflicted on Lebanon following the kidnapping as evidence of and leverage for the need for reform. The radicals, led by Iran, Syria, and Hizbollah, flaunt their success in thwarting the intention to destroy Hizbollah and in upsetting Israel’s confidence in its military strength as another achievement in their list of victories over the West. The pragmatic elements, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, with the support of heads of European states, including the prime minister of Britain at the time, fear actual reforms. At the same time, they are concerned over the threat of the radical elements and find proof in the war of their belief that neither side is able to defeat the other. Continuation of the struggle between the sides endangers the stability of the region, which in the view of the pragmatists is essential to their survival. The conclusion they draw is that in order to minimize the damage of the war and reap benefit from its results, such as the erosion of Israel’s image of strength, the illusion of stability should be enhanced through familiar means, in other words, by renewing the political process between Israel and Palestinians regardless of the actual status of this confrontation arena.

Thus, analysis of the regional significances of the war requires the distinction used by Ahad Ha’am in his essay on Moses on the difference between history and archeology, in other words, what actually took place in the war is less important than how it will be recorded in the regional historical memory. An analysis of the events of July-August 2006 reveals contrasting components that together, albeit with much disarray, comprise

the whole of what until now has emerged as the regional historic memory of the war. Despite Nasrallah's repeated attempts to claim that the US president and the British prime minister – and not he, Nasrallah – were responsible, and that Israel in any case planned to declare war in October 2006, the international historical memory has accepted the belief that the initiative for the war came from Nasrallah. This component of the memory is not only important in terms of apportioning blame, but it also has a far wider significance as it makes it hard for the radicals to resort to the mantra that lies at the core of their philosophy, according to which the dire straits of Middle East residents are the result of a dastardly plot devised by the West, led by the US and Israel.

It is not just blame that has been assigned to Nasrallah; it is also hard for him to shake off another important factor of the historical memory of the war, namely, that his initiative was designed to serve foreign interests, specifically of Syria and Iran. In this context, the regional historical memory has also recorded the massive Iranian and Syrian military aid to Hizbollah and the ease and consistency with which Hizbollah fighters, under Iran's guidance, used military force to strike systematically at civilians. The regional significance of this memory may accentuate the Iranian threat in the eyes of the reformist and pragmatic elements, and may position it as the principal regional threat. Indeed, it is possible that their perception of the threat will prompt greater willingness to help restrain the Iranian regime's aspirations of hegemony and power, although it does not appear that these elements will extend themselves sufficiently to achieve significant results.

With regard to the regional balance of deterrence, the war eroded the deterrence image of all those that participated, directly and indirectly, although it appears that in the wider sense Israel's deterrence image suffered the most. Several axioms have been etched in the regional historical memory regarding the image of Israeli power, first and foremost that Israel's ability to employ its military strength has lessened, particularly in the context of its war with an organization operating at a low signature level (a guerilla force fighting from subterranean fortifications and using rocket fire). On the other hand, the IDF's airpower and intelligence abilities were demonstrated clearly, as was Israel's willingness to use its force, and Israel's image as a state that exercises its military strength in disproportionately large measures was enhanced. Nasrallah's statement

that he would not have carried out the kidnapping had he known that Israel would respond in the way it did shows that even an organization such as Hizbollah can be deterred. The war also clearly demonstrated the level of American administration support for Israel.

The deterrence level of the radical elements was likewise tested, and was damaged by Israel's willingness to absorb the rocket barrages launched by Hizbollah and also by the fact that the extent of damage caused by the thousands of rockets fired (around 4,000 according to Israel, 8,000 according to Nasrallah) was far smaller than one might have expected. Moreover, the damage to Lebanon resulting from the Nasrallah-led "escapade" etched in the Lebanese and regional memory the understanding that using force against Israel can incur a high price and thus Hizbollah should not resort to weapons lightly. In this way, the ability of the radical camp to muster the Lebanese arena in future contexts, such as an escalation on the Iranian nuclear issue, has weakened.

On the other hand, Hizbollah emerged as an organization that did not shrink from fighting a superior military force and even to a degree successfully resisted it. Overall, this component appears to be the dominant among the balance of deterrence factors. It clearly reflects the basic asymmetry between the elements in the West that are required to defeat the enemy in order to achieve victory, and the radical parties – particularly the non-state entities – that only have to survive to claim victory. This factor is exploited by the radicals in order to impact on the political mood across the region and to gain credence for their philosophy, which contends that only through sacrifice and willingness to suffer can the inhabitants of the Middle East both quash their enemies that are trying to perpetuate their distress and regain their respect. On this basis, Syria even toyed with the idea of heating up the border on the Golan Heights through low signature warfare, although this does not appear to reflect any real intention in view of its awareness of Israel's strength, which is more relevant in the context of an organized state with a regular army.

The ceasefire and the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon did not end the struggle between the region's camps regarding the war. Instead, the focus shifted from the battlefield to the implementation of resolution 1701 and the internal developments in Lebanon. The strict realization of the resolution would indicate a considerable achievement for the reformist camp. It

would wrest the control of Lebanon from the radicals that they hitherto enjoyed due to the absence of state responsibility; through their power, Lebanon became a base for terror and training personnel as part of the struggle against the West and its regional proxies. Resolution 1701 would enable the reformists to demonstrate an alternative model to the suffering and ongoing struggle in the pursuit of honor proffered by the radicals. This model focuses on enabling inhabitants of the region to seek fulfillment by developing their abilities and taking responsibility for their fate.

To the radical elements, the risk inherent in the Security Council resolution is substantial, and possibly a matter of survival. As such, they are determined to prevent the resolution's implementation at almost all costs. On the other hand, the forces that support the reformists exhausted themselves trying to achieve the Security Council resolution, and though interested in its effective implementation, they did not attach to its implementation the same level of importance that the radicals have attached to its obstruction. Thus the manner in which the war will ultimately impact on the regional balance of power is yet emerging, and the supporters of reform in Lebanon and the region – including Israel and the US – can still influence the end result.

The war accentuated the crucial role of weak and weakened states in the formation of the regional system. Lebanon, and particularly the areas controlled by Hizbollah, is just one example of this reality. Even if each case has its particular attributes, the Palestinian Authority, the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, large parts of Iraq, parts of Yemen, and in a wider sense, certain parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan are similar. The common denominator of all these areas, the lack of control of the central government, is not only a result of the weakness of the government. It is also to a great extent an expression of the radicals' interest to promote the lack of central responsibility as a political alternative to the Western approach. This is an additional component of the effort to turn the Western concept of accountability – which was designed, according to the radical view, to perpetuate Western control of the Muslims' deprivation – into a tool that specifically serves the radicals as a means of advancing their ultimate goal, a change in world order.

The existing world order rests on the logic that every place is subject to the full and sovereign control of some national entity, which, based on its

sovereignty, is exclusively responsible for the events that take place within its territory and in particular for the use of force within its borders – and in a state context, outside as well. When radical elements upset this logic, they are able on the one hand to exploit the lack of state control in order to build up a force that acts against the Western rules of warfare – in other words, employ terror against citizens – and on the other hand, to benefit from the West's commitment to state logic to prevent massive forceful intervention against them by Western forces, as long as they (the radicals) do not go too far. Thus, the United States did not employ massive force against al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan between 1998 and 2001, despite the fact that it was clear that the organization used the area to prepare terror attacks against American targets. Israel too did not carry out an extensive campaign in Gaza and did not act in the areas that were under the full control of the Palestinian Authority (Area A) from the start of the confrontation with the Palestinians in September 2000 until early 2002.

The radical camp, headed by Syria and Iran, is determined to maintain and develop this reality, and has succeeded in doing so even in places where the government is already in the hands of radicals. This was the situation in Lebanon when it was fully controlled by Syria, and this was the situation in the Gaza Strip when Hamas was in government but presented itself as not fully responsible for the acts of terror, even when such acts were performed by its own terror branch, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Battalions. This achievement was largely possible due to the impressive success of the radical parties in inculcating the terminology that they imprinted on the regional political culture. The recognition of terror as national or Islamic resistance, and the full adoption of the concept of lack of responsibility and denial by the pragmatic forces as a means of evading the need to act against terror provided a comfortable basis for the development of areas of non-accountability. Thus, Abu Mazen preferred to deny the responsibility of Islamic Jihad for a series of suicide terror attacks carried out by the organization during 2005, in order to avoid having to confront the organization, even though he was able to do this. The Palestinians also did not act to arrest the killers of the American diplomats in October 2004, even though almost all Palestinian parties condemned the act. Likewise Egypt did not take decisive action to prevent the smuggling of weapons from the Sinai Peninsula to the Gaza Strip and even maintains

ongoing political dialogue with Hamas, which has managed this extensive smuggling operation.

The West – Europe in particular though in no small measure the United States and Israel as well – shares considerable responsibility for the development of this situation. Tolerance of Middle Eastern regimes that generate this reality is tantamount to being a partner in crime. Not only does this tolerance, which reflects a naive belief that apparent stability will prevent empowerment of the radical stream, make it easier for the regimes to adhere to a policy of denial and does not provide them with grounds and strength to change the situation; it also provides evidence for the principal radical arguments whereby the hollow West has lost faith in its values and is not willing to fight for them. Unfortunately for the West, the war in Iraq has turned into a test case that instead of encouraging the West to deal with such problems as it did in Afghanistan, in fact sharpened the reluctance of elements in the West to contend with the problem.

Israel's reactions to the kidnappings of Shalit on the Gaza Strip border and Goldwasser and Regev on the Lebanese border were designed to transmit a message that as far as Israel is concerned, the situation had escalated out of control and Israel did not intend to accept the further cultivation of the idea of non-accountability and the presence of uncontrolled areas along its borders. It appeared that the message was received following the heavy casualties of the Palestinians and the heavy damage in Lebanon, particularly of Hizbollah. However, Israel was also perceived to be hesitant in all aspects of using ground forces to generate fundamental change of the situation and as a result, it was viewed as once again leaving the problem to the local regimes and the international community. One can assume that as long as there is no change in the political culture and the terminology used in the regional political dialogue, and as long as the West desists from discouraging such change through its actions, the radical elements will continue benefiting from the existence of areas that are not subject to state control and accountability.

In this context it is interesting to examine the approach presented by Richard Haass in his article on the end of the era of American influence in the Middle East.¹ The question is: did such an era ever exist? In practice there was an attempt by the United States to exploit the fall of the Soviet Union and the 1991 Gulf War to establish a new reality in the region through a

peace process and a policy of dual containment. However, this attempt did not take hold in the region at any stage: peace remained a distant prospect and did not incorporate acceptance of Israel's right to exist or rejection of terror. Iran continued its process of empowerment and the principal current that garnered strength in the Middle East during this period was radical Islam, which genuinely reflected the feelings of deprivation, jealousy, frustration, and hatred of much of the Middle East towards the United States. The true feature of the period is the struggle between the radical stream and the reformist stream, which includes the pragmatic elements. The war in Lebanon and the war in Iraq reflect the advantages of the radical elements resulting from their willingness to suffer and sacrifice more than the reformists and their supporters in the West. On the other hand, the situation has yet to be decided, and as it has been developing dialectically throughout, one should wait to see how the reformists and the West react to the challenges of the radicals, including the continued killings in Iraq, the assassination of senior members of the Lebanese reformist camp and the rearmament of Hizbollah, ongoing Palestinian terror in the Gaza Strip, the continued nuclearization of Iran, and possibly another mega-terror attack by al-Qaeda.

Note

1. Richard N. Haass, "The New Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (2006): 2-11.

Chapter 15

The Impact of the War on Arab Security Concepts

Ephraim Kam

The Arab street has for the most part heralded the results of the fighting in Lebanon as a Hizbollah victory. The prevalent Arab narrative is that for several weeks a small military organization with a few thousand fighters, without an air force or tanks, displayed determination and the ability to realize its potential, and thus withstood the might of the army that is considered to be the strongest in the Middle East. It may be assumed that the Arab defense establishments and other regional elements examined the progress and results of the fighting, and scrutinized the strengths and weaknesses shown by Israel and Hizbollah. It is not yet clear what conclusions they have drawn, and whether the confrontation in Lebanon will impact on Arab security concepts and if so, how. Certainly, the process of internalizing the significance of the war in Lebanon by the Arab security systems and translating this into specific practical results – if this occurs at all – will take time.

This essay aims to consider how the results of the fighting in Lebanon may ultimately influence Arab security concepts. In the absence of actual data on any learning process on the Arab side, the analysis, based on the known components of Arab security thinking, attempts to assess how the Arab approach may change in the wake of the fighting. What follows, therefore, is a review of the overall impact of the war on Arab security thinking, followed by a look at the security approach of states and organizations that have hostile relations with Israel and are directly affected by Israel's military strength and behavior: Syria, Iran, and the Palestinian organizations. Naturally, the more information is gleaned on the

conclusions drawn by the Arabs and the Iranians from the war in Lebanon, the more it will be possible to reexamine this analysis.

The Principles of the Arab Security Concepts

With regard to Israel, the current Arab security concepts have crystallized primarily since the seventies based on the main developments in the Arab-Israeli arena: the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the 1982 Lebanon War, the collapse of the Arab coalition against Israel, the signing of the peace accords between Egypt and Israel and Jordan and Israel, and the two violent clashes between the Palestinians and Israel. At the same time, regional and global developments contributed to their formulation, particularly the transition of the locus of instability in the Middle East from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Gulf area, reflected by the Iraq-Iran War, the Gulf War, and the 2003 Iraq War; the economic crisis in the Arab world that began in the mid-eighties; the collapse of the Soviet Union; and the emergence of the United States as the lone superpower.

From these developments, most Arab states drew a number of principal conclusions vis-à-vis Israel. First, Israel has overall strategic superiority over the Arab states and as such, the Arab armies are unable, in the foreseeable future, to defeat it on the battlefield and destroy it as a political entity. This conclusion derives from the assumption that Israel is militarily stronger than each individual Arab state and apparently than an entire Arab military coalition as well (which in any event the Arabs have been incapable of mobilizing effectively). The central factors in Israel's superiority are its aerial strength, its quality intelligence, its ability to operate large ground formations, its advantage in the field of precision arms, its command and control systems, and its extended reach. The Arabs appear to believe that despite the advances in quality made in some Arab armies in the last two decades, particularly in the Egyptian army, the discrepancy between the IDF and the Arab armies has increased further in Israel's favor.

Second, Israel's strategic superiority results from the confluence of several factors: on the one hand, Israel's ability to develop and utilize its human resources and harness them for its defense needs; its ability to obtain advanced military technologies and weapon systems – some from American and Western sources, and some self-developed; and its ability

to formulate and adopt advanced fighting methods and adapt them to the conditions of the Arab-Israeli arena. For their part, the Arabs have failed in most of these areas, and have not managed to harness their resources and unite to overcome their inferiority vis-à-vis Israel.

The special relationship between the United States and Israel; the commitment of American administrations to Israel's survival and security; and the US commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative edge over the Arab states are among the pillars of Israeli security. These relations provide Israel not only with a source of technological superiority but also superpower backing in times of military distress during a war. The Arabs, however, have no such support in their confrontation with Israel.

Israel has a strategic security net based on its nuclear capability. At the same time, the Arabs do not believe Israel will use nuclear weapons against them unless it finds itself in extreme distress and has no other option, which they do not think will happen in the foreseeable future. As such, the Arabs are of the opinion that Israel's nuclear capability should not limit or deter them from acting against it, either in a conventional war or through terror and violence. In addition, Israel has weak points that stem from its smaller geographical size and population, sensitivity to losses, political constraints, dependence of the IDF on reserve forces, and its difficulties in contending with terror and guerilla organizations.

These factors oblige the Arabs to adopt strategic conclusions with regard to their approach towards Israel. Here, the Arabs are divided over what conclusions to draw. Today all the Arab regimes believe that embarking on another war with Israel in the coming years is not in their favor because they would inevitably be defeated. As such, their strategic interest is to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict by political means, while adhering to the objective of attaining the Arab demands. Egypt and Jordan translated this approach into peace agreements with Israel. Syria has looked for a political settlement, but has not achieved it due to the gap between Syrian and Israeli positions. Other Arab countries are divided between willingness to maintain informal relations with Israel and a refusal to have any ties with Israel at all. The Palestinians are divided in their approach: some are willing to accept a political compromise settlement with Israel that satisfies their basic conditions, while the radical organizations support maintaining the armed struggle until attrition achieves the victory over Israel. The only

regime in the region that supports an armed struggle against Israel until it is annihilated is the Iranian regime.

For over a generation the Arabs have noted Israel's inability to achieve all its military objectives. Israel is still considered by them as a threat due to its military ability and intentions to occupy Arab territory. However, in all wars since the Six Day War – the peak of Israel's realization of its military abilities against the Arabs – the Arabs have uncovered weak points in Israel's strength: in the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanon War and the clash with Hizbollah, and the struggle against Palestinian terror. In the Arabs' eyes, the last war in Lebanon is, therefore, part of this general pattern.

The War in Lebanon: General Arab Lessons

Before examining the possible Arab conclusions from the war in Lebanon, a preliminary observation should be made. Not only is there not yet sufficient evidence as to the conclusions the Arabs will draw from the war; it should be assumed that for a number of reasons they will need to exercise caution with regard to the conclusions they do draw: (a) There is clearly a fundamental difference between fighting a small military organization and waging war against regular armies backed by states and governments. Thus, the main conceptual problem will be to examine which lessons from the war in Lebanon can be applied to countries and regular armies, and which are irrelevant. (b) It should be clear to the Arabs that Israel will also draw its own conclusions from the war and will aim to correct the lapses and defects that surfaced. Consequently, they will make a mistake if they rely only on the lessons learned from the last war in examining Israel's future defense activities. (c) Despite the prolonged nature of the war, only part of Israel's military components were tested, while the Arab states were not involved at all. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the Arabs will continue to maintain their fundamental approach towards Israel with regard to their perception of its abilities and limitations, but they will probably update some components based on the conclusions drawn from the war in Lebanon.

The basis of Arab analysis of the war's results will likely be that for the foreseeable future Israel will continue to maintain its overall strategic-

military supremacy and its technological advantage over the Arab states. Some of the fundamental components in Israel's supremacy, which were reflected in the last war, once again demonstrated to the Arabs that they lack an adequate response. First and foremost, the Arab states do not have an answer to Israel's aerial ability, firepower, and precision capabilities that were demonstrated in the war, despite the fact that in Lebanon these were not tested against an enemy air force and significant aerial defense. Second, Israel's intelligence capability, lapses notwithstanding, still provides its fighting forces with sufficiently accurate intelligence that lends them an advantage in the field and enables them to hit quality targets. And third, the United States' full support of Israel during the war in Lebanon was entirely clear, more so than in any previous war. Not only did these basic components not decline; their quality was felt even more keenly than in the past.

On the other hand, the war in Lebanon gave the Arabs food for thought as to possible ways of eroding Israel's supremacy and, principally, of exploiting its weak points. First there is the vulnerability of Israel's home front. The 2006 war was the first time since the War of Independence that an Arab force launched a large scale attack on Israel's home front, other than Iraq's Scud missiles during the Gulf War and terrorist attacks whose scope and the damage are far more limited. Ultimately, the Arabs will likely come to the conclusion that they cannot defeat Israel by striking at its home front, which demonstrated considerable resilience during the war. On the other hand, the damage was significant enough to justify development of an option to strike at the home front in the future, in the expectation that the Israeli home front will find it hard to withstand more prolonged and intensive attrition. Will the Arabs exploit such an option in future confrontations? That depends on the state. Arab states whose home front is as vulnerable as Israel's – Syria, for example – would have to weigh carefully whether they want to ignite the home front during a war. On the other hand, countries whose rear is less vulnerable to an Israeli response due to the distance, such as Iran, or elements that are less sensitive to strikes of this sort, such as Hizbollah and Palestinian organizations, are liable to use this option and try to enhance their ability to strike at Israel's home front.

Second, there are rockets and missiles. As far back as the Gulf War the Arabs viewed Iraq's Scud missile fire as a means to offset part of Israel's aerial advantage. The Arabs, including more distant states, see missiles as a long arm and an option for striking against Israel, a means of hitting Israel's home front and inflicting material and psychological damage, a deterrent, and a means of launching non-conventional weapons. In recent years missiles have become a less attractive option for the Arabs, probably due to the interception capability of the Arrow system. The missiles' efficiency was not tested during the war in Lebanon; the effectiveness of rockets, however, was tested and the Arabs may draw the conclusion that they proved themselves. Although the thousands of rockets launched by Hizbollah at Israel did not break the Israeli home front, they proved themselves a simple, available, and convenient weapon that is difficult to destroy and has a high level of survivability against aerial attacks. The use of rockets can also force Israel into a situation of prolonged warfare, high costs, partial paralysis of the national economy, intense frustration, and damage to national morale, all of which have always been viewed by the Arabs as being to Israel's disadvantage. The conclusion, both of Arab states and Iran and of military and terror organizations, is likely to be that they should expand and enhance their missile and rocket arrays against Israel.

Third, there are anti-tank missiles. The Arabs have long realized that in light of Israel's firepower and high level of mobility and its aerial supremacy, it is best not to engage it using large formations. Hizbollah's use of anti-tank missiles, some advanced, is apparently viewed as one of the organization's successes. Hizbollah proved capable of using low signature small forces in areas saturated with anti-tank weaponry, suited to operations in built-up areas and in a manner that optimizes force mobility. This success may motivate Arab armies to establish more anti-tank light forces and teams, perhaps at the expense of large armored units, to stop ground advances. These units would likely be equipped with more advanced anti-tank missiles and with more advanced missiles that may be mostly of Russian manufacture. This may also be the conclusion drawn by smaller military organizations.

One important question is how the deficiencies discovered in the IDF during the Second Lebanon War are likely to impact on the Arabs'

perception of the Israeli threat. In the last clash the IDF did not function well, partly due to defective planning and its use of ground forces and reserves, the quality of some of the officers, and logistical failures. Will the Arabs take this to mean that the IDF's strength has declined and the threat it poses to Arab states has lessened to the extent that they are able to launch new options against Israel? Not necessarily, and much depends on the processes that the IDF undergoes in the wake of the war. If the IDF manages to relay the message that it is correcting the mistakes and is restoring its capabilities, it is reasonable to assume that the Arabs will also conclude that its power base has not been damaged and that its deterrent level has been maintained. On the other hand, if the Arabs determine that the IDF's problems are substantial and long term, its deterrence may be eroded.

Will Israel's deterrence capability against its rivals be influenced by the confrontation in Lebanon? Presumably so, but the extent of the impact and the final result are still unclear. On the one hand, Israel surprised its enemies and launched a large scale military operation, during which it enjoyed political freedom of operation, almost without restraint. It also managed to dismantle Hizbollah's system of fortifications along the border and to destroy some of its rocket array, thereby decreasing the organization's deterrence. On the other hand, despite the abilities and resources Israel utilized freely, it paid a high price and did not achieve some of its objectives, what may persuade the Arabs that Israel will not hurry to repeat such an operation. At the end of the day it appears that Israel's ability to deter Syria from launching a military operation against it will not be affected. This deterrent ability will even increase, possibly because the Syrians will be more impressed with Israel's strategic components – particularly its aerial strength – than the tactical weakness it displayed against Hizbollah. Israel's deterrence vis-à-vis Hizbollah and the Palestinians will be significantly affected both by the IDF's measures and the steps taken by Hizbollah, as well as by the organizations' ability to rehabilitate and even improve their capabilities in the near future.

Lessons of the War: Syria and Iran

The lessons of the fighting in Lebanon may be of particular importance to Syria and Iran, both because they consider Israel an enemy they are liable to encounter in the future, and because they are both connected to Hizbollah, which is an important component of their security concepts. Syria considered Hizbollah part of its military deployment against Israel, which includes strategic weapons, regular conventional forces, and terror systems, where Hizbollah occupies center stage alongside Palestinian organizations. Syria attached particular importance to strengthening Hizbollah after the IDF's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, as the organization's ability to act against Israel declined after that. Thus, Hizbollah's large arsenal of rockets, most of which were supplied by Syria, was designed to deter Israel from attacking Lebanon, Hizbollah, and Syria, and to provide the organization with a response capability if subjected to massive attack.

Is Syria likely to change its strategic approach towards Israel following the clash in Lebanon? Since the end of the hostilities Syrian officials, principally Bashar Asad, have made militant statements against Israel whose primary message has been: if Israel does not make progress towards a peace settlement with Syria there will be no choice other than to return the Golan Heights to Syrian control by force. The declarations were general and it is difficult to determine whether there has been a change in Syria's approach to a potential military option against Israel. As far as one can tell, Syria's basic understanding of Israel's strategic supremacy remains unchanged. In this respect, the confrontation in Lebanon conveyed the advantages of a flexible and determined military organization like Hizbollah in the area of asymmetric warfare. Nonetheless, the majority of these advantages would be eclipsed in a war against a regular army backed by a responsible state, such as in the case of Syria.

Is Syria likely to change its war objectives based on the lessons of the clash in Lebanon, and set as its objective mere survival against a superior enemy, rather than victory in a war? It is reasonable to assume that it will not do so, as in such a case, in contrast with Hizbollah, it would might lose strategic assets in a war, such as territories, elements of military strength, financial assets, and centers of government. The loss of such assets is liable

to damage the country's strategic power, lead to a loss of will to continue fighting, and even bring about the downfall of the regime. It is also unlikely that Syria would consider a limited military operation while exploiting its advantages in order to generate a political process, due to its weakness, its frail political standing, and its insufficiently strong basis for diplomatic leverage.

However, the Syrians may well conclude that strengthening Hizbollah has lessened some of Israel's advantages and as such has proven its worth. Therefore Syria is likely to draw a twofold conclusion from the confrontation in Lebanon. First, it is important to strengthen Hizbollah with the most advanced weaponry in the field of rockets and anti-tank missiles in order to bolster its deterrence against Israel and demand a heavier toll in a future confrontation. Second, it is important to adopt some of the lessons of the fighting in Lebanon in the Syrian army, mainly in the area of missiles and rockets and anti-tank weapons.

Iran may reach similar conclusions. It too contributed to strengthening Hizbollah in its fortifications along the border and its rocket array in order to create a threat to the Israeli home front, which included deterring Israel from attacking the nuclear facilities in Iran. However, Israel surprised it with the scale of its response and forced Hizbollah to resort to its rocket array ahead of time, and not for the purpose for which the rockets were designed. Moreover, in the situation that arose at the end of the war, Hizbollah lost part of its deterrent capability against Israel, including through the dismantling of its border fortifications. Thus, Iran's basic strategic interest in strengthening Hizbollah has not declined, rather has been augmented by ideological and political considerations. For this reason, one must assume that Iran will make every effort to rearm the organization and restore its military strength and, if possible, provide it with more advanced weapons and equipment.

The Lessons Learned by the Palestinians

The way Hizbollah conducted itself in the past had significant impact on the defense perceptions of Palestinian organizations. In particular, the IDF's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in mid-2000 was perceived by the Palestinians as a major success by Hizbollah that should be duplicated,

and this appears to have impacted on the conduct of the Palestinians and contributed to the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada. The influence of Hizbollah on Palestinian military activity rose during the intifada, with the significant increase in the military aid and training that Hizbollah provided to the Palestinian organizations.

Of all the Arab elements, the Palestinian organizations will undoubtedly be most influenced by the war in Lebanon due to the similarity between conditions in southern Lebanon and the conditions in which these organizations operate, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The lessons that the Palestinian organizations are likely to glean from the fighting in Lebanon, in order to reduce Israel's overall supremacy while enjoying the support of Hizbollah, can be summarized in a number of areas:

- Enhancing the use of civilian populations as a shield for the Palestinian fighters. The Palestinian organizations already use civilians as a shield. However, in order to complicate matters for the IDF, Hizbollah relaxed its constraints on activity in a civilian environment, and the Palestinians are liable for follow suit: to conceal fighters and make it difficult to trace them; to deter the IDF from attack due to the presence of civilians; to turn a civilian area into a fortified entity; to lead the IDF into fighting in a built up area; to exploit the impression of IDF attacks in populated areas; and to inflate the number of losses for the sake of propaganda.
- Expanding the use of rockets, while exploiting the void in the Rafah area to smuggle new weapons into the Gaza Strip and, as much as possible, also into the West Bank. It may be assumed that Palestinian organizations will try to build for themselves enhanced rocket arsenals, both in terms of range and warheads, in order to be able to launch long and ongoing attacks on Israeli populated areas in the future, including on the center of Israel. The main constraint on this is, naturally, Israel's preventive and obstructive measures.
- Establishing a control system in the field, as well as an alternative system, that offers centralized, hierarchical, and flexible control of the forces.
- Increasing the use of subterranean channels for smuggling arms and for operational uses.
- Enhancing the use of communications and psychological warfare, while exploiting Israel's sensitivities.

The Palestinian organizations already use such means, and it is clear that there are differences between the conditions in the Palestinian territories – even in the Gaza Strip – and the Lebanese arena. However, the lessons of the fighting in Lebanon are likely to provide them with leverage for trying to turn from a terror organization to a semi-military guerilla organization, as similar as possible to the Hizbollah model.

Conclusion

One of the important features of the war in Lebanon is that it remained an arena of two players: Israel on the one side, and Hizbollah and Lebanon on the other side. Despite Hizbollah's close links with Syria and Iran – during the fighting there was concern that the situation could deteriorate into a direct conflict between Israel and Syria – ultimately all the players stayed outside the circle of fighting. Nevertheless, the war in Lebanon is considered a confrontation with a wider context: the radical elements in the region view it as a reflection of the Israeli-American struggle against them. The moderate Arab elements viewed it as part of the clash between the radical Muslim camp and the moderate camp, and partly between Sunnis and Shiites. All see the war as potential for escalation in the future.

Because of the wider significance of the confrontation and its being a prolonged test between a regular, modern, and strong army and a small guerilla organization that was well armed and well deployed, the war has drawn the attention of Arab and other parties looking to draw the relevant conclusions. At this stage it does not seem that the Arab security concepts will change significantly as a result of the war. It was not comprehensive enough, and in any case, Arab states and armies did not participate in it sufficiently to leave a lasting impression on the Arabs' approach. A significant portion of the war's features is relevant to a confrontation with a small military organization that is not backed by a state, and not necessarily to a confrontation between regular armies. The lessons to be learned from the war should also not be detached from the conclusions drawn from previous and future developments that influenced the formulation of the security concepts, especially since security concepts generally evolve slowly and change gradually.

Nevertheless, the conclusions that the Arab elements and Iran may draw from the war are significant. The most important conclusions will be studied by the Palestinian organizations, which are liable to try to emulate the Hizbollah model, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Syria is apt to draw conclusions at the operative and tactical level in order to reduce Israel's overall superiority – mainly in areas relating to strengthening Hizbollah and the use of rockets and anti-tank missiles – and less on the strategic level. The scope and nature of these lessons will be influenced not only by the war but also by the measures taken in the near future, both by Israel and by Hizbollah.

Chapter 16

The International Dimension: Why So Few Constraints on Israel?

Mark A. Heller

The Second Lebanon War lasted just over one month. Its duration was determined by a variety of factors, but primarily by Israeli's own assessment that prolongation of the fighting would not advance any war aims even more ambitious than those that Israel had already achieved, at least not at a cost deemed acceptable to the society and political system. Unlike previous wars, Israel did not – contrary to the predictions of many analysts – have to operate under severe time constraints, because its margin of maneuver was not seriously curtailed by diplomatic pressure. Whether or not that freedom of maneuver ultimately worked to Israel's benefit is a subject of some controversy in Israel's collective post-war assessment, but as an operational factor it appears incontrovertible.

In the Israeli discourse, “diplomatic pressure” is normally understood to mean American pressure to cease hostilities. The reason for the focus on the United States is self-evident: Israeli dependency makes the United States the only foreign actor whose policies constitute a critical input into Israeli decision making. The convergence if not congruence of Israeli and American attitudes toward Hizbollah and its regional patrons meant that there was little intrinsic reason for the United States to push for an early termination of Israeli operations against Hizbollah. However, the rest of the international system or “international community” was not irrelevant, even if Israel itself might be inclined to downplay its importance, because it could have fed into the American calculus and, given the broader American agenda, have moved the administration to accommodate international

preferences even if they did not accord with its own. That explains the potential importance of the international dimension in the Second Lebanon War. In practice, however, that potential did not come into play.

There are two fairly straightforward reasons for this. The first is strategic. Because no other major extra-regional regional actors were closely aligned with the protagonists assumed to be at greatest risk – Lebanon and Hizbollah or their regional patrons – the critical interests and prestige of others were not engaged in the confrontation, obviating any anxiety about escalation of the type that often influenced superpower behavior in local conflicts during the height of the Cold War. Moreover, it quickly became clear that even other Middle Eastern actors were wary of being directly implicated in the fighting, alleviating concerns that the fighting might precipitate a broader regional conflict. In fact, some regional governments, perhaps for the first time in the history of Arab-Israeli wars, actually distanced themselves from an Arab protagonist, in part because they objected to the “hijacking” of national security agendas by a non-state actor. Saudi Arabia, for one, officially condemned the “rash adventures carried out by elements inside the state,” in part because of Hizbollah’s identification with Iran and with Islamist radicalism – factors that threatened its own state or regime security. But even Iran and Syria, which did support Hizbollah, nevertheless communicated their own intention to stay outside the fray in order to avoid jeopardizing what they deemed were more important national security interests.

Second, the emotional sympathy with the targets of Israeli military attacks that did exist was too limited to drive the foreign policies of major international actors. True, Israel did attack the Lebanese national infrastructure (the Beirut airport, oil storage facilities, an electricity transformer, some bridges) in the first few days of the war in the hope of generating more active Lebanese opposition to Hizbollah, and that prompted widespread condemnations of “disproportionate response.” But the failure of this mode of operation to produce any discernible benefits led Israel to abandon it in favor of more focused attacks on Hizbollah, and these did not produce the same emotional resonance even when they took place in Shiite-populated areas. That is not just because Hizbollah was almost universally seen as responsible for the outbreak of violence. It also stemmed from Hizbollah’s association with Syria and especially

Iran. At the global level, that placed it in the same camp with forces that are themselves objects of fear and loathing, particularly because of the Iranian leadership's belligerent rhetoric and refusal to take the steps necessary to dispel widespread suspicions that it is embarked on a quest for nuclear weapons. At the regional level, it made Hizbollah appear to be the spearhead of growing Shiite self-assertion and belligerency that had already prompted King Abdullah of Jordan to express anxiety about the danger of a "Shiite crescent" surrounding the Sunni Arab world and led President Mubarak of Egypt to complain that Iraqi Shiites are more loyal to Iran than to their own country.

Of course, there were large-scale condemnations of Israeli operations in Lebanon and expressions of sympathy for its victims, usually defined as "the Lebanese people" rather than as Hizbollah per se. These were most evident in demonstrations throughout the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia, although such demonstrations also took place in Western cities, where the most prominent participants were often local Arabs or other residents of Muslim origin along with leftists objecting to whatever the United States did or (in this case) did not do. As a result of these public sentiments, Arab governments quickly desisted from their initial criticism of Hizbollah and began to issue declarations of support for Hizbollah/Syrian/Iranian demands for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. But while they shared the Hizbollah/Syrian/Iranian assessment that a prolongation of the fighting would be to the detriment of Hizbollah, they did not share the objective of avoiding that, and their declarations therefore seemed to be pro forma efforts to appease domestic public opinion rather than real investments of political capital. The same can be said of non-regional governments in Asia and Europe, including Great Britain, where Prime Minister Tony Blair did face strong criticism within his own party for aligning himself too closely with the substance and pace of American diplomacy.

As a result, none of the institutions that are taken to embody the international community (or significant parts of it) – the United Nations, the European Union, the G-8, even the Arab League – pressed vigorously for an early cessation of hostilities, and real momentum for a Security Council ceasefire did not begin to build until several weeks into the war, when both the United States and Israel itself concluded that further combat was unlikely to produce additional substantial gains or consolidate what

had been already been achieved. Moreover, the ceasefire resolution that did eventually emerge – SC 1701 – was very different from the version that Hizbollah and its backers had wanted: a cessation of hostilities that was either unconditional or (even more ambitiously) that also called for the immediate withdrawal of whatever Israeli forces were in Lebanon. Instead, by reaffirming previous Security Council resolutions that had never been implemented (especially 1559), it endorsed the extension of central Lebanese government authority throughout the country and the deployment of the Lebanese army up to the Israeli-Lebanese border. This was one of Israel's central objectives but had previously been anathema to Hizbollah. However, 1701 went further and established a mechanism for the implementation of this goal: a strengthened United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Despite initial delays and widespread skepticism about whether this force would actually come into existence or meet its force-level targets, various international actors (especially Italy and France) did come forward with contributions substantial enough to warrant the withdrawal of Israeli forces remaining in Lebanon.

All in all, it can therefore be argued not only that international pressure did not compel Israel to terminate operations in Lebanon before it itself was inclined to do so, but also that the international community actually helped to entrench and consolidate whatever gains Israel had managed to make through military means. Of course, that does not mean that international involvement helped secure goals that Israel was unable to achieve by its own actions. Nor does it necessarily mean that international involvement in Lebanon will continue to operate to Israel's advantage in the future. The relatively permissive international environment in the summer of 2006 was almost certainly a function of the particular circumstances surrounding the outbreak and evolution of the crisis. It is far from certain that Israeli and international – or even Israel and American – perspectives will overlap on the issues in the Lebanese arena that remain to be addressed, such as the disposition of Shab'a Farms, the release of prisoners, Israeli aerial overflights, the prevention of arms smuggling into Lebanon and, most significantly, the eventual disarming of Hizbollah.

Even more uncertainty attaches to perceived or proposed linkages between the Lebanese arena and other regional problems. For example, analysts and policymakers in Europe and the United States began almost

immediately after the fighting stopped to endorse the idea that Hizbollah can only be further undermined or at least prevented from rehabilitating itself by inducing Syria, which is widely seen to be the weakest or least natural link in the Hizbollah-Syria-Iran axis, to defect, and that Israel needs to contribute to that by agreeing to renew peace negotiations with Syria on the clear understanding that a major Israeli withdrawal in – and almost certainly from – the Golan Heights will be the focus of any such negotiations. It is unclear how international preferences or prescriptions will evolve concerning this logic, but the American administration currently shows little enthusiasm for it, regardless of the attitudes of others, and unless that changes, the reluctance of the Israeli government to embrace it will probably not be influenced by other attitudes in the international arena.

But that may not be the case with respect to other linkages, particularly the linkage between the Palestinian issue and international approaches to Hizbollah's other patron – Iran. On the Palestinian issue, American and Israeli approaches may also be generally convergent. But there is greater inclination elsewhere in the region and the world to be more responsive to Palestinian demands and requirements, at least concerning financial support and other measures to facilitate improved functioning of the Palestinian Authority. The American agenda vis-à-vis Iran also largely corresponds with Israel's, but the promotion of that agenda requires mobilization of regional and international support, and failure to promote a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or least a reduction of its profile, may well come to be seen as an irritant if not an obstacle to the formation of a broader coalition in support of American action against Iran. Sympathy for the Palestinian cause, especially in the Middle East, outstrips any sympathy for Hizbollah's cause and may actually be one of the few threads preventing the Sunni-Shiite fault line from turning into a real rift that could make it easier for the United States to deal more effectively with Iran. By the same token, clear evidence of engagement on behalf of the Palestinians would allow Europeans to convince themselves, if not others, that forceful diplomatic/economic and even military action against Iran could not be depicted as part of the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West that they desperately want to avoid. The United States may well conclude that it has to accommodate this reality. And if that happens,

the international system that allowed Israel so much freedom of maneuver in Lebanon could have a rather different impact on Israeli relations with the Palestinians.

Appendix 1

Shab'a Farms

Amos Gilboa

Shab'a Farms, the hilly ridge that forms the western extension of Mount Hermon next to Israel's primary water source, appeared on the agenda after the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, and it reemerged prominently during and after the Second Lebanon War. The Lebanese government has repeatedly demanded possession of Shab'a Farms, known in Israel as Mount Dov. Security Council resolution 1701 explicitly includes it as an issue to be discussed in the context of relations between Lebanon and Israel and instructs the UN secretary-general to submit to the Security Council recommendations for resolving the dispute. In addition, President Bashar Asad pointed out in a television interview on September 26, 2006 that before all else Israel must withdraw from Shab'a Farms; and in the Lebanese press there are public announcements from the Lebanese government calling for former residents of the farms to come forward and present their ownership papers.

The aim of this essay is to outline the Shab'a Farms dispute: what it actually is about, how Israel arrived at it, and how it evolved – and continued to evolve – into an issue. This will generate a factual basis for public debate over Israel's policy on the matter.

1967-1999

Just before the end of hostilities in the Six Day War the senior military echelon gathered at the headquarters of Division 36, which was responsible for the Golan Heights. Ezer Weizmann, then head of Operations in the IDF, turned to Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and said: "Don't you think

the air force deserves a reward?” “Certainly,” answered Dayan, “ask for anything.” At the time the IDF forces had advanced as far as the Druze village of Majdal Shams, in the foothills of Mt. Hermon. Weizmann pointed at Mt. Hermon and said: “I want us to have a position up there, the point from where you can see Damascus.”

Where was that point? Everyone looked at the divisional intelligence officer, Danny Agmon, one of the founding fathers of IDF combat intelligence. Agmon sat down, calculated, measured the maps, and went up to the spot in a helicopter. Golani soldiers followed, and on the next day UN personnel and a surveyor went to the spot to take measurements and mark the place on their maps as an IDF location. But then a problem arose: the line had to continue to the Lebanese border. In accordance with the “accepted” sign for an international border on the 1:100000 scale map of the intelligence officer, a number of soldiers were stationed on the prominent hilltops along the border. The UN personnel and surveyor came and noted the line of the IDF forces on their maps as following the line of the international border between Syria and Lebanon.

The IDF later abandoned the area of the Syrian-Lebanese border. In the early 1970s, however, Palestinian terrorists infiltrated the area, subsequently nicknamed “Fatahland.” The IDF took possession of it, paved a road, and established a chain of positions there. The hill, called Jabal Rus, became known as Mt. Dov, named after Capt. Dov Rodberg who was killed there in August 1970 in a battle with terrorists. This is also the time when the farmers who lived there abandoned their homes, and ever since the farms have been unoccupied. After the Yom Kippur War and the signing of the disengagement treaty between Israel and the Syrians, the UN force (UNDOP) was established. The operational regional map naturally included Mt. Dov, based on the marking of the international border that a UN surveyor and Danny Agmon delineated in 1967.

2000-2006

When in light of the failed meeting between Presidents Clinton and Asad on March 26, 2000 Prime Minister Barak made the decision to withdraw from Lebanon without an agreement with Syria, he determined that the withdrawal would take place as part of Security Council resolution 425,

adopted following Operation Litani in 1978. According to this resolution, Israel was to withdraw to the international Israel-Lebanon border. UN envoy Terje Larsen was sent to Israel and Lebanon, together with a team of UN surveyors, in part to clarify the line to which IDF had to withdraw in order to comply with resolution 425. The main problem was the border with Lebanon, drawn in 1923 – where exactly did it run? On the eastern border, from the Hatzbani River and eastwards, meaning the Lebanese-Syrian border, there were no special problems, except for two important IDF positions inside Lebanese territory.

And then a major surprise occurred. Larsen and his team met Lebanese President Emile Lahoud on May 4. The president, who was close to the Syrians, told Larsen that the border with Israel did not interest him just then. The eastern border was far more important to him. He claimed that this area, which was called Shab'a Farms, was Lebanese and not Syrian, and Israel had to withdraw from it in accordance with resolution 425. Lahoud noted that at this location there were at least fourteen farms, the largest of them being Mizrat Shab'a (after which the region of the farms is named, not to be confused with the Lebanese village of Shab'a), with others including Fashkol, Ramatha, Zabdin, and Aiazel.

The Lebanese media, including Hizbollah's media and the speaker of the Lebanese parliament, Nabih Berri, immediately made this public. Larsen returned to Israel where a Lebanese map was shown to him with the accepted Lebanese-Syrian border, with Shab'a Farms clearly marked in Syrian territory. The Lebanese claimed that the map was not up-to-date and in any case was inaccurate, and insisted that the area of Shab'a Farms (without precisely denoting its boundaries) is located in Lebanon. From that moment and until the publication of a report by the UN secretary-general to the Security Council on May 23, a struggle ensued over the position of the Syrian-Lebanese border and to whom Shab'a Farms belong: Syria or Lebanon. The UN asked Israel and Lebanon to provide evidence to support their claims, and launched an investigation of its own.

Two fundamental historic facts lay at the basis of the struggle: one, there was no formal agreement between Syria and Lebanon over a formal international border, and second, there was no agreed marking of the border. The actual border between Lebanon and Syria was set in 1920 by the French when the state of Lebanon was established.

The Lebanese had four arguments:

- Syrian property notes testify that the farms belong to the Lebanese.
- Various documents show that religious leaders from Lebanon provided the inhabitants of the farms with religious services.
- Partial minutes of a Lebanese-Syrian borders committee meeting from 1964 allegedly indicated that the Syrian side agreed that the farms belong to Lebanon, and the route of the border should be reset.
- One Lebanese map from 1966 shows the farms as being on Lebanese soil.

Israel clearly saw this as a Hizbollah pretext to fabricate an issue that would validate acts of violence after the IDF withdrawal, claiming that this is occupied Lebanese territory. The arguments Israel submitted to the UN to show that the area is Syrian and not Lebanese included:

- Dismissal of the Lebanese claim of a purchase certificate as being entirely irrelevant to the question of sovereignty.
- Showing proof that the so-called 1964 minutes, presented by the Lebanese, were in fact forged.
- Showing dozens of Lebanese maps printed after 1964, including from the Lebanese Ministry of Defense, that clearly indicate that the farms are located on Syrian soil.
- Syrian maps representing the same information.
- French maps were brought in, along with testimony of French officials who described where the border between Syria and the new state of Lebanon ran.
- A Syrian census from 1960 showed that the inhabitants of the farms were incorporated into a population census (this ranged from several dozen to several hundred at each farm).
- A Lebanese banknote with a value of 1000 Lebanese lira, which was issued in 1988 and which bears a map of Lebanon. The route of the Syrian-Lebanese border, marked out on the map, indicates that area of Shab'a Farms is, in fact, Syrian land.
- Maps belonging to UNDOP and UNIFIL, including their activity areas, are divided by the "accepted" line of the Syrian-Lebanese border.
- The UN announcement from 1978 (after Operation Litani) stated that Israel had completed its withdrawal from all Lebanese territory (without referring to IDF positions on Mt. Dov as belonging to Lebanon).

Lebanon did not claim then that Shab'a Farms belonged to Lebanon, and did not demand that Israel withdraw from the area as part of its withdrawal from all Lebanese territory.

The UN accepted Israel's position and announced this to the Lebanese government several days after submission of the UN secretary-general's report to the Security Council on May 23, 2000. The UN's main reason for rejecting the Lebanese demand was connected to the UNDOF and UNIFIL maps. The UNDOF map appeared in the protocol of the disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria in May 1974, which Syria signed, thereby confirming that the area of Shab'a Farms is located in Syria, as part of the occupied Golan Heights; Lebanon never complained that UNIFIL's operational area does not include Shab'a Farms.

The Lebanese did not give up. They repeated their claim that the area is Lebanese and therefore the UN position is unacceptable. The Syrians supported the Lebanese and, in a telephone call to the UN secretary-general, Syrian foreign minister Farouq a-Shara said that Shab'a Farms were, in fact, Lebanese. Thus the Syrians claimed then, and still do today, that the farms belong to the Lebanese. In terms of ownership the farms in fact belong to Lebanese. However, the Syrians have also made sure not to state that the farms are in sovereign Lebanese territory and not in Syrian sovereign territory.

On May 20, 2000, for the first time since 1983, Hizbollah fired a number of shells on the IDF Gladiola outpost on Mt. Dov. That day Nasrallah announced that this is occupied Lebanese territory, thereby establishing the legitimacy for future violence against Mt. Dov positions.

At the same time, the UN secretary-general updated Prime Minister Barak with regard to the pressure being exerted on him on the matter, including the words of the Syrian foreign minister. Barak decided to test the Syrians and call their bluff. He suggested to the UN secretary-general to ask President Hafez Asad to send an official letter to the UN secretary-general stating that Shab'a Farms are not part of Syria and the Golan Heights, but part of sovereign Lebanon. Syria was to sign an official border agreement with Lebanon, mark the border (according to which the farms would be in Lebanese territory) and initiate the accepted international processes pertaining to defining an international border (parliamentary approval, sending maps to the UN, and so on.).

Barak was certain that Asad would not sign because if he did, Asad would officially signify that he was ceding part of the Golan Heights that had been occupied since June 4, 1967. In so doing he would create a precedent that would damage the fundamental Syrian position. Barak's assumption was correct. An international application was made to Asad regarding the border in the area of Shab'a Farms but he did not respond to it and indeed did not send the letter Barak had suggested.

The Israeli position was officially embraced in the UN secretary-general's report to the Security Council submitted on May 23, 2000. At the same time, the report emphasized that it was not ruling out the possibility that Lebanon and Syria would sign a binding international border agreement in the future (in which sovereignty of the farms would be decided). Since then, Mt. Dov has become the main – and almost only – area on which Hizbollah occasionally fires. The Lebanese government, for its part, has continued to make its claim to Shab'a Farms in the international community.

After resolution 1559 in September 2004 was passed and the Syrians withdrew from Lebanon the following year, UN Middle East envoy Terje Larsen raised the idea that Israel would vacate the area of Shab'a Farms and transfer it to the Lebanese government (or, initially, to the UN). There were two components to this rationale. First, this would obviate Hizbollah's grounds for firing on Israel and bring complete quiet to the northern border. Second, this would bolster the reformist forces in Lebanon (for example, Prime Minister Siniora) against Hizbollah and add weight to the demand that Hizbollah disarm in accordance with resolution 1559. Larsen found a degree of responsiveness in Israel to the idea, particularly in the National Security Council. On the other hand, the official Israeli position rejected the idea outright, arguing first and foremost that since this is not Lebanese territory, it is a clear Hizbollah excuse for continuing to fire on Israel. If Hizbollah did not have the pretext of Shab'a Farms it would find another, for example, the demand to return seven Shiite villages to Lebanon that, it claims, have been in Israeli territory since 1948. Transfer of the farms would strengthen Hizbollah, not Siniora. In addition, Mt. Dov is of supreme strategic importance as it controls the three water sources of the Jordan River (Dan, Hatzbani, and Banias), and in general, there is no precise and clear geographic delineation of Shab'a Farms. According to

some Lebanese claims the area stretches as far as the settlement of Snir and extends to the Israeli side of Mt. Hermon.

2007

This is the background to the current situation. The Shab'a Farms issue will undoubtedly remain on the political, diplomatic, and even military agenda in the future. There are five main direct players in the issue: the UN, the Lebanese government, Hizbollah, Syria, and Israel.

With regard to the UN: Clause 10 of Security Council resolution 1701 instructs the UN secretary-general to prepare proposals within thirty days concerning the possibility of finding a solution for the issues of the unclear and controversial international borders of Lebanon, including the area of Shab'a Farms. Well after thirty days, no such proposals were submitted. One may assume with a high degree of probability that any proposal submitted in the future by the UN secretary-general will not essentially depart from the position presented by the UN in advance of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. In other words, this is an issue that is subject to Syrian-Lebanese consent and will be formally shaped in accordance with setting an international border that is agreeable to both.

Fouad Siniora, the Lebanese prime minister, is the principal interested party in a political-diplomatic settlement of the Shab'a Farms problem. Since his election as prime minister he has asked Syria several times to reach a written agreement with him that recognizes Lebanese sovereignty over the area of the farms, thereby generating a dynamic of international pressure on Israel to withdraw from the area. His obstinacy led to the explicit citing of the farms in clause 10 of Resolution 1701. It is hard to know whether Siniora sincerely believes that the farms are in sovereign Lebanese territory. For him the importance of the issue is not only territorial but fundamental as well, and concerns the internal balance of power in Lebanon and relations with Syria: if he succeeds in restoring the farms to Lebanese sovereignty through diplomatic-political means he will strengthen his position vis-à-vis Hizbollah, open a new and positive chapter in his relations with Syria, and demonstrate a degree of power.

Hizbollah naturally objects to Siniora's concept, arguing that Israel should withdraw from Shab'a Farms before any Syrian-Lebanese agreement.

It has already declared that Israel's presence in the farms, like its flights over Lebanon, are a breach of resolution 1701, and the organization has the right to respond with armed resistance. It would come as no surprise if Hizbollah were to use violence again against Israel's strongholds at Mt. Dov as part of its struggle.

For now, it is hard to find a satisfactory reason that would motivate the Syrians to help Siniora and transfer Shab'a Farms to Lebanon in a formal and binding way. On the contrary, it appears the Syrians have good reasons to obstruct Siniora. Together with Nasrallah, they are now looking to depose Siniora; their sole interest lies in strengthening Nasrallah; they have all the evidence that shows that Shab'a Farms are in sovereign Syrian territory as determined by the French in 1920; there is no precedent for Syria giving up sovereign territory unless faced with a superior force (such as Turkey, on the Alexandretta issue); and, in general, why should Hizbollah be left without a pretext for continuing with its armed struggle?

And what about Israel? Two brief points will suffice here. The first is highly practical. Everyone talks about Shab'a Farms, but what is important is that this is not a defined area enclosed by clear topographical lines. In any case, the Mt. Dov ridge controls all of Israel's water sources. The second point is a fundamental one. If Syria agrees for some reason to mark and sign a border agreement with Lebanon, including the area of the farms, then Israel could consider the possibility of meeting Siniora half way; if not, it should not rush to withdraw from more "Lebanese territory" as one of the results of the Second Lebanon War.

Appendix 2

Observations on Hizbollah Weaponry

Yiftah S. Shapir

The Second Lebanon War aroused much discussion as to the weapons harbored and employed by Hizbollah. The following essay offers some observations on the technical aspects of the weapons used by Hizbollah during the war and their ramifications.

Rockets

Hizbollah's use of rockets against Israeli civilian targets was the organization's most consistent and blatant aggressive measure during the hostilities, and in general, rockets took on new strategic importance during the Second Lebanon War. According to figures supplied by the Israeli police, 3,970 rocket landings in Israel were recorded, with an average of over 120 rockets each day during the thirty-three days of hostilities (table 1). Hamas also uses a similar weapon, although far more primitive, and fires it from Gaza into nearby Israeli towns.

Table 1. Rocket Landing and Casualty Data (according to Israeli Police)

Galilee (Acre to Kiryat Shmona)	3,530 launches
Coastal region - (Acre to Hadera, including Haifa)	221 launches
Valley region (Tiberias, Bet She'an, Afula)	217 launches
Samaria region	2 launches
Total	3,970 launches
Launches into populated areas	901 launches
Home front casualties	2,412
Deaths (of the total number of casualties)	52
Shock (of the total number of casualties)	1,318

Rockets are used by regular armed forces for special purposes only, and do not appear in any military as the backbone of artillery support. Militaries continue to rely on towed or self-propelled artillery. Hizbollah, however, prefers rockets for several reasons. First, rocket launchers are simple to produce and operate. A rocket is launched from a thin barrel or rail that is not heavy or rifled like a cannon barrel. Unlike an artillery shell, there is no recoil, and therefore it does not require the complicated recoil absorption mechanism of cannons. Many launching barrels can be mounted on a light truck or jeep, and a single launching barrel can be placed on the back of an animal or even a soldier. Second, artillery rockets provide firepower coverage for greater ranges than standard artillery: unguided rockets are generally effective up to 100 km. Warsaw Pact armed forces used FROG-7 rockets for ranges of up to 70 km. Even today weapon systems such as the Russian Smerch system (for ranges up to 70 km) or the Chinese WS-1B system (which boasts a range of up to 180 km) are manufactured. Third, artillery rockets provide rapid and dense cover: a Russian BM-21 launcher, for example, is capable of firing forty 122 mm rockets in less than a minute.

At the same time, artillery rockets have an inherent set of disadvantages. Rocket weapons are far from accurate: a reasonable level of accuracy is a range dispersal of between 1-1.5 percent. For relatively short ranges they can be used against defined field targets, but for long ranges there is no point aiming them at specific targets. As a result, during the war the rockets were launched against population centers. Although Hizbollah leader Nasrallah tried to claim that he intentionally did not aim the rockets at the chemical plants in the Haifa Bay in order to avoid mass killings, it is clear that Hizbollah's rocket attacks were aimed at centers of population. In the south, the Qassam rockets are aimed by Hamas at populated areas, for similar reasons. This usage of rockets has made it a serious strategic threat.

Special expertise is required for the manufacture of rockets that have a reasonable degree of accuracy, and for longer range rockets the manufacturing process is highly complex. In addition, and this is probably the greatest disadvantage, rocket fire produces large volumes of fire and smoke, which immediately exposes the launch location to the enemy. Therefore, rocket launchers must withdraw from their firing positions as

soon as they finish shooting, although their high mobility level greatly facilitates this rapid exit. In the case of guerilla forces operating a single barrel, several launchers can be placed in the field, aimed at the target, and operated by remote control or by a delayed-action fuse, thereby preventing exposure of the operators to counter-fire. This enables the attacking force to move quickly, hide, fire, and flee to other hiding places. This is an advantage not enjoyed by regular artillery batteries, which are not as mobile and are more difficult to conceal.

Hizbollah's rocket system (table 2) was arranged in a number of formations according to rocket range. The main formation included several thousand short range 107 mm. and 122 mm. caliber launchers. Some were fired from multi-barrel launchers that were moved around on small vehicles. Portable barrels were occasionally transported on donkeys or motorcycles. Others were made of static launching barrels installed in small bunkers (2 meters by 3 meters) positioned in well camouflaged areas with dense vegetation, sometimes in orchards. Missiles were stored in nearby houses. While these rockets have a range of no more than 20 km, this formation managed to fire throughout the north of Israel. The launchers were elusive and the IDF had difficulty attacking them.

The second formation included medium range rockets, with ranges of between 35 and 70 km. These included Iranian-made Fajr rockets and Syrian-made 220 mm. rockets, which were launched from mobile launchers on heavy custom-made trucks. This formation was operated from extended ranges deep in Hizbollah territory. It is more complicated to use than the first formation, and while the launchers were operated from concealed positions, the IDF succeeded in identifying them immediately after the rockets were launched and destroyed them. The third formation included long range rockets – the Zelzal rocket with a range of up to 200 km (which extends to the center of Israel). This unit was at least partly destroyed and was not used in the war.

In recent years attention has been given to the possibility of intercepting rockets, mainly the byproduct of the idea of intercepting intercontinental ballistic missiles, from the American Sprint system of the 1960s to the Israeli Arrow system and anti-ballistic missile systems currently being developed in the United States.

Table 2. Rocket Weaponry in the Battle Zone: Main Characteristics

Rocket	Caliber	Length	Weight	Warhead Weight	Range Min. - Max.	Warhead Type	Notes
Chinese Rockets							
Type 63 (Fadji-1)	107 mm	0.84-0.92 m	18.8 kg	Approx 5 kg (estimated.)	8,500 m	12-barrel launcher, towed, mounted on jeep or single launcher, portable	Chinese rocket
The Grad Series							
9M22U	122 mm	3.226 m	66.2 kg	19.4 kg	1,500 m. - 20,389 m	Explosive, fragmentation	Chinese rocket
9M22M	122 mm	2.870 m	66.0 kg	18.4 kg	1,500 m. - 20,000 m	Fragmentation, smoke, ignition	This is the original basic rocket
9M2B	122 mm	1.905 m	45.8 kg	19.4 kg	2,500 m. - 10,800m		Used by special forces
9M217	122 mm		70 kg	25 kg	30,000 m		New models
9M218	122 mm		70 kg	25 kg	40,000 m		
9M521	122 mm		70 kg	21 kg	37,500 m		
Syrian Launchers							
220 mm.	220 mm						Seems to be a Syrian version of the Uragan
302 mm.	302 mm						Possibly a Syrian version of the Chinese WS-1
Various Iranian Launchers							
Fadji-3	240 mm	5.2 m	407 kg	90 kg	17,000 m. - 43,000 m		12 barrels on a truck
Fadji-5	333 mm	6.485 m	915 kg	175 kg	75,000 m		4 barrels on a truck
Falaq-1	240 mm		111 kg	50 kg	10,000 m		4 barrels on a jeep
Falaq-2	333 mm		255 kg	120 kg	10,800 m		1 barrel on a jeep
Zelzal-2	610 mm	8.46 m	3400 kg	600 kg	210,000 m		Track on a truck
Possible weapons in the arena							
Uragan BM 9P 140 Rocket: 9M27F	220 mm	4.8 m. - 5.1 m., according to type	280 kg	100 kg	10,000 m. - 35,000 m	Explosive, fragmentation, various cluster munitions	Launcher - ZiL 135 vehicle carrying 16 barrels with various types of rockets; apparently sold to Syria, and a Syrian-made rocket may be based on this design
WS-1	302 mm	4.737 m	524 kg	150 kg	40,000 m. - 100,000 m		Made in China, possibly sold to Iran, and the Syrian rocket may be based on it
WS-1B	302 mm	6.375 m	725 kg	150 kg	60,000 m. - 180,000 m		Made in China
BM 9A52 Smerch	300 mm	7.6 m	800 kg	120-130 kg	20,000 m. - 70,000 m (some reach 90,000 m)	Explosive, fuel-air, various cluster munitions	12-barrel launcher - used in the arena by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates

The Nautilus project (also known as Tactical High Energy Laser – THEL) was established in the 1990s to advance rocket interception. The Nautilus system uses directed energy, in the form of a laser beam, directly against rockets in flight. The laser beam is designed to generate heat that causes the rocket to explode in mid-air. The system used chemical lasers and was tried out at missile ranges in the US. Following the success of the technology demonstration phase – in which the technology was operated from a heavy apparatus transported on a number of trucks – development work was started on the mobile model (MTHL), the first model designed for operational use. However, development of MTHL did not progress beyond the heavy experimental system and the work was shelved on financial grounds, after the US military lost interest in the system.

Despite the attractiveness of the idea, intercepting artillery rockets is a very complex matter. First, the flight duration of the rockets is relatively short – about one to two minutes, for ranges of 20-40 km. Second, they are low signature. In terms of a radar cross-section, they constitute extremely small targets. True, the propellant has a significant signature (in the infrared wavelength) while burning, but it operates for a few seconds only, and for most of the flight duration the rockets fly in a ballistic trajectory, without propulsion. Third, they are normally launched in large salvos. A successful interception would be one that hits a very high percentage of the salvo, but the attacker will always be able to saturate the defender's defense systems with more rockets.

The Nautilus system had a relatively short range, and thus defense of the north of the country would have required deployment of dozens of systems for localized protection of strategic targets and populated areas. Moreover, interception was expensive: each laser “launch,” at least in the experimental system, cost several thousands of dollars.

Here the economic factor comes into play. A careful financial analysis shows that rockets do not cause a great deal of damage. Their wide dispersal around targets on the one hand, and the dispersal of elements liable to be hit in the target area on the other hand, means that the vast majority of the rockets land in open areas without causing any damage, while only a small fraction actually hit targets and cause death and injury. However, cold calculation is of no value when the country's leadership faces a situation in which its citizens are attacked in their homes by enemy weapons.

Nonetheless, a calculation of this sort must be made when considering the cost of developing a rocket interception system, which in turn will furnish the cost of intercepting a single rocket. It is precisely such calculations that have thus far overridden the idea of developing an artillery shell interception system, for example. No one thinks it worthwhile to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in developing such a system. However, when rockets are fired at cities and political pressure is exerted on the country's leadership, this consideration assumes a different shape. From the perspective of the political leadership, the very existence of a technological option – as limited as it may be – to intercept rockets constitutes a crucial factor, as the leadership feels it is unable to withstand the inevitable argument, “You could have done something, and you didn't.”

Thus, once again, rocket fire impacts on weighty and costly political and military decisions, since it was precisely these considerations that led Israel to begin developing a system similar to the Nautilus. It is likely that in the wake of the war in the north, there is a greater chance that Israel will invest more to develop this or other systems designed to achieve the same result.

The main method of the IDF, and particularly the air force, to deal with the problem of rocket launches was the attempt to hit the launchers themselves. The ideal situation is, of course, to hit the launcher prior to the launch. However, chances of success are slim, due to the launchers' low signature in the field and the difficulty of tracking them. The problem is less acute with regard to heavy rockets transported on heavy vehicles, which are easier to trace when they leave their hiding place. The problem is more serious when the launcher is a single barrel, transported on a motorcycle or a donkey, or concealed in a small bunker in an area covered with thick vegetation.

On the other hand, as soon as the launch has occurred it is easier to identify the launcher and pinpoint its precise location. The difficulty lies in completing the process of pinpointing and directing a jet to strike the launcher. This difficulty is illustrated by the attempt of the Americans to hit Iraq's Scud launchers during the Gulf War. Despite the launches being observed from distances of hundreds of kilometers the American war planes did not manage to hit a single launcher.

In a small area such as southern Lebanon, distances do not pose such a serious problem, although a mobile launcher can still disappear from the field within a few seconds, particularly in a built-up or forested area. Thus at least with regard to medium and heavy launchers, Israel's air force achieved highly impressive successes. These results were only achieved by virtue of the ability to complete the pinpointing process, connecting the attacker with the target so that the attacker reached the target before the launcher could vanish. This is naturally more difficult when dealing with a very large number of light launchers, as used by Hizbollah from the border area.

Anti-Tank Missiles

Hizbollah fighters used anti-tank missiles during the Second Lebanon War (table 3). Before the war the organization was known to have At-3 Sagger missiles or its Iranian version, i.e., Raad and even enhanced Raad missiles, but essentially these were the same missiles used in the Yom Kippur War. In the summer of 2006 it became apparent that Hizbollah had more advanced Konkurs anti-tank (known in the West as the AT-5B Spandrel) and Fagot missiles (known in the West as the AT-4 Spigot). However, the biggest surprise to the IDF were the Metis-M and Kornet-E missiles, which are a newer generation of Russian anti-tank missiles. These missiles were sold by Russia to Syria in 2000. The great advantage of the new missiles lies in their enhanced accuracy, and the fact that they carry a "tandem" warhead. This head was designed to overcome the reactive armor used by the IDF (armor enhancement that was developed by Israel following the lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War). These anti-tank missiles were used in large numbers and against infantry forces hiding in buildings.

The endless race of new attack measures and countermeasures has reached a new turning point. In 1973 the Egyptian army surprised the IDF with its use of Sagger missiles. Since then, many defense means have been developed, the most prominent of which is reactive armor. This is an Israeli development used today by many armies around the world. Another phenomenon is the gradual increase in the weight of armored vehicles. The M-47 vehicle used in the sixties weighed 46 tons, while the M1A1 Abrams and Merkava weigh in excess of 60 tons.

Table 3. Anti-Tank Missiles in the Arena: Technical Data

Russian Name	Western Name	Introduced	Missile Weight	Range	Warhead Type	Armor Penetration	Guidance Type	Speed	Notes
Malyutka	AT-3 Sagger	3691	10.9 kg	500 m. -3,000 m.	Designed load (heat)	480 mm	Manual Command to Line of Sight (MCLOS)	115 ms., 26 seconds to maximum range	Track launched; weight of "suitcase" launcher - approx. 30 kg; used in large quantities in the Yom Kippur War
Malyutka-P	AT-3c		11.4 kg	500 m. -3,000 m.	Designed load (heat)	520 mm	Manual Command to Line of Sight (MCLOS)		
Fagot	AT-4 Spigot	3791	13.0 kg incl. launcher	70 m. -2,000 m.	Designed load (heat)	480 mm	Semi-Automatic Command to Line of Sight (SACLOS)	186 ms., 11 seconds to maximum range	Barrel-launched missile, portable; replaced the Sagger used by the Russian army
Konkurs	AT-5 Spandriel	3791	25.2 kg incl. launcher	75 m. -4,000 m.	Heat	650 mm	SACLOS	200 ms., 20 seconds to maximum range	Barrel-launched missile, prototype of the Fagot, with very similar features. Normally transported by vehicle, such as the BMP armored personnel carrier
Metis-M	AT-13	2991	13.8 kg in launcher	80 m. -1,500 m.	Tandem double load	900-1,000 mm	SACLOS (beam-riding?)	287 ms., 8 seconds to maximum range	The new generation of anti-tank missiles - replaces the Fagot used by the Russian army. Portable missile
Kornet-E	AT-14	2991	27 kg	80 m. -4,400 m.	Tandem double load	1,100-1,200 mm	SACLOS (laser-beam?)		Prototype of the Metis-M; transported on armored vehicles; replaces the Konkurs

The next phase in the race is already imminent: active protection systems (known as DAS – defensive aids suite, or APS – active protection systems). These systems are based on principles similar to those of intercepting ballistic missiles. Combat vehicles will be fitted with various detector systems that identify the combat threats – tank shells or anti-tank missiles – and will operate systems that intercept and neutralize the threat at a safe distance from the defending vehicle. Detector systems can be radar-based, or based on optical identification in the fields of the visible, IR or UV, and laser detectors (for laser range detection or beam-riding missile guidance systems). Interception can be implemented by a missile, but this is generally achieved by firing a spray load meant to hit and set off the approaching missile.

Such systems will offer a significant advantage when they reach technological maturity and can be relied on. Then it will be possible to reduce the weight of the combat vehicles considerably and defend against light arms only (up to 14.5 mm), for which such protection systems are not efficient. A vehicle with this kind of protection can protect not only itself but a nearby vehicle as well.

There are serious problems with developing such systems, due to the need to identify targets quickly, to assess if they present a direct threat to the defending vehicle (and are not aimed at another target, outside the range of self-protection), and to decide how to act and activate the countermeasures. In addition, the countermeasures must be designed so as not to endanger friendly forces near the defending vehicle.

Such systems are currently at various stages of development around the world, and some are already operational. In Israel, the Trophy system was unveiled in early 2005 (known in the IDF as Raincoat, made by Rafael); Israel Aerospace Industries has unveiled the Iron Fist system. No details of these systems are yet available. However, even if a decision was made to purchase them, it would be a long process of several years to attain full equipping, and it is questionable whether they would have impacted on the patterns of the last war. Indeed, the Trophy system was tested by the US army and was found to be unsuitable for its needs.

As with any other technological innovation, it is easy to argue with hindsight that an error was made by not investing in equipping the IDF with maximum protection. Such an argument is always problematic in that

it does not look back at the investment alternatives and the information in the hands of the decision makers in relation to each of the available alternatives. Based on the Second Lebanon War, however, it is reasonable to assume that a significant effort will be made to acquire such protection systems.

Appendix 3

UN Security Council Resolution 1701

August 11, 2006

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 520 (1982), 1559 (2004), 1655 (2006) 1680 (2006) and 1697 (2006), as well as the statements of its President on the situation in Lebanon, in particular the statements of 18 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/21), of 19 October 2004 (S/PRST/2004/36), of 4 May 2005 (S/PRST/2005/17), of 23 January 2006 (S/PRST/2006/3) and of 30 July 2006 (S/PRST/2006/35),

Expressing its utmost concern at the continuing escalation of hostilities in Lebanon and in Israel since Hizbollah's attack on Israel on 12 July 2006, which has already caused hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons,

Emphasizing the need for an end of violence, but at the same time *emphasizing* the need to address urgently the causes that have given rise to the current crisis, including by the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers,

Mindful of the sensitivity of the issue of prisoners and *encouraging* the efforts aimed at urgently settling the issue of the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel,

Welcoming the efforts of the Lebanese Prime Minister and the commitment of the Government of Lebanon, in its seven-point plan, to extend its authority over its territory, through its own legitimate armed forces, such that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon, *welcoming also* its commitment to a United Nations force that is supplemented and enhanced in

numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operation, and *bearing in mind* its request in this plan for an immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon,

Determined to act for this withdrawal to happen at the earliest,

Taking due note of the proposals made in the seven-point plan regarding the Shebaa farms area,

Welcoming the unanimous decision by the Government of Lebanon on 7 August 2006 to deploy a Lebanese armed force of 15,000 troops in South Lebanon as the Israeli army withdraws behind the Blue Line and to request the assistance of additional forces from UNIFIL as needed, to facilitate the entry of the Lebanese armed forces into the region and to restate its intention to strengthen the Lebanese armed forces with material as needed to enable it to perform its duties,

Aware of its responsibilities to help secure a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict,

Determining that the situation in Lebanon constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

1. *Calls for* a full cessation of hostilities based upon, in particular, the immediate cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations;
2. Upon full cessation of hostilities, *calls upon* the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL as authorized by paragraph 11 to deploy their forces together throughout the South and *calls upon* the Government of Israel, as that deployment begins, to withdraw all of its forces from southern Lebanon in parallel;
3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and resolution 1680 (2006), and of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon;
4. *Reiterates* its strong support for full respect for the Blue Line;
5. *Also reiterates* its strong support, as recalled in all its previous relevant resolutions, for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders, as contemplated by the Israeli-Lebanese General Armistice Agreement of 23 March 1949;

6. *Calls on* the international community to take immediate steps to extend its financial and humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people, including through facilitating the safe return of displaced persons and, under the authority of the Government of Lebanon, reopening airports and harbours, consistent with paragraphs 14 and 15, and *calls on* it also to consider further assistance in the future to contribute to the reconstruction and development of Lebanon;
7. *Affirms* that all parties are responsible for ensuring that no action is taken contrary to paragraph 1 that might adversely affect the search for a long-term solution, humanitarian access to civilian populations, including safe passage for humanitarian convoys, or the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons, and *calls on* all parties to comply with this responsibility and to cooperate with the Security Council;
8. *Calls for* Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution based on the following principles and elements:
 - full respect for the Blue Line by both parties;
 - security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities, including the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL as authorized in paragraph 11, deployed in this area;
 - full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State;
 - no foreign forces in Lebanon without the consent of its Government;
 - no sales or supply of arms and related materiel to Lebanon except as authorized by its Government;
 - provision to the United Nations of all remaining maps of land mines in Lebanon in Israel's possession;
9. *Invites* the Secretary-General to support efforts to secure as soon as possible agreements in principle from the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel to the principles and elements for a long-term solution as set forth in paragraph 8, and *expresses* its intention to be actively involved;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop, in liaison with relevant international actors and the concerned parties, proposals to implement the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including disarmament, and for delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain, including by dealing with the Shebaa farms area, and to present to the Security Council those proposals within thirty days;
11. *Decides*, in order to supplement and enhance the force in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operations, to authorize an increase in the force strength of UNIFIL to a maximum of 15,000 troops, and that the force shall, in addition to carrying out its mandate under resolutions 425 and 426 (1978):
 - (a) Monitor the cessation of hostilities;
 - (b) Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon as provided in paragraph 2;
 - (c) Coordinate its activities related to paragraph 11 (b) with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel;
 - (d) Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons;
 - (e) Assist the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment of the area as referred to in paragraph 8;
 - (f) Assist the Government of Lebanon, at its request, to implement paragraph 14;
12. Acting in support of a request from the Government of Lebanon to deploy an international force to assist it to exercise its authority throughout the territory, *authorizes* UNIFIL to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces and as it deems within its capabilities, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind, to resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council, and to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General urgently to put in place measures to ensure UNIFIL is able to carry out the functions envisaged in this resolution, *urges* Member States to consider making appropriate contributions to UNIFIL and to respond positively to requests for assistance from the Force, and *expresses* its strong appreciation to those who have contributed to UNIFIL in the past;
14. *Calls upon* the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel and *requests* UNIFIL as authorized in paragraph 11 to assist the Government of Lebanon at its request;
15. *Decides* further that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent, by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft:
 - (a) The sale or supply to any entity or individual in Lebanon of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, whether or not originating in their territories; and
 - (b) The provision to any entity or individual in Lebanon of any technical training or assistance related to the provision, manufacture, maintenance or use of the items listed in subparagraph (a) above; except that these prohibitions shall not apply to arms, related material, training or assistance authorized by the Government of Lebanon or by UNIFIL as authorized in paragraph 11;
16. *Decides* to extend the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2007, and *expresses its intention* to consider in a later resolution further enhancements to the mandate and other steps to contribute to the implementation of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution;
17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council within one week on the implementation of this resolution and subsequently on a regular basis;
18. *Stresses* the importance of, and the need to achieve, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 1515 (2003) of 18 November 2003;
19. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Contributors

Dr. **Yehuda Ben Meir**, INSS principal research associate, former deputy minister of foreign affairs

Brig. Gen. (ret.) **Shlomo Brom**, INSS senior research associate, former director of Strategic Planning in the IDF

Maj. Gen. (res.) **Giora Eiland**, INSS senior research associate, former head of the National Security Council

Brig. Gen. (ret.) **Meir Elran**, INSS senior research associate, former deputy head of Military Intelligence in the IDF

Prof. **Yair Evron**, INSS adjunct principal research associate, Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University

Brig. Gen. (ret.) **Amos Gilboa**, former head of the Research Division in IDF Intelligence

Dr. **Mark A. Heller**, INSS principal research associate and Director of Research at INSS

Dr. Col. (ret.) **Ephraim Kam**, INSS principal research associate and deputy director of INSS

Brig. Gen. (ret.) **Yossi Kuperwasser**, former head of the Research Division in IDF Intelligence

Dr. **Anat Kurz**, INSS senior research associate

Prof. **David Menashri**, head of the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University

Maj. Gen. (ret.) **Giora Romm**, adjunct INSS senior research associate, formerly assistant commander of the IAF and IDF attaché in the United States

Yoram Schweitzer, INSS senior research associate

Yiftah S. Shapir, INSS senior research associate

Dr. Col. (res.) **Gabriel Siboni**, INSS research associate

Prof. **Asher Susser**, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, senior research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University

Maj. Gen. (ret.) **Aharon Ze'evi Farkash**, INSS senior research associate, former head of Military Intelligence in the IDF

Prof. **Eyal Zisser**, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University

